

## Second Battle of Drewry's Bluff

The second battle of Drewry's Bluff, almost two years to the day after the first battle, began May 16, 1864. On May 5, 1864, Union troops landed at Bermuda Hundred, seriously threatening Richmond and Petersburg. Major General Butler's Union forces were far superior with 39,000 troops to the 20,000 Confederates under General Beauregard. Butler, lacking ability and initiative, proved an ineffective leader for his superior troops. For five days Butler's army criss-crossed the peninsula between the James and Appomattox Rivers and were repulsed at Swift's Creek on May 9th. Butler withdrew his army to a defensive position across Bermuda Neck. Beauregard, hoping to lure Butler's army from its safe-haven at Bermuda Neck, sent 7 divisions of men, under the command of Major Hoke to Drewry's Bluff, and on May 12th Butler began an advance against Hoke's army at Drewry's Bluff. By the morning of the 13th the approaching Union troops had effectively caused the outlying Confederate troops to fall back to the fortified main line at Drewry's Bluff. An overly cautious Butler planned an attack for the 15th but later canceled it preferring to hold his troops for a strong defense. By the 15th, Beauregard's armies were fortified by troops from Richmond and North Carolina. At 4:45 on the morning of the 16th, 4 brigades of Confederate soldiers, under the leadership of Major General Ransom, attacked Butler's right flank. Although slowed by heavy fog, the Confederates captured several hundred Union soldiers, 5 flags and a brigade commander. With his ammunition dangerously low and his organization dismantled Ransom halted the advance. Major Holk's command, also slowed by the heavy fog, attacked Butler's left flank and the Union troops stubbornly withdrew. In the heavy fog the Confederate troops became disorganized and disoriented. Taking advantage of their disorganization the Union troops mounted an attack between the two Confederate armies, thus halting the Confederate's advance. By mid-morning, with Beauregard's command exhausted, Butler began withdrawing back across the peninsula. The Confederates continued to pursue Butler's army and on the morning of 17th, opposite their position, Beauregard sealed off Bermuda Hundred, isolating Butler's troops on the Peninsula. Again a serious threat to Richmond and Petersburg had been averted at Drewry's Bluff. The victory, temporary as it was, came at a high cost to both the Confederate and Union troops. 2,506 Confederate and 4,160 Union soldiers died in the second battle of Drewry's Bluff.

## Proctor's Creek

**Other Names:** Drewry's Bluff, Fort Darling

**Location:** Chesterfield County

**Campaign:** Bermuda Hundred Campaign (May-June 1864)

**Date(s):** May 12-16, 1864

**Principal Commanders:** Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler [US]; Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard [CS]

**Forces Engaged:** 48,000 total (US 30,000; CS 18,000)

**Estimated Casualties:** 6,660 total

**Description:** After his repulse at Swift Creek and Fort Clifton on May 9, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler withdrew into his entrenchments at Bermuda Hundred. A Confederate army of 18,000 was patched together under command of Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard to confront Butler's 30,000. On May 12, Butler moved north against the Confederate line at Drewry's Bluff but again adopted a defensive posture when his attack was not supported by gunboats. On the 13th a Union column struck the right flank of the Confederate line at the Wooldridge House, carrying a line of works. Butler remained cautious, however, giving Beauregard time to concentrate his forces. On May 16 at dawn, Ransom's Confederate division opened an attack on Butler's right flank, routing many units. Subsequent attacks lost direction in the fog, but the Federals were disorganized and demoralized. After severe fighting, Butler extricated himself from battle, withdrawing again to his Bermuda Hundred Line. This battle stopped Butler's offensive against Richmond.

## Proctor's Creek (1864)

**War:** American Civil War

**Also known as:** Drewry's Bluff, Fort Darling

**Date(s):** 12 May 1864 - 16 May 1864

**Location:** Chesterfield County, Virginia, US

**Outcome:** Confederate victory

**Principal Commanders:** Union: Benjamin F. Butler  
Confederate: Pierre G. Beauregard

**Description:** Butler had the whole Army of the James; Beauregard assembled 18,000 men.

There were about 6,500 casualties all told, over 4,000 Union and about 2,500 Confederate.

After his repulse at Swift Creek and Fort Clifton on May 9, Butler withdrew into his entrenchments at Bermuda Hundred. "Gus" Beauregard patched together an army of 18,000 in front of Butler's 30,000. On May 12, Butler moved north against the Confederate line at Drewry's Bluff but again adopted a defensive posture when his attack was not supported by gunboats. The next day the Union X Corps circled along Centralia Road and struck the Confederate's right flank at the Wooldridge House, carrying one defensive line after stiff fighting. Beauregard fell back to another line of prepared defenses, and the tenacious Confederate defense showed their growing strength.

Despite success Butler remained cautious and Beauregard had more time to concentrate troops. He was helped by leftover fortifications, remnants of the 1862 campaign that had never been needed then, like Fort Stevens, strong enough to be held by only the 27th South Carolina and the Surry (Virginia) Light Artillery.

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Butler's advance was checked, and his army was "bottled up".