

# **The Staff Ride Handbook for The Battles of New Orleans, 23 December 1814 - 8 January 1815**



**Lieutenant Colonel Matthew B. Dale**



**Combat Studies Institute Press  
US Army Combined Arms Center  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**



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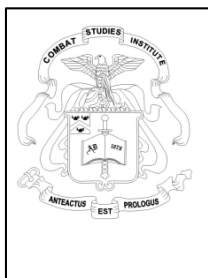
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## Foreword

The Combat Studies Institute is pleased to publish *The Staff Ride Handbook for the Battles of New Orleans, 23 December 1814-8 January 1815*, covering the final battles of the War of 1812. Interest in the details of this often-overlooked conflict has increased as a result of recent bicentennial observances, exposing a new generation of students to a unique period in our Army's history. Most survey course references to the War of 1812 concern the demonstrably different performances of the US Army and US Navy, the latter getting the better coverage. That comparison however, lies at the heart of why this war and this series of battles are crucial to understanding the development of both the Army as an institution and civil-military relations more generally from 1815 to 1941. This handbook will help new and returning students to look at the battles of New Orleans in the proper context, aided by a wealth of new scholarship produced over the last 30 years.

This handbook enables understanding of the battle by facilitating readers' awareness as they walk the ground. It begins with a thorough description of the strategic objectives desired by both the British and Americans, and an operational overview of events in the American Deep South and the Gulf of Mexico which set the conditions for the tactical engagements which occurred in December 1814 and January 1815. The use of the plural *Battles* in the title denotes a focus upon all four of the engagements fought between American and British forces just south and east of New Orleans. Because of this, the handbook can be used to tailor a staff ride for a single tactical engagement or as a campaign analysis.

In keeping with our previous staff ride publications, this handbook spends a great deal of time on the study of leadership. New Orleans remains firmly associated in American military lore with visions of a victorious Andrew Jackson, in command of a composite force of fighters from an astonishing array of backgrounds. While Jackson's influence over the battle and its outcome remain mostly undeniable, this handbook provides equal attention to Jackson's opponent, Sir Edward Pakenham, the ill-starred commander of British regulars, many of whom boasted long experience against the French armies of Napoleon Bonaparte. Further attention is also paid to a variety of American and British subordinate commanders at all levels, bringing these seldom-heard voices back into the conversation two centuries after the fact.

*The Battles of New Orleans* offers military organizations of all three components and of any echelon the opportunity to study the timeless factors that influence armed conflict to include leadership, sustainment,

and domestic politics. Although the tactics and the equipment are far different today, modern participants will still come away with a greater appreciation and understanding of the experiences of American and British Soldiers of all ranks in the final battle between the Unites States and Great Britain.

Colonel Thomas E. Hanson  
Director  
Combat Studies Institute

## Acknowledgements

Even before receiving my commission in the 1990s, the published works of the Combat Studies Institute (CSI) were not unknown to me. If there was a CSI publication in a library or lying around a unit headquarters, I borrowed it and pored over it, attempting to add to my professional development. The most recent example was during my last deployment in Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012 was Occasional Paper 36, outlining the Soviet approach in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989. Little did I know that during that same tour I would be offered the opportunity to join the fine team of Soldiers and Civilians at CSI less than a year later, first as the Staff Ride Team Chief and then continuing as the Deputy Director.

As this is my first published book in support of the Army, I wish to thank our daughter, Specialist Rosalee Dale, who served with her unit in Kuwait during the time that this handbook was written. She chose the life of her father, grandfathers, and then some in serving the Nation and I dedicate this first work to her as my thanks for her sacrifice and the great love and pride that her mother and I have for her. I must also thank my wife Jane, who is always pushing me to write anything to vent my love for the Army and its great history. I must also thank my very loving and supporting mother who is my longest running fan and probably still possesses a young boy's crayon-drawn portrait of Jean Lafitte in her collection of maternal memories.

I am very grateful to all of the members of the CSI team, now part of our Army Family. The confines of this work prevent me from thanking each member in kind. However, there are some people that especially deserve my thanks. First, and foremost there is Colonel Tom Hanson, Director of CSI. Few are lucky enough to have a supervisor, mentor, and valued family friend of such worth who allowed me the time to continue being a historian in addition to the administrative duties of deputy. Then there is Dr. Donald Wright, the CSI Chief of Research and Publication, a man who never fails to teach me something in the midst of many conversations, especially about the art and technique of academic research, writing, and publishing. Next, is the CSI Staff Ride Team, an organization that I had the honor of leading and working with for my first 18 months at CSI. The Staff Ride Team remains an asset that the Army at large needs to know more about in order to help make leaders at all levels progressively better. In particular, I wish to sincerely thank Mr. Gary Linhart, Staff Ride Team contract historian, for his help in shaping the development of this work and guiding me along a very time compressed weekend spent at various locations that helped clarify many assumptions and assertions on

how to best shape a staff ride that captures the importance of both the overall campaign and its culminating battle. His ongoing work to revise the original CSI-facilitated New Orleans staff ride includes the fantastic maps provided in this book. His assistance and friendship is greatly appreciated and is a testament of the Staff Ride Team's dedication to supporting the Force. Finally, I would like to thank my Norwich classmate and good friend, Lieutenant Colonel Brian Doyle and his ROTC cadets from Tulane University's Orleans Battalion for requesting CSI's support of their New Orleans staff ride in April 2014, during which a detailed reconnaissance, preparation, as well as focused discussions led to a great Tulane staff ride, a depth of practical research, and the energy to produce this book for future staff rides.

Matthew B. Dale  
Combat Studies Institute

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## Introduction

The legacy of the battles fought on the Plains of Chalmette, just down river from the city of New Orleans and which gave its name to the collective fighting, remains partially shrouded in a great deal of popular myth. Part of the issue originates from its occurrence within the span of the War of 1812, unfairly pigeonholed as one of our least remembered and studied American conflicts even during its bicentennial commemoration. Another key factor is that New Orleans has come to represent one of the most lop-sided military victories in history, an American miracle. Rising above it all is Andrew Jackson, the larger than life frontier Militia general that humbled the British Army which had itself defeated Napoleon, and paving a way to the American Presidency.

However, there really is far more to the entire event than the *Battle* of New Orleans. First of all, the “battle” really consisted of four separate actions, taking place during the period between 23 December 1814 and 8 January 1815. Each of these engagements differed somewhat from another based on the type of offensive operation conducted: an American spoiling attack, two consecutive British limited attacks (the first example meeting the definition of a modern reconnaissance in force), and a deliberate British attack against a fortified defensive position. Hence, the carefully considered title of this work: *The Staff Ride Handbook for the **Battles** of New Orleans, 23 December 1814-8 January 1815*.

In order to be properly understood, New Orleans must be considered as the decisive operation of a larger operational plan designed to achieve a strategic goal. The British campaign in the Gulf represented a clear intent to achieve a decisive victory over the United States in order to positively influence the terms of the peace treaty already being negotiated.

The British campaign in the Gulf represented a highly ambitious political undertaking embodied within an exceedingly complicated joint campaign plan. Within the context of the campaign in the Gulf region (comprising both the Creek War and the battles for Mobile, Pensacola, and New Orleans) Andrew Jackson clearly stands out as the dominating influence over every aspect of the campaign and its culminating battle on the Plain of Chalmette. His British opponent’s influence upon events pales in comparison to Jackson because of Major General Sir Edward Pakenham’s late entry into the already ill-proceeding campaign, making Pakenham a sadly tragic figure. Still, the two commanders remain the central characters of the drama and provide interesting contrasts in leadership on the early 19th century battlefield as experienced outside the concurrent Napoleonic battles seen in Europe.

Ultimately, the battles fought below New Orleans were also very much Soldiers' battles. On both sides the common Soldier's motivation to fight is under constant measurement, more so with the British because of the challenges they had to overcome in just getting to the battlefield. The Soldiers endured weather conditions common in a Gulf coast winter: wet, windy, and cold. They moved through some of the most challenging terrain offered in North America: bayous, swamps, and dense vegetation. They endured repeated exposure to intense and highly accurate enemy fire for prolonged periods without the slightest evidence of success. In the end, the British Soldiers at New Orleans demonstrated that that fighting spirit does have a breaking point, no matter how courageous the actions of their leadership on the battlefield.

There is the challenge of providing an effectively conducted staff ride, aligning the historical facts and analysis in order to tell an accurate story of what happened at the time it occurred and why, while providing the important "so what." The "so what" being the final analysis that helps make the history relevant.

As a vehicle for the education of military professionals, the staff ride has long proven its efficacy. Analysis of a battle or a campaign through an examination of the actual terrain is a concept deeply rooted in military study. In Europe, following the Wars of German Unification (1864-1871), Helmuth von Moltke who was referred to as the Elder in comparison to his nephew who followed in his footsteps, integrated staff rides into the training of German general staff officers by posing challenging questions to them during rides of battlefields on which he had achieved his greatest triumphs. In the United States in 1894, Captain Arthur L. Wagner, a leading scholar at the Army's General Service and Staff School which is the forerunner of today's Command and General Staff College CGSC at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, made an initial proposal for the conduct of a staff ride on Civil War battlefields for the course's top students. However, just as with other periods of fiscal difficulty in our Army's history, the exercise was seen as too extravagant and funding was denied. In 1906, Major Eben Swift finally brought the concept to fruition with a staff ride focused on William T. Sherman's 1864 Atlanta Campaign. The essential elements of Wagner and Swift's staff ride concept included a detailed classroom study of a campaign followed by an in-depth visit to the sites associated with that campaign. In the wake of Swift's successful first effort, staff rides became part of the curriculum at Fort Leavenworth and eventually the Army War College. Unfortunately, both programs saw elimination with America's entry in to the First World War. Afterward, only the War College's program saw

re-institution, running through most of the Interwar Period until America's Second World War mobilization. Several decades came to pass until staff rides once again saw integration within Army Professional Military Education (PME), with a new generation of contributors adding an integration phase in order to interconnect the classroom and field study for further insights. Over the course of the last 30 years the preliminary study, field study, and integration phases have become the prime components of the modern staff ride.

Today, the Army considers the staff ride an essential aspect of historical education for the modern military professional throughout its system of schools and a crucial facet in the continuing professional development and education of its leaders. The Army War College, CGSC, and institutions throughout the Army's education system conduct staff rides with the extensive resources necessary to execute the preliminary study, field study, and integration methodology. Organizations and units outside of the PME environment can also benefit extensively from staff rides but they often find resources, particularly time, to be more restricted. Hence the publishing of staff ride handbooks. A handbook is a tool that is extremely useful in preparing for a staff ride. It provides background to the opposing forces and campaign, a suggested list of sites to visit also referred to as stands, subject matter topics for discussion at those stands, and advice for administrative and sustainment support. The intent of this handbook is not to replace the detailed study required to execute an effective staff ride but to provide a solid starting point for the interested organization.

This handbook is one in a series of works from the Combat Studies Institute (CSI) designed to facilitate the conduct of staff rides throughout the Armed Forces of the United States. The foundational document of this series is *The Staff Ride* by Dr. William Glenn Robertson (Washington, DC: Center of Military History Publication 70-21, 1987). *The Staff Ride* describes the staff ride methodology in detail and gives suggestions that will assist in building any staff ride. In addition to *The Staff Ride*, CSI publishes handbooks focused on particular battles and campaigns from throughout the Army's history. These are from the American Revolution to Pearl Harbor. *The Staff Ride* and CSI's staff ride handbooks can be electronically downloaded or requested in hard copy from the US Army Combined Arms Center's Military History Support website at <http://usacac.Army.mil/cac2/historical-support.asp>.

All of these publications are outstanding tools for the military professional and for anyone interested in the detailed study of a given battle or campaign. New Orleans presents students of the operational art

with an excellent theater of operations in the Gulf Region which ranged from the Gulf coast of Florida to southeastern Louisiana, including decisive points at Pensacola and Mobile. While many of the stands in this staff ride handbook deal directly with the tactical battles of New Orleans, those battles also represent the decisive operation of a joint operational campaign.

Therefore, the first stand, at the Rigolets between Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne, places a group in an ideal setting to discuss the wide-ranging implications of joint campaign planning at the operational level of war before transitioning to the tactical level as illustrated in the stands that follow.

The majority of groups conducting a New Orleans staff ride will focus on the tactical level directly tied to the battles themselves. There are numerous lessons at the tactical level to include concepts about leadership, doctrine, technology, and the human dimension which should emerge from the staff ride. For example, there is Jackson's building of a victorious cohesive team from an extremely diverse force of Regulars, Sailors, Marines, Militia, pirates, free men of color, and Indians which attests to the power of his leadership and personality. Similarly, the staff ride should include something of the pathos of battle. An example is when Lieutenant Colonel Dale (no relation to the author), commander of the 93d Regiment, gave his watch to a surgeon requesting that he give it to his wife because he knew that he was going to die at the head of his regiment from attacking the American line. Individuals developing the staff ride may have to modify the stands to fit their schedules but they should always attempt to keep a sense of connection between stands so that participants do not lose the context of the campaign.

Participants must have a chance to conduct proper research and prepare before actually visiting the staff ride locations. The extent of participants' preparation will depend on available time. At one end of the spectrum students might have ample time to explore numerous secondary sources and important primary sources. On the other end, if less time is available for research, many secondary works provide ample overviews of the campaign and its culminating battle.

The *Staff Ride Handbook for the Battles of New Orleans* provides a systematic approach to the analysis of this key event of the War of 1812:

Part I describes the organization of the American and British Armies, detailing their organization, training, equipment, and tactics.

Part II consists of a campaign overview, establishing the context for

the individual actions to be studied in the field.

Part III consists of a suggested itinerary of sites to visit in order to obtain a more concrete view of the campaign and battles in several phases. For each stand, there is a set of navigational directions, an orientation to the battle site, detailed descriptions of the action that occurred there, and vignettes provided by campaign participants in their own words, and suggested analysis questions and topics for further discussion. \*

Part IV discusses the final phase of the staff ride, the integration. The participating group, as the term implies, integrate the collective and individual actions of the preliminary study and field study phases of the staffride and to provide relevant lessons for application in the contemporary Armed Forces – making history relevant to the warfighter!

Part V provides practical information on conducting a staff ride in the New Orleans area, including sources of assistance and sustainment considerations.

Appendixes A, B, and C outline the orders of battle of the opposing forces, biographical sketches of the key participants, and historic maps. Finally, the bibliography provides a list sources utilized in writing this hand book, providing further options for preliminary study. Many of the sources listed in the bibliography are easily available on the internet, eliminating the added expense of purchasing books for preliminary study.

In sum, the battles of New Orleans, and the larger Gulf Campaign, provides a unique view of decisive action within the joint operational level of warfare as it evolved during the early 19th Century and eventually maturing as our current understanding of joint operations in the 21st Century.

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\* All vignettes provided from primary sources in the bibliography appear without changes to the original text.



## **Part I. The Opposing Force<sup>1</sup>**

### **The American Army**

On 1 January 1812, 11 regiments made up the regular Army. Seven of these were infantry, one each of riflemen and light dragoons, and two of artillery. The Army divided the two artillery regiments into a regiment of light and a regiment of heavy artillery. However, because the War Department saw horses as an expensive peacetime expenditure, all of the companies of light artillery served as infantry. The authorized strength of the Army was near 10,000 but with only about 6,000 men on active service. These veteran regiments in smaller elements, often as small as a single company, found themselves scattered in posts and fortifications on the coastlines or along the major rivers in the interior. As manned, the force could not effectively execute its primary missions without reinforcements of Militia or Volunteers. Therefore, in the first months of 1812 and prior to the declaration of war, Congress approved an expansion of the regular Army. Congress authorized 10 additional regiments of infantry, a second regiment of light dragoons, and two more regiments of artillery. This came to a total authorized strength of approximately 27,000 officers and men. However, fewer than 12,000 had been commissioned or enlisted by the period immediately prior to the war. Nearly half of the regular Army amounted to newly recruited and equally raw recruits and officers. The sudden, though slower than anticipated, influx of manpower created an enormous strain upon the sustainment system that failed to provide even the most basic of items.

The majority of the Army found itself deployed in various locations in the newly acquired territory as a result of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Over 400 Soldiers formed the force assigned to the city of New Orleans because of lingering uncertainty on the part of the government toward the loyalty of the French and Spanish Creole population. However, a larger issue merited the Army's presence in the new territory. This being Spanish possessions in Texas and Florida flanked what had been the Spanish colony of Louisiana only a few years before. The close proximity to New Orleans, the new American port for exportation of goods from the emerging American northwestern economy, made Americans uncomfortable. When previously in control of Louisiana, the Spanish authorities closed the Mississippi to American traffic numerous times. Spanish occupied East and West Florida also presented a potential threat to American settlers in the Mississippi Territory (the modern states of Alabama and Mississippi) who required the Spanish port of Mobile to export

their goods to market. The next several years following the Louisiana Purchase saw the deployment of nearly 700 American Soldiers to various outposts throughout the region and multiple incidents between the military forces of both nations. Though both sides avoided a larger war over the contested territories, tensions between the two nations over lands continued for nearly the next 20 years.<sup>2</sup>

The United States entered the war unprepared. Despite the labors of Madison and his supporters, the various efforts in the past 18 months to increase the size and quality of the American military fell gravely short. With an Army of slightly over 6,000 men and a navy of only 16 vessels, the United States committed itself to a conflict with one of the greatest powers on earth. Thus, the American story of the War of 1812 is one of military unpreparedness, the great efforts made by the nation to overcome its initial miscalculations, and the organization of it and the military to conduct an effective war. The first two years of the war reflected a steep learning curve for the nation and its Army as the two reacted and persevered to both defeat and disaster on every front. Time, however, and the predominant British focus on their war against Napoleon in Europe, allowed for the selection of new military leaders and better trained formations that eventually demonstrated a clear improvement on the battlefields in the war's second two years. Eventually, that time and the efforts made by the Americans, gave the United States parity at the negotiating table in the fall of 1814.<sup>3</sup>

### **The War of 1812**

The beginning of the War of 1812 saw the Regular Army dispersed in series of forts stretched along the Canadian boundary and the western frontier. The strength of the Army in June of 1812 totaled 11,744 officers and men, including an estimated 5,000 recruits enlisted for an additional force authorized by Congress at the beginning of the year. It fell well short of the authorized strength of 35,600. On the other hand, the combat strength of the United States Navy consisted of 20 vessels: three large frigates, three smaller frigates, and 14 other vessels.

Congress quickly reacted following the declaration of war to expand the military forces necessary to both invade British Canada and protect the American coast from attacks by the British Royal Navy. Nearly 20 years of concern over standing armies as well as ineffective legislation and an occasionally erratic economy, countered the efforts of an instant demand. Three separate components stood at the core of the government's plan to mobilize the nation's manpower for war: the regular Army, the Militia, and Volunteers.<sup>4</sup>



## Regulars

Immediately following the declaration of war, Congress once again passed legislation authorizing a further increase in the regular Army. Congress approved a standardized organization for the infantry regiment and increased the infantry to a total of 25 regiments. Congress offered far more incentives for new recruits enlisting for a term of five years or for the duration of the war. The government promised to pay recruits a bounty of 16 dollars and, upon completion of their enlistment, the provision of three months' pay and 160 acres of land. Nevertheless, the twin incentives of land and money resulted in an insufficient number of recruits to fill the ranks and the established regiments fell chronically short of Soldiers.

The Army's rapid expansion depended greatly upon the selection of competent men to serve as officers at various levels. Men with the right economic and social connections, usually from amongst the upper class and having thoughts of military glory, contacted their congressmen. State delegations to Congress submitted lists of their constituents for consideration by the Secretary of War and President Madison. Madison and his Secretary of War made their selections and returned the nominations to Congress for its approval. Some nominees possessed prior commissioned service or currently served in the regular Army, seeking promotion and assignment to a new regiment. However, despite efforts to ensure that experienced applicants received commissions across the regiments, most of the nominees possessed little or no previous military service, least of all in wartime, and started at a similar level as the privates in their charge.

The War Department established procedures for recruiting. Typically, but not always, a captain remained most closely associated with recruiting new soldiers. As the officers persuaded men to enlist, they selected the most fit to serve as non-commissioned officers, corporals, and sergeants. Upon 100 men agreeing to serve, officers mustered them into service and marched them to a designated training camp under the command of a captain authorized by the War Department. Eventually, the office of the Adjutant General assumed direction of recruiting efforts. The War Department assigned officers and companies to their regiments and by August, a shift in recruiting took place. The secretary of war turned over responsibility for recruiting to the individual colonels commanding the regiments. The War Department staff established a geographic area for each regiment as its specific recruiting zone. Therefore, an infantry regiment would recruit within a single state or two states at most. For example, the two regular infantry regiments present at New

Orleans during the campaign in Louisiana, the 7th and 44th, came from Kentucky and Louisiana (predominantly from the city of New Orleans) respectively. However, recruiting remained slow throughout the war and produced direct consequences at the regimental level.

With the mustering of a full company, the formation received orders to join its regiment or to garrison a threatened location. This resulted in the fact that regiments rarely fielded all of their companies and officers in one location. Typically, only a few companies served together under their regimental colonels. Detached companies might be significant distances from their regiment and under the local control of a different regimental commander. On the other hand, the main body of the regiment might be commanded by the colonel or a lieutenant colonel. Other regimental officers served on recruiting duty or on brigade-level and higher staffs. Some few served as aides to generals or on special assignment. Often, orphan companies, those separated from their regiments, temporarily amalgamated under whatever field grade officer might be available. All of these circumstances leant some confusion when attempting to understand military reports and orders of battle. A military report noting the presence or action of a specific regiment almost never refers to the entire regiment. It refers to those companies of that specific regiment collocated and acting under a single commander. It may also refer to an orphaned company of an infantry regiment or the Light Artillery temporarily amalgamated with another regiment. This may be loosely termed a regiment or a battalion. The term battalion referring to a grouping of companies, usually under command of a field grade officer.

As the war progressed, Congress adjusted the composition of the regular Army twice more. In January of 1813, Congress created 20 additional infantry regiments, including the 44th, organized in New Orleans and later present during the fighting. At first, Congress directed that the men recruited for these new regiments would enlist for only one year of service. However, it later decreed that Soldiers would enlist for the usual term of five years or the duration of the war.

American military and political leaders, for the most part, understood the extensive timeframe required to organize, train, and equip new regiments for the Regular Army. In order to buy the necessary time for the Army, leaders believed that Militia could effectively defend the nation until the time when the expanded Regular Army could effectively take the offensive.

## **Militia**

Militia comprised the vast majority of American Soldiers that fought in the War of 1812. Unfortunately, the system in place prior to the war prevented the United States from fielding the force necessary to effectively conduct operations. The Constitution and the Militia Act of 1792 created divisions of labor between the federal and state governments that blurred the responsibility for organizing and equipping the Militia which lead to the failure of the entire Militia system. The federal laws and systems in place prior to the war failed to established standards for organizing and training the states' respective militias and provide guidance for the wartime integrating the Militia with the Regular Army.<sup>5</sup>

During the War of 1812, employment of Militia presented more of a question of their ability to fight than their willingness to fight. Despite the parameters of the Militia Act of 1792, many sources indicated that Militia reported without weapons and basic equipment to include shoes and blankets. Therefore, the modern concept of the American frontiersman coming with rifle in hand proved false. Reality presented a different picture of a man reporting without a weapon and even the knowledge of how to use one. An individual Militiaman reporting to a rendezvous or camp of instruction represented the same challenge to a Regular training a new recruit in the 23 separate movements required to fire a musket outlined in the manuals of the day. However, when properly organized, trained, and equipped, and provided with capable leaders that knew how to employ them within a given operating environment, Militia could become a formidably effective force as demonstrated at New Orleans.<sup>6</sup>

The company represented the basic Militia unit. The organizational standard called for 64 privates but frontier organizations fielded between 40 and 80. The Soldiers of the company elected company captains and the subordinate officers. The elected captain then appointed the noncommissioned officers. Multiple companies made up battalions. These formations usually fielded between four and eight subordinate companies, perhaps a total of 500 men. Two or more battalions formed a regiment and two to four regiments formed a brigade. A division, the highest level, consolidated between two and four brigades. State governors appointed general officers approved by the state legislature. The commissioned officers of the organizations elected officers above the rank of captain in field positions in battalions and regiments.

While many of the Militiamen in the North faced professional British formations along the Canadian frontier, the

bulk of Militiamen in the south faced hostile Indians and a far different type of warfare. However, Southern Militia experienced the same problems seen by Northern Militia, especially disputes over time in service which always posed a major friction point with senior Regular Army commanders. Some differences came from the fact that several states in the south entered the Union just before the war began and still had no Militia laws on the books.

The war in the southern part of the United States began in July of 1813 when Mississippi Territorial Militia (the modern States of Mississippi and Alabama) ambushed a party of Creek Indians after their return from Pensacola, in Spanish controlled Florida, to obtain arms for use against American settlers. The Militia, initially successful, then scattered in the face of resurgent Creeks. The Mississippi Militia's actions directly led to the Creek assault on Fort Mims resulting in the "Fort Mims massacre" which stirred the American southern frontier to arms.<sup>7</sup>

A multitude of issues with the Militia in the south during 1812 and 1813 reflected the overall problems with the nation's Militia system. This was especially in the category of supplies in a Federal system that failed to support reporting Militia. Many of the issues encountered ended up being either exasperated or partially resolved by strong personalities. All of the issues widely experienced with Militia led Andrew Jackson, Major General of the Tennessee Militia, to finally withdraw his forces from the overall Federal government's 1813 campaign against the Creeks who appeared to be a lesser enemy than his own logistics was and those logistics that the Federal government failed to provide.<sup>8</sup>

Following his 1814 victory over the Creeks at Horseshoe Bend, Andrew Jackson's commission as Major General in the Regular Army and appointment as Commanding General of the United States 7th Military District, facilitated the integration and improvement of the Militia units within the area of operations. Jackson's new found authority also authorized him to call out additional Volunteers from the States within his district and from Kentucky. Jackson's short campaign to seize Pensacola in order to deny the Spanish city as a base for Creek and British operations, demonstrated this new flexibility. Militia made up two thirds of Jackson's 4,100-man force of combat experienced Volunteers, Regulars, and allied Indians.<sup>9</sup>

At the battle of New Orleans, Jackson became a standard bearer in all of the myth-making behind the battle and the Militia's role in the victory. While Militia on the right bank of the Mississippi collapsed in the face of a numerically inferior

British force, representing the sole black mark on the battle (somewhat undeserved in hindsight as will be outlined below), the Militia on the left bank, many veterans of the Creek War, won all of the glory and perpetuated much of the pervading myth that surrounds the battle. However, it also demonstrated that Militia, under the right conditions and with strong leadership directly at hand, could contribute to decisive victory, even in the face of an experienced veteran Regular force.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the hard learned lessons of those leaders at the federal levels of government and their subordinate field commanders, news of the victory at New Orleans and the agreeable peace that followed, restored faith in the ideals of the Militia that most Americans held before the war. It would take nearly another century with three further major military conflicts for the Army to finally come to grips with its repeatedly faulty Militia system.<sup>11</sup>

### **Volunteers**

Many states and territories possessed permanently established volunteer military organizations. Companies, organized by the leaders of the local upper class around the, in many ways operated like private social clubs. Members with a desire for a military lifestyle organized their companies and then gained the governor's recognition for the unit to get status as an adjunct to the Militia. Volunteers provided their own uniforms, weapons, and equipment. They elected their own officers commissioned by the governor into the Militia. Older states, like New York, boasted dozens of companies of riflemen, artillery, dragoons, and hussars. The volunteer companies trained more frequently than the common Militia and carried a greater martial spirit.

Louisiana, like other states in the country, possessed a tradition of organizing volunteer military companies. However, with its eclectic mix of French and Spanish Creole culture and old world military traditions, Louisiana fielded some unique organizations. Each of the volunteer companies of New Orleans presented a colorful picture, dating back to the earliest days of French colonization and parading in a variety of different colored uniforms of European origin. Duplicating the social club atmosphere of other units throughout the country, the New Orleans Rifles consisted of recruits from the city's elite. These were businessmen known for their marksmanship, honed during public target shooting competitions.<sup>12</sup>

## Organization

American military force organization emulated the practices of their European counterparts. The basic organization, the infantry regiment, comprised 10 companies organized as a single battalion, although the Army briefly considered a two-battalion regiment. In June 1812, Congress approved the establishment of a regimental organization consisting of a small regimental headquarters and 10 infantry companies. The regimental commander's staff included a lieutenant colonel (the second-in-command), a major, an adjutant, quartermaster, paymaster, surgeon and two surgeons' mates, the sergeant major, quartermaster sergeant, and two musicians. The composition of a company included a captain, first lieutenant, second lieutenant, ensign, four sergeants, six corporals, two musicians and 90 privates. In March 1813, Congress added a second major to the headquarters and a third lieutenant and an additional sergeant to each company. An additional officer in each company theoretically made it easier to support recruiting without degrading leadership in the field. The new legislation established the infantry regiments full authorization of 1,091 men.

Congress authorized the establishment of two regiments of light dragoons but the two did not share a common uniformity. The First Regiment of Light Dragoons fielded eight companies with an authorized strength of 672 men. The organization of the Second Regiment of Light Dragoons, however, differed with 12 companies and a total authorization of 1,006 Soldiers. However, mounted forces rarely conducted a battlefield charge during this war. The mounted arm's primary tasks consisted of providing a rapid courier service and providing security between the widely dispersed elements of the Army. Andrew Jackson's 7th Military District did not have regular Army dragoons but relied upon mounted Militia from the Mississippi Territory who conducted security operations at various times throughout the Gulf campaign in Louisiana.

The Regiment of Light Artillery, conceptually designed as a horse artillery unit in which every soldier rode, proved to be a concept that never came to fruition, although some companies probably functioned in this manner during the war. On the other hand, several companies of the light artillery operated as infantry companies. Each of the 10 companies of light artillery included a captain, first lieutenant, and second lieutenant. The company also included four sergeants, four corporals, two musicians, eight artificers, and 12 drivers. Congress never saw to the formal standardization of the

three heavy artillery regiments. The companies of heavy artillery regiments served in three capacities. First, a company could serve as a garrison of a fixed fortification with the obvious task of manning the guns. Second, a company could serve as field artillery with larger elements. There was no fixed organization of a field artillery company. The company might serve three guns and a howitzer or a variety of other non-standard combinations. Third, a company of artillerists could be employed as infantrymen.

US regular artillerymen served as the core of Jackson's artillery at New Orleans, augmented by equally proficient US Navy gun crews. A company of over 70 Soldiers from the Regiment of Light Artillery served at New Orleans, while a second company served at Fort St. Philip on the Mississippi River, and another served at Fort Bowyer at the entrance of Mobile Bay. All three elements saw significant fighting during the campaign in the Gulf. Baratarian pirates and experienced Militia gunners provided additional gun crews. While regulars served artillery positions along Jackson's main defensive line along the Rodriguez Canal, a larger contingent manned the variety of guns assigned to the critical important position at Fort St. Philip on the Mississippi River.<sup>13</sup>

Engineers were staff officers and consolidated into the professional but small Corps of Engineers. There were a mere 17 engineers serving on active duty when war broke out but that number grew as the war progressed. Graduates of West Point dominated the Corps of Engineers although that school had only come into existence in 1802. Prior to the war, these engineers were occupied with designing and building fortifications, usually to protect harbors. As the War Department designated armies and military districts, it assigned engineers to serve on the staff of the commanding generals. Besides building fortifications, engineer officers also conducted reconnaissance or opened roads. It appears that Jackson lacked regular Army engineers during the campaign in Louisiana but greatly benefited from his selection of two civilian engineers on his staff, Major Tatum Howell, a veteran Revolutionary War topographical engineer and longtime friend, and Major Arsene Lacarriere Latour, a French-born military engineer living in New Orleans. Officers such as these two supervised the establishment of the fortification built at New Orleans, utilizing the non-specialized troops on hand to perform the necessary work.

To meet wartime demands, Congress appointed general officers to command armies. These Army commanders possessed the authority to organize brigades and appoint commanders. In 1813, the War Department eliminated the

Army as an organization and instead divided the United States into nine (and eventually 10) military districts. A general officer commanded each district as well as all the regulars, Volunteers, and federalized Militia within its borders. The Seventh District encompassed the states of Tennessee, Louisiana, and the Mississippi Territory (comprised of the modern states of Mississippi and Alabama). When Andrew Jackson assumed command of the district upon accepting his commission as a Major General in the Regular Army, it included the United States 2d, 3rd, 7th, 39th (this regiment serving as the core of Jackson's force in the final campaign against the Creeks), 44th Infantry Regiments, and various detachments of US regular artillerymen.<sup>14</sup>

### **Sustaining the Force**

The Soldiers in the field suffered from the repeated failures of a faulty American logistical system unprepared for war. Prior to the declaration of war, the secretary of war and a handful of civilian agents in the field performed the Army's logistical tasks. The War Department operated a number of permanent supply points, operated by civilian agents, under the direction of a Superintendent of Military Stores. In 1812, Congress authorized an expansion of the Army's sustainment structure to meet the needs of an enlarged Army. The secretary of war oversaw multiple specialized offices responsible for acquiring, storing, moving, and issuing weapons, ammunition, equipment, and clothing. Unfortunately, the secretary experienced challenges that prevented him from clearly delineating the duties and responsibilities of each office or how they interfaced. Little coordination among the three departments occurred at their highest levels resulting in an ineffectiveness and inefficiencies in every theater, especially the south.

The most important Congressional action led to the creation of a Quartermaster Department and a number of additional subordinate quartermaster officer positions. The Quartermaster Department also held responsibility to procure equipment and supplies. In accordance with congressional legislation, each regiment possessed a quartermaster officer assigned to the regiment, appointed by the commander. Still, above the regimental level, commanders also detailed officers to serve as quartermaster officers. These officers answered to both the general officer they served in the field and the Quartermaster General in Washington.

The Quartermaster Department accepted material from the Purchasing Department and held responsibility for its transportation and issuing to units in the field. However, transportation problems presented a serious bottleneck in the



American wartime logistics system. Issues existed in transporting equipment and weapons to units in camp and the field, especially the Militia. With fighting fronts well away from sources of supplies and equipment, and roads in the United States generally poor, finding wagons, teams, and teamsters willing to travel near an active front proved difficult. The lack of manufacturing centers and a suitable road network in the south made the sustainment of forces in the region extremely challenging, making a dependence on river borne transportation even more vital. Regrettably, the supply of food or subsistence, suffered from chronic mishandling. The War Department issued contracts for subsistence, requiring each appointed contractor to serve all Army forces within a given geographic area. Limitations, however, made the system inflexible in the field. Contractors need not cross international boundaries, nor did they have to provide supplies beyond their assigned areas. During the war, forces faced a continual shortage of supplies which arrived late and often spoiled. Despite repeated complaints from general officers, the system of feeding the Army did not improve until after the war's completion.

Subsistence proved an Achilles heel in Jackson's 1813 campaign against the Creeks in the sparsely developed Mississippi Territory, causing its early termination without decisive results. He still encountered challenging issues during his successful concluding campaign the following year even when taking the initiative to utilize the inland rivers available to him. When defending New Orleans from the British in 1814, Jackson's Army received abundant provisions directly from the city of New Orleans, less than 10 miles to its rear. This point stemmed from the British blockade, effectively closing the port of New Orleans to foreign trade and leaving stocks of various products stacked along the city's levee. The Mississippi River provided an uninterrupted line of supply from northern manufacturing centers. However, the government's fragile sustainment system failed to exploit this fact, especially during the campaign in Louisiana. While Jackson received sufficient manpower via the river from Kentucky and Tennessee, the Quartermaster Department failed to deliver critically needed weapons and ammunition to New Orleans until several weeks after Jackson's victory.<sup>15</sup>

### **The British Army**

With the declaration of war, the United States faced one of the major powers in the world. However, by 1812, Great Britain continued nearly 20 years of warfare with revolutionary and then Napoleonic France. England dedicated the majority of its economic and military power toward this

war, since 1808, against French efforts in Portugal and Spain. Therefore, when the United States declared war, the British government found little it could do to support the defense of Canada, let alone conduct major combat operations against the Americans. Within months of the new war, the British Royal Navy deployed less than 50 warships in the western Atlantic. These vessels and an equal amount of smaller craft focused on a multitude of missions that included escorting merchant shipping, protecting British possessions, establishing a blockade along the American coastline, and engaging the smaller US Navy.

British security of Upper and Lower Canada (today's modern Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec) consisted of approximately 7,000 regular troops backed by a Canadian Militia that could be drawn from a population of 86,000 military age males. Furthermore, Canada lacked the established infrastructure to directly support the British warfare effort locally. However, the British made up their shortage somewhat in manpower through their continued support of the Indians living in American territory, one of the key reasons for the American declaration of war. Following the American victory over Tecumseh's Indian confederacy at Tippecanoe, Tecumseh led some 3,500 warriors across the border into Canada. The pro-British tribes represented a source of manpower lacking for the United States. Based on this resource, the two warring nations began their war with a degree of parity.<sup>16</sup>

### **Organization**

Despite several years of less than successful campaigning against the armies of revolutionary France in Holland and elsewhere, the British Army and primarily its infantry, still held somewhat of a moral superiority over its European continental foes. Though small in comparison to its rivals, the Army established a lengthy reputation for fielding well-trained and disciplined formations. Men enlisted in the British Army for a period of seven years or for life. Typical recruits came from two common sources: the poor and the criminal class. Hard discipline turned this unlikely material into the finest infantry of its time, especially during the wars of the Napoleonic period.

The majority of officers in American units new to their positions and with little but Militia experience as preparation but the officers in the British Army were, for the most part, professionals. British officers predominantly came from the gentry and middle class, although a small percentage actually came up from the ranks by being rewarded for personal gallantry. While not particularly well-educated,

British officers remained literate and read. Only about four percent of the officer corps graduated from the Royal Military College at High Wycombe. The British officer corps still depended upon a purchase system whereby an individual with enough money could buy a vacancy in a regiment. After that, an officer could continue to buy his way up through the officer ranks or await promotion by seniority as spaces opened by death or injury.

A proud heritage of specialized Soldiers marked the British infantry. The infantry boasted kilted highlanders, green-jacketed riflemen, and whole battalions of light infantry and of fusiliers. All of these types of regiments would be represented at New Orleans. British infantry regiments contained anywhere from a single to seven battalions but more than half of all regiments possessed only two battalions that rarely served together. Therefore, the terms regiment and battalion tended to be used interchangeably in contemporary and historical sources. A lieutenant colonel commanded the infantry battalion. The regimental colonel, if present, often commanded a brigade or a garrison. Other options saw him back in England recruiting or even on inactive duty.

Like the United States Army's infantry regiments, each British battalion consisted of 10 companies. However, the British differed in one important distinction. British battalions fielded eight "battalions" (or "centre") companies and two elite "flank" companies. These distinctive companies arose from the position of the companies when arrayed in a line formation, each company on line facing the enemy. One of the flank companies, the grenadier company, consisted of the tallest, most stalwart Soldiers who found their way into this company to receive a pay bonus. Originally distinguished by their throwing of hand bombs, grenadiers eventually came to be equipped exactly like the Soldiers of the centre companies. The other flank company, designated the light company, consisted of equally stalwart Soldiers, physically tough and particularly energetic. The light company often received the task of scouting and skirmishing, while receiving higher pay like the grenadiers.

Positioning these two companies on the flanks of the battalion made it easier to detach them for other missions without disrupting the battalion's line. The battalion commander possessed the flexibility to detach the light company for skirmishing forward of the rest of the battalion or detach the grenadier company to defend a weak flank or lead an assault. Brigade and division commanders often consolidated several light companies or grenadier companies

into temporary battalions to take advantage of their expertise and high moral for special tasks. During the war, with such a long border to defend, senior commanders further divided infantry battalions to provide a broader coverage. Like their American equivalents, a British battalion seldom saw combat with all of its subordinate companies under the regimental colors.

Though the authorized strength of a British infantry battalion numbered 1,100 Soldiers, the British Army rarely maintained this total. Regiments that participated in the Gulf campaign, veterans of various periods of the fighting in Spain, averaged between 550 and 800 men but again, not all present for duty. Only the 93d Regiment, organized during the European wars, numbered close to its full strength, having been stationed in South Africa's Cape Colony prior to its first combat action at New Orleans.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of cavalry, the British Army's deployment of its mounted regiments remained limited. Only two regular British cavalry regiments went to North America during the War of 1812. One regiment, the 14th Dragoons, arrived in Louisiana in January of 1814, before the final British attempt to penetrate Jackson's line. However, this regiment arrived without its horses based on a combined attempt by the government to save money and an intelligence report that asserted an abundant number of horses in the American south. The organization of a British cavalry regiment included a small headquarters and 10 troops (companies). The Royal Regiment of Artillery provided the artillery batteries that supported England's armies. Some units were called Royal Foot Artillery, consisting of 10 battalions of 10 companies each. Companies of a specific battalion did not serve together and might be found on several continents during the same time frame. Artillery officers were all graduates of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and were considered specialists, like engineer officers. Unlike American artillerists who frequently served as infantry, the British artillerists never did so.<sup>18</sup>

### **Influence of the Peninsula Army**

At the climax of the American repulse of Pakenham's final assault upon the Rodriguez Canal on 8 January 1815, Andrew Jackson must have considered that his Army defeated a numerically superior force of the Duke of Wellington's Army. At that moment he knew that he achieved a decisive victory over, at that time, the best Army in the world. However, several points need to be made on the accuracy in describing the British force at New Orleans as a force of Peninsula veterans, not to diminish the quality of the British

force and its efforts but to balance the record of the campaign.

The force that landed and fought at New Orleans cannot be considered a portion of the Peninsula Army because of one simple fact that it lacked the leadership of Sir Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington. A British Army landed in Louisiana but it failed to conform to the high personal standards of a Wellingtonian Army. Even the Iron Duke held varying opinions of the Army under his direct command in Portugal and Spain, referring to it in 1810 as “the worst Army that was ever sent from England” and then, at its high point, asserting that “I could have done *anything* with that Army, it was in such splendid order.”<sup>19</sup>

Twenty-one regiments received orders for North America. Four regiments never departed. A total of 10 Peninsula regiments sailed for Canada where they played a minor role in the abortive 1814 campaign in the Champlain Valley but provided the necessary force to adequately defend the border from American attack. Four regiments, the 4th, 21st, 44th, and 85th, all destined to serve at New Orleans, first served in the Chesapeake region by fighting at Bladensburg and Baltimore.

Eleven regiments served in the fighting below New Orleans from 22 December 1814 to 19 January 1815. Seven regiments possessed moderate to longer term experience serving in the Peninsula and six saw extensive action from 1810-1814 which was the period that saw the highest operational tempo and Wellington’s greatest victories in the Peninsula. This represented 63 percent of the total force. Only the 44th missed the fighting in 1813-1814. However, roughly 42 percent of that experienced combat power that arrived two days before the final assault never saw significant action on 8 January 1815 (the 7th, 43rd, and 14th Light Dragoons in reserve). Only four regiments lacked combat experience in the Peninsula. The 1st and 5th West India, manned by former slaves recruited in the Caribbean, possessed good combat records in the various British amphibious operations in that area of the world and though immune to the diseases of the region, they endured hostile winter conditions in Louisiana never before encountered, the 21st fought during Chesapeake campaign, and the 93d which was a new wartime regiment from the Cape Colony arrived without prior combat experience.<sup>20</sup>

Two basic problems that plagued the British Army as an institution, and its Army in the Peninsula specifically, stemmed from a shortage of competent generals and attrition upon the rank and file. Both factors maintained a day-to-day hold on Wellington’s attention throughout the war but especially from about 1810 until 1814. Both issues extended

to operations in North America after Napoleon's abdication, and concerned Wellington later at Waterloo in 1815. These two factors help, in some ways, dispel the aura that surrounded the British expeditionary force when it arrived in Louisiana in December of 1814.

Wellington and the government found it exceedingly difficult to supply the Army in the Peninsula back in Europe with effective leaders. This resulted in a youth movement in general officers, as reflected in their Peninsula commander-in-chief. However, youth also influenced the high casualties among the general officers as Wellington lost nine generals killed in action in the Peninsula. However, at this level most officers failed because while many adequately proved themselves capable of commanding a battalion or brigade, the command of a division usually revealed personal shortcomings. Even commanders that proved themselves at the head of a division, lacked the core requirements to effectively command larger forces. Wellington cited Sir Michael Pakenham, his brother in law and future commander of the New Orleans expedition, as one of those few capable officers by stating, "He may not be a genius but [he is] one of the best we have."<sup>21</sup>

Another factor played a part in understanding the true nature of the British Army as a whole and the regiments present at New Orleans in particular, that factor being attrition. Of the allied powers fighting against first revolutionary France and then Napoleon, Britain remained the only nation remaining in the field throughout the entire period extending from 1793 to 1815. The physical cost of the war against Napoleon totaled approximately 240,000. Attrition caused tremendous turnover in the ranks of the Peninsula regiments. At the Battle of Vittoria in 1814 where the majority of the Peninsula-New Orleans veterans served, the extremes of unit reporting prior to the battle extended from a minimum of 230 men fit for duty to a maximum of 800. At times, attrition made it difficult to determine the experience of a particular regiment. In fact, the difference of a year's time sometimes proved critical in this assessment. However, sometimes the heritage of a given regiment's status colored the assessment, no matter how many new and inexperienced Soldiers stood in formation. This might have been especially true with the "veteran" units that ended the war in southern France in 1814 and later fought in Canada, Louisiana, and at Waterloo in 1815.

## Weapons

### Infantry

Both American and British Soldiers carried the primary weapon of the age, the **flintlock musket** and its attached bayonet. The smooth bore musket fired a spherical bullet made of lead. Tactics depended more on the volume of fire than on its accuracy. In order to increase the rate of fire, the manufacturers molded the ball so that the finished product measured significantly smaller than the barrel of the musket. Thus, the infantryman could ram the powder and ball down the barrel quickly. Upon firing, the ball blasted down the barrel and exited the muzzle on an erratic trajectory. A trained soldier, carefully aiming his musket, might have a reasonable chance of hitting a man at a distance of 40 yards but a group of Soldiers in formation could inflict significant casualties on an enemy at 125 yards or farther. With quality training and practice, the standard soldier could manage to fire two rounds per minute. Very well-trained Soldiers, as exhibited by British regulars under combat conditions, often achieved a rate of up to three and even four volleys per minute.

