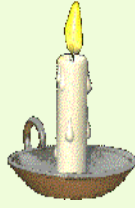


Shedding a little known light



on a well known battle

Shilo

in an e-mail to my son Richard

Richard,

Shilo was the most intense battle of the Civil War.

It taught both sides that entrenchments were necessary, to protect themselves from the new Minié bullets.

Neither side dug entrenchments -- or even thought they were necessary -- at Shilo.

Remember, in the Crimean War, "*The Charge of the Light Brigade*"?

But it wasn't cannon that brought them down because cannister balls shot from cannon are only effective up to 200 yards; it was the new Minié

bullet (**Minié ball**) lethal at 600 yards that downed most of them that day in 1854. The lethal effectiveness of this new Minié bullet was something even poet Alfred Tennyson failed to comprehend.

By 1853, as the Crimean war began, the old patch and ball was no longer used in warfare because it was only good up to about 60 yards.

So earlier troops had to get close before they shot -- *the order, "Don't fire 'till you see the whites of their eyes"* -- was given because even the best linen patch could not effectively seal and contain the full blast of powder. Thus **most** of the explosive energy in the old patch and ball was entirely lost.

Copied from the 2013 Encyclopaedia Britannica DVD.

"The Minié ball produced lethally accurate fire at long ranges. It was almost universally adopted by the armies of Europe and the United States and was used throughout the American Civil War (1861–65). Minié was rewarded by the French government with 20,000 francs and an appointment to the staff of the military school at Vincennes. After retiring in 1858 with the rank of colonel, he served as a military instructor for the khedive of Egypt and as a manager at the Remington Arms Company in the

United States."

The new Minié bullet -- *invented in 1849* -- had a hollow base fitted with an iron cone shaped wedge that, after being fired, pushed into and expanded the lead bullet to effectively seal the explosive charge so that **none** of the energy was bypassed and lost.

This INCREASED THE LETHAL RANGE **TEN** TIMES.

A 58 caliber Minié bullet could penetrate an inch of pine at 600 yards.

Not only that but the Minié bullet had grease in grooves that helped remove previous residue and allowed the Minié bullets to be shot at the rate of three every minute which was considerably faster than anyone could shoot the old style patch and ball out of the same gun.

So even though the guns didn't change, it was the change to the Minié bullet that made the same guns extremely lethal compared to using the old patch and ball.

The **Minié ball** was popularly called a **ball** but it wasn't; it was the very first bullet and not **ball** shaped at all.

Both the North and South were casting and shooting these new Minié bullets well before 1860.

However, people here in the U.S. didn't pay enough attention to all the distant Crimean war reports, 7 years earlier, as to the effectiveness of these new Minié bullets:

Hence the terrible carnage at Shilo.

About 150 steam boats brought 40,000 of Grant's troops to Shilo (Pittsburgh Landing).

Grant was ordered not to attack until 25,000 more of General Buell's men arrived.

Buell's men were marching for 25 days and had just turned south to march down the Tennessee river to Grant.

But Confederate General Johnston knew the supreme rule of '*divide and conquer*' he had to hit Grant **BEFORE** Grant had half of his forces landed. Bad weather held Johnston back several days and these lost days may well have been critical in not getting to Grant fast enough.

BUT he did hit Grant on April 6, 1861 **BEFORE** Buell's men got there.

Johnston threw Grant's men back but then General Johnston was killed as he and his Confederates overran the Union positions but Grant was able to get an orderly retreat and form a new line, further back, at dusk.

General Beauregard took over the Confederates after Johnston died and telegraphed to Jefferson Davis, the south's president, that they had a splendid victory.

BUT

That evening and all throughout the night, Grant used his remaining steam boats to run up the Tennessee river and bring in about 16,000 of General Buell's men, along with 6,000 of another General's men, that were brought in by his steam boats as well, just before the morning of April 7, 1861.

These 22,000 additional men enabled Grant and Sherman to turn back the Confederates in the early afternoon of that next day.

The carnage of those TWO DAYS of BATTLE taught both sides that these new Minié bullets required the digging of entrenchments to keep the troops safe. The South dug theirs mostly with slave

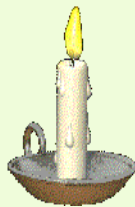
labor.

Almost ALL the battles after Shilo were fought using entrenchments EXACTLY as they were used later in the First World War.

So began the prelude to the manner in which the First World War would be fought.

Lynn & I spent some of your money this weekend, at the Shilo Civil War battleground memorial park, and at The Corinth Civil War memorial; thanks.

Pop



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Daniel P. Fitzpatrick Jr.