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Contents

Departments

COVER: Veterans of the Confederate 1st Kentucky Brigade were dubbed "The Orphans" when their state remained in the Union. See story page 86. Painting by Rick Reeves.

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Chattanoogans still live with reminders of the war and its aftermath 150 years after the Civil War.

LIVING IN Chattanooga is a little like living inside a museum. Civil War reminders are all around us. Many of us remember going as students on field trips to Point Park and Chickamauga Battlefield and spending long Sunday afternoons driving with our families along the winding, monument-strewn Crest Road on Missionary Ridge. My own father, a combat infantryman in World War II, once told my brother and me that the gray-green moss growing on the boulders on the side of Lookout Mountain was gunpowder left over from the Battle Above the Clouds. It seemed plausible to us. After all, Dad had been in a war himself.

Looking at photographs of Chattanooga during the Civil War, you can recognize many of the same landmarks that are still here today. Lookout Mountain, of course, still looms over the city, and Moccasin Bend still traces its serpentine route around the base of the mountain. The Crutchfield House, now the Read House, where Jefferson Davis almost fought a duel with local unionist Thomas Crutchfield on the eve of the war, remains at the corner of Broad Street and the old Ninth Street, now renamed Martin Luther King Boulevard. Union Station is gone, but Chattanooga's other historic railway depot, Terminal Station, was restored several years ago as the Chattanooga Choo-Choo. It's only right that it was. Railroads, after all, were what drew the Union and Confederate armies to Chattanooga in the first place. They didn't come here for the view.

For nearly three months, from early September to late November 1863, Chattanooga was the central focus of the war. There had already been a brief shelling of the city a year earlier by Union artillery, but no concentrated efforts were made to capture the city until the late summer of 1863. Then the war arrived with a vengeance, and the little river town, which had been established only 25 years earlier as a trading post for white settlers and Cherokee Indians, found itself squarely in the crosshairs of two contending armies.

Ultimately, Chattanooga paid a huge price for its brief moment in the sun. By the time Union forces under their new commander, Ulysses S. Grant, broke the Confederate siege at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, there were scarcely any homes or trees left standing in the city. Federal troops had torn them all down for firewood during the chilly autumn nights. By then, many of Chattanooga's pioneer citizens had left town as refugees, never to return. It is one of many ironies of the war that a number of former Union soldiers, including future mayor John T. Wilder, resettled in Chattanooga after the war. Victors' memories are always fonder.

A common question we asked as children growing up in Chattanooga was, "Whose side were we on?" It was a question without an easy answer. We lived in the South, but we also lived in the United States. We pledged allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, but we waved the Confederate Stars and Bars at football games. There was the Rebel Drive-in, the Dixie Theater, and Confederama, a popular tourist stop that featured a large-scale paper-maché diorama of the city during the Civil War, complete with flashing lights and tinny sound effects dramatizing cannon fire. A popular bumper sticker showed an old coot in a Confederate kepi vowing, "Forget, hell!" As the dozens of plaques and monuments scattered about our lovely little city ensure, that's not likely to happen. We're at 150 years and counting. Gunpowder still dusts the boulders on Lookout Mountain.

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By Kevin O'Beirne

Civil War soldiers on both sides learned the life-saving value of fieldworks as a defense against the enemy.

EVER SINCE JULIUS CAESAR's legions conquered Gaul, opposing armies have built temporary fortifications, or fieldworks, during campaigns in the open countryside. In the modern age, such fieldworks were perfected first during the Civil War. By the spring of 1864, Americans on both sides of the conflict had discovered the life-saving nuances of trench warfare, something that would cost their European counterparts hundreds of thousands of lives to learn for themselves half a century later.

