

Shiloh

National Military Park
Tennessee

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Cover: Action in the Hornets' Nest, from the painting "The Battle of Shiloh," by Thure de Thulstrup.

During the winter of 1861-62 Federal forces pushing southward from St. Louis, Mo., captured Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. This action forced Gen. A. S. Johnston to abandon southern Kentucky and much of West and Middle Tennessee, including Nashville. After withdrawing further south, he established a new line covering the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, the only direct railroad link to Richmond and Memphis. Realizing that he could not wait for another Federal advance, Johnston began concentrating 44,000 men at Corinth, Miss., whence he hoped to take the offensive and destroy Gen. U.S. Grant's Union Army of the Tennessee before it could be joined by Gen. D. C. Buell's Army of the Ohio.

The Federals had not expected the rapid collapse of the Southern defenses; thus there was a delay before Grant's Army of the Tennessee, 40,000 strong, moved south along the Tennessee River toward Pittsburg Landing, 32 kilometers (22 miles) northeast of Corinth. Ordered to wait there until Buell's army joined him, Grant camped his men in the woods and fields around Shiloh Church. Concerned about the large number of raw recruits in his army, Grant drilled his men rather than fortify his position.

Johnston's attack on Grant was originally planned for April 4, but repeated delays postponed it 48 hours. As a result, Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, Johnston's second in command, feared that the element of surprise had been lost and recommended withdrawing to Corinth. But Johnston refused to consider retreat.

When Johnston's Army of Mississippi hit the Federal camps on the morning of April 6, the Confederates achieved complete surprise. (The Union division commanders had done little or no patrolling, and the senior commander on the field, Gen. W. T. Sherman, treated all reports of Confederate troops in the area with contempt.) Some

Northern troops fought doggedly to hold their line; others fell back and re-formed elsewhere. Many who had never been in combat before fled for safety to the Tennessee River. The Southern army rolled over one Union position after another until noon. Then, along the Sunken Road, the Federals finally established and held a line that stopped the Southern advance. Confederate soldiers knew they had struck a "Hornets' Nest", and named it that. Rather than seek a way around the stronghold, the Southerners charged the position repeatedly.

None of these attacks succeeded until Confederate Gen. Daniel Ruggles brought up 62 cannon, the largest artillery concentration until 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 Gen. Benjamin Prentiss' division. That sacrifice bought time for Grant to establish a final defense line near Pittsburg Landing.

To the right and left of the Hornets' Nest, Federal forces fell back before the Confederate attack, and the fighting became a confused slugging match. On both sides, regiments became disorganized and companies disintegrated. Johnston was killed while trying to push home attacks on the river side of the battlefield to isolate the Unionists from the landing, and Beauregard took over the Confederate command.

By late afternoon Grant's surviving troops were safe in their final line. His chief of artillery, Col. J. D. Webster, had established a line of 53 guns on the heights around Pittsburg Landing. The Confederates, now as disorganized as 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.

