

= Battle of Shiloh =

The Battle of Shiloh , also known as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing , was a major battle in the Western Theater of the American Civil War , fought April 6 ? 7 , 1862 , in southwestern Tennessee . A Union army under Major General Ulysses S. Grant had moved via the Tennessee River deep into Tennessee and was encamped principally at Pittsburg Landing , Tennessee on the west bank of the river , where Confederate forces under Generals Albert Sidney Johnston and Pierre G. T. Beauregard launched a surprise attack on Grant 's army . Johnston was killed in action during the fighting ; Beauregard , who thus succeeded to command of the army , decided against pressing the attack late in the evening . Overnight Grant was reinforced by one of his own divisions stationed further north and was joined by three divisions from another Union army under Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell . This allowed them to launch an unexpected counterattack the next morning which completely reversed the Confederate gains of the previous day .

On April 6 , the first day of the battle , the Confederates struck with the intention of driving the Union defenders away from the river and into the swamps of Owl Creek to the west . Johnston hoped to defeat Grant 's Army of the Tennessee before the anticipated arrival of General Don Carlos Buell 's Army of the Ohio . The Confederate battle lines became confused during the fierce fighting , and Grant 's men instead fell back to the northeast , in the direction of Pittsburg Landing . A Union position on a slightly sunken road , nicknamed the " Hornet 's Nest , " defended by the men of Brig. Gens . Benjamin M. Prentiss 's and William H. L. Wallace 's divisions , provided critical time for the remainder of the Union line to stabilize under the protection of numerous artillery batteries . Wallace was mortally wounded when the position collapsed , while several regiments from the two divisions were eventually surrounded and surrendered . General Johnston was shot in the leg and bled to death while personally leading an attack . Beauregard , his second in command , acknowledged how tired the army was from the day 's exertions and decided against assaulting the final Union position that night .

Tired but unfought and well @-@ organized men from Buell 's army and a division of Grant 's army arrived in the evening of April 6 and helped turn the tide the next morning , when the Union commanders launched a counterattack along the entire line . Confederate forces were forced to retreat from the area , ending their hopes of blocking the Union advance into northern Mississippi . The Battle of Shiloh was the bloodiest battle in American history up to that time , although it was superseded the next year by the Battle of Chancellorsville and , soon after , the three @-@ day Battle of Gettysburg , which would prove to be the bloodiest of the war .

= = Background and plans = =

= = = Military situation = = =

After the losses of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in February 1862 , Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston withdrew his forces into western Tennessee , northern Mississippi , and Alabama to reorganize . Johnston established his base at Corinth , Mississippi , the site of a major railroad junction and strategic transportation link between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River , but left the Union troops with access into southern Tennessee and points farther south via the Tennessee River .

In early March , Union Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck , then commander of the Department of the Missouri , ordered Grant to remain at Fort Henry , and on March 4 turned field command of the expedition over to a subordinate , Brig. Gen. C. F. Smith , who had recently been nominated as a major general . (Various writers assert that Halleck took this step because of professional and personal animosity toward Grant ; however , Halleck shortly restored Grant to full command , perhaps influenced by an inquiry from President Abraham Lincoln .) Smith 's orders were to lead raids intended to capture or damage the railroads in southwestern Tennessee . Brig. Gen. William T. Sherman 's troops arrived from Paducah , Kentucky , to conduct a similar mission to break the

railroads near Eastport , Mississippi . Halleck also ordered Grant to advance his Army of West Tennessee (soon to be known by its more famous name , the Army of the Tennessee) on an invasion up the Tennessee River . Grant left Fort Henry and headed upriver (south) , arriving at Savannah , Tennessee , on March 14 , and established his headquarters on the east bank of the river . Grant 's troops set up camp farther upriver : five divisions at Pittsburg Landing , Tennessee , and a sixth at Crump 's Landing , four miles from Grant 's headquarters .

Meanwhile , Halleck 's command was enlarged through consolidation of Grant 's and Buell 's armies and renamed the Department of the Mississippi . With Buell 's Army of the Ohio under his command , Halleck ordered Buell to concentrate with Grant at Savannah . Buell began a march with much of his army from Nashville , Tennessee , and headed southwest toward Savannah . Halleck intended to take the field in person and lead both armies in an advance south to seize Corinth , Mississippi , where the Mobile and Ohio Railroad linking Mobile , Alabama , to the Ohio River intersected the Memphis and Charleston Railroad . The railroad was a vital supply line connecting the Mississippi River at Memphis , Tennessee to Richmond , Virginia .

