This paper examines the failures of Confederate leadership in the defense of eastern North Carolina during the Civil War by investigating the measures taken to protect Cape Hatteras and Roanoke Island at the state and national levels. The author draws upon primary sources from archives, letters, official war records, newspapers, and reports to argue that government officials did not understand the strategic importance of the two posts. Civilian and military leaders did not properly supply the defenses, sought to defer responsibility, and avoided collaboration between Raleigh and Richmond and between the officers on the ground and the bureaucracy designed to support them.

As the summer heat reached its peak across the South in late August 1861, the rebellion seemed to have hit its own zenith with dramatic Confederate victories at Fort Sumter and First Bull Run. Victory over the Union appeared imminent for the fledgling Confederacy, yet on an isolated, windswept barrier island in North Carolina, the United States won a crucial battle that would dramatically turn the tide of war in the Old North State. The Battle of Hatteras Inlet Batteries highlighted the spectacular failure of the state to defend its own shoreline with officials in Raleigh, the state capitol, being entirely unprepared. Nevertheless, the failure to understand the significance of guarding the coast would be repeated five months later on a greater scale after the Confederate debacle at the Battle of Roanoke Island secured Union control over eastern North Carolina. The Confederacy lost the region within the first year of its bid for independence because the North Carolina state and the Confederate national governments were slow to recognize the importance of defending the coast and did not cooperate effectively. As a result, the North Carolina Military Board and the Confederate Secretary of War did not provide adequate troops and supplies for the defense of Cape Hatteras and Roanoke Island, respectively.

The Confederate outposts at Hatteras and Roanoke were the two most strategically important positions in the defense of eastern North Carolina because their capture allowed the Union to control Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds and the rivers that flow into them. The state’s second wartime governor, Henry Clark, argued that by occupying Hatteras Island, the Union had “command of the population on the sea beach, [which] affords them a fine position from which they can make inroads into our adjoining counties.” Although isolated, it provided a beachhead for Northern forces and a station for blockading vessels to seal off the inlets and the ports that relied upon them. With possession of Roanoke to the north, the Union could control the two sounds that the island separates. That post was, according to Confederate
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Brigadier General Daniel H. Hill, “the key of one-third of North Carolina, and whose occupancy by the enemy would enable him to reach the great railroad from Richmond to New Orleans.” It allowed the invader to move up the many rivers that snake inland, garrison towns, and conduct raids. Therefore, the Union could begin to reconquer the state by possessing these two key points, which it understood much more quickly than the Confederacy.

Faced with the constant raiding of Union merchant shipping along the Outer Banks by Confederate privateers, federal authorities were quick to recognize the value of capturing Hatteras. The North Carolina Military Board advised the state to purchase a steamer as early as May 22, 1861, and by June 26, North Carolina had three vessels in its navy. These ships, combined with at least four privateers by August, wreaked havoc on Union trade from their base at Hatteras during the summer. Their activities were so prevalent that “it seem[ed] that the coast of Carolina [was] infested with a nest of privateers.” The constant raids, however, had one benefit for the Union in that they served as a call for action. The New York Board of Underwriters petitioned for “immediate steps [to] be taken by the Government to prevent . . . any further captures by the pirates” out of Hatteras, while the State Department complained to the Navy about the alleged “pirates.” As a result, a joint expedition to capture the inlet was ordered on August 13. Thus, North Carolina hastened an invasion of Hatteras Island by plundering so many Union merchant vessels as to provoke a response. At the same time, the state faced challenges in defending the outpost.

