

**THE BRITISH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF PORTUGAL**

TWENTY FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT
AND REVIEW 1998

Quinta Nova
Carcavelos
2777 PAREDE

THE CONFEDERATE NAVY IN PORTUGUESE WATERS

During the American Civil War of 1861-1865 cruisers were built for the Confederacy in England and sailed unarmed to the Azores and Madeira. Arms for the ships were purchased separately in England and the ships carrying the arms met the cruisers in waters off the Azores and Madeira where they were armed and commissioned.

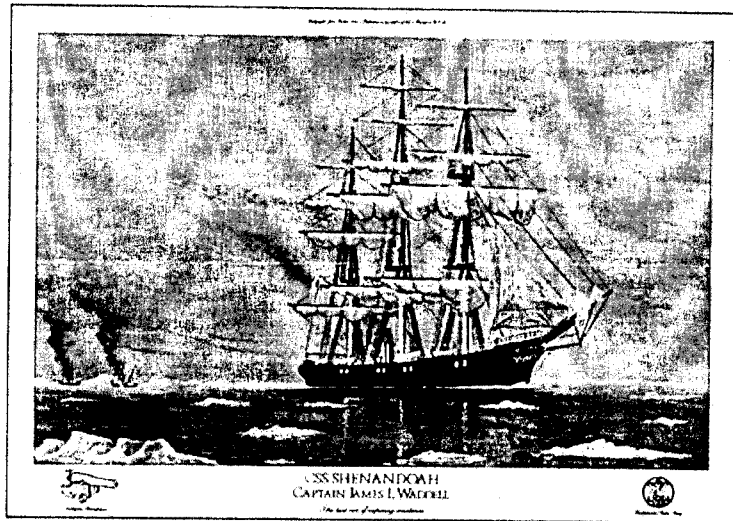
To give a profile of the Confederate Navy I have picked 4 ships that had contact with Portuguese waters:

CSS ALABAMA

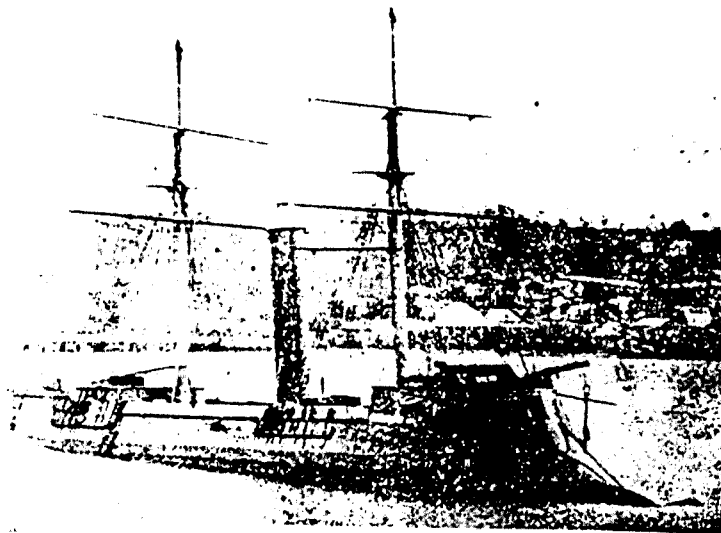


C.S.S. Alabama (cruiser), built by Laird, 220' x 31.9' x 14' at 1,050 tons;

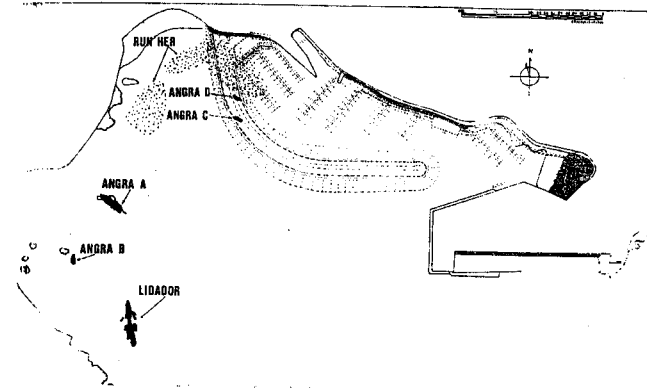
CSS SHENANDOAH



C.S.S. Shenandoah (cruiser), built by Stephen, 230' x 36' x 20' at 1,060 tons;



C.S.S. Stonewall (armored ram), built by Arman in France, 157' x 32' x 14' at 1,390 tons;



The Run 'Her (blockade runner), built by John and Wm. Dudgeon, London, 230' x 27' x 14.6' at 829 tons.

