



U.S. ARMY

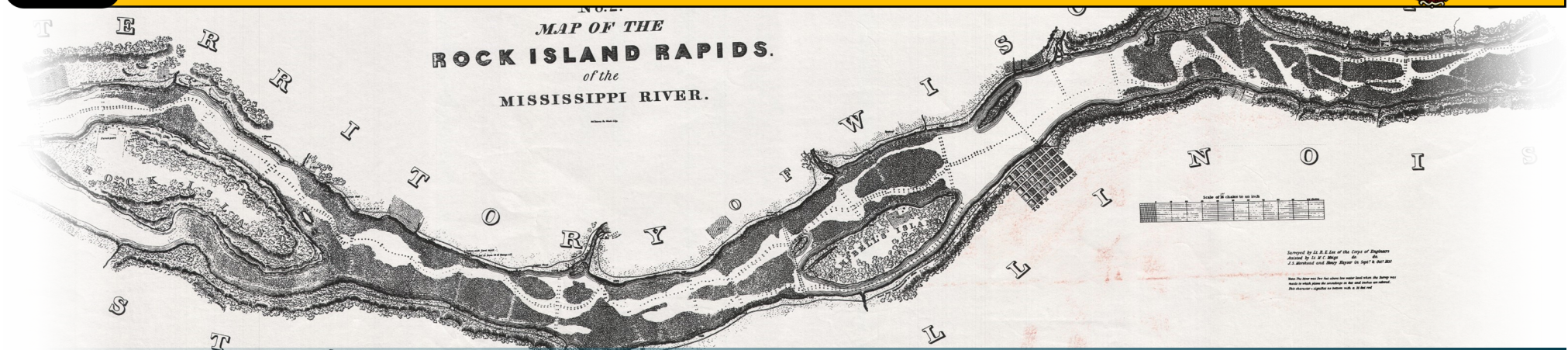
# THE ASC HISTORY TOILET PAPER

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## COMMEMORATING ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL'S 160TH ANNIVERSARY



### THIS MONTH in MILITARY HISTORY

### Battle of the Rock Island Rapids

- 1918 6 The last engagement of the American Indian Wars takes place on the Mexican border.
- 1942 6 FDR authorizes the largest armaments production buildup in U.S. history.
- 1943 15 The Pentagon is dedicated in Washington, D.C.
- 1945 3 GEN Douglas MacArthur is put in charge of all ground operations in the Pacific.
- 1951 4 Seoul falls to the North Koreans for a second time.
- 1962 12 The first American combat action in the Vietnam War is conducted west of Saigon.
- 1966 17 The Palomares Incident occurs over the Mediterranean Sea.
- 1991 17 Operation *DESERT STORM* kicks off in the Persian Gulf.
- 1994 2 The F-4G *Wild Weasel V* flies its last mission, it will be replaced by the F-16CJ.
- 2009 5 The Miracle of the Hudson takes place.

### TRIVIA

- 1 What was the only claimed loss in Zachary Taylors military career?
- 2 What year was Blackhawk captured?
- 3 What was the name of the US Army fort established following the war of 1812 partly in response to the battle of Credit Island?

#### ANSWERS FOR DECEMBER 2021 QUESTIONS

- 1 What day did the largest U.S. Army, pre-WWII, exercise/maneuver end?  
➤ 1 DEC 1941
- 2 What patriotic American song was written on Christmas day of 1896?  
➤ *The Stars and Stripes Forever*
- 3 How much money did it cost a West Point Cadet to watch the first Army-Navy football game in 1890?  
➤ 52 cents (\$15.88 in 2021)



You might think that it's cold outside, and it is! (Well for some of us.) Just remember that way back, Washington crossed a river on Christmas morning to attack a British position. Snow, sleet and ice battered the force with intense cold and wind. But at least, there probably were no sharks swimming in those icy waters that morning.



Trivia answers, digital newsletters, and more history is available on the ASC History website:

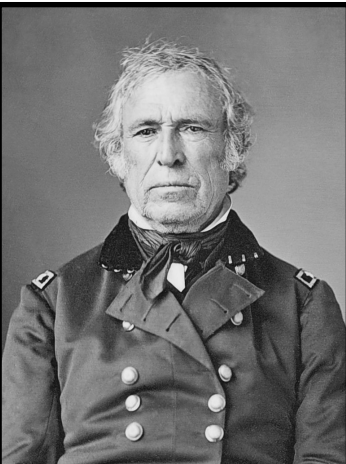
<https://aschq.army.mil/About-Us/History>

A shaky agreement had been established in what used to be the Northwest Territory of the fledgling United States in 1804. It was during this time, after the Louisiana Purchase, that the United States had forged an agreement that ceded a large tract of land from the local Sauk and Fox tribes. The region extended from approximately Moberly, Missouri, east across the Mississippi River and points north towards Madison, Wisconsin. The territory from this point included roughly the entire space between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. This established an exploitable wariness among local tribes in the region; a particular fatal one in the War of 1812.

