Corinth National Cemetery
1551 Horton Street
Corinth, Mississippi 38834

Description

The Corinth National Cemetery, established in 1866, is located approximately 3/4 of a mile southeast of the court house within the Corinth city limits in Alcorn County. The site is nearly square in shape and is enclosed by a brick wall, constructed in 1872, four feet in height with concrete coping. The main entrance is situated at the center of the north side and is protected by a double ornamental wrought-iron gate supported by granite piers with a pedestrian gate on each side. There are three other entrances to the cemetery. On the south side, there are two entrances (one for pedestrians), both protected by wrought-iron gates; on the north side is an entrance, also protected by a wrought-iron gate, with a pedestrian gate on one side. From the main entrance, a road leads north to a circle, where the flagpole is located. The lodge is located northeast of the main entrance, and the utility building is situated in the southeast corner of the cemetery. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones.

The lodge was constructed in 1934. The first story is brick and the dormered second story is frame and stucco, with a concrete foundation and an asphalt shingle gambrel roof. The second story has stucco gables with exposed wood loosely imitating half-timber English tudor. The lodge contains six rooms, an office, a basement, and a front porch which was enclosed in 1952. No director has resided in the lodge since January 1991, and the building is now used as an administrative office.

In 1936, a brick and concrete utility building, 20 feet by 31 feet, containing a storage room and two public rest rooms, was constructed. The windows are six-over-six double hung, and the roof is asphalt shingles. The utility building area, which includes a fuel storage area, is enclosed by a wooden picket fence.

Civil War Activity in Area

The city of Corinth was strategically located, and its capture was a prime objective of Union forces in the area. It was regarded as the symbol of the South throughout the conflict. It was where the vital railway line which led east from Memphis, connecting the western part of the Confederacy from Virginia, crossed the north-south line of the Mobile and Ohio. The Confederates kept the city heavily fortified, but early in the spring of 1862, they were forced to evacuate. Union troops soon occupied the city and continued to do so for five months.

In mid-March 1862, the troops of General Albert Sidney Johnston, Commander of the Western Department of the Confederate Armies, began arriving in Corinth from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and all had arrived by March 24. General Johnston had charged General P. G. T. Beauregard, his second in command, with the responsibility of assembling troops at Corinth. Later, the Confederate Army of Kentucky and that of Mississippi were consolidated under General Johnston's command. He decided that he would attack the Federals at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, and drive them into the river. The troops were to move early on April 3, but one delay caused another. More delays occurred on April 4 and Johnston did not get his troops aligned until late in the day on April 5 and decided to wait until the following day. Then, on April 6, he sent them into the unsuspecting Union lines around Shiloh Church. Most Union troops did not react and were unprepared for the charge. General Ulysses S. Grant was alerted and immediately

went to Pittsburg Landing. Sometime around 3 p.m. that day, General Johnston was wounded in the leg. He continued to direct the battle but slowly bled to death. Command of the troops passed to General P. T. Pierre Beauregard, who collected his battered units and organized a defense at Corinth. His army recovered at Corinth. Major General Henry W. Halleck arrived at Pittsburg Landing to assume direct command of the Union troops. By April 29, Halleck, with over 100,000 men, prepared to attack Beauregard's nearly 65,000 troops. Halleck would march from Pittsburg Landing to Corinth. From early May to about May 29, skirmishing took place between Halleck's and Beauregard's forces. After all the waiting and watching, nothing happened. On May 29, Beauregard decided to quit and ordered a pullout. To cover the withdrawal, he had the front-line troops make loud noises to keep the Federals occupied. Although Halleck called it a victory, some wondered.