= = Opposing forces and initial movements = =

= = = Union = = =

Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant 's Army of the Tennessee of 44 @, @ 895 men consisted of six divisions :

1st Division (Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand) : 3 brigades ;

2nd Division (Maj. Gen. W. H. L. Wallace) : 3 brigades ;

3rd Division (Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace) : 3 brigades ;

4th Division (Brig. Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut) : 3 brigades ;

5th Division (Brig. Gen. William T. Sherman) : 4 brigades ;

6th Division (Brig. Gen. Benjamin M. Prentiss) : 2 brigades ;

Of the six divisions encamped on the western side of the Tennessee River in early April , only Lew Wallace 's 3rd Division was at Crump 's Landing ; the remainder were farther south (upriver) at Pittsburg Landing . Grant developed a reputation during the war for being more concerned with his own plans than with those of the enemy . His encampment at Pittsburg Landing displayed his most consequential lack of such concern ? his army was spread out in bivouac style , with many of his men surrounding a small , log meetinghouse named Shiloh Church (Shiloh is a Hebrew word meaning " place of peace ") , passing the time waiting for Buell 's army with drills for his many raw troops , without establishing entrenchments or other significant defensive measures .

In his memoirs , Grant reacted to criticism of his lack of entrenchments : " Besides this , the troops with me , officers and men , needed discipline and drill more than they did experience with the pick , shovel and axe under all these circumstances I concluded that drill and discipline were worth more to our men than fortifications . " Lew Wallace 's division was 5 miles (8 @. @ 0 km) downstream (north) from Pittsburg Landing , at Crump 's Landing , a position intended to prevent the placement of Confederate river batteries , to protect the road connecting Crump 's Landing to Bethel Station , Tennessee , and to guard the Union army 's right flank . In addition , Wallace 's troops could strike the railroad line connecting Bethel Station to Corinth , about 20 miles (32 km) to the south .

The portion of Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell 's Army of the Ohio that was engaged in the battle consisted of four divisions :

2nd Division (Brig. Gen. Alexander M. McCook) : 3 brigades ;

4th Division (Brig. Gen. William " Bull " Nelson) : 3 brigades ;

5th Division (Brig. Gen. Thomas L. Crittenden) : 2 brigades ;

6th Division (Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood) : 2 brigades ;

On April 5 , the eve of battle , the first of Buell 's divisions , under the command of Brig. Gen. William " Bull " Nelson , reached Savannah . Grant instructed Nelson to encamp there instead of

immediately crossing the river . The remainder of Buell 's army , still marching toward Savannah with only portions of four of his divisions , totaling 17 @, @ 918 men , did not reach the area in time to have a significant role in the battle until its second day . Buell 's three other divisions were led by Brig. Gens . Alexander M. McCook , Thomas L. Crittenden , and Thomas J. Wood . (Wood 's division appeared too late even to be of much service on the second day .)

= = = Confederate = = =

On the Confederate side , Johnston named his newly assembled force the Army of Mississippi . He concentrated almost 55 @, @ 000 men around Corinth , Mississippi , about 20 miles (32 km) southwest of Grant 's troops at Pittsburg Landing . Of these men , 40 @, @ 335 departed from Corinth on April 3 , hoping to surprise Grant before Buell arrived to join forces . They were organized into four large corps , commanded by :

I Corps (Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk) , with 2 divisions under Brig. Gen. Charles Clark and Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Cheatham ;

II Corps (Maj. Gen. Braxton Bragg) , with 2 divisions under Brig. Gens . Daniel Ruggles and Jones M. Withers ;

III Corps (Maj. Gen. William J. Hardee) , with 3 brigades under Brig. Gens . Thomas C. Hindman , Patrick Cleburne , and Sterling A. M. Wood ;

Reserve Corps (Brig. Gen. John C. Breckinridge) , with 3 brigades under Cols . Robert Trabue and Winfield S. Statham , and Brig. Gen. John S. Bowen , and attached cavalry ;

= = = Comparison between Union and Confederate armies = = =

On the eve of battle , Grant 's and Johnston 's armies were of comparable size , but the Confederates were poorly armed with antique weapons , including shotguns , hunting rifles , pistols , flintlock muskets , and even a few pikes ; however , some regiments , notably the 6th and 7th Kentucky Infantry , had Enfield rifles . The troops approached the battle with very little combat experience ; Braxton Bragg 's men from Pensacola and Mobile were the best trained . Grant 's army included 32 out of 62 infantry regiments who had combat experience at Fort Donelson . One half of his artillery batteries and most of his cavalry were also combat veterans .

