Vocabulary:

regiment—a unit of the army consisting of around 1000 troops and led by a colonel

distinguished—did well; made itself famous for doing good work

charges—movement of troops when they run up to the enemy

oblique—a specific kind of step when you turn to the right or left while marching

promptly—right away; on time

charge bayonets—run towards the enemy with the knife point of the rifle facing forward

minnie balls (minié balls)—round bullets fired out of Civil War-era rifles

ram cartridge—shove the packet containing the bullet down the barrel of the rifle using a metal rod

halloed—called, yelled

be jabbers—an expression kind of like “by golly” or “oh my gosh”

Battle of Shiloh excerpt—part 1 of 7

This was the first big battle in which our regiment had ever been engaged. I do not pretend to tell of what command distinguished itself; of heroes; of blood and wounds; of shrieks and groans; of brilliant charges; of cannon captured, etc. I was but a private soldier, and if I happened to look to see if I could find out anything, “Eyes right, guide center,” was the order. “Close up, guide right, halt, forward, right oblique, left oblique, halt, forward, guide center, eyes right, dress up promptly in the rear, steady, double quick, charge bayonets, fire at will,” is about all that a private soldier ever knows of a battle. He can see the smoke rise and the flash of the enemy’s guns, and he can hear the whistle of the minnie and cannon balls, but he has got to load and shoot as hard as he can tear and ram cartridge, or he will soon find out, like the Irishman who had been shooting blank cartridges, when a ball happened to strike him, and he halloed out, “Faith, Pat, and be jabbers, them fellows are shooting bullets.” But I nevertheless remember many things that came under my observation in this battle. I remember a
On Sunday morning, a clear, beautiful, and still day, the order was given for the whole army to advance, and to attack immediately. We were supporting an Alabama brigade. The fire opened—bang, bang, bang, a rattle de bang, bang, bang, a boom, de bang, bang, bang, boom, bang, boom, bang, boom, bang, boom, bang, boom, whirr-siz-siz-siz—a ripping, roaring boom, bang! The air was full of balls and deadly missiles. The litter corps was carrying off the dying and wounded. We could hear the shout of the charge and the incessant roar of the guns, the rattle of the musketry, and knew that the contending forces were engaged in a breast to breast struggle. But cheering news continued to come back. Every one who passed would be hailed with, “Well, what news from the front?” “Well, boys, we are driving ’em. We have captured all their encampments, everything that they had, and all their provisions and army stores, and everything.”

**VOCABULARY:**

*brigade*—unit of the army consisting of about five regiments (in the Civil War); led by a brigadier general

*missiles*—bullets and other deadly metal bits (like shrapnel) flying through the air towards a target

*litter corps*—small group of soldiers whose job was to take away the dead and wounded; they carried bodies on small cots called litters

*incessant*—without stopping

*musketry*—muskets, which were already considered old-fashioned guns during the Civil War

*contending forces*—the two sides that were fighting each other

*breast to breast*—face to face

*the front*—the front line of battle, where the thickest action was

*encampments*—places where soldiers settled down for the night

*provisions*—food and equipment given to soldiers
Vocabulary:

strewn—covered an in unorganized way

“pomp and circumstance”—a fancy ceremony

glorious—amazing

conceivable—thinkable; “every conceivable position”—every way you can imagine

piteously—in a sad and pathetic way that makes you feel sorry for someone

haze—thick, almost foggy air that’s hard to see through clearly

minnie balls (minié balls)—round bullets fired out of Civil War-era rifles

Yankee line—Union line of defense—(Yankee)=Northerner
VOCABULARY:

charge bayonets—run towards the enemy with the knife point of the rifle facing forward
feeling mean—feeling low, feeling bad
professes—says out loud that he accepts something as truth
Methodist—a denomination of evangelical Christianity in America
camp-meeting—a large gathering of people for a religious revival/service
waver—grow weak and strong and weak again
jubilant—cheering, happy to win
triumphant—victorious, winning
curb—hold them back
discharge—shooting (the discharge of rifles is shooting them off)
retreating—marching away from the enemy, usually because that side is losing
Federal— reference to Union soldiers

The Battle of Shiloh excerpt—part 4 of 7

Put into your own words:
VOCABULARY:

halt—stop

Sidney Johnson: Albert Sidney Johnston (with a “t”) was the commanding general of the Confederate Army at Shiloh, and the highest-ranking officer on either side to die in battle during the Civil War.

General Gladden—Confederate brigadier general who was shot at Shiloh and died a few days later from his wound.

Yankee army—Union Army

Retreat—run away from or hide

host—large group
This was Sunday.
On Monday the tide was reversed.
Now, those Yankees were whipped, fairly whipped, and according to all the rules of war they ought to have retreated. But they didn’t. Flushed with their victories at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson and the capture of Nashville, and the whole State of Tennessee having fallen into their hands, victory was again to perch upon their banners, for Buell’s army, by forced marches, had come to Grant’s assistance at the eleventh hour.

VOCABULARY:
tide was reversed— the opposite happened; here, it means the other side started winning
Yankees— Union soldiers
whipped— beaten in battle
retreated— marched away as a way to admit they lost
flushed— full of energy
Fort Henry— one of the forts on the Cumberland River protecting Nashville and Tennessee, which fell to the Union army on February 6, 1862
Fort Donelson— one of the forts on the Cumberland River protecting Nashville and Tennessee, which fell to the Union army on February 12-16, 1862
capture of Nashville— February 25, 1862; Nashville was the first major southern city to fall into Union hands, and remained occupied by Union troops throughout the rest of the Civil War
perch upon their banners— sit on their flags; an expression meaning to stay with them
Buell (Don Carlos Buell)— major general in the Union army; commanded Union forces at the Battle of Shiloh
Grant (Ulysses S. Grant)— major general in the Union army; later became commander of all Union forces
the eleventh hour— expression meaning the very last minute
The Battle of Shiloh excerpt—part 7 of 7

Put into your own words:

Gun boats—boat made to transport guns
transports—smaller boats that carried people and equipment from shore to the larger boats
Buell (Don Carlos Buell)—major general in the Union army; commanded Union forces at the Battle of Shiloh
Boilers—parts of a boat where the fuel was burned to power the boat’s motion
regiment—a unit of the army consisting of around 1000 troops and led by a colonel
advance outpost—the army unit the farthest in front which was supposed to scout things out
skirmish line—line between two armies where the soldiers in the front fought each other before the main battle began
Federals—Union soldiers
artillery—cannons
automaton—a thing that moves by itself or when it is ordered, without thinking for itself
chronicles—histories or stories