NORTH CAROLINA SLOWLY PREPARES THE DEFENSES ON HATTERAS ISLAND

While Hatteras served as an effective base for privateering operations, it was still a remote location in North Carolina that presented some logistical challenges for the defenders. The island “is a dreary, barren spot, composed chiefly of sand” that experiences strong, frigid winds in the winter and abundant “mosquitoes remarkable alike for size and blood-thirstiness” in the summer. The climate made garrisoning troops a miserable experience, which was further compounded by supply problems. Fresh water could be obtained by “digging wells between high and low water marks,” but provisions could only come on boats from New Bern that had problems crossing Pamlico Sound because it is “entirely too shallow for several miles out to admit the approach of any but the smallest of boats.” The logistical problems extended to supplying cannons, which had to be shipped via water from Norfolk, Virginia, and then moved onto rafts constructed on the island to cross the shallows. The difficulties in garrisoning and supplying the isolated outpost were substantial but far from insurmountable. Instead, the problems rested more in the leadership of those responsible for its defense.

After joining the Confederacy, North Carolina initially was responsible for preparing the fortifications on Hatteras. On May 10, the General Assembly passed a law establishing the North Carolina Military and Naval Board that consisted of three members, including one “principal officer” to serve as a cabinet official, who advised the governor on appointments and “such other matters respecting naval and military affairs” as the legislature saw fit. Since the board was headed by the military secretary and advised the governor, it effectively served as a war department directing the war effort under the commander-in-chief. Warren Winslow led the board throughout its tenure and issued orders under his name to officers of the North Carolina State Troops until the board was abolished on August 20 when the Confederacy subsumed the state’s military. Therefore, since the Confederacy did not take over until a week before the battle on August 28, the Military Board was responsible for managing the defenses at Hatteras; however, it began its preparation efforts too late.

The state faced some difficulties in building fortifications on the island and was slow to complete them. Inspector General W. H. C. Whiting recommended erecting batteries on April 28, and a reconnaissance confirmed his opinion, noting that construction “should have been carried out . . . before now” to be effective. He felt that work could be finished quickly with proper resources, but worried that if officials delayed or prepared slowly, “it would only advise and assist the enemy to occupy the very positions we choose.” Yet it took almost a month before construction began on May 25, which cannot be faulted entirely on logistical challenges because the board...
did not vote to utilize a “Seaboard Rail Road” for transportation of men and supplies until the day before. Instead, it simply chose to not prioritize defending Hatteras. Once an Engineer Corps was created, the board proposed that it be used for fortifications on the Roanoke River and the state’s northern boundaries, not the coast. Board members then spent most of May and June only discussing appointments, often adjourning without conducting any other business and never mentioning Hatteras. Thus, the board demonstrated its lack of concern for the island by not acting quickly and by focusing its efforts elsewhere. The situation was then exacerbated by a lack of troops.

Even though the state would not complete the transfer of its military to the Confederacy until late August, the Military Board ceased expenditures for Hatteras over a month before. The transition began on June 27 and lasted through August 20. In the meantime, the board stated that “no further expenses for the Forts or Navy will be met by the State.” Winslow did not alert Gwynn until July 12 when he ordered him to cease spending on supplies and munitions, stop raising troops, and charge the state only for employing the forces he had at work. Despite continual privateering out of Hatteras, the board could not comprehend the value of maintaining the island’s fledgling defenses for the time being because it did not want to continue funding them in the transitory power vacuum. The Confederacy had not even inspected the “Public works, forts & batteries in North Carolina” yet, only beginning the statewide process on July 5; and as late as August 16, the state was inquiring of President Jefferson Davis whether it should provide troops for the coast. Clearly the Confederacy was not ready to assume responsibility of the defenses so early before the final transition and the state’s indifference to this led to unpreparedness and confusion. Yet the board continued to ignore calls for more soldiers and supplies.

After resigning Hatteras’ fate to the unready hands of the Confederacy, the Military Board focused on providing troops for other Confederate armies. North Carolina State Troops could transfer to Confederate service only in regiments enlisted for one year, with unattached companies and excess troops discharged. This presented a dilemma for Gwynn because as of July 22 many of the companies on Hatteras were not enrolled in regiments and the fate of artillery companies was never specified. He warned the governor that “under existing laws and the terms of the transfer . . . the coast will be almost stripped of troops on the 20th of August.”

