

See Also NC Masters for Colston/Pryor Master after Norfolk

Colston & Pryor's careers seem to be Co-mingled to the point of confusing one's command for the other

June 61 [about] The 13th NC [organized 5/16/61 at Garysburg] remained in camp at Garysburg about two weeks, being instructed in drilling, etc., when it was ordered to Suffolk & remained there four weeks. It was next ordered to Ben's church in Isle Of Wight County, five miles from Smithfield. At this place it was thrown into Pemberton's Bgde, Huger's Div.

7/18/61 Hqs 1st Bgde, Gen Pemberton Cdg **Arty Bgde**, Smithfield, Va- To Col S. Anderson, AAG Hqs Forces, Norfolk Harbor- yesterday I completed a personal examination of the country embraced within the limits of this Bgde, the neighborhood of Suffolk excepted. Commencing eastward, I find the Btry at Cedar Point unfinished. The guns, implements, & ammunition were hourly expected, but in consequence of changes made in the plan for carriages, several of the platforms now finished must be taken up, & others more complex laid. This seems to me an unnecessary delay, when the guns may at any hour be needed. The Btry at Barrel Point still needs at least one 9-inch shell gun, which will render it much more effective. The neck on which these Btrys are located is very thickly wooded, & susceptible of defense by a comparatively small force.

I have placed one Co of Infy (& a Cav picket advanced) near the causeway connecting Ragged Island with the mainland. Another Cav vedette patrols from Soddin's Point eastward. The Hqs of this Co (Capt Gillett's) is near the post marked "Store." Seven Co's of Col Pender's Regt, with Hqs, are, I think, well located at the cross-roads marked "Isle of Wight Church." It affords support to Old Town Btry, on Jones' Creek, which was previously entirely isolated. All the roads towards the shore from the church are good, & no distance exceeding six miles. A road opened by Col Pryor brings it within seven or seven & a half miles of his Hqs. The Btry at Old Town (four short 32s) is in good condition, & served by two Co's of Col Pender's Regt, under the Lt-Col. I have directed one of these Co's to be relieved every fortnight, that all may be instructed in Bn drill.

Col Pryor's Hqs, with seven Co's, is on Day's Neck, one-half a mile or less from the Back Wharf Btry. Of six 32s, weighing 6,000 pounds, five only were mounted on the occasion of my visit. The sixth carriage was, however, at hand. Lt Poindexter, in charge of this Btry, has gone to Norfolk for the complete equipment of this Btry. It is served by Co's of Col Pryor's Regt nearby. This Btry commands the inner channel only. Burwell's Bay may be reached by the outer channel. I have stationed a Co of Col Pryor's Regt at the Stonehouse Wharf Landing, & have directed a breastwork to be thrown up, which will command the shore, accessible on either side of the wharf. I think it very desirable that one or two field pieces (two of the old iron ones in the old custom-house at Norfolk or the iron gun on navy carriage in the same yard, would answer) be sent to this point. Another Co of Col Pryor's Regt guards two landings nearby, both of which are only available by narrow causeways. Two Co's of Cav guard & patrol the coast to Day's Point. The roads in this neighborhood are very numerous, & all have strong force be posted in this vicinity, & urgently request either that Daniel's Regt be advanced or that another Regt be sent forward. I understand that Col Daniel's Regt is to be held in reserve at Suffolk. It is of little or no use to me there, unless to fall back on, which I hope not to be compelled to do.

I request authority to establish a QM & commissary depot at this point or nearby. The troops here have not been supplied with fresh meat for six weeks. On the representation of the surgeon of Col Pryor's Regt, I have today ordered mutton or other meat to be supplied.

10/2/61 Richmond, Pemberton to Sec of War- In connection with the conversation which I had with you this morning, I beg to state that in my opinion the position west of Nansemond River, which is now under my command, absolutely requires for its safety & that of the surrounding country a reinforcement of at least 1,500 men, &, if possible, a mounted Btry of four field pieces. I beg to state that Gen Huger, cdg at Norfolk, concurs with me in these opinions.

Pemberton's first Bgde command was in the Dept of Norfolk, leading its 10th [1st] Bgde from June to Nov

The 6th NC, Col Pender [?]

The 13th NC, Col Scales.

The 14th NC, Col Daniel

The 3rd Va., Col Pryor.

The Ellis Arty, Capt S. D. Ramseur.

...Were by the authorities organized into a Bgde, with Colston, Gen cdg. Gen Colston established a camp of instruction about two miles north of Smithfield, the town famous for its fine hams.

11/28 the 14th Regt was ordered to this camp for instruction & Bgde drill.

