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Abstract approved:

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The Ninth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry served Illinois and the Union for four years during the Civil War. Originally constituted as a "three months" regiment, the Ninth was reorganized for a three-year term of duty, and it eventually served to the conclusion of the war. The regiment was composed chiefly of men from the southern Illinois counties of Madison, Montgomery, and St. Clair. Throughout its existence, however, the regiment included men from all parts of Illinois, as well as some from other states.

Along with many other Illinois regiments, the Ninth participated in General Ulysses S. Grant's 1862 campaign for the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers. At Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth, the Ninth was in the thick of severe

fighting. The regiment performed gallantly in these battles, faithfully carrying out orders in the heat of combat despite tremendous casualties.

In 1863, owing to its dwindling ranks, the Ninth had the unique distinction of being transformed into a mounted infantry regiment. In this capacity, it took part in numerous skirmishes and small-scale engagements.

During the Atlanta Campaign, in 1864, the Ninth Illinois led a column of General William T. Sherman's massive army. The regiment traveled with Sherman on the famous "March to the Sea," and continued with him through the Carolinas in 1865. Then, as its last official act, the Ninth led Sherman's army in its Grand Review at Washington, D. C.

THE NINTH ILLINOIS INFANTRY:

A CIVIL WAR HISTORY

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CHAPTER 1

THREE MONTHS OF CAMP LIFE

When the Civil War began on April 12, 1861, the existing United States Army was small and unprepared to fight. In an effort to quickly raise a fighting force, President Abraham Lincoln appealed to the states for help. He asked for 75,000 three-month volunteers to aid in suppressing the southern rebellion.

As did many others throughout the North, the citizens of the southern Illinois town of Belleville exploded with enthusiasm and patriotic feeling as they responded to Lincoln's call. On the evening of April 15, and again the following day, the residents gathered at the St. Clair County courthouse to hear speeches in both English and German, to ceremoniously raise the United States flag, and to adopt a proclamation that expressed their support for the Union. A resolution stated: "The people of old St. Clair County ought and will stand by the President, and faithfully support him in keeping the oath he has registered in Heaven, to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, and see that the laws are faithfully executed."¹

"Young men, Lovers of the Union, Patriots" were strongly encouraged to join one of the volunteer companies forming in the county. Although some of its statements would prove to be erroneous, the Belleville Advocate urged men to answer the call:

Happily, it is not probable that the struggle

will be a protracted one. The science of modern warfare has been bro't to such a degree of perfection that all wars must of necessity be short and . . . it is hoped that the patriotic men of the county will rise in their might and . . . insure the speedy triumph of loyalty over treason.²

In Belleville, more than 100 men were organized into a company by August Mersy, a graduate of a military institute and officer in the German Revolution. Recruiting efforts were successful elsewhere in St. Clair County, as companies formed in Lebanon, Mascoutah, and the Shiloh area. In neighboring Madison County, many more men were demonstrating "their devotion to the Stars and Stripes" and enlisting in volunteer companies. The "Alton City Guards" and the "Alton Jaegers" were raised by Benjamin W. Tucker and John H. Kuhn. Joseph G. Robinson recruited the "Madison Guards" in Edwardsville.³

There were many reasons why men and boys volunteered for three months of service. Some looked forward to glory and recognition as heroes. Others envisioned a three-month vacation with pay--20 dollars a month for privates. Many caught the war spirit and enlisted in anticipation of adventure and the thrill of combat. Still others saw volunteering as their patriotic duty. "An old Texas Ranger, who had served several years under Sam Houston," gave his reason for enlisting:

I have enlisted in the Union army and am determined to fight the enemy of freedom to the bitter end, and till every freeman is allowed to speak his sentiments in the South. I'm a Southerner, but I pray God to continue the war, till Southerners of true American spirit can be heard.⁴

By April 22, the volunteers were ready to travel to Springfield, the state capital, where they would offer their services to Governor Richard Yates. Large, enthusiastic crowds gathered at the depot in Alton twice that week to bid the "soldiers" farewell. "Friends and relations gathered around each one, and there were shaking of hands, tears, Good Byes, and some heavy hearts too, as the brave fellows learned the first sad lesson of a soldier's life."⁵

Loren Webb, one of the recruits, let the people of Belleville know that the "boys" had arrived safely at Springfield on April 23, and that they were "all well and in good spirits" at Camp Yates, outside the city. Webb wrote:

The almost continual waving of handkerchiefs by the ladies, and of hats by the gentlemen, as we passed along the railroad to this place, and the very welcome reception here, have altogether seemed to inspire them with such courage that they are lifted above the true realization of the hardships of camp life.⁶

Although many of the companies that poured into the fairgrounds known as Camp Yates contained more than 100 men, the volunteers were required to organize into companies of 64 privates each. With officers and musicians, the sizes of companies ranged from 75 to 79 men. As was the custom of the time, every enrolled man was entitled to vote for company officers. The Belleville Advocate proudly announced that two of its editors, Alexander Hawes and Collins Van Cleve, had been elected captains of their respective companies.⁷

On April 25, 1861, the Ninth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry was mustered into the service of the state for a

period of three months. In honor of the six Illinois regiments that served in the Mexican War, the first Civil War regiment was given the number "seven." Thus, the Ninth was actually the third regiment organized. The following list indicates the ten companies, the counties where they were raised, and their captains:

<u>Company</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Captain</u>
A	St. Clair	August Mersy
B	St. Clair	Rudolphus Beckier
C	St. Clair	Dietrich F. Tiedemann
D	St. Clair	Alexander G. Hawes
E	St. Clair	Otto Koellein
F	St. Clair	Collins Van Cleve
G	Madison	Benjamin W. Tucker
H	Montgomery	Jesse J. Phillips
I	Madison	Joseph G. Robinson
K	Madison	John H. Kuhn

Upon the regiment's organization, an election for field officers resulted in the choices of Eleazer A. Paine as Colonel, August Mersy as Lieutenant Colonel, and Jesse J. Phillips as Major.⁸

The Ninth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry remained at Camp Yates until the afternoon of May 1, when it was ordered to leave Springfield for an important destination. After an overnight ride on the Illinois Central Railroad, the men arrived at the southernmost tip of Illinois--the river town of Cairo. The regiment immediately marched to camp, an

area already dubbed Camp Defiance. The Eighth and Tenth Illinois Infantry were already there, as were several batteries of artillery. Later in the week, these regiments were organized into a brigade, and Colonel Benjamin M. Prentiss was elected Post Commandant.⁹

From a defensive standpoint, the occupation of Cairo was a necessity; it was located at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. For some time, rumors had been circulating that rebel units were poised for a move that would result in the capture of Cairo and the severing of communications between the two major rivers. Most disturbing to loyal Illinois citizens was the possibility of a Confederate invasion of the state, launched from an enemy-occupied Cairo.

The area where the Ninth was to camp, between the town and the Mississippi River, was covered with very large trees and driftwood. The men worked hard at clearing the ground, and "after a time they had the logs all cleared away, the stumps burnt out, and a pretty respectable camping ground prepared."¹⁰

No tents were provided for the regiment, so for several days the men slept on hay they had spread out. In a letter dated May 13, First Lieutenant Loren Webb, of Company F, wrote, "we procured lumber and built some temporary barracks that do very well in dry weather, but are a little too much ventilated for the rainy season that has existed here for the last three days."¹¹

In early June, under the direction of Major Phillips,

the men finished constructing permanent barracks for the regiment. A correspondent of the London Times, Mr. Russell, reported on a visit to Cairo late in the summer:

The bulk of the troops are encamped in wooden sheds, provided with berths like those in a ship, which are disposed longitudinally, so as to afford the maximum of sleeping room. These sheds run continuously along the inward side of the levees, the tops of which are broad enough to serve as carriage roads. They answer well enough for temporary purposes, but would not do for a lengthened residence. There can be no drainage, as the ground on which they stand is below the water level.¹²

Lack of preparedness on the part of the state and national government, and haphazard distribution, led to inadequate supplies for the troops. As Marion Morrison explained, clothing was a major problem for the Ninth:

Many of the soldiers, supposing that they would be furnished with clothing by the government, took very little clothing with them . . . The result was, that many of them had no change of clothing for the three months they were in the service. They had no regular uniform. Some of the companies were clothed with such a uniform as they had selected and supplied for themselves.¹³

According to the Cairo Gazette, however, most of the troops at Cairo eventually did receive government-supplied uniforms. On June 13, the newspaper reported that all but a few companies were uniformed and fully equipped.¹⁴

Concerning food, rations were highly irregular. If no problems occurred, each man's rations were to be as follows:

7:00 A.M. Breakfast -- 1 quart of coffee; 8 ounces of bread; 3/8 pound of beef

12:00 Noon Dinner -- 5/8 pound of beef or mutton, well cooked with potatoes; 1 quart of baked beans for every 10 men (every other day); 1 pint of rice, bean, or vegeta-

ble soup (every other day in lieu of baked beans)

5:00 P.M. Supper -- 3 pints of coffee (properly sweetened with milk provided);
1/4 pound of beef or mutton¹⁵

The intention was to supply the troops with a decent menu, but that did not always happen. One member of the Ninth, who identified himself only as "SOJER," wrote, "Our cook . . . is preparing a batch of taffey out of a gallon of molasses which our Orderly drew as this days rations."¹⁶ In letters written in mid May, Private William A. McLean, of Company H, stated that the men had plenty to eat and that they were all as "fat as bears." Yet a few weeks later on June 4, McLean claimed to have lost 12 pounds since leaving home.¹⁷

Changes in food and water, daily habits, and climate immensely affected the men. As the spring and summer progressed, the number of men treated at the brigade hospital increased dramatically. Barely two weeks after troops arrived at Cairo, 500 men had already been treated at the newly completed hospital quarters. The principal ailments were diarrhea, dysentery, and various fevers. Specifically referring to the Ninth, "SOJER" wrote, "A good many of the boys have suffered from diarrhea, caused by irregularity in eating, and change of water. All our water is brought from the river. We are supplied with an abundance of ice, otherwise the water would not be quite so palatable."¹⁸

For most of the three months at Cairo, many members of the Ninth had no money. As early as May 8, "SOJER" com-

plained about the situation and indicated how some money might be spent: "The one great want in camp at present is tobacco; most of the boys being broke, they are unable to procure this great luxury."¹⁹ Periodically, the newspapers reminded everyone that the troops had not yet been paid. Finally, just as the Ninth's three-month term ended, a United States Paymaster arrived to pay the men.²⁰

Perhaps a lack of money contributed to the conditions in Cairo as reported by the local newspaper:

Cairo is quiet. The troops, instead of over-running the town, filling the grog-shops, insulting the citizens and committing the thousand outrages that it was conjectured they would commit, are orderly, quiet and unobtrusive, attending strictly to their own business, and deporting themselves generally in a manner that no one can take exceptions to.²¹

Brigadier General Benjamin M. Prentiss' "Regulations for Camp Defiance" also served to keep things orderly:

1. All non-commissioned officers will be within the camp at 8 p.m.
2. No commissioned officer will be allowed to remain out of the camp after tattoo without the permission of his Battalion commander.
3. After 8 p.m. no loud singing, no cheering or firing arms will be allowed,--nor any firing or cheering on the Sabbath. The Commandant requests that the troops will observe the Sabbath in an orderly and Christian-like manner.
4. Citizens visiting the camp must obtain a written pass from Headquarters.
5. Guards, when recognizing staff officers and commissioned officers of the line, will pass them in the daylight without the countersign.²²

Any carnival atmosphere that might have existed could not have lasted long, for after a few days, the monotonous routine of camp life set in:

5:00 A.M. reveille
7:00 A.M. breakfast, then squad drill

9:30 A.M. guard mounting and officers drill
10:00 A.M. company drill
12:00 Noon dinner
1:00 P.M. company drill until 3:00 P.M.
6:00 P.M. dress parade
9:00 P.M. tatoon
10:00 P.M. taps²³

Another anonymous member of the Ninth, this one calling himself "PRIVATE," gave details about guard duty, one of the soldiers' most unpleasant duties:

The guard for the day is formed . . . into . . . three reliefs, with a captain who has them under his care for the ensuing twenty-four hours; a sergeant stations the men and a corporal who has charge of each relief. The guard is required to be on two and off four hours, making eight hours of duty in all. The remainder of the time they must be in the guard house, and are not allowed . . . to go to their quarters during the whole time. In an encampment this size, a soldier's turn comes once in a week or ten days. In encampments of fewer men they are detailed so often that the duty becomes irksome. So much so that it is a real test of patriotism.²⁴

On several occasions, people were injured or killed when guards discharged their weapons. Blame for these accidents was most often rightly placed on the altered "Minie muskets" the troops were issued. These guns could be as dangerous to the bearer as to anyone within range of the muzzle.²⁵

Time was also found for the men to work on fortifying Cairo. Command of the rivers was essential, so earthen fortifications were constructed to provide locations for many artillery pieces. Old buildings were demolished, dirt was hauled in by rail, and anything that interfered with a full view of the rivers was removed.²⁶

During their free time, the men did such things as gather wood, cook, and wash. William McLean and his friends

enjoyed daily trips to the river for fishing, rafting, and swimming.²⁷

Amid countless rumors that Confederates were about to attack Cairo, the troops anxiously awaited a "brush" with the enemy. Although the rebels never came, an enemy of a different sort made its appearance. "SOJER" commented, "We will undoubtedly have hard fighting for the rest of our stay . . . as the mosquitoes are already volunteering and rushing into camp by the thousands."²⁸ Marion Morrison mentioned other pests, saying that "rats, fleas and mosquitoes were the principal enemies with which our boys had then to contend."²⁹ He also wrote of a battle that a member of the Ninth had with an army of rats:

The side walks in town were made of plank. Under these was a beautiful place for the rats to run and play. Sergeant [George W.] Williford . . . was Sergeant of the guard in the town one night. That he might have something to do, by which he could while away the dull hours of the night, he armed himself with an old cavalry sabre and took his position at a point where there was a break in the side-walk, there to watch the movements of the enemy. They had to pass through this opening, and as one after another made his appearance, each met a death blow from the Sergeant's sabre.³⁰

The troops were also plagued by the weather. They suffered greatly because of the intense heat and humidity of the Illinois summer. Rain and its effects did nothing to ease their plight. "PRIVATE" wrote in mid May, "The weather for the past few days has been very rainy, making everything dirty and disagreeable. All agree that Cairo mud excels in its adhesive qualities . . ."³¹ That same week an enormous amount of rain over a five-day period left 12 inches of water

standing on the Camp Defiance parade grounds.³²

During their stay at Cairo, the members of the Ninth were occasionally visited by people from home. A committee of gentlemen representing the ladies of Mascoutah visited the regiment in late May. Their mission was to present the regiment with a United States flag that the ladies had made and to assure the men that the folks at home were thinking of them. At the flag presentation ceremony on the evening of May 24, resolutions were read and speeches were made amid much enthusiasm. Henry C. Fike, chairman of the visiting committee, made a lengthy and eloquent speech in which he claimed that "the patriotic sons of those three gallant counties, St. Clair, Madison and Montgomery" had "a glorious future awaiting" them.³³ Three cheers each were given for the flag, the ladies of Mascoutah, the representative committee, and Colonel Paine. A member of the Ninth wrote:

. . . wherever he [Colonel Paine] orders the flag . . . to be borne, within the scope of human possibilities, it shall go, shedding light and joy upon its unhesitating followers. . . . I will say to the ladies of Mascoutah, be assured that your flag shall not be disgraced nor dishonored as long as there is an arm left to strike a blow in its defence.³⁴

In June, the Ninth received another flag; this one, a regimental flag, was sent by the "patriotic ladies of Belleville." The American Eagle was embroidered on a field of blue silk. Besides the familiar olive branch and arrows, the eagle also clutched a scroll displaying the words "Illinois U. S. Volunteers" and "Return Victorious." A scroll inscribed with "E Pluribus Unum" was held in the

eagle's mouth, and a semi-circle of 13 stars appeared over its head. Most of the work was done with gold and gray silk.³⁵

Newspapers often contained articles praising specific companies and regiments for being the best drilled or best looking, so it was not surprising that the men at Cairo believed they were ready to face the enemy. On June 13, Major General George B. McClellan, commander of the Department of the Ohio, visited Cairo. He promised the troops that they would be the leaders of the "Great Western Army" that would soon meet the rebels. Nearly 50,000 Confederates were near the Mississippi River between Cairo and Memphis, Tennessee, yet the Ninth did not get a chance to bear its new flags into battle. For the most part, all of the regiments at Cairo remained in camp.³⁶

Sometimes, small portions of the Cairo garrison were sent out to chase Confederate bands roaming the Kentucky and Missouri countryside. Detachments of the Ninth Illinois were nearly always in these expeditions, but they never engaged the rebels in combat. In June, Company H of the Ninth Illinois was part of an upriver scout that traveled nearly 40 miles from Cairo by boat and on foot. Referring to this particular march, William McLean unknowingly spoke for most of the soldiers in regard to all of the scouting parties when he wrote, "the rebels had left 2 or 3 days earlier so we marched for nothing."³⁷

In the absence of exciting clashes with the enemy, the

special activities of July 4 were more interesting to the Cairo garrison. A thunderous artillery salute from batteries all around the town opened the holiday. In the afternoon, the citizens were treated to a brigade dress parade through Cairo's streets. More booming of artillery marked nightfall. The highlight of the evening was provided by the Fourth Missouri Infantry, as it entertained people with a fireworks display and a torchlight procession.³⁸

The commanders at Cairo made periodic speeches in June and July to convince the troops to reenlist when their three-month term expired. As did all of the regiments, the Ninth contained many whose expectations of army life had not been fulfilled. These men simply went home when they were mustered out. For whatever reasons, seven men did not wait to be mustered out, but deserted before the regiment's term expired. While a few deserted, other men who were anxious to join the army were allowed to enlist. New recruits were enrolled frequently during the summer and assigned to the existing companies. In this way, 156 additional recruits joined the Ninth before its three-month term ended.³⁹

Some men were dissatisfied with the command situation. "PRIVATE" wrote, "How some of those in command here, obtained their position, and hold them now, is a mystery to me. Such exhibitions of conceit and assumption of brief authority, as are here witnessed, is disgusting."⁴⁰

Henry A. Kircher, a 19-year-old sergeant in Company A of the Ninth Illinois, openly expressed disgust with the polit-

ical maneuvering required for one to move up the chain of command. He wrote of being discouraged from seeking an officer's commission. Also, he complained of being surrounded by many uncultured and uneducated people and of ethnic antagonisms between Germans and Americans in the regiment. Kircher and many of his German friends from Belleville left the Ninth Illinois. Still willing to fight for the Union, they left for St. Louis to enlist in the Twelfth Missouri Infantry.⁴¹

Even if they had wanted to, some ex-members of the Ninth were unable to reenlist. During the regiment's three months of service, 46 men were discharged because of illness or wounds. In addition, nine men died at Cairo.⁴²

The Ninth Illinois Infantry was mustered out of the service on July 25, 1861. Owing to the fact that many men who planned to reenlist made short visits home, just 350 men were present when the Ninth Illinois Infantry was mustered into the United States Army for three years on July 28, 1861.⁴³ The oath the volunteers were required to take was as follows:

I, _____, do solemnly swear that I will bear true allegiance to the United States of America; that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all enemies or opposers whatsoever; that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and of the officers appointed over me according to the rules of the Army of the United States; so help me God.⁴⁴

The absentees gradually returned to Cairo and rejoined the regiment. In all, 239 of the 933 men who had previously served elected to stay with the Ninth Illinois.⁴⁵ These

"veterans" were augmented by new recruits who flocked to Cairo and were added to the Ninth throughout August and September. In a short time, the new Ninth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry was filled and ready to play an important role in the Civil War.

