Ft. Sumter

Just after the inauguration of President Abraham Lincoln on March 4, 1861, Major Anderson of Ft. Sumter reported that he had only a six week supply of food left and Confederate patience for Union Troops in its territory was wearing thin.

On Thursday, April 11, 1861, Confederate Brig. Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard dispatched aides to Maj. Anderson to demand the fort’s surrender. Anderson refused. The next morning, at 4:30 a.m., Confederate batteries opened fire on Fort Sumter and continued for 34 hours. The Civil War had begun!

The firing continued all day, although much less rapidly since the Union fired aimed to conserve ammunition. "The crashing of the shot, the bursting of the shells, the falling of the walls, and the roar of the flames, made a pandemonium of the fort." That evening, the firing was sporadic with but an occasional round landing on or in Fort Sumter.

On Saturday, April 13, Anderson surrendered the fort. Incredibly, no soldiers were killed in battle. The generous terms of surrender, however, allowed Anderson to perform a 100-gun salute before he and his men evacuated the fort the next day. The salute began at 2:00 P.M. on April 14, but was cut short to 50 guns after an accidental explosion killed one of the gunners and mortally wounded another. Carrying their tattered banner, the men marched out of the fort and boarded a boat that ferried them to the Union ships outside the harbor. They were greeted as heroes on their return to the North.