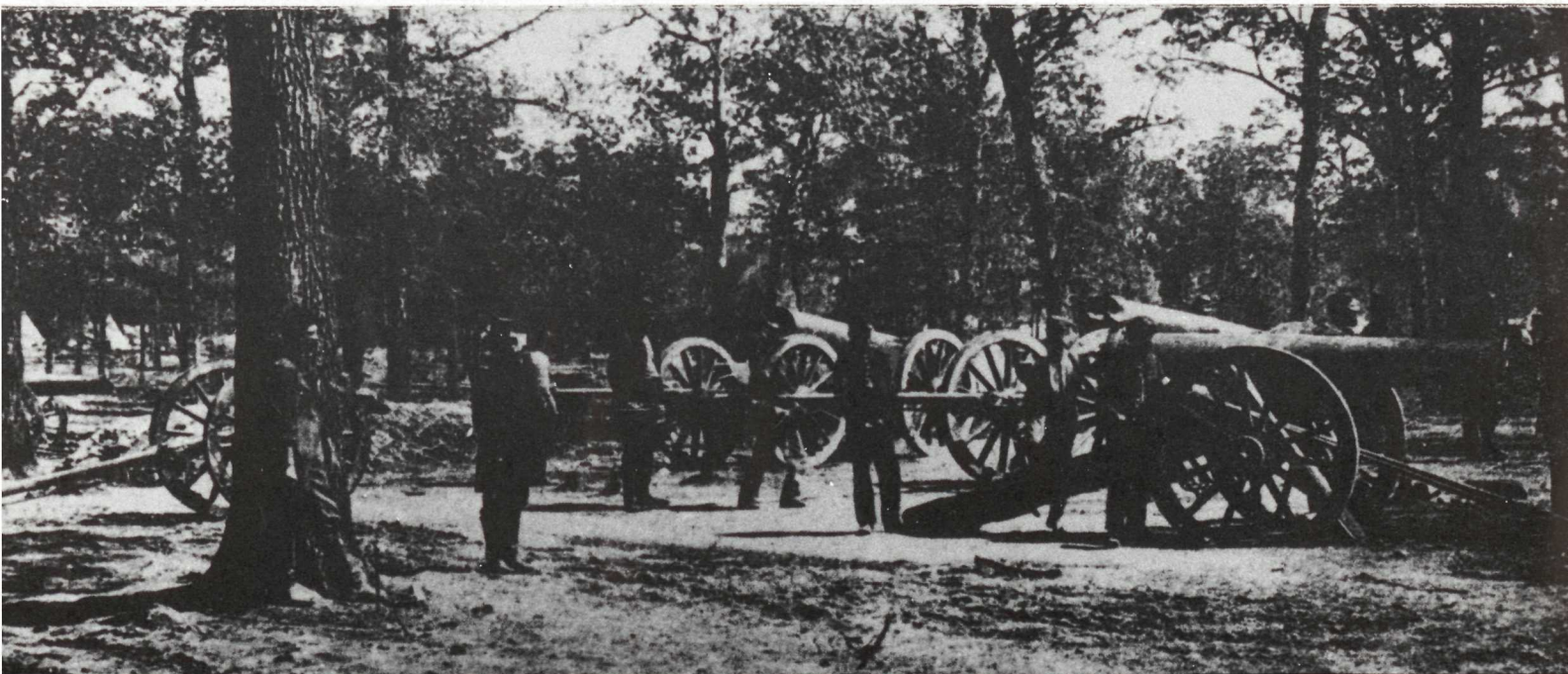
By dawn on April 7, the combined Federal armies numbered 55,000 men. Beauregard, unaware that all of Buell's army had arrived, planned to continue the attack and drive the Northerners into the river. At about 6 a.m. the Confederates went on the offensive and were, at first, successful. The stronger Union armies, however, soon began to push the Confederates back. Realizing that he had lost the initiative, Beauregard tried to break the Union drive by counterattacking at Water Oaks Pond. The Federal advance was stopped, but their line did not break. Low on ammunition and food and with 15,000 of his men killed, wounded, or missing, Beauregard knew he could go no further. He withdrew beyond Shiloh Church and began the weary march back to Corinth. The exhausted Federals did not pursue. The battle was over.

On April 8, Grant sent Sherman south along the Corinth Road to try to catch the retreating Confederates. Sixteen kilometers (10 miles) out he ran into the Southern rear-guard under Col. N. B. Forrest. Sherman abandoned the pursuit.

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. After the surrender of Vicksburg and the fall of Port Hudson in the summer of 1863, the Confederacy was cut in half. The war went on, but careful observers knew that the South must lose.

Back cover: Defenders of Grant's last line at Shiloh, April 6, 1862.

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Albert S. Johnston
P.G.T. Beauregard

Ulysses S. Grant
Don Carlos Buell
William T. Sherman

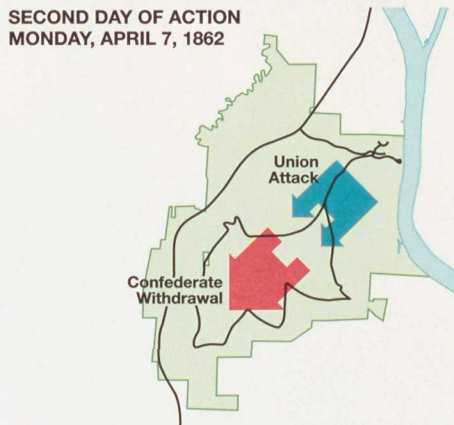


The battlefield tour, shown on the map below, starts at the visitor center where exhibits and a 25-minute film provide an introduction to the battle and the war. The maps at right show schematically the troop movements of the armies engaged during the two-day battle and, when used in conjunction with the tour map, help to provide orientation to the ground on which the action took place and make the individual tour stops more meaningful. Park interpreters will be glad to answer any questions you might have about the battle or the tour. The visitor center is open every day except December 25. Address all correspondence in care of the park superintendent, whose address is Shiloh, TN 38376.