Musket ammunition consisted of a ball and powder rolled up in a paper cartridge. The paper was sometimes pasted closed but more often tied with string. The Americans also used a variant which consisted of three small buck shot placed atop the ball. Buck and ball was so popular among American Soldiers that virtually all cartridges were configured this way by war's end. The four pieces of lead dispersed soon after leaving the muzzle giving a somewhat greater probability of hitting a target. However, there is no clear evidence that the three buck shot were effective in incapacitating an enemy soldier unless striking the soldier in the face or hands. The British considered buck and ball as ungentlemanly.

Firing a musket produced particles of burning powder and small fragments from the flint that thrown all directions by the ignition of the powder in the pan. This feature of battlefield firepower created specific uniform requirements to protect the individual soldier with uniform coats including high collars and military headgear which possessed low brims, both designed to protect a soldier's hands and face from burns. Regimental surgeons still treated facial and hand burns at the conclusion of an engagement. The recoil of a musket equaled today's 12-gauge shotgun, leaving some Soldiers with bruised and sore shoulders. Improper control of the musket often injured the firer and his nearby comrades.

With each successive volley, dirty white smoke filled the air, obscuring the battlefield. On a still day, with no wind to disperse the smoke, a soldier often lost sight of his target after just a few volleys. This presented challenges for any soldier but especially the inexperienced Soldiers. Despite being in a linear formation with comrades to right and left, a soldier could find himself “lost” in the smoke and stricken with the fear of not seeing his comrades or the enemy. Here is where the well-trained and disciplined of a unit came into play.

Flint-lock muskets, even under the best possible conditions, frequently suffered from misfires. In approximately 15 percent of firings, the powder charge failed to ignite. Misfires resulted from misaligned, worn, or broken flints, a disturbed charge of priming powder, fouling in the touchhole, or poor gunpowder quality. An experienced soldier could identify a misfire and correct the deficiency to return his weapon to combat readiness. On the other hand, an inexperienced soldier might continue to load his musket with charge and ball repeatedly. Soldiers simply became ineffective if the musket misfired at each subsequent firing. However, if the musket eventually fired, the barrel would explode, seriously injuring or killing the soldier behind the weapon and potentially those Soldiers nearby.

**Bayonets** added to the killing potential of the flint-lock musket. The bayonet represented the terror weapon of the infantryman’s battlefield in the first half of the nineteenth century. Approximately fifteen inches long with a triangular cross section, the bayonet proved extremely deadly if brought into close action by well-trained Soldiers. Fear of being wounded by a bayonet persuaded inexperienced Soldiers to often refuse the order to charge despite the urgings of their officers. These same Soldiers often withdrew against orders in the face of a determined charge by the enemy. Experienced Soldiers, understanding the moral advantage that a bayonet charge gave them, sometimes showed their eagerness to advance against an enemy they believed to be less experienced and trained.

**Rifles** represented the precision firearm of the time, extremely accurate in the hands of a well-trained marksman. Therefore, riflemen in both armies became specialists. The United States Army established one regiment of riflemen. The British also established a rifle regiment, the 95th. Both armies deployed riflemen in skirmish lines forward of the regular infantry formations and employed them in security



missions or the targeting of key enemy leaders on the battlefield. The rifleman carried fine priming powder as well as coarser gunpowder rather than fixed cartridges musket ammunition used by the bulk of the British infantry. The rifle ball possessed a much tighter fit than the musket ball. The rifleman wrapped a greased piece of cloth or leather patch around the ball. This served to seal gases behind the ball and to assist it in gripping the barrel rifling. It took a skilled rifleman as long as a minute to carefully load his rifle but it often served as time well spent. The rifle was accurate up to 300 yards and represented a consistent guarantee that an enemy officer went down.

American rifle units, both Regulars and Volunteers, carried either the Model 1803 or Contract Model 1807 Rifle. The Harper's Ferry arsenal produced the .54 caliber Model 1803 and, as the name implies, private arms manufacturers made the Contract Model 1807. However, in the western regions of the United States, some militiamen carried the Kentucky Rifle (a variation of the original Pennsylvania Rifle, and referred to as a Tennessee Rifle because of local modifications made by gunsmiths in that state). In the hands of an experienced marksman, it could exceed ranges of several hundred yards. Contrary to popular myth, however, not every frontier volunteer reported for duty with a rifle. The popular conception of the well-armed crack shot fell to the wayside with the hundreds of ill equipped farmers, shop keepers, and laborers that volunteered for service. Nonetheless, the American force at New Orleans contained several small units equipped with rifles and many of the Tennessee Militia in General John Coffee's brigade also carried the weapon. The British 95th Regiment, known as the Rifle Regiment, represented a specialized unit on the battlefield because of being specifically organized for the skirmishing mission forward of the regular infantry. Riflemen formed an impressive obstacle to attacking French columns in the Peninsula in Europe, dominating their French counterparts. Riflemen could also be employed in smaller elements, providing precision covering fires for larger specific British units executing attacks or defenses. The British rifleman's weapon, the Baker Rifle, though shorter than American equivalents, hence shorter in maximum range, still provided a well-balanced rifle with highly accurate capability. Hence, the deployment of several companies of the 95th, organized as a battalion, with the New Orleans expeditionary force.<sup>23</sup>

## Artillery

Artillery weapons made a major contribution to the War of 1812 land and sea battles. By 1812, artillery weapons became specialized, depending upon the desired effect on the target. Artillery fell in three general types of cannon: guns, howitzers, and mortars, all smooth bore (lacking rifling that appeared later in the century) and loaded from the muzzle. Long-barreled guns shot at a flat trajectory, giving them greater range and accuracy than howitzers or mortars. Guns made up the majority of the most typical battlefield pieces. Guns differentiated in the weight of their projectile. A six-pounder gun would fire an iron ball weighing six pounds. Six-pounder guns made up the majority of guns on the battlefield, though nine, 18, and 24 pounder guns also saw employment under certain circumstances. Larger guns, requiring heavier carriages to absorb the recoil of firing, commonly remained in fixed fortifications. At New Orleans, both sides initially deployed a limited number of mobile six-pounder field guns but eventually relied upon larger caliber naval guns established in fixed fortifications during the weeks leading up to the culminating battle.

**Guns** fired a variety of common ammunition to include shot, grape, and case (canister). Shot (also called round shot) consisted of a simple solid iron ball that smashed through its target of ships, fortifications, and compact formations of men. A six-pounder gun could fire shot up to a 1,000 yards. A six-pound iron ball, about three and a half inches in diameter, could be clearly visible if fired directly at its target. Though deemed “unmanly” to dodge an approaching shot, not many Soldiers held themselves to that standard. Grape ammunition served as an anti-personnel round, composed of a number of iron or lead balls of an inch or more in diameter, and held together in a canvas bag, tied tightly in a compact cylindrical shape necessary for easy loading. This configuration resembled a bunch of grapes and gave it its name. Upon firing, the bag ruptured and the iron balls flew out of the barrel in a conical pattern. This shot gun effect blast cut a much wider swath through enemy lines than a solid iron ball. Because of the heaviness of the balls making up the grape ammunition, the range was nearly as great as that of solid shot. Case, or canister, ammunition received its name due to its configuration. This ammunition consisted of a thin metal cylindrical can filled with lead musket balls. The shock of the gun being fired forced the collapse of the metal can and the musket balls left the barrel of the gun in a wide pattern. With less than half the range of solid shot, case utterly devastated tightly packed troop formations at close range.

**Howitzers** were easy to differentiate from guns because of their shorter barrels. Howitzers fired at a higher trajectory than a gun, lobbing its projectile over the walls of fortifications and to explode above formations of enemy troops. While a howitzer could fire shot, case, and grape, its specific design fired shell, a hollow iron ball filled with gunpowder. The shell came fitted with a fuse that lit when the explosive charge pushed the shell out of the barrel. The gunner cut the fuse to an appropriate length so that the shell exploded over the target, showering a blast of hot metal fragments downward and into the designated target. Cut too long or burned too slowly, the shot could bury itself into the ground and its effects diminished. Nonetheless, the sight of a shell on the ground, fuse sputtering, terrified onlookers who awaited the blast. Prior to the War of 1812, British Lieutenant Colonel Henry Shrapnel of the Royal Artillery designed a round of ammunition that eventually bore his name. Shrapnel created a thin metal shell filled with gunpowder and a few dozen musket balls. The shell, named spherical case, exploded in the air above Soldiers with immense destructiveness. Spherical case surprised American Soldiers when first used early in the war but they overcame their surprise and eventually built their own version of spherical case.

**Mortars** made up the last category. Mortars possessed extremely short barrels and fired in a high arc trajectory. Artillerists used mortars to lob shells into large fortifications. Naval forces sometimes used gun boats armed with mortars against large seacoast fortifications. Because mortars recoiled downward, carriages light enough for field use proved impractical, giving little call for mortars on the battlefield.

The **Congreve rocket** that the British possessed was a relatively new weapon that fell into the artillery category. A turn-of-the century British discovery encountered during wars in India, examples made their way back to England where British Army officer and inventor, William Congreve, built an improved model. Military employment began in 1806, seeing use in both the Royal Navy and Army. Rockets came in a variety of sizes. Steel cases held propellant and the conical head, the warhead, contained black powder. Despite having a guide pole, rockets very often proved inaccurate. More practically, the employment of rockets as signaling devices worked well. However, they held a moral impact, especially over inexperienced troops. Their greatest legacy from the War of 1812 remains the “rockets’ red glare” during the British attack on Fort McHenry in September 1814.<sup>24</sup>

The American fortifications in the Gulf region possessed a wide variety of guns. Guns often could be

found mounted on “garrison” or “truck” carriages, wooden gun carriages found on naval vessels. Crews placed the gun and carriage on a gun platform, a level section of timber or stone that made it easier to allow movement to align the gun with its designated target. The more time available for a force to prepare defensive positions, the more effective their preparation of firing platforms would be. However, carriage design made it difficult for garrison carriages to be used in the field. Roads and ground could not support the ground pressure of small iron wheels. Field carriages, with large wheels, essentially wagon wheels, allowed guns to move along dry roads and on gentle slopes. In many cases, artillery dictated the speed of movement of an Army. Forces along the Canadian border generally took few guns to the field, largely because of poor trafficability. The same can be specifically said of the British expeditionary force that landed in Louisiana, initially taking only a handful of light guns with them as they advanced within a few miles of New Orleans.

Opposing forces fortified key positions in the New Orleans area of operations with guns emplaced behind earthen bastions, referring to them as batteries. A battery referred to one or more guns placed together rather than a company-sized unit of artillery. One of the most effective American batteries employed at New Orleans, the Marine Battery, sited on the right bank of the Mississippi River, provided devastating enfilading fire that greatly contributed to defeating the final British attack. The Americans took full advantage of the time available to them and built extremely well sited and effective batteries. However, contrary to popular myth, they did not use cotton bales as the primary component of their positions, only as an element heavily reinforced with dirt. On the other hand, the British continually suffered from ineffectively built batteries, some of them built with sugar casks that exploded instantly with accurate American fire, sometimes with unanticipated results.

### **Dragoons**

Contrary to combat in Europe, the employment of mounted forces remained relatively small and scattered. Small numbers of mounted Soldiers, Regulars and Volunteers, served on the Niagara Frontier and in the American western territories. British and Canadian dragoons armed themselves with sabers, pistols, and carbines. American regular dragoons carried pistols and sabers but not carbines. In the western territories, Americans fielded volunteer mounted rifle units. These units carried rifles and usually a wide collection of tomahawks, pistols, hunting knives, and sabers. Such units made up the Tennessee Militia brigades of William Carroll

and John Coffee. However, they utilized their mounts to get to the battlefield quickly and then dismounted to engage the enemy with accurate rifle fire. Such units made up the bulk of Jackson's forces during his campaigns against the Creeks. During the operations in Louisiana, mounted Militia from the Mississippi Territory conducted mounted operations against the British, executing security missions between the two opposing forces while the Tennesseans fought as conventional infantry. On the other hand, the British expeditionary force's 14th Light Dragoons arrived without horses and contributed very little to the campaign and its results.<sup>25</sup>

### **Sustaining the Force**

Despite possession of Canada and colonial bases in the Caribbean, the British suffered from an inefficient sustainment system. Canada simply lacked the resources to support its citizens and the Army. The Caribbean islands, far from battlefronts until the 1814 campaign in the Gulf of Mexico, provided little for Britain's forces beyond its local garrisons and forces passing through the region. Nearly every commodity required by British forces originated in Great Britain. This predicament extended to England's utilization of naval-based expeditionary forces operating far from England and its overseas bases and adversely affected numerous aspects of the operations conducted by these forces. The British expeditionary force organized for the seizure of New Orleans suffered from an extremely fragile sustainment system that directly influenced the morale of the common soldier and the health of the entire force as a whole.<sup>26</sup>

### **American and British Tactics**

Despite the fact that the exploits of Napoleon dominated the military standards of the time, both the British and American armies approached warfare with the techniques and designs of the previous generation. The objectives, however, remained the same to break the enemy's will, force his withdrawal, and pursue until destroyed. Even Napoleon found this difficult. Neither side achieved it during the War of 1812. However, American and British commanders still formed their forces into firing lines of infantry and support by artillery, in an attempt to achieve decisive victory.

When the war began, the United States Army still relied upon Baron Von Steuben's tactical manual, referred to as the "Blue Book," derived from contemporary European practices of the late 18th century. The value of the manual during the Revolution stemmed from its simplifying the many standard movements because American Soldiers did not have time to

effectively train in accordance with the European standards of the time. The regular Army retained the Blue Book after the Revolution and Congress stipulated its use for the Militia as well. French military success encouraged the War Department to examine a new tactical manual to replace the “Blue Book.” William Duane borrowed heavily from the new French doctrine, and to a lesser extent from Von Steuben, to develop a collection of small manuals addressing tactical doctrine for infantry and riflemen. However, in early 1812 the Secretary of War ordered that the Army’s infantry adopt a tactical manual written by Alexander Smyth. Smyth’s work also combined aspects of the new French manual and Von Steuben’s manual, governing regular infantry only. The Militia, however, continued to use the “Blue Book.” Unfortunately, commanders in the field used whatever suited them throughout the war: Von Steuben, Duane, Smyth, or locally fabricated combinations, making it possible that several regiments brigaded together might have been trained with different doctrinal sources.

The British Army, on the other hand, used a standard manual since 1792 written by Colonel David Dundas. His book, known commonly as “Dundas’ 18 Manoeuvres,” adopted a conservative tactical approach common to the previous generation, preferring use of the line over the column. British infantry repeatedly demonstrated their expertise at the many tactical movements and proved superior to numerically greater French armies and comparable numbers of American infantry, at least at the beginning of the war.

A notional battle started with the two sides facing one another in line of battle. The combatant that arrived first sought a position on higher ground with flanks protected by river or dense forest or a body of skirmishers. The combatant arriving on the battlefield later typically moved on a route in column and then deployed into a line formation, preferably out of musket and artillery range. American infantry formed firing lines in three ranks while the British preferred two ranks. With artillery present on the field, guns might be placed on the flanks to enfilade approaching enemy formations, inflicting more casualties than firing perpendicularly at the thin firing line. Once the two sides aligned for combat, one side initiated the battle where the attacking force hoped to achieve a level of moral superiority over the defender. Artillery opened fire to attrit the enemy both physically and morally. At approximately 100 yards distance, the two lines commenced firing. The fire fight aimed to break the resolve of the enemy to stand and fight. As each soldier witnessed casualties to his left and right, he faced the decision to fight or flee. The weight of fire, based on

the speed of volleys, lent a major factor in eroding enemy resolve.

As a battle developed with the two sides trading volleys, the force firing more frequently gained fire superiority and a distinct advantage in morale. After just a few volleys, the battlefield became shrouded in dense smoke. The inability to see the enemy across the battlefield, even at a relatively short distance, proved particularly frightening. British commanders perceived a frailty in American units and especially in Militia formations that they thought they could exploit with a strong and well placed blow. Thus even when outnumbered, the British often looked to close with the enemy and deliver a bayonet assault. British commanders sought to keep their men silent during this type of assault. While Soldiers might shout to prove their courage and intimidate the enemy this kept them from hearing orders from their officers. The two lines hardly ever made contact. With one side assaulting, two outcomes became most common. Either the men conducting the assault would lose enthusiasm and halt before making contact or the defending line would break.

The breaking of a line frequently led to panic in the ranks. Like a spreading virus, Soldiers, seeing fellow comrades flee, threw down their weapons and ran from the battlefield for safety. Officers and noncommissioned officers desperately tried to rally as many troops as possible in the hopes of maintaining order. The successful attackers tried to gain victory trophies like enemy's colors or artillery pieces. Tangible symbols of victory made a powerful statement in measuring a battlefield victory. At New Orleans, neither side possessed adequate cavalry to conduct an effective mounted pursuit. If a victorious commander kept his head, he maintained uncommitted troops and ordered them to pursue the enemy, capturing as many enemy Soldiers, guns, horses, and wagons as possible. Inexperienced commanders settled for the victory on the field and set his troops about their next duties, policing the battlefield. However, as seen at New Orleans, a commander may have larger reasons for not pursuing the enemy after a battlefield victory.

In the aftermath of a large scale battle, it took time to consolidate the victory. Local effects on the battlefield itself could be staggering. Burial parties gathered the dead, separating and sorting them by nationality, and burying them on the site of the battle. Officers in charge of the parties recovered personal effects from fellow officers killed in action and arranged for them to be sent to the next of kin, who sometimes followed their husbands on campaign. The individual Soldiers that made up the burial party often took

valuables from their comrades. Groups found the wounded and evacuated them to centralized collection points. There, regimental surgeons worked quickly to treat the wounds as best they could. Eventually they loaded wounded into wagons and evacuated them to field hospitals. Work parties collected weapons, ammunition, and equipment to be issued again as needed.

### **The Opposing Naval Forces**

The War of 1812 offers an excellent period for the study of the evolution of modern joint operations, especially along the Canadian border centered on the Great Lakes of Erie and Ontario and Lake Champlain where the armies and navies of both sides depended heavily upon each other in the conduct of large joint campaigns in the war's primary theater. However, by 1813, as the European coalition allies began to assert their collective will upon Napoleon's shrinking empire, the Royal Navy began shifting more naval assets to the American theater of war. By early 1814, the Royal Navy established control of the Atlantic and established a reinvigorated full blockade of the American Atlantic and Gulf coasts, trapping American warships in port and denying those at sea a friendly base for refitting. The final year of the war also marked the first time that the British exploited their strategic mobility, as projected by the Royal Navy, in the form of expeditionary forces targeting various strategic points along the enemy coastline. These included Washington, Baltimore, and ultimately New Orleans.

The same navy made famous in recent memory by Horatio Nelson and his victories in Egypt, Copenhagen, and ultimately Trafalgar, also maintained a well-known reputation for conducting expeditionary operations around the world. In the years leading up to the War of 1812, the Royal Navy conducted various operations on both sides of the Atlantic, inside the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas, and against distant Pacific targets. In the wars against the French and Napoleon, Britain's navy and Army collected an abundance of experience during extensive operations in the Caribbean, seizing numerous French island colonies. Therefore, by the time the British gathered increased assets for commitment to the North American station in 1814, England's combined armed forces possessed a wide body of collective joint experience.

The role of the Royal Navy in the Gulf campaign, however, extended only so far. Once the British fleet reached their anchorage in the Gulf, its greatest asset of its fighting vessels, no longer had a direct bearing upon the campaign. Several decisions made by the expeditionary force commander led to the near elimination of the fleet's role in the plan to



seize New Orleans. The only viable option for the employment of the fleet's large combat vessels, forcing Americans to land defenses and sailing straight up the Mississippi River to the city, fell to the wayside almost immediately. Then the senior commanders committed to a landing on the west shore of Lake Borgne, followed by an overland approach to the city. In doing so, they depended upon their collection of smaller barges and sailing craft which were more capable of navigating the coastal areas and bayous of Louisiana. Both decisions prevented any further direct influence upon the campaign by the fighting ships of the Royal Navy until after the British decision to retreat from New Orleans.

However, the sailors and marines of the British fleet continued to actively contribute to the campaign, leaving their ships and serving in a variety of roles through the campaign's land phase. The Royal Navy overwhelmed the American gunboat flotilla on Lake Borgne without their heavy guns, employing practices and tactics more akin to those used in the era of galleys that ended during the sixteenth century. Sailors pulled the oars and navigated the smaller craft from the fleet's anchorage as far inland as possible in order to land the navy, making numerous round trips in support of the force. The fleet's marines, with many sailors as well, consolidated and joined the Army for the movement inland and for all of the major fighting. Finally, as the British Army leaders began to fully appreciate the strength of the American defenses south of New Orleans, sailors once again manned their oars in order to transport heavy naval ordnance to the battlefield, while comrades established firing positions and manned the guns for the duration of the fighting.

At the beginning of the war, as the American navy approached 40 years of service to the nation since the American Revolution, the core of the navy's power lay in seven top line frigates that represented the best in naval technology at the time, on par with their British opponents. The navy possessed 16 warships other than gunboats: eight frigates, two sloops of war, and six smaller vessels. While smaller than the frigates, numerous refits over the years before the war created vessels with larger than normal crews and more guns than could be normally expected compared to their British equivalents. The ships were crewed well by combat veteran officers and their all-volunteer crews of equally experienced sailors. However, the British were far more concerned with American privateers. Over 500 privately armed American vessels took part in the war, targeting the British merchant fleet, including ships supporting the Duke of Wellington's campaign in Spain. America's early victories by

the navy and privateers caused the British to overly react to events by reinforcing its North American station with assets from elsewhere.

The American navy also possessed approximately 200 gunboats at the start of the war, the legacy of the Jefferson administration's focus on coastal defense and economic restraint. Examples varied between 50-80 feet in length and carried a heavy gun, usually a 24-pounder on the bow (front). While approximately half of the navy's gunboats went into storage before the war, the New Orleans station received permission to retain all 26 of its compliment. Gunboats were never included in American combat power assets as they were orphans and held in great disdain by the bulk of the navy's officers. They were not enough to perform the defensive missions originally envisioned for them. Nevertheless, prior to the war, gunboats proved themselves in the New Orleans area, under an extremely competent commander, enforcing the Jefferson administration's embargo and suppressing the slave trade. They proved very good in patrolling the Mississippi River and the adjacent bayous and lakes but had no recorded success against illegal trade such as that conducted by the Baratarian pirates under Jean Lafitte.

When the British initiated their joint campaign in the Gulf of Mexico in 1814, the United States Navy in that region amounted to Master Commandant Daniel Patterson's flotilla consisting of the armed schooner *Carolina*, the armed ship *Louisiana*, and a handful of gunboats. The larger schooners represented the Federal government's recent acquiescence to the demands of the Louisiana governor to provide the means to destroy the illegal practices of the Baratarian pirates located along the southern Louisianan coast. This relatively small surface force suffered from manpower shortages, principally in the crews of the two schooners. Patterson's one advantage came from a significant naval depot at New Orleans that eventually supplied Jackson's defense with cannon, powder, and ammunition. Furthermore, like the sailors from the American flotilla in the Chesapeake, Patterson's sailors later manned a large assortment of naval ordnance positioned in a number of the batteries that supported Jackson's defense, most importantly in the Marine Battery across the Mississippi River. These highly disciplined and experienced gun crews proved their worth equally on land as they did at sea and contributed greatly to the overall American victory over the British.<sup>27</sup>

Primarily because the bulk of British and American sailors and their guns saw action on land, only a brief explanation of these naval pieces is necessary in order to

understand what the eventual impact their key role was in the two opposing armies' fires plans. Warships of the day carried two specific types of naval ordnance. The long gun, firing solid shot from 18 to 32 pounds, fired a considerable distance. The carronade, with a shorter length but large muzzle, fired heavier shot up to 48 pounds but with shorter range. Long guns initiated the longer range engagement as ships closed the distance. Carronades then engaged at close range, delivering heavy blows against an enemy ship. British vessels carried a higher ratio of carronades to long guns than American vessels. Therefore, American warships, with more long guns, could potentially inflict more damage to British vessels before the British brought their ships into closer range and used their carronades to overpower the American ships.

With less than 40 years of experience behind it, the United States Marine Corps still closely mirrored that of the British Royal Marines they battled in various surface engagements during Revolutionary War. Marines maintained discipline and order aboard naval vessels, manned the ship's rigging during combat when they would aim their musket fire at individual targets on the exposed deck of the enemy's ship and defended their own ships against boarding parties, and formed the core of any ship's landing party.

At the beginning of the War of 1812, the Marine Corps numbered approximately 1,000 officers and men, slightly more than half of its authorized strength. Like the Army, recruiting presented a major challenge and effective retention proved just as critical throughout the war. Even with moderately successful recruiting, little adequate time existed to train new recruits for active service. While Marines distinguished themselves in several famous naval engagements, they could not effectively meet the demands of the Navy on sea or land as ship guards, at the Navy yard as station guards, and flotilla duty along the nation's coastal approaches.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps' envisioned the Corps serving aboard ship, not defending shore facilities, especially at the cost of serving under Army control, even though he had few men to spare for shore assignments. Regardless, Marines served on land with the Army along the Great Lakes and defended Norfolk and Baltimore from British naval raids in 1813-14. However, their wartime legacy came from their combat actions on land at the battles of Bladensburg and New Orleans. At the former, an organized battalion of Marines served with the American flotilla in the Chesapeake and, following the elimination of that force, fought with ground forces against the British approach march to Washington. Marginalized by Army and Militia officers throughout the

ground maneuvers, the Marines, with a contingent of sailors manning supporting artillery, distinguished themselves at Bladensburg by repelling three consecutive assaults by the British before withdrawing after the American flanks gave way and ammunition ran low.

In 1804, following the Louisiana Purchase, the United States government established a Marine detachment at the New Orleans naval station. For the Marines' commanding officer, Captain Daniel Carmick, this would be the first of three tours in New Orleans, including the British attempt to seize the city in 1814. Prior to the War of 1812 the greatest threats faced by the Marines consisted of yellow fever epidemics and occasional rumors of slave revolts. Authorized increases in local manpower remained limited and yellow fever struck down approximately a third of the command and claimed at least one Marine a day. In a unique peacetime command and control relationship, the Marines, governed by Naval Regulations at sea, found themselves governed by the Army's Articles of War ashore. Therefore, the senior Marine officer answered to the senior Army officer responsible for the military district. The War of 1812 initially failed to change daily events in New Orleans and the greater Gulf region until 1814. Despite initial British shaping operations in the Gulf, the Navy focused on the elimination of the Baratarians pirates under Jean Lafitte. The September 1814 naval attack on the pirates' base of operation included Carmick's Marines, reinforced by a company of the 44th US Infantry.

As British operations closed in on the region around New Orleans, Marine activities increased. Thirty-five Marines served with Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones' gunboat flotilla in its action against the British on Lake Borgne in mid-December. The bulk of the Marines participating in Jackson's 23 December night attack on the British camp, served aboard the schooner *Louisiana*, on the right flank of Jackson's defensive line along the Rodriguez Canal throughout the fighting, and in the Marine Battery across the river on the right bank of the Mississippi.

While a relatively small element in Jackson's Army, the Marines shared in the ensuing fame of the victory. Major Carmick's Marines provided a professional body of experienced regular troops accustomed to the local conditions of the Gulf region. Their contributions at New Orleans, combined with other Marine examples in the war, benefited the organization in the long term. In the war's aftermath, the Marine Corps' conduct elevated it to a much higher appreciation than before, most importantly in the eyes of the

Navy and Congress and thus justified its existence.<sup>28</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In providing an overview of the opposing forces engaged in the battles south of New Orleans, it is then necessary to examine the strategic and operational planning and movements that placed them in opposition to one another. With that picture in mind, conducting the staff ride will help identify a collection of critical points that explain how the forces fought the various engagements and differences that led to victory and defeat.

## Notes

1. Unless otherwise noted, information pertaining to the organization, equipment, and basic doctrine of the opposing forces is provided from Dr. Richard Barbuto's, *Staff Ride Handbook for the Niagara Campaigns, 1812-1814*, Combat Studies Institute Press, Fort Leavenworth, 2014.
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5. C. Edward Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812*, (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 1-4; Stewart, 114-116.
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15. Frank Lawrence Owsley Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans, 1812-1815*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1981), 62, 64-65, 68, 72; Reilly, 278; Brown, 134, Remini, 123.
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17. Data on Peninsula regiments serving in the New Orleans campaign compiled from: Fletcher, Ian, *Wellington's*

*Regiments: The Men and their Battles from Rolica to Waterloo, 1808-1815*, (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1994).

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19. David G. Chandler, "Wellington in the Peninsula: a Reassessment," in *On the Napoleonic Wars: Collected Essays*, (London: Greenhill Books, 1994), 163.

20. Philip J. Haythornthwaite, *The Armies of Wellington*, (London: Arms and Armour, 1994), 215-16. The total number of Peninsula regiments sent to North America and those fighting at New Orleans are compiled from: Fletcher, *Wellington's Regiments*.

21. Michael Glover, *Wellington as Military Commander*, (London: B.T. Batsford LTD, 1968), 205-213.

22. Chandler, 156; Haythornthwaite, 7, 78-79.

23. Remini, 122; Owsley, 144; Glover, 30-31.

24. Glover, 237-238.

25. Owsley, 62, 144, 146.

26. Brown, 75-76.

27. George C. Daughan, *If By Sea: The Forging of the American Navy from the American Revolution to the War of 1812*, (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 400-470; Mahon, 7-9.

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## **Part II. Campaign Overview Introduction: The War's First Two Years**

The United States of America chose to go to war with the British Empire in June of 1812 unprepared. This fact became apparent almost immediately upon the attempt to fulfill the nation's key strategic objective, the seizure of Canada. The first year of the war seemed to illustrate that the Army raised by the United States could not effectively wage an offensive war. On the other hand, British forces in Canada ably demonstrated that they could wage both an effective defensive war to protect Canada while successfully executing limited offensive operations that seized American territory.

The second year of the war witnessed a slight change in American fortunes. Tactical victories, or at least stalemates, occurred as American forces gained in training and experience during a series of high tempo operations along the Canadian border. One highlight of American military operations in 1813 was the American naval victory on Lake Erie and the sequel invasion of Canadian territory northeast of Detroit. In securing American control of the lake, the small American fleet secured the crossing of an American ground force to the Canadian side of the lake that eventually forced an abandonment of British controlled American territory and a decisive victory at the battle of the Thames that not only defeated the British force but also destroyed the Indian confederation of the northwestern tribes led by the great Shawnee war chief Tecumseh. However, the ability to achieve operational objectives and the strategic end state continued to elude American policy makers that were focused on acquiring British territory in Canada.

At the same time, repeated abortive American operations along the eastern Niagara frontier with Canada only resulted in limited British success and occupation of key American defensive positions. Furthermore, with the increase of European allied successes against Napoleon's shrinking empire, the Royal Navy began sending reinforcements to its North American station. Utilizing its strategic and operational mobility, the world's premier naval power relied upon a considerable body of experience in expeditionary warfare. During 1813, the Royal Navy secured control of the Atlantic Ocean which effectively neutralized the much smaller United States Navy. With control of the seas, the British began conducting a series of raids against key ports along America's vulnerable coastline, especially in New England, the Carolinas, and Chesapeake Bay. This aggressive raiding policy forced the American government to improve and reinforce its coastal defenses, denying reinforcements to the

Canadian frontier. More menacing for the Americans, the British now possessed a means of seizing the initiative, at the time and place of their choosing, potentially to open a second front in the war.

Whereas, American leaders focused strategically on the northern border with Canada, events in the American Deep South began drawing the government's attention in the summer of 1813. A continuing territorial dispute with Spain finally led to an American force of Regulars entering the coastal region of what is now the Gulf coast of the modern states of Mississippi and Alabama to seize both the territory and its principle port of Mobile. The Spanish chose not to contest the aggressive move by force and peace continued between the two nations. However, the Creek Indians of the Mississippi Territory (modern Alabama and Mississippi) as well as the State of Georgia, motivated by a series of previous grievances suffered at the hands of American settlers, started a series of attacks against frontier settlements that threw much of the southern frontier into chaos. The resulting American campaign against the Creeks saw the rise of Andrew Jackson, as military commander, to the national stage. However, while aggressive in a constant search for decisive battle with the Creeks, Jackson's efforts which was part of a larger American effort to defeat the Creeks, suffered from a fragile supply system, overextended lines of operation, and the breakdown of the national government system to properly address logistical requirements in the South. The campaign ended in failure, leaving the Creeks as still a viable threat to the security of the American southern frontier. This was a threat rumored to be supported by the British.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Culminating Year: The Final Campaign of 1814-15**

The focus of both the United States and Great Britain in the culminating year of the War of 1812 remained the Great Lakes and the Niagara frontier. Each country, especially the United States in one of their political objectives in regard to Canada, saw the capture of the other's national territory as an advantage to bring to the negotiating table. However, neither side achieved a strategic advantage over the other on this front during the spring of 1814. The British continued to leverage their most consistent weapon against the United States which was the Royal Navy. The British tightened their blockade of the United States and engaged in an array of seaborne raids against various American ports up and down the eastern seaboard. In the south, the majority of American military manpower in that region continued their campaign against the Creeks.

In England, the ministry of Prime Minister Lord Liverpool knew that decisive results in North America required

resources sent from Europe. While the allied war against Napoleon, especially England's campaign in Spain, continued successfully, doubts still existed in allied circles that the French emperor would eventually concede defeat. However, as early as January 1814, Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, informed the Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, that his Peninsula Army should be broken up and some of the regiments sent to America even as it moved to invade southern France. While Wellington outlined the problems with campaigning in North America, he did not openly refuse the assertion, and four regiments left for America during January and February.

Three months later, conditions in Europe changed radically and influenced the future of events in North America. In April of 1814, Napoleon abdicated and accepted exile to the island of Elba. Three days later, Bathurst notified the North American Commander-in-Chief and Governor General of Canada, George Prevost, that reinforcements from Europe would be sent to Canada. These reinforcements destined for employment in North America totaled some 16,000 British Soldiers, veterans of the Duke of Wellington's long and ultimately successful Peninsula campaign in Portugal and Spain. However, it took time to transport these forces across the Atlantic. Early June saw the departure of 13,000 British troops to Canada, reaching Quebec in the second half of August. On 2 July 1814, 3,000 men under Major General Robert Ross departed France for America to serve as the expeditionary force targeting locations along the Chesapeake shore, specifically the key port of Baltimore. The two movements represented the strategic sealift capability of the most powerful navy in the world.<sup>2</sup>

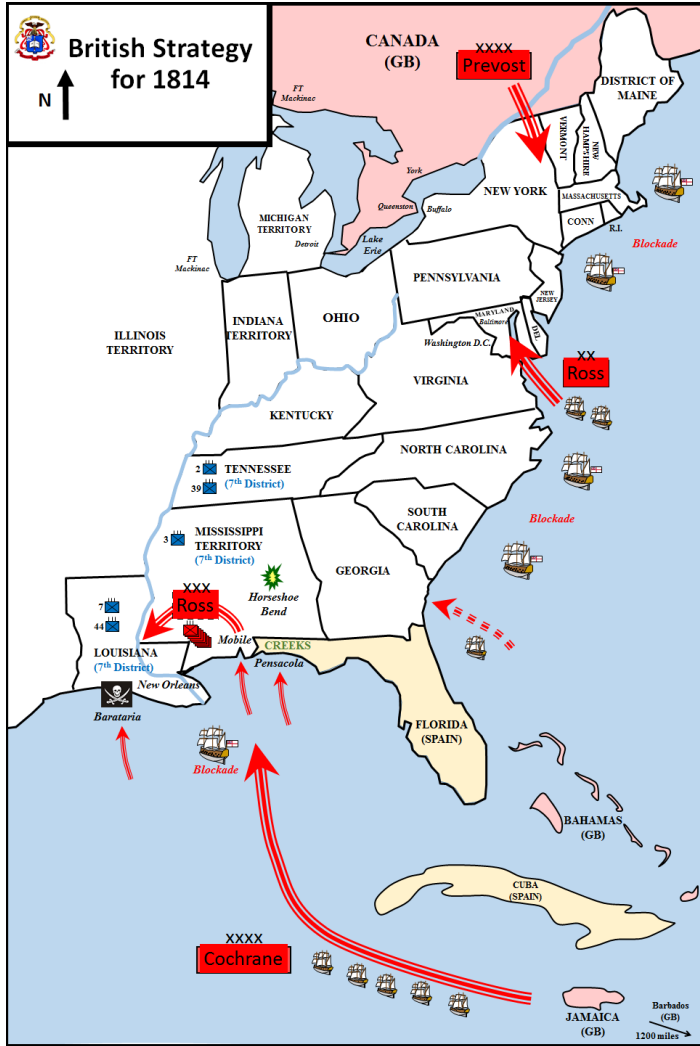


Figure 1. The British Strategy for 1814.

CSI created.

## **The Canadian Theater**

The Americans took the early initiative with a series of limited offensives that resulted in a series of initial tactical victories. These included Lundy's Lane but not the necessary strategic gains desired by either side. The American offensive on the Niagara frontier failed to secure an American foothold in Canada but it did deter any further British attempts at a major offensive in the region. However, too late to influence offensive operations in the spring, the British reinforcements upon arrival from Europe, established a long desired force capable of defending Canada and eventually conducting offensive operations into the United States in the late summer.

Despite the shock suffered by the Americans in the wake of the capture and burning of Washington, British strategic focus along the Canadian border remained steadfast. With 10,000 reinforcements, Prevost organized his force for a southern advance into the United States through the Lake Champlain Valley. This was the same invasion route used by the British during the American Revolution. In such an operation, a British advance depended heavily upon close support from the British fleet on Lake Champlain. However, in another decisive naval engagement along the American-Canadian border, the American flotilla destroyed the British fleet on Lake Champlain on 11 September. Without naval support for a further movement down the Champlain Valley, the British commander withdrew back into Canada. More importantly, this failure added to that at Baltimore during the same week, convinced the British government to add more energy to the peace negotiations already proceeding in the Belgian city of Ghent.<sup>3</sup>

## **The Chesapeake Bay**

Three weeks after assuming command of the Royal Navy's North American Station, Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane ordered the expansion of the British blockade to encompass the entire United States coastline. With the fall of Napoleon that same month, England eventually increased its naval forces in the Western Hemisphere to meet the objective. The reinforced blockade forced nearly half of the small United States Navy into various east coast ports, while it prevented the majority of the enemy fleet from re-entering American ports to resupply. In neutralizing the United States Navy, the British cleared the American merchant fleet from the Atlantic, the only time in US history when the nation experienced full isolation from the sea. The Royal Navy enjoyed an unquestioned dominance in the Atlantic that allowed them to exploit their strategic and operational mobility. In the words of one of its ship captains in reference

to the Americans, “Jonathan is so confounded that he does not know when or where to look for us.”<sup>4</sup> Further British naval operations included raids against key ports along the eastern seaboard. These operations targeted locations from Maine to the Carolinas, especially those ports building or sustaining American privateers which were a significant threat to the British overseas merchant trade which greatly influenced the British desire to quickly end the war on favorable terms. One area in particular, the Chesapeake Bay, remained an attractive British target because it provided an avenue deep into American territory, including the American capital of Washington, and the important port of Baltimore.<sup>5</sup>

Utilizing a newly released force of Peninsula veterans to augment an already present naval force along the eastern seaboard of the United States, the British government saw the potential of distracting American attention from its northern frontier and attacking the will of the nation’s citizens by striking the economic center of Baltimore and the American capital of Washington by means of swift seaborne raids.

Therefore, on 19 August 1814, a British expeditionary force with a land component of approximately 4,000 men released from Wellington’s Peninsula Army and led by their hand-picked commander, Major General Robert Ross, landed at the Patuxent River in Virginia and marched on Washington. Within five days of landing, Ross’ force encountered a hastily organized American force of some 5,000 Regulars, sailors, Marines, and Militia defending a key crossing site on an extension of the Potomac River northeast of Washington at Bladensburg, Maryland. During the initial fighting, the Americans proved an obstinate defender especially with the support of heavy and highly accurate artillery fire provided by US Navy gunners. However, the British demonstrated their ability to quickly regroup under fire and execute successful frontal assaults against fortified positions. Their renewed efforts scattered the American Militia and opened the American capital to capture, a circumstance blamed squarely upon the poorly-led Militia who earned a high amount of contempt from the professional British Soldiers. Following the fighting at Bladensburg, Ross marched his force into Washington and burned the Capitol, the White House (then referred to as the Presidential Mansion or President’s House), and a number of other public buildings. This was said to be in retribution for the America’s causing the burning of the Canadian city of York (present day Toronto) the previous year. The British remained in the city a total of 26 hours before returning to the Royal Navy’s

transports for follow-on operations in the Bay.

The British next targeted the port city of Baltimore in the northern portion of the Chesapeake Bay. However, the Americans proved better prepared than prior to the burning of Washington, having established a significant series of defensive positions to counter British naval and land advances. The eventual failure of the British fleet to reduce Fort McHenry, the principle American fortification protecting the entrance to Baltimore's harbor, on 13-14 September resulted in the culmination of the British raid in the Chesapeake as well as Francis Scott Key's writing of "The Star Spangled Banner." However, the British suffered further when, during a minor skirmish, Major General Ross rode forward with his men and suffered a mortal gunshot wound. The passing of Ross threw the British into a somewhat confusing period as government leaders in London strove to identify a proper replacement that could be rushed to the American theater of operations quickly and take up the next phases of the overall British strategy.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Southern Theater: The Creek War**

The continuation of the Creek War forced American leaders to maintain a fairly significant organized military force in the Deep South. Though the predominant numbers of fighting men came from the various State Militias, a collection of Regular Army regiments also continued to serve in the region. In March of 1814, Andrew Jackson led a reorganized force in excess of 3,000 Militia, Volunteers, Regulars, and friendly Indian tribes against the Creeks. At a fortified camp in the Horseshoe Bend of the Tallapoosa River, the Creeks suffered the loss of over 800 warriors, a defeat that they would not recover from. In the aftermath of Horseshoe Bend, the remaining hostile Creek factions fled to the sanctuary of Spanish controlled Florida. As a result of his victory over the Creeks, President Madison rewarded Jackson with an appointment to the rank of Major General in the Regular Army and gave him command of the 7th Military District comprising the states of Tennessee, Louisiana, and the Mississippi Territory. Jackson's first act in this capacity was to orchestrate a harsh treaty upon the Creeks, enemy and friendly alike, seizing millions of acres of traditional tribal lands and forcing more elements of the tribe into neutral Spanish territory.

With the collapse of the northwest Indian confederation in the wake of the death of Tecumseh at the battle of the Thames the previous year, the British saw the value in expanding a previously small effort in supplying the Creek Indians into economy of force operations targeting American interests in the Deep South. In the past, Creeks drew on various

settlements in Spanish controlled Florida for supplies, especially arms and powder. Now, the British adopted a policy of arming the Creeks in their war against the Americans through the tacit approval of their Spanish allies who still claimed a state of neutrality with the American government.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Campaign in the Gulf**

Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane developed the operational plan for the capture of New Orleans. He assumed command of the Royal Navy's North American station on 1 April 1814 with a lifetime of experience in expeditionary operations to his credit, many of them under his personal command in the Caribbean. Past success marked him as a clear minded and practical strategic thinker. Thus, before assuming his new command, Cochrane served as one of the British Admiralty's planners in developing the government's strategy for 1814. Within his first 100 days in command, Cochrane dispatched a memorandum to the Admiralty entitled "Expedition against New Orleans," dated 20 June. The plan closely resembled the original British concept approved by the cabinet, later cancelled because of the manpower and funding requirements that the cabinet proved unwilling to commit to. However, Cochrane's plan called for an Army contribution to an expeditionary force of only 3,000 men, a significant decrease in British troops. Cochrane rationalized that a force of this smaller size could be augmented by Indian allies and recruited runaway former slaves that would operate on the Georgia frontier and the areas east of Mobile to prevent the Americans from reaching the Gulf coast except via the Mississippi River.

With the support of the local tribes Cochrane asserted that a 3,000-man force could successfully conduct an amphibious operation to seize Mobile. Once in British hands, Mobile would become the main British base in the Gulf, similar to Lisbon in Portugal in its support of Wellington's campaigns in the Peninsula. The British also assumed that once they secured Mobile, the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians to the north would declare themselves active British supporters and neutralize the American presence on the Alabama River and give the British de facto control of the territory between the Georgia frontier and the Mississippi River. Cochrane thought that with all of this accomplished and with the support of the Creeks, the British could then advance overland from the Alabama River to Baton Rouge on the Mississippi River. With the capture of Baton Rouge, the British could isolate New Orleans from the north while the Royal Navy blockaded its access to the Gulf. Then the Army could advance to take control of the city. The British asserted



that it was impossible for the Americans to sustain operations against them in the Gulf region because of the Royal Navy's support. The American record (and Jackson's) in the war against the Creeks supported this assumption.

To support Cochrane's intended plan, he requested the charter of a large number of light draft vessels, able to transport 100 men at a time, and flatboats in England that would be moved to the Gulf by the Royal Navy. These vessels would transport the British Army up the Alabama River and then be moved overland to Baton Rouge. These boats could also be used in the Mississippi Sound off Louisiana and on the inland approaches to New Orleans, including Lake Borgne and Lake Pontchartrain.

