

## **Selected List of Sources:**

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## **Designer's Notes**

**Q:** *How did you construct the Order of Battle(s)?*

**A:** All OOBs used during the game were derived from multiple sources. The "what-if" parts of the OOB, those for the actions after the Battle of Corinth, were derived from forces historically available at that given time period stationed in their respective military districts and departments. For example, in the game, the Confederate provisional divisions of Breckinridge and Tilghman are partially filled with garrison troops from Van Dorn's department, including some that made the attack on Baton Rouge. Historically, about 10-15,000 prisoners (many of whom were captured at Forts Henry and Donelson) were being released from Northern POW camps at the time of the campaign and the rationale was used that these reorganized regiments would take the place of those formations released for campaigning with Van Dorn's army. In providing these reinforcements, a conscious effort was made to make sure the rest of the West would not be unreasonably and ahistorically stripped of troops to supply Van Dorn's army in its drive to Corinth and beyond. Thus, a realistic assessment of just how much Van Dorn could be reinforced was thoughtfully attempted. The decision to include certain regiments, of course, is subjective in this case as, after the attack on Corinth, we are in historical what-if territory.

**Q:** *Where did the troop strengths come from?*

**A:** For most of the regiments of the Army of the Mississippi, total strength could be obtained from regimental strength returns prior to the beginning of the campaign. This was also true to a lesser extent with the Confederate Army of West Tennessee. When individual regimental numbers could not be obtained, the missing numbers were extrapolated from brigade returns. Battery tube types were taken from tables and specific references in the literature. Sifakis' volumes were of great help in this regard (Thanks to Lee for looking these up for me).

**Q:** *Why are all the batteries divided up into sections?*

**A:** At the expense of making movement a little more tedious, I thought the added flexibility combined with the often mixed composition of batteries (especially Confederate) warranted breaking down the full batteries into 2 gun sections. Similarly, most cavalry regiments were split into battalions to add flexibility.

**Q:** *Only two playtesters??*

**A:** Sort of. Besides the scenario designer there were two other primary playtesters but it should be realized that the game has been in playtest continuously for almost two years, and, in addition, several other parallel development teams have been testing the game system itself over the same period.

**Q:** *Why are mounted cavalry disrupted when moving into rough, orchard, or forest hexes?*

**A:** Mounted cavalry could not operate with any semblance of order while moving through dense forests with thick undergrowth much less mount a charge in formation. The same principle was applied to mounted units moving through both rough and orchard hexes. Of course, infantry formations would also have problems in such terrain but to a lesser degree. Also, having woods disrupt infantry formations does not work as well within the game system.

**Q:** *Hey, it is not mathematically possible for me to actually win this scenario with these Victory Conditions? Is this a mistake?*

**A:** It's no mistake. In order to preserve fog-of-war the Victory Conditions have to be the same for each scenario corresponding to a given situation (situation = the branch points in the campaign game where you are offered choices). For example, depending on the choice you make, a given situation may involve a battle with only a few men (such as a small cavalry battle) or a very large number of men. If you see that you only need 200 VPs to get a minor victory in one scenario and 3000 VPs to get a victory in another scenario within the same game situation then it is a good bet the 200 VP one is the small cavalry battle and the 3000 VP one is the full battle. This serves to directly give away the size of the enemy force and the type of battle that is to be fought and one certainly does not want that to happen.

In general, if the VPs absolutely preclude a victory by one side or the other than the scenario result probably does not have an effect on the course of the campaign (aside from the casualties lost of course!). In other words, no matter what happens in terms of victory or defeat, all results of that particular scenario will take the players to the same situation next in the campaign. These types of scenarios are typically rear guard actions to cover retreats or minor cavalry clashes that have no importance to the campaign as a whole; but, they *are* needed because all choices made for a particular situation must result in a scenario being played. If this isn't clear, perhaps this example taken directly from the game will help. In the Iuka situation there is an option available to each player to not attack the other. If both players choose this option then the scenario played will involve a Confederate diversionary attack on Pocahontas and the Federal response to this incursion (a small battle—about a division per side). No matter the result of this small clash, the campaign will progress to the same situation since the tiny “battle” just fought will have been inconsequential to the campaign as a whole. You can think of these small battles as “fillers” for the campaign when the choice combination the players make for a particular situation will result in no significant engagement. Another point to remember when scenarios have high point values for Victory Conditions is to pay very close attention to the presence of exit objectives—if they are present then their use is almost always required in order to “win”.

**Q:** *Why Corinth?*

**A:** When John Tiller and I initially discussed the subject, it was found that we were both interested in this particular campaign. The idea of making a game about Van Dorn and Price's Corinth campaign has several merits besides personal interest. First of all, the entire campaign (not just individual battles) has never been done before in a board or computer game as far as I know. Wargamers are always clamoring for something new and this certainly is original. Also, general unfamiliarity with the campaign will only enhance the fog-of-war created in the game. Few people know the minute details of this particular campaign than they would for say Gettysburg or even Shiloh, which makes for a fresh new experience. It is also a very interesting historical campaign with lots of options for both sides. Opportunities for both sides to go on the offensive are present. Moreover, the battles themselves are of small to medium size (ranging from about 14,000 to 45,000 per side) when compared to massive Civil War battles like Chancellorsville or Fredericksburg. This makes for a faster paced game for PBEM and Internet games. Additionally, as a personal note, my primary interest is in the West and Trans-Mississippi theatres of war and I have always liked the Battle of Corinth. The campaign, while relatively less well known than other western battles, definitely had the potential of having a major impact on the course of the war.