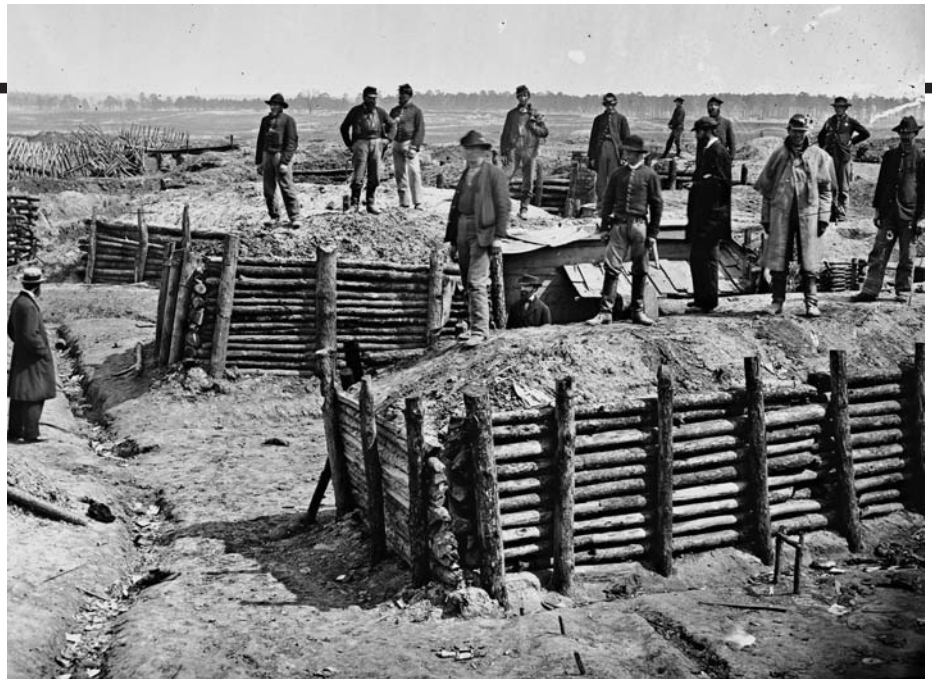
All photos: Library of Congress

A group of Confederate soldiers studies a newspaper at Petersburg in a painting by Confederate veteran William Sheppard.

When no one was actively shooting at them, Civil War soldiers despised the hard physical labor required to construct fieldworks. As one officer of the 2nd Michigan Infantry recalled, "Soldiers would rather march all day than shovel for an hour." Another Union soldier, Sergeant George Tipping of the 155th New York, wrote to his wife from Petersburg, Va., in September 1864: "We now handle the spade and shovel in place of the musket. There are 3,000 of us [who] go out every day to build forts and rifle pits. Twenty men would do more work in one day than the whole 3,000 men." Another Yank, James Ford, grumbled about building fieldworks at Pipe Creek, Md., during the Gettysburg campaign. "Well we tried what you call soldiering for two days. I think that I should like it very well nothing very bad about it only that spades come trump pretty often."

Enemy bullets, however, were a terrific motivator of men, as related by a bluecoat named Van Dyke in the aftermath of skirmishing along the Rapidan River in November 1863: "It is hard to get the men to dig for 10 minutes when we are not at the front. But when the shot and shell begin to fly, they dig like woodchucks, even though they do not carry spades. [I]n a short time they are safe behind strong works."

Regardless of their dislike for constructing fieldworks, soldiers certainly preferred fighting behind them, as New Yorker Richard T. Van Wyck noted of his regiment's works on Culp's Hill at Gettysburg. "Our position there was of a most favorable kind," Van Wyck wrote. "We were little exposed and did terrible execution upon the Rebs." And a member of the Union 2nd Corps recalled after the Battle of the Wilderness: "The rapid fire of the foe had but slight effect on our line, behind its bullet proof cover, over the top of which we, with



ABOVE: Abatis made of tree limbs can be seen in the foreground as part of the fortifications at Fort Brady on the James River. RIGHT: The breastworks at Fort Mahone, Petersburg, are seen in this 1865 photo. RIGHT BOTTOM: Federal troops occupy a line of simple breastworks on the north bank of the North Anna River in Virginia.

deliberate aim, hurled into [the Confederate] regiments an incessant and most deadly fire."

Civil War fieldworks were actually trench systems, and were much more complex than a mere trench made by excavating material and tossing it out in front of the trench. Fieldwork systems included cleared fields of fire, obstructions, and barricades, and outer works in front of the breastwork proper, together with gun positions, redoubts, covered ways, and other protective features on the defenders' side of the line.

When built under fire, the initial line of fieldworks was often selected by regimental field and line officers, and construction was supervised directly by them. It was not uncommon for engineer officers to later adjust portions of the line to better positions. Non-engineer officers also sited works at isolated posts. The majority of fieldworks were constructed by rank-and-file enlisted men wielding a variety of specially designed and improvised hand tools. A small number of men in each company might be designated as pioneers, temporarily assigned to fatigue duties such as fieldworks construction and road work. Pioneers were not permanent units, and men were selected for such details because they were good ax-men or possessed other construction-related skills.

