

Union Corps Histories - 10th Corps

James Island; Pocotaligo; Morris Island; Fort Wagner; Olustee; Walthall Junction; Chester Station; Proctor's Creek; Drewry's Bluff; Cold Harbor; Bermuda Hundred; Ware Bottom Church; Petersburg; Strawberry Plains; Deep Bottom; Chaffin's Farm; New Market Road; Darbytown Road; Charles City Road; Fair Oaks (1864); Fort Fisher; Sugar Loaf Battery; Fort Anderson; Wilmington.

Organized under General Orders No. 123, September 3, 1862, which designated the forces in the Department of the South as the Tenth Army Corps, and assigned Major-General O. M. Mitchel to its command. These troops were stationed principally at Hilton Head, S.C., and Beaufort, S.C., the order including also the troops at Fort Pulaski, Ga., Key West, Fla., Fernandina, Fla., and St. Augustine, Fla.; in all, 14,602, present and absent, with 10,190 <fx_85>present for duty. There were 14 regiments of infantry, 1 of engineers, a battalion of cavalry, and the usual compliment of light batteries.

General Mitchel died, October 30, 1862, and was succeeded by General J. M. Brannan. In January, 1863, General David Hunter relieved Brannan, and assumed command of the department; Hunter was relieved on June 3, 1863, and General Quincy A. Gillmore was assigned to the command of the corps. The total, present for duty, in June, 1863, was 16,329, including artillery and cavalry. The troops at Hilton Head were commanded by General Alfred H. Terry; those on Folly Island, by General Israel Vogdes; those at Beaufort, by General Rufus Saxton; at Seabrook Island, by General T. J. Stevenson; at St. Helena Island, by Colonel H. R. Guss.

These forces were all under General Gillmore, and participated in the various operations about Charleston Harbor in the summer of 1863, the principal event being the bloody assault on Fort Wagner, July 18, 1863. This assault was made by a column of three brigades,--Strong's, Putnam's, and Stevenson's, the whole under command of General Truman H. Seymour. General Strong's brigade led the assault, with the 54th Massachusetts (Colored) at the head of his column. The attack was a failure, resulting in a loss of 246 killed, 880 wounded, and 389 missing; total, 1,515. The most of the missing were killed or wounded, but few of them ever returning. To this loss should be added 339 casualties, which occurred in an attack on Fort Wagner, July 11th, a week before, an attempt made by three regiments only. Two of the three brigade commanders, General Strong and Colonel Putnam, were killed in the assault of the 18th, Putnam falling after he had effected an entrance into the fort. Stevenson's Brigade was held mainly in reserve.

In February, 1864, Seymour's Division, of about 7,000 men, sailed for Florida, where it was engaged on the 20th in the battle of Olustee, a defeat in which some of the regiments suffered terribly. In April, 1864, the Tenth Corps was ordered to Virginia, where it was placed in General Butler's Army of the James, which was composed of the Tenth and Eighteenth Corps. The Tenth assembled at Yorktown, Va., where it was organized into the three divisions of Terry, Turner, and Ames, numbering, as present for duty, 16,812 infantry, and 1,114 artillerymen, with 46 guns.

The Army of the James landed at Bermuda Hundred, May 6, 1864, and a month of active service and hard fighting immediately commenced, the Tenth Corps losing in its operations around Drewry's Bluff, 374 killed, 2,475 wounded, and 807 missing; total, 3,656. Butler's operations resulting in nothing but failures, General Grant ordered the greater part of his forces to the support of the Army of the Potomac. Accordingly, on the 29th of May, General W. F. Smith, commanding the Eighteenth Corps, took the First (Brooks') and Second (Martin-dale's) Divisions of his own corps, and the Second (Devens') and Third (Ames') Divisions of the Tenth Corps, and proceeded to Cold Harbor, where these divisions cooperated with the Army of the Potomac in the terrible fighting which commenced immediately upon their arrival. While at Cold Harbor, these two divisions of the Tenth Corps were known as part of the Eighteenth Corps, forming the Third Division, under command of General Devens. Upon the close of the fighting at Cold Harbor, the two divisions returned by water transports to Bermuda Hundred, but consolidated as the Second Division, Tenth A. C.

On the 14th of August, the Tenth Corps, under command of General David B. Birney, crossed the James and became engaged with the enemy at Deep Bottom, General Terry's division taking a prominent part in this action. The casualties in the corps were: 213 killed, 1,154 wounded, 311 missing; total, 1,678. On September 29th, Birney crossed again with his corps, and fought at Chaffin's Farm, his command consisting of Terry's and Ames' divisions, together with a brigade of colored troops, under General William Birney. Loss: 74 killed, 587 wounded, 302 missing; total, 963. In the unsuccessful attack on Fort Gilmer, and at New Market Heights, these colored troops displayed great gallantry. General David B. Birney died at Philadelphia, October 18, 1864, and was succeeded by General Terry, who was in command of the corps during the fighting on the Darbytown Road, and at the battle of Fair Oaks, October 27, 1864.

On December 3, 1864, the corps was discontinued, and its regiments were assigned to the newly formed Twenty-fourth Corps, which was composed of the white troops from the Tenth and Eighteenth Corps. But

immediately after this transfer, Ames' Division, together with Abbott's Brigade of this new corps, were detached and ordered on the Fort Fisher expedition. After the brilliant capture of Fort Fisher by these troops, they remained in North Carolina, and, in March, 1865, the Tenth Corps was revived. As reorganized, it consisted of Birge's (1st) Division, composed of three brigades taken from Grover's Division of the Nineteenth Corps, then stationed at Savannah; of Ames' (2nd) Division, composed of the troops which fought at Fort Fisher; of Paine's (3d) Division, colored troops; and of Abbott's Separate Brigade, numbering in all 12,099 men. General Terry, who was in command at the victory of Fort Fisher, was placed at the head of the corps. But the war was then near its close, and in August, 1865, the organization was discontinued.

Source: "Regimental Losses in the American Civil War (1861-1865)" - William F. Fox