

Macmillan Under Heavy Fire; Political Survival Openly Questioned



Bloody Battles in Two States

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The night before the battle of Stones River (Murfreesboro) the Union and Confederate armies lay within earshot of each other.

Before bedtime the bands warmed up on both sides of the battle line. The strains of "Yankee Doodle" and "Hail Columbia" resounded from the Federal side across the broken country and in the cedar glades. Confederate bands answered with "Dixie" and "The Bonny Blue Flag."

The bands alternated for a time. Then one struck up "Home Sweet Home."

As if some unseen bandmaster was directing, the simple melody, so familiar to all Northerners and Southerners, was taken up, first by one band and then another until all bands — Blue and Gray alike — joined in the tune.

Then the soldiers caught up the melody, and nearly drowned out the brass as they sang the song so close to all their hearts.

Many a battle-hardened soldier wiped away a tear as the music ended on the line — "There's no place like home" — before falling into his blanket for a few hours sleep before the bloody business of the morrow.

Two-Day Affair
The battle of Stones River was a two-day affair straddling New Year's day of 1863.

The armies clashed at dawn on Dec. 31. The Union army — about 46,000 men — was commanded by Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans. Gen. Braxton Bragg led the Confederate army of about 37,000. The scene was along Stones River, a few miles northwest of Murfreesboro, Tenn., which is about 35 miles southeast of Nashville.

Each commander planned to strike the other's right wing. Rosecrans ordered his attack for 7 a.m. to give his men a chance to eat breakfast. But Bragg beat him to the punch, attacking as soon as it was light enough to see.

The Confederates' attack was surprised while eating breakfast and retired quickly. Another fought back for a time but was forced to retire. That deflected the force of the Rebel attack against divisions commanded by Brig. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis and Brig. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan. Davis' division was forced to retreat but Sheridan's stood fast and even counter-attacked until its ammunition was exhausted.

Line Completed by Noon
Sheridan's stand enabled Rosecrans' battle plan abandoned in the face of Bragg's earlier attack, to form a line along the Nashville Pike at right angles to the previous one. By noon this line was completed, resting its left in a four-acre woodland called the Round Forest in battle reports but dubbed "Hell's Half Acre" by the soldiers.

To attack the position, the Rebels had to cross open ground against Federals posted among cedar copses and behind boulders.

From noon until night the Confederates threw brigade after brigade against "Hell's Half Acre" and each time they were repulsed with fantastic losses. One Confederate regiment, the Eighth Tennessee, lost 306 of 425 engaged.

At nightfall Rosecrans still held his new line and determined to remain on the field and take the offensive the

next day if Bragg did not re-attack.

Neither attacked the next morning and New Year's day was quiet except for some skirmishing and cavalry raiding.

Started Again
But on Jan. 2 fighting started again on the other side of Stones River where Rosecrans had seized some high ground.

Bragg ordered the position taken and at 4 p.m. the Confederates tried, although Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge, commander of Bragg's right wing and vice president under President Buchanan, said the task was impossible.

His men charged to the crest of the ridge and started down the other side but 88 massed Federal cannon slaughtered them. Breckinridge lost 1,700 of 4,000 men.

On the night of Jan. 3-4, Bragg withdrew his army towards Tullahoma, Tenn., leaving Rosecrans with an indecisive but timely victory.

Casualties were heavy. Rosecrans lost 1,677 killed; 7,543 wounded; 3,686 missing — total 12,906. Bragg's losses: 1,294 killed; 7,495 wounded; 2,500 missing — total 11,289.

Sheridan, whose division lost almost 40 per cent of its numbers, said: "In the remaining years of the war... I never experienced... so high a rate of casualties."

Not in Condition
Rosecrans did not follow Bragg. "We were not in condition to pursue," Sheridan wrote.

The North was in desperate need of victory after the disaster at Fredericksburg, Va., and Lincoln telegraphed his congratulations to Rosecrans, ending "God bless you and all with you."

Two days before Stones River, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman made a stab at Vicksburg, Miss., from the north via the Yazoo river, a stream which runs into the Mississippi above Vicksburg. The Confederates had fortified Chickasaw Bluffs north of the city and Sherman proposed to carry the works by assault across land which Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, called "a profound mire, resting on quicksand."

Greeley wrote the story of the battle: "On the 26th and 27th of Dec. 1862, our men formed in four columns, gradually pushed forward and drove back the enemy pickets toward the frowning bluffs... Chickasaw Bayou was conclusively ascertained to be passable but at two points, one a narrow levee, the other a sandbar, each commanded by the enemy's sharpshooters."

Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele... found his progress barred by an impassable swamp... This venture he properly declined... "Brig. Gen. George W. Morgan's division charged on the 29th, but what could valor avail against rifle pits filled with sharpshooters whose every bullet drew blood? Against gunners who poured grape and canister into our dauntless heroes, who could not advance and were stung by the consciousness that they were dying in vain?"

Fought Way To Bluffs
The Sixth Missouri (Union) regiment succeeded in fighting its way to the bluffs but could not climb the steep bank.

