

Designer's Notes

by Andrew Wagenhoffer

Acknowledgement

Campaign Vicksburg has been Lee Hook's project since the beginning, with my own design contribution being a relatively recent development. Lee has always been a great help to me in my own HPS Civil War Battles series research, especially for Campaigns Corinth and Ozark, and working with Lee on the campaign and scenario design aspects of Vicksburg is both a pleasure and a privilege.

Map Notes

Campaign Vicksburg's maps are entirely the work of Lee Hook. Years of research and painstaking labor were put into their creation, the result of which is one of the best (if not the very best) overall set of maps for the entire HPS Civil War Battles series. Knowing the difficulties associated with this task—having created the maps for three of the Civil War titles myself—I was continually impressed by the consistent level of detail achieved by Lee, which is very difficult to maintain the further you get from cities and towns. It was fun creating scenarios using those maps and a great learning experience as well.

Notes on the OBs

Work on this project was begun long before any internal debate arose over the propriety of creating on map field artillery units as full batteries or broken down into sections. Clearly, there are advantages and disadvantages (either with gameplay or issues of historical validity) whichever design philosophy is chosen. For the most part, Campaign Vicksburg has retained full battery-sized units. The siege gun batteries that compose heavy artillery battalions, on the other hand, are generally parceled out in ones and twos over miles of earthworks that either surround cities or run great distances atop critical river bluff defenses.

Notes on Vicksburg Campaign Design

The philosophy behind the design of the Vicksburg campaign tree was to make it as simple as possible (in order to be able to complete the entire campaign in a reasonable amount of time) yet still provide multiple approaches and replay value. The scenarios associated with a single campaign situation can use several different maps so significantly different paths can be taken.

The simplest path for the Union player to take is to go straight at Vicksburg by attempting to capture the bluffs north of the city (similar to Sherman's Chickasaw Bayou campaign – also included as standalone scenarios in Campaign Vicksburg). This approach is very difficult but can win the campaign in a single battle.

Alternatively, a landing at Bruinsburg and a push inland to Port Gibson opens up three different possibilities. The first involves a strike northward from Port Gibson, crossing the Big Black River at Hankinson's Ferry and heading straight for Vicksburg. The other two choices involve a northeast ranging push up the watershed of the Big Black along the Rocky Springs-Cayuga-Auburn axis. From here, the Union player can either strike directly at Edwards Station and Big Black Bridge (moving on to Vicksburg from there) or move east and attack Jackson—the Mississippi state capital—first before turning back towards Vicksburg (the historical choice that resulted in the Battle of Champion Hill).

The Union player must keep winning in order to continue the campaign, and the final battle for Vicksburg will involve a Confederate breakout from the city.

Notes on Specific Features/Situations/Scenarios

- The the group of scenarios (thc_c1u1,thc_c1u2, thc_c2u1, tch_c2u2) has a Confederate object of having as much of their army as possible exit the map at the exit objective(s). Keep in mind the cumulative defeats necessary to reach this point have meant the Confederates cannot win the campaign—the best they can hope for is a draw (and that is contingent upon how many men have been able to escape and how many have been lost during the campaign as a whole).
- William T. Sherman's December 1862 Chickasaw Bayou campaign can be gamed using the 250 turn monster campaign scenario designed by Lee or with shorter daily scenarios simulating the movements and fighting on December 27, 28, and 29. The heaviest fighting occurred on the 28th and 29th.
- The battles of Champion Hill and Big Black Bridge resulted in the loss of many Confederate cannon. The problem is figuring out just how many. None of the sources agree. The number reportedly lost at Champion Hill ranges from 16 to over 24 with Big Black Bridge gun losses somewhere between 18 and 21 (I lean toward the latter). Upon arrival at Vicksburg, these newly unemployed artillerymen were assigned to man guns from the Vicksburg garrison, which had large numbers of field guns and heavy artillery available.
- The reason the Confederate divisions of Martin L. Smith and John H. Forney were not available for wholesale inclusion in the actual army of maneuver created by Pemberton to oppose Grant's army was the need for a strong garrison at Vicksburg. Throughout the active campaign south and east of the Big Black River, strong Union army and naval forces remained in the vicinity of Vicksburg and posed a tangible threat to the city. This necessitated the occupation of the bluffs north of Vicksburg and of the city itself, which, unfortunately for the Confederates, tied up valuable manpower needed on the battlefields to the east. Although elements of these divisions are made available, as they were historically, these garrisoning constraints were maintained in the design of the game's campaign.
- Bridges: keeping the new optional repair/rebuilding rule in mind, the bridge strengths for Vicksburg scenarios are based on the default value of 200 (so, strength must be at least 150 for artillery and supply wagons to cross, 100 for cavalry, and 50 for infantry and leaders). In general, I set railroad bridges at 200 and road traffic bridges at 160 to reflect relative sturdiness. Note: it will only take slight damage to the latter to render the bridge unfit for artillery and wagons. This is intentional.

Recommended Reading

The Vicksburg campaign has been blessed by receiving the attention of a number of talented and dedicated historians. The work of Ed Bearss, the godfather of Vicksburg studies, must remain at the top of the list. His three-volume history of the Vicksburg campaign, published by Morningside Books and titled appropriately enough *The Vicksburg Campaign*, remains unequalled in breadth and scope. Warren Grabau, a frequent collaborator with Bearss, published his own

magnum opus in *Ninety-Eight Days: A Geographer's View of the Vicksburg Campaign*. Grabau's maps alone make the his book worth purchasing. However, these books are both lengthy and expensive and readers looking for a more modest investment in time and resources might try a recent release by Michael Ballard titled *Vicksburg: The Campaign That Opened the Mississippi*. It's not a strictly military study, but could serve as a good introductory volume. The best book-length study so far of a Vicksburg campaign battle is Timothy Smith's *Champion Hill: Decisive Battle for Vicksburg*.