

of the Governors Island garrison would be sent away, anywhere, at any time.

In the same year a small permanent fort to guard Buttermilk Channel was completed on the south shore of the island. This installation (the present South Battery Club) was named "South Battery" and brought the total of guns mounted on the island to about 600. Along with the guns came an increase of officers and men to more than 1,000 by 1814. Since there were only 200 artillerymen of the Regular Army available for garrison duty on the island, it was necessary to enlist the services of various militia outfits. These were recruited from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York, all of whom were tutored diligently by the redoubtable Colonel Burbeck in artillery drill on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and in infantry drill on Tuesday, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Considerable emphasis was also placed on manning the fortifications in case of a surprise attack. But, so great was the reputation of the strength and ability of Governors Island, that the British could never bring themselves to risk the attempt to capture the great prizes of New York, which the citizens fearfully expected. This permitted the island to serve the additional purpose of an infantry recruiting station, which was transferred from Poughkeepsie.

The happy circumstance was therefore brought about that the only time the guns of Governors Island were brought into action following the target practice at the start of the war was by the following General Order issued at its close:

Adjutant Gen. Office  
3d Military District, New York  
Feb. 6th, 1815  
A Martial Salute will be fired tomorrow



The front gate of Castle Williams

from Governors Island in honor of the Glorious Victory obtained over the enemy at New Orleans on the 8th January by the troops under Major Gen. Jackson.

Another order called for a "Martial Salute to be fired on Feb. 21 in honor of the signing of the peace treaty between Great Britain and the United States," the salute to be followed by a "feu de joie" or general discharge of musketry, with an "Extra Ration of Liquor to be offered to the troops to drink the glorious termination of an honorable war." And apparently to make sure that everybody got in on the celebrating, an order of Feb. 25 directs that "the day should be passed by the Troops of this Garrison in festivity and rejoicing and in the evening an illumination of the Officers' Quarters and Barracks and Guard House to begin at dusk and continue until 9 o'clock. At half after 7 o'clock in the evening 18 rockets will be discharged from the castle under the direction of the Artillery Quartermaster." At the conclusion of this unbridled celebration, it is highly probable that officers and men alike were sighing for a return of the sterner but less wearing days of wartime discipline.

Not that service on the island under war conditions had been completely idle. The long period of enforced idleness to which the garrison was subjected, unrelieved by any counterparts of our modern service clubs, special services or USO, and the highly restricted character of its station, could not help but breed a certain amount of disaffection among the more rambunctious characters in the command. The administrative officers - Burbeck, Stoddard, Irving Talmadge, and Delafield - were forced to use stern measures to maintain martial law and order. Some of the soldier crimes and their punishments may seem trivial and amusing now, but they loomed large at the time when our Army and its members were all too new to their jobs for their responsibilities to be taken even slightly for granted.

The records of the courts-martial held on Governors Island in this period give some interesting reflections of conditions then commonly existing, with the appropriate remedial actions. The most minor infractions of regulations were punished by daily diets of bread and water in the guard house or "Black Hole." A noncommissioned offender was customarily reduced to the ranks by having his identifying insignia of a worsted epaulet cut off "by the smallest drummer in the battalion." One private who stole some whiskey, naturally got drunk on it, and then completed the job by getting the two guards who arrested him equally drunk, was sentenced to the "Black Hole" for four days and to be