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The Vicksburg Campaign, US Grant

Rocky Mountain Civil War Round Table

May 16, 2013; spring 1863, Union Plans, presented by Frank Atwood

Topic:

- (a) Down the west bank of the Mississippi River
 - (1) Union troops create roads
 - (2) Pemberton responds
- (b) Naval ships move south past Vicksburg
- (c) Sherman attacks at Snyder's Bluff, Mississippi
- (d) Grierson's raid
- (e) Grant lands troops at Bruinsburg

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HISTORY

Herodotus

Sythians campaign

False attack

Leave your sons here.

Amphibious operations are difficult –

Bridgehead If you think a river crossing is tough; and a bridge would make life easier; think again. At a beach head there's no bridge possibilities.

Gallipoli, Anzio. Dieppe

Louisburg and Plains of Abraham.

British attempt on Fort McHenry

Belmont, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson

B was a raid that almost went disastrous.
H a push over that the Navy won the race
D approached from the landside; hoped navy bombardment would win it; cooperative enemy.

ORIENTATION

MILITARY OPERATIONS

Strategic levels of combat are: attrition, mobility and guerrilla warfare.

Is a railroad system the lines or the stations? Northern perspective of the lines – Erie Canal; however Southern perspective of the plantations are the hubs. If you're maintaining slaves you want control; the hub.

Amateurs discuss raids and battles; professionals discuss logistics.

OODA Loop – Observe, Orient, Decision, Action. If the loop becomes overwhelmed then paralysis, chaos and panic ensue.

Data / Noise / Distractions / Misinformation / Disinformation / Information

How do you out spies? How do you manipulate spies?

SALUTE – Size, Activity, Location, Unite, Time, Equipment.

S-1 personnel; enthusiastic supportive leadership. Washington w/ Lee at Monmoth in 1779?

S-2 Intelligence

S-3 Operations

S-4 Logistics – critical four hours to distribute three days worth of rations.

S-5 – Civil Military affairs – how do you handle the damn press?

Weather was forgiving.

LEADERS

GRANT

Grant was a horseman, but not a teamster.

Although cooperating with Navy, they were a team of rivals for glory.

Persistence with father in law, took a stand on slavery, worked for in-laws.

Allergic to retracing his route

Belmont, “We fought our way in, we’ll fight our way out.”

“What is the reward for good work?” “More work.”

Some political connections

Assessing subordinates as independent commanders (Sherman, Grierson)
subordinates.

From a geographic perspective, view plantations as hubs rather than roads as
spokes.

Grant is coordinating fleet, raid, overland march, and diversionary attack

Subduing too ambitious (aka insubordinate) subordinates.

Grant was persevering yet flexible.

Do you play the board or your opponent

Frustrations – Keep believing you’re not a failure.

#1 Holly Springs

- #2 Chickasaw Bayou
- Wood / Grant's Canal
- #3 Lake Providence operations
- #4 Yazoo Pass operations
- #5 Steele's bayou operation
- #6 Duckport canal
- #7 see above, successful diversion, unsuccessful assault.

Sinking of the Cairo

Steam shovels Sampson & ?? on line with artillery.

Bill Cosby's "Sitting Bull" for US Grant:

Grant, you lost the toss. Now put some, be certain to leave most behind on the other shore beyond help, but close enough to hear and watch and talk with reporters, of your men in very few boats; let all of them get wet shoes, and some of them get seasick and throw up on each other. When the first boat comes in, it may be greeted by a canister cannon blast that sinks the boat and drowns most of the men on board, and the wreck may block the landing to prevent any other boats from coming in and landing troops ashore. Also, there may be torpedoes below the surface being triggered from shore as happened to the Cairo. Good luck, sleep well, don't have any nightmares.

His relief when finally he'd made it ashore.

PORTER

When the Captain of the recently sunk Cairo asks if there will be trial for losing the ship, Porter says, I won't punish an officer for going into combat.

Porter let Grant know that after vessels ran by Vicksburg; there was no coming back upstream past the guns.

Porter outfitted his boats around the bend and beyond Confederate spies.

Memory is not clear on what I read but I think the numbers are: Mississippi River speed of 4 mph, boat speed of 6mph, upstream speed of 2mph,

downstream of 10 mph. To pass a mile of shoreline takes 6 minutes going down stream; 30 minutes going upstream to pass 4 miles of shore lines

Porter has supplies ready for Grant when the siege begins.

SHERMAN

Sherman had misgivings about going south, enough to send a CYA letter to Grant. Grant assigns him to stay north and provides the diversionary on the far north bluff. Subsequently, as with Lincoln, Sherman concedes Grant's go south campaign was right.

MCCLERNAND

McClermand was enthusiastic, but vain. The analogy given is General Washington at Battle of Monmouth tasked a General Lee who messed it up

He wanted his bride of a less than a month to watch the assault. He did not have supplies with the troops and cost a critical FOUR hours.

PEMBERTON

Mixed guidance from Davis (save Vicksburg) and Johnson (save the Army).

Pemberton moving headquarters during critical days that Grant was crossing the Mississippi.

Spread too thin leaves holes.

TIMELINE highlights

March 24, 1863; A small skirmish at Black Bayou marked the end of General William Tecumseh Sherman's attempt to find an unguarded route into Vicksburg

March 29, 1863; Stymied in his attempt to reach Vicksburg on the east bank of the Mississippi, Grant orders General John McClermand to march south on the west bank to Miliken's Bend

April 16, 1863; Rear Admiral David Porter sent 12 vessels south on the Mississippi past Vicksburg. Although hit a number of times by Confederate gunners, the vessels suffered little damage.