= = = Johnston 's plan = = =

Johnston 's plan was to attack Grant 's left , separate the Union army from its gunboat support and avenue of retreat on the Tennessee River , and drive it west into the swamps of Snake and Owl Creeks , where it could be destroyed . The attack on Grant was originally planned for April 4 , but it was delayed forty @-@ eight hours due to heavy rain . As a result , Johnston 's second in command , P. G. T. Beauregard , again feared that the element of surprise had been lost and recommended withdrawing to Corinth . But Johnston once more refused to consider retreat . Beauregard was concerned that the sounds of marching and the Confederate soldiers test @-@ firing their rifles after two days of rain had cost them the element of surprise . Beauregard urged Johnston not to attack Grant .

Johnston , who refused to accept Beauregard 's advice , made the decision to attack and then remarked , " I would fight them if they were a million . " Despite Beauregard 's well @-@ founded concern , most of the Union forces did not hear the marching army approach and were unaware of the enemy camps less than 3 miles (4 @. @ 8 km) away .

= = Battle , April 6 (first day : Confederate assault) = =

= = = Early morning attack = = =

Before 6 a.m. on Sunday , April 6 , Johnston 's army was deployed for battle , straddling the Corinth Road . The army had spent the entire night bivouacking in order of battle within 2 miles (3 @. @ 2 km) of the Union camp near Sherman 's headquarters at Shiloh Church . Their approach and dawn assault achieved a strategic and tactical surprise . The Union army had sent out no scouts or regular patrols and did not have any vedettes in place for early warning . Grant telegraphed a message to Halleck on the night of April 5 , " I have scarcely the faintest idea of an attack (general one) being made upon us , but will be prepared should such a thing take place . " Grant 's declaration proved to be overstated . Sherman , the informal camp commander at Pittsburg Landing , did not believe the Confederates had a major assault force nearby ; he discounted the possibility of an attack from the south . Sherman expected that Johnston would eventually attack from the direction of Purdy , Tennessee , to the west . When Col. Jesse Appler , 53rd Ohio Infantry , warned Sherman that an attack was imminent , the general angrily replied , " Take your damned regiment back to Ohio . There are no Confederates closer than Corinth . "

Around 3 a.m. , Col. Everett Peabody , commanding Brig. Gen. Benjamin Prentiss 's 1st Brigade , sent a patrol of 250 infantry men from the 25th Missouri and the 12th Michigan out on reconnaissance . The patrol , under the command of Maj. James P. Powell , met fire from Confederates who then fled into the woods . A short time later , 5 : 15 a.m. , they encountered Confederate outposts manned by the 3rd Mississippi Battalion , and a spirited fight lasted about an hour . Arriving messengers and sounds of gunfire from the skirmish alerted the nearest Union troops , who formed battle line positions before the Confederates were able to reach them ; however , the Union army command had not adequately prepared for an attack on their camps . By 9 a.m. Union forces at Pittsburgh Landing were either engaged or moving toward the front line .

The confusing alignment of the Confederate troops helped reduce the effectiveness of the attack , since Johnston and Beauregard had no unified battle plan . Earlier , Johnston had telegraphed Confederate President Jefferson Davis his plan for the attack : " Polk the left , Bragg the center , Hardee the right , Breckinridge in reserve . " His strategy was to emphasize the attack on his right flank to prevent the Union army from reaching the Tennessee River , its supply line and avenue of retreat . Johnston instructed Beauregard to stay in the rear and direct men and supplies as needed , while he rode to the front to lead the men on the battle line . This effectively ceded control of the battle to Beauregard , who had a different concept , which was simply to attack in three waves and push the Union army eastward to the river . The corps of Hardee and Bragg began the assault with their divisions in one line , nearly 3 miles (4 @. @ 8 km) wide and about 2 miles (3 @. @ 2 km) from its front to its rear column . As these units advanced , they became intermingled and difficult to control . Corps commanders attacked in line without reserves , and artillery could not be concentrated to effect a breakthrough . At about 7 : 30 a.m. , from his position in the rear , Beauregard ordered the corps of Polk and Breckinridge forward on the left and right of the line , diluting their effectiveness . The attack therefore went forward as a frontal assault conducted by a single linear formation , which lacked both the depth and weight needed for success . Command and control , in the modern sense , were lost from the onset of the first assault .

