

Union Corps Histories - 16th Corps

Hernando; Coldwater; Town Creek; Siege Of Vicksburg; Jackson; Collierville; Meridian March; Snake Creek Gap; Resaca; Lay's Ferry; Rome Cross Roads; Dallas; Big Shanty; Kennesaw Mountain; Ruff's Mills; Battle Of Atlanta; Ezra Church; Jonesboro; Siege Of Atlanta; Pleasant Hill; Bayou De Glaize; Lake Chicot; Tupelo; Tallahatchie River; Oxford; Brice's Cross Roads; Nashville; Spanish Fort; Fort Blakely

Organized December 18, 1862, with Major-General S. A. Hurlbut in command, and was composed of the four divisions of Generals W. S. Smith, Dodge, Kimball, and Lauman. It numbered 50,659, present for duty in April, 1863, with 72,569 present and absent. These troops were stationed in the vicinity of Memphis, La Grange, and Corinth until June, 1863, when the divisions of Smith, Kimball, and Lauman were ordered to Vicksburg in response to Grant's call for reinforcements, and participated in the investment of that place. This detachment of the corps, while at Vicksburg, was placed under command of Major-General C. C. Washburn.

It would be impossible to give anything like a connected history of the Sixteenth Corps from this time on, so many were the changes in its ranks, and so widely were its divisions scattered. The Sixteenth suffered more than any other corps by transfers of its divisions,-- changes which prevented anything like a continuous organization, and well nigh destroyed its identity. Part of the corps served on the Atlanta campaign, while the other part was fighting in the Mississippi Valley. It was ordered discontinued in November, 1864, but was re-established within a few weeks. An organization would be perfected one month, only to be broken up the next. The War Department evinced no conception of what was due to corps organization or corps pride, and the unfortunate brigades and divisions were transferred hither and thither, with as little consideration as if they were squads from some recruiting rendezvous instead of battle-tried divisions.

The three divisions at Vicksburg were not engaged in any active fighting while there, having arrived after the siege was well under way. Lauman's and Smith's divisions, however, fought at the Siege of Jackson, July 10-16, the former division being attached temporarily to the Thirteenth, and the latter, to the Ninth Corps. Smith's Division lost at Jackson 12 killed, 124 wounded, and 13 missing; total, 149. Lauman's Division lost 68 killed, 338 wounded, and 149 missing; total, 555. Nearly all of Lauman's loss occurred in an ill-

advised attack made by three regiments of Pugh's Brigade, for which Lauman was relieved from command. Many of Lauman's officers, however, have stoutly contended that he was not to blame. The enemy having evacuated Jackson, the Army returned to Vicksburg, where the troops remained for several weeks. In September, W. S. Smith's Division was transferred to the Fifteenth Corps, and Lauman's Division was transferred to the Seventeenth. In return, when the Fifteenth Corps moved to Chattanooga, Tuttle's Division of that corps was left at Vicksburg and assigned to the Sixteenth Corps. This latter division was commanded, subsequently by General Joseph A. Mower.

Dodge's Division did not take part in the Vicksburg campaign, but remained at Corinth until November, when it moved with Sherman to the relief of Chattanooga, marching from Corinth to Pulaski, Tenn., where it was left to guard the Nashville & Decatur R. R., while Sherman with the Fifteenth corps moved on to Chattanooga. Two divisions, the Second and Fourth, commanded respectively by Generals Sweeny and Veatch, participated in the Atlanta campaign, May 1 to September 4, 1864. These two divisions, or the Sixteenth Corps as it was designated, were under the command of Major-General Grenville M. Dodge, and formed one of the three corps constituting the Army of the Tennessee. During the Atlanta campaign General Veatch was succeeded in the command of his division by General John W. Fuller.

General Dodge's command was prominently engaged at Lay's Ferry, and in the bloody battle of Atlanta, July 22, 1864. After the fall of Atlanta his two divisions were transferred, Sweeny's (or Corse's) to the Fifteenth, and Fuller's to the Seventeenth Corps.

In the meantime the right wing of the Sixteenth Corps, as it was called, had been left in the Mississippi Valley; it was composed of the First (Mower's) and Second (A. J. Smith's) Divisions, the former being the one which was transferred, in September, 1863, from the Fifteenth Corps. The greater part of Kimball's Division had been ordered into Arkansas, where it became incorporated in the Seventh Corps. In February, 1864, A. J. Smith's and Veatch's Divisions accompanied Sherman on his Meridian expedition. In April, Mower's and A. J. Smith's Divisions moved with Banks' expedition up the Red River, fighting at the battle of Pleasant Hill and in the various minor engagements incidental to that campaign. These two divisions had been "loaned" to General Banks by Sherman, with an understanding that they should soon return; but the disasters of Banks' campaign prolonged their stay until it was too late to rejoin the corps in time for the Atlanta campaign. Hence, the divided operations of the Sixteenth Corps in 1864; the First and Third Divisions, under General

A. J. Smith, fighting along the Mississippi, while the Second and Fourth Divisions, under Dodge, fought from Chattanooga to Atlanta.

On November 7, 1864, orders were issued for the discontinuance of the organization; but in December, 1864, General A. J. Smith and his two divisions turned up at the defense of Nashville, and participated in the victory over Hood's Army; casualties, 750. In this battle Smith's two divisions were commanded by Generals McArthur and Kenner Garrard. His command was designated as a "Detachment, Army of the Tennessee," although it was still known as the Sixteenth Corps.

It was reorganized Feb. 18, 1865, under its old designation and with Major-General A. J. Smith in command. As reorganized, it had three divisions which were commanded by Generals McArthur, Garrard and E. A. Carr. Proceeding to Mobile, it was engaged in the siege, and in the fighting at Spanish Fort and Fort Blakely, the latter being the last infantry engagement of the war. Fort Blakely was carried by assault, April 9, 1865, the day on which Lee surrendered at Appomattox. The corps organization was finally discontinued July 20, 1865.

The men of the Sixteenth had for the most part seen plenty of service before the organization of the corps. They had fought well at Iuka, Corinth and Hatchie River, and many of the regiments had been engaged at Fort Donelson and Shiloh.

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