



Iron Maidens and the Devil's Daughters

US Navy Gunboats versus Confederate Gunners and Cavalry
On the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, 1861-65

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IRON MAIDENS *and* *the* DEVIL'S DAUGHTERS

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Introduction

*Battles between the navy and the cavalry were unheard of—
until the Federals invaded Middle Tennessee*

The invasion and occupation of Middle Tennessee by Union forces during the Civil War produced a unique and interesting type of warfare — U.S. Navy gunboats fighting Confederate cavalry. Other similar examples in the annals of military history are difficult to find. There was no gameplan to consult. The rules were created as the battles were fought.

This publication tells the story of how the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy combined forces, along with civilian assistance, to create a unique flotilla of armored river gunboats, essentially from scratch, to fight the gunners in the Confederate river fortifications and the field artillery of the Confederate cavalry.

At the beginning of the Civil War, the Federal authorities faced a dilemma. The blockading of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts (the Anaconda Plan) consumed most of the resources of the U.S. Department of the Navy, including ships, heavy guns, experienced crews, and distinguished officers. But the Lower Mississippi River Valley was in Confederate hands and a major campaign would be needed to wrest control away from the rebels. It was also evident that any invasion route into the Confederate heartland of Kentucky and Tennessee would need to be along the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. Complicating the situation was the simple fact that the Federals did not possess any gunboats capable of navigating the Western rivers.

On the opposite side, the Confederate authorities considered the defense of their capital at Richmond, Va., as priority number one, with the Western Theater receiving much less attention and resources. This despite the fact that the holding of the Mississippi River was a major Confederate objective along with defending a thousand-mile front from the river eastward to the Appalachian mountains.

There were no plans and few precedents for such an undertaking. Advancements were made in fits and starts. Miscommunications, territorial quarrels, petty jealousies, and other controversies slowed their progress but somehow the job got done through the efforts of men such as James B. Eads, Samuel Pook, U.S. Grant, Andrew Foote, Seth L. Phelps, LeRoy Fitch, and David D. Porter. An invasion route was negotiated via the churning of paddlewheels and the thumping of smoothbores up the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers into the heart of the Confederacy. At first, the fledgling flotilla consisted of three ungainly converted sidewheelers armored solely with thick oak planking. These timberclads performed yeoman's service, patrolling the rivers and providing intelligence about enemy defenses.

Facing the Federal "brown water" navy were considerable Confederate fortifications bristling with heavy siege artillery. Confederate cavalrymen led by such famous figures as Nathan Bedford Forrest, John Hunt Morgan, and Joseph Wheeler roamed the countryside, hitting and harassing Federal forces seemingly at will. Battles and skirmishes between the U.S. Navy gunboats and the Confederate cavalry, armed with field artillery, created a unique form of combat during the Civil War. The first such conflict occurred at Canton, Ky. between a lone timberclad and a unit of Forrest's command, fought before Forrest's first acknowledged battle at Sacramento, Ky. The first amphibious landing of troops came at Belmont on the Mississippi River in late 1861, a technique that would be used successfully many times in the coming years of conflict. An ambitious construction program—building armored gunboats from scratch—produced the City Class of casemate ironclads, which battled Confederate gunners at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, with mixed results. This use of ironclad gunboats (in conjunction with army maneuvers) came a full month before the much more celebrated clash of the *USS Monitor* and *CSS Virginia* ironclads at Hampton Roads, Va. In fact, the first ironclad manufactured in the Western Hemisphere was launched in the heartland, at Carondelet, Mo.

Although the Confederacy attempted to build and launch gunboats and ironclads, their efforts were thwarted on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. "The lack of a fleet to back up the forts underscores the Confederate defensive problem—you need a navy to fight another navy," stated historian Greg Biggs. Furthermore, there is no known instance of the Federal cavalry fighting a Confederate river gunboat.

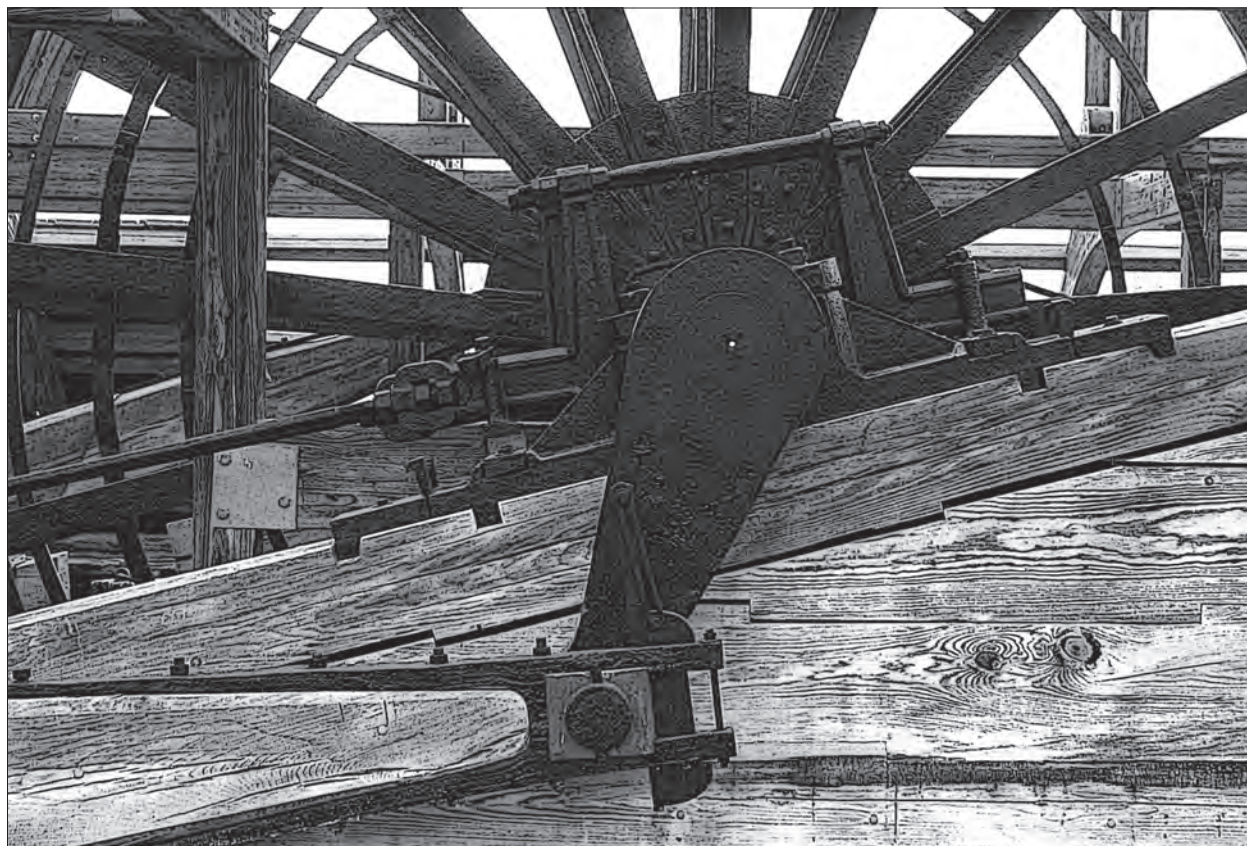
As it turned out, the efficiency of the Federal ironclads at Fort Henry and at Fort Donelson could not have been more disparate. The battles at the river forts produced strangely disproportionate effects on both sides.

