

Union Corps Histories 24th Corps

Bermuda Hundred; Fort Fisher; Petersburg; Hatcher's Run, March 30th; Fort Gregg; Rice's Station; Fall Of Richmond; Clover Hill; Appomattox.

The white troops of the Tenth and Eighteenth Corps were assembled in one command, and organized, December 3, 1864, as the Twenty-fourth Corps, with Major-General Edward O. Ord in command. The troops of the Tenth Corps were assigned to the First and Second Divisions, while the regiments of the Eighteenth Corps were placed in the Third Division. The three divisions were commanded by Generals Foster, Ames and Devens, and were stationed on the north bank of the James, in front of Richmond. As before the consolidation, these troops remained in the Army of the James.

Ames' (2d) Division did not remain long in the corps. In December, 1864, it left its quarters and embarked for North Carolina, forming part of Butler's expedition to Fort Fisher. Butler's troops returned without having accomplished anything; but, in January, Ames' three brigades were ordered to return to Fort Fisher, this second expedition being entrusted to the command of General Alfred H. Terry, the former commander of the Tenth Corps. Abbott's Brigade, of the First Division, also accompanied Terry's Expedition. These troops -- Ames' Division and Abbott's Brigade -- were the ones which won the famous victory at Fort Fisher, January 15, 1865. They never rejoined the Twenty-fourth Corps, but remained in North Carolina, where they formed a nucleus for a revival of the organization of the Tenth Corps.

In December, 1864, while Ames' Division was absent on the first expedition to Fort Fisher, the Twenty-fourth Corps was reinforced by the First Division, Eighth Corps. This was a veteran body of troops--formerly Thoburn's Division--which had seen long and active service in West Virginia and in the Shenandoah Valley. It was transferred to the Twenty-fourth Corps, the fighting in the Valley having ended, and arrived December 25th on the banks of the James, where it took possession of the abandoned quarters of the Fort Fisher division. These troops from West Virginia (9 regiments) were designated an Independent Division, and General John W. Turner, formerly a division-general in the Tenth Corps, was assigned to its command. The Twenty-fourth Corps now consisted of three divisions, Foster's, Devens' and Turner's, containing 42 infantry regiments, and numbering 18,148 present for duty, equipped.

On January 1, 1865, General Butler was relieved from the command of the Army of the James--Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Corps--and

General Ord was appointed in his place. Major-General John Gibbon, an able and distinguished division-general of the Second Corps, became the commander of the Twenty-fourth. But little fighting had occurred on the north bank of the James since the organization of the corps, except a minor affair at Spring Hill, December 10, 1864:, in which Longstreet made a sortie against the extreme right of the Union line.

On the 27th of March, 1865, Foster's and Turner's Divisions of the Twenty-fourth Corps, with one division of the Twenty-fifth, all under command of General Ord, Army of the James (General Gibbon commanding his corps), crossed to the south banks of the James and Appomattox Rivers, and joined the main army at Hatcher's Run, where they participated in the preliminary movements of the final, grand campaign. In the general and victorious assault on Petersburg, April 2, 1865, the Twenty-fourth Corps was assigned to the duty of assaulting Forts Gregg and Whitworth, which they carried by a determined and brilliant attack; but not without a serious loss, and a final struggle in which bayonets were used. General Gibbon describes this assault as one of the most desperate in the war.

The fall of Petersburg immediately followed as the result of the victorious assaults of the Twenty-fourth, Sixth, and Ninth Corps, after which the Twenty-fourth joined in the pursuit of Lee's Army. During this pursuit it had a sharp fight, April 6th, at Rice's Station, or High Bridge. On April 9th, the day of Lee's surrender, the corps was sharply engaged in the forenoon, the Twenty-fourth Corps having the honor of making the last infantry fight of that campaign, and of the war. Gibbon arrived at Appomattox Court House about ten o'clock, and intercepted Lee's troops who were driving the cavalry back in their attempt to escape. General Ord, commanding at that time the Twenty-fourth, Fifth, and Twenty-fifth (colored) Corps, states that the arrival of his command was opportune; that "in spite of General Sheridan's attempts, the cavalry was falling back in confusion before Lee's infantry ;" and that his troops "soon deployed and went in, Gibbon at double-quick, with Foster's and Turner's Divisions in beautiful style." After a short, sharp action a white flag appeared at an adjoining part of Ord's line, whereupon the Twenty-fourth Corps was ordered to cease firing. The last infantry-volley of the war had been fired. This fight, on the day of Lee's surrender, was known by the troops as Clover Hill. During this campaign, March 29th to April 9th, --from Hatcher's Run to Appomattox -- the Twenty-fourth Corps lost 149 killed, and 565 wounded; total, 714.

When General Ord moved the Army of the James to Petersburg, March 27,

1865, he left Devens' (3d) Division of the Twenty-fourth, and one division of the Twenty-fifth, in front of Richmond, on the north bank of the James. Upon the fall of Petersburg these troops, under General Weitzel, the commander of the Twenty-fifth Corps, marched on Richmond, and encountering little or no opposition entered that city on the 3d of April. Foster's and Turner's Divisions returned to Richmond after the victory at Appomattox, and the corps remained in Virginia until August 1, 1865, when the existence of the organization ceased officially, many of the regiments having already returned to their homes. Although this corps does not display any long list of battles, it should be remembered that its regiments were veterans of many hard-fought fields before they were assigned to it. They had withstood the shock of many battles, and their banners were inscribed with the names of historic fields.

Source: "Regimental Losses in the American Civil War (1861-1865)" -
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