As the war trudged on, the Americans found themselves stretched thin in the old west. By June of 1814, the garrison at Fort Shelby in Prairie du Chien was at an increased risk for attack by the British and their allied Native cohorts. Governor William Clark of Missouri territory ordered a relief and resupply expedition to be organized to reinforce Fort Shelby. The expedition, led by LT John Campbell, was to traverse the Mississippi River from St. Louis to Prairie du Chien by keel boat.

Campbell's expedition departed on the evening of 4 July 1814. He took around 100 total Soldiers and Militia in addition to a civilian sutler and his family. The expedition reached the mouth of the Rock River in about two weeks, which was just south of the Rock Island Rapids. On 18 July, Campbell's expedition entered into peace talks with tribal elders as well as war chief Blackhawk. LT Campbell conveyed a wish for the local tribes to aid the Americans in resisting the British, but could not guarantee any means to do so. Late that same night a party of Sauk warriors arrived at Saukenuk from Prairie du Chien. They had brought kegs of black powder and word that Fort Shelby had fallen to the British. In addition, the British had requested the aid of the Sauk to fight against the Americans, with the black powder provided as down payment. Blackhawk agreed to these terms and proceeded to collect a war party in an attempt to ambush Campbell's expedition. A storm moving through the area had forced Campbell's boat, which was heavily loaded down with supplies for Fort Shelby, ashore on an island giving the warriors a prime opportunity to strike.

Campbell dispatched sentinels on the island, but the intense brush and wood cover made sight difficult in the storm. Before long, Sauk warriors launched their assault on Campbell's boat. At the same time the other boats in the expedition commanded by LT Riggs and LT Rector, who had become separated in the storm, noted gunfire in the distance. They immediately turned around to provide aid to Campbell. Upon reaching Campbell's boat, contractors and Soldiers both rapidly began a rescue of the survivors before withdrawing from the area. The expedition then withdrew back down river to St. Louis after having lost 16, including two civilians, and sustaining 21 wounded.



MAJ Zachary Taylor

After news of the failed expedition had spread in St. Louis, MAJ Zachary Taylor began preparing an expedition to recon the area to punish the now hostile Native American tribes and potentially retake Fort Shelby. Taylor's expedition, consisting of 334 Soldiers and Rangers, embarked on 23 August 1814 and was just north of the Rock River by 4 September. A storm once again beached the Americans, this time down river of present day Rock Island. On the morning of 5 September, a number of Native warriors waded from the larger island (modern Credit Island) to Willow Island to attack Taylor's boats. In the initial gunfire one of the American sentinels was killed. Taylor described the next few minutes of the attack as "a sea of [Natives] as far as the eye could see." Intense gunfire made shoving off from shore difficult, but it was increased when the British artillery began to lay into Taylor's ship to the north of the island. The precision and rapid attacks led Taylor to erroneously believe an entire British battery of artillery was in the area. Taylor decided to withdraw to get out of the intense fire and consider his options. The expedition regrouped downriver from the Rock River, where they buried their dead and accounted for their losses. It was decided by a council of Officers that Fort Shelby was a total loss, and that the Americans were not equipped to mount a counterattack with the Sauk in the area. Taylor agrees with his officers and orders a return to St. Louis to report back to GOV Clark. With the defeat at Campbell's Island and Credit Island, the Americans ultimately leave the region until 1816, when they establish Fort Armstrong at Rock Island. The fort will serve as the headquarters for operations against the Sauk in the 1832 Blackhawk War, which ends in Blackhawk's capture.



Chief Blackhawk

- 1. Fredriksen, John C. *The United States Army in the War of 1812*. McFarland & Company, London, UK. 2009.
- 2. Gilpin, Alec R. *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest*. Michigan State University Press, Lansing, MI. 1958.
- 3. Collins, Gilbert. *Guidebook to the Historic Sites of the War of 1812*. Second Edition. Dundurn, Toronto, Canada. 2006. pp64-65.
- 4. Quimby, Robert. *The U.S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study*. Michigan State University Press, Lansing, MI. 1997. pp733-752.

History is being made every day at this command.



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