Between the two river-fort battles, the daring Phelps raid by the three timberclads up the Tennessee River struck terror into the hearts of secessionists and provided support to Union loyalists along the river. The raid, along with the ever-exaggerated rumors of pirate-like behavior on behalf of the ironclad crews, produced literal panic among Mid-South civilian populations along the invasion routes. There were several fortifications between Dover and Nashville that could have given battle to the Federal flotilla, but those battles were over before they had even begun.

One of the major accomplishments of the river invasion of early 1862 was the capture of Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, which became the major staging area and depot for the invasion and capture of Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Savannah. The focus of the struggle on the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers shifted to the logistical necessity of shipping massive amounts of war matériel from the Northern ports of Louisville and Cincinnati to Nashville.

In April 1862, the timberclads played an interesting role at the bloody Battle of Shiloh, a role which is still being debated as to its significance. Few people know, however, that one of the timberclads had clashed with Confederate forces four weeks earlier at Pittsburg Landing in what is called the First Battle of Shiloh. During their routine patrols, the ironclads and other U.S. riverboats often deployed landing parties to project force. The Federal landing party at Pittsburg Landing received quite a surprise.

Traditionally, as depicted in the movies and



other popular entertainment, the cavalry has been called upon to “come to the rescue.” In early 1863, however, it was the U.S. gunboat flotilla (escorting a convoy at the time) which came to the rescue of the Union garrison at Dover, which was under attack by Confederate cavalry. Again, the significance of the role of the gunboats is still being debated.

Irregular forces such as partisan rangers, guerrillas, and even lone sharpshooters continued to harass Union shipping on the rivers despite Federal reprisals which grew more frequent and brutal as the fighting lingered on. In this environment, two men rose to the occasion and left their marks, LeRoy Fitch and David Campbell Kelley. U.S. Lt. Commander Fitch devised a system of gunboat escorts for steamer convoys which allowed a steady stream of war goods to reach the front. He also developed and instituted counterinsurgency tactics that discouraged the guerrillas although rarely successful in killing or capturing them. Colonel Kelley, a Methodist preacher serving under Forrest,

became known as the Devil’s Parson and became an expert in battling gunboats from the riverbanks and establishing blockades. Another character in this story, a civilian named Captain Jack Hinson, suffered tremendous personal loss, and through patience, skill, and daring, gained revenge against his enemies.

The culmination of U.S. naval combat versus Confederate cavalry came in a series of events in 1864 consisting of Forrest raiding the vital riverport of Paducah, Ky.; an ambush at Eastport, Miss.; the capturing of Union gunboats at Paris Landing; the formation of an ersatz Confederate navy; the destruction of the Federal supply depot at Johnsonville; and a classic series of encounters between Kelley’s field artillerists and a host of Union naval vessels at Bell’s Bend near Nashville.

The final skirmish between Union gunboats and pro-Confederate forces came in Kentucky in 1865, three weeks after Robert E. Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox.

This publication tells the story of the struggle between U.S. naval gunboats and Confederate forces on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. It should be noted that both sides placed more emphasis on the conflict over the control of the Mississippi River and its tributaries, not to mention the overall priority of the war in the Eastern Theater and the preferential use of naval forces for the coastal blockades. It should also be noted that the Confederacy did not float any gunboats of its own on the two rivers under study. This publication does not cover in any depth the naval actions on the Cumberland River above Nashville or the Tennessee River above Muscle Shoals. In the author's opinion, however, the importance of the twin rivers as avenues of invasion and routes of supply cannot be overstated. Without the stream of supplies and troops reaching Nashville during 1863-64, there would have been no Atlanta campaign or March to the Sea, much less the subjugation of the Carolinas and final victory in the West.

When all was said and done, the U.S. naval officers and crews on the Western waters served with distinction and little recognition, while the Confederate forces who opposed them fought with bravery and determination, with few tangible results.

Facts can be stubborn things. During the fog of war, commanders tend to overestimate the casualties and damage inflicted upon the enemy and inflate their own contributions and accomplishments, for reasons of vanity, glory, or legacy. Accounts of battle vary as to each witness. Periods of time and estimates of distance become distorted. Victory is claimed by both sides, perhaps for the sake of boosting morale and advancing careers. Victories can come at great cost; defeats can be inconsequential, in the long run. The records and accounts of naval battles included in this publication are no exception to these phenomena. Every effort has been made to minimize these discrepancies or at the very least to make note of them.

Readers are asked to make full use of the many maps in this publication to familiarize themselves with the many place names. The last chapter of

this publication serves as a brief travel guide to battlefield sites, museums, and interpretive centers the reader can visit to learn more about the subject matter. The author's personal interest in the Civil War was cultivated through participation in groups such as the Civil War Trust, the Civil War Fortification Study Group, and the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society, which are just a few of the organizations, along with state and federal governments, responsible for reclaiming, interpreting, and developing the tourism potential of sites such as Fort Negley, Johnsonville, Bell's Bend, and Fort Defiance-Clarksville. Much of this hard work has been accomplished in only the past two decades. Some of these historic sites had been abandoned, grown over and glossed over, and nearly lost to history.

Also included is a bibliography for further reading. Much of the author's research has come from these publications. A much-welcomed new addition in 2016 was Timothy B. Smith's *Grant Invades Tennessee*, the definitive study of the battles of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson and the Phelps raid. In addition, two scholars should be singled out as significant contributors due to their own works. Myron J. "Jack" Smith Jr., former Professor of Library Science at Tusculum College in Greeneville, Tenn., literally wrote the books on this subject matter, creating reference works on tinclads and timberclads, and biographies of Fitch, the *USS Carondelet*, and all of the naval commanders on the Western waters. Much of the grist for this book, other than the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, comes from this reference material. The other indispensable man is Edwin Bearss, U.S. Marine, Historian Emeritus of the National Park Service, discoverer and savior of the *USS Cairo*, and tour guide extraordinaire. I have had the pleasure of touring Nashville, Chickamauga, and Vicksburg with Mr. Bearss. His book, *Hardluck Ironclad*, with his personal inscription, is one of my most treasured possessions.

Thanks also goes to Middle Tennessee historian Greg Biggs, who was kind enough to read the manuscript and offer many helpful suggestions.



