Confederate States of America,
EXECUTIVE OFFICE,
Richmond, Va. 2 April 1865

Vice Admiral
Raphael Semmes
Comg. James River Squadron

Sir;

Genl Lee advises the Govt. to withdraw from this city, and the Officers will leave this evening accordingly. I presume that Genl. Lee has advised you of this, and of his movements, and made suggestions as to the disposition to be made of your squadron. He withdraws from his lines towards Danville this night; and, unless otherwised directed by Genl Lee, upon you is devolved the duty of destroying your ships this night, and with all the forces under your command, joining Genl. Lee. Confer with him if practicable before destroying them.

Let your people be rationed as far as possible for the March, and armed and equipped for duty in the field

Very Resply
W Obser
S R Mallory Sec Nav