The cabinet approved Cochrane's memorandum. Ross' successful capture of Washington also influenced the cabinet's decision to reinforce the New Orleans expedition with an additional brigade from England numbering over 2,000 men. The increased force would exceed 8,000 men, still a small financial and manpower investment compared to the original New Orleans concept. However, a dispatch received on 17 October notifying the cabinet of Ross's death the month before dictated the appointment of a new commander-in-chief. The cabinet chose Major General Sir Edward Pakenham, Wellington's Peninsula Assistant Adjutant General and brother-in-law. He was a man of proven talents as both staff officer and combat commander. Nevertheless, Pakenham immediately found himself well behind the operation, the various elements of the expeditionary force already moved while he received his orders in England. Lord Bathurst, in his instructions to the new commander-in-chief included the warning, "It is probable that this force will have proceeded from the approximated rendezvous before your arrival there, in order to carry into execution the Plans contemplated by Sir Alexander Cochrane."<sup>8</sup>

### **Aftermath of the Battles of New Orleans**

In the same week that the British struggled back along their line of communication to the barges that took them back to the fleet anchorage, the city of New Orleans celebrated. Jackson, finally confirmed the British expeditionary force's departure, declared 21 January a day of thanksgiving and celebration. Leaving the 7th US Infantry and the Tennessee troops to guard against the British, Jackson marched the rest of his Army into the city for a parade and service at the cathedral. The celebration took place in great New Orleans style, full of ceremony and pageantry. In the aftermath of the celebration Andrew Jackson departed the city for home in Tennessee and his journey to the Presidency of the United

States.

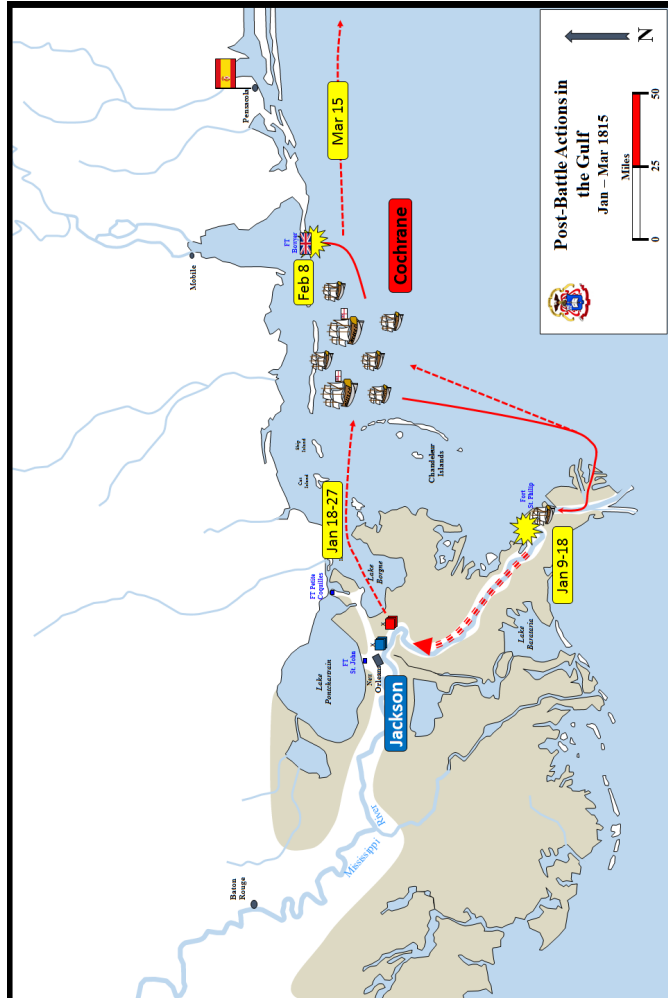


Figure 2. Post-Battle Actions in the Gulf, Jan 18-Mar 15 1815.

CSI created.

Unfortunately, the enemy presence in the gulf remained. Once the British expeditionary force re-boarded their naval transports, the senior commanders considered their next move. Cochrane, as the senior officer, urged a second attempt to seize Mobile and resurrect the overland option against New Orleans, his original plan attempted in September failed with the successful American defense of Fort Bowyer. He succeeded in convincing Lambert to support this course of

action. The fleet sailed on 27 January and arrived off the entrance of Mobile Bay the next day, landing troops and starting a siege of Fort Bowyer. Twelve days later, on 8 February, the American commander, Colonel William Lawrence, convinced that an extended defense would be fruitless, surrendered the fort and 350 men to the British. On the verge of capturing Mobile, the British received dispatches from England outlining the terms of the peace treaty negotiated at Ghent, Belgium agreed upon on 24 December 1814, over a month before. Though the treaty required ratification by the two governments, British operations ceased and an uneasy period filled with correspondence between Jackson, Lambert, and Cochrane filled the time until their governments ratified the Treaty of Ghent producing a long series of correspondence between each other, including coordination for the exchange of prisoners. The British fleet finally sailed home for England on 15 March 1815.<sup>9</sup>

However, the story of some of the British regiments involved in the fighting south of New Orleans continued beyond their relatively brief journey to the North American continent. The regiments returned to Europe and found a reignited conflict with France brought on by the sudden escape of Napoleon from exile. Returning from the New Orleans expedition, the 4th, 7th, 40th (which arrived at the fleet anchorage as the expeditionary force ended its retreat and began its embarkation), 43d, and 95th Regiments saw action on the field at Waterloo. Many of the key staff officers made contributions behind the scenes and Lambert, having since received a knighthood for his service in Spain, commanded a brigade near the highly contested allied center. Unlike at New Orleans, the British, with their Dutch and Prussian allies, fought their way to a decisive victory that influenced the path of European history.<sup>10</sup>

Just as Waterloo influenced the path of history, so too did New Orleans. Not only did the Americans achieve a great tactical victory over their British enemies but they also defeated the entire British operational plan for the campaign in the Gulf region. In doing so, American fortunes radically changed. An American victory prevented many of the extreme British demands related to the negotiations at Ghent from coming to fruition. Instead, in the wake of British failures along the Canadian frontier and after New Orleans, the British could only end the war by agreeing with the Americans to restore the *status quo ante bellum*. Most importantly, the United States of America, in its achievement over Great Britain, firmly established its independence and its determination to

walk its own path. Manifest Destiny, encouraged by men like Jackson, led the growing American population across the continent and set the nation to become a global power by the end of the century.<sup>11</sup>

## Notes

1. Richard W. Stewart, 136-148; Lebeau, Jean-Francois, "Breaking the Stalemate: Amphibious Warfare During the War of 1812," *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Winter 2013, 48, 53.
2. John K. Mahon, *The War of 1812*, (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1972), 257-261, 293, 317.
3. Mahon, 276.
4. Mahon, 291.
5. Mahon, 248-256, 289-291.
6. Reilly, 151-164.
7. Owsley, 72-105.
8. Henry Bathurst, "Instructions to Major-General Sir Edward Pakenham for the New Orleans Campaign," *The War of 1812 Magazine*, [http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/Warof1812/2011/Issue16/c\\_PakenhamOrders.html](http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/Warof1812/2011/Issue16/c_PakenhamOrders.html); Owsley, 101-102; Reilly, 176.
9. Brown, 161.
10. Reilly, 361.
11. Brown, 168; Reilly, 367-369.



### **Part III. Suggested Stands (Sites) to Visit**

The New Orleans staff ride is composed of 11 suggested stands to support a basic overview of the operational campaign in the Louisiana portion of the Gulf region and a more detailed study and analysis of the tactical battles south of New Orleans. The full 11 suggested stands incorporate the bulk of the campaign that took place in Louisiana in 1814-1815 and culminated with the numerous actions fought south and east of the city, all in an effort that focuses on all three level of war: strategic, operational, and tactical. An alternate first stand is also provided in order to provide organizations and units with an additional options based on time available. However, to adjust for available time considerations a seven-stand option, entirely contained within the Chalmette National Battlefield Park, can be adopted from this handbook beginning with Stand 4. This option provides a strictly tactical level view of the battle, while eliminating the potential for direct analysis of operational aspects of the staff ride at key locations away from the battlefield. The abbreviated option should, however, begin with a campaign overview that includes key information from Stands 1-3, before starting Stand 4.

#### **New Orleans Staff Ride Stands**

- Stand 1, Strategic Background and Campaign Overview The Rigolets Stand 1 (Alternate), The Levee at New Orleans
- Stand 2, Villere's Canal – The British Landing, 22 December 1814
- Stand 3, The de La Ronde Plantation – The American Spoiling Attack, 23 December 1814
- Stand 4, East Chalmette – The British Reconnaissance in Force, 28 December 1814
- Stand 5, East Chalmette – The Artillery Duel, 1 January 1815
- Stand 6, Rodriguez Canal – Jackson's Line, 8 January 1815
- Stand 7, The Final Assault – Right Bank of the Mississippi (Thornton's Brigade), 8 January 1815
- Stand 8, The Final Assault – British Left Column (Keane's Brigade), 8 January 1815
- Stand 9, The Final Assault – British Right Column (Gibbs' Brigade), 8 January 1815
- Stand 10, The Rodriguez Canal – Repulse of the British Army, 8 January 1815
- Stand 11, Aftermath of the Battle and Conclusion of the Campaign on the Gulf Coast





## Stand One

### Strategic Background and Campaign Overview: The Rigolets

**Directions:** While start locations for the staff ride can vary based on local lodging, a general start point should be from downtown New Orleans. **When using GPS navigation enter the following address: 27100 Chef Menteur Highway, New Orleans, LA.** From downtown, immediately head to US Interstate 10 (I-10) East. Travel on I-10 East 6 miles, to Exit 240B (the Chef Highway) to Louisiana (LA) State Highway 90 East, and travel for 23 miles. Note: After 10.6 miles the highway splits; bear to the right. In 12.4 miles, turn right into the Fort Pike parking lot. Park there and walk approximately 100 minutes to the park office in order to gain access.

**Notes:** The Fort Pike State Historic Site is operated by the State of Louisiana. Admittance to Fort Pike, from which there is an unobstructed view of the Rigolets (pronounced *Riggo-leees*) and connected shores of both lakes, is \$4 per person. However, the stand could also be conducted from the side of the boat launch, though with a lesser view.

### Visual Aids

British Shaping Operations in the Gulf, Jul-  
Nov 1814 British Shift to the West

British Amphibious Operations, Dec 16-22 1814

**Orientation:** The route from New Orleans to this spot follows the original path of the Chef Menteur, which still retains that name and still passes through the Plain of Gentilly, key terrain stretching from the lakes to New Orleans. The center of 1814 New Orleans is approximately 25 miles to the southwest. Jackson considered it the most likely avenue of approach for a British advance on the city and remained greatly concerned over its defense throughout most of the campaign.

This spot, the Rigolets, was a key water avenue of approach for British naval forces passing from the Gulf of Mexico because its narrow channel connected Lake Borgne in the south and Lake Pontchartrain in the north. Therefore, control of this position denied the enemy access to the Chef Menteur and further access to Lake Pontchartrain which would provide the British a potential “back door” into New Orleans. In 1814 the Americans occupied Fort Petites Coquilles, a position designed to deny an enemy landing on the Plain of Gentilly and access to Lake Pontchartrain. It was located approximately 760m to the west of this location but is now underwater.

The current historical structure on this site is Fort Pike, the first ever Third System Fort built in the United States. It was built after the War of 1812, in 1818, as part of the improved American defense plan to protect New Orleans. During the Civil War Union forces occupied the fort. Fort Pike was abandoned by the government in 1890. Today, it provides an excellent platform from which to observe the surrounding terrain during this stand.



Figure 3. The Rigolets and Lake Borgne seen from Fort Pike.

By Author.

### **Description**

A successful British campaign in the Gulf of Mexico depended heavily upon support from several regional factions that they saw as anti-American and the possession of a local base from which to conduct operations against New Orleans. In addressing the former criteria, in addition to the Creeks, the British approached Caribbean pirates operating from the Louisiana coast and appealed directly to the French and Spanish Creole population of New Orleans itself to join them in their fight against the Americans. In the case of the latter criteria, British leaders ruled a direct attack on the city as infeasible. However, the base at Jamaica presented extremely long lines of communication and supply, 1,200 miles, from the scene of action for the Royal Navy to effectively supply an expeditionary force in a flexibly and timely fashion. Shaping operations therefore, required the securing of a British base closer to New Orleans. The two closest available choices were the American port of Mobile, situated in the excellent bay of the same name, or Pensacola. The latter, slightly more than 200 miles east of New Orleans, however, came with the awkward relationship of being England's Spanish ally. Therefore, Mobile, less than 150 miles east of New Orleans, became the

next British military objective.

However, the British experienced a series of challenges and shortcomings during the final preparation period. The cabinet, in a string of cost-saving measures, directed several key changes in fulfilling Cochrane's various requests in order to effectively support his approved plan. First, the original Caribbean base of operations moved from Barbados to Jamaica. Second, the cabinet ignored Cochrane's specific request for specific limited draft vessels from Europe and instead directed the purchase of light craft in Jamaica and the adjacent islands. Third, the West Indian troops requested winter clothing. Finally, cost cutting resulted in a limited supply of provisions. The cabinet directed local purchase of supplies in the Caribbean rather than spending additional funds to ship them from England. The alternative drove up the cost of nearly everything in an area that proved incapable of provisioning an expeditionary force of the size assigned to seize New Orleans. All of the Cabinet's economies led to a tremendous operations security challenge for the British. It did not take long for information to make its way to New Orleans in the hands of merchant seamen, via Havana in Cuba, outlining nearly every aspect of the British plan and the objective.

The British understood that the Creek War decisively engaged the bulk of American military assets in the South and the Gulf region. Therefore, if the British could get the Indians fully involved in supporting their efforts along the Gulf coast it would continue to be a major diversion for the Americans. However, the only means of actively supporting the Indians involved accessing them via Spanish-controlled Florida. While an Anglo-Spanish alliance fought against Napoleon in Europe, Spain maintained a policy of neutrality in England's war with the United States. However, the European alliance convinced British leaders that Spain would cooperate without appearing anything other than neutral to their American enemy. Furthermore, the Spanish realizing their position of weakness in the region, adopted a policy of securing specific Florida enclaves such as St. Augustine, St. Marks, and Pensacola while avoiding confrontation with either the United States or England. This policy gave the British their opportunity to establish a foothold on the Apalachicola River and direct access to the inland tribes.

The first British effort to meet with the Creeks and other tribes took place on the Apalachicola River in Florida on 10 May 1814, 165 miles east of Pensacola. Unfortunately, during this first conference, the British found out about the Creek's decisive defeat at Horseshoe Bend. Still, the outcome of the meeting led to positive British reports of the

existence of potential Indian resistance to Americans. These reports fed Cochrane's confidence in his proposed plan to seize New Orleans, leading to his order in July for a British element to land in Spanish Florida in order to arm and train the tribes to support future British operations. On 10 August, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Nicholls, a Royal Marine officer, landed at the Apalachicola River. Discovering that the initial British contingent followed the Indians to Pensacola in order for the latter to be closer to Spanish protection, Nicholls arrived there on 14 August. Upon his arrival, Nicholls received a request from the Spanish governor to help defend the city, despite the orders of the Captain General in Havana refusing to admit the access of British forces to the colony.

Another British shaping operation, this one to inform and influence, involved approaching the syndicate of pirates led by a French Haitian named Jean Lafitte. Called Baratarians because of their base of operations in Louisiana's Barataria Bay, these self-styled privateers preyed upon the Spanish and French merchant shipping in the Gulf and Caribbean. Barataria Bay, located along the southern Louisiana coast, presented a possible avenue of approach for a British expeditionary force sent to seize New Orleans. From the bay, via a series of interior waterways well known to Baratarian smugglers, an invasion force could move to within a few miles of the city. Despite a long history of aggressive counter-pirate operations in the region, the British began entertaining a dialogue with Lafitte after Cochrane received Pigot's report dated 8 June. Again, based on Pigot's positive assessment of the situation in the Gulf, the British saw an opportunity in leveraging the Baratarians and directly approached Lafitte on 3 September.

Nicholls once again assumed the position of point man for the British shaping operation in the Gulf, asserting in his correspondence to Lafitte that with the defeat of Napoleon, England and France were once again allies. He further advanced promises that if the Baratarians sided with the British, Lafitte would be granted the rank of a naval captain and that all of his followers would receive lands and be allowed to pursue their practice of piracy in the Gulf. Lafitte, proving his ability to lead such a diverse group, saw the British approach as more of an ultimatum and a clear message that their way of life would end after a British victory. He, therefore, requested a two week period to consider the proposal which the British accepted. In the interim, he in turn approached Governor Claiborne of Louisiana, providing copies of all of his correspondence with the British, choosing to side with the Americans in exchange for amnesty for his followers and the hope that his enterprises could continue for the foreseeable

future.

American policies against piracy remained inflexible, however, especially in Louisiana where Governor Claiborne and Lafitte appeared to conduct a personal war of wits against one another with Lafitte maintaining the advantage. Claiborne, attempting to enforce the laws of the United States, continued to rely upon a policy of force in an effort to destroy the Baratarians and their smuggling activities. Confronted with Lafitte's evidence of a British attempt to enlist their aid and Lafitte's offer of support, the governor refused his offer, remaining focused on his goal to end the Baratarian trade. The governor was actively assisted by Master Commandant David Patterson, the commander of the US Navy station of New Orleans. Most secondary sources refer to Patterson as Commodore, a common mistake. He was named to command "the Naval Forces of the United States on the New Orleans Station." However, he was not promoted to the same rank as his predecessor which was commodore. Patterson was charged with the American counter-piracy mission in that part of the Gulf as well as its defense against the British. Claiborne saw both the pirates and the British as equal threats. With Patterson's refusal to shift assets to Mobile in support of Jackson prior to the British attack on Fort Bowyer, Patterson instead focused his combat power against the Baratarians in accordance with Claiborne's desires. On 16 September, the final day of the British attempt to seize Fort Bowyer at the entrance of Mobile Bay, Patterson's flotilla, with a landing party of sailors and US Marines, reinforced by the Army's 44th Infantry Regiment, attacked Lafitte's base on the island of Grand Terre in Barataria Bay. The joint operation destroyed the base and captured most of the pirate fleet disrupting their operations in the Gulf. However, Lafitte, refusing to allow his men to return fire, successfully repositioned the bulk of his supplies inland out of the grasp of Patterson's force.

Despite the American destruction of Lafitte's main base of operations however, Lafitte continued his appeals to the Americans, offering the support of his Baratarians against the British. Despite the encouragement of the bulk of New Orleans' Creole leaders, Jackson adamantly refused to accept the services of Lafitte, ruling them criminals that should be prosecuted by the United States. However, the Creole societal network orchestrated a resolution by the state legislature that suspended legal proceedings against the Baratarians for a period of four months on condition that they serve in the defense of New Orleans. That action and a chance encounter on a city street between Jackson and Lafitte, allowed the pirate to passionately state his case and convince the

general that he could support the cause with both experienced men and war materials.

Jackson arrived at Mobile on 22 August just as major components of what the British government considered the final campaign in America began. Two days later, Ross' British force defeated an American force at Bladensburg and captured Washington. A week later British forces in Canada began their advance into American territory via the Champlain Valley. Then as August gave way to September, fortune seemed to shine on the Americans. On 11 September, the American naval flotilla on Lake Champlain achieved a decisive victory that seized control of the lake and forced the culmination of the British northern offensive. During that same period, the British expeditionary force in the Chesapeake suffered twin setbacks: the navy failed to neutralize Fort McHenry, defending Baltimore harbor and the Army failed to penetrate the landward defenses of the city, losing Ross in the process.

During August and September, a critical development took place in the shaping of American joint operational relations between Jackson and his naval counterpart, Master Commandant Patterson, which lasted through the remainder of the campaign in the Gulf. Upon his arrival in Mobile at the end of August, Jackson requested the movement of all naval assets from New Orleans to Mobile in order to support its defense. Patterson, in a reply dated 2 September, politely and respectfully declined to do so citing his certainty that New Orleans was the British objective and that his flotilla could best be employed to defend the various waterborne avenues of approach to the city, especially Lake Borgne and the Rigolets. He warned that once inside Mobile Bay, the flotilla would be trapped by the Royal Navy's blockade. Unused to being told no, Jackson complained to Secretary of War Monroe, not knowing that Monroe and the Secretary of the Navy already previously established that the Army and Navy forces in the Gulf would be governed by separate chains of command. Therefore, the joint command of the Gulf would be one of cooperation between the senior component commanders. While the mandate initially presented a personal affront to Jackson, the agreed upon operational employment of Army and Navy forces in the Gulf region, in fact, established the parameters for what became a successful relationship that eventually developed between Jackson and Patterson. Jackson, who possessed no experience with naval operations or technology and thus suffered from a rough learning curve, instead learned as he went from Patterson, who proved a patient teacher and valuable joint service partner. In the end, Jackson would not have supreme command but he would achieve the

victory that he sought.

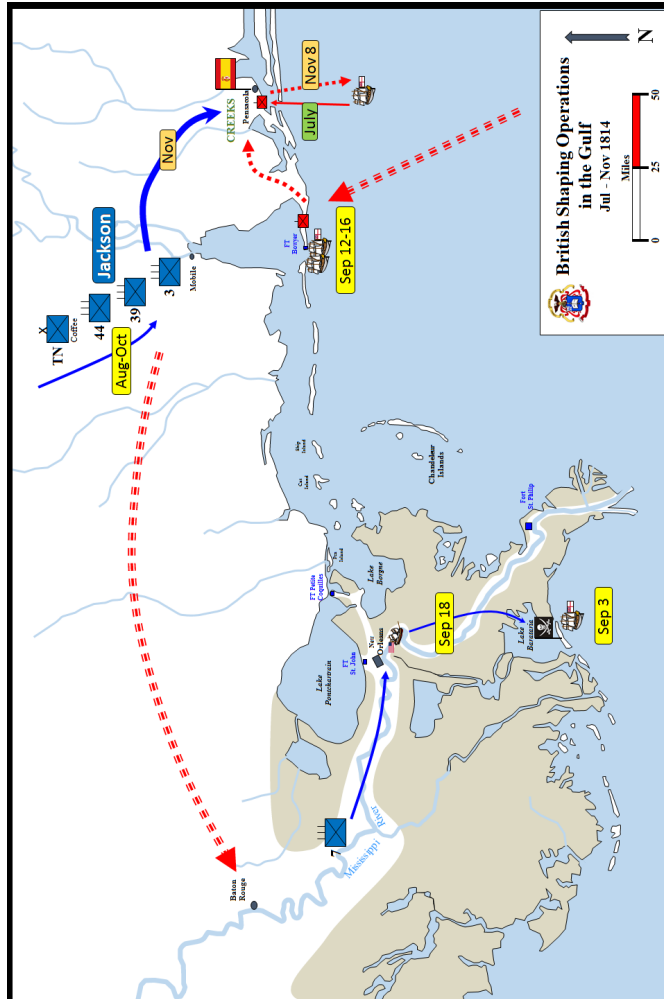


Figure 4. British Shaping Operations in the Gulf, Jul-Nov 1814.  
CSI created.

While the attention of the national government and much of the country focused on events in upstate New York and the Chesapeake, British efforts on the Gulf coast also accelerated. As British support to the various groups of Indians at Apalachicola and Pensacola progressed, Lieutenant Colonel Nicholls determined that the British needed a victory over the Americans in order to increase Indian confidence and to expand British influence further to other tribes. Nicholls decided that an attack against Mobile offered such an opportunity. However, Captain W.H. Percy, the Royal Navy's senior commander in the Gulf, wanted to attack Fort Bowyer, the American fortification that defended the entrance to Mobile Bay. A successful attack against the fort would isolate Mobile from the Gulf and the capture of the city would allow the British access to the Indian tribes along the Alabama River. Despite Nicholls'

personal reservations, he eventually gave in to his usually aggressive nature and agreed with a joint assault on Fort Bowyer.

On 12 September, a combined force of an estimated 120 Royal Marines and Indians landed some 16 miles to the rear of Fort Bowyer at the tip of Mobile point on the eastern side of the entrance to the bay. Their attack met heavy resistance from the garrison which though approximately 150 men, consisted of all Regulars, and forced the British force to retire. The next day, Percy and the navy tried to achieve their intent. However, a number of natural and manmade influences resulted in a second unsuccessful attempt where neither side did much damage to the other. Finally, on 16 September, Percy conducted a joint attack on Fort Bowyer. Jackson, crossing Mobile Bay at the time, rushed back to organize reinforcements. However, the attack proved to be as short and ineffective as the previous attempt and the Americans achieved a decided victory when they severely damaged the British flagship HMS *Hermes*, forcing the British to scuttle her. Casualties were slight based on relative strength of the opposing forces. The Americans sustained four killed and five wounded, while the British casualties numbered 27 killed and 45 wounded. Yet, the combination of failed attempts by the British to seize Fort Bowyer or Mobile resulted in their withdrawal to Pensacola.

The misguided decision by Nicholls and Percy to attempt an attack against either Fort Bowyer or Mobile, resulted in an under-resourced and ill-coordinated failure. The two commanders demonstrated contempt for American military capabilities while overly emphasizing their own. The garrison of Fort Bowyer achieved a victory that helped sustain the morale of the American troops defending the Gulf coast. It gave the British cause for thought that Mobile and the indirect approach may not be the best way to New Orleans. However, much deeper impacts began to be felt in the wake of Fort Bowyer. While the British could prove that they were capable of helping the Spanish, the governor in Pensacola welcomed them, though with reservations. After Fort Bowyer, the underlying strain of the Anglo-Spanish relationship in Florida began to rise to the surface. Mutual support ended. The British setback at Fort Bowyer gave the Spanish governor second thoughts about condoning the British presence in Florida and requesting their assistance to defend the territory from the Americans. The deteriorating relationship between the two allies presented an ill-timed predicament. Based on his personal assessment of the known number of British and Spanish sympathizers and spies in Mobile, Andrew Jackson envisioned that Pensacola represented the center of enemy



intentions and operations in the Gulf. He, therefore, determined to attack Pensacola.

James Monroe, Madison's Secretary of State since 1811, officially assumed the duties of Secretary of War in the middle of October. He resigned his former position but conducted the affairs of both cabinet positions until after the war because Madison did not select a successor. This was in the midst of the most difficult period of the war for the United States. The high operational tempo that dominated the summer months along the Canadian border and in the Chesapeake Bay finally subsided but it shifted to the Gulf Region. In fact, the same day that Monroe assumed his new cabinet position, 14 October, the British expeditionary force that burned Washington, DC left the Chesapeake and sailed for Jamaica. Since the resignation of Armstrong following the capture of the capital, Monroe took over the correspondence with the various American commanders, including Jackson. Monroe's greatest challenge with Jackson involved restraining the Tennessean's desire to invade Florida in an effort to stop Anglo-Spanish material support to the Creeks residing in the Spanish colony. On 28 October 1814, Monroe unequivocally prohibited Jackson from violating Spanish neutrality.

Jackson, however, benefited from a simple combination of distance and time, conducting operations some 850 miles from the seat of government. While this adversely affected command and control at the strategic level, it left Jackson free to conduct operations of his own design at the operational level. Two key considerations influenced his thinking and ultimately his decision making. Jackson felt that his location in the theater placed him in a position to collect and analyze information quickly and then act decisively to neutralize threats. Furthermore, as a Tennessean, he felt that he knew the true gravity of the situation in the South and along its frontier far better than eastern politicians in Washington. Therefore, Jackson willfully disobeyed Monroe's repeated direct orders prohibiting an armed incursion into Spanish Florida. On 2 November Jackson began a march into Spanish Florida with a force of 520 Regulars, 750 Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians, over 2,800 Militia and Volunteers or 4,070 men. His objective was to seize Pensacola and deny it as a base of operations in arming the Creeks or operating against other American locations on the Gulf coast.

Averaging 15 miles per day during the march of approximately 60 miles, the American force arrived outside the city of Pensacola on 6 November. Jackson immediately issued an ultimatum to the Spanish governor to surrender the city and its fortifications. However, the governor replied

with a refusal and a demand that the Americans leave Spanish territory. Jackson did not possess the equipment required for a siege. Nor did he have the requisite time to conduct one. The longer he remained fixed at Pensacola, the more opportunity he gave to the British to exploit their naval mobility by attacking elsewhere. In a bid for a speedy capitulation, he stormed the city on 7 November. The Spanish troops initially resisted but soon collapsed and surrendered the city. Jackson's end state came to fruition the following day, 8 November, when the British blew up the magazine and stores in Fort Barrancas and Fort Santa Rosa, withdrawing its Soldiers to the fleet and leaving the harbor defenseless. The British withdrew to their position along the Apalachicola River. The battle's casualties amounted to a small total: the Americans suffered five killed and 10 wounded with the Spanish having 14 killed and six wounded and no record of British casualties exists. With a successful conclusion to his Pensacola operation, Jackson turned control of the city back over to the Spanish and began his movement back to Mobile on 9 November. The destruction of the fortifications negated the option of an occupation but also Jackson received intelligence of the main British expeditionary force gathered on Jamaica for operations against New Orleans. That left few options beyond returning to Mobile. In a matter of seven days, Jackson decisively altered the state of the British campaign in the Gulf. The British could no longer directly support the Creeks with arms and material but much worse, they no longer possessed a base inside the Gulf to support operations along the coast or inland. The closest major British base in the region was back in Jamaica, over 1,100 miles from New Orleans.

The fall of Pensacola to the Americans presented a series of benefits to their half of the developing campaign. Jackson disrupted large groups of Indians planning to attack American territory. More importantly, his success discredited their faith in the British to secure and support them. Additionally, Jackson drove a deep wedge between the British and their hesitant Spanish allies. Cochrane later asserted, "The attack made by the Americans upon Pensacola has in a great measure retarded this service [the planned British campaign in the Gulf region]."<sup>1</sup>

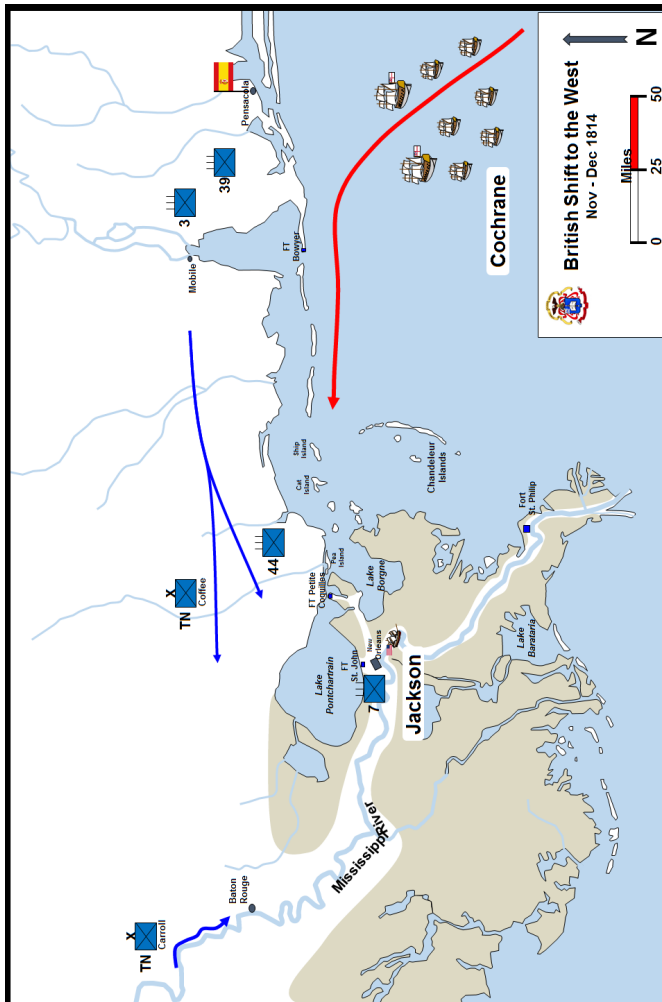


Figure 5. British Shift to the West, Nov-Dec 1814.

CSI created.

Jackson seized and maintained firm control of the initiative, disrupting significant British shaping operations and denying the British a major sustainable base on the Gulf coast for a second time. Furthermore, despite correctly seeing the larger threat to New Orleans, Jackson continued his efforts to eliminate any further threat originating from Spanish Florida. He sent a force of 1,000 mounted Militia and friendly Indians against the Anglo-Indian position on the Apalachicola River to maintain the initiative against the enemy, preventing them from having any further part in the campaign.

Jackson remained in Mobile only as long as it took him to be convinced that his defensive measures would be effective in the event of a second British attack. He and his staff left Mobile for New Orleans on 22 November. Two days later the British expeditionary force weighed anchor and departed Jamaica for Louisiana.

Jackson's arrival in New Orleans on 1 December marked an increase in the campaign's tempo that lasted until its

culmination. As with the Creeks and in Mobile and Pensacola, where Jackson went, things happened. New Orleans suffered in a state of fear and paranoia for over six months. The population needed a strong leader to restore its confidence and faith. Jackson presented somewhat of a contradiction.

A tall, gaunt man, very erect...with a countenance furrowed by care and anxiety. His dress was simple and nearly threadbare. A small leather cap protected his head, and a short blue Spanish cloak his body, whilst his...high dragoon boots [were] long innocent of polish or blacking...His complexion was sallow and unhealthy; his hair iron grey, and his body thin and emaciated like that of one who had just recovered from a lingering sickness... But... [a] fierce glare...[lighted] his bright and hawk-like eye[s].<sup>2</sup>

At 48, he looked aged beyond his years being gray-haired, thin, and frail looking. He still carried a pistol ball from a Nashville street fight with a political rival and suffered from a severe case of dysentery. However, he possessed an energy seen only by his Soldiers and his enemies and soon acknowledged by the citizens of New Orleans who saw cool confidence in his demeanor and fire in his eyes.

After receiving a series of reports and updates in his headquarters in the city where he also rested, Jackson began an exhaustive five day reconnaissance of his new area of operations. He personally studied every major defensive work, directing improvements, and repositioning forces to strengthen the overall American defense. Where he could not go, Jackson sent members of his small staff of personally selected officers, demonstrating a great deal of faith in them to keep him well informed and accomplish his intent. What they could not tell Jackson and what no one could tell him, was that the British expeditionary force dropped anchor off Ship Island on 8 December 1814. This was some 60 miles east of New Orleans.

The two opposing senior naval commanders, Cochrane and Patterson, both saw the immense value of possessing access to Lake Borgne and Lake Pontchartrain. They also understood the value of the American flotilla. As long as the flotilla existed on Lake Borgne, a British landing and growing line of communication lay vulnerable to disruption. Cochrane explained, "It became impossible that any movement of the troops could take place till this formidable flotilla was either captured or destroyed."<sup>3</sup> However, Patterson remained restricted in the fact that his vessels were a more critical asset for collecting intelligence for Jackson concerning

British intentions leading up to a landing. Patterson's reports to Jackson outlined his plans. "My idea is to station my vessels at different points of the Lake [Borgne] to the eastward of this and if attacked by too superior a force, to retreat to the fort at the Rigolets, then make a stand and aid the Battery in the defense of that important pass."<sup>4</sup>

Patterson posted five gunboats (with 25 guns of various caliber), a tender, and a dispatch boat, with crews numbering over 200 men, under the command of Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones in Lake Borgne. Patterson intended this force to delay British landing operations in the area surrounding the lake in order to provide Jackson with more time to prepare his defenses. Jones' orders directed him to delay and attrit British forces on the lake but avoid decisive engagement threatening destruction of his force by withdrawing to the Rigolets and the cover of the guns of Fort Petite Coquilles.

Patterson's instructions to Jones became critical on 10 December when the latter's flotilla patrolled the Pass Christian, west of Ship Island. That day, the British fleet identified the Americans. Because the lake presented extreme difficulties for the larger navy ships of the line, 45 barges which were under Captain Nicholas Lockyer, deployed to attack the Americans with specific orders to capture as many of the gunboats as possible. Upon spotting the approaching British, Jones began to reposition to the cover of the Petit Coquilles in accordance with Patterson's orders. In a scene more like a naval battle from antiquity, British sailors rowed their barges into contact with Jones' withdrawing force. It took over 36 hours for the British to close with the enemy, who found themselves stranded on sandbars on the north side of Malheureux Island in the Pass Christian on the night of 13-14 December when the tide lowered.

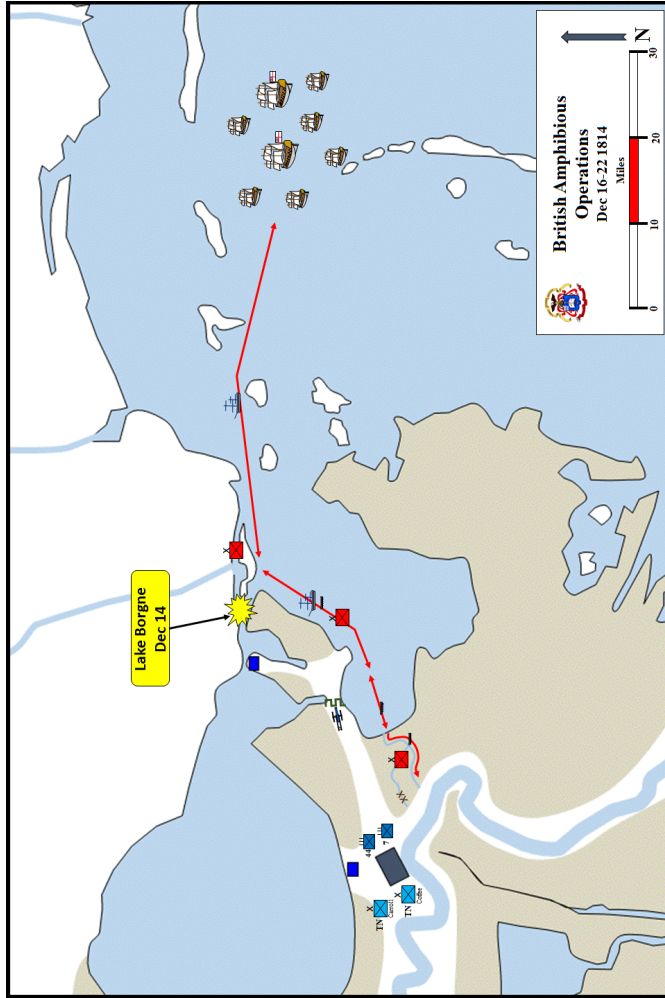


Figure 6. British Amphibious Operations, Dec 16-22 1814.  
CSI created.

Jones considered his situation. The British possessed twice the guns and a greater mobility than their American opponents. Jones could either scuttle his gunboats or fight. He ordered his gunboat commanders to anchor their vessels in a line to block the channel and prepare for combat. On 14 December, the British barges closed with the Americans at 0930, engaging in a tactic of isolating each American vessel one at a time. Just before noon, Jones suffered wounds that forced him to turn command over to another officer. Over the course of the next hour the British quickly captured the remaining American vessels. By 1300 the battle for Lake

Borgne ended. The Americans sustained six killed and 86 wounded while the British suffered 19 killed and 75 wounded and lost several of their limited barges damaged or sunk. However, the entire American squadron fell into British hands, giving the British control of Lake Borgne and access to a potential landing site.

Once the British fleet cleared Lake Borgne of the American flotilla the next step involved finding a secured landing site for the expeditionary force. The destruction of Patterson's flotilla effectively eliminated Jackson's best asset for effective early warning of a British landing along the eastern approaches to New Orleans. It also denied the Americans critical firepower to add to static positions situated around Lake Borgne. As in their amphibious operations along the American east coast, the British could exploit their operational mobility in the Gulf, choosing the place and time of their landing to achieve surprise over the Americans and then rapidly seize New Orleans.

The British scrutinized a number of potential courses of action. First, there was the direct route up the Mississippi River to New Orleans. However, natural and manmade obstacles stood in their way because of the river's strong current of nearly five knots and strong American defensive positions, especially the well sited Fort St. Philip, gave British naval commanders cause for concern. Second, the British fleet could utilize Barataria Bay and then utilize the system of lakes and bayous south of New Orleans in order to gain access to a landing site close to the city. Two points ruled out this course of action: Lafitte's decline to support the operation denied the British critically necessary guides to lead them through the confusing interior water route and, even with experienced guides, the expeditionary force then faced the challenge of being on the opposite bank of the river from New Orleans. Third, with the elimination of enemy naval assets on Lake Borgne, the British could force their way through the Rigolets into Lake Pontchartrain and approach the city from the north. This course of action gained some consensus among the British commanders but again they faced several challenges. Movement along this avenue of approach would lengthen the British line of operations from the Royal Navy's anchorage. Furthermore, the depth of the Rigolets prevented any vessel larger than a barge to pass through. Any attempt to force the pass with the already limited number of barges put them at great risk because of the threat posed by the American position at Fort Petite Coquilles.

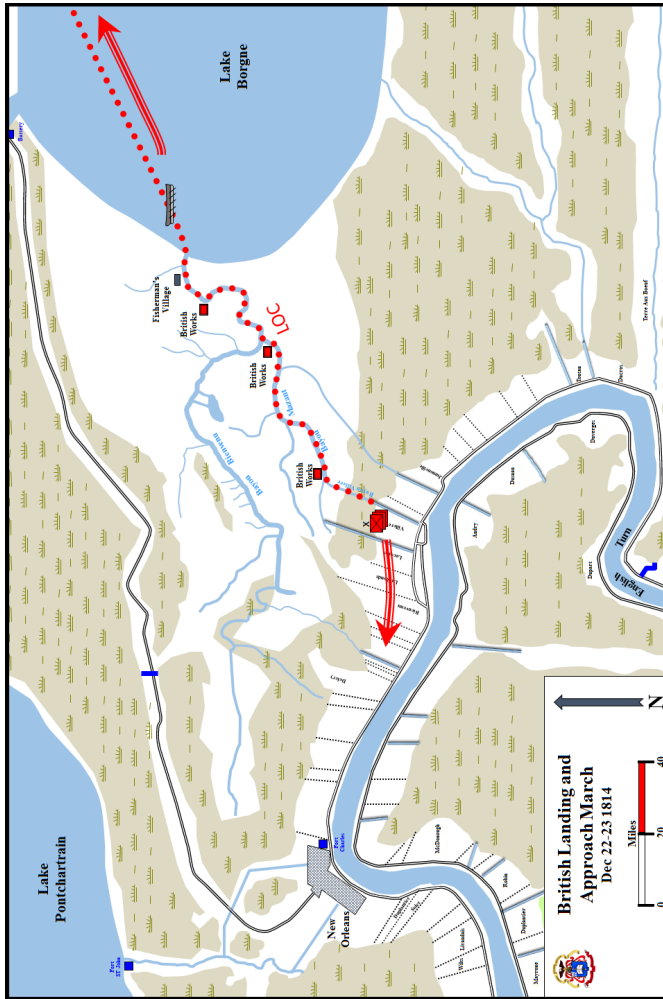


Figure 7. The British Landing and Approach March, Dec 22-23 1814.

CSI created.

Therefore, the British also took into account additional courses of action that included a more direct approach. Hence, the British considered a landing at the Chef Pass, due east of New Orleans. From there they could utilize the Chef Menteur road directly into the city. Unfortunately, a reconnaissance revealed an American battery that controlled a position canalized by a series of swamps alongside the road. With that in mind the British finally adopted a course of action that involved finding a water route from Lake Borgne westward to the Mississippi River. Upon meeting the river, the expeditionary force could utilize the local road network and gain access to the city. With the identification of an unguarded waterborne approach from Lake Borgne, a route that included the potential for achieving surprise upon the Americans, the British could move to within close proximity of the city and then make a rapid advance to seize the New



Orleans. The British chose this course of action.

However, choosing this specific course of action did not come without its challenges. The most important involved a combination of distance, lift capability, and time. Supporting this course of action entailed moving the expeditionary force some 60 miles one way with the limited number of barges and other light draft vessels. The Royal Navy possessed far less transport of this type than Cochrane requested and could, therefore, only transport approximately one third of the force's troops at a time. Choosing such a route with limited capabilities would take a number of days to accomplish, extend the line of operation, and possibly forfeit the element of surprise.

Thus, with the decision made, Cochrane and Keane agreed to land and consolidate the expeditionary force in one location in order to organize it for the approach and landing operation envisioned. The British commitment to a course of action, and the immediate steps that followed that decision, initiated a sequence of events that shaped the culminating period of the Gulf campaign which was a 30 day period referred to today as the Battle of New Orleans.

