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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FORTS HENRY AND DONELSON
IN THE WESTERN CAMPAIGN, 1862.

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SON NATIONAL MILITARY PARK, DECEMBER 19, 1933 - April 26, 1934.

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C O N T E N T S

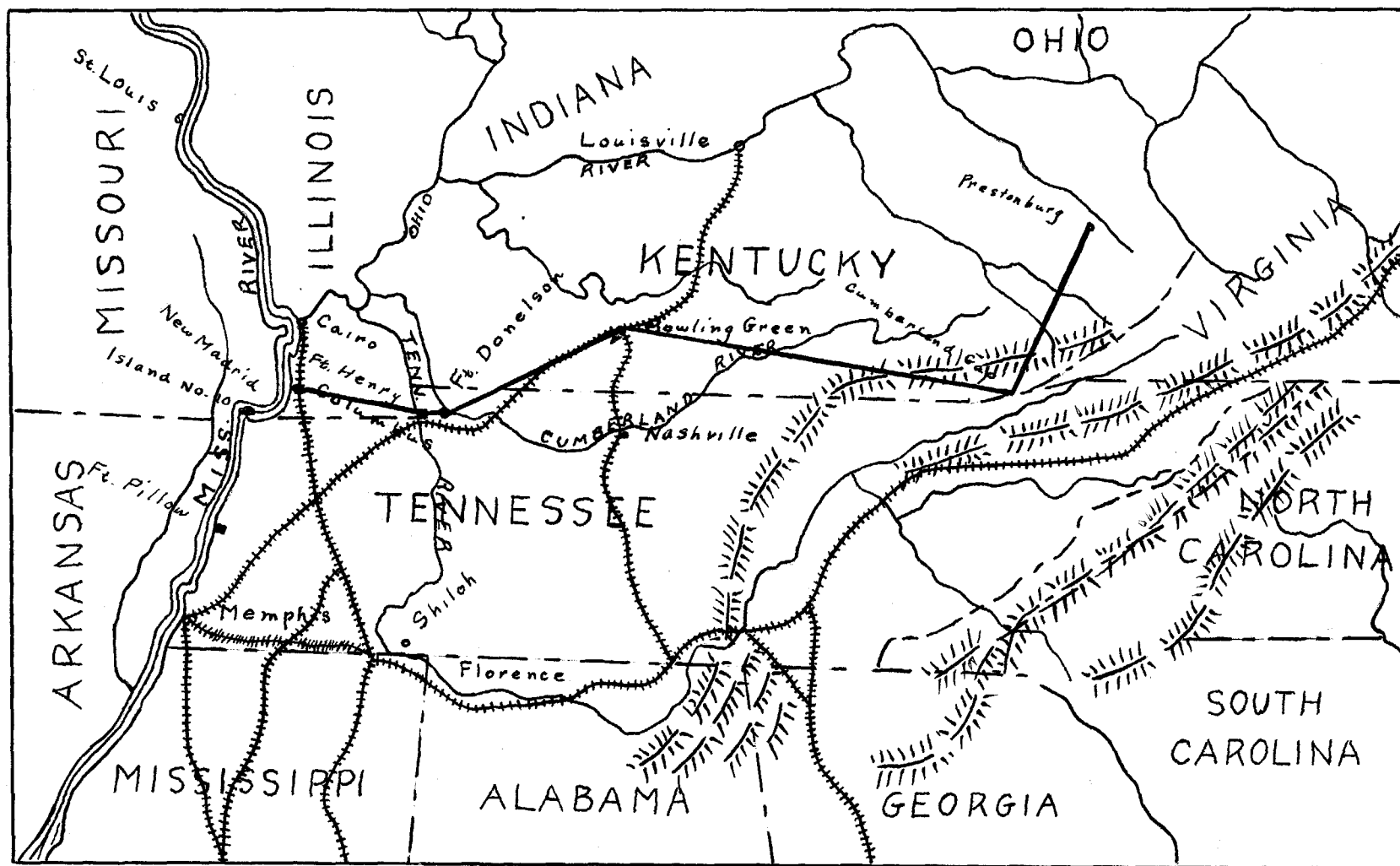
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION.

The protrusion of the Southern Appalachian Mountains predetermined that there would be two theatres of action, nearly a thousand miles apart, in the War Between the States. The district east of these mountains and south of Northern Virginia was known as the eastern theatre, while the district west of these mountains and south of Louisville, Kentucky, was known as the western theatre. Other movements and engagements in the great conflict were only secondary to the events of these two regions. Therefore, the two definite objectives of the northern armies during the early part of the war were to capture Richmond and to open the Mississippi River,¹ hence an offensive campaign. The Confederacy, with the exception of threats on Washington, Gettysburg, and raids into Kentucky and Tennessee, was on the defensive from the beginning of hostilities.² In the eastern theatre, the Cumberland Mountains, the Shenandoah Valley, and the east and west course of the rivers, offered a strong line of defense; but in the western theatre the rivers, (Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, and Cumberland), due to their length, navigability, and general course, proved to be better suited for offensive than defensive warfare. These two river systems determined largely the movements and operations of the two armies. It can readily be seen that the power having control of these streams, especially the navigable ones, would be master of the

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1. Francis Trevelyan Miller, The Photographic History of the Civil War, 1, 178.
 2. Ibid., 178.



The Western Theatre, 1862.

— Approximate Confederate Front, January 1, 1862.

situation, hence the effort of both armies to secure control of these waterways.

The logical line of defense in the western theatre, and the one first selected by the Confederacy, was the Ohio River. If this river could be commanded it would give the Confederacy an extraordinary strong line of defense, since it flows southwest, and after having reached its two great tributaries, the Tennessee and Cumberland, empties into the Mississippi at the commanding position at Cairo, Illinois; thus converging with the center of a water navigation of nearly two thousand miles. Being situated at the confluence of two of the most important water courses in the country, the strategic importance of Cairo can not be overestimated. It is also the terminus of the Illinois Central Railroad, hence in communication with the railroad system of the North. Without doubt it is the key to the Mississippi Valley. By fortifying Cairo the Mississippi River and its basin southward to the Gulf of Mexico would be securely in the Confederate fold; and by fortifying Paducah, where the Tennessee empties into the Ohio, only a few miles south of where the Cumberland also empties into the Ohio, the territory leading into the heart of the Confederacy would be protected. Another advantage of the Ohio River as the first line of defense was the fact that practically all the state of Kentucky would have been within the boundary of the Confederacy, hence the likelihood of her secession, which

3. John Fiske, The Civil War in the Mississippi Valley, 35.

would have been of inestimable value to the Confederacy.

From Cairo military operation could be directed against the border states of Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Both parties saw these advantages and made efforts to secure control of the Ohio.

Governor Yates, of Illinois, had the foresight to see the strategic advantages of Cairo and had it garrisoned as early as April 23, 1861.⁴ Hence, the Union was fortunate in securing control of the commanding position in the Mississippi Valley. The converging currents of so many rivers, uniting at Cairo into one great stream, enabled the Federal Government to collect a flotilla of gun-boats, which searched out all the navigable streams.⁵ The gun-boats prepared by the Federal Government to do this work consisted of twelve, seven of which were iron-clad. This flotilla carried 143 guns, some 64-pounders, some 32-pounders, and some 7-inch rifled-guns using 80 pound shells.⁶

Incidentally, the struggle for control of the Tennessee, Cumberland, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers in the western theatre of the war was comparable to the struggle in the eastern theatre for control of the Kanawha, Potomac, James, and Rappahannock rivers. The Rappahannock, situated about half way between the two Capitals, Richmond and Washington, long remained the line of defense of both Federals and

4. William Conant Church, Ulysses S. Grant, 80.

5. William Preston Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston, 313.

6. Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, 25.

Confederates,⁷ but as has previously been intimated there was a decided contrast in the functions these two river systems were destined to play in this great drama of war. The short rivers of the east, with an east and west course and practically no navigability, served only as barriers to an invading army, while the western rivers, by reason of their size, course, and navigability, played an important role as highways for communication into the heart of the Confederacy.⁸

Another important factor that confronted both the Federals and Confederates during the embryonic stage of the war was securing the aid of the border states of Missouri, Kentucky, Virginia, and Maryland. At first there was a strong sentiment in each of these states toward the Confederacy, but geographic and political factors, mingled with the force of arms, eventually forced three of these states and a part of the fourth to ally with the Union. However, in order to prevent these states from seceding, it took a struggle commingled with both diplomacy and force. It was diplomacy that played the greater part in Maryland and Kentucky, geographical influences in Virginia, and force in Missouri. The diplomatic move of Governor Hicks of Maryland in convening the State Legislature at Frederick City, a town where Union sentiment dominated, instead of Baltimore, where Southern sentiment was strong, perhaps, prevented that body from calling a convention to adopt an

7. Ellen Churchill Semple, American History and its Geographic Conditions, 291.

8. Ibid., 300.

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ordinance of secession. Secondary to the diplomatic maneuvers of Governor Hicks was the geographic location of the state. Being located so near the Potomac River it offered a thoroughfare for the Federal troops to defend the national capitol, thus causing the state to be occupied by Federal forces securing the possession of Chesapeake Bay. The geographical location of Virginia presented conflicting interests between the eastern lowlands and western highlands of that state. These different interests prompted the scheme of separation that culminated in the creation of the new state of West Virginia in 1861 from the loyal portion of Virginia.

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Missouri and Kentucky held the same strategic value to the western theatre as did Maryland and Virginia in the eastern theatre. The Missouri Compromise in 1820 permitted slavery in the State of Missouri. During these two score years the southern and central part of the state had become thoroughly saturated with the institutions and ideas of Southern aristocracy. This, together with her geographical lines of intercourse with the Gulf States, caused her to be in sympathy with the Confederacy. In the struggle for control of this state the Union leaders proved to be the better diplomats, and after a brief civil conflict, lasting only a few months, Missouri was secured to the Union side. Kentucky, like Missouri, by reason of her soil, climate, and industrial system, was tolerant toward the South. Her geographical location plac-

9. James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States, 1850-1896, III, 275-6.

10. Sample, Op. cit., 289.

11. Ibid., 289.

ed her between the Confederacy and the Union. The Tennessee and the Cumberland rivers traversed its territory and offered avenues for an offensive campaign into the heart of the Confederacy. Therefore, it presented a strategic area that was of vital importance to both sides. Due to her location and even balance of northern and southern sympathizers in the State, her attitude of declared neutrality was logical, but both sides soon disregarded her neutrality and made efforts to gain possession of the state. Here again diplomacy played an important role. President Lincoln guided the Union movement in the state, and the result was that the Pro-Union legislature placed the state on the Union side.¹²

Having failed in their efforts to secure the border states of Missouri and Kentucky, and also failing to gain the Ohio River as their first line of defense, the Confederacy now located their defensive line in the western theatre from Columbus, Kentucky, on the Mississippi River southeastward to Dover and Clarksville, and northeastward to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and a bit southeastward from Bowling Green to Cumberland Gap. This presented an irregular line of over three hundred miles in length. However, as will be seen later, the greater part of the Confederate forces were concentrated on the western part of this line from Columbus to Bowling Green. This entire line possessed four strategic points, Columbus, Forts Henry and Donelson, Bowling Green, and Cumberland Gap, that would protect the heart of the Confederacy from an

12. Rhodes, *Op. cit.*, 279.

invasion of the Federal forces, provided each of these strongholds could be held. If one of the four should fall, the others would be in great danger of a Federal flanking attack, and probably would have to be evacuated.¹³

Columbus was one of the few positions capable of effective defense on the Mississippi River, having the advantages of being only eighteen miles from Cairo, the stronghold of the Union forces, and of rail connection with Bowling Green. General Polk referred to it as the "Gibraltar of the West".¹⁴ Going from west to east the next strategic point in this line was at Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, about twelve miles apart. These forts were of great importance to the Confederacy, for should they fall the Federals could easily penetrate deep into the interior of the South by the way of the two rivers. Their fall would also give the Federal armies a chance for a flanking movement on either Columbus or Bowling Green and force their evacuation or surrender.

Eighty miles northeast of these forts was the commanding position of Bowling Green, Kentucky. This strategic point is near the junction of two important railroads connecting with Nashville and Memphis.¹⁵ It is the out-post to Nashville. It was the "Manassas of the West". If it were to fall Nashville would be in great danger, and Columbus and Forts Henry and Donelson would be open to a flanking attack. Gen-

13. A glance at a map showing this line of defense will bear out this statement.

14. Church, Op. cit., 90.

15. Rhodes, Op. cit., 468.

eral Johnston saw the importance of this place and concentrated most of his forces there under his personal command. As had already been stated the greater part of the Federal and Confederate forces were concentrated on the 170 miles of this line from Columbus to Bowling Green, however, there was one other important point that was of strategic value to both forces. This point was Cumberland Gap, Tennessee. This position gave access to the valley of East Tennessee and protected the central part of the defense line from flanking attacks. Hence, it can readily be seen that the security of the above named four strong points was closely related.

When General Albert Sidney Johnston took command of the Confederate forces in the West, (September 10, 1861) and began forming his defensive line, he had to consider the geography of the district, the political complexity of its population, and the disposition and strength¹⁶ of the opposing forces. The first and third of these considerations were logical, since Columbus commanded the lower Mississippi and Forts Henry and Donelson prevented an advance up the Tennessee and Cumberland, and Bowling Green protected the railway system leading into the Confederacy, and Cumberland Gap prevented a Union advance into Eastern Tennessee; and since the greater part of the Federal forces was concentrated near the strong points of Columbus and Bowling Green. The second consideration was of a very complex nature and required diplomatic maneuvers which, apparently, the Confederates did not use. When

16. Johnston, Op. cit., 312.

General Buckner occupied Bowling Green he expected the Secession sentiment of Kentucky to rally to his support, but instead of securing the support of the populace in this vicinity (Bowling Green, Kentucky, is about 28 miles from the Tennessee State Line) it caused the Union sentiment to grow stronger and was a potent factor in causing Kentucky to abandon her neutrality, September 28, 1861.¹⁷ A few days prior to the occupation of Bowling Green (September 19, 1861) General Zollicoffer advanced to Cumberland Ford in southeastern Kentucky with about 4,000 men. The Union sentiment in this part of the State, and in Eastern Tennessee, was strong and Zollicoffer's presence only aggravated this sentiment. Instead of winning Kentucky for the Confederacy, these movements were probably responsible for her going over to the Union side.

Similar considerations played an important role in the disposal of the Federal forces in the West. The protection of Unionists in Missouri and East Tennessee, the holding of Kentucky, and securing the strategic points that commanded the rivers and railroad centers, were all of vital interest to the success of an invading army. Due to these considerations one army under General Buell, with headquarters at Louisville, Kentucky, had for its object the exclusion of the Confederates from central Tennessee and the occupation of East Tennessee. Another army under General Grant, with headquarters at Cairo, Illinois, essayed the opening of the Mississippi, the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers from the north. Still another army under General Halleck,

17. Johnston, Op. cit., 310, 316, 351.

with headquarters at Saint Louis, was to occupy the lower Mississippi¹⁸ and to try to join hands with the upper forces. Thus was the situation of affairs in the western theatre in the late fall of 1861.

The first occasion on which the two forces measured arms with real purpose in the West was on the 10th of August, 1861, at the battle of Wilson Creek near Springfield, Missouri. Here a force of about 6,000 Federal troops under General Lyon met a similar force of Confederates under General McCulloch. During this affray General Lyon was killed and the Federals forced to retreat, hence a decisive Confederate victory. Soon after this victory General Price, with a force of about 5,000 men, moved upon Lexington, Missouri, his old home. Before he arrived at Lexington his force had increased to¹⁹ 12,000 men. Colonel Mulligan, with 3,500 men, prepared to defend Lexington. Price attacked the fortifications, and after a few days Mulligan surrendered the garrison on September 20, 1861. However, Price soon retreated back to Springfield.

The next and last battle fought in the western theatre in the year 1861 was the battle of Belmont, Missouri, November 7th. Here General Grant, with a force of about 3,000 men and two gun-boats, attacked the Confederate forces, who were reinforced from the strong fort at Columbus just on the opposite side of the river. This battle ended with a complete rout of the Federal troops; Grant barely escaping capture. However, Grant is given credit for accomplishing the

18. Edward Channing, A History of the United States, 6, 450-455.

19. This great support given Price is quite a contrast to the support given Buckner and Zollicoffer when they marched into Kentucky.

purpose of his attack, since it is said that the purpose was to prevent the reinforcement of Price's army in Missouri from Columbus. It is interesting to note that the three engagements in the western theatre in the year 1861 took place in the state of Missouri,

In order to protect the friendly element in Eastern Tennessee and Eastern Kentucky, to curtail the Unionist sentiment, and to protect the great salt works and lead mines of southwestern Virginia, a force of about 3,000 men under the command of General Marshall marched²⁰ to Prestonburg, Kentucky, in November 1861. On January 10, 1862, Colonel Garfield attacked General Marshall's forces, and after a brief engagement both forces withdrew a distance of several miles; Marshall gradually withdrawing to Cumberland Gap.

The next, and the first battle in the West that gave the Federal armies a decisive victory, was the battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky, January 19, 1862. Here General Thomas won a complete victory over the Confederate forces commanded by General Zollicoffer; Zollicoffer being killed in the battle. It is assumed that General Zollicoffer, in making preparations for an attack, made a mistake in crossing to the right bank of the Cumberland and not retiring to the left bank when ordered²¹ to do so by his superior officer, General Crittenden, whereas if he had occupied the right bank his force and supplies would have been saved in case of defeat. As it was, the rise in the river prevented the

20. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 393.

21. Davis, Op. cit. 18-23.

removal of supplies. This battle had for its prize the strategic point of Cumberland Gap, opening the way for Union advance into East Tennessee and flanking Johnston's position at Bowling Green. However, Thomas did not pursue the Confederates. He was recalled by General Buell, who was concentrating his forces against Bowling Green. General Crittenden's forces retreated to Chestnut Mound, Tennessee, about sixty miles east of Nashville. This was a great blow to the Confederacy, since the idol of Tennessee, General Zollicoffer, was killed; and now the Union forces could concentrate their efforts on Bowling Green, Forts Henry and Donelson, and Columbus.

As has been seen very little was accomplished in the way of offensive warfare in the western theatre during the year of 1861. It was in the East where the United States had massed its armies and thither had flocked Southern manhood, who had sprung to arms at the first bugle call in the conflict. The situation in the West had been left largely to such protection as Kentucky's neutrality could give, but when her neutrality was broken the situation demanded two large forces to protect the vital interests in this theatre. At the beginning of 1862 the Union army had sufficient forces to begin an offensive campaign in the West, and since Kentucky had cast her lot with the Union, the time was ripe for a forward movement upon some point of the Confederate line. Just where this movement should begin was a question that, apparently, was hard for the Federal commanders to agree upon. President Lincoln suggested a simultaneous attack at different points, while General McClellan wished General Buell to

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Morrison, William R. (1824)

An American Congressman and politician, born in Monroe County, Ill. Private in an Illinois volunteer regiment in the Mexican War, and participated in most of the battles of Taylor's campaign. At the outbreak of the Civil War he organized and became colonel of the Forty-ninth Illinois Infantry, serving in that capacity until December, 1863, when he resigned to take his seat in the Thirty-eights Congress. In 1885 Morrison was defeated for election to the United States Senate by John A. Logan by one vote, and in the following year was defeated for re-election to the House. He was appointed by President Cleveland a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1887, and served until 1897, fir the last six years as chairman.

[illegible]

Strike in East Tennessee, General Buell suggested that his forces should move on Bowling Green and Nashville and that at the same time General Halleck, with 20,000 men and the iron-clad fleet, move up the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers. General Halleck did not favor either plan but wanted the greater part of Buell's army placed under his command so that he would have a force of about 60,000 men for a movement up the Cumberland River. ²² However, without orders from General McClellan, without any arrangements with General Buell for reinforcements, and without any plans for a simultaneous movement of Buell's army, on the 30th of January, 1862, he ordered General Grant, ²³ with 15,000 men and a fleet of gun-boats, to capture Fort Henry.

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22. Matthew Forney Steele, American Campaigns, 1, 74. 152
 23. John Codman Ropes, The Story of the Civil War, Part 2, 4.

CHAPTER TWO

FORT HENRY. (TENNESSEE).

On May 10, 1861, Mr. Adam Anderson, by order of Governor Isham G. Harris, of the State of Tennessee, began surveys near Dover, Tennessee, and under his direction the water batteries at Fort Donelson were located. Shortly afterward, Anderson and his party went over to the Tennessee River and there located the site for the proposed fort near the mouth of Standing Stone Creek and almost opposite the mouth of Sandy Creek.²

Major (afterwards General) Bushrod Johnson was appointed Chief Engineer of the Army of Tennessee on May 28 and assumed charge of the construction of the fortifications on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Under his direction Fort Henry was built five miles further down the river than the site which Anderson had selected and near Kirman's old landing.³ Work was begun by the Tenth Tennessee Regiment on Friday, June 14, 1861. The first gun was mounted and fired with blank cartridge on Friday, July 12th.⁴

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1. Broadfield L. Ridley, Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee, 65. "Mr. Anderson, at that time, was receiver of the Edgefield and Kentucky railroad, running from Nashville to Guthrie, Ky., and was one of the ablest and most widely known engineers in the South. As chief engineer, he had located and built under three separate corporations the entire line of railroad from Guthrie, Ky., southwardly to the state line of Alabama, which now forms an important part of the Louisville and Nashville railroad system....."
 2. Ibid., 65. The present name of Standing Stone Creek is Standing Rock, the name being derived from the fact that a huge mass of rock stands near the bank a few miles from the mouth.
 3. Ibid., 65.
 4. Ibid., 65.

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Johnston says that, sometime before General Bushrod Johnson located the site of Fort Henry, Governor Harris of Tennessee sent General Daniel S. Donelson to select locations for Forts Henry and Donelson. "General Donelson wished to build a fort in Kentucky, on better ground; but, under the Governor's orders, adopted the site at Fort Henry as the best in Tennessee near the Kentucky line, and because of the convenience for mutual support between it and Fort Donelson. These locations are said to have been approved by General Bushrod R. Johnson, also."

At this point it is fitting to note that both Forts Henry and Donelson were laid out and work started on the latter prior to the seceding of the State of Tennessee from the Union. Tennessee seceded on June 8, 1861, being the last state to sever connection with the Union. This anomaly needs explanation.

The General Assembly of Tennessee on January 19, 1861, passed a bill calling for an election, to be held on February 9th, to elect delegates to a State Convention. The delegates to the Convention were to determine what should be the relation of Tennessee to the Union. The same session of the assembly, acting on the recommendation of Governor Harris, passed a bill to form "all white male inhabitants between the ages of eighteen and forty-five into companies, regiments, brigades, and divisions," etc. The general election defeated, by a

5. William Preston Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston, 407.

6. Goodspeed Publishing Co., History of Tennessee, 515.

majority of perhaps 60,000, the attempt to hold the convention.

This was considered a great Union victory.

Immediately after the fall of Sumter, the Secretary of War at Washington called on Governor Harris for two regiments of militia for immediate service. In response, Governor Harris sent the following reply:

Executive Department, Nashville, Tenn.
April 17, 1861.

Hon. Simon Cameron,
Secretary of War,
Washington, D. C.

SIR:

Your dispatch of the 15th inst. informing me that Tennessee is called upon for two regiments of militia for immediate service is received. Tennessee will not furnish a single man for purposes of coercion, but 50,000, if necessary, for the defense of our right and those of our Southern brothers.

Isaac G. Harris,
Governor of Tennessee.

Tennessee for a long time deluded herself with the vain hope that a neutral position might be possible, but that this was an impossibility is shown by the later events in Kentucky. Governor Harris was one of the few who knew that war was a certainty and therefore called a special session of the General Assembly for April 25, 1861. A secret session was held, and on May 6th, a bill was passed calling for a referendum to be held June 8th to ratify "A Declaration of Independence", which would dissolve "The Federal Relations between
8
the State of Tennessee and the United States of America".

7. Ibid., 517.

8. Ibid., 520-21. Text of the Article incorporating the Declaration.

The secret session also enacted a bill, which made it the duty of the Governor "to raise, organize and equip a provisional force of volunteers for the defense of the State, to consist of 55,000 volunteers".⁹ The bill included all the provisions necessary for putting an army in the field.

By virtue of the authority given him by a joint resolution of the General Assembly on May 1st, 1861, Governor Harris appointed a commission of three to treat with the representatives of The Confederate States of America. As a result a "Convention between the State of Tennessee and the Confederate States of America" was consummated. A "military league, offensive and defensive" was forced on the 7th day of May looking to a speedy admission of Tennessee into the Confederacy.¹⁰ The vote in the Senate on the adoption of the league was: ayes 14, nays 6, absent and not voting 5; while in the house¹¹ the vote was: ayes 42, nays 15, and absent and not voting 18.

The State election held on June 8th approved secession and the other acts of the General Assembly by a vote of 60,000 to 47,000.¹² About three weeks before, May 17, the Confederacy had approved an act to admit Tennessee as soon as possible, but it was the 31st of July before the Provisional Army of Tennessee was formally transferred to the Confederacy.

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9. Ibid., 522-23. Passed May 6, 1861. Text of Article on these pages.
 10. Ibid., 523.
 11. Ibid., 523.
 12. Ibid., 534.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the leaders in Tennessee expected that State to secede and to form one of the first battle grounds of the war and that they took steps to protect the State from invasion. One of their steps was the beginning of Forts Henry and Donelson by the provisional Army of Tennessee.

The location of Fort Henry was subject to much criticism. Some of the criticisms are given here and attention given to their validity.