## **Strategy Guide**

**By Andrew Wagenhoffer**

A large portion of the game covers the historical (or historical variant) actions of both armies—before, during and after the Battle of Corinth. Numerous hypothetical situations over the same period (September-December, 1862), including a Confederate invasion of West Tennessee and/or Kentucky, are woven into the campaign as well. For an in-depth reading of the historical aspects of the campaign read Peter Cozzens' excellent book, *Darkest Days of the War: the Battles of Iuka and Corinth*. This book is the most detailed account of the campaign yet published.

### **Confederate Strategy Tips**

Arguably, the Confederate player has the most challenging position of the two sides. In most situations, the Confederate army is either equal or inferior to the Federal forces in terms of numbers and often carries the burden of attack. Consequently, preservation of soldier's lives is even more important when playing the Southern side. Over the long course of the campaign, the Confederate army is gradually reinforced from 14,000 to over 35,000 infantry and cavalry. Even if victorious, an extremely costly battle early in the campaign may doom subsequent efforts to failure. Realistically, the Confederate player should seek to keep combined losses below 6,000 men in the battles up to and including the fight for Corinth itself.

The player must pick and choose where to make a major effort and be able to accurately assess the amount of likely loss that will go with that effort to see if it is worth the cost. The pre-battle messages and other information given the player

during campaign play will hint at what situations are more important than others. Interpreting the intelligence given is an integral part of the game. Due to the choices made by each player, situations will probably arise in which one side or the other will have a major advantage over the other. It is essential that the player recognize these opportunities throughout the campaign and take advantage of them. Destroying parts of the Federal forces early in the campaign at little expense will make the subsequent battles much easier. On the other hand, there is no disgrace in retreating without a major fight from an extremely disadvantageous situation of lesser importance to the overall campaign. Remember, any scenario at any victory level can be terminated at any time using a termination bid.

As is readily apparent, the Confederate artillery complement is vastly inferior to that of the Federal forces. Most Confederate cannon are 12 lb. Howitzers and other short range smoothbores while the Union forces have many batteries of modern rifled field artillery (3 in. rifles, James rifles, along with 10 and 20 lb. Parrotts) and Napoleons. When on the offensive, the Confederate player should seek to engage the Union forces at short range and as rapidly as possible. The Confederate army cannot handle an extended artillery duel with its forces drawn up in open terrain in support. The few rifled guns and Napoleons that the Confederates do have must be preserved at all costs. Avoid fighting in large open areas as this will help to negate the Union advantage in long range weaponry.

### **Union Strategy Tips**

Though the Union player can choose to always remain on the defensive, he can change the tempo of the game and go on the offensive as well in order to knock out the Confederate offensive before it can even start. One of the best opportunities for the Federal player to gain a victory is at Iuka. The later options for an attack on Ripley have more risk attached to them but they do represent additional opportunities for an aggressive Union player to go on the offensive.

The Union player has several special advantages on the defensive. Along with the advantage of superior firepower—for the most part the Federal forces have rifles for the infantry, breech-loading carbines for the cavalry, and abundant rifled cannon—the Union player will sometimes be able to fight behind earthworks. Open spaces can be dominated by the powerful Union artillery and one should seek to funnel Confederate attacks into such killing zones.

In total, the Federal forces can assemble close to 50,000 infantry and cavalry, significantly outnumbering their Confederate counterparts. The problem lies in the fact that they are spread all over northern Mississippi, West Tennessee, and Kentucky in important garrison duties and cannot all be concentrated in one location rapidly. In order to have the best chance of gaining a victory in the campaign, the Union player should make all possible effort to maintain his hold on the city of Corinth. It is possible to win the campaign after losing the city but crushing victories in Tennessee will be required.

Early in the campaign, the Union player should seek to engage the enemy in battle whenever possible. Severe losses from fighting in Mississippi will likely cripple Confederate efforts for the latter stages of the campaign even if Corinth falls. In all likelihood, the best place to stop the Confederate offensive is at Corinth. The city is well fortified and the Federals there can inflict heavy losses on the attacking Confederates (as they did historically).

### **General Tips for Both Sides**

#### **1. Conserve your cavalry:**

Generally, avoid the temptation to fight heavy battles with cavalry alone. Though there are ample opportunities to inflict heavy losses on the opposing cavalry, all-cavalry fights are usually not decisive in their effects on the campaign as a whole and heavy cavalry losses will deprive the army of its “eyes”. Cavalry are best used for covering exposed flanks, screening an advance, or covering the army’s rear by blocking roads and trails that the enemy can use to their advantage. If you do fight, be sure to concentrate several regiments in reserve so that surrounded units can be extricated and successful attacks exploited.

#### **2. Watch your artillery ammunition supply:**

Batteries cannot be fired at all possible opportunity without exhausting the ammunition reserves. Conserve ammunition for the second day if a continued fight is expected.