Chapter 1 Notes

¹Belleville Advocate, April 19, 1861.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.; Alton Telegraph, April 27, 1861; Ibid., May 3, 1861.

⁴Belleville Advocate, April 26, 1861.

⁵Alton Telegraph, April 27, 1861.

⁶Belleville Advocate, May 3, 1861.

⁷Ibid., May 10, 1861.

⁸Marion Morrison, A History of the Ninth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry, (Monmouth, Illinois: John S. Clark, 1864), pp. 7-8.

⁹Belleville Advocate, May 17, 1861; Cairo Gazette, May 9, 1861.

¹⁰Morrison, p. 10.

¹¹Belleville Advocate, May 17, 1861.

¹²Alton Telegraph, August 9, 1861.

¹³Morrison, p. 9.

¹⁴Cairo Gazette, June 13, 1861.

¹⁵Ibid., May 16, 1861.

¹⁶Belleville Advocate, May 17, 1861.

¹⁷William A. McLean to his father, May 9, 18, and June 4, 1861, William A. McLean Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

¹⁸Belleville Advocate, May 17, 1861.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., July 25, 1861.

²¹Ibid., May 23, 1861.

²²Ibid., June 6, 1861.

²³Ibid.; Belleville Advocate, May 17, 1861.

²⁴Alton Telegraph, May 31, 1861.

²⁵Belleville Advocate, May 17, 1861; Cairo Gazette, June 6, 1861.

²⁶Alton Telegraph, May 31, 1861.

²⁷William A. McLean to his father, May 4, 9, 18, and June 20, 1861, William A. McLean Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

²⁸Belleville Advocate, May 17, 1861.

²⁹Morrison, p. 12.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Alton Telegraph, May 17, 1861.

³²Cairo Gazette, May 16, 1861.

³³Ibid., May 30, 1861.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Belleville Advocate, June 28, 1861.

³⁶Alton Telegraph, June 21, 1861; Cairo Gazette, June 13, 1861.

³⁷William A. McLean to his father, May 18, 1861, William A. McLean Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

³⁸Alton Telegraph, July 19, 1861; Cairo Gazette, July 11, 1861.

³⁹Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois, 8 vols., (Springfield: H. W. Rokker, 1886), 1:282-297. Hereafter cited as Report of the Adjutant General.

⁴⁰Alton Telegraph, May 31, 1861.

⁴¹Earl J. Hess, ed., A German in the Yankee Fatherland: The Civil War Letters of Henry A. Kircher, (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1983), pp. 4-7.

⁴²Report of the Adjutant General, 1:282-297.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 425-451.

⁴⁴Belleville Advocate, May 3, 1861.

⁴⁵Report of the Adjutant General, 1:425-451.

CHAPTER 2

FROM CIVILIANS TO SOLDIERS

Throughout the summer of 1861, the number of Union troops sent to the Cairo vicinity climbed to over 11,000. They were distributed at Cairo, nearby Mound City, and Bird's Point, Missouri, across the Mississippi River. Newspapers, soldiers' diaries and letters, and the public complained about the seeming lack of military activity during the buildup. The Belleville Advocate frankly stated, "The War Department must awake from its lethargy."¹

In the meantime, the Ninth Illinois Infantry was busy, being "principally engaged in doing guard duty and drilling." Marion Morrison shed light on the situation:

The great matter was to have men well drilled. War was a new occupation to most of them. They were men who had been spending their lives quietly at home on their farms, behind their counters, in their offices, and among their tools in the workshop. The peaceful walks of life were those they were accustomed to tread. When their country was threatened . . . they left those peaceful walks and rushed to its defence. It was new work, and they must be trained for it. Much patient drill must be passed through.²

The Belleville Advocate eventually came to defend the army as well:

The time that has been spent by our men in camp--in "inactivity," as some fretful people say has been profitably spent in removing the weak elements, and educating the men to be soldiers. The country should be patient. Our friends are undergoing a course of discipline that will make them invincible in the field.³

A longer stay at Camp Defiance gave the Ninth Illinois time to adjust to the new officers. Listed below are the ten

companies, their captains, and the captains' home towns:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Captain</u>	<u>Residence</u>
A	John H. Kuhn	Alton
B	William C. Kueffner	St. Louis, MO
C	Dietrich F. Tiedemann	O'Fallon Station
D	Rudolphus Beckier	Belleville
E	Alexander G. Hawes	Belleville
F	Loren Webb	Mascoutah
G	Edgar M. Lowe	Pulaski
H	William F. Armstrong	Hillsboro
I	Joseph G. Robinson	Edwardsville
K	George B. Poor	Cairo

For those to serve as captains, first lieutenants, and second lieutenants, previous experience with the Ninth was important. Of the 30 men who held those positions, 20 had been with the regiment since April. Colonel Eleazer A. Paine, Lieutenant Colonel August Mersy, and Major Jesse J. Phillips continued in their capacities as regimental officers.⁴

With the advent of September, a command change in the Ninth took place. Colonel Paine was promoted to Brigadier General, so Lieutenant Colonel Mersy succeeded to the command of the regiment.⁵ A new commander came on the scene at Cairo as well--a leader who would become famous for taking action. On September 4, Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant arrived to assume command of the Military District of Southeast

Missouri. He established his headquarters at Cairo and immediately assigned command of the post to Brigadier General John A. McClernand.⁶

Clothed in recently received new gray uniforms, the men of the Ninth Illinois also moved to a new location, the result of a fast-changing military situation in Kentucky. On September 3, Confederate forces under Brigadier General Gideon Pillow and Major General Leonidas Polk ended Kentucky's "neutrality" by invading the state from the south and occupying Hickman and Columbus, a mere 20 miles south of Cairo on the Mississippi River. To offset this move and thwart continued enemy advances, Grant quickly organized an expedition and made his own offensive move. Late in the evening on September 5, the Ninth and Twelfth Illinois and a four-gun battery left for Paducah, Kentucky. The steamers "Graham" and "Terry," accompanied by the wooden gunboats "Tyler" and "Conestoga," transported the troops 50 miles up the Ohio River from Cairo. Grant made the trip and reported his success on September 6:

Arrived at Paducah at 8.30 this morning. Found numerous secession flags flying over the city, and the citizens in anticipation of the approach of the rebel army, which was reliably reported 3,800 strong 16 miles distant. . . . I landed the troops and took possession of the city without firing a gun.

Before I landed the secession flags had disappeared, and I ordered our flags to replace them. I found at the railroad depot a large number of complete rations and about two tons of leather, marked for the Confederate Army. Took possession of these and ordered the rations to be distributed to the troops.⁷ I also took possession of the telegraph office.

Grant placed General Paine in overall command and

returned to Cairo, leaving the gunboats and a steamboat at Paducah. The original force was reinforced within a few days by troops under Brigadier General Charles F. Smith, who took command at Paducah. Smith also completed the offensive by sending detachments ten miles farther up the Ohio River to occupy Smithland, Kentucky.⁸

In the Civil War's Western Theater, the success of any armies would ultimately depend upon control of major rivers. The bloodless occupations of Paducah and Smithland were, therefore, of tremendous importance to the Union, as they were located at the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, which flowed northward from the heart of the Confederacy. Furthermore, Confederate forces were prevented from controlling all of Kentucky and extending their line of defense along the Ohio River. Grant was completely correct when he wrote to his wife, Julia, "You have seen my move upon Paducah KY! It was of much greater importance than is probably generally known. . . . Our arrival . . . put quite a damper upon their [the Confederates'] hopes."⁹

Paducah and Smithland quickly became much like Cairo--defensive strongholds on the Ohio River from which future offensive operations could easily be carried out. The Ninth, Twelfth, Fortieth, and Forty-first Illinois Infantry, the Second Illinois Cavalry, and a battery of artillery were formed into a brigade led by General Paine. Brigadier General Lew Wallace and his brigade of Missouri and Indiana regiments later joined the Illinois troops. By December,

6,000 men were stationed at Paducah and 7,000 more were at Smithland.¹⁰

Reminiscent of their days at Cairo, the men of the Ninth Illinois drilled, performed picket duty, and helped construct Paducah's defenses. General Smith described the defenses:

It is a flat, wooded country, not much susceptible of defense at first, but by an unsparing use of the ax a very sufficient abatis, several hundred yards in width, renders all approach, except by the roads, which are guarded by the earthworks, very difficult, if not impracticable. . . . The line of defense is long, say 2 miles from the redoubt (Marine Hospital) to the bridge over Island Creek.¹¹

While Smith covered the military topics, the Cairo Gazette, in opinionated fashion, informed the public about Paducah itself:

Paducah is said to be a mere wreck of its former self--houses are vacant, streets deserted, factories are standing idle, and an air of desolation broods over everything. All this is because the former citizens there were not permitted to aid in the destruction of the government and the dissolution of the Union.

From the same printing office from which John Noble used to emit his secessionism, now appears a pert little weekly entitled the "Union Picket Guard," published by soldiers of the Federal Army.¹²

In fact, the Union Picket Guard was published by Captain Alexander G. Hawes of Company E, Ninth Illinois Infantry. The former editor of the Belleville Advocate surely provided some entertainment for his comrades with his "spicy and spritful little sheet."¹³

The Belleville Advocate spoke of other reading the soldiers might enjoy: "The best reading that soldiers can have, is contained in letters from their friends, and the next the local newspapers published in the places or neigh-

borhoods where they belong. If you want men brave or moral, cultivate in them the love of home."¹⁴ The newspaper also put in a plug for the American Bible Society by mentioning its need for donations. Referring to the more than 100,000 New Testaments that had already been supplied to soldiers, the Belleville Advocate stated, "Never did men need them more, and never will they be more likely to read them, than while time hangs heavily on their hands, and death from disease or on the battlefield stares them in the face."¹⁵

Indeed, the spectre of battle had come closer to shadowing the Ninth Illinois since its departure from home-state soil. Opposing armies in Kentucky were scrambling to control as much territory as possible, and with tens of thousands of troops involved, confrontations became nearly inevitable. At times, the enemies were so close that the pickets exchanged shots. To his wife, General Grant wrote, "We are likely to have lively times here. The Rebels are in great force . . . and an attack somewhere cannot be postponed many days."¹⁶

The men of the Ninth were "spoiling for a fight," and in late October, a portion of the regiment became involved in a long-awaited clash with the enemy. General Smith learned that rebel cavalrymen were stationed at Saratoga, Kentucky, on the Cumberland River. He ordered Major Phillips and Companies B, H, and I of the Ninth Illinois to "capture or destroy them." The detachment left Paducah aboard the steamer "Lake Erie" at 4:30 P.M. on the 25th. Accompanied by

the gunboat "Conestoga," the expedition traveled about 45 miles up the Cumberland River to New Forge Landing, arriving there at 3:00 A.M. on the 26th. The troops quickly disembarked and, in hopes of surprising the enemy, marched about 13 miles along unused roads and in the bed of a dry creek. Major Phillips described what transpired when the troops arrived at Saratoga:

Our skirmishers succeeded in surrounding and capturing the rebel pickets without firing a gun, and the advance of our troops was unsuspected by the rebels until we wheeled in column in platoon in the lane in full view, 600 yards distant from their camp, at about 7 o'clock a.m. They, to the number of about 160 men, dismounted, immediately formed in line, awaiting our attack until we advanced within 200 yards of their line. We, when first coming in sight, having charged on them at the double-quick, they commenced an irregular fire when we were at the distance of 300 yards, but at our approach broke for their horses, though many took shelter behind fences, trees, or houses. We charged to within 50 yards, halted, delivered a volley, and then charged bayonet, driving them from the houses and from their place of cover, and they then fled in every direction--some on foot, others on horseback. . . . Six of their men were left dead and 1 mortally wounded. Several others were seen to ride off clinging to their horses, and were wounded.¹⁷

Three members of the Ninth were wounded, but none were killed. The Ninth took 21 prisoners, 40 horses and mules with saddles, 30 bridles, 8 mule harnesses, 2 wagons, and more than 30 muskets, rifles, and shotguns. The victorious troops, along with their prisoners and captured property, returned to Paducah at 8:00 P.M. the same day.¹⁸

Concluding his remarks on the Ninth's first experience under fire, Major Phillips wrote, "Too much praise cannot be given the men for the spirit and energy with which they made

the difficult and laborious march, as well as their coolness and bravery during the fight."¹⁹

In November, the Ninth Illinois made its first long march. At Cairo, General Grant received orders to move in force against the Confederate stronghold at Columbus and its outpost at Belmont, Missouri, directly across the Mississippi River. Grant asked for assistance from General Smith and his men at Paducah. Along with other regiments in General Paine's First Brigade, the Ninth Illinois assisted in a false attack to mask the real Union plans. On November 6, the brigade left Paducah at 2:00 P.M. and marched to Mayfield Creek, where camp was made. The following day the brigade marched to Milburn, 25 miles nearer Columbus. On the 8th, nearly out of provisions, the troops began their return trip to Paducah, arriving there the next day. While Paine's brigade marched over 60 miles, Grant had fought an indecisive battle at Belmont.²⁰

Of the long march, Marion Morrison wrote:

This was about the first heavy marching the boys had undergone. It was very fatiguing. There was a disposition to straggle. To prevent it, in the 9th, a rear guard was appointed, which compelled all to keep their places. This, some of the boys who were very tired, no doubt thought to be cruel. But the result was, the 9th Regiment came into camp in Paducah in splendid order, while the 40th and 41st Ill. Regiments seemed to have lost their organization altogether on the return march, and came straggling into camp in small squads during the entire days of the 9th and 10th.²¹

General Smith issued an order in regard to the straggling marchers:

The imputations are of the most discreditable,

most disgraceful character to them as soldiers or citizens--that in returning, several regiments (the Ninth and Twelfth Illinois excepted) straggled home in parties without the semblance of military array--a mere armed mob, and that the property of citizens was wantonly destroyed, and in some instances robbery by violence committed. Such conduct implies a want of discipline . . .²²

The order "commending the 9th for their orderly conduct" so pleased the men "that they almost forgot their heavy marching, and there was no more complaining about rigid discipline."²³

One other long reconnaissance involving the Ninth took place between January 15 and 25, 1862. With the exception of the Fortieth Illinois, both brigades at Paducah made the march under General Smith's leadership. The troops moved southward, occasionally hampered by rain and mud, to the vicinity of Fort Henry, the Confederate post on the Tennessee River near the Kentucky-Tennessee border. The men covered 125 miles by the time they returned to Paducah. "The most that was accomplished, was accustoming the men to hard marches."²⁴

If the Ninth Illinois found marching difficult, the men would soon find battle even worse. On January 31, 1862, General Smith received a message from General Grant that read, "On Monday next I expect to start from Smithland, Paducah, and this place [Cairo] some 15,000 men for Fort Henry, to take and occupy that position."²⁵

Chapter 2 Notes

¹Belleville Advocate, August 29, 1861.