"Some men of the Sixth... actually scooped out with their hands caves in the bank, which sheltered them against the fire of the enemy, who,

right over their heads, held their muskets outside the parapet vertically and fired down," Sherman wrote later.

The Sixth withdrew after dark.

Sherman tried again the next night but it was so foggy that the Union gunboats were unable to move. The following night was brightly moonlit, too light for any surprise. Sherman's men were encamped in a swamp that was liable to overflow in a moderate rain.

On Jan. 2 he decided to withdraw, his attempt against Vicksburg a failure.

Sherman's army suffered 1,776 casualties in the operation, the Confederates, 187.

The same day Sherman gave up the fight, Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand arrived and took over the command. He had been recruiting an army for an expedition against Vicksburg and understood that he was to command it although Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was in charge of the department.

No sooner had McClernand taken over than he began to plan moves against several minor Confederate points.

A showdown was nearing between McClernand and Grant over who would command against Vicksburg.



STAB AT VICKSBURG — Just two days before the Battle of Stones River, near Murfreesboro, Tenn., Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman made a stab at Vicksburg from the north. Moving over what had been called a "profound mire, resting on quicksand," Sherman proposed Confederate fortifications north of the city. He struck, but failed. The Union suffered 1,776 casualties, the Confederates 187. The indications, however, were now clear. The fall of Vicksburg was imminent. This map shows the route by which Sherman struck at the city. (UPI)

London — (UPI) — Prime Minister Harold Macmillan has entered 1963 under heavy fire for policies at home and abroad, with political circles here openly questioning whether he will survive the year in office.

Few persons in political quarters doubt that Macmillan is entering the most decisive phase in his House of Commons career stretching over 40 turbulent years. During 1963 he must choose the date for the next general elections, and decide whether he is the man to lead the Conservative party at the polls.

Deep-Rooted Uneasiness
He must find the answer to these questions knowing that his government appears to have lost popularity among voters, and aware that there is some deep-rooted uneasiness within his own party over the Polaris-for-Skybolt compromise he worked out with President Kennedy in the Bahamas.

Macmillan also knows that Conservative M.P.s are not all happy over the way Britain's negotiations to enter the European Common Market have been handled. He also knows there is a hard core of 40 to 50 parliamentarians who want this country to stay out.

Another group has been critical of the decision to allow Nyassaland to pull out of the Central African Federation.

Many conservative M.P.s also are apprehensive about the government's handling of

the country's economic situation.

Jobless Favor Labor Party
There is growing unemployment, which has already hit the half-million mark. Traditionally in British politics, areas with large numbers of jobless vote for the Labor party.

At present the Conservatives have 363 M.P.s against 259 for Labor and 7 for the Liberals, with 1 Independent. The trend in by-elections has indicated that if Conservatives continue to lose popularity, the Labor party could win a general election. The Liberal party hopes to increase its representation.

Macmillan's government does not have to call general elections until October, 1964. But it has frequently been speculated that if the prime minister can obtain satisfactory terms for Common Market entry quickly, he might go to the polls this fall.

In any event he must choose during 1963 when the election will be held.

Time Needed
Conservative campaign managers need time to get

PLANS U. S. VISIT
Manila — (UPI) — The newspaper Philippine Herald reported today that President Diosdado Macapagal may pay a state visit to the United States sometime this year. It said the president told newsmen during an informal dinner Sunday that he had "accepted in principle" a standing invitation from President Kennedy to make the trip.

their organization into gear for a battle which is certain to be tough.

In political circles it is generally assumed that if Macmillan feels he does not want to lead the party at the next general elections, or that the party does not want him to do so, then he will step down well in advance to give his successor time to make his mark.

The big question is who would succeed him. Not even the most confident advisers claim to know for certain the answer to that one.

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Total Farm Debt Estimated To Be \$29.3 Billion

Washington — (UPI) — The Agricultural department estimates that total farm debt on Jan. 1 was about \$29.3 billion, an increase of about 6 per cent of \$1.6 billion from Jan. 1, 1962.

In a year-end agricultural finance review, the department's Economic Research Service said farmers' use of credit continued to rise strongly in 1962. This reflected continued consolidation and enlargement of farms, further increases in capital investments, and higher prices paid for farm real estate and some purchased production goods.

Loan funds were generally ample, and interest rates edged slightly lower during

the year, ERS said. Payments on loans were well maintained, because farm incomes

were about steady and off-farm earnings of farmers remained large. These conditions contributed to a confident outlook of both lenders and borrowers.

'Critic' Possibly Biased in Review
New York — (UPI) — A "critic" reviewed the new musical "Oliver!" which opened Sunday night in New York during a newspaper blackout.

The review, read on a local radio station, was filled with descriptive words like "breathtaking, the greatest musical of all time, marvelous, staggering, transcendent, unique, incomparable, stunning dazzler."

The "critic" was David Merrick, the producer of the musical.

ERS said the ratio of total farm debt to total farm assets by the end of 1962 rose to about 13.7 per cent because debts increased a little more rapidly than the value of farm assets. Since not all operators or landlords were in debt, this ratio is higher for indebted farms than for all farms. ERS said the census sample survey of agriculture in 1960 showed that about 60 per cent of all farms had debts — owned by the operator, landlord, or both.

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