

Union Corps Histories
15th Corps

Chickasaw Bluffs; Arkansas Post; Deer Creek; Black Bayou; Snyder's Bluff; Jackson; Assault On Vicksburg, May 19th; Assault On Vicksburg, May 22nd; Vicksburg Trenches; Clinton; Jackson; Brandon; Cherokee; Tuscumbia; Lookout Mountain; Missionary Ridge; Ringgold; Resaca; Dallas; Big Shanty; Kennesaw Mountain; Nickajack Creek; Battle Of Atlanta; Ezra Church; Jonesboro; Lovejoy's Station; Siege Of Atlanta; Allatoona Pass; Taylor's Ridge; Griswoldville; Fort Mcallister; River's Bridge; Congaree Creek; Columbia; Lynch Creek; Bentonville.

The Fifteenth Corps was one of the organizations resulting from the partition of the Thirteenth Corps, December 18, 1862. General William T. Sherman was assigned to its command. Part of the Fifteenth Corps--the divisions of Generals Steele and Morgan L. Smith, together with other troops--were engaged under Sherman at Chickasaw Bluffs in the first attempt on Vicksburg. These two divisions lost in that action, 144 killed, 579 wounded, and 189 missing; total, 912. The entire loss of the Army at Chickasaw Bluffs was 1,776. A few days later these two divisions accompanied McClernand's expedition to Arkansas Post, a successful affair which resulted in the capture of that place. General Sherman was present with these two divisions of his corps; General M. L. Smith having been severely wounded at Chickasaw Bluffs, his division was commanded at Arkansas Post by General David Stuart. The loss of the Fifteenth Corps in this affair was 86 killed, 501 wounded, and 11 missing; total, 598. The loss of the entire Army was 1,061.

During the spring of 1863 the corps participated in the Bayou expeditions about Vicksburg, preceding the campaign in the rear of that city. On that campaign the corps was composed of the three divisions of Steele, Blair, and Tuttle, numbered respectively as the First, Second, and Third Divisions; they were previously known as the Eleventh, Fifth, and Eighth, of the Army of the Tennessee. These three divisions contained 41 regiments of infantry, 7 batteries of light artillery (36 guns), and 5 companies of cavalry, numbering in all, 15,975 present for duty, out of 19,238 present in the aggregate. Present and absent, it numbered 27,416 men.

Of the series of battles in the rear of Vicksburg, the battle of Jackson, May 14, was the only one in which the Fifteenth Corps took part. In that action Tuttle's Division was slightly engaged, losing 6 killed, 22 wounded, and 4 missing. The corps was engaged, next, in the investment of Vicksburg. In the assault of May 19th, it lost 134

killed, 571 wounded, and 8' missing; total, 713. In this assault the Fifteenth sustained the principal loss, .the total of the casualties amounting to 942. In the general assault which occurred three days later- May 22d- the corps lost 150 killed, 666 wounded, and 42 missing, total 858. After the surrender of Vicksburg, the Army moved on Jackson' and invested that place; the corps losing there,-- July 10-16th,--10 killed, 32 wounded, and 38 missing. During the latter movement the First Division was commanded by General John M. Thayer.

After the evacuation of Jackson by the enemy, 'the Army returned to Vicksburg and its vicinity, the Fifteenth Corps encamping there until the*latter part Of September, when it moved to Memphis. The Third Division (Tuttle's) was left behind at Vicksburg, and it never rejoined the corps. Its place was taken by John E. Smith's Division (formerly Quinby's), Seventeenth Corps, which joined at Memphis 'and remained permanently attached, as -the Third Division. Willi.am S. Smith's Division was detached from the Sixteenth Corps, in September, and was also added to the Fifteenth Corps, becoming the Fourth Division. The four divisions having been concentrated at Memphis, moved thence to Chattanooga, where they participated in the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, November 23-25, 1863. General Frank P. Blair was in command of the corps, General Sherman having been promoted, October 27, 1863, to the command of the three corps composing the Army of the Tennessee. The four divisions of the Fifteenth Corps were commanded at Missionary Ridge by Generals Osterhaus, Morgan L. Smith, John E. Smith, and Hugh Ewing. The losses of the corps in that battle, and in the minor actions connected with it, aggregated 295 killed, 1,402 wounded, and 292 missing; total 1,989. After this battle the corps marched to the relief of Knoxville, arriving there December 6, 1863, two days after Longstreet's retreat. The corps then returned to Chattanooga, moving thence into Northern Alabama, where it went into winter quarters.

Division commanders were Generals Osterhaus, Morgan L. Smith, John E. Smith, and Harrow. The Third Division (John E. Smith's) garrisoned points on Sherman's line of communication, and so was not present with the advancing columns. After the fall of Atlanta, Harrow's (4th) Division was consolidated with the others, and its place was taken by Corse's Division of the Sixteenth Corps. General Corse, with a provisional command from the Fifteenth Corps, made the famous defense of Allatoona Pass, an affair remarkable for the courageous, desperate fighting of commander, officers and men.

On the 12th of November, 1864, the corps started with Sherman's Army on the march through Georgia to the sea. General Logan being absent,

the corps was under the command of General Osterhaus; the four divisions were commanded by Generals C. R. Woods, Hazen, John E. Smith, and Corse. They contained 60 regiments of infantry, and 4 batteries, the infantry numbering 15,894, present for duty; it was the largest corps in the Army that marched to the sea.

The Army of the Tennessee, under General Howard, formed the right wing of Sherman's Army as it marched through Georgia on its way to the sea, and was composed of the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Corps, only, that part of the Sixteenth Corps--2 divisions--which had served with the Army of the Tennessee on the Atlanta campaign having been consolidated with the two other corps. Although the three other corps in Sherman's Army marched uninterrupted to the sea, the Fifteenth had a brisk engagement at Griswoldville, in which Walcutt's Brigade, of Woods' Division, repelled a determined attack; and, again, upon reaching the sea, Hazen's Division was the one selected for the storming of Fort McAllister.

Savannah was evacuated December 21, 1864, after a short siege, and on the 1st of February, Sherman's Army started on its grand, victorious march through the Carolinas. General Logan having returned, he was again in command of his corps, which now numbered 15,755, infantry and artillery. It encountered some fighting in forcing disputed crossings at some of the larger rivers, and captured Columbia, S.C., General C. R. Woods' Division occupying the city at the time it was burned. The corps was also in line at the battle of Bentonville, N. C., March 19, 1865; but General Slocum had won a substantial victory with his wing of the Army, and but little fighting, comparatively, devolved upon the Army of the Tennessee.

Johnston's Army having surrendered April 26th, the corps continued its northward march, and, arriving at Washington May 20th, participated in the Grand Review of May 24, 1865.

It proceeded, June 2d, to Louisville, Ky., and in the latter part of that month the Second Division was ordered to Little Rock, Ark., where it served with the Army of Occupation. The organization was discontinued August 1, 1865.

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