= = = Grant and his army rally = = =

The Confederate assault , despite its shortcomings , was ferocious , causing some of the numerous inexperienced Union soldiers in Grant 's new army to flee to the river for safety . Others fought well , but were forced to withdraw under strong pressure from the Confederates , and attempted to form new defensive lines . Many Union regiments fragmented entirely ; the companies and sections that remained on the field attached themselves to other commands . Sherman , who had been negligent in preparing for an attack , became one of its most important elements . He appeared everywhere along his lines , inspiring his raw recruits to resist the initial assaults , despite the staggering losses on both sides . Sherman received two minor wounds and had three horses shot out from under him . Historian James M. McPherson cites the battle as the turning point of Sherman 's life , helping him to become one of the North 's premier generals . Sherman 's division bore the brunt of the initial attack . Despite heavy fire on their position and their left flank crumbling , Sherman 's men fought

stubbornly , but the Union troops slowly lost ground and fell back to a position behind Shiloh Church . McClellan 's division temporarily stabilized the position . Overall , however , Johnston 's forces made steady progress until noon , rolling up Union positions one by one . As the Confederates advanced , many threw away their flintlock muskets and grabbed rifles dropped by the fleeing Union troops .

Grant was about 10 miles (16 km) downriver at Savannah , Tennessee , when he heard the sound of artillery fire . (On April 4 , he had been injured when his horse fell and pinned him underneath . He was convalescing and unable to move without crutches .) Before leaving Savannah , Grant ordered Bull Nelson 's division to march along the east side of the river , to a point opposite Pittsburg Landing , where it could be ferried over to the battlefield . Grant then took his steamboat , Tigress , to Crump 's Landing , where he gave Lew Wallace his first orders , which were to wait in reserve and be ready to move . Grant proceeded to Pittsburg Landing , arriving about 8 : 30 a.m. ; most of the day went by before the first of these reinforcements arrived . (Nelson 's division arrived around 5 p.m. ; Wallace 's appeared about 7 p.m.) Wallace 's slow movement to the battlefield would become particularly controversial .

= = = Lew Wallace 's division = = =

On the morning of April 6 , around 8 : 00 or 8 : 30 a.m. , Grant 's flagship stopped alongside Wallace 's boat moored at Crump 's Landing and gave orders for the 3rd Division to be held ready to move in any direction . Wallace concentrated his troops at Stoney Lonesome , although his westernmost brigade remained at Adamsville . He then waited for further orders , which arrived between 11 and 11 : 30 a.m. Grant ordered Wallace to move his unit up to join the Union right , a move that would have been in support of Sherman 's 5th Division , which was encamped around Shiloh Church when the battle began . The written orders , transcribed from verbal orders that Grant gave to an aide , were lost during the battle and controversy remains over their wording . Wallace maintained that he was not ordered to Pittsburg Landing , which was to the left rear of the army , or told which road to use . Grant later claimed that he ordered Wallace to Pittsburg Landing by way of the River Road (also called the Hamburg ? Savannah Road) .

Around noon , Wallace began the journey along the Shunpike , a route familiar to his men . A member of Grant 's staff , William Rowley , found Wallace between 2 and 2 : 30 p.m. on the Shunpike , after Grant wondered where Wallace was and why he had not arrived on the battlefield , while the main Union force was being slowly pressed backward . Rowley told Wallace that the Union army had retreated , Sherman was no longer fighting at Shiloh Church , and the battle line had moved northeast toward Pittsburg Landing . If Wallace continued in the same direction , he would have found himself in the rear of the advancing Confederate troops .

Wallace had to make a choice : he could launch an attack and fight through the Confederate rear to reach Grant 's forces closer to Pittsburg Landing , or reverse his direction and march toward Pittsburg Landing via a crossroads to the River Road . Wallace chose the second option . (After the war , Wallace claimed that his division might have attacked and defeated the Confederates if his advance had not been interrupted , but later conceded that the move would not have been successful .) Rather than realign his troops so the rear guard would be in the front , Wallace made a controversial decision to countermarch his troops to maintain the original order , only facing in the other direction . The move further delayed Wallace 's troops as they marched north along the Shunpike road , then took a crossover to reach the River Road to the east , and headed south toward the battlefield .

Wallace 's division began arriving at Grant 's position about 6 : 30 p.m. , after a march of about 14 miles (23 km) in seven hours over poor and muddy roads . It formed line on the battlefield about 7 p.m. , when the fighting was nearly over for the day . Although Grant showed no disapproval at the time , his later endorsement of Wallace 's battle report was negative enough to severely damage Wallace 's military career . Today , Wallace is better remembered as the author of Ben @-@ Hur .