### **Vignettes**

1. Instructions to the senior commanders, Admiral Cochrane and Major General Ross, clearly indicated that the campaign in the Gulf, and specifically the capture of New Orleans, remained a strategic priority in Britain's efforts to end the war in a position built from strength:

Orders to Cochrane from Bathurst (11 August 1814):

*First, to obtain command of the embouchure of the Mississippi, so as to deprive the back settlements of America of their communication with the sea; and, secondly, to occupy some important and valuable possession, by the restorations of which the conditions of peace might be improved, or which we might be entitled to exact the cession of as the price of peace.*<sup>5</sup>

Orders to Ross from Bathurst (6 September 1814):

*If you shall find in the inhabitants a general and decided disposition to withdraw from their recent connection with the United States, either with the view of establishing themselves as an independent people or returning under the dominion of the Spanish Crown, you will give them every support in your power; you will furnish them with arms and clothing, and assist in forming and disciplining the several levies,*

*provided you are fully satisfied of the loyalty of their intention, which will be best evinced by their committing themselves in some act of decided hostility against the United States.*<sup>6</sup>

2. In a colorful effort to describe the great diversity of the population of New Orleans, an observer noted several years before the campaign that:

*Here in half an hour you can see and speak to Frenchmen, Spaniards, Danes, Swedes, Germans, Englishmen, Portuguese, Hollanders, Mexicans, Kentuckians, Tennesseans, Ohioans, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, New Englanders and a motley group of Indians, quadroons [people of one-quarter African descent], Africans, etc.*<sup>7</sup>

3. The British attempted to conduct aggressive information operations as part of their shaping operations. These attempts targeted various elements of the diverse Louisiana population and that of the wider Gulf region as well. In particular, the British attempted to sway the French and Spanish population of Louisiana, as demonstrated in this proclamation addressed to the “NATIVES OF LOUISIANA:”

*ON you the first call is made, to assist in liberating from a faithless and imbecile government your paternal soil. Spaniards, Frenchmen, Italians, and British, whether settled or residing for the time in Louisiana, on you I also call to aid me in the just cause. The American usurpation in this country must be abolished, and the lawful owners of the soil put in possession. I am at the head of a large body of Indians, well-armed, disciplined, and commanded by British Officers. A good train of Artillery, with every requisite, seconded by the powerful aid of a numerous British and Spanish Squadron of Ships and Vessels of War. Be not alarmed, Inhabitants of the Country, at our approach; the same good faith and disinterestedness which has distinguished the conduct of Britons in Europe, accompany them here...You will have no fear...your Property, your Laws, the peace and tranquility of your Country, will be guaranteed...rest assured that these brave men only burn with the ardent desire of satisfaction for the wrongs they have suffered from the Americans, to join you in liberating these Southern Frontiers from their yoke...The Indians have pledged themselves in the most solemn manner, not to injure in the slightest degree, the Persons and Properties, of any but enemies to their Spanish and English fathers. A Flag*

*over any door, whether Spanish, French, or British, will be a sure protection.*<sup>8</sup>

4. As part of the British attempt to gain the support of the Baratarians pirates, Major Edward J. Nicholls, the Royal Marine officer charged with organizing and supplying the Creek Indians in Spanish Pensacola, wrote to Laffite on 31 August 1814, requesting the support of the Baratarians:

*I HAVE arrived in the Floridas for the purpose of annoying the only enemy Great Britain has in the world, as France and England are now friends. I call on you, with your brave followers, to enter into the service of Great Britain, in which you shall have the rank of a captain; lands will be given to you all, in proportion to your respective ranks, on a peace taking place, and I invite you on the following terms. Your property shall be guaranteed to you, and your persons protected: in return for which I ask you to cease all hostilities against Spain, or the allies of Great Britain.*<sup>9</sup>

Successfully delaying his response to the British, Lafitte, as part of his drawn out correspondence with leading citizens of New Orleans to inform them of the British offer and his loyalty to the United States, finally wrote directly to Governor Claiborne:

*I offer to you to restore to this state several citizens who perhaps in your eyes have lost that sacred title. I offer you them, however, such as you could wish to find them, ready to exert their utmost efforts in defence of the country. This point of Louisiana, which I occupy, is of great importance in the present crisis. I tender my services to defend it; and the only reward I ask is that a stop be put to the proscriptions against me and my adherents.*<sup>10</sup>

5. The confusion on the part of the citizens of New Orleans stemmed more from a simple fear of the unknown than British information operations. The populace also lacked a strong source of leadership until the arrival of Jackson. Once on the scene, Jackson applied his immense charisma and will power to restoring the confidence of the population and placing the city on a defensive footing, as recorded separately by Majors Arsene Lacarriere Latour and Howell Tatum, members of Jackson staff:

Latour:

*The situation of our country at that period, owing to the*

*proximity of the enemy – the number of whose ships of war on our coast was daily increasing – was critical in the extreme...It is hardly possible to form an idea of the change which his [Jackson's] arrival produced on the minds of the people...on his arrival, he was immediately invested with the confidence of the public, and all hope centered in him.*<sup>11</sup>

Tatum:

*The first days of the General's arrival at New Orleans was devoted to the acquisition of such information, upon various points, as were deemed necessary, in order, to enable him to adopt the most efficacious plan for the defence of Louisiana, and of Orleans in particular, against threatened, and expected Invasions, by the enemy who were at this time ascertained to have reached our coast.*<sup>12</sup>

### **Analysis**

1. Evaluate the British operational plan. What principles of operational art stand out most? What limitations existed that could have created an unsuccessful outcome?
2. Compare the two opposing forces' application of what we today call joint operations.
3. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the British information operations focused directly on the civilian population of Louisiana?
4. Did the Americans/British handle the Baratarian Pirates properly? What contemporary examples can be compared to such an approach in gaining allies "of convenience?"

## **Stand One (alternate)**

### **The Levee at Woldenberg Park, New Orleans Strategic Background and Campaign Overview**

**Directions:** Woldenberg Park (1 Canal Street) is located along the Mississippi River in downtown New Orleans. **When using GPS navigation enter the following address: Woldenberg Park, 1 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA.** The best route in and out of the park is:

Enter: Approach the French Quarter from the west on North Peters Street, turn right on Conti Street just before Landry's Seafood, turn right on North Front Street, pull off to the side of the road near the next intersection with Bienville Street and dismount. Note that the entire route from the turn on Conti is one way in the desired direction of travel.

Walk across the railroad tracks at Bienville Station and enter Woldenberg Park along the levee. Stop along the levee with an unobstructed view of up, down, and across the river.

Exit: From North Front Street, turn right on Bienville Street and then left on North Peters Street. Turn right on Canal Street and proceed to Interstate 10 (I-10) and enter I-10 East.

**Notes:** This is a very good location to support organizations with lodging in or adjacent to downtown New Orleans that cannot conduct a classroom preliminary study phase. However, this option must be completed before approximately 8:30 a.m. in order to continue movement to next stand without encountering increasing downtown traffic congestion that will adversely impact the staff ride's timeline.

**Visual Aids:** Same as Fort Pike

**Orientation:** The levee here, more so during the campaign than today, was part of the larger New Orleans waterfront, the center of New Orleans' economic value. Along the levee merchants' stacked various products, such as locally grown sugar cane or raw materials from the northern states to here moved via the river. Once the British blockade of the American coast took full effect in 1814 there would have been millions of dollars in goods stacked on the levee waiting shipment, indicating the city's economic value to the United States and the possible wealth available to the British expeditionary force.

The Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico approximately 100 miles south of this location.

Fort St. Philip on the Mississippi River is 40 miles downstream.

Barataria Bay, facing the Gulf of Mexico, is approximately 40 miles to the southeast. A waterborne avenue of approach

begins in at the entrance of the bay, extends through various lakes and rivers, and ends only a few miles south here on the opposite bank of the river.

Lake Borgne, which opens into the Gulf of Mexico, is approximately 15 miles due east.

Lake Pontchartrain, which is connected to Lake Borne by the Rigolets, is five miles north of this point and dominates the north side of the city.

**Description:** Same as Fort Pike

**Vignettes:** Same as Fort Pike

**Analysis:** Same as Fort Pike

## **Stand Two**

### **Villere's Canal – The British Landing (22 December 1814)**

**Directions:** Exit the Fort Pike parking lot and turn left on LA 90 West. Travel approximately 17 miles and to I-510 South/Paris Road. Travel 7 miles and turn left on East Judge Perez Drive. In 1 mile turn left on Munster Drive. After entering the neighborhood, cross the first small canal, and park in the gravel area immediately on the right hand side. Dismount and cross the street to the path that parallels the canal. Stop at the first intersection of two canals. **When using GPS navigation enter the following addresses:**

For cars/vans (no more than 6 vehicle total): **2860 Munster Blvd, Meraux, LA**

This is the last house on the right hand side of the street prior to crossing a small canal. Immediately upon crossing the canal, turn right on to the gravel on the north side of the canal. Dismount and cross the street directly across to the trail and walk back to the stand location.

For busses: **2674 Munster Blvd Meraux, LA**

This is the large brown warehouse on the immediate right hand side after the turn. Park in the rear parking lot, dismount and walk up the street to the canal and the trail.

**Notes:** The entry point to this stand is in a residential area. Please respect private property. Also, rain can make the walking route to this stand extremely slippery; ensure that participants walk on the side of the trail opposite of the adjacent canals. Finally, alligators and venomous snakes inhabit the canals and natural waterways of the New Orleans area. Be aware of these dangerous animals and avoid them.

### **Visual Aids**

British Amphibious Operations, 16-22 December 1814

The British Landing and Approach March, 22-23 December 1814

**Orientation:** This is the approximate location of Villere's Canal (it is possible that it may be located more to the east of this location), part of the Villere plantation. It was the approximate endpoint of the waterborne route taken by the British from Lake Borgne. It ran from Fisherman's Village on Bayou Bienvenue and turned on to Bayou Mazant along the rear of the de La Ronde plantation. However, water levels prevented the British from continuing into the de La Ronde canal, so they continued along the Villere canal which led to the plantation of the same name. At the plantation solid ground existed along both sides of canal, providing a landing place within close proximity of the Mississippi River. The Villere

House served as the British headquarters until 18 January 1815.<sup>13</sup>

From this approximate point the British advance guard stood nine miles from New Orleans. Their line of communications extended approximately 90 miles long.



Figure 8. Villere's Canal looking to the northeast back along the British LOC.

Photo by Author.

The most important terrain feature is the still very difficult terrain to the northeast; even in December and January the foliage and vegetation in these woods and swamps can greatly impede movement. While this is a modern canal, its narrow width serves as a good approximation of what the British Navy dealt with in navigating their boats as far as they did.

### **Description**

After adopting a course of action that directed the British expeditionary force to a landing on the west side of Lake Borgne with an intent to move inland to a point within 10 miles of New Orleans, Cochrane and Keane agreed to consolidate the expeditionary force in one location in order to organize it for the landing and approach operation envisioned. They chose Pea Island, some 10 miles east of the Rigolets and approximately 20 miles from where Bayou Bienvenue met the western shore of Lake Borgne. The landing at Pea Island began on 16 December. In a painstaking and exhausting process, the Royal Navy seaman rowed barges packed with 200 men per vessel, a total of some 6,000 Soldiers, in a 10 hour one way trip to Pea Island, completing that phase of the landing in five days. Once there Keane organized the troops into three brigades and devised a plan to send an entire brigade with each lift from Pea Island to the



final landing point. The British planned to move the lead brigade in shallow draft barges that could continue the journey down Bayou Bienvenue while moving a second brigade in larger barges on the lake. Once the first brigade landed, the smaller craft would return to the lake, transfer the second brigade, and go right back into the Bayou. The third brigade, picked up at Pea Island, would follow suit. Once the troops landed the British began moving artillery, ammunition, and supplies inland to support the expeditionary force.

While intended as only a transition point, the British Soldiers found Pea Island to be no paradise. In fact, the island provided almost nothing to support a large camp, even if temporary. The terrain offered no shelter and, because of the transport limitations, the men only carried their weapons and packs, leaving tents and other small luxuries behind. This did not fit in with the December Gulf weather patterns. Cold temperatures and rain during the days and severe frosts during the nights made the Soldiers' existence poor. The West Indian troops, organized for campaigns in the Caribbean tropics and brought along in the misguided assumption that they would also thrive in the American Deep South, began falling sick almost immediately.

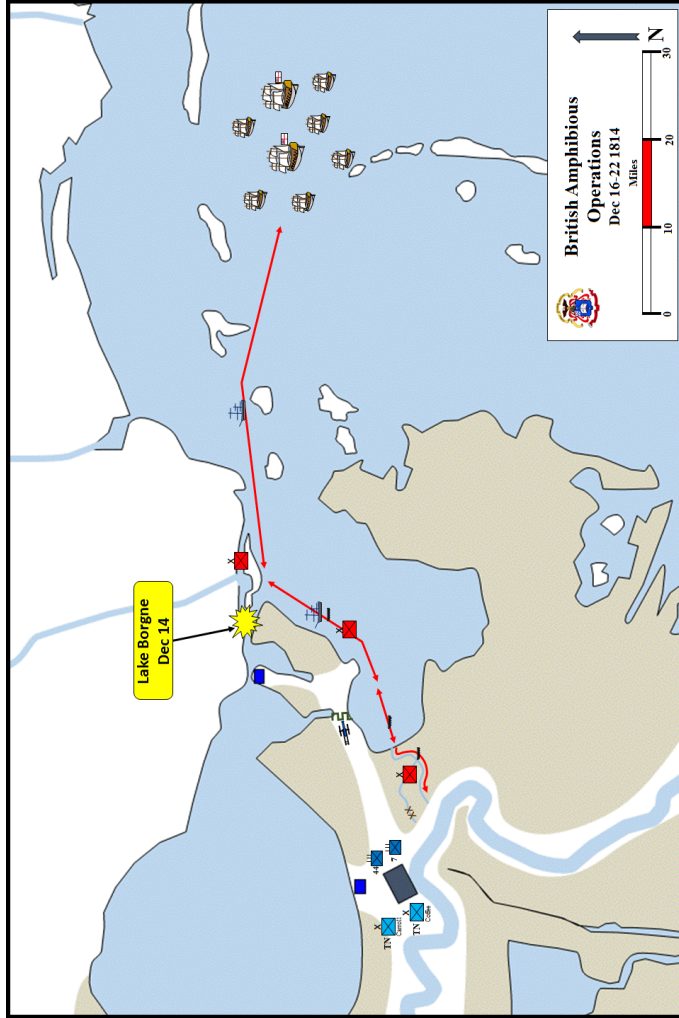


Figure 9. British Amphibious Operations (previously seen as figure 6).  
CSI created.

During the British landing operations on Pea Island, reconnaissance parties began investigating the inland waterways and collecting information on the best routes toward the river. Captain Robert Spencer, Royal Navy, and Army Lieutenant John Peddie discovered a local fishing village

located at the entrance of Bayou Bienvenue. There they collected information from Portuguese fisherman that inhabited what the British later referred to as Fisherman's Village. Disguising themselves as fisherman, they forced the Portuguese to take them further up the bayou's principle branch, Bayou Mazant, searching for a landing site. Eventually, they came to the Villere Plantation, approximately 10 miles from New Orleans. After studying the area in more detail the two officers determined that the plantation provided a sufficient site for landing the expeditionary force. Upon learning of the reconnaissance and its results Cochrane and Keane agreed to proceed with the next phase of the landing, moving along the bayou to the final landing site.

The 1st Brigade, under the command of Colonel William Thornton, commander of the 85th Regiment of Foot, left Pea Island on the morning of 22 December. Thornton's brigade consisted of his own 85th, the 95th Rifle Regiment, the 4th Regiment of Foot, 100 sappers (engineers), and a detachment of rocket artillery armed with Congreve rockets. Keane accompanied the brigade. Cochrane tracked the initial progress of the barges from a small schooner. Weather became a factor from the start as it began to rain, filling the barges with ankle-deep water. Even when the rain stopped the wind increased and the Soldiers suffering continued. They kept small charcoal fires on the stern of each barge but these were extinguished with the approach of nightfall. In the midst of this anguish the flotilla halted and took a one hour pause just before nightfall.

Returning to Fisherman's Village in force, the British quickly scattered a 12-man American detachment tasked with observing potential British movements, capturing a handful while the rest fled into the swamps. While easily overcoming the small American detachment, the movement on Bayou Bienvenue proved more challenging. Initially, the barges moved at five vessels abreast but then transitioned to single file as the bayou's banks narrowed. When the force reached the Bayou Mazant rowing proved impossible and sailors began to use their oars to "punt," pushing the riverbanks in order to propel the craft further along the bayou. Eventually, at 0400 on 23 December, the lead brigade made landfall. With the terrain forcing a single line of transports in the bayou, the British troops found themselves forced to move from rear to front, going from barge to barge, until each group reached land that proved to really be a marshy defile. While finally landing somewhat cheered the formerly confined and sore Soldiers, the ensuing ground movement proved no less demanding. The Soldiers moved in a single file across the marshy ground, cutting down thick forests of reeds and building bridges across

numerous streams.

After an hour and a half of moving through this difficult terrain the landscape ultimately began to open at the Villere Plantation and the advance guard deployed for potential action.

Prior to the British landing, following Jackson's personal reconnaissance of the various avenues of approach available to the British and American defensive positions, the American commander ordered that all major avenues be blocked. This included Bayou Bienvenue and the Villere Canal. Jackson entrusted this task to Major Gabriel Villere, whose father served as the commander of the Louisiana Militia and owned the Villere Plantation. However, Villere chose not to execute Jackson's orders, perhaps because the family's plantation depended heavily upon the bayou and canal for moving the plantation's sugar cane and other products. Villere instead chose to deploy a small detachment to guard the entrance at the Fisherman's village, as demonstrated by the detachment easily scattered on 21 December by the approaching lead British brigade.

Ironically, late on the morning of 23 December, Major Villere and his brother sat on the porch of their father's plantation house when the advance guard of the British expeditionary force appeared, quickly falling prisoner. Thornton consolidated his brigade of two thousand Soldiers at the Villere Plantation near the Mississippi River and ten miles from New Orleans without the enemy being aware of the movement.

Keane reached a decision point. Having executed an undetected approach march to within ten miles of the city and with a somewhat sufficient amount of daylight remaining, he could continue the movement, exploiting his success, and seize New Orleans. On the other hand, he could secure his position and await the arrival of the rest of his force and then proceed to the city. However, his current situation represented his first independent command, even if only temporary. Some stories assert that Colonel Thornton, an extremely aggressive commander and perhaps trying to appeal to his commander's widely accepted reputation for personal recklessness in the Peninsula, strongly pushed his commander to continue the advance and seize the city. However, no firm evidence exists to support this point. One, must however, analyze the situation that Keane found himself in at the time. Keane considered the wider complications of his situation. The force under his direct command stood isolated from reinforcement, hours away on the other end of a ninety mile long line of communication. His troops required a rest from

the arduous movement through the wilderness and he possessed only two small artillery pieces. He already knew that an American force of unknown size operated to his rear but did not know what occupied his front. In considering so much information, Keane decided, contrary to his reputation for recklessness, to consolidate his position and await the arrival of the rest of the expeditionary force.

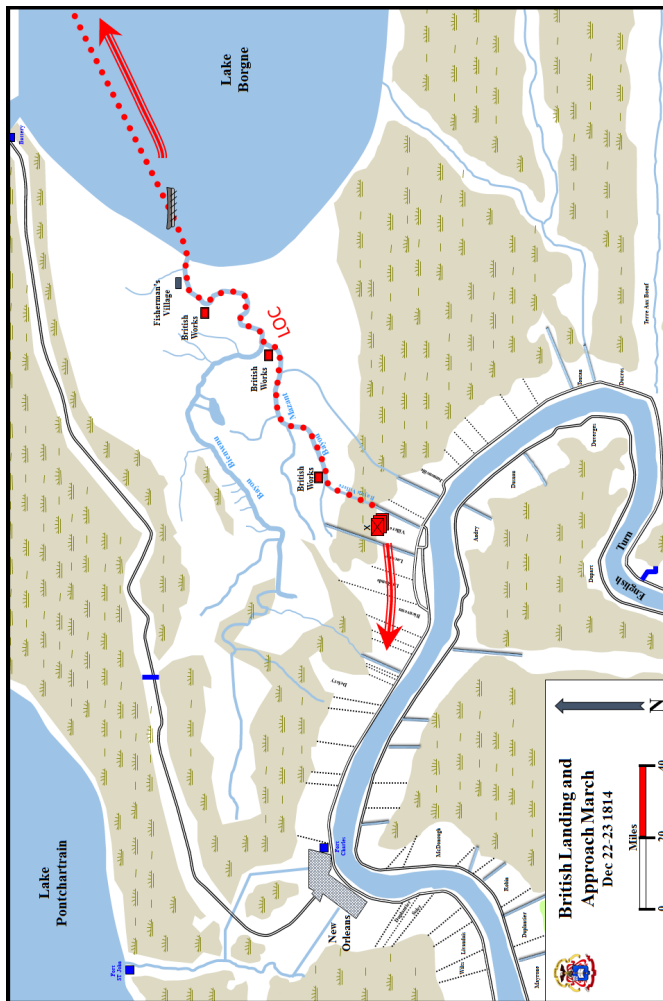


Figure 10. The British Landing and Approach March (previously seen as figure 7).  
CSI created.

**Vignettes:** Lieutenant George R. Gleig, an officer in the 85th Regiment who wrote of his military experiences in later life, left a vivid description of the conditions encountered by the expeditionary force during its time on Pea Island.

*It is scarcely possible to imagine any place more completely wretched. It was a swamp, containing, a small space of firm ground at one end, and almost wholly unadorned with trees of any sort of description... The interior was the resort of wild ducks and other water-fowl; and the pools and creeks with*

*which it was intercepted abounded in dormant alligators.*

*Upon this miserable desert the Army was assembled, without tents or huts, or any covering to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather; and in truth we may fairly affirm that our hardships had here their commencement. After having been exposed all day to the cold and pelting rain, we landed upon a barren island, incapable of furnishing even fuel enough to supply our fires. To add to our miseries, as night closed, the rain generally ceased, and severe frosts set in, which, congealing our wet clothes upon our bodies, left little animal warmth to keep the limbs in a state of activity; and the consequence was, that many of the wretched [West Indian troops] to whom frost and cold were altogether new, fell fast asleep, and perished before morning.*

*Yet in spite of all of this, not a murmur nor a whisper of complaint could be heard throughout the whole expedition. No man appeared to regard the present, whilst everyone looked forward to the future. From the General, down to the youngest drummerboy, a confident anticipation of success seemed to pervade all ranks; and in the hope of an ample reward in store for them, the toils and grievances of the moment were forgotten.<sup>14</sup>*

### **Analysis**

1. Assess the failure to block the Villere Canal – how does a commander ensure that tasks and intents are adhered to by their subordinates?
2. Evaluate the contribution of the Royal Navy during this period within the context of modern joint operations.
3. Assess Keane's decision not to immediately advance on New Orleans. Was this a lost opportunity? Evaluate the situation from Colonel Thornton's perspective; how do leaders try to influence the decision making of their commanders and how far is too far?

### **Stand Three**

#### **The de La Ronde Plantation – The American Spoiling Attack (23 December 1814)**

**Directions:** From the previous stand, turn south on Munster Drive and return to East Judge Perez Drive, this time turning west. In approximately 1 mile turn left on Paris Road. Just short of the intersection of Paris Road and St. Claude Avenue, turn right into the adjacent parking lot. Then, walk west across West St. Bernard Highway to briefly view the de La Ronde ruins (preserved on a traffic island in the middle of the road) and continue cross the road to the park located on the west side of West St. Bernard Highway. **When using GPS navigation enter the following address: 200 Paris Road, Chalmette, LA.** This is a two-story white mason brick building on the corner just before the traffic light that marks the intersection with West St. Bernard Highway. Pull into the parking lot immediately off Paris Road. Dismount and carefully proceed to the de La Ronde Plantation ruins in the traffic island and across to the large oak tree that mark the old lane from the house to the levee.

**Notes:** The ruins of the de La Ronde Plantation are located in close proximity of an extremely busy intersection and along an equally busy industrial route. Groups will be required to cross two sections of the highway in order to gain access to the two sites that make up the stand. Therefore, exercise caution when moving groups across the highway

#### **Visual Aids**

The American Night Attack, 23 December,  
1930-2030 The American Night Attack, 23  
December, 2030-2130

**Orientation:** The ruins preserved between the West St. Bernard Highway are what remain of the de La Ronde Mansion. At this location, Andrew Jackson formed his force for the night attack on the British camp. From this location the British camp was approximately 1,750 meters to the east. The Mississippi River is approximately 500 meters to the south. New Orleans is 9 miles to the west.

#### **The de La Ronde plantation**

This plantation, owned by Colonel Pierre Denis de La Ronde, topped the list of the finest plantations that stood on the New Orleans battlefield in 1814-1815. It is also the only house of which any evidence survives to this day. Built in 1805, this mansion, a brick construction covered in white cement, was two stories high, contained sixteen rooms, and had galleries and colonnades on all four sides. Jackson's

engineer, Arsene Lacarriere Latour, recorded that during the night attack on 23 December the American line “formed on a line almost perpendicular to the river, stretching from the levee to the garden of La Ronde’s plantation and on its principle avenue” (marked by the two lines of oak trees on the west side of the of the road across from the ruins). The house and its contents suffered considerable damage throughout the period. The British used the house as an observation post and a hospital; during the final British attack on January 8, Major General Samuel Gibbs died of his wounds here and Soldiers brought Major General Edward Pakenham’s body here following his death on the battlefield. Fire destroyed the house in 1885 and a hurricane in 1915 blew down the bulk of the surviving walls. Contrary to common tourist information, no contemporary accounts of the battle make reference to the oak trees that still stand between the house ruins and the river. They were planted after the battle.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 11. Ruins of the de La Ronde Plantation House.

By Author.

### **Description**

The destruction of the American naval flotilla on Lake Borgne created a great amount of concern for Andrew Jackson who previously depended on that asset to keep him informed of British naval movements to the east of New Orleans. In an attempt to reestablish contact with the enemy Jackson sent his engineers out to the eastern approaches of the city, a common practice of armies of the period.





Figure 12. The de La Ronde Plantation river road beyond the railroad tracks.

By Author.

Jackson also decided, on 16 December, to consolidate his forces in New Orleans. He ordered Major General John Coffee of the Tennessee Militia and a veteran commander of Jackson's campaign against the Creeks to move his 600 men of mounted rifles from Baton Rouge, advising Coffee that "You must not sleep until you reach me." He also sent movement orders to Major General William Carroll, commander of the Tennessee Militia to increase his movement from Tennessee to New Orleans in order to assume a defensive position guard the Plain of Gentilly along the Chef Menteur.

Finally, Jackson did something radical that did not endear him with Governor Claiborne and the Louisiana legislature despite their distress over the British approach. He declared martial law in the city of New Orleans. Assuming control of the city from elected officials, Jackson hoped to lessen the panic of the civilian population while denying potential British spies access to the city and keeping it clear for his own forces. However, in the aftermath of the campaign the local and state government officials continued to hold a grudge against Jackson over what they considered draconian and undemocratic measures.

The positive break that Jackson looked for rushed into his headquarters just after 1300 on 23 December. Major Villere, captured earlier that morning by the British at his family's plantation, escaped from his captors by jumping out a window and eluding pursuit. He informed Jackson that the British were at his family's plantation, nine miles south of the city. Shortly after Villere's arrival, Jackson's chief engineer, Major Latour, arrived and confirmed the same information, adding

that the British numbered 2,500 men.

Jackson's consolidation of his forces at New Orleans continued as he built an intelligence picture of the British situation south of New Orleans. The force immediately at his disposal consisted of a very diverse body of troops. The backbone of his force consisted of the US regulars of the 7th and 44th Infantry Regiments. They were joined by regular Army artillery and a detachment of Marines assigned to New Orleans. The Militia units included Coffee's Tennessee mounted riflemen and a battalion of Mississippi dragoons under Major Thomas Hinds. The Louisiana Militia consisted of an interesting variety of troops. Major Jean Baptiste Plauche led a battalion, Major Louis Daquin led a battalion of free men of color (free black citizens), and Captain Thomas Beale led a company of the city's upper class businessmen named the New Orleans Rifles. If the force lacked sufficient diversity then it increased with the addition of a company of Choctaw Indians under the command of Captain Pierre Jugeant. However, still concerned over the possibility of a British movement on the Plain of Gentilly, Jackson deployed Carroll's Tennesseans and three regiments of Louisiana Militia, under Governor Claiborne, to defend this avenue of approach and his left flank. The force under Jackson's immediate command numbered 2, 287 men.

Jackson entertained only one course of action: attack the British. His previous military operations against the Creeks involved aggressive and rapid movements followed by equally aggressive attacks. In this situation Jackson envisioned seizing the initiative and destroying the British force camped at the Villere Plantation. However, this concept involved a great risk given the accepted difficulties inherent in a night attack. His forces began moving at 1500 and closed on an attack position on the de La Ronde Plantation by 1700. With the British pickets only 500 yards away, Jackson quietly formed his attack force. At the same time Master Commandant Patterson prepared the schooner USS *Carolina* to move down river to a position where it could bombard the British camp.

Shortly before 1930 British Soldiers in the camp noticed what they thought was a merchant ship passing down the river. Showing no concern, the troops began cooking dinner. Suddenly the *Carolina* opened fired with her port battery, showering the British camp with grape and shot. The schooner's attack served as a signal for Jackson's larger attack. Ten minutes later, Jackson personally led the regulars, reinforced by two battalions of Louisiana Militia and the Choctaws in an assault along the bank of the river while Coffee, commanding his Tennessee Militia, Hinds' Mississippians,

and Beale's New Orleans Rifles advanced on the left and turned the British right flank. It is noteworthy that Jackson personally led the regulars in a holding attack against the British while Coffee commanded the Militia in a difficult turning movement at night. Jackson's faith in Coffee and the Tennessee troops made this feasible; Jackson knew that the regulars would hold, allowing Coffee to successfully execute the maneuver into the enemy flank. In a supporting operation to the south, Brigadier General David Morgan of the Louisiana Militia, commanding the American position at the English Turn of the Mississippi River received orders to conduct a demonstration against the rear of the British camp

Chaos reigned throughout the British camp as the schooner's guns continued to suppress the camp. However, Colonel Thornton immediately tried to organize resistance and reacted to the fire. Soldiers moved to the four foot tall levee and began to open fire upon the ship with ineffective musket fire. Without artillery, the British could only rely upon Congreve rockets which resulted in little effect.

The American regulars advanced along the river levee. The regular artillery moved forward along the exposed road that ran along the levee, propelled by the hand of its gun crews, covered by the Marine detachment. When the battery ran into a British outpost the Marines fell back, exposing the guns to danger. The British saw the opportunity and attempted to seize the guns only to be foiled by the actions of Jackson himself. The American commander and his staff rode forward and Jackson called out, "Save the guns, my boys, at every sacrifice," motivating a company of the 7th Infantry to counterattack and save the guns from capture. By then the regulars and Louisiana Militia closed with the enemy. The British fought in a formation of three lines, the first kneeling and the other two firing over the shoulder of the men in front of them. Close quarter, hand to hand fighting typified the action. Soon, the British began to withdraw, assisted by the timely intervention of a building fog bank. The Americans continued their advance and maintained contact.

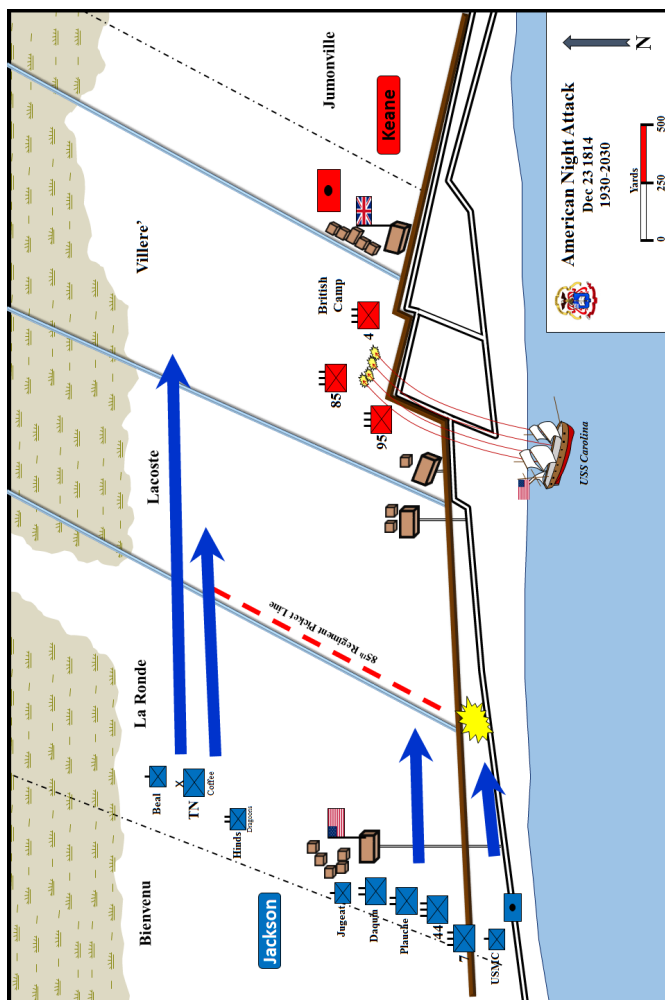


Figure 13. The American Night Attack, 23 December, 1930-2030.

CSI created.

On the American left flank Coffee's Tennesseans also advanced at the *Carolina's* first broadside. While Jackson made contact with the British pickets, Coffee conducted his turning movement to the south. The riflemen soon made contact with mixed formations of British Soldiers from the 85th and 95th and hand to hand fighting immediately began. Beale's Company made its way into the center of the British camp but withdrew under the pressure of a local counterattack. Unbeknownst to Coffee or any of the other American commanders, the British 2d Brigade (made up of the veteran 4th Regiment and the inexperienced 93d Regiment making its combat debut), after its long approach movement, entered the fight on the British right flank. Beale's Company found itself isolated from the rest of Coffee's force. Many men fell

into enemy hands while others dispersed into the darkness and eventually found their way back to the main body.

Coffee prudently demonstrated why Jackson placed so much trust in him. After nearly two hours of fierce fighting, Coffee evaluated the situation on his part of the field. The darkness, combined with large amounts of smoke, made the confusing fight extremely difficult for leaders to command and control. Additionally, fog started to build as it rolled off the river. Furthermore, the further Coffee advanced into the British camp, the greater the threat of fratricide from the Carolina's guns increased. Finally, he understood the growing danger to his force from the arriving British reinforcements. He assessed that he had lost 200 of his Tennesseans and all of Beale's Company. Coffee chose to end the attack and withdraw. He sent a message to Jackson, conveying his assessment and intent and Jackson concurred. At approximately 2130, the Americans began to withdraw back to the de La Ronde Plantation where they started.

Two hours after Jackson withdrew his forces, Brigadier General Morgan's Louisiana Militia, well behind schedule, finished their movement to the rear of the British camp. However, not hearing any fighting on Jackson's front, Morgan only conducted a slight feint and then returned to English Turn. The American attack ended slightly after midnight on 24 December. At roughly that same time Jackson met with his staff and key commanders where he announced that the Army would continue its withdrawal at dawn and prepare a defensive line along the Rodriguez Canal, a naturally defensible position that could be physically reinforced, lying two miles to the north between the Chalmette and Macarty plantations.

Jackson's casualties sustained during the attack numbered 24 killed, 115 wounded, and 74 missing. The British sustained 46 killed, 167 wounded, and 64 missing. However, while the British secured the battlefield in the wake of Jackson's withdrawal, the American commander secured something else that being that Jackson seized the initiative

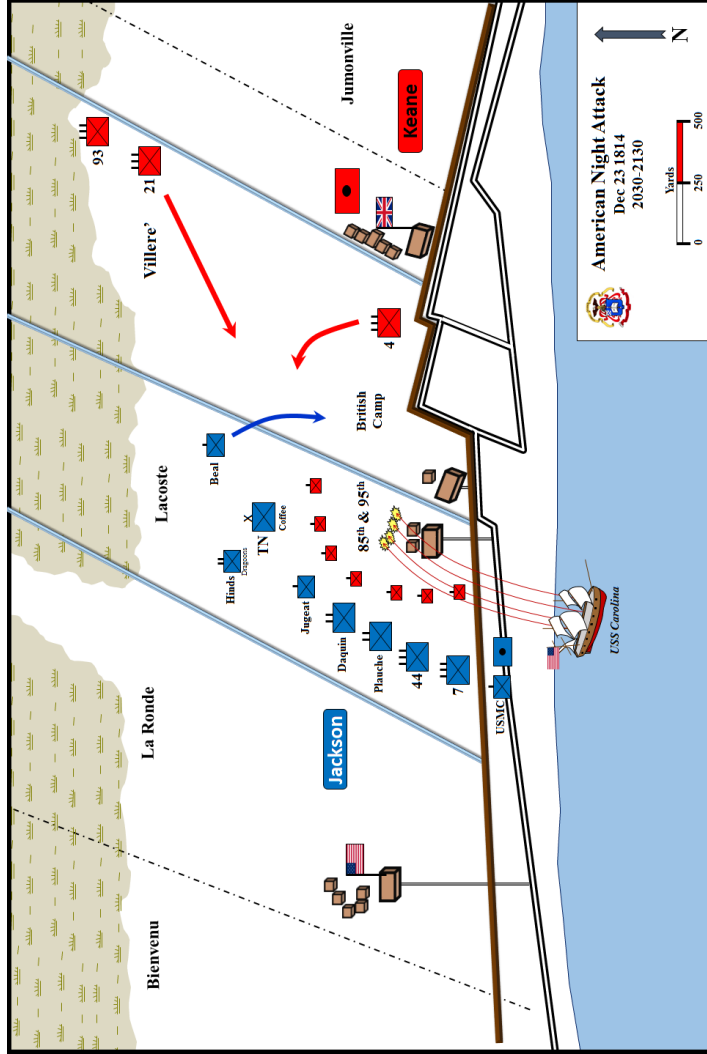


Figure 14. The American Night Attack, Dec 23 1814, 2030-2130.  
 CSI created.

and executed an aggressive and unexpected night attack against a somewhat numerical superior force, inflicting physical and moral damage upon the British. The Americans won a moral victory.

While the armies regrouped on 24 December and prepared for the next stage of their struggle, the American and British diplomats negotiating the treaty to end the war, signed the Treaty of Ghent in Belgium. Both nations need only ratify the treaty and the war would be over. However, a copy of the treaty would take time making its way across the Atlantic to the American capital. Meanwhile, on Christmas Day, Major General Sir Edward Pakenham, a month behind schedule, arrived in camp to assume command of the British expeditionary force.

### **Vignettes**

1. The fact that the British were convinced that the Americans would not attack their camp, especially at night, set the conditions that allowed the Americans to achieve such tactical surprise and a high degree of initial success.

According to Lieutenant Gleig of the British 85th Regiment:

*The dropping fire [naval gunfire from the Carolina] having paused for a few moments, was succeed by a fearful yell; and the heavens were illuminated on all sides by a semi-circular blaze of musketry. It was now manifest that we were surrounded, and that by a very superior force; and that no alternative remained, except to surrender at discretion, or to beat back the assailants... All order, all discipline were lost. Each officer, as he succeeded in collecting twenty or thirty men about him, plunged into the midst of the enemy's ranks, where it was fought hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, and sabre to sabre...the darkness and general confusion effectually prevented me from observing how others, except my own immediate party, were employed.<sup>16</sup>*

2. Jackson, a commander widely-known to share in the privations of his men, moved forward along the river road levee during the attack with his Regulars and Marines. His chief military engineer, Arsene Lacarriere Latour, accompanied Jackson forward and personally witnessed his commanding general's great moral and physical courage, though with reasonable concern.

*I may say, without fear to be taxed with adulation, that on the night of the 23d, Jackson exposed himself rather too much. I saw him in advance of all who were near*

*him, at a time when the enemy was making a charge on the artillery, within pistol shot, in the midst of a shower of bullet, and in that situation, I observed him spiriting and urging on the marines, and the right of the seventh regiment, who animated by the presence and voice of their gallant commander-in-chief, attacked the enemy briskly, that they soon forced him [the British] to retire.*<sup>17</sup>

3. Two days after the American night attack, Major General Sir Edward Pakenham and his staff arrived in the British camp. Catching up with his command over a month later than planned, the new commanding general immediately took stock of his Army's situation. While provided with copies of the previous orders issued to Ross, Keane, and Lambert, Pakenham also possessed additional guidance from Lord Bathurst, of a somewhat more political nature, issued prior to his departure:

*... it is not perhaps to be expected that the Inhabitants will be willing to take any active part against a Government to which on the Signature of a Peace between Great Britain and the United States, they might afterwards be obliged to submit but it is probable that a general disposition may exist, peaceably to acquiesce in our Possession of the Country during the War.*

*You will give every encouragement to such a Disposition; and you will for that purpose cause the force under your command, to observe the strictest Discipline; to respect the Lives and the Property of all those inclined to a peaceable deportment and by no means to excite the Black Population to rise against their Masters. There is nothing so calculated to unite the Inhabitants against you as an attempt of this description, while the apprehension of your being obliged to resort to such a measure for your own protection may be made to act as an additional inducement with them to make no resistance to His Majesty's Forces.*

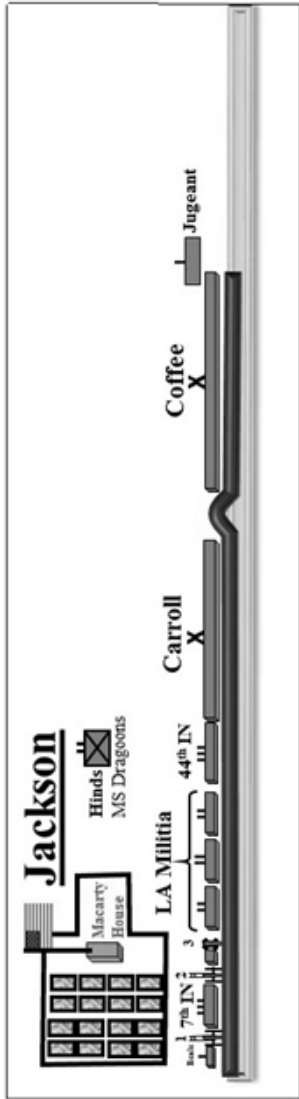
*You may possibly hear whilst engaged in active operations that the Preliminaries of Peace between His Majesty and the United States have been signed in Europe and that they have been sent to America in order to receive the Ratification of The President...it is advisable that Hostilities should not be suspended until you shall have official information that The President has actually ratified the Treaty and a Person will be duly authorized to apprise you of this event.*



*As during this interval, judging from the experience we have had, the termination of the war must be considered as doubtful, you will regulate your proceedings accordingly, neither omitting an opportunity of obtaining signal success, nor exposing the troops to hazard or serious loss for an inconsiderable advantage. And you will take special care not so to act under the expectation of hearing that the Treaty of Peace has been ratified, as to endanger the safety of His Majesty's Forces, should that expectation be unhappily disappointed.*<sup>18</sup>

### **Analysis**

1. Evaluate Jackson's decision to immediately attack the British camp. What were the risks involved and how were they mitigated?
2. Discuss the situation in the British camp prior to the attack. Did contempt for American military ability lead to a state of vulnerability?
3. Assess Jackson's tactical leadership and the personal risks that he took throughout the battle.
4. Evaluate Coffee's performance commanding the American turning movement in the context of modern mission command.
5. What was the impact of the American attack? Was it a victory or a defeat; what influence did it have upon the rest of the campaign?



This legend shows the disposition of forces on the American line, 27-28 December 1814.

## **Stand Four**

### **East Chalmette – British Limited Attack (28 December 1814)**

**Directions:** From the previous stand, turn right on West St. Bernard Highway (LA 46) and drive 1.2 miles. See signs for the Chalmette National Cemetery. Turn left on Chalmette Military Cemetery Road and enter the National Cemetery. Drive to the end of the road and turn around in the circle at the Grand Army of the Republic Civil War monument. Backtrack along the road toward the cemetery entrance, stopping approximately halfway, and pull off to the side of the lane opposite of the opening in the low stone wall on the far left hand side. Dismount and move through the gap in the wall and stop just past the interpretive markers.

If the Cemetery gate is closed, continue 0.3 miles up the West St. Bernard Highway to the Chalmette Battlefield entrance (the next left, however, if traffic is too heavy to safely turn left proceed further north to the first traffic light and execute a U-turn) and drive the park loop to the southern end of the park adjacent to the cemetery. Ensure to park vehicles on either the right or left limits of the parking section adjacent to the flag pole (flying a British flag when the Visitor Center is open); attempt to avoid the center section of the parking area to preserve a field of vision from the cemetery to the American line at the northern end of the park.

**Notes:** The Chalmette National Cemetery and the Chalmette Battlefield share the same operating hours. However, while the battlefield park is open on Sundays there is a chance that the Cemetery gate may be closed. Contact the Chalmette Battlefield Visitor Center for confirmation that the cemetery gate will be open if conducting a Sunday staff ride. If the gate is closed, execute the second half of the driving instructions above to conduct Stands 4 and 5.

**Visual Aids:** Pakenham's Reconnaissance in Force, 28 December, 0730-1000.



Figure 15. Chalmette National Cemetery. Approximate location of the British artillery battery number 5 was located on the far side of the brick wall and to the left of where the tree stands. The Rodriguez Canal is 300m forward.

By Author.

**Orientation:** This stand is situated along the approximate line where the British placed their artillery, which remained limited in number at this point, on 28 December. The British guns were emplaced along this general line to support a British infantry attack. From this position the American line, along the Rodriguez Canal, is approximately 300 meters to the front (west). For reference, the Chalmette battlefield monument on the American side of the field is located approximately where Lacoste's Battalion of Louisiana Militia defended its part of the line during the battle.

The Mississippi River is approximately 200 meters to the left on the other side of the modern levee. It was approximately 50 meters closer in 1814, before it changed its course.

In 1814 the terrain on the British right flank was highly restricted by a large cypress swamp that would have been approximately 200 meter to the right, canalizing British movements to a narrower front as they advanced toward the American position.

## **The Chalmette Plantation**

The largest of the local plantations that comprised the overall battle area gave its name to the battle fought on its grounds. Sales records indicate that this was a well-developed plantation with number of significant buildings. The British occupied the plantation on 27 December. Because of the cover provided by the buildings, which stood 500-600 yards from the American line, American artillery targeted the structures, destroying all of them in the course of the battle. The Chalmette Plantation property saw the fiercest fighting of the battle on 8 January; the British concentrated their main effort in this area and it was here that Sir Edward Pakenham died during the battle.<sup>19</sup> Much of its former property now makes up the National Cemetery.

The National Cemetery was established in 1864 as the final resting place for 15,000 Union Soldiers that died in Louisiana and American veterans of conflicts from the War of 1812 to the Vietnam War. Four War of 1812 veterans, including one veteran of the fighting at New Orleans are buried here.<sup>20</sup>

Point out the Malus-Beauregard mansion, forward of the right end of the American line, note that it was built after the battle, and mention that it will be addressed in a later stand.

### **Description**

Following the American withdrawal to the Rodriguez Canal Jackson began to turn the canal into his main defensive line. The true strength of the position, without improvements, could be determined by the terrain and its effects. The Mississippi River, averaging a half mile in width in some places and maintaining a nearly four and a half knot current, secured Jackson's right flank. Winter conditions increased the river's depth to near flood stage, despite the adjacent levee, which also provided a significant obstacle of between four to ten feet high. On the other end of the canal a dense cypress swamp secured Jackson's left flank, providing a natural obstacle for advancing infantry formations and supporting artillery. Wet marshlands, referred to in Louisiana as "prairies," extended the radius of the swamp even further, denying the British the option of a wide turning movement. Sugar cane fields dominated the front of the American line, including a series of drainage ditches throughout the fields that measured between five and six feet wide and four feet deep. Already harvested, the fields provided excellent fields of observation and fire. Jackson's choice of the Rodriguez Canal and the supporting terrain forced the British with one option in overcoming the American force: the frontal assault.