Brigadier-General Lloyd Tilghman, commander of Fort Henry when it surrendered, said in an official report, dated February 12, 1862:

To understand properly the difficulties of my position it is right that I should explain fully the unfortunate location of Fort Henry in reference to resistance by a small force against an attack by land co-operating with the gun-boats, as well as its disadvantages in even an engagement with boats alone. The entire fort, together with the entrenched camp spoken of, is enfiladed from three or four points on the opposite shore, while three points on the eastern bank completely command them both, all at easy cannon range. At the same time the entrenched camp, arranged as it was in the best possible manner to meet the case, was two-thirds of it completely under the control of the fire of the gun-boats. The history of military engineering records no parallel to this case. Points within a few miles of it, possessing great advantages and few disadvantages, were totally neglected, and a location fixed upon without one redeeming feature or filling one of the many requirements of a site for a work such as Fort Henry. The work itself was well built; it was completed long before I took command, but strengthened greatly by myself in building embrasures and epaulements of sand bags. An enemy had but to use their most common sense in obtaining the advantage of high water, as was the case, to have complete and entire control of the position.

I am guilty of no act of injustice in this frank avowal of the opinion entertained by myself, as well as by all other officers who

13. War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series, I, 7, 139. Hereinafter referred to as Official Records.

have become familiar with the location of Fort Henry; nor do I desire the defects of location to have an undue influence in directing public opinion in relation to the battle of the 6th instant. The fort was built when I took charge, and I had no time to build anew.

Milton A. Haynes, Lieutenant-Colonel of Artillery, in an official
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report, dated March 22, 1862, said:

Fort Henry was of necessity compelled to surrender; if not to the gun-boats, certainly to General Grant's investing army. The fault was in its location, not in its defenders.

Captain Jesse Taylor, C. S. A., who arrived at Fort Henry early
15
in September, 1861, said:

Arriving at the fort, I was convinced by a glance at its surroundings that extraordinary bad judgment, or worse, had selected the site for its erection. I found it placed on the east bank of the river, in a bottom commanded by high hills arising on either side of the river, and within a good rifle range. This circumstance was at once reported to the proper military authorities of the State at Nashville, who replied that the selection had been made by competent engineers and with reference to mutual support with Fort Donelson on the Cumberland, twelve miles away;.....

A recent visit by the author to the site of Fort Henry confirms the criticisms given just above, and the best reason for placing Fort
16
Henry where it was is given by Johnston:

The governing considerations were evidently political rather than strategic, and depended more on geography than topography.

Reports of defeated officers should be viewed critically, but the facts bear them out that Fort Henry was untenable both from the water and land side. The desire to fortify a point on the Tennessee River

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- 14. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 147.
 - 15. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 1, 368-369.
 - 16. Johnston, Op. cit., 408.

as near the Kentucky line as possible directed the choosing of the site for Fort Henry.

Though, as mentioned above, work had been done at Fort Henry prior to July 12, 1861, and cannon tested, it was not put into fighting shape until almost the time when the major engagement took place. General Albert Sidney Johnston was placed in command of Department ¹⁷ No. 2, which included Tennessee, on September 10, 1861, superseding Major-General Polk. It was under Johnston's orders that Fort Henry was completed. On September 15, Colonel B. R. Johnson, Colonel of ¹⁸ Engineers of the Army of Tennessee, reported that:

At Fort Henry, on Tennessee River, there is a good inclosed work with bastion fronts mounting 6 32-pounders and 2 12-pounders, requiring 1,000 men to man it.

¹⁹

Early in October, 1861, General Johnston sent Lieutenant Dixon to examine Forts Henry and Donelson. He reported that Fort Henry was ²⁰ almost complete: that it

was built, not at the most favorable position, but that it was a strong work, and instead of abandoning it and building at another place, he advised that it should be completed, and other works constructed on the high lands just above the fort on the opposite side of the river.

Brigadier-General C. F. Smith, U. S. A., in a report dated October

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16, 1861, tells of a trip made by the gun-boat Consatoga up the Ten-

17. Official Records, Series 1, 4, 405.

18. Ibid., 408.

19. Ibid., 440.

20. Ibid., 7, 711.

Johnston, Op. cit., 410.

21. Official Records, Series 1, 4, 308.

Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Series 1, 22, 371. Hereinafter referred to as Official Records (Navies).

nesses River to Fort Henry to investigate the situation there. The commander of the gun-boat described Fort Henry,

as a respectable earthwork, mounting heavy guns, with outworks, and a garrison of probably 1,700 to 1,800 men.

Smith, from other information, estimated the number of guns as 20 and the number of the garrison as 2,000. Colonel A. Helman, in command at Fort Henry at the time, mentioned the visit in a report of the 14th of October. ²² The appearance of the gun-boat threw a scare over the garrison, which prepared to defend itself. The vessel, however, did not come within range of the fort's guns and shortly retired.

The following report from Colonel Helman tells of the situation at Fort Henry in the middle of October: ²³

PORT HENRY, TENNESSEE RIVER,
October 19, 1861.

Major-General Folk:

SIR: I beg leave to submit the following report, to which I most respectfully call the general's attention:

Fort Henry is situated on the east bank of Tennessee River, about 1 mile north of the offset in the boundary line of the State on its western extension. It is 80 miles below Louisville, where the Memphis, Louisville and Nashville Railroad crosses the Tennessee, and 60 miles above Paducah. The river at this point is 1,200 feet wide. It is a bastion fort, enclosing an area of a little over 3 acres. The ditch surrounding it is 30 feet in width, with an average depth of 10 feet, making the height of a parapet from the bottom of the ditch about 15 feet. The line of parapet is 2,270 feet.

Its armament consists at present of six 32-pounders, two 12-pounders, and one 6-pounder field piece.

22. Official Records, Series 1, 4, 446.
23. Ibid., 409-68.

Four of the 32-pounders range down the river, and the fifth may be brought to bear when a boat passes the channel between the island and the bank, which is a distance of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Should a boat be able to run close to the bank in high water, this gun would have a very uncertain range.

The head of the island is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the fort. The island is 1 mile in length and about 350 feet in width, and is heavily timbered. The channel is 700 feet in width. The chute between the island and the Kentucky shore is not available except the river is very high.

The valley in which the fort is situated is parallel with the river, about 7 miles in length and from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in breadth, excepting one point north of the fort $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, where the valley is narrowed by projecting spurs to about 350 yards.

The hills on the east outlying this valley have a steep acclivity to a height of 80 to 100 feet in the horizontal distance of 300 feet. These hills are spurs from a dividing ridge distant from the bank of the river from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 miles. This ridge is about 350 feet above low water, and divides the waters of the Tennessee from the Cumberland River.

The hills of the greatest elevation fronting upon the river are south of the fort about 3 miles and distant from the river about 1 mile. Two hills within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the fort attain the height of 220 feet above the crest of the parapet, but owing to the heaviness of the timber between them and the fort, they can be of little advantage to an enemy.

There is also a ridge northeast of the fort, about 3,000 feet distant, with an elevation of 60 feet above the parapet, which furnishes an effective basis of operations if the fort should be attacked by land forces. From low-water mark to high-water mark is about 56 feet; the rise of water from an average stage to high-water mark is 44 feet.

At high stage of the river the water backs up into Panther Creek on the north and Lost Creek on the south $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and at this stage the lower part of the fort is not free from over-flow, being 7 feet 6 inches lower than the highest part. The leading roads begin to ascend the hills in about half a mile from the river, and are generally located on the summits of the ridges, are gravelly, and generally very good.

This is the topography around the fort on the east bank (Tennessee side) of the river.

On the west bank of the river (Kentucky side) the valley extends northward to the mouth of Blood River, about 9 miles from the fort, and to the southward only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The hills outlying this valley are distant from the river at the south only 80 yards, just opposite the fort only 790 yards, and thence recede to a general distance of $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 mile.

The hill abutting on the river on the south side of the fort and on the west bank is distant from the fort 1,300 yards and is 170 feet above the crest of the parapet. Across the summit of this hill runs the dividing line between Tennessee and Kentucky. About $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile north of this hill and about 1 mile from and immediately opposite the fort, is a hill 250 feet above the crest of the parapet, from which a spur projects to a distance of 3,000 feet from the fort, with an elevation of 80 feet, which from its flanking position and the nature of the ground, may be easily fortified.

These hills I consider the really dangerous points, and proper batteries placed on them will certainly command the fort.

Should the enemy attempt an invasion of the State by ascending simultaneously the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers with a large force, these points, being within 20 miles of the railroad leading from Louisville and Nashville to Memphis, should be occupied by our troops in order to maintain our position here.

I have at present for the defense of this fort my own regiment with an aggregate of 820, Captain Taylor's company of artillery, with an aggregate of 50 men. I have repeatedly requested that the company of artillery be recruited to its full strength. In its present condition there are not men enough to work all the guns at the same time and to properly arm the fort. Four 12-pounders are necessary in addition to guns now here, particularly if we have to defend it against the land force.

Whether a gun-boat can pass Fort Henry depends greatly upon the skill and efficiency of our gunners. A boat coming within the range of our guns $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles below the fort will get out of their range as soon as it passes the fort, as none of our guns have a range up the river; their range, too, is unreasonably short for 32-pounders, which must be caused by inferiority of powder, and

perhaps by the balls having too much windage.

If the enemy's gun-boats should succeed in passing Fort Henry, two hours' run will take them to Danville, and there is nothing to prevent the destruction of the railroad bridge.

Again I beg leave to call the attention of the general to the indispensable necessity of having a company of cavalry at this post for the purpose of communicating with the railroad and telegraph at Danville, to act as pickets and scouts in every direction from Fort Henry, that we may be apprized by the enemy's approach either by land or water, and to communicate between this post and Fort Donelson.

* * * * *

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. Heiman, .
Colonel, Commanding.

In a dispatch of October 28th, 1861, Adjutant General MacCall ordered General Polk as follows: 24

General Johnston directs me to say he wishes you to keep a vigilant eye on the Tennessee River. If possible, fortify opposite Fort Henry, to protect it from being overlooked by the enemy. It can be held with part of the garrison of Henry, Lieutenant Dixon, who is familiar with the country, will be able to point out the proper position. No time should be lost.

* * * * *

as soon as you are able increase the force at Fort Henry and the point opposite.

The position opposite Fort Henry was christened Fort Heiman in honor of the colonel commanding at Fort Henry at the time. Although the importance of maintaining fortification opposite Fort Henry was realized, the work progressed slowly. The works there were comparatively insignificant and played no part in the defense of Fort Henry.

C. A. Henry, on November 1, 1861, visited the fort named in
 25
 his honor and reported to General Johnston that:

"Fort Henry is in a fine condition for a defense, the work admirably done, as Major Gilmer thinks and the first regiment under Colonel Heiman, the Tenth Tennessee, the best I have seen in service."

On November 8th, 1861, General C. F. Smith, in an official
 report, described Fort Henry, saying that of the works on the Ten-
 26
 nessee and Cumberland Rivers:

The more important is Fort Henry, 71 miles up the Tennessee just at the State Line. It is a strong earth work, on the water front, but not nearly so strong on the land side. It has three 24 or 32 pounders, one or two 8-inch columbiads, and the remainder of the field guns, in all from 14 to 16; its garrison was two weeks since 1,800. They have been under apprehension of attack from here Paducah for the past two weeks.

Some 8 miles above Fort Henry the enemy had been for the past two weeks endeavoring to convert river steamers into iron plated gun-boats. This fort is an obstacle to our gun-boats proceeding to look after such work.

I sent an intelligent person to see what progress had been made on these gun-boats, but he was captured. It is my only weak point (this river), made so by the use of gun-boats.

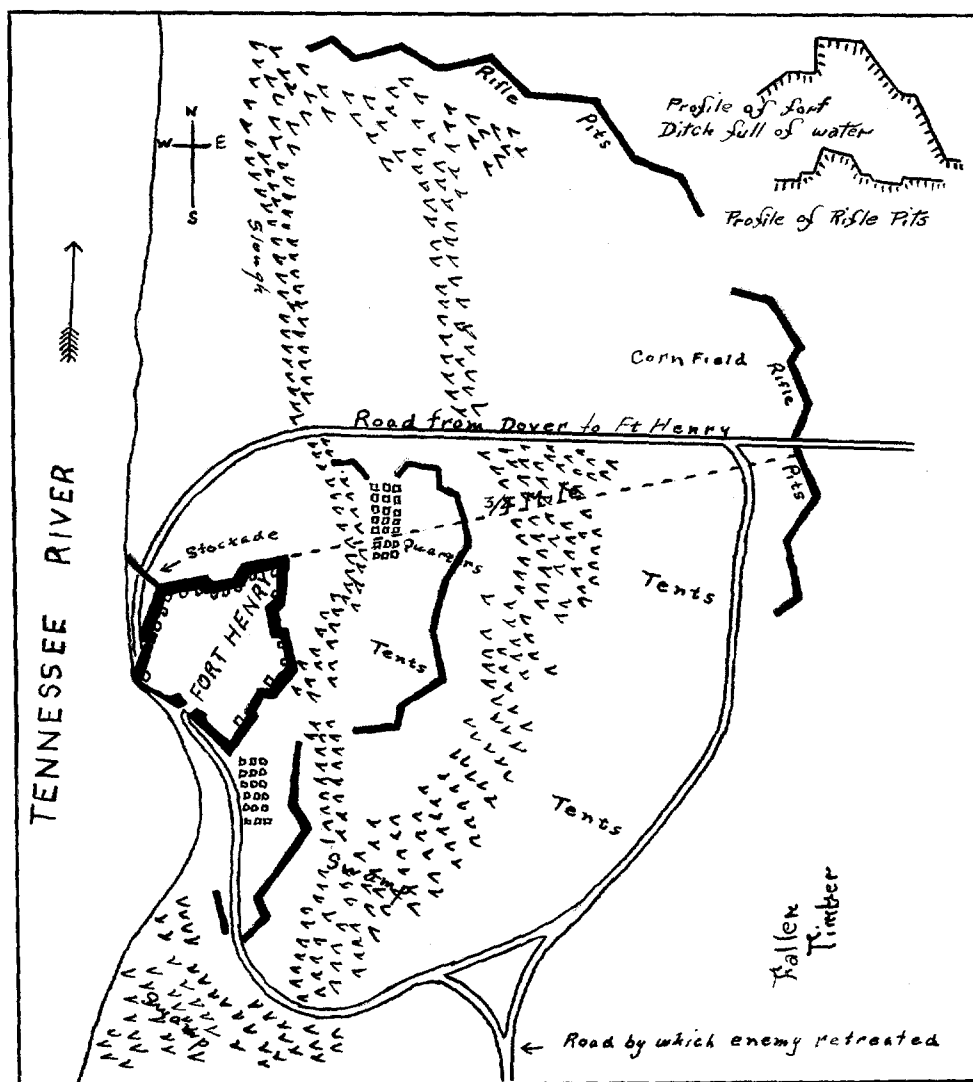
The Union generals were early aware of the importance of taking both forts Henry and Donelson and were remarkably well informed of the situation at each.

Brigadier-General Lloyd Tilghman, who had been placed in command at Columbus and Hopkinsville, Kentucky, was on November 17, 1861, told
 27
 to:

25. Ibid., 496.

26. Official Records, Series 1, 4, 345.

27. Ibid., 560.



Plan of
FORT HENRY¹
and its Outworks.

Drawn under the direction of Lieut. Col.
J. B. Mc Pherson, A.D.C. and Captain of Engineers.

1. Atlas to accompany the Official Records of the Union
and Confederate Armies 1861-1865, Series 1, 7, 164.

.....Repair to the Cumberland, and assume command of Forts Donelson and Henry and their defenses and the defenses of the intermediate country. You will push forward the completion of the works and their armament with the utmost activity

Just after Tilghman assumed command of Forts Henry and Donel-
son, General Johnston on November 21st ordered:

Lieutenant Dixon to lay out a field-work on the commanding ground opposite Fort Henry; and on the 29th telegraphed Gilmer that, "these works should not be stopped."

He urged that the work be pushed to completion.

Fort Henry and Heiman guarded the gate-way to West Tennessee, Northern Alabama, and Mississippi. This fact was not appreciated by the inhabitants of these regions, for to them the war was something remote and unfelt. In spite of appeals from the authorities of Tennessee and Alabama for slave labor to complete the fortifications, which would protect these states from an invasion by a gun-boat fleet, the response was meager. Five thousand laborers were needed, and only 200 were secured. It was early in January, 1862, when an in-
sufficient number of negroes reached Fort Henry.

The apathy of this section was also illustrated by the failure to construct a fleet to contest the control of the Tennessee River. A feeble attempt was made, as above stated, to construct gun-boats, but they were started too late and never completed.

The interest of the Federals in Fort Henry was again demonstrated on January 7th, 1862, when the Conestoga went up the Tennessee to the Tennessee State Line. At that time the commander reported the river

28. Johnston, Op. cit., 416.

29. Ibid.,

to be at such a low stage as to be barely sufficient to float his boat, which drew five feet and four inches. He also stated,
30
"Fort Henry I have examined and the work is formidable."

Ten days later the Federal steamer Wilson threw a few shells
31
at Fort Henry, at a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, without effect.

In spite of Johnston's repeated orders and the threats from the enemy, the construction of Fort Heiman lagged. Hon. James E. Saunders wrote to Colonel Mumford, aide to General Johnston, on January
32
17, 1862, as follows:

Nashville, January 17, 1862.

Dear Sir:

I am just starting for Fort Heiman, opposite Fort Henry, where I have been for some time. I was sent for ammunition and equipments (which I have obtained), as none of the officers could be spared.

We carried a large negro force down. They have literally done nothing, for want of the entrenchments being laid off ready to commence work as soon as the shelters were made. When the engineer, Captain Hayden, was urged to his work, the answer was that General Tilghman on the 3d or 4th of January, advising him that laborers were then in transitu from North Alabama. The general came to Fort Henry on the 18th -- and then it was, when I left, debated whether it was not too late to throw up works on the west side, as contemplated by Captain Dixon and every general who knows anything of the position of the fort. All did concur in the opinion that a failure to occupy the heights would be equivalent to abandoning Fort Henry.

* * * * *

Hurriedly, your friend,

James E. Saunders.

* * * * *

30. Official Records (Navies) Series 1, 22, 485-6.

31. Ibid., 507.

32. Ibid., 423-4.

33

In reply, General Johnston telegraphed Tilghman:

Occupy and entrench the heights opposite Fort Henry. Do not lose a moment. Work all night.

A few days later he wired Pope telling him to "urge upon General Tilghman the necessity of immediate attention to the discipline and instruction of his command". A similar wire went to Tilghman³⁴ on January 29th.³⁵ This was after the defeat at Mill Springs, and Johnston was apprehensive of a center attack on his main front.

Johnston was correct in his assumption that an attack would be made. Grant had, as early as January 6th, asked permission of Halleck, who was the commanding general of the Army of the West and Grant's superior,³⁶ to take Fort Henry. Halleck refused, thinking it would take 60,000 men to accomplish the undertaking.³⁷ On January 28, Grant wired Halleck that, "with permission, I will take Fort Henry, on the Tennessee, and establish and hold a camp there".³⁸ The same day, Flag-Officer Foote, in command of the Western fleet, sent a similar dispatch supporting Grant in his desire to take Fort Henry.³⁹ On January 30th, Halleck⁴⁰ gave Grant authority to proceed from Cairo against Fort Henry. For two weeks prior to this time Tilghman feared an attack on Fort Henry

33. Ibid., 424.

34. Ibid.

35. Vide supra, 11.

36. Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, 1, 286-7.

37. Johnston, Op. cit., 421.

38. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 121.

39. Grant, Op. cit., 1, 287.

Official Records, Series 1, 7, 121.

40. Ibid., 121, 572, 574.

because of reports which informed him that a part of General Smith's forces were in the neighborhood. Smith's scouts secured valuable information about the defenses of Henry and caused Tilghman to hasten his preparations for an attack. The fears of Johnston were thus realized and the location of Fort Henry, the tardy preparation for defense, the rising of the river due to the heavy rains, as well as the deficiency in armament and number of the defenders, predetermined the results. Fort Henry was doomed.

Grant had 17,000 troops at Cairo and on February 2nd sent half of them up the Tennessee River under General McClernand, accompanied by seven gun-boats under Flag-Officer Foote. Two days later McClernand disembarked four miles below Fort Henry and named his encampment Camp Halleck. Grant arrived the same day with a portion of his command, having left C. F. Smith with a division at Paducah. Camp Halleck was about eight land miles from Fort Henry, so Grant attempted to move his troops further up the river in order to shorten the distance that they must march. A shot from a long range gun sent the transports back to their original position. Grant then went to Paducah to bring up Smith's division, returning on the 5th. Smith, with five or six thousand men, was assigned to the left (west) bank with orders to take Fort Heiman. Grant, with the remainder of his army, was to attack Fort Henry at 11:00⁴¹ A. M. on the 6th, in conjunction with the gun-boats.

41. Grant, Op. cit., 299-31.
Johnston, Op. cit., 422-3.

The Union army was optimistic in regard to victory, and it had a right to be. Grant's force of 17,000 effective men was alone sufficient to take the fort, either by assault or siege. In addition, Foote's fleet, consisting of four new iron-plated gun-boats and three old wooden gun-boats, mounting in all 61 guns, could be counted on to be of great assistance in the reduction of the fort.

To meet the Federal force, General Tilghman had a much smaller number of troops, estimated by him in one report as 2,610⁴² and in another as 2,734.⁴³

In addition to the armament of the Fort the Confederates had yet other means of defense of which little is known, and which were more interesting from their uniqueness than for their effectiveness. One of these were torpedoes, (more correctly called mines) which were placed in the river.⁴⁴ Wood describes this danger as follows:

On the 4th, Flag-Officer Foote, with seven gun-boats led the way up the Tennessee, against Fort Henry. That day the furious current was dashing driftwood in whirling masses against the flotilla, which had all it could do to keep station, even with double anchors down and full steam up. Next morning a new danger appeared in the shape of what looked like a school of dead porpoises. These were Confederate torpedoes, washed from their moorings. As it was now broad daylight they were all successfully avoided; and the crews felt as if they had won the first round.

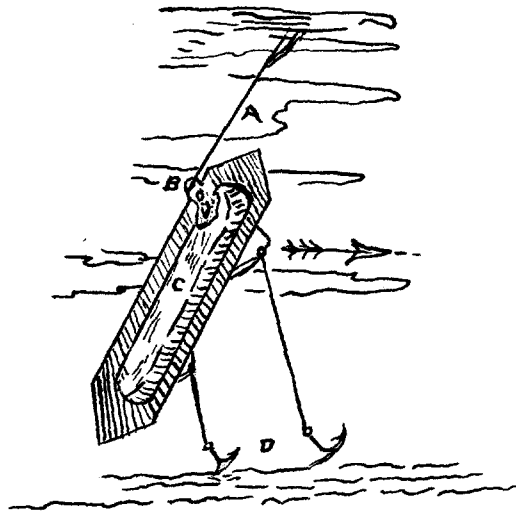
The Union officers were aware of the existence of the torpedoes before the attack, for Lieutenant Phelps of the Conestoga refers to them in a report of January 21st⁴⁵ and thought that they were worked by "galvanic batteries" from the shore.

42. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 140-and 143.

43. Ibid., 137.

44. William Wood, Captains of the Civil War, 126-7.

45. Official Records (Navies) Series 1, 22, 512. Again referred to by him on January 31. Ibid., 528.



1
THE PRONGED TORPEDO

Consisted of a stout sheet iron cylinder, pointed at both ends, about five and a half feet long and one foot in diameter. The iron lever was three and a half feet long, and armed with prongs to catch in the bottom of the boat. This lever was constructed to move the iron-rod on inside of cylinder, thus acting upon the trigger of the lock to explode the cap and fire the powder. The machine was anchored, presenting the prongs in such a way that boats going down stream should slide over them, but those coming up should catch.

A - iron-rod armed with prongs to fasten upon bottom of boats going up stream and act upon. B - A lever connected with trigger to explode a cap and ignite powder. C - canvass filled with seventy pounds of powder. D - anchors to hold torpedoes in place.

The torpedo shown above was of the type probably used at Fort Henry. Confederate torpedoes destroyed or seriously injured forty Federal vessels during the war, but none of the torpedoes placed in the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers were effective. Twelve torpedoes were sunk in the chute, at the foot of Panther Island.

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1. Illustration and explanatory matter taken from The Confederate Soldier in the Civil War, edited by Ben LaBree, 439.

The rising water not only washed the torpedoes away and relieved the flotilla of that danger but actually threatened the fort. The water stood two feet deep in the lower magazine when the fort was attacked and was steadily rising. In regard to the water Tilghman said after the fort surrendered:

The elements even were against us, and had the enemy delayed his attack a few days, with the river rising, one third of the entire fortifications (already affected by it) would have been washed away, while the remaining portion of the works would have been untenable by reason of the depth of water over the whole interior portion.

A deep moat completely surrounded Fort Henry on the land side and strengthened its defenses against an attack in that quarter. The only means of ingress and egress was by using a draw-bridge. In this respect Fort Henry was defended similarly to a mediaeval castle.

Accounts of the number and disposition of the guns in Fort Henry vary as much as the accounts giving the number of the garrison. It seems safe to conclude, however, that seventeen guns were mounted in the Fort and that eleven of these faced the river. Of these eleven, one 10-inch columbiad and a twenty-four-pounder rifled gun were the only two which were effective against the iron-clad gun-boats. Two forty-two-pounders, poorly supplied with ammunition, and seven smooth bore 32-pounders completed the armament on the river side.