#### **3. Preserve your leaders:**

Devastating losses in leadership in a single battle will effect the entire campaign. Think twice before committing leaders to the front lines regularly.

#### **4. Pay close attention to the information given during the game:**

Valuable intelligence is provided for the player during the game. Carefully read **all** the choices and weigh the pros and cons of each before committing yourself. Also, and this is **very important**, the message preceding the beginning of each scenario can provide crucial clues on how to fight the battle. If given direct instructions it is certainly in the players best interest to follow those directives.

#### **5. Use termination bids:**

Many scenarios are multi-day affairs. More turns than are commonly needed to complete a given scenario are often provided so that the player will not feel rushed or experience problems like having the scenario end right as a successful attack

is just being launched or completed. If *neither* side wishes to initiate more combat after even a short time period then **by all means use the termination bid**—it greatly shortens campaign completion time.

6. *Perhaps most importantly, always remember that each individual battle is only a part of the larger campaign:*

Every man and every gun that is lost in combat is generally irreplaceable. As opposed to the common mindset of players involved in tactical level games covering single battles, Corinth absolutely requires that objectives be met with a minimum of casualties, as all losses are permanently carried over to the next situation's battle. Never lose an opportunity to flank your opponent out of a strong position rather than carry it by direct assault. If a direct frontal assault with little probability of success is the only option one feels he has then it is probably best to withdraw the army off the map. Remember, through the situational briefings and hints provided, the game will let you know if an aggressive battle absolutely must be fought or not.

## **Historical Notes**

**By Andrew Wagenhoffer**

### **The Corinth Campaign (September-October, 1862)**

In the late summer of 1862, Major Generals Braxton Bragg and Edmund Kirby Smith launched their joint invasion of Kentucky with high hopes of success. With the campaign occurring at around the same time as Robert E. Lee's invasion of Maryland, these were heady days for the Confederacy. Two Confederate forces were left behind to guard important points in Mississippi. The larger force, Major General Sterling Price's Army of the West, was based at Baldwin and Saltillo in Mississippi and numbered about 14,000 men. The Army of the West was largely made up of veteran soldiers from the Trans-Mississippi region (several regiments were from Mississippi as well). Many were veterans of Pea Ridge and the earlier struggles for control of Missouri and Arkansas. The other large Confederate force in the state was commanded by Major General Earl Van Dorn with headquarters in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Van Dorn could put 7,000 soldiers in the field as an offensive force.

Without leaving explicit instructions outlining a command arrangement between the generals in Mississippi, Bragg ordered the Confederate forces in Mississippi to cooperate with his army and to guard its vast western flank. If all went extraordinarily well, perhaps the Mississippi army could even meet Bragg at the Ohio River. Due to the command confusion, Price and Van Dorn both considered themselves independent commanders, each calling incessantly for the other to cooperate.

### **Iuka, September 19, 1862**

While Van Dorn organized his own strike force, Price was becoming increasingly frustrated. Bragg ordered Price north to keep Union forces from further reinforcing Major General Don Carlos Buell's now burgeoning Army of the Ohio. Though ordered to do so, Price felt he could hardly comply with such orders with the small force available to him. He pleaded with Van Dorn to effect a combination of forces, but the independent-minded Van Dorn was evasive. Feeling that he must follow Bragg's orders with or without Van Dorn's cooperation, General Price launched his 14,000 man Army of the West at the isolated Union outpost of Iuka, Mississippi.

Opposing the Confederate forces in Mississippi was Major General Ulysses S. Grant's newly constituted Army of West Tennessee. Grant's army was spread all over West Tennessee and northern Mississippi guarding the region's crucial railroad network. Major troop concentrations were located at Memphis, Bolivar, and Jackson in Tennessee along with Corinth, Rienzi and Iuka in Mississippi. The Union forces nearest to Price comprised the Army of the Mississippi under Major General William Starke Rosecrans. The brigade of Colonel Robert Murphy garrisoned Iuka and guarded its stockpile of supplies and the important railroad bridge over Bear Creek to the east.

As the Army of the West approached Iuka from the south, Colonel Murphy panicked and fled northwest to Corinth leaving behind tons of valuable supplies. With Brigadier General Frank C. Armstrong's cavalry in the van, Price captured Iuka on Sept. 14th. His famished troops gorged themselves on the captured stores. On the 17th, General Grant, seeing the opportunity to crush Price in his isolated position in the northeast corner of Mississippi, ordered a two pronged attack. The left wing, under Major General Edward Otho Cresap Ord, would take elements of the divisions of Ross, McArthur and Davies and advance southeast to Iuka via Burnsville. Meanwhile, Rosecrans himself, with the divisions of Hamilton and Stanley, would attack Iuka from the south. As was common during the Civil War when attacking from widely separate fronts, things did not go as planned. General Ord had his wing in position five miles west of Iuka by 8 a.m. on the 19th but Rosecrans ran into problems. The longer approach march, combined with a wrong turn toward Burnsville that necessitated an exhausting countermarch, caused Rosecrans' wing to fall far behind schedule. It was not until around 2:30 p.m. that Rosecrans' cavalry finally struck Price's videttes south of Iuka at Moore Branch. Inexplicably, Price neglected to properly screen his vulnerable southern front. Rosecrans was allowed to get within 5 miles of Iuka before being discovered.

