

MISSOURI STATE MEMORIAL RESTORATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

Introduction

History remembers the fact that the state of Missouri played a key and pivotal role in the American Civil War. Missouri witnessed the third largest number of engagements during the war (behind Virginia and Tennessee) and she sent nearly 150,000 of her sons to fight for both Northern and Southern causes. Nowhere was the impact of Missourians greater than during the Vicksburg Campaign and the resultant siege of Vicksburg. A total of 42 Missouri units, 27 Union and 15 Confederate, engaged in the battles around Vicksburg. To honor their sacrifices, a monument was erected and dedicated at Vicksburg National Military Park in 1917 through funding provided by the state of Missouri. Nearly 100 years later, the monument still stands proudly; however, time and exposure have taken their toll. The Department of Missouri, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, proposes a bill to authorize funding to restore the Missouri monument at Vicksburg to her pristine state and a project plan that concludes with an October 2017 re-dedication on the 100th anniversary of the original monument dedication.



Missouri State Monument at Vicksburg National Military Park

Background

Siege of Vicksburg

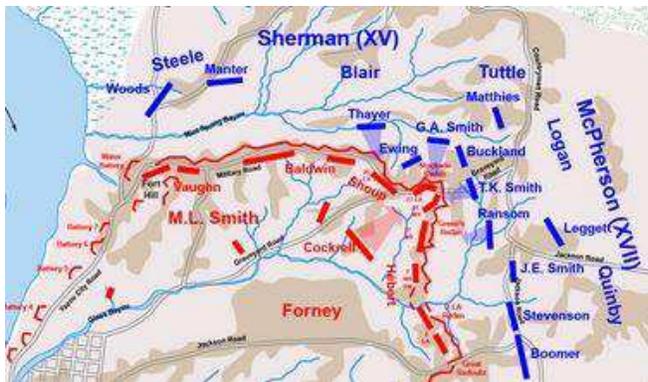
The siege of Vicksburg, which lasted from May 18 – July 4, 1863, was the final major military action in the Vicksburg Campaign of the American Civil War. In a series of maneuvers, Union Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and his Army of the Tennessee crossed the Mississippi River and drove the Confederate Army of Vicksburg led by Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton into the defensive lines surrounding the fortress city of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

When two major assaults (May 19 and 22, 1863) against the Confederate fortifications were repulsed with heavy casualties, Grant decided to besiege the city beginning on May 25. With no reinforcement, supplies nearly gone, and after holding out for more than forty days, the garrison finally surrendered on July 4. This action (combined with the surrender of Port Hudson to Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks on July 9) yielded command of the Mississippi River to the Union forces, who would hold it for the rest of the conflict.

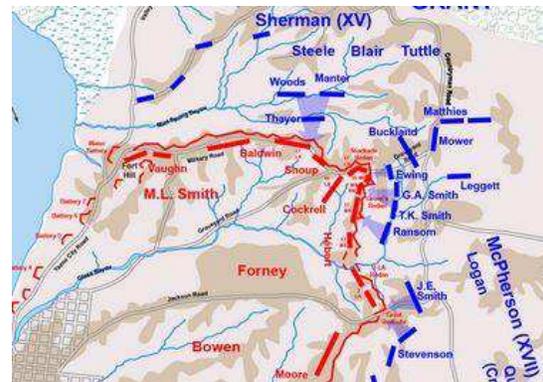
The Confederate surrender following the siege at Vicksburg is sometimes considered, when combined with Gen. Robert E. Lee's defeat at Gettysburg by Maj. Gen. George G. Meade the previous day, the turning point of the war. It also cut off communication with Confederate forces in the Trans-Mississippi Department for the remainder of the war. Upon hearing the news of Vicksburg's surrender, President Abraham Lincoln declared, "The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea".

Missouri Involvement

Missourians, both Union and Confederate, played a key role in both the battles and the eventual siege of Vicksburg. A total of 27 Union and 15 Confederate regiments from Missouri participated in the engagement, amounting to over 15,000 men. During the assaults on Confederate held redans on May 19 and 22, Union troops under Col. Giles Smith, including the 6th and 8th Missouri Infantry regiments, faced Confederate troops under Col. Francis Cockrell, including five Missouri infantry regiments and three Missouri artillery batteries. Eight additional Missouri Union infantry regiments under Col. Francis Manter and Col. Charles Woods, supported the attacks north of the redans. Over 4000 Union and over 3000 Confederate casualties (killed, wounded, missing) were suffered during the May 19 and 22 assaults, many of them Missourians. When General Pemberton finally surrendered the Vicksburg garrison to General Grant on July 4, 1863, the casualty totals included over 10,000 Union and 9,000 Confederate soldiers killed, wounded or missing.