²Morrison, p. 14.

³Belleville Advocate, September 13, 1861.

⁴Report of the Adjutant General, 1:425-451.

⁵Morrison, p. 15.

⁶The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 128 vols., (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1900), series 1, 3:470. Hereafter cited as Official Records.

⁷Ibid., ser. 1, 4:196-197.

⁸Ibid., pp. 197, 257.

⁹Ulysses S. Grant, The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, ed. John Y. Simon, 10 vols., (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1982), 2:10.

¹⁰Alton Telegraph, December 20, 1861; Cairo Gazette, January 23, 1862.

¹¹Official Records, ser. 1, 4:339-340.

¹²Cairo Gazette, November 7, 1861.

¹³Belleville Advocate, October 18, 1861.

¹⁴Ibid., January 31, 1862.

¹⁵Ibid., June 21, 1861.

¹⁶Grant, 2:214.

¹⁷Official Records, ser. 1, 4:216-217.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 217.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., ser. 1, 3:299-303.

²¹Morrison, p. 16.

²²Official Records, ser. 1, 3:303.

²³Morrison, p. 16.

²⁴Ibid., p. 17.

²⁵Official Records, ser. 1, 7:575.

CHAPTER 3

CAPTURING THE FORTS

On the evening of February 4, 1862, Companies A, B, C, D, and E of the Ninth Illinois Infantry gathered their tents, camp and garrison equipment, and five days' rations, then boarded the steamer "V. R. Wilson." Along with more transports carrying other troops of Brigadier General Charles F. Smith's Second Division, the "V. R. Wilson" proceeded from Paducah, up the Tennessee River, to Bailey's Landing. The flotilla arrived at about 10:00 A.M. on February 5. The troops immediately disembarked and joined the First Division of Brigadier General John A. McClernand on the right (east) bank of the river four miles below Fort Henry.¹

The remainder of the Ninth Illinois, with the exception of Company H, detached as Provost Guard at Paducah, was brought up the river on February 5 by the steamer "W. H. B." These men were delivered to the left (west) bank of the Tennessee River. The "W. H. B." ferried the earlier arrivals across the river that night to reunite the regiment at Pine Bluff, Kentucky.²

Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant issued orders to his division commanders on the night of February 5. McClernand's division was to remain on the east side of the river and, in conjunction with the gunboat squadron of Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote, attack Fort Henry. On the west shore, Smith's division was to move southward from Pine Bluff and occupy Fort Heiman, the unfinished earthwork on the heights dom-

inating Fort Henry; the goal was to place artillery there. Both commands were to move at 11:00 A.M. the next morning.³

On February 6, the Ninth Illinois' baggage was placed aboard the "Keystone," and the men were given two days' rations of bread and meat before they began their trek toward Fort Heiman. A severe rainstorm during the night, following recent heavy rains, soaked the already soft river bottoms and turned the area into mire. Although Smith's men encountered no enemy opposition as they marched, they suffered intensely. The troops struggled along almost impassable roads and forded numerous swollen streams. At times, they were forced to wade in deep water that nearly submerged their cartridge boxes.⁴

Due to a late start and the horrible condition of the roads, Smith's command did not reach the abandoned Fort Heiman until about 8:00 P.M., several hours after Fort Henry had surrendered to the gunboats. The advent of darkness found the weary Ninth Illinois camped near a former rebel encampment, in close proximity to other Second Division regiments camped in and around Fort Heiman. Many of the men had no choice but to spend a dismal night on the damp ground without blankets, as the baggage left on the transports had not been forwarded, and some men had left their knapsacks behind.⁵

Encouraged by the successful capture of Fort Henry, General Grant quickly telegraphed the good news to his superior in the Department of the Missouri, Major General Henry W. Halleck. He also revealed his next plan: "I shall

take and destroy Fort Donelson on the 8th and return to Fort Henry."6

A bit hasty in his prediction, Grant was forced to postpone his attack because he wanted the assistance of Foote's gunboats. The ironclads damaged in the Fort Henry fight had to be repaired or replaced at Cairo; they also needed time to move down the Tennessee River to Paducah and then ascend the Cumberland River to Fort Donelson.

For several days the army remained in the vicinity of Fort Henry. The only activity of consequence was the reconnoitering of the country to the east, in the direction of Fort Donelson. Two roads were discovered--one running directly to the fort, 12 miles away, and the second, two miles longer, running approximately parallel to the first. These roads would obviously provide the routes of march to Fort Donelson.

General Smith's division was ordered to cross the river and garrison Fort Henry on February 7. This proved impossible, however, as the heavy rains had so swollen the Tennessee River that the men were unable to reach the boats waiting to ferry them across. While waiting for a bridge to be built to the boats, the Ninth Illinois camped near the river. With the bridge still unfinished the following day, orders to cross the river were countermanded. After its baggage was finally delivered, the Ninth returned and pitched tents at a location near its original campground of the 6th.⁷

Grant's orders for the move on Fort Donelson, issued on

February 10, were as follows:

The troops from Forts Henry and Heiman will hold themselves in readiness to move on Wednesday, the 12th instant, at as early an hour as practicable. Neither tents nor baggage will be taken, except such as the troops can carry. Brigade and regimental commanders will see that all their men are supplied with 40 rounds of ammunition in their cartridge-boxes and two days' rations in their haversacks. Three days' additional rations may be put in wagons to follow the expedition, but will not impede the progress of the main column.⁸

By 8:00 A.M. on February 12, Smith's Second Division had been ferried across the river and was in full march behind McClernand's First Division on the roads to Fort Donelson.

The march across the narrow neck of land between the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers was made by 25 infantry regiments and several units of cavalry and artillery. The troops marched along the two roads across rolling, marshy, thickly timbered country. Throughout the day, the First Brigade, Second Division--composed of the Ninth, Twelfth, and Forty-first Illinois--occupied the extreme rear of the column on the Telegraph Road. When close to Fort Donelson, Grant's army commenced a partial investment of the place; McClernand took the right and Smith the left. The First Brigade, Second Division went into camp at 6:00 P.M. about two and a half miles from Fort Donelson. It moved one and a half miles nearer the enemy and to the right later that night. Here the brigade was allowed to stay, in reserve of the Second Division.⁹

Fort Donelson, a bastioned earthwork enclosing about 15 acres, was located on a bluff on the left bank of the

Cumberland River, 100 feet above the water. Less than a mile downstream from the little town of Dover, Tennessee, the fort was situated on a bend in the river, allowing it to command the river in both directions. Any vessels attempting to move upstream would face the powerful armaments of two water batteries, constructed just outside the fort.

Northwest of the fort, Hickman Creek flowed into the Cumberland River. During February it was swelled with backwater, forming an impassable barrier. About a half mile east of Fort Donelson, Indian Creek emptied into the river. Branches of the two creeks zig-zagged in all directions, creating a series of deep ravines and 50 to 80-foot ridges that, though irregular in outline, ran nearly parallel to the river.

To supplement Fort Donelson's defenses, the Confederates had fortified a continuous line of ridges along the fort's perimeter. They dug trenches and created rifle pits by throwing the dirt high against the outer side. The line was constructed to face ravines mostly covered with thick woods and underbrush. To form a rude abatis, the defenders cut trees about chest-high and felled them outward in the direction from which an assault might come. Almost three miles long, this line ran from Hickman Creek to an area just east of Dover that commanded the Charlotte Road, the only available route of retreat in case of an overwhelming land attack.

The work of investing Fort Donelson, begun on the 12th,

was to continue all of the next day. Among the thick woods and broken ground, Grant's army felt for position and probed the enemy. The line was extended in both directions, drawn closer to the rebel works, and constantly readjusted to cover gaps between the units. There was a good deal of cannonading and skirmishing all along the battle lines.

On the morning of February 13, the Ninth Illinois moved forward to support a battery covering the main road to Fort Donelson. Early in the afternoon, the entire First Brigade, commanded by Colonel John A. McArthur, was ordered one and a half miles farther to the right. From this new position, the brigade could prevent a flank movement against the left of McClernand's division. After nightfall, the Ninth and Forty-first Illinois relocated to a position another half mile to the right. Here, Company A of the Ninth was detached to support a battery.¹⁰

General McClernand described the uncomfortable night of February 13:

During the afternoon of the 13th the weather turned intensely cold, a driving north wind bringing a storm of snow and sleet upon the unprotected men . . . The night set in gloomily, and the mingled rain and snow congealed as they fell, thus painfully adding to the discomfort of a destitution of tents and camp equipage, all of which had been left behind. The scanty rations which the men could carry on leaving Fort Henry were reduced to a small allowance of hard bread and coffee . . . Being in point-blank range of the enemy's batteries and sharpshooters, camp fires, inviting shot and shell, were not lighted.¹¹

The Union troops spent the 14th adjusting their positions in line. Occasional skirmishing and artillery fire

took place throughout the day. On the river side of Fort Donelson there was much noisy activity during the afternoon, as an hour and a half battle between the gunboats and the water batteries resulted in a convincing Confederate victory. The fort seemed far from surrender.

The Ninth Illinois spent the cold, cheerless day under arms and awaiting orders. After being detached from the Second Division, the Ninth, with the rest of McArthur's brigade, was sent to the right of the First Division--the extreme right of the entire Union line. The brigade received its orders at 5:00 P.M. and did not arrive at its assigned position until after dark. As Colonel McArthur explained, the troops had a problem: "Encamped for the night without instructions, and, as I regret to add, without adequate knowledge of the nature of the ground in front and on our right."¹²

The Forty-first Illinois held the army's right flank near the river. The Ninth Illinois camped to the left of the Forty-first. Immediately behind the hill which they occupied was the Twelfth Illinois. Units of McClernand's division were to the left of the Ninth Illinois, the Eighteenth and Eighth Illinois being closest.¹³

The men again suffered through a wintry night without fires for warmth. They remained under arms, few sleeping because the cold weather and three inches of snow discouraged them from lying down.

At daybreak on February 15, 8,000 Confederates under

division commander Brigadier General Gideon J. Pillow hurled themselves at the right of the Union line. General McClernand wrote, "Skirmishing and the distant firing of sharpshooters were now over, and large masses of the enemy, rushing towards my right, were first met by the Eighteenth and the Ninth and immediately after by the Twelfth, Forty-first, and Eighth."¹⁴

Colonel McArthur reported that his brigade was "surrounded by the enemy, who opened on us a heavy fire of musketry, at the same time outflanking us by one regiment on our right."¹⁵ In an attempt to thwart the enemy's flanking maneuver, McArthur's regiments relocated. The Ninth and Forty-first Illinois advanced about 100 yards to a high ridge, the Twelfth Illinois moved toward the right, and the regiments widened the distance between each other.¹⁶

The attacking rebels were difficult to distinguish, even when they were close at hand, for their uniforms were the same color as the dead leaves of the tangled trees that covered the sharply broken ground. The fire of Confederate artillery, using grape and canister, coupled with the musket fire of the advancing infantry, caused the Union regiments great suffering. Many of the men lay down to escape the severity of the enemy's fire. A humorous incident during the fierce fighting was recorded by Marion Morrison:

James Getty, of Co. F, aged about 60 years, was observed by Lieut. [George W.] Williford of his Co., to decline laying down to load. He stood, loaded his gun, and fired as deliberately as if he had been shooting at a target for a wager. The Lieut. told him he had better lay down to load, or

he would get shot. His reply was, "I reckon I know my business," and again raised his gun and deliberately lowered it upon his selected rebel. Soon the Lieut. saw him tumble over, and supposing he was killed, went to him. But he jumped up, and said he guessed he was not much hurt. He was shot in the shoulder, but he gathered up his musket and went to firing again. It was not long until another ball struck a silver half dollar, and mashed it up, driving it against his thigh, bruising it very much. Two or three buckshot were lodged in him. Still he stood firing away at the enemy.¹⁷

For two and a half hours, the Union troops held their ground, but when ammunition became scarce and fresh Confederate troops arrived to overwhelm them, McArthur's brigade and regiments of McClernand's division withdrew. The Forty-first Illinois was the first to be forced to retreat. With its line already thinly extended toward the right, the Twelfth Illinois attempted to take the place of the Forty-first as well. Soon, the Twelfth was forced to give way, followed by the Ninth, and then gradually by each succeeding section of line. Colonel Mersy of the Ninth stated, "After a hard-fought and bloody contest of two and a half hours' duration the regiment was compelled to fall back, our ammunition being exhausted."¹⁸

The regiments retired from the battle in good order, leaving the field strewn with dead and wounded. McArthur's brigade reformed several hundred yards to the rear, where it was not confronted by another Confederate push. Early in the afternoon, the brigade moved farther toward the rear. Colonel McArthur reported, "I then encamped in close order, and had the company rolls called and the men supplied with food (they having had none for nearly thirty-six hours), as

also ammunition to replace that expended. At 4 p.m. we were ordered to the extreme left of our lines to support troops at this place."¹⁹

By noon, the Confederates had achieved their goal. The Union right had crumbled and McClernand's division had been swept from the area of the Charlotte Road. An avenue of escape had been opened to the Confederates. By acting immediately, they might have escaped and saved their army, but the vacillation of generals and the exhaustion of the troops kept them from doing anything. In the meantime, General Smith's division, on the Union left, was ordered to charge the enemy works in that sector, while the newly arrived division of General Lew Wallace advanced to the right. Both moves were great successes; Smith seized a portion of the rifle pits before nightfall, and Wallace retook all of the ground lost in the morning, including the Charlotte Road.

Following another terribly cold night, during which the men were able to build fires, the Ninth Illinois was to take part in a final charge to completely drive the Confederates from their works. The charge was unnecessary, however, for the Confederate defenders had agreed, during the night, to General Grant's terms of unconditional surrender. On February 16, 1862, Grant's troops took possession of Fort Donelson. "The 9th Ill. Inft. and the 2d Iowa Inft. were granted the honor of first marching into the outer works of the enemy."²⁰ The Ninth was then assigned to guard 2,000

prisoners belonging to Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee regiments.²¹

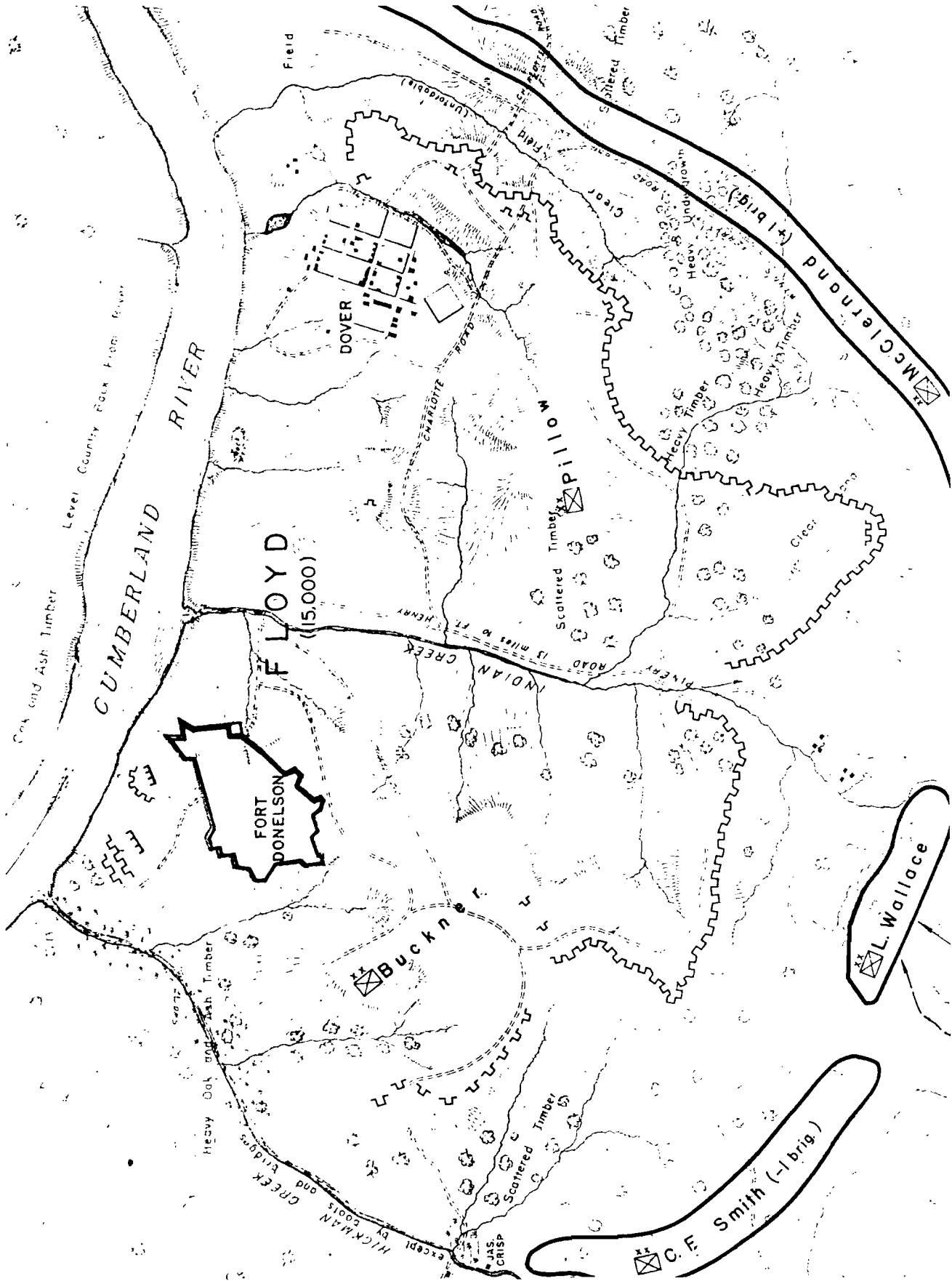
An exact number of prisoners captured was not established, and Grant simply estimated the number between 12,000 and 15,000. He did know that it was "the greatest number of prisoners of war ever taken in one battle on this continent."²² He also reported capturing 20,000 stand of arms, 65 artillery pieces, nearly 4,000 horses, and large quantities of commissary stores.

