

Anaconda

Timeline

May, 1861 -- To avoid an invasion of the South Winfield Scott, the Union's General in Chief, proposes a strategy of combining a naval blockade of seaports along more than 3,500 miles of coastline together with establishing military control of the Mississippi River. The press soon dubbed this scheme as the "Anaconda Plan."

November, 1861 -- Scott retires from active duty to be replaced by George McClellan.

Coastal Blue Water Operations

November 7, 1861 -- Following a naval bombardment, the operation being known as Hilton Head, the Federals take possession of Forts Beauregard and Walker in Port Royal Sound to establish a base for subsequent operations along the coast of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

January 1, 1862 -- Skirmishing in the area around Port Royal Island, South Carolina, forces Rebel batteries out of their positions to allow the Federals to continue their move to establish a permanent base at this important coastal location.

January 16, 1862 -- Union naval forces burn blockade-runners as well as dockside property at Cedar Keys, Florida.

February 10, 1862 -- After successfully launching attacks from Port Royal, a Federal force under Ambrose Burnside finishes clean-up operations at Roanoke Island and prepares for further campaigning against the Confederates in the New Berne area.

March 3-4, 1862 -- A Federal fleet under Admiral DuPont seizes Fort Clinch on the highly fortified island of Amelia Island before taking Fernandina, Florida, the next day.

March 8, 1862 -- Pursuant to a reconnaissance in force, Federal infantry transported by some of DuPont's gunboats take possession of Jacksonville, Florida, which had been abandoned upon approach of the gunboats, leaving the pathway into the heart of East Florida wide open.

March 9, 1862 -- The CSS *Merrimack* and the USS *Monitor* clash for four hours at the harbor at Hampton Roads, Virginia. Neither ship is badly damaged and the battle has no real victor. However, Hampton Roads is one of the most important coastal regions where the James, Elizabeth, and Nansemond Rivers meet the Chesapeake Bay at the tip of the peninsula formed by the James and York Rivers.

April 10-11, 1862 -- A Union army operation captures Fort Pulaski, Georgia, which guards the sea approach to Savannah. Purportedly it was the first battle between rifled guns and masonry forts, leading to a revolution in the construction of seacoast defenses.

May 7, 1862 -- While Lincoln is visiting Fort Monroe across from Hampton Roads to take operational control of a drive to capture Norfolk, Virginia, (which McClellan had bypassed when he launched his Peninsula campaign) the Confederates evacuate Norfolk, leaving only a handful of men to complete wrecking Gosport Naval Yard, the *Merrimack*'s home base.

May 10, 1862 -- After the Federals occupy Norfolk, the Confederate ironclad is trapped in the James River where it is destroyed to avoid being captured by the Federals.

May 12, 1862 -- The Confederates burn and abandon their positions on the mainland across from Santa Rosa Island, Florida where Fort Pickens is located. This allows the Federals to establish their headquarters for the West Coast Squadron at Pensacola.

August 17, 1863 -- The Union navy begins a bombardment of Fort Sumter.

March 14, 1864 -- The Federals capture Fort DeRussy, La, at the beginning of the Red River Campaign.

June 19, 1864 -- The *USS Kearsarge* sinks the Confederate raider, *CSS Alabama*.

August 5, 1864 -- David "Damn the torpedoes, full steam ahead" Farragut runs past three Southern ports -- Morgan, Gaines, and Powell -- to secure Mobile Bay, giving the Union army a staging area for planned operations against Mobile, Alabama.

December 10, 1864 -- Sherman's army reaches Savannah, concluding his March to the Sea that destroys a large portion of the Confederacy's war potential in Georgia.

December 13, 1864 -- Hazen's division captures a Confederate garrison at Fort McAllister, Georgia, meaning that Sherman had reached the coast where the Federal Navy could support him.

January 13 -15, 1865. Capture of Fort Fisher that commands the entrance to the Cape Fear River that leads to Wilmington, the Confederacy's last open port along the Atlantic.

February 17, 1865 -- Fort Sumter falls back into Union hands when Hardee evacuates Charleston, South Carolina, to move his troops northwestward toward Cheraw, South Carolina.

Inland Brown Water Operations

February 6, 1862 -- Grant captures Fort Henry, Tennessee, to give the Union control of the Tennessee River.

February 15, 1862 -- Grant captures Fort Donelson, Tennessee, to also give the Union control of the Cumberland River.

March 3, 1862 -- After Confederates evacuate the city, Union cavalrymen enter Columbus, Kentucky, which had been heavily fortified to be called the Gibraltar of the Mississippi.

April 7, 1862 -- A Federal task force compels the Confederates to surrender occupation of Island No. 10, eliminating a Rebel chokehold on that portion of the Mississippi River.

April 27, 1862 -- After Admiral Farragut's fleet sails past Forts Jackson and St Philip on its way to New Orleans, these forts surrender, totally removing any Confederate resistance to Northern action on the Mississippi River as far up to New Orleans.

May 1, 1863 -- The capture of Port Gibson, Mississippi, becomes a prelude to the battle of Vicksburg, which overlooks the Mississippi River.

June 3, 1862 -- Following a battle between ironclads near the mouth of Plum Run Creek, the Confederates evacuate nearby Fort Pillow -- about fifty miles north of Memphis, Tennessee -- without a fight.

June 6, 1862 -- Following a two hour naval engagement that results in the virtual destruction of the small Confederate flotilla, the Federals accept the surrender of Memphis.

July 4, 1863 -- Following a long, devastating siege, Vicksburg, sometimes called another Gibraltar of the Mississippi, surrenders to the Federals led by Grant.

July 9, 1863 -- After another siege lasting even longer than the one at Vicksburg, Port Hudson, another Confederate strong point guarding the Mississippi approximately 25 miles north of Baton Rouge, surrenders.

July 13, 1863 -- Union forces take occupation of Natchez, 75 miles south of Vicksburg, where Confederates had continued to cross the Mississippi River with livestock and ordinance