From throughout the city of New Orleans the population provided picks, shovels, saws, carts, and other building supplies for the troops. Slaves augmented the troops in the construction, allowing 50 percent of the troops to provide security while the other fifty percent worked. Jackson also ordered that a section of the Mississippi levee be cut so that the fields forward of the line became flooded. Eventually, however, the river level receded and with it a significant amount of his water obstacle. Jackson chose the nearby Macarty House as his headquarters, on the plantation immediately behind the right of the American line, along the river. From here he could personally see the length of his line and ground over which a British advance would come. However, he did not stay there very much, choosing instead to be constantly on the move, viewing the work. To his rear Jackson built a defense in depth, establishing two additional defensive lines between the Rodriguez Canal and New Orleans, a second line at the Dupre Plantation, and a third at the Montreuil Plantation.

Jackson also realigned his forces within his battle space. He ordered Carroll and his Tennessee Militia to move forward to the Rodriguez Canal, leaving Governor Claiborne and his three regiments of Louisiana Militia defend the American position on the Plain of Gentilly. With no further requirement for defending English Turn, Jackson accepted Morgan's recommendation to employ his force elsewhere and ordered him to move to a position across the river where a new defensive position could support the main American defensive line.

In an effort to buy time for his defensive preparation and harass the British, Jackson requested Master Commandant Patterson to have the Navy schooners *Carolina* and *Louisiana* conduct a nearly around the clock bombardment of the British camp. Jackson also establish an effective security zone forward of the canal to prevent British reconnaissance efforts and provide him with early warning in the event of an attack. Hinds' mounted Mississippi dragoons established a visible screen line forward of the canal. However, the Tennessee Militia made an enduring impact on the British pickets throughout this period, going out at night to "hunt" British sentries who considered it proper military conduct to cease operations once night fell. On one particular occasion the riflemen focused their attention on a single British post: They watched a sentinel being posted and upon the departure of the corporal of the guard, killed the sentinel and took everything of value. When the next guard arrived, he too was killed. It took a third dead sentinel for the corporal of the guard to determine that area was too dangerous and that the post should be

abandoned.

In this nightly contest of predator and prey the Americans continually increased their harassment of the British camps. Sometimes British Soldiers died in the midst of their own camps. On one occasion resourceful Tennesseans infiltrated a 6-pounder artillery piece forward and fired point blank into a British artillery crew. However, one American force instilled a true sense of fear in the British pickets in the form of Captain Jugeant's company of Choctaw Indians. The Choctaws controlled the swamp that extended along the British right flank. A British picket went to his post in constant worry that he could be attacked by a man jumping from a tree above him. With the death of each British soldier, the Choctaws let out their blood curdling war cry, establishing a moral superiority that the British pickets never overcame.

All of these distinctly American frontier tactics ran contrary to the British concept of warfare. The British saw warfare as guided by indisputable rules or a gentlemen's game. Not only did the American tactics shock men used to established European standards of warfare but they also denied the British a natural need for security. They found themselves constantly under fire, called to arms several times in the course of a night, exhausted, undersupplied, and cold. British morale suffered almost from the beginning.

As the American line along the Rodriguez Canal continued to develop, Jackson began assigning positions along the line to his various formations. From right to left along the Rodriguez Canal Jackson assigned his units: Beale's Company occupied the right end of the line along the river (ground that is now under water due to the river's many changes in course since the fighting). The 7th Infantry Regiment formed to their left (the immediate landward side of the modern levee accessible by the park walkway starting at the Visitor Center). The three battalions of Louisiana Militia under Plauche, Lacoste, and Daquin came next. The 44th Infantry Regiment and Carroll's Tennessee Militia shared responsibility for the center. Finally, Coffee's Tennessee Militia held the far left end of the line. Jackson also established three separate positions for his limited artillery: a 12-pounder, two howitzers, and two 24-pounders. Not satisfied to sit still, Jackson periodically shifted the artillery and adjusted his infantry positions in an effort to continually improve his defense.

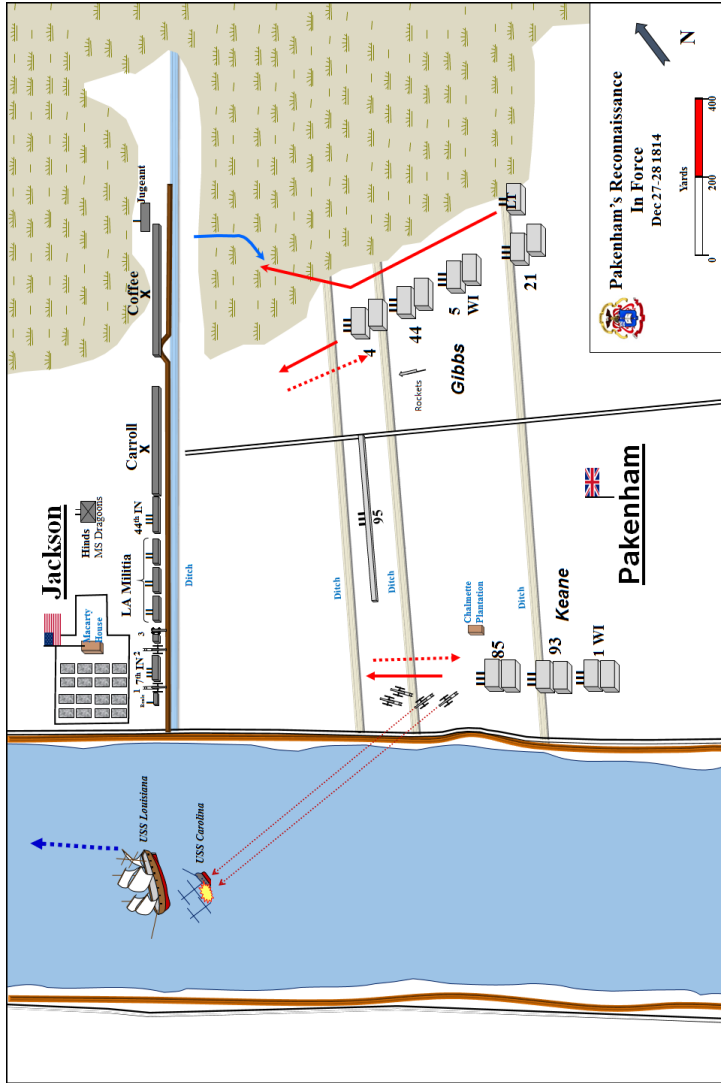


Figure 16. Pakenham's Reconnaissance in Force, Dec 27-28 1814.

CSI created.

In the British camp the newly arrived commander-in-chief took stock of his Army's situation. With Pakenham came Major General Samuel Gibbs, who as Pakenham's second in command, assumed command of the 2d Brigade. Major General Keane, after turning over command to Pakenham, assumed command of the 3d Brigade. Thornton retained his command of the 1st Brigade for the time being.



Pakenham assumed direct command of his first independent command with a feeling of concern over its current situation. The terrain in which the Army leadership allowed themselves to be positioned (a greatly confined space between a dense swamp and the broad river located at the end of a 60 mile long line of operation) concerned him most. In his first meeting of senior commanders and staff he stated his regret that the British failed to immediately move on New Orleans when they occupied their present position on 23 December. Pakenham also stated that he was sorry that the British had lost the battle on the 23d. Furthermore, he lacked cavalry for reconnaissance, the West Indian troops suffered increasing casualties from sickness, and the French Creoles failed to join the British. He considered withdrawing the Army from its current position and trying to find another route to New Orleans.

However, Pakenham chose to stay in his current position. It appears that he felt committed to the course of action initially chosen by Cochrane and Keane before his arrival. Additionally, Pakenham assessed the enemy as substandard and no match for disciplined and seasoned British troops. Therefore, he reorganized his force into two brigades. Gibbs commanded the brigade on the British right flank, consisting of the 4th, 21st, 44th, and 1st West India Regiment. Keane commanded the brigade on the British left flank, consisting of 85th, 93d, 95th, and 5th West Indian Regiments. Pakenham elected to conduct a limited attack, a reconnaissance in force in today's doctrine, to "try" the American line. He planned to advance the two brigades abreast in a limited attack to identify weaknesses in the American line. If any were discovered Pakenham would order a full attack toward those points to exploit the initial success.

Before Pakenham's men could cross the open ground and close with the enemy, he determined that the American naval threat to his left flank had to be neutralized. The *Carolina* and *Louisiana* continued to bombard the British positions, firing on any major movement in the camps and the various plantation buildings. The British, however, lacked sufficient artillery to challenge the vessels and support an infantry attack. Therefore, Pakenham requested that the navy transport additional artillery from the fleet. In another example of the Royal Navy's strong support to the Army, Cochrane and his officers oversaw the laborious process of transporting the guns to Pakenham. By the evening of 26 December, the navy brought two 9-pounders, four 6-pounders, two 5.5-inch howitzers, and a 5.5-inch mortar to the British camp.

Once in camp, the British seamen then helped the

Soldiers move the guns forward along the river bank, under cover of darkness, and set them up for action. At 0200 on the morning of 27 December, the British built fires to heat shot. Called "hot shot," the British heated solid shot artillery rounds or cannonballs in the fires before loading them into the barrels of their 9-pounder guns. Upon contact with the wooden vessels, they would cause fires to break out aboard the American schooners, doing great damage and hopefully destroy them. Five hours later, at 0700, the British guns opened fire on the *Carolina*. The 9-pounders fired "hot shot," the 6-pounders fired shrapnel to sweep the ship's deck, and the remainder of the guns fired regular shot.

The British artillery attack must have been quite a surprise to the Americans because very shortly after the British opened fire the *Carolina's* rigging came down and a large fire soon grew out of control. The ship's commander, Captain John Henley, ordered the crew to abandon ship. At 0930 the *Carolina* blew up. With a brief but loud cheer, the British turned their guns on the *Louisiana*. By then Jackson personally ordered the remaining vessel to withdraw up the river to safety but the wind suddenly ceased and the *Louisiana* became stranded and on the verge of sharing the *Carolina's* fate. However, the *Louisiana's* crew, made up mostly of Baratarians, quickly took to the ship's boats, tied lines to their ship, and rowed the vessel out of harm's way. Jackson's acceptance of Jean Lafitte's assistance served him well this day.

The neutralization of the American navy on the river allowed Pakenham to conduct his attack without any threat to his left flank. During the period of darkness on 27-28 December, the British troops began their advance, occupying assault positions along the Bienvenue and Chalmette Plantations. There they drove the American pickets back to their main line along the canal. However, before their withdrawal, the Americans set fire to all of the buildings on the Chalmette Plantation, denying them to the British and also creating man-made light to illuminate the enemy as they advanced. British batteries established the night before, an artillery battery on the left and a rocket battery on the right, began firing on the American line, signaling the attack.

The morning of 28 December brought bright and clear weather. Pakenham and his staff rode in the center of the field in order to observe the advance of both brigades. On the British left Keane advanced in a column of regiments (one regiment behind another). At a distance of 600 yards from their objective the American artillery commenced firing. Keane's men continued to advance but suddenly the *Louisiana*

returned to action along the river and began firing on the attacking British troops. Quickly, officers gave the order for the men to lie down in order to protect themselves, a proven practice against the French in the Peninsula. Keane's attack ended. The troops remained in their current position until darkness fell and then withdrew. Remaining as they did throughout the rest of the day, under constant American artillery fire, spoke well of the discipline of British infantry.

While the British attack on the left flank quickly culminated, Gibbs attack on the right flank went somewhat better. The brigade faced the weakest section of the American line which also lacked artillery and the troops advance much further than their comrades on the left flank. However, Keane's set back caused Gibbs' column to be ordered back to its assault position. Pakenham's position in the center prevented him from seeing the success of the brigade. He erroneously assumed that Gibbs' attack suffered from the same punishment as Keane's brigade along the river and ordered the withdrawal. The apparent British retreat temporarily demoralized the troops in Gibbs' brigade who thought that they were on the verge of penetrating and turning the American line.

Both sides sustained light casualties in the attack. The British suffered 16 killed and 43 wounded but they also lost two pieces of artillery and the mortar which were dismounted by highly accurate American artillery fire and abandoned. The American casualties amounted to seven killed and 10 wounded. The American line stood firm.

**Vignettes:** Throughout their presence south of Jackson's line the British experienced a nearly uninterrupted program of harassment from American artillery, especially from the *Carolina*, and riflemen.

1. During this attack the British immediately felt the impact of American artillery. Lieutenant Gleig described its deadly effects against the British infantry and support artillery during Pakenham's first, limited, attack against Jackson's line:

*...a deadly fire was opened from both the battery and the shipping. That the Americans are excellent marksmen, as well with artillery as with rifles, we have had frequent cause to acknowledge; but, perhaps, on no occasion did they assert their claim to the title of good artillery-men more effectually than on the present. Scarce a ball passed over or fell short of its mark but all striking full into the midst of our ranks, occasioned terrible havoc.*<sup>21</sup>

2. Throughout the fighting south of New Orleans there

were numerous examples of the how the Americans constantly harassed the British picket lines protecting the camp. During periods of darkness, parties from the Tennessee and Louisiana Militia units, joined by Choctaw Indians, hovered around the camp's periphery stalking British Soldiers.

*Every night since our arrival the enemy had been incessant in their means to harass and annoy us, as in truth they had a right to do if they pleased but it was exceedingly distressing to the troops, and therefore I mention it. They seldom let an hour pass during the night, that they were not firing at some of our sentries, and on some occasions they brought the body of irregular cavalry, before mentioned, immediately in front of our outposts, and fired volleys, which although it did not do much injury to our advanced picquets, had the effect of turning out the whole line, and that often repeated, with annoyance from the schooner, certainly did not leave us much time for comfortable rest.<sup>22</sup>*

3. While considered highly inaccurate at the time, the Congreve rockets used by the British were capable of inflicting some physical damage. During the British limited attack on the 28th, Major Daniel Carmick, the senior Marine Corps officer present at New Orleans, and several others fell victim to what may be the only notable record of a Congreve rocket inflicting casualties during the battle, as one observer recorded:

*That gallant officer, Major Carmick, of the Marine Corps, was among the wounded. Whilst delivering an order to Major Plauche near the center of the American line, he was struck by a rocket, which tore his horse to pieces and wounded the Major in the arm and head.*

Taken to a nearby hospital, Carmick remained there throughout the rest of the campaign, and never regained his health, dying in New Orleans of either an infection or inflammation of the brain 6 November 1816. He was buried in New Orleans' St. Louis Cemetery Number 2. The 4th Marine Air Wing, stationed in New Orleans, commemorates sacrifice of Major Carmick and his Marines on a regular basis with ceremonies in the cemetery.<sup>23</sup>

### **Analysis**

1. Analyze the surrounding terrain and its impact on the conduct of British operations.
2. Evaluate Pakenham's plan; was there enough flexibility for his reconnaissance in force to transition to a penetration?

3. Discuss the combined effects of American harassment of the British expeditionary force. What measures could the British have taken to defeat such efforts?
4. Compare and contrast the employment of fires by the opposing sides; how were the Americans able to achieve fires superiority?
5. What key points concerning the American position did Pakenham learn from this operation?
6. Outline the options available to Pakenham after this attack.



## Stand Five

### East Chalmette – The Artillery Duel (1 January 1815)

**Directions:** From the previous stand walk forward to the flag pole to observe the Rodriguez Canal.

**Notes:** None

**Visual Aids:** British Artillery Attack, Jan 1 1815, 1000-1500



Figure 17. View of the American center vicinity the battlefield monument and visitor center. The ship's conning tower marks the approximate location of the Macarty House during the fighting.

By Author.

**Orientation:** No change from the previous stand. Highlight the new British artillery positions built specifically for this attack and their orientation when describing the British scheme of maneuver during this attack.

Point out where the Macarty House was located near the modern boat slip behind the Rodriguez Canal on the north side of the park (there is usually a ship docked there to use as reference). By Christmas Day Jackson selected this building for his headquarters. The house, burned down in 1896 and rebuilt, was torn down in 1912 to make room for the modern day Chalmette Slip. The actual location of the house is in the Mississippi River because the levee was pushed back when the slip was constructed.<sup>24</sup>

### Description

Immediately following the abortive attack on the American line Pakenham call a council of war with his senior commanders and staff; Captain Malcolm, Admiral and commander of the British fleet, represented the navy, while Gibbs, Keane, and a number of more junior officers also attended.<sup>25</sup> The gathered officers offered Pakenham a consensus that the American line represented an extremely well built defensive position, almost like some of the fortified cities encountered in the Peninsula. They, therefore, recommended that more and heavier artillery than what was

currently present was necessary to breach the enemy and facilitate an infantry assault. Orders went out directing the fleet to transport more than thirty of the heaviest caliber guns available to the Army.

Over the next three days the Royal Navy's sailors once again labored along the Army's line of communication, dismounting and moving ordnance directly from designated warships through the bayous and into the Villere Canal to the British camp. At the conclusion of the effort they successfully delivered ten 18-pounder and four 24-pounder naval deck guns. However, based on lift capabilities the British moved only a limited quantity of ammunition. In a realignment of the British battlespace to make room for the artillery positions, the Army advanced to a line along the boundary between the Bienvenue and Chalmette Plantations and began establishing positions for the newly arrived artillery. In order to obtain a better view of the American positions, Pakenham moved his headquarters from the Villere Plantation to the main house of the de La Ronde Plantation where Jackson staged his men for the 23 December night assault.

However, the British situation seemed far from positive. In addition to nearly around the clock harassment from the guns of the *Louisiana* from the left flank and the Tennessean Soldiers and Choctaw Indians from the right, the plight of the individual British soldier, including the officers, increased with each passing day. Collectively, the expeditionary force possessed little food to properly sustain the troops and supplies required by the force suffered from repeated reprioritization in favor of more artillery and ammunition. Furthermore, the troops suffered from a constant exposure to the elements since departing the anchorage without tents. The location of their camp lacked two of the necessities of the moment: the plantations only grew sugar cane and the few remaining structures still standing after repeated bombardments provided only limited shelter, serving as hospitals for the mounting sick lists from across the force. Finally, Soldiers, especially in Gibbs' brigade, complained about the order to withdraw when they thought they were on the verge of a victory during the abortive 28 December attack. British morale crept toward a crisis point.

While the British prepared for a second attempt against the American line Jackson continued his efforts to improve the defense. Seeing that the left flank appeared to be vulnerable, he ordered reinforcements there, including artillery. In fact, Jackson spared no exertion in securing additional artillery, including taking guns from the *Louisiana*, still responsible for bombarding the British positions on a nightly basis. His



original three batteries expanded to eight, positioned along the entire length of his defensive line. On the recommendation of Master Commandant Patterson, Jackson ordered his engineers to supervise the construction of a fortified position on the right bank \* of the river parallel to the Rodriguez Canal. This position would provide enfilading artillery fire into the left flank of any British attack on the main line. Patterson landed cannon from the *Louisiana* and manned them with his gun crews, hence christening it, Marine Battery.

The American troops exhibited high morale during this period. The night attack on 23 December and the successful defense on 28 December combined to mostly eliminate any great fear they may have had of the British. Unlike their counterparts, the Americans found themselves under canvas, sheltered from the same elements that sapped at the enemy's strength. Finally, the American line of communication ran only seven miles to New Orleans and Jackson ensured that his men ate well from the supplies provided by the city's populace.

The British prepared for their second attack, moving their artillery into forward positions during the night of 31 December into New Year's Day. They moved within 600 yards of the American position and prepared positions for their batteries, infantrymen providing the labor to move the guns and construct the firing positions. A major problem arose from building firing platforms for the guns. Lacking dry and solid ground, attempts to dig in only led to the holes filling with water because of the area's low water table. Soldiers relied upon improvisation but built unstable platforms incapable of properly supporting the heavy pieces of naval ordnance. Additionally, they built the protective ramparts around the guns with anything they could find, including cotton bales and casks of sugar from the nearby plantations. As the British continued to prepare throughout the night, American sentries heard the construction activity.<sup>26</sup>

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\* The right bank is that side of the Mississippi River opposite the main battlefield at Chalmette. The river's erratic flow to the Gulf of Mexico makes use of cardinal directions problematic. Participants used the same terminology.

By first light on 1 January 1815, the British had established a total of seven artillery batteries from the bank of the river to the far right flank to support Gibbs' brigade. Behind the line of batteries, along the levee, the British established a battery of two 18-pounders (this location now being under water) to target the Marine battery on the right bank and the *Louisiana* during its sorties down river to bombard the British camp. Just forward of the main British gun line, a battery (also now under water) located near the levee that held two 18-pounders, oriented on the extreme right of the American line and Jackson's headquarters at the Macarty House. A third battery of three 5.5-inch mortars targeted the American batteries that supported the right of the line. Next, a fourth battery containing half of the Congreve rockets in the expeditionary force occupied the left center. The British established their most powerful batteries in the center from where their guns could target nearly every part of the American line. The fifth battery contained two 9-pounders, five 6-pounders and two 5.5-inch mortars. To its right, the sixth battery contained four 24-pounders and six 18-pounders. The seventh and final battery, on the far right, contained the remaining half of the Congreve rockets.

The first day of 1815 began in the midst of a dense morning fog that obscured the activities of both sides. The fog cleared at 1000 and the British commenced their bombardment on the American line, filling their camp with shot, shell, and rocket. For approximately the first ten minutes the British deliberately targeted Jackson's headquarters in the Macarty House where Jackson and his staff ate breakfast together. Their meal interrupted, the entire party quickly escaped from the building without harm. The enemy artillery fire soon reduced the building to a smoking shell. Chaos reigned throughout the rest of the American camp as commanders attempted to form their men in their respective fighting positions to effectively meet an attack.<sup>27</sup>

Though initially surprised by the British fire, Jackson, who personally walked up and down the line issuing words of encouragement, and his subordinate commanders swiftly reestablished control inside their positions within ten minutes of the first enemy barrage and returned fire with all of their artillery pieces. This prompt recovery under fire stemmed from the hard work put into building the solid protective cover along the American line and specifically around the batteries which bought time for the troops and gun crews to safely occupy their assigned positions. Additionally, much of the British fire passed somewhat harmlessly over the American troops.

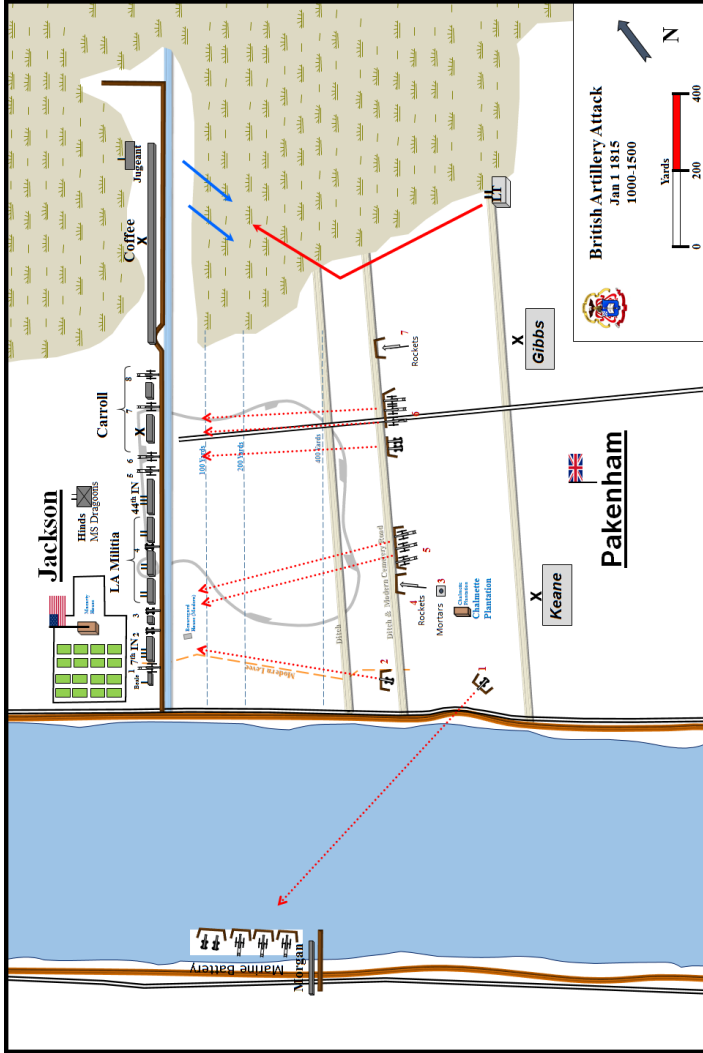


figure 18. British Artillery Attack, Jan 1 1815, 1000-1500.  
CSI created.

Once the American artillery came into play the highly effective accuracy and volume of its fire almost immediately began to overwhelm the British positions. Even when rounds missed their intended targets in the artillery line they passed over and fell into the ranks of the infantry to the rear, causing casualties. In a weak facet of their fires planning, the British battery along the levee alternated between the *Louisiana* and the Marine Battery, never massing fire on one threat at a time. Patterson, on the other hand, massed the Marine Battery's guns on the British position and neutralized the battery. The American guns easily penetrated the ill prepared British artillery positions across their front. Sugar casks used in protecting the guns, shattered on impact, throwing their melted residue everywhere and fouling the guns. Poorly built platforms sank in the mud. By noon the British fire began to slacken with each firing and throwing of the laying of the guns. Ammunition began to run short within two hours.

Approximately one hour into the artillery duel the British attempted an attack on the American left flank where they previously experienced some success during the last attack. A detachment made up of the light companies from the regiments in Gibbs' brigade attempted to infiltrate through the swamp on their right in order to attack what they thought was still a weak American flank. They made contact with Coffee's Tennessee Militia and the company of Choctaw Indians who quickly stopped their advance with heavy small arms fire. The Americans even staged a local counterattack, continuing to confound the British with their frontier style of warfare, darting from tree to tree for cover in between firing. The actions of Coffee's men quickly forced the light column to retreat under heavy fire.

By 1300 the American artillery silenced all but two of the enemy batteries. The two remaining British batteries continued the fight until the order to cease fire at 1500. Under continued enemy fire, the British withdrew, abandoning the guns in the positions neutralized by the Americans. As the British moved to their rear American musicians struck up a tune as their comrades celebrated up and down the line.

The British sustained slightly higher casualties than the Americans during this attempt to breach their line. They lost 45 killed and 55 wounded. However, eight pieces of artillery sustained serious damage. On the American side of the field the list contained 11 killed and 23 wounded. Included in those numbers, the Americans listed a 32-pounder, a 24-pounder, and a 12-pounder severely damaged. Jackson, in his well-known style, also lost his temper when at a point

during the battle his two batteries closest to the river ran out of ammunition. He summoned Governor Claiborne, responsible for supplying the Army, demanding the critical supplies with the additional warning: “By Almighty God, if you do not send me balls and powder instantly, I shall chop off your head, and have it rammed into one of those field-pieces.”<sup>28</sup>

However, beyond the numbers, the British suffered most from their failed attack. For the third time, however, since arriving in their camp the British felt that they had been bested by an American force that they did not respect. Discipline and morale disappeared in the night. After sunset, the British attempted to recover their abandoned guns from the forward positions, Soldiers refused the orders and urgings of their officers to retrieve them. It took the personal example of Sir Edward Pakenham himself to lead them forward to eventually retrieve all but five of the abandoned pieces which were merely buried next to their positions. The situation of the British expeditionary force spiraled out of control.

### **Vignettes**

1. To illustrate the strong American joint relationship that existed, Patterson thoroughly shared Jackson’s desire to continually improve the American defensive line. He also saw the value in establishing supporting positions on the right bank of the Mississippi that directly supported the line along the Rodriguez Canal, as described by Major Tatum in his journal:

*Commodore Patterson, about this time [between the two British attacks on December 28 and January 1], suggested to the General the advantages that would result from the erecting batteries on the Levey on the right bank of the river, which he had examined, and tendered his services for that purpose. The General highly approved of this plan, as it afforded an opportunity to enfilade the enemy’s Encampment and would prove of great advantage, in annoying the enemy in all his movements near the river. He immediately ordered General Morgan (who had crossed to St. Leon) with a considerable proportion of his Command to march up and cover the operation of the Commodore, assist in erecting the batteries and, to throw up a line of defence, at some proper place, to cover his command.*<sup>29</sup>

2. The highly accurate and sustained American artillery fire did tremendous damage to both the British artillery positions and British morale. Captain William Surtees, serving as quartermaster in the

quartermaster in the effectiveness of American Battery #4 as he observed the firing:

*Their gun, a 32-pounder, was a most bitter antagonist to our principle battery. This happened to be erected in front of that part of the line where this gun was situated, and when it fired, its shot always struck the battery at the first bound, then ricocheted into the redoubt where I had taken up my post. We were told the captain of the schooner, after having been deprived of his vessel, had been appointed to the charge and management of this gun, with some of his crew to work it; and indeed it seemed very like the bitter and determined manner of our former opponent, for any of the other guns seemed like children's play to the unceasing and destructive fire of this heavy piece of ordnance. I could distinctly see that they were sailors that worked it.*<sup>30</sup>

Directly involved in the action, British artillery officer, Captain Benson Hill described the effects of the American guns even further:

*Our men, both those working the guns and the infantry lying down in the rear, suffered heavily. By half past eleven or after the enemy's fire had been maintained about forty minutes, five of our guns were dismounted completely. They had to be left on the field. Eight more were so disabled in their carriages that they could not be pointed. This left us with only nine serviceable guns and of these but one was a 12-pounder.*<sup>31</sup>

3. In the wake of a second abortive British attempt to seize the American line, British endurance and morale began to decidedly slump as compared to its former state of collective perseverance. Lieutenant Gleig described his observations of the British force following the 1 January attack:

*Of the fatigue undergone during these operations by the whole Army, from General down to the meanest sentinel, it would be difficult to form an adequate conception. For two whole nights and days not a man had closed an eye, except such as were cool enough to sleep amidst showers of cannon-ball; and during the day scarcely a moment had been allowed in which we were able so much as to break our fast. We retired, therefore, not only baffled and disappointed ut in some degree disheartened and discontented. All our plans had as yet proved abortive; even this,*

*upon which so much reliance had been placed, was found to be of no avail; and it must be confessed that something like murmuring began to be heard through the camp.*<sup>32</sup>

4. Perhaps the best illustration of the mounting strain upon the British expeditionary force came from an episode requiring the personal intervention of Pakenham himself during the night of 1-2 January, as described by Major Harry Smith, the force's Acting Adjutant General and Pakenham's favorite staff officer.

*The troops were withdrawn, except such strong picquets as were left to protect the guns in the [batteries].*

**Pakenham:** "Smith, those guns must be brought back; go and do it.

**Smith:** *It will require a great many men.*

**Pakenham:** *Well, take 600 men from Gibb's Brigade.*

*Off I started. The Soldiers were sulky, and neither the 21st nor the 44th were distinguished for discipline – certainly not the sort I had been used to. After every exertion I could induce them to make, I saw I had no chance of success – to my mortification, for to return and say to Sir Edward I could not effect it, was as bad as the loss of a leg...so I told him as quietly as I could. He saw I was mortified, and said nothing but jumped up in his cloak, and says "Be so kind as to order my horse, and go on and turn out Gibb's whole brigade quietly."*

*They were under arms by the time he arrived, and by dint of exertion and his saying, "I am Sir Edward Pakenham, etc., and commander-in-chief," as well as using every expression to induce officers and Soldiers to exertion, just as daylight appeared he had completed the task, and the Brigade returned to its ground.*

As Pakenham and Smith rode back, the commander said, "You see, Smith, exertion and determination will effect anything.

Smith responded: *Your excitement, your name, your energy, as commander-in-chief with a whole brigade, most certainly has done that which I failed in with 600 men but I assure you, Sir Edward, I did all I could.*

Pakenham replied: *I admire your mortification; it*

*shows your zeal. Why I barely effected, with all the exertion of the commander-in-chief, and, as you say, a brigade, what I expected you to do with one-fourth of the men!*<sup>33</sup>

### **Analysis**

1. Evaluate Pakenham's plan; how does it differ from the previous attempt? Is this an isolated operation or the first phase of a deliberate attack; was there enough flexibility in the plan for Pakenham to identify the conditions and transition from one to the other?
2. Compare and contrast the continued employment of fires by the opposing sides; how were the Americans able to maintain their fires superiority despite the increase in British artillery for this attack?
3. Assess the state of British morale after this aborted attack. Does the incident over the recovery of the guns and the direct intervention of Pakenham accurately attest to the deteriorating situation of the British expeditionary force?
4. Outline the options available to Pakenham after his two aborted attacks.



## Stand Six

### The Rodriguez Canal – Jackson’s Line (8 January 1815)

**Directions:** Walk back to the vehicles and drive to the cemetery exit, returning to West St. Bernard Highway, and turn left. Drive 0.3 miles and turn left into the entrance of the Chalmette National Battlefield. If traffic is too heavy to safely turn left in a timely manner proceed further north to the first light and execute a U-turn). Upon entrance to the park the group will be dropped at Battery 5/6 (the first available parking section on the left side of the park road). The vehicles will then continue to the parking area on the far side of the Visitor Center for the duration of the staff ride. Drivers can then rejoin the group along the Rodriguez Canal.

**Notes: From this stand, until the completion of the staff ride, all movement will be on foot.** This stand will be broken into several key locations along the American line. Prompts and directions are listed below and imbedded in the description section.

#### Visual Aids

Jackson’s Line: The Rodriguez Canal (as seen on 8 January 1815) Composition of Jackson’s Line

**Orientation:** This stand will examine the bulk of the American defensive line built along the Rodriguez Canal. It is a more detailed description of the construction and composition of Jackson’s line than provided in previous stands. This is also a walking stand. The description supports the walk and various stops along the line during this stand. Because of the modern changes surrounding the battlefield, the left flank secured by Major General Coffee’s Tennessee Militia is now mostly inaccessible but parts are similar to the heavily wooded marshland that existed during the battle. Coffee’s position is now bisected by the West St. Bernard Highway. On the end of the right flank, the Mississippi River has reclaimed approximately 50 meters of the American line. The start point for this stand is the area adjacent to Batteries 5 and 6, near what was once the center of Jackson’s line.

The American line extended approximately three quarters of a mile from the river to the swamp. However, only 700 yards of the line saw the bulk of the fighting – an area roughly 400 by 700 yards. The Americans erected a tall flagpole near the center of the line that could be easily seen from the British lines and by American positions across the river. Jackson established his outposts 500 yards forward of the canal. During the final attack, after the British drove in the outposts, their line of departure lay some 400 yards to the front.

Move from left to right along the remnants of the Rodriguez Canal, making the following stops during this stand:

Begin at Battery 5 and 6

Move to Battery 4

Move to Battery 3

Move to the top of the modern levee (passing Battery 2 en route) in order to discuss Battery 1, the Redoubt (the area around Battery 1, the Redoubt, and Beale's Company have been partially reclaimed by the river), and to see the far side of the river

### **Description**

Since initially setting his main defensive line along the Rodriguez on 28 December, Jackson focused on maintaining a steady rate of improvement in its construction, the benefits of which became apparent after the two British attempts to breach the line. Still, Jackson urged his commanders and men to continue improving their positions even more. Continual pauses in British operations gave the Americans additional time that they fully exploited. This is just one aspect of Jackson's leadership, the way he motivated the diverse force under his command. He unified a mixed force of regulars, sailors, Marines, organized Militia, emergency Militia, free men of color, Indians, and pirates into a powerful and resilient fighting force that repeatedly destroyed notions of contempt from their British opponents.

The Rodriguez Canal originally represented a feasible defensive position when the Americans occupied it the day after their night attack. Eventual improvements widened the canal to nine feet and a depth of nearly seven feet. In some places Soldiers built abatis in the canal. The parapet itself stood four and a half feet in height, nearly twenty-four feet at the base and between eighteen and twenty feet at the top. Engineers oversaw the construction of a three foot ledge at the base of the parapet to catch loss dirt so it did not fall and fill the canal. In some sections of the line units dug holes in the parapet to fire through or added logs to protect themselves when they stood up to fire. Contrary to popular myth, the Americans did not incorporate cotton bales into their defensive positions, aside from a mistaken use of the combustible material as support for the artillery platforms (despite Johnny Horton's popular song and the modern *nom de guerre* of the US 7th Infantry Regiment being the "Cotton Balers").



Figure 19. The scar of the original Rodriguez Canal, looking from the Center of the American line to the right flank.

By Author.

The construction of the various artillery positions became the cornerstone of the American engineering effort. Once sited, Soldiers dug directly into the parapet, carving out a position for a battery. Seven foot embrasures cut into the parapet allowed the guns to traverse to some degree, expanding their fields of fire. The sides and faces of the batteries included revettes (retaining walls) with fascines (bundles of sticks) or gabions (woven stick baskets filled with dirt) or cotton bales. Unlike their British opponents the Americans succeeded in constructing solid firing platforms. Some of the batteries eventually included raised platforms that allowed them to freely sweep the battlefield, dominating the British field batteries as they did on 1 January. Magazines, well-protected and full of ample ammunition, stood approximately sixty to seventy yards behind the guns.

In order to simplify command and control over his force, Jackson assigned his various units to three distinct wings, left, center, and right, under the command of Major General Coffee, Major General Carroll, and Colonel George

Ross of the US 44th Infantry Regiment, respectively.

The left wing, under Coffee, consisted of his 550 Tennessee Militia organized into 9 companies, now dismounted, and Jugeant's Choctaw Indians. Their section of the American line extended into the wooded swamp. These were frontier veterans of Jackson's Creek campaign, dressed in their rough homemade clothes and carrying their Tennessee long rifles, knives, and tomahawks.

The center wing, under Carroll, consisted of 800 Tennessee Militia organized into eleven companies. His section of the line began just to the right edge of the swamp and extended to the right. Part of the Tennessee governor's response to Jackson's call for more troops, the men travelled down the Mississippi in keel boats, fell in on arms and ammunition in Natchez, and arrived in New Orleans on 24 December. This formation of Tennessee Militia lacked the experience of Coffee's troops but brought the same combativeness from the Tennessee frontier.

Jackson posted four artillery batteries to provide direct support to Coffee and Carroll's troops, all located adjacent to Carroll's position in the American center. Two batteries, numbers 8 and 7, anchored Carroll's left and provided support to Coffee's troops. The first, a small bronze naval carronade served by Carroll's troops under the command of a regular Army corporal, occupied the last gun on the line from the river. To its immediate right, a 6-pounder and 18-pounder stood watch, manned by a crew of regular Army artillerymen and secured by a detachment of Marines. Further to the right, close to the center of the open fields forward of the canal, two more batteries, numbers 6 and 5, sat at the point where the center and right wing of Jackson's line met. In the left battery of the pair, Brigadier General Garrigues Flaujeac, a member of the Louisiana state legislature, selflessly volunteered to command a single 12-pounder manned by a company of local Creoles. Regular artillerymen worked two 6-pounders in the adjacent battery.

The location of battery number 5 marked the left flank of the right wing under Colonel Ross of the Regulars, occupied by his own 44th Infantry Regiment, 350 regulars under the command of Captain Isaac Baker. A relatively new regiment organized in 1813, the regiment served under Jackson during the Creek War and the operation to seize Pensacola. **[MOVE TO Battery Number 4]**

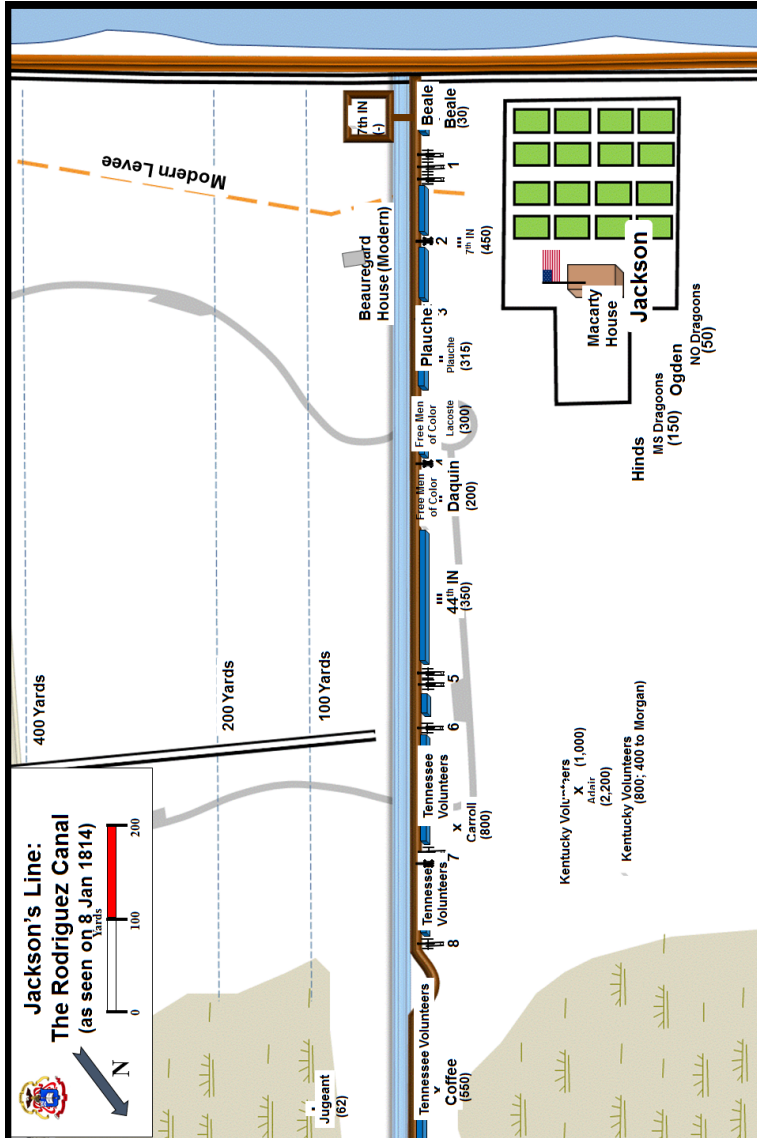


Figure 20. Jackson's Line: The Rodriguez Canal (as seen on Jan 8 1815).  
CSI created.



Figure 21. The remains of the base of the American defensive line along the Rodriguez Canal, looking from the center to left flank. Artillery pieces representing the locations of Battery Numbers 5 and 6 are in the foreground and distance respectively. Battery Number 7 and 8 were located further down the line beyond the existing tree line.

By Author.

Ross assigned the three battalions of Louisiana Militia to occupy the center of his wing. Major Louis Daquin's battalion of 200 free men of color led by white officers fell in to the right of the 44th. This unit predated Louisiana's admission to the Union and the legislature authorized its retention upon statehood. Jackson, who needed every trained man he could get to defend New Orleans, also saw the value of fielding an organized unit of African-Americans to counter rumored British attempts to incite a slave revolt in Louisiana. A second battalion of free men of color, with more training and experience than their sister battalion, under Major Pierre Lacoste, stood to the right. Somewhat between the two battalions, engineers established a battery,

Number 4, for a naval 32-pounder (today the park has a 24-pounder naval gun in the same location) commanded by Lieutenant Charles Crawley, USN, and crewman from the Carolina. **[MOVE TO Battery Number 3]**



Figure 22. The far left of the American line, occupied by Coffee's Tennessee Militia, reclaimed by new growth that now replicates similar vegetation conditions during the fighting.

By Author.

The final Louisiana battalion in the center of Ross's wing represented perhaps the most colorful formation in Jackson's Army. Major Jean Baptiste Plauche's Uniformed Battalion of Orleans Volunteers, 315 men in total, came from among the natives of New Orleans. An ad hoc unit of various assembled Militia companies, each of the five companies reported for duty in different colored uniforms. This seemingly small feature inadvertently gave the Americans an unknown advantage. The British mistook the wide variety of uniforms to be additional formations and overestimated the size of Jackson's Army. To Plauche's immediate right sat Battery Number 3, two 24-pounders manned by Baratarians under Lafitte's older brother, Dominique You, another example of the value of integrating the experienced Baratarians into the American force. **[MOVE TO the top of the modern levee to discuss the US 7th Infantry Regiment (left side), Battery**

**Number 1, the Redoubt, and Beale's company (right side adjacent to river. Note: the modern levee marks the approximate point where the 7th Infantry's line and Battery Number 1 met.)**



Figure 23. Battery Numbers 5 (foreground) and 6 (distance).

By Author.

To the right of the three Louisiana battalions stood the 450 veteran Soldiers of the US 7th Infantry Regiment under Major Henry Peire. Organized in Tennessee and Georgia when the Army increased its number of infantry regiments in the months before the war, the regiment initially served in New Orleans before being transferred to operations in Canada. In October 1814 the regiment returned to New Orleans in time to serve under Jackson during his operation to size Pensacola. Several companies and detachments of the regiment served independently during the bulk of the fighting in Louisiana, including a company assigned to defend Fort St. Philip. On the extreme right of the American line Jackson posted Beale's Company of New Orleans Riflemen, reduced to 30 riflemen, to cover the levee with his expert marksmen.



Figure 24. Battery Number 4 oriented on the British lines (Note that the actual ordnance used in the fighting was a larger 32-pounder naval gun. Also, the two field guns currently posted to the left, outside the frame, do not accurately reflect actual battery positions at the time of the fighting.

By Author.



At the center and on the right of the 7th Infantry's position, the final two batteries of the American line covered the open ground and the levee along the right flank. Battery Number 2, built on a raised platform, contained a 24-pounder commanded by a naval officer and manned by Baratarians from the *Carolina*. The final American battery, Number 1, consisted of two 12-pounders manned by Regulars and a 6-pounder howitzer manned by Louisiana militiamen. As the overall defensive position evolved, Jackson approved the recommendation to build a redoubt on the far right end of the line, extending forward of the canal, the intent being to reposition battery Number 1 into the redoubt and enfilade the length of the American line. However, time prevented the guns from being moved and only a company of the 7th Infantry occupied the position.