Price was in trouble. Two major roads approached Iuka from the south. Rosecrans initially planned on using both roads as a blockade of both routes would trap Price in the V formed by Bear Creek to the east and the Tennessee River to the north. The Jacinto (Bay Springs) Road was the westernmost of the two roads. The eastern avenue of approach, the Fulton Road, was separated from the Jacinto Road by several miles with the intervening distance gradually narrowing as the roads entered opposite ends of the town. Thus, an advance on both roads would not be mutually supportive. Taking this into account, Rosecrans advanced both of his divisions up the Jacinto Road, knowingly leaving Price with an escape route to the south.

Meanwhile, Price learned of Rosecrans' approach from his cavalry scouts stationed at Mrs. Moore's southwest of town. At the moment, both of Price's divisions, under Brigadier Generals Little and Maury, were out on the Burnsville Road west of Iuka facing Ord. As it was not in line at the time, Brigadier General Louis Hebert's brigade of Little's division was immediately dispatched to the scene. Contact was made with Rosecrans' advance about a mile south of Iuka on the Jacinto Road. Hebert immediately put his brigade into line of battle and advanced.

Advancing up the Jacinto Road as Hebert was rushing down it were the leading elements of Rosecrans' wing, the brigade under the temporary command of Colonel John Sanborn (the normal commander was the less able Brigadier General Napoleon Buford). At about 4:20 p.m., and finding his advance blocked, Sanborn deployed his brigade on a low ridge about 300 yards southwest of a higher ridge upon which Hebert's soldiers and artillery were deploying. The Federals were now only a mile and a half from Iuka. As Hebert's skirmishers plunged into the intervening ravine, a Confederate artillery section of 10 pound Parrott rifles was deployed on the high knoll. On the opposite ridge, the six 6 pound smoothbore guns of the 11th Independent Ohio Battery of Sanborn's Brigade dueled with the Parrotts at short range. The Ohio battery immediately became the center of the action as Hebert's brigade initiated a furious fight for it. With hundreds of screaming Texas Confederates pouring out of the tangled ravine toward the guns, the crews of the 11th Ohio's guns were slaughtered or driven off and the entire battery taken.

Meanwhile, division commander Brigadier General Charles Hamilton, with his second brigade under Brigadier General Jeremiah "Fighting Jerry" Sullivan, was joining the fight. Federal cavalry under Colonel John K. Mizner moved off the Jacinto Road to screen Hamilton's right flank. The Confederates were reinforced as well. Generals Price and Little rode up to the front, joined by the brigade of Brigadier General John D. Martin (four regiments). Martin's brigade of Mississippians split in half with two regiments deploying on each flank of Hebert's brigade. The action, once again swirling around the 11th Ohio's cannon, see-sawed back and forth throughout the late afternoon. During this time, the Confederates suffered a severe blow when the able General Little was killed by a stray minie ball.

As night fell, Colonel Elijah Gates' First Missouri Brigade arrived to bolster the Confederate position while Union Brigadier General David Stanley's division supported Hamilton's embattled division. The fighting finally sputtered out around 8 p.m. The day's action finally ended with the Confederates in possession of both the ridge and the guns of the 11th Ohio (lacking available transportation, the guns were left behind during the Confederate retreat). Sources vary widely in casualty estimates but a reasonable figure would be about 800 men lost on each side. It was a savage little fight considering only a few thousand men on each side were actually engaged.

During the night, Price, convinced he had won the fight on the 19th and with his grief over the death of General Little clouding his judgement, stubbornly wanted to stay and continue the fight the next day. Explaining to Price Ord's position and the precarious position of the Confederate army, Price's officers eventually convinced their commander that retreat was the best option available. Fortunately for Price, the Fulton road was clear all the way to safety. With the rear guard skillfully covering the retreat from the heights east of Iuka, the Army of the West slipped away to the south and escaped the rather feeble Federal pursuit.

Bitter recriminations followed the battle on the Union side. Ord was not engaged at all on the 19th. Though ordered to do so, Ord did not advance his entire wing. Instead, he wasted time in a personal reconnaissance with a small force. Ord claimed to not have heard Rosecrans' fight at all (the ubiquitous "acoustic shadow" argument) while Rosecrans accused Ord of leaving him in the lurch. Grant, who travelled with Ord's wing and was at Burnsville during the fight, blamed Rosecrans for the upsetting of his plans by getting into position late and by not covering the Fulton Road. Fair or not, "Old Rosey" would never again be in the good graces of Grant for the remainder of the war.

After a limited pursuit, Rosecrans and Ord marched back to Corinth, leaving Crocker's brigade behind to garrison Iuka. Ord, with Ross's division in tow, headed back to garrison duty in West Tennessee. Grant, meanwhile, left the theatre on leave, travelling to St. Louis. That would leave Rosecrans alone in command at Corinth with the divisions of Stanley, Hamilton, Davies, and McKean (Brigadier General John McArthur was in temporary command of the division but McKean would return to command before the battle of Corinth).

