



British Strategy for 1814

British Strategy

- Wellington's defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Toulouse freed Great Britain to send some veteran regiments to America.
- They adopted a three-pronged strategy for the tiresome conflict:
 1. Attack the Northern States from Canada.
 2. Occupy Washington, DC, and destroy public buildings.
 3. A secret expedition is sent from the UK against Louisiana to capture the mouths of the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans.

British Strategy for 1814

Map showing British military strategy for 1814, including the invasion of the United States from Canada and the Great Lakes region. Key locations marked include Canada (GB), District of Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana Territory, Michigan Territory, Illinois Territory, Virginia, and Kentucky. A starburst indicates the location of the Battle of Bladensburg.

The Outcomes

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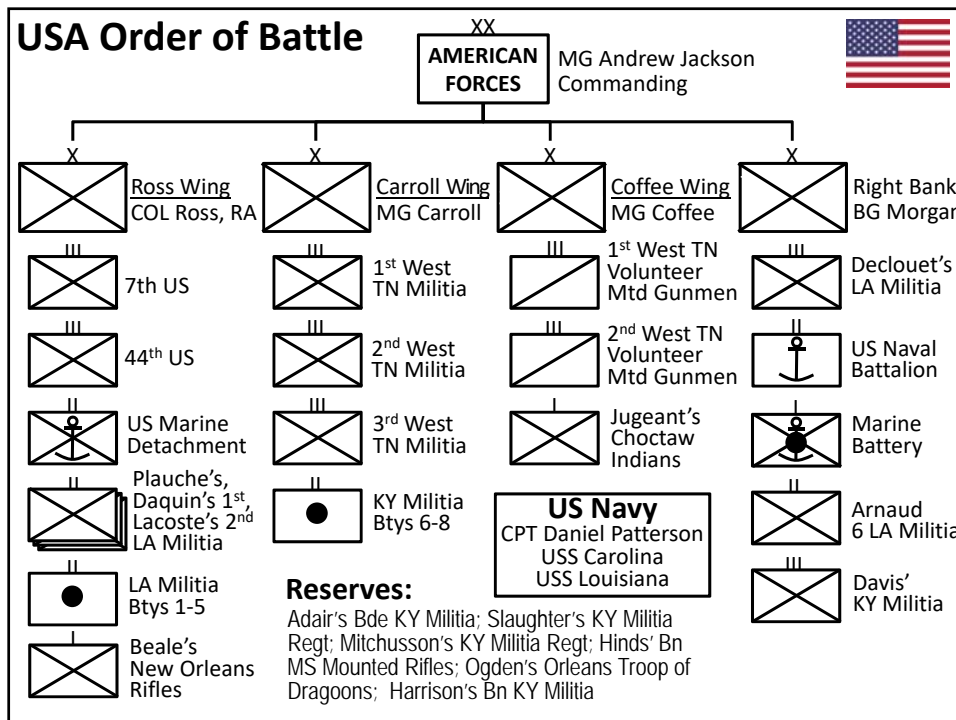
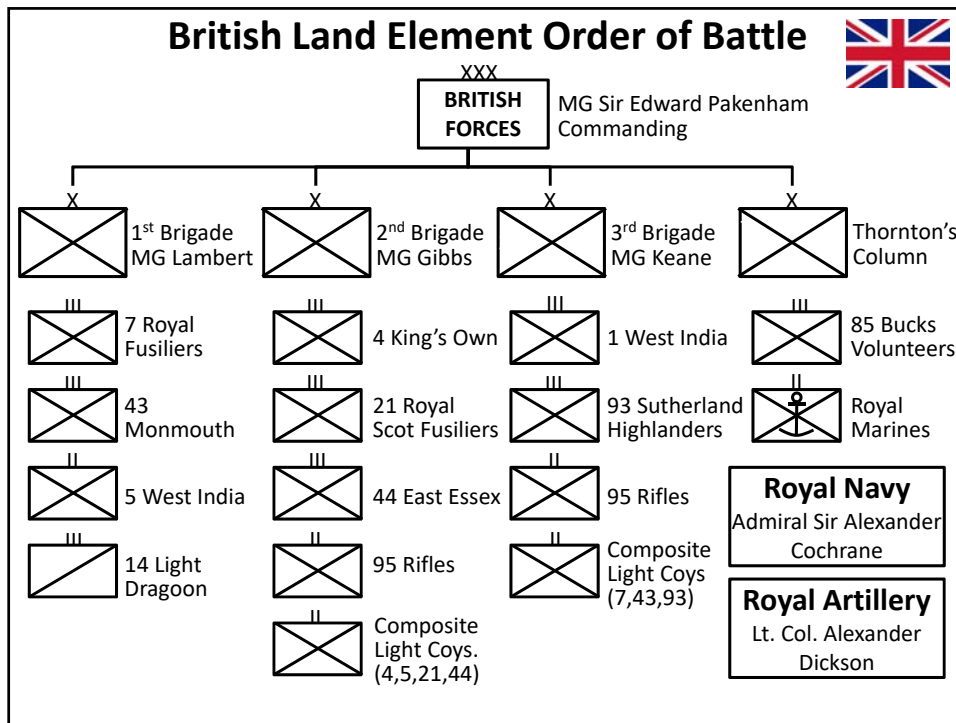
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- The first British attack on Mobile Point Alabama is repulsed by American artillery. HMS Hermes is lost. (15 September 1814)
- MG Pakenham is sent from England to command the New Orleans attack and departs for Jamaica. He is due to arrive in Jamaica mid-Dec.
- Perhaps seeking glory, Admiral Cochrane loads newly arrived troops under MG Keane and sets sail.



The Battle of New Orleans	
Belligerents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  United States (incl. State militias)  Creoles, Frontiersmen, Free Slaves  Barataria privateers (Pirates)  Choctaw Nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  United Kingdom
Major units involved	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  7th Infantry Regiment (Kentucky)  44th Infantry Regiment (Louisiana)  KY, LA and TN Militias; Volunteers  US Artillery, US Marines, others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4th, 21st, 44th, and 85th Regiments (experienced) 1st and 5th West India (new in America) 93rd newly formed from the Cape Colony 7th, 43rd, and 14th Light Dragoons (reserve)
Commanders and leaders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Major General Andrew Jackson  MGs William Carroll and John Coffee  BG David Morgan, COL George Ross  Captain Jean Lafitte & many others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Major General Sir Edward Pakenham †  Major General Gibbs †  Major General John Lambert  Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane
Strength	
5,700	~ 8,000
Casualties	
<hr/>	



British Chain of Command



Major General Sir Edward Pakenham



ADM Sir Alexander Cochrane



MG Sir John Lambert



MG Sir Samuel Gibbs



MG Sir John Keane



Prince Regent George (later George IV)

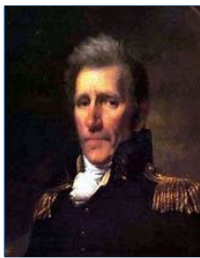


MG Robert Ross



LTG Sir George Prevost

American Chain of Command



Major General Andrew Jackson



Major General William Carroll



Major General John Coffee



Colonel George T. Ross



Brigadier General David B. Morgan



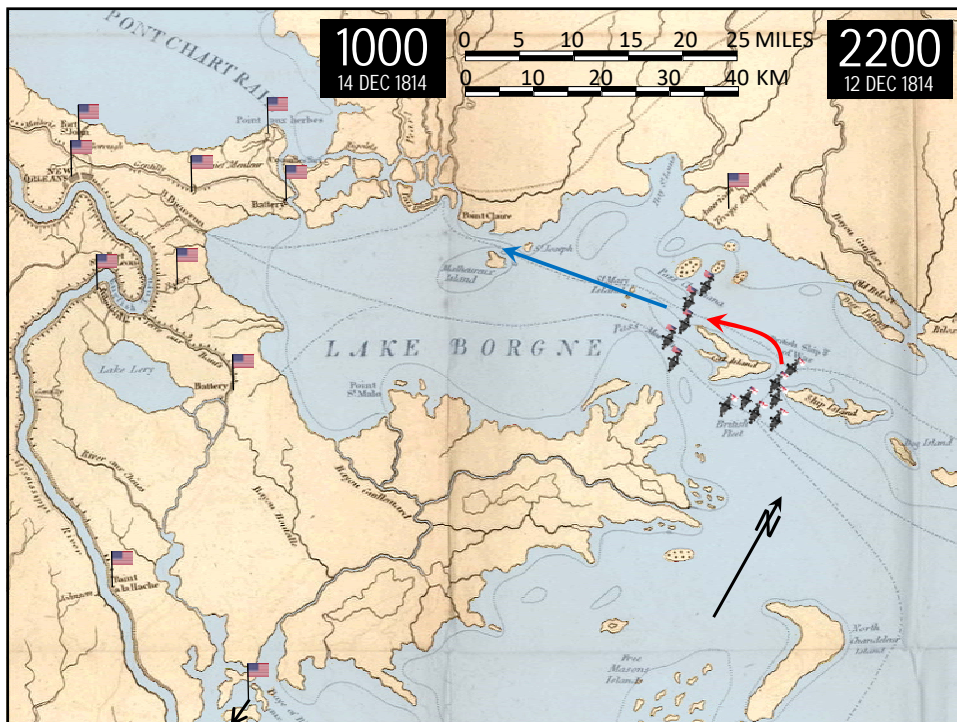
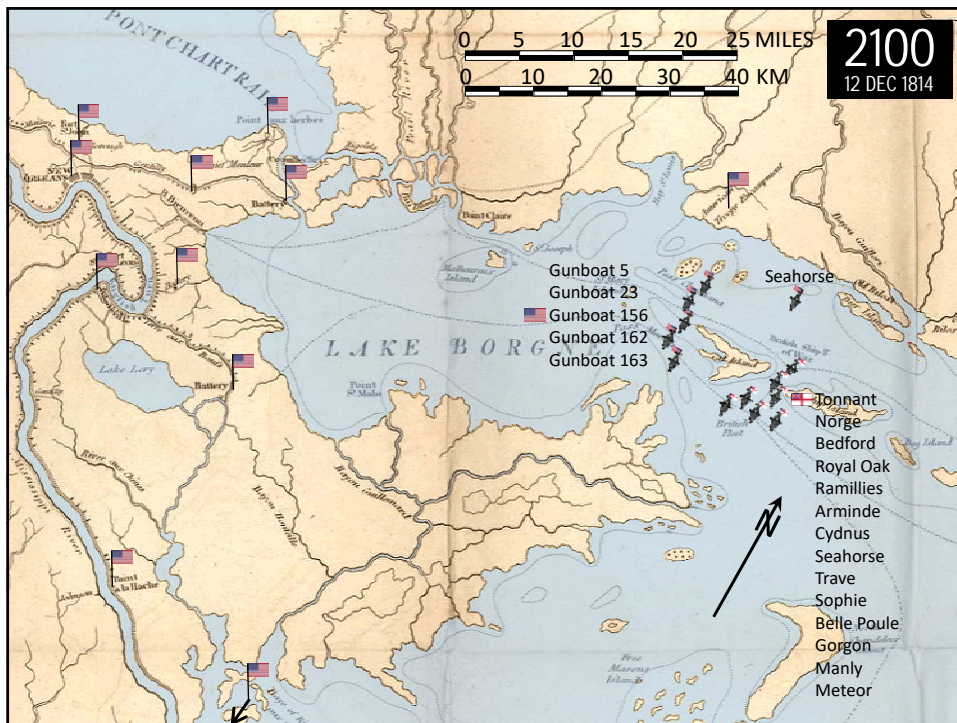
Major General Jacques Villeré

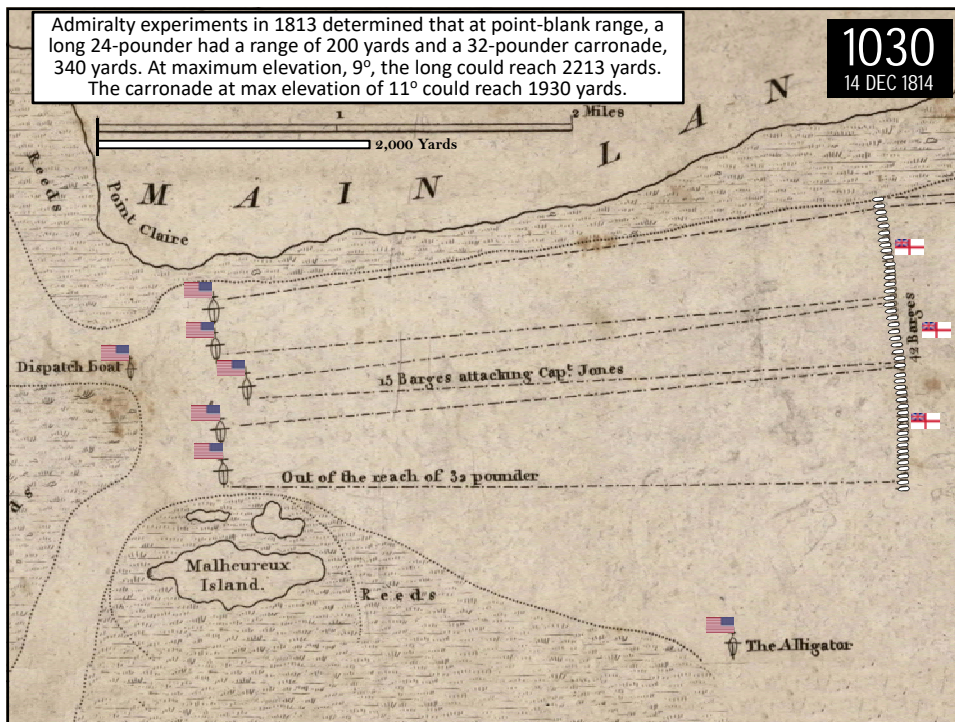
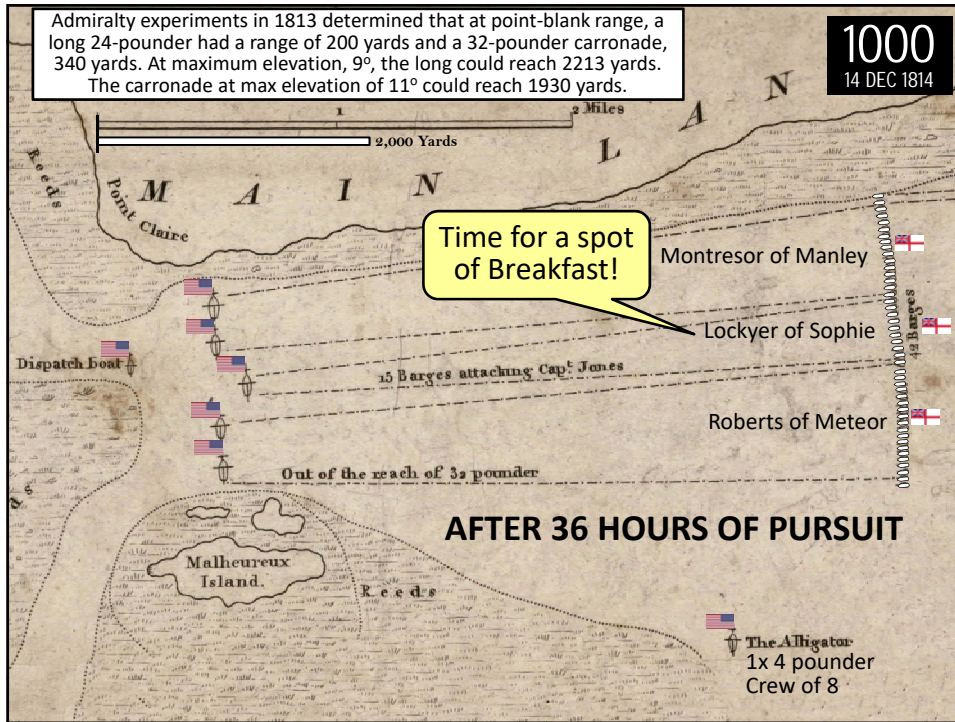


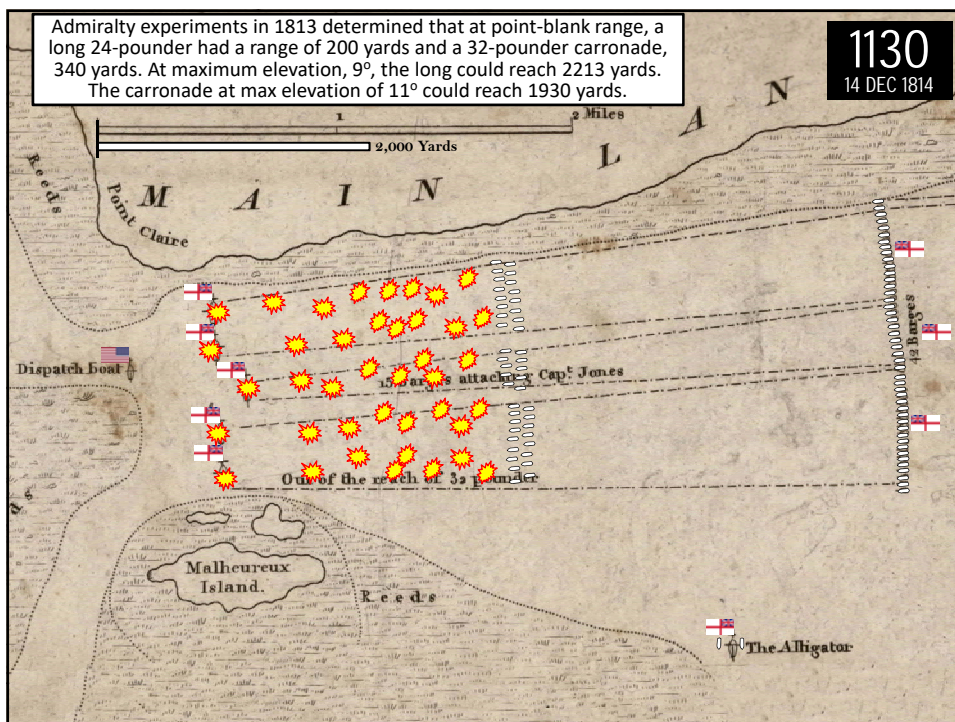
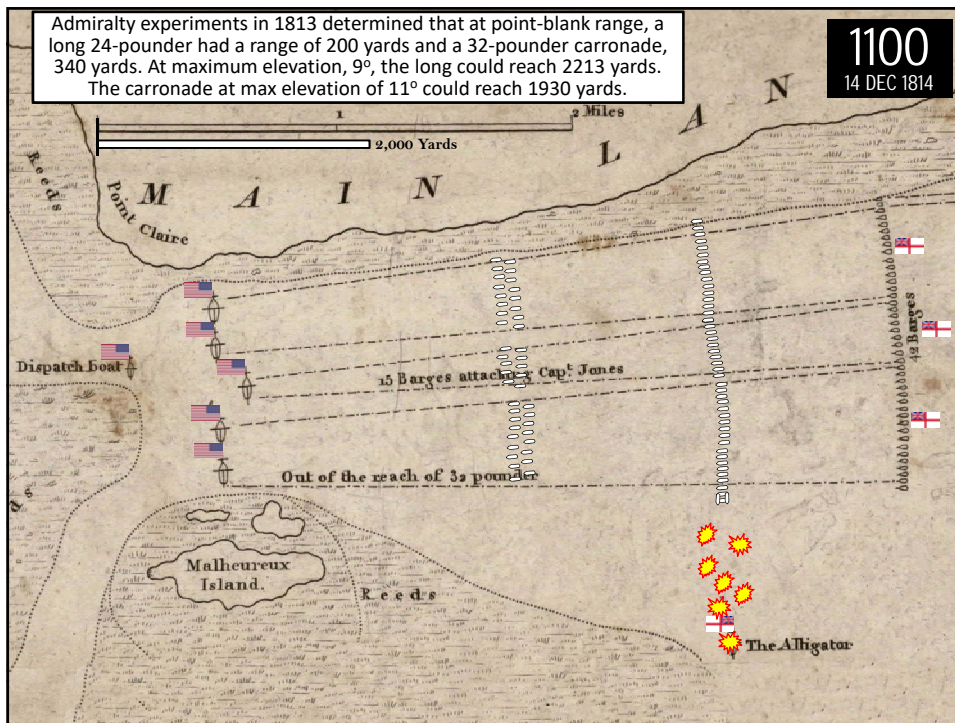
Commodore Daniel Patterson