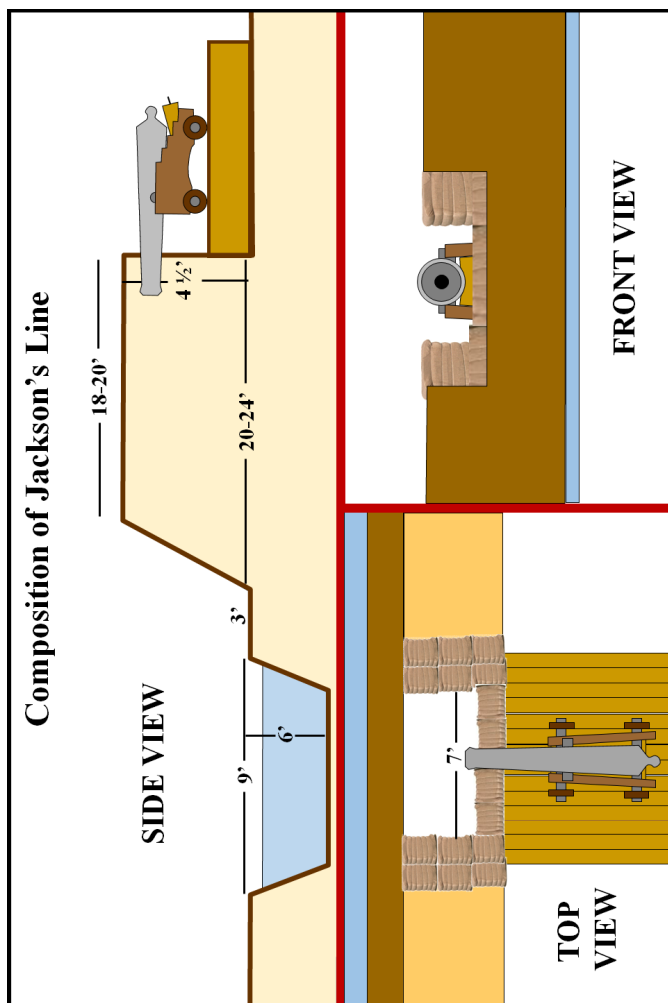


Figure 25. Composition of Jackson's Line.  
CSI created.

Battery Number 1, the Redoubt, and Beale's Company would have been positioned on the opposite side of the levee

toward the river. The position of the US 7th Infantry is in the immediate foreground.

The first set of signs on the walkway incorrectly mark the position of Battery Number 1.

The second set of signs in the center of the picture represent Battery Numbers 2 and 3.

To the rear of the Rodriguez Canal Jackson established his reserve formations. Answering the Secretary of War's call for manpower, a force of over 2,000 Militia from Kentucky, commanded by Major General John Thomas, reported to Jackson on 7 January 1815. The War Department promised arms and supplies to the Volunteers but the national level sustainment system failed and nothing arrived to support the Kentuckians during their march or after their arrival. The bulk of the men came without arms and Thomas fell ill soon after arriving, passing command to Brigadier General John Adair. Jackson immediately called on the people of New Orleans to once again help provide weapons in their defense. Civilians donated nearly one thousand firearms of all types, some of them unreliable antiques. Thus armed, 1,000 Kentuckians, under Adair, constituted the main reserve, positioned mostly to the rear of Carroll's wing. Jackson eventually transferred some 400 of these men to the right bank to support Morgan.



Figure 26. Close up of a 24-pounder naval gun like those employed by the Americans at New Orleans.

By Author.

Jackson also organized his remaining horsemen as a small mounted reserve. Hinds' Mississippi Mounted Rifles, Jackson's effective pickets between the lines, numbered some 150 men and occupied the grounds of the Macarty Plantation. Captain Peter Ogden's Orleans Troop of Dragoons, another unit of prominent New Orleans businessmen numbering 50 men, positioned themselves just north of the plantation. **[While still standing on the levee, reorient to look across the river and discuss the Marine Battery and Morgan's positions.]**

Across the river, on the right bank, Major General David Morgan organized his force to defend the battery recommended by Patterson. Morgan brought his Louisiana troops from English Turn. Initially, Morgan commanded Colonel Alexander Declouet's Regiment of Louisiana Drafted Militia, and ad hoc formation of 200 men from numerous companies, and Major Paul Arnaud's 100-man detachment from the 6th Louisiana Militia. Jackson's engineer, Major Arsene Latour, supervised construction of a defensive line along the Boisgervais Canal on the Flood Plantation where Morgan established his main defensive line slightly downstream from the Marine Battery, emplacing a battery of two 6-pounders and a 12-pounder to support his position. He deployed the units of Arnaud and Davis in a forward position slightly over 1,000 yards in order to provide early warning in case of attack. Patterson's Marine Battery, set slightly behind Morgan's defense and extending upstream for nearly 1,000 yards, represented an impressive collection of artillery. The battery, oriented across the river to enfilade the flank of any British attack, consisted of three 24-pounders and six 12-pounders served by a 106 man mixed force of Patterson's sailors, Baratarians, and men from Declouet's regiment.



Figure 27. Jackson's line as seen from the modern levee.

By Author.

Jackson's span of control extended over far more men than those units along the Rodriguez Canal and in the vicinity of the Marine Battery. Other key areas required manpower, including the forces on the Plain of Gentilly, at Fort St. Philip, and in the two other defensive lines to the rear. However, returns for 8 January 1815 indicated Jackson's strength as 5,437 men (4,137 behind the Rodriguez Canal and 1,300, through a final repositioning of reinforcements, on the right bank).

### **Vignettes**

1. Major Tatum, Jackson's topographical engineer described the overall defensive line sited along the Rodriguez Canal:

*The Canal, behind which the Army retired, was large, and stretched from the river (nearly at right angle) a considerable distance into a thick, and almost, impenetrable swamp, which commenced at the distance of about 600 yds. to the left of the river. On the upper side, and on the bank, of this Canal a Breast Work (or parapet) was commenced, and its erection prosecuted with great ardor, and calculated to extend a distance of about 800 yards to the left, from the river, and extending about 200 paces into the swamp. Proper banquetts was erected to every part of this line of defence, and batteries constructed at such places on the line as were deemed proper, according to the number of Ordinance that could be spared to this work.<sup>34</sup>*

2. Major Latour, Jackson's chief engineer described some of the construction that built the American line:

*As soon as this position was chosen, the troops began to raise a parapet, leaving the ditch as it was... as there was then a temporary rise of the river. Earth was fetched from the rear of the line and thrown carelessly on the left bank, where the earth had been thrown when the canal was originally dug. The bank on the right side being but little elevated above the soil formed a kind of glacis. All the pales of the fences in the vicinity were taken to line the parapet, and prevent the earth from falling into the canal. All this was done at various intervals, and by different corps, owing to the frequent mutations in the disposition of the troops. This circumstance, added to the cold and to incessant rain, rendered it impossible to observe any regularity as to the thickness and height of the parapet, which in some*

*places was as much as twenty feet thick at the top, though hardly five feet high; whilst in other places the enemy's balls went through it at the base. On the 1st of January there was but a very small proportion of the line able to withstand the balls; but on the 8th of January the whole extent, as far as the wood, was proof against the enemy's cannon.*<sup>35</sup>

3. Captain Benson Hill, overseeing a battery along the British forward line described the effects of the 1 January bombardment on the American line:

*A heavy cannonading against the enemy's lines commenced, which was answered by him with great spirit but, alas! our shot made little or no impression on the cotton-bags with which General Jackson had so skillfully constructed his parapet; for, in spite of our battering at it for some hours, it was apparent that we had failed to make the impression which had been expected added to which our ammunition was nearly expended, and it was deemed advisable to "husband our fire."*<sup>36</sup>

### **Analysis**

1. Evaluate Jackson's defensive line along the Rodriguez Canal; identify its strengths. What were the limitations to this position?
2. Assess the contributions made by Patterson, his sailors, and the Marines to Jackson's defense. Is Patterson's example an effective case study in how personal and command relationships influence joint operations?
3. Jackson commanded a tremendously diverse force made up of elements from numerous sources; discuss the challenges he faced and how he overcame them. Are their lessons that today's leaders can learn from his example?



## **Stand Seven**

### **The Final Assault – Right Bank of the Mississippi (8 January 1815)**

**Directions:** From the initial location on the levee, walk forward of the Rodriguez Canal along the top levee to a spot that allows an unhindered view of both the far side of the river and back towards the American line.

**Notes:** The actions described below, after a description of the overall British plan, are presented out of sequence. While the British assault took place well after the main attack, this stand will be conducted next because of the group's present location on the levee facing the opposite bank.

#### **Visual Aids**

Pakenham's Plan

Battle on the Right Bank, 8 January 1815, 0315-0830

Battle on the Right Bank, 8 January 1815, 0830-1030

**Orientation:** You are currently standing on the modern levee along the bank of the Mississippi River. The old levee was the extreme right of the American line built along the Rodriguez Canal but has since failed to preserve the far right of the line. This stand, on the modern levee, is on the very edge of property owned by the NPS. The boat slip to the north of this location is where Macarty House stood which served as Jackson's HQ during the battle. The Chalmette Plantation is to the immediate front and the British camp is beyond the plantation and would have been slightly hidden on the far side of a bend in the river. From this point one can look to the left and survey Jackson's defensive position and look across the Mississippi toward the location of the Marine Battery on the right (southwest) bank of the river.



Figure 28. A view of the Mississippi's right bank from the modern levee.

By Author.

### **Description**

Two failed attacks in five days led Pakenham to reevaluate his situation and conceive a new plan to defeat the Americans. He expected Major General John Lambert to arrive with additional two regiments within a matter of days. However, when considering the reinforcements, Pakenham still determined that another frontal assault unsupported by effective artillery fire would potentially lead to yet another reverse. The next attack needed to be a well-coordinated combined attack supported by heavy fires.

Compared to the earlier two attempts, Pakenham's new plan called for a level of complexity previously missing from the expeditionary force's operations. While the direct approach remained a necessary piece in penetrating the American line, Pakenham integrated an element of the indirect approach as well. Colonel Thornton, of the 85th Regiment, received command of a composite unit consisting of most of his own regiment, Royal Marines, some West Indian Soldiers, and a rocket detachment; a total of some 1,400 men. Pakenham tasked Thornton to conduct a nighttime crossing of the Mississippi to the right bank and then a direct assault to seize the American Marine Battery. Once secure, Thornton's sailors would reorient the captured enemy artillery to enfilade the American position on the Rodriguez Canal, facilitating a successful main attack on the left bank.

The operation planned for the right bank represented an immense challenge for the British. A major component of the plan involved transporting the force across the river. Admiral



Cochrane recommended an effort to widen the Villere Canal in order to move barges from the initial landing point to the Mississippi River. Thornton could then stage his force in the canal and then cross the river during the night. Though Pakenham appeared pessimistic, he approved the project. Soldiers and sailors worked non-stop, beginning on 2 January, in an effort to improve the canal. However, as work progressed the soft soil of the canal's banks continually collapsed back into the waterway and the struggle to improve the canal and pass the barges through continued until completion on 6 January.

As Cochrane oversaw the frustrating work to improve the Villere Canal, Pakenham organized the remainder of his force allocated for an attack on the left bank of the river. In the first week of January the British expeditionary force numbered slightly over 6,500 men. In reorganizing his force Pakenham, once again, gave command of the main effort to Gibbs, assigning him the 4th, 21st, and 44th Regiments, and a battalion formed from the light companies of those regiments to secure Gibbs' flank in the cypress swamp along the British right flank. To the 44th Regiment, under Colonel Thomas Mullins, fell a task not unknown to British veterans of the Peninsula, storming a battalion, the critical task of storming the American line to gain a foothold for the other regiments to follow. The regiment would advance under fire, encumbered by fascines and ladders, filling the canal with the fascines to secure easier footing, and using the ladders to climb over the parapet.

In a supporting effort on the left flank (advancing roughly along the line of the modern levee), Pakenham assigned Keane the 93d, 1st West Indian regiments and a composite battalion of light companies from the 7th, 43d, and 93d regiments, reinforced with two additional companies from the 95th (the arrival of the first two named regiments is addressed below). The light companies, under Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rennie of the 21st Regiment, received the key mission to infiltrate and seize the American redoubt on their right flank (reclaimed by the river), thus denying the enemy the ability to enfilade Gibbs' attack. The British failed to identify that the Americans did not have artillery posted in the redoubt. Pakenham gave Keane discretionary orders concerning the deployment of the 93rd and 1st West Indian regiments, telling him to employ the regiments where they could do the most good.

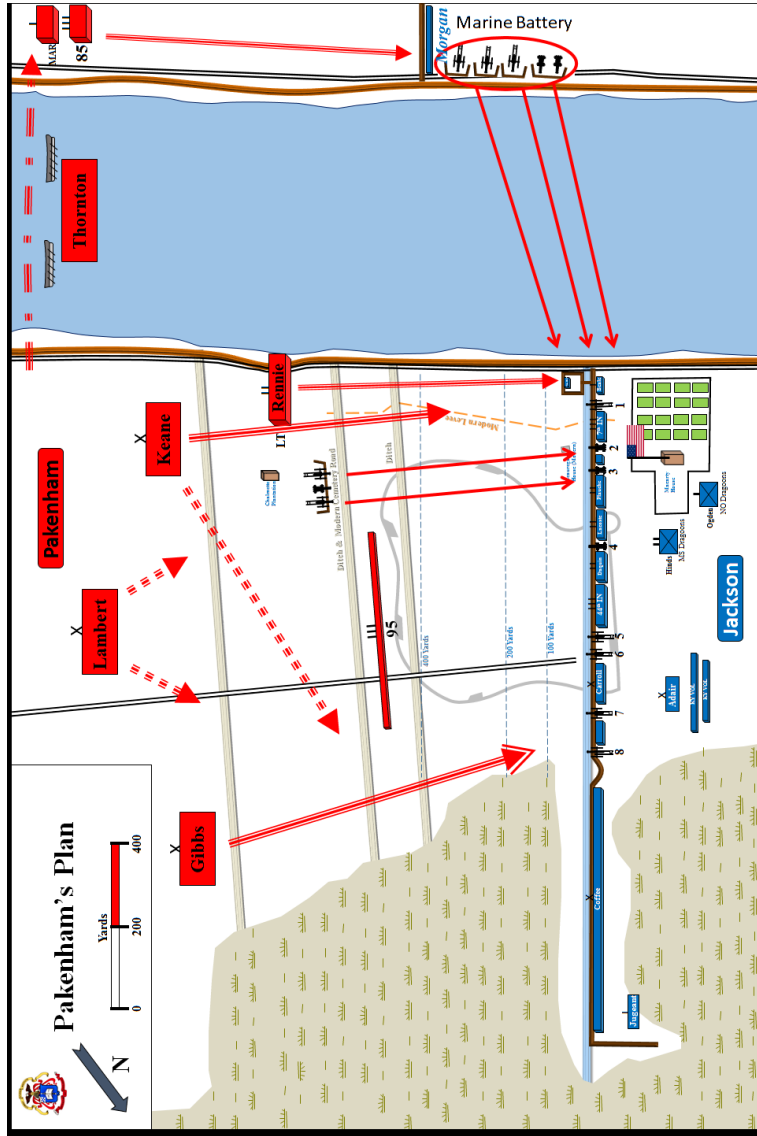


Figure 29. Pakenham's Plan.

CSI created.

In addition to the two companies of the 95th provided to Rennie's battalion, the regiment also provided three companies to support the advance of Gibbs' brigade. The task of the riflemen involved establishing a skirmish line across the British front forward of the advancing columns and attempt to use their precision fire to disrupt American fire directed at the British forces.

Pakenham's confidence level rose on 6 January with the arrival of the reinforcements under Major General John Lambert. He arrived in camp at the head of the 7th and 43d Regiments of Foot, both very experienced Peninsula regiments. When these 1,800 veterans of Wellington's campaigns in Europe marched into camp they experienced a degree of shock at the situation facing their comrades over the past weeks. Some officers questioned how "dirty shirt" Militia held up "Wellington's heroes" for so long when they should be living comfortably in New Orleans. They displayed a great bit of disdain for their rough looking and bitter comrades, making fun of none too receptive men in the brigades of Keane and Gibbs. Increasing the size of the Army to over 8,500 men, the reinforcements represented the most experienced and steady regiments in the expeditionary force. Pakenham brigaded them with the dismounted 14th Dragoons and the 5th West India Regiment. However, by this time the 1st and 5th West India Regiments, still suffering from the harsh weather conditions first encountered upon the Army's arrival in the region, were greatly diminished in strength. Their inclusion in overall British combat by 8 January 1815, proved marginal. The brigade occupied the British center, serving as the reserve under Lambert's command. Previous experience in Spain led commanders to believe that retaining a few strong veteran regiments in reserve during sieges allowed them to maintain better order following the capture of fortified cities.

Given the attrition suffered by his artillery, Pakenham changed his fires plan. Instead of attempting to blow a hole in the American line as he tried before, he tasked his artillery to suppress the American position in order to allow his infantry to maneuver. However, a few points serve to conflict with Pakenham's planned intent, especially when considering contemporary military doctrine. First, he chose not to have the navy transport additional guns forward from the anchorage. He instead requested additional ammunition, some of it even carried in the knapsacks of the Soldiers in Lambert's newly arrived brigade (17 Soldiers of the 7th Regiment drowned when their barge overturned on Lake Borgne, the ammunition in their packs dragging them to the bottom). Second, a great deal of risk existed in the planned seizure of the Marine

Battery in order to turn its guns against the Americans. Finally, all of the remaining active British batteries lay on the left flank of the British position on the left bank. They could only provide direct support to Keane's brigade, a supporting effort, or Lambert's in the center if Pakenham ordered commitment of his reserve. None of the batteries supported the main effort, Gibbs brigade.

As the British continued their preparations American intelligence provided a valuable piece of information to Jackson. On 6 January American forces captured a British barge on Lake Borgne. During questioning British sailors divulged that the improvements underway on the Villere Canal. Patterson's assessment of this information led him to assume that the British meant to attack along both banks of the Mississippi. He, therefore, moved to the Marine Battery to personally observe the British and confirm their intentions. Jackson, agreeing with Patterson, sent reinforcements to Morgan on the right bank. These consisted of the 1st and 2d Regiments of Louisiana Militia and a battalion of Kentucky Militia. Reinforcements allowed Morgan to establish a forward line where he deployed Major Arnaud's detachment with the task to contest any British attempt at a landing. However, this choice proved questionable because Arnaud's men carried a crude collection of fowling pieces. On the other hand, the Kentuckians, under Lieutenant Colonel John Davis, provided more problems. At 1900 on 7 January, the men received their orders to move to the right bank and marched back to New Orleans. Since only half of the 400 man battalion carried arms, 200 men remained in the city. The remaining Kentuckians crossed the Mississippi on a ferry and marched along muddy roads, arriving at Morgan's line at 0200 on the morning on 8 January, tired and hungry. Morgan ordered them to move forward and join Arnaud where they arrived at 0400, completely exhausted.

Both commanders approached personal intelligence gathering from their own unique positions on the battlefield. The Americans possessed a distinct advantage in the fact that they took more prisoners than the British in previous engagements. Furthermore, the number of British deserters to the American lines increased daily. When not riding the line, Jackson retired to the 3d floor of the Macarty House and observed enemy activity through his telescope. By 7 January, Jackson personally saw all that he needed to determine that the British intended to attack shortly. He ordered that half of the command man the defenses at all times. Pakenham, on the other hand, climbed a tree to observe the American line. Comfortable with what he saw, he climbed down and issued the final orders prior to execution, following which he chose

to get some rest before the next day's attack.

In such a complex operation full of so many supporting operations it is not surprising that things went wrong, especially given the lack of British success in relatively simple operations on previous occasions. For the critical operation on the right bank, British leaders encountered challenges from almost the very beginning. When Thornton arrived at the river at sunset he found no barges waiting for his troops. A collapse in the canal's walls prevented them from getting to the pick-up point. The only solution available involved physically manhandling the barges from their present location to the river. Once again the combined efforts of the sailors and Soldiers went to work to solve an unanticipated problem. However, despite their exertions it took eight hours to move barges to the river. Furthermore, in that eight hours the men moved only enough vessels to move 450 men across the river at one time. Rather than wait, Thornton chose to go, selecting 350 of his own Soldiers, 50 Royal Marines, and 50 sailors. During the entire effort to beat the clock, no one thought to wake Pakenham and inform him of the setback in his plan.

Thornton's greatly reduced force finally began crossing the Mississippi, very much behind schedule, at 0300 on 8 January. Fortunately, they still retained the benefit of darkness. However, the river's current proved stronger than anticipated. The force landed approximately a mile and half downstream from their expected landing site. Two hundred exhausted Kentuckians and 100 ill-armed Louisianans waited for them in the forward position chosen by Morgan.

Upon arriving on the right bank, Thornton disembarked and formed his men for the advance. Suddenly he heard the main British attack begin on the opposite bank. Knowing that Pakenham disregarded the fact that his attack failed to precede the main attack, Thornton ordered his men forward at the double. With three of the barges providing artillery support that fired grapeshot into Arnaud's position, Thornton continued to advance. Arnaud's Louisianans rapidly withdrew under the artillery fire and at the sight of British infantry advancing toward them, joining Davis' Kentucky Militia. However, Thornton's men quickly attacked from the march and turned the American flank. Arnaud's men ran into an adjacent swamp where they disappeared for the remainder of the day. Davis' men fired a few scattered shots at the British before hurrying rearward to the main line, Thornton's men following closely behind them.

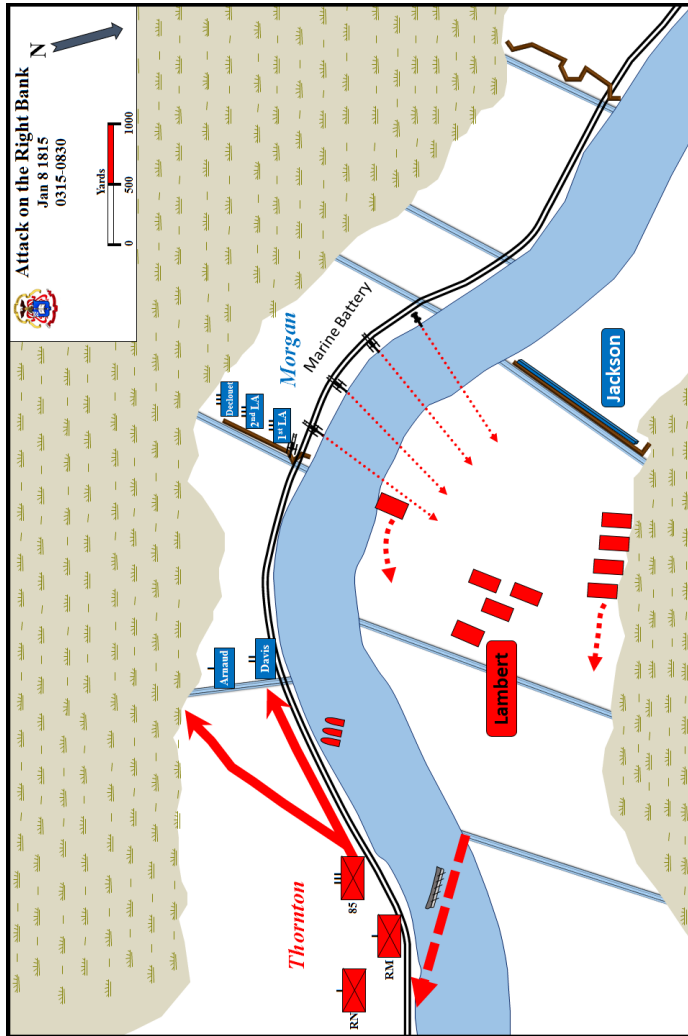


Figure 30. Attack on the Right Bank, Jan 8 1815, 03:15-08:30.  
CSI created.

A brief tactical pause followed, some 700 yards forward of Morgan’s line, when Thornton halted his men and went forward for a personal reconnaissance. Identifying that the Kentuckians fled to a position on the American right, he immediately decided to exploit his initial success and continue the attack there. After a quickly issued set of orders, Thornton sent three companies of his 85th, under Lieutenant Colonel Richard Gubbins, against the American right flank, while a detachment of sailors conducted a feint against the American left. He retained a company of the 85th and the Royal Marines as a reserve.

Rockets from the barges opened Thornton's attack. The feint by the sailors encountered brutal artillery fire that killed and wounded many of the men, including their commander. However, Gubbins' attack on the enemy right succeeded in turning the American flank and the Kentuckians quickly fled the scene. Despite the success on that flank, Thornton, seeing the trouble encountered by the sailors under his command, personally led the company of the 85th in reserve to their aid. Thornton fell seriously wounded in his effort but the reinforced sailors succeed in capturing the American battery.

Morgan saw his line collapse and tried to stop the retreat. He ordered Davis to stop his men but was told that it was impossible. Morgan replied "Sir, I have not seen you try." Observing the retreat, Patterson attempted to turn some of the Marine Battery's guns toward the new threat but too late, he ordered the guns spiked and the powder thrown into the river. He ordered his sailors to move upstream towards the *Louisiana* which moved upstream to avoid British fire from the right bank. From the left bank of the river Jackson observed the American retreat. He reacted to the critical change in his situation by sending 400 men to reinforce Morgan's command, guided by Jean Lafitte.

At 1000 the seriously wounded Thornton sent a message to Pakenham that his force captured the American battery on the right bank of the river. Thornton did not know that that main British attack had ended in failure or that his commander in chief died at the head of his troops. In a heavy touch of irony, Thornton noticed that one of the captured American guns bore a plate that said "Taken at the surrender of Yorktown, 1781." In the face of repeated set-backs and against great odds Thornton's force secured an untimely victory for the British but it proved bittersweet. Major General John Lambert, now the commander of the British expeditionary force, not Pakenham, received Thornton's report. Lambert sent the Army's chief of artillery, Colonel Alexander Dickson, to the right bank to observe conditions. On the right bank Dickson learned that the Americans rendered all of their guns inoperable and he saw American reinforcements arriving from the far bank. Upon returning to the left bank Dickson advised Lambert to recall Thornton's men from the far bank, which Lambert did. After destroying anything of value, the British returned to their barges and re-crossed the river.

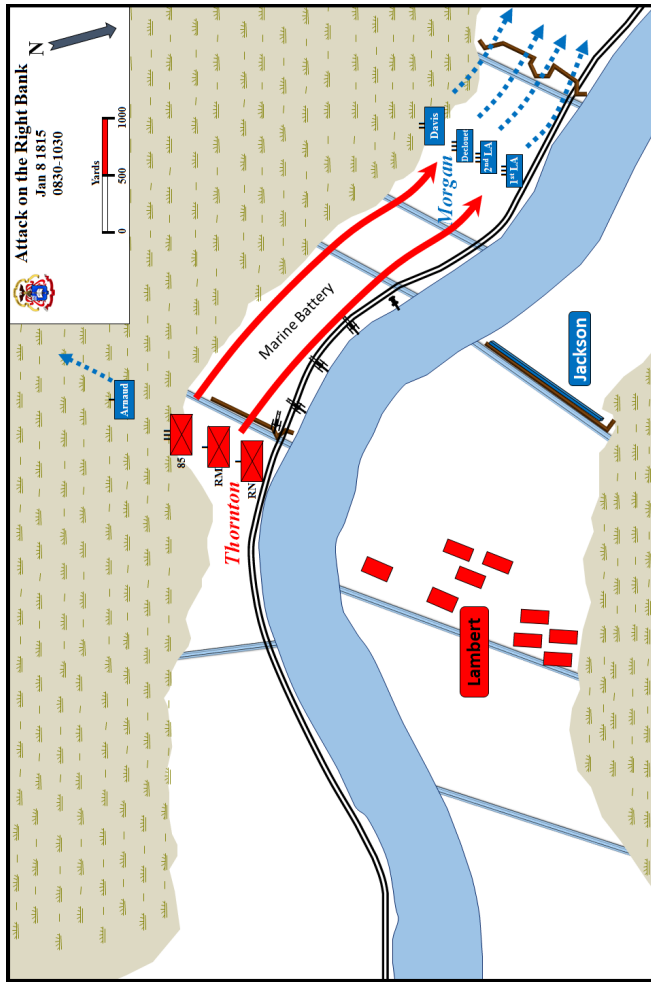


Figure 31. Attack on the Right Bank, Jan 8 1815, 0830-1030.

Author created.

1. When Lambert's brigade marched in to the British camp on 4 January, the new arrivals were stunned by the rough appearance and demeanor of their comrades who faced the American line for the past two weeks.

*An officer of the forty-third said, "Why, Wilky, how is it that you have not provided us with good quarters in New Orleans, as we expected . Why, what the d--l [devil] have you been about?" At this question Wilkinson looked exceedingly vexed; and clapping his hand to his forehead, and colouring up deeply, he turned away, stamping his foot according to his usual custom when put out and giving his arm a peculiar swing, answered, "Oh! ! Say no more about it," And then placing his arm within mine, we paced up and down for a long time, when he opened such a budget of astounding information, concerning the hesitation shown for the fourteen previous days, as to make the very military blood curdle in one's veins. And, on being further questioned, by myself, as to the great stoppage,*



*answered, “ bullets stopped us — bullets — that’s all!” but declared that the lines in front were now grown formidable, and that the only chance of taking them was by a well concerted and simultaneous rush.*<sup>37</sup>

2. Preparations in the British camp in the week since the attack on the first of January reached their climax during the night of 7 January, the early morning of the eighth. However, Captain William Surtees, in the 95th Rifle Regiment, saw proven British military practices being abandoned, something that concerned him on the eve of the attack.

*After dark I went with my commanding-officer and adjutant to view the ground over which our battalion was to march next morning...I was sadly disappointed at our not meeting with any other commanding-officers engaged in this most necessary duty, and at the time I expressed my apprehension as to the result. I pointed out to him the different manner in which the business had been conducted previous to the assault of Badajos [a French-held fortress in Spain], and previous to the attack on the enemy’s position on the Nivelle [one of the last major battles of the Peninsula campaign, fought in France], where every commanding-officer, or others, who had any particular duty assigned to them in the next day’s operation, were brought to the ground from which it was clearly pointed out to them how they were to move and act: but all here seemed apathy and fatal security, arising from our too much despising our enemy.*<sup>38</sup>

3. Captain Surtee’s apprehension and concern garnered merit. As the British continued to prepare for the next morning’s attack several indicators of the impending action came to the attention of the Americans. Latour described the situation at Jackson’s headquarters, the McCarty House, where Jackson was able to view the battlefield from a second floor balcony, using a telescope:

*With the assistance of a telescope in the upper apartment of head-quarters, we perceived Soldiers on Laronde’s plantation, busy in making fascines, while other were working on pieces of wood, which we concluded must be scaling ladders. The picket-guards near the wood had moreover been increased and stationed near to each other. Officers on the staff were seen riding about the fields of Laronde’s, Bienvenu’s, and Chalmette’s plantation, and stopping at the different posts to give orders. Finally, on the 7th, shortly after night-fall, we distinctly heard men*

*at work in the enemy's different batteries; the strokes of hammers gave "notes of preparation" and resounded even within our lines; and our out-posts informed us that the enemy was re-establishing his batteries: his guards were re-enforced about sunset, probably with a view to cover the movements of the troops.*<sup>39</sup>

4. More alarming, a report from Patterson, still located on the river's right bank, described British work to widen the Villere Canal and pass barges through, to Patterson, a clear indication of a British intent to land forces on the far side of the river:

*On Saturday (the 7th) in the morning Commodore Patterson (ever on the alert) advised the Commanding General that, the enemy had opened Villery's Canal to communicate with the river, and had passed a number of Armed Barges through it, into the Mississippi. The Idea was immediately conceived that, an attack was premeditated against the lines & batteries on the right bank of the river, and that a simultaneous attack would be made to storm the lines on the left. Preparations were made to defeat the enemy in both of his designs.*<sup>40</sup>

5. Patterson, supervising the gun crews in the Marine Battery as they provided a devastating enfilading fire on the British advance on the left bank of the river, observed Thornton's attack and the ensuing collapse of Morgan's defense on the right bank:

*While thus engaged with the enemy on the opposite shore, I was informed that they had effected their landing on this side, and were advancing to general Morgan's breastwork...the enemy's force had approached general Morgan's lines, under the cover of a shower of rockets, and charged in despite of the fire from the twelve-pounder and field-pieces mounted on the lines... when in a few minutes I had the extreme mortification and chagrin to observe general Morgan's right wing, composed... of the Kentucky Militia commanded by major Davison abandon their breastwork and flying in a most shameful and dastardly manner, almost without a shot; which disgraceful example, after firing a few rounds, was soon followed by the whole of general Morgan's command, notwithstanding every exertion was made by him, his staff and several officers of the city Militia, to keep them to their posts. By the great exertions of those officers a short stand was effected on the field, when a discharge of rockets from the*

*enemy, caused them again to retreat in such a manner that no efforts could stop them. Finding myself thus abandoned by the force I relied upon to protect my battery, I was most reluctantly and with inexpressible pain, after destroying my powder and spiking my cannon, compelled to abandon them, having only thirty officers and seamen with me.*<sup>41</sup>

6. Jackson, in a letter to the Secretary of War written after the battle, on 9 January, commented on the events on the right bank during the battle the day before and the effect on his intentions. Later this correspondence made its way in to newspapers across the country, causing Jackson to be held in great contempt by the people of Kentucky for many years to follow.

*The entire destruction of the enemy's Army was now inevitable, had it not been for an unfortunate occurrence, which at this moment took place on the other side of the river. Simultaneously with his advance upon my lines, he had thrown over in his boats a considerable force to the other side of the river. These having landed, were hardy enough to advance against the works of general Morgan; and, what is strange and difficult to account for, at the very moment when their entire discomfiture was looked for with a confidence approaching to certainty, the Kentucky re-enforcements, in whom so much reliance had been placed, ingloriously fled, drawing after them, by their example, the remainder of the forces; and thus yielding to the enemy that most formidable position. The batteries which had rendered me, for many days, the most important service, though bravely defended, were, of course, now abandoned; not however until the guns had been spiked. This unfortunate rout had totally changed the aspect of affairs. The enemy now occupied a position from which they might annoy us without hazard, and by means of which they might have been able to defeat, in a great measure, the effects of our success on this side the river. It became therefore an object of the first consequence to dislodge him as soon as possible.*<sup>42</sup>

## **Analysis**

1. Discuss the British preparations for the attack—did Pakenham effectively set the necessary conditions for these operations and the attack?
2. Discuss the problems encountered by Thornton's assault force; was there a specific time when this piece of the overall British attack should have been cancelled? Should Pakenham have cancelled the entire attack based on the challenges encountered by such a critical shaping operation?
3. Analyze Pakenham's decisions in designating his reserve. Should he have retained experienced Peninsula regiments or considered employing the inexperienced 93d? What criteria do modern commanders use in designating a reserve?
4. Evaluate Pakenham's final decision to attack despite the extreme delay in Thornton's attack. What other options did he have available?
5. Assess the American preparation on the right bank of the river. What conditions led to the American defeat despite so many challenges encountered by Thornton's force?
6. How did the British capture of the Marine Battery influence American and British forces involved in main assault on the left bank of the river or was it case of too little too late?

## **Stand Eight**

### **The Final Assault – British Left Column Keane’s Brigade (8 January 1815)**

**Directions:** Remain on top of the levee to discuss Keane’s attack. Position the group so that it can see along the front of the American line along the Rodriguez Canal (continue to move down the levee and use the Beauregard House as a landmark if necessary).

#### **Visual Aids**

British Attack, January 8 1815, 0315-0730

British Attack Continues, January 8 1815, 0730-0745

**Orientation:** This position is approximately 50 meters forward of the Rodriguez Canal. Orient the group back toward the American line and to either side of the levee as necessary when describing the events. The US 7th Infantry’s position began on the immediate right of the modern levee. Battery Number 1 was located on the immediate left of the levee (to the approximate bank of the modern river), then the Redoubt and Beale’s Company further to its left (reclaimed by the river). Rennie’s battalion made its approach along a route along the old levee, now reclaimed by the river. Keane’s main body advanced more closely to a line roughly along the modern levee.

#### **The Malus-Beauregard House**

This structure was constructed approximately 18 years after the battle in about 1833 (exact date is uncertain). It passed through the hands of several owners, including Rene Beauregard, son of Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard, whose family owned the property until 1904, when it was sold to a railway system, the New Orleans Terminal Company. The house went into serious decline and was unlivable when the National Park Service purchased it in 1949, starting a long process of restoration efforts that continues today.<sup>43</sup>

#### **Description**

Pakenham’s staff woke him at 0300 (all British sources vary in approximating the timeline that morning prior to the battle’s start) on the morning of 8 January to inform him of the delay in getting Thornton’s force across the river. Though he realized that the preliminary piece of his overall attack fell far behind schedule he still decided to commence the main attack at 0400 in order to take advantage of the darkness. Riding forward to inspect Gibbs’ troops, however, Pakenham ran into more problems when he discovered that the troops

remained stationary. In the darkness the 44th Regiment failed to pick up the fascines and ladders necessary to overcome the American defenses. Still, Pakenham refused to be dissuaded. His faith in the British regular steered him to believe that a direct assault of these veterans would clear any defense manned by “dirty shirt” backwoods Militia, causing them to run at the first sight of British bayonets advancing toward them. Pakenham ordered his former Assistant Adjutant General, Major Harry Smith, now serving in the same capacity in Lambert’s brigade because of the arrival of a more senior officer, to have the rocket fired to signal the attack.

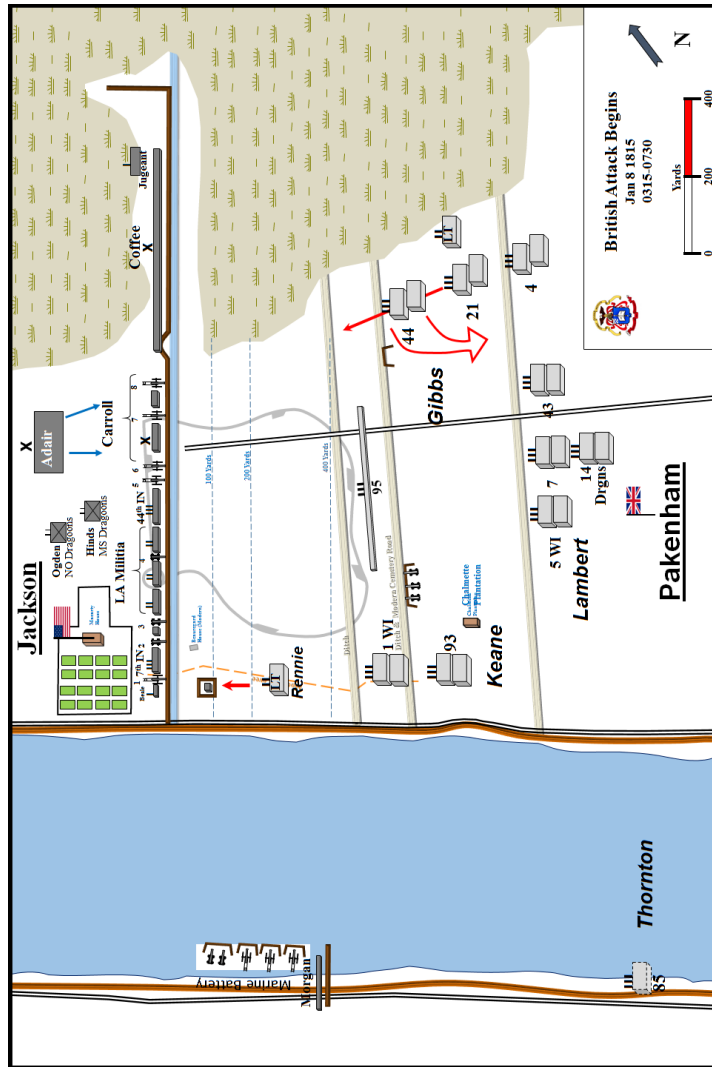


Figure 32. British Attack, Jan 8 1815, 0315-0730.

Author created.

Infiltrating within striking distance of the American redoubt along the right end of the Rodriguez Canal in the fog, Lieutenant Colonel Rennie's battalion of light companies, approximately 1,000 men, upon seeing the signal close to sunrise, rose out of the darkness and rushed the redoubt. The British achieved the element of surprise so surely that the American outposts fled without firing a shot, Rennie's men closely pursuing them. A company of the US 7th Infantry, under Captain Enoch Humphrey, defended the redoubt and prepared to engage the attacking British. However, the Americans held their fire for fear of shooting their comrades retreating from the outposts. The redoubt, unfinished, lacked the artillery supposed to be emplaced there. In the face of the overwhelming attack, a single plank over the canal served as the only means of escape for Humphrey's men, which the Captain elected to take, leading his men back into the main American line. When the men from the outposts reached the empty redoubt they turned and engaged the closely pursuing British in hand to hand combat until they could hold out no longer, retreating across the plank and pulling it up behind them.

Success, however, bred extreme complications as Rennie's column entered the redoubt and attempted to move on to the main American line. Soldiers of the 1st West India Regiment moved forward with ladders to scale the American parapet but scattered and took cover due to the heavy American artillery and small arms fire. Unbeknownst to Rennie, no other British unit supported his assault. Keane received new instructions from Pakenham as the commander-in-chief rode the British line before the attack. With the delay in Thornton's attack, Pakenham saw the Marine Battery as a threat to Keane's flank. In order to mitigate that threat, Pakenham ordered Keane to redirect his brigade's attack across the field and attack along Gibbs' left flank.

Keane therefore could not exploit the success achieved by Rennie's men. Rennie, not knowing whether to press his successful attack or secure the captured redoubt, remained unsupported for the rest of the battle. The American redoubt became a deathtrap for the British. Without the scaling ladders discarded by the 1st West India Regiment, Rennie and two fellow officers started climbing the enemy parapet, dying with many of his men inside the redoubt (see Figure 36 for a star with the letter "R" that signifies the approximate location of Rennie's death), caught between the deadly small arms fire of the 7th Infantry to their front and the guns of the Marine Battery on their flank from the opposite bank of the river. The effect of the American fire proved too great to overcome and the rest of the column broke and ran to the rear, many of the men falling

in the continued crossfire.

So ended the short but extremely violent fighting on the British left flank; another under-resourced and lost British opportunity on the field that day.

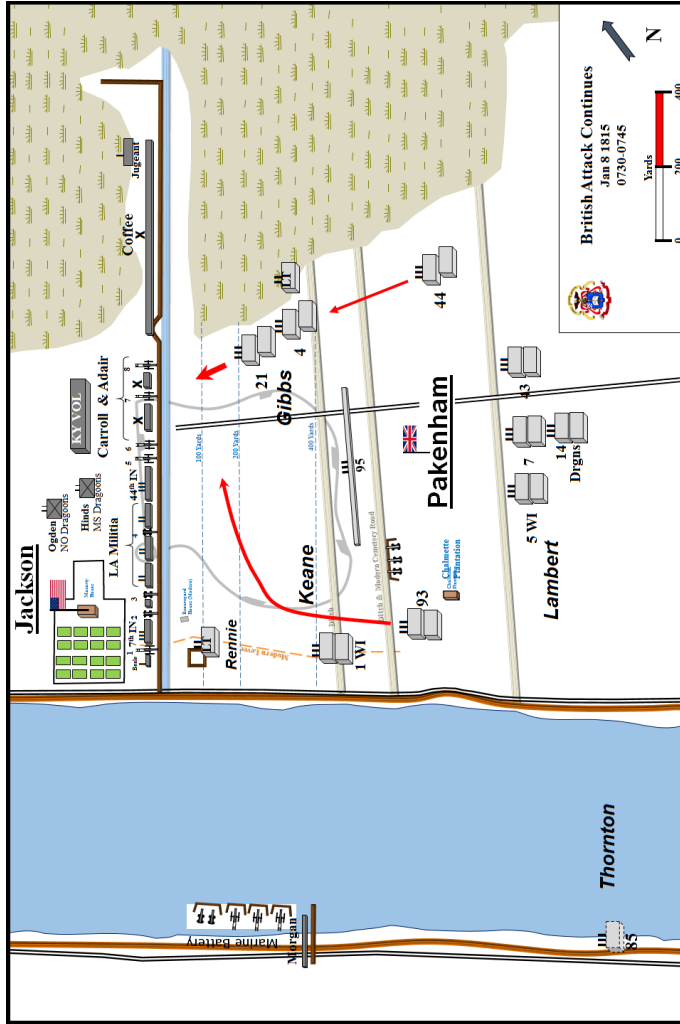


Figure 33. British Attack Continues, Jan 8 1815, 0730-0745.

CSI created.