On the morning of the 4th, General Tilghman, who was at Fort Donelson, heard the exchange of shot mentioned above and returned to Fort

46. Ibid., 149, 536.

47. Ibid., 561.

48. See Appendix, IV, TABLE TWO.

Henry, accompanied by Gilmer. The 5th and the morning of the 6th were spent in preparation for the attack.

At 11 o'clock on the morning of the 6th the fleet started towards Fort Henry. The four iron-clads were abreast, followed by three wooden vessels at a short distance.

Flag-Officer Foote says that the attack began at 12:30,⁴⁹ and General Tilghman says that it began at precisely 11:45.⁵⁰ Tilghman says⁵¹ the conflict lasted two hours and ten minutes, ending at 1:55; while⁵² Foote puts the time at one hour and fifteen minutes.

During the melee the Fort received over 400 shot and shell and made more than 60 direct hits on the fleet. The 24-pounder rifled⁵³ gun burst at 12:35, and the columbiad was silenced shortly afterward⁵⁴ because a priming wire became jammed in the vent. A few minutes later another gun exploded, and three guns were out of commission from that cause. The 42-pounders were silent from lack of ammunition, the 32-pounders were ineffective, and only four guns were manned at the close of the battle. General Tilghman had held only sufficient men in the Fort to man his guns, having decided that his small force could not successfully defend the Fort against a land attack, and had caused the majority of his command to retreat to Fort Donelson.

With only four guns really serviceable and with his men so badly reduced that he could not well have worked a greater number, General

49. Official Records (Navies), Series 1, 22, 537.

50. Ibid., 558.

51. Ibid., 559.

52. Ibid., 538.

53. Ibid., 558, 568. Every man at the piece was disabled.

54. Ibid., 558, 568.

Tilghman raised the white flag just before two o'clock. He surrendered twelve officers, sixty-six noncommissioned officers and privates, and sixteen men on the hospital boat Patton.

The total casualties as reported by Tilghman were:

Killed by the enemy, 2; wounded by the enemy (one since dead), 3; wounded slightly by the enemy, 2; killed by premature explosion, 2; wounded seriously by premature explosion, 1; slightly wounded, 1; temporarily disabled by explosion of rifled gun, 5. Making a total killed, 5; seriously wounded, 3; slightly wounded, 3; disabled, 5; missing, 5. Total casualties, 21.

Total casualties of the enemy were stated in my presence the following morning to be 73

The enemy reported the number of shots that struck their vessels to have been 74;

The Federal casualties were about forty-eight, according to reports of the commanders of the Federal boats. Most of their casualties resulted when a shot from the Fort pierced a boiler on the Essex, scalding a large number of men.

After the fall of Fort Henry, Grant arrived on the scene, too late to assist the fleet in the reduction of the fort. Some of McClernand's cavalry pursued the retreating troops and secured six pieces of artillery, thirty-eight prisoners, and killed one man; the remainder of the troops reached Fort Donelson safely. Heiman and Gilmer also escaped to Donelson.

The three wooden gun-boats, after Fort Henry surrendered, proceeded up the Tennessee River, reaching the railroad bridge at Danville just after dark. At Danville the Confederate pickets destroyed three

55. Ibid., 561. A total of 94.

56. Ibid., 560.

57. See Appendix, III, TABLE ONE.

58. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 129.

steamers to prevent their capture and destroyed part of the railroad. The bridge at Danville was burned by the Carondelet on the 7th. At Cerro Cordo (Hardin County, Tennessee) the fleet captured the Eastport, a half completed Confederate gun-boat, and at Chickasaw (Mississippi) took the Muscle and the Sallie Wood. The fleet proceeded as far as Florence, Alabama, arriving there on February 8th, where three more steamers were burned by the Confederates to prevent capture. The fleet returned to Paducah with the Eastport and Sallie Wood in tow, the Muscle having been abandoned owing to leaks.⁵⁹

The commander of the expedition reported a strong Union sentiment in the territory traversed, six boats burned by the Confederates to prevent capture, and two boats and a quantity of stores taken. The fleet then prepared to go up the Cumberland to attack Fort Donelson.

After the Federal victory at Fort Henry, Fort Heiman (Kentucky) was renamed Fort Foote in honor of the Flag-Officer in command of the Union flotilla.⁶⁰ This position was not fortified by the Federal troops and was several times in possession of small bodies of Confederate forces.

The Union victory greatly encouraged the North. Lieutenant Wise⁶¹ of the United States Navy, in a congratulatory letter to Foote said:

We all went wild over your success, not unmixed with envy, when the news came of the reduction of Fort Henry. Uncle Abe was joyful, and said everything of the navy boys and spoke of you

The victory at Fort Henry had seemed so easy that Grant proposed to move on Fort Donelson and take it on the 8th. Bad roads and the wait

59. Official Records, (Navies), Series 1, 22, 571-4.

60. Ibid., 544.

61. Ibid., 549.

for the gun-boats to go around to the new objective delayed him, and
 62
 it was the 12th before his columns moved toward Donelson.

General Lew Wallace, who had been left at Fort Henry with 2,500
 men, was on the 13th ordered to bring his men over to Fort Donelson.
 63
 He arrived at Fort Donelson about noon on the 14th.

Halleck planned to strengthen Fort Henry and to occupy it per-
 manently. To that end he ordered slaves to be impressed to work on
 64
 the fortifications and sent shovels down on the 8th.

From this date, until the close of the war, the material relat-
 ing to Forts Henry and Heiman is fragmentary. But they seem to have
 been held by the Federal troops for the majority of the time. After
 the victory at Donelson a large portion of the Union troops returned
 to Henry, for several reports from officers in regard to the battle
 65 66
 were written from Henry, and others from Fort Heiman. These reports
 indicate that Fort Henry was Headquarters of the 3d Division, Depart-
 ment of West Tennessee, with Captain Fred Knefler as Assistant Adjut-
 ant-General.

Until January 25, 1863, Forts Henry and Donelson belonged to Gen-
 eral Grant's command, perhaps to honor him, for he was too busy at
 67
 other points to notice these small posts. On that date Halleck trans-
 ferred Henry and Donelson to the Department of the Cumberland, Major-

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62. Grant, Op. cit., 1, 96.
Official Records, Series 1, 7, 124.
 63. Grant, Op. cit., 1, 98.
Official Records, Series 1, 7, 606.
Battles and Leaders, 408-9.
 64. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 595-6.
 65. Ibid., 243, 246, 248, 249, 252.
 66. Ibid., 233, 234, 235.
 67. Official Records, Series 1, 23, Part 2, 9.

68

General Rosecrans in command, with headquarters at Murfreesborough.

Fort Heiman was considered an appendage of Fort Henry, and W. W.

Lowe, Colonel-Commanding of the United States forces at Forts Henry, Donelson, and Heiman, asked that Fort Heiman be transferred also, so

69

as to unify his command and responsibility. Fort Heiman was, presumably, Lowe's headquarters, and on February 4th his request was

70

granted. Both the transfer of Heiman and 2,000 troops from the Department of the Tennessee met with protest from General Asboth, of

71

the District of Columbia, but without avail. The return of the Department of the Cumberland, for February 1863, showed approximately

72

5,000 men at Forts Heiman, Henry, and Donelson under Colonel Lowe.

W. P. Lyon, commander at Fort Henry, on March 3, reported that the fort was covered with water and untenable for his 700 or 800

73

troops. Fort Henry and also Fort Heiman must have been evacuated

at this time, for the next report mentioning either says that General

Asboth re-occupied Fort Heiman on March 14th; having to throw a few shells at the place to dislodge a small body of Confederate troops.

Asboth left two pieces of artillery, two companies of cavalry, the 3d Minnesota and the 111th Illinois Volunteers as a garrison under Colonel

74

Origgs; and proceeded up the river.

Fort Heiman was held for only a short time, for on March 31, General Halleck ordered it re-occupied and placed in General Grant's de-

68. Ibid., 11.

69. Ibid., 37.

70. Ibid., 43.

71. Ibid., 51, 65.

72. Ibid., 93.

73. Ibid., 100.

74. Ibid., 150, 151.

75
partment. At the same time Fort Heiman was evidently placed in
the District of Columbia, for the next return from that district
(June 30, 1863) shows 235 cavalrymen there, with Lieutenant-Colonel

76
Henry commanding. Rebel forces threatened Fort Heiman several
times during the month but made no attack, and Rosecrans did not
77
consider "its occupation as very important".

On July 14, General Pillow was reported to be threatening Paris
and Fort Heiman with 6,000 men, and Lieutenant-Colonel Black, command-
ing at Heiman, was ordered to withdraw to Paducah if the report were
78
true. On the 16th a steamer was sent to Fort Heiman to bring the force

at Heiman to Paducah, and defensive preparations were made for a Confed-
79
erate attack on the latter place. On the 17th the forces from Heiman

80
reached Paducah. Later information showed that Pillow had never been
in West Tennessee, but that Forrest and Biddle with about 600 men were
81
in the region. To meet this threat a force was sent along the Tennes-
82
see River from Paducah to prevent rebel forces occupying Heiman.

On August 6th "a dozen rebel guerrillas" captured the telegraph
83
operator and line repairer at Fort Henry.

No other information is available in regard to this region until
the fall of 1864, when Forrest made his famous or infamous raid (depend-
ing on the point of view at the time) into West Tennessee. Forrest
appeared at Fort Heiman on October 23 and captured the steamboat Mazeppa

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75. Ibid., 195.
76. Ibid., 499.
77. Ibid., 431, 434.
78. Ibid., 532, 533, 536.
79. Ibid., 537, 538.
80. Ibid., 541, 542.
81. Ibid., 546.
82. Ibid., 549, 550, 558, 559.
83. Ibid., 595.

and a barge loaded with quartermaster's and subsistence stores.

84

The cargo was removed and the boat and barge burned. Batteries were then placed at Helman and at Paris Landing four miles above.

On October 30th the gun-boat 55 (also known as the Undine) and the steamboats Cheesman and Venus got between the two batteries and were taken by Forrest. The crews of the latter two were cap-

tured, and the Undine and Venus were used by the Confederates near

85

Johnsonville but were retaken within a week by the Federals. The

property destroyed and captured by Forrest on the Tennessee was esti-

86

mated by the Federals at \$2,200,000.

Buford, Lyon, and Chalmers co-operated with Forrest in this raid, and the combined force constituted a great menace to the scattered Federal forces. Forrest, in his report, said that he lost 2 killed, and 9 wounded and thought that the enemy losses would number 500 killed, wounded and prisoners. He also stated that he had in a period of

87

two weeks captured and destroyed:

4 gun-boats, 14 transports, 20 barges, 26 pieces of artillery, \$6,700,000. worth of property and 180 prisoners. Brigadier-General Buford after supplying his own command, turned over to my chief quartermaster, about 9,000 pairs of shoes and 1,000 blankets.

After this raid Forrest withdrew to Mississippi and in a few more

88

months laid down his arms in West Alabama. After his withdrawal no

Confederate force ever occupied or threatened either Helman or Henry.

84. Official Records, Series 1, 39, Part 1, 860, 863.

85. Ibid., 860, 861, 864.

86. Ibid., 862.

87. Ibid., 871.

Thomas Jordan and J. P. Pryor, The Campaigns of Lieut. Gen. M. B. Forrest, 588 - 609.

88. Gainesville, Alabama, May 9, 1865.

Of Heiman scarcely a trace remains, but Henry is to this day remarkably preserved, despite the ravages of time and the overflows of the Tennessee. Where once General Tilghman made his gallant stand for two hours against the guns of the Federal fleet, now quiet reigns. A small farmhouse stands inside the boundaries of the fort, pigs find delight in the water of the moat, and cows graze along the rifle-pits. The Tennessee flows peacefully by, and sectional strife and hatred seem far removed.

CHAPTER THREE FORT DONELSON, (TENNESSEE).

Command of the Cumberland River meant control of the Cumberland Valley and all of north Middle Tennessee. The authorities of Tennessee early realized the necessity of defending this region through which the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers flowed. Like Kentucky, Tennessee desired to remain neutral in the civil conflict, though there were strong indications that the State would join the Confederacy.¹ Prior to the secession of the State from the Union, construction on the fortresses on the two rivers was begun. The desire to place the forts as near the Kentucky Line as possible, and at the same time close to each other, outweighed strategical considerations in the locations of Forts Henry and Donelson.² This was later the cause of much criticism of the sites chosen. It was believed that these works could successfully repel any attempts by the Union gun-boats to penetrate this territory. The fort on the Cumberland River would also assure the protection of the railroad bridges at Clarksville and Nashville.

The site of Fort Donelson was selected by Mr. Adna Anderson on May 10, 1861, and the water-batteries were located. This site was approved by General Daniel S. Donelson,⁴ for whom the fort was named, and by Major (afterwards General) Bushrod R. Johnson.⁵

Fort Donelson was located on the southwest bank of the Cumberland River, approximately ten miles south of the Kentucky Line and one mile northwest of the village of Dover. It was twelve miles east of Fort Henry and was connect-

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1. Vide supra, 15-8.
 2. William Preston Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston, 407.
 3. Vide supra, 14.
 4. Johnston, Op. cit., 407.
 5. Ibid..

ed with that fort by two roads. Owing to their locations the forts were able to render mutual assistance.

A more advantageous location for the two forts might have been selected at a place where the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers flowed within three miles of each other.⁶ This site was about 35 miles north of where the two river defenses were established. It was near the mouths of the rivers and not far from Paducah and Smithland on the Tennessee and Cumberland, respectively. A Garrison stationed at this place might have held the Union forces in check indefinitely. This site, however, was in Kentucky, and political considerations were the deciding factors in not making use of this commanding position. A policy of respect for Kentucky's neutrality was adopted by Tennessee in the hope that this border state would ally herself with the cause of the Confederacy. Kentucky's neutrality was disregarded early in September when General Polk, Confederate Commander in West Tennessee, occupied Columbus on September 7. About the same time, September 6, General Grant seized Paducah with his Union troops. Shortly after this, September 15, General Buckner moved his Confederate troops into Bowling Green. This was the strategy of the Confederacy in establishing its first lines of defense.⁷ At that time these lines extended from Columbus to Forts Henry and Donelson, thence to Bowling Green and on over to Cumberland Gap.

6. Ibid., 408.

7. Vide supra, 6. See map, preceding page 2.

8

Fort Donelson covered about 15 acres. It was built on the crest of a ridge, about a hundred feet above the level of the river. It encircled a ravine on three sides, and there was a difference of seventy-five feet between the head of the ravine and the lowest point in the fort, where the ravine opened out into Indian Creek Valley. The garrison was quartered in 65 log cabins built on the north slope of the ravine. They were well protected from the view of the enemy as well as his fire. Colonel Mac-Cawock, of Colonel Heiman's Tenth Tennessee Regiment, was in charge of the work of throwing up the earthworks of the fort.

The Winter and Spring rains cause the Cumberland River to overflow and push its waters up the valleys of its tributaries. This condition prevailed during the siege of Fort Donelson. On the west, Hickman Creek protected the Fort from an assault in that quarter, and on the east, Spring and Lick creeks served the same purpose. Indian Creek, however, separated the Fort from Dover and limited the movements of troops in that region.

To provide greater security to the fort on the land-side and to protect the village of Dover, the supply depots, and the lines of communication, outer works were built. These were a series of intrenchments along the irregular ridges. These intrenchments or rifle-pits extended in the form of an arc for three miles and were approximately a mile from the river at the farthest point.

8. cf. Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 2, 28. Indicates about 100 acres, but evidently this was a mistake. A recent survey shows that the fort proper could not possibly have been much over 15 acres, inasmuch as the fort, including the water-batteries, contains only 18.9 acres; according to the deeds in the Stewart County Register's office at Dover, Tennessee.

The ground inside and outside this intrenched line was very broken and heavily wooded. An abatis was made all along this outer line. Around the fort was a slope, which was also thickly spread with an abatis. The extension of the outlying works made this abatis a serious obstacle, for it hindered the operations of the Confederates within their own lines. Beyond the outer lines were many ravines, with a general direction perpendicular to the river. This rugged terrain made the southward area unfavorable for the free movement and maneuver of troops. It offered great difficulties to artillery and cavalry. But field batteries, once established, found a natural camouflage, and redans on the high ridges overlooking the valleys could be used for effective enfilading. It provided excellent cover for sharpshooters.

Two water-batteries were established just below the fort so as to command the river approach three miles downstream. Had any other side possessed advantages over Fort Donelson in the way of land defense, it is doubtful whether it would have been as strong on the water-side. Selection on this latter basis is justifiable, as subsequent events proved. The batteries were strongly protected, for earthworks had been thrown up for them on the side of the bluff, about thirty feet above the river. With their commanding position and range of fire on the great bend, it was believed that they were much better able to resist a naval attack than Fort Henry.

On July 1, 1861, Fort Donelson was very poorly fortified, and only a few troops were garrisoned there. Several regiments were stationed at or

9. This abatis was made by cutting the trees outside of the rifle-pits and placing them in such a way that their tops lay outward. The smaller branches were cut off, and the limbs were interlaced and pointed. A charge over these and onto the trenches would involve great danger from the enemy fire.

near Clarksville, about forty miles away by river, where they could be transferred to Fort Donelson on short notice.

About August 1, Colonel Heiman assumed command of Forts Henry and Donelson. Very little constructive work was accomplished as the duty of the few troops there was to seize all contraband property being transported down the river.

On the 17th of September, General Johnston directed Lieutenant Dixon "to report at Fort Donelson for engineer duty From this time these defenses never ceased to be the subject of extreme solicitude to General Johnston."

On the 8th of October, Colonel Mackall, Assistant Adjutant-General,
10
wrote to General Polk:

General Johnston directs you to send Lieutenant Dixon to Fort Donelson, Cumberland River, instantly. Lieutenant Dixon was engaged elsewhere at this time with orders to mount the guns at that place for the defense of the river.

As Colonel MacGavock's regiment has been by you notified to hold itself in readiness to move, you will detach him from the regiment and order him to remain in vigilant command of Fort Donelson.

11

C. A. Henry advised General Johnston on October 16:

Governor Harris has sent, or rather ordered, to-day, one company of artillery to Fort Donelson. Cannot one regiment be ordered there from Hopkinsville immediately? The distance is only 30 miles, over a turnpike most of the way and a good dirt road the balance. It seems to me there is no part of the whole west so exposed as the valley of the Cumberland.....

Dixon has not yet had time to mount his 32-pounder guns, nor has the artillery company ordered from here left Nashville. I suppose it may reach Fort Donelson tomorrow night.....

10. Official Records, Series 1, 4, 440.

11. Ibid., 453.

On October 17, Colonel MacGavock, at Fort Donelson, advised General

12

Polk:

The gun-boats reached Eddyville, Kentucky, at noon yesterday and landed 200 cavalry. They have taken possession of the town. We are in a defenseless condition here, having only three companies of raw recruits, poorly armed and not one artillerist to manage what heavy guns we have. One regiment of infantry, one company of artillery, and two companies of cavalry are required here at once. Please furnish me with guns, if possible, for the companies now here.....

13

Colonel Heiman, writing to General Polk on October 18, stated:

To hold this place against even a small force would require a great deal of additional work on the crest of a ridge which immediately overlooks this work, called a fort.

This post was entirely abandoned until within the last few weeks, when it was occupied by three companies organized by Lieutenant-Colonel MacGavock, of my regiment, whom I detailed for that purpose. This force has not yet been armed, except with such guns as they could furnish themselves -- mostly shotguns. As I have learned within the last few days, other companies will be added to this command, to raise it, if possible, to a full regiment.

No artillery force whatsoever is there; but I have detached Lieutenant Watts, of Captain Taylor's company, to instruct such men of the companies there to serve the guns as may be best fitted for that purpose. I have since learned that two more 32-pounders are to be placed at that point.

Lieutenant-Colonel MacGavock is in command there at present, and requested me to send a detachment of artillery from Captain Taylor's company, which is impossible,..... I was also informed by Captain Hayden, Corps of Engineers, that Captain Harrison, of Nashville, is at Fort Donelson with two steamers and six barges, loaded with wood and stone, to be sunk at Ingram's Shoals, 35 miles below Dover, for the purpose of obstructing the navigation of the river -- by whose authority I know not; but, if I may express my opinion on the subject, I beg leave to state that this will be a fruitless operation in a river which rises from low-water mark at least 57 feet, and which I myself have often known to rise at least 10 feet in 24 hours. The General will perceive that these obstructions are no impediment to navigation in high water, and it may cost an immense sum to remove them.

12. Ibid., 459.

13. Ibid., 461.

On October 25, Colonel Heiman directed Lieutenant Dixon, of the Corps of Engineers, "to obstruct the navigation of the Cumberland at Ingram's Shoals". Major Kelly commanded a squadron of cavalry, which went to the Shoals to reconnoiter and protect the operations. Dixon's expedition was accompanied by a detachment from Captain Maney's light artillery company of 40 men and 4 pieces, and 2 companies of infantry (170 men), under command of Captain Young.

14

15

G. A. Henry reported to General Johnston on November 1st that:

* * * * *

Fort Donelson is in a very bad condition. No work has been done of any account, though Lieutenant Dixon, a young officer of great energy, will soon, I hope, have it put in a fine state of defense, unless Major Gilmer shall determine to fortify Line Post instead. He and Dixon were to go to-day to inspect that point and determine which position should be fortified. Dixon returned yesterday [October 31] from an expedition down the river, where he had gone to blockade it by sinking old barges in the channel. Two were sunk at Line Island, and six at Ingram's Shoals, some 10 miles below..... They think it will be impossible for gun-boats to pass Ingram's Shoals even when the water is 10 feet higher than it is now.....

These obstructions gave protection to the men working on the fortifications against Union gun-boats as long as the river was at normal stage.

16

In a dispatch to General Johnston [on November 23] General Polk stated:

In conformity with your order to report to you on the defenses of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers at the time of my taking command in the West.....

Lieutenant Dixon also made a similar reconnaissance on the Cumberland, and gave as his opinion that, although a better position might have been chosen for the fortifications on that river, under the circumstances then surrounding our command it would be better to retain and strengthen the position chosen. He accordingly made surveys for additional outworks, and the service of a considerable slave force was obtained to construct them. This work was continued and kept under the supervision of Lieutenant Dixon....

14. Ibid., 480.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 7, 710.

You are aware that efforts were made to obtain heavy ordnance to arm these forts, but as we had to rely on supplies from the Atlantic sea-coast, they came slowly, and it became necessary to divert a number of pieces intended for Columbus to the service of these forts.

The principal difficulty in the way of a successful defense of the rivers in question was the want of an adequate force -- a force of infantry and a force of experienced artillerymen. They were applied for by you and also by me, but the appeal was made earnestly to every quarter from whence relief might be hoped for. Why it was not furnished others must say. I believe the chief reason, so far as the infantry was concerned, was the want of arms. As to experienced artillerymen, they were not in the country.

* * * * *

Dissatisfaction with Fort Donelson prompted General Tilghman, while he was in command at Hopkinsville, to write to General Johnston the latter part of October that the inefficient state of things made him fear that their
17
interests there were almost beyond their control.

Subsequent to Lieutenant Dixon's approval of Fort Donelson, Major Jeremy F. Gilmer, on November 3, made a survey of Line Port, fifteen miles below Dover, to determine the possibilities of abandoning Donelson and fortifying this new location. He believed that Line Port had many advantages for defending the river but decided that the position already established should be retained in preference to attempting the construction of a new fort elsewhere.
18
Immediately after this Colonel MacGavock was ordered to work his troops day and night until the guns at Fort Donelson were protected by parapets.

Major Gilmer reported the ordnance strength at Fort Donelson on November 4:
19

At Fort Donelson there are now only four 32-pounders and 2 naval guns, an armament insufficient, I fear, to make a reliable defense against a

17. Ibid., 479.

18. Ibid., 506.

19. Ibid., 514.

fleet of gun-boats. The number of guns should be doubled: say 4 additional 32-pounders and 2 of heavier caliber, 8-inch columbiads, or long range Parrott guns, all with garrison carriages In addition to the four 32-pounders and 2 naval guns at Fort Donelson (that fire over the river), there are two small iron-guns that were manufactured at Clarksville and a battery of bronze field pieces, which will be effective in the land defense of the place.

G. A. Henry reported to General Johnston on November 7, that there were at Fort Donelson "about 800 cavalry and 500 infantry, and great want of organization and drill.". There were not enough troops to even form a regiment. He further said that the guns were wholly unprotected and would probably remain so until a regiment was organized and some one put in command who would push the work to completion.²⁰

About the 5th of November, Colonel (afterwards General) Nathan Forrest reported at Fort Donelson with his "Forrest Rangers". Colonel MacCavock reported that the strength at the fort as of that date was composed of Forrest's command of cavalry, one company of light artillery, with a battery of seven guns and a sufficient amount of heavy guns; also, five companies of infantry tolerably armed.²¹ Forrest reported that the troops garrisoned there were employed in throwing up fortifications.

General Forrest operated with his command of eight companies near Forts Henry and Donelson. He requested General Polk to unite his command and that he be allowed to work with General Tilghman.²²

General C. F. Smith, U. S. A., in a communication to the Adjutant-General at Washington, reported on November 8:²³

20. Ibid., 526.

21. Ibid., 519.

22. Ibid., 551.

23. Ibid., 348. Colonel MacCavock was in command at that time and it may be for this reason that it was referred to by this name.

On my report of the 8th instant, in relation to the forces of the enemy, I accidentally overlooked in my note the works on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers.....

The Conestoga gun-boat, admirably commanded by Lieutenant Phelps, of the Navy, ... is constantly moving his vessel up and down the Tennessee and Cumberland. From the latter river he came this morning, having gone into the State of Tennessee as far as Dover, where the enemy have a work called Fort Gavock, or Fort MacGavock, or something else, usually called Fort Gavock Fort Donelson. He could not give me an idea of its armament.....

