

Civil War 150 years ago September 1863

Sept 5 Laird Rams detained at Liverpool, England by Her Majesty's government. The Laird rams were two ships secretly funded and constructed at Birkenhead, England on behalf of the Confederacy between 1862-1862. Iron-hulled from the keel up and fitted with two revolving turrets, these ships posed a grave threat to the sea-going force of the United States Navy and its blockade on Southern ports; strong diplomatic pressure led to their seizure by the British government and eventual commissioning into the Royal Navy.

Sept 6 Confederates evacuate Fort Wagner and Morris Island, South Carolina

Sept 8 Confederates repulse attack at Sabine Pass (Fort Griffin), Texas

Sept 9 Federal army enters Chattanooga, Tennessee

Sept 10 Little Rock, Arkansas captured by Union Forces

Sept 15 Lincoln suspends writ of habeas corpus

Sept 18 Skirmish at Bristol in east Tennessee

Confederates force their way across Chickamauga Creek

Sept 19-22 Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia: After the Tullahoma Campaign, Rosecrans renewed his offensive, aiming to force the Confederates out of Chattanooga. The three army corps comprising Rosecrans' s army split and set out for Chattanooga by separate routes. In early September, Rosecrans consolidated his forces scattered in Tennessee and Georgia and forced Bragg's army out of Chattanooga, heading south. The Union troops followed it and brushed with it at Davis' Cross Roads. Bragg was determined to reoccupy Chattanooga and decided to meet a part of Rosecrans's army, defeat them, and then move back into the city. On the 17th he headed north, intending to meet and beat the XXI Army Corps. As Bragg marched north on the 18th, his cavalry and infantry fought with Union cavalry and mounted infantry which were armed with Spencer repeating rifles. Fighting began in earnest on the morning of the 19th, and Bragg's men hammered but did not break the Union line. The next day, Bragg continued his assault on the Union line on the left, and in late morning, Rosecrans was informed that he had a gap in his line. In moving units to shore up the supposed gap, Rosecrans created one, and James Longstreet's men promptly exploited it, driving one-third of the Union army, including Rosecrans himself, from the field. George H. Thomas took over command and began consolidating forces on Horseshoe Ridge and Snodgrass Hill. Although the Rebels launched determined assaults on these forces, they held until after dark. Thomas then led these men from the field leaving it to the Confederates. The Union retired to Chattanooga while the Rebels occupied the surrounding heights.