–Chapter Five–

Fort Henry

*The ironclads snatch a victory from the army
against a determined but poorly situated foe*

On Jan. 27, 1862, President Lincoln issued General War Order No. 1, which required all of his generals to show movement against the enemy by February 22. General U.S. Grant had already been pressing his superior, General Henry “Old Brains” Halleck, to allow him to move up the twin rivers. Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote assured Halleck that his ironclad gunboats could defeat any Confederate river fort. Then it was learned that Confederate General P.T.G. Beauregard had been ordered to Kentucky with 15 regiments to reinforce the Western Theater army of General Albert Sidney Johnston. Although this rumor was false (Beauregard brought no men with him), on January 30, Halleck wired Grant: “Make your preparations to take and hold Fort Henry.”

On the last day of January 1862, the timberclads *Conestoga* and *Lexington* moved up the Tennessee River ever closer to Fort Henry, trying to get one last look before the upcoming attack. Accompanying Lt. Commander Seth Ledyard Phelps was landlubber Brigadier General Lew Wallace, the future author of the bestselling novel *Ben Hur*, who took notes of his fascinating trip. The boats had anchored for the night in mid-channel, planning to conduct their reconnaissance first thing in the morning. Then the baying of hounds was heard on the shore, getting louder and ever closer. Emerging from a riverside cornfield was their target, an escaped slave. The black man was running toward the boats. A landing party was sent. The Union men used their paddles to drive away the hounds and rescued the fugitive slave, a contraband. He was taken back to the gunboat.



Battle of Fort Henry by Andy Thomas, artist.

At the crack of dawn, the gunboats paddled slowly upstream, with two men in the bow on either side, staring intently into the waters ahead. They were searching for torpedoes, as submerged naval mines were called in those days. At least a dozen underwater mines had been anchored in the western chute of the river around Panther Island, which was located about two miles downstream from Fort Henry. The torpedoes were sheet-metal cylinders about six feet long, a foot in diameter, filled with 70 pounds of black powder, and sporting a protruding prong, which would trigger an explosion if tripped by the bottom of a passing boat. It was flood season and the river level was rising, the currents strong. As it turned out, due to the floodwaters, most of the torpedoes had been swept away and sank or rendered inert due to damage or seepage.

The flagboat *Conestoga* cleared Panther Island and boldly moved into the main channel, in full view of the fort's occupants, who were ready and waiting. What Phelps and Wallace saw was a bastioned fort "built squat on low ground" and covering ten acres, with one of its bastions extending out into the river

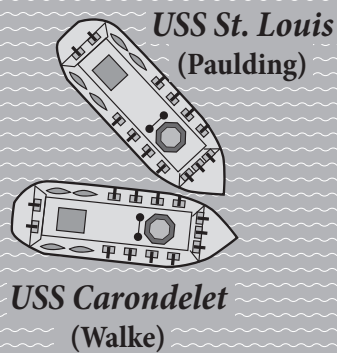
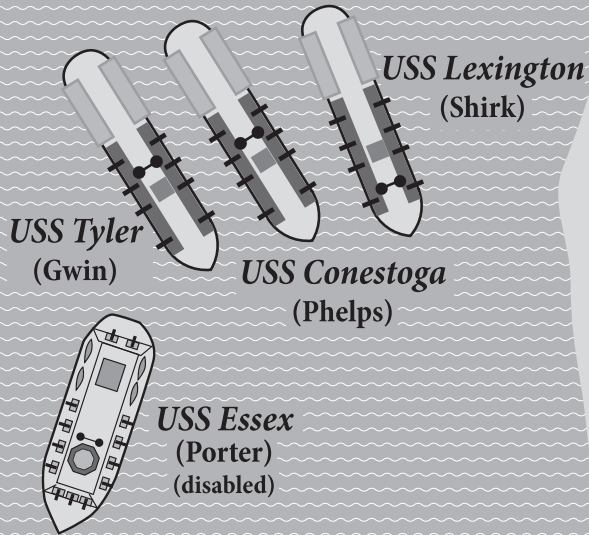
and holding three heavy guns. They counted 17 guns in all, 11 trained on the river. A water-filled ditch circled the fort, as did rifle pits. Behind the fort on slightly higher ground were trees bearing watermarks, indicating that at flood stage the fortification would be underwater. On the opposite side of the river, further upstream and in Kentucky, was the unfinished fortification known as Fort Heiman, much higher in elevation than Fort Henry. Engineers had been ordered to build Fort Heiman back in November 1861, but it remained unfinished.

Fort Henry (named for Confederate Senator Gustavus Henry) had been poorly sited, as noted by several engineers, but it was built at Kirkman's Landing nonetheless. In June 1861, at the time of the fort's construction, Kentucky was still neutral, so the fort had to be situated on Tennessee soil. The water level was low during the summer 1861 and nearly everybody assumed the war would be a short and decisive one. One factor in Fort Henry's favor was that it was only 12 miles west of Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. The forts could reinforce

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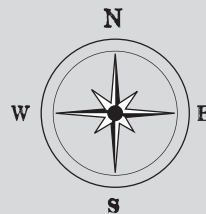