On the 17th of November, General Tilghman was transferred from Hopkinsville to command Forts Henry and Donelson. His orders were : 24

.....You will repair to the Cumberland, and assume command of Forts Henry and Donelson and their defenses and the defenses of the intermediate country. You will push forward the completion of the works and their armament with the utmost activity, and to this end will apply to the citizens of the surrounding country for assistance in labor, for which you will give them certificates for amounts of such labor.....

The utmost vigilance is enjoined. The general General Johnston regrets to hear that there has been heretofore gross negligence in this respect -- the commander at Fort Donelson away from his post nightly and the officer in charge of the field batteries frequently absent. This cannot be tolerated.

I will ask Governor Harris tomorrow for four additional armed companies, which he will send to Fort Donelson. These, with the six companies now there, will make up a regiment, when organized by the election of field officers. The Colonel will command the fort. Colonel J. M. Head.

You will then order Lieutenant-Colonel MacGavock to return to his regiment at Fort Henry. Your command is embraced in the division of Major-General Polk.....

Lieutenant Dixon completed a new battery on the river by the third week in November. Two 9-pounders were mounted on a little work on the ridge about 100 yards back of the encampment. He made a request that labor be impressed, for it could not be obtained in any other way. He also wrote

"there are not more than 200 troops here fit for duty; all the rest are
²⁵
 sick or on leave of absence."

Commenting on Lieutenant Dixon's request for labor, Major Gilmer
²⁶
 wrote to Colonel Mackall:

In regard to labor, I would suggest that the batteries at Fort Don-
 elson can be completed sooner by the troops, perhaps, than if an effort
 were made to collect negroes for the purpose from the surrounding coun-
 try. With re-enforcements proposed for the garrison the requisite
 amount of work can well be done by fatigue parties. In imminent danger,
 the brigadier-general commanding Forts Donelson and Henry might be auth-
 orized to press all neighborhood negro labor into service, but under the
 circumstances I do not think that the labor of troops and slaves can be
 combined to any advantage.....

Towards the end of November a controversy arose between Major Gilmer
 and General Tilghman concerning obstructions in the Cumberland River. Ma-
²⁷
 jor Gilmer's letter to Colonel Mackall explained:

Last evening I received the following telegram from Mr. T. J. Glenn,
 civil engineer, employed by me in obstructing the Cumberland River, under
 the guns of Fort Donelson, with timbers and timber, viz:

Cumberland City, November 27, 1861.

Major J. F. Gilmer, St. Cloud Hotel:
 General Tilghman has ordered me to suspend. Instruct me immediately,
 T. J. Glenn.

To which I replied at 8PM as follows:

You will continue the work for obstructing the Cumberland River.
 J. F. Gilmer.

The obstructing works on which Mr. Glenn is engaged are far advanced,
 and to be effective must be completed. It will be impossible for me to
 rely upon any work being done properly if each subordinate brigadier-
 general be allowed to suspend operations ordered by me. I must therefore
 earnestly request that the general commanding the Western Department hold
 Brigadier-General Tilghman responsible for the act, now reported, and
 forbid the repetition of like interference for the future.....

Upon completion of an examination of Forts Henry and Donelson, Tilghman

25. Ibid., 7, 699.

26. Ibid., 698.

27. Ibid., 710.

said that he did not admire the aspect of things. He urgently asked for more heavy guns, not less than four for each fort: He had 1000 unarmed men and requested arms for them. "I feel for the first time discouraged, but will not give up," he wrote. ²⁸ Writing to the Assistant Adjutant-General on ²⁹ December 2, Tilghman advised:

In obedience to special orders from headquarters of the Western Department I have assumed command of the defenses of the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers on the line of Forts Donelson and Henry and of the country immediately adjacent thereto..... I will state here, however, that it is but too plain that instant and powerful steps must be taken to strengthen not only the two forts in the way of work, but the armament must be increased materially in number of pieces of artillery as well as in weight of metal..... I will communicate in detail as soon as I return to my headquarters, which for the present I shall make at Fort Donelson.....

Major Gilmer informed Lieutenant Dixon that General Tilghman had been instructed not to interfere further with their operations. He then ordered Mr. Glenn to place the obstructions in the river at a distance of about 1,000 to 1,200 yards from the guns at Fort Donelson. "I do not wish them farther ³⁰ away, else the command of them may not be perfect," he wrote. Continuing:

It has been decided to send the guns -- the 32-pounders -- at Clarksville to Donelson and Henry, two to each work. We hope to get other guns for each place at an early day. Please urge the mounting of the guns for commanding the river and have them in place as soon as possible.

I think the intrenchments for defense against a land attack important. It may be well to put a small redoubt for infantry fires on the high point just below Donelson across the creek, to prevent the enemy from occupying it.

Charge Mr. Glenn to get large and heavy anchors for the trees he is placing in the river; I mean heavy stones or other convenient weights.....

General Tilghman wrote to Colonel Mackall on the 16th of December, saying,

"I deem it only just to myself to say that I am not secure at either Henry or

28. Ibid., 719.

29. Ibid., 731.

30. Ibid., 735. The trees referred to were chained at the roots and the tops pointed down stream. They were stretched from one bank to the other.

31

Donelson. Have 1,500 unarmed men". Writing again from Fort Donelson

32

on January 2, 1862, he reported:

In transmitting weekly report (ending 31st) of the troops under my command I am happy to be able to report a favorable progress in all matters connected with the command. The large difference in the weekly report between "Present for duty" and "Total present and absent", will, I hope, be cured in a few days.

The regiments of Colonels Bailey and Stacker have only just organized, and freed now somewhat from feeling themselves bound to court the good will of their men in order to secure their election, aided by a positive order against granting any furloughs, I hope to be able to restore matters to a more wholesome status. I have still nearly 2,000 unarmed men in my command Forts Henry and Donelson. I have not men enough armed at this post to man one-half the lines within the fortification, much less to effect anything at points which command whole work. I beg you to call the attention of the general commanding division to this unvarnished state of things.

A most satisfactory progress has been made in the main fortification, an inclosed work. A very few more days will close up the gap and give us a very good work.

The heavy batteries are progressing rapidly and will be very efficient. I shall be ready to place all the guns in position, as fast as they arrive..... My entire command is now comfortably housed for the winter. The houses are admirably built, well situated, and present an appearance of real comfort that will compare favorably with any command in the field.

In response to a telegram sent by Colonel Helman to General Polk, advising him that a Federal movement up the two rivers was imminent, Assistant Adjutant-

33

General Mackall said:

.....the information is most important. The general desires me to say that we now require vigilance and energy, and he is satisfied that in these you will not fail. He hopes to stop the movement for some time on this line, and that General Polk and Tilghman will delay them on the others.....

Colonel J. M. Head, commanding post at Fort Donelson, in a dispatch to

34

General Tilghman, stated:

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- 31. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 227.
 - 32. Official Records, Series 1, 2, 817.
 - 33. Ibid., 833.
 - 34. Ibid., 834.

.....All things are ready. I have thrown out pickets below; have had them stationed so as to give us the earliest possible information. I have had the whole command turned out and put to cutting timber and preparing rifle-pits, so as to protect the approaches. Everything will be done that can be accomplished by energy and industry. The men are cool and determined. Most of the sick were sent off yesterday.

An extract from weekly report of troops at Fort Donelson, as of January 21, 1862, revealed 89 officers, 1,103 men; aggregate present and absent, 35 2,175. At the time this report was made out, General Tilghman was absent at Fort Henry, and General Bushrod R. Johnson was in command, temporarily, at Fort Donelson. It was General Johnson's belief that "Fort Donelson is now our weakest point." An abstract from the weekly report for January 31, 1862, gave the returns for Fort Donelson:³⁶ Officers, 161; men, 1,795; aggregate present and absent, 3,506.

General Tilghman, in his supplemental report, dated August 9, 1862, and forwarded to the Adjutant and Inspector General C. S. Army immediately after his release from prison on August 9, revealed the condition of Fort Donelson in December and also work accomplished up to the last week in January:³⁷

On reaching Fort Donelson the middle of December I found at my disposal six undisciplined companies of infantry, with an organized light battery, while a small water battery of two light guns constituted the available river defense. Four 32-pounders had been rightly placed, but were not available. By January 25, I had prepared the entire batteries (except one piece, which arrived too late) for the river defenses: built the entire field work with a trace of 2,900 feet, and in the most substantial manner constructed a large amount of abatis, and commenced guarding the approaches by rifle-pits and abatis. This was all done when the re-enforcements arrived, and, when the total lack of transportation is taken into consideration, as well as the inclemency of the season, and yet find not only the original troops there, but nearly all my re-enforcements housed in something like 400 good cabins, I conceive my time to have been well spent..... I would further state that I had connected both Forts Henry and Donelson by a line of telegraph from Cua-

35. Ibid., 843.

36. Ibid., 835.

37. Ibid., 144.

berland City, a total length of line about 35 miles, thus placing me in close relations with Bowling Green and Columbus.

The third and fourth days of February were days of intense activity at Fort Donelson. General Tilghman had left Fort Henry at this time, in company with Major Gilmer, to make a final inspection of the fortification and to arrange for the disposition of the troops.

38

Major Gilmer said of their inspection:

* * * * *

February 3rd we went over to Fort Donelson..... The works there required additions, to prevent the enemy from occupying grounds dangerous to the river batteries and the field work which had been constructed for the immediate defense landward. It was also important that better protection should be made for the heavy guns (mounted for the defense of the river) by raising the parapet with sand bags between the guns to give greater protection to the gunners.

The third and fourth days of February were devoted to making preparations for this work and locating lines of infantry cover on the commanding ground around the fort.

* * * * *

The whole garrison was thrown into a state of excitement when heavy firing was heard from the direction of Fort Henry about noon of the fourth. A courier, dispatched by Colonel Heiman, advised Tilghman that at 4:30 that morning rocket signals exchanged with the picket at Bailey's Ferry, indicated the approach of Federal gun-boats towards Fort Henry. A second and then a third messenger revealed the seriousness of the situation. Tilghman delegated the command at Donelson to Colonel Head and with as little delay as necessary, left shortly after 4:00 o'clock that afternoon to direct the troops at Fort Henry. He was escorted by a regiment of Tennessee Cavalry, under command of Colonel Gentt.

Occasional guns were heard the following day, and the garrison gave itself up to excitement and conjecture. About noon on the sixth a continuous cannon-

39. Ibid., 133.

ading was heard, but little did the men realize the great significance of it; that Fort Henry would fall and they themselves would be in a state of siege within a week.

About 11:00 o'clock that same night, (February 6) Colonel Heiman brought about 3,000 troops to the safety of Fort Donelson and announced
39
the fall of Fort Henry.

Heiman, upon whom the command of Fort Donelson devolved with the capture of General Tilghman, well knew that he would soon be superseded and refused to assume the command. General Johnston immediately communicated with General Bushrod R. Johnson at Nashville and directed him to proceed as quickly as possible to take command at Fort Donelson. He arrived the following night and relieved Colonel Heald.

General Johnston, upon being apprized of the capitulation of Fort Henry, expressed his apprehension that Donelson would be forced to surrender in the same manner. He believed that the gun-boats would be strong enough to take
40
the fort without the necessity of support from the land force in co-operation. The effective troops at this time, including the two brigades from Fort Henry
41
and three regiments of Floyd's command, numbered about 7,000. With the exception of Heiman's regiment and those attached to Floyd's division, all the others were poorly armed and drilled.

General Johnston feared that an immediate attack on Fort Donelson by the Union forces would be disastrous, however, he made the best possible disposal of his resources to prevent the capitulation of the fort. At this time, he

39. Ibid., 135.

40. Ibid., 863.

41. Ibid., 131.

was observing General Bell at Louisville and noting with great fear, no doubt, the ever increasing troops under Grant at Cairo. As soon as Fort Henry fell into the hands of the Union troops he determined to fight for Nashville at Port Donelson, despite the fact that he did not believe it tenable.⁴² The Confederates had unlimited means of transportation for troops, and concentration was work of but a few hours. William Preston Johnston⁴⁴ says:

General Johnston's plan was general in its scope, and perfectly simple. He wished Fort Donelson defended if possible, but he did not wish the army to be sacrificed in the attempt. Something must be done for the maintenance of a position so important, doubtful though he felt the issue must be; but there did not seem any imminent peril to a vigilant and able commander of not being able to extricate his army from Donelson.

Should the enemy be routed at Port Donelson, this would serve to raise the morale and spirit of the Confederacy. And should the troops at the fort be endangered, then they were to be moved out to Nashville.

Following the Union success at Fort Henry, General Grant, in his communication to Halleck, advising the latter of this fact, also stated that he would take and destroy Fort Donelson on the eighth.⁴³ There was something more than spectacular daring that impelled Grant to consider such a move. It was his belief that an immediate attack on Port Donelson was imperative to insure the success of the Western Campaign. He realized that, at this time, his 15,000 troops were of greater value than 50,000 a month later.⁴⁵ He was aware of the importance of Port Donelson to the cause of the Confederacy and

42. Johnston, Op. cit., 439.

43. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 801.

44. Johnston, Op. cit., 433.

45. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 124.

46. Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, 1, 298.

was impatient to take it. The capture of Fort Donelson would have been a comparatively easy task immediately after the fall of Fort Henry, for the Confederate stronghold was outnumbered about two to one.

The day following the victory Grant and his staff, including Lieutenant-Colonel Matherson, Chief Engineer attached to General Halleck's staff, escorted by part of a regiment of Federal Cavalry, made a reconnaissance of the surrounding country. Without a contest of any kind, except the necessity of driving in the pickets, the party went up to within a mile of the outer line of works at Fort Donelson. Grant determined from these field trips the best way to move his troops to the Cumberland River defense. Flag-Officer Foote was requested to return to Cairo with his flotilla to repair damages to the fleet and to prepare for co-operation with the land forces in the imminent battle at Fort Donelson. From this point he was to proceed with the gun-boats up the Cumberland River and await orders.

General Halleck, as soon as he learned of Grant's plan to advance on Fort Donelson, sent re-enforcements from whatever quarter they could be spared. He wrote to General Cullum that "I am straining every nerve to send troops to take Dover and Clarksville. Troops are on their way. All we want is gun-boats to precede the transports." Troops from General Hunter's Division were sent from Kansas. A large division under General Nelson, from Buell's command, was sent to re-enforce Grant but was recalled by General Buell before they reached their destination. The War Department ordered that all companies being recruited in the Western States be consolidated into regiments and sent to Fort Donelson. These troops are probably those that arrived on transports on

47. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 591, 600, 607, 612.

48. Ibid., 610, 693.

the fifteenth, too late to participate in the fighting. General Halleck was cautious and uncertain as to the outcome of a demonstration on the Cumberland at this time, though he did not approve or disapprove of Grant's going to Fort Donelson.⁴⁹ General Buell was notified that Grant would set out for Fort Donelson on the eighth and that it might be necessary to call on him (General Buell) for additional re-enforcements. But on the tenth Halleck ordered Grant to fortify Fort Henry strongly in the event any attempt be made to regain it. It was believed that the enemy was concentrating troops by railroad either at Dover, Paris, or Clarksville; to recover his lost advantage and restore an "equilibrium" in his line of defense.⁵⁰

The inclemency of the weather prevented Grant from consummating his plans. The roads became impassable for the movement of troops and supplies. The Tennessee had reached its flood stage and all efforts were directed towards saving the equipage.⁵¹ Another factor that deterred him was the necessity of attacking without the gun-boats, upon which so much reliance was placed.⁵² Upon investigation, it was found that several days more would be necessary to make repairs to the flotilla and properly equip it. And so the remainder of the time from the sixth to the twelfth was spent in getting his troops in good condition to march against the Confederate stronghold.

After the fall of Fort Henry, Confederate troops began arriving daily and Fort Donelson was continually strengthened by the labor of the soldiers. It was realized that a formidable attack by land and water would soon follow.

49. Grant, Op. cit., 1, 296.

50. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 590.

51. Ibid., 596.

52. Ibid., 600.

General Johnston hoped to maintain the line of defense from Fort Donelson to Bowling Green for a few weeks and hoped that, meanwhile, an awakened spirit of the country might supply him with the long sought for re-enforcements.

The attention of General Duheret B. Johnson was directed to the re-enforcements which were sent to the fort. Substenance stores and munitions of war were landed daily from the transports. These all required storage. Work for the improvement of the original plan of defense was proceeded up. Troops were assigned and moved to their positions without definite knowledge of the strength of the re-enforcements destined for the place. Doubtless the troops which Colonel Helman had brought to Fort Donelson, General Johnson reported other effective troops; viz: ⁵³ Thirtieth Regiment, Colonel J. W. Head; Forty-ninth Regiment, Colonel Bailey; Fiftieth Regiment, Colonel Sugg; Fifty-third Regiment, Colonel Abernethy; all of Tennessee Infantry. There were also five companies of Tennessee Infantry, Colonel Collins; and one company of light artillery, Captain Henry. The batteries of heavy artillery were manned by two companies of infantry, one commanded by Captain Hdwell, detached from Colonel Head's Regiment, and the other commanded by Captain Beaumont, from Colonel Sugg's Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers.

On the ninth of February, however, General Pillow arrived and assumed ⁵⁴ command. Special Orders, No. 1. stated:

Brigadier-General Pillow assumes command of the forces at this place Fort Donelson. He relies with confidence upon the courage and fidelity of the brave officers and men under his command to maintain the post. Drive back the ruthless invader from our soil and again raise the Confederate flag over Fort Henry. He expects every man to do his duty. With God's help we will accomplish our purpose. Our battle cry, "Liberty or Death".

53. Ibid., 356.

54. Ibid., 367.

He assigned the recent commandant of the fort, General Johnson, to the command of the left wing. General Pillow had been in command of the troops stationed at Clarksville since the last week in January. He moved his army approximately 4,000 troops to Fort Donelson when he was ordered to take command. General Pillow considered the fortifications incomplete and imperfect but said the place would not be surrendered and didn't think it would be taken. 35
In a letter to General Floyd, and dated February 10th, Pillow said: 36

.....I am pushing the work on my river batteries day and night, and on my field works and defensive lines on the river also day and night. In one week's time (if I am allowed that much time) I will try hard to make my batteries bombproof. I am now raising the parapets and strengthening them. I got my heavy rifled 32-pounders and 10-inch columbiad in position to-day, and tried them and my whole battery. The trial was most satisfactory..... Upon one thing you may rest assured, viz, that I will never surrender the position, and with God's help I mean to maintain it.....

Excerpts from the report of General Pillow, written after the fall of
37
Fort Donelson:

.....When I arrived.....deep gloom was hanging over the command, and the troops were greatly depressed and demoralized by the circumstances attending the surrender of Fort Henry and the manner of retiring from that place.

The armament of the batteries consisted of eight 32-pounders, three 32-pounder columbiads, one 10-inch columbiad, and one rifled gun of 32-pounder caliber.

The selection of the site for the work was an unfortunate one. While its command of the river was favorable, the site was commanded by the heights above and below on the river by a continuous range of hills all around the works to its rear. A field work of very contracted dimensions had been constructed by the garrison to protect the battery; but the field works were surrounded by the hills already referred to, and lay open to a fire of artillery from every direction except from the hills below.....

An extract from the New York Times stated that the first thing that impressed one upon entering Fort Donelson was its immense strength. "Fort Henry was

35. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 628, 630, 637, 638, 647.

36. Official Records, Series I, 7, 292.

37. Ibid., 278. "The field work of very contracted dimensions mentioned are now un-

marked ridges lying between the fort and the water-batteries. Three 32-pounders were mounted in this work but were moved into the lower battery before the battle. 38. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 637. Lieutenant H.L. Bedford, in charge of the 10-inch columbiad, stated: "At the time of the arrival of reinforcements, the water-batteries were not in that state of incompleteness and disorder which the report of a general officer charges, nor was there any gloom hanging over the garrison."

thought to be almost a Gibraltar, but its strength is weakness compared to
 59
 that of Donelson". The account continued:

.....Right on this bend on the left bank of the river, and commanding it on the north, are two water-batteries, side by side, and nearly down to the waters edge.
 60

.....The only guns in the Fort are four eight siege guns, a twelve-pound howitzer, 2 twenty-four pound guns, and one sixty-four pound howitzer..... For several hundred yards around the fort the timber has all been cut down so as to afford a fair sweep for the Confederate guns. Surrounding the whole Fort and the town, and distant from the former about a mile, is a trench for riflemen, which runs completely around from the river bank above Dover almost to a point near the river some distance below the water-batteries. Directly west of the Fort, and within the rifle-pit, are formidable abatis, which would render advance from that direction almost an impossibility.

In view of the threatening movements from Cairo and Louisville, General Clark evacuated Hopkinsville on the sixth. General Forrest protected the rear of the retreating troops as far as Clarksville, where he reported to General Pillow. General Forrest was ordered to Fort Donelson and reached the vicinity on the evening of the tenth, but his command was not ferried
 61
 over to the fort side until the next day. As the senior cavalry officer he was assigned to the command of all cavalry present; that is, his own ten companies, Colonel Cantt's battalion of Tennesseans, and Captains Huey's, Wilcox's, and William's Kentucky companies -- in all about 800 troopers. The same afternoon a camp was selected behind the intrenched line. Soon after, orders came from General Pillow to move out at once to observe the road to Fort Henry. About three miles out he encountered a squadron of Federal Cavalry. These were evidently staff officers and their escort making a reconnaissance. The detachment, which was dismounted when the Confederates appear-

59. Donelson Campaign Sources, 82.

60. For a more complete description of the water-batteries, see page 99.

61. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 383.

ed, quickly mounted and fled to Fort Henry. Forrest pursued them to the vicinity of that place. Several Federal soldiers were killed and wounded in the running gun fight, while one was taken prisoner. As he was returning Forrest observed another cavalry detachment. An ambush was laid to trap it, but as some of the soldiers were too eager to shoot, the enemy was warned and made its escape. From all his observations Forrest was satisfied that Grant was on the point of moving towards Fort Donelson.

62

Writing to General Johnston on the tenth, Gilmer said:

The attack expected here is a combined one; gun-boats by water and a land force in the rear. The greatest danger is, in my opinion, from the gun-boats, which appear to be well protected from our shot. The effect of our shot at Fort Henry was not sufficient to disable them, or any one of them, so far as I can ascertain. This was due, I think, in a great measure, to the want of skill in the men who served the guns, and not to the invulnerability of the boats themselves..... With the preparations that are now being made here, I feel much confidence that we can make a successful resistance against a land attack. The attack by water will be more difficult to meet. Still, I hope for success here also..... We are making Herculean efforts to strengthen our parapets, making narrow embrasures with sandbags.....

63

Pillow wrote at the same time:

.....This position can be made stronger than Columbus now by water if we had more heavy artillery; the great advantage it has is in the narrowness of the stream and the necessity of the boats approaching our works by a straight and narrow channel for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. No more than three boats could possibly bring their guns to act upon our position at once. This makes the field of fire required for the guns so very narrow, that it admits of the construction of very narrow embrasures.

But Pillow, shortly after, saw difficulties vanishing and gave assurance of the improving condition of affairs, for on the eleventh he telegraphed Governor Harris: "Can defend my position by land, have confidence of doing so on water if I can have a few more days to make my battery proof." The day

62. Ibid., 369.

63. Ibid., 370.

following he wrote to General Floyd, "Feel sanguine of victory, though I am not fully ready. I have done all that was possible to do, and think I will drive back the enemy".⁶⁴ Colonel Bailey, of the Forty-ninth Tennessee Regiment, stated that the restoration of confidence among the men in the garrison to resist the passage of the gun-boats was chiefly due to Lieutenant Dixon, in charge of the water-batteries.

In the interim, General Buckner was directed to detach that portion of the second Division of the Central Army of Kentucky, stationed at Bowling Green and Russellville, Kentucky; and which he brought to aid in the defense of Fort Donelson. He arrived with his troops on the night of February 11,⁶⁵ and was immediately assigned to the right wing -- to cover the land approach to the water-batteries.

66

General Floyd received a dispatch from General Johnston on the eleventh:

I give you full authority to make all the dispositions of your troops for the defense of Fort Donelson, Clarksville, and the Cumberland you may think proper.....

67

That same day another dispatch:

Twice to-day I have telegraphed to you to command all the troops and use your judgment. Your report of the effect of our shot at Henry should encourage the troops and insure our success. If [at] the long range we could do so much damage with the necessary short range on the Cumberland, we should destroy their boats.

A difference of opinion arose between General Pillow and General Floyd as to the proper disposition of the troops. General Buckner concurred with General Floyd. Pillow believed that the defense of the river should be made at Donelson; the other two seem to have given up the idea of a successful defense of the river before the enemy appeared. Floyd purposed to withdraw

64. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 645.

65. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 328.

66. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 638.

67. Ibid.

his division and Buckner's troops from Fort Donelson to Cumberland City. At this point the railroad diverged from the river, and from which place a retreat might be easily made to Nashville. He intended to leave Pillow to defend the fort. This did not appeal to Pillow, who believed that stronger forces were necessary and that such a course would involve his capture. General Buckner arrived on the night of the eleventh with orders from General Floyd, directing General Pillow to send back to Cumberland City the designated troops, but Pillow refused to allow the troops to be withdrawn. He appealed to Johnston by telegraph. He also went by steamer to Floyd at Cumberland City the morning of the twelfth, leaving Buckner in temporary command. He finally persuaded Floyd to re-enforce the garrison with the remaining troops from Cumberland City and Clarksville. General Pillow returned to Fort Donelson about noon of the same day and relieved General

68

Buckner.