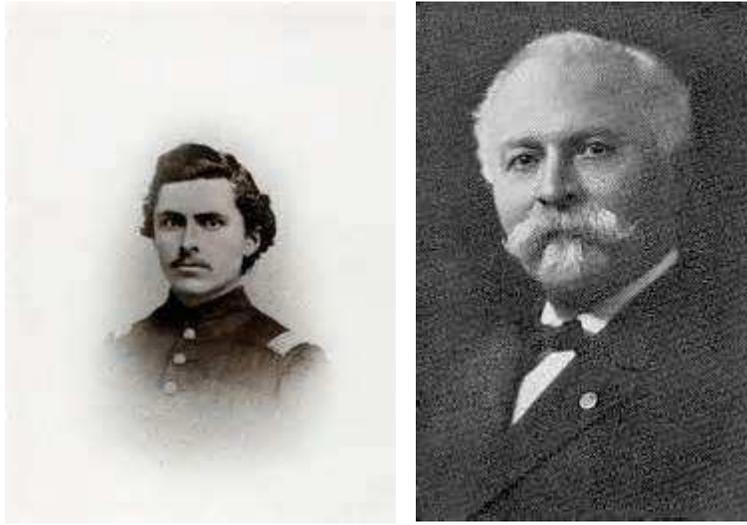
Union Assault – May 19, 1863



Union Assault – May 22, 1863

Missouri State Memorial

The Missouri State Memorial is located just south of the Stockade Redan on Confederate Avenue, tour stop 10, at milepost 10.9 of the park tour road. It is basically a large granite memorial with inset bronze reliefs and, in the center, a bronze winged Angel of Peace atop a granite ship bow. The bronze reliefs depict the Battle of Vicksburg. Soldiers are seen fighting and dying. There is a Missouri Coat of Arms relief on the top, center portion of the monument. It is unique as the only state memorial on the battlefield dedicated to soldiers of both armies. The height is symbolic of the forty-two Missouri units, 27 Union, 15 Confederate. It stands where two opposing Missouri regiments clashed in battle. The sculptor was Victor S. Holm, who was also founder of the American Bronze Company. The memorial was erected at a cost of \$40,000 and dedicated on October 17, 1917. The dedication was led by Leo Rassieur, who was appointed as president of the commission to establish this memorial by act of the Missouri General Assembly. He also served as an officer in the 30th Missouri Infantry U.S. during the Civil War and was one of only three Missourians to serve as Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, serving in 1900-1901.



Leo Rassieur
President, Missouri State Memorial Commission

Approach

The approach will be similar to that taken by the Department of Iowa, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, who worked with the Iowa General Assembly and Gov. Terry Branstad to secure over \$300,000 to restore the Iowa monument at Vicksburg. The Iowa monument was re-dedicated with great fanfare over Memorial Day weekend in 2013 as part of the Vicksburg sesquicentennial celebration. Key elements of the approach include:

- Meet with superintendent of Vicksburg National Military Park to secure formal approval from the National Park Service to proceed with project.
- Conduct detailed examination of the Missouri monument in collaboration with stone working and metal working experts in order to estimate the cost of the monument restoration.
- Develop draft of bill in collaboration with interested Missouri state legislators.
- Provide briefing to Gov. Jay Nixon to secure executive support of the proposed bill in advance of first reading in legislative session.
- Develop restoration schedule in collaboration with Vicksburg National Military Park.
- Pending passage of spending bill, commence restoration operations per the approved schedule.
- Coordinate with Vicksburg National Military Park and Vicksburg Chamber of Commerce to plan re-dedication events to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the original monument dedication.

Benefits to Missourians

The Missouri state memorial is one of the most beautiful of the multitude of state memorials located at Vicksburg National Military Park. It is also unique, as it is the only state memorial dedicated to both sides of the struggle. As it is only one of two large state memorials dedicated to Missourians on National Park Service lands (the other being the memorial at Shiloh, dedicated in 1971), it also represents Missouri’s higher level contributions during the entire Civil War. Time and weather have taken their toll on the memorial and, after nearly 100 years, it is now time to restore this beautiful structure to its original grandeur. Because this memorial represents so much, Missouri cannot let it continue to decline and become a source of embarrassment. In 1911, Missouri Governor Herbert S. Hadley saw fit to approve the resources to establish this memorial, so we, in 2014, should dedicate the resources necessary to ensure that this memorial remains a source of pride and adequately honors the heroic Missourians who fought for the cause they thought was right.

Damaged Bronze Work



Cracks and Crumbling Stone



Discolored Stone

Photos showing examples of damage to stone and bronze work

Preliminary Project Plan

Task	2014	2015	2016	2017
Planning Phase (VNMP/Contractors)	[Blue bar spanning from start of 2014 to end of 2014]			
Coordination Phase (Legislature/Governor)	[Blue bar spanning from mid-2014 to mid-2015, with 'First Reading' and 'Bill Passage' marked by stars]			
Restoration Phase	[Blue bar spanning from mid-2015 to end of 2016]			
Re-Dedication Phase	[Blue bar spanning from mid-2016 to end of 2017, with 'Re-Dedication Ceremony' marked by a star]			