FOOTE



TENNESSEE RIVER

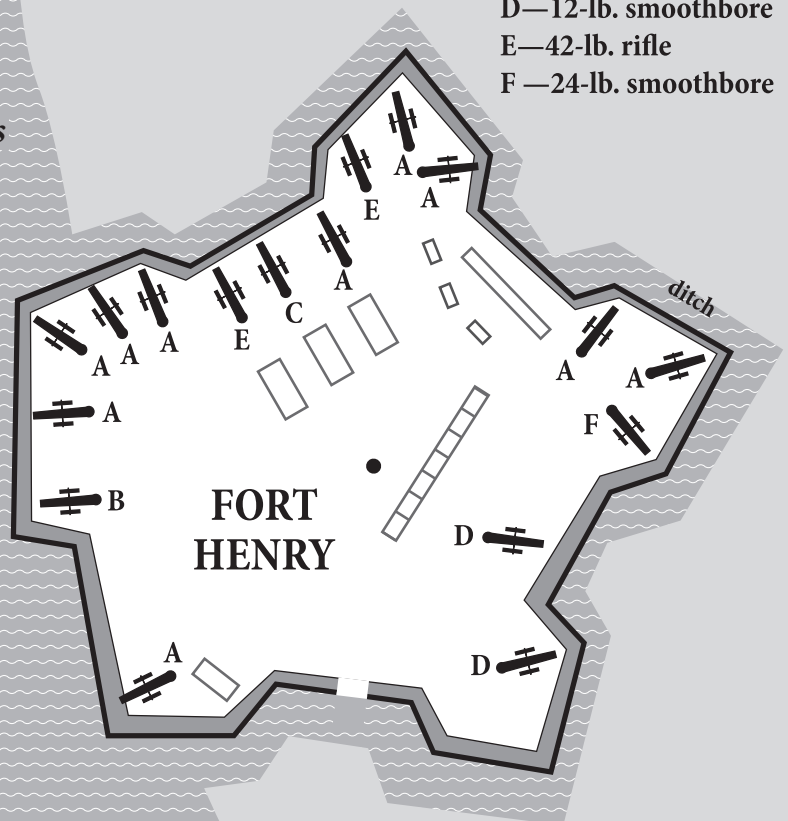
CSA Hospital Boat
Patton



The Capture of FORT HENRY

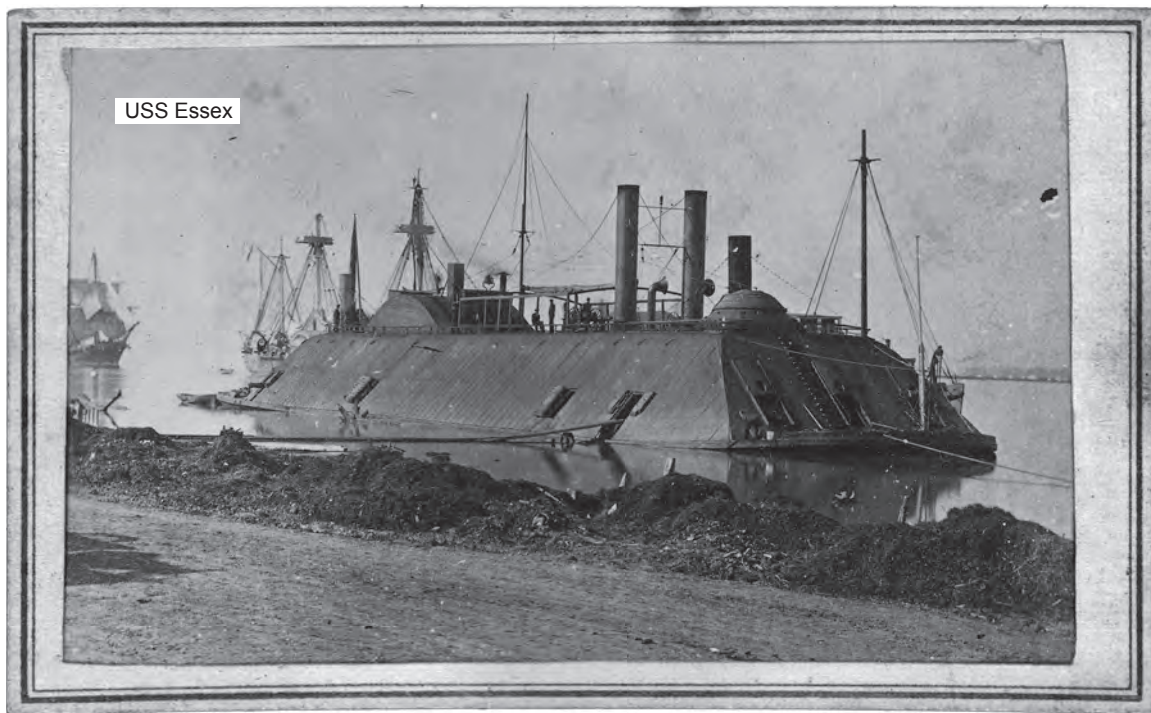
FEBRUARY 6, 1862

- A—32-lb. smoothbore
- B—24-lb. rifle
- C—10-in. Columbiad
- D—12-lb. smoothbore
- E—42-lb. rifle
- F—24-lb. smoothbore



TILGHMAN

Taylor's Battery
Lt. Col. Milton Haynes
100 men



each other, as it was correctly assumed that both forts would not be attacked at the same time.

Fort Henry's commander, Brigadier General Lloyd Tilghman, a native of Paducah, knew that the location of Fort Henry at Kirkman's Landing was unfortunate. In his after-action report, he wrote, "The history of military engineering records no parallel to this case." Historian Kendall Gott argues that the mouth of Standing Rock Creek or Boswell Landing would have been a much better site.

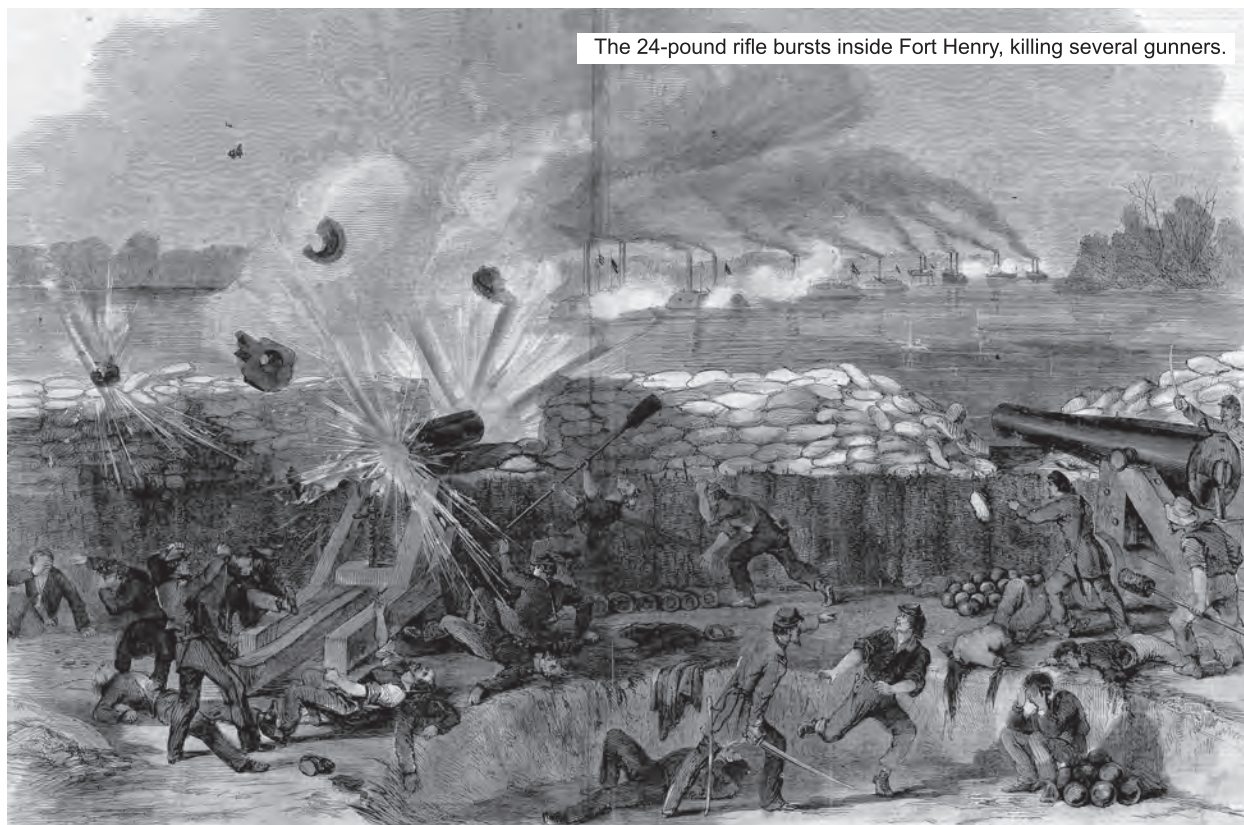
Fort Henry bristled with 17 heavy guns, ten of them 32-pounders, with eleven trained on the river, including a 10-inch Columbiad, a 42-pounder rifle, and two 42-pounder smoothbores (these were inoperable due to lack of suitable ammunition). During training, the Confederate gunners were having trouble with the recoil of the big Columbiad, as the length of the chassis was too short and the massive tube threatened to dislodge itself.