Some common—but not the only—features of a Civil War fieldworks system included rifle pits, abatises, chevaux-de-frise, ditches, embankments, parapets, breastworks, trenches, revetments, head logs, traverses, sally ports, redans, lunettes, and redoubts. Rifle pits varied in size, from what might be called a foxhole to complete fieldworks. Most were advanced fieldworks meant for pickets, usually hundreds of yards in front of the main line.

An abatis was an obstruction placed in front of the breastworks, well within the defenders' rifle range. The abatis included the tops of pine trees stripped of leaves and smaller branches and sharpened to points using hatchets and axes, with the points placed towards the enemy. It was usually about breast-high, and was low enough for its defenders to shoot over and into. The obstructions were interlocked with each other to create a formidable barrier.

Chevaux-de-frise were X-shaped, movable obstacles consisting of a horizontal beam about 10 to 12 feet long and one foot in diameter, with two opposing, diagonal rows of sharpened, 2-inch-wide, 10-foot-long wooden rods inserted it. Chevaux-de-frise were placed at important positions in front of fieldworks and could be used to temporary obstruct sally ports. Because they took some effort to construct, chevaux-de-frise were only

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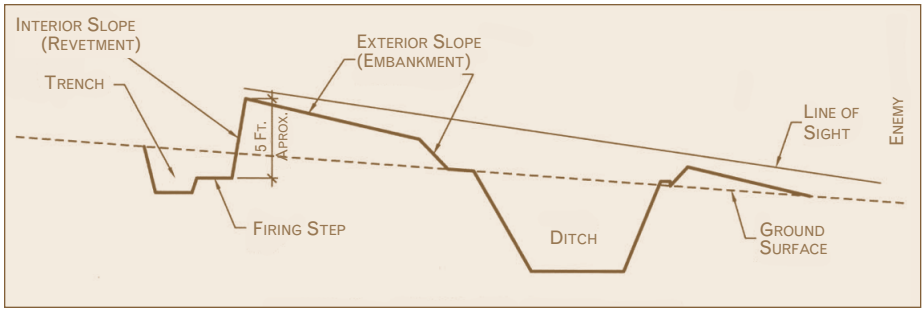


used when an army remained in location for an extended period of time.

The main line of works had several components, typically including a ditch on the enemy side; an earthen embankment or parapet that sheltered the defenders; a revetment, or retaining wall, on the inside of the embankment, against which defenders stood to fire their muskets; head logs, installed several inches above the revetment to protect soldiers' heads as they fired; and traverses, or walls of log, timber and dirt extending 15 to 30 feet from the parapet back into the defenders' line to prevent the enemy from enfilading the entire line.

A ditch, similar to a castle moat in principle, sometimes included obstructions like fraise (closely spaced, sharpened timbers driven into the earth and angled toward attackers), a palisade, or other obstructions. If the earthworks did not have a defenders' trench, often an earthen platform called a banquette was built a few feet above the ground to allow defenders to fire downward on their foes. Similarly, an earthen platform—often reinforced with a timber floor—called a barbette was constructed for artillery.

Breastworks were arranged in straight lines runs called curtain walls, and commonly included redans, advanced works used to cover a sally port or defend a blockhouse along a railroad. Redans were usually not much more than a V-shaped breastwork, often with a ditch in front, with the point of the V facing the enemy and an open back, or gorge, to the rear. They were placed along the main line of works to permit the defenders to enfilade enemy troops that approached the curtain wall. While redans varied greatly in size, most were between 30 and 60 yards line. An inverted redan was called a tenaille. Lunettes were similar to redans, but instead of being V-shaped, they had two faces and two flanks.

Redoubts were polygonal, redan-type structures. Unlike redans, Federal redoubts were usually enclosed on all sides, and usually were larger than redans, including underground powder magazines and bombproofs to protect the garrison. Redoubts were local strong points, and famous forts such as Fort Stedman were, strictly speaking, redoubts.

