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United States Mint Launches New Quarter Honoring Vicksburg National Military Park

VICKSBURG, Miss. – Residents of Vicksburg and the surrounding area — including thousands of children — joined United States Mint and National Park Service officials today to celebrate the release of a new quarter honoring Vicksburg National Military Park. The coin's reverse (tails side) design depicts *USS Cairo* on the Yazoo River as it looked when it served the Union Navy during the Civil War. Inscriptions on the reverse are *VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI, 2011* and *E PLURIBUS UNUM*.

United States Mint Chief of Staff Al Runnels told the crowd, which included more than 2000 school children, that the "America the Beautiful Quarters are a standing invitation for all Americans to come along on a journey to each national site" and that "today's launch starts the journey of the Vicksburg National Military Park quarters as they pass from American hand to American hand, connecting America through coins."

In addition to Runnels and Vicksburg National Military Park Superintendent Michael Madell, participants included Sarah McCullough, Cultural Heritage Program Manager at the Mississippi Development Authority Division of Tourism, WLBT TV-3 reporter Walt Grayson, and Hinds Community College's Utica Jubilee Singers. Following the ceremony, attendees exchanged their currency for rolls of the Vicksburg National Military Park quarter. Those 18 years of age and younger received a free quarter to commemorate the event. In addition to today's ceremony, the United States Mint hosted a coin forum last evening where local residents gathered to discuss U.S. coinage and learn about United States Mint coin initiatives and programs.

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The Vicksburg National Military Park quarter is the ninth coin in the United States Mint's America the Beautiful Quarters® Program. The new quarter was released to Federal Reserve Banks on August 29. At noon Eastern Time the same day, the United States Mint opened sales of collectible bags and rolls of Vicksburg National Military Park quarters at <http://www.usmint.gov/catalog> and 1-800-USA-MINT (872-6468). Hearing- and speech-impaired customers with TTY equipment may order at 1-888-321-MINT (6468). Additional information about products featuring the Vicksburg National Military Park quarter is also available at the online catalog.

Vicksburg National Military Park commemorates one of the pivotal battles of the Civil War — the campaign, siege and defense of Vicksburg, Miss. Surrender on July 4, 1863, coupled with the fall of Port Hudson, La., split the South, giving control of the Mississippi River to the North. The museum exhibits at the park depict the hardships of civilians and soldiers during the 47-day siege of the city. More than 1,350 monuments, a national cemetery and the restored Union ironclad gunboat, *USS Cairo*, mark the 16-mile tour road. It was the first warship sunk by an electrically detonated "torpedo," which ushered in a new age of naval warfare. Vicksburg National Military Park was first established as a national site on February 21, 1899 (30 Stat. 841).

The United States Mint, created by Congress in 1792, is the Nation's sole manufacturer of legal tender coinage and is responsible for producing circulating coinage for the Nation to conduct its trade and commerce. The United States Mint also produces proof, uncirculated and commemorative coins; Congressional Gold Medals; and silver, gold and platinum bullion coins.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- For information about the America the Beautiful Quarters® Program, please visit <http://www.americathebeautifulquarters.gov/>.
- Free lesson plans based on the America Beautiful Quarters® Program are available at <http://www.usmint.gov/kids/teachers/>.
- For information about the United States Mint, visit <http://www.usmint.gov>.
- To subscribe to United States Mint electronic product notifications, visit <http://www.usmint.gov/email/?action=newsletters>.
- Sign up for [RSS Feeds](#) from the United States Mint and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- For more information about Vicksburg National Military Park, visit <http://www.nps.gov/vick/index.htm>.

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