The next morning, May 30, Halleck's Union forces cautiously entered Corinth only to find the village deserted. General Halleck ordered Generals W. S. Rosecrans and John Pope to pursue the Confederates. A Union cavalry column caught up with the Confederate rear guard in Tuscumbia bottom late in the afternoon and met strong resistance. The Confederates crossed the river and burned the bridge, leaving sufficient force to prevent reconstruction of the bridge. The next morning, the Federals went up-stream to a narrow place in the river, felled trees, and crossed. While the artillery engaged the Confederates at the bridge, the infantry began a flanking movement. Seeing they were about to be trapped, the Confederates withdrew toward the south with the Federals continuing to press their rear. The Federals halted their pursuit at Twenty Mile Creek near Baldwyn. They remained there for eight days before returning to Corinth. When the pursuit ended, General Halleck began to break up his army into smaller commands. He sent Major General Don Carlos Buell off toward Chattanooga and detached another 20,000 men to guard railroad communications. He reduced his grand army to less than 40,000, and the initiative passed to General Braxton Bragg, who had superseded General Gaston T. Beauregard. Bragg hurried off to Chattanooga, leaving Major Generals Earl Van Dorn and Sterling Price with about 40,000 men. President Abraham Lincoln then appointed Halleck as general-in-chief of the United States land forces. General Ulysses S. Grant was named to succeed Halleck. He was supervising the new line of defense begun by General Halleck. When completed, the Halleck line and the Beauregard line would encircle the city. Grant, however, was expected to protect the whole of western Tennessee; he had 7,000 men at Memphis, 12,000 at Bolivar, 6,000 at

Jackson, and 23,000 at Corinth under Major General William S. Rosecrans. General Beauregard was able to complete all duties assigned to him, although he had not been feeling well. General Braxton Bragg later relieved Beauregard. At Tupelo, he reorganized the Army of Tennessee. During the last week in July, Bragg began transferring his forces to Chattanooga. Price was left in Tupelo to keep an eye on Grant in Corinth.

After a battle at Iuka, Mississippi, on September 19, Rosecrans moved his command northwest to Corinth where he strengthened the fortifications in Corinth. Van Dorn and Price moved in on Corinth late in September with 22,000 men. Rosecrans opposed them with about 21,000 troops. The battle of Corinth began on October 3. Van Dorn's first attack hit two Federal divisions outside the inner defenses. The blue-coats fought stubbornly but had to fall back behind the fortifications. Price then sent his divisions against the Union center. The Federals waited until the Confederates broke out of the woods and advanced over an open field. When they reached point blank range, the Federals poured in a deadly fire, including artillery from entrenched positions on the left. Price's men retreated, reformed, and tried again, but were repulsed. The third charge sent some Federals running but the line held until fighting died out at nightfall. Van Dorn felt he had the battle won and that another thrust would bring victory.

It was 9 a.m. before the Confederates attacked on October 4. They hit first on the Federal right. Again, Price's troops led the attack, broke through and penetrated into the town of Corinth, fighting along streets and around houses. Rosecrans saw the break and rode among his panicked troops. His hat was shot away. His hair streamed in the wind. He "fought like a private soldier, dealt sturdy blows with the flat of his sword and fairly drove them to stand," Whitelaw Reid, a war correspondent wrote. "Then came a quick rally which his magnificent bearing inspired. . .and the charging column was speedily swept back outside the entrenchments."

At the same time the Confederates also hit the Federal left. They stormed Battery Robinett, an entrenched artillery position, and some of the foremost ranks spilled over the top of the works but were driven out by a bayonet charge. Back in the woods they reformed and, led by Colonel W.P. Rogers of the Second Texas, they swarmed over the works despite heavy losses. Colonel Rogers carried a flag to the top of the rampart. A Union drummer boy picked him off with a single revolver shot. His men raced on, about 100 reaching the Corinth public square, but then they were beaten back into the woods. That was enough for Van Dorn. Soon after 7 p.m., he ordered a retreat. Union casualties were: 355 killed, 1,841 wounded, 324 missing; Confederate losses were 473 killed, 1,997 wounded, and 1,763 missing.

During the next 15 months, Corinth continued to be a base for Union reconnaissance and raids throughout the northeastern counties of Mississippi, the northwestern ones in Alabama, and the adjacent counties in southern Tennessee. Many skirmishes occurred, mainly between cavalry units of the two armies.