The governor and the Military Board refused to allow a mobile reserve for the defense of Hatteras, showcasing their failure to understand the island’s importance. After the ordinance passed, a delegate motioned that the vote be reconsidered, but it was put off until June 10. On that day, the state’s first wartime governor, John Ellis, sent a message to the convention stating that “the power of the United States Navy is not sufficient to effect an entrance into any one of the harbors of the State.” After it was presented, the ordinance was voted down on June 14. Despite his own officers and newspapers of varying locations and political ideologies arguing otherwise, the governor felt the coast had enough troops and the defenses on Hatteras could stop the entire Union navy. Then, after communicating with the Military Board, the convention passed a law on June 27 that included a prohibition on creating a “different species of force,” implying the mobile reserve. By undermining the statute, the governor and the board either felt sufficiently prepared or simply did not prioritize spending money and resources on Hatteras. The latter seems more likely as the board assumed the Confederacy would shoulder that burden.

EVADING AND DEFERRING RESPONSIBILITY LEADS TO DISASTER

As the North Carolina government prepared Hatteras’ defenses, state officials faced growing calls for more soldiers at the outpost. Whiting argued in April that the batteries would “require a strong supporting force” or a reserve of one thousand soldiers on the mainland. A month later, State Troops Brigadier General Walter Gwynn was placed in charge of the new northern coastal department, which included Hatteras, and stated that only 190 men were stationed there despite his estimate of one thousand needed to defend the island. He also advised that five thousand troops were needed to protect the entire coastline. Military officers were not the only ones urging for more soldiers on Hatteras. Surely influenced by Gwynn’s assessment, an ordinance was introduced in the state’s Secession Convention on May 28 “to raise seven regiments of volunteers . . . for the exclusive defense of the sea-board counties” and was passed on June 7. The law was intended to create a mobile reserve to respond to coastal crises, as Whiting had recommended and as major state newspapers had demanded. Therefore, the pitiful number of troops stationed on Hatteras was deemed vastly insufficient by the military, the legislature, and the press. Still state officials not only ignored their calls but also sought to undermine them.

“The governor and the board either felt sufficiently prepared or simply did not prioritize spending money and resources on Hatteras.”
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concerns fell on deaf ears in Raleigh. The board barely increased the garrison on Hatteras from the 190 troops in late May to about 350 men of the Seventh North Carolina on the eve of battle, August 27, and even placed a cap of one thousand coastal troops in the adjacent southern department. The board continued its trend of ignoring officers’ concerns of manpower shortages by giving precedence to Confederate service in Virginia over coastal duty. A lack of state-funded ammunition further hampered the island’s defenses.

Not only did the Military Board refuse to finance Hatteras and garrison it with enough soldiers, but it also did not supply enough munitions. In late May, only 80 muskets were sent to the island, but on June 26, the board reported that they had originally seized 37,000 muskets from the arsenal in Fayetteville, of which 9,500 had been shipped to Virginia. Later reports do not reference a lack of small arms on Hatteras, but at least initially the board again prioritized the Virginia front more than its coast. As for artillery, the two batteries built on the island to protect Hatteras Inlet, Forts Hatteras and Clark, were only partially armed, with ten cannons in the former out of a capacity for twenty and seven in the latter out of an estimated eighteen possible. Yet the real problem was ammunition for small arms and artillery. A prisoner held on the island through July 19 reported a “very short” supply, with only “about 100 kegs of powder” available, whereas Gwynn detailed on July 22 that the stock was deficient despite his “repeated . . . requisitions” since he first arrived. After the battle, the officer who assumed command of Confederate forces on the second day stated there was a “very limited supply of ammunition,” which even the governor corroborated as “contribut[ing] to its fall.” By rejecting Gwynn’s requests for more ammunition, the board further indicated its lack of understanding about Hatteras’ role in defending eastern North Carolina and its repeated mismanagement culminated in major defeat.