While large numbers of prisoners were gradually shipped northward to various camps, Grant's army stayed at Fort Donelson to bury the dead amidst the battlefield debris, to sort out the captured supplies, and to take stock of its own losses. The Ninth Illinois reported 210 casualties: 36 killed, 165 wounded, and 9 captured or missing. In terms of numbers, the Ninth lost the fourth largest number of men of all the Union regiments at Fort Donelson.²³

The capture of Fort Donelson provided the North with the event people had long awaited--the first major Union victory of the war. Newspapers carrying the story were quickly snapped up by ecstatic citizens who claimed that the war would soon be over and the Union quickly restored.

Though the war would drag on for three more bloody years, a momentous step had been taken. The Confederates' first line of defense, stretching 400 miles across southern Kentucky, had been pierced at its center. With its flanks left untenable, the Confederate line disappeared. The

Southerners evacuated Bowling Green and Columbus, and let Nashville, Tennessee become the first Confederate state capital to fall into Union hands. "The National authority was re-established over the whole of Kentucky, the State of Tennessee was opened to the advance of both army and fleet, and the Mississippi was cleared down to Island Number Ten."²⁴



MAP 2

Source: The West Point Atlas of the Civil War, map 27.

Chapter 3 Notes

¹Morrison, p. 21; Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 52:11-12.

²Ibid.

³Good general descriptions of the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson may be found in John Fiske, The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War, (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1900), and M. F. Force, From Fort Henry to Corinth, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881).

⁴Official Records, ser. 1, 7:586; Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 1, 52:12.

⁵Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 1, 52:12.

⁶Ibid., ser. 1, 7:124.

⁷Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 1, 52:12; Morrison, p. 12.

⁸Official Records, ser. 1, 7:601.

⁹Ibid., pp. 167-169, 215-217; Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 1, 52:12.

¹⁰Ibid., ser. 1, 7:215; Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 1, 52:12; Morrison, p. 22.

¹¹Official Records, ser. 1, 7:174.

¹²Ibid., p. 215.

¹³Ibid., pp. 175, 217.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 176.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 216.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 216-217; Morrison, p. 22.

¹⁷Morrison, p. 26.

¹⁸Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 52:12.

¹⁹Ibid., ser. 1, 7:216.

²⁰Morrison, p. 23.

²¹Ibid.

²²Official Records, ser. 1, 7:625, 629.

²³ibid., p. 168.

²⁴Force, p. 64.

CHAPTER 4

THE BATTLE OF SHILOH

During late February and early March 1862, Union troops moved to consolidate their newly won hold on Kentucky and western Tennessee. The Ninth Illinois Infantry was transported up the Cumberland River from Fort Donelson and, with three other regiments, took possession of Clarksville, Tennessee. The Ninth was rejoined by Company H, which had been left at Paducah during the operations against Forts Henry and Donelson. On February 25 and 26, the regiment camped at Fort Sevier, near Clarksville. It was transported on the steamer "Woodford" 63 miles upriver to Nashville, Tennessee's capital, on the 27th. The Ninth cooperated with elements of Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio to secure the city.¹

Occupying both cities was extremely beneficial to the Union armies, for large amounts of supplies were captured and several railroad junctions fell under their control. As had been the case when the Ninth helped occupy Paducah, many of the cities' inhabitants were not unhappy about the appearance of Union troops.

After a two-day stay at Nashville, the Ninth Illinois returned to Fort Sevier. The regiment camped there until March 6, when it left to reunite with the remainder of General Grant's army. By March 10, the "Lady Pike" and "Commercial" had steamed the Ninth down the Cumberland River, past Fort Donelson and Paducah, and back up the Tennessee

River to the vicinity of Fort Henry. Grant's army was concentrating at Fort Henry and preparing to go on the offensive again. "The 9th Ill. Inft. was destined to take part in this expedition."²

A second Confederate line of defense was formed with Memphis, Tennessee, on the left, and Chattanooga, Tennessee, on the right. The line ran nearly parallel to the important Memphis & Charleston Railroad, dipping through northern Mississippi and Alabama. Corinth, Mississippi, where the Mobile & Ohio Railroad intersected the Memphis & Charleston, was Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston's choice of location for a buildup of force. This Confederate concentration, and the railroads it guarded, was the objective of the Tennessee River expedition led by Ulysses S. Grant, who had recently been promoted to Major General.³

The expedition was originally composed of five divisions. Two new divisions, commanded by Brigadier Generals Stephen A. Hurlbut and William T. Sherman, were added to the "veteran" divisions of John A. McClernand, Charles F. Smith, and Lew Wallace. Later, a sixth division, led by Brigadier General Benjamin M. Prentiss, joined the expedition.

Nearly 100 steamboats, jammed full of soldiers, proceeded up the Tennessee River to Savannah, Tennessee, arriving there on March 12. The trip was "grand beyond all description." "The weather was beautiful and pleasant. Bands of music were playing. Everything that was calculated to charm was there. . . . The terrors to come were forgotten

in the joys and grandeur of the hour."⁴

While they waited for a detachment to raid the Memphis & Charleston Railroad, the troops were forced to remain on the boats and endure the cramped, unsanitary conditions for several days. Not surprisingly, many men became ill, and some died. The divisions were gradually sent farther upriver to Pittsburg Landing, where the Ninth Illinois finally disembarked on March 19. After marching through a ravine leading up 100-foot bluffs, the regiment went into camp a quarter of a mile west of the river. On the 23rd, the regiment moved to a camp another half mile west.⁵

Pittsburg Landing was a base from which Grant could easily strike against the enemy or the railroads. The area around the landing thus became a vast campground for 40,000 Union troops. The commanders considered Pittsburg Landing to be a good defensive position. A rough plateau, the area was covered by thick timber dotted with fields and orchards. Steep ravines and ridges cut the terrain. The encampment was protected on three sides by water--the Tennessee River to the east, Owl and Snake Creeks to the north, and Lick Creek to the south. The creeks were all at unfordable flood stage, 25 feet deep in places.

"Though the area was easy to defend, the Federals made little effort to organize a defense."⁶ Corinth was just 22 miles to the southwest, yet a Confederate attack seemed a remote possibility. Unfortunately for Grant's army, the "green" divisions were assigned camps on the perimeter,

early four miles from the landing, and closest to Corinth. The "veteran" units were well to the rear.

Grant was instructed to wait and rendezvous with the Army of the Ohio, on the way from Nashville, before attacking. So while the troops at Pittsburg Landing waited, they spent their time drilling. At least the loveliness of the season cheered the men and eased the boredom of camp life. A newspaper correspondent wrote, "The morning is pleasant. Peach and plum trees are in blossom, and with the singing of birds reminds us Spring is here. Every thing about camp seems to . . . invigorate the spirits of the soldiers."⁷

The Ninth Illinois was also happy to receive new uniforms. "Up to Friday, April 4th, 1862, the uniform of the Ninth Ill. was gray, with a stiff gray high hat. On Friday, April 4th, a new blue uniform was issued to the regiment to replace the gray suit."⁸ Little did the men of the Ninth realize that they had received their new uniforms just in time for what Ulysses S. Grant would term "the severest battle fought at the West during the war."⁹

General Albert Sidney Johnston's Confederate Army of Mississippi took several days to move from Corinth and form a battle line within a mile of the Union encampments. Amazingly, 44,000 troops made the move without the Union commanders' knowledge. The Battle of Shiloh, which took its name from the Methodist Meeting House near General Sherman's headquarters, began at 5:00 A.M. on April 6, 1862. The

Confederate battle line surged toward Pittsburg Landing in a surprise attack designed to trap the Union army against the Tennessee River and destroy it. Meeting only sporadic resistance, the Southerners completely overran the camps of Prentiss and Sherman by 9:00 A.M.

The Ninth Illinois Infantry had been placed in the Second Brigade, Second Division of the Army of the Tennessee. Brigadier General William H. L. Wallace took command of the division when Charles F. Smith was incapacitated by a leg injury. Brigadier General John A. McArthur commanded the Second Brigade, which consisted of the Ninth and Twelfth Illinois, the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Missouri, and the Eighty-first Ohio. With two and a half miles of intervening timberland muffling the sound of musketry, the men in this division's camps were unaware for several hours that a full-scale battle was in progress. Sergeant James Oates of Company K, Ninth Illinois Infantry, told how the troops learned of the battle:

My company had had morning roll-call and we had eaten our breakfast. The boys . . . were getting ready for Sunday morning's inspection, never thinking a battle was so near on.

I can never forget the sound of the first cannon shots that Sunday morning. At the time we heard the first cannon shots, fighting had been going on at the front for some time, but our encampment was so far to the rear that we did not hear the musketry firing. After hearing the first cannon shots others came in rapid succession, and there was not a soldier in our camp but knew a battle was on.¹⁰

The Ninth Illinois, numbering 578 men, some of whom were sick, quickly formed in line. Ammunition was issued, and the men filled their cartridge boxes. Remembering that they had

run out of ammunition at Fort Donelson, most also stuffed their pockets full of cartridges. The regiment was formed between 8:00 and 8:30 A.M., and the men watched aids and orderlies dash from camp to camp while they awaited orders.¹¹

At 9:00 A.M., the Ninth and Twelfth Illinois were ordered to separate from the rest of their brigade and move forward to take a position in the line of defense that was developing. General McArthur led this portion of his brigade about one and a half miles down the Hamburg-Savannah Road. Marching was difficult because the road was clogged with troops retreating toward Pittsburg Landing. James Oates wrote, "The number of stragglers was such it was almost impossible for us to keep our formation. . . . During the whole time of our march . . . it was through this surging, panic-stricken mass of fleeing soldiers, all trying to get to the rear."¹² Oates described the Ninth's reaction:

Not one of the Ninth offered to leave the ranks; but you could hear our boys pleading and begging the runaways to hold up and join our ranks, to turn back and go with us. It's but justice here to say that many of them did turn back and join our ranks and fought all day. There was not a company but had many to join. . . . The men were all right; it was the fault of their regimental officers. Some one blundered at the front which caused the stampede.¹³

Regardless of who was to blame, the "green" troops from the outer camps had fled in terror as the Confederates attacked. Many ran all the way back to Pittsburg Landing and cowered under the river bluffs. Those with enough nerve, however, stopped and began forming a defensive line about a mile behind their camps. It was this line, continually

strengthened by the arrival of experienced units from the rear, which the Ninth Illinois was to join. James Oates described the scene as the regiment neared the line of battle:

Up to this time our colors had not been unfurled. Col. Mersey ordered them unfurled, also ordered the musicians to the front. . . . Our band played a lively march and as each company took its proper distance, with our colors flying, I thought . . . the regiment going into battle . . . was the grandest sight I ever witnessed. In the midst of the army stampede there was our regiment going into action with music and colors flying.¹⁴

As the Ninth passed the landmarks known to history as "Bloody Pond" and the "Peach Orchard," the regiment veered left off the Hamburg-Savannah Road. A short distance away the regiment formed its battle line, to the right of the Twelfth Illinois, at about 11:00 A.M. In passing an open field, the men had seen enemy infantry, but it was the Confederate artillery that bothered them as they formed in line. To escape the bursting shells, the Ninth took shelter in a wooded ravine nearly 20 feet deep.¹⁵

As in any large battle, divisions and brigades were divided and sent in many directions. A conglomeration of units, therefore, could be found in the vicinity of McArthur's small command. At the far left of the Union line were the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Illinois of the Second Brigade, Fifth Division. Next came the Fiftieth Illinois of the Third Brigade, Second Division. The Twelfth and Ninth Illinois were adjacent, and to their right were the Forty-first Illinois and other units of the First Brigade, Fourth

division. Just beyond, to the right, was the famous location known as the "Hornet's Nest."

This left flank of the Union army was confronted by 5,000 Confederate infantrymen intent on plowing their way through and then enveloping the whole line. As the enemy appeared, the Ninth Illinois charged out of the ravine to its opposite side. "We commenced firing," wrote James Oates, "and after delivering our fire our boys would fall back into the ravine and load."¹⁶ For more than an hour and a half the regiment gave and received "a steady and destructive fire."¹⁷

The pressure on McArthur's left became too great for the thin line, and the Fiftieth and Twelfth Illinois crumbled and fled. The Confederates then gained the flank of the Ninth. "A most murderous crossfire," reported Colonel August Mersy, "poured into our ranks from the left, which we were unable to silence by a partial change of front of the two left companies."¹⁸ Those two companies, Companies I and K, were then under terrific fire. James Oates described what happened:

A Confederate regiment came at a double quick by the left flank and formed in our front not ten paces from us and poured a volley into us. Their colors stopped so near to us that I could count the stars. I remember well the stars were in a circle on their flag.

When they delivered the volley we turned to get out, many of us running down the ravine toward the river in preference to climbing the side of the ravine to our rear. It was this volley that killed and wounded so many of I and K.¹⁹

The Confederates were firing down the ravine, while the men of the Ninth were trying to escape. The survivors of

This slaughter fled pell mell. James Oates recalled, "The slaughter was horrible, and when ordered to retreat our dead and wounded lay so thick along our battle line in the ravine a man could have walked from the head of our line to the foot on their bodies."²⁰

After regrouping 500 yards to the rear, the regiment was ordered by General William H. L. Wallace "to retire to . . . camp, replenish the cartridge-boxes, clean the guns, and be in readiness for action as speedily as possible."²¹ The men did so, quickly got something to eat, and went to help the remnants of General Sherman's division on the army's right wing. Not far west of its own campground and the Hamburg-Savannah Road, the Ninth, reduced by casualties to about 300 men, entered action again. For about an hour in the late afternoon, the regiment "aided in checking the advance of the enemy's force, disputing the ground inch by inch, until compelled to retire on account of a flank movement of the rebels and a destructive artillery fire."²²

Throughout the afternoon, as his entire army retreated piecemeal from the battle, General Grant patched together a "last line" near Pittsburg Landing. It was this compact line, extending westward from the landing for just over a mile and a half, to which the Ninth Illinois retreated. The regiment's few able men got into line, only a half mile west of Pittsburg Landing, with the other shattered units of the Second Division.

One final assault was half-heartedly attempted by the

weary, hungry Confederates nearest the landing. When it was repulsed at the fall of darkness, the first day's fighting at Shiloh closed. The Union Army of the Tennessee had narrowly escaped destruction.

While the Confederates moved back to spend the night in the captured Union camps, the Army of the Tennessee stayed in its line. The Ninth Illinois "laid in line of battle near the camp of the Fourteenth Iowa Infantry, on the main road leading to Pittsburg Landing."²³

The night was miserable. Everywhere, the helpless wounded suffered terribly. At ten minute intervals, two Union gunboats on the Tennessee River lobbed heavy shells into the enemy camps to prevent the Confederates from sleeping. The booming shock waves, however, kept men in both armies awake. "Yet the crowning touch of misery . . . was added about midnight. During the evening the sky had grown overcast, and at about 10 P.M. a drizzling rain began. By midnight a severe thunderstorm was . . . drenching both armies."²⁴

During the evening and night, Grant received fresh reinforcements that guaranteed a Union victory. General Lew Wallace and his 6,000-man division arrived from Crump's Landing, and 20,000 men of the Army of the Ohio were ferried across the Tennessee River.

