

U. S. Navy-Yard,  
New York, June 16th, 1838.

SIR,—  
The peculiarly delicate situation in which I felt myself placed in relation to Lieutenant Wilkes, must be my excuse for the delay which has occurred in replying to your communication of the 5th instant, proffering to me the situation of second in command of the Exploring Expedition.

The coincidence of opinion between the President and yourself in relation to its character in a military point of view, the claims of the nation upon the services of its officers, with the very flattering suggestion contained in your letter, have outweighed my scruples. I, therefore, from a sense of duty, accept the command, and tender my best services to promote the objects of the Expedition, and advance the honour of our common country.

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Wm. L. HUDSON.

To the HON. JOEL R. POINSETT,  
Secretary of War.

The following order was issued :

#### IV.

##### NAVY GENERAL ORDER.

THE armament of the Exploring Expedition, being adapted merely for its necessary defence while engaged in the examination and survey of the Southern Ocean, against any attempts to disturb its operations by the savage and warlike inhabitants of those islands; and the objects which it is destined to promote being altogether scientific and useful, intended for the benefit equally of the United States, and of all commercial nations of the world; *it is considered to be entirely divested of all military character*, that even in the event of the country being involved in a war, before the return of the squadron, its path upon the ocean will be peaceful, and its pursuits respected by all belligerents. The President has, therefore, thought proper, in assigning officers to the command of this squadron, to depart from the usual custom of selecting them from the senior ranks of the navy and according to their respective grades in the service; and has appointed Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, first officer, to command the Exploring Expedition, and Lieutenant William L. Hudson to command