When a naval fleet appeared on August 27, Confederate Colonel William Martin had not nearly enough men to both work the cannons and “successfully resist a landing of the enemy’s troops,” so he sent for reinforcements. The Union launched a heavy bombardment the next day, which the guns in Fort Clark returned but with limited results. A lack of rifled shells and ammunition that was “entirely exhausted” prompted a retreat to Fort Hatteras. During this time, Union Major General Benjamin Butler landed 315 men with two cannons and seized the abandoned fort, but bad weather forced the fleet back out to sea. Over 250 more Confederates arrived that night and Martin turned command over to Commodore Samuel Barron, who wanted to attack the isolated Union soldiers in the fort but lacked sufficient soldiers to do so. Instead, the naval barrage continued in the morning. With limited ammunition that had no “ability to damage our adversaries,” Barron surrendered the fort and 691 men. The lack of ammunition prevented the Confederates from damaging the Union fleet and led them to abandon Fort Clark, thereby giving the strong position and eventually the island to Union soldiers.

**ATTENTION SHIFTS TO ROANOKE ISLAND AND THE CONFEDERACY TAKES COMMAND**

The state lost the “key to the Albemarle” by not prioritizing it, and while it would learn from its mistakes, the greater Confederacy would not in the face of an even larger Union invasion. With the capture of Hatteras, Union officials saw the importance of seizing Roanoke Island as a springboard for invading the state. On November 11, Flag-Officer Louis Goldsborough of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron proposed destroying the small Confederate fleet in Pamlico Sound and then “driving the enemy away from Roanoke Island by a combined attack on the part of the Army and the Navy.” Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles heartedly approved. This idea fit well with suggestions for an amphibious army command to be “used in conjunction with a naval force operating against points on the sea-coast.” The seeds were sown for a joint expedition to capture eastern North Carolina. The Burnside Expedition, so named for its commander Brigadier General Ambrose Burnside, was ordered in January 1862 to first attack Roanoke and use it as a base of operations from which to penetrate deep into the state, capturing ports, destroying railroads, and possibly seizing Raleigh. Thus, the Union was quick to see the value of the island because it was the logical next step after Hatteras and fit with their strategic plans for invading the Confederate coastline. Similarly, North Carolina officials finally saw the significance of defending their shores.

Even though the capture of Hatteras served as a wakeup call for administrators in Raleigh to prioritize coastal defenses, state officials could do little but protest to the Confederate government. With the transition of power in August, the state lost direct control of military affairs within its borders as Brigadier General Richard Gatlin assumed command of the coast. The Confederacy was now responsible for preparing the defenses on Roanoke. Yet Governor Clark, who was without the Military Board to advise him, communicated frequently with President Davis and the secretaries of war, arguing immediately after Hatteras fell that the coast “requires all attention of [the] Confederate government.” Despite his limited authority, he also kept in touch with the ever-rotating series of generals who oversaw the coast. Clark recognized the significance of Roanoke and pleaded repeatedly for action from Confederate officials in command of the island. Yet his appeals did little to improve the situation as the Confederacy constructed inadequate fortifications.

Under the authority of Colonel Ambrose Wright, the Confederates quickly erected batteries on Roanoke that proved to be weak and poorly placed. Brigadier General Benjamin Huger, commanding the defenses of nearby Norfolk, sent Wright’s Third Georgia Volunteers to occupy the island in early September with some North Carolina State Troops and
build fortifications. He constructed batteries at Pork Point (Fort Bartow) and Weir Point (Fort Huger) to command Croatan Sound facing the mainland; in the center of the island to protect from land attacks; at Midgett’s Hammock on the eastern shore to guard Roanoke Sound; and on the mainland at Roberts’ Fishery. Yet the building project was riddled with flaws. Brigadier General Daniel H. Hill assumed command of the northern coastal defenses under Galatin on September 29 and noticed the forts’ deficiencies upon inspection, arguing they made the island weak by being “badly located and without adequate infantry support.” Fort Bartow needed strengthening and the battery in the island’s center could not adequately repel infantry assaults. Thus, Wright’s best efforts ultimately did not significantly improve the island’s defenses as he had hoped and would later cost the Confederacy precious time that it did not have to fix them.