Pillow, being still in command, telegraphed on the twelfth to General

69

Johnston:

If I can retain my present force, I can hold my position -- let me retain Buckner for the present. If now withdrawn, will invite an attack. Enemy cannot pass this place without exposing himself to flank attack. If I am strong enough to take field, he cannot ever reach here; nor is it possible for him to subsist on anything in the country to pass over, nor can he possibly bring his subsistence with him. With Buckner's force I can hold my position. Without it, cannot long.

At 3:00 o'clock that afternoon, Johnston relayed the above dispatch

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from Pillow to Floyd, and added:

I do not know the wants of General Pillow, nor yours, nor position of General Buckner. You do. Decide, Answer.

68. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 329.

69. Johnston, Op. cit., 438.

70. Ibid.

71

Floyd replied:

I am moving all my troops except two Tennessee Regiments as fast as possible with the means at command. The force, except what is absolutely necessary for the fort (I think Buckner concurs) ought to be at Cumberland City, whither we go from all directions.

Johnston wired to Floyd at Cumberland City at 10:30 o'clock that

72

night:

My information from Donelson is that a battle will be fought in the morning. Leave a small force at Clarksville and take the remainder, if possible, to Donelson tonight. Take all ammunition that can be spared from Clarksville. The force at Elkford and Whippoorwill Bridge has been ordered to Clarksville.

Three hours later, 1:30 A. M. February 13, Floyd replied from Cumberland City:

73

land City:

I anticipated your order, which overtook me here. Shipping the balance of the troops from this point to Donelson. I will reach there before day. Leaving a small guard here.

General Floyd had been given the authority to determine his movements as he might think judicious, at the same time it was indicated to him that his forces should be held in readiness at Clarksville to move to the support of Donelson. But in any case, he was directed to encamp on the left bank of the Cumberland, so as to keep open the route to Nashville in the event it should become necessary to retreat.

Floyd arrived early the morning of the thirteenth and took command of

74

Fort Donelson by virtue of his seniority. At 9:30 A. M. he telegraphed

75

Johnston:

The enemy's gun-boats are advancing. They [Union forces] are in force around our entire works. Our field defenses are good. I think we can sustain ourselves against the land forces. I reached here this morning at daylight.

71. Ibid.

72. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 645.

73. Ibid., 646.

74. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 267.

75. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 646.

General Floyd wrote to Johnston on the twelfth, before he received
 76
 orders to go to Fort Donelson, the following letter indicating his plans:

The best disposition to make of the troops on this line was to concentrate the main force at Cumberland City -- leaving at Donelson enough to make all possible resistance to any attack which may be made upon the fort, but no more. The character of the country in the rear and to the left of the fort is such as to make it dangerous to concentrate our whole force there; for if their gun-boats should pass the fort and command the river, our troops would be in danger of being cut off by a force from the Tennessee. In this event their road would be open to Nashville without any obstruction whatever.

He proposed to concentrate at Cumberland City and threaten the flank of any force attacking the fort. "This vacillation impeded, instead of fully carrying out Johnston's conception of defending Nashville at Donelson. It seems that the duty of the hour was to concentrate rapidly at Donelson, dispute vigorously the roads from Henry, fortify as speedily and strongly as possible, to secure transit across the Cumberland, and a line of retreat along its south bank; in a word, to defend Nashville at Donelson."

77

General Floyd, in his official report of February 27, commented:

The position of the fort, which was established by the Tennessee authorities, was by no means commanding, nor was the least military significance attached to the position. The intrenchments, afterward hastily made, in many places injudiciously constructed, because of the distance they were placed from the brow of the hill, subjecting the men to a heavy fire from the enemy's sharpshooters opposite as they advanced to or retired from the intrenchments.....

78

An excerpt from Floyd's supplemental report of March 20 stated:

I consider the place illy chosen, out of position, and entirely indefensible, by any re-enforcements which would be brought to its support..... I thought the force already there sufficient for sacrifice, as well as enough to hold the place until Bowling Green could be evacuated, with its supplies and munitions of war.

76. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 272.

77. Ibid., 267.

78. Ibid., 271.

The great number of changes of command that occurred during operations against the fort show the lack of thorough preparation for its defense, for no one commander had an opportunity to form and carry out a consistent plan of defense.

On the 10th of February, General Field Orders, No. 7, were issued, instructing the troops at Forts Henry and Heiman to hold themselves in readiness to move on Wednesday, the 12th instant, at as early an hour as practicable. Neither tents nor baggage were to be taken, except such as the troops could carry. All the men were to be supplied with 40 rounds of ammunition and two days' rations. Three days' additional rations were to follow. Two regiments of infantry were ordered to remain at Fort Henry, to be designated from the First Division, and one brigade at Fort Heiman, to be designated by General Smith, commanding.⁷⁹ General Lew Wallace was directed to remain in command of Fort Henry during the expedition against Fort Donelson.

It is doubtful that Grant called a council of war. The nearest approach to it was a meeting held on the new Uncle Sam, later transformed into the gunboat Blackhawk. On the morning of the eleventh a staff officer visited each commandant of division and brigade and gave the following message:⁸⁰

General Grant sends his compliments and requests to see you this afternoon on his boat.

The meeting was very informal and officers left as soon as they learned the plans for the attack.

The most difficult part of the whole route to Fort Donelson was from the Tennessee River at Fort Henry to the high ground about two miles back. To expedite the movement of troops, The First Brigade, Colonel Oglesby, and the

79. Ibid., 601.

80. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 1, 404.

Third Brigade, Colonel Morrison, of McClelland's Division, moved out about four miles at 4:00 o'clock that afternoon on the Ridge Road, where the troops bivouaced for the night. The Second Brigade, Colonel W. H. L. Wallace, encamped about four miles out on the Telegraph Road. The Second Division, under General Smith, was composed of the First Brigade, Colonel McArthur; Third Brigade, Colonel Cook; Fourth Brigade, Colonel Lauman; Fifth Brigade, Colonel M. L. Smith. This Division took position for the line of march on the Ridge Road in rear of the First Division.

81

McClelland's division was composed of eleven regiments of infantry, one or two regiments of Cavalry, and at least four field batteries. These batteries were Dresser's, Taylor's, Schwartz's, and McAllister's. General Smith's

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division was made up of fifteen regiments of infantry (including Birge's sharpshooters), and three field batteries. These batteries were D, H, and K; commanded by Captains Richardson, Welker, and Stone, respectively; composing the Second Battalion of the First Missouri Light Artillery and command-

83

ed by Major Cavender. This made about 15,000 effective troops. As the troops were moving out to the high lands the first re-enforcements arrived at Fort Henry on transports. These were six regiments, under the command of Colonel Thayer, of Nebraska, and consisted of about six thousand troops --

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infantry, cavalry, and artillery. It was too late to disembark the troops, and they were ordered to go at once under convoy of the transports to Fort Donelson. General Lew Wallace was directed to remain at Forts Henry and

81. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 168.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid., 159.

84. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 540.

85 Helman with 2,500 men. This constituted the Third Division.

The columns of the First and Second Divisions were ordered forward at 8:00 on the morning of the 12th. The country-side between the two forts was very rolling, thickly covered with timber and sparsely settled. The roads were not obstructed by any Confederate scouting parties for the Federal Cavalry under Colonel Dickey, had patrolled the roads continually and effectively and maintained communication between the two columns. The telegraph Road was twelve miles long, the Hidge Road about fourteen; and the two columns came together about two and a half miles from the outer intrenchments of Fort Donelson about noon.

General Buckner stated that General Pillow, when he went to Cumberland City to consult with General Floyd on the twelfth, had left him under the impression that he General Pillow did not expect an immediate advance of the enemy, and regarded their approach from Fort Henry as impracticable. Pillow also informed General Buckner that he had directed that a reconnaissance be made by Forrest's Cavalry, "with instructions in no event to bring on an engagement should the enemy approach in force."⁸⁶

The Federal scouting party, in command of Major John Mudd, was encountered by Forrest about two miles from the center intrenchments. General McClernand's official report stated that his cavalrymen were met by a "detachment of the enemy's cavalry strongly supported, indicating the determination to resist our further progress".⁸⁷ The Confederate pickets were driven in, and the scouting party was given support by the advanced guard, under Major Incom, of the

Thirtieth Regiment Illinois Volunteers. The Eighteenth Regiment was formed

85. Grant, Op. cit., I, 264.

86. Official Records, Series I, 7, 329.

87. Id., 170.

in a column of companies at the foot of the hill, on the top of which, Forrest and his men were stationed. The remainder of the Federal column held its position as in the line of march.

General Forrest dismounted his men and formed a line of battle along the crest of the ridge and obliquely across the road. The most important position was assigned to May's and Hambrick's companies, who were armed with powerful Maynard rifles. In front of his center was a narrow valley of cleared land through which the enemy had to advance. When this was attempted, they were met with a terrific fusillade. This deterred the advance and caused a retreat to a neighboring ridge. Along this a detour and an advance by another road was attempted for the purpose of turning Forrest's left flank. His force was re-disposed so as to check this movement. May's and Hambrick's companies remounted and made a gallant charge down the road on some Federal Cavalry, driving them back to the lines of infantry. Soon after, Major Kelly, with three squadrons of Confederate Cavalry, made a vigorous advance from the center and engaged a large infantry force in that quarter.

A part of Forrest's troops attempted to gain the rear of the grand guard, so as to cut them off from their support. This attempt was frustrated by the timely arrival of the Eighth Regiment and Lieutenant Garbart's battery, which fired a shell into the advancing cavalry and caused it to retire. Detachments of the Confederate Cavalry continued to guard the hills in front, over which the Federal troops had to pass to their designated positions. The first brigade of McClernand's Division formed to the right in the open fields, and the second and third brigades were held within supporting distance. General Forrest changed his front from the right to the left of his line of battle to

met the new advance. Some of Forrest's skirmishers were endangered by superior numbers and were relieved by a second detachment of skirmishers. Presser was ordered to fire his battery into these skirmishers. This forced the Confederates to retire.

For several hours skirmishing had been maintained with the effect of keeping the whole Federal column in check. Jackson, temporarily in command, at 3:00 o'clock ordered Forrest to return behind the intrenchments, for it was found that Forrest was opposed to superior numbers and there was no infantry to support him, pursuant to Pillow's instructions not to bring on any engagement. With the exception of this attempt by General Forrest to resist the advance to, and the ultimate investment of Fort Donelson, the Confederate commanding officers made no effort to check the movement and calmly let the Federal forces encircle their position.

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The Carondelet, under Commander Walke, arrived about 11:30 A. M., just at the time when Grant's main guard arrived within sight of Fort Donelson. The gun-boat had been ordered up the Cumberland River in advance of the other gun-boats to prevent the landing of any reinforcements. She was in tow of the steamer Algo and cast off when the fort appeared in sight. The gun-boat proceeded to within long range of the Confederate batteries. From this position part of the fortifications were screened by the woods and hills on the left bank. It had been agreed between Grant and Walke that the latter signal his arrival by firing the howguns at the fort and also to draw the enemy's fire, and thus to locate the gun placements. About ten shots were fired by the Carondelet. Captain R. R. Ross, of the Heavy Artillery, stated in his official report that he took charge of the 64-pounder rifled gun and that it and the

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10-inch columbiad replied to the fire of the gun-boat. The Carondelet then dropped down stream and anchored about three miles away. The Federal land forces were reported to have cheered heartily when the sound of the shot reverberated through the air. There was a great deal of rivalry, for the troops were determined that this battle at Fort Donelson would reflect credit upon themselves, inasmuch as they had not shared in the victory at
90
Fort Henry.

General McClelland found no further resistance to his movements after Forrest's cavalry had been recalled within the fort and ordered the First Division to push forward. His instructions were to continue his advance so as to cover the left of the enemy's works, which was in the direction of Dover. Before starting this movement, however, he ordered a reconnaissance to be made of the Indian Creek road, on his right. The report of the reconnoitering party showed that this road was open to an advance by the Confederate troops. The Third Brigade, followed by the Second, were moved over a range of steep hills, which overlooked the center and right of the enemy's works. The First Brigade was formed on their right in a line of battle. The field pieces were moved into position on the crest of the hill. Oglesby moved his brigade toward the enemy's center, from which point could be seen the encampment of the Confederates on a hill opposite. Confederate troops were seen in the valley and on the hills in large numbers. Colonel Oglesby ordered Schwartz's battery to open fire upon them, but the range of fire was too great to do much damage.

A James rifled piece, from Captain Dresser's battery, was brought into

89. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 398.

90. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 1, 431.

service and cleared the way for a further advance of the First Division, which was led by the grenadiers, under Major Bacon, and followed by the First Brigade. The Second Brigade was formed into line on the left of the First; the Third formed into line on the left of the Second and opposite the Confederate center.

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This movement of the First Division placed it opposite the Confederate left wing, commanded by General Buford R. Johnson. As soon as it was realized that the Union troops had effected a partial investment of the fort, General Pillow ordered the troops out to engage as rapidly as possible the line of rifle-pits marked out by Major Gilmer. Captains Henry's, French's, Green's (first division), Gay's, and Green's (second division, under Lieutenant Perkins) batteries were placed in salient positions; from right to left, respectively. Confederate pickets were thrown out on the Ryan's Ferry Road, to protect a working party, employed in extending an abatis at that point. The detachment was driven in about dusk, and the first casualties occurred on the left wing, viz: killed, 2; wounded, 1; the latter was never found and must have been captured. During the skirmishing in the afternoon, several Confederate soldiers were taken prisoners, who informed the Federal officers that the Confederate stronghold consisted of between 20,000 and 25,000 men.

General Smith, upon his arrival at Fort Joneson, immediately in rear of the First Division, moved his column in the direction of the Confederate right, held by General Bushner's troops. The investment was begun by placing the Fourth Brigade on the extreme left of the Second Division's position. On its right, the Third Brigade took up its position. This joined the left of McClelland's Division. The First Brigade of Smith's division was held at Official Records, Series 1, 7, 171.

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in reserve.

The remainder of the day and part of the night was devoted to moving the Federal troops into position to invest the fort. That night some of the Federal troops, standing under arms, encamped within sight of the entrenchments and received shot from the pickets and sharpshooters. Batteries were established, without opposition, in the night upon commanding eminences along the Federal lines -- at points highly favorable for annoying the Confederates.

In the meantime the Confederates had not been inactive but labored in the trenches throughout the night of the twelfth with practically all their available men. The earthworks were strengthened, field batteries were placed in position, and every possible disposition was made for the most efficient defense.

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Before daybreak on the morning of the thirteenth, Birge's sharpshooters moved out to advanced positions, from where they began to fire into the fatigue parties working on the Confederate defenses. Their fire, however, was returned by the Confederate marksmen, who found vantage spots behind the breastworks, and through the cracks of which they were able to shoot with greater safety to themselves. This continued for about an hour and inflicted such losses on

92. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 930.

93. An explanation is of interest regarding Birge's sharpshooters. They played quite an important part during a period of inactivity of the main troops. Each was a perfect marksman and carried a long-range Henry rifle, with sights delicately adjusted as for target practice. They had no immediate superior while in the line of duty and acted individually in the discharge of their work. They would report to their officer at dawn who would ask "canteens full, biscuits for all day." Following this formality of "All right boys, hunt your holes." They would disperse and seek the most advantageous places behind trees or rocks in hollows and sometimes in holes they dug. They usually remained in that position the entire day. After nightfall they would return to camp to report the day's activities.

the Union sharpshooters that they were forced to withdraw from action.

General Grant's headquarters was a log house about two miles from Dover, owned by Mrs. Crisp. Early this same morning Grant, at headquarters, communicated with Commander Walke concerning his arrival the day before and that he had succeeded in getting his division in position and had partially invested the enemy's works. He requested Walke to bombard the fort at 10:00 o'clock that he might take advantage of any confusion within the garrison.

The strangest thing of all was the fact that the Confederates, behind field works erected in a chosen position quietly waited, without the slightest show of opposition, while another army its equal proceeded at
94
leisure to place it in a state of siege.

By 8:00 o'clock the Federal troops started their movement to complete the investment. On the Federal left, the Seventh Iowa, Lieutenant-Colonel James C. Parrott, was detached from Colonel Lauman's Brigade to support Captain Welker's Battery H. This battery of two 20-pounder Parrott guns was of the First Missouri Light Artillery, under Major Cavender. When the infantry support was maneuvered into position it commenced firing opposite the center of the Confederate field works. The Confederate batteries responded with such a well directed fire that the Federal batteries were forced to change position from time to time. Batteries D and K were also posted to best advantages to cover the movement of the infantry columns, which continued to push on to the extreme left.

This procedure was of necessity very slow and cautious, for the ter-

rain was heavily wooded and broken. The head of the column was flanked right and left with as many skirmishers as possible, supported by strong reserves. General Smith stated in his official report that, "Reports of different commanders, partially confirmed by my personal observations, satisfied me that an assault on almost any part of the entire front covered by us was not practical, without enormous sacrifice of life."⁹⁵

The First Brigade, commanded by Colonel John McArthur, was composed of the Ninth Illinois, Colonel August Mersey; Twelfth Illinois, Colonel John McArthur; Forty-first Illinois, Colonel Isaac C. Pugh; all regiments of infantry. This brigade was held in reserve and also supported Major Cavender's batteries. By order of General Grant, it was detached at 4:00 P. M. and put under the command of General McClernand.

The Third Brigade, commanded by Colonel John Cook, was composed of the Seventh Illinois, Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew J. Babcock; Twelfth Iowa, Colonel J. J. Woods; Thirteenth Missouri, Colonel Crafts J. Wright; Fiftieth Illinois, Colonel Moses M. Bane; Fifty-second Indiana, Colonel Smith; all regiments of infantry. The First Missouri Light Artillery, under command of Major Cavender, was temporarily assigned to the brigade. This brigade was moved up the Dover road to within a half mile of the Confederate works, with the troops of the Seventh Illinois and Fifty-second Indiana Regiments as skirmishers. They progressed until the Seventh Illinois came within range of a Confederate battery, (most likely Porter's). They were forced to retreat when fired upon, for the nature of the ground was such that the supporting artillery was delayed. After falling back, they gave support

to Richardson's battery, which by this time was brought into action. Colonel Cook ordered the four other regiments to gain the summit of a ridge overlooking the fortifications, about 60 yards away. It was found that it would be impossible to go any further without heavy loss of life, on account of the heavy abatis outside the intrenchments. A continuous fire was maintained all day by the skirmishers. This position was held during the night by the Third Brigade.

The Fourth Brigade, commanded by Colonel Lawren, was composed of Fourteenth Iowa, Colonel William T. Shaw; Twenty-fifth Indiana, Colonel James C. Vestah; Seventh Iowa, Lieutenant-Colonel James C. Parrott; Second Iowa, Colonel James H. Tuttle (arrived at Fort Donelson on the steamer McCull on the 14th; all regiments of infantry. The First Regiment sharpshooters, Western Division (also known as Birge's sharpshooters), Lieutenant-Colonel H. S. Compton, was also attached to the Fourth Brigade. The left wing, 14th Iowa and 25th Indiana, was moved from its encampment toward the Confederate intrenchments. These troops progressed satisfactorily until they reached a ravine at the base of a hill, upon which were the enemy fortifications. The 14th Iowa was deployed on the right, while the 25th Indiana moved on the left -- up the hill. The 7th Iowa, which had supported Major Cavender's Battery the day before, returned and took its position in the center. These advances were made under terrific firing and came to a halt when the abatis was reached. A fairly safe position was found, and this was held for about two hours, after which the troops were ordered to retire beyond range of the Confederate fire. The losses were heavy in this brigade.

By nightfall General Smith had covered the Confederate right wing with

approximately 7,000 troops. Kershaw's were recalled to their respective units, and the troops were ordered to remain in the positions they held, except Colonel Lamm's regiment, which retired to the position it had held in the morning.

The Confederate line of defense was divided into two sectors; the right wing, under Brigadier-General Buckner, and the left, under Brigadier-General Johnson. General Buckner occupied that part of the line from Indian to Hickman Creek. This covered the land approaches to the water-batteries and the fort and extended for about three-quarters of a mile. His command was a portion of the Second Division of the Central Army of Kentucky which had been detached from Bowling Green and Russellville, Kentucky. This portion consisted of the Third or Colonel John C. Brown's brigade, which was composed of the Third Tennessee Volunteers (which was Colonel Brown's regiment); Eighteenth Tennessee Regiment, Colonel James E. Palmer; Thirty-second Tennessee Regiment, Colonel M. C. Cook; half of Colonel Baldwin's Second Kentucky Brigade (temporarily attached to Colonel Brown's); Second Regiment Kentucky Volunteers, Colonel R. W. Hanson; Fourteenth Mississippi Volunteers, Major W. L. Doss; Forty-first Tennessee Volunteers, Colonel Robert Farguharson; Porter's Thomas K. Battery of six field pieces, and Graves' Rice K. Battery of six field pieces. The remaining regiments of Baldwin's brigade, The Twenty-sixth Tennessee Volunteers, Colonel John H. Milled, and the Twenty-sixth Mississippi Volunteers, Colonel A. E. Reynolds, together with the brigade commander, were detached from my command by Brigadier-General 96. Grant, Op. cit., I, 289. Gen. Grant stated that during the 12th and 13th the National forces were composed of 15,000 men. General McClelland reported the strength for the First Division as 8,000. It seems reasonable to believe that the strength of the Second Division should have been 7,000.

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Pillow, and assigned a position on the left of the line of intrenchments?

General Buckner disposed his troops in the following manner: The extreme right was held by Colonel Hanson's regiment, the Second Kentucky Volunteers. The line of this regiment extended on the right to the backwaters of Hickman Creek. It was upon this sector that the Third Brigade of General Smith's Division, under Colonel Leuman, charged and made several desperate attempts to capture. Porter's battery, on the left, inflicted severe losses to the Federal troops with an enfilading fire. On the night of the thirteenth, Colonel Hanson was re-enforced by four pieces of Colonel Jackson's Virginia Artillery, which were placed in good positions to repulse any further attacks.

Colonel Palmer's Regiment, the 18th Tennessee, on Hanson's left, prepared to support Hanson in any assaults on his position. Just before the Federal troops made their assault on Hanson's line, three companies of the 18th Tennessee were deployed in the rifle-pits, while the remaining companies formed in columns to sustain the line covered by this deployment. At the time when Hanson's position was charged, two companies of the Eighteenth were sent to re-enforce him.

Porter's battery of six guns occupied a commanding position, where they could flank the intrenchments from right to left and also command the road which lead to the front. They gave admirable support to Hanson's and Helman's positions that were assaulted that day and from this vantage spot aided greatly in repelling the onslaughts. The Fourteenth Mississippi was the main infantry support for this battery.

The Third and Thirty-second Tennessee regiments found a position on the left of the Second Kentucky Regiment. The salient position of this line was defended by Porter's battery, while Captain Graves' battery (sometimes referred to as the Issaquena Battery) was posted near the left. This battery protected the left flank of Colonel Brown's Third Brigade and also Heiman's right. It also commanded the hills immediately in front. About 11:00 o'clock in the morning a Federal column was seen moving down the valley between the Third Brigade's left and Heiman's right. Before Heiman noticed this moving column, Colonel Brown ordered Graves to open fire with all his guns. Shortly after, the Federal troops took shelter on a summit of a hill to the left, when Maney's battery opened up and drove them beyond range of all the guns.⁹⁸ Later on in the day, the Federals planted one section of a battery Battery H, First Missouri Light Artillery on a hill almost opposite Graves' battery and opened an enfilading fire upon the left of the Third Brigade. Graves' responded with a direct shot and knocked one of the guns from its carriages. A shot from Porter's Battery disabled another, and the supporting infantry retreated under fire from both batteries.

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The approximate aggregate strength of Buckner's troops was 3,425 infantry and 213 men in the two batteries of artillery.¹⁰⁰ This strength is exclusive of the 844 infantry detached and placed under the command of General Pillow.

General Bushrod R. Johnson commanded the Confederate left, which took

98. See account of this assault on pages 87, 88, and 89.

99. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 337, see Appendix XXX, TABLE FIVE.

100. This is the estimated strength of Graves' and Porter's Batteries. Graves' Battery had about 113 officers and men. Porter's Battery had about 100 officers and men.

up its position on the left wing of the Confederate line of defense. Colonel Belmont's Brigade was in position on the right of this division and on the left of Buckner's division. Colonel Belmont's Brigade consisted of the Tenth Tennessee Volunteers, Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. McInerney; Fifty-third Tennessee, Colonel Alfred H. Abernethy; Battery Light Artillery, Captain Frank Maney; 3 companies Forty-eighth Tennessee Regiment, Colonel H. M. Voorhies; 3 companies Twenty-seventh Alabama, Colonel A. A. Hughes; Forty-second Tennessee, Colonel W. A. Quarles; aggregate strength, 1,600.

The ground occupied in the line of defense by Belmont was a hill some what in the shape of a A, with the apex at the angle; this was the advance point as well as the center of his command and nearly the center of the whole line of defense. From this point the ground descended abruptly on each side to a valley. The valley on the right was about 500 yards wide and separated him from Buckner. The valley on the left was about half as wide and ran between the left of Belmont's Brigade and the right of Urles's Brigade. These two valleys united about half a mile in the rear of the line. Belmont's line of defense was about 2,500 feet in length. The rifle-pits were occupied by the Tenth Tennessee on the right. On the left flank was the Forty-eighth Tennessee. The Fifty-third Tennessee and the Twenty-seventh Alabama were between these two flanking regiments, and Maney's battery was in the center. While Maney's battery on the summit of a hill, had an advantageous spot for enfilading, it was exposed to enemy fire. At the time of the engagement on the Thirteenth the guns were not even protected by parapets, for very little time was available for this purpose. During the night, two Federal batteries had been established, one on the right, the other on the left, of Belmont's

position. While Maney's battery was exposed to the Federal battery on the right, he had an advantage over the battery on the left in altitude. Below was a large field, over which the Federal troops had to cross to get to Drake's position or to Heiman's line from that direction. The Forty-second Tennessee was held in reserve, and several companies of this regiment were put in the rifle-pits, for there were not enough men in the other regiments to cover the whole line.

