

HdQrs: 13 Aug >64

Mr President

I have had the honour to receive your dispatch today. Unless Butler is promoted no one can be promoted to his Brigade -- I believe Dunovant gives the fairest promise among the S. C. Colonels & Hampton recommends him -- I think too he is the senior Col: in the Brigade -- I have not heard of his return to duty & it is not my habit to recommend officers for promotion when absent from their Commands -- What our officers most lack is the pains & labour of inculcating discipline. It is a painful tedious process & is not apt to win popular favor. Many officers have too many selfish views to promote to induce them to undertake the task of instructing & disciplining their Commands. To succeed it is necessary to set the example, & this necessarily confines them to their duties, their camp & men which is disagreeable & deprives them of pleasant visits, dinners, etc. If I had have known Genl George Stuart would have been so soon available I would have proposed him for the Command of the Cavalry in Western Viga. I believe it would be a good plan now to give him command of two of the brigades-- He did remarkably well in the Inft (page 2) Had the best camp, more order among his trains too than any brigade in the army unless it might have been Mahones -- He is brave too & always obeys orders-- How he would administer when alone is the only question-- I have to get a Brigr for S\_?\_ brigade & do not know where to find one--

I was at Howletts today & witnessed the firing at the enemys camp at Dutch Gap. The enemy was kept very close & under cover, but did not move his camp--The practice on our side was very good. The battery at Howletts kept two upper batteries of the enemy engaged -- The lowest battery was too distant to reach, but it divided its attention between our gunboats & Howletts-- Our gunboats planted some excellent shot in the enemy camp-- I could discover no canal. I saw their customary lines of entrenchments in front & rear of their camps, extending across the neck, with rifle pits in advance of each line for their pickets--But I saw nothing approaching a canal. Still deserters & prisoners to report--With great respect your obtservt

R E Lee

Genl

His Excy Jeffn Davis

Pres: C. States