## Corinth, October 3-4, 1862

### **To Corinth: September 20-October 2**

After escaping the trap at Iuka, the Army of the West marched south and west across northern Mississippi to Ripley. At Ripley, Price was to place himself and his army under the command of Major General Earl Van Dorn. Price and his men could not have been very pleased with this new arrangement, having experienced Van Dorn's style of generalship at Pea Ridge earlier in the year. At least now the two forces would finally be combined, giving them enough men to be able to attack with a decent chance of success the Union forces in Mississippi.

Price's men were given a brief rest as a plan of attack in compliance with Bragg's earlier orders was debated. Van Dorn was determined to attack Corinth itself. Other officers favored a drive into West Tennessee, forcing Rosecrans to come out of his fortifications and fight. Both armies numbered around 22,000 men but at Corinth Rosecrans had the additional benefit of several lines of extensive fortifications. This would seem to favor a Confederate attack into Tennessee in order to draw Rosecrans out into the open. On the other hand, it must be remembered that such an advance would run into converging

Union forces—Ord from the north, Brigadier General William T. Sherman from the west and Rosecrans from the east and south—that would both surround and greatly outnumber Van Dorn's army.

It was eventually decided upon that the newly christened Army of West Tennessee, comprising Price's Army of the West and Major General Mansfield Lovell's division of Van Dorn's district, would attack Corinth from the northwest. The line of fortifications guarding the town could be turned at this point as the trenches ended at the Memphis and Charleston Railroad leaving the left flank of the defenses "in the air". In order for the element of surprise to be maintained, the long approach march would have to be forced. As if that was not enough of a problem for the footsore Confederate infantrymen, in late September and early October of 1862 the weather was still very hot in northern Mississippi and there was a shortage of potable water along the army's marching route.

Nevertheless, on Sept 29th, the army struck north in the direction of Pocahtontas, Tennessee. This feint toward Tennessee was intended to fix in place the Union troops guarding the West Tennessee railroads. The ruse was enhanced with the building of a bridge across the Tuscumbia River opposite Pocahtontas by the cavalry advance. Meanwhile, the main elements of Van Dorn's army reached the town of Metamora several miles south of Pocahtontas and camped. The next day they would cross the Hatchie River to the east and continue the advance on the State Line Road.

Earlier, Union cavalry had partially dismantled the bridge that spanned the Hatchie at Davis' Mill. This bridge, called either Davis Bridge or Hatchie Bridge, would be of great consequence to Van Dorn's army as will be revealed later. The bridge was repaired and the army started east on State Line Road for the eight-mile march to Chewalla. The State Line Road roughly paralleled the Memphis and Charleston Railroad and led directly to Corinth. Two miles east of the Hatchie River crossing at Davis Bridge, the Tuscumbia River would have to be crossed as well (at Young's Bridge).

At this point, General Van Dorn, realizing how tenuous his lines of communication would be as the army advanced further, left behind Wirt Adams' cavalry regiment, the 1st Texas Legion, and a section of artillery to guard Davis Bridge and the supply trains. For protection, the trains were parked in the V formed by the confluence of the Hatchie and Tuscumbia rivers. Sources vary on how much artillery was left behind. Price's report states that two entire batteries were left but it is difficult to believe that Van Dorn would leave that many guns behind while attacking a numerically equal force behind strong fortifications. He would need all the help he could get.

In order to reach the outer Corinth fortifications by early October 3rd, a grueling night march had to be made. At Chewalla, the Confederates ran into a Federal outpost the evening of the 1st. The Federals were soon reinforced and the now brigade-sized force of infantry, cavalry and artillery under Colonel John Oliver performed a skillful delaying action. Steadily driven back by Colonel "Red" Jackson's cavalry, then by the advance of Lovell's division, Colonel Oliver's force was finally able to break contact and reform on the fortified high ground later to be known as Oliver's Hill. These works were part of the "Beauregard Line" constructed under the skilled engineering eye of General P.G.T. Beauregard after the retreat to Corinth after the Shiloh defeat. Though still formidable, in the time since Halleck's plodding Corinth campaign, the works had fallen into disrepair. The four hundred yards of abatis in front of the trenches was rotten and no longer provided as imposing a barrier as formerly.

The Beauregard Line stretched in a wide north, east, and southeast arc around Corinth, from the M & C Railroad northwest of Corinth to a point almost touching the Mobile and Ohio Railroad south of Corinth. In addition to these defenses, a chain of redoubts west and south of Corinth, called Batteries A through F, completed the circle of outer defenses around the city. The inner defenses of Corinth were anchored by seven lunettes, six finished and one in mid-construction. Starting with the unfinished Battery Powell a half-mile directly north of Corinth, Batteries Madison, Lothrop, Tanrath, Phillips, Williams and Robinett, in clockwise fashion completed the inner line. All were roughly one half mile from Corinth. In addition, a line of hastily built breastworks stretched from College Hill (one-half mile southwest of Corinth) to Battery Robinett. The high ground around College Hill, atop which loomed Batteries Lothrop, Tanrath, and Phillips, dominated the immediate area. A weak abatis covered the front of Battery Robinett northwest of Corinth and between the two railroads.

