

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

Published by Georgia Battlefields Association, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preservation of Georgia's Civil War history and sites. Contact newsletter editor by e-mail: info@georgiabattlefields.org

150 years ago this month

The Federals have the initiative as the month begins. In Virginia, McClellan advances towards Manassas, but finding the Confederates have withdrawn, foregoes a direct advance southward and frustrates President Lincoln by planning a campaign that approaches Richmond by transferring a massive army (the largest field force ever assembled in North America) to Fort Monroe and advancing up the peninsula between the York and James Rivers.

McClellan's grand advance will be impossible without control of Hampton Roads, but control is in doubt when the Confederates complete construction of *CSS Virginia*, an ironclad built on the hulk of *USS Merrimack*. *Virginia* steams into Hampton Roads on 8 March, destroys two Federal warships and runs a third aground. The prospects are for more Federal losses the next day, but *USS Monitor* arrives that evening. The next day, the first battle between ironclad warships occurs, and neither proves superior; but *Virginia* has been neutralized. On 17 March, lead elements of the Army of the Potomac board ship at Alexandria, and the massive movement of over 100,000 troops and their equipment to Fort Monroe proceeds over the following weeks.

Under Nathaniel Banks, a Federal movement up the Shenandoah Valley starts at Harpers Ferry on 5 March and meets initial success, driving southward a Confederate force under Thomas J. Jackson. Its objective apparently achieved, part of the Federal force is withdrawn on 19 March to protect Washington as McClellan's army departs the capital area; but Jackson attacks the Federals at Kernstown on 23 March. Although the Confederates are repulsed, the battle causes the War Department to return all of Banks' force to the Valley and also causes President Lincoln to order one corps to remain in the Washington area rather than joining McClellan. Jackson has lost a battle but achieved far more than he knows.

In North Carolina, Burnside's Federal expedition captures New Berne on 14 March and Washington on 21 March and renders large parts of the Carolina coast unavailable to the Confederacy.

With Nashville in Federal hands, Andrew Johnson is appointed military governor of Tennessee on 4 March. The Federals advance up the Tennessee River to Pittsburg Landing, from which land patrols scout into Mississippi and gun boats reach Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

In concert with the advance up the Tennessee River, a Federal force under John Pope moves down the Mississippi River, taking New Madrid, Missouri on 14 March. In reaction, Beauregard pulls the Confederates out of western Tennessee and gathers his forces at Corinth, Mississippi. Leaving an untenable position in Kentucky, Albert Sidney Johnston withdraws his Confederates southward and combines with Beauregard at Corinth on 24 March.

Across the Mississippi River, Federals under Samuel Curtis have driven southwestward through Missouri into Arkansas. Initially retreating before superior numbers, Confederates under Earl van Dorn attempt to flank Curtis, resulting in a 6-8 March battle at Pea Ridge that begins well for the Confederates but ends with their withdrawal.

Confederates advancing into New Mexico Territory take Albuquerque and Santa Fe early in the month. A 28 March battle at Glorieta Pass is a draw, but a Federal cavalry force burns the Confederate wagons and supplies. The Confederates begin their retreat back to Texas.

Both presidents continue to search for a command structure that can respond to political realities as well as follow military dictums. On 2 March, President Davis recalls R.E. Lee from planning coastal defenses to be the President's senior military advisor. On 5 March, Beauregard takes command of the Army of the Mississippi, and on 8 March, Edmund Kirby Smith takes command in Eastern Tennessee. On 18 March, Judah Benjamin moves from Secretary of War to Secretary of State, with George Randolph taking over the War Department.

On the Federal side, Lincoln relieves McClellan as general in chief on 11 March but leaves him in command of the Army of the Potomac. In the same order, Halleck is elevated to overall command of Federal forces in the west. On 31 March, David Hunter is assigned to command the Department of the South at Hilton Head, and Ben Butler arrives on 20 March at Ship Island off the Mississippi coast to command the force that will try to take New Orleans.

Annual GBA tour goes back to Savannah 9-12 March 2012

Only a few days until our annual tour, based this year in Savannah. Note that this is a Friday evening through Monday morning tour rather than our usual Thursday to Sunday. Your place is reserved when your check to GBA for \$395 per person arrives at 7 Camden Rd NE, Atlanta GA 30309. Hotel is the Courtyard by Marriott at 415 West Liberty Street, 912 790 8287.

GBA will again lead a tour for Phoenix Flies

Atlanta Preservation Center's annual Phoenix Flies program will feature a GBA-led walking tour of downtown Atlanta Civil War sites at 1 p.m. on 18 March. You can make reservations by calling 404 688 3353. Information about this and the other tours is at www.phoenixflies.org.

The March 2008 GBA walking tour of downtown Atlanta was recorded by Three23 Films, and a 52 minute-long DVD titled "Civil War Atlanta: A walk through history" is available. The intro of the DVD is on the web at <http://vimeo.com/7535060>. The DVD is normally available at the museum store of the Atlanta History Center, or you can order a DVD by sending a \$15 check to GBA at 7 Camden Rd NE, Atlanta GA 30309.

Civil War Trust Park Day scheduled for 31 March 2012

The annual Civil War Trust Park Day is scheduled for 31 March. Park Day provides an opportunity for volunteers to help maintain national, state, and local parks. For more info, see the web site www.civilwar.org/parkday, or call Mary Stephens at 301 665 1400. Contact these Georgia sites (going from Chickamauga to the coast) if you want to help:

Chickamauga National Military Park, Fort Oglethorpe www.nps.gov/chch

William Sunderland at 706 866 9241 or william_sunderland@nps.gov

Anderson Cemetery, Rocky Face

Steve Hall at 706 673 7987 or tunnelhill@windstream.net

Historic Prater's Mill, Varnell www.pratersmill.org

Judy Alderman at 706 694 6455 or judy@pratersmill.org

Dalton Confederate Cemetery

Marvin Sowder at 706 278 3925 or msowder@dalton.net

Resaca Confederate Cemetery www.resacabattlefield.org

Ken Padgett at 706 602 1864 or hdrebel@bellsouth.net

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Marietta www.nps.gov/kemo

Benita Duling at 770 427 4686 or benita_duling@nps.gov

Nash Farm Battlefield Park (E. of Lovejoy's Station) www.henrycountymbattlefield.com

Cassie Barrow at 770 486 4313 or nashfarmbattlefieldmuseum@gmail.com

Andersonville National Historic Site www.nps.gov/ande

Eric Leonard at 229 924 0343 or eric_leonard@nps.gov

Blue & Gray Museum and Evergreen Cemetery, Fitzgerald www.fitzgeraldga.org

Al Strom at 229 426 5069 or bgmuseum@mchsi.com

Jefferson Davis State Historic Site, Irwinville www.gastateparks.org/info/jeffd

John Hughes at 229 831 2335 or jeffdavis1@windstream.net

Fort Pulaski National Monument, east of Savannah www.nps.gov/fopu

Gloria Lee at 912 786 5787 x209 or gloria_lee@nps.gov

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March 2012

Address correction requested

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