A Sesquicentennial

SEPT. 14 - 20, 1862



directions for three days and nights. The Confederates also seized 11,000 small arms, 73 pieces of artillery, 200

After three days of intense rebel bombardment to gain control of the federal arsenal and Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Bridge at Harpers Ferry, more than 12,000 Union soldiers surrendered on Sept. 15, 1862.

It was the largest surrender of Union troops during the Civil War and still ranks as the third largest surrender of any U.S. Army.

The New York Times reported that Confederate Major-Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's troops pummeled Harpers Ferry from seven wagons and a large amount of garrison equipment, according to a letter Jackson sent to Col. R.H. Chilton.

A federal commission later held Col. Dixon S. Miles responsible for the tactical gaffe. Its 1863 report on the incident says: "Colonel Miles's incapacity, amounting to almost imbecility, led to the shameful surrender of this important post."

This sesquicentennial moment is brought to you by the West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Archives and History Section.

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