= = = Hornet 's Nest = = =

On the main Union defensive line , starting around 9 a.m. , Prentiss 's and W. H. L. Wallace 's divisions established and held a position nicknamed the " Hornet 's Nest " , in a field along a road , now popularly called the " Sunken Road , " although there is little physical justification for that name . The Confederates assaulted the position for several hours rather than simply bypassing it , and suffered heavy casualties . Historians ' estimates of the number of separate charges range from 8 to 14 . The Union forces to the left and right of the Nest were forced back , making Prentiss 's position a prominent point in the line . Coordination within the Nest was poor , and units withdrew based solely on their individual commanders ' decisions . The pressure increased when W. H. L. Wallace , commander of the largest concentration of troops in the position , was mortally wounded . Union regiments became disorganized and companies disintegrated as the Confederates , led by Brig. Gen. Daniel Ruggles , assembled more than 50 cannons into " Ruggles 's Battery " to blast the line at close range . Confederates surrounded the Hornet 's Nest , and it fell after holding out for seven hours . Prentiss surrendered himself and the remains of his division to the Confederates . A large portion of the Union survivors , an estimated 2 @, @ 200 to 2 @, @ 400 men , were captured , but their sacrifice bought time for Grant to establish a final defense line near Pittsburg Landing .

While dealing with the Hornet 's Nest , the South suffered a serious setback with the death of their commanding general . Albert Sidney Johnston was mortally wounded at about 2 : 30 p.m. as he led attacks on the Union left through the Widow Bell 's cotton field against the Peach Orchard . Johnston was shot in his right leg , behind the knee . Deeming the leg wound to be insignificant , he sent his personal surgeon to care for wounded Confederates and the Union soldiers they had captured . In the doctor 's absence , Johnston bled to death within an hour from a torn popliteal artery that caused internal bleeding and blood to collect unnoticed in his riding boot . Jefferson Davis considered Johnston to be the most effective general they had (this was two months before Robert E. Lee emerged as the pre @-@ eminent Confederate general) . Johnston was the highest @-@ ranking officer from either side to be killed in combat during the Civil War . Beauregard assumed command , but his position in the rear , where he relied on field reports from his subordinates , may have given him only a vague idea of the disposition of forces at the front . Beauregard ordered Johnston 's body shrouded for secrecy to avoid damaging morale and resumed attacks against the Hornet 's Nest . This was likely a tactical error , because the Union flanks were slowly pulling back to form a semicircular line around Pittsburg Landing . If Beauregard had concentrated his forces against the flanks , he might have defeated the Union army at the landing , and then reduced the Hornet 's Nest position at his leisure .

= = = Defense at Pittsburg Landing = = =

The Union flanks were being pushed back , but not decisively . Hardee and Polk caused Sherman and McClernand on the Union right to retreat in the direction of Pittsburg Landing , leaving the right flank of the Hornet 's Nest exposed . Just after Johnston 's death , Breckinridge , whose corps had been in reserve , attacked on the extreme left of the Union line , driving off the understrength brigade of Col. David Stuart and potentially opening a path into the Union rear and the Tennessee River . However , the Confederates paused to regroup and recover from exhaustion and disorganization , then followed the sounds of the guns toward the Hornet 's Nest , and an opportunity was lost . After the Hornet 's Nest fell , the remnants of the Union line established a solid three @-@ mile (5 km) front around Pittsburg Landing , extending west from the river and then north , up the River Road , keeping the approach open for the expected , although belated , arrival of Lew Wallace 's division . Sherman commanded the right of the line , McClernand took the center , and on the left , the remnants of W. H. L. Wallace 's , Hurlbut 's , and Stuart 's men mixed with thousands of stragglers who were crowding on the bluff over the landing . The advance of Buell 's army , Col. Jacob Ammen 's brigade of Bull Nelson 's division , arrived in time to be ferried over and join the left end of the line . The defensive line included a ring of more than 50 cannons and naval guns from the river (the gunboats USS Lexington and USS Tyler) . A final Confederate charge of two brigades , led by Brig. Gen. Withers , attempted to break through the line but was repulsed .

Beauregard called off a second attempt after 6 p.m. , as the sun set . The Confederate plan had failed ; they had pushed Grant east to a defensible position on the river , not forced him west into the swamps .

= = = Evening lull = = =

The evening of April 6 was a dispiriting end to the first day of one of the bloodiest battles in American history . The cries of wounded and dying men on the fields between the armies could be heard in the Union and Confederate camps throughout the night . Exhausted Confederate soldiers bedded down in the abandoned Union camps . The Union troops were pushed back to the river and the junction of the River (Hamburg ? Savannah Road) and the Corinth @-@ Pittsburg Landing Roads . Around 10 p.m. a thunderstorm passed through the area . Coupled with the continuous shelling from the Union gunboats Lexington and Tyler , it made the night a miserable experience for both sides .