### **Day One of the Battle of Corinth: October 3**

While Colonel Oliver was delaying Van Dorn's advance, General Rosecrans scrambled to reassemble his scattered army. At the time the Confederates marched north from Ripley, much of the Union army was spread out over northern Mississippi on garrison duty. By dawn of October 3rd (the day of Van Dorn's planned attack) Brigadier General Thomas Davies' division was still three miles south of Corinth. Hamilton was a mile south of Davies and Stanley was still six hours away at Kossuth. In fact, McKean's division was the only sizable infantry force at Corinth at dawn. Oliver's delaying action was a godsend to Rosecrans.

By the time the Confederate army was in position to attack later in the morning, Rosecrans was able to put three divisions into the trenches of the Beauregard Line. McKean's men, under McArthur again in this sector, formed on both sides of Oliver's Hill, their left flank partially protected by a railroad cut. A huge gap lay between McArthur's right and Davies' left. Davies' division was stretched to the breaking point after sending several regiments to the supposedly more threatened left. The right flank of General Davies' division was linked to the left of Hamilton's division at the M&O Railroad. Hamilton, positioned behind the earthworks on both sides of the Purdy Road, covered the army's far right. The line, strongest on the right, was very long and very thin. The Confederates could break it at almost any point.

Meanwhile, as the last of the available Federals filed into the earthworks, Van Dorn was finally ready to attack. It was 10 a.m. before all three Confederate divisions were in line and able to advance. The army's largest division, Lovell's, formed the right flank of the Confederate army. Lovell's line, with all three brigades in front, stretched far beyond the Union left. On Lovell's left, General Maury's division formed directly opposite the massive gap between McKean's right and Davies' left. General Hebert, now in charge of Little's division after the latter's death at Iuka, was on Maury's left and formed in line of battle right in front of the worried faces of Davies' division. Armstrong's cavalry screened the army's extreme left flank from the Columbus Road to the M&O Railroad. At just past 10 o'clock the entire Confederate army surged forward. Lovell quickly outflanked and collapsed the Federal left flank. At the same time, Moore's brigade of Maury's division charged across the field

of decaying abatis and entered the empty works that formed the yawning gap in the Union line. After reforming, Moore wheeled right and smashed into McArthur's right flank. With both flanks turned, McArthur was forced to fall back in some confusion. Meanwhile, Hebert and the rest of Maury's division crashed into the over-stretched line of General Davies, causing an immediate collapse in that sector as well. Things were going well for the Confederates on this hot Mississippi morning.

Later on, McKean and McArthur, bolstered by the fresh lowa Brigade, made a spirited stand south of Oliver's Hill at Battery F but were driven back to the inner defenses by the afternoon. To the east, Davies' exhausted and depleted division made a stand fronting the White House fields about 725 yards north of Battery Robinett. This line, bolstered by the arrival of elements of Stanley's division at noon, was eventually smashed by several determined charges by the brigades of Green, Phifer, and Gates in the late afternoon. The tired, thirsty Union troops streamed to the rear past Battery Robinett, behind which they were reformed.

Hamilton, on the Union right flank, did next to nothing while the Confederates swept past his left on the way to Corinth. Hamilton was ordered to pitch into the Rebel left but did not. Instead, after a half-hearted probe toward Van Dorn's left rear through an overgrown field, Hamilton withdrew to the inner defenses. Similarly, on the Confederate side, General Lovell put in a miserable performance after his initial success. After crushing the Union left flank, he halted his division for the rest of the day at the outer earthworks while his brigade commanders chomped at the bit waiting to continue the attack.

After the victory in the White House fields, Price, citing the exhaustion of his troops, counseled a halt and Van Dorn acquiesced. Many generals and almost all of the soldiers in the ranks believed Corinth could and should have been taken. The facts are inescapable that a golden opportunity to defeat Rosecrans was lost on that hot October 3rd day in 1862.

During the night, Rosecrans rearranged his defensive line. It stretched from Battery Tanrath on College Hill all the way to the Beauregard Line east of Battery Powell. McKean and McArthur held the left flank at College Hill. Stanley's division occupied the lines from Battery Phillips all the way to the Mobile and Ohio. This line included Battery Robinett. Davies' exhausted division covered much of the sloping ground between the M&O and Battery Powell. Hamilton was once again the Union right flank.

#### **Day Two of the Battle of Corinth, October 4**

The Confederate battle plan for the 4th called for Lovell to attack on the right facing College Hill while Maury assaulted Battery Robinett. Hebert's division (now under Brig. Gen. Martin E. Green as Hebert fell ill) would hit Rosecrans' right. Green's division, bolstered by Cabell's brigade of Maury's division, made a grand right wheel through the dense forest north of Corinth, presumably with the hope of turning the Union right. Unfortunately for the Confederacy, on that day all of their attacks turned into frontal assaults. Green's left and center ran into fierce resistance around Battery Powell and Fort Richardson, a cotton bale earthwork constructed during the night. Suffering appalling losses, the howling Confederates swarmed over the redoubts and captured all of the enemy batteries before being thrown back by Union reserves.