11/29 Pemberton reports for duty to Gen Lee at Charleston

12/3/61

<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd Mahone</u>	<u>3rd Blanchard</u>
13 NC	3 Ala	4 Ga
14 NC	12 NC	Ga Co
3 Va.	6 Va.	1 La
1 Bn Va. [?]	12 Va.	3 rd Bn La
9 Va. 2 Co's	16 Va.	1 st Bn NC
Wilson Bn 1 Co [7 th Va. Bn Infy later 61 Va.]	41 Va.	9 Va. 2 Co's
Va. Cav 4 Co's	7 Va. Bn 1 Co	Arty Bn 1 Co
	1 Co unassigned	Va. Cav 2 Co's
	_Co's Va. Cav	
	Sewell's Pt Btry	3 Ga dtchd
		1 SC Gregg

12/11 petition from officers of 3rd Va for Col Pryor to be made BG due to vacancy caused by transfer of Gen Pemberton. Pryor is now the acting cdr of the Bgde.

12/14/61 Col Pryor cdg 1st Bgde Norfolk Dept-to the Hon. Sec of War-In every respect the Btry at Hardy's Bluff is the most important of the defenses on James River in this vicinity. It is supported, nevertheless, by the very inadequate force of five Co's, which number only 350 in the agg. Of these, one Co, & that the largest, is detached a distance of some 2 miles, to protect a work at Stone House wharf.

Under these circumstances I beg leave respectfully to recommend that the force at Hardy's Bluff be increased by the addition of five Co's, so as to constitute a full Regt. The officer in command, Lt Col F. H. Archer, is a soldier of experience, ability, & the most zealous devotion to the cause. If it were admissible, I would venture to suggest that his services already entitle him to promotion. The suggestions I presume to offer in this communication are prompted by a deliberate conviction of public necessity.

[Endorsements] Respectfully forwarded & approved. Huger

Respectfully submitted to Sec of War. I know no better way to increase this force than to authorize Gen Huger to detail a portion of the unarmed Regt recently sent to him to serve at the Btry at Hardy's Bluff. There are no troops in Richmond that can be sent anywhere. S. Cooper

12/15 the Bgde was reviewed & at 3 p. m. returned to Fort Bee

12/17/61 Rec'd at War Dept- Pryor, Col 3rd Va. Infy recommended for B Gen to fill vacancy in that Bgde left by Pemberton being ordered to S C. He is now acting as B Gen in that Bgde & is the senior colonel in it

12/24 Colston of 16th Va. promoted to Brig Gen. *[apparently vice Pryor]*

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1/8-1/31 Colston-cdg 1st Bgde

1/31
<u>1st Colston</u>
13 NC
14 NC
3 Va.
9 Va. 2 Co's
7 th Va. Bn _Co
Archers Va. Bn [5 th Bn Infy serving as HA later to 53 Va.]
Va. Cav 4 Co's
10 NC 1 Co

2/14 Beauregard, Nashville, to Gen A S Johnston, Cdr Western Dept - States that a Col Pryor's Regt has been ordered to Norfolk & offered his services in Congress for anything that may be required. Mentions that he will be leaving on the 7 P.M. train for Decatur & Corinth *[don't understand how this can be the same Colston]*

2/1-2/28 Colston cdg 1st Bgde Dept Norfolk at Smithfield

3/1-3/31- Colston cdg 1st Bgde

4/1-4/10 ref Colston at Smithfield, Va. cdg 1st Bgde

3/16 Magruder to Lee- ...I enclose you a communication from Col Cabell in relation to Harden's Bluff. I applied more than three months ago to have this work transferred to my Dept, & sent Col Randolph & Mr. St. John, the engineer then in charge of the works of this Peninsula, to Richmond to press this subject upon the consideration of the War Dept, but could get no answer. It is too late now probably to effect anything, but I am willing to do what can be done. The Btry has been a naval Btry, & is now commanded by Capt De Lagnel (late of the Navy, but now temporarily a Capt in the Army).

I recommend that the whole be placed under the command of the cdg officer, whoever he may be at present **Col Archer** - while the guns & the men who serve them should be under the immediate command of Capt De Lagnel, who, however, I believe, is junior to the Capt's of Arty serving the guns; &, if so, ought to be made a major, as has been done in many similar cases, & as his services at this time cannot be spared.

I recommend that **Gen Colston**, who commands that portion of Gen Huger's Dept, be ordered to call out forthwith all the negroes, with their axes, spades, &c., for the purpose of executing without delay any work which Capt Rives, in charge of the Engineer Bureau at Richmond, or Capt Clark, the engineer in immediate charge of the work, may require to be done. The decision as respects the rank, relative positions & responsibilities of the officers at Harden's Bluff I think had better come from yourself or the War Dept, as I understand there is some feeling among them on this subject.