A famous anecdote encapsulates Grant 's unflinching attitude to temporary setbacks and his tendency for offensive action . Sometime after midnight , Sherman encountered Grant standing under a tree , sheltering himself from the pouring rain and smoking one of his cigars , while considering his losses and planning for the next day . Sherman remarked , " Well , Grant , we 've had the devil 's own day , haven 't we ? " Grant looked up . " Yes , " he replied , followed by a puff . " Yes . Lick ' em tomorrow , though . "

Beauregard sent a telegram to President Davis announcing a complete victory . He later admitted , " I thought I had Grant just where I wanted him and could finish him up in the morning . " Many of his men were jubilant , having overrun the Union camps and taken thousands of prisoners and tons of supplies . Grant still had reason to be optimistic : Lew Wallace 's 5 @,@ 800 men (minus the two regiments guarding the supplies at Crump 's Landing) and 15 @,@ 000 of Don Carlos Buell 's army began to arrive that evening . Wallace 's division took up a position on the right of the Union line and was in place by 1 a.m. ; Buell 's men were fully on the scene by 4 a.m. , in time to turn the tide the next day .

Beauregard caused considerable historical controversy with his decision to halt the assault at dusk . Braxton Bragg and Albert Sidney Johnston 's son , Col. William Preston Johnston , were among those who bemoaned the so @-@ called " lost opportunity at Shiloh . " Beauregard did not come to the front to inspect the strength of the Union lines ; he remained at Shiloh Church . He also discounted intelligence reports from Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest (and bluster from prisoner of war General Prentiss) that Buell 's men were crossing the river to reinforce Grant . In defense of his decision , Beauregard 's troops were simply exhausted , there was less than an hour of daylight left , and Grant 's artillery advantage was formidable . In addition , he had received a dispatch from Brig. Gen. Benjamin Hardin Helm in northern Alabama that indicated Buell was marching toward Decatur and not Pittsburg Landing .

= = Battle , April 7 (second day : Union counterattack) = =

On Monday morning , April 7 , the combined Union armies numbered 45 @,@ 000 men ; the Confederates suffered as many as 8 @,@ 500 casualties the first day and their commanders reported no more than 20 @,@ 000 effectives due to stragglers and deserters . (Buell disputed that figure after the war , stating that there were 28 @,@ 000) . The Confederates had withdrawn south into Prentiss 's and Sherman 's former camps , while Polk 's corps retired to the Confederate bivouac established on April 5 , which was 4 miles (6 @.@ 4 km) southwest of Pittsburg Landing . No line of battle was formed , and few if any commands were resupplied with ammunition . The soldiers were consumed by the need to locate food , water , and shelter for a much @-@ needed night 's rest .

Beauregard , unaware that he was now outnumbered , planned to continue the attack and drive Grant into the river . To his surprise , Union forces started moving forward in a massive counterattack at dawn . Grant and Buell launched their attacks separately ; coordination occurred

only at the division level . Lew Wallace 's division was the first to see action , about 5 : 30 a.m. , at the extreme right of the Union line . Wallace continued the advance , crossing Tilghman Branch around 7 a.m. and met little resistance . Changing direction and moving to the southwest , Wallace 's men drove back the brigade of Col. Preston Pond . On Wallace 's left were the survivors of Sherman 's division , then McClernand 's , and W. H. L. Wallace 's (now under the command of Col. James M. Tuttle) . Buell 's army continued to the left with Bull Nelson 's , Crittenden 's , and McCook 's divisions . The Confederate defenders were so badly commingled that little unit cohesion existed above the brigade level . It required more than two hours to locate Gen. Polk and bring up his division from its bivouac to the southwest . By 10 a.m. , Beauregard had stabilized his front with his corps commanders from left to right : Bragg , Polk , Breckinridge , and Hardee . In a thicket near the Hamburg @-@ Purdy Road , the fighting was so intense that Sherman described in his report of the battle " the severest musketry fire I ever heard . "

On the Union left , Nelson 's division led the advance , followed closely by Crittenden 's and McCook 's men , down the Corinth and Hamburg @-@ Savannah roads . After heavy fighting , Crittenden 's division recaptured the Hornet 's Nest area by late morning , but the Crittenden and Nelson forces were repulsed by determined counterattacks from Breckinridge . Wallace 's and Sherman 's men on the Union right made steady progress , driving Bragg and Polk to the south . As Crittenden and McCook resumed their attacks , Breckinridge was forced to retire . By noon Beauregard 's line paralleled the Hamburg @-@ Purdy Road .

