

Timetable

Shiloh:

The War's Cruel Baptism of Fire

(All dates are 1862)

Early February -- The Confederate army with 45,000 soldiers under the command of Albert Sidney Johnston manned an extended defense line in Kentucky and Northern Tennessee. The gray coats were opposed by three separate Federal armies with a total of 125,000 troops. Two of the Union armies, under U. S. Grant and John Pope, were under the command of Henry Halleck while the third Union army was under the independent command of Don Carlos Buell.

February 6 – Grant takes Fort Henry.

February 16 – After Grant issued his terms of “unconditional surrender” the previous evening, Simon Buckner was forced to surrender Fort Donelson, an unmitigated disaster for the Confederacy.

March 4 – Halleck, apparently jealous of Grant’s success, accuses Grant of neglect of duty, inefficiency, and drunkenness before replacing Grant with C.F. Smith. In the meanwhile Johnston concentrates his troops, organized into three corps, at Corinth, Mississippi. Beauregard, recently arrived from the East, became Johnston’s second in command of the newly created Army of Mississippi.

March 6 – Orders finally arrive for the Federal army at Paducah, Kentucky to begin up the Tennessee River to destroy railroad assets in the state of Mississippi.

March 8 – Advance elements of Sherman’s division reach Savannah, Tennessee.

At Pea Ridge, Missouri, Van Dorn – while leading 17,000 soldiers against only 11,000 Federals -- suffered a crushing defeat, losing a couple Confederate able generals, James McIntosh and Ben McCulloch, recently one of the most popular men in Texas.

March 11 – Lincoln gives Halleck overall command of the Knoxville-Missouri River area; Halleck immediately orders Buell to join Smith.

March 15-16 – Sherman leads an unsuccessful attempt to destroy the Memphis-Charleston R.R. at Eastport MS. While on this raid Sherman discovers Pittsburg Landing, a transfer point for goods shipped from the Tennessee River to Corinth, 26 miles to the south.

Meanwhile, Grant replaces Smith who has a tetanus infection that will be fatal. Grant will keep his headquarters at Savannah, eight miles downstream from Pittsburg Landing.

March 19 – Buell reaches Columbia, TN, but will be delayed ten days by the flooded Duck River.

March 16 – Another Union division, this under Prentiss, is formed and sent to Pittsburg Landing where it will continue to organize.

March 23 – At Kernstown, VA, south of Winchester, Stonewall Jackson's army fights with and losses to a Federal army. Although Kernstown will be Jackson's only defeat in battle during the Civil War, it will also be the first battle in Jackson's Shenandoah Valley campaign

April 3 – Johnston's army departs Corinth, hoping to catch Grant before Buell arrives.

The Ohio 5th Cav rides six miles down the Corinth Road where they capture a prisoner who reports the Rebels have at least three infantry regiments at Monterey, five miles from the Union encampment at Pittsburg Landing.

April 4 – After a series of forays, Sherman angrily chastises an infantry regimental commander for possibly drawing the whole enemy into battle while mocking the cavalry commander who reported seeing a substantial enemy force.

April 5 – There are five Federal infantry divisions scattered almost randomly immediately south of the Tennessee River with Sherman's division at the Shiloh church being the southernmost, or most exposed, division. The divisions were not

fortified and have only limited outposts. A sixth division commanded by Lew Wallace is deployed five miles downstream at Crump's Landing.

By 4:00 pm the Confederates finally have their tired and hungry troops deployed for battle, approaching to within a couple hundred yards of Federal pickets near the Shiloh church. Johnston has organized his army into three parallel columns along a three mile front. The respective sides have several encounters and sightings of each other. Grant makes a field inspection before returning to Savannah and seemed favorably impressed, reports to Halleck that, "I have scarcely the slightest idea of an attack ... being made on us ..."

April 6 – As early as 4:30 am a 16 man picket reports a "large force in [their] front" At 6:15 am Sherman dismissed the importance of the report, saying "You must be badly scared over there." Prentiss chastises one of his regimental commanders for bring on an attack by sending out an unauthorized reconnaissance party.

By 6:30 am the Confederate attack has begun in earnest hoping to envelop or turn the Union left. Southerners overrun Northerners having their breakfasts, driving many northward to cower along the banks of the Tennessee River. By 8:00 am three of Sherman's regiments have broken and fled to the rear. Later Buell reports that upon arriving at Pittsburg Landing the morning of the 6th he observed "... the banks swarmed with confused mass of men of various regiments. The number could not have been less than 4,000 or 5,000, and later in the day it became much larger."

By 9:00 am the Confederates envelopment plan disintegrates into a series of frontal assaults with a battle line forming along a generally north-south axis approximately perpendicular to the river. Much of the fighting is ferocious but spasmodic and uncoordinated.