The Federal batteries commenced firing very early in the morning, and this was promptly answered by the Confederate Artillery. About 11:00 A. M. the pickets advised Colonel Heiman of the advance of a large column
101 of Federal troops. These troops were found to be deployed in the woods in front of the right and center of the Heiman's position. It was at this time that Graves' battery, across the valley, opened fire upon the assaulting group. Captain Maney shelled the woods, using grape and canister, which inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy. The Federal sharpshooters, under cover of the woods, killed and wounded many of Maney's gunners, to such an extent that there were only enough survivors to man one section of the battery after the conflict. Lieutenants Burns and Massie were the first casualties in Maney's battery on this day. Altogether, about 10 were killed and 30 wounded, all from Captain Maney's and Colonel Abernathy's command. The brunt of the attack was borne by the left of the Tenth Tennessee, Fifty-third, the right of the Forty-eighth, and the Forty-second Tennessee. Intermittent firing continued along this sector for the remainder of the day. General Pillow, late that night, re-enforced Maney with a section of light artillery, under Captain Parker, Major Grace, 10th Tennessee, supervised
101. See the account of the assaulting detachment, page 86.

fatigue parties from the 42nd Tennessee in constructing parapets in front of the batteries.

There was very little fighting on the thirteenth for the remainder of the Confederate left wing. The Thirtieth Tennessee, Colonel John W. Head, held a position in the outer line of defense, between the right of Drake's Brigade and the left of Helman's. The men in this regiment found it necessary to hurriedly construct rifle-pits for their protection, as the enemy was encamped in force in front of this position.

Colonel Joseph Drake's Brigade consisted of the Fourth Regiment Mississippi, Major Adair; Fifteenth Arkansas, Colonel James J. Gee; two companies Alabama Battalion, Major Carvin; and a Tennessee Battalion, Colonel Browder. Captain D. A. French's Virginia Light Artillery, of four pieces, occupied a position between the first two regiments of this brigade.

The Fifty-first Virginia Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. Massie, of Colonel Gabriel C. Wharton's Brigade, had occupied a position between Drake's and Davidson's Brigade, but when Porter's battery was assigned to this position, the Fifty-first Virginia was ordered to the support of the left wing.

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Colonel J. J. Davidson's Brigade was on Drake's left and was composed of the Third Twenty-third Mississippi, Colonel Davidson, Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph M. Wells, commanding; Eighth Kentucky, Colonel Burnett, Lieutenant-Colonel H. B. Lyon, commanding; Seventh Texas, Colonel Gregg; and the First Mississippi, Colonel John M. Simonton, Lieutenant-Colonel A. S. Hamilton, commanding. Between the Third Mississippi and the Eighth Kentucky

102. About 1:00 o'clock on the fifteenth Colonel Simonton, in compliance with a verbal order from General Pillow, took command of this brigade, commanded up to that time by Colonel Davidson.

were two batteries. The first section of Green's Battery, of four pieces under the personal supervision of Captain Green, was located near the Wyn's Ferry Road. The Goodland Light Artillery of four pieces, under Captain John H. Guy, was in position near the Forge Road.

On the right of the First Mississippi was the other regiment of Colonel Wharton's Brigade, the Fifty-sixth Virginia Regiment, Captain G. B. Davis. On the left of the First Mississippi was the second section of Green's Battery, of three pieces, under the command of Lieutenant Perkins. The extreme left was held by the Twenty-sixth Mississippi, Colonel Reynolds, of Colonel Halden's Brigade, which was posted in this position when detached from Buchner's troops. The Twenty-sixth Tennessee, Colonel Miliard, was held in reserve. The left wing extended to a point where power could be protected on the east and where the headwaters of Lick Creek made an impassable barrier beyond the left line of defense. The effective troops on the left wing under General Johnson, including General Willow's command, numbered between seven and eight thousand.

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The Forty-ninth Tennessee, Colonel James E. Bailey, and the Fiftieth Tennessee, Colonel C. A. Sugg, garrisoned Fort Donelson, under command of Colonel Bailey. Colonel Head with his Thirtieth Tennessee, had been in command of the Garrison up until the time the regiment was ordered out to the front line of defense on the thirteenth.

The First Division, under General McClelland's orders, continued to push along the left of the Confederate line, while General Smith moved the Second Division to its assigned position. Haney's Battery, on the crest of a hill, in the center of Helman's command, opened fire upon Mc-

Clemens's troops. General McClelland had given instructions to his batteries to refrain from returning the fire, in compliance with Grant's orders to avoid bringing on a general engagement. While this firing was going on, he ordered Colonel Dickey's Cavalry; two companies of Second Illinois Cavalry, under Colonel Silas Noble; and two companies of the Regular Fourth Cavalry, under Lieutenant Powell; to make a reconnaissance farther to the right and also of the works near Dover. During this reconnaissance the line was advanced under the partial cover of a ridge and some woods in the direction towards the Wynn's Ferry Road. The column was lead by the First Brigade.

Colonel Richard J. Oglesby's Brigade, the First, was composed of the Eighth Regiment Illinois, Lieutenant-Colonel Frank L. Rhoads; Eighteenth Illinois Colonel Michael K. Lawler; Twenty-ninth Illinois, Colonel James S. Rearden; Thirtieth Illinois, Lieutenant-Colonel Elias S. Dennis; and the Thirty-first Illinois, Colonel John A. Logan. The Eighteenth was on the extreme right and just beyond the Wynn's Ferry Road. The other regiments were in line right to the left, The Eighth on the left of the Eighteenth and the Thirty-first on the extreme left of the brigade. Four Independent Cavalry Companies, under Lieutenant Kind and Captains Eggleston Carmichael, James J. Dollins, and M. James O'Harnett, were attached to this brigade. Captain Adolph Schwartz's battery, the Second Illinois Light Artillery, Battery E, was composed of the two 6-pounder guns and two 12-pounder howitzers, under Lieutenant G. Conrad Gambart. Captain Schwartz was acting Chief of Field Artillery, attached to McClelland's staff. Captain Jasper M. Dresser's Battery A, of the Illinois Light Artillery, was composed of three
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6-pounder rifled guns. This brigade numbered 3,223 effective troops.

104. Estimated: McClelland says 8000 troops in the 1st Division, Col. Wm. H. L. Wallace says 3400 in the 2nd Brigade, Col. Morrison says 1377 in the 3rd Brigade, therefore 3233 should have been in the 1st Brigade. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 180, 192, 211.

When the Confederate battery opened upon the Federal column early in the morning, Dresser's battery was ordered to take a position opposite this main redan. He succeeded in silencing this battery in about fifteen minutes. During the morning Oglesby's Brigade moved forward to the right about half a mile, under heavy fire from the Confederate batteries. Dresser's battery was advanced as the column progressed and had to unlimber several times to return the heavy fire that hindered the advance of the main body of troops. During the afternoon, Oglesby's Brigade advanced another half mile nearer Dover. This placed the brigade line within about 100 yards of the Confederate intrenchments. Towards night fall, the command was taken back to a next and higher ridge, about 250 yards from the intrenchments, where they encamped for the night, out of danger of enemy fire. Lieutenant Gambart, commanding Schwartz's Battery, was posted between the Eighth and Twenty-ninth Illinois Regiments.

The Second Brigade of McClelland's Division, Colonel William H. L. Wallace, was composed of the Eleventh Illinois, Colonel Wallace, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas E. C. Hanson, commanding; Twentieth Illinois, Colonel C. C. Marsh; Forty-fifth Illinois, Colonel John E. Smith; and the Forty-eighth Illinois, Colonel Isaac N. Haynie. The Fourth Regular Illinois Cavalry, Colonel T. Lyle Dickey, was attached to this brigade. Two batteries of the First Illinois Artillery were assigned to Wallace's Brigade. Captain Ezra Taylor commanded the Chicago Light Battery B, with four 6-pounder field guns and two 12-pounder howitzers. Captain Edward McAllister's Battery D had three 24-pounder howitzers. This brigade had 3,400 effective

men.

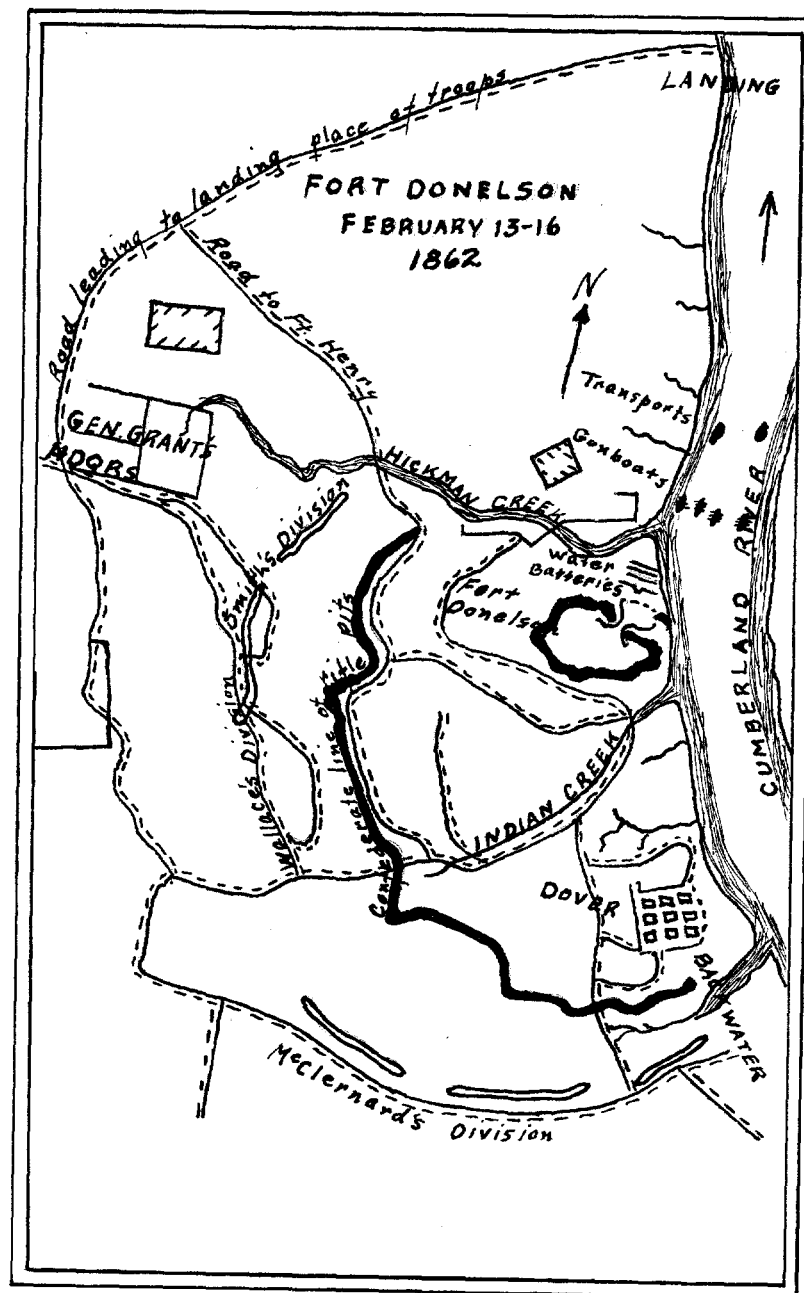
105. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 192.

Colonel Wallace had moved his brigade behind Oglesby's across the Indian Creek Valley towards the left of Confederate line on the twelfth. By the morning of the thirteenth, the brigade was in position just east of this valley. They were fired on by Captain Maney's Confederate Battery, and Colonel Wallace ordered the Eleventh, Twentieth, and the Forty-fifth Regiments, together with Taylor's Battery, to the right across the valley; leaving McAllister's Battery, supported by the Forty-eighth, on a ridge in the position occupied the night before. Wallace's Brigade followed in the rear of the advance of the First Brigade, and Taylor's Battery advanced ahead of the column to assist Schwartz's and Dresser's batteries in returning the Confederate artillery fire.

About noon Maney's and Porter's batteries opened upon McAllister's Battery, now farther to the left on a commanding hill beyond Indian Creek. This cannonading must have been intended by the Confederates to distract the enemy's attention and to prevent his advance to the right. Without
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orders or authority from General Grant, McClellan ordered Wallace to detach the Forty-eighth to operate with the Third Brigade in making an assault on the Confederate redan on the hill west of the valley. The Third Brigade was temporarily under the command of Colonel William R. Morrison and consisted of the Forty-ninth Illinois, Colonel Morrison, Lieutenant-Colonel Phineas Pease, commanding; and the Seventeenth Illinois, Major Francis M. Smith.

Colonel Morrison held his command in readiness until Colonel Haynie should report with the Forty-eighth as support. Colonel Haynie ranked

106. Grant, Op. cit., I, 300.



Personal Narrative of J. P. Smith, 1.
 facing page 210.

Colonel Morrison and assumed command of the detachment. The Forty-eighth was formed on left of the Seventeenth, which was on the left of the Forty-ninth. The two latter regiments were about 500 yards to the right of the Forty-eighth. The regimental commanders were directed to control their flank movements upon the right and left wings of the center regiment, the Seventeenth.

Upon the formation of the line of battle, skirmishers were deployed all along the front and about a hundred yards in advance of the main column. The entire line advanced in good order until the redan of the enemy was approached to within a short distance. The ground around the base of this hill had been cleared of timber, and it was over this ground that the Forty-ninth charged and advanced with greater speed than the other regiments. About 50 paces from the breastworks the assaulting group encountered an almost impassable abatis. The redan was so constructed as to be re-enforced without the knowledge of those making the assault and without exposing their re-enforcements to the enemy fire from the guns upon any of the surrounding heights. The Federal detachment found themselves confronted by a battery of four guns, supported by redans on the right, which mounted Graves' and Porter's Batteries.

The assaulting detachment had advanced to the abatis without meeting any opposition. Soon after, however, the skirmishers started drawing the fire of the Confederate sharpshooters. The difficulties to a further advance consisted in the almost impassable nature of the breastworks and the time required to mount them. The men had been instructed to reserve

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fire until the top of the works were reached. By doing this it was believed that they could create confusion with one volley and climb over the earthworks before the foe had an opportunity to recover from the first onslaught. The troops, however, who had never been under fire before, shot without orders and were met with a terrific fire of shot and canister from the batteries and a deadly musketry fire from the riflemen. The Forty-ninth waited for the Forty-eighth to make an assault further over to the left, that they might take advantage of any diversion it might create, but the Forty-eighth failed to support this movement. The Forty-fifth, at this point, was sent in to support the line. These troops were under fire for about an hour, and when it was seen that the redan could not be taken without greater loss of life, Colonel Haynie ordered the detachment to retire. The dry leaves on the ground were set on fire by Maney's Battery and several of the wounded perished in the flames, even though gallant efforts were made to rescue them.

Colonel Morrison had been carried from the field wounded, and when McClelland ordered the four regiments, thus temporarily united, to rejoin their brigades, the Third, for the time being, was attached to Wallace's command. The assault proved a failure and many lives were lost on the Federal side.

During the afternoon another contest began between Oglesby's line and the opposite side, nearer lower than the assault of the morning. About 3:00 o'clock Dresser's battery of James rifled pieces opened upon the enemy from a new position on the crest of a ridge between Schwartz's and Taylor's batteries, now by the gun's Ferry Road. A constant cannonading was kept up for the remainder of the day. Dresser's Battery was forced to retire later in the afternoon, for its ammunition was exhausted.

After a reconnaissance had been made by McClelland, he found that the Confederate line was too long for his brigades to cover, even when extended, and to do this would weaken his line considerably and leave him without reserves. General Grant was apprised of this fact and sent orders to General Lee Wallace, still at Fort Henry, to report as quickly as possible at Fort Donelson.

109. When Colonel Morrison was wounded Lieutenant-Colonel Pense took temporary command of the Third Brigade, which was then attached to the Second Brigade. About 2:00 o'clock P. M. of the fifteenth, General McClelland assigned Colonel Leonard F. Foss, of the Seventeenth, to the command of the Third Brigade, which was then detached from the Second.

110. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 368. Helms stated in his official report that the enemy was repulsed after a terrific firing, lasting about fifteen minutes; but that they were rallied, and vigorously attacked them the second and third time, but with the same result, and that they finally retired.

The Federal troops found that there was no need for trenches, for the nature of the ground occupied by them was such that the troops were just as well protected from enemy fire as if intrenchments had been made. Then, too, it was expected that a combined attack by the flotilla and land forces would take the fort, without the necessity of making intrenchments for the troops. The investing forces found advantageous positions generally along the crest of the ridges. The batteries were placed in positions where they could play upon the forces within the fort to best effect. This was done only with great difficulties, for the heavy undergrowth obstructed a clear view. The field pieces were protected by being sunk in the ground. And the men who served the guns were protected by great mounds of earth that were thrown up. Those not serving the guns were protected from the enemy fire by taking positions behind the crests.

While the early morning attacks engaged the attention of the land forces, Commander Walke had succeeded in locating a fairly safe shelter, behind a heavily wooded point, and at 10:00 o'clock, in compliance with General Grant's request, began shelling the water-batteries. The Carondelet fired 130, 70 pound and 64 pound shells at the fort; and, in return, received the fire of all the enemy's guns that could be brought to bear on it. The gun-boat sustained little damage, except from two direct hits, as most of the shot passed over the vessel. A very vivid description is given of one shot:

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on of one shot:

One, a 128 pound solid shot, at 11:30 struck the corner of the port broadside casemate, passed through it, and in its progress toward the center of our boiler, passed over the temporary barricade in front of the boilers. It then passed over the steamdrum, struck the beams of the upper deck, carried away the railing around the engine room and burst the steamhester, and glancing back into the engine room "seemed to bound after the men," as one of the engineers said, "Like a wild beast pursuing its

prey." When it burst through the side of the Carondelet, it knocked down and wounded twelve men, seven severely. An immense quantity of splinters was blown through the vessel. Some of them, as fine as needles, shot through the clothes of the men like arrows.....

The Carondelet ceased firing after this casualty and withdrew from action until the damages were repaired and the wounded were transferred to the Alps.

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Floyd wired General Johnston:

After two hours' cannonade the enemy has hauled off their gun-boat; will probably commence again. The attack on our intrenchments has been feeble, confined almost exclusively to field pieces up to this hour (11:30).

Forty-five minutes later the Carondelet entered again into the fray in order to comply with Grant's wishes to disconcert the enemy. The firing continued until dusk, when nearly all their ammunition was expended. No damage was sustained in this second attack. They retired when the enemy fire ceased and anchored downstream. Grant had awaited an opportunity that day to attack the garrison if any weakness appeared. But inasmuch as he believed a land attack alone would not be successful, for he had not been able to transport his siege artillery, he delayed opening hostilities until he could get re-enforcements and co-operation from the flotilla.

The water-batteries sustained very little damage from the shot fired by the Carondelet. One of the projectiles dismounted one of the 32-pounders by knocking off the cheek of the carriage. A screw-cap from this mechanism struck Lieutenant Dixon and killed him. This was the only casualty that occurred to the water-batteries for the duration of the siege. General Floyd sent an aide to Captain Ross, directing him, to bring the only artillery Cap-

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112. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 646.

113. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 393.

tain present, to take charge of the batteries. Out of deference to seniority, Captain Ross refused the command, and it then devolved upon Captain Culberson to assume charge.

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General Pillow sent the following telegram to Governor Harris:

The day has almost past and we still hold our own. We have repulsed the enemy and driven back his gunboats. He still lies around and will attack us to-morrow again we think. Our loss is not very great, we have had lively fighting and heavy cannonading all around the line all day. Repulsed the enemy everywhere. We are satisfied that we injured the gun-boat materially, as it retired twice. Our lines are intrenched all around. The enemy's force to-day was very large and report says increasing.

The weather has been unusually mild and pleasant during the march of the troops from Fort Henry. A great number of the men had either thrown away or left their overcoats and blankets in their hurried advance to Fort Donelson. But late that afternoon the weather changed suddenly and radically. A driving snow storm, accompanied by sleet, caused great privation and suffering among the men. The men had little rest that night for their tents had been left at Fort Henry. The ground was too cold to sleep on, and most of them dozed standing by their rifles. No fires were allowed, for this would have attracted the enemy's pickets. All during the night the Federal pickets heard the Confederates feverishly throwing up additional earthworks. Throughout the night the cold North wind became more intense, and the suffering was acute on both sides, for the temperature dropped

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to 30 degrees below freezing.

114. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 647.

115. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 613.

Flag-Officer Andrew H. Foote brought the flotilla of gun-boats up the
 Cumberland River, having left Cairo on the night of the eleventh, and anchor-
 ed about two miles below Fort Donelson late on the night of the thirteenth.

The fleet now consisted of the iron-clads St. Louis (the Admiral's flag-
 ship), Carondelet (this gun-boat preceded the others and arrived on the
 twelfth), Louisville, and the Pittsburg; and the wooden gun-boats Tyler
 and Conestoga. Twelve transports, under convoy of the gun-boats, arrived
 at the same time, too late to disembark the re-enforcements, Colonel Thayer's
 troops, that night.

General Grant decided, after the arrival of the gun-boats, that:

The plan was for the troops to hold the enemy within his own lines, while the gun-boats should attack the water-batteries at close quarters and silence them. Some of the gun-boats were to run the batteries, and get above the fort and village of Dover..... That position attained by the gun-boats it would have been but a question of time -- and a very short time, too - when the garrison would have been compelled to surrender.....

Lieutenant-Colonel McPherson, in his official report, revealed that
 this should be a combined attack, by land and water:

.....we [the land forces] at the same time sweeping around with our right and taking possession of a portion of their works, cutting them off from the greater part of their supplies, and driving them back upon our center and left, which were strongly posted to prevent their escape.....

Early on the fourteenth, Grant communicated with General Halleck that:

Our troops now invest the works at Fort Donelson. The enemy have been driven into their works at every point. A heavy abatis all around prevents carrying the works by storm at present. I feel every confidence of success and the best feeling prevails among the men.

General Lew Wallace arrived from Fort Henry with the 2,500 troops, belong-

116. Ibid., 604.

117. Ibid., 159.

118. Ibid., 166.

119. Grant, Op cit., 1, 302.

120. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 163.

121. Ibid., 613.

ing to General C. F. Smith's Division, about the same time that the reinforcements disembarked from the transports on the morning of the fourteenth. The arrival of Thayer's six full regiments and the troops from Fort Henry brought the Union strength up to approximately 23,500.¹²²

The troops brought to Fort Donelson by General Wallace were restored to their regular command. General Wallace was then directed to take command of Colonel Thayer's troops and other detachments to form a division,¹²³ designated as the Third. The First Brigade, Colonel Charles Cruft, of this Division was composed of the Thirty-first Indiana, Colonel Cruft, Lieutenant-Colonel Osburn commanding; Seventeenth Kentucky, Colonel John W. McHenry; eight companies of the Forty-fourth Indiana, Colonel Hugh B. Reed; and the Twenty-fifth Kentucky, Colonel James M. Shackelford. The Third Brigade, Colonel John M. Thayer, was composed of the First Nebraska, Colonel Thayer, Lieutenant-Colonel William D. McCord commanding; Seventy-sixth Ohio, Colonel Charles R. Woods; Fifty-eighth Ohio, Colonel Valentine Bausenwein; and the Sixty-eighth Ohio, Colonel Steedman. The Second Brigade, attached to Colonel Thayer's command,¹²⁴ was composed of the Forty-sixth Illinois, Colonel John A. Davis; Fifty-seventh Illinois, Colonel Baldwin; and the Fifty-eighth Illinois, Colonel William F. Lynch. The First Illinois Light Artil-

122. Ibid., 236.

123. Grant, Op. cit., 1, 301.

124. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 236. Gen. Lew Wallace stated in his official report that this brigade was not found together as an organization before or after the action.
Official Records, Series 1, 7, 252.

lery, Battery A, Lieutenant P. P. Wood; and Company A, Thirty-second Illinois, Colonel Davidson; were attached to the Third Division but were not brigaded.

General Wallace's Division was ordered to take a position in the center of the line of attack, between the First and Second Division. The right of this division was within good supporting distance of McClernand's Division and about 500 yards from the Confederate line of intrenchments. Colonel Thayer's Brigade took up a position on the left of Colonel Cruft's Brigade. General Wallace's orders, received from Grant, were to hold his position and prevent the Confederate troops from escaping in that direction. These instructions left General Wallace under the impression that he had no orders to take the offensive and resulted in considerable delay the following day when McClernand sought re-enforcements from him.

The timely arrival of Wallace's troops enabled General McClernand to extend his line still farther to the right, the object being to get his troops in position to cut off all communications of the Confederate troops and to command the river above Dover. General Smith's Division could not extend their line any farther to the left on account of Hickman Creek. While this creek was an advantage to the fort, it was also an advantage to the investing army. It enabled the Federals to move their troops and supplies up from their landing place with security, it prevented the escape of the Confederate troops in that direction, and it required fewer troops to hold the Federal left.