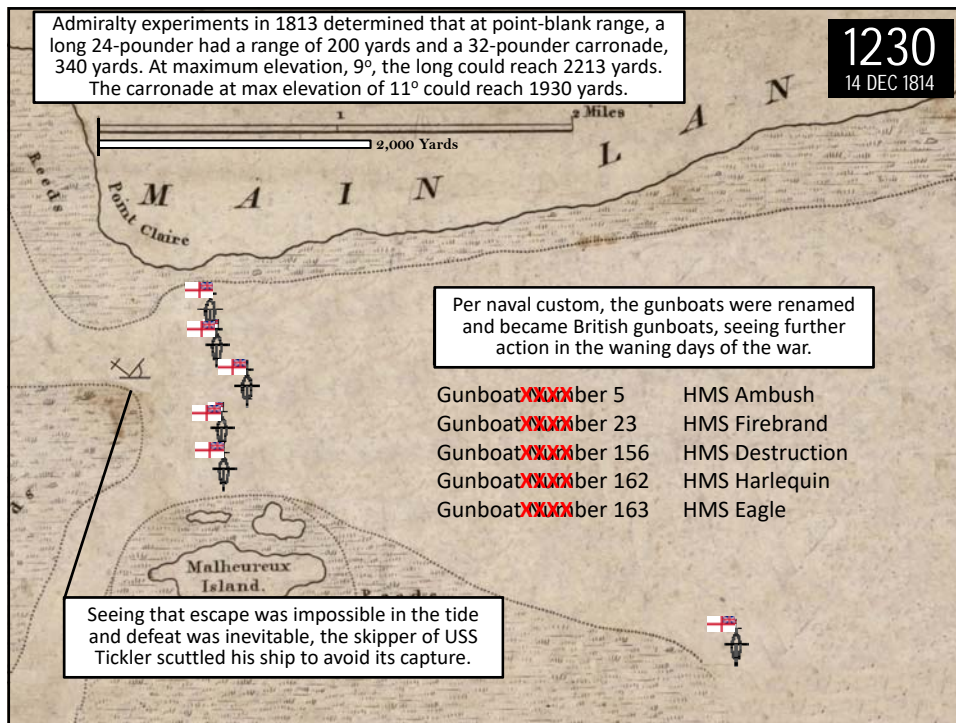











Captain Jean Laffite

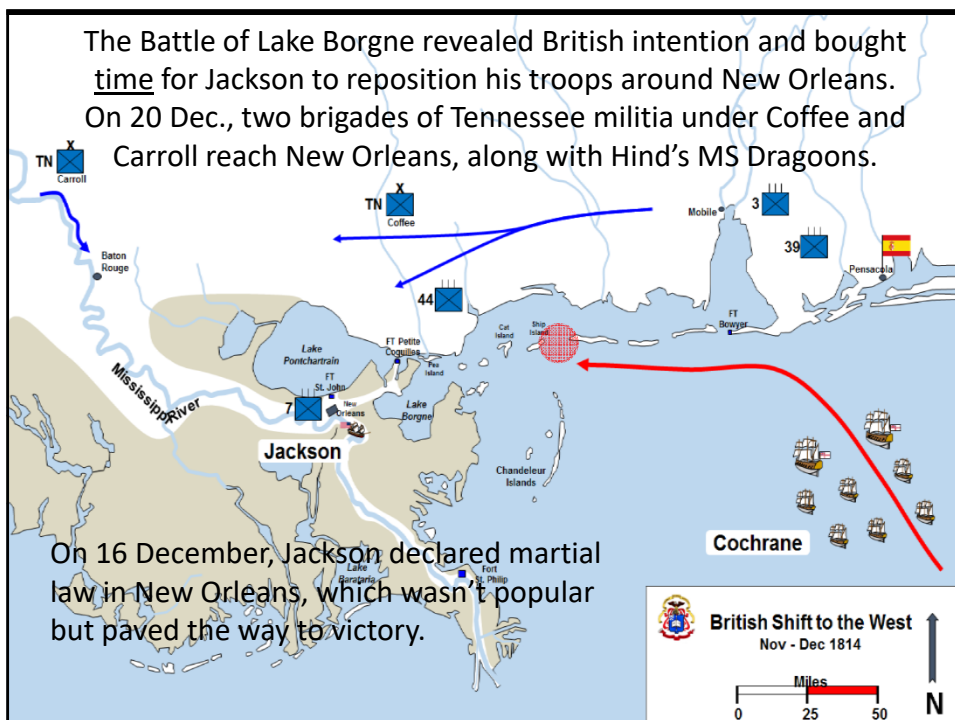


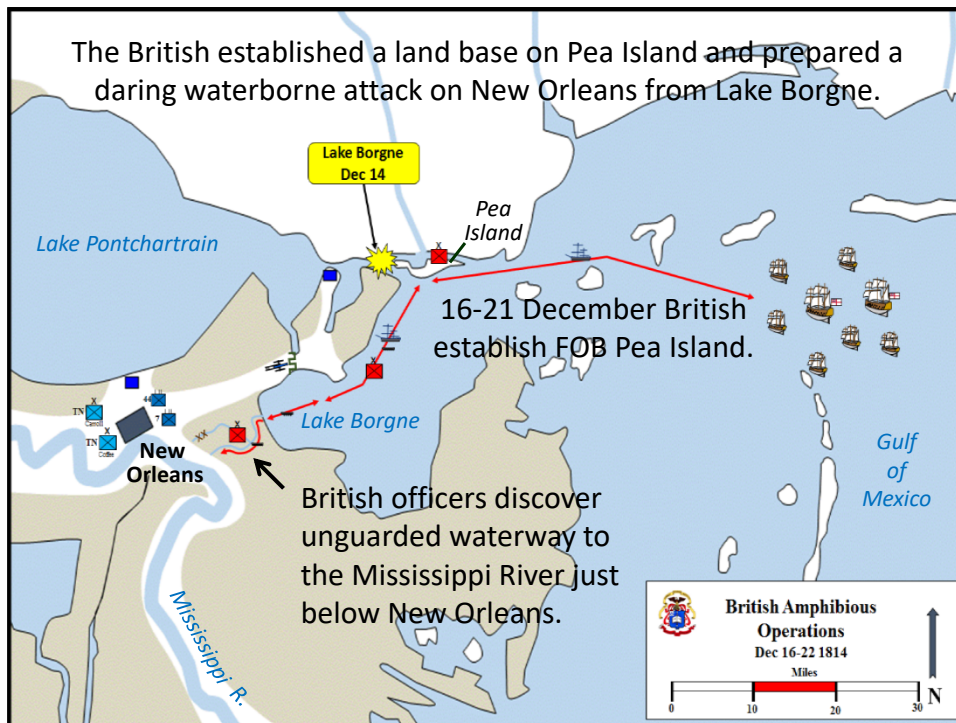






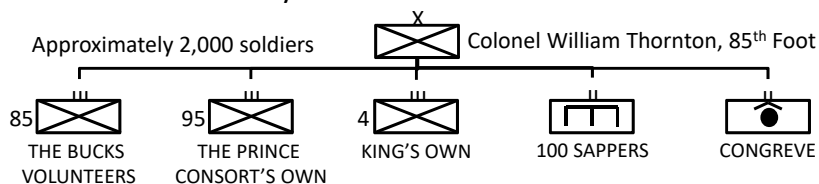
The Battle of Lake Borgne, 13-14 December 1814	
Belligerents	
 United States (incl. State militias)	 United Kingdom
Major units involved	
 5 gunboats Nos. 156, 163, 5, 23, 162	 North American Station
 Sloop-of-War USS <i>Alligator</i>	42 armed open boats (from British fleet)
 Sloop-of-War USS <i>Tickler</i>	Royal Navy
U.S. Navy	Royal Marines
U.S. Marines	
Commanders and leaders	
 Commodore Daniel Patterson, USN	 Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane
 Lieutenant Thomas Jones, USN (WIA)	Commander Nicholas Lockyer, RN (WIA)
Strength	
180 men	1200 sailors and Royal Marines
Casualties	
5 gunboats captured	2 armed boats sunk
1 sloop captured (USS <i>Alligator</i>)	unknown armed boats damaged
1 sloop scuttled (USS <i>Tickler</i>)	17 killed
6 killed	77 wounded
35 wounded	
86 captured	



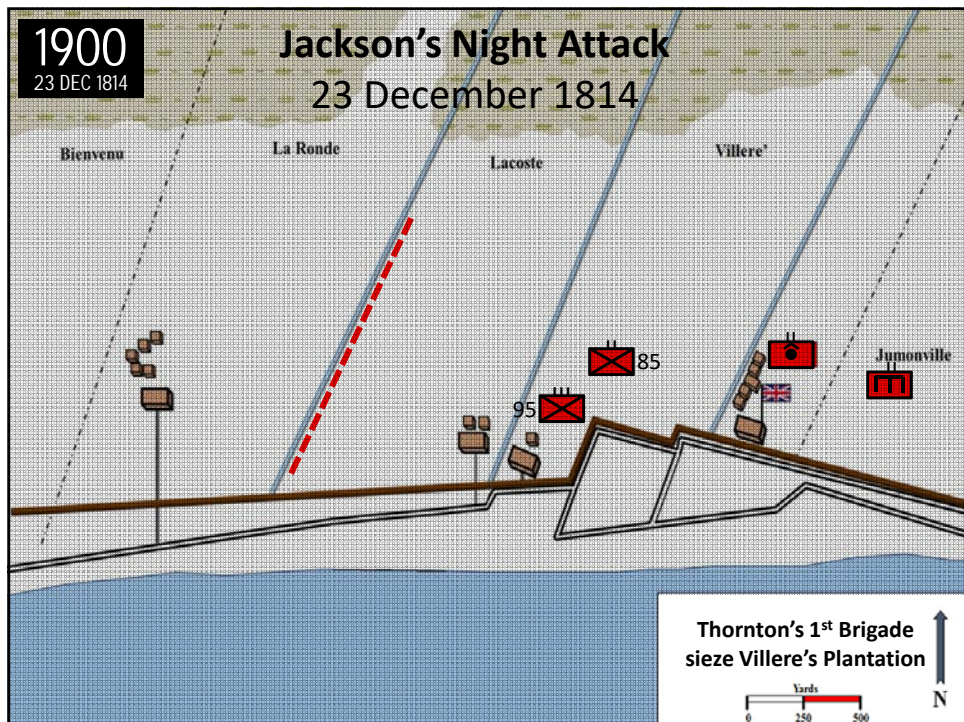
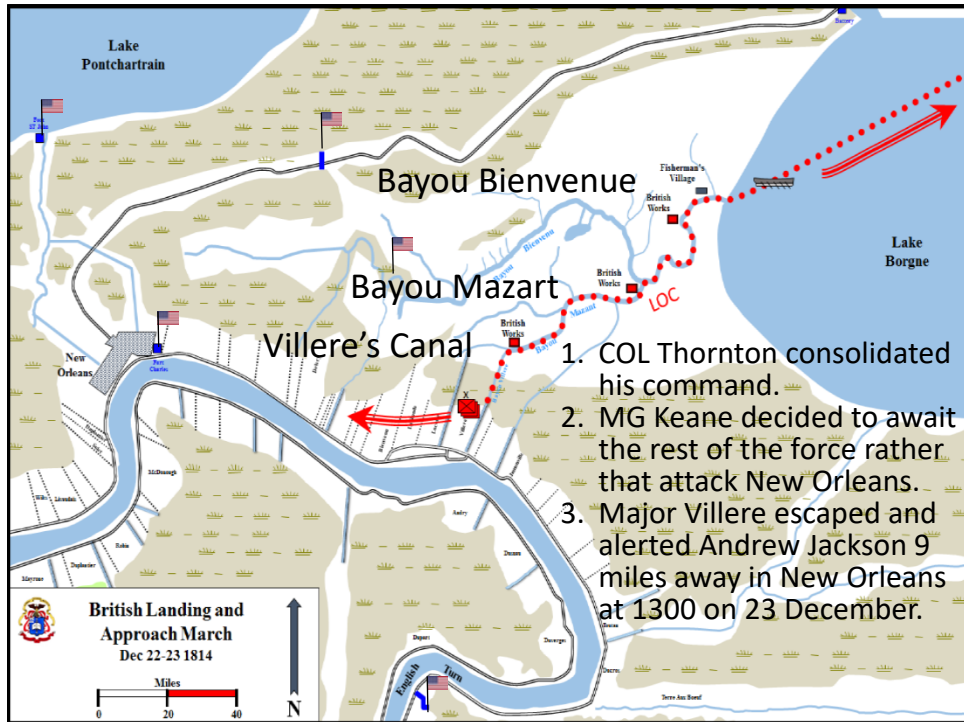


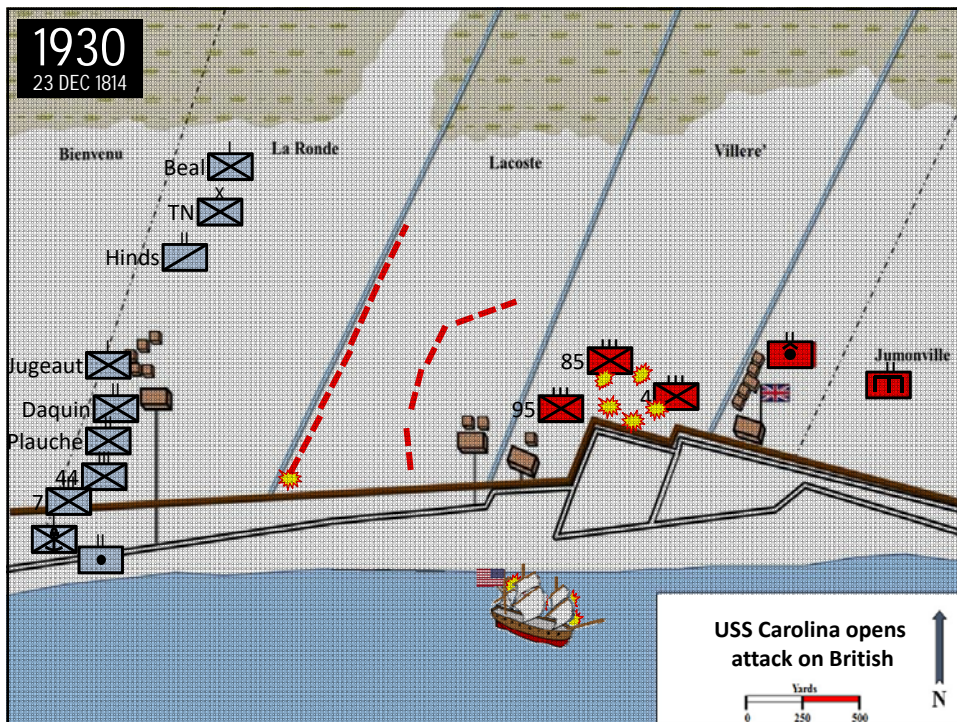
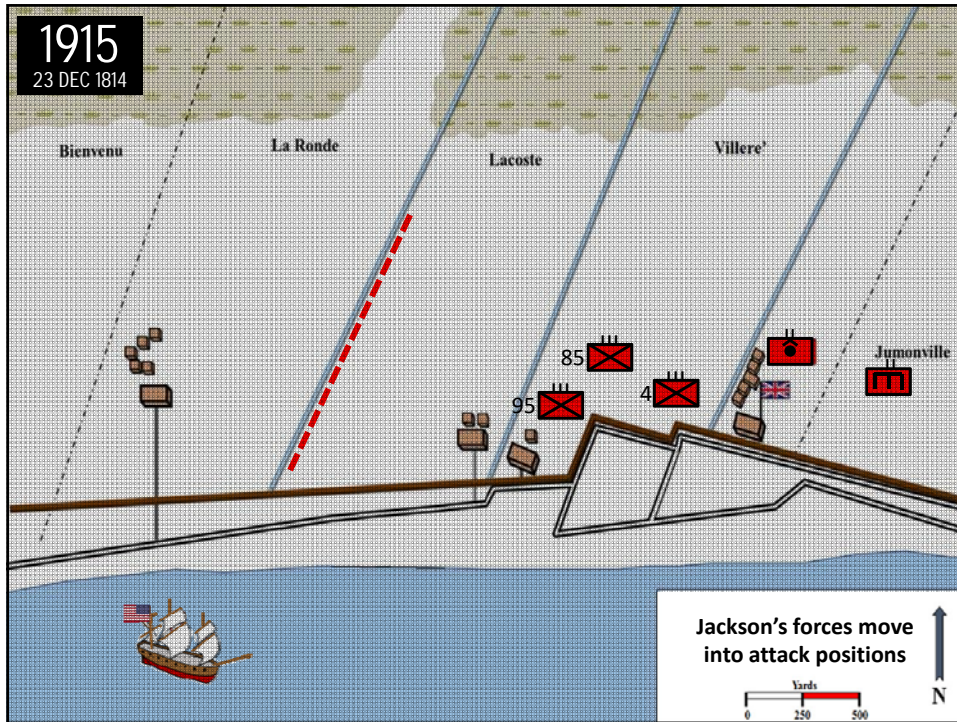
Plan of Attack

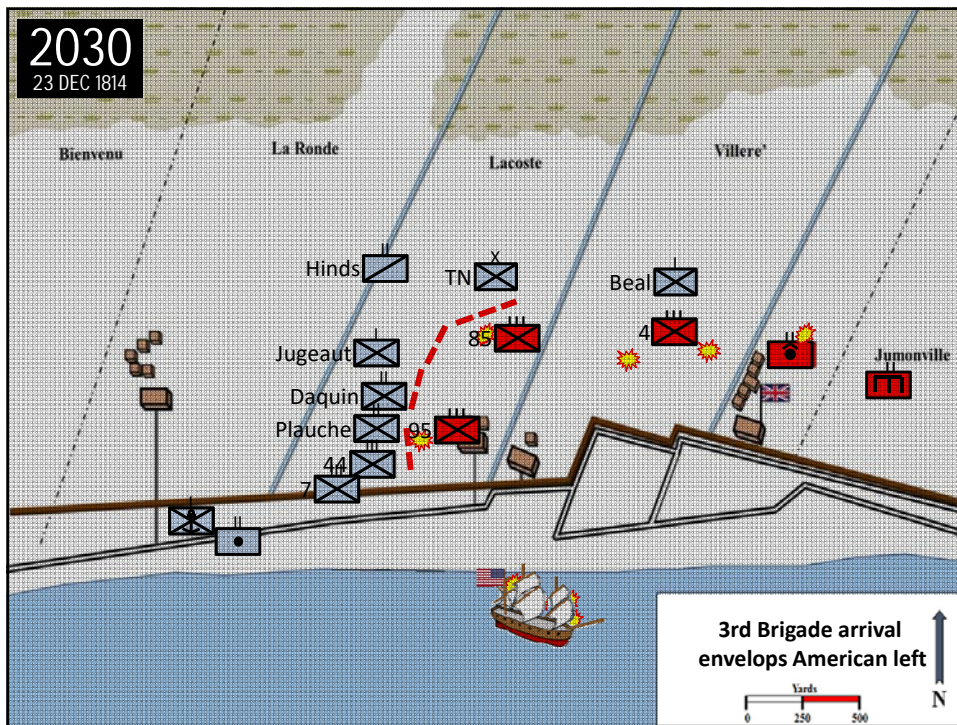
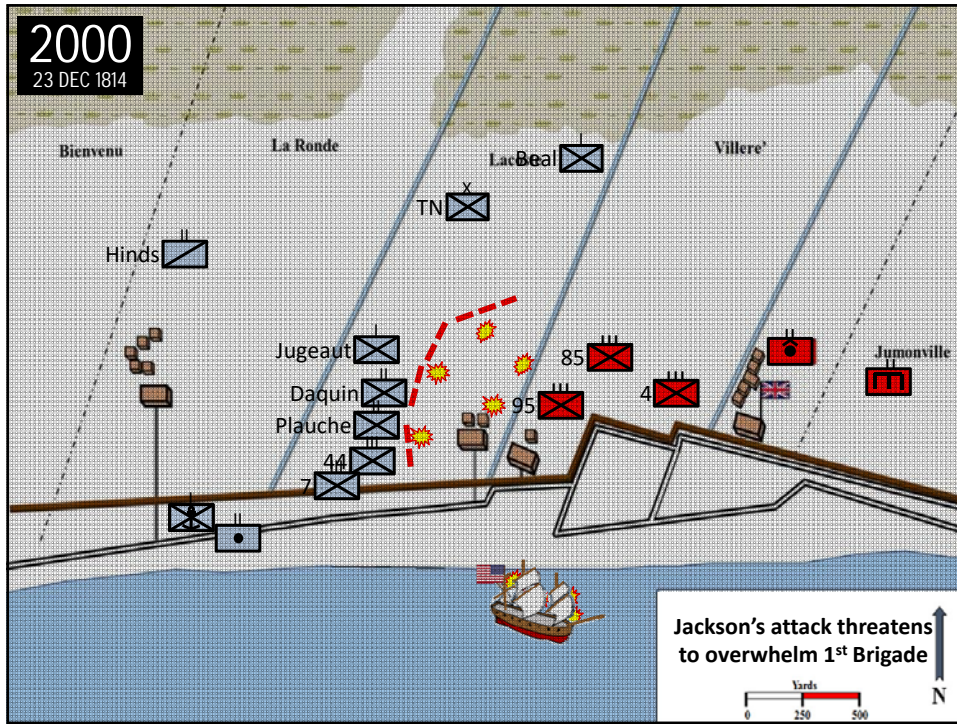
- Establish FOB at Pea Island to consolidate expeditionary force.
- Identify unguarded waterborne passage between Lake Borgne and Mississippi River to bypass American forts and batteries.
- Reorganise troops into three brigades for assault, with a brigade to be transported to the landing in each lift.
- Lead brigade cross Lake Borgne in shallow draft barges and continue down Bayou Bienvenue.