Where did the Confederates obtain such large siege artillery pieces? The Columbiads were cast at the famous Tredegar ironworks in Richmond, Va., but the other guns came from the 1,200 heavy artillery pieces confiscated by Virginia state troops

when they captured the Federal naval yard at Gosport/Norfolk in April 1861. The Confederates certainly would have been ill-equipped without the bounty seized from that early raid.

Fort Henry was garrisoned by 1,885 men and Fort Heiman by 1,100 men, although sickness had reduced the effective total strength to 2,600. Many were not properly trained or equipped, the exceptions being the 10th Tennessee and the 4th Mississippi regiments.

In a classic case of too little too late, Fort Heiman was built on the high west banks of the river, overlooking Fort Henry. This bastion was named for its commander, Colonel Adolphus Heiman, a Prussian architect who had emigrated to America in 1834. A hero of the Mexican War, Heiman was the colonel of the 10th Tennessee Infantry Regiment. "Construction began in December 1861 with the arrival of the Twenty-seventh Alabama and Fifteenth Arkansas infantry regiments who, along with some 500 slaves, were tasked with building the works," stated National Park Service (NPS) Historian Timothy Parsons. "Its suitable defensive position—protected by 150-foot bluffs



The 24-pound rifle bursts inside Fort Henry, killing several gunners.

in front and impassible roads and rough terrain in the rear—stood in marked contrast to the poor placement of Fort Henry. On the morning of February 3, General Tilghman made an inspection of the incomplete works at Fort Heiman.”

Onboard the *Conestoga*, Phelps had seen enough, satisfied with his observations. Before the gunboats withdrew, however, a solitary figure “stepped out on the parapet by the big gun of the lower bastion of the fort, and entertained himself returning our bravado like for like.” The naval men later learned that the bold belligerent rebel had been General Tilghman himself.

On Feb. 3, 1862, a convoy of steam transports carrying Federal troops left the Ohio River port of Paducah and made its way up the Tennessee River. The transports were escorted by the ironclad gunboats *Essex* and *St. Louis*. A few hours later, the remainder of the gunboats, the City Class ironclads *Cincinnati* and *Carondelet*, and the three timberclads, *Conestoga*, *Lexington*, and *Tyler*, departed, all under the command of Flag Officer Foote. Their target

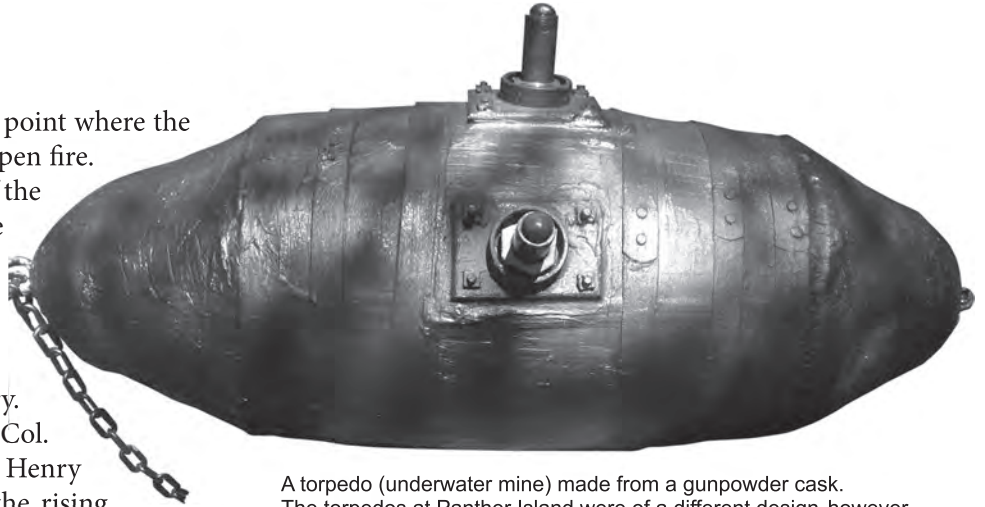
was Fort Henry. The army troops, under the overall command of Grant, disembarked on the east bank of the river several miles below the fort, planning to advance upon the Confederates in a joint attack with the naval forces. Another small Federal force put ashore on the west bank and advanced upon Fort Heiman, the small unfinished bastion on high ground overlooking Fort Henry directly across the river. The weather had been rainy and the river was swollen, making advancement by the infantry difficult due to the muddy conditions.

Reports were reaching the Confederate fort’s commander that transports were landing thousands of U.S. soldiers below the fort, and the gunboats were shelling the riverbanks as Confederate cavalry patrols skirmished with the advancing forces. On February 4 at noon, three gunboats moved to within two miles of the fort and began shelling it. The boats were out of range of the 32-pounders so the rebel gunners discharged the Columbiad and 24-pounder rifle. Several shots from the Columbiad threatened to dismount it, so it was abandoned.

Soon the range had closed to a point where the 32-pounders were ordered to open fire. After half an hour, with none of the gunboat blasts landing in the fort, the gunboats withdrew.

The next day the Confederate garrison at Fort Heiman was ferried across the river to bolster Fort Henry. Tilghman's chief of artillery, Lt. Col. Milton Haynes, thought Fort Henry should be abandoned due to the rising level of the river and his estimation that the Confederate forces were vastly outnumbered. They agreed that the fight at Fort Henry would be a holding action. Tilghman ordered Heiman to remove all the remaining troops from Fort Henry except for Taylor's Battery, which would remain to man the guns.

