

Shiloh

NATIONAL MILITARY PARK • TENNESSEE



Federal forces, pushing southward and gobbling up Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, forced Confederate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston to abandon southern Kentucky and much of West and Middle Tennessee. He established his new line covering the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, concentrating 44,000 men at Corinth, Miss. Gen. U. S. Grant followed him, steaming up the Tennessee River with 40,000 troops of the Army of the Tennessee to Pittsburg Landing, 22 miles from Corinth. Ordered to wait there until Gen. D. C. Buell's Army of the Ohio could join him, Grant camped his men in the woods and fields near Shiloh Church.

Warned that Buell would join Grant, Johnston decided to strike before the two armies could unite. When his Army of the Mississippi hit the Federal camps on the morning of April 6, some Northern troops fought doggedly to hold their line; others, caught unprepared, barely had time to get out to re-form elsewhere. Along the Sunken Road the Federals exacted a fearful toll. Confederate soldiers knew they had struck a "hornets' nest," and named it that.

To conquer the Hornets' Nest, Confederate Gen. Daniel Ruggles brought up 62 cannon, the largest artillery concentration till then seen on a North American battlefield. Under cover of the hammering guns, Confederate infantry swept forward, surrounded the Union defenders and captured most of them. That sacrifice bought time for Grant to establish his final line near Pittsburg Landing.

To the right and left of the Hornets' Nest, Federal forces fell back before the Confederate onslaughts, and the fighting became a confused slugging match. On both sides, regiments became disorganized and companies disintegrated. One thing became painfully evident to the Confederate command: the melee was driving the Federals toward their base at Pittsburg Landing, rather than away from it as the Southerners had planned. Johnston was killed while trying to push home attacks on the river side of the battlefield to isolate the Unionists from the landing, and Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard took over the Confederate command.

By late afternoon Grant's surviving troops were safe in their final line. The Confederates, now

more disorganized than the Federals, tried the flanks of the Federal position. The Union right beat them off easily. The vanguard of Buell's army crossed the Tennessee and filed into position on Grant's left covering Pittsburg Landing. Union infantry, artillery, and gunboat fire on that flank hurled back the Confederate attempt to cross the rugged Dill Creek terrain, and the fighting sputtered out for the night. While Confederates tried to reorganize, Northern gunboats sent salvos crashing into their lines at 15-minute intervals, and the remainder of Buell's army crossed the river.

At dawn on April 7 the combined Federal armies, now 55,000 strong, began their attack. In spite of a gallant Confederate counterattack at Water Oaks Pond, the Federals pushed the 37,000 Confederates off the field. They withdrew beyond Shiloh Church and began their weary march to Corinth. The exhausted Federals did not pursue. The battle was over.

In late April and May the Federals crept toward Corinth and seized it, while an amphibious force on the Mississippi was destroying the Confederate River Defense Fleet and capturing Memphis. From these bases the Federals pushed on down the Mississippi to besiege Vicksburg. With the surrender of Vicksburg and the fall of Port Hudson the Confederacy was cut in half. The war went on, but careful observers knew that the Confederacy must lose.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The park is about 10 miles south of Savannah and Adamsville, Tenn., via U.S. 64 and Tenn. 22; 15 miles southeast of Selmer, Tenn., via U.S. 45 and Tenn. 142; and 23 miles north of Corinth, Miss., via Miss. 2 and Tenn. 22.

The visitor center is open every day except December 25.

ADMINISTRATION

Shiloh National Military Park and Cemetery are administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Shiloh, Tenn. 38376, is in immediate charge.

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U. S. Department of the Interior
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