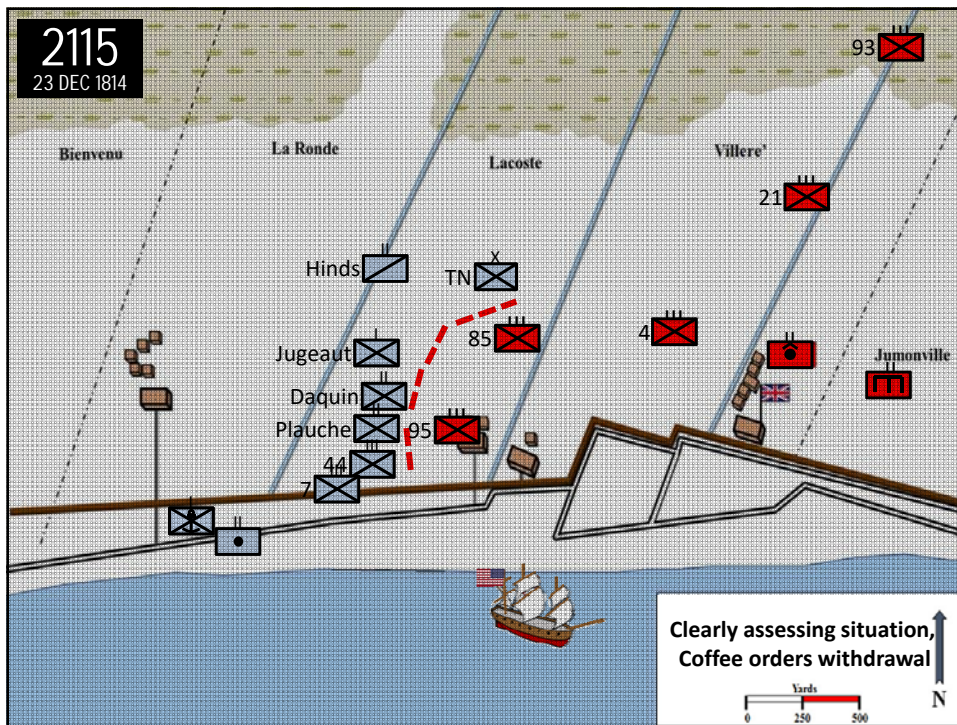
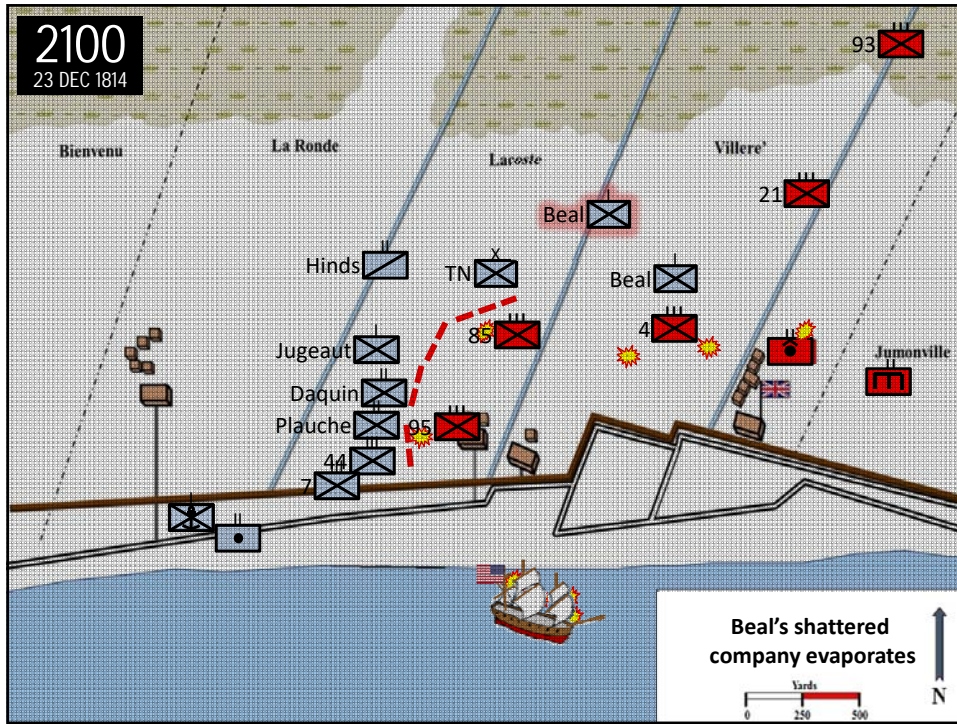


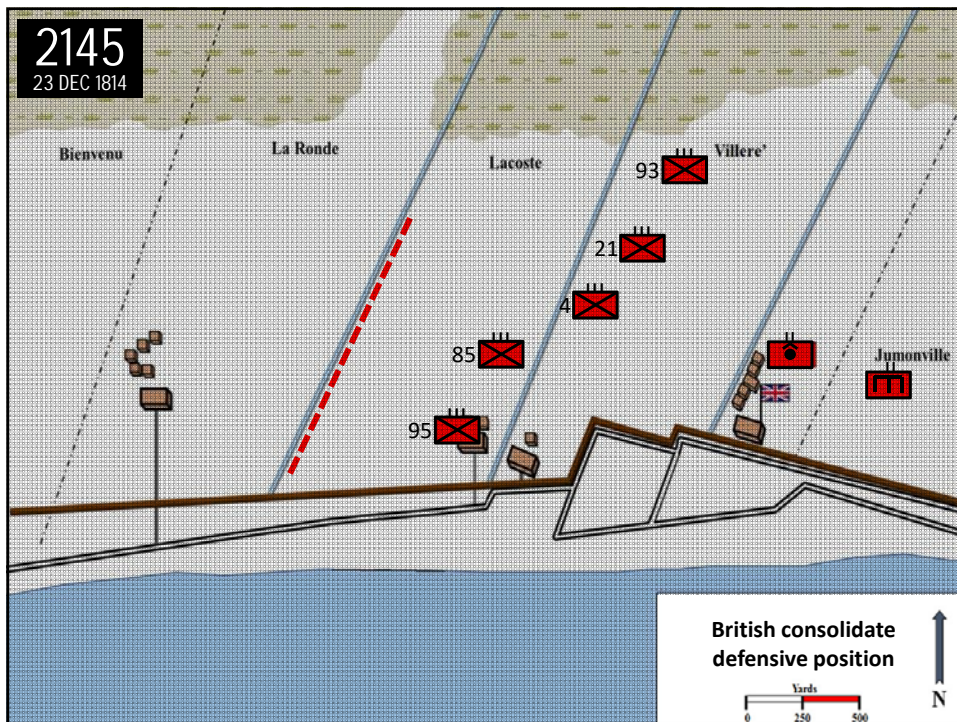
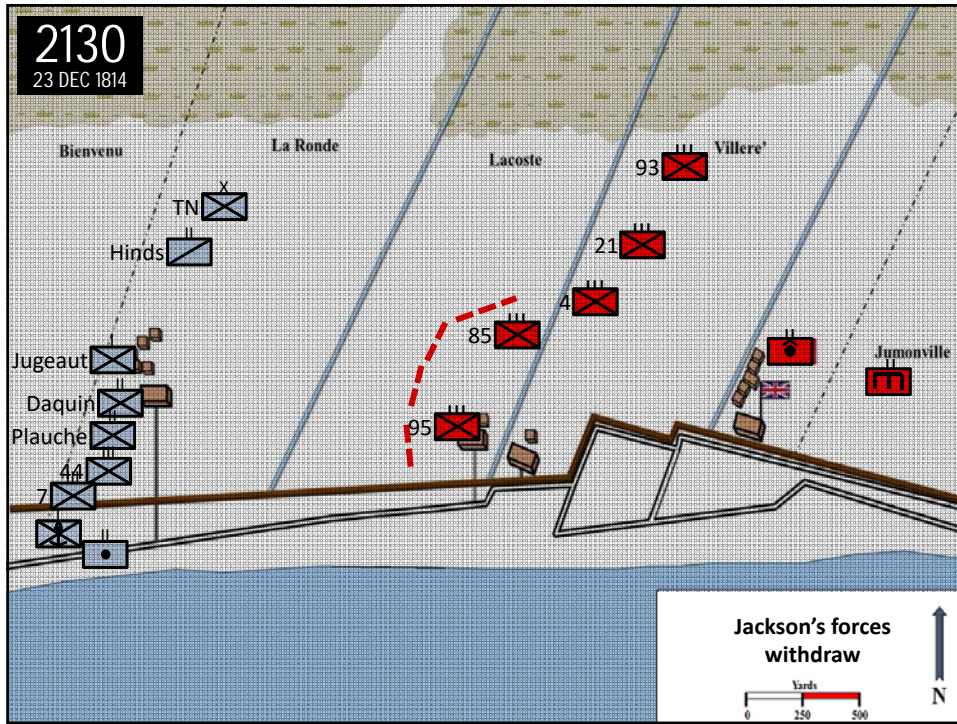
- Once at the Mississippi, send barges back for next brigade.
- With all brigades landed, the barges would move artillery, etc.
- Assault and capture New Orleans.






















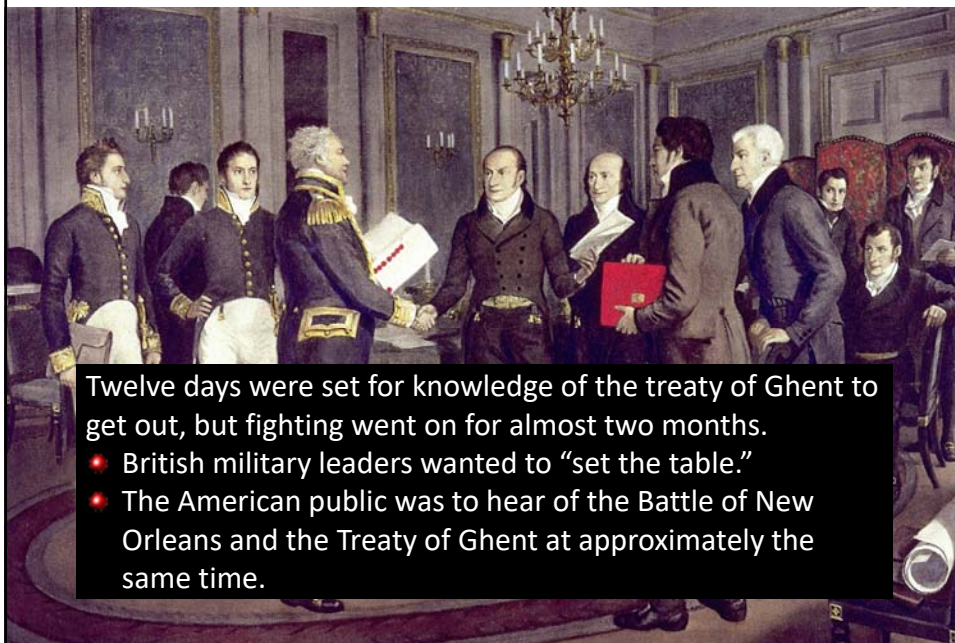






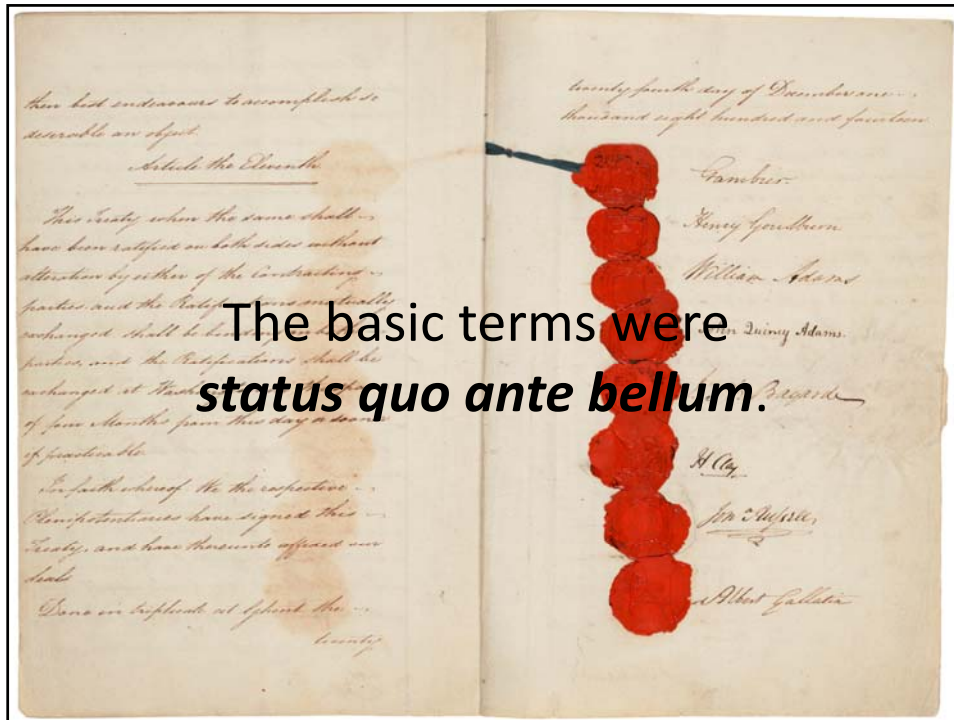
Jackson's Night Attack, 23 December 1814	
Belligerents	
 United States (incl. State militias)	 United Kingdom
Major units involved	
 7 th and 44 th US Infantry (regulars)  US Artillery (regulars)  US Marines (detachment)  Coffee's Tennessee Mounted Rifle Bde  Carroll's West Tennessee Militia Bde  Hind's Mississippi Dragoons  Louisiana Militia (various units)  CPT Jugeant's Choctaw Indians  USS (the schooner) Carolina	 Thornton's 1 st Brigade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85th The Bucks Volunteers • 95th Prince Consort's Own • 4th King's Own • Miscellaneous others  Keane's 3 rd Brigade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21st Royal Scot Fusiliers (enter 2100) • 93rd Sutherland Highlanders (2100)
Commanders and leaders	
 Major General Andrew Jackson  Major General John Coffee	 MG John Keane, Actg CinC, 3d Bde Cdr  COL William Thornton, Thornton's Bde
Strength	
2,287 men	2,000-2,500
Casualties	
24 KIA, 115 WIA, 74 MIA (9% casualties)	46 KIA, 167 WIA, 64 MIA (11-14% casualties)

24 December 1814 – Treaty of Ghent ends the war



Twelve days were set for knowledge of the treaty of Ghent to get out, but fighting went on for almost two months.

- British military leaders wanted to "set the table."
- The American public was to hear of the Battle of New Orleans and the Treaty of Ghent at approximately the same time.



The basic terms were
status quo ante bellum.

Pakenham reaches Villere Plantation

- 25 December, Major General The Honourable Sir Edward Pakenham, GCB, arrived in camp.
- The 36 year old brother-in-law of Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, was a veteran of the Irish Rebellion of 1798, Frontier and West Indies duties, and the Napoleonic Wars. He commanded a regiment at Bussaco and the Third Division at Salamanca, where he distinguished himself to win a Gold Cross:

'Ned, d'ye see those fellows on the hill? Throw your division into column; at them and drive them to the devil.'
- In September 1814, Pakenham, having been promoted to the rank of major general, accepted an offer to replace General Robert Ross as commander of the British North American army, after Ross was killed during the skirmishing prior to the Battle of North Point near Baltimore.
- He and 2IC MG Gibbs arrive at Villere' to find a **dispirited army**.

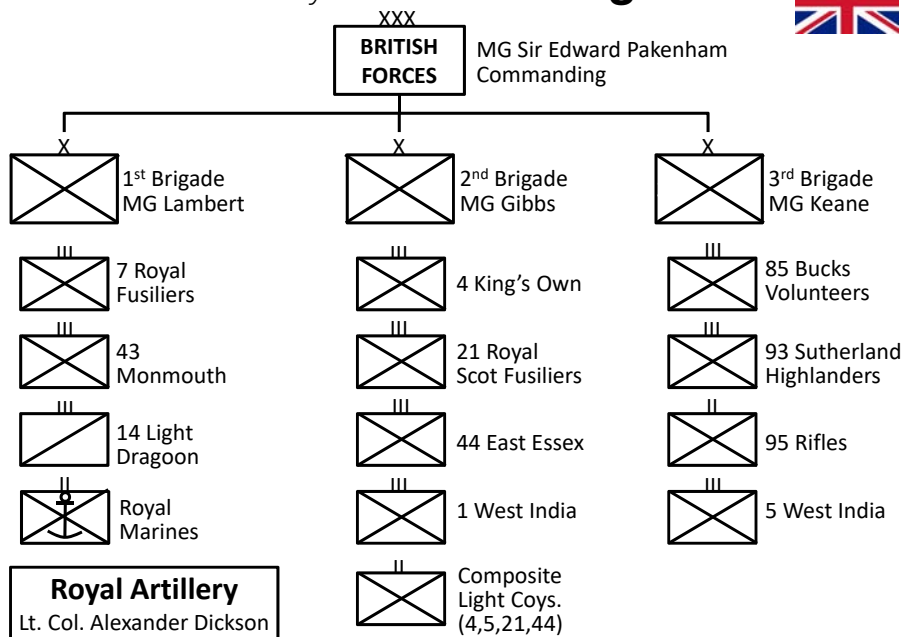




Immediate issues facing Pakenham

- Unsuitable terrain (a greatly confined space between a dense swamp and a broad river at the end of a 60 mile long LOC).
- Lack of supplies or any amenity.
- Failure to attack immediately on 23 December upon arrival.
- Being surprised that evening and losing the night battle.
- Lacking cavalry for reconnaissance, while the enemy made effective use of cavalry for screening and raids.
- Increasing casualties resulting from West Indians' sicknesses.
- Failure to muster local French Creoles to the cause.
- Ongoing bombardment from schooners Louisiana and Carolina.
- Unethical nightly "hunts" of British pickets **even in the camp**.
- Choctaw Indian patrols of the swamp on the British right flank (and their blood curdling war cry as yet another sentinel died).
- Never-ending harassment of the British camp. They found themselves under fire and stood-to several times a night.

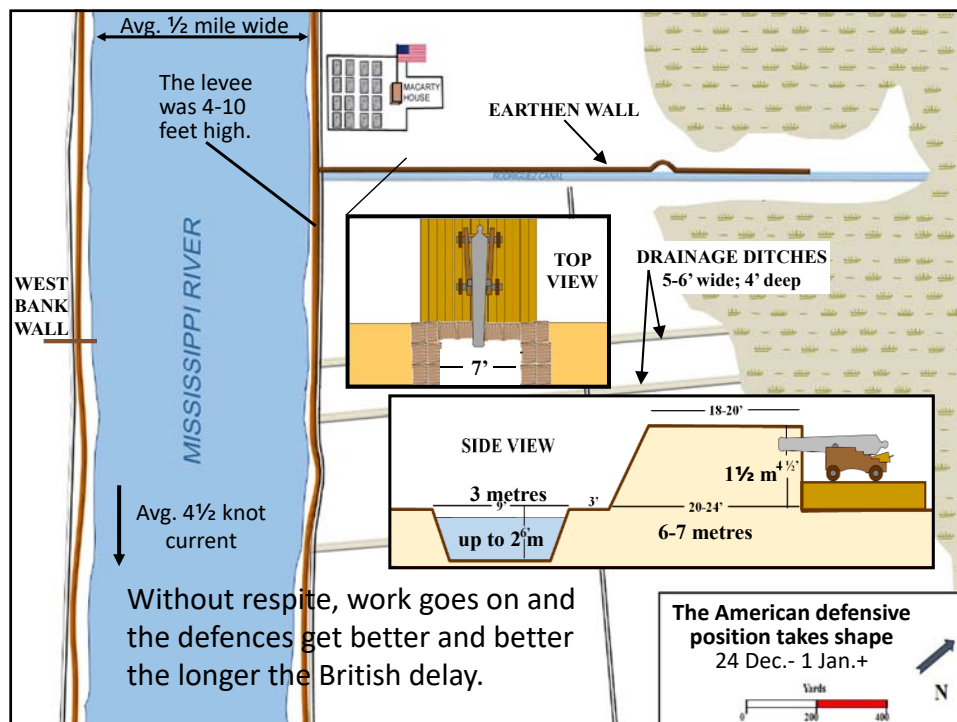
The Military Solution - Reorganise

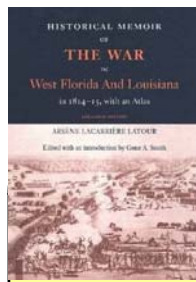




During this time

- Jackson built a strong defensive position along the empty Rodriguez Canal (a disused sawmill millrace between the Chalmette and Macarty plantations) with a second line at the Dupre Plantation and a third at the Montreuil Plantation.
- The levee was cut to flood ground between him and the British. Alas, the river level eventually receded leaving mud.
- With building materials and equipment from New Orleans, troops worked as in the Bible, 50% on watch and 50% on tools.
- Forces were realigned. BG Morgan left British Turn (below Villere) and set up a defensive and artillery position across the Mississippi.
- To buy time, Master Commandant Patterson was requested to have the Louisiana and Carolina bombard the British around-the-clock.
- Significantly, Jackson actively sought and placed as much artillery as possible in stout embrasures.





Per Major Arsène Lacarrière Latour, Jackson's chief engineer:

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.



