

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Battles of Mobile Bay, Petersburg, Memorialized on Civil War Forever Stamps Today *Fourth of Five-Year Civil War Sesquicentennial Stamps Series Continues*

MOBILE, AL — Two of the most important events of the Civil War — the Battle of Mobile Bay (AL) and the siege at Petersburg, VA — were memorialized on Forever stamps today at the sites where these conflicts took place.

One stamp depicts Admiral David G. Farragut's fleet at the Battle of Mobile Bay (AL) on Aug. 5, 1864. The other stamp depicts the 22nd U.S. Colored Troops engaged in the June 15-18, 1864, assault on Petersburg, VA, at the beginning of the Petersburg Campaign.

"The Civil War was one of the most intense chapters in our history, claiming the lives of more than 620,000 people," said Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe in dedicating the Mobile Bay stamp. "Today, through events and programs held around the country, we're helping citizens consider how their lives — and their own American experience — have been shaped by this period of history."

In Petersburg, Chief U.S. Postal Service Inspector Guy Cottrell dedicated the stamps just yards from the location of an underground explosion — that took place 150 years ago today — which created a huge depression in the earth and led to the battle being named "Battle of the Crater." Confederates — enraged by the sight of black soldiers — killed many soldiers trapped in the crater attempting to surrender.

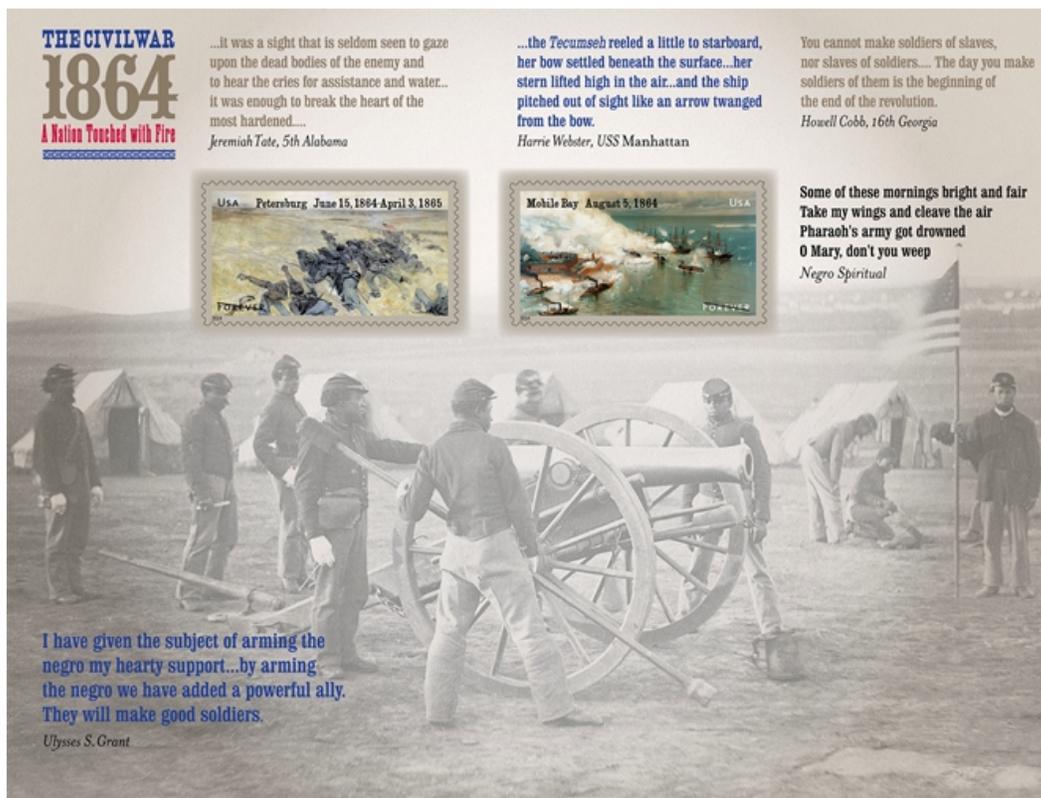
COTTRELL APPROVED QUOTE: "The soldiers shown on the Petersburg stamp were part of the 175 regiments — more than 178,000 African-American men — who made up the United States Colored Troops," Cottrell explained. "They were free blacks from the north as well as escaped and freed slaves from the south. These brave men placed their lives on the line to prove they were fit to be citizens. Beyond fighting to preserve the nation — they were fighting for their freedom and freedom of their families."

Customers may purchase the Civil War Sesquicentennial 1864 collectible Forever Souvenir Stamp sheet at

usps.com/stamps, at 800-STAMP-24 (800-782-6724) and at Post Offices nationwide.

The Postal Service began the Civil War Sesquicentennial Forever stamp series in 2011 with the Fort Sumter and Battle of Bull Run Forever stamps. In 2012, stamps memorializing the Battles of Antietam and New Orleans were issued. The battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg were recognized on Forever stamps last year.