On the morning of Thurs., Feb. 6, 1862, the Federal gunboat flotilla pulled away from Bailey's Landing at 10:50 am and headed for the fort. The four ironclads lined up abreast with their bows to the enemy (the *St. Louis* positioned closest to the east bank, then the *Carondelet*, *Cincinnati*, and *Essex*). The vulnerable timberclads (*Conestoga*, *Lexington*, and *Tyler*) would stay behind the ironclads and provide artillery support. When the



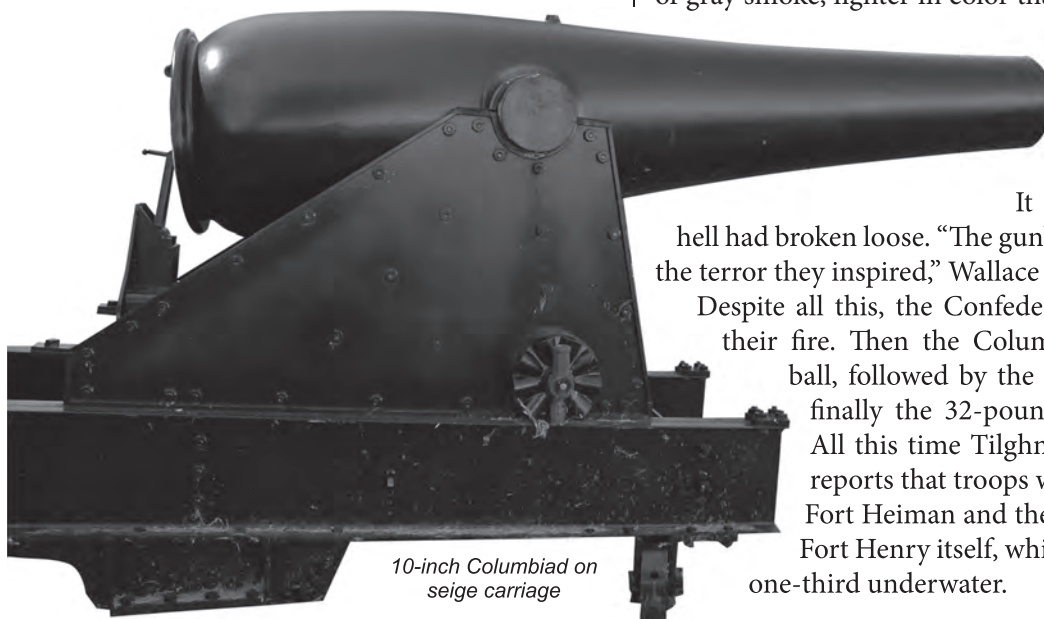
A torpedo (underwater mine) made from a gunpowder cask. The torpedos at Panther Island were of a different design, however.

range had closed to 1,700 yards, Flag Officer Foote ordered the captain of the *Cincinnati*, Commander Roger Stembel, to open fire. This was the signal for all of the gunboats to commence firing. At 12:34 pm, the bottle-shaped 8-inch Dahlgren in the bow of the *Cincinnati* roared to life. The commander of the *Essex*, William "Dirty Bill" Porter, cautioned his gunners to watch the flight of the shells from the *Cincinnati* before firing. As the first shells fell short, the gunners raised the elevation of the guns. The No. 2 port bow gun of the *Essex* spoke with authority and landed the first hit on the fort's earthworks, exploding "handsomely" with a scattering of dirt and evoking a cheer from the sailors. The percussive pounding of the big guns, accompanied by the flames and bursts of gray smoke, lighter in color than the black sooty

discharges of the chimneys, echoed back and forth from the riverbanks.

It seemed as if all hell had broken loose. "The gunboat-men enjoyed the terror they inspired," Wallace duly noted.

Despite all this, the Confederate gunners held their fire. Then the Columbiad opened the ball, followed by the 24-pounders, and finally the 32-pounder smoothbores. All this time Tilghman was receiving reports that troops were moving upon Fort Heiman and the outer rifle pits of Fort Henry itself, which was now about one-third underwater.



10-inch Columbiad on siege carriage



As the officers aboard the *Essex*, including Commander Porter, prepared to go below, a solid shot hit the pilothouse, sending deadly wooden splinters through the air. The pilot was killed instantly while his assistant fell to the deck below and died within minutes. On the gundeck, Porter ordered the changing of gun crews, one in relief of the other, and at that time another solid shot hit a porthole and tore its way through the iron plating and oak backing and struck the middle boiler, causing a terrific blast of scalding steam to escape. The resulting scene was “almost indescribable,” stated Second Master James Laning. One of the gunners was kneeling while handing a new shell to the gunner and caught the scalding steam right in the face. The steam blast forced many gunners to leap out the gunports and into the river, some managing to cling to the casemate. Others weren’t so lucky. The acting master’s mate was killed instantly and Porter was scalded badly. He tried to jump into the river, but a crewman caught him and carried him

astern. The first master took over the commander’s duties as the *Essex* drifted downriver, away from the fort, “a number of her officers and crew dead at their posts, whilst many others were writhing in their last agony.” Porter managed to stay conscious until a crewman told him that the fort had surrendered. He called for three cheers but by the second cheer he collapsed, exhausted. He would survive his injuries and eventually report back for duty.

Ten crewmen on the *Essex* died, 23 were wounded, and five went missing. The gunboat had taken 15 hits while discharging 72 shells from her three 9-inch Dahlgrens.

All in all, the Confederate gunners at Fort Henry hit the gunboats 59 times, with more than half aimed at the *Cincinnati*, in an attempt to disable Foote’s flagboat. The gunners also remarked that the *Cincinnati* seemed to be dispensing more accurate fire than the other gunboats. The rebel gunners managed to shred the spar-deck, chimneys, after-cabin, and small boats, while a direct strike on the

pilothouse dented it but bounced away. On the gundeck one round tore through the seam between the front and port side of the casemate, decapitating a gunner. Another shell crashed through and splintered the woodwork and hit the paddlewheel. One 8-inch Dahlgren was hit and one 32-pounder smoothbore disabled. Nine casualties were suffered in all. The *Cincinnati* fired 112 rounds at the fort.