Major Tatum, Jackson's topographical engineer, wrote:

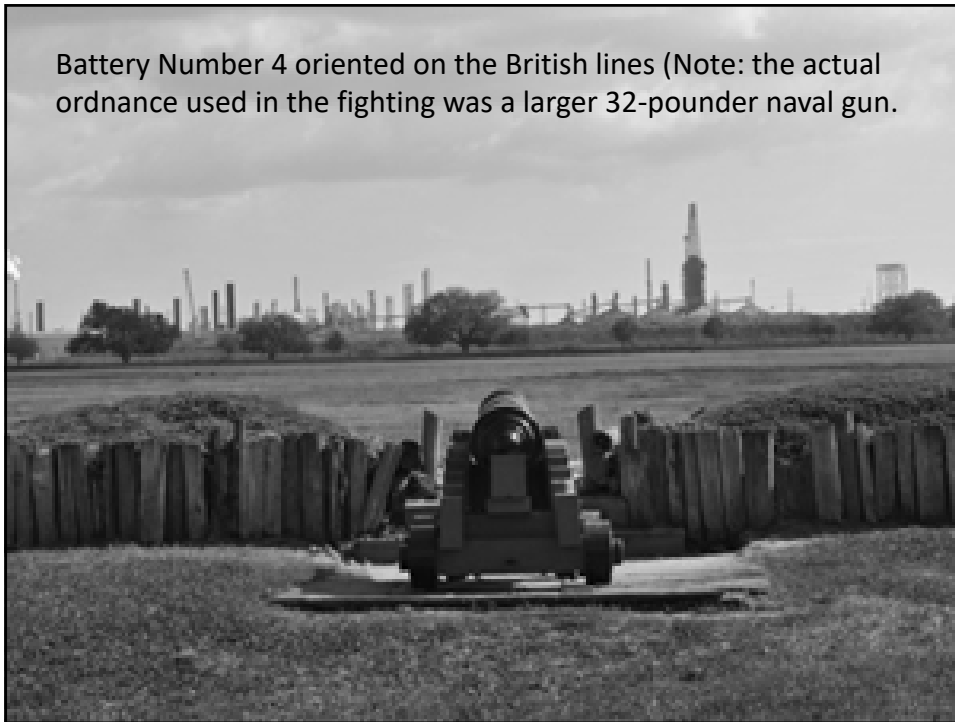
The Canal, behind which the Army retired, was large, and stretched from the river (nearly at right angle) a considerable distance into a thick, and almost, impenetrable swamp, which commenced at the distance of about 600 yds. to the left of the river. On the upper side, and on the bank, of this Canal 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.



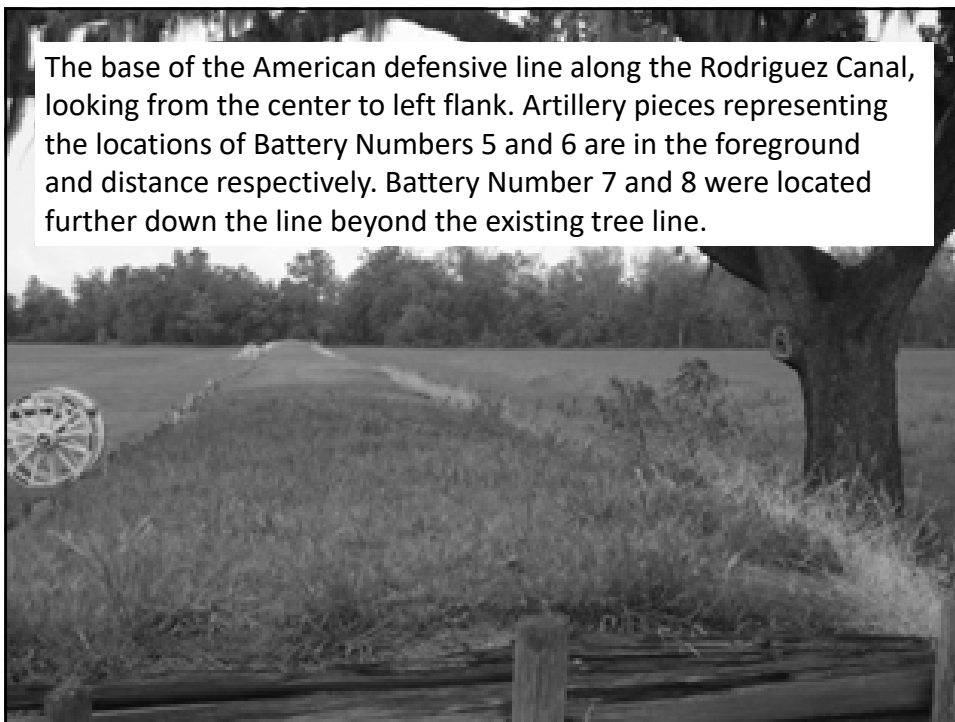
Captain Benson Hill, overseeing a battery along the British forward line described the effects of the 1 January bombardment on the American line.

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."

Battery Number 4 oriented on the British lines (Note: the actual ordnance used in the fighting was a larger 32-pounder naval gun.)



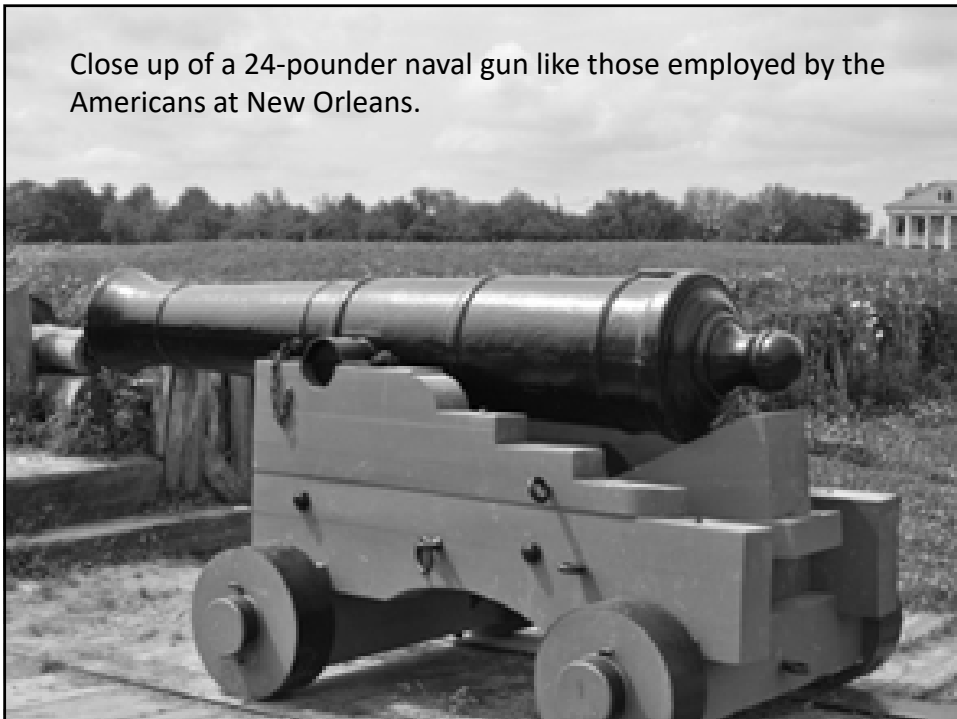
The base of the American defensive line along the Rodriguez Canal, looking from the center to left flank. Artillery pieces representing the locations of Battery Numbers 5 and 6 are in the foreground and distance respectively. Battery Number 7 and 8 were located further down the line beyond the existing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



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.



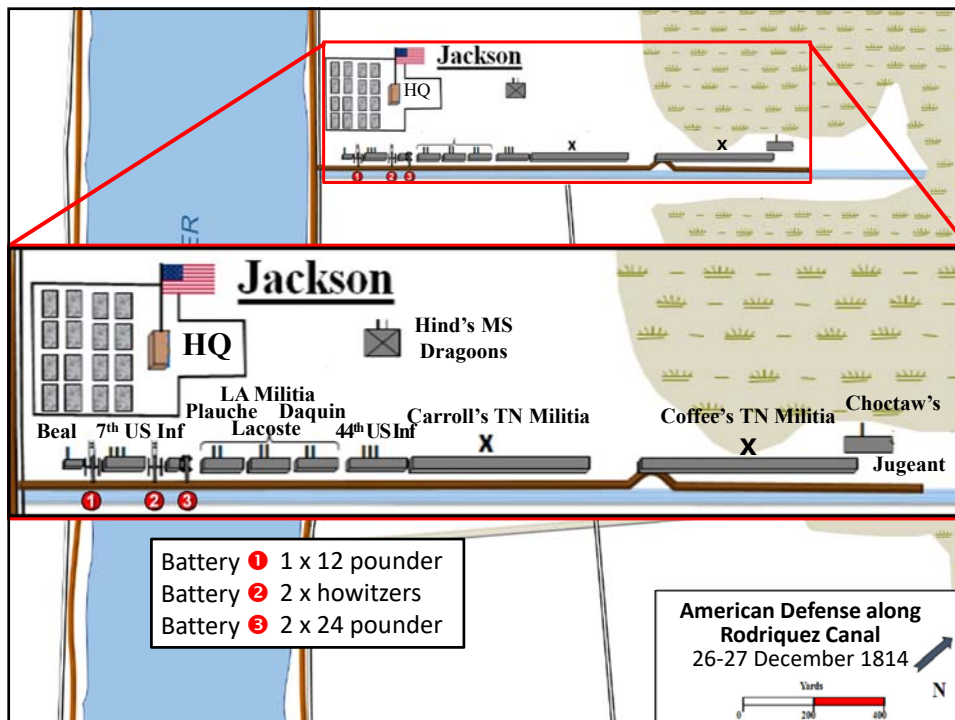
Close up of a 24-pounder naval gun like those employed by the Americans at New Orleans.

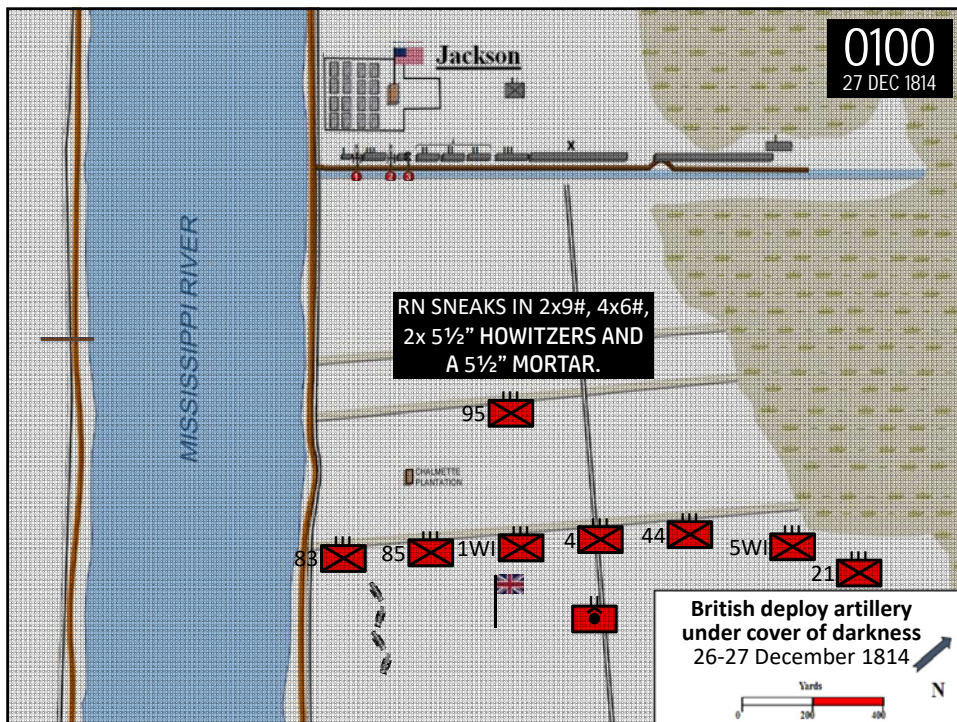
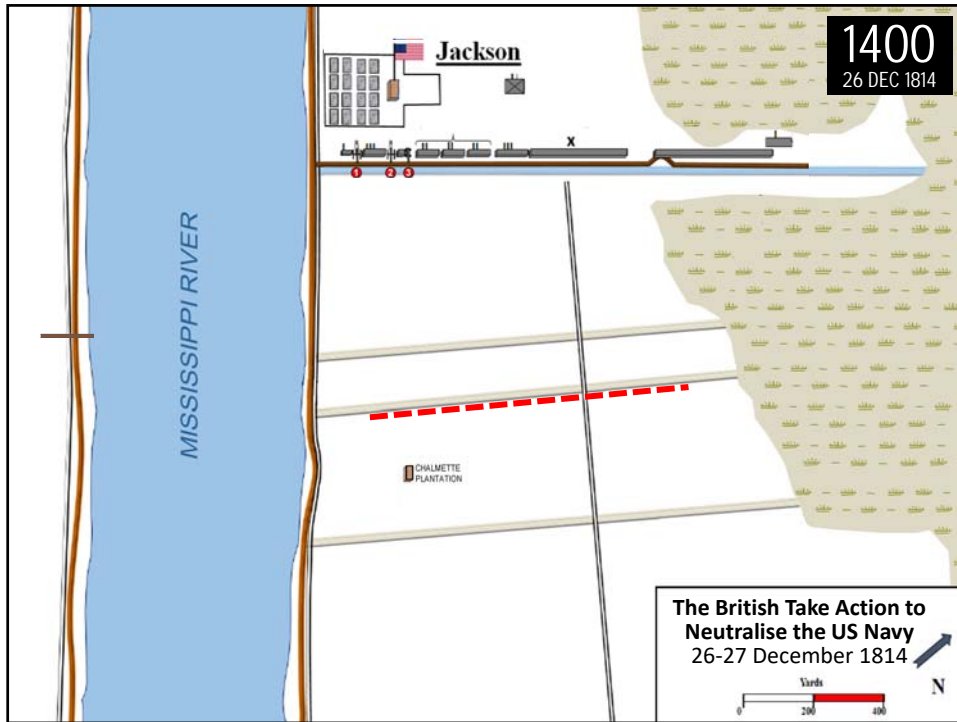


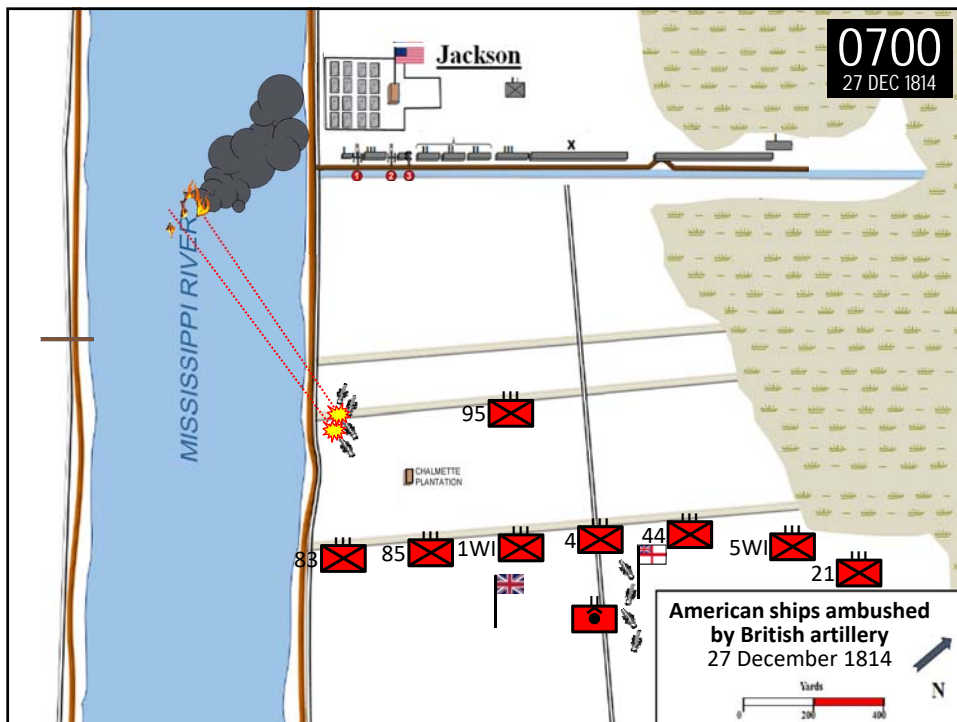
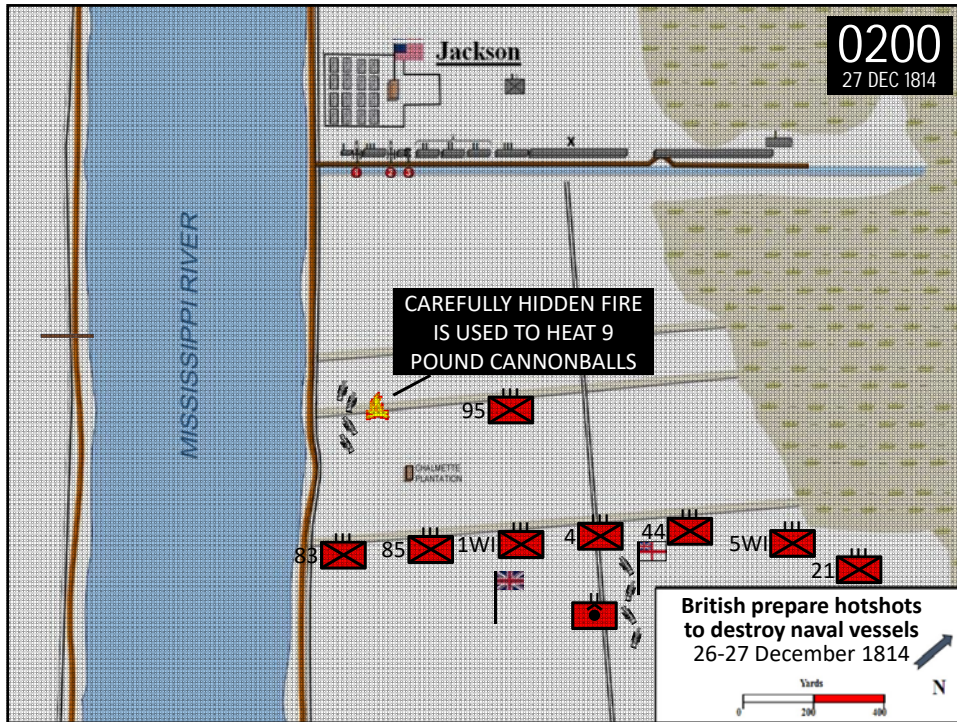


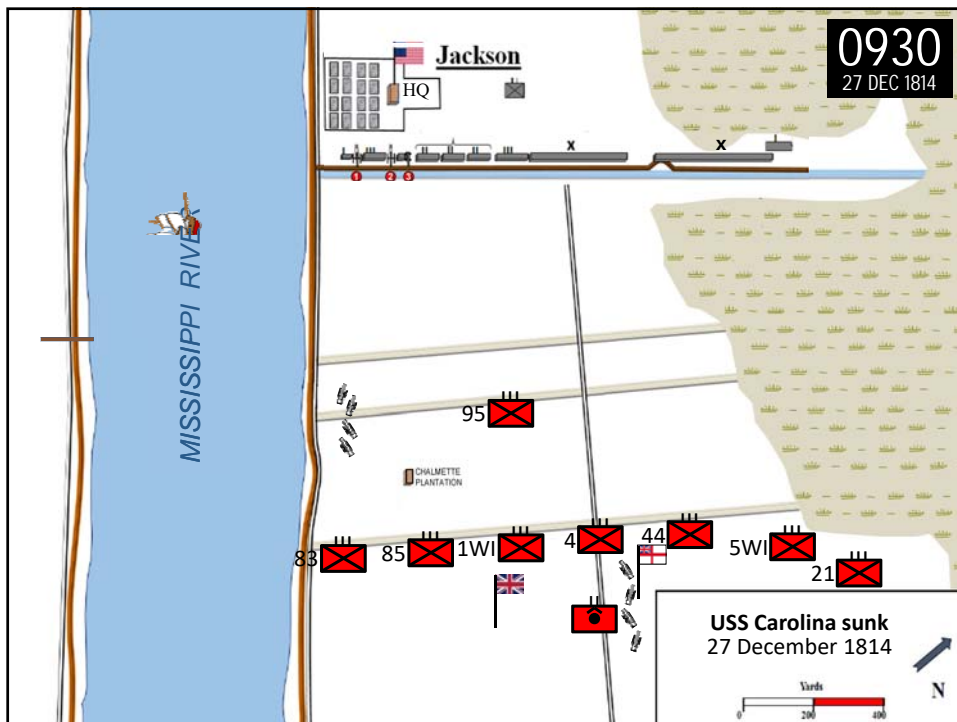
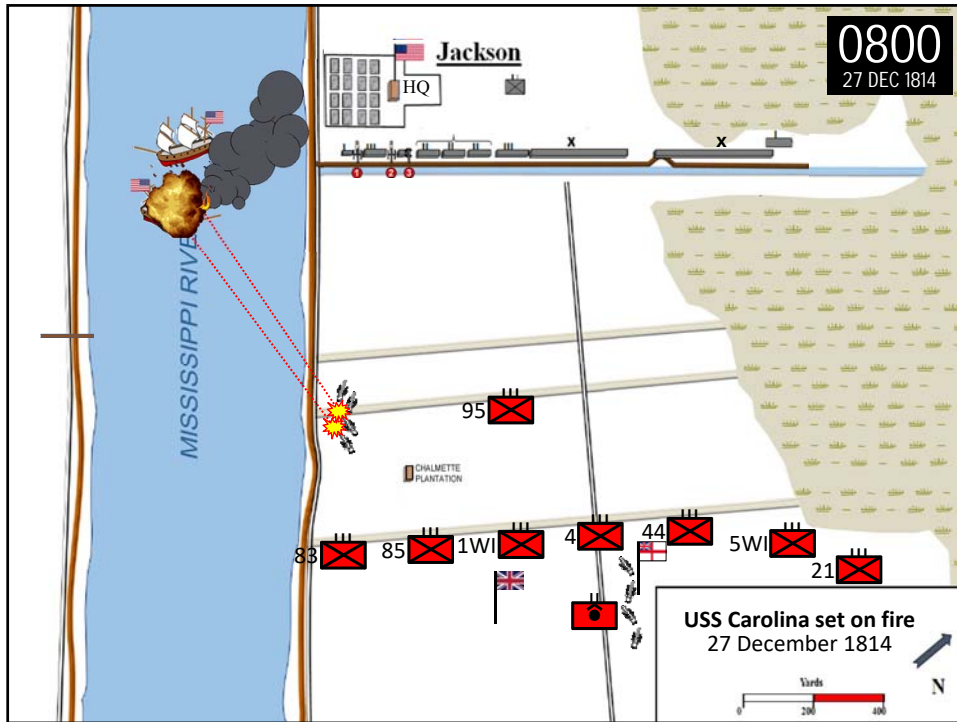
Pakenham's Cunning Plan