On April 7, the additional troops spearheaded the Union attack that, slowly but steadily, won back all of the ground lost the previous day. Weary of the two-day struggle, the

Union force allowed the Confederates to retreat to Corinth without harassment. For the greater part of Monday's fighting, the Ninth Illinois was stationed in reserve behind the main lines. Late in the afternoon the regiment, not having been involved in any action, was ordered to return to its original camp.²⁵

News of the Battle of Shiloh stunned both North and South. The 24,000 casualties there were more than the combined casualties of all the Civil War battles fought up to that time. One of the casualties of April 6 was the highest ranking general to die during the Civil War. Albert Sidney Johnston was mortally wounded while leading a charge at the "Peach Orchard" early in the afternoon. As his wound was sustained near the Ninth Illinois' position, James Oates dubiously claimed that "Gen. Johnston fell . . . by the fire of our own guns."²⁶

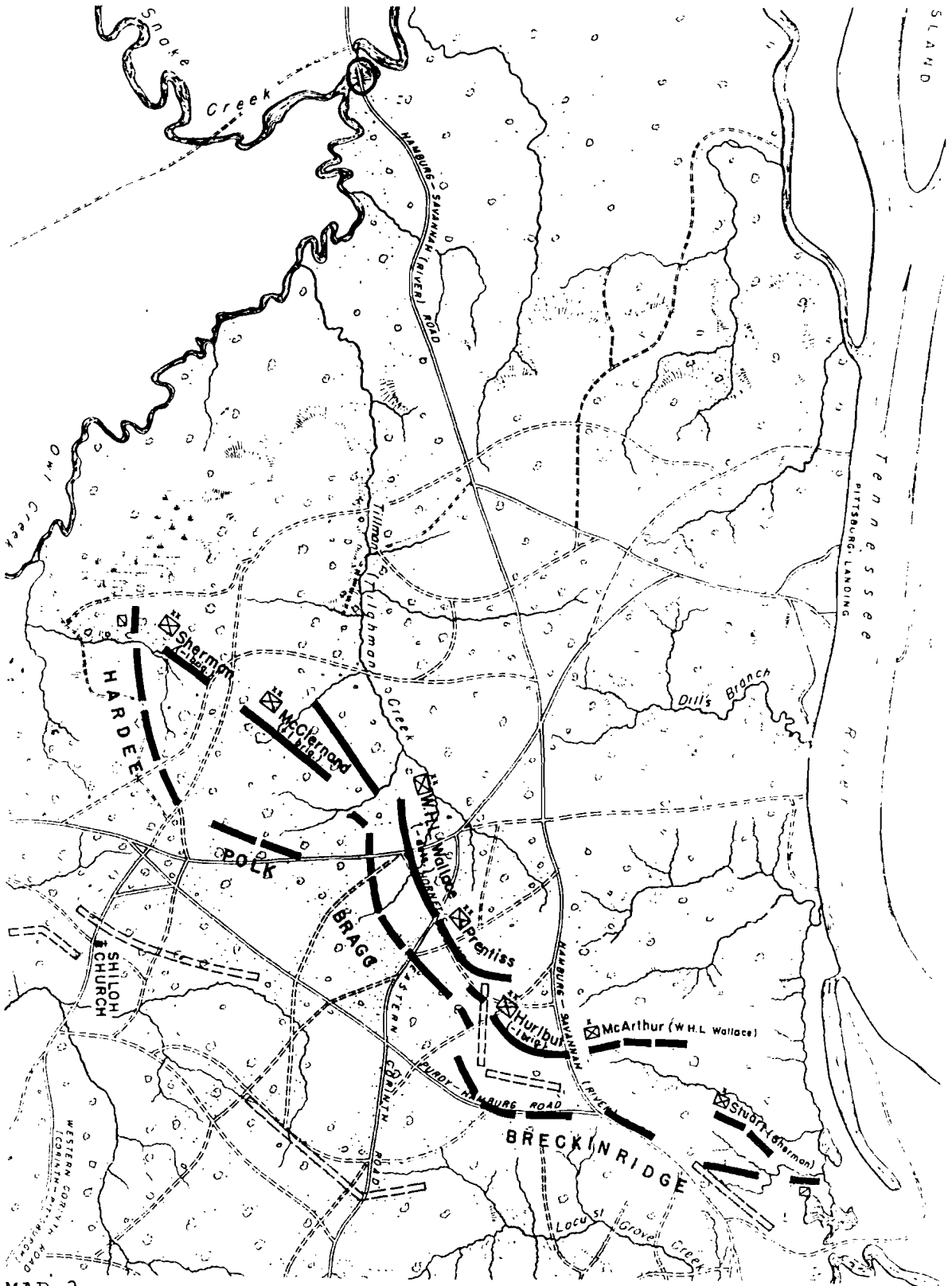
The Battle of Shiloh was one of the most decisive battles of the Civil War. The Confederates failed in their attempt to destroy the Union army or drive it out of Tennessee; never again would the Confederates hold a numerical advantage in the Western Theater.

On April 8, members of the Ninth Illinois returned to the scene of their bloody fight. The wounded were carried to the boats at the landing, while the regiment's dead were carried out of the ravine and were buried in one grave at the top of the hill behind it.²⁷

Sixty-one men of the Ninth had been killed during the

battle. Of the 300 wounded, many died in the days and weeks ahead. Some died because of the nature of their wounds, but others died of illnesses they contracted while in such a weakened condition. The regiment also reported that five men were either missing or had been captured.²⁸

The 366 casualties suffered by the Ninth Illinois Infantry at Shiloh represented the highest loss, at 63 percent, of any Union unit in the battle. It was no wonder that Colonel Mersy, himself wounded, exclaimed, "My poor boys--all gone; my poor little Ninth."²⁹ Echoing his colonel's sentiments, James Oates wrote, "And so it was; but a few of us were left."³⁰



MAP 3
 Source: The West Point Atlas of the Civil War, map 35.

Chapter 4 Notes

¹Morrison, pp. 25-26.

²Ibid., p. 28.

³Excellent detailed accounts of the Tennessee River expedition and the resulting Battle of Shiloh may be found in James Lee McDonough, Shiloh--in Hell before Night, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1977), and Wiley Sword, Shiloh: Bloody April, (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1974).

⁴Morrison, p. 29.

⁵Ibid.

⁶David Nevin, The Road to Shiloh, (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1983), p. 105.

⁷Cairo Gazette, April 3, 1862.

⁸James Oates, A Gallant Regiment: And the Place it Holds in National History. (Belleville, Illinois: Post and Zeitung Publishing Co., 1899), p. 2.

⁹Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, 2 vols, (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1886), 2:355-356.

¹⁰Oates, p. 2.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁵Ibid.; Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 10:155.

¹⁶Oates, p. 3.

¹⁷Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 10:155.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Oates, pp. 3-4.

²⁰Ibid., p. 3.

²¹Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 10:155.

Chapter 4 Notes

¹Morrison, pp. 25-26.

²Ibid., p. 28.

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⁴Morrison, p. 29.

⁵Ibid.

⁶David Nevin, The Road to Shiloh, (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1983), p. 105.

⁷Cairo Gazette, April 3, 1862.

⁸James Oates, A Gallant Regiment: And the Place it Holds in National History. (Belleville, Illinois: Post and Zeitung Publishing Co., 1899), p. 2.

⁹Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, 2 vols, (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1886), 2:355-356.

¹⁰Oates, p. 2.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁵Ibid.; Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 10:155.

¹⁶Oates, p. 3.

¹⁷Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 10:155.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Oates, pp. 3-4.

²⁰Ibid., p. 3.

²¹Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 10:155.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Sword, p. 374.

²⁵Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 10:155.

²⁶Oates, p. 3.

²⁷Ibid., p. 4.

²⁸Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 10:101.

²⁹Oates, p. 4.

³⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

OPERATIONS AROUND CORINTH

Corinth, Mississippi, continued to be the goal of the Union's western armies. On April 11, 1862, Major General Henry W. Halleck, overall commander in the West, arrived at Pittsburg Landing to personally lead an advance to Corinth. To this end, Halleck collected and combined three armies. During April, the Army of the Tennessee was joined by the Army of the Mississippi and the Army of the Ohio.¹

While the armies gathered, the units that had fought in the Battle of Shiloh remained in their camps around the battlefield. Marion Morrison wrote:

The 9th Ill. Inft. remained in camp on the battle-ground of Shiloh, exposed to all the sickening influences of the nearness of so many dead animals, as well as offensive odor arising from the shallow and imperfect burial, which necessarily had to be given to so great a multitude of dead. . . . That, together with the diet upon which the soldiers had to live, produced disease to an alarming extent. Here the regiment remained in camp . . . over three weeks.²

General Halleck organized 120,000 troops into a right wing, center, left wing, and reserve. The Army of the Tennessee, minus the divisions of John A. McClernand and Lew Wallace, was assigned to the right wing. Major General George H. Thomas' division from the Army of the Ohio was also placed in the right wing, and Thomas was given command. At Shiloh, John A. McArthur and William H. L. Wallace had been seriously wounded, the latter mortally. The Ninth Illinois was thus introduced to two new commanders. Brigadier General

Thomas A. Davies took command of the division, and Brigadier General Richard J. Oglesby assumed command of the brigade.³

The advance toward Corinth began on April 29. Existing roads were corduroyed and new ones were built. Moving through the wilderness was not enjoyable for the Ninth Illinois. Marion Morrison explained, "The country here is very poor and broken, and water very scarce and unfit for use. A great many of the men were sick with the Diarrhea and Typhoid Fever."⁴

The army moved just a few miles each day, and the distance covered was less than a mile per day nearer Corinth. The reason for the slow progress was Halleck's fear of a surprise attack like the one at Shiloh. He was overly cautious, and after each day's advance, he had the army erect breastworks to prepare for an attack. Marion Morrison wrote of the Ninth Illinois' progress:

On the 17th, [the regiment] moved forward again one mile, and one-half mile on the 19th. This brought our line within two and a-half miles of Corinth . . . On the 21st of May, our line advanced 400 yards, and again on the 29th 400 yards more.⁵

"There was no need for Halleck to be so careful. The Confederate army, battered and broken, was hardly in condition to fight."⁶ General P. G. T. Beauregard had only about half the number of men of Halleck. When the pressure became too great upon his defenses, Beauregard elected to evacuate Corinth with his inferior force. With little more than infrequent minor skirmishes along the way from Pittsburg Landing, the Union troops captured Corinth on May 30.

As quickly as they ascertained that the enemy had retreated from Corinth, two divisions of the right wing joined the left wing to pursue. The Ninth Illinois was involved in what proved to be a fruitless 30 mile chase to Booneville, Mississippi. On June 13, the regiment set up camp along the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, two and a half miles south of Corinth.⁷

Possession of Corinth was of strategic importance to the Union war effort. The Memphis & Charleston Railroad was severed, thus robbing the Confederates of a major line connecting the east and the west. This left the Southern Mississippi Railroad, running eastward from Vicksburg, as the last east-west link across the Confederacy.

To the soldiers themselves, however, bloodlessly gaining control of Corinth was a hollow victory. General Grant wrote, "I know the officers and men . . . were disappointed at the result. They could not see how the mere occupation of places was to close the war while large and effective rebel armies existed."⁸

Once Corinth was occupied, the army was divided and sent in many directions to tighten control over Tennessee and northern Mississippi. The Army of the Mississippi and a portion of the Army of the Tennessee, including the Ninth Illinois Infantry, stayed at Corinth. From June 13 to August 16, 1862, the Ninth Illinois remained in camp two and a half miles south of Corinth. The regiment was then separated from its division and moved ten miles south to Rienzi. Here it

performed outpost duty through the end of September.⁹

Little of consequence, aside from personnel changes, affected the Ninth at this time. Several officers resigned, while others were promoted within the regiment. Many men were discharged because of illness or wounds. Others were able to recover from their wounds and join the ranks again.¹⁰

High-level personnel changes occurred as well. General Halleck left for Washington to assume the duties of general in chief of the Union Army, and General Grant moved to Jackson, Tennessee, to head the District of West Tennessee. Major General William S. Rosecrans was left in charge of Corinth.

In late September, Confederate Major General Earl Van Dorn took action to wrest control of Corinth away from Rosecrans. He gathered 22,000 men at Ripley, Mississippi, and started toward his objective on September 29. Warned of Van Dorn's approach, Rosecrans began moving his detachments back to Corinth from the outlying area. His force totalled about 23,000 men.

On October 1, the Ninth Illinois received orders to march from Rienzi and rejoin its brigade and division. The following day the men arrived at their old camp, two and a half miles south of Corinth. At noon they reported to General Oglesby, commander of the Second Brigade.¹¹

The Ninth Illinois, with the rest of General Davies' Second Division, marched to Corinth at daylight on October 3. As they approached, the men occasionally heard the boom of

distant cannons. In preparation for the upcoming battle, each man was supplied with 100 rounds of ammunition and three days' rations. By 9:00 A.M. the troops had passed through town and occupied their assigned position, one and a half miles northwest of Corinth, between the Memphis & Charleston and Mobile & Ohio Railroads.¹²

Corinth was well-defended by a line of redoubts a short distance from town. In addition, the defenders could use a line of entrenchments that had been constructed by the Confederates, prior to their May evacuation, about two miles from town. It was to these old Confederate earthworks that Davies' division moved, at about 10:00 A.M., to meet the enemy advance.¹³

Thinly stretched in an attempt to cover a gap to its left, Davies' line was also made up of under-manned units. The effective strength of the Ninth Illinois was just 359 officers and men. In the Second Brigade's battle line, the Ninth Illinois held the right. To its left were the Twelfth Illinois and the Eighty-first Ohio, and beyond, the Third Brigade. To the Ninth's right was the First Brigade.¹⁴

At 10:00 A.M. the Confederate attack began, the brunt being against units on the left of the Ninth's position. The Third Brigade was forced to fall back, creating a gap in the Union line. The enemy exploited this gap and simultaneously attacked Oglesby's brigade on the left and in front. Private Charles Cowell of Company I, Ninth Illinois Infantry, told how this happened:

This ground was very hilly and covered with a thick growth of underbrush, and the Rebels being much better acquainted with the lay of the ground than we were took advantage of the ground and attacked us in front to draw more attention there, while a part of their forces came in behind us, as we did not have men enough to guard such an extensive line.¹⁵

Marion Morrison described the inevitable result of the Confederate break-through:

The 81st Ohio . . . gave way and moved in confusion and disorder to the right and rear, followed very soon by the 12th Ill., and then the 9th moved in the same manner.

In attempting to check the too hasty advance of the Rebels, the 9th Ill. lost Capt. Britt, killed, and the two Captains Lowe and Lieutenants Hughes and Ulen, together with 53 enlisted men, captured.¹⁶

Captain Gilbert G. Lowe of Company K explained how he and his men were captured:

The enemy were gradually approaching from the front, and our line was being engaged, when I noticed a panic in my company. I was on the extreme left of our Regiment. Many of my men broke out of the ditch and started back. I ordered every man back to his place. They told me the 12th Ill. and 81st Ohio were running. I told them it mattered not; we would stay there until we were ordered away. I . . . expected to hear the order to change front to rear, on first company. But it did not come. Soon after, I heard the order to move by the right flank; but it was too late. Already the enemy were in our rear. I saw it would be death for my men to attempt to leave their position, and I surrendered with seventeen of my command.¹⁷

At an open field 1000 yards behind the breastworks, Davies' remaining troops were able to reform and establish a line. Though the Confederates soon formed there in opposition, Davies fell back before more fighting commenced. Davies formed another battle line at the junction of the Chewalla and Columbus Roads, but when no reinforcements came

the division retreated without a fight. Finally Davies' small force found an area where the men could make a stand without much chance of being flanked and surrounded. In the edge of some woods, 725 yards in front of Battery Robinett, they lay partially concealed with an open field in their front. At the far left of the line, the Ninth Illinois' flank was protected by Davies' artillery and by the guns of Batteries Robinett and Williams.¹⁸

For a short time the men were able to rest, and wagons brought up water from the rear. It was a respite they sorely needed. General Davies wrote, "The day was intensely hot, and, the men having been twelve hours under arms, many had fallen from sheer exhaustion, sun-stroke, and other casualties."¹⁹

The Confederates, having halted to regroup and rest, again launched an assault that fell mainly on Davies' division. Because of its proximity to a white structure, the soldiers called this action the "Battle of the White House." Referring to the Ninth, Charles Cowell wrote, "Once more the boys plunged into the dreadful scene and fought like tigers [sic] till night when darkness prevented it any longer."²⁰

General Rosecrans adjusted his lines after nightfall. The Ninth Illinois relocated to the yard of a home at the north edge of Corinth. It occupied the right flank of Davies' division, just to the west of Battery Powell.²¹

The Confederates began shelling the town before dawn. "The shells were flying through the air like mosquitos of a

summer night," wrote Charles Cowell, "and I thought they were the prettiest thing a busting in the air I ever saw, most especially when they did not come close."²²

Between 9:00 and 10:00 A.M. on the morning of October 4, the Confederates renewed their infantry charges. Charles Cowell described what he saw:

They came on to us in great masses. . . . On they came, our cannons mowed them down, the siege guns were a crossfiring on them, our infantry a pouring a deadly fire into them. But all in vain, on they came and scaled our guns.²³