In early afternoon , Beauregard launched a series of counterattacks from the Shiloh Church area , aiming to control the Corinth Road . The Union right was temporarily driven back by these assaults at Water Oaks Pond . Crittenden , reinforced by Tuttle , seized the junction of the Hamburg @-@ Purdy and East Corinth roads , driving the Confederates into Prentiss 's old camps . Nelson resumed his attack and seized the heights overlooking Locust Grove Branch by late afternoon . Beauregard 's final counterattack was flanked and repulsed when Grant moved Col. James C. Veatch 's brigade forward .

= = = Confederate retreat = = =

Realizing that he had lost the initiative , was low on ammunition and food , and had more than 10 @,@ 000 of his men killed , wounded , or missing , Beauregard could go no further . He withdrew beyond Shiloh Church , leaving 5 @,@ 000 men under Breckinridge as a covering force , and massed Confederate batteries at the church and on the ridge south of Shiloh Branch . Confederate forces kept the Union men in position on the Corinth Road until 5 p.m. , then began an orderly withdrawal southwest to Corinth . The exhausted Union soldiers did not pursue much farther than the original Sherman and Prentiss encampments . Lew Wallace 's division crossed Shiloh Branch and advanced nearly 2 miles (3 @.@ 2 km) , but received no support from other units and was recalled . They returned to Sherman 's camps at dark . The battle was over .

For long afterwards , Grant and Buell quarreled over Grant 's decision not to mount an immediate pursuit with another hour of daylight remaining . Grant cited the exhaustion of his troops , although the Confederates were certainly just as exhausted . Part of Grant 's reluctance to act could have been the unusual command relationship he had with Buell . Although Grant was the senior officer and technically was in command of both armies , Buell made it quite clear throughout the two days that he was acting independently .

= = Fallen Timbers , April 8 = =

On April 8 , Grant sent Sherman south along the Corinth Road on a reconnaissance in force to confirm that the Confederates had retreated , or if they were regrouping to resume their attacks . Grant 's army lacked the large organized cavalry units that would have been better suited for reconnaissance and vigorous pursuit of a retreating enemy . Sherman marched with two infantry brigades from his division , along with two battalions of cavalry , and met Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood 's division of Buell 's army . Six miles (10 km) southwest of Pittsburg Landing , Sherman 's

men came upon a clear field in which an extensive camp was erected , including a Confederate field hospital . The camp was protected by 300 troopers of Confederate cavalry , commanded by Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest . The road approaching the field was covered by fallen trees for more than 200 yards (180 m) .

As skirmishers from the 77th Ohio Infantry approached , having difficulty clearing the fallen timber , Forrest ordered a charge . The wild melee , with Confederate troops firing shotguns and revolvers and brandishing sabers , nearly resulted in Sherman 's capture . As Col. Jesse Hildebrand 's brigade began forming in line of battle , the Southern troopers started to retreat at the sight of the strong force , and Forrest , who was well in advance of his men , came within a few yards of the Union soldiers before realizing he was all alone . Sherman 's men yelled out , " Kill him ! Kill him and his horse ! " A Union soldier shoved his musket into Forrest 's side and fired , striking him above the hip , penetrating to near the spine . Although he was seriously wounded , Forrest was able to stay on horseback and escape ; he survived both the wound and the war . The Union lost about 100 men , most of them captured during Forrest 's charge , in an incident that has been remembered with the name " Fallen Timbers " . After capturing the Confederate field hospital , Sherman encountered the rear of Breckinridge 's covering force , but determined the enemy was making no signs of renewing its attack and withdrew back to the Union camps .

= = Aftermath = =

= = = Reactions and effects = = =

In the immediate aftermath of the battle , Northern newspapers vilified Grant for his performance during the battle on April 6 , especially for being surprised and unprepared . Reporters , many far from the battle , spread the story that Grant had been drunk , falsely alleging that this had resulted in many of his men being bayoneted in their tents because of a lack of defensive preparedness . Despite the Union victory , Grant 's reputation suffered in Northern public opinion . Many credited Buell with taking control of the broken Union forces and leading them to victory on April 7 . Calls for Grant 's removal overwhelmed the White House . President Lincoln replied with one of his most famous quotations about Grant : " I can 't spare this man ; he fights . " Although all of the Union division commanders fought well , Sherman emerged as an immediate hero after Grant and Halleck commended him especially . His steadfastness under fire and amid chaos atoned for his previous melancholy and his defensive lapses preceding the battle . In retrospect , however , Grant is recognized positively for the clear judgment he was able to retain under the strenuous circumstances , and his ability to perceive the larger tactical picture that ultimately resulted in victory on the second day .