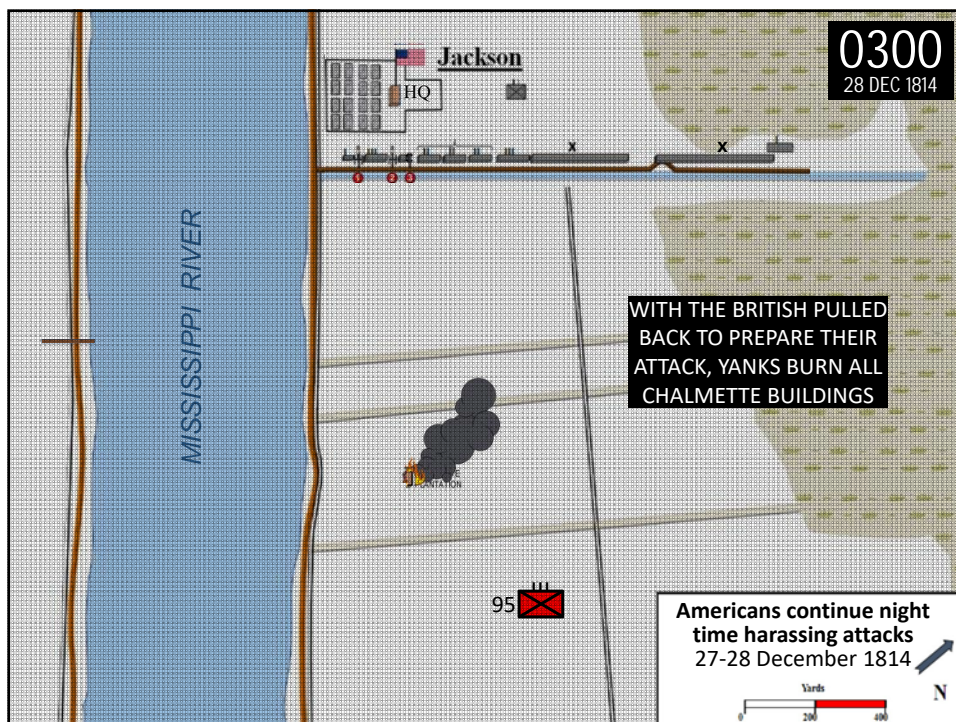
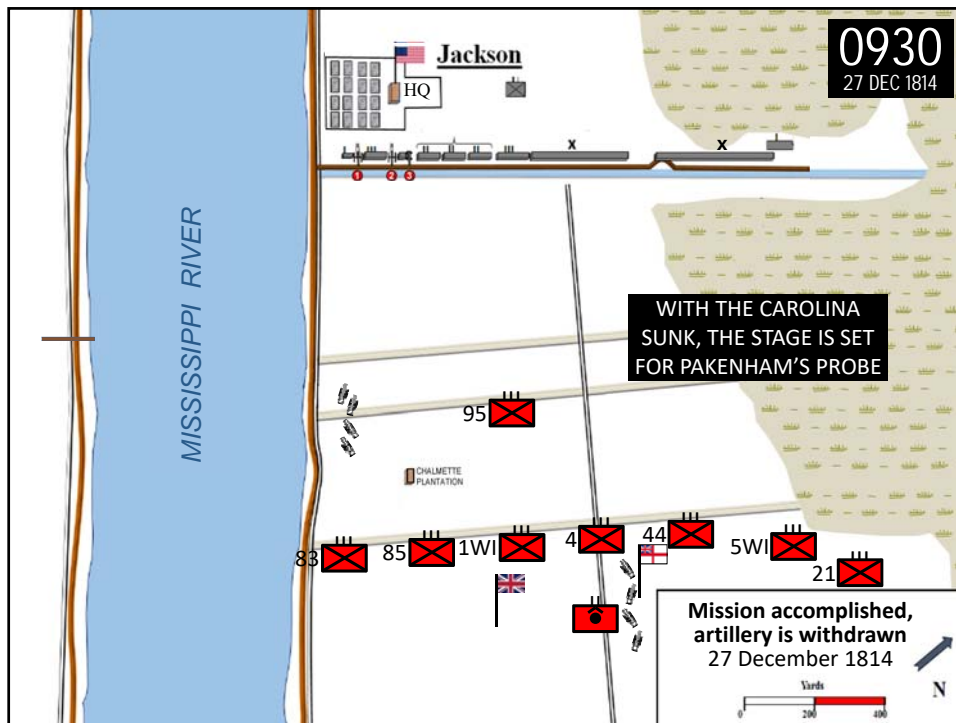
- Pakenham was in no doubt about Andrew Jackson's intentions. So he moved north and occupied the Chalmette Plantation on 27 December. Its buildings stood 500-600 from the line.
- Jackson's use of terrain left the British with only two options:
 1. Frontal attack, OR
 2. A very difficult withdrawal.
- Pakenham chose to stay in his current position, as chosen by Cochrane and Keane before his arrival.
- Pakenham viewed the enemy as substandard and no match for disciplined and seasoned British troops.
- He decided on a limited attack of two brigades abreast to find any weaknesses. A full attack could focus on any found.
- To neutralise the naval guns, the RN brought in 2 9-pounders, four 6-pounders, 2 5.5' howitzers and a 5.5" mortar. The gunners heated 9 pounder shot (hot shot) from 0200 onwards.

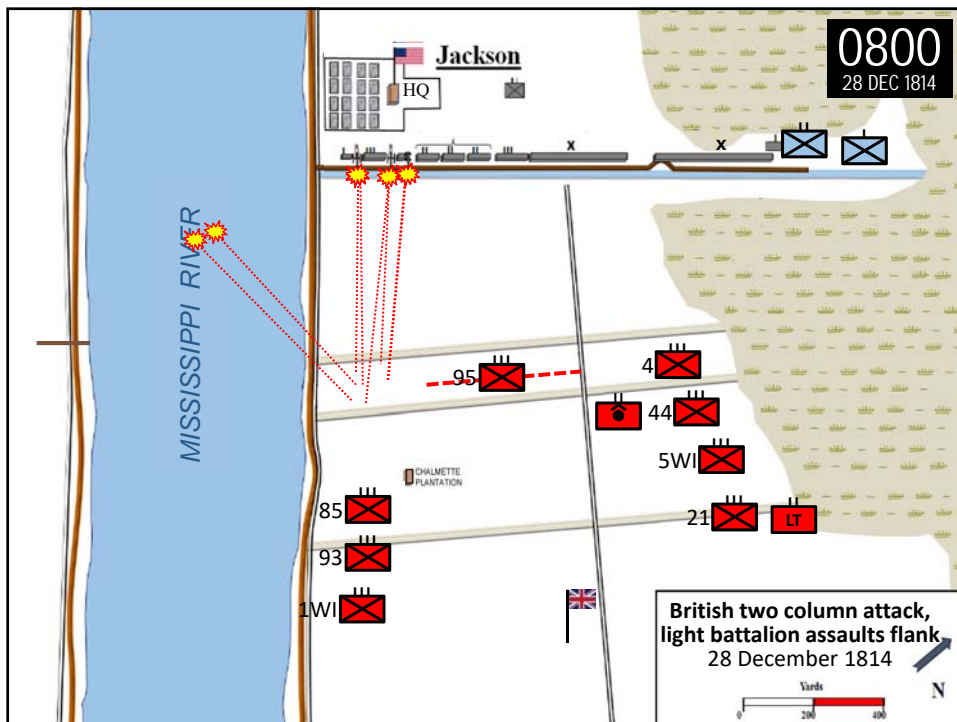
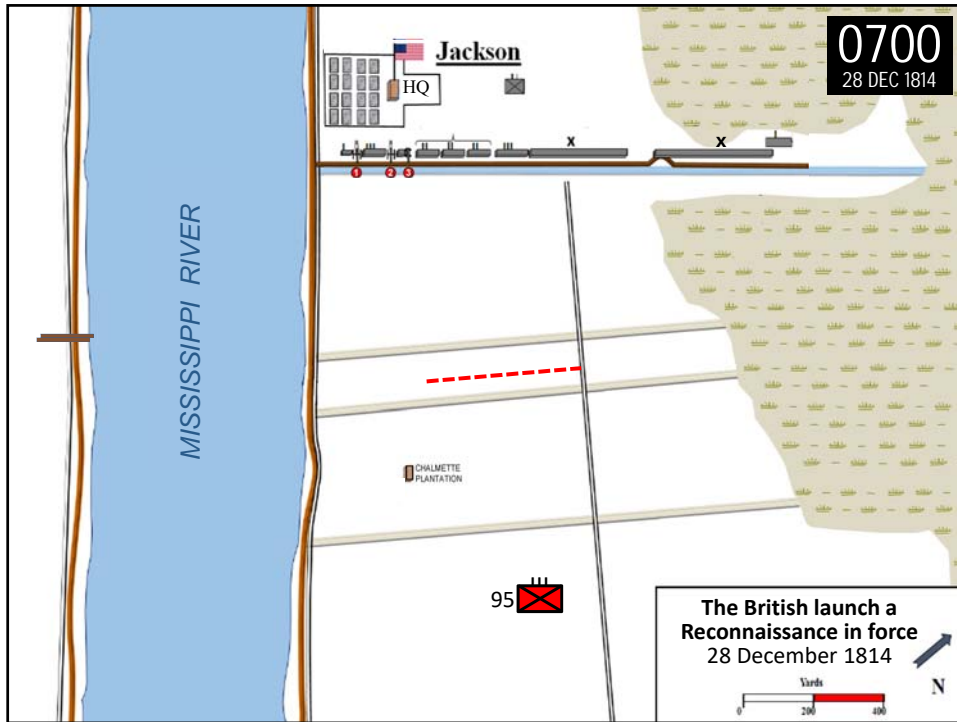


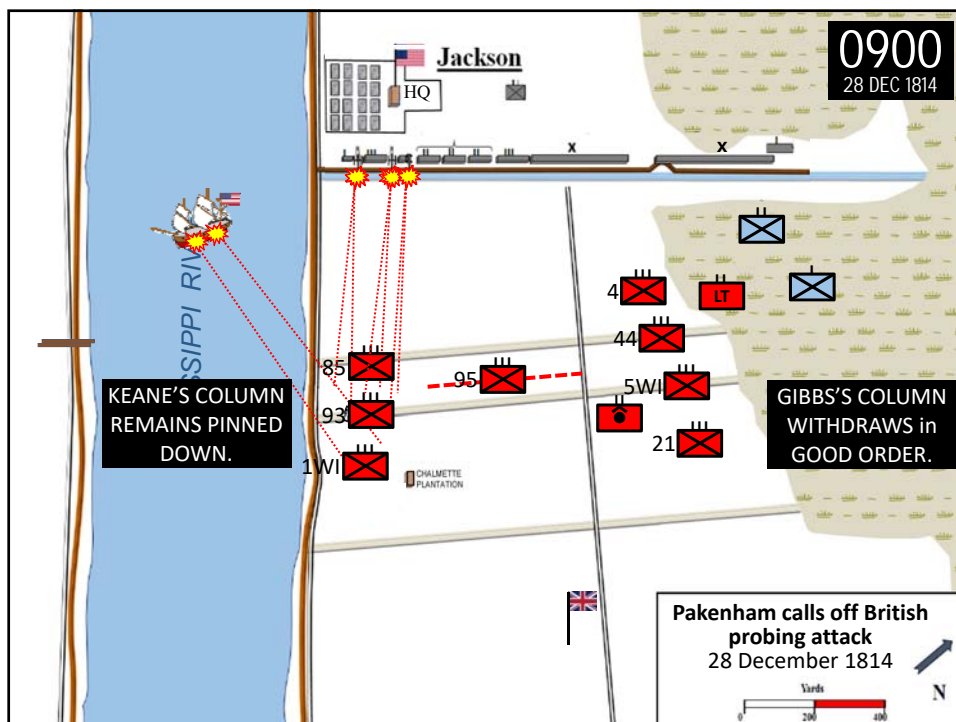
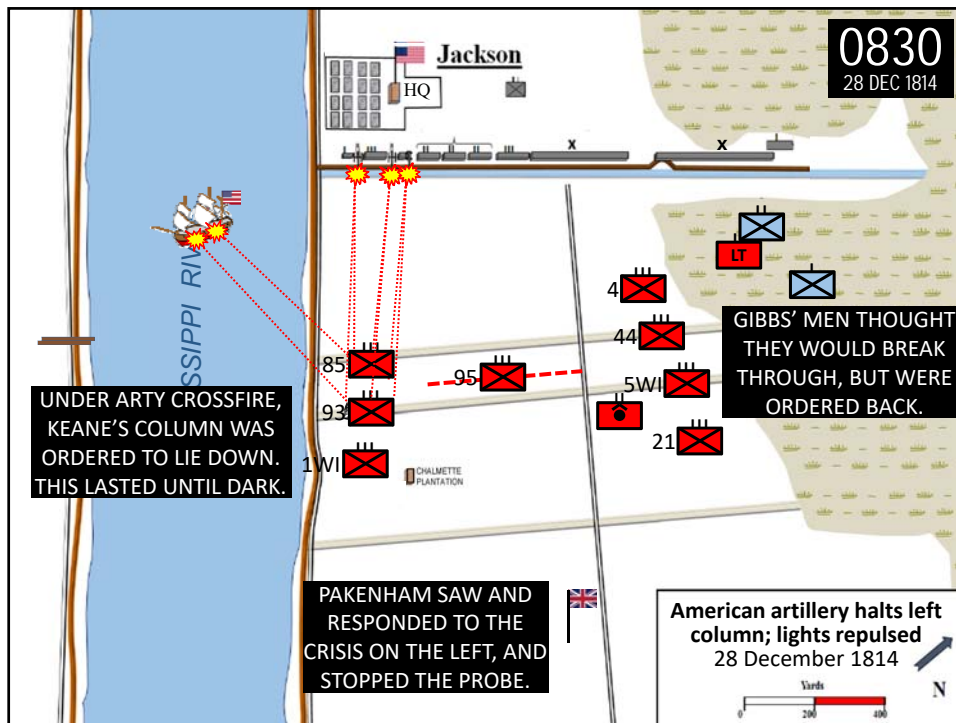


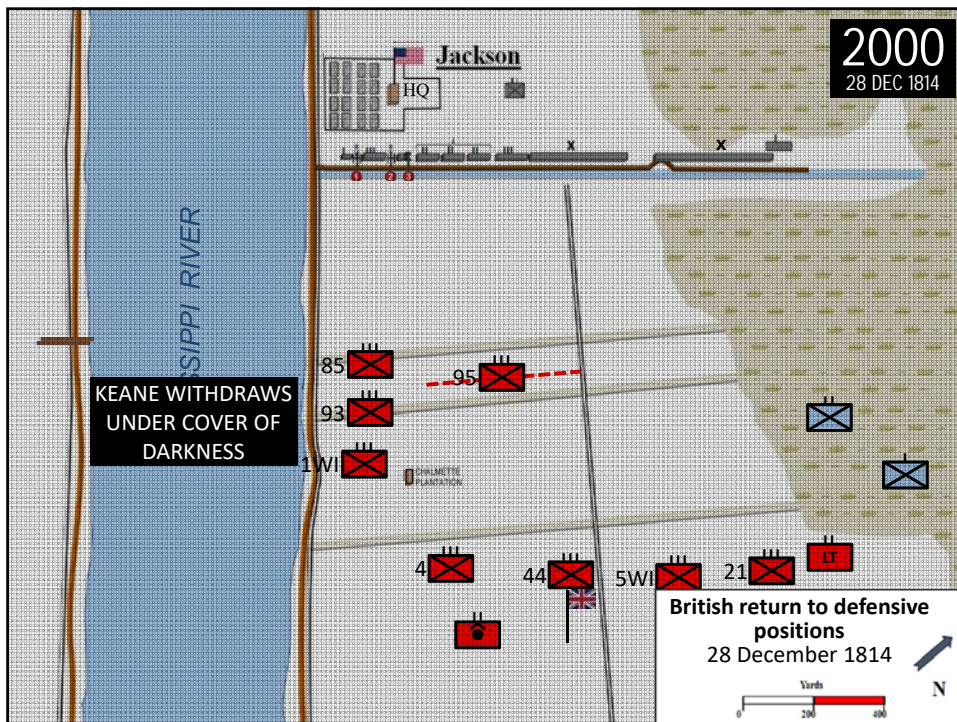
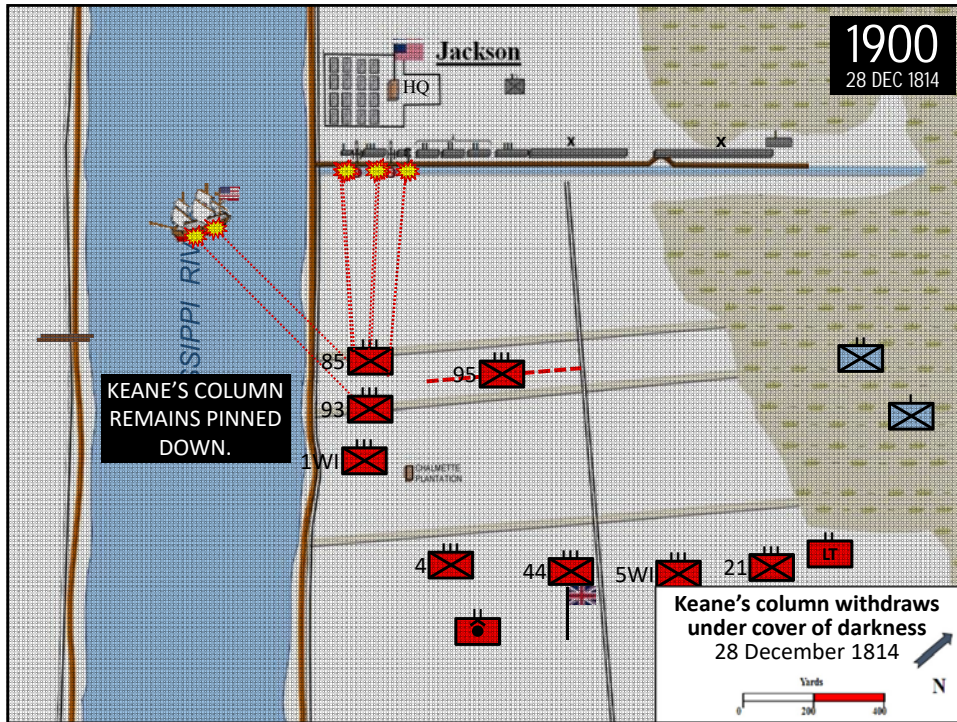