Attacks on the Union center were more successful. Davies' badly cut up division put up a feeble fight and the right of Green's line along with much of Phifer's brigade of Maury's division pushed them aside and succeeded in entering Corinth itself. Victory was possible if fresh troops could be pushed forward to continue the attack. But none were available. Too late, General Cabell's brigade was brought up after the Confederate attacks had already receded. Cabell's attack was quickly repulsed, the brigade suffering horrendous losses in its brief assault.

To the right of the breakthrough, Moore's brigade, along with parts of Phifer's brigade, was involved in a desperate fight for Battery Robinett. To the right of Robinett, Fuller's brigade of Federals, unprotected by earthworks, held firm under repeated assault and helped to completely wreck Moore's brigade in return. The fighting around Robinett was truly murderous and was punctuated with the death of Colonel Rogers of the 2nd Texas near the work's ditch. The veteran 11th Missouri (Union) did excellent work preserving the Federal lines around Robinett. No help in order to sustain the Confederate breakthrough to the east would come from this quarter. As a consequence, the disorganized mass of Confederate troops fighting in Corinth itself was eventually contained and then forcefully expelled. Almost surrounded, many of these soldiers surrendered instead of attempting the exceedingly dangerous return trip back to friendly lines.

Mansfield Lovell put in another inexplicable performance on October 4. While Confederate regiments all over the field were being destroyed, Lovell did almost nothing. The extent of his advance was to reach the treeline opposite College Hill. From that vantage point he could see Maury's men being terribly battered in front of Battery Robinett, yet did nothing to help. Disgusted with his division commander's inactivity, General John Bowen, on his own initiative, advanced infantry and artillery to a position atop a rise 500 yards northwest of Battery Phillips. The hill was promptly smothered with artillery fire from College Hill and Bowen withdrew. That was the extent of the division's offensive activities on that day. By early afternoon, the battle was over.

Corinth was an unmitigated disaster for the Confederate Army of West Tennessee. Price's two divisions were completely wrecked. Lovell's division's losses were only slight in comparison, a fact not lost upon the angered survivors of the Army of the West. Van Dorn's high hopes for retrieving his martial reputation were smashed. Confederate losses were staggering—almost 4,500 men were lost in the ultimately futile assaults at Corinth. Federal losses were slightly over 2,500. Not only was the battle lost but now Van Dorn had to find a way to extricate his army from a still very dangerous situation. If the Federals launched a vigorous pursuit, Van Dorn's line of retreat would be tenuous indeed. Little did he know what awaited him ahead at Davis Bridge.

#### **Davis Bridge, October 5, 1862**

As Lovell's division represented the only Confederate infantry in any shape for further fighting, Van Dorn assigned it rear guard duty. The broken remnants of the Army of West Tennessee streamed along the Chewalla Road and headed back

toward the trains parked in the fork formed by the confluence of the Hatchie and Tuscumbia rivers. Much daylight still remained on the 4th but Rosecrans chose to give his army the rest of the day to rest. The Federal pursuit was to begin early on the 5th.

A provisional Federal division under Brigadier General James B. McPherson arrived after the fighting from Bethel, Tennessee. As they were the only fresh troops available, Rosecrans ordered them to form the van of the pursuit. The army was to pursue the beaten Confederates up the Chewalla Road. The pursuit, directed by Rosecrans back at Corinth, was badly managed by his subordinates. In addition to clogged roads, there were numerous delays and misunderstandings of orders; consequently, only a fraction of the pursuing force would be available for action on the 5th.

Threats from the victors of Corinth represented only a portion of Van Dorn's host of worries. While the fighting at Corinth raged, General Grant had ordered Major General Stephen Hurlbut's division of General Ord's Jackson District to march from Bolivar to Corinth. The troops stepped out at dawn on October 4 and passed through Middleton on their way to Metamora, camping for the night along the State Line Road near Muddy Creek. Due to Van Dorn's defeat and retreat, Hurlbut was provided with a magnificent opportunity to block the important Hatchie crossing at Davis Bridge. Brushing aside Adams' cavalry, Hurlbut moved his division toward Metamora but was superseded in command by Ord himself just as his men were going into battle. As the two lead Union brigades (under Veatch and Scott) deployed from column into line on the Metamora Heights overlooking the Hatchie River, the Federal artillery roared into action. Van Dorn's leading division, Maury's, was just then crossing the Hatchie to secure those very same heights. They were too late.

Moore's brigade, terribly cut up at Corinth, was at the front as that position was thought to be the safest place for the return march. None of the Confederate commanders expected Hurlbut to appear at such a fortuitous time for the Union cause. Battle losses and straggling had reduced Moore's brigade to only about 300 men. Nonetheless, they did their duty and double-timed over Davis Bridge. Union artillery on the Metamora heights hammered the column, forcing Moore to move off the road to the right toward the protection of a skirt of trees bordering a small stream. To the right of Moore, Wirt Adams reformed his dismounted troopers along the tree line most of the way to the river and threw out a skirmish line. The Confederate left flank lay just south of the State Line Road and was composed of Colonel Hawkins' 1st Texas Legion. On a nearby knoll behind the Legion, four guns of Dawson's St. Louis battery (reported by some sources to have been joined by two guns captured at Corinth) unlimbered and returned the fire of the Union guns atop the heights.