FIRST DAY OF ACTION
SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 1862



SECOND DAY OF ACTION
MONDAY, APRIL 7, 1862



Touring Shiloh Battlefield

1 Pittsburg Landing Union base during the battle and a landing for river steamers. Here on the night of April 6-7, General Buell's Army of the Ohio marched off troop transports to reinforce Grant's army. The next day a Federal counterattack forced the Confederates under Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard to withdraw.

2 Grant's Last Line While the Confederates moved to crush the Hornets' Nest, Grant formed a defensive line along this ridge. The line of artillery marks the final position of Grant's left on April 6. That night Buell's reinforcements deployed forward of Grant's left and center while Lew Wallace's fresh division reinforced the right. At dawn on April 7 nearly 50,000 Federals launched a counterattack against the Confederates.

3 Hornets' Nest At mid-morning on April 6, parts of three Union divisions occupied a dense oak thicket on this sector of the Federal front. For seven hours the Federals repulsed several piecemeal Confederate attacks. In the late afternoon, while Grant prepared a last line of defense to the north, the Confederates surrounded and captured this position.

4 Ruggles' Battery After infantry attacks failed to break the Hornets' Nest line, the Confederates employed the guns from 11 Southern batteries to bombard the Union position. Under cover of this barrage, Confederate infantry outflanked the Union position. As a result, Union Gen. William Wallace was mortally wounded and General Prentiss was captured along with 2,250 Northern troops.

5 Shiloh's Casualties After the battle, Union soldiers dug several trenches to bury the 1,728 Confederates killed in the fighting. This one is believed to be the largest of the five known mass burial trenches.

6 Confederate Retreat The Confederate counter-attack through this wet weather pond on April 7 halted the Union advances but failed to break the Union line. With chances for victory gone, Beauregard withdrew his army to Corinth.

7 Shiloh Church Here stood Shiloh Meeting House, the log Methodist church that gave the battle its name. On the morning of April 6, Sherman's division held this area of the battlefield until forced to abandon it. Later Beauregard established his headquarters here. The present church and cemetery are privately owned, but park visitors are welcome on the grounds.

8 Union Reconnaissance Patrol Here at 4:55 a.m. on April 6, the first shots of the battle were fired when Confederate pickets engaged a Union patrol from Prentiss's division. Fraley Field, where the Federals struck the Confederate line of battle, is a short walk along the trail west of the tour stop.

9 Union Lines of Defense On the low ridge in front of you General Prentiss formed his Union division into line of battle on the morning of April 6 in an attempt to halt the unexpected Confederate onslaught. The Federals held for about an hour, when a massive assault drove them back to their camps.

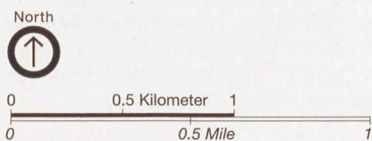
10 Invasion of the Union Camps Here Prentiss's division made a brief stand until it was overrun by Confederates at 9 a.m. While most of his survivors fled to Pittsburg Landing, Prentiss rallied 500 men and joined troops from other divisions in the Hornets' Nest. The upright cannon marks where Col. Everett Peabody was killed while trying to rally his Union brigade.

11 Field Hospital Here Federal surgeons established one of the first tent hospitals of the Civil War. By gathering tents from all over the battlefield and concentrating medical services, patient care was greatly improved and the death rate was lowered.

12 Death of General Johnston The monument here marks the site where the Confederate commander, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, was found mortally wounded at 2 p.m. on April 6. He was the highest ranking Southern officer killed during the war.

13 The Peach Orchard Sarah Bell's orchard was in bloom on April 6 as Confederate attacks hammered the Union left. Peach blossoms cut down by bullets reminded some observers of falling snow. After 2 p.m. the Federals withdrew north, holding a succession of lines until 4 p.m., when they conducted a fighting retreat to Pittsburg Landing.

14 Bloody Pond During the battle, soldiers of both sides came here to drink and bathe their wounds. Both men and horses died in the pond, their blood staining the water a dark red.



For Your Safety
Make your visit a safe and enjoyable one. Motorists, hikers, and bikers will be sharing the park roads and everyone should be alert and exercise extreme caution at all times.

Do not climb on cannons, monuments, or fences; it damages them and it is dangerous for you.

Use good judgment when near the river bank.

Report all accidents to park rangers, who are here to assist you.

Notice
The possession or use of metal detectors and the hunting, collecting, or possession of archeological artifacts within national park boundaries is prohibited by federal law.

This map should not be used to determine present legal park boundaries. Please check at the visitor center for accurate boundary information.