3/24/62 Hqs 1st Bgde, Dept of Norfolk, Smithfield-Gen Colston cdg 1st Bgde recommends Pryor for promotion to BG. Says he is senior of this Bgde & well qualified for a larger command...

3/25 Cooper to Col Pryor, 3rd Va., Richmond-A copy of yours of 3/23 to Sec of War has been sent to Lt Col D J Godwin *[9th Va.-the Co's had served at various locations around the harbor at Portsmouth & Norfolk doing duty as Hvy Arty & Infy-before the organization of the 9th Va. Inf, there had been a failed attempt to organize a Va. Arty Regt under Richardson]* desiring him to report by what authority the assurance that his troops would be kept near to Portsmouth has been given.

About the middle of March, 1862, the 3rd Va Regt was ferried across James River to reinforce Gen Magruder at Yorktown. Shortly after reaching Yorktown the 3rd Regt was assigned to Colston's Bgde, Longstreet's Div. Its 1st engagement with the enemy was on 4/5/62 The Regt was on duty at Dam #2, & the advance of McClellan's army attempted to cross Warwick River at that point but was driven back. It was in consequence of this repulse that McClellan decided to assail the CS lines by regular approaches; He therefore halted his troops & began building earthworks.

3/25 the 14th rec'd orders for the Regt to join Gen Magruder on the Warwick River. The time had come when we were to leave our fine winter quarters & become actively engaged. While regretting to leave, still we were very desirous to be active participants in the great drama being enacted, fearing the war would close before we had had an opportunity to strike one blow for our freedom.

Packing our trunks we sent them home by some visiting friends, keeping only our knapsacks filled with light baggage. Taking boat at Wren's landing we steamed across the bay to Mulberry Island, near the mouth of Warwick River. It was the first boat ride many of us had ever taken, & were much interested in the manner of getting the officers' horses aboard, the boat itself & the engines driving the side-wheeler.

On landing, marched up the river to Green's farm on the Warwick, near dam # 2- The river was only some forty or fifty yards wide & fordable at low tide. Gen Magruder had dams constructed across it at intervals which raised the' water above fording, & had posted Arty, supported by Infy, at each dam, making it possible for a small force to defend the position against a large army. The Regt remained here only two days & returned to Fort Bee. *[Norfolk Dept]* We never learned the object sought or reason for our return. Some of the boys left valuables to find them gone on their return. Thoughtless, thoughtless boys!

We took up our old program of eating, sleeping & drilling with the necessary guard duty for only a few days when again ordered to the peninsula where we landed 4/4.

3/28 Magruder Hqs to staff aide-regarding boats for crossing troops & that Colston is ready to send reinforcements.

3/28 Huger to Lee-has rec'd orders relative to movement of Colston's command-asks more troops & impresses his inability to reinforce others

3/29 Lee to Magruder... As regards the Bgde of Gen Colston, it was not intended that he should move until there was positive evidence that the intention of the enemy was to attack you in force. Full instructions to that effect have been forwarded to him. You are desired to keep him fully advised as to the movements & probable designs of the enemy. A steamer for the necessary transportation has been placed at Stone House Wharf, subject to the orders of Gen Colston. The enemy is pressing us on all sides, & a call for reinforcements comes from every Dept. It is impossible to place at every point which is threatened a force which shall prove equal to every emergency. As yet the design of the enemy in your front is somewhat vague & undecided. The movement against you may be a feint, & the real attack may be on Norfolk. When it is unmistakably ascertained that he shall attempt to force his way up the Peninsula every exertion shall be made to enable you successfully to resist & drive him.

3/31 Magruder Hqs to Gen Colston, Dept of Norfolk-Acknowledge yours of today [noon]-The Gen will keep you fully advised of the enemy movements

3/31 Smithfield, Gen Colston to Lee-has crossed 2 Regts of Infy-will keep ...advised

4/2 to Gen Colston cdg 1st Bgde, Dept of Norfolk-Gen Magruder directs me to request you to send the steamer Allison, with any other transportation you may have, to Grove's Wharf as speedily as possible, to convey back to you the two Regts under Col Pryor. The present indications are that these troops will be needed on your side, & Gen Magruder is therefore ordered to send them to their former position. There is no transportation now on this side.

4/2 Magruder Hqs to Capt of Steamer Allison-Gen Magruder has been ordered to send 2 Regts [under Col Pryor] to Smithfield & directs you to Grove Wharf to move them. They will be ready at the wharf early tomorrow AM.

