

Union Corps Histories - 19th Corps

Baton Rouge; Georgia Landing; Bayou Teche; Fort Bisland; Irish Bend; Plains' Store; Assault On Port Hudson, May 27th; Assault On Port Hudson, June 14th; Port Hudson Trenches; Thibodeaux ; Brashear City; Donaldsonville; Sabine Cross Roads; Pleasant Hill; Cane River; Cloutierville; Alexandria; Mansura; Yellow Bayou; Atchafalaya; Berryville; Opequon; Fisher's Hill; Cedar Creek.

Organized under General Order No. 5, dated at Washington, Jan. 5, 1863 :--" By direction of the President, the troops in the Department of the Gulf will constitute the Nineteenth Army Corps, to date from December 14, 1862, and Major-General N. P. Banks is assigned to the command."

At this time the troops of the Nineteenth Corps were, for the most part, just arriving from the North on ocean transports, and some of the regiments which had been assigned to the corps had not landed at this date. There had been some Union troops in Louisiana since the occupation of New Orleans, one brigade of which, under command of General Thomas Williams, fought at Baton Rouge, August 5, 1862, making a gallant and successful defense against the attack of Breckenridge's Division. General Williams was killed in this battle. Another brigade, under General Weitzel, was engaged in a hot fight, October 27, 1862, at Georgia Landing (Labadiesville) in the LaFourche district.

Soon after the date of the order creating the Nineteenth Corps, an organization was effected. The returns for April, 1863, show four divisions, commanded respectively by Generals Augur, Sherman (Thos. w.), Emory and Grover. In addition, the corps command included seven unassigned regiments, stationed at Brashear City, Key West, Tortugas and West Florida; in all, 65 regiments of infantry, 19 batteries of light artillery, one regiment of heavy artillery, and 5 regiments of cavalry. It numbered, all told--present and absent--55,229; present, 44,832; present for duty, 35,670. Forty of these regiments had been organized in the fall of 1862, under the second call for troops, and twenty-two of them were enlisted for nine months only, the terms of the latter expiring in July, 1863. There were also six newly organized regiments of colored troops from Louisiana. The New England States contributed 39 regiments, 21 of which were nine-months men; there were 22 regiments from New York, and 1 from Pennsylvania, the latter (47th Penn.) being the only Keystone regiment in the

Department of the Gulf.

Active operations were soon commenced, and on April 12, 1863, the corps encountered the enemy at Fort Bisland, La., with a loss of 40 killed, and 184 wounded; and on the 14th, at Irish Bend, La., with a loss of 49 killed, 274 wounded, and 30 missing; total casualties in both actions, 577. The investment of Port Hudson was accomplished in the following month, and on May 27th a gallant but unsuccessful attempt was made to carry the enemy's works by storm, the corps losing in this action 293 killed, 1,545 wounded, and 157 missing; total, 1,995. Another general assault was made on June 14th, but without success; loss, 203 killed, 1,401 wounded, and 201 missing; total, 1,805. In the meantime, the constant firing from the trenches resulted in additional daily losses in killed and wounded. The Confederate garrison, learning of the fall of Vicksburg, surrendered on July 9th. The losses in the corps during the siege--including the assaults of May 27th and June 14th -- amounted to 707 killed, 3,336 wounded, and 319 missing; total, 4,362. The heaviest loss fell on Augur's (1st) Division. Fearing's Brigade, of Paine's (3d) Division, also sustained a severe loss, and one of the Louisiana (colored) regiments suffered severely in the assaults.

Soon after the surrender of Port Hudson and termination of that campaign, the 22 regiments which had been recruited for nine months left for their homes, their term of service having expired. The loss of these troops necessitated a reduction of the organization to three divisions. The ensuing nine months--July, 1863, to March, 1864--were spent in post or garrison duty, with some reconnaissance's and minor expeditions into the enemy's country. On the 15th of March, 1864, the troops started on Banks' Red River Expedition, his Army consisting of parts of the Thirteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Nineteenth Corps. Major-General William B. Franklin commanded the Nineteenth Corps on this expedition, and took with him the First (Emory's) and Second (Grover's) Divisions; the Third Division was left in the defenses of New Orleans. Upon the arrival of Bank's Army at Alexandria the Second Division was left there, while the First moved on and fought at Sabine Cross Roads. In addition to the battles of Sabine Cross Roads and Pleasant Hill, the corps was engaged in several minor actions while on this expedition.

In July, 1864, the First and Second Divisions proceeded to New Orleans, and embarked for Virginia, leaving the rest of the corps in Louisiana. On arriving at Washington the two divisions were ordered into Maryland to confront Early's invasion, after which they served in the Shenandoah Valley, in Sheridan's Army. The Nineteenth Corps,

or this part of it, was now under the command of General William H. Emory; the First Division, containing 17 regiments, was commanded by General William Dwight; the Second Division, containing 4 brigades, 21 regiments, was commanded by General Cuvier Grover. The returns from these two divisions for August, 1864, show an aggregate of 21,640, present and absent; 14,645 present, with 13,176 present for duty. Of the latter, the corps lost over 5,000 men in the Shenandoah campaign. It lost at the Opequon, September 19th, 314 killed, 1,554 wounded, and 206 missing; at Fisher's Hill, September 22d, 15 killed, 86 wounded, and 13 missing; at Cedar Creek, October 19th, 257 killed, 1,336 wounded, and 790 missing; in skirmishes and on the picket lines, 57 killed, 446 wounded, and 13 missing; in all, 5,087 casualties. At the Opequon, Grover's Division lost 1,527 men out of 6,797 taken into action, or present for duty before the battle.

The fighting in the Valley having ended, Grover's (2d) Division was ordered, in January, 1865, to proceed to Savannah, where it was followed by the First Division, which left the Valley in April. The latter division made a short stay at Washington before sailing for Savannah, during which it participated in the Grand Review of May 24, 1865. The Second Division having arrived at Savannah, General Grover was assigned to the command of the district, and General H. W. Birge to the command of the division. In March, 1865, Birge's Division, containing three brigades, eighteen regiments, was ordered to North Carolina, where it was attached temporarily to the Tenth Corps and was designated as the First Division of that corps. The Fourth Brigade of Birge's Division was left at Savannah, the whole division returning there in May. The Nineteenth corps remained at Savannah and vicinity until August, 1865; some of the regiments remained until 1866. The corps organization, however, was officially discontinued March 26, 1865.

The portion of the corps left behind at New Orleans remained in the Department of the Gulf, and, in the spring of 1865, participated with the Thirteenth and Sixteenth corps in General Canby's operations against Fort Blakely, Spanish Fort, and Mobile.

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