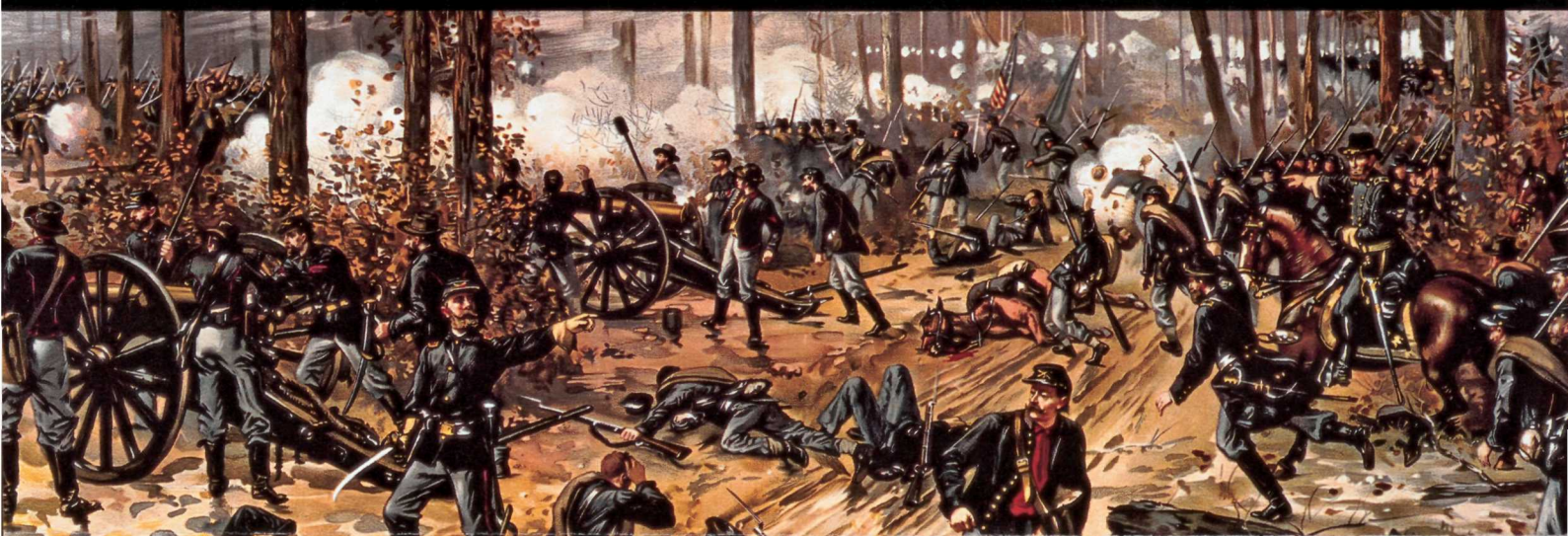


Shiloh

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Military Park
Tennessee



Action in the Hornets' Nest, from the painting "The Battle of Shiloh," by Thure de Thulstrup.
NPS EMPLOYEE COLLECTION

By mid-February 1862, United States forces had won decisive victories in the West at Mill Springs, Ky., and Forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee. These successes opened the way for invasion up the Tennessee River to sever Confederate rail communications along the important Memphis & Charleston and Mobile & Ohio railroads. Forced to abandon Kentucky and Middle Tennessee, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, supreme Confederate commander in the West, moved to protect his rail communications by concentrating his scattered forces around the small town of Corinth in northeast Mississippi—strategic crossroads of the Memphis & Charleston and the Mobile & Ohio.

In March, Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, commanding U.S. forces in the West, advanced armies under Maj. Gens. Ulysses S. Grant and Don Carlos Buell southward to sever the railroads. Grant ascended the Tennessee River by steamboat, disembarking his Army of the Tennessee at Pittsburg Landing, 22 miles northeast of Corinth. There he established a base of operations on a plateau (Shiloh Hill) west of the river, with his forward camps posted two miles inland around a log church called Shiloh Meeting House. Halleck had specifically instructed Grant not to engage the Confederates until he had been reinforced by Buell's Army of the Ohio, then marching overland from Nashville. Once combined, the two armies would advance on Corinth and permanently break western Confederate railroad communications.

General Johnston, aware of Federal designs on Corinth, planned to smash Grant's army at Pittsburg Landing before Buell arrived. He placed his troops in motion on April 3, but heavy rain and difficulties encountered by marching large columns of troops, artillery, and heavy wagons over muddy roads, delayed the attack. By nightfall, April 5, his Army of the Mississippi, nearly 44,000 men present for duty, was finally deployed for battle four miles southwest of Pittsburg Landing.

At daybreak, Sunday, April 6, the Confederates stormed out of the woods and assailed the forward Federal camps around Shiloh Church. Grant and his nearly 40,000 men present for duty were equally surprised by the onslaught. The Federals soon rallied, and bitter fighting consumed Shiloh Hill. Throughout the morning, Confederate brigades slowly gained ground, forcing Grant's troops to give way, grudgingly, making successive defensive stands at Shiloh Church, the Peach Orchard, Water Oaks Pond, and within an impenetrable oak thicket battle survivors named the Hornets' Nest (see painting above).