= = = Subsequent events = = =

Nevertheless , Grant 's career suffered temporarily in the aftermath of Shiloh . Halleck combined and reorganized his armies , relegating Grant to the powerless position of second @-@ in @-@ command . In late April and May , the Union armies , under Halleck 's personal command , advanced slowly toward Corinth and captured it , while an amphibious force on the Mississippi River destroyed the Confederates ' River Defense Fleet and captured Memphis , Tennessee . Halleck was promoted to be general in chief of all the Union armies . With Halleck 's departure to the East , Grant was restored to command and eventually pushed down the Mississippi River to besiege Vicksburg , Mississippi . After the surrender of Vicksburg and the fall of Port Hudson in the summer of 1863 , the Mississippi River was under Union control and the Confederacy was cut in two . Command of the Army of Mississippi fell to Braxton Bragg , who was promoted to full general on April 6 , and during the fall of 1862 , he led it on an unsuccessful invasion of Kentucky , culminating in his retreat from the Battle of Perryville .

== Casualties ==

The two-day battle of Shiloh, the costliest in American history up to that time, resulted in the defeat of the Confederate army and frustration of Johnston's plans to prevent the two Union armies in Tennessee from joining together. Union casualties were 13,047 (1,754 killed, 8,408 wounded, and 2,885 missing); Grant's army bore the brunt of the fighting over the two days, with casualties of 1,513 killed, 6,601 wounded, and 2,830 missing or captured. Confederate casualties were 10,699 (1,728 killed, 8,012 wounded, and 959 missing or captured). The dead included the Confederate army's commander, Albert Sidney Johnston; the highest ranking Union general killed was W. H. L. Wallace. Both sides were shocked at the carnage. Three more years of such bloodshed remained and eight larger and bloodier battles were yet to come. Grant later came to realize that his prediction of one great battle bringing the war to a close would probably not occur. The war would continue, at great cost in casualties and resources, until the Confederacy succumbed or the Union was divided. Grant also learned a valuable personal lesson on preparedness that (mostly) served him well for the rest of the war.

== Battlefield preservation ==

Shiloh's importance as a Civil War battle, coupled with the lack of widespread agricultural or industrial development in the battle area after the war, led to its development as one of the first five battlefields restored by the federal government in the 1890s. Government involvement eventually proved insufficient to preserve the land on which the battle took place. (The federal government had saved just over 2,000 acres at Shiloh by 1897, and consolidated those gains by adding another 1,700 acres by 1954.) Preservation eventually slowed. Since 1954, only 300 additional acres of the saved land had been preserved. Private preservation organizations stepped in to fill the void. The Civil War Trust became the primary agent of these efforts, preserving 1,158 acres at Shiloh since its inception. The land preserved by the Trust at Shiloh included tracts over which Confederate divisions passed as they fought Grant's men on the battle's first day and their retreat during the Union counteroffensive on day two. A 2012 campaign focused in particular on a section of land which was part of the Confederate right flank on day one and on several tracts which were part of the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

Shiloh National Military Park is managed by the National Park Service.

== Honors and commemoration ==

The United States Postal Service released a commemorative stamp on the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Shiloh, first issued through the Shiloh, Tennessee, Post Office on April 7, 1962. It was the second in a series of five stamps marking the Civil War Centennial.

== In popular culture ==

The Battle of Shiloh was depicted in the 1962 film *How the West Was Won*, directed by John Ford. The all-star cast includes (in alphabetical order) Carroll Baker, Lee J. Cobb, Henry Fonda, Carolyn Jones, Karl Malden, Gregory Peck, George Peppard, Robert Preston, Debbie Reynolds, James Stewart, Eli Wallach, John Wayne, and Richard Widmark. The film is narrated by Spencer Tracy.

Simulation games The Battle of Shiloh was depicted in the wargame " Bloody April : The Battle of Shiloh, 1862 ", published in 1979 by SPI (Simulation Publications Inc). The game is a grand tactical, regimental-level simulation, and is the 2nd game in the SPI " Great Battles of the American Civil War " game system, following " Terrible Swift Sword " (Gettysburg). With 1200 unit counters and two maps, the game is of unusual size and complexity. It is now out of print.

In May 2016, " Bloody April ", a computer game based on the SPI title was released by HexWar

Games , Ltd . (Scotland) , for iPhone / iPad / Mac platforms . This single @-@ player game (with computer opponent) presents several scenarios covering the two @-@ day battle .

= = = Memoirs and primary sources = = =

Grant , Ulysses S. Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant . 2 vols . Charles L. Webster & Company , 1885 ? 86 . ISBN 0 @-@ 914427 @-@ 67 @-@ 9 .

U.S. War Department , The War of the Rebellion : a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies . Washington , DC : U.S. Government Printing Office , 1880 ? 1901 .