Embrasures were trapezoidal-shaped openings in earthworks used by artillery. The artillery could be positioned as single pieces, as sections (two guns), or as four-to six-gun batteries. The ground immediately behind the works was termed the terreplein. If time allowed, an army sometimes constructed more than one main line of earthworks so that if the first line fell, the secondary defense could hold the line and serve as a launching point for counterattacks. Man-made and natural features were almost always incorporated into fieldworks, including high ground, marshes, watercourses, and buildings. Most army-sized fieldworks were securely anchored on impassable terrain features such as a wide river, large swamp, or steep ridge.

The main line of earthworks was not the initial line of defense. Out in front were rifle pits manned by vigilant pickets and their supports. Closer in, portions of the main line were preceded by obstructions, including natural barriers like streams and man-made defenses such as abatis, palisades, fraise, chevaux-de-frise, and horizontal "nets" of telegraph wire strung about 18 inches above the ground. In addition, there would be advanced works such as redans and lunettes. Indeed, an enemy had to pass a number of formidable defenses before reaching the main line of works.

The main line of works—ditch, breastworks, trenches, etc.—was typically located at or near the military crest or a rise in the terrain (the topographical crest or highest point was not where fieldworks were constructed), which allowed the defenders good sight-distance and the advantage of height to fire down on their attackers. The extent of fieldworks behind the main line depended on the terrain and on how long the army occupied the position. The areas behind the works could include additional lines of fieldworks, artillery emplacements on higher ground, zigzagging communications trenches to the main line, encampments, field hospitals, headquarters, and wagon train parks.

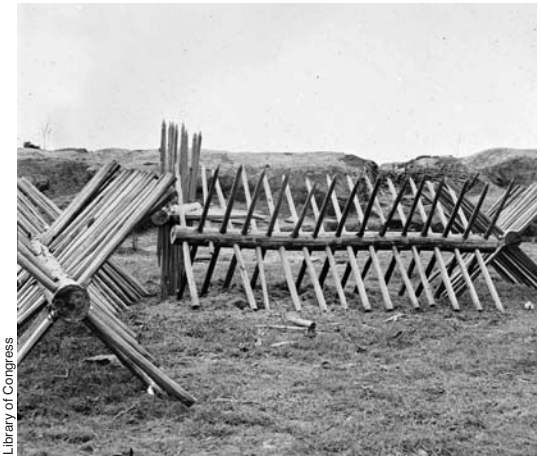
The complexity and use of fieldworks increased as the war progressed, and by late 1863 the opposing armies were doing more digging than shooting. However, some fieldworks were used throughout the war. Extensive, siege-type works were built near Washington, D.C., in 1862, at Yorktown, Va., in 1862, and Suffolk, Va., in early 1863. Natural fieldwork-like terrain features figured prominently in such battles as Second Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Bristoe Station.

To be sure, 1863 was a pivotal year for fieldworks in the eastern theater of the war. Federal troops constructed many slight to moderate works during the Chancellorsville campaign that May, and moderate works were built on Culp's Hill, Little Round Top, and along Cemetery Ride at Gettysburg. By November of 1863, fairly extensive fieldworks were constructed during the Kelly's Ford, Rappahannock Station and, Mine Run campaigns. In the spring of 1864, the Battle of the Wilderness saw extensive construction of moderate works, and following the Battle of Spotsylvania that May, the opposing armies of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee perfected the art of fieldworks during the 10-month siege of Petersburg.

One problem for both armies was storm water drainage. In many Civil War fieldworks there was not a suitable location for drainage, as evidenced by a South Carolina defender of Spotsylvania's Bloody Angle who recalled, "The trenches, dug on the inner side [of the works] were almost filled with water." In fact, during very heavy rain, troops were some-

times driven out of their own works by rising water, such as occurred when some Confederate units abandoned their works at Cold Harbor during the night of June 2-3, 1864, making their line vulnerable to attacking Federal troops. Fortunately for the soldiers, much of the soil in the eastern theater of the war a clay-sand mix that usually drained fairly quickly.

When sited under fire, the first line of main works was usually excavated under the direction of field and line officers, or in dire situations by the men themselves, either in positions of military advantage such as the top of a rise in the ground, or simply where the advance halted. Typically, the soldiers constructing fieldworks would stack their muskets and form details for excavation and construction. While most of the manpower was used in earth-moving, other details cut down trees for revetments and head logs. Sometimes other handy materials such as fence rails and rocks were gathered and incorporated into the line, and old logs were often tossed in and made part of the



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