Confederate States of America,
NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D.C., 23rd Feb. 1862.

Sir,

You are hereby informed that the President has appointed you by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, a Captain, to rank from the 26th day of March, 1861, in the Navy of the Confederate States. You are requested to signify your acceptance or non-acceptance of this appointment; and should you accept you will sign before a magistrate, the oath of office herewith, and forward the same, with your letter of acceptance, to this Department.

Registered - No 9

The least number takes rank.

S. Mallory
Secretary of the Navy.

Captain
James S. Horath,
U.S. Navy.

Presented to the Secretary of the Navy
from the

The Confederate Navy was established by President Jefferson Davis on February 2, 1861 and the Secretary of the Confederate Navy was Stephen R. Mallory.

Secretary Mallory had been a US Senator from Florida and had served on several Navy committees, including the Naval Retiring Board, in the US Senate. When the Civil War began there was no Confederate Navy and the Union Navy was quite large. The South had no shipyards, workshops, steam mills, foundries, nor capability to build a ship or steam engine. At its zenith the Confederate Navy had only 40 vessels of all grades. It was expedient for Mallory to purchase ships and the likely places were England and France. Further there were no Southern capitalists nor money men. Wealth was frozen in land, slaves and cotton. There were, however, 200 former Union Naval Officer volunteers of whom many had been retired by Mallory when he sat on the Naval Retiring Board. Most never got a chance to fight.

Commander James D. Bulloch was sent to England in May 1861 to purchase or otherwise obtain fighting ships for the Confederacy. Upon arrival he found that this was no easy task. In his book "A History of the Confederate Navy", Raimondo Luraghi said, "Building commerce raiders in England and France was a test of Southern subterfuge versus Federal diligence in holding foreign governments to existing neutrality laws."

By subterfuge Bulloch designed and contracted with the Laird Brothers in Birkenhead to build ship # 290 which became the C.S.S. Alabama. This ship was designed to operate under sail or steam and the propeller could be lifted out of the water when under sail to reduce drag. Sails were necessary because of the logistical problem of obtaining coal. Ship #290 went to sea "for trials" and kept on going until it reached Angra Bay on the island of Terceira in the Azores. There it met with its support ship Agripinna carrying Captain Raphael Semmes with the arms and stores. The 2 ships were lashed together and the arms transferred to # 290. Once armed the cruiser was commissioned the Alabama on 24 August 1862 and Captain Semmes ran up the Confederate flag and proceeded to the area of Pico/Faial in the Azores. Here he burned and sank his first Union whaler on 5 September 1862. Within 11 days he burned 10 Union ships within view of the island of Flores in the Azores. The

own with their hand luggage and whale boats were permitted to row ashore on the island of Flores. There were so many sailors that they outnumbered the inhabitants. Semmes commented in his diary that it would be interesting to check the police records in the future to see how much trouble the beached sailors got into. Eventually the marooned Union sailors were sent back to the North by US Consul Dabney, resident on the island of Faial.

The Dabney family on Faial assisted the Union by providing intelligence and by denying the purchase of coal to Confederate cruisers. In his book, "Atlantic Islanders", Professor Francis Rogers states, "They (Dabneys) fought the Civil War in part by controlling the supply of coal in mid ocean and their ship AZOR once had a close call with the Confederacy's Alabama".

After spending 2 years sweeping the Union fishing fleet from the Grand Banks and spreading chaos along the sea lanes of the American Atlantic Coast and off South America the Alabama was fired and headed for Western Europe from the Cape of Good Hope on 20 March 1864 for an overhaul. She arrived at Cherbourg in June 1864 and the U.S.S. Kearsarge arrived on 14 June 1864 to block the escape of the Alabama. Semmes communicated to Captain Winslow of the Kearsarge that he would come out and do battle after he had taken on coal. The 2 ships were of comparable size and armament but the Kearsarge had armored her sides by stretching chains from bow to stern. On 19 June 1864 the Alabama steamed out and the 2 ships circled one another for an hour and 10 minutes while firing away. None of the Alabama shells hitting the Kearsarge exploded and the Alabama was hit several times and was sinking before Semmes ordered abandon ship. Most of the crew of the Alabama was rescued by the British steamer Deerhound and Semmes lived to fight as a General in the retreat from Richmond.