Hill’s designs for strengthening Roanoke’s fortifications were ignored by his successor, effectively crippling the defenses. Hill set to work immediately to fix the deficiencies by “having a line of defense thrown up to defend the approaches to Roanoke. The spade has been set going everywhere.” He replaced the Roberts’ Fishery battery with another on the mainland known as Fort Forrest, started strengthening Fort Bartow, and planned to erect a fortified line across the entire island to protect against infantry attack. However, the ambitious project was not to last. Hill was replaced by Brigadier General Lawrence Branch on November 16, an obscure officer whom the press considered unqualified for the command and with good reason because “it does not appear in evidence that General Branch ever visited the island or made any move towards its defence.” Branch did not continue Hill’s improvements because Fort Bartow still “afford[ed] no protection to the defense of the sound” by the end of the year and the fortifications continued to be “a sad farce of ignorance and neglect combined.” Therefore, Wright’s poor planning and Branch’s disregard for his command left Roanoke in a state of virtual defenselessness as 1862 dawned. Even though their successor would try to rectify the situation, their long series of failures ensured he had too much to handle.

Roanoke’s final commander was successful in strengthening many of the existing forts but could not finish everything. On December 21, the northern coastal department was divided, with the region including Roanoke given to Brigadier General Henry Wise under Huger’s department. Wise began his work “with great energy” in January, ordering the island’s commander, Colonel Henry Shaw, to construct piles across Croatan Sound, extend the earthwork in the island’s center as far as possible, and strengthen the other forts. He also proposed that new batteries be built on marshes at the southern end to stop gunboats moving up the sound. When Huger scrapped the idea, “probably for want of time,” Wise had troops patrol the area in the interim and eventually placed infantry with field artillery to cover the two possible Union landing sites. Ultimately, the obstructions across the sound were never completed, nor was the extension of the center battery. Thus, General Wise simply did not have enough time to build all the necessary defenses before the battle because so much effort was needed to improve the existing batteries as a result of Wright’s and Branch’s failures. The unfinished defenses were further hampered by a lack of troops.

**DISCONNECT BETWEEN RALEIGH, RICHMOND, AND ROANOKE**

Besides appointing several lackluster officers to command the island, Confederate officials in Richmond ignored calls from the state for more troops to be sent to Roanoke. Governor Clark was the most persistent, arguing for more coastal regiments immediately after Hatteras fell, particularly those troops sent to Virginia “who are not allowed to come to the defense of their homes” or some of “our own regiments from James River.” He prioritized the coast, but there was a clear disconnect with Richmond as the president and secretary of war would not cooperate with him. They repeatedly refused to send more soldiers, with Davis “object[ing] to sending back any troops,” Secretary Leroy Walker finding it not in the “necessities of the public service,” and his successor Judah Benjamin claiming it was “impossible” to meet all the state’s needs. Benjamin also made un-kept promises about dispatching troops. In addition to stating that three regiments were waiting to come to Clark’s aid, he claimed on November 2 that a regiment, battalion, and battery of artillery were sent to the region to respond to coastal threats. Evidently, they were never ordered to Roanoke as returns show no increase at the garrison from September to January. Therefore, by ignoring Clark’s pleas for more men, the Confederate government not only failed to work together with the state
also failed to give any precedence to Roanoke. It continued this negligence with its own officers.