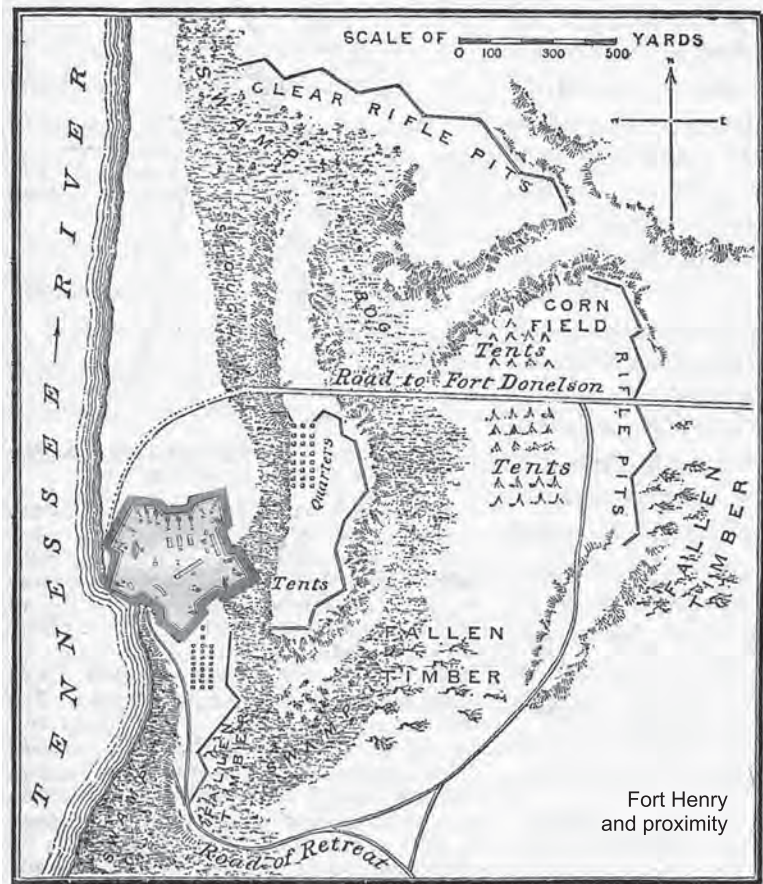
Elsewhere, the *Carondelet* and the *St. Louis* collided, interlocked, and remained mated for a large portion of the battle. The *Carondelet*, commanded by Henry Walke, fired 107 projectiles and was struck nine or ten times. One shot from the *Carondelet* went through the upper deck of the *Patton*, a Confederate hospital boat trying to escape upriver. The Federal gunners realized their mistake when they finally were able to see the boat's yellow flag. Nobody on the hospital ship was injured.

The *St. Louis* fired 116 times, the most of any gunboat, and was hit seven times but suffered little damage and no casualties.

Inside the fort, Captain Jesse Taylor was directing the gunners, telling each crew to concentrate on one gunboat. Then he took charge of the big 24-pounder rifle, while Capt. Charles Hayden manned the 10-inch Columbiad. Shortly after the *Essex* was disabled, the 24-pounder burst, killing a sergeant and disabling the crew. Then, the priming wire got stuck in the breech of the Columbiad and could not be cleared, rendering the big gun unusable. As the gunboats plowed to within a thousand yards of the fort, two of the 32-pounder guns in the fort were struck and put out of action. A premature discharge at another 32-pounder killed two of its gunners. By the time the gunboats were within 600 yards, the fort had only seven functioning guns. A few minutes later, only four guns remained serviceable. The cannoners were exhausted from an hour's worth of tremendous effort loading and firing the

heavy guns.

Colonel Heiman, who had led the majority of the fort's defenders on the march to Fort Donelson 12 miles away, returned to Fort Henry and asked Tilghman how to proceed. Heiman agreed with Col. Gilmer that the time had come to surrender, but Tilghman refused. The general threw off his coat and manned one of the 32-pounders himself. Heiman was ordered to fetch 50 men back to the fort to man the guns. By this time, the three ironclads had closed to within 600 yards of the fort, which was now being ripped apart. Finally, Tilghman agreed to surrender but not right away. He tied a white flag to a staff and waved it atop a parapet but the smoke was too dense for the flag to be seen. After another conference with his officers, Tilghman ordered the colors struck. While Taylor struck the colors at the fort, Haynes, who had not been consulted, ordered the Confederate flag raised again and directed that any man who tried to interfere be shot. Haynes





sought out Tilghman and became indignant when told of the pending surrender. Haynes wanted no part of it and left the fort, headed to Fort Donelson.

The battle lasted 75 minutes. Two Confederate officers rowed a small boat to the *Cincinnati*. Stembel and Phelps were ordered by Foote to take possession of the fort. After raising the Union flag over the half-submerged fortification, Stembel accompanied Tilghman back to the *Cincinnati*. The Federal sailors went crazy with jubilant emotion, so much so that Foote “had to run among the men and knock them on the head to restore order.”

Fort Henry’s garrison suffered 99 casualties (five dead, 11 wounded, five missing, and 78 captured) during the holding action. Seventeen pieces of heavy ordnance were captured or destroyed. The hospital boat *Patton* was captured. General Grant reached the fort about an hour after its capture. Entering the fort, Union officers described what they saw. “The effect of the fire on the fortifications here was terrible—guns dismounted—earthworks torn up and the evidences of carnage meet the eye on every hand.” Another remarked that “the devastation astonished me all the more when I recalled the short time in which it had been accomplished.” One sailor noted, “On every side lay the lifeless bodies of the victims, in reckless confusion, intermingled with

shattered implements of war.”

Flag Officer Foote worried about the damage to his fleet. He vowed “never again will I go into a fight half-prepared.” He also thought that “we have made the narrowest escape possible with our boats and our lives.” The gunboats were ordered back to Paducah and Cairo for repairs.

The fall of Fort Henry to the Federal gunboats made a heavy impression upon Confederate theater commander Albert Sidney Johnston, who noted that the battle “indicates that the best open earth works are not reliable to meet successfully a vigorous attack of iron clad gun boats.” Johnston began to intimate that he might pull his entire army out of Kentucky and southward into Tennessee.

On Fort Henry, the Union’s first significant victory of the war, historian Gott wrote: “One of the poorest lessons the Confederate troops learned from their officers was that surrender or fleeing the battlefield was somehow tolerable. Colonel Heiman, Lt. Col. Haynes, and Major Gilmer fled from the scene even though they were inside the fort at the time of surrender...the precedent had been set that a fortified position was not necessarily defended to the bitter end.”

Grant telegraphed headquarters, “Fort Henry is ours.” Halleck wired Washington: “The flag of the

Union is re-established on the soil of Tennessee. It will never be removed." Grant also told Halleck, "I shall take and destroy Fort Donelson on the 8th and return to Fort Henry."

Foote took his victorious yet heavily damaged fleet back downriver to its headquarters at Cairo for needed repairs, flying the captured rebel flag of Fort Henry upside-down from his flagboat's stern staff. Phelps' three timberclads remained on the scene and were ordered by Foote up the Tennessee River on a bold and daring raid. On February 11, after days of delay, the first of Grant's troops began heading eastward toward Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River.

Ironically, two days later, Fort Henry would disappear altogether under the rising waters of the Tennessee River.

Historian Benjamin F. Cooling wrote, "Fort Henry demonstrated that the Civil War in the West would be fought largely for control of the rivers — antebellum commercial arteries that

became wartime barriers to effective Confederate unity and Union avenues for military, political, and economic reconstruction."