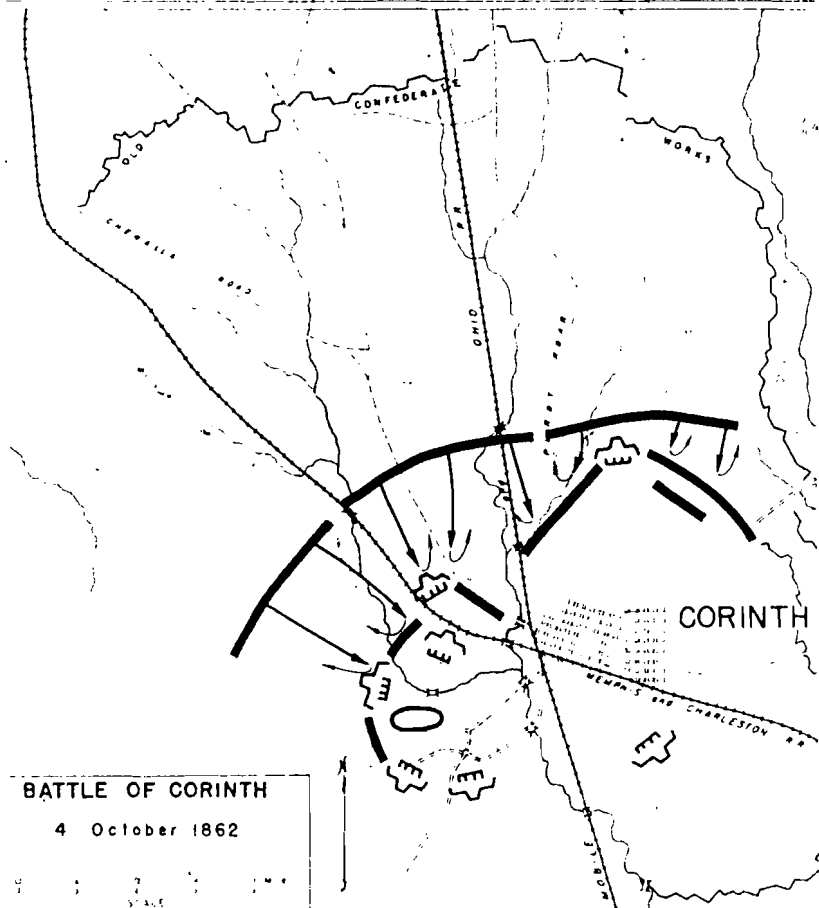
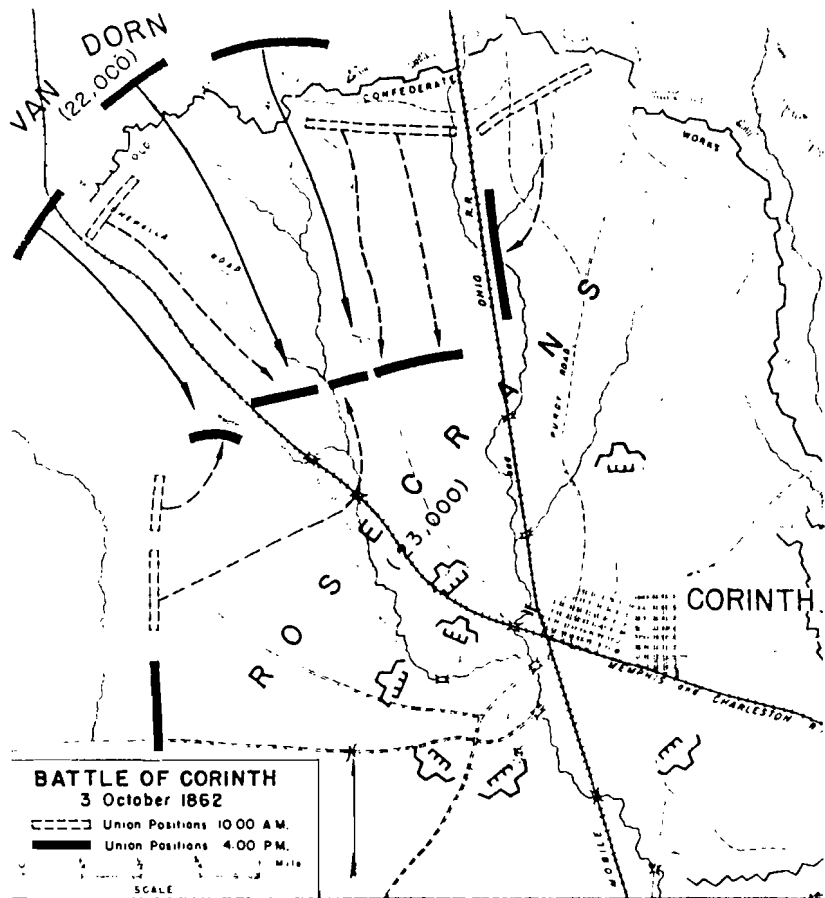
The Confederates had blasted into the Union line and briefly captured Battery Powell, sending blue-coated soldiers from that sector scurrying into Corinth. Having its right flank exposed, the Ninth Illinois also fled.²⁴

Fortunately for Corinth's defenders, units quickly moved in from both sides and caught the Confederates in a cross-fire. Under a withering fire, the rebels either ran back across the fields or surrendered. With remnants of other regiments, the men of the Ninth Illinois formed a battle line again. The Battle of Corinth, however, was over. At daylight on the 5th, the Ninth marched on the Chewalla Road in pursuit of the retreating enemy, but it was ordered back to Corinth after moving five miles.²⁵

The already dwindling ranks of the Ninth Illinois were decimated at Corinth, as they had been at Fort Donelson and Shiloh before. The regiment reported 148 casualties: 11 killed, 82 wounded, and 55 captured.²⁶

Following the successful defense of Corinth, the Ninth

was sent southward for more outpost duty. The regiment was split, and Colonel Mersy commanded five companies at Rienzi, while Lieutenant Colonel Phillips commanded the other five companies at Danville. On November 28, the entire regiment returned to Corinth and established its camp there. Lacking any fighting to write about, Marion Morrison simply said, "The Regiment remained in camp until March [1863], not having much duty, except guard duty."²⁷



MAP 4
Source: The West Point Atlas of the Civil War, map 101.

Chapter 5 Notes

¹Good general accounts of the move to Corinth, and the Battle of Corinth in October 1862, may be found in M. F. Force, From Fort Henry to Corinth, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), and Francis Vinton Greene, The Mississippi, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882).

²Morrison, p. 35.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Nevin, p. 157.

⁷Morrison, pp. 36-37.

⁸Grant, 1:381.

⁹Morrison, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 37.

¹¹Ibid., p. 38.

¹²Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 17:251.

¹³Ibid., pp. 251-252.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 251-252, 282-284.

¹⁵"An Infantryman at Corinth: The Diary of Charles Cowell," Civil War Times Illustrated, 13 (November 1974), pp. 10-11. Hereafter cited as "An Infantryman at Corinth."

¹⁶Morrison, p. 39.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁸Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 17:253-255.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 255.

²⁰"An Infantryman at Corinth," p. 11.

²¹Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 17:258.

²²"An Infantryman at Corinth," p. 12.

²³Ibid., p. 13.

²⁴Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 17:259.

²⁵Ibid., p. 283.

²⁶Ibid., p. 175.

²⁷Morrison, p. 45.

CHAPTER 6

SCOUTS AND SKIRMISHES

Instead of recruiting more cavalry units for scouting purposes, Union leaders assigned mounts to existing infantry regiments to strengthen the Army's mounted force. The Ninth Illinois was deemed a good candidate for such service since there were only about 350 men left in the regiment.

Lieutenant Colonel Phillips, commanding the Ninth because of Colonel Mersy's assumption of the brigade command, was notified that horses were unavailable for the regiment. When offered mules instead, Phillips "replied that he would prefer the mules, as they would endure more hard usage and require less care."¹

By March 20, 1863, the Ninth had received mules and became known as the Ninth Illinois Mounted Infantry. Its first mission as a mounted regiment began on April 14. The goal of the expedition, up the Tuscumbia Valley to Courtland, Alabama, was to draw attention away from a railroad raid at another location. The recently organized Second Division, Sixteenth Army Corps, Army of the Tennessee, under Brigadier General Grenville M. Dodge, took part.²

The Ninth Illinois was involved in a skirmish near Great Bear Creek on April 17. In cooperation with three cavalry units--the First Alabama, the Fifteenth Illinois, and the Tenth Missouri--the Ninth, fighting dismounted, drove the enemy from Buzzard Roost. While inflicting 67 casualties and taking 23 prisoners, the Union force lost about the same

number of men. Through an unfortunate circumstance, part of the rebel force was driven to the area where Company D of the Ninth was guarding prisoners. Forty-three members of Company D were thus captured. Five men of the Ninth were wounded. On the 19th, the regiment again took part in action at Buzzard Roost, surviving the encounter without casualties. Led by Lieutenant Colonel Phillips, Companies A and B were involved in capturing Florence, Alabama, on April 24. The rest of the Ninth helped capture Tuscumbia, Alabama, the same day.³

After minor fighting near Town Creek on April 28, Dodge's force began returning to Corinth, arriving there on May 2. Companies A, B, F, I, and K of the Ninth were quickly on the move again. They rode with the cavalry brigade of Colonel Florence M. Cornyn to Tupelo, Mississippi, fought briefly on May 4, and moved back to Corinth on the 8th. During the 25-day expedition, the Ninth Illinois Mounted Infantry logged nearly 400 miles in enemy territory.⁴

On May 13, the Ninth moved into the barracks formerly occupied by the Thirty-ninth Ohio, a mile southeast of Corinth. In less than two weeks, however, the regiment was on an expedition to Florence, sleeping in the open when it stopped to bivouack. Between May 26 and 31, the cavalry brigade to which the Ninth was attached destroyed seven cotton factories and other property that might have been useful to the Confederates. The Ninth took part in skirmishes at Florence and Hamburg Landing, Tennessee. The

raid through enemy territory was a success; 69 prisoners and 200 horses and mules were taken back to Corinth.⁵

On June 3, Colonel Mersy was ordered to move the Second Brigade--consisting of the Ninth, Twelfth, and One-hundred-twenty-second Illinois, and the Eighty-first Ohio--to Pocahontas, Tennessee. Mersy was instructed to "protect the bridges on the Memphis & Charleston Railroad to Grand Junction" and to "scout and closely watch the country south." He was also to patrol the railroad at least once each day and night.⁶

The Ninth Illinois was stationed at Pocahontas from June 5 to October 30, 1863. Almost daily, at least one company left Pocahontas to scout, escort wagons or trains, forage, or chase rebel bands. If enemy camps were the objective, the entire regiment would participate in the marches. Speed was important. The men often spent days at a time in their saddles, stopping only briefly to rest or sleep, and it was common to cover hundreds of miles in a single week. They rode through swamps, drizzling rains, severe storms, and rough country. Of the difficulties encountered on an August march, Marion Morrison wrote, "A heavy storm of rain came on . . . and the night became intensely dark. The darkness made it very difficult to march at all. Often the mules, with their riders, would tumble into the ditches."⁷

Sometimes the regiment exhausted rations because of extended marches. On one occasion, Morrison wrote, "Our boys arrived in camp at Pocahontas . . . after having been out

thirteen days. They left camp with six days rations. Where did the other seven days rations come from? . . . Perhaps, if the smoke-houses and hen roosts of the citizens along the way could speak, they might tell."⁸

Food for the mules was needed as well. Marion Morrison recalled a joke the men enjoyed while "helping themselves to the contents of a corncrib" near Ripley, Mississippi:

A woman appeared, with the usual cry, that she was a "poor lone widow, with six orphan children," and requested the Col. to leave her corn enough to make her bread until she could raise more. The Col. assured her that they would leave her some corn. . . . The Col. gave orders to the Adjutant to have a guard placed at that woman's corn . . . to see that some of that corn was left. . . . In the meantime, it had been ascertained that the family had a lot of wheat . . . and if they had wheat-bread, they would not starve. Hence, as corn to feed upon was scarce, the Adjutant, in instructing the guard to see that some of that corn was left, gave him a knowing wink . . . Some of the corn was left. But it was simply a little shelled corn in the bottom of the crib."⁹

The army was constantly in need of horses and mules, so the Ninth confiscated any animals it found. In describing the pleasure that Lieutenant Colonel Phillips took in performing this act, Marion Morrison wrote that "he has no mercy on Rebels, and takes all the horses and mules from them, that he can place his hands upon, without much trouble of conscience."¹⁰

Everywhere the Ninth Illinois went, thousands of slaves followed it to "freedom." Most Southerners looked on scornfully as their property, valued at millions of dollars, walked away. Marion Morrison, however, described the exodus of droves of poorly clad blacks as "a sight sufficient to

touch the heart of any one," and he noted that even "old grey headed grandfathers and grandmothers" were tagging along.¹¹

In addition to its daily activities around Pocahontas, the Ninth Illinois took part in five major missions while stationed there. On each of these marches, the regiment was part of a larger force made up of various units gathered from the region. Below is a summary of the missions:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Destination</u>	<u>Skirmishes</u>
June 12 to June 14	New Albany and Rip- ley, Mississippi	Orizaba (13th) New Albany (14th)
	<u>Results:</u> Ordnance stores and several blacksmith and wagon shops were destroyed; 25 rebels, 15 horses, and 7 mules were captured. ¹²	
June 17 to June 22	Ripley, Mississippi	New Albany (19th) Mud Creek (20th)
	<u>Results:</u> The Confederates suffered over 100 casualties; the Ninth lost 10 men killed and 11 men wounded. ¹³	
July 12 to July 15	Jackson, Tennessee	Forked Deer River (13th)
	<u>Results:</u> 35 rebels and 100 horses and mules were captured; the Ninth lost 1 man killed and 6 men wounded. ¹⁴	
August 12 to August 24	Grenada, Mississippi	Grenada (17th)
	<u>Results:</u> 57 engines and 500 railroad cars, a depot, blacksmith and machine shops, and commissary and ordnance stores were destroyed; 58 rebels, several hundred horses and mules, and more than \$8000 in Confederate money were captured; the Ninth lost 2 men wounded. ¹⁵	
October 6 to October 20	Colliersville, Tennessee	Salem (8th) Quinn and Jack- son's Mill (12th) Wyatt (13th)

Results: 50 rebels, 200 small arms, and 2 ammunition wagons were captured; the town of Wyatt was burned; the Ninth lost 5 men killed and 20 men wounded.¹⁶

The Ninth Illinois numbered roughly 330 men while it was at Pocahontas. During the first week of August, however, the Ninth permanently absorbed detachments from other Illinois regiments and added 208 new men to its rolls.¹⁷

On September 4, the Ninth welcomed another new face, as Reverend Marion Morrison arrived to serve as the regiment's chaplain. Since the regiment had been without a chaplain for almost two years, the religious practices of the men had waned. Under Morrison's guidance, the men attended regular services each Sunday and prayer meetings on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. "For several Sabbaths," Morrison wrote, "we held our services under the shades of the trees in front of the Colonel's quarters. Soon, however, some of the soldiers volunteered their services, and erected a comfortable chapel, 40 by 24 feet, in which to hold our meetings."¹⁸

Once the fall weather became too cold for tent dwelling, the men used the nearby timber to construct quarters for themselves. "Brick chimneys, left where houses had been burnt through the country, were torn down and brought into camp, and neat little chimneys built to their shanties."¹⁹

On October 30, however, the Pocahontas garrison was ordered to pack all of its equipment and march to Corinth. The men began their march in a heavy rain, leaving their

"comfortable little dwellings" behind.²⁰

The Ninth Illinois escorted a wagon train from Corinth to Iuka, Mississippi on November 3, and the next day it escorted more wagons to Eastport, Mississippi. At this time, General Grenville M. Dodge's entire Second Division was moving to Pulaski, Tennessee. The Ninth was ordered to scout on the left flank of the advancing column. After arriving at Pulaski, on November 12, the regiment was detached from the main body and sent south to establish a post at Athens, Alabama. It arrived there the next day.²¹

Two days after arriving at Athens, William A. Allen, the Ninth's Assistant Surgeon, wrote to his wife, Millie, "This is the 16th day that we have been in the saddle, feasting on hard tack and sorghum. . . . This is soldiering in earnest and no mistake."²²

The Ninth had been so busy "soldiering" deep in enemy territory that the belongings of the men amounted to what they could carry on their mules. It eventually became safe for the regiment's wagons to be moved to Athens, and when they arrived on November 21, "the boys were glad to have a change of clothing."²³

Marion Morrison recapped the regiment's move to Athens:

From the time we left camp at Pocahontas, until our train was brought down, we had been out 23 days, and on the march nearly all the time. During this time, we had with us no tents or covering of any kind, except such as we carried on our animals. We would march all day, often making 40 and 45 miles, and then lay down on the ground at night, with no covering but our blankets. During this time, we marched over 400 miles.²⁴

The men built "shanties" like those at Pocahontas. In building "New Athens," they used lumber from fences, empty stables, and the buildings of a fair grounds. It was necessary for them to preserve and reuse the nails from the original structures.²⁵

In ordering Lieutenant Colonel Phillips to take the Ninth Illinois to Athens, General Dodge wrote, "Watch the movements of the enemy, and gain all the information you can of the enemy, both north and south of the Tennessee. The object of our stay here is to open the railroad from Columbia to Decatur."²⁶

Using Athens as a base, the Ninth patrolled daily along the Tennessee River, the Memphis & Charleston Railroad, and important telegraph lines, from November 13, 1863 to March 7, 1864. The men also continued to reconnoiter, forage, and confiscate livestock.²⁷

The Ninth engaged in fewer skirmishes than it had at Pocahontas, but none more harrowing than a fight on January 26. Companies A, E, and G, about 75 to 100 men, were left at Athens while the rest of the Ninth went on a scout. They were attacked by 700 Confederates and two pieces of artillery. General Dodge wrote, "Captain [Emil] Adam [Company A] and his men displayed great coolness and judgement and fought with determined bravery, checking General [Philip D.] Roddey's command and holding them some two hours."²⁸

Adam was able to face such an overwhelming force for a

time because, like cavalry and other mounted infantry units, the Ninth had been issued seven-shot Spencer repeating rifles. Adam's small command retreated from Athens and braced for more fighting. The Confederates, however, were content simply to plunder the Ninth's camp and leave. The rebels captured 12 men, wounded 4, and killed 1 civilian.²⁹

The men lost all of their baggage and belongings except those items which they had with them. Assistant Surgeon Allen wrote, "They got all my blankets, my slippers and brush and comb, all the quinine, morphine and opium, but were in too big a hurry to get into my trunk."³⁰

Though the Ninth, throughout its tenure as a mounted regiment, had frequently fought Confederate Major General Nathan B. Forrest's cavalry, the men were also able to share in some humorous incidents. One involved Confederate Major Eugene F. Falconet who was being married in Florence. Marion Morrison wrote:

While . . . having the marriage ceremony performed, Lieut. Col. Phillips, with the 9th Ill., made a dash into Florence. Some one came into the room and cried out, "The Yanks are coming!" The brave Major left his fair companion, broke from the house, and over the garden fence, tearing down about twenty feet of it, dashed to his boat and was off. I suppose he did not fancy being captured just then.³⁰

On March 7, the Ninth Illinois moved 15 miles south to Decatur, Alabama. Because Confederate troops knew of the move, the men crossed the Tennessee River under cover of foggy darkness, using a hodgepodge of small vessels to reach the opposite shore. The regiment stayed at Decatur from

March 7 to May 2, 1864, continuing to carry out its previous orders. It was also engaged in minor fighting at Moulton, Alabama (March 21), around Decatur (April 13), and at Flint River, Alabama (April 17).³²

By May 1864, the Union's western armies had severed the Confederacy by gaining control of the entire Mississippi River, and they had gradually moved farther south into Alabama and Mississippi, extinguishing the threat of further uprisings there. As early as March, the men of the Ninth Illinois foresaw that they would move farther east to participate in at least one more major offensive. "Our moving across the [Tennessee] river," wrote William Allen, "may be the beginning of a grand move on Rome, Georgia. . . . I should not wonder if Rome or [Major General William T.] Sherman will be our destination."³² It was not until April 29 that the regiment left Decatur, but Allen had been correct; the Ninth Illinois headed for Chattanooga, where all of the western armies were congregating under General Sherman.