Benjamin also disregarded appeals from multiple sources for more soldiers on Roanoke. Gatlin, stating that “no reliance should be placed on the expectation of troops . . . from Virginia,” requested in vain three coastal regiments in September. Hill then pleaded to the Confederate government for four regiments that “are absolutely indispensable to the protection of this island,” but he was refused. Wise went a step further, not only writing requests but also going in person to see Benjamin, urging “in the most importunate manner, the absolute necessity of strengthening the defences” before being rebuffed and ordered back to his command. Officers were not the only ones complaining about the lack of coastal troops. A letter was forwarded to Richmond from Confederate Judge Asa Biggs who believed that Roanoke lacked enough men to work the batteries.

The press felt similarly, with the Weekly Standard stating in October that Davis ignored the island and later, along with the Wilmington Journal calling upon the Confederacy to strengthen the island in anticipation of the Burnside Expedition. Yet despite the military, the judiciary, and the press arguing that Roanoke lacked sufficient troops, Benjamin refused to spare any men. He clearly did not understand its significance. He even would not help when given an opportunity to do so without sending soldiers.

Civilian and military authorities petitioned Benjamin to supply the coast with more munitions and supplies but were again denied despite the state raising regiments to help. There was a severe shortage of small arms in North Carolina and Clark energetically pressed Richmond for more, stating that “we have disarmed ourselves to arm you” after sending full regiments and an extra 13,500 muskets to Virginia. He raised three regiments by late October, but they were utterly useless without arms. Benjamin continued to disappoint the disgruntled governor. He repeatedly stated he had no arms to give the state, despite receiving thousands that were instead sent elsewhere. Hill and Wise were just as adamant in their concerns for more munitions and supplies on Roanoke. The former found the batteries desperately needing rifled cannons, “cannon powder badly, fuses, and friction tubes.” Similarly, Wise felt that any more delay in receiving powder and ammunition from Richmond would prove disastrous. Nevertheless, Benjamin still did not find Roanoke important enough or faced with imminent danger to answer their requests, preferring to prioritize other fronts instead. Little did he realize that Wise’s prediction was about to come true. In the meantime, the generals turned to the only other official who could help, Huger.

Just as Davis and Benjamin did not grasp the value of Roanoke, neither did Huger even though he often administered the island. Immediately after dispatching Wright’s regiment in early September, he stated that he already sent more troops than he could spare and within a month “asked to be relieved from the command supervision of Roanoke.” He was adamant about reclaiming Wright’s men even when there were none to replace them. Then, when commanders under his authority pressed him for more soldiers and supplies, he simply refused. Wright needed horses, cannon limbers, and especially troops, while Wise requested in writing and in person more ammunition, “large artillery pieces,” and several
thousand infantrymen, among other materials. Huger had 15,000 soldiers and "a large supply of armament and ammunition" sitting idly around Norfolk, but he did not consider large forces necessary for the defense of this island if the batteries kept gunboats away. He did not consider that infantry would be needed to repel any attackers despite Wise having informed him that the forts were in no condition to prevent a landing or that the island was a backdoor to Norfolk. Thus, Huger showed that he did not realize Roanoke's importance by not properly defending it when under his command and ignoring requisitions from his subordinates.

Finally, the Confederate government did not concentrate on the naval affairs that captivated the state before the fall of Hatteras because it provided only a few extra steamers to defend Roanoke. Gatlin knew that warships were needed to patrol the sounds and recommended to the War Department and the president on September 4 that they construct "a number of gunboats, to be placed upon Pamlico Sound." He did not consider that infantry would be needed to repel any attackers despite Wise having informed him that the forts were in no condition to prevent a landing or that the island was a backdoor to Norfolk. Thus, Huger showed that he did not realize Roanoke's importance by not properly defending it when under his command and ignoring requisitions from his subordinates.