The significance of the capture of Fort Henry was stated plainly by *New York Times* correspondent Franc B. Wilkie, who wrote: "The value of the victory at Fort Henry will, in view of the shortness of the battle and the small number of prisoners, be very generally regarded as of no great consequence. In truth, the result is quite the contrary ... The surrender of the fort breaks up the rebel line of fortification, which extended from Columbus on the west to Bowling Green on the east, and opens to our forces a highway easy to be traversed and along which operations can be carried nearly to the Gulf without opposition. By its taking, our troops can reach the very heart of the South without formidable hindrance — indeed there are no works of any kind between Fort Henry and any point further north than Tusculumbia, in Alabama."

Timeline of Events

1861

April 13, 1861	Fort Sumter in Charleston, S.C. harbor.
April 23, 1861	State troops occupy Cairo, Ill. at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.
May 16, 1861	John Rodgers named commander of Western Gunboat Flotilla.
June 8, 1861	Tennessee votes 105,000 to 47,000 to secede from Union.
June 21, 1861	Battle of Bull Run (Manassas), Va.
Aug. 7, 1861	Contract signed between US Army and Eads for construction of seven City Class ironclads.
Aug. 30, 1861	Andrew H. Foote named commander of Western Gunboat Flotilla.
Sept. 3, 1861	Confederate Gen. Polk occupies Columbus, breaking Kentucky's neutrality.
Sept. 6, 1861	Grant occupies Paducah and Smithland, Ky., at the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland.
Oct. 12, 1861	First City Class ironclad <i>USS Carondelet</i> launched at St. Louis, Mo.
Nov. 7, 1861	Grant attacks Confederate camp at Belmont, Mo. using timberclads and transports.
Nov. 19, 1861	Henry Halleck named commander of the Department of the Missouri.
Nov. 20, 1861	Canton, Ky. skirmish between <i>USS Conestoga</i> under Phelps and Forrest's cavalry under Kelley.

1862

Jan. 15, 1862	Foote accepts the seven City Class ironclads from contractor Eads.
Feb. 6, 1862	Fort Henry on Tennessee River falls to ironclad gunboats under Foote.
Feb. 6-11, 1862	Phelps raid up Tennessee River to Florence, Ala. by three timberclads.
Feb. 14, 1862	Confederate gunners at Fort Donelson defeat Foote's ironclad gunboats.
Feb. 16, 1862	Fort Donelson on Cumberland River falls to Grant's army.
Feb. 19, 1862	Clarksville, Tenn. occupied by Federal troops.
Feb. 25, 1862	Nashville, capital of Tennessee, occupied by Union forces under Buell.
March 1, 1862	First Battle of Shiloh. <i>Lexington</i> and <i>Tyler</i> skirmish with rebel infantry at Pittsburg Landing.
March 8, 1862	40th Illinois Infantry Regiment, vanguard of 40,000, reaches Savannah, Tenn. by river.

Timeline of Events

March 9, 1862	Battle of Hampton Roads, Va. between the ironclads <i>USS Monitor</i> and <i>CSS Virginia</i> .
April 6-7, 1862	Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing). <i>Tyler</i> and <i>Lexington</i> shell Confederate troops.
May 9, 1862	Charles H. Davis named commander of Western Gunboat Flotilla.
June 6, 1862	Battle of Memphis on Mississippi results in surrender of town and destruction of CSA fleet.
Aug. 12-13, 1862	John Hunt Morgan's men block South Tunnel on Louisville & Nashville Railroad near Gallatin.
Aug. 18, 1862	Clarksville recaptured by Confederates.
Aug. 25, 1862	Woodward attacks Federal garrison at Dover.
Oct. 1, 1862	Army hands Western Gunboat Flotilla over to US Navy; renamed Mississippi River Squadron.
Oct. 15, 1862	David D. Porter named commander of Mississippi River Squadron.
Dec. 7, 1862	Fort Negley in Nashville is completed using contraband labor.

1863

Jan. 2, 1863	Battle of Stones River (Murfreesboro) ends with Confederate retreat.
Feb. 3, 1863	Battle of Dover, Tenn. Wheeler's cavalry defeated as Fitch's gunboats intervene.
Feb. 7, 1863	Gen. Gordon Granger's convoy from Louisville reaches Nashville.
April 8, 1863	Confederate troops capture and burn the steamers <i>Saxonia</i> and <i>Lovell</i> near Clarksville.
April 26, 1863	Mississippi Marine Brigade chases Texas Rangers on the Tennessee at Duck River.
July 3, 1863	Battle of Gettysburg. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia defeated.
July 4, 1863	Confederates surrender Vicksburg on Mississippi River to Grant.
Sept. 10, 1863	Bureau of U.S. Colored Troops opens in Nashville.

1864

March 25, 1864	Forrest attacks Paducah, repelled in part by US gunboats on Ohio River.
April 12, 1864	Fort Pillow on Mississippi River captured by Forrest, massacre alleged.
May 7, 1864	Sherman begins Atlanta campaign through northern Georgia.
May 10, 1864	Nashville & Northwestern Railroad to Johnsonville depot completed.

Timeline of Events

July 1864	Alexander M. Pennock named commander of Mississippi River Squadron.
Sept. 2, 1864	Sherman's armies capture Atlanta, Ga. after four-month campaign and seige.
Oct. 14, 1864	Eastport, Miss. ambush of US troops, gunboats by Kelley's cavalry and artillery.
Oct. 16, 1864	Forrest begins month-long raid of West Tennessee.
Oct. 29-30, 1864	Forrest captures Union gunboats at Paris Landing, Tenn.
Nov. 1, 1864	Samuel P. Lee named commander of Mississippi River Squadron.
Nov. 4, 1864	Forrest destroys Johnsonville depot on Tennessee River.
Nov. 8, 1864	Lincoln re-elected President with Tennessean Andrew Johnson as Vice-President.
Nov. 15, 1864	Sherman leaves Atlanta and begins his March to the Sea.
Nov. 21, 1864	Hood marches north from Florence, Ala.
Nov. 30, 1864	Battle of Franklin-Confederate Army of Tennessee smashed.
Dec. 3-4, 1864	Transports captured by Kelley at Bell's Bend are seized by Fitch's gunboats.
Dec. 6, 1864	Kelley's artillery battles <i>USS Carondelet</i> and <i>USS Neosho</i> at Bell's Bend.
Dec. 15-16, 1864	Battle of Nashville. Kelley skirmishes with Union cavalry under Gen. Richard Johnson.
Dec. 21, 1864	Sherman marches into Savannah, Ga. on the seacoast.
Dec. 25, 1864	Hood retreats across the Tennessee River; Union gunboats decline to intervene.

1865

April 9, 1865	Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox, Va.
April 14, 1865	Lincoln shot at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. and dies the next day.
April 26, 1865	Gen. Joseph Johnston surrenders to Gen. William T. Sherman at Bentonville, N.C.
April 29, 1865	<i>USS Moose</i> turns back Confederate attack on Eddyville, Ky.