Chapter 6 Notes

¹Morrison, p. 49.

²Ibid.; Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 23:246.

³Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 23:248, 251-258.

⁴Ibid., pp. 248-249, 257.

⁵Ibid., pp. 349-351 ; Morrison, p. 54.

⁶Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 3, 24:382.

⁷Morrison, p. 61.

⁸Ibid., p. 63.

⁹Ibid., pp. 68-69.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 58.

¹¹Ibid., p. 70.

¹²Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 2, 24:473.

¹³Ibid., pp. 475-479.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 676-677.

¹⁵Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 1, 30:11-18.

¹⁶Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 2, 30:740-743; Morrison, p. 66.

¹⁷Report of the Adjutant General, 1:454.

¹⁸Morrison, p. 65.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 65-66.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 71-72.

²¹Ibid., pp. 72-75; Official Records, ser. 1, pt.3, 31:289.

²²William A. Allen to his wife, November 15, 1863, William A. Allen Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

²³Morrison, p. 77.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 78.

²⁶Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 32:119.

²⁷Morrison, p. 78.

²⁸Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 32:119.

²⁹William A. Allen to his wife, January 27, 1864, William A. Allen Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield; Morrison, p. 79.

³⁰William A. Allen to his wife, January 27, 1864, William A. Allen Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

³¹Morrison, p. 85.

³²Ibid., pp. 81-82; Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 32:625, 669-670.

³³William A. Allen to his wife, March 1, 1864, William A. Allen Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

CHAPTER 7

THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

By May 7, 1864, the Ninth Illinois Mounted Infantry had marched to Chattanooga and then nine miles south into Georgia. Camped at Gordon's Mills on Chickamauga Creek, William Allen wrote to his wife, "For the last 16 miles we have been going between two ranges of mountains not over a mile a part and some of the grandest scenes in the world. I passed under a trestle 150 feet high. . . . Over that bridge, above and below, 110,000 soldiers passed Wednesday."¹

Allen was referring to the Armies of the Cumberland, the Ohio, and the Tennessee. Major General William T. Sherman, the new commander of all Union forces in the West, was personally leading the three great armies on an invasion of Georgia. "The city of Atlanta lay 120 miles south of Chattanooga. It was an obvious target, and would become, eventually, the goal of the campaign. The immediate quest, however, was the Confederate army; to force a fight, if possible, and break it up."²

General Joseph E. Johnston, with no more than 60,000 Confederate troops, held an impregnable position along Rocky Face Ridge, about three miles northwest of Dalton. While the other two armies feigned attacks on this Confederate line, Major General James B. McPherson's Army of the Tennessee moved in a wide flanking maneuver to the south. McPherson's goal was to cut the Macon & Western Railroad at Resaca, thus forcing Johnston to evacuate Dalton, 15 miles to the north.

On the night of May 8, McPherson bivouacked in Snake Creek Gap, a densely wooded, narrow gorge. The Ninth Illinois spent the night at the eastern outlet of the gap, ready to lead the army to Resaca, eight miles distant.³

At daylight on May 9, as it marched in advance of the Army of the Tennessee, the Ninth Illinois was fired upon by Confederate cavalry. Brigadier General John M. Corse, of the Sixteenth Army Corps' Second Division, described the action in a battle report:

The Ninth Illinois . . . struck a skirmish line of the enemy's cavalry, which was driven entirely from the gap and forced back by this regiment, until, striking a superior force of the enemy, it was in turn compelled to give way (in some little confusion) and fall back upon the infantry, already deployed for its support. It was during this momentary panic of this regiment that Lieut. Col. J. J. Phillips, its commander, received a painful wound in the leg, while gallantly striving to rally and hold his men.⁴

Besides Phillips, the Ninth suffered 21 other casualties: 1 killed, 4 wounded, and 16 captured. After Phillips was wounded, Major John H. Kuhn assumed command of the regiment.⁵

The other infantry regiments quickly drove the Confederates off, and the Ninth again took the lead in the march toward Resaca. Within two miles of town, McPherson learned that the enemy was entrenched there and decided to pull his army back. The railroad was not cut, but one company of the Ninth Illinois did succeed in cutting the telegraph wire north of town.⁶

McPherson guarded Snake Creek Gap while Sherman's other two armies moved south and filed through. Outflanked by the

massive Union force, Johnston fell back from Dalton to Resaca. While the Battle of Resaca was being fought on May 14 and 15, the division of Brigadier General Thomas W. Sweeny, to which the Ninth Illinois belonged, worked its way around the Confederate left flank to Lay's Ferry. Since the division posed a threat to the Confederate rear, and the all-important railroad, Johnston again had to fall back.⁷

A game of cat and mouse quickly developed. Sherman relentlessly pushed the Confederate army deeper into Georgia, seeking to destroy it with a single blow. Johnston, a skillful defender and a master of retreat, fell back bit by bit, always seeming to escape at the last minute. All the while, however, Atlanta loomed closer on the horizon.

Throughout the campaign, Sherman relied heavily on flanking tactics. He repeatedly sent his western-most column, the fast-moving Army of the Tennessee, on long, circuitous marches around the enemy's left flank. The Ninth Illinois could always be found leading these advances, acting as the army's rear guard or protecting the wagon train bearing supplies. In addition, detachments of the regiment were given other special assignments. During late May, Company I, commanded by Captain Samuel T. Hughes, served as the escort for the army's chief of engineers, and for much of the Atlanta Campaign, Captain Isaac Clements' Company G escorted the Seventeenth Army Corps commander, Major General Frank P. Blair, Jr.⁸

Continually outflanked on the left by McPherson and

pressured in front by the rest of Sherman's force, Johnston's Confederates fell back through Adairsville, Cassville, Cartersville, and Allatoona in quick succession. During the last week of May, however, the armies stopped and fought around Dallas. "During the engagements at and near Dallas, Ga.," wrote Samuel Hughes of the Ninth Illinois, "the regiment was used as mounted force for pickets, flankers, and such [duty] as was required of mounted troops."⁹ On June 4, the Confederates were forced to retreat again.

Heavy rainfall, in early June, hampered Sherman's progress in pressing Johnston at the latter's strong new line on Kennesaw Mountain, about a mile northwest of Marietta. Finally, on June 27, the Union armies conducted a general assault along the entire line. The strategically meaningless battle resulted in the bloody repulse of the blue-clad infantry. For a week prior to the battle, the Ninth Illinois performed picket duty and manned the skirmish line. The men were fortunate to be assigned to the same duty during the battle, to support the attacking infantry. The Ninth escaped the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain with just one casualty.¹⁰

More Union flank movements dislodged the Confederates from Kennesaw Mountain and also forced them to retreat from other strong positions at Smyrna and along the Chattahoochee River. On July 10, Johnston's army established a defensive line along Peach Tree Creek, a mere five miles north of Atlanta.

As the Union force drew closer to Atlanta, the Ninth

Illinois was kept busy. The regiment guarded Baker's Ferry, on the Chattahoochee River, from July 6 to July 9. On the 9th, the regiment moved completely around Sherman's armies to the extreme left of the line, taking a position near Roswell. Samuel Hughes briefly summarized the Ninth's repetitive activities:

Regiment remained in position one mile from Chattahoochee River until July 17, acting as pickets and scouts, and skirmishing with the enemy daily. July 17, moved as advance guard of Sixteenth Army Corps to Peach Tree Creek, and in skirmishing with the enemy lost 1 enlisted man killed. July 18, moved as advance guard Sixteenth Army Corps, and in skirmishing with the enemy lost 1 enlisted man wounded. July 19, ordered to Roswell, Ga., as train guard Sixteenth Army Corps wagon train.¹¹

Following another short visit to the front lines near Decatur, the Ninth was ordered to the rear for reorganization on July 24. The three-year term of most of the men expired on the 26th. Three years of camp duty, fighting, and marching thousands of miles had taken their toll on the men; 274 men--including Colonel Mersy, Lieutenant Colonel Phillips, and Major Kuhn--were ready to go home. They were ordered to report to Chattanooga, where they were mustered out of the army on August 20, 1864. Eighty-five men, however, reenlisted for the war's duration. They were reorganized with the many troops who had periodically been absorbed by the Ninth, but whose term of service had not yet expired.¹²

Below is a list of the seven companies of the reorganized regiment, the captains, and the captains' home towns:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Captain</u>	<u>Residence</u>
A	William Padon	Troy
B	George Woodbury	Troy
C	Jacob Miller	Hillsboro
D	Frank X. Wagner	-----
E	Thomas C. Kidd	Springfield
F	William M. Cooper	-----
G	Henry J. Martin	Winchester

Captain Samuel T. Hughes assumed command of the regiment.¹³

While the Ninth was absent, two major command changes took place in and around Atlanta. General McPherson was killed, so Major General Oliver O. Howard was appointed to command the Army of the Tennessee. The Confederate army got a new commander as well; the Confederacy's high command relieved General Johnston and replaced him with General John B. Hood.

The positions of the armies changed as well. Hood was forced to fall back to the last Confederate line of defense, a series of elaborate "breastworks and rifle pits studded with a score of fortified batteries" that "encircled the city at an average distance of a mile and a half from the center."¹⁴ Close behind the Confederates, tightening a noose around the city, were the three Union armies.

After the Ninth Illinois was reorganized, it returned to an advance position in front of the Army of the Tennessee, recently moved back to its familiar spot on Sherman's right wing. The Ninth spent most of August near Utoy Creek, at the

extreme right of the Union forces. The regiment skirmished daily, but it reported no casualties for the entire month.¹⁵ Skirmishing went on all along the lines every day during August, as the opposing forces probed and searched for any weaknesses to exploit. The armies, however, were locked in a stalemate.

Atlanta became a symbol of Southern resistance and, even more than the defeat of the Confederate army, the goal of Sherman's campaign. Indeed, Atlanta was an important city. It was a vital arsenal, manufacturing center, and rail hub, with four railroads radiating out to other major cities of the Confederacy.

Though Sherman lacked enough troops to completely surround Atlanta, for all practical purposes he was besieging the city. The troops remained entrenched, while skirmishing and artillery shelling of Atlanta went on daily. By the beginning of August, Sherman had either destroyed or captured three railroad lines that emanated from the city. The Confederates were left with a single rail link to serve as their life line for food and supplies.

Instead of wasting his troops in frontal attacks against Atlanta's strong defenses, Sherman hit upon a bold new plan to capture the city. He decided to swing his entire force around the Confederates' left flank and move to sever the Macon & Western Railroad south of Atlanta. Samuel Hughes described the Ninth Illinois' part in the move:

On the 26th day of August [the Ninth] was ordered to cover the rear of the Army of the Tennes-

see in the retrograde movement from the trenches in front of Atlanta, Ga. . . . On the 28th of August, in the movement on the rear of Atlanta, the regiment was used as advance guard and flankers for Sixteenth and Seventeenth Army Corps, except two companies, which were in advance of the Fifteenth Army Corps. August 29, regiment was used as advance guard of Sixteenth Army Corps . . .¹⁶

Sherman's strategy worked. Hood attempted to check the Union advance at Jonesboro, ten miles south of Atlanta, on August 31. When the Confederate attack was repulsed, Union forces remained astride the railroad, effectively closing Atlanta's last outside link. On September 1, Hood evacuated Atlanta and escaped to the southeast. The following morning, a portion of the Army of the Ohio marched into the city and took possession. On September 3, Sherman sent the good news to Washington, D. C. Support for the war effort was suddenly rekindled in war-weary Northerners by his famous message: "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won."¹⁷

The Confederate army remained at large in the vicinity of Lovejoy's Station, about 30 miles south of Atlanta. Sherman dispatched portions of his command to protect key points. Rome, Georgia, was such a place, and, on September 26, the Ninth Illinois was ordered there from East Point. The regiment was stationed at Rome for more than a month, performing scouting duty and occasionally skirmishing with Confederate "bushwhackers."¹⁸

Union troops rested during most of September and October, while their commander formulated new plans. General Hood eventually took the Confederate army northward into Tennessee, which left Sherman free to choose any course of

action. In mid November, he began recalling 62,000 troops to Atlanta and prepared to leave the city. He planned to march through Georgia to Savannah, on the Atlantic coast, destroying anything along the way that might be of use to the Confederacy. He hoped this would bring the Confederacy to its knees and hasten the end of the war. "Sherman's aim was destruction--to teach the South a painful object lesson in the futility of continuing the conflict."¹⁹

Among the units ordered to return to Atlanta, the Ninth Illinois left Rome on November 11.²⁰ As a prelude to the devastation of Georgia, the troops at Atlanta were already beginning to destroy the city. Even though Sherman ordered that only Atlanta's business and industrial areas be destroyed, undisciplined soldiers and looting citizens ransacked and burned some of the residential areas. On the evening of November 15, after most of Sherman's men evacuated the city, Atlanta's industrial area was put to the torch. Sheets of flame rapidly spread, and one-third of Atlanta became a pile of ashes. The fires that engulfed the great Southern city clearly marked the beginning of one of history's most famous marches--Sherman's "March to the Sea."

Chapter 7 Notes

¹William A. Allen to his wife, May 6, 1864, William A. Allen Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

²James Lee McDonough, and James Pickett Jones, War So Terrible: Sherman and Atlanta, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987), p. 89. This book provides an excellent detailed description of the Atlanta Campaign.

³Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 3, 38:397; William T. Sherman, Memoirs of General William T. Sherman, 2 vols., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 2:32.

⁴Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 3, 38:397.

⁵Ibid., p. 452.

⁶Ibid., p. 16.

⁷Ibid., pp. 377-378.

⁸Ibid., p. 452.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 406, 452.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 452-453.

¹²Ibid., p. 453.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ronald H. Bailey, Battles for Atlanta, (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1985), p. 132.

¹⁵Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 3, 38:450, 453.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 453.

¹⁷Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 5, 38:777.

¹⁸Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 2, 39:477; Ibid., ser. 1, pt. 3, 39:729-730.

¹⁹David Nevin, Sherman's March, (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1986), p. 46.

²⁰Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 3, 39:729-730.

CHAPTER 8

MARCHING WITH SHERMAN

For the "March to the Sea," General Sherman trimmed his army to 62,000 soldiers, sending the remainder to help Major General George H. Thomas defend Tennessee. Sherman's troops comprised four army corps. The Fourteenth and Twentieth Corps, commanded by Major General Henry W. Slocum, formed Sherman's left wing, while the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Corps were led by Major General Oliver O. Howard on the right wing. Sherman's two-column arrangement gave the wings room to march and forage without crowding each other. It also diffused his army across the Georgia landscape to widen its path of destruction.¹

The destruction of Confederate food and supplies was the ultimate goal of the march, and Sherman accomplished this by having his men live off the land and destroy the surplus. He ordered his men to "forage liberally" and to take what the army needed. Because he knew the country would provide plenty for his men, Sherman had troops load his wagons with just 20 days' rations. Sherman believed that he would meet with little resistance as he advanced toward Savannah, so he did not burden his army with ammunition either. Each soldier was issued 40 rounds, and the wagons hauled an additional 200 rounds per man.