With the loss of the Alabama there was a need for a replacement and Commander Bulloch was fortunate in being able to purchase a similar ship, the Sea King. The blockade runner Laurel was loaded with guns and stores at Liverpool and sailed 8 October 1864 for

Madeira. The 2 ships met off the Desertas Islands, southeast of Madeira, on 18 October 1864 and the Sea King was armed and commissioned the C.S.S. Shenandoah. Captain James I. Waddell received his orders to proceed to the area of the Northern Whaling Fleet in the Pacific. He proceeded to the Bering Sea via Australia and destroyed 24 whalers of which 20 were destroyed during the period 22 - 28 June after the Civil War was over. These 2 ships, the Alabama and Shenandoah destroyed the Northern Whaling Fleet which was never replaced due to the competition of kerosene which had only recently been introduced to replace whale oil lamps.

Captain Waddell had been told by a number of the captains of whalers that the war was over but the newspapers they produced from California were equivocal. Once he found out from a passing British ship that had newspapers announcing the war's end he was afraid of being branded a pirate and sailed for England where he arrived in Liverpool on 6 November 1865 (6 months after the Civil War ended). US Consul Adams in Liverpool cried piracy but the British Government released Captain Waddell and his crew.

It was always the intent of Secretary Mallory and Commander Bulloch to obtain armored vessels to break the Northern blockade of Southern ports but all their efforts in England and France were frustrated. Bulloch designed them and contracted to have them built but the US Consul had spies everywhere looking for the clandestine preparation of Southern men of war. All the armored ships being built by Bulloch in England were embargoed. In France there was on and off cooperation by Napoleon III with the Confederacy and armored ships were laid down but eventually the ships were lost to foreign governments. The armored rams Cheops and Sphinx were planned by Confederate Agents in France to be built in the name of the Viceroy of Egypt. The French government discovered the ruse and the Sphinx was sold to the Government of Denmark because of a war with Germany. That war was over before delivery, however, and Bulloch was able to purchase the ship from Denmark through a 3rd party. This ship became the C.S.S. Stonewall and on 28 January 1865 the Confederate crew was placed on board off the coast of

France. It proceeded to Coruña through heavy seas to arrive 2 February 1865 for repairs due to leaks in the superstructure. After repairs it left Coruña on 24 March 1865 to do battle with 2 US men of war who declined combat. Later court martial proceedings for unwardice were considered against the captains of the US men of war. She then proceeded to Lisbon where she received an unfriendly welcome. The Stonewall departed Lisbon as the Civil War was coming to an end and the captain learned the war was over when he arrived in Nassau. From there he went to Cuba and sold the ship to the Captain General for \$16,000 to pay off his crew.

The Run 'Her was built as a blockade runner by John and Wm. Dudgeon, Isle of Dogs, London' and she proceeded to Terceira in the Azores under Captain Edwin Courtney for transfer to the Confederacy. Unfortunately Captain Courtney ran aground in Angra harbor on 5 November 1864 and the ship was sold for salvage but was totally destroyed by a storm on 19 December 1864. There she lay until 1997 when her remains were discovered when improvements were being made to the harbor. Marine archaeologists have plotted an undersea map of the location of the artifacts.

These 4 ships represent the hopes and aspirations of the Confederate Navy. As a result of the cruisers Alabama and Shenandoah the US Merchant Marine and the US Whaling Fleet were destroyed, never to be replaced. Once the cruisers were loose in the ocean and burning Northern ships the owners either sold their remaining ships or changed the registrations to foreign countries. Whale oil for lamps was already receiving competition from kerosene and there was little incentive to replace the whalers. Only one of the armored ships got to sea and that was just in time for the end of the Civil War. Blockade runners were a profitable business and many fortunes were made. There were more than 400 steam powered blockade runners and most were made in England.

After the war, the US blamed England for giving aid and comfort to the Confederacy in building and arming the cruisers. The 2 countries signed the Johnson-Clarendon Convention in January 14, 1869 but it

was opposed by Senator Charles Sumner. US Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, says in his diary "Sumner speech defeats Alabama treaty which got 1 vote. Sumner is better informed than Secretary of State Seward". In his speech to the Senate, Charles Sumner, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, said that Great Britain should pay half the cost of the war which he estimated to be \$2.5 billion but he was prepared to settle for: Canada, Newfoundland, Bermuda and the West Indies.

The dispute was allowed to cool off for a few years and in September 1872 a Tribunal of Arbitration in Geneva awarded the United States \$15,500,000.00 which represents only the losses incurred by the Alabama and Shenandoah. No compensation was obtained for the 6 other Confederate raiders or the over 400 blockade runners that kept the South alive during the war. This figure was a small price to be paid by Great Britain for obtaining and maintaining mastery of world maritime commerce.

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