After an hour-long bombardment that pulverized the ground around the St. Louis battery, Ord ordered the brigades of Veatch and Scott to attack. General Veatch's brigade advanced astride the State Line Road while Colonel Scott's small provisional brigade covered his right flank. The Confederates numbered only about 1,000 men and could not resist the onslaught. After a brief stand at the treeline, Moore, Adams, and Hawkins were overwhelmed and the supporting St. Louis battery guns were taken. There was a mad scramble back over the bridge by the Confederates. An estimated 300 soldiers were trapped at the river bank and were taken prisoner by the onrushing Union soldiers. On Ord's order, Brigadier General Jacob Lauman's large brigade was now brought up in support.

General Ord, flushed with success and probably against his better judgement, next ordered the Union brigades over the river. He had secured the bridge, but not satisfied with that gain only, wished to continue driving the Confederates back. Fortunately for the Confederates, the terrain east of Davis Bridge was perfect for defense. Just south of the bridge, the river made a sharp turn to the east for about 500 yards before turning south again. After crossing Davis Bridge, the State Line Road paralleled the river as it turned east leaving very little room between the road and the river. Five hundred yards east of the bridge rose a commanding height covered with woods. The ground between the imposing ridge and the river was clear most of the way. Thus, any attacking Union forces would be funneled into a confined space in relatively open ground. To make matters worse for Ord, several enemy batteries were placed on the heights along with the brigades of Phifer (now under command of Colonel "Sull" Ross) and Cabell.

Ord ordered regiment after regiment over the bridge and to the right of the road. This crammed the troops into a small area where they are sprayed mercilessly with bullets, canister, and shell. Ord himself was severely wounded while crossing the bridge. For little gain, almost 500 Federals were lost in the attack on the heights east of the bridge. Covered by Green's brigade, the Confederates later pulled back under orders from Van Dorn.

There was a good reason behind those orders requiring Maury's division to abandon such an advantageous position. Realizing his retreat route was blocked, Van Dorn had to find an alternate crossing. There was a bridge six miles to the south at Crum's Mill so Van Dorn ordered the army to turn south on a road (the Boneyard Road) leading to that crossing. With the trains in advance and screened by the cavalry, the army commenced the slow, meandering march down to Crum's Mill.

Meanwhile, the rearguard, under Bowen, was having troubles of its own. East of the Tuscumbia River crossing at Young's bridge, General Bowen had formed his brigade atop Big Hill, a high eminence astride the State Line Road from Chewalla. It was a commanding position. About 4:30 in the afternoon, the botched Union pursuit from Corinth finally caught up with the Confederates. McPherson's provisional division, followed by McArthur's division, were the only Federals nearby, but they gamely went to the attack.

McPherson's two brigades, made up of only four regiments and two companies of West Tennessee cavalry, quickly went into line and charged up the densely wooded slope of Big Hill. Several volleys from the center of Bowen's line stopped the attack cold, sending the Federals flying back down the slope. As night was approaching, McPherson suspended any further attacks. Their duty finished, Bowen's brigade filed off the hill, burned the bridge behind them, and assumed a position at the rear of the long Confederate column winding away toward Crum's Mill. By the next morning, all of the Confederates were across the Hatchie and on their way back to Ripley. Rosecrans pursued but soon abandoned the venture completely, allowing Van Dorn to fall back all the way to Holly Springs unmolested. General Grant was beside himself when told that the pursuit was abandoned, further eroding his confidence in Rosecrans.

## **The End of the Campaign (October-December, 1862)**

A great opportunity to destroy the Confederacy's principal army in Mississippi was lost. If Van Dorn could have been

pressed more strongly from front and rear it is possible that the Confederate Army of West Tennessee could have been destroyed in the fork of the two rivers. Even after Van Dorn escaped across the Hatchie, a more aggressive pursuit could perhaps have resulted in the utter dissolution of the defeated and utterly exhausted Confederate army.

For a brief period of time following the battle at the Hatchie, the overland route to Vicksburg itself was open. If the garrisons of West Tennessee and Mississippi could have been filled with new recruits or transfers from Missouri, Arkansas and other fronts, perhaps 40,000 men could have been assembled for a devastating march through the heart of Mississippi. Only after being given time to regroup could this invasion have been resisted by the Confederates. A little time to rest and reorganize was just what Van Dorn needed and got and Grant's later overland expedition to seize Vicksburg in the last months of 1862 came to naught. Ironically, much of the credit for turning back Grant must go to Van Dorn, whose lightning cavalry raid captured and destroyed Grant's supply depots at Holly Springs, forcing the Federals to retreat. Perhaps even more surprising, the very same Colonel Murphy that abandoned the depots at Holly Springs was given a second chance by Grant himself and was charged with the defense of the even more important post of Holly Springs. Murphy's shameful performance of this duty at Holly Springs finally got him cashiered from the service permanently.

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**It has been a great pleasure collaborating with John Tiller, Joe Amoral, Mark Adams, HPS, and all the rest of the development team.**

*I would like to respectfully dedicate my part in this effort to all the gallant soldiers of both sides, but especially to the "orphans" of Missouri and Arkansas. Ordered east of the Mississippi by a desperate government, with their faraway farms and families abandoned to their enemy, these brave soldiers fought and gave their lives for the greater good of their cause.*