



Record Traffic From The Past

by Steve Anderson

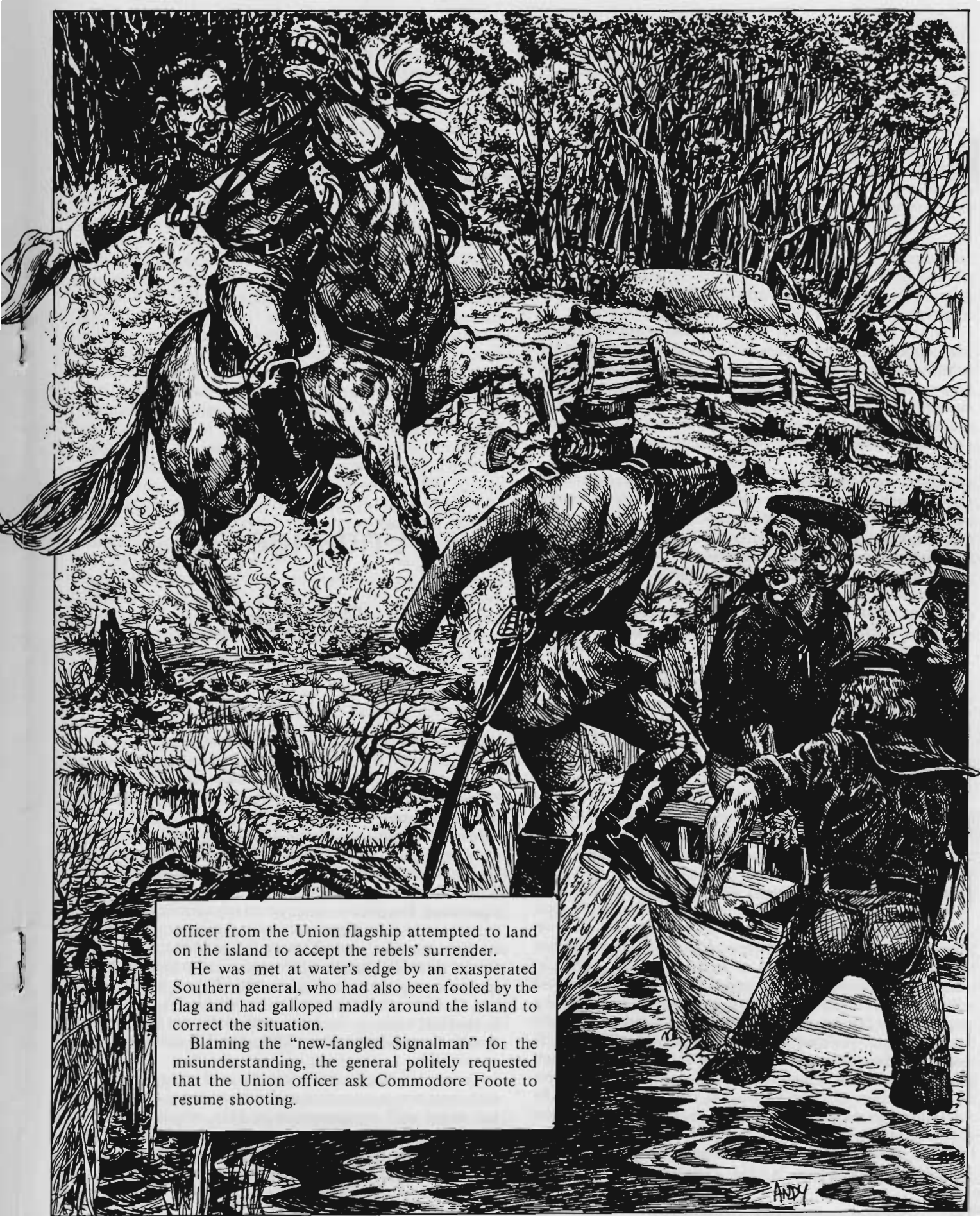
Attempting to gain control of the Mississippi River, the Union Army under General Alexander Pope joined with Commodore Andrew Hull Foote's gunboat flotilla to hack southward through Confederate-held territory.

Standing in the path of Union progress on a bend of the river 10 miles above New Madrid, Missouri, was a heavily fortified island obscurely named "Island Number 10."

Pope's men built a canal to bypass the island. And Foote's mortar boats bombarded the Confederate batteries to ensure safe passage of Union ships through the canal.

In the face of the Union barrage, a Confederate Signalman climbed to the top of the breastwork of his battery to flag a message to a distant battery. The flag was mistaken for the white flag of surrender and, almost at once, all firing ceased. An





officer from the Union flagship attempted to land on the island to accept the rebels' surrender.

He was met at water's edge by an exasperated Southern general, who had also been fooled by the flag and had galloped madly around the island to correct the situation.

Blaming the "new-fangled Signalman" for the misunderstanding, the general politely requested that the Union officer ask Commodore Foote to resume shooting.