



The Civil War - July 1863

The Civil War was beginning its third year of a struggle that would decide if this nation would survive. The Union had the largest and most modern military in the world at the time. President Lincoln was searching for a military leader that could stand and defeat the Confederate Army. The battles in the eastern theater of the nation captured the imagination of the public. In the western theater there were small victories with a little know general that would become the commander of the Union Army to defeat the Confederate successionist.

The Civil War started with many of the best Army leaders going with the South and many Naval leaders staying with the Union. The first years of the war the South would have an advantage of military success on the battlefield and the North on the seas and rivers. The South would name battles after the nearest settlement and the North after the nearest body of water causing a little confusion for first time readers of the Civil War. However, some battles were remembered for the impact they had on the war. The Battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July 1863 are two of those battles that are remembered by one name.

The Battle of Gettysburg is one of the most written about battles in the American Civil War. The Battle of Vicksburg has one book written for every book written on Gettysburg. Furthermore, epic movies have been made on the Battle of Gettysburg. Yet, these two battles are interlinked in the defeat of the Confederate successionists.

The victory at Vicksburg divided the Confederate territory isolating the eastern armies from the west armies. The general who won this victory was Ulysses S. Grant known as “Unconditional Surrender” for his victories earlier in the war. One of his generals in the victory was William Tecumseh Sherman who wanted to take the war to the heart of the South.

The Battle of Gettysburg saved the Union Capital from an invading army and forced it to turn around. The general who won the battle failed to pursue the Rebel army after the battle. The Battle has captured the imagination of later generations because of the heroic event called “Picket Charge” where 10,000 men spread across a mile front walked into murderous fire from Union troops. Vicksburg was a long and slow siege.

President Lincoln recognized this failure to chase the rebels after Gettysburg in the eastern theater and sent for the victor of Vicksburg to move to the eastern theater and command the Union Army. General Grant knew the Union had the manpower and industrial might to crush the Confederates in time.

These battles in early July 1863 did not end the hopes of the South for political victory. It did end their chance of military victory on the battlefield. Their hope now was to fight and survive until the Union became tired of the struggle and called for peace. That hope was almost achieved in 1864 until General Sherman took the Capital of the Southern successionists. That victory allowed President Lincoln to win the election and continue the war to its final victory and Appomattox Court House.