The battle for Roanoke began on February 7 when seven of nineteen Union warships attacked Forts Bartow, Blanchard, and Forrest, but the latter two returned fire "without effect." Just as Hill and Wise had feared, the placement of the forts proved disastrous as only one could respond, leaving the southern end of the island open for invasion. In the afternoon, Burnside landed 4,000 men "in less than twenty minutes" at Ashby's Harbor and eventually disembarked over 10,000 with artillery, compelling the small rebel force of two companies and cannons guarding the position to retreat out of fear they "might be cut off." At the same time, the few gunboats opposing the Union fleet quickly ran out of ammunition and retired. Wise was sick and morning brought a perilous situation for Shaw, who commanded a Confederate force of 1,434 infantrymen, a portion of which he placed behind and on either side of the battery in the island's center. For five hours his troops held on in a grueling, "unceasing" firefight, but when they ran out of ammunition and found their left flank turned, Shaw "considered the island lost" and surrendered after retreating to the north. The absence of earthworks extending the width of the island and sufficient troops and ammunition to repel attackers cost the Confederates the battle.

**CONCLUSION: A SERIES OF FAILURES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS AT ALL LEVELS**

The Confederacy lost eastern North Carolina via Hatteras and Roanoke because the state and Confederate governments did not properly supply the posts or cooperate effectively. The Military Board is responsible for the loss of the former, although Governor Ellis shoulders a portion of the blame for defeating the mobile reserve ordinance. The board sent out too many privateers, waited almost a month before preparing the defenses, and provided too few soldiers and supplies. It then ceased funding the post when the Confederacy was unprepared. While Benjamin repeatedly ignored Roanoke, he is not the only one responsible for its fall. Davis and Walker dodged calls for more men and the former did not act on improving the navy. Huger also disregarded the island when it was under his command since he refused requisitions from his large Norfolk garrison. Wright and Branch constructed useless forts and allowed improvements to lapse, respectively. All these men ignored military officers, local citizens, and/or newspapers that saw Roanoke's significance, but none more so than Benjamin. He repeatedly refused to dispatch soldiers, sent munitions elsewhere, and ignored his promise to build gunboats. Both he and Davis did not work with Governor Clark; they refused his requests at every turn, even when presented with an opportunity to help without sending troops. Thus, civilian and military officials in Raleigh and Richmond did not perceive the importance of Hatteras and Roanoke.

By failing to prioritize Cape Hatteras and Roanoke Island, the state and the Confederate governments allowed the Union to reconquer most of eastern North Carolina. The Burnside Expedition continued its successful campaign, capturing New Bern, Beaufort, Washington, and Plymouth, sealing off the major rivers, and later conducting raids through the countryside that threatened the vital Wilmington and Weldon Railroad. Yet those victories would not have been possible without first establishing a beachhead at Hatteras and then controlling the sounds by seizing Roanoke. While it would be ahistorical to fault state and Confederate leaders for not seeing into a future where a third of North Carolina would be reconquered within a year of its secession, they are certainly responsible for doing almost nothing to strengthen the defenses at those points which military officers, legislative officials, civilians, newspapers, and Union leaders recognized as the keys to the region. However, the disconnect between Raleigh and Richmond that hampered defensive preparations, particularly at Roanoke, was not unique but rather was part of a larger trend in the Confederacy where state and national views of the war conflicted. In part, it was these failures to cooperate and to understand the strategic importance of certain areas within the Confederacy by officials at all levels of government that, like at Hatteras and Roanoke, contributed to its eventual downfall and restoration to the Union.
Endnotes


[16] Ibid., 52-53.


[18] Ibid., May 17, 1861, 14.

[19] The board did occasionally discuss purchasing steamers and naval supplies, presumably for privateering operations, before inevitably spending the bulk of the meeting on appointments; see Ibid., May 2, 1861, 19.


[24] “Sea Coast Defences,” Weekly Standard (Raleigh, NC), June 19, 1861; For newspapers arguing for more coastal troops, see “War,” Wilmington Journal (Wilmington, NC), May 30, 1861; “Do We Realize our Danger,” Newbern Weekly Progress (New Bern, NC), June 4, 1861; and “President Davis,” Weekly Standard, June 5, 1861.