At approximately 2:30 pm Johnston, who had been trying to deploy his forces from the front, is killed. Beauregard assumes overall command of the Confederate attack.

At 5:30 pm Prentiss, after pulling his flanks in a defensive cordon, is forced to surrender his 2,200 men.

At 6:00 pm Beauregard suspends further operations after receiving an erroneous report that Buell would not arrive in time to prevent the destruction of Grant's army the next day.

Beauregard, with his characteristic bravado, tells a staff officer that "Tonight we will water our horses in the Tennessee River." Meanwhile Grant, knowing that Buell's arrival was imminent, remains composed, that evening telling Sherman that "We'll lick 'em tomorrow, though."

Grant reforms new lines of battle, including the massing of 36 pieces of artillery. A midnight thunderstorm together with shelling from Federal gunboats makes for a miserable night. Nevertheless many of the Rebel soldiers make themselves comfortable in the abandoned Union campsites while freely looting "all the tea, coffee, sugar, cheese, hardtack and bacon they could want."

April 7 – At daybreak the Union forces begin their attack. Elements of Buell's army begin to arrive army take positions on the left side of the Federal line.

By 10:00 am Union forces attack all along the line with the weight of their attack, reinforced by 25,000 fresh troops, beginning to be too much for Beauregard to contain.

By noon upon learning that hoped-for reinforcements had not been able to cross the Mississippi River, Beauregard apparently decides he has to retreat but does not issue orders until 2:30 pm.

By 4:00 pm the Confederate army, now reduced to approximately 20,000 effectives, is en route to Corinth. The exhausted Yanks were content to reoccupy the camps they had held prior to the battle.

The Battle of Shiloh with losses of 13,047 for the prevailing Union forces under Grant's command. The Confederate losses were set at 10,700.

April 8 – The Federals attempt a pursuit that is roundly repulsed by Forrest's rearguard at Fallen Timbers.

April 11 -- Halleck seizes upon the possibility that Grant may have been surprised by the attack at Shiloh to insert himself as field commander of the Union army. Upon arriving at Pittsburg Landing Halleck begins to reinforce, refit, and reorganize the available Federal forces that will exceed 100,000 soldiers. Grant is "promoted" to become Halleck's second-in-command, an unhappy

assignment since it is a virtually useless position; Grant complains it was worse than being in jail and contemplates leaving the army again.

April 29 – More than three weeks after the battle is over -- Halleck's reorganized force heads south for Corinth.

April 25-May 1– David Farragut, with 17 Union ships under his command, takes New Orleans, a key port. Ben Butler is installed as military governor of New Orleans. Butler will see to the management of the captured city, which he observes is, “a city under the domination of the mob.”

May 3 -- Halleck telegraphs Secretary of War Stanton that; “I leave here tomorrow, and our army will be before Corinth tomorrow night.” Instead Halleck proceeds with an abundance of caution, advancing no more than two miles per day before stopping to entrench each night.

During Halleck's march to Corinth Phil Sheridan became Halleck's quartermaster while trying to get himself a command. While serving with Halleck's headquarters Sheridan meets Sherman.

May 16 -- Butler issues his “Woman Order” that says in part “... when any female shall ... show contempt for the United States, she shall be regarded as a woman of the town plying her avocation.” (Ok, this has nothing to do with Shiloh but I just happen to find it to be amusing.)

May 25 –Upon Gordon Granger's recommendation, and over the initial objections of Halleck who wants to retain Sheridan as his quartermaster, Sheridan is appointed a colonel and given command of the 2nd Michigan Cavalry. Within another week Sheridan will be given command of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade. Within 35 days of becoming a colonel Sheridan will earn a brigadier's star. During this period Sheridan becomes acquainted with Grant.

In Virginia, after a hard, exhausting night march, as soon as the morning fog lifts Stonewall Jackson overruns an outmanned Federal force to capture the city of Winchester.

May 27 – During the night Sheridan's new cavalry command, along with another cavalry regiment, both carrying only sugar, coffee, and salt, set out for

Booneville, Mississippi, a village sitting astride the Mobile & Ohio RR, approximately 22 miles south of Corinth.

May 29— Pressure from Halleck's Federal troops upon Beauregard's CSA troops at Corinth causes the Confederate General to order a retreat toward Tupelo, Mississippi. 2000 Rebel troops are captured.

May 30 -- Proceeding cautiously, Halleck captures Corinth but has allowed Beauregard's army to escape.

Sheridan's troopers reach Booneville where they seize and/or destroy vast amounts of Rebel ordinance and miles of rail track while capturing 2,000 Confederate soldiers.

May 31-June 1— Joe Johnston attacks McClellan at Seven Pines, Virginia, east of Richmond. Johnston is seriously wounded to be replaced by Robert E. Lee who renames Johnston's army the Army of Northern Virginia.