

Washington, N.C., Attack on ^[1]

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by Paul Branch, 2006



"the steams 'escort' running the rebel batteries near washington, nc. harper's weekly, may 9, 1863. courtesy of the north carolina collection, univervity of north carolina libraries.

^[2]The September 1862 attack on Washington, N.C., marked the first major Confederate ^[3] attempt to recapture Eastern North Carolina towns taken by Union forces earlier in the Civil War. Before sunrise on 6 September, Maj. Stephen D. Pool ^[4] and his roughly 700 men from the 1st North Carolina artillery and the 8th, 17th, and 55th North Carolina infantry launched a surprise attack on Washington. Pool's first column overwhelmed Union pickets on the west side of Washington and stormed through the town. During the fighting, the Union gunboat Picket ^[5] exploded and sank. Pool's second column encountered stiffer resistance but was soon able to push through the unionist defenders into town as well.

Col. Edward E. Potter ^[6] commanded Washington's defending forces, which included the 1st North Carolina Union volunteers ^[7]. Union cavalry fanned out through the streets, but resistance proved too heavy. Potter withdrew his artillery and infantry to permit the union gunboat *Louisiana* to open fire on the town. Its heavy guns turned the tide and the Confederates withdrew.

The Union lost 8 killed, 36 wounded, and 12 missing or captured as well as the *Picket* and 20 of its crew killed (including the Captain) and 6 wounded. Confederate losses were at least 13 killed, 57 wounded, and about 20 captured.

References:

John G. Barrett, *The Civil War in North Carolina* (1963).

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Louis H. Manarin and Weymouth T. Jordan, eds., *North Carolina troops, 1861-1865: A Roster*, vols. 6, 13 (1968, 2003).

Image Credit:

"The Steams 'Escort' Running the Rebel Batteries near Washington, N.C. Harper's Weekly, May 9, 1863. Courtesy of the North Carolina collection, Univerity of North Carolina libraries. Available from <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/pcoll/civilwar/80-430.jpg> ^[2] (accessed May 18, 2012).

Subjects:

Civil War (1861-1865) ^[8]

War ^[9]

Authors:

Branch, Paul, Jr. ^[10]

Origin - location:

Beaufort ^[11]

From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. ^[12]

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