## Vignettes

1. Major Harry Smith, sent to serve as the Assistant Adjutant General under Lambert because of the arrival of a more senior officer to serve on Pakenham's staff, recorded his final personal interaction with Pakenham, as the commander rode past Lambert's reserve position, just before the signal to attack:

*About half an hour before daylight, while I was with General Lambert's column, standing ready, Sir Edward Pakenham sent for me. I was soon with him. He was greatly agitated. "Smith, most Commanders-in-Chief have many difficulties to contend with but surely none like mine. The dam, as you heard me say it would, gave way, and Thornton's people will be of no use whatever to the general attack." I said, "So impressed have you ever been, so obvious is it in every military point of view, we should possess the right bank of the river, and thus enfilade and divert the attention of the enemy; there is still time before daylight to retire the columns now. We are under the enemy's fire so soon as discovered." He says, "This may be but I have twice deferred the attack. We are strong in numbers now comparatively. It will cost more men, and the assault must be made." I again urged delay. While we were talking, the streaks of daylight began to appear, although the morning was dull, close, and heavy, the clouds almost touching the ground. He said, "Smith, order the rocket to be fired." I again ventured to plead the cause of delay. He said, and very justly, "It is now too late: the columns would be visible to the enemy before they could move out of fire, and would lose more men than it is to be hoped they will in the attack. Fire the rocket, I say, and go to Lambert." This was done. I had reached Lambert just as the stillness of death and anticipation (for I really believe the enemy was aware of our proximity to their position) [was broken by the firing of the rocket]. The rocket was hardly in the air before a rush of our troops was met by the most murderous and destructive fire of all arms ever poured upon column.<sup>44</sup>*

2. Patterson's establishment of the Marine Battery on the right bank of the river immediately demonstrated its critical value to Jackson's overall defensive plan, enfilading the left flank of the British attack with heavy fire and inflicting tremendous casualties. In a post-battle report, Patterson described the British attack on Jackson's line and the part

played by his battery:

*At daylight, the enemy opened a heavy cannonade upon general Jackson's lines and my battery, leading their troops under cover of their cannon to the assault of the lines, which they attempted on the right and left but principally the latter wing; they were met by a most tremendous and incessant fire of artillery and musketry, which compelled them to retreat with precipitation; leaving the ditch filled, and the field strewn with their dead and wounded. My battery was opened upon them simultaneously with those from our lines, flanking the enemy both in his advance and retreat with round, grape and canister, which must have proved extremely destructive as in their haste and confusion to retreat they crowded the top of the levee, affording us a most advantageous opportunity for the use of grape and canister, which I used to the greatest advantage.*<sup>45</sup>

3. Captain Cooke of the 43rd Regiment went forward during the night with some 200 Soldiers to repair and guard the far left British battery next to the levee, about 700 yards from the American line. From there he witnessed the 95th Rifles go forward to establish its skirmish line and the movement of Rennie's column its way to assault the American redoubt. The column included the light company from Cooke's 43rd Regiment:

*These three companies [there were also two additional companies from the 95th] formed a compact little column of two hundred and forty Soldiers, near the battery on the high road to New Orleans. They were to attack the crescent battery near the river, and if possible to silence its fire under the muzzles of twenty pieces of cannon; at a point, too, where the bulk of the British force had hesitated when it first landed, and had recoiled from its fire on the 28th...and on the 1st of January...said I [to an officer in his regiment's light company that took part in the assault] "you have got into what I call a good thing...the American battery is in front at short range, and on the left this spot is flanked at eight hundred yards by their batteries on the opposite bank of the river."*<sup>46</sup>

4. Captain William Surtees, forward with the 95th Rifles, witnessed the consequence of Rennie's success and the failure of the British to exploit the capture of the American redoubt:

*But the poor fellows on the left, who had gained the only work which fell into our hands on this bank of the river, were still detained there, unable either to advance or retreat; and not one durst show his head above the parapet, or he was instantly shot dead. The news they now learned was most disheartening indeed, which was, that the whole of the British had retired, and that the Americans were coming out of their lines, and were moving in the direction of that work. Nothing now remained but to surrender, or to make an attempt to retreat, at the risk of being every man knocked down. The latter, however, they preferred; on which Colonel Rennie, of the 21st, who commanded these three companies, was the first to make the experiment, and in doing which, the moment after he left the fort, he fell to rise no more. They thought it better for them all to go at once, and instantly the whole party made a rush out of the work. The greater part of them providentially succeeded in effecting their escape, although many a brave fellow fell in the attempt.*<sup>47</sup>

5. Upon the collapse of Rennie's assault on the redoubt, the men in Beale's company, who helped defeat the assault, dragged the bodies of three dead British officers into the lines; one included Rennie himself. Soon, Beale's men, all known for their marksmanship, argued over who had killed the British colonel. A man named Withers said, "If he isn't hit above the eyebrows, it wasn't my shot." They rolled Rennie's body over and saw a bullet wound just above the eyebrows. His peers gave Withers credit for the shot but also the responsibility to give Rennie's watch and other valuables to his wife, who, like many of the officer's wives, sat aboard ship with the fleet in the Gulf.<sup>48</sup>

**Analysis:**

1. Discuss Rennie's success in seizing the redoubt during the initial minutes of the attack; what advantages did it serve within the larger plan?
2. Evaluate Pakenham's last minute orders to Keane changing the brigade's line of attack from the British left flank to the right rather than support successful Rennie's assault on the redoubt. What impact did this decision have on the actions on the British left flank? What was the overall impact?
3. Analyze the effects of the American fires plan, incorporating the fires from the Marine Battery and the direct fire from the Rodriguez Canal.



## **Stand Nine**

### **The Final Assault -British Right Column Gibbs' Brigade (8 January 1815)**

**Directions:** Walk northeast to NPS Stop #3, vicinity the parking pull-in. This is a "Walking Stand." Orient on Stand 10, located at Battery 6, as you walk, and end directly in front of the battery. If the field is flooded (which it can be at times), use the park road to walk back around to Battery 6 and then stand behind the battery.

**Notes:** The transition from Stand 9 to Stand 10 consists of a walk across part of the battlefield from the left to the right flank of the British attack, replicating the line of march taken by the 93d Regiment during the battle. During periods of inclement weather the field can be quite inundated with standing rain water, like the conditions present during the battle. Based on conditions during execution, the group will have to determine whether to walk this section or use the park road to walk around to the portion of the American line where the main British attack culminated in front of the American Battery Number 6.

#### **Visual Aids**

British Attack, Jan 8 1815, 0315-0730 (shown in Stand Eight)

British Attack Continues, January 8 1815, 0730-0745 (shown in Stand Eight)

**Orientation:** This is the final approximate position that the 93rd Regiment occupied when it was ordered to reposition to the right and support the attack of Gibbs' brigade. At this point in the battle the regiment's position was approximately 450 yards forward of the American Batteries 3 and 4.

#### **Description**

As related in the previous stand Gibbs' attack on the British right flank encountered a great deal of confusion from the start. Many officers later observed that the chaos stemmed from the actions, or lack of actions of the 44th Regiment, the brigade's primary assault regiment. Pakenham's orders to Lieutenant Colonel Mullins, commanding the regiment, directed that "The Advance Guard is to carry forward with it, six long Ladders with planks on them & ten small Ladders, as well as the Fascines. The officer commanding the 44th Regt. Must ascertain where these requisites are, this evening, so that there may be no delay in taking them forward tomorrow to the old batteries."<sup>49</sup> When Mullins learned the role of his regiment he supposedly said, "My regiment has been ordered to execution. Their dead bodies are to be used as a bridge for the rest of the Army to march over."<sup>50</sup> This appalled

many of the officers present, including Captain William Surtees, the 95th's Quartermaster, who later recorded in disgust that "In all my campaigning I have never yet heard a commanding-officer who did not look upon the post of danger as the post of honour, and who did not rejoice, as if a favour was conferred on him, when appointed to an arduous or hazardous duty."<sup>51</sup>

When the rocket signaling the attack rose into the thinning darkness that morning the 44th Regiment could not be found. Mullins, believing that the engineers positioned the fascines and ladders in one artillery redoubt, marched his men past the true location. The engineer entrusted to meet Mullins in the correct redoubt failed to arrive, possibly sleeping. Arriving at the regiment's final assault position without finding the critical equipment, Mullins and his men went looking for them. Gibbs, unwilling to wait, ordered the brigade forward. Officers supposedly overheard him state "Let me live till tomorrow and I'll hang him to the highest tree in the swamp."<sup>52</sup> The 21st Regiment assumed the lead position in Gibbs' attack, followed by the 4th Regiment, quickly forcing the American outposts to withdraw to their main defensive line.

The American outpost troops returned to a main line filled with their prepared comrades and reported the approach of the British in force. Jackson's suspicions proved correct. During a ride along the line in the early morning hours he consulted with Brigadier General Adair, commanding the reserve of Kentuckians, telling Adair to place and employ the reserve as he saw best. With that guidance Adair moved his men to a position directly behind Carroll's Tennesseans, establishing four firing lines at the very point where the British hoped to breach.

The fog began to lift as the sun rose and the men in Battery Number 6 saw the British advancing within 300-400 yards of the American line and immediately opened fire. Batteries 7 and 8 quickly combined their fires. Advancing in a column of regiments, Gibbs' brigade proved an easy target for enemy gunners. Well within range of canister rounds, the American artillery ripped large holes in the advancing British ranks. However, they continued to advance, efficiently filling the gaps with men from the subsequent ranks with parade ground precision. Carroll, an experienced fighter, developed his section of the American line with some of the same principles used in today's military engagement area development. First, he selected the specific location on the ground where he wanted to engage the British, taking advantage of the range of his Soldiers' small arms and their defensive position. Next, he briefed all of his officers and men on his plan and where to

engage the enemy. Finally, he established a method with which he could guarantee a sustained massing of fire against the head of the British column, utilizing his four lines of troops in a rotating system that provided a rapid and lethal volume of fire.



Figure 34. The ground over which Gibb's column attacked the left center of the American line (forward of the left tree line).

By Author.

With no way to get across the canal due to the failure of the 44th Regiment and extremely effective American fire, Gibbs' advance ground to a halt. A brief success by the lead element of the 21st Regiment which fought its way into the American line defended by Adair's Kentuckians, quickly found itself overwhelmed by small arms fire. The current situation proved insurmountable and the British went to ground, continuing to absorb the deadly fire to their front.

On the British left flank, along the river, Major General Keane observed Gibbs' predicament. Realizing the lack of success on both banks of the river (note that Thornton's attack had not yet taken place) and the availability of his 93rd Regiment, Keane determined, within Pakenham's newly issued intent, to directly influence the situation on the right. Moving to the head of the column, Keane personally led the Highlanders across the fields at an oblique to the American line. Keane's decision demonstrated grave risk in exposing the flank of the regiment to an already proven lethality on the part of the Americans. Furthermore, the maneuver masked the British batteries to his rear, preventing them from firing in support of the attack for fear of hitting their own infantry. The regiment's commanding officer,

Colonel Robert Dale (no relation to the author), upon receiving Keane's orders, summoned the regimental surgeon and handed the man a packet containing his watch and a letter explaining, "Give these to my wife. I shall die at the head of my regiment."<sup>53</sup>



Figure 35. Location where the Keane changed the 93rd Regiment's direction of attack.

By Author.

Behind the American line, Andrew Jackson moved forward when the fighting commenced and co-located his headquarters with the 7th Infantry Regiment. Seeing the quick termination of the British attack on his right flank and then the halt of the attack on his left, he watched the change in direction of the Highlanders from their left to right. Jackson shouted encouragement to his Soldiers: "Stand by your guns. Don't waste ammunition. See every shot tells."<sup>54</sup> The band started playing *Yankee Doodle*.

Upon Keane's order, the 900 men of the 93d Regiment advanced at the double in a 100-man front, the pipers playing the regimental charge, *Monymusk*. Contrary to some contemporary and later illustrations, the Highlanders did not wear their kilts but wore their regimental tartan trousers. However, the fresh regiment made an impression and upon seeing it advance to his aid, Gibbs prepared to carry his attack further. The Americans met Keane's movement with the same lethal firepower presented to the other British columns. The regiment's exposed flank resulted in appalling casualties. Keane sustained severe wounds to the neck and thigh while leading the regiment through the heavy fire (see Figure 36 for a star with the letter "K" that signifies the approximate location where Keane was wounded). Soldiers carried him



from the field. The regiment abruptly halted some 100 yards from the enemy line where the Americans continued to fire into their ragged formation. Colonel Dale fell within a moment of ordering the halt, instantly killed by grapeshot that passed through his body. The 93d advanced with the understanding that the 44th successfully employed the fascines and ladders but upon discovering the 44th's failure, the regiment stood still, waiting for new orders from senior leaders no longer capable of commanding. With equal suddenness, the Highlanders broke formation and ran for the rear.



Figure 36. US Battery Number 6. The 93rd Regiment's attack in support of Gibbs' assault collapsed on the opposite side of the Rodriguez Canal just forward of the battery.

By Author.

### Vignettes

1. An American Militia soldier from Kentucky described his point of view from a position along the American line defended by Major General Carroll's brigade:

*Colonel Smiley, from Bardstown, was the first one who gave us orders to fire from our part of the line; and then, I reckon, there was a pretty considerable noise. There were also brass pieces on our right, the noisiest kind of varmints that began blaring away as hard as they could, while the heavy iron cannon, toward the river, and some thousands of small arms, joined in the chorus and made the ground shake under our feet. Directly after the firing began, Capt. Patterson, I think he was from Knox County, Kentucky but an Irishman born, came running along. He jumped upon the breastwork (sic) and stooping a moment to look through the darkness as well as he could, he shouted with a broad North of Ireland brogue, 'shoot*

*low, boys! Shoot low! Rake them rake them! They're comin' on their all fours!*<sup>55</sup>

2. Lieutenant Gleig described the scene on the British right in great detail:

*On the right again, the 21 and 4th supported by the 93d, though thrown into some confusion by the enemy's fire, pushed on with desperate gallantry to the ditch; but to scale the parapet without ladders was a work of no slight difficulty some few, indeed, by mounting one upon another's shoulders, succeeded in entering he works but these were speedily overpowered, most of them killed, and the rest taken; whilst as many as stood without were exposed to a sweeping fire, which cut them down by whole companies. It was in vain that the most obstinate courage was displayed... The whole of the guns, likewise, from the opposite bank, kept up a well-directed and deadly cannonade upon their flank; and thus were they destroyed without an opportunity being given of displaying their valour, or obtaining so much as revenge.*<sup>56</sup>

3. Lieutenant Gordon, an officer in the 93d Regiment, wrote in his diary:

*The enemy...no sooner got us within 150 yards of their works than a most destructive and murderous fire was opened on our Column of round, grape, musquetry, rifle, and buckshot along the whole course and length of our line in front; as well as on our left flank. Not daunted, however, we continued our advance which in one minute would have carried us into the ditch, when we received the peremptory order to halt – this indeed was the moment of trial. The officers and men being as it were mowed down by ranks, impatient to get at the enemy at all hazards, yet compelled for want of orders to stand still and neither to advance or retire, galled as they were by this murderous fire of an invisible enemy, for a single American soldier we did not see that day, they kept discharging their musquets [sic] and rifles without lifting their faces above the ramparts.*<sup>57</sup>

4. From the balcony of the de La Ronde House, Captain Benson Hill and Colonel Alexander Dickson, Pakenham's chief of artillery, observed the initial attack and its failure, especially Gibb's column:

*Speedily a tremendous line of fire was perceived, extending from one end of the enemy's position to the other; and to our dismay we soon observed the column on our right wavering. Hastily galloping to the scene of confusion, we found the men falling back in great numbers. Every possible means were used to rally them; the majority of the retreating party were wounded; and one and all bitterly complained that not a single ladder, or fascine, had been brought up, to enable them to cross the ditch. A singular illusion, for which I have never been able to account, occurred on our nearer approach to the American lines: the roar of musquetry and cannon seemed to proceed from the thick cypress-wood on our right, whilst the bright flashes of fire in our front were not apparently accompanied by sound. This strange effect was probably produced by the state of the atmosphere and the character of the ground; but I leave the solution of the mystery to time and the curious.<sup>58</sup>*

### **Analysis**

1. Discuss the failure of the 44th Regiment in its specified task and how it affected the main British assault. Use Pakenham's order to Mullins as part of the analysis. What modern techniques help today's leaders prevent such situations?
2. Evaluate the decision to shift the 93d Regiment from supporting Keane's attack on the British left flank to support Gibbs' attack on the right.



## **Stand Ten**

### **Rodriguez Canal – Repulse of the British Army (8 January 1815)**

**Directions:** Following the line of march of the 93d Regiment from Stand 9, the group will stop at a point approximately 100 yards in front of the Rodriguez Canal forward of Battery Number 6 (where the group started its original walk of the American line). If the ground is too wet and the park road was utilized, the stand will take place behind the Battery oriented on the line of advance of the British main effort.

**Notes:** None

#### **Visual Aids**

British Attack Continues, January 8 1815, 0730-0745 (shown in Stands 8 and 9)

British Attack Culminates, January 8 1815, 0745-0800

**Orientation:** If following the line of march of the 93d Regiment in support of the Major General Gibbs' attack (the British main effort) orient the group on the American Battery Number 6. If following the park road and standing behind Battery Number 6, orient the group to Gibbs' attack.

#### **Description**

Pakenham, once again taking a position near the center to see as much of the battlefield as he could, watched the attack develop. Very quickly he decided to move forward in an effort to personally influence events on the right. Near the head of the stalled brigade, Pakenham found the 44th Regiment but not Mullins. The commander-in-chief, attempting to make order of the chaotic situation, shouted as he pointed toward the enemy's position "For shame! Recollect that you are British Soldiers! This is the road you ought take!" and took command of the regiment, leading it forward.<sup>59</sup> Further forward, Pakenham found Gibbs, who informed his commander that the men would not obey him; the men would not follow him. With anger rising within him, Pakenham immediately galloped to the head of the column with some of his staff to take personal command, shouting for the men to rally behind him.

As Pakenham led the men that chose to follow him, his horse went down, shot out from underneath him by grapeshot, one of the balls shattering Pakenham's knee. As his aides attempted to help him, a musket or rifle ball struck his right arm, rending it useless. Assisted by staff officers, the general mounted an aide's horse and continued forward. However, with his right arm shattered, an aide walked alongside the

horse to guide his commander's way. Continuing forward, Pakenham suddenly realized his Army's situation and sent orders for Lambert to bring up the reserve. Seeing Keane's movement of the Highlanders, he raised his hat above his head and shouted "Come on, brave Ninety-third!"<sup>60</sup> No sooner did he utter those words when a shot suddenly struck Pakenham in the groin and passed through his spine, paralyzing him (see Figure 36 for a star with the letter "P" that signifies the approximate location where Pakenham fell). His staff carried him out of harm's way, beyond the American artillery, where a surgeon pronounced the wound mortal.



Figure 37. Part of the ground over which Gibbs' column attacked. Pakenham suffered his mortal wounds in the lower right foreground.

By Author.

Gibbs continued to lead what remained of his brigade forward. He led a small detachment that reached a point within twenty yards of the enemy line when he sustained a severe wound and had to be carried from the field (see Figure 36 for a star with the letter "G" that signifies the approximate location where Gibbs was wounded). Other small detachments made their way to their parapet and tried to force their way into the American line, again with no success. On the far right of the British line the battalion of light companies attempted to infiltrate through the swamp in an effort to reach the American line. Coffee's Tennesseans and the Choctaws easily defeated the effort and soon forced them to withdraw. All possibilities exhausted, Gibbs regiments began to succumb to collapse and as Soldiers began leaving the field.

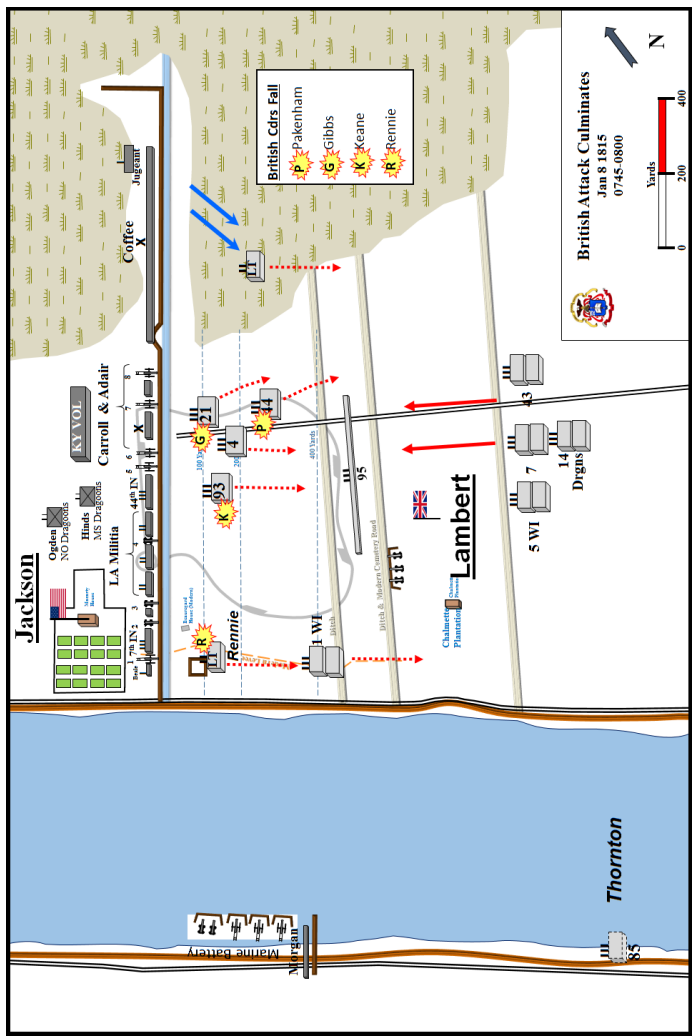


Figure 38. British Attack Culminates, Jan 8 1815, 0745-0800. CSI created.

Lambert led his brigade forward in accordance with Pakenham’s orders but soon received the reports that Pakenham lay dying and that both Gibbs and Keane received possibly mortal wounds. From his somewhat rearward position in the center of the battlefield Lambert held a clear and indisputable view of the events surrounding him. Troops from all over the front left their posts either individually or in small groups, many of the men wounded. Only the troops in his brigade remained fresh and under arms. His last message from Pakenham ordered his brigade to attack but Lambert, now in command, disregarded the order and issued his own: retreat.

Lambert’s 7th and 43d Regiment’s covered the British withdrawal and prepared to defend against an anticipated American counterattack that never came. The British attack on the left bank of the Mississippi ended in less than 30 minutes. A rough estimated indicated that up to two thirds of the British troops that went forward became casualties; among them three

generals, seven colonels, and 75 other officers of various ranks.

### Vignettes

1. Major Harry Smith, now Lambert's brigade Assistant Adjutant General, witnessed the attack from the reserve position occupied by the 7th and 43rd Regiments. Upon his last glimpse of Pakenham, who rode forward to rally the men, Smith made a powerful assertion to his new commander:

*The rocket was hardly in the air before a rush of our troops was met by the most murderous and destructive fire of all arms ever poured upon column. Sir Edward Pakenham galloped past me with all his Staff, saying, "That's a terrific fire, Lambert." I knew nothing of my General [Lambert] then, except that he was a most gentlemanlike, amiable fellow, and I had seen him lead his Brigade at Toulouse in the order of a review of his Household Troops in Hyde Park. I said, "In twenty-five minutes, General, you will command the Army. Sir Edward Pakenham will be wounded and incapable or, killed. The troops do not get on a step. He will be at the head of the first Brigade he comes to, and what I say will occur." A few seconds verified my words. Tylden came wildly up to tell the melancholy truth, saying, "Sir Edward Pakenham is killed. You command the Army."<sup>61</sup>*

2. After becoming lost in the fog just as the attack began, Captain Cooke's detachment, attempting to move toward the heaviest fighting, eventually stumbled upon its regiment in its reserve position, thereby sparing most of his Soldiers from the chaos encountered by Gibbs' column:

*As soon as the action was over, and some troops were formed in our rear, we then, under a smart fire of grape and round shot, moved to the right, and joined our own corps, who had been ordered to lie down at the edge of a ditch; and some of the old Soldiers, with rage depicted on their countenances, were demanding why they were not led to the assault.*

*The fire of the Americans from behind their barricade had been indeed murderous, and had caused so sudden a repulse that it was difficult to persuade ourselves that such an event had happened, --the whole affair being more like a dream, or some scene of enchantment, than reality.<sup>62</sup>*

3. The same Kentucky Militia soldier who described the fighting along Major General Carroll's front at the height of the



British assault described the scene that existed in front of the American line once the fog and smoke fully cleared:

*When the smoke had cleared away and we could obtain a fair view of the field, it looked, at the first glance, like a sea of blood. It was not blood itself which gave it this appearance but the red coats in which the British Soldiers were dressed. Straight out before our position, for about the width of space which we supposed had been occupied by the British column, the field was entirely covered with prostrate bodies. In some places they were laying in piles of several, one on the top of the other. On either side, there was an interval more thinly sprinkled with the slain; and then two other dense rows, one near the levee and the other towards the swamp. About two hundred yards off, directly in front of our position, lay a large dapple gray horse, which we understood to have been Pakenham's.*

*When we first got a fair view of the field in our front, individuals could be seen in every possible attitude. Some laying quite dead, others mortally wounded, pitching and tumbling about in the agonies of death. Some had their heads shot off, some their legs, some their arms. Some were laughing, some crying, some groaning, and some screaming. There was every variety of sight and sound. Among those that were on the ground, however, there were some that were neither dead nor wounded. A great many had thrown themselves down behind piles of slain, for protection. As the firing ceased, these men were every now and then jumping up and either running off or coming in and giving themselves up.<sup>63</sup>*

4. Lieutenant Gleig chose to ride forward and see the battlefield for himself once the fighting ceased:

*Prompted by curiosity, I mounted my horse and rode to the front; but of all the sights I ever witnessed, that which met me there was beyond comparison the most shocking and the most humiliating. Within the narrow compass of a few hundred yards, were gathered together nearly a thousand bodies, all of them arrayed in British uniforms. Not a single American was among them; all were English; and they were thrown by dozens into shallow holes, scarcely deep enough to furnish them with a slight covering of earth. I confess, that when I beheld the Scene, I hung down my head half in sorrow, and half in anger.*

*But the change of expression, visible there in every countenance, no language can pourtray. Only twenty hours ago, and all was life and animation; wherever you went you were enlivened by the sound of merriment and raillery; whilst the expected attack was mentioned in terms... of the most perfect confidence as to its result. Now gloom and discontent everywhere prevailed. Disappointment, grief, indignation, and rage, succeeded each other in all bosoms; nay, so completely were the troops overwhelmed by a sense of disgrace, that, for a-while, they retained their sorrow without so much as hinting at its cause.<sup>64</sup>*

### **Analysis**

1. Discuss the individual actions of the various senior British commanders in attempting to lead their men from the front under enemy fire, especially when the attack stalled. Have changes in warfare altered where a leader should be located on the battlefield?
2. Evaluate Lambert's decision to end the attack and consolidate the British expeditionary force.
3. Assess Jackson's decision not to conduct a counterattack to exploit the British withdrawal.

## **Stand Eleven**

### **Aftermath of the Battle and Conclusion of the Campaign on the Gulf Coast**

**Directions:** From Battery 6, move directly to the Chalmette monument. The steps around its base can be utilized for seating while the description of the post-battle campaign events are covered, followed by the integration phase (unless an alternate site for the integration is planned in advance). In the event of inclement weather, the Visitor Center provides some shelter with a limited view of the battlefield that can be utilized.

**Notes:** None

**Visual Aids:** Post-battle Actions in the Gulf, January-March 1815 (shown at conclusion of Section II. Campaign Overview)

**Orientation:** None is required. However, the size of the Chalmette battlefield offers a rare opportunity rarely seen on most preserved battlefields. From the monument, much of the battlefield, with the exception of dead space immediately on the British side of the Rodriguez Canal, is still visible to actively reference during the integration phase. A relatively similar perspective is available from the shelter of the Visitor Center, which is close to the far right of the American line but decreases in quality the further one looks east along the Rodriguez Canal toward the far left of the American line. If the integration takes place off site, visuals can be used to reference specific battlefield actions.

### **The Battlefield Monument**

Initial attempts to erect a monument to honor the victory began in 1839. The cornerstone was laid in 1840 in the presence of the hero of the battle and former President of the United States, Andrew Jackson. Progress, however, slowed because of inconsistent funding and construction flaws. Work ceased sometime immediately before the Civil War due to funding and for nearly fifty years a half-completed column, about 56-feet high, stood on the former battlefield. Work on the monument was finally completed in 1908. It stands at a height of 100 feet.<sup>65</sup>

### **Description**

Lambert encountered a truly chaotic situation in the aftermath of the third failed British attack on Jackson's defensive line. Pakenham died before the troops returned to their lines, Gibbs lay dying in great pain from his horrible mortal wounds that he succumbed to the next day, and Keane suffered from serious wounds, leaving Lambert to salvage the situation and the Army. Dead and wounded still littered

large stretches of the field and overwhelmed the hospitals to the rear.

The returns that day listed 291 killed, 1,262 wounded, and 482 prisoners lost. All of Lambert's initial decisions focused on consolidating his remaining force and preparing for a major tactical or operational transition; attack again, defend, or retreat. Ending the attack, posting his brigade to defend the lines, and recalling Thornton's force from the right bank, despite its success, all served this end. The most pressing concern that occupied Lambert's thoughts involved whether or not the enemy would counterattack and, if so, how would his men react in another fight.

Behind the parapet on the Rodriguez Canal few Americans disputed the victory just achieved over the British Army. The evidence littered the open fields to their front from the canal itself to hundreds of yards beyond, a mass of dead or dying red coated Soldiers. At first, there seemed to be an ominous silence but when they came to the realization that they were victorious cheers erupted up and down the line, eventually joining as one. Even Jackson must have realized the scope of his victory: he had defeated the Army of the Iron Duke (the Duke of Wellington) himself. Final casualty returns for the battle reinforced the decisive nature of the victory. The Americans suffered 55 killed, 185 wounded, and 93 captured throughout the entire period spent defending New Orleans.

However, Jackson's personal satisfaction ended with sound of fighting on the river's right bank which quickly consumed his full attention. Reports swiftly came in describing the new British threat and the fast deteriorating situation among Morgan's Soldiers. Jackson rapidly formed reinforcements and sent them on a forced march back to New Orleans to cross the river and stem the reported rout. There could be no thought of counterattacking on his side of the river when the situation on the opposite bank posed such a danger his overall plan of defending New Orleans.

Lambert assisted Jackson in restoring order to the right bank when he ordered the withdrawal of Thornton's column from that side of the river after a reconnaissance and estimate of the situation by one of his key staff officers. The delayed British attack and the American failure on that bank provided Lambert with time that he desperately needed. He could not immediately order a retreat along his long line of communication because of the large numbers of wounded that inundated his hospitals. Into this hectic period walked Admiral Cochrane. The admiral provided an idea meant to take pressure off the expeditionary force. He proposed that

the Royal Navy become the British main effort, forcing its way through the American defenses on the Mississippi and sailing upstream to support the Army's future operations against New Orleans. Only the American position at Fort St. Philip prevented their access to the river.

Fort St. Philip stood thirty miles north of the river's mouth and eighty miles south of New Orleans. During his rapidly conducted personal inspection of the American defenses upon his arrival in December, Jackson clearly saw the importance of the fort and ordered it improved and reinforced. The garrison consisted mostly of regulars, two companies of artillerymen and two companies of the 7th US Infantry, under the command of Major Walter H. Overton, reinforced by a detachment of sailors and some Louisiana militiamen; a total of 406 men. Thirty-four pieces of artillery defended the river and landward approaches and the last remaining Navy gunboat operated on the river just north of the fort.

On 9 January five British vessels armed with mortars arrived and began their bombardment of Fort St. Philip. For nine consecutive days the British maintained their fire in an effort to reduce the fort. Though the Americans could not return effective fire because of the distance and heavy enemy fire, the fort sustained very little damage. The garrison lost only two killed and seven wounded from the nine-day bombardment. Major Overton, in a signal of defiance, not only nailed the garrison's American flag to its staff but also nailed a British Union Jack underneath his colors. By 18 January the British realized that they could not reduce the fort and weighed anchor to leave the river and rejoin the fleet. The American guns, unsuppressed, saw the British vessels off with several artillery volleys.

Cochrane's attempt to force the river did nothing to change the British operational situation. Jackson held reinforcements and left the garrison of Fort St. Philip to defend itself, remaining focused on the British Army to his front. In fact, the British attempt to run the river convinced Jackson that the British remained focused on breaching his line and planned another attack. After the defeat of the British on 8 January, Jackson maintained his strategy of constant harassment. The artillery, including the *Louisiana*, continued bombarding the British camp and the Tennesseans and Choctaws resumed their nighttime "hunting" trips.

Making matters worse for the British, after the battle the weather once again turned, resulting in heavy rains. The Mississippi overflowed its banks and flooded the British camp, making the day to day existence of the individual

Soldier miserable. The supply situation, poor since the expeditionary force's arrival, never improved, leaving Lambert with an irretrievable position. Lambert made the decision to retreat on 9 January.

Lambert's decision required a great deal of detailed planning previously absent in the British command, primarily because of the shattered physical and moral state of the Army. A haphazard retreat could lead to the destruction of the entire British force. The capabilities on hand to support such an effort remained limited. Lambert lacked the transport to move all of his force at once. Therefore, he planned to conduct a withdrawal from contact and a general retreat over the course of nine days. In addition to moving his wounded by barge, he ordered the construction of a crude road all the way back to Lake Borgne for use by his remaining Soldiers and the walking wounded. He even accounted for the transport of the bodies of Pakenham and Gibbs, packing them in casks of rum for the voyage home and burial in England.

During the darkness on 18-19 January the British withdrew from their camp, aided by a thick fog bank rolling off of the river. They spiked and abandoned the majority of their artillery. By 0800 on the nineteenth the camp stood abandoned, with the exception of the severely wounded and attending doctors, left to the care and compassion of the enemy. However, the retreat presented another ordeal for the Soldiers as they silently marched toward Lake Borgne. Under the continuing poor weather conditions, the British columns moved along the roughly cut road. Lead regiments moved fairly well but the further rearward elements encountered a path of churned mud and water that greatly slowed their movement. On 27 January the last British Soldiers joined the fleet in its anchorage. Lambert successfully conducted the most complicated and risky operation undertaken by the British expeditionary force during the entire campaign.

When the fog cleared on the morning of 19 January, Jackson and his men learned of the British departure. Jackson's subordinates counseled a pursuit but he declined, deciding to allow the British to leave unhindered. He still needed to preserve his force for future operations, not knowing where the British may strike next. He did, however, send his mounted forces under Major Hinds to follow the retreating British at a safe distance in order to maintain contact and assess their potential intentions. Jackson then rode into the abandoned enemy camp and ordered that the British wounded receive care and prepared transport for them to housing in New Orleans.

## Vignettes

1. In an effort to maintain pressure on the defeated British through nonlethal methods the Americans began a fairly aggressive attempt at inducing British Soldiers to desert. These efforts achieved somewhat better effects than the more aggressive British attempts before the campaign began. Lieutenant Glieg described the increasing challenges in the immediate aftermath of the fighting:

*To our Soldiers every inducement was held out by the enemy to desert. Printed papers, offering lands and money as the price of desertion, were thrown into the piquets, whilst individuals made a practice of approaching our posts, and endeavoring to persuade the very sentinels to quit their stations. Nor could it be expected that bribes so tempting would always be refused. Many desertions began daily to take place, and became before long so frequent, that the evil rose to be of a serious nature.<sup>66</sup>*

2. Within a week of the final attack the Americans began to detect indicators of the British retreat, as indicated by Major Tatum:

*About the 15th & 16th the movements of the enemy afforded strong evidence of a disposition to withdraw from their lines and to re-embark on board their Vessels at the Bayou Bienvenue. Deserters confirmed the suspicions we had entertained, and stated that they were daily sending off all heavy Articles, particularly their Ball, powder, Grape shot &c. as well as their sick & convalescent Soldiers. This disposition to retire was attended with increased evidence until the night of the 18th when, under cover of a heavy fog, common to this country, they actually abandoned their Encampment, and retired behind a battery erected for the security of their retreat, at a strong position on Villerys Canal. A discovery of this movement was not made until the fog had cleared away at about 8 o'clock of the morning of the 19th.<sup>67</sup>*

3. Jackson wrote to the Secretary of War that same day with an assessment of the situation following the British retreat:

*Whether it is the purpose of the enemy to abandon the expedition altogether or, renew his efforts at some other point, I do not pretend to determine with positiveness. In my own mind, however, there is but little doubt that his last exertions have been made in this quarter, at any rate for the present season, and by the next I hope we shall be fully prepared for him.*

*In this belief I am strengthened not only by the prodigious loss he has sustained at the position he has just quitted but by the failure of his fleet to pass fort St. Philip.*<sup>68</sup>

4. Major Overton, the American commander of Fort St. Philip reported the events surrounding the British attempt to force the Mississippi in a letter to Jackson on 19 January.

*Early in the day of the 8th instant, I was advised of their approach, and on the 9th at a quarter past ten A.M. hove in sight two bomb-vessels, one sloop, one brig, and one schooner; they anchored two and a quarter miles below. At half past eleven, and at half past twelve they advanced two barges, apparently for the purpose of sounding within one and a half mile of the fort. At this moment, I ordered my water battery, under the command of Lieutenant Cunningham of the navy, to open upon them its well-directed shot caused a precipitate retreat. At half past three o'clock, P. M. the enemy's bomb vessels opened their fire from four sea-mortars, two of thirteen inches, two of ten, and to my great mortification I found they were within the effective range of my shot, as many subsequent experiments proved; they continued their fire with little intermission during the 10th [and through the] 17th. I occasionally opened my batteries on them with great vivacity, particularly when they showed a disposition to change their position. On the 17th in the evening, our heavy mortar was said to be in readiness. I ordered...to open a fire, which was done with great effect, as the enemy from that moment became disordered, and at daylight on the 18th commenced their retreat, after having thrown upwards of a thousand heavy shells, besides small shells from howitzers, round shot and grape, which he discharged from boats under cover of the night. Our loss in this affair has been uncommonly small, owing entirely to the great pains that was taken by the different officers to keep their men under cover; as the enemy left scarcely ten feet of this garrison untouched.*<sup>69</sup>

5. For the British Soldiers, once back aboard ship, time to reflect upon the recent events of New Orleans began. Some of these thoughts would continue to develop over the following decades as some officers put pen to paper and wrote their accounts of the campaign and its culminating battle.

Lieutenant Gleig, with the passage of time, still focused on remembering the personal details of the Soldiers:



*Our return was far from triumphant. We, who only seven weeks ago had set out in the surest confidence of glory, and, I may add, of emolument, were brought back dispirited and dejected. Our ranks were wofully [sic] thinned, our chiefs slain, our clothing tattered and filthy, and even our discipline in some degree injured. A gloomy silence reigned throughout the armament, except when it was broken by the voice of lamentation over fallen friends; and the interior of each ship presented a scene well calculated to prove the short-sightedness of human hope, and human prudence.<sup>70</sup>*

Captain Surtees, with slightly more time to remember than Gleig, adopted a deeper approach, learning the lesson of contempt:

*Providence, which had smiled upon us in our late operations against the most formidable Army in the world, the French, here taught us most painfully, that the victory is not always to be gained by strength or courage. Indeed it was but a just punishment for the contempt we entertained for our opponents, and which unfortunate feeling, I believe, was almost universal. I own I entertained it in a high degree; for I judged it next to a moral impossibility that an Army of undisciplined and unmanageable peasants, however numerous, could for a moment withstand the attack of those troops who had overthrown the victorious legions of Bonaparte.<sup>71</sup>*

### **Analysis**

1. Discuss the challenges that the British faced in conducting their retreat from New Orleans.
2. Evaluate Jackson's reaction and the steps he took in the wake of the British retreat. What was his assessment of the situation?
3. Evaluate the British decision to attempt to force the Mississippi at Fort St. Philip after the repulse of the British attack at Chalmette. Would success have given new life to the British campaign?
4. How important is the idea of respecting one's enemy?

## Notes

1. Brown, 56.
2. Benton Rain Patterson, *The Generals: Andrew Jackson, Sir Edward Pakenham, and the Road to the Battle of New Orleans*, (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 168.
3. Lacarriere Latour, *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana in 1814-1815: With an Atlas*, (Philadelphia: John Conrad and Co., 1816), cxxxviii.
4. Quoted in Brown, 77-78.
5. Quoted in Reilly, 174.
6. Quoted in Reilly, 175.
7. Quoted in Patterson, 157.
8. Quoted in Latour, vii-viii.
9. Quoted in Latour, xi.
10. Quoted in Latour, xiv.
11. Latour, 53-54.
12. Howell Tatum, "Major Howell Tatum's Journal," in *Smith College Studies in History*, (Northampton: Smith College: 1921/1922), 96-97.
13. Samuel Wilson, Jr., *The Battle of New Orleans: Plantation Houses on the Battlefield of New Orleans*, (New Orleans: The Louisiana Landmark Society, 1985), 87.
14. G.R. Gleig, *The Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans, in the Years 1814-1815*, (London: John Murray, 1827), 265-266.
15. Wilson, 60-75.
16. Gleig, 288.
17. Latour, 112.
18. These various points are quoted from three supporting letters dispatched from London on 24 October 1814 in Henry Bathurst, "Instructions to Major-General Sir Edward Pakenham for the New Orleans Campaign," *The War of 1812 Magazine*, [http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/Warof1812/2011/Issue16/c\\_PakenhamOrders.html](http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/Warof1812/2011/Issue16/c_PakenhamOrders.html).
19. Wilson, 39, 42, 44.
20. "National Park Service pamphlet for Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve." <http://www.nps.gov/jela/chalmette-national-cemetery.htm>, accessed 19 FEB 14.
21. Gleig, 210.

22. William Surtees, *Twenty-five Years in the Rifle Brigade*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1833), 58.

23. Simmons, 7-8.

24. Wilson, 22- 32

25. Numerous sources attest to Cochrane's presence at this council and his ensuing argument with Pakenham when the latter supposedly indicated his thoughts on a withdrawal in order to march on New Orleans from another more viable approach. Cochrane supposedly objected to the idea of withdrawal and openly questioned the courage of the army, bragging that he would lead sailors and marines to seize the city. This led to the assertion that Cochrane bullied Pakenham into the events that followed. British historian Robin Reilly, who provides the best researched study of the campaign, lends that there are no credible sources to support this; none of the most relied upon primary sources, written by key staff officers in the British headquarters present that evening mentioned Cochrane's presence in camp. In hindsight, they would have most certainly mentioned it in defense of their commander-in-chief.

26. Latour refers to the noise being heard by the men in the line, but does not mention if such critical information was reported up the chain of command. On the other hand, Tatum explains, though without noting any specific time, that evidence of the British work led to orders to prepare to defend against a possible attack, which occurred shortly afterward. See Latour, 131-132, and Tatum, 120-121.

27. Several historians assert that Jackson chose the morning of 1 January to conduct a grand review of his army, implying that this provided some opportunity for the British to achieve initial tactical surprise. However, Robin Reilly found nothing substantial to support the occurrence and ruled out an erroneous assertion left by Gleig who was not physically located to see beyond the Rodriguez Canal. There is no reference to such an event in the post-action memoirs produced by Latour and Tatum, trusted members of Jackson's staff. In fact, both men described in detail the opening of the bombardment when the fog began to clear at approximately 1000 and the direct targeting of the Macarty House, where they were eating breakfast with their commanding general.

28. Quoted in Remini, 118.

29. Tatum, 18-119.

30. Surtees, 366.

31. Benson Earle Hill, *Recollections of an Artillery Officer, Including Scenes and Adventures in Ireland*,

*America, Flanders, and France*, (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), 3-4.

32. Gleig, 326-327.

33. G. C. Smith, *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith, Baronet of Aliwal on The Sutlej, G.C.B.*, (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1903), 232-233.

34. Tatum, 112.

35. Latour, 146-147.

36. Hill, 3-4.

37. John Henry Cooke, *Narrative of Events in the South of France and of the Attack on New Orleans*, (London: T. & W. Boone, 1835), 169.

38. Surtees, 73.

39. Latour, 153.

40. Tatum, "Major Howell Tatum's Journal," 124.

41. Quoted in Latour, lxii.

42. Quoted in Latour, liii.

43. Old New Orleans, "The Beauregard House," [http://www.thepastwhispers.com/Old\\_New\\_Orleans](http://www.thepastwhispers.com/Old_New_Orleans).

44. Smith, 235-236.

45. Quoted in Latour, lxii.

46. Cooke, 228.

47. Surtees, 376-377.

48. Quoted in Remini, 142.

49. Quoted in Reilly, 313-314.

50. Surtees, 73.

51. Surtees, 73.

52. Quoted in Remini, 143.

53. Patterson, 245.

54. Quoted in Remini, 145.

55. "They're comin' on their all fours!" *2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Kentucky Volunteer Militia*, <http://www.2ndkentucky1812.com/category/2nd-regiment-kentucky-volunteer-militia/>. This eyewitness account first appeared in *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol. IX, No. 1, January 1926, republished in Paul M. Angle, *The American Reader* (1958) and was partially quoted in Remini's, *The Battle of New Orleans*.

56. Gleig, 335.
57. Quoted in Reilly, 318-319.
58. Hill, 11.
59. Quoted in Remini, 147.
60. Quoted in Reilly, 320.
61. Smith, 236-237.
62. Cooke, 238-239.
63. "They're comin' on their all fours!" *2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Kentucky Volunteer Militia*,  
<http://www.2ndkentucky1812.com/category/2nd-regiment-kentucky-volunteer-militia/>.
64. Gleig, 341-342.
65. Leonard V. Huber, *The Battle of New Orleans and its Monument*, (New Orleans: Laborde Printing Company, 1983), 12, 25, 30.
66. Gleig, 348.
67. Tatum, 134.
68. Quoted in Latour, lvii.
69. Quoted in Latour, lxix.
70. Gleig, 357.
71. Surtees, 87.



## **Part IV. Integration: Final Phase of the Staff Ride**

### **Introduction**

As previously mentioned, a staff ride consists of three distinct phases. The first phase is the preliminary study phase. This phase is conducted before the visit to the battlefield and prepares the audience for the visit to the terrain. The second phase is the field study phase. This phase is conducted on the actual terrain and enables the participants to understand historical events through analysis of the actual ground on which the events took place. The final phase of a staff ride is the integration phase, where the work of the preliminary and field study phases come together to provide the audience with the fullest picture of events. No staff ride is complete without an integration phase because it is critical for the participants to understand what happened, why it happened, and, most importantly, what can be learned from the study of the battle or campaign.

There are several factors that those facilitating a staff ride should consider when planning for and conducting the integration phase. First, they must work with the organization that is participating in the staff ride and select a time and location for the integration session. Occasionally, organizations and units may have to depart shortly after the last stand of the field study phase. Therefore, the integration phase must be conducted on the battlefield immediately following the completion of the final stand, perhaps at an important monument or in an adjacent National Cemetery. However, when possible, participants should have some time for personal reflection and thought before the integration phase. Thus, it may be best to do the integration session at another location; informal settings that are often more comfortable and will encourage open discussion from all the participants.