4/2 Hqs Dept of Peninsula-special order-Col Pryor will proceed with his Bgde at early dawn tomorrow to Grove Wharf for embarking. He will report to Gen Colston at Smithfield. Dept QM will furnish him 10 wagons for temporary use.

4/3/62 Magruder special orders-26th Ala [O'Neal] is transferred to McLaws' Div & attached to Winston's Bgde
Gen Rains will send the 26th Ala to Col Winston forthwith

4/3 @ 9 PM-Magruder Hqs to Gen Colston cdg 1st Bgde, Dept of Norfolk, Smithfield-In reply to yours of last evening, the 2 Regts of your Bgde had already been ordered back to you & on the march to Grove Wharf before receiving your letter. The James River boat has been ordered to assist you in moving them.

4/4 Petersburg-Roger Pryor wants to know if his nomination has been confirmed [see 4/16]

4/4 The 14th NC lands on the peninsula

4/4 The 13th NC remained at Camp Ruffin till April 4, when it was ordered to the Peninsula.
April-Colston moved his Bgde, composed of the 13th NC & 14th NC & 3rd Va. Regts to the defense of Yorktown.

4/5 Lee's Farm, Magruder's Hqs to ___The 13th NC will reinforce you tomorrow at daylight. Recall your Btry sent to Lee's Mills. Be ready to move to Williamsburg in case of disaster.

4/5 Yorktown, By order of Magruder to Col Ewell-Send the 3rd Va or any other Regt that may arrive at King's Mill or Grove Wharf immediately to Gen Magruder at Lee's Farm. Also send Ramseur's Btry there

4/7 Ref to Gen Wilcox cdg 3rd Div, Wynne's Mill-Dept of Peninsula

4/19 Camp near Yorktown, Dorsey Pender [13th NC] to wife-We have at last arrived at our destination for the present. We are encamped about a mile from Yorktown. We are to be the reserve of the army—the troops from Fredericksburg. We have a magnificent army here; the largest & finest we have ever had at [one] place. We have our best Gen's also. We all believe & hope we shall whip them. In all the skirmishes that have taken place—and they occur nightly & daily—we have had the best of it. We hear firing in the distance all the time, but not near enough to do us any damage.

We have a great many N.C. troops here. Those Regts from near Smithfield have come over. Col [R.M.] McKinney of the 15th NC Vols was killed the other day in a skirmish. He was surprised.

... We had hard but pleasant marches to get to this place. Our men & officers thought it very hard that they should have to march 75 miles instead of coming on the RR. I think it was probably right for they have as much as they can do with their limited rail & water transportation.

I do not know whether I can get this off or not & shall not write much until I find out. At Ashland I had my pistol stolen out of my tent.

4/14 Colston to Capt F Gardner Hqs 3rd Div, Army of Peninsula [note Capt Gardner was on staff of Gen Withers [formerly of 3rd Ala] –& Gardner later became Cdr at Port Hudson]

In obedience to G O #2 from Dept Hqs at Yorktown, following is list of field officers of this Bgde. I request that our Bgde be numbered.

Colston-B Gen

3 Va.-**R Pryor**-Col

14 NC-J Daniel-Col

13 NC-A Scales-Col

13 NC-W S Guy Lt Col

3 Va.-Mayo-Lt Col

1 NC Arty Ramseur-Major

13 NC-D Hamilton-Major

14 NC-P Faison-Major

3 Va.-J V Scott-Maj

Va Historical Society

Early Family Papers, 1764–1956. 437 items. Mss1EA765b. Microfilm reels C456–458.

4/16 Pryor promoted to Gen

After the army reached the vicinity of Richmond, Col Pryor was promoted to Brig Gen & given command of the Bgde, & Lt Col Mayo became Col of 3rd Va. The Bgde was composed of the 3rd Va, the 14th Ala, the 14th La & 2nd Fla Regts & 1st La Bn. It participated in the battle of Seven Pines.

4/24 Huger to Lee-My reports from South Mills, N. C., up to 3 p.m. last {p. 464} evening, represent all quiet. The enemy had not returned there, & the reported landing of the day previous at Canal Bridge, Currituck County, turned out to be only a small party, who soon retired.

Gen Blanchard sent the wounded prisoners up here, & I forwarded them (19) yesterday to Gen Wool at Fort Monroe. The surgeon I released unconditionally.

You are aware that no forces have replaced Colston's Bgde, & our Btrys & the country along James River (Burrell's Bay) are undefended.