Throughout the day on the Federal left wing, under General Smith, an annoying fire from sharpshooters and skirmishers was kept up. Sometime during

the morning General Smith made a personal reconnoissance of the extreme left of his line and satisfied himself that the only apparent practicable point of assault was in that quarter. Inasmuch as his line did not extend in Hickman Creek to the backwater, he discovered, however, that his troops could not possibly get over at that point, and that the best place for assault was at the left flank of his line. There were no movements of troops in this division during the day. The First Missouri Light Artillery, however, was moved over to support McArthur's Brigade, on the extreme right of McClelland's Division. Colonels Noble's and Dickey's cavalry were also moved to the extreme right just behind McArthur's brigade. Two 10-pounder Parrott guns were also brought to this sector. Colonel Augustus L. Chetlain moved his regiment (the 12th Illinois Volunteers) to the support of General McClelland's division, near the right of the Federal line. This was done late in the evening of the 14th. The Second Iowa Infantry, commanded by Colonel James M. Tuttle, landed just below the fort during the day and was assigned to the Fourth Brigade of General C. F. Smith's division,
126
on the extreme left.

There was even less activity on the part of the Confederate land forces during the day of the 14th. A section of Maney's battery was moved down the hill in range of the valley of Indian Creek. This was done in anticipation of an attack in that direction. Any advance would have been checked by Graves' and Maney's Batteries, however, no demonstration was made in that direction during the day.
127

126. Ibid., 229.

127. Ibid., 369.

Early in the morning, after learning of the landing of heavy Federal
 128 re-enforcements, a council of the general officers was held. It was unanimously decided to make an immediate attack on the Federal right in order to open up communications with Charlotte and Nashville before the Federal troops, which were landing below the fort, could be used as re-enforcement. Soon after this council, and near noontime of that day, General Pillow directed the left wing, consisting of the 26th Mississippi, 26th Tennessee, 20th Mississippi infantry regiments, to be formed in the open ground on the Confederates left for the purpose of making the proposed attack on the Federal
 129 al right. Forrest's cavalry was to act in conjunction with this infantry, and Buckner's division was held in readiness to cover the retreat of the
 130 army in the event the sortie should prove successful. After advancing for about a quarter of a mile toward the Federal line and meeting a few sharpshooters and little other opposition, General Pillow ordered a countermarch to his former position in the line, remarking that it was too late in the
 131 day to accomplish anything. Just why, other than the reason given by General Pillow, this move was not carried out no one seems to know. That this sortie could have been successfully carried out there is but little doubt. General Grant asked General Buckner (after the surrender) why he did not attack on Friday (the 14th), and General Buckner replied that he was not in command. General Grant then remarked that had the attack been made on Fri-
 132 day his reinforcements could not have reached him in time.

128. Ibid., 330.

129. Ibid., 384.

Generals Floyd and Pillow omit all mention of the proposed attack, but Buckner, Forrest, Baldwin, and Brown are very specific upon the point.

130. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 330.

131. Ibid., 338.

132. Donelson Campaign Sources, 210.

These maneuvers, together with minor skirmishes, sharpshooting, and exchange of artillery fire, constituted the activities of the land forces at Fort Donelson during the day of the 14th. However, the principal event of the entire siege took place on the afternoon of this day -- the battle between the Federal gun-boats and the Confederate water-batteries. The Confederates had anticipated the coming of the Federal gun-boats for several days, and their recent success at Fort Henry had, no doubt, caused the command at Fort Donelson to fear their approach even more than the approach of Grant's land forces.

When the smoke from the transports was seen below the fort about 9:00 o'clock in the morning, the water-batteries were ready for whatever the day might bring. The upper battery was crescent shaped on the river bank in front of the extreme right of the fort. It mounted one 64-pounder rifled gun between two 32-pounder carronades and was manned by about 70 men. Captain R. R. Ross, of the Heavy Light Artillery, was in command of this battery, and also the 10-inch columbiad, in the lower battery, which was about seventy-yards down the river. The lower battery contained, beside the 10-inch columbiad, two batteries of four 32-pounders. The first section of 32-pounders was close to the river bank. It was commanded by Captain T. W. Beaumont, Company A, of the Fifteenth Tennessee. A detachment of men, numbering about 80 from this same organization, manned the guns. The second section, on the left, was commanded by Captain B. C. Bidwell, of the Thirtieth Tennessee. About 75 men were stationed at this section. The 10-inch columbiad was on the extreme left of the 32-pounders. It was under the immediate command of

133. See Appendix, V, TABLE THREE, also I, TABLE SIX.

134. Official Records, Series I, 7, 388, also See Appendix, V, TABLE THREE.

135. Ibid.

136. The Official marker at the water-battery indicates that the columbiad was on the extreme right.

THE WATER BATTERIES AT FORT DONELSON

Capt. Jacob Culbertson commanding, Feb. 13-16, 1862.

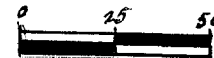
See Table Three, Appendix.

1 10" columbiad
Lieut. H. S. Bedford

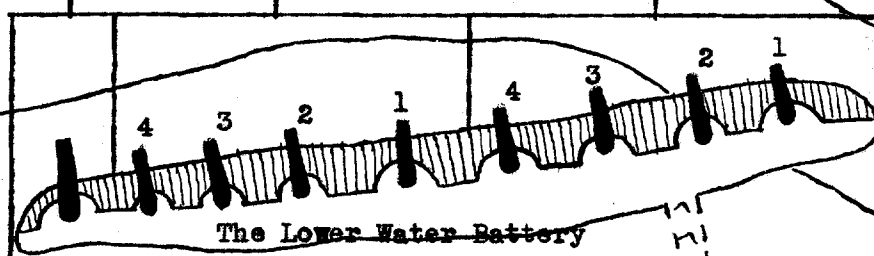
Section Two
4 32-Pounders
Capt. B. G. Bidwell

Section One
4 32-Pounders
Capt. T. W. Beaumont

CUMBERLAND RIVER



Scale
50' to 1"



The Lower Water Battery



Bomb-proof Magazine for The Lower Water Battery
Corp. Dan C. Lyle in charge of magazines.

Original location
3 32-pounders, later moved to the
Lower Water Battery.

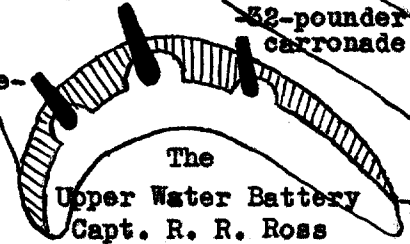


6" rifled gun-

32-pound carronade-

32-pound carronade

The
Upper Water Battery
Capt. R. R. Ross



Bomb-proof Magazine for the
Upper Water Battery.

425 feet above sea level.

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Lieutenant H. L. Bedford, and 20 men, under Lieut. Sparkman, detached from Captain Ross's Company. Captains Culbertson and Shuster were assigned to the water-batteries on special duty. Prior to the untimely death of Captain Dixon, who had been in command of the entire batteries Captain Culbertson was in command of both sections of 32-pounders but was in the immediate command during the contest with the gun-boats. Colonel Bailey, as commandant of the garrison, was also the commander of the river-batteries after the 13th.

About 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon the gun-boats weighed anchor and steamed up the river for the assault on the water-batteries. The St. Louis was on the right, or near the left bank of the river; the Louisville on her left; the Pittsburg on the left of the Louisville; and the Carondelet on the extreme left of the line of battle and near the opposite bank of the river. This battle formation formed a straight battery of twelve guns. The two wooden gun-boats, the Conestoga and Tyler, followed the iron-clad fleet but remained at a safe distance in the rear. Flag-Officer Foote was in command of the flotilla and directed the battle from the St. Louis. Commander Leonard Paulding was in command of the St. Louis. The Pittsburg was in command of Lieutenant Egbert Thompson; the Conestoga was commanded by Lieutenant S. Ledyard Phelps; Commander Henry Walker was in command of the Carondelet; the Tyler was commanded by Lieutenant William Gwin; and the Louisville was in

137. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 659.

138. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 392.

139. Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 569.

140. Each gun-boat had three bow guns. When the flotilla steamed up the river, these were the only guns used against the water-batteries. Had the side guns been used, the boats would have had to be turned broadside. This would have offered too large a target for the enemy and consequently were not used. Also see Appendix, VI, TABLE FOUR.

charge of commander Benjamin M. Dove.

The attack commenced at 3:00 o'clock. General Pillow's orders to the officers of the lower battery, Captains J. P. Shuster and P. K. Stankieuriz, and to Captain Ross, of the upper battery, were to hold their fire until the enemy's boats should come within point-blank range of their guns. The Carondelet, the first boat to appear around the bend of the river, fired at the fort. The columbiad was ordered fired to harrass the boats, but the first shot went wild. As the gun-boats approached within a mile and a half of the batteries, solid shot was substituted for shell in the columbiad. The rifled gun was the next to fire, after which the gun-boats began to reply in earnest. After the third shot the 64-pounder rifled gun became accidentally spiked and was of no further use. The columbiad continued the action unsupported until the boats came within range of the 32-pounders, when the action became general. The water-batteries had only ten guns (one 32-pounder was disabled the day before and the rifled gun was out of commission) to the twelve bow-guns
141
of the iron-clads and the six of the wooden boats.

After about 1½ hours of severe fighting, during the latter part of which the fleet had moved to within 400 yards of the fort, the flotilla began to experience unforeseen mishaps. The wheel pilot house of the St. Louis was shot away by a well directed shot, and it was this same shot that slightly wounded Admiral Foote. At the same time the tiller ropes of the Louisville were shot away. Both boats became unmanageable and drifted downstream. The Pittsburg was greatly damaged between wind and water and received a 128-pound shot through the pilot house. They retired shortly after. The Carondelet continued firing until the fleet had dropped out of range of the enemy's fire. During the lat-

141. See appendix, V, TABLE THREE, and also VI, TABLE FOUR.

ler part of the action, when all the serviceable guns in the water-batteries were fired on this boat, she sustained great damage and was disabled when a shot struck the wheel house and jammed the wheel. The pilot was badly wounded by this shot. An 8-inch shell fired by the Tyler, burst astern of the Gerondelet and the fragments penetrated the casemates. One of the rifled guns in the bow burst at 5 P. M., and at 5:30 o'clock the Gerondelet retired from action. The wooden gun-boats did not get within range of the water-batteries to sustain any damages.

Flag-Officer Foote, in his official report, stated that had the gun-boats been able to continue the battle for another fifteen minutes, it was his opinion that they would have successfully silenced the water-batteries. He reported that the enemy was seen running from the batteries and that they returned to open a heavy fire upon the retiring vessels.

Great shouts were heard from the troops in the fort when the supposedly invincible fleet drifted away-- without even endangering the batteries. This shout was taken up all along the Confederate line and was an indication to the Union troops of the great victory over the flotilla. Generals Pillow and Floyd were at the batteries during the contest. They congratulated the commander of the columbiad and promised that if the men at the columbiad would continue to keep back the gun-boats, the infantry of their command would keep the enemy land forces at a safe distance.

142. Official Records (Navies) Series I, 22, 584.

143. Ibid.

Henry and Donelson Campaigns, 663. Lieutenant H. L. Bedford, in a paper read before the Confederate Relief and Historical Association at Memphis, insisted that General Wallace, Commander White (and Flag-Officer Foote) were mistaken when they asserted that gunners were seen running from the guns. He said that some were passing from the batteries to the fort but that the artilleryists in action did not.

144. Ibid., 661.

The purpose for which Fort Donelson was intended -- to block the passage of a hostile fleet up the Cumberland -- was accomplished. Had the fort been so located that the fleet should have had to attack above the batteries, rather than below, as was the case, the entire flotilla would have been captured when the gun-boats drifted helplessly in the current. The day, however, was a great one for the water-batteries, for they had won an undisputed victory over a powerful foe. There were no casualties in the water-batteries, and the only damage done was by shot and shell plunging deep into the earth around the guns. Admiral Foote reported that 54 were killed and wounded¹⁴⁵ and that considerable damage was done to the gun-boats.

In contrast to the jubilant spirit of the Confederate forces over their¹⁴⁶ victory was the gloom that now prevailed over the defeated flotilla. This gloom also pervaded the Federal land forces, for General Grant concluded to make preparations to partially fortify his position while waiting for re-enforcements and the repairing of the disabled gun-boats.¹⁴⁷

During the battle with the gun-boats General Johnston received the following telegram from General Floyd:¹⁴⁸

The fort cannot hold out twenty minutes. Our river batteries working admirably. Four gun-boats advancing abreast.

About the close of the conflict General Johnston received another message from General Floyd:¹⁴⁹

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145. Official Records, (Navies), Series 1, 22, 594. See also Appendix, VI, TABLE FOUR.
146. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 384. General Forrest said in his report: "Never were men more jubilant than when the victory crowned the steady bravery of our little fort;.... the gun-boats driven back;.... the army was in the best possible spirits, feeling that, relieved of the greatest terror, they could whip any land force that could be brought against them."
147. Official Records, (Navies), Series 1, 22, 594. This plan was frustrated, however, by the attack upon McClernand's wing the following morning.
148. Ibid., 612.
149. Ibid.

After General Johnston's arrival at Edgefield (near Nashville) on the
 150
 fourteenth, he telegraphed Floyd:

If you lose the fort, bring your troops to Nashville if possible.

Inasmuch as the proposed sortie during the morning was not carried out, immediate steps were necessary to save the troops, now believed to be greatly outnumbered and in danger of being forced to surrender.

On the night of the 14th, when there was every reason for optimism in the Confederate Fort (due to the victory over the gun-boats), General Floyd called a council of general/regimental officers to formulate a plan for evacuating Fort Donelson. In view of the fact that the Federals had a superior force and were constantly being re-enforced, it was unanimously decided by this council to attack the Federal right at daylight on the following morning and open up an
 151
 avenue for retreat towards Nashville by way of Charlotte. The general plan for this sortie was that General Pillow should attack the extreme Federal right, and that General Buckner should make a simultaneous attack on the right center and then cover the retreat of the whole army towards Nashville.

More specifically, the plan of attack was that General Pillow should make a flank attack on the Union forces and that Forrest and the cavalry should drive them from the rear onto the Third Division. As a rout of the Federals was expected to result from these assaults, General Buckner's troops were to press all enemy forces back beyond the Wynn's Ferry Road. Should this sortie be successful, then the troops were to escape via the Charlotte Road, while Buckner deployed his division as a rear-guard. Only sufficient troops were to be left in the trenches and the fort so as to divert the attention of the enemy. It was ordered that Colonel Heiman should hold his position, so as to sustain Buckner's move-

150. Ibid.

151. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 330-1.

ments or prevent a flank attack.

General Pillow sought to have Hanson's regiment united with his, for he believed that "upon my success depended the fortunes of the day". As a modification to this plan Buckner proposed that he attack simultaneously with Pillow's assault. From the position designated for his troops, Buckner believed that by striking the forces on the Wynn's Ferry Road at the same time the Federal right wing was attacked, their combined efforts would produce more satisfactory results. Pillow agreed to this modification, as an improvement upon his proposed plan.

These plans were hastily made and poorly conceived and executed. They were so vague that they were misunderstood by various officers.

There was nothing else for the Confederates to do; either they must break through the enemy's lines and retreat, or resign themselves to the fate of ultimate surrender. One essential point had been overlooked, and that was the weakness of the troops moving to occupy the position vacated by Buckner's division.

Inasmuch as this point was the shortest and weakest line of approach to the Fort, it should have been strengthened by transferring all the troops in the garrison to these outworks. It was more accessible than the water-batteries, and troops should have been concentrated, so that the assault made by Smith's division in the afternoon might have been prevented or repulsed.

General B. R. Johnson, in a supplementary report dated November 8, 1862, said:

152. Ibid., 286.

153. While this weakness was apparent, there was no need for a large force in this quarter, for evacuation was the proposed plan of the day. The mistake made by the commanding General in not throwing heavy reserves on this line at the time all the troops were recalled to the intrenchments, contributed to the Federal success in establishing a line within the Confederate works. This was an important factor in hastening the surrender.

154. Official Records, Series 1, 79 365.

The plans and preparations necessary to commence the retreat, after the way was opened, or the circumstances which should determine exactly when it should commence, were not settled more definitely than indicated in general terms given above. How and when the retreat should commence was not determined in conference, and these were clearly things to be determined at a subsequent period. There was no proposition made in the conference to retreat from the battle-field and no determination made to do so. If a proposition had been made for a retreat from the field of battle, it would at once have suggested the necessity of making proper provisions for the march, of food and clothing, for the intensely cold weather, and an additional supply of ammunition; and such preparations made previously to the battle would have greatly loaded down and encumbered the men in the fight.

155

Colonel Heiman, who attended the council of general officers, stated:

.....therefore it was agreed to attack the enemy's right wing in force at 4 o'clock in the morning, and then to act according to circumstances, either to continue the fight or to cut through their lines and retreat towards Nashville.....

Concerning his understanding of the plan for the battle, Colonel John G.

156

Brown stated: "My whole command was provided with three days' cooked rations, and marched with their knapsacks, the purpose being.... to march out on the Wynn's Ferry Road to fall back upon Nashville."

All through the bitter cold night the troops, cavalry, and artillery moved over the icy and broken road to take up their designated positions for the imminent attack. The greatest movement was the transfer of troops from the rifle-pits to the left flank. Though the Federal lines of investment were not far from the Confederate intrenchments, these movements of troops were not heard by the Federal pickets. It might have been that in their struggle against the elements, the pickets did not keep a vigilant watch.

158. Ibid., 369.

166. Ibid., 347. It seems to have been the understanding of the troops in Buckner's division that they were to retreat as soon as the Wynn's Ferry Road was cleared.

168. Ibid., 352.

Ibid., 355. Colonel E. C. Cook, (32nd Tennessee Regiment) stated: "I then learned that it had been determined by the generals in council at that hour [4 o'clock] to march to the extreme left of our intrenchments, attack the enemy's right wing and turn it, and, if we succeeded, to march for Nashville." Grant, Op. cit., 1, 307. Gen. Grant commented on the fact that haversacks found on the dead and wounded contained rations, indicating the intention of the Confederates to retreat if their sortie proved successful.

There was considerable delay in the movement of a portion of General Buckner's troops to their designated position for the proposed sortie. General Buckner ordered Colonel Heiman to send a regiment to hold the Wynn's Ferry Road until his arrival, and Colonel Charles' Forty-second Tennessee Regiment was assigned to this duty. The detachments of Colonel Brown's Brigade, the 3rd, were directed to follow their brigade as soon as they were relieved from the rifle-pits by Colonel Head's Thirtieth Tennessee. The Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Tennessee regiments of Colonel Head's Brigade remained in the garri-
157
son. The Thirtieth Tennessee, numbering about 450 men fit for duty, were disposed of along the trenches, which covered a distance of about three-quarters of a mile. Colonel Head had taken a little longer to reach his destination than had been expected, and had delayed not only a portion of the Third Brigade but Colonel Hanson's Second Kentucky, which was assigned a position as a reserve and support for Graves' artillery.

The Third Tennessee, Buckner's advance regiment, reached its position in rear of a portion of intrenchments occupied by Pillow's troops by daylight. This particular section of the line had been left without troops, and Buckner found it necessary to deploy the Third Tennessee in the rifle-pits to cover the formation of the troops as they arrived. These regiments were formed partly in line and partly in column, but the position was well protected from the Federal batteries by a ridge.

Meanwhile, all the brigades under General B. R. Johnson were being moved into position. By 4:00 A. M. the command was formed in columns of regiments to the left of and outside of their trenches. General Pillow took personal command of the Confederate left wing and moved out to engage the enemy at 5:00 A.M.

Colonel Baldwin's Brigade, the Twentieth and Twenty-sixth Mississippi and the Twenty-sixth Tennessee, led the assault, supported by Colonels McCausland's and Wharton's brigades of Virginia regiments. Before any line of battle could be formed, the troops were fired upon by Oglesby's and McArthur's brigades, on the extreme right of General McClelland's Division. Federal pickets had sounded the alarm at the first signs of any demonstration and the Union troops were not taken completely by surprise. For nearly half an hour Pillow endeavored to get his forces in proper formation to engage his opponents. To divert the attention of the enemy skirmishers were directed to engage them, while the main body of troops were put into a flanking position. Lieutenant Perkins, commanding the second division of Green's battery, aided these maneuvers by opening fire upon the enemy from his position behind the trenches,

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The troops were finally disposed in line of battle as follows: Colonel Baldwin's Brigade formed the right of the attacking force. Colonel Wharton's and McCausland's brigades were formed in line on the left. Davidson's Brigade, commanded by Colonel Simonton, was formed in the rear of Baldwin's troops.

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General McClelland's command was formed in line of battle as follows: Colonel McArthur's Brigade, the Forty-first, Twelfth, and Ninth Illinois Regiments, respectively, were posted on the extreme right. Colonel Oglesby's Brigade, the Eighteenth, Eighth, Twenty-ninth, Thirty-first Illinois regiments, formed in line to the left of McArthur's Brigade. The Thirtieth Illinois was in rear of the Eighth as a reserve. The Eighth and Twenty-ninth supported

158. Ibid., 361.

159. Ibid., 175.

Schwartz's battery of four guns. Colonel Wallace's Brigade, the Eleventh, Twentieth, Forty-eighth, Forty-fifth, Forty-ninth, and the Seventeenth Illinois regiments were on the left flank of McClelland's line. McAllister's two 24-pounder howitzers and a section of the Missouri Battery were posted in front of the Forty-fifth and Forty-eighth Illinois regiments. Taylor's Battery, of four 6-pounder and two 12-pounder howitzers, had a position in front of the Seventeenth. Dresser's Battery, of three James rifled 6-pounders, was on McClelland's extreme left, just east of Maney's Battery.

Baldwin's Brigade was ordered to advance and occupy the crest of a hill, held by Union forces. The Third twenty-third Mississippi was brought into action on the left flank as the column advanced up the hill. The Eighth Kentucky was met with a terrific fire and had to reform its line of battle in a hollow; and again it pressed on as ordered. The Seventh Texas and First Mississippi moved forward together towards the enemy's position after very severe fighting, and being somewhat pressed by the enemy, the commanders found it necessary to request support. The Thirty-sixth Virginia was brought up and put into action on its left, so as to annoy the enemy on the flank. Baldwin's Brigade fought for nearly an hour and found it necessary to send to General Pillow ¹⁶⁰ for additional support. The Seventh Texas was brought to the Brigade's left to prevent any flank ^{ATTACK} by the enemy, while the remainder of the brigade, supported by several other regiments, made a vigorous assault on the enemy's position. This resulted in the Federal troops retiring some little distance behind their first position. They were rallied at the point and supported Schwartz's Battery.

160. Ibid., 341. Colonel Baldwin stated: "Three times during the day I had sent a staff officer to General Pillow for instructions, advising him of our situation; but no orders or directions were received from him, except to do the best I could."

McArthur's and Oglesby's brigades maintained their ground steadily, all the time advancing further to the right under a very heavy fire. When the Confederate troops appeared in great strength on their right flank, these brigades were forced to fall back. The batteries were closely pressed and their supply of ammunition was fast running short. About 8:00 o'clock McClellan sent an appeal to headquarters for re-enforcements. It was reported to McClellan that General Grant was attending a conference on board the St. Louis with Admiral Foote and that the General's request would be made known to him upon his return.

Grant had, before he left for the gun-boat, directed his adjutant-general to notify the division commanders of his absence and instructed them to do nothing to bring on an engagement until they received further orders, but to hold
161
their positions. Meanwhile, McClellan had to do the best he could with the forces at his command.

The Eighteenth, Eighth, and Twenty-ninth Illinois became the point of concentrated attack as McArthur's flank was turned. Lieutenant Gumbart's battery was brought into position and replied to the terrific cross-fire of three Confederate batteries until Gumbart was wounded and carried from the field. The troops under Oglesby were unable to withstand the onslaught and were forced to fall back. While it is reasonable to believe that the Federal troops outnumbered the Confederate forces, they found it necessary to fall back, rather than stand their ground, for their ammunition supplies were nearly exhausted. For
162
some time they had resorted to using the ammunition of the dead and wounded.

161. Grant, Op. cit., 1, 304.

162. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 177.

General McClelland sent his assistant adjutant-general, Major Brayman, to General Wallace, requesting him to re-enforce his division with fresh troops. General Wallace appreciated the exigency and expressed his willingness to co-¹⁶³ operate, but acting under orders of Grant to maintain his position, declined to send any of his troops. General Smith likewise declined to send any of his troops. When General McClelland sent a second messenger to General Wallace, stating that the enemy was endangering his whole command, General Wallace, act-¹⁶⁴ ing on his own responsibility, ordered Colonel Cruft's Brigade to report to General McClelland. The brigade was formed in a column of companies; the Twenty-fifth Kentucky in advance, followed by the Thirty-first Indiana, Seventeenth Kentucky, and the Forty-fourth Indiana. The first two regiments, before they could form a line of battle, were attacked by a large force, for the guide had misdirected the column and conducted it to the extreme right of the force it was sent to aid.

At this critical moment the Twenty-fifth Kentucky, of Colonel Cruft's Brigade, was sent to support the Eighth and Twenty-ninth Illinois. As it moved past the Eighth Illinois, which was withdrawn from action to replenish its ammunition supplies, the left wing, for some ~~un~~accountable reason, fired into their own troops. This caused a great deal of confusion among the men, who did not know,¹⁶⁵ at the time, whether they were friend or foe. Davidson's Brigade, commanded by Colonel Simonton, were quick to take advantage of this confusion and advanced,¹⁶⁶ capturing three pieces of Captain Gumbart's battery; and a fourth piece was captured when abandoned by the supporting infantry. Major Post, of the Eighth

163. Ibid., 177.

164. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, I, 420.