Those individuals tasked with planning a staff ride should organize the integration phase based on the organization/unit, the time available, and the learning/training objectives. It is important to keep in mind that the integration phase is *not* an after action review (AAR) of the staff ride itself (i.e., ways to improve the ride). While it is useful to seek constructive criticism in order to continue to improve the staff ride, this should be done at another time and perhaps in written format for future reference. Instead, the integration phase is used for the audience to integrate their preliminary study with the fieldwork to gain insights that are relevant to their current duties and enhance their development and education.

One method that often produces a fruitful integration phase is to conduct the session in two parts based on two broad questions. Sometimes, the individual leading the integration session need only present the general question and let others carry the conversation, or there may be additional follow-up questions to enhance the overall discussion. The two questions are discussed below:

**What aspects of the overall campaign and the battle that you developed in the preliminary study phase that changed or were strongly reinforced because of your study of the ground?**

This is a crucial question because seeing the terrain is central to a staff ride, otherwise the campaign could simply be studied in the classroom. Of course, students may develop a wide range of answers based on personal study and observations in the field. Some of the more popular aspects of the discussion of terrain for the Battle of New Orleans include the various waterways that facilitated or hindered British naval superiority, the complex terrain countered by the British expeditionary force once it landed below New Orleans, the American cutting of the levee to flood the ground on the Chalmette plantation, the limited maneuver space available to the British, the effectiveness of the Rodriguez Canal as a defensive line, and the part played by the Mississippi River as both avenue of approach and obstacle to the British. The facilitator can ask related questions, which may also generate added discussion: *Did seeing the terrain alter your opinion of any key decisions made by a specific leader?* A common response to this question is that Jackson should have emplaced command and control mechanisms that verified to him that the Villere Canal had been effectively blocked, per his orders, in order to deny the British a possible avenue of approach to the city.

**What insights can the modern military professional gain from the Battles of New Orleans that are relevant today?**

This part of the integration session can be divided into a number of subject matter areas, depending on the type of organization or unit conducting the staff ride. For example, a military intelligence battalion might focus on reconnaissance operations, intelligence gathering, Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR), shared situational awareness, and the differences between situational awareness and situational understanding.



Keeping in mind that New Orleans is the decisive operation of the larger Gulf Campaign makes the staff ride as much an operational level effort as it is tactical, it might be useful to prompt discussion by using the elements of operational art as a framework for relevant lessons. These elements are:

End state and conditions	Basing
Center of gravity	Tempo
Deceive points	Phasing and transitions
Lines of operations and effort	Culmination
Operational reach	Risk

These terms from ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, are provided as a tool; the facilitator may use them, use another framework, or simply let the audience take the discussion in whatever direction that makes sense in achieving the training objectives.

The two suggested integration phase questions are meant to aid in sparking discussion, not to provide hard and fast rules of warfare. Note that the handbook provides examples of possible answers to the questions but it does not attempt to provide a list of “schoolhouse solution” answers. The facilitator should take time before the session to write down his or her own answers to these questions in order to have some potential ideas to generate further discussion. At the same time, the facilitator should strive for the participants to develop their own answers, and thus be prepared to let the discussion roam many different constructive paths.



## **Part V. Support**

### **Practical Information on Conducting a Staff Ride in the New Orleans Area**

#### 1. Information and assistance.

a. The Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride Team, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has conducted numerous New Orleans Staff Rides and can provide advice and assistance on every aspect of the staff ride. The Team can also provide qualified instructors to facilitators the New Orleans Staff Ride. Staff Ride Team support includes background information, detailed knowledge of the battle and battlefield, and familiarity with the New Orleans campaign area. Visit the Combat Studies Institute's Military History Support website for information on requesting staff ride assistance.

Phone contact:

Telephone: DSN:

552-2131/2082

Commercial: (913)

684-2131 Staff Ride

Team website:

<http://usacac.Army.mil/core-functions/military-history/staff-rides>

Contact the Staff Ride Team:

[usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.csi-srt@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.csi-srt@mail.mil)

b. Various sites outlined in this hand book fall under the authority of local, State, and Federal offices. Where applicable, it is important to contact the respective site staffs and let them know that a group will be conducting a staff ride at their site. Many times this coordination assists in de-conflicting staff rides with local events that can adversely affect the staff ride. While members of the United States military can enter National Park Service (NPS) Battlefield Parks without entrance fees, state parks do have entrance fees that cannot be waived.

#### **Fort Pike State Historic Site**

For groups utilizing Fort Pike as an initial stand in a staff ride several key points should be understood. First, individual entry fee is \$4 per person. Second, there is no visitor center (however, there are modern restroom facilities) or museum. Finally, a visit to the site is self-guided due to support staff manning.

Address: 27100 Chef Menteur Highway, New Orleans,

LA Telephone: (504) 255-9171 or 1-888-662-5703

Hours of operation: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday

Website:

<http://www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/historic-sites/fort-pike-state-historic-site/index>

### **Chalmette National Historic Battlefield Park and Chalmette National Cemetery**

The Chalmette Battlefield is a part of the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve system. Chalmette has its own visitor center and facilities. The Visitor Center is closed on Sunday. There is no admission fee but donations are appreciated.

Address: 8606 West St. Bernard Highway, Chalmette,  
LA Telephone: (504) 281-0510

Hours of operation: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday;  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 pm Sunday and Monday.

Website: <http://www.nps.gov/jela/chalmette-battlefield.htm>

#### 2. Sustainment.

a. Meals. New Orleans is known for its food and there are many restaurants in the area that are convenient for use during a staff ride. Enjoy the local establishments; do not settle for chain restaurants unless time is a factor. Meals can either be a personal responsibility or can be taken care of at nearby restaurants. Allow 30-45 minutes for lunch, even when the group carries its own.

b. Lodging. There is an abundance of hotels in New Orleans area, especially in downtown New Orleans. However, traffic becomes an issue when driving to various sites around the city at peak hours. Traffic must always be a factor in selecting a location. If the group wants to decrease lodging costs, there is usually billeting available at the Louisiana Army National Guard's Jackson Barracks.

c. Travel. If the group is flying to the area, the Louis Armstrong International Airport is the only choice. Once on the ground, larger groups will need to contract for a bus *in advance*—make sure it has a microphone and public address system as well as a restroom. Smaller groups (less than 35) will find it easier to use rental vans.

#### 3. Other considerations.

a. A detailed reconnaissance of the stands and routes prior to execution of the staff ride is critical for a successful staff ride.

b. Ensure that every member of the group has water. Additionally, restrooms are only available at the Fort Pike State Historic Site and the Chalmette National Battlefield Park; plan for additional stops for facilities

as necessary.

c. Ensure that the group brings proper clothing for inclement weather. Thunderstorms can occur in any season and some local storms can be quite violent. Walking is required for all of the sites visited, so comfortable boots or hiking shoes are highly recommended as the standard.

d. Mosquitoes, chiggers, ticks, and fire ants are prevalent insects from March to October, so the use of insect repellent is advised.

e. Road traffic throughout the New Orleans area is heavy and drivers can be aggressive. Several stands are conducted near major roads and some foot movement across or parallel to these roads is necessary. Be sure to stress safety to group members when getting off and on the vehicles and when moving across or near these busy roads.



## **Appendix A**

### **New Orleans Order of Battle On the Morning of 8 January 1815**

#### **British Forces**

Sir Edward Pakenham, Commanding

#### **1st Brigade (Lambert)**

7th Regiment (Royal Fusiliers) (minus Light Company)  
43rd Regiment (Monmouth Light Infantry) (minus Light Company)  
5th West India Regiment (minus Light Company)  
14th Light Dragoon Regiment (Dismounted)

#### **2nd Brigade (Gibbs)**

4th Regiment (Kings Own) (minus Light Company)  
21st Regiment (Royal Scots Fusiliers) (minus Light Company)  
44th Regiment (East Essex) (minus Light Company)  
95th Rifle Regiment (Detachment)

Battalion of Light Companies (4th, 5th, 21st, 44th Regiments)

#### **3rd Brigade (Keane)**

1st West India Regiment  
93d Regiment (Sutherland Highlanders) (minus Light Company)  
95th Rifle Regiment (Detachment)  
Battalion of Light Companies (7th, 43rd, 93d Regiments)

#### **Thornton's Column**

85th Regiment (Bucks Light Infantry) Detachment,  
Royal Marines Detachment, Royal Navy

## **American Forces**

Major General Andrew Jackson, Commanding

### **Ross' Wing (Colonel George Ross)**

US 7th Infantry Regiment  
US 44th Infantry Regiment  
US Marine Detachment, New Orleans  
Plauché's Uniformed Militia, Louisiana Militia  
Daquin's First Battalion of Free Men of Color, Louisiana Militia  
Lacoste's Second Battalion of Free Men of Color, Louisiana Militia  
Beales' New Orleans Rifles Company, Louisiana Militia  
Battery Numbers 1-5

### **Carroll's Wing (Major General William Carroll)**

Carroll's Brigade, West Tennessee Militia  
1st Regiment West Tennessee Militia  
2d Regiment West Tennessee Militia  
3d Regiment West Tennessee Militia  
Detachment of Kentucky Militia Battery Numbers 6-8

### **Coffee's Wing (Major General John Coffee)**

Coffee's Brigade, West Tennessee Volunteer Mounted Gunmen  
1st Regiment West Tennessee Volunteer Mounted Gunmen  
2d Regiment West Tennessee Volunteer Mounted Gunmen  
Jugeant's Company of Choctaw Indians

### **Morgan (Brigadier General David Morgan) (Right Bank)**

US Naval Battalion (Patterson)  
Marine Battery (Patterson)  
Declouet's Regiment of Louisiana Drafted Militia  
Arnaud's Battalion, 6th Louisiana Militia Regiment  
Davis' Kentucky Militia Regiment

### **Reserves**

Adair's Brigade, Kentucky Militia  
Slaughter's Kentucky Militia Regiment  
Mitchusson's Kentucky Militia Regiment  
Hinds' Battalion of Mississippi Mounted Rifles  
Ogden's Orleans Troop of Dragoons  
Harrison's Battalion, Kentucky Militia



## Appendix B

### Biographical Sketches of Key Participants American Forces

#### **Major General Andrew Jackson**, Commanding General, US 7th Military District

Andrew Jackson was born on 15 March 1767 in the Waxhaw Settlement in South Carolina shortly after the death of his father in an accident. As a young teenager he supported the patriot cause during the American Revolution, serving as a scout, courier, and participated in several engagements. Wounded in an altercation with a British officer and imprisoned, he barely survived an illness contracted in prison, thanks to the care provided by his mother. Eventually his mother died of illness contracted while caring for other American prisoners of war. This event, coupled with the deaths of two of his brothers during the war, increased Jackson's extremely passionate hatred for the British. After American independence he worked for a time in a saddler's shop and afterward taught school. Despite never receiving a good formal education but demonstrating a strong eagerness to learn, Jackson studied law in Salisbury, NC, was admitted to the bar in 1787 and moved to Jonesboro (now Tennessee) in 1788 and commenced practice where he began his political rise. He received an appointment as solicitor of the western district of North Carolina (the modern state of Tennessee) in 1788 and held the same position in the Tennessee territorial government after 1791. Additionally, he served as a delegate to the convention to frame a constitution for the new state of Tennessee in 1796 and, upon the admission of Tennessee into the Union, became the Democratic Republican state representative to the Fourth and Fifth United States Congresses, serving from 5 December 1796 until his resignation in September 1797 upon his election to the United States Senate. He served in the senate from September 1797 until his resignation in April 1798. Jackson then served as a judge of the State Supreme Court of Tennessee from 1798-1804 while also engaging in private planting and mercantile investments. Jackson's political pursuits became deeply embedded with military activities in 1801 when he received appointment as commander of the Tennessee Militia with the rank of colonel and later was elected major general of the Tennessee Militia in 1802. On 4 September 1813 the infamous Jackson-Benton Brothers duel in downtown Nashville took place and Jackson sustained two pistol wounds that affected his health for the rest of his life. Despite his recent wounds and associated ill-health, Jackson served as commander of Tennessee forces during the Creek War in 1813-

1814, earning the personal respect of his regular and Militia Soldiers alike and the nickname “Old Hickory.” His ultimate victory over the Creeks earned him a commission as major general of regulars in the United States Army in May 1814 and command of the US 7th Military District. Jackson commanded American forces during the final campaign of the War of 1812 in the Gulf region of the United States, culminating in the victory over the British expeditionary force in the Battle of New Orleans, December 1814-January 1815, for which he received the thanks of Congress and a gold medal by resolution. Following the War of 1812 Jackson commanded the American expedition that seized Florida from Spain in 1817 and served as Governor of that new American territory in 1821. He returned to United States Senate and served from March 1823 to October 1825 when he resigned. Jackson made an unsuccessful bid for the Presidency in 1824 but won an extremely bitter campaign to be elected the seventh President of the United States in 1828, winning re-election in 1832, and serving until the end of his second term in March 1837 when he officially retired to his country home, the ‘Hermitage,’ near Nashville, Tennessee where he died 8 June 1845.

**Governor William C. C. Claiborne, Governor of Louisiana**

William Charles Coles Claiborne’s birth date is disputed due to poor record keeping (several dates from 23 November 1772 to August 1775) but he was born in Sussex County, Virginia. He studied at the College of William and Mary and Richmond Academy at a very young age and at the age of 16, Claiborne moved to New York City where he worked as an assistant to the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, maintaining that position when the Federal Government moved to Philadelphia. After studying law, he moved to the Tennessee Territory in 1794 to practice law. Claiborne began his political rise following his appointment by Tennessee State Governor, John Sevier, to the Tennessee State Supreme Court in 1796. In 1797 Claiborne successfully ran for the seat in the US House of Representatives vacated by Andrew Jackson, serving through 1801 when President Thomas Jefferson appointed him governor and superintendent of Indian affairs in the Mississippi Territory (the modern states of Mississippi and Alabama) where his efforts in this capacity earned him the praise of his constituents and the indigenous Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians. In 1803 Claiborne served as a commissioner appointed to receive the colony of Louisiana from French authorities following the Louisiana Purchase. He was then appointed first governor of the new Territory of Orleans (comprised of the modern state of Louisiana east

of the Mississippi River and the southern half on the west side), serving from 1804 to 1812. The sudden ushering in of an American government was not well received by the local Creole population and there were a series of political quarrels between Claiborne, legislators, and the local aristocracy. However, upon the admittance of the Territory of Orleans into the Union in 1812 as the state of Louisiana, Claiborne was elected governor and served until 1816. During the War of 1812 Claiborne constantly voiced concerns over the vulnerabilities of the American Gulf coast, especially New Orleans. Upon the arrival of Andrew Jackson to assume personal command of the American forces at New Orleans, Claiborne and Jackson suffered a falling out based on the Governor's previous correspondence that outlined many threats to New Orleans, real and perceived, and misrepresented the state of the city's defenses. Some historians believe he abdicated his authority and responsibility to Jackson, ultimately resulting in martial law. Claiborne served in his capacity as a major general in the Louisiana state Militia and commanded state forces that secured the critical Chef Menteur route from Lake Borgne to the city, long a personal concern of Jackson's as a key avenue of approach for British forces. After the War of 1812 Claiborne won election to the US Senate in 1817 but served only a few months before dying in that same year. His remains are interred at the Metairie Cemetery in New Orleans.

**Master Commandant Daniel T. Patterson**, Commander, US Naval Forces, New Orleans Station

Daniel Todd Patterson was born on 6 March 1786 on Long Island, New York. He entered the US Navy as an acting Midshipman in 1799, defending American shipping from French privateers and warships. During the war with Tripoli pirates he served in the frigates *Constitution* and *Philadelphia* and was taken prisoner when the latter was captured on 31 October 1803. Released in 1805, upon the cessation of hostilities, Patterson served at New Orleans, Louisiana, for nearly two decades, attaining the ranks of Lieutenant in 1807 and Master Commandant in 1812. Later that year Patterson assumed command of the New Orleans station. As part of the Madison Administration's policies against piracy, in September 1814 Patterson led an amphibious attack on a pirate base of Jean Lafitte in Barataria Bay along Louisiana's Gulf coast. Anticipating eventual British designs against New Orleans some two months before their attempt, Patterson became one of the first American leaders to prepare the defense of the city. He proved a highly competent naval advisor to Andrew Jackson during the Gulf Campaign of 1814-1815, respectfully refusing to commit naval assets to Mobile Bay

where they could be trapped by superior British naval forces, using his vessels to serve in critical reconnaissance missions, and providing manpower and supplies to Jackson's force south of New Orleans. His decisions significantly delayed the British approach to New Orleans and his placement of naval guns with highly trained naval crews made a critical contribution to the American victory. Promoted to Captain at the end of February 1815, Patterson's service at New Orleans continued until 1824, when he took command of the frigate *Constitution*. From 1832-1836 he commanded the US Navy's Mediterranean Squadron, with the title of Commodore. Subsequently, Patterson served as Commandant of the Washington Naval Yard, holding that post until he died on 25 August 1839. The US Navy went on to name three ships in honor of Daniel Patterson including the USS *Patterson* (DD of 1911-1934; USS *Patterson* (DD 392) of 1937-1947; and USS *Patterson* (E 1061) of 1970-1999.

**Major General John Coffee**, Commander, Tennessee brigade of mounted Militia

John Coffee was born on 2 June 1772 in Prince Edward County, Virginia. He removed to Davidson County, Tennessee in 1798 and engaged in mercantile pursuits till 1807, when he began to survey public lands. In October 1809 Coffee married a niece of Andrew Jackson's wife, establishing close relations, to include several duels in defense of Jackson's honor, with the man that would guide much of the rest of Coffee's life. At the beginning of the War of 1812 Coffee raised and organized a Tennessee regiment of mounted riflemen. In December 1812, the Governor of Tennessee called out state militia in response to a request from the Secretary of War. Serving under Jackson, Coffee commanded a force of 600 in the abortive campaign against Natchez in the Mississippi Territory, whereupon arrival of Jackson's Militia, he discovered that the Federal Government chose to disband his forces rather than field them. Jackson marched them back to Nashville, funding the effort from his personal expenses. On 4 September 1813 Coffee was involved in the infamous Jackson-Benton Brothers duel in downtown Nashville; Coffee knocked future US Senator and westward expansion champion Thomas Hart Benton down a flight of stairs after Benton's failed attempt to kill Jackson. A month later, Coffee was promoted to brigadier general and placed in command of a brigade of mounted Militia. Jackson chose General Coffee as his advance guard commander in the Creek War, in which he commanded mostly militia and allied American Indians. Coffee led his brigade at the Battles of Tallushatchee,

Talladega, Emuckfaw, and Enotachopo Creek, where he was seriously wounded, and finally at the decisive American victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend which served to eliminate much of the Creek resistance and prevent British interference in the conflict. Coffee's brigade also actively participated in Jackson's seizure of Pensacola and then executed a two-day forced march from Baton Rouge to New Orleans upon Jackson's order to consolidate American forces to face the British expeditionary force. The brigade, combined with free blacks and American Indian warriors from allied Southeast tribes, played a key role in securing the woods on the left flank of the American defensive line at New Orleans. After the War of 1812, served as Surveyor-General of the Southwest Territory; he laid out the town of Florence, Alabama and established the modern boundary between the states of Mississippi and Alabama. During Jackson's Presidency, Coffee served as one of his old friend's representatives in negotiating treaties with the Southeastern American Indian tribes to accomplish their removal in accordance with the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Coffee died near Florence, Alabama in July 1834.

**Major General William Carroll**, Major General of the Tennessee Militia William Carroll was born on 3 March 1788 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the son of successful businessman with strong state political ties. With little formal education, Carroll gained practical experience working for his father. That led to his moving to Nashville, Tennessee in 1808 to open a branch of his father's business, carrying a letter of introduction to Andrew Jackson signed by Pennsylvania politician and US Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin. At the start of the War of 1812 Carroll received an appointment as a captain in the Tennessee State Militia. He served in Jackson's campaigns against the Creek Indians in 1813, receiving promotion to major, and serving at the Battle of Talladega. During the lull between campaigns against the Creeks, Carroll also became involved in the Jackson-Benton Brothers feud, fighting a duel with Jesse Benton, one of Jackson's subordinate officers, in June 1813; Jackson served as Carroll's second. The duel, in which both participants were wounded, led directly to the infamous street battle in September 1813 where Jackson received his debilitating wounds on the eve of his final campaign against the Creeks. During that final campaign, Carroll distinguished himself at the Battles of Emuckfaw and Enotachopo Creek in January 1814 and was wounded at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in March 1814. In November 1814, Carroll received the appointment as major general of Tennessee Militia, replacing Jackson after he accepted his Regular Army commission and

command of the 7th Military District. At the Battle of New Orleans Carroll's force defended the center of the American line and experienced the brunt of the fighting during the various British attacks, inflicting severe casualties upon the enemy on 8 January. After the War of 1812 Carroll ran for the Tennessee governorship, against an opponent endorsed by Jackson, and won in a landslide. He ran unopposed for reelection in 1823 and 1825. In 1827 term limits prevented him from serving a fourth consecutive term. Passed over for a US Senate seat, Carroll fell out with the Jackson wing of the Democratic Party and ran unsuccessfully against Sam Houston in 1829. Political scandal led to Houston's resignation and Carroll's easy election and successful re-elections, without opposition, in 1831 and 1833. He held the office longer than any other person and is considered one of the state's most popular political figures during the 1820s and 1830s. William Carroll died in Nashville, Tennessee on 22 March 1844.

**Brigadier General David Morgan**, Louisiana Militia,  
Commander of American forces on the Right Bank

David B. Morgan was born in 1773 in West Springfield, Massachusetts. He worked as a surveyor, initially in Massachusetts, and moved to Louisiana in 1803, served in the territorial legislature, worked as a member of the Constitutional convention, and served in the state legislature after Louisiana's admission to the Union. He also served as Surveyor-General of Louisiana and Mississippi. As Brigadier General, he commanded the Militia forces of those states under Andrew Jackson during the British attempt to seize New Orleans. Morgan initially commanded the Louisiana Militia located on the English Turn portion of the Mississippi River, a key position in denying the Royal Navy further access up the river to New Orleans. During Jackson's night attack on 23 December 1814, Morgan received orders to also attack the rear of the British camp. However, the force did not arrive at the enemy camp until well after Jackson's attack ended and Morgan withdrew out of caution. A week later Jackson ordered Morgan to assume command of the Louisiana Militia, and later attached Kentucky Militia, tasked with defending the right bank of the Mississippi River across from Jackson's main defensive line along the Rodriguez Canal. There the British experienced the only major tactical success encountered during the expedition, overwhelming Morgan's line and capturing the key artillery positions that could enfilade the main British attack against Jackson. A court of inquiry after the battle did not even mention Morgan's name, thus allowing him to escape blame or reprimand. David Morgan died in Covington, Louisiana, 15 July 1848.



## British Forces

**Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane**, commander of the British Royal Navy's North America station

Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane was born on 23 April 1758, the son of the eighth Earl of Dundonald. He joined the navy at an early age, and was made lieutenant in 1778 during the War of American independence. In 1780, as a junior lieutenant, he was wounded in action off Martinique. Made commander in December 1780, he continued on the West Indian station and in December 1782 achieved promotion to post captain. When war ended in 1783 Cochrane returned to England and he remained unemployed on half pay until 1790 when he was appointed to command of a frigate. In 1793, with war against France, Cochrane cruised against enemy privateers off Norway during the spring and summer, and then transferred to command of a vessel on the North American station. In 1799 Cochrane commanded an 80 gun frigate and in the following year he served in the Channel Fleet, participating in a number of amphibious operations in the Mediterranean where he earned high praise for superintending the landing of troops in Egypt in February–March 1801 and supporting them with a flotilla of armed boats. However, Cochrane also began displaying a personality prone to personal vendetta and intra-service infighting. The breakdown of the short peace in 1803 led to a return to sea and a new command, which he retained as his flagship when advanced to rear admiral of the blue in April 1804. Commanding a squadron off the coast of Spain, Cochrane proved efficient in sending home intelligence on Spanish armament and war preparations. In February 1805, he conducted an unsuccessful pursuit of a French naval squadron to the West Indies but he received the appointment as commander-in-chief at the Leeward Islands. Cochrane became rear admiral of the white in November 1805. In 1806 he participated in the battle of San Domingo for which he received a knighthood, a vote of thanks from both houses of parliament, freedom of the City of London, and a sword of honor. He advanced to rear admiral of the red in April 1808 and in 1809 he and Lieutenant General George Beckwith began a joint campaign against the French in the West Indies captured the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe (in which Edward Pakenham also served as commander of the 7th Fusiliers). Cochrane became vice-admiral of the blue in October 1809 and advanced to vice-admiral of the white in July 1810 and of the red in December 1813. Cochrane participated in 1813 in the joint planning for the 1814 campaign season in North America which included operations in the Gulf of Mexico. By 1814, he commanded the North American station to direct, though not actively

commanding, a number of amphibious operations against the American coast. These would include the burning of Washington, the failure to seize Baltimore, and the disaster at New Orleans. After the war ended, Cochrane oversaw the withdrawal of British forces from North America before his return to England in April 1815. On his return to England Cochrane once again became unemployed and on half pay but became admiral of the blue in August 1819. He finished his long naval career as commander-in-chief at Plymouth in 1821, advancing to admiral of the white in May 1825. Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane died suddenly in Paris on 26 January 1832 and is buried in the Paris' Père Lachaise cemetery.

**Lieutenant General Sir Edward Pakenham**, commander of the British expeditionary force

Edward Pakenham was on 19 April 1778 at Longford Castle, County Westmeath, Ireland. After a basic initial education he became, at age sixteen, lieutenant in the 92nd Regiment of Foot in May 1794; a few days later he made captain. On 6 December 1794, though still not seventeen, he became major in the 33rd or Ulster Light Dragoons. In June 1798 Pakenham became a major in the 23d Light Dragoons, with which he served in Ireland during the 1798 Irish uprising; and in October 1799 he received an appointment as lieutenant colonel of the 64th Regiment of Foot, which he commanded during the capture of the Danish and Swedish controlled West Indies islands in 1801. Pakenham commanded the 64th at the capture of St Lucia in June 1803 where he was wounded. After returning home, he became a brevet colonel in 1805. He received an appointment to the lieutenant colonelcy of the 7th Royal Fusiliers, whose 1st Battalion he joined at Weymouth in 1806, commanding during the expedition against Copenhagen in 1807 and at the capture of Martinique in 1809. Pakenham joined the Duke of Wellington, who married Pakenham's sister Kitty in 1806, in the Iberian Peninsula after the battle of Talavera in July 1809, where he initially served as an assistant adjutant-general to the fusiliers and eventually deputy adjutant-general in the Peninsula in March 1810. He disliked staff work immensely but performed his duties in a competent and professional manner. However, combat requirements brought opportunities to command troops in the field and Pakenham commanded a brigade of the two battalions 7th Fusiliers and the Cameron Highlanders at the Battles of Busaco and Fuentes de Oñoro in 1810. In 1811 he received the local rank of major general in the Peninsula, and returned to the headquarters staff. Pakenham became major general in June



1812. At the Battle of Salamanca in July 1812, described by Wellington as the best managed battle of the war, Pakenham temporarily commanded the 3rd Division, which broke the French center and marked him as a proven senior combat leader. Then he returned to the staff, advancing to the position of adjutant general in May 1813. He commanded the 6th Division, once again temporarily, in the fighting in the Pyrenees and received a knighthood in September 1813, returning to his adjutant general duties in the final campaigns of the war. He received the gold cross and clasps for Martinique, Busaco, Fuentes de Oñoro, Salamanca, Pyrenees, Nivelle, Nive, Orthez, and Toulouse. Pakenham did not care participate in any capacity in Britain's war against America; his brother-in-law, the Duke of Wellington refused the command following his part in the defeat of Napoleon. The death of Major General Ross at Baltimore, however, led to Pakenham's selection to command the British forces rendezvousing in Jamaica for the planned operation against New Orleans. He arrived in Louisiana on Christmas Day 1814, a month behind schedule and his Army conducted three failed attacks against the American line commanded by Andrew Jackson, and lost his life with many of his Soldiers during the third attempt. Pakenham's officers preserved his body and brought it back to Ireland. He shares a monument with his second-in-command, Samuel Gibbs, in St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

**Major General Sir Samuel Gibbs**, brigade commander and Pakenham's second in command

Samuel Gibbs was born in 1771. At the age of twelve he received an appointment as an ensign in the British Army with posting to the 102nd Regiment of Foot in October 1783. In 1788 he moved to the 60th Regiment of Foot in Upper Canada where he served until promotion to lieutenant and assignment to the 11th Regiment of Foot in 1792. He joined this regiment at Gibraltar, and returned with it to England in February 1793, when he received appointment as aide-de-camp to Lieutenant General James Grant. He served with the 11th Regiment in Corsica and aboard Lord Hood's naval fleet in the Mediterranean from the spring of 1794 until the end of 1795 when he obtained command of a company. After serving for some months as captain and adjutant in the garrison at Gibraltar he returned to England in April 1796 and returned to his former position of aide-de-camp. In May 1798 he accompanied the expedition sent to cut the sluices at Ostend and was taken prisoner but exchanged the following Christmas. In 1799 he succeeded to the rank of major and accompanied the 11th Regiment to the West Indies, where he commanded the regiment in an attack on St. Martins.

Promoted to lieutenant colonel of the 10th West India Regiment in 1802, he returned to England upon the declaration of peace in the same year. Subsequently appointed to the 59th Regiment of Foot, he commanded the regiment in the expedition to the Cape of Good Hope in 1805-1806. From the Cape he proceeded to India and commanded his regiment in the Travancore War of 1808–9. He received the brevet rank of colonel on 25 July 1810 and in March 1811 accompanied the expedition to conquer Dutch-controlled Java where he greatly distinguished himself. Gibbs left India and in 1812 commanded two British regiments stationed with the allied forces at Stralsund. In the following year he served in Holland and on 4 June received his appointment as major-general. In autumn 1814 he received an appointment as second in command to Major General Sir Edward Pakenham, commander-in-chief of the British expeditionary force sent to seize New Orleans, where Gibbs arrived with Pakenham and additional troops on Christmas Day, 1814. Gibbs served as Pakenham's senior ground commander through the various British attacks and commanded the main attack on the right flank on 8 January 1815 when he was severely wounded and died on the following day. Ironically, by a proclamation of the Prince Regent, he was made a Knight Commander of the Bath on 2 January 1815. Gibbs' remains were interned next to his commander, Sir Edward Pakenham, in Westminster Abbey.

**Major General Sir John Keane**, brigade commander

John Keane was born in 6 February 1781 in Belmont, Ireland, the son of a baronet Member of Parliament with influential family connections. On 12 November 1794 he received an appointment as captain in a new regiment that was broken up immediately afterwards and Keane went on half pay. In November 1799 he returned to active service with the 44th Regiment of Foot, which he joined at Gibraltar and accompanied to Egypt, where he served as aide-de-camp to Lord Cavan. Keane obtained a majority in the 60th Royal American Regiment in May 1802 but continued on the staff in Egypt and Malta until 1803. In August 1803 he became lieutenant colonel in the 13th Regiment of Foot, joining the regiment at Gibraltar early in 1804 and returning home with it in 1805. After serving several years in Ireland, Keane accompanied his regiment to Bermuda as junior lieutenant-colonel and commanded it during the capture of Martinique in 1809. He became a brevet colonel in January 1812 and the same year transferred to the 60th Royal American Regiment. In April 1813 he joined Wellington's Army in the Peninsula, commanding a brigade of the 3rd division at Vitoria, the Pyrenees, Nivelle, the Nive, Vic Bigorre, and Toulouse. Promoted to major-general in 1814, Keane assumed command

of the units selected for operations in the American Gulf coast region upon notification of the death of Major General Robert Ross during the fighting for Baltimore. Keane commanded the British expeditionary force in the Gulf through the fall and early winter of 1814, overseeing the British undetected landing and approach march south of New Orleans. However, he faced criticism for not proceeding with his advance guard against the city instead choosing to bring up his entire force for a consolidated advance; and for allowing the Americans to conduct an aggressive spoiling attack on the British camp on the night of 23 December 1814. He was superseded by Major General Sir Edward Pakenham, upon that officer's arrival on 25 December 1814, and commanded the 3d Brigade of the British force during the three British attacks on the American defensive line. During the final assault on 8 January 1815 Keane commanded the British supporting attack on the left flank along the Mississippi River, where he received two severe wounds. Upon recovery from his wounds, Keane served as commander-in-chief of the West Indian Army and during a part of that period administered the civil government of Jamaica. Lieutenant General Keane served as Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army from 1834 to 1840 and commanded the combined British and British Indian Army -- The Army of the Indus -- during the opening campaign of the First Anglo-Afghan and First Anglo-Marri wars. During the former, he commanded the victorious British and Indian Army at the Battle of Ghazni on 23 July 1839. For his service, he was elevated to the peerage as Baron Keane, of Ghuznee and of Cappoquin in the County of Waterford on 23 December 1839, also receiving from the East India Company a pension of £2,000 per year. Baron Sir John Keane died in Burton Lodge, Hampshire, England on 24 August 1844.

**Major General Sir John Lambert**, Brigade commander

John Lambert was born in 1772, the second son to a captain in the British Royal Navy. He became an ensign in the British Army in 1791, at age nineteen, and served in France, Ireland, Spain and Portugal in the 16 years that followed. The experience helped shape a prudent and seasoned combat leader when he joined Wellington's Army in 1812 after a year's experience in southern Spain. Promoted to Major General in June 1813, Lambert received command of a brigade that performed gallantly during the invasion of France in the battles of Nivelles, Nive, Orthes, and Toulouse, earning him a vote of thanks from Parliament, a gold cross, and a knighthood (he received notification of this last honor while commanding the shattered British expeditionary force in Louisiana). Lambert commanded the brigade of reinforcements, comprised of the 7th Fusiliers and the 43d

Regiment, that arrived in Pakenham's camp on 6 January 1815, and served as his reserve during the final British assault. Command of the British force fell to Lambert after the death of Pakenham and Gibbs and the serious wounding of Keane. After gathering as much information as possible in a short period of time on both the British and American situations, he ended the attack on Jackson's line. Reorganizing the defeated expeditionary force, Lambert eventually conducted an extremely orderly evacuation, under severe conditions, to the British fleet anchorage. In the last hostilities of the war, Lambert successfully captured Fort Bowyer at Mobile on 12 February 1815. The next day he received news of peace being restored between the two nations. During the expeditionary force's return to England, Lambert learned of Napoleon's return from exile and the reinstatement of hostilities with France. Lambert joined Wellington in Belgium when fighting with Napoleon resumed later in 1815. He commanded the 10th Brigade at the Battle of Waterloo, where the brigade sustained nearly 75% casualties defending the decisive terrain at La Haye Sainte, the highest casualties of any brigade present. For his performance in the Battle of Waterloo, Lambert received the personal commendation of Wellington and high honors from Parliament. Sir John Lambert died in 1847.

**Colonel William Thornton**, commander of the British 85th (Bucks Volunteers) (Light Infantry) Regiment.

William Thornton was born in 1779 in Ireland. Little is known of his life before entering the British Army. He received a commission in the British Army in 1796 at the age of eighteen and experienced the patronage of a senior British general officer. Promotions followed, first to captain in 1803 and then major in 1806. He rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel by 1811 and received command of the 85th Regiment of Foot. He commanded the regiment through the end of the Peninsula campaign, participating in nearly every major battle, and receiving promotion to colonel. By 1814, Thornton possessed an established reputation as a capable and daring officer. With trademark impetuosity, Thornton started the attack at Bladensburg, Maryland before the reinforcements arrived. Though initially repulsed, he reorganized his formation under fire and penetrated the American line, scattering the Militia, being wounded in the effort. In December 1814 Thornton commanded the British advance guard, landing at the Villere Plantation and marching without detection to a position within nine miles of New Orleans. As a major shaping operation in support of the main British assault on the American line on 8 January 1815,

Thornton commanded the attack on the supporting American artillery position located on the right bank of the Mississippi River. Badly wounded, Thornton relinquished command and the column eventually withdrew, under orders, to the left bank of the river. Thornton returned to England and continued to amass a distinguished military career, achieving promotion to major general in 1825, appointment as Lieutenant Governor of Jersey in 1830, knighthood in 1836, and lieutenant general in 1838. However, Thornton developed psychological problems in his later years attributed to his many wounds sustained in North America. He committed suicide in 1840 at the age of sixty-one.



## **Appendix C**

### **Notes on Specific Sources**

Though in some cases not major contributors in the drama that culminated on the plain at Chalmette on 8 January 1815, there are several key participants that contributed to the primary source history of the overall campaign. First-hand participants are critical in deciphering any battle or campaign, providing valuable material in building as close to a complete picture as possible. However, they must be taken with a great deal of discretion, applying corroborating information from other supporting sources. Such sources are shaped by circumstances and environment: personality, military rank, position on the battlefield, personal agenda, vanity, vindictiveness, or the simple passing of time into old age when the facts are not as clear as they once were.

There are several personal accounts included in the bibliography that support the general historical narrative and specific vignettes that make up this handbook. A brief explanation of some of these individuals and their recorded accounts adds value to the detailed study of the battle that takes place. The myriad of personalities seen at New Orleans presents a comprehensive representation of military life in each of the opposing forces and a window into what appears to be, in some ways, the not so distant past of the military profession: company-grade officers are focused on the passing boredom, the infrequent periods of fighting, and the hardship of the common Soldiers, while speculating upon and criticizing the actions of their senior commanders; primary staff officers recollect the actions and decisions at the highest levels, yet question the actions on the battlefield; and commanding generals become clouded in the myth created by both victory and defeat.

#### **The British Army**

There are far more British memoirs of the campaign in the Gulf and New Orleans than American. This is because it was not unnatural for many British Army officers, no matter what rank they attained, to write some sort of personal memoir at the end of a long military career, especially during a span that included the Napoleonic Wars. In many instances the officers in question wrote their memoirs in an effort to earn additional income, augmenting meager retirement pensions provided at the time. While most men were content merely to tell their personal story in the midst of greater events, works of this particular genre sold well and several officers became well-established writers.

**Major Harry Smith:** A highly regarded veteran of Wellington's campaigns in the Peninsula, Smith served as a primary staff officer under Major General Ross in the operation that resulted in the capture and destruction of Washington, DC. With the fall of the American capital, Ross chose Smith to return to England with dispatches describing the victory, which Ross personally delivered to the Prince Regent. Smith's time in England proved short. Upon receiving the news of Ross' death near Baltimore, in October 1814 the government appointed Major General Sir Edward Pakenham to replace Ross. Pakenham then personally selected Smith, a close friend, to serve as his Assistant Adjutant General (AAG) of the British expeditionary force; a challenging duty assignment because Pakenham was himself AAG to his brother-in-law, the Duke of Wellington, for several years during the Peninsula campaign. Therefore, Smith became one of the true inside observers within the British headquarters throughout his service in America, capturing many of the councils of war, key decisions, and interactions with his commander. Smith's very exhaustive memoir of his long life and career was written over a long period of time, with several extensive breaks between writing. His recollections of the battle were recorded approximately 30 years after the events of 1814-1815. Though the passage of time logically exhibited some effect on his memory, Smith's memoir, *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith, Baronet of Aliwal on the Sutlej*, still provides an insider's perspective of Pakenham's short command and the operations of his staff.

**Captain Benson Earle Hill:** An artillery officer, Hill also had the advantage of being a staff officer for the chief of artillery of the British expeditionary force. In that capacity he had more freedom of movement around the battlefield than most Captains and witnessed events from unique locations. His memoirs, *Recollections of an Artillery Officer; Including Scenes and Adventures in Ireland, America, Flanders, and France*, provide an expert's view and assessment of the artillery employment by both sides during the fighting at New Orleans. Many of these scenes remain fresh to Hill, even after a gap some twenty years from events. From the forward gun positions he possessed a front-row seat and afterward was especially clear in asserting the dominance of the American guns over the British. During the final attack he witnessed the collapse of those regiments from the gallery of the La Ronde House and then galloped forward with other staff officers in a vain attempt to reform the regiments.

**Captain William Surtees:** Surtee's, *Twenty-five Years in the Rifle Brigade*, remains one of the most popular British memoirs of the period. His unique position as the quartermaster officer



for the 95th Regiment (the Rifles) allowed him to move back and forth from skirmish line to Army-level councils of war. Like most of his peers that published memoirs of these events, many of these scenes remain very fresh in Surtees' mind, even after a gap some twenty years from events; this may explain his slightly more insightful tone, one developed after deep reflection. He comments on proven practices from the Peninsula abandoned by the British in similar situations at New Orleans and, like Gleig, questions these failures on the part of the senior officers. He also heavily criticizes the conduct of the 44th Regiment's Lieutenant Colonel Mullins on the eve of the final attack, providing additional vent to that of most of Mullins' fellow officers over his conduct during the attack. Moving forward with the 95th's riflemen during the final assault, Surtees provides one of the most detailed eye witness accounts from the very front, the British skirmish line, where he saw key events along the American line from Rennie's success in seizing the American redoubt on the left to the final collapse of Gibbs' brigade on the right. In this handbook, Surtees is also allowed the last word in the final vignette, where he cautions of the dangers of pride and holding one's enemy in contempt.

**Captain John Henry Cooke:** Another company grade officer with extensive experience in the Peninsula campaign, Cooke, a Captain in the 43rd Regiment, in his *Narrative of Events in the South of France and of the Attack on New Orleans*, provides an eyewitness account of that captures many unique aspects found in the British primary sources. His writing is very descriptive yet simple, maintaining his own personal perspective and rarely stepping out of his lane. Like Hill and Surtees, many of these scenes remain fresh, even after twenty years. One of his most sobering accounts involves the a discussion between officers of the 85th Regiment and newly arrived 43rd Regiment, where the former tries to explain to the latter why the expeditionary force has not yet seized New Orleans. Cooke also describes Rennie's battalion stealthy movement forward toward the American redoubt, captures the confusion of his detachment as it is lost in the morning fog during the British approach and initial fighting, and upon finally reuniting with his regiment in Lambert's reserve position serves witness to the destruction of the British assault force in front of the Rodriguez Canal.

**Lieutenant George R. Gleig:** Gleig's memoir, under the modern title, *The Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans*, remains fairly popular with modern students of the period, providing a window into the world of the junior officer and Soldiers among the Peninsula veterans that campaigned in America. Gleig, a lieutenant in the

85th Regiment, was already a veteran of campaigning in northern Spain and southern France with Wellington's Army. He accompanied his regiment with the British reinforcements to North America and participated in the campaign against Washington and Baltimore before participating in the operations at New Orleans. His personal account of both campaigns, especially New Orleans, offers a great deal of commonality with the challenges of modern pre-commissioning students and company-grade officers coming to grips with the military profession and the challenges it presents. Two points stand out in Gleig's writing. First, he shared with his modern counterparts the propensity to question and criticize his seniors and their decisions that he disagreed with or did not understand; i.e., he does not, in today's parlance, remain in his lane. Second, as he later became a fairly well-known author and historian, a fair share of his observations, though extremely keen and insightful, appear to be shaped in hindsight over ten years after the battle. Therefore, he presents more of an overview with his general observations based on his experience, not the detailed memories of his published peers.

### **The American Army**

On the American side of the battlefield the most comprehensive personal accounts came from within Andrew Jackson's inner circle of staff officers, Latour and Tatum. However, there is a discouraging lack of personal accounts provided by more junior leaders or Soldiers. Therefore, the accounts of Latour and Tatum provide an excellent portrait of Jackson and his Army throughout the British invasion, though with a definite sense of hero worship directed at Jackson.

**Arsene Lacarriere Latour:** Like Harry Smith, Latour provides an insider's view to the day to day operations of Jackson's staff. Of all of the personal works published in the aftermath of the battle, Latour's *Historical Memoir of The War in West Florida and Louisiana in 181415*, beat the rest to the publisher within two years of the war's end. While Latour, as a native Frenchman, proved to be thoroughly anti-British in his sentiments, he was present with Jackson during several key moments in the campaign, providing detailed observations. The comprehensive value of Latour's memoir is the detailed collection of his engineering sketches and a lengthy appendix containing a large collection of American and British correspondence produced during the campaign on the American Gulf coast.

**Major Howell Tatum:** Another detailed view of events inside Jackson's headquarters and staff is provided by Major Tatum's personal journal, the version referenced here being published

in 1922. Tatum, a Revolutionary War veteran, served as the Jackson's acting topographical engineer from July 1814 until the conclusion of the war. Tatum does not shy from placing Jackson on a pedestal that puts him above making mistakes, something built upon a friendship dating back to the establishment of Tennessee as a territory. However, Tatum's journal does provide an extended window of the campaign in the Gulf, including first-hand accounts of the British attempt to seize Mobile and Jackson's seizure of Pensacola, before concentrating on the events at New Orleans which he presents with the detail-oriented method seen with military engineers of the day.



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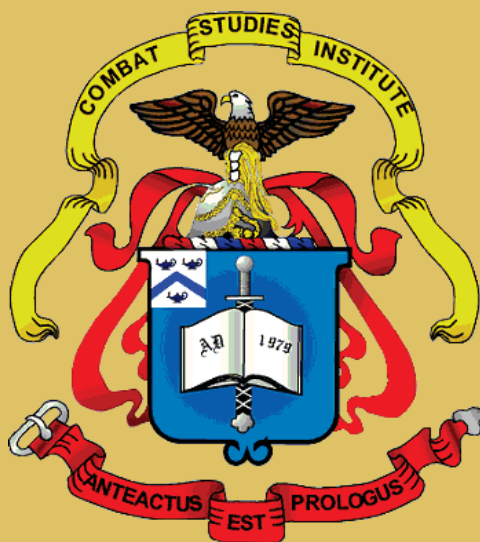


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