Despite having achieved surprise, Johnston's troops soon became as disorganized as the Federals. The Southern attack lost coordination as corps, divisions, and brigades became entangled. Then, at mid-afternoon, as he supervised an assault on the Union left, Johnston was struck in the right leg by a bullet and bled to death, leaving Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard in command of the Confederate army. Grant's battered divisions retired to a strong position extending west from Pittsburg Landing where massed artillery and rugged ravines protected their front and flanks. Fighting ended at nightfall.

Overnight, reinforcements from Buell's army reached Pittsburg Landing. Beauregard, unaware Buell had arrived, planned to finish the destruction of Grant the next day. At dawn, April 7, however, it was Grant who attacked. Throughout the day, the combined Union armies, numbering more than 54,500 men, hammered Beauregard's depleted ranks, now mustering barely 34,000 troops. Despite mounting desperate counterattacks, the exhausted Confederates could not stem the increasingly stronger Federal tide. Forced back to Shiloh Church, Beauregard skillfully withdrew his outnumbered command and returned to Corinth. The battered Federal forces did not press the pursuit. The battle of Shiloh, or Pittsburg Landing, was over. It had cost both sides a combined total of 23,746 men

killed, wounded, or missing—more casualties than America had suffered in previous wars—and ultimate control of the railroad junction at Corinth still remained in doubt.

Halleck, recognizing Corinth's military value, considered its capture more important than the destruction of Confederate armies. Reinforced by another army under Gen. John Pope, he cautiously advanced southward from Tennessee and, by late May, entrenched his three armies within cannon range of Confederate fortifications defending the strategic crossroads. Despite being reinforced by Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn's Trans-Mississippi Army, Beauregard withdrew south to Tupelo, abandoning the most viable line of east-west rail communications in the western Confederacy.

Federal efforts to recover the Mississippi Valley stalled in the late summer of 1862, and Confederate leaders launched counteroffensives in every theater. Armies led by Gens. Braxton Bragg and Edmund Kirby Smith invaded Kentucky, while troops under Van Dorn boldly attacked the heavily fortified Union garrison at Corinth, linchpin of Federal control in northern Mississippi. In one of the more bitterly contested battles of the war, Van Dorn was decisively repulsed, following two days of carnage (October 3–4) that claimed nearly 7,000 more Confederate and Union casualties.

Although overshadowed by the failure of Robert E. Lee's Confederate invasion in Maryland, Van Dorn's defeat, coupled with Bragg's retreat from Kentucky after the Battle of Perryville (October 8), caused discouragement in Richmond and relief in Washington. More significantly, Van Dorn's defeat at Corinth—the last Confederate offensive in Mississippi—seriously weakened the only mobile Southern army defending the Mississippi Valley. This permitted Ulysses S. Grant to launch a relentless nine-month campaign to capture the so-called "fortress city" of Vicksburg and recover the Mississippi River.

The Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center

For six months in 1862, Corinth, Miss., a critical railroad junction second only to Richmond in military importance, captured the attention of a divided nation. Control of Corinth's railroads was the strategic goal of the armies fighting at Shiloh in April and at the Battle of Corinth in October.

Begin your visit to Shiloh National Military Park at the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center, where interactive exhibits explore the key role of Corinth in the western theater of the Civil War. Located 23 miles southwest of Shiloh Battlefield, the Center is near the site of Bat-



Bronze Civil War soldier tableau at Center's entrance.



Reconstructed Civil War artillery emplacement.

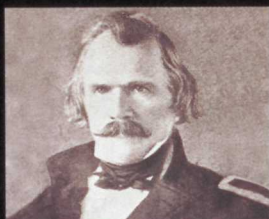


tery Robinett, a Union fortification witness to bloody fighting in the October 1862 battle.

The Center is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except December 25, and features interactive exhibits, a multime-

dia presentation on the Battle of Shiloh, and a video on the Battle of Corinth. Full-scale depictions of field fortifications explain their importance during the Civil War. To the rear of the Center, a unique water feature commemorates

100 years of American history. A reflecting pool serves as a memorial to the lives lost during the Shiloh campaign. The Center houses a 75-seat auditorium, a public research library, and a Civil War bookstore.



Albert S. Johnston



P.G.T. Beauregard



Ulysses S. Grant



Don Carlos Buell



William T. Sherman

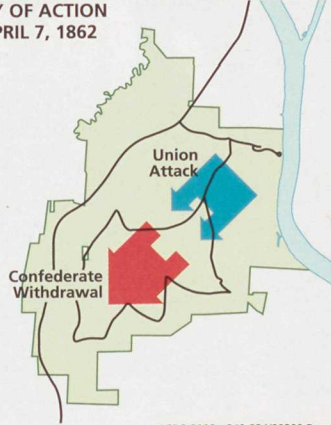
The battlefield tour (see map below) starts at the visitor center, where exhibits and a 25-minute film introduce the battle and the war. The maps at right highlight troop movements of the armies during the two-day battle. Used with the tour map, they help orient you to the ground on which the action took place and make the tour stops more meaningful. Park interpreters will gladly answer any questions you might have about the battle or the tour. The visitor center is open every day except December 25. For more information contact:

Shiloh National Military Park
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FIRST DAY OF ACTION
SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 1862



SECOND DAY OF ACTION
MONDAY, APRIL 7, 1862



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Printed on recycled paper.

Touring Shiloh Battlefield

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Confederate Retreat** The Confederate counterattack 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