April 17, 1863; Col Benjamin Grierson (US) leaves La Grange, Tennessee at the head of 1,700 man cavalry column heading towards Mississippi to raid the state.

April 22, 1863; Grant's forces south of Vicksburg are re-supplied by Porter's fleet, which suffered heavy losses when transports and barges steamed by Confederate batteries.

April 29 – May 1, 1863; Sherman attacks Snyder's Bluff.

April 30, 1863; Early morning, US Navy bombardment of Grand Gulf is unsuccessful.

April 30, 1863 About noon, Ulysses S. Grant begins crossing the Mississippi and landing U. S. troops south of Vicksburg at Bruinsburg.

May 1, 1863; Battle of Port Gibson.

May 2, 1863; Bowen is forced to abandon Port Gibson and it becomes Grant's central supply depot as he moves inland. Confederates plan for Grant to drive north across the Big Black River directly to Vicksburg.

Teaser Alert May 12, 1863 Battle of Raymond; A Confederate brigade under John Gregg attacks a Union division under Major General John Logan in the town of Raymond, between Vicksburg and Jackson

More teaser:

The Confederates evacuated Hayne's Bluff, which was occupied by Sherman's cavalry on May 19, and Union steamboats no longer had to run the guns of Vicksburg, now being able to dock by the dozens up the [Yazoo River](#). Grant could now receive supplies more directly than by the previous route, which ran through Louisiana, over the river crossing at [Grand Gulf](#) and Bruinsburg, then back up north.^[5]

TOPIC

(d) is fun, for the amateurs.

(d) GRIERSON'S RAID – causing mischief.

Movie material

Roughshod through Dixie – Grierson's Raid 1863, p. 8

“Cavalry served three major functions in the Civil War – reconnaissance, security, and mobility. It was used to scout out the location of the enemy; to seize critical pieces of terrain, holding it until infantry could reinforce it; and to counter enemy reconnaissance and attempts to seize terrain. Cavalry was also used to strike deep into enemy territory, to destroy supplies and transportation

Dairius and the Synthians – “sneak” attack to skedaddle. Quinine Brigade an opportunity to use them.

Grant is human; this is pay back for Van Dorn raid at Holly Spring.

Board game,

Fox and geese. With best play geese win. However, this is three boards, with stale post-it notes of past reports.

For the board gamers raids have 10 movement points; but typically other units have half and even larger units are slower.

The Confederacy was a tough shell at both ends of the raid.

Weight of Wentworth cannons – Return on Investment; was the canon worth the additional weight? Maybe 210 lbs. Horse battery over awed militia.

Length of column;

Listening into telegraph lines. Code books? Lurkers on the wire. Listening in on the party line for local gossip.

Minimizing the Paul Reveres is the goal. Surround and Besiege the town don't let anyone in or out. Take (steal) the better horses.

Paid for an informants guide to Mississippi as to what sympathies were.

“Grierson’s Raid” by Dennis Keating, the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, 2010.

Ben Grierson, ante-bellum, was actually a failed business owner and music teacher. Grierson had been afraid of horses after a near fatal accident while he was eight years old – kicked in the head.

Grierson was chosen by Grant and Sherman to destroy the railhead at Newton Station. Initially intended to return to Lagrange, then on day 8 changed to Grand Gulf, then changed to Baton Rouge, LA.

“Butternut Guerillas” – his scouts disguised as Confederates.

Day 1 of raid: Departs LaGrange, Tennessee, Cavalry Brigade: three regiments – his own, 6th Illinois Cavalry and the 7th Illinois and 2nd Iowa comprising 1,700 troopers and a horse battery.

Day 4 of raid: sent Quinine Brigade back to LaGrange, Tennessee.

Day 5 of raid sent 2nd Iowa back, continued with 900 men.

Day 6 Company B of the 7th Illinois detached to attack Mobile and Ohio railroad at Macon, attack failed. I think this is the lost company until day #11.

Day 8 of raid: reached Newton Station, disabled the railhead, destroyed two arriving ammunition trains, decides to head for Grand Gulf rather than return to LaGrange

After Day 8 crossed three rivers and eluded forces sent from Vicksburg and Port Hudson

Day 11 of raid: Brigade crosses Pearl River on ferry. Company B of 7th Illinois (detached on day 6) rejoined the raiding party

Day 14 Grant unopposed landing at Bruinsburg lands at

Day 15 of raid, Wall's bridge at the crossing of the Taickfaw River (#2), loss of commander of the a battalion in the 7th who made a reckless charge across the bridge; sever wounding of the leader of the Butternut Guerillas

Grierson's last close call came at the crossing of the Amite River (#3) bridge, when officers of his pursuers from Port Hudson stopped to participate in a cotillion ball in their honor, thereby reaching the destroyed bridge just two hours after Grierson's departure.

Total 16 days emerged at Baton Rouge. (April 17 – May 2, 1863), 600 miles (averaged over 30 miles daily), disabled parts of two key railroads, captured and paroled around 600 Confederates and destroyed many war supplies. Grierson lost only 3 killed, 7 wounded, and 16 captured.

The real stuff I'll ignore.

(a) Down the west bank of the Mississippi River

(3) Union troops create roads

(4) Pemberton responds

(b) Naval ships move south past Vicksburg

Prep ships out of sight of enemy

(c) Sherman attacks at Snyder's Bluff, Mississippi

(e) Grant lands troops at Bruinsburg

Tourista below.

Tourista:

Surviving Mansion ruins –