When Atlanta's industrial section was put to the torch on the evening of November 15, 1864, the Ninth Illinois Mounted Infantry was well away from the city. The regiment

left Atlanta that day, marched east through Decatur, and joined the Twentieth Army Corps of Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams, encamped near Stone Mountain. The Ninth was not assigned to a division or brigade, but remained "unattached" throughout the Savannah Campaign, receiving orders directly from the corps commander.²

The Ninth Illinois marched in advance of the Twentieth Corps, leading the column ten to 15 miles each day. The men passed through Madison on November 19 and Eatonton two days later. They camped at Milledgeville, Georgia's capital, on the 22nd and 23rd, just a week after leaving Atlanta.³

Sherman correctly predicted little opposition from Confederates. Only occasionally did small bands of cavalry or state militia fire a few shots at the invading army. As it marched to Sandersville, on November 26, the Ninth Illinois exchanged shots with rebel cavalymen two miles from town. The Ninth drove them off and continued marching, reaching Davisborough on the 27th, and Louisville on the 28th. The action near Sandersville would prove to be the Ninth's only skirmish between Atlanta and Savannah.⁴

Crying, cheering, singing groups of slaves greeted the army near every farm, plantation, and town. With utter jubilation, they fell in behind the marching columns and followed their "liberators." By the time Sherman reached Savannah, nearly 25,000 blacks were tagging along.

Other groups that traveled with the army were not as welcome. Gangs of deserters, from both Union and Confederate

armies, were joined by renegades and vagrants in looting and committing atrocities, including the raping of helpless women. Undisciplined soldiers also began to participate in these activities, especially after they saw several Union troops who, as living skeletons, had escaped from the death camp at Andersonville Prison and found Sherman's army.

Unauthorized foragers and looters, referred to as "bummers," became such a problem that the army's commanders began assigning special units to deal with them. Beginning on December 2, the Ninth Illinois served as a kind of police force for the Twentieth Corps. As foraging was allowed only within two miles of the column's flanks, the Ninth was given authority to arrest anyone outside of those limits, especially in front of the column. In addition, the regiment was to arrest anyone foraging without written permission.⁵

While performing this additional service, the Ninth Illinois continued to lead the Twentieth Corps, leaving central Georgia's gently rolling country and entering the state's swampy coastal region. General Williams described the area:

As we approached the coast the surface of the country became flat and swampy. Large ponds or pools were met every mile or so, and the creeks spread out into several miry branches. The roads between the creeks and ponds, though apparently of sandy and substantial character, proved to be upon a thin crust, which was soon cut through by our long trains into the deep quicksand, requiring miles of corduroy.⁶

The Twentieth Corps marched through Sylvania on December 4, and Springfield on the 7th. On December 10, about four

miles from Savannah, Confederate troops were spotted in entrenchments around the city. "At this point, meeting with the enemy's strong line of defenses behind swamps and artificial ponds, the corps was ordered to encamp for the night."⁷

For over a week, Sherman's army reconnoitered and pushed closer to the enemy defenses in preparation for an assault. Inside Savannah, Confederate General William J. Hardee was also busy. Rather than focusing on a useless defense of the city, Hardee worked at finding an escape route whereby he could save his 9,000 men. During the night of December 20, the Confederates were able to sneak across the Savannah River, on a pontoon bridge, into South Carolina. Savannah was occupied by Sherman's troops the next day, and their commander offered the city to President Lincoln and the Union as a Christmas present.

Behind Sherman's army lay a path of destruction 225 miles long and 60 miles wide. Nothing of value was left for the Confederacy. The work of the Twentieth Corps was largely representative of that of the other corps on the Savannah Campaign. Between Atlanta and Savannah, the Twentieth Corps burned and destroyed 2,300 muskets, 15,000 rounds of ammunition, 5,000 bales (2.5 million pounds) of cotton, 71 miles of railroad track, and "more than a million feet of timber for the largest sized bridges and thousands of cords of wood."⁸ General Williams' command also confiscated 2,300 horses and mules, 3.3 million pounds of corn, 1.8 million

pounds of fodder, and 550,000 pounds of fresh meat. In summarizing his corps' role in the march, Williams wrote about the abundance of food:

Of the quantities of turkeys, geese, ducks, and poultry of all kinds taken, no approximate estimate can be made. For at least 200 miles of our route these articles were in great abundance, and were used lavishly and wastefully. So of the other articles above mentioned, it would be safe to say that the amount might be doubled for waste and subsistence of the thousands of refugee slaves who followed our march.⁹

General Sherman and his army did not plan to rest on their laurels at Savannah, but prepared for more campaigning. Their next objective was to continue marching northward through the Carolinas and cooperate with Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Potomac in ending the war in Virginia. According to Sherman, his troops were anxious to march through South Carolina. He wrote, "Somehow, our men had got the idea that South Carolina was the cause of all our troubles; her people were the first to fire on Fort Sumter, had been in a great hurry to precipitate the country into civil war; and therefore on them should fall the scourge of war in its worst form."¹⁰

As a preliminary move to the Carolinas Campaign, Sherman sent his right wing ahead to Pocatigo, South Carolina. The Ninth Illinois Mounted Infantry was reassigned to the Seventeenth Corps for the campaign, so it took part in the move to Pocatigo during the second week of January 1865. As it had on the "March to the Sea," the Ninth would function as an "unattached" regiment, receiving its orders directly from the

corps commander, Major General Frank P. Blair, Jr.¹¹

After a two-week rain delay, Sherman began his newest campaign. Sherman wrote, "On the 1st day of February . . . the army designed for the active campaign from Savannah northward was . . . substantially the same that had marched from Atlanta to Savannah. The same general orders were in force, and this campaign may properly be classed as a continuance of the former."¹²

The Ninth Illinois played a significant role in opening the campaign. As it led the Seventeenth Corps to the Salkehatchie River on February 1, the regiment skirmished with rebel cavalymen. The next day the Ninth, supported by the Third Division, quickly drove the enemy away to prevent their destruction of the river bridges.¹³

On February 4, the Ninth Illinois left the main column to escort a train of wagons and ambulances carrying sick and wounded soldiers back to Pocatigo. A week later on the 11th, the mounted infantrymen were back in front of the Seventeenth Corps when Confederates attempted to prevent the column from crossing the Edisto River's North Fork. Aided once more by the Third Division, the Ninth succeeded in driving the rebels away before they could burn the bridges.¹⁴

While the Ninth usually marched in advance of the Seventeenth Corps, it was occasionally dispatched to perform special assignments. On February 12 and 13, the regiment protected the right flank of the marching column, and on the 14th, it skirmished with rebels while completing a successful

mission to burn a railroad bridge over the Congaree River.¹⁵

On February 17, Sherman's troops marched into Columbia, the capital of South Carolina. That night drunken, uncontrollable soldiers made the city pay for secessionism by burning it to the ground. The Ninth Illinois Mounted Infantry and a brigade of the Seventeenth Corps' First Division were assigned as the city's Provost Guard on the 18th. Two days later the Seventeenth Corps resumed its march, and the ashes of Columbia were left behind.¹⁶

After the corps reached Cheraw, South Carolina, on March 3, the Ninth Illinois was assigned detached duties more frequently. For the next three days, the men took part in an expedition with two other mounted regiments--the Seventh Illinois and the Twenty-ninth Missouri. The expedition, to Darlington and Florence, South Carolina, was a success. The 546-man force destroyed 15 train cars, 500 yards of trestlework, 2 depots and a printing office, 250 bales of cotton, 4,000 pounds of bacon, 80 bushels of wheat, and 50 sacks of corn.¹⁷

On March 9 and 10, the Ninth worked alone in rendering more property useless at Lumberton and Rockfish Factory, North Carolina. The men tore up a mile of railroad track, and they burned the railroad and wagon bridges over the Lumber River, 6 railroad cars, and one of the state's largest cotton factories, with 318 looms.¹⁸

The only major stumble that Sherman's men took in their march through eastern North Carolina occurred at Bentonville.

A vastly outnumbered Confederate army, led by General Joseph E. Johnston, blocked Sherman's way there from March 19 to 21.

Receiving a well deserved rest, though it did not participate in the Battle of Bentonville, the Ninth Illinois camped near Goldsboro, North Carolina, from March 24 to April 10. It had completed another 300-mile leg in Sherman's march through the South, suffering just ten casualties--2 killed, 4 wounded, and 4 missing--between Savannah and Goldsboro.¹⁹

Realizing that further resistance would be futile, General Robert E. Lee surrendered his Confederate Army of Northern Virginia to General Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865. General Johnston's army, though pressed by Sherman, still remained active in North Carolina. By forcing Johnston's surrender, Sherman could bring the Civil War to a close.

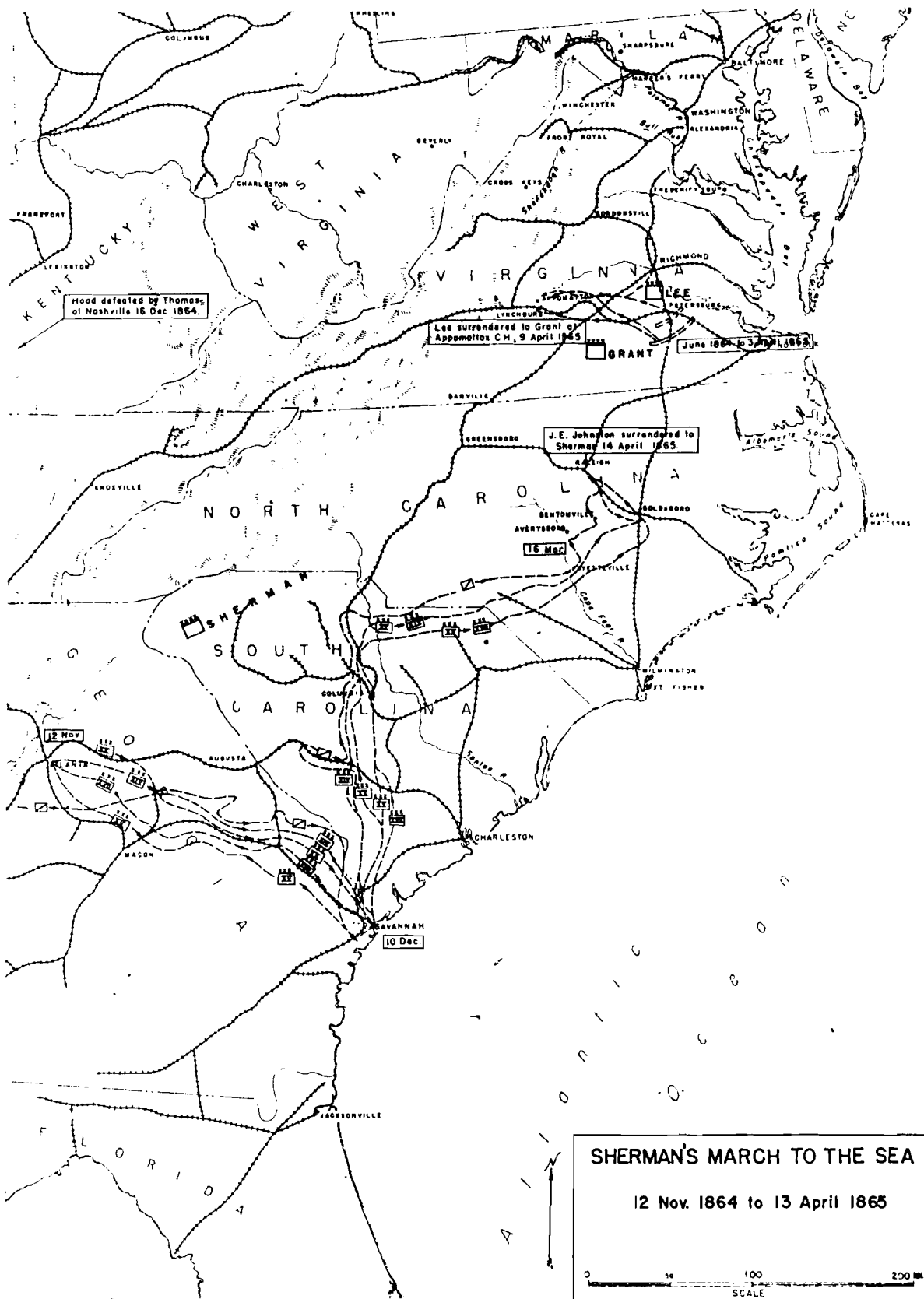
The Seventeenth Corps began actively campaigning again on April 10, and on the 14th, the Ninth Illinois led the advance to Raleigh, North Carolina, the third Confederate state capital the men had occupied in less than six months.²⁰ When they arrived, the troops learned of Lee's surrender in Virginia. Later that same night, John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln in Washington. The Ninth Illinois was still at Raleigh when Johnston's Confederates finally surrendered to Sherman at Durham Station, North Carolina, on April 26, 1865.

The nation's capital was Sherman's next destination. The Ninth Illinois led the Seventeenth Corps from Raleigh, on

April 29. The column marched to Washington via three great battlefields of the war in Virginia--Petersburg, the recently burned Confederate capital at Richmond, and Fredericksburg. On May 19, the troops arrived at Alexandria, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington. After marching more than 1000 miles since leaving Atlanta five months before, they remained in their camps and prepared for one final march--a Grand Review of Sherman's army scheduled for May 24.²¹

The crowning reward of the Ninth Illinois' Civil War service was being selected to march at the front of Sherman's army during that Grand Review in Washington. Amid throngs of cheering spectators, and in front of hundreds of political and military dignitaries, including President Andrew Johnson and General Grant, the Ninth Illinois Mounted Infantry led Sherman's western army down Pennsylvania Avenue.²²

The Ninth camped about four miles north of Washington until June 5, when the men began their slow trek homeward. Riding on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, the regiment arrived at Louisville, Kentucky, on June 12. The men were, however, still a part of the army, and they were required to camp near the city for almost a month. Finally, on July 9, 1865, the 455 men remaining in the Ninth Illinois Mounted Infantry were mustered out of the United States Army and allowed to go home to the heroes' welcomes awaiting them.²³



Map 5

Source: The West Point Atlas of the Civil War, map 154.

Chapter 8 Notes

¹Excellent detailed accounts of the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns may be found in Burke Davis, Sherman's March, (New York: Random House, 1980), and Joseph T. Glatthaar, The March to the Sea and Beyond, (New York: New York University Press, 1985).

²Official Records, ser. 1, 44:25, 206.

³Ibid., pp. 43-44, 497.

⁴Ibid., pp. 44, 234.

⁵Ibid., pp. 599-600.

⁶Ibid., pp. 207-208.

⁷Ibid., p. 208.

⁸Ibid., p. 210.

⁹Ibid., p. 211.

¹⁰Sherman, 2:254.

¹¹Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 47:50, 374.

¹²Sherman, 2:268.

¹³Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 47:375-376, 386-387.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 377-378, 406.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 378-379, 412.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 379.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 254-256.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 382.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 90, 385.

²⁰Ibid., p. 90.

²¹Ibid.

²²Davis, p. 289.

²³Official Records, ser. 1, pt. 1, 47:90; Report of the Adjutant General, 1:456-470.

EPILOGUE

While the activities of the Ninth Illinois Infantry were largely representative of most Civil War regiments, the unit was unique in many ways. As the third Illinois regiment organized at the outbreak of hostilities, the Ninth was one of just a few organizations that existed from the war's beginning to its end. The regiment was originally recruited in Madison, Montgomery, and St. Clair Counties, but men from all parts of Illinois, as well as some from other states, came to be a part of it. Few other regiments could claim the distinction of serving as both an infantry and a mounted infantry force, and fewer still had mules as their mounts. Ironically, the Ninth spent nearly equal time in each capacity, spending 23 months on foot and 28 months in the saddle.

The Ninth Illinois took part in more than 100 engagements during the war, three of which were major battles in the Western Theater. At Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth, the Ninth suffered an incredible number of casualties: 108 killed, 547 wounded, and 69 missing. The regiment fought defensively, yet on each occasion it ranked in the top four Union regiments in terms of casualties. At Shiloh, the Ninth lost 63 percent of its effective force, a figure that possibly represents the greatest loss by a single regiment in any Civil War battle.

During the Ninth Illinois' four-year existence, 2378 men served in its ranks. Men who died in battle or from wounds

and illness totalled 290, while 224 men were discharged because of physical problems and wounds they incurred. Just 15 men served with the Ninth for the whole Civil War, a figure that reflects the regiment's constant heavy involvement in campaigning and scouting.

The Illinois Adjutant General's report does not include "remarks" for 167 members of the Ninth. It must be assumed, therefore, that their whereabouts were not known at the time the regiment was mustered out. Most of those men were probably missing in battle or taken prisoner. A list of Illinois troops who died at Andersonville Prison includes 18 men of the Ninth, and it is probable that many more died in Confederate prisons as "unknown" soldiers.

The Ninth Illinois Infantry took part in some of the key campaigns and operations of the Civil War, and it was at the forefront in some of the Union Army's most important activities. The regiment represented well its home state and was rewarded and honored for its excellent service when it was chosen to lead the Grand Review of Sherman's army. James Oates, a member of the Ninth Illinois, correctly boasted, "It was a grand old regiment and an honor to anyone who did service in its ranks."¹

Epilogue Notes

¹Oates, p. 4.

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