[28] Ibid., 179; An Ordinance to Provide for the Disposition, Ordinances and Resolutions, 39.

[29] Ibid., 37.


[35] Ibid.


[38] For the number of cannons mounted, see Benj. F. Butler to John E. Wool, August 30, 1861 OR, ser. 1, vol. IV (1882), 584; For the number possible in Fort Hatteras, see Farquhar to Wool, September 7, 1861, OR, ser. 1, vol. IV (1882), 591; For the number possible in Fort Clark, I added those mounted with those additionally requested, see W. Bevershaw Thompson to Thomas H.
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(1882), 660.
[80] Hill to Cooper, October 18, 1861, OR, ser. 1, vol. IV (1882), 682; D. H. Hill to S. Cooper, October 2, 1861, OR, ser. 1, vol. IV (1882), 664.
[89] Ibid., 786-89; Wm. F. Lunch to S. R. Mallory, February 18, 1862, NR, ser. 1, vol. VI (1897), 594. The squadron consisted of the Appomattox (unknown origin), Beaufort (NC Navy), Curlew (Norfolk), Ellis (NC Navy), Forrest (captured), Raleigh (NC Navy or Norfolk), and Sea Bird (Norfolk), see Muse and Tredwell, “Abstract Log,” NR, ser. 1, vol. VI (1897), 781-88; Thos. T. Hunter to Commander Lee, July 22, 1861, NR, ser. 1, vol. VI (1897), 711; F. Forrest to Wm. F. Lynch, September 23, 1861, NR, ser. 1, vol. VI (1897), 732; and W. F. Lynch to J. R. Tucker, December 13, 1861, NR, ser. 1, vol. VI (1897), 752.
[90] Clark to Benjamin, September 27, 1861, OR, ser. 1, vol. IV (1882), 660; Benjamin to Clark, September 29, 1861, OR, ser. 1, vol. IV (1882), 662. Benjamin claimed that vessels were being built in the state but those that arrived before the battle all came from Norfolk or were captured, see note 85 above.
[92] A. E. Burnside to Lorenzo Thomas, February 14, 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. IX (1883), 76-77; Goldsborough to Welles, February 18, 1862, NR, ser. 1, vol. VI (1897), 553; J. V. Jordan to H. M. Shaw, February 17, 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. IX (1883), 175-76.
[94] Wise to Benjamin, February 21, 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. IX (1883), 145; H. M. Shaw to Henry A. Wise, February 24, 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. IX (1883), 172; James M. Whitson, report dated February 6, 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. IX (1883), 174. The date on the final report is incorrect, as it is on events that took place after the 6th.
[95] Shaw to Wise, February 24, 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. IX (1883), 172; Burnside to Thomas, February 14, 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. IX (1883), 79. Shaw surrendered about 2,500 troops, which included the roughly 1,500 officers and men available for battle, the soldiers manning the forts, and a column of reinforcements who arrived on the 8th just as the Confederates retreated, see Shaw to Wise, February 24, 1862, OR, ser. 1, vol. IX (1883), 173.
[96] Ellis was absent in early July and died on July 7. He was succeeded by Clark, who still did not fulfill Gwynn’s requests but was handicapped by the decision of the board to cease funding in early July. For news of Ellis’ absence and death, see Warren Winslow to Marshall Parks, July 3, 1861, “Military Board: Letter Book,” 35. For more on the Burnside Expedition and the raids conducted by the garrisons left behind, see Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 95-148.
[97] The Confederate Congress investigated, blaming Huger and Benjamin. I agree with their basic premise, but they ignore the responsibility of many others involved, see Confederate House, Report of the Roanoke Island.
[98] For more on the Burnside Expedition after Roanoke and the raids conducted by the garrisons left behind, see Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 95-148.