4/28 Yorktown, communication from Col Mayo of 3rd Va

4/30 Lee to Holmes- ...With reference to the promotion of Col Daniel the Sec is unwilling at this time to increase the number of brigadiers. There are two now without commands, **Gen's Wise & Pryor**, either of whom can be ordered to you if you desire it.

5/3 orders came to march. We lived in knapsacks; you know, & the little we had seemed too heavy. As we trudged on, not knowing where going nor the object of the going, we discarded much of that little to lighten the burden of our shoulders. As in the beginning we had to learn the hard lesson of discipline & obedience, but now we must learn to march at the behest, the mandate of Gen J E. Johnston. Merely a machine with sufficient intellect to go when he said go.

At this hour Gen Colston rode to the front & called the Bgde to attention, followed by the command,

"Load at will. Fix bayonets. Shoulder arms. Forward, march! "Our time—the time we had waited for & longed for, had come.

Marching through the town in mud knee deep, the ladies waved their handkerchiefs & cheered us on. Clearing the town, were formed in line of battle. "Double quick/" "march!" rang out, & away we dashed, yelling like devils. Divesting ourselves of all baggage that impeded our haste we soon reached Fort Magruder. The panorama of battle was visible, an inspiring sight. Halting here we saw the Cav, under Gen Stuart, charging a Yankee Btry which he captured, though many saddles were emptied.

Early's Bgde were charging & driving the enemy back in our front. "We were ordered to the right to relieve the 19th Ms, fighting gallantly. Forward we went & were soon into one of the worst places that can be constructed. During the preceding night the Yankees had felled trees in our direction, sharpened the limbs, making a cheval de frise that would seem to impose a barrier impossible to penetrate, while they could pour a destructive fire into our ranks.

These fortifications were directly across the road leading from Richmond to the White House on the Pamunkey River. The battle was opened about 3:30 in the afternoon by the Div's of Gen's D. H. Hill & Smith, supported by Longstreet. The 14th Regt was in Longstreet's Div.

Gen Mahone's Bgde was on the field. They were fresh from some well-ordered camp near Norfolk & had seen no service. uniforms nice & clean, looking like soldiers, petted soldiers — just out of the bandbox They were ordered to storm a part of the enemy's works in which was a Btry of guns taking our troops in enfilade, & doing great destruction. It was a very dangerous undertaking & being raw troops they refused to move. Gen Hill then ordered up the 30th & 14th NC.

5/8 Hqs near New Kent CH, *Johnston* to Lee-I have just received three* letters from your office signed "R. E. Lee, Gen, by W. H. Taylor, AAG," written in the first person, all dated yesterday.

One of these informs me that certain supposed orders of mine had been countermanded by you or "W. H. Taylor, AAG" The matter to which you refer was instructed by me to Gen Huger. The only order given directly to troops on the south side of James River was intended to carry out one by the President to bring a remnant of Gen Colston's-Bgde to join him. He informed me that his Bgde had been ordered to the Peninsula, but that he had left his staff & some other portion of it. He was authorized to order them to join him via Richmond. This was carrying out an order of the Gov't.

My authority does not extend beyond the troops immediately around me. I request therefore to be ...

5/8 Lee replies to Johnston-Those you rec'd yesterday were signed by Maj Taylor at my direction as I was suddenly called away. The one referring to Loring was merely to advise you of the progress of the evacuation of Norfolk. Nothing was done to intercept that portion of Colston's Bgde joining him. I consider your authority to extend to troops on both sides of the James & have transmitted as rapidly as I could all orders sent to me. I advised you on 4/23 of certain troops from this city being sent to reinforce Gen Field at Fredericksburg. Two Regts from this city raised for local defense, 2 Btrys, a Bgde from NC, & a Bgde from SC making in all about 8,000 men as reinforcements. The Bgde sent by Holmes of Gen J R Anderson places him in command there as the Sr officer. Under orders from the President, a Bgde from NC & one from Norfolk have been sent to Gordonsville to be in reach of Ewell...

5/23 Pryor recommends Capt of 14th La

6/2 Huger to Lee-I beg to call your attention to the fact that all the troops I commanded have been detached, I presume from the necessity of the service; & finding myself on the field last evening without any command at all, I, with the permission of Gen Longstreet, returned to these Hqs.

The 1st Bgde of my Div (Colston's) was detached to reinforce Gen Magruder when the enemy first advanced up the Peninsula.

The three Bgdes I brought up with me are at present serving under the orders of Gen Hill.

I ask that all may be returned to my command. I hope the position I am placed in is merely an accidental one, & will be changed as soon as it can be done.

I must demand the command & position my rank entitles me to. On no other condition will I hold it.