165. Official Records, Series I, 7, 189.

166. Ibid., 374.

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Illinois, was captured by the Seventh Texas Infantry.

Greater confusion resulted when several officers from other regiments ordered part of the Brigade to advance without advising the commanding officers of the regiments so moved. This movement partially dislodged the enemy from his position in front. Meanwhile, the Seventeenth Kentucky moved to the support of the Forty-fourth Indiana, which was engaged with the enemy and which had already sustained heavy losses. Soon after, the brigade on the right began to withdraw and left Craft's Brigade without support. Before long it was ordered to retire, for it was seen that the troops could not withstand the assault of the advancing Confederate line. McAllister's and Dresser's batteries were also captured in this confusion, and the Confederate troops were also able to take possession of General McClelland's headquarters. The Federal forces continued their retreat and were about a half a mile in front of the advancing Confederate troops, who were now in possession of the ground previously held by the first division. Meanwhile, the Confederate troops began to exhaust their supplies of ammunition and had to resort to use that taken from the dead and wounded.

In the meantime, McClelland advised his brigade commanders to maintain their positions at all hazards, until re-enforcements should be sent him. He stated:

It was now 11 o'clock and up to this and a still later hour a gun had not been fired either from the gun-boats or from any portion of our line, except that formed by the forces under my command.

The forces under General Pillow's command had been bringing so much pressure to bear upon the first and second brigades that General McClelland ordered the commanders to withdraw their brigades, so that the line of battle might again be re-

167. Ibid., 376.

168. Ibid., 208.

169. Ibid., 178.

formed and the troops given new supplies of ammunition. The brigades fell back some little distance in rear of the position held earlier. The second brigade was reformed and the first brigade was disposed in rear of the second. At this point the division made a desperate attempt to check the enemy's advance.

General Wallace was conversing with Captain John A. Rawlins, assistant Adjutant-General to General Grant, when an officer rode by in great haste, shouting "we are cut to pieces".¹⁷⁰ Troops retreating in great disorder indicated to the officers that the worst had happened. To prevent a panic among Thayer's troops, near the road by which the troops of Colonels Oglesby and Wallace were retiring, General Wallace ordered Thayer to move his command off by the right flank. This move placed Thayer's troops between the enemy and the brigades which had fallen back.

Colonel Thayer's regiments were formed in a line of battle across the Wynn's Ferry Road. An order was sent to bring Battery A, Chicago Light Artillery, forward as rapidly as possible, which was posted in the center of the road as soon as it arrived, so as to sweep the approach in front. The First Nebraska and the Fifty-eighth Illinois regiments were posted on the right of Lieutenant Wood's Battery; on the left of the battery were posted a detached company of the Thirty-second Illinois [Company A, Captain Davidson] and the Fifty-eighth Ohio, The Seventy-sixth and Sixty-eighth Ohio and the Forty-sixth and Fifty-seventh Illinois regiments were posted in the rear as a reserve. The formation of this line enabled the troops which had just retired in confusion to reform and replenish their ammunition supplies.

These orders had scarcely been executed when the advancing Confederate troops¹⁷¹ appeared. General Wallace stated that: "This assault on my position was un-

170. Ibid., 237.

171. Ibid., 236.

questionably a bold attempt to follow-up the success gained by the enemy in their attack on our right." Graves' Tennessee Battery, supported by a large body of infantry, seemed to make the First Nebraska and Lieutenant Wood's Battery A their principal objective. The Federal regiments poured a destructive fire into the Confederate ranks, and in turn received a well-directed fire from their foe. After about three-quarters of an hour, the Confederate troops began to retire to their intrenchments. Meanwhile, Colonel Cruft's Brigade was located not far from the right of Thayer's line of battle, whither it had been driven by a superior force of the enemy. It was re-united with the Division by the deployment of skirmishers. After reforming, the division was placed in readiness to execute orders.

While General Grant was in conference with Admiral Foote he learned that it would be at least ten days before the flotilla could return from Cairo, where the damages were to be repaired. Grant contemplated a protracted siege, for he did not expect that the Confederates would fight unless he brought on the engage-
172
ment. His fears were allayed when he learned that the Confederates themselves had precipitated the fight that day. As he returned from that early morning conference, he was met by Captain Hillyer, one of his staff-officers, who informed him of the disaster which had befallen McClelland's Division. Eager to learn the seriousness of the rout and to rally his men, Grant galloped four or five miles over rough and frozen roads to learn from General Smith the condition of affairs on the right wing. He was informed that up to that time very little had occurred on the left wing. Grant immediately gave instructions to General Smith to prepare for an assault on the enemy's works in his front.

Grant soon came up to a place where Generals McClelland and Wallace were in consultation. The ~~day~~ of the battle had greatly subsided, for the Confeder-
172. Grant, Op. cit., 1, 305.

ate troops had already begun their retirement to their intrenchments. Without any formality he listened to the account of McClelland's rout and remarked,
 173 "Gentlemen, the position on the right must be retaken".

With that remark Grant started to investigate conditions and found that the Federal lines along the left and center were favorable. But on the right the scene was one of confusion, for the men were quite at a loss as to what to
 174 do, inasmuch as their ammunition had been expended. Grant said: "I saw the men standing in knots talking in the most excited manner. No officer seemed to be giving any directions. The soldiers had their muskets, but no ammunition, while there were tons of it close at hand." The Confederates had retired to their intrenchments, but knapsacks found filled with rations indicated the intention of the Confederates to escape or to fight until they had completely routed the Union forces.

175

General Grant remarked to Colonel J. D. Webster of his staff:

Some of our men are pretty badly demoralized, but the enemy must be more so, for he has attempted to force his way out, but has fallen back; the one who attacks first now will be victorious and the enemy will have to be in a hurry if he gets ahead of me.

He directed Colonel Webster to accompany him and call to the men as they
 176 passed, "Fill your cartridge-boxes quick, and get into line; the enemy is trying to escape and he must not be permitted to do so." The routed Federals of McClelland's division rallied with this command.

173. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 1, 421.

174. Grant, Op. cit., 1, 307.

175. Ibid., 307.

176. Ibid., 308.

177

In an urgent dispatch to Admiral Foote, Grant requested:

If all the gun-boats that can will immediately make their appearance to the enemy it may secure us a victory. Otherwise all may be defeated. A terrible conflict ensued in my absence, which has demoralized a position of my command, and I think the enemy is much more so. If the gun-boats do not show themselves, it will reassure the enemy and still further demoralize our troops. I must order a charge to save appearances. I don't expect the gun-boats to go into action, but to make appearance and throw a few shells at long range.

Pillow, by 11:00 o'clock, held the road to Charlotte and the whole of the position held by McClelland's division at dawn; and by so doing had accomplished his part of the program. Floyd now had the opportunity the Confederates had fought so hard for, to retreat southward. Buckner was in a position to protect Colonel Head's withdrawal from the trenches on the right wing and also to protect the retreat of the Confederate column, as had been decided upon.

Why Floyd did not avail himself of this opportunity is a matter of conjecture. It may be that he believed the Federals were in such great disorder that by remaining within the works he could later completely rout them. Or it might have been that a concentrated attack would crown the partial victory with utter rout and destruction of the enemy.

There is but little doubt that a spirit of vacillation and divided counsels prevented complete success of the preconcerted plan. Buckner had lined up his troops to allow the army to pass out by the roads now opened. From Heiman's position, Pillow was led to believe that preparations were being made by General Smith to assault the Confederate right, where the greatest weakness

177. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 618.

Official Records (Navies) Series 1, 22, 588. Commander Dove stated that the Louisville and the St. Louis were the gun-boats that went up the river. The others were too badly damaged to be taken. The St. Louis threw a few shell at the fort.

Official Records, Series 1, 7, 401. The St. Louis was fired at with the rifled gun and soon after dropped downstream.

now existed. Why it was not strengthened at this critical time may never be known. Pillow, contrary to the arrangements made, ordered the troops back to the trenches and instructed Buckner to return to his original position on the right. ¹⁷⁸ However, Buckner did not feel inclined to do this, inasmuch as it was such a radical change of plans. He consulted Floyd and urged upon him the necessity of carrying out the original plan of evacuation and avail themselves of the opportunity to regain their communications. Floyd concurred in this opinion and directed Buckner to hold his position until he ¹⁷⁹ should have consulted Pillow. When Floyd met Pillow shortly after he yielded to his arguments.

180

Pillow said, in his supplemental report:

I know that the enemy had twenty gun-boats of fresh troops at his landing, then only about three miles distant; I know, from the great loss my command had sustained during the protracted fight of over seven hours, my command was in no condition to meet a large body of fresh troops, who I had every reason to believe were then rapidly approaching the field. General Buckner's command, so far as labor was concerned, was comparatively fresh, but its disorganization, from being repulsed by the battery, had unfitted it to meet a large body of fresh troops. I therefore called off the pursuit, explaining my reasons to General Floyd, who approved the order.

181

Concerning Pillow's order to Buckner to retire, General Floyd stated:

.....During my absence, and from some misapprehension, I presume, of the previous order given, Brigadier-General Pillow ordered Brigadier-General Buckner to leave his position on the Wynn's Ferry Road and to resume his place in his trenches on the right. This movement was nearly executed before I was aware of it. As the enemy were pressing up on the trenches, I deemed that the execution of this last order was all that was left to be done.....

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- 178. Johnston, Op. cit., 464.
 - 179. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 332-3.
 - 180. Johnston, Op. cit., 464.
 - 181. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 269.

The Confederates must have realized by 2:00 or 3:00 o'clock that the hostilities would be re-opened on their right. It was unfortunate that there existed a conflict of opinion among the commanding officers, for Buellner's troops arrived in position too late to make any preparations for a vigorous defense.

While the battle was raging on McClernand's front, the Federal left was comparatively quiet, with only an annoying fire by skirmishers and slow artillery fire to hold the troops' attention; but they were held in readiness for any orders. General Smith was instructed to make his assault at 3:00 P. M. He sent forward large numbers of skirmishers and directed his artillery to open fire upon the outer defenses of the Confederates. The Second Iowa, Colonel Tuttle, was selected to lead the assault, supported by the Fifty-second Indiana [detached from the Third Brigade], Twenty-fifth Indiana, and the Twelfth Iowa. The regiments were ordered to rely on their bayonets and not to fire until the works were reached. The regiments moved slowly down the ravine and up the hill, under a terrific fire of the Confederate troops, and did not stop until the works were reached. General Smith led the charge in front of his advancing regiments and was one of the first to go over the works. The right and left wings united and pursued the few troops until they reached the summit of a small ridge, where they fought for about an hour against the troops stationed at a more advantageous position.

Colonel Hanson's regiment, which had been ordered to return to his former position on the Confederate right, was thrown into confusion as the Federals, swarming over the breast-works, drove the few men [three companies of the Thirtieth Tennessee, under Major J. J. Turner] there defending the works into Hanson's advancing troops. The enemy was already strongly intrenched before Hanson could deploy his regiment into them, and his command fell back to the original line of defense. By this time, Buellner reached the scene of the fighting

and hastily formed a line behind the crest of the hill, which overlooked these detached works. As the re-enforcements arrived they were placed in position to strengthen it. The Forty-ninth and the right wing of the Fiftieth Tennessee regiments were ordered from the garrison to sustain Buckner's line. The left wing of the Fiftieth was left in the Fort to contest any assault in that quarter. Lieutenant Stankiewicz was ordered to fire a few shots from the two nine-inch howitzers in the fort. The contest continued for two hours until about dusk. Repeated attempts were made by Colonels Brown's and Lauman's troops to storm the right of the line, and the left flank was threatened many times during the conflict. The wall-directed fire from Porter's and Graves' artillery and the musketry fire of the infantry finally repelled these attempts and caused the Federal troops to seek cover behind the outerworks just taken.

As soon as it got too dark to continue the fight, General Smith made preparations to dispose his troops in his key position within the Confederate lines. The Ninth and Twelfth Illinois regiments, of McArthur's Brigade, reported at this time and were held as a reserve. This advantage gained by the Federals placed them in a position to assault the right wing in full force the next morning. The original line of defense to which the Confederate troops had been driven was considered stronger than the one lost and every effort was made to construct additional defenses. ¹⁸² Very little was accomplished, for the men were so exhausted from their fighting and loss of sleep. Generals Pillow and Floyd went to the scene of this conflict about nightfall and, no doubt, formulated their plans for the council that night when they realized that the enemy was within their lines. This final charge closed the fighting at Fort

182. Ibid., 344.

Donelson after four days and nights of strife.

While General Smith was conducting the assault on the Confederate right wing, Grant's orders to General Wallace to recover the lost ground were put into execution. The Fifth Brigade, Colonel Morgan L. Smith, was sent by General Smith to the aid of the First Division, but General McClelland directed the troops to report to General Wallace. This brigade was composed of the Eighth Missouri, Major John McDonald; and the Eleventh Indiana, Colonel George F. McGinnis. This brigade was directed to lead the assault on the enemy's position. It was supported by Colonel Cruft's Brigade on the right. Colonel Morrison's Brigade of General McClelland's Division, under Colonel Leonard F. Ross, was assigned to the left, supported by the Forty-sixth, Fifty-seventh, and Fifty-eighth Illinois regiments, of Colonel Thayer's Brigade. The remainder of Thayer's command was held in reserve. The line moved forward simultaneously about 3:00 o'clock and, pouring a deadly fire into the Confederate ranks, drove them back about three quarters of a mile to seek protection behind their intrenchments. Commenting on this assault General Wallace said: "And now began the most desperate, yet in my opinion the most skillfully executed, performance of the battle."

This forward movement of General Wallace's command left the Federals in possession of a part of the ground they had held in the morning and also enabled them to recapture some of the field pieces lost in retreat. General Wallace received an order from Grant to fall back out of cannon range and throw up breast-works, as a new plan of operations was contemplated for the following day. Knowing that to retire at this time would involve the loss of this sector, Wallace

183. *Ibid.*, 236.

184. The Eighteenth Illinois recovered Drift's Battery and the Thirty-first Illinois recovered Schwartz's Battery.

assumed the responsibility and ignored the order. The troops camped that night on the ground so stubbornly contested in the afternoon and found much work to do taking care of the dead and wounded.

By noon, Pillow and Buckner had accomplished all that had been planned in the council on the night of the 14th. The Federal right had been pushed back and was badly disorganized. The main body of the Confederate forces were already beyond their lines of intrenchment, and Buckner had his troops in a position to cover the retreat. A few troops in the outerworks on the extreme Confederate right could have held the Federal forces at bay, while the retreat towards Nashville was being effected.

185

Instead of this, Pillow, about 1:00 o'clock, recalled all the troops to their former positions; and the advantages gained by the assault in the morning were not followed up. Buckner demanded that the plan of retreat be carried out; Floyd approved of this stand. Regarding Pillow's attitude; it might have been that he doubted the ability of his troops to effect the escape and the strength of Buckner's command to cover the rear, for he believed that Buckner's troops were demoralized by the attack of the last few hours. Floyd was easily swayed and listened to Pillow's arguments, reversed his position, and gave the order to Buckner to return to his original position.

If the original plans were to be adhered to the capture of the rifle-pits on the extreme Confederate right in the afternoon had no significance; but if they were to be disregarded and an attempt made to hold the positions, then the fort and the water-batteries were in danger of being lost on the following morning.

185. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 282-3. Pillow stated that he moved out at 5:00 A. M. and a half an hour later was engaged with the enemy. After seven and a half hours of conflict he called off further pursuit of the enemy.

Even after nightfall on the 15th it was not too late to effect the escape of the majority of the Confederate troops. Divided opinions prevented an evacuation during the early part of the night, and Floyd and Pillow talked of escape rather than making an effort to effect the retreat; and thus many precious hours were wasted. By midnight all the wounded had been brought in, and at 1:00 o'clock A. M. (February 16th) all the commanders of regiments and brigades were assembled and given orders to be under arms at 4:00 o'clock, ready to march out on the Charlotte Road. ¹⁸⁶ The commissaries and quartermasters had been ordered to burn all their stores as soon as the main body of troops had escaped.

General Buckner stated that in the council that night, it was unanimously resolved that the army should effect their retreat if the enemy had not re-occupied the position in front of General Pillow's lines. ¹⁸⁷

Soon after general order was given to be ready for the evacuation, scouts were sent out to ascertain the movement of the Federal troops, and on their return they reported the Federals in large force and occupying the former positions held before the battle of the previous day, hence closing the route of the proposed retreat. ¹⁸⁸ Not being satisfied with the correctness of the reports,

General Pillow directed Colonel Forrest to send out a second set of scouts. One set of these scouts was sent up the river to examine the overflow and to determine if this overflowed ground could be crossed, and also to ascertain whether the enemy's forces reached the river bank. They reported that the overflowed land on the Confederate extreme left was not practicable for the retreat of infantry, but it was possible for cavalry to move out, since the water was about saddle-skirt deep. The other set of the scouts returned and

^{186.} Ibid., 287.
^{187.} Ibid., 333.
^{188.} Ibid., 287.
Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, I, 424. General Wallace stated that about 5:30 A. M. on the 16th that the way of escape was closed.

confirmed the earlier reports that the enemy, in great numbers, had re-
 189 occupied the position of the previous morning. However, Colonel Forrest, in his official report, did not confirm the latter statement. He said that the scouts stated that they saw no enemy, but did see fires in the same places
 190 they were Friday night. From these reports the council decided that the Fort had been reinvested by the Federal forces, and that the avenue for escape towards Nashville had been closed.

At this point of the crisis, General Pillow stated that he proposed to
 191 fight the way out through the Federal line, as had been attempted on the 15th. The general opinion of the council was that to effect the proposed sortie would
 192 cost a greater part of the army. General Buckner said that his men could not make another attack, and that no officer had a right to make such a great sac-
 193 rifice of his command. In response to this Forrest told Buckner that he would take his cavalry to Buckner's position and that the troops could be drawn out,
 194 protected by the cavalry. After the above proposition of General Pillow's was not heeded, he suggested that the Fort be held another day by fighting the en-
 any from the trenches, and that by that time there should be a sufficient num-
 195 ber of boats to transfer the army to the opposite side of the river, where it could retreat towards Clarksville.

189. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 237.

190. Ibid., 235.

191. Ibid., 237.

192. Ibid., 239.

193. Ibid., 233.

194. Ibid., 235.

195. Ibid., 233.

To this proposition General Buckner stated that he was satisfied that the Federals would attack his position at daylight and that he could not hold his position half an hour. To the above statement General Pillow asked: "Why can't you?" adding, "I think you can hold your position; I think you can, sir". General Buckner replied: "I know my position; I can only bring to bear against the enemy 4,000 men, while he can oppose me with any given number." ¹⁹⁶ General Buckner further remarked that he understood the object of the defense of the Fort was to cover the movement of General Albert Sidney Johnston's army from Bowling Green to Nashville, and that if Johnston had not reached Nashville he was willing to further defend the Fort for the safety of General Johnston's forces. At this point General Floyd stated that General Johnston had already reached Nashville. Then Buckner stated that it would be wrong to subject the army to a great sacrifice when no good could result from the sacrifice, and that the general officers owed it to their men to obtain the best terms of capitulation possible. Here General Floyd, possibly for the first time during the entire siege, concurred with General Buckner.

After Floyd concurred with Buckner, General Pillow remarked: "Gentlemen, if we cannot cut our way out nor fight on there is no alternative left but capitulation, and I am determined that I will never surrender the command nor will I ever surrender myself a prisoner. I will die first." ¹⁹⁷ General Floyd said that Pillow's determination was also his own, and that he would die before he would do either, acknowledging that they were personal considerations. Then General Buckner said, that being satisfied nothing

196. Ibid., 398.

197. Ibid., 398.

else could be done, that if he were placed in command he would surrender the command and accept the consequences. General Floyd immediately asked General Buckner that if he placed him in command would he be allowed to take away his brigade. General Buckner replied that he would, provided he did so before the enemy acted upon his communication. General Floyd then remarked: "General Pillow, I turn over the command." General Pillow then said: "I pass it." General Buckner replied: "I assume it, bring on a bug-
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lar, pen, ink and paper."

General Floyd was undecided as to how he was going to make his escape. At first he directed Colonel Forrest to be present for the purpose of ac-
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companying him in an effort to pass through the Federal lines. However, he still entertained a hope that a steamer would reach the place before capitulation. About daybreak this hope was realized when the steamer General Anderson and another small boat came down the river. General Floyd took command of the boats and crossed over the opposite shore as many of his Virginia troops as he could until told by General Buckner that unless the steamboat left immediately he would have a shell thrown into it; that he had surrendered the place, and that his honor as an officer of the Confederacy required that at daylight he should turn over everything under his command stipulated
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by terms of capitulation. The steamer immediately departed up the river, carrying the commanding General of Fort Donelson to ultimate obscur-

198. Ibid.

199. Ibid., 270.

200. Ibid., 382.

201
ity.

General Pillow made his escape by crossing the river in a small flat boat procured by a citizen of Dover. He waited on the safe side of the river until one of the boats bringing over part of Floyd's brigade, brought over his horses. Then he and his staff made their way by land to Clarks-
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ville, where they joined General Floyd on the steamer.

203
Colonel Forrest, also was present at the council, and one who also stated that he neither could nor would surrender his command, asked if he
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might have permission to fight his way out. General Pillow then told Forrest that he might cut his way out and that he and General Floyd would come
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out with him. Colonel Forrest hastened to get his command ready and reported to headquarters. Here General Floyd informed him that General Pillow had left, and that he (Floyd) would go by boat. Then Colonel Forrest, with about 500 of his cavalry, a company of artillery forces, and a number of men from different regiments passed out over the road that led toward Charlotte. However, about a mile from Dover they had to cross the backwater of Lick Creek,

201. A number of historians and writers state that Floyd's refusal to surrender himself with his command was due to the fact that he was wanted in Washington on a charge of embezzlement, secretly preparing means of aiding the secession leaders by dispersing the army to remote parts of the country, and transferring 13,000 muskets from northern to southern arsenals while he was Secretary of War, 1857-60. On that particular allegation it appears that history has been unjust to General Floyd. It is true that these charges were brought against him soon after his resignation in the fall of 1860, but it is also true that as soon as he learned of the charges he went to Washington and demanded trial. An investigation was made by a committee of the House of Representatives, and he was completely exonerated from each charge of the indictment in January, 1861.

202. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 502.

203. Ibid., 365. General Forrest stated: "Saturday night our troops slept, flushed with victory, and confident that they could drive the enemy back to the Tennessee River the next morning."

204. Ibid.

205. Ibid.

which was about saddle-skirt deep. This retreat was made without a shot
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 being fired from the enemy. Neither was an enemy seen or heard.

207

At 4:00 o'clock A. M. General Buckner opened negotiations, under a flag
 of truce, with General Grant, proposing an armistice for six hours to negoti-
 ate for terms of capitulation. The following correspondence passed between
 208
 General Grant and General Buckner:

Sir: In consideration of all the circumstances governing the present
 situation of affairs at this station I propose to the commanding officers
 of the Federal forces the appointment of commissioners to agree upon terms
 of capitulation of the forces and post under, my command, and in that view
 suggest an armistice until 12 o'clock to-day.

209

To which Grant responded as follows:

Sir: Yours of this date, proposing armistice and appointment of com-
 missions to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms ex-
 cept unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to
 move immediately upon your works.

210

To this Grant received the following reply:

Sir: The distribution of the forces under my command incident to an
 unexpected change of commanders and the overwhelming force under your com-
 mand compel me, notwithstanding the brilliant success of the Confederate
 arms yesterday, to accept the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms which you
 propose.

General Buckner advised all of the brigade commanders of his action and
 requested them to raise white flags at intervals along the line of rifle-pits,
 so as to prevent any further conflict at daylight. No white flags were rais-
 ed on the water-batteries, probably in deference to their success on the 14th.

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206. Ibid., 386.
 207. Ibid., 419.
 208. Ibid., 160.
 209. Ibid., 161.
 210. Ibid.

acceptance of his terms, Grant immediately proceeded to the Buckner's Headquarters, which was the Hobing Tavern in Dover. There Grant found General Wallace, who had preceded him about an hour and a half and who had had breakfast with General Buckner and his staff.

The meeting was not quite as strained as it might have been, for the officers of both armies were acquaintances. Grant made the Hobing Tavern his temporary headquarters. He permitted Buckner to send out parties to bury the dead and bring in the wounded.

212

In regard to the terms of surrender, Buckner wrote:

.....To have refused his terms would, in the condition of the army at the time, have led to the massacre of my troops without any advantage resulting from the sacrifice. I therefore felt it my highest duty to these brave men, whose conduct had been so brilliant and whose sufferings had been so intense, to accept the ungenerous terms proposed by the Federal commander, who overcame us solely by overwhelming superiority of numbers. This army is accordingly prisoners of war, the officers retaining their side-arms and private property and the soldiers their clothing and blankets. I regret to state, however, that, notwithstanding the earnest efforts of General Grant and many of his officers to prevent it, our camps have been a scene of almost indiscriminate pillage by the Federal troops.

After the formalities of surrender were arranged, the Union forces marched into Fort Donelson to take possession of it. Colonel J. G. Lauman, of General Smith's Division, was placed in command of the Fort. Upon Buckner devolved the responsibility of surrendering their troops, arms, ordnance, and supplies.

213

The prisoners were sent down the river to Cairo, where the rank and file were separated from the officers. The non-commissioned officers and privates were sent to Camp Douglas, near Chicago, Illinois. Others were sent to Camp

211. This building still stands and is owned by the Fort Donelson House Historical Association.

212. Official Records, Series 1, 7, 328.

213. Donelson Campaign Sources, 160.