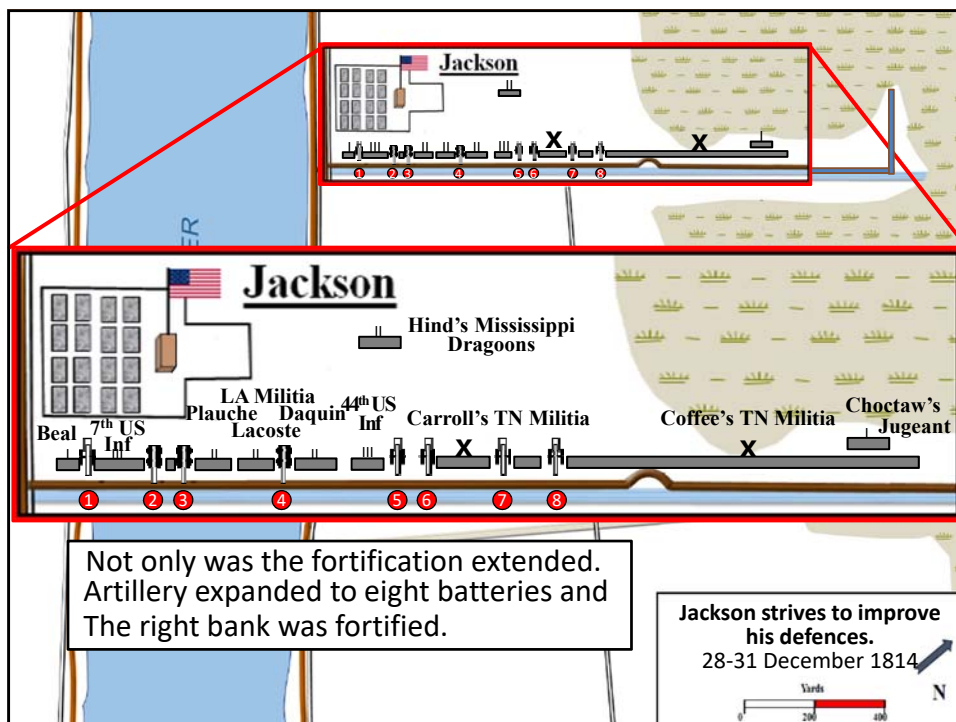
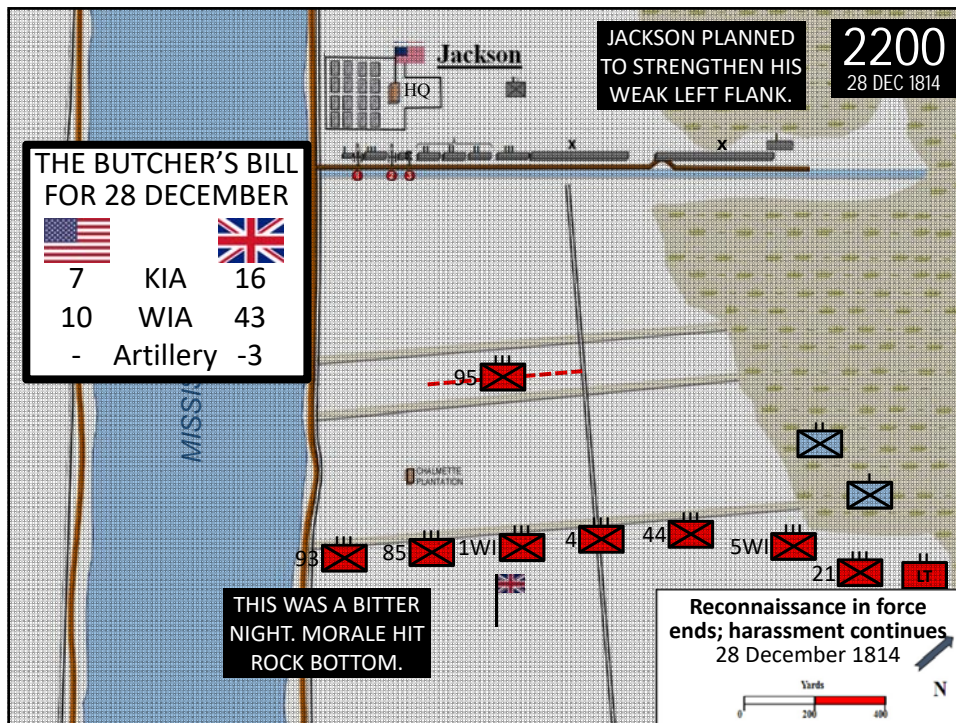


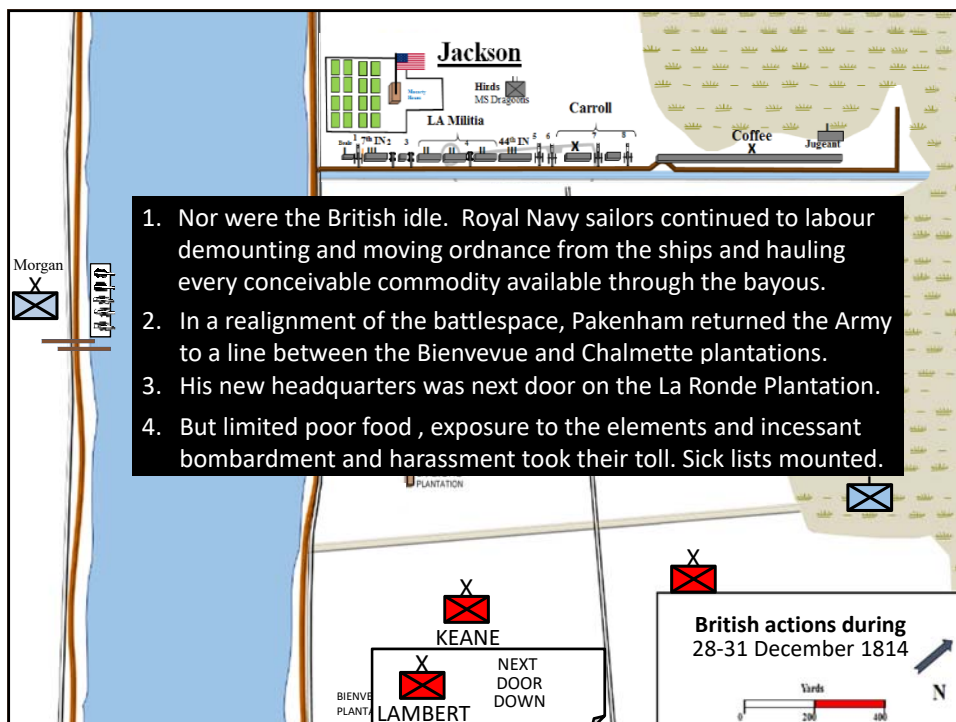
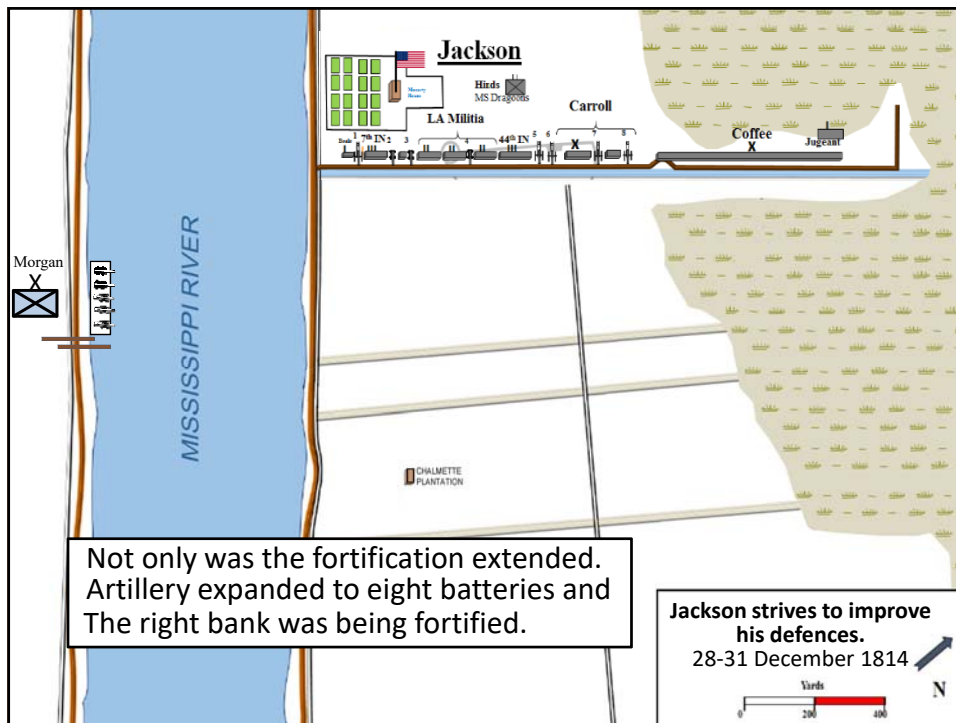












Pakenham's New Cunning Plan

1. Pakenham had another cunning plan. They would attack again on New Years' Day, but this time using massive artillery brought in:
 - 10 18-pound and 2-24 pounder naval deck guns, as well as
 - the artillery (including rockets) already on hand.
2. The artillery would be covertly moved into prepared forward positions within 600 yards of the Americans on New Year's Eve.
3. The Infantry would provide the labour to move the guns and construct the firing positions.

A new British plan arises
28-31 December 1814

Yards
0 200 400

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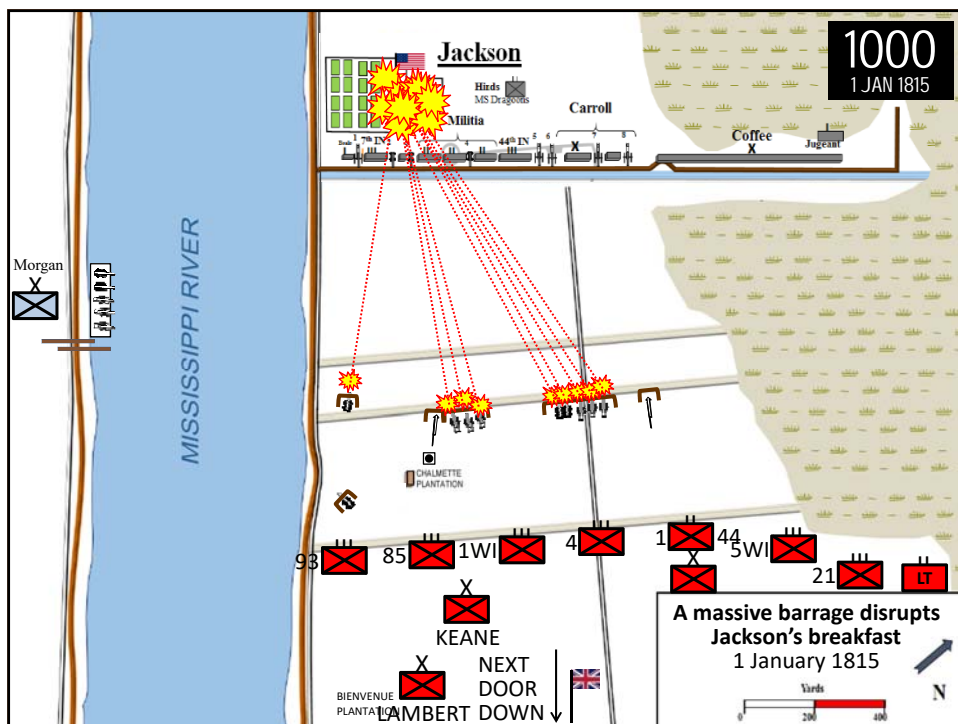
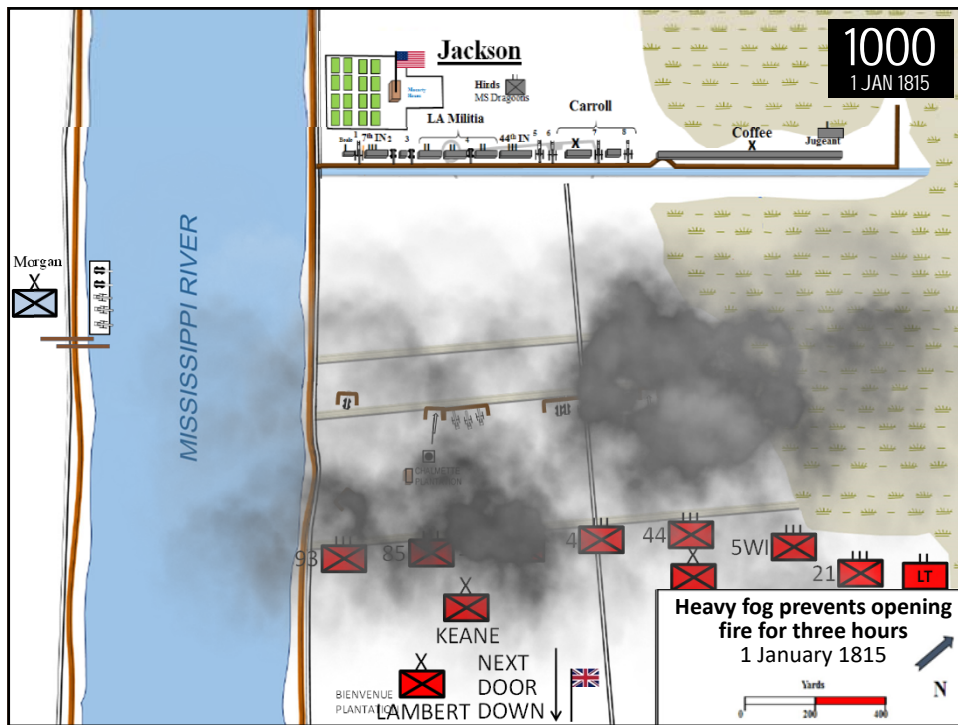
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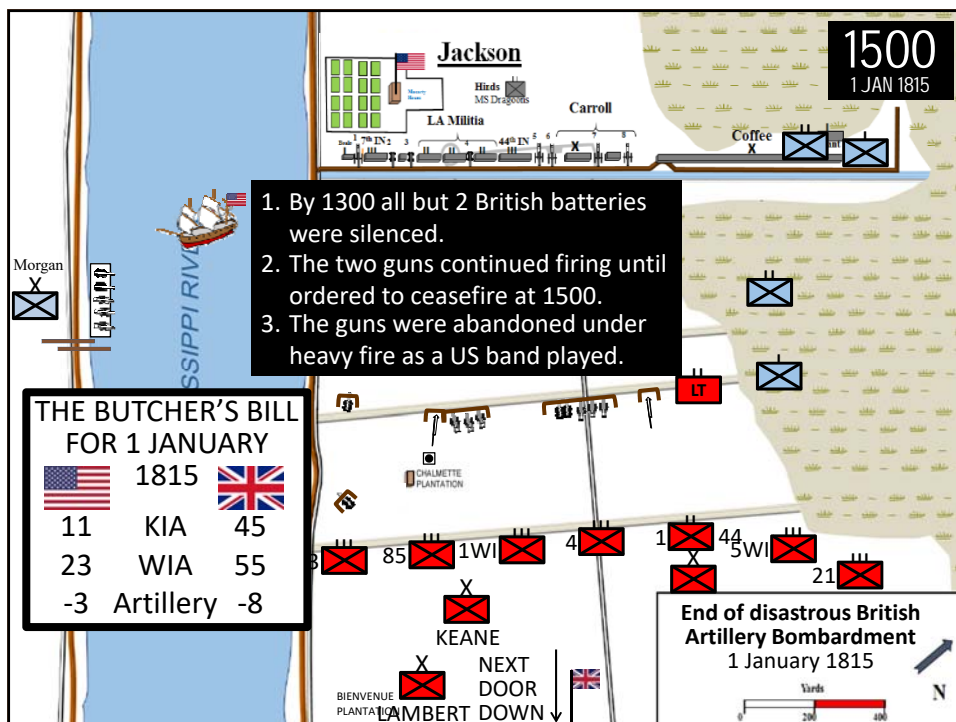
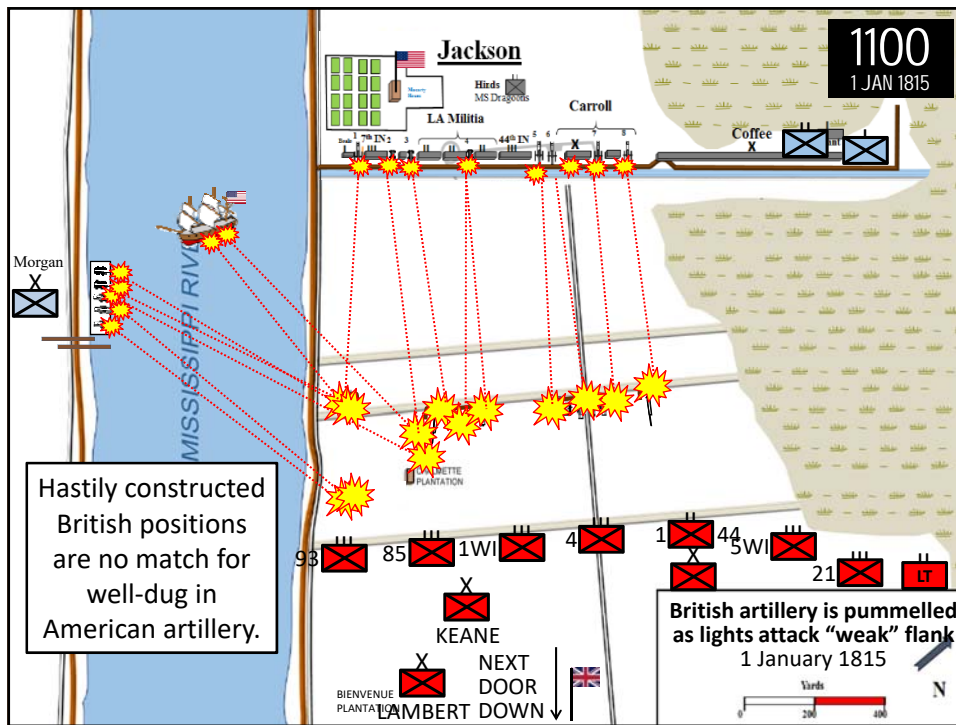
1 JAN 1815

Seven British batteries are laboriously constructed
New Year's Eve 1814

Yards
0 200 400

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A comment on British morale

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 but 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.



Lieutenant George R. Gleig,
85th Light Infantry,
Later Inspector of
Military Schools;
Chaplain-General
of the British Army
(1844-1875)

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."

Maj Harry 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!"

*Later Lieutenant General Sir Henry George Wakelyn Smith, 1st Baronet, GCB, husband of Mrs Smith

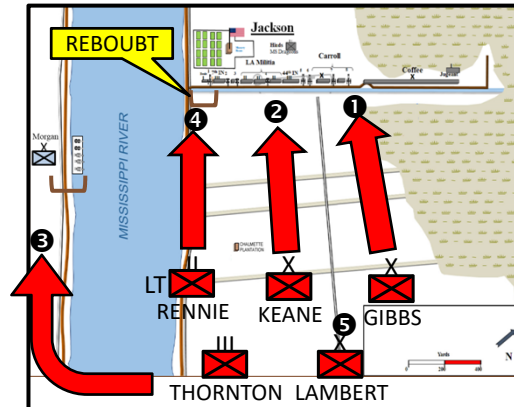


IT'S TIME TO BRING THIS TO A CLOSE!

Two failed attacks in five days led Pakenham to re-evaluate his situation and conceive a new plan to defeat the Americans. 1,800 reinforcements arrived.

The next attack will be a well-coordinated combined attack supported by heavy fires, a level of complexity previously missing from operations.

- There will be a ① main and a ② supporting attack.
- A force ③ will cross the river at night to seize the Marine Battery.
- A special assault force ④ will capture the redoubt on American right flank.
- A strong reserve ⑤ will be available to exploit gains.



Selected details of the plan

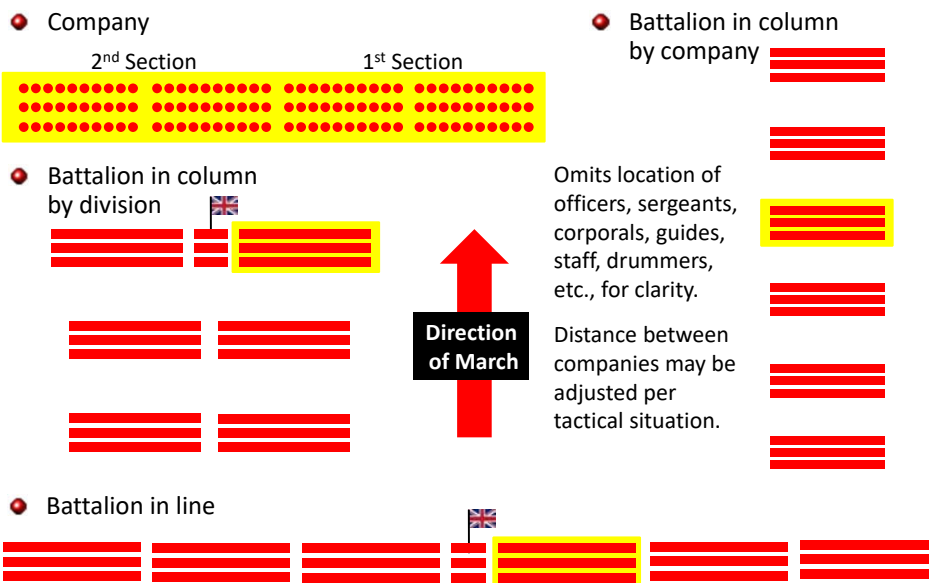
- Commanders held a few veteran regiments in reserve during sieges to better maintain order in captured fortified cities.
- MG Lambert's brigade (7th and 43d Foot) arrived 6 January.
- Pakenham prioritised ammunition supply vice additional guns. He saw arty's role as suppressing American fire. Thus, no guns were available to directly support Gibb's main attack.
- Admiral Cochrane recommended widening the Villere Canal to allow the boats/barges access to the Mississippi. Sailors worked tirelessly to push a navigable canal to the river.
- 44th East Essex (COL Thomas Mullins) was designated storming party to breach the parapet and gain a foothold for following units. They would carry fascines and ladders.


How to storm a fortress (1815)

1. Surround the fortified town (or fortress or...).
2. Demand surrender (ask for surrender at each step).
3. If no surrender, construct temporary fortifications.
4. Dig a trench (called a "Parallel") outside artillery range parallel to the walls of the fortress.
5. Dig zigzag trenches ("Forwards") to get closer.
6. Dig a Second Parallel with gun emplacements.
7. Apply siege engines, artillery, mining (aka "sapping"), fire, starvation, disease, deception, treachery, etc. to induce surrender.
8. Repeat until breach occurs or enemy surrenders.
9. Assault breach with storming party. Apply forlorn hope (tiny group of volunteers who seek promotion, fame or wealth if they survive).
10. Indulge in 1-3 days of drunken RPP (enlisted only).
11. Execute selected miscreants to restore order.
12. Move to next fortified town.
13. Repeat as required.