Art director Phil Jordan of Falls Church, VA, selected historic paintings for the stamp designs. The Petersburg Campaign stamp is a reproduction of a painting, dated 1892, by J. André Castaigne (painting courtesy of the West Point Museum, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY). The Battle of Mobile Bay stamp is a reproduction of a painting by Julian Oliver Davidson, published circa 1886 by Louis Prang & Co.



For the background image on the souvenir sheet, Jordan used a photograph of Battery A, 2nd U.S. Colored Artillery (Light), Department of the Cumberland, 1864 (photograph courtesy of the Chicago History Museum).

The souvenir sheet includes comments on the war by Ulysses S. Grant, Jeremiah Tate, Harrie Webster and Howell Cobb. It also includes some of the lyrics from the Negro spiritual "O Mary, Don't You Weep."

The Petersburg Campaign, June 15 - July 4, 1863

In the spring of 1864, Grant launched an offensive targeting Richmond, VA, the capital of the Confederacy.

During the first month of the massive operation, the Union sustained losses to Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the Battle of the Wilderness, west of Fredericksburg, and at Cold Harbor, just north of Richmond. Instead of retreating, Grant in early June moved his forces across the James River in an attempt to approach Richmond from the south through Petersburg.

Pierre G.T. Beauregard, the general in command of Petersburg's defense, had fewer than 6,000 soldiers and local militia on June 15 when William F. Smith's Eighteenth Corps, some 14,000 strong, stormed the city's fortifications. Two brigades of African-American soldiers spearheaded the assault and were poised to enter the city.

Battle of the Crater and the role of U.S. Colored Troops

A long siege of 10 months ensued, despite a Union attempt on July 30 to blast through Confederate defenses at the Battle of the Crater. After digging a 500-foot tunnel under a Confederate strongpoint, a regiment of Pennsylvania coal miners in Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside's Ninth Corps (Army of the Potomac) set off a massive explosion. Union soldiers charged into the resulting crater but became sitting ducks for Confederates as they

tried to climb its steep sides. Grant called the battle “a stupendous failure.”

As in the initial June assault, black troops participated in the fighting at the Battle of the Crater. However, by the time the all-black Fourth Division of the Ninth Corps entered the battle, the crater was clogged with Federal troops and their offensive was stalling. As Confederates counterattacked, according to witnesses, they became enraged at the sight of black soldiers and killed many who were essentially trapped in the crater and attempting to surrender. The Fourth Division lost more than 1,000 men, nearly 40 percent of the Ninth Corps' losses that day.

After the Union defeat at the Battle of the Crater, both sides settled into trench warfare that lasted another eight months. The battle caused a decline in Northern morale and nearly prevented Lincoln from winning a second term as president. The Petersburg Campaign ultimately led to Richmond and to the South's surrender at Appomattox.

Battle of Mobile Bay Aug. 5, 1864

Beyond Virginia, Grant set his sights on Mobile, coordinating an attack with Gen. William T. Sherman's advance further south toward Atlanta. Adm. David G. Farragut, hero of the U.S. Navy's conquest of New Orleans in 1862, headed the operations against Mobile. To reach the city, his fleet had to face fire from two forts guarding Mobile Bay — and navigate around mines (then called torpedoes) laid at the entrance.

'Damn the Torpedos! Full speed ahead!'

On Aug. 5, the lead ironclad USS *Tecumseh* hit a torpedo and sank, losing 94 men. Farragut climbed the rigging of his flagship USS *Hartford*. From this high perch, he is said to have given the famous order “Damn the Torpedoes! Full speed ahead.”

Farragut and his flagship USS *Hartford* guided the rest of the fleet through the minefield, and when Fort Morgan surrendered Aug. 23, the Confederacy lost the use of the crucial port of Mobile for the rest of the war.

The Petersburg Campaign and the Battle of Mobile Bay stamps are being issued as Forever stamps. They will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce rate. Many of this year's other stamps may be viewed on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), via Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or at beyondtheperf.com/2013-preview.

First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase stamps at a local Post Office, The Postal Store at usps.com/stamps, or by calling 800-STAMP-24. Customers should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others, and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Civil War: 1864 (Mobile, AL)
Supervisor Customer Service Support
250 Saint Joseph Street
Mobile, AL 36601-9998

Civil War: 1864 (Petersburg, VA)
Retail Manager – Richmond District
1801 Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23232-9640

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. While the first 50 postmarks are free, there is a five-cent charge per postmark beyond that. All orders must be postmarked by Sept. 28, 2014.

First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamps and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at usps.com/stamps or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

United States Postal Service Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014



587316 [First-Day Cover \(Set of 2\)](#), \$1.86.



587319 [First-Day Cancelled Full Sheet](#), \$8.38.



587321 [Digital Color Postmark \(Set of 2\)](#), \$3.28.



587327 [The Civil War: 1864 Folio](#), \$16.95.



587330 [Ceremony Program \(2 stamps, 2 cancels\)](#), \$6.95.

587331 Stamped Deck Card, \$0.95.

587332 Stamped Deck Card w/Digital Color Postmark (2 stamps, 2 cancels), \$2.98.

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