

## **Ironclads and Small Engagements**

**<http://civilwar150.longwood.edu>**

The 173<sup>rd</sup> week of the Civil War was not an exciting one, but it did include several important events that led to major changes later in the war. Generally, during the winter months of war, there was not too much activity. Troops were usually low on supplies and not fit to travel the long distances necessary to fight battles. Health was not ideal and they had to concentrate on taking care of basic needs. In New Berne, North Carolina, where a battle had already been fought in 1862, there were some operations. Skirmishes did occur between troops, such as near Cobb's Mill, Alabama, and Knoxville, Tennessee, but no major battle took place this week.

On Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, the Confederates added a new ironclad, the Charleston, to their defenses. The Confederates began the war with little naval force, because most of the Navy stayed loyal to the Union, and so to add such a strong asset was a significant benefit. Both sides went from relying on wooden ships to finding Ironclads a necessity. Though Ironclads were invented before the war, the improvements made on them during the Civil War introduced a new age of naval warfare.

On Saturday, January 30, Major General William Rosecrans replaced Major General John Schofield as the commander of the Federal Department of Missouri. Rosecrans was an esteemed graduate of West Point, and though he had left the Army by the time the Civil War began, he rejoined the Union side at the wars onset. He began his Civil War military career as a colonel but was quickly promoted to Brigadier General. He gained prestige as he commanded a division of Major General Pope's Army of the Mississippi in the Battle of Corinth. This

important Union victory gave way to his taking command of the Army of the Cumberland and a new rank, Major General. But in September 1863, Rosecrans' army suffered an unrecoverable defeat. The Battle of Chickamauga was the worst Union defeat in the Western Theatre, and Rosecrans was never able to regain his reputation. Only a few short months after this crippling loss, in the 173<sup>rd</sup> week of war, Rosecrans was moved to command the Department of the Missouri. There he kept small rebellions at bay and maintained control of the state for the Federals until the end of the war.

On Sunday, January 31, President Abraham Lincoln sent a message to General Banks, who was stationed in New Orleans. The message told Banks that he was "at liberty to adopt any rule" that would give Louisianans the opportunity to vote, as long as they could somehow be categorized as "unquestionably loyal free state men." Lincoln wished they would take an oath of loyalty but recognized that this was not a practical request for the current situation.