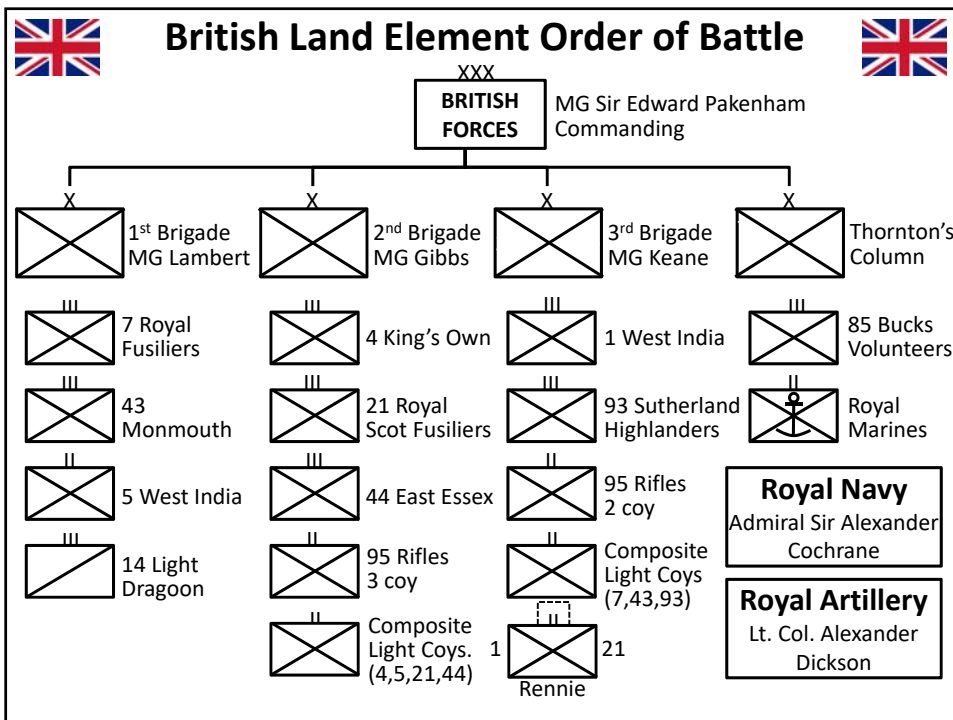
A very quick overview of 1815 British Infantry Tactics






The multi-pronged British Attack

1. The 95th Rifles (-) will remain deployed as a covering force.
2. MG Gibbs will lead a main attack on the weak American left flank. He will command the 4th, 21st and 44th, and a battalion from their light companies to secure the right flank. 95th Rifles will provide a skirmish line of 3 companies forward of the columns.
3. MG Keane will lead a supporting attack against the American left, with the 93rd, 1st WI, 2 companies from the 95th and a battalion of light companies from the 7th, 43rd, and 93rd. He will employ the regiments where they will do the most good.
4. LTC Rennie's battalion of the 21st with 2 companies of the 95th will seize the American redoubt and turn its artillery against them.
5. COL Thornton's 85th and a Marine Detachment will board barges in the Villere Canal, cross the river at night, and seize the Marine Battery to enfilade American fortifications during the attack.
6. MG Lambert's reserve of the 7th and 43rd Foot, 14th Dragoons and 5th WI will support either attack or exploit any breakthrough.
7. Artillery will suppress the enemy to allow infantry to maneuver.

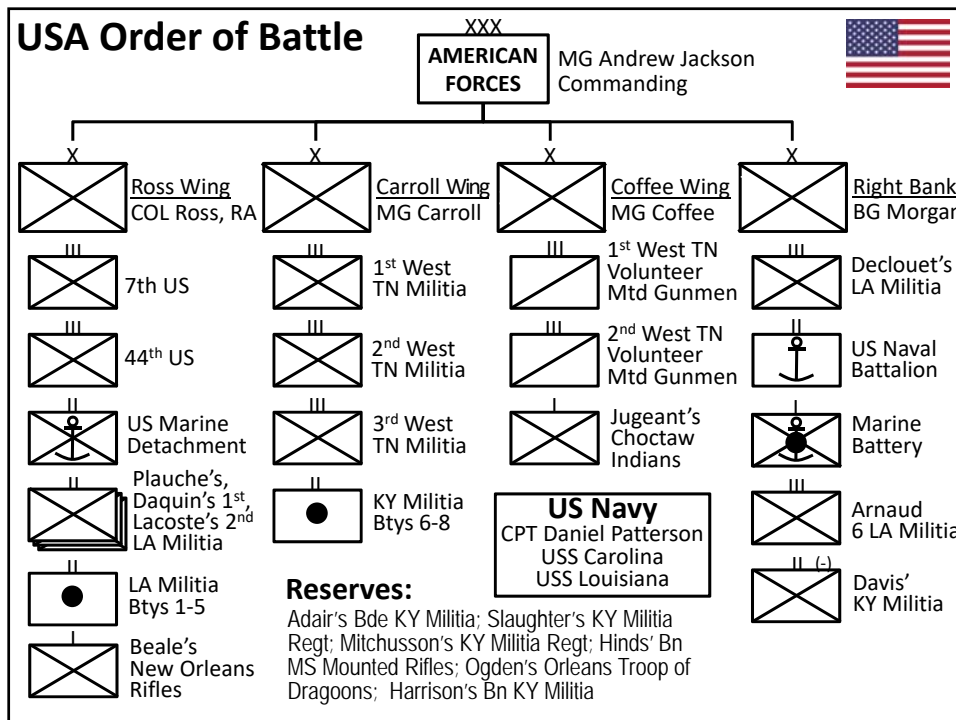


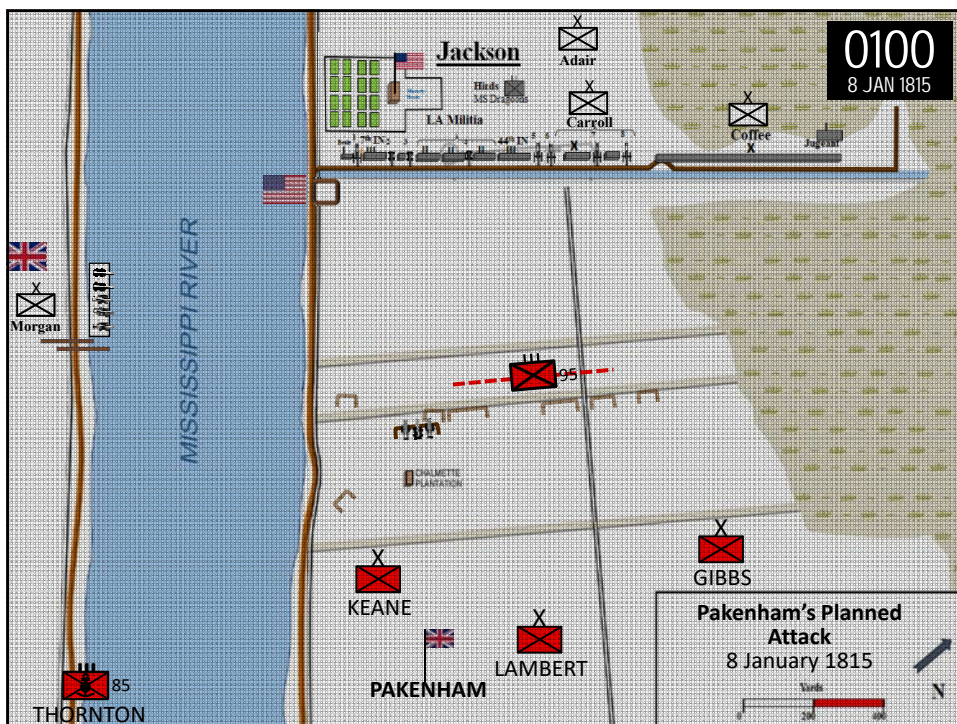
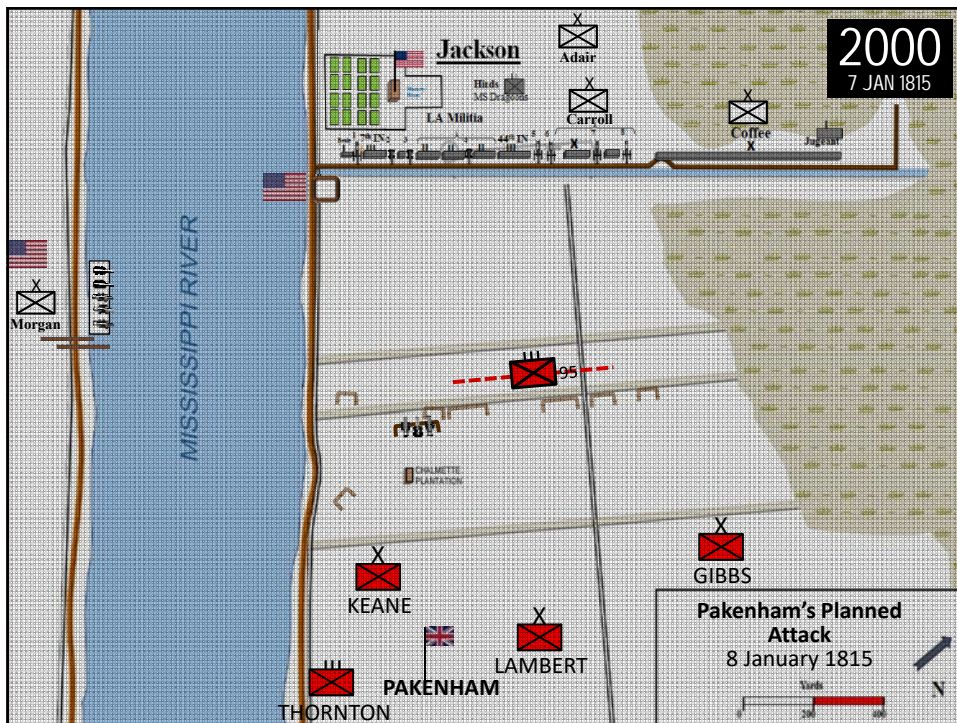


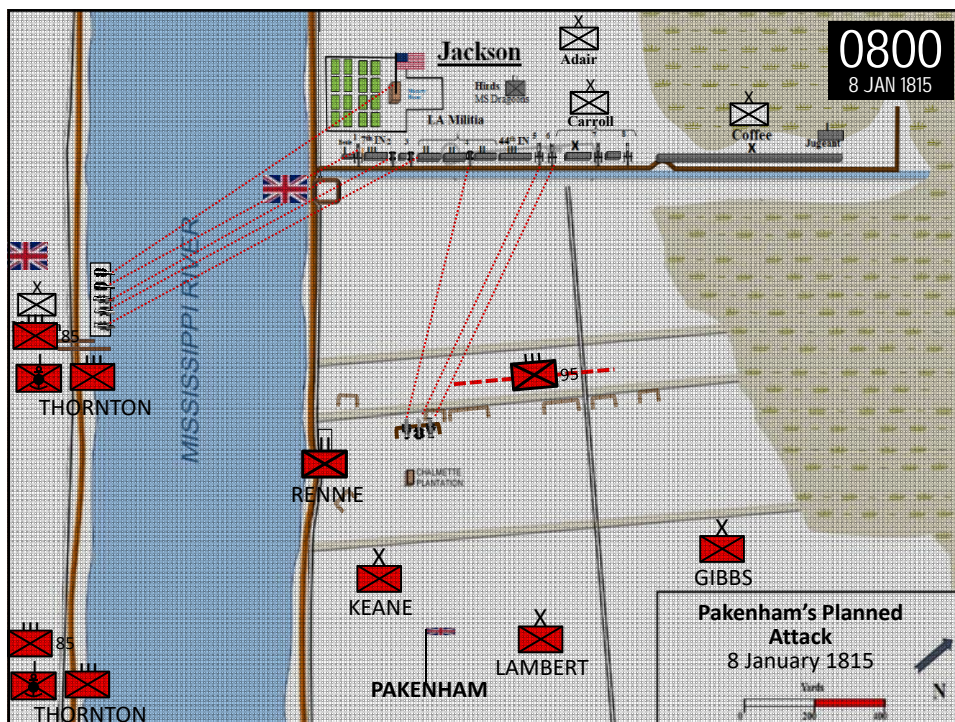
American Preparations

1. Jackson continued to push improvement of the fortifications, even as more militia Regiments and Adair's Brigade arrived.
2. The daily increase in British deserters and prisoners kept Jackson informed of British intentions. In particular, capture on 6 January of sailors on Lake Borgne divulged the widening of the Villere Canal, so attack on both banks was anticipated.
3. CDR Patterson, USN, went to the right bank to observe the defences and advised Jackson to reinforce BG Morgan. Two LA Militia regiments and a KY Militia battalion were rushed arriving at 0200 8 January and deployed as a forward line.

Arnaud's LA Militia were armed with a variety of fowling pieces of limited military value. The 400 Kentuckians were even worse off, most without a weapon until given one in New Orleans before crossing the river; 200 stayed behind.
4. Fully expecting a morning attack on 8 January, Jackson placed the command on 50% alert and settled down to rest.

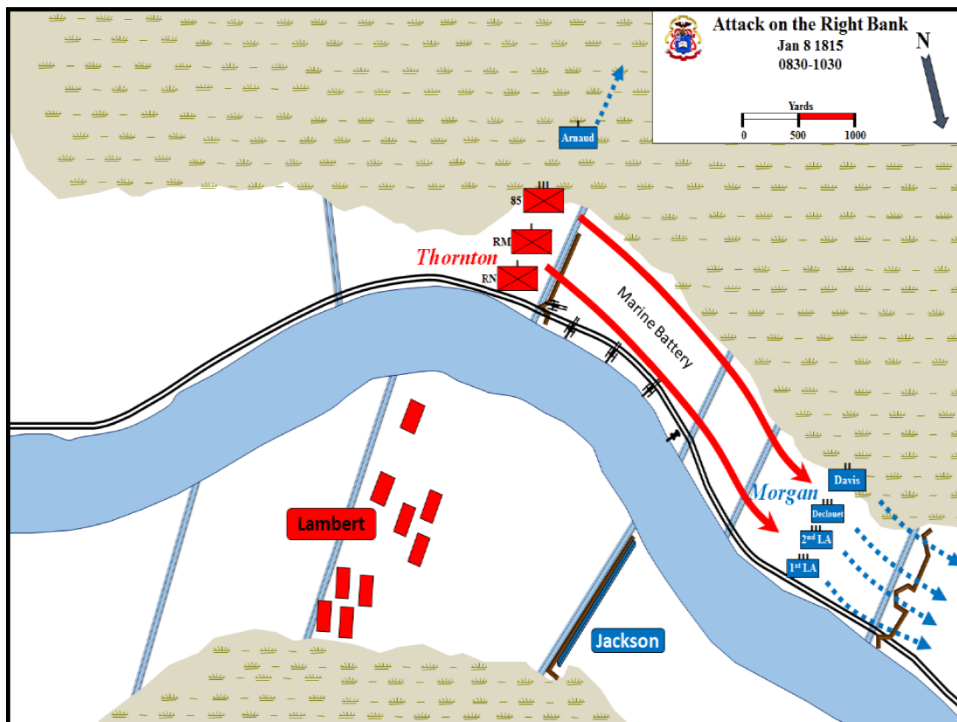
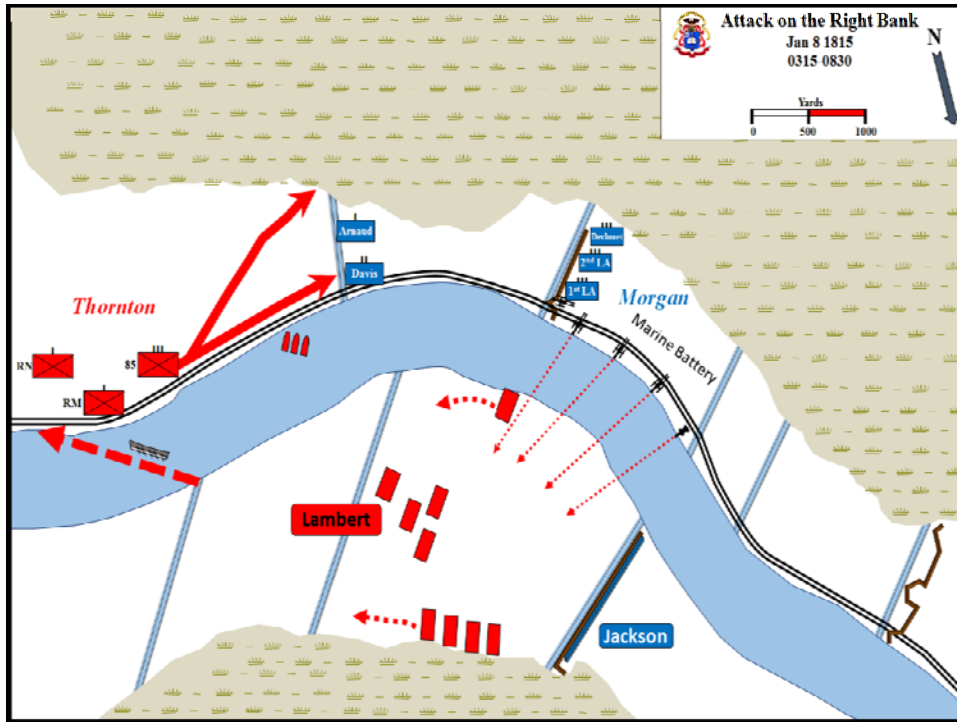






Thornton's Attack on the Right Bank

- From 2 January, the RN under ADM Cochrane were frantically trying to make Villere Canal navigable to the Mississippi R.:
 - Significant widening was needed along its length.
 - About 400-500 metres of new canal was needed to connect with the Mississippi.
- Thornton arrived at sunset 7 January, but found no boats. Canal wall collapse prevented passage. Eight hours of man handling got barges for 450 of his 1400 men to the river. He decided to go with 350 of his men, 50 marines and 50 sailors.
- No one advised Pakenham of the delay.
- Pushing off at 0300, the river's current was stronger than anticipated and they were pushed 1½ miles downstream. They landed just as the British attack got underway.
- Thornton ordered attack on the double, supported by three boats with carronades loaded with grapeshot. Off they went.





REPORT OF THE COURT OF INQUIRY.
HEADQUARTERS 7TH MILITARY DISTRICT.
NEW ORLEANS, LA., February 19, 1815.

GENERAL ORDERS.

At a Court of Inquiry, convened at this place on the 9th inst., of which Major-general Carroll is President, the military conduct of Colonel Davis, of Kentucky Militia, and of Colonels Dijon and Cavalier, of Louisiana Militia, in the engagement on the 8th of January last, on the west bank of the Mississippi, were investigated; the Court, after mature deliberation, is of opinion that the conduct of those gentlemen in the action aforesaid, and retreat on the 8th of January, on the western bank of the river, is not reprehensible. The cause of the retreat the Court attributes to the shameful flight of the command of Major Arnaud, sent to oppose the landing of the enemy. The retreat of the Kentucky militia, which, considering their position, the deficiency of their arms, and other causes, may be excusable; and the panic and confusion introduced into every part of the line, thereby occasioning the retreat and confusion of the Orleans and Louisiana militia. While the Court found much to applaud in the zeal and gallantry of the officer immediately commanding, they believe that a further reason for the retreat may be found in the manner in which the force was placed on the line; which they consider exceptionable. The commands of Colonels Dijon, Cavalier, and Declouet, composing five hundred men, supported by three pieces of artillery, having in front a strong breastwork, occupying a space of only two hundred yards; whilst the Kentucky militia, composing Colonel Davis' command, only one hundred and seventy strong, occupied over three hundred yards, covered by a small ditch only.

The Major-general approves the proceeding of the Court of Inquiry, which is hereby dissolved.

By Command. H. CHOTARD, *Asst. Adj. Gen.*

To Lord Bathurst:

JANUARY 10th, 1815.



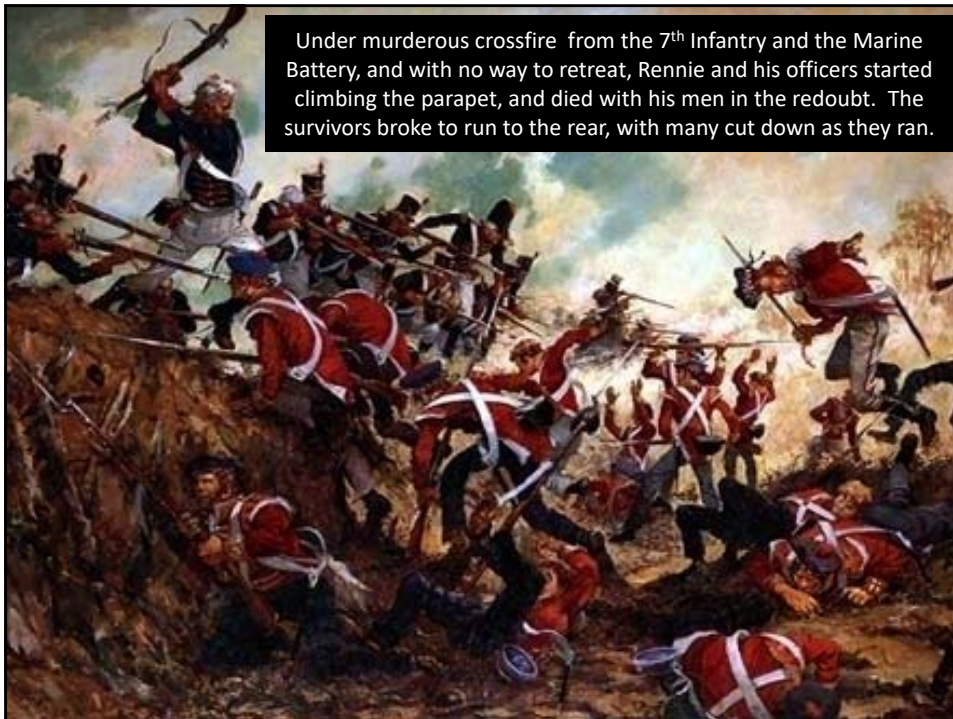
It becomes my duty to lay before your Lordship the proceedings of the force lately employed on the right bank of the Mississippi River. Preparations had been made on our side to clear out and widen the canal that led from the bayou to the river, by which our boats had been brought up to the point of disembarkation, and to open it to the Mississippi, by which our troops could be got over to the right bank, and the cooperation of armed boats be secured. A corps consisting of the 85th light infantry, two hundred seamen, four hundred marines, the 5th West India Regiment, and four pieces of artillery, under the command of Colonel Thornton, of the 85th, were to pass over during the night, and move along the right bank toward New Orleans, clearing its front, until it reached the flanking battery of the enemy on that side, which it had orders to carry. Unlooked for difficulties caused delay in the entrance of the armed boats from the canal into the river, destined to land Colonel Thornton's corps, by which several hours' delay was caused. The ensemble of the general movement was lost, a point of the last importance to the main attack on the left bank, although Colonel Thornton ably executed his instructions.

MAJ.-GEN. LAMBERT, *Com'd'g.*



Rennie's Attack on the Left Flank

- LTC Rennie's 1,200 man battalion had infiltrated under darkness and fog to within striking distance of the redoubt.
- Upon seeing Pakenham's rocket, Rennie's men rushed the redoubt, achieving total surprise and the outposts fled without firing a shot.
- In the redoubt, CPT Humphrey's single company of the 7th US Infantry held fire to avoid shooting the fleeing Americans.
- Humphrey sent his men over the single plank spanning the Rodriguez Canal from the unfinished redoubt. A rear guard engaged the British hand-to-hand until all were across and the plank was pulled up behind them.
- At that point, Rennie's problems began:
 - There were no cannon in the unfinished redoubt.
 - He was unaware Pakenham had changed Keane's orders
 - No other British unit supported his successful attack.





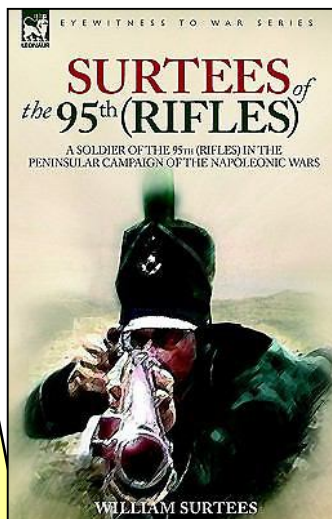
Postscript

- 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.

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.



Captain William Surtees (Quartermaster of the 95th) at the time of the battle



Why did Pakenham continue the attack?

- He [Pakenham] 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.



44th (the East Essex) Regiment of Foot

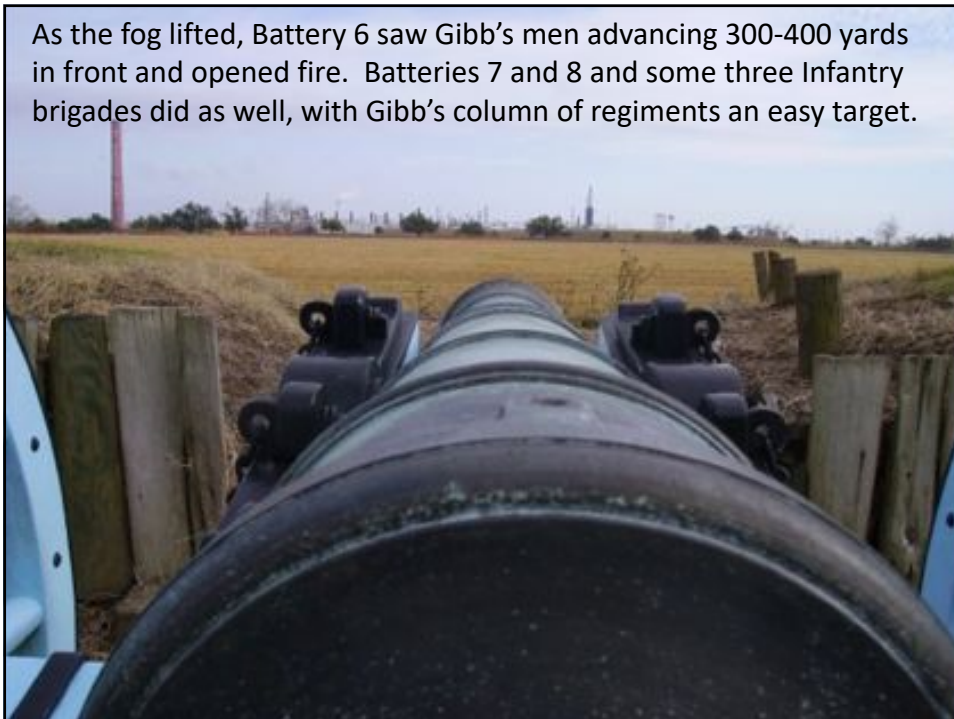
- Up to 1815, the 44th had seen 74 years of service, twenty in the United States and Canada. During the Napoleonic Wars, they served in Flanders, West Indies, Gibraltar, Egypt, Malta, Sicily, Naples, Spain and America.
- Many officers observed chaos that day, and many ascribed it to the actions, or lack, of the 44th Regiment.
- Pakenham's written 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."



The plot thickens

- 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.”
- When the rocket signalling the attack was fired, 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.
- 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.”
- The 21st assumed the lead (the 44th assigned position) followed by the 4th. They quickly forced the American outposts to withdraw to the mainline.
- The American reserve brigade then formed four firing lines directly behind the brigade at the very point Gibbs’ was to breach.

As the fog lifted, Battery 6 saw Gibb’s men advancing 300-400 yards in front and opened fire. Batteries 7 and 8 and some three Infantry brigades did as well, with Gibb’s column of regiments an easy target.



- With neither fascines nor ladders to cross the canal and in the face of effective American fire, the advance ground to a halt.
- Some in the lead element of the 21st, the *de facto* forlorn hope, briefly made it up to, and possibly onto, a portion of the line but was quickly overwhelmed by small arms.
- Unbeknownst to just about everybody, the 2IC of the 44th and some of his men had reached Rodriguez Canal with fascines and ladders, but the attack had completely stalled and gone to ground so survivors dropped them in the canal and withdrew.
- Seeing Gibb's predicament even as he experienced the deadly fire from the Marine Battery across the river, Keane determined to influence the success of the main attack with his 93rd Regiment. From the head of the column, he led the Highlanders obliquely across the American front line.

The CO of the 93rd, COL Robert Dale, summoned his surgeon and gave him a packet with his watch and a letter, saying "Give these to my wife as I shall die at the head of my regiment."

- On the right again, the 21st 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.

Lieutenant George R. Gleig, 85th Regiment

- Jackson, situated with the US 7th Infantry, seeing Gibbs' attack fail and Keane's change of direction, ordered, "Stand by your guns. Don't waste ammunition. See every shot tells."

"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!'"

- 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*.
- 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. 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 thinking that the 44th had employed the fascines and ladders. Discovering otherwise, the 93rd stood still, waiting for orders from senior leaders who no longer existed.
- Then the Highlanders broke formation and ran for the rear.

- 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.

Lieutenant Gordon, 93rd Regiment

- 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 taking command, led the 44th forward.
- 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.

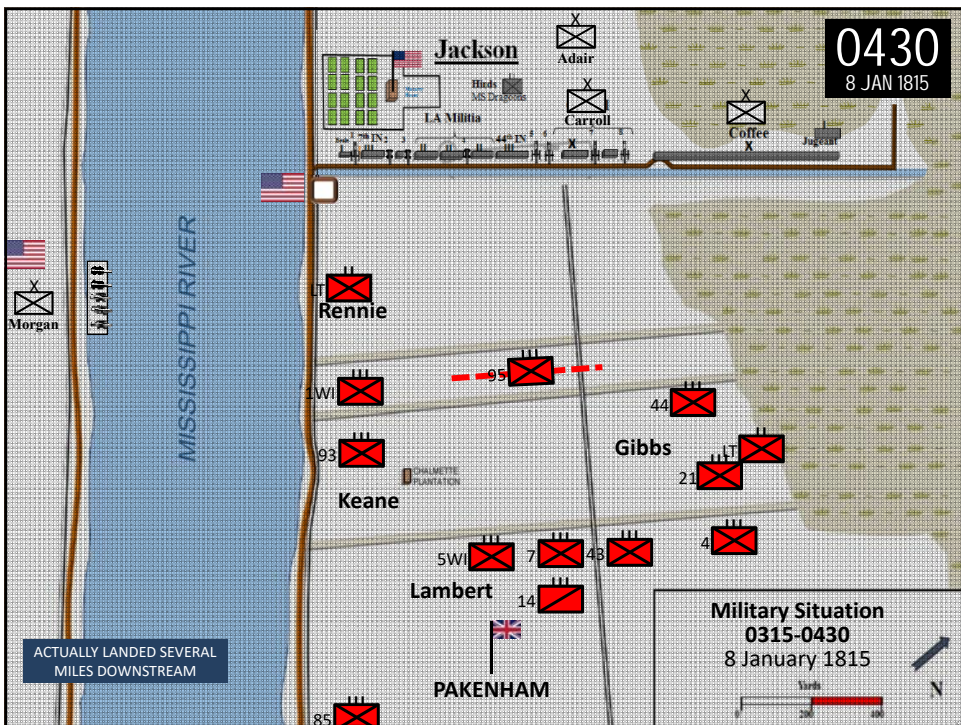
- As Pakenham led the men that chose to follow him, his horse went down, shot out from underneath him by grapeshot, one of the balls shattering Pakenham's knee. As his aides attempted to help him, a musket or rifle ball struck his right arm, rending it useless. Assisted by staff officers, the general 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!" No sooner did he utter those words when a shot suddenly struck Pakenham in the groin and passed through his spine, paralyzing him. His staff carried him out of harm's way, beyond the American artillery, where a surgeon pronounced the wound mortal.

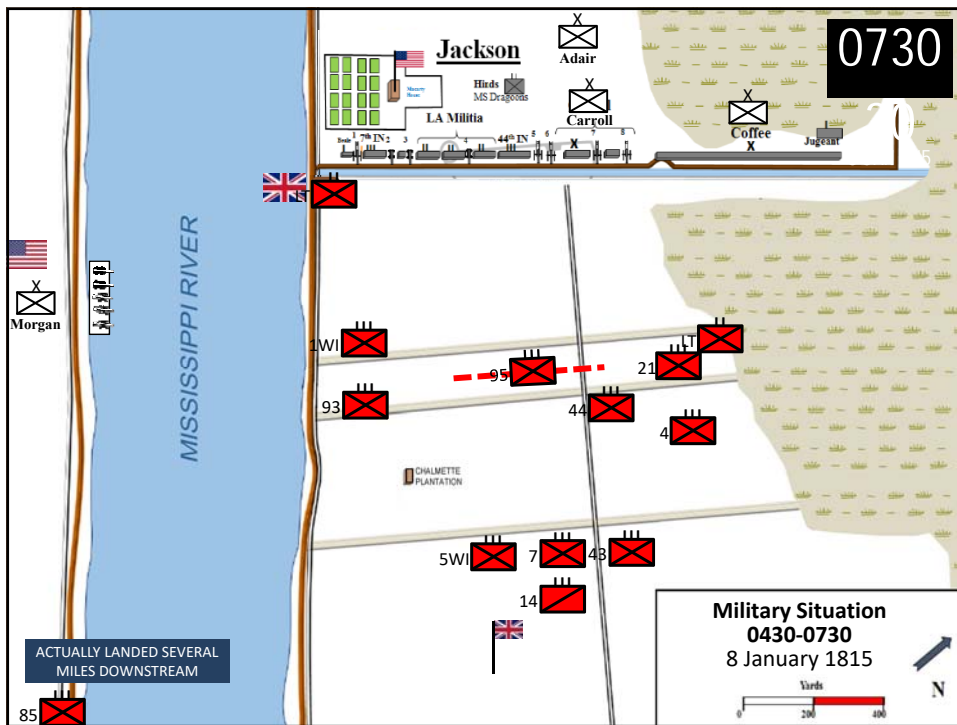
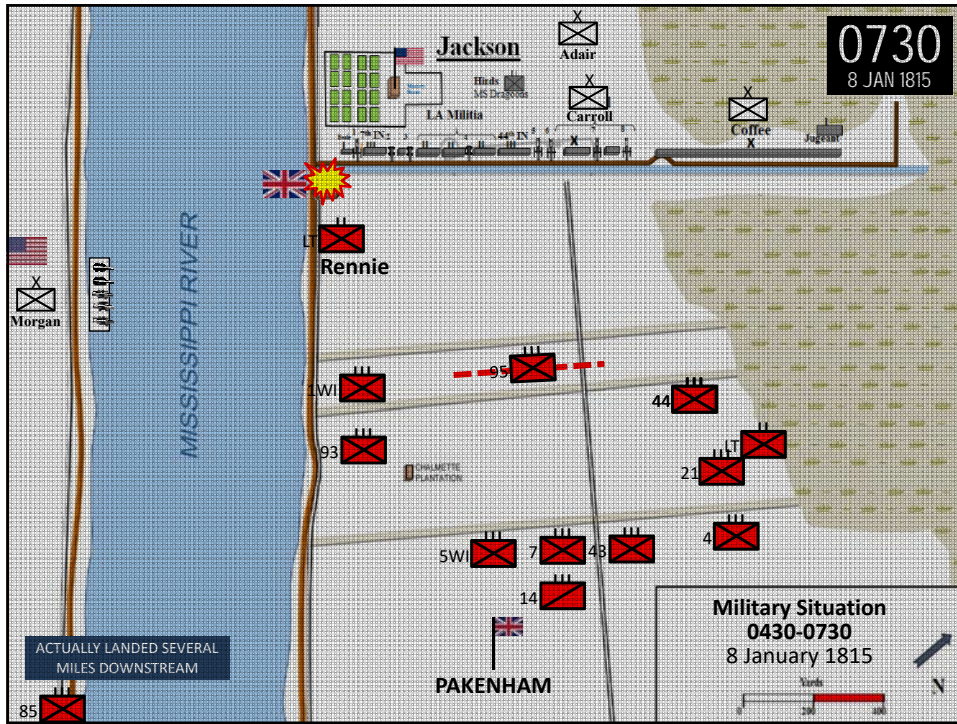
- Gibbs continued to lead what remained of his brigade forward. He led a small detachment that reached a point within twenty yards of the enemy line when he sustained a severe wound and had to be carried from the field.
- Other small detachments made their way to their parapet and tried to force their 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 individual Soldiers began leaving the field.
- 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.

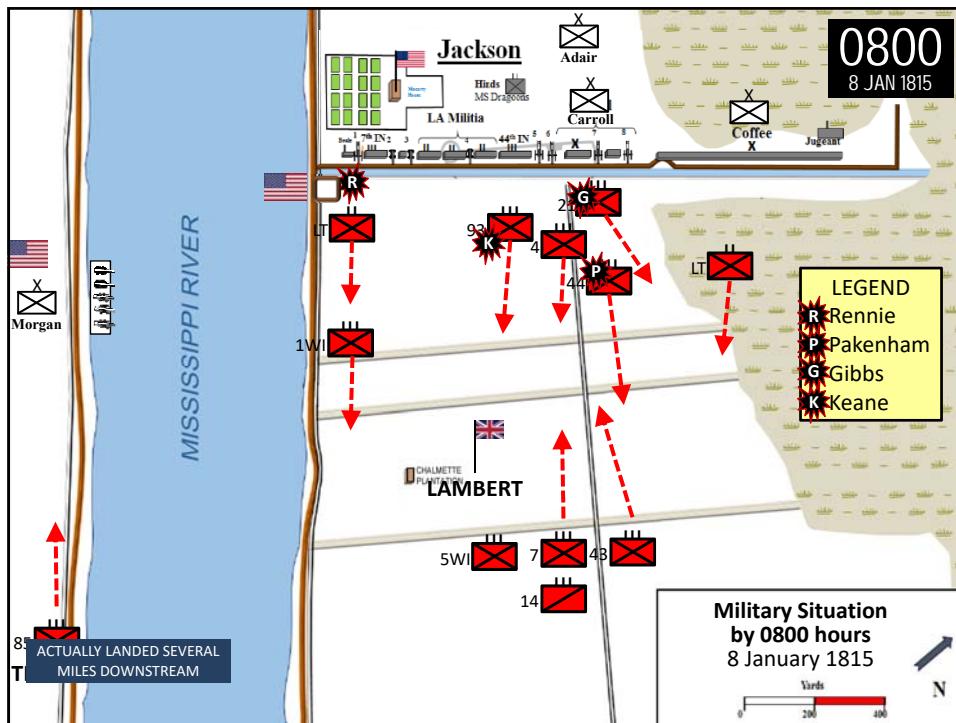
- From his somewhat rearward position in the center of the battlefield Lambert held a clear and indisputable view of the events surrounding him. Troops from all over the front left their posts either individually or in small groups, many of the men wounded. Only the troops in his brigade remained fresh 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.

- 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.

Kentucky Militiaman







The Battle of New Orleans	
Belligerents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United States (incl. State militias) Creoles, Frontiersmen, Free Slaves Barataria privateers (Pirates) Choctaw Nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Kingdom
Major units involved	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7th Infantry Regiment (Kentucky) 44th Infantry Regiment (Louisiana) KY, LA and TN Militias; Volunteers US Artillery, US Marines, others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4th, 21st, 44th, and 85th Regiments (experienced) 1st and 5th West India (new in America) 93rd newly formed from the Cape Colony 7th, 43rd, and 14th Light Dragoons (reserve)
Commanders and leaders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major General Andrew Jackson MGs William Carroll and John Coffee BG David Morgan, COL George Ross Captain Jean Lafitte & many others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major General Sir Edward Pakenham † Major General Gibbs † Major General John Lambert Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane
Strength	
5,700	~ 8,000
Casualties	
13 dead, 30 wounded 19 missing or captured	291 dead, 1,267 wounded 484 missing or captured
1%	13% of total but 67% of committed

Aftermath

- Lambert faced a truly chaotic situation. Pakenham died before the troops returned to their lines, Gibbs lay dying in great pain and died the next day. Keane suffered from serious wounds, leaving Lambert to salvage the situation and the Army.
- Dead and wounded still lay on the field. Hospitals were overwhelmed. The returns listed 291 killed, 1,262 wounded, and 482 prisoners lost.
- 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. Evidence was indisputable.

- 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. The Americans suffered 55 killed, 185 wounded, and 93 captured throughout the entire defence of New Orleans.
- However, fighting on the right bank concerned Jackson. Reports described the new British threat and the deteriorating situation. Jackson rapidly sent reinforcements; there could be no thought of a counterattack when the situation on the right bank might threaten New Orleans.
- Lambert withdrew Thornton's column after a report by one of his key staff officers. The delay Lambert with time that he desperately needed. He couldn't retreat because of the large numbers of wounded.
- Admiral Cochrane provided an idea to take pressure off. He proposed that the Royal Navy become the British main effort, force 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 upon his arrival in December, Jackson clearly saw the importance of the fort and ordered it improved and reinforced.
 - The garrison consisted of two companies of regular artillerymen and two companies of the 7th US Infantry, reinforced by sailors and some Louisiana militiamen; a total of 406 men.
 - Thirty-four pieces of artillery defended the approaches.
 - The last 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 British attempt to run the river convinced Jackson that the British remained focused on breaching his line and planned another attack. He maintained his strategy of harassment artillery and "hunting" trips.
- Heavy rains made matters worse for the British. Their camp flooded. The supply situation never improved. Lambert decided to retreat on 9 January.
- Retreat required extensive planning for the shattered army. A haphazard retreat could lead to the destruction of the entire British force.
- Transport was lacking, so he planned to move the wounded by barge and build a crude road all the way back to Lake Borgne for use by his soldiers and walking wounded. Pakenham's and Gibbs' bodies were packed in rum.
- During the darkness on 18-19 January the British withdrew spiking and abandoning their artillery. By 0800 on the nineteenth the camp stood abandoned, with the exception of the 80 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 did okay but rearward elements slogged through mud.

- 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 counselled 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.

The Last Word

- On the 23d of February, 1815, news of the defeat at New Orleans reached London. On the same day arrived the intelligence of the escape of Napoleon from Elba, and of his landing on the shores of France. Public attention was diverted by the new sensation. The government press fostered the illusion, and the horrors of New Orleans were not so fully known or felt.
- William Cobbett, the noted Liberal essayist and author, of England, wrote of the event: "And this was all the people of the duped nation ever heard of the matter. Bonaparte had landed from Elba, and the battle of Waterloo soon succeeded. Both the Government and the people were glad to forget all about this unmerciful beating in America. This battle of New Orleans broke the heart of European despotism. The man who won it did, in that one act, more for the good and the honour of the human race than ever was done by any other man."

Battle of New Orleans

January 8, 1815 (after the Treaty of Ghent was signed)

Casualties		
Killed	291	13
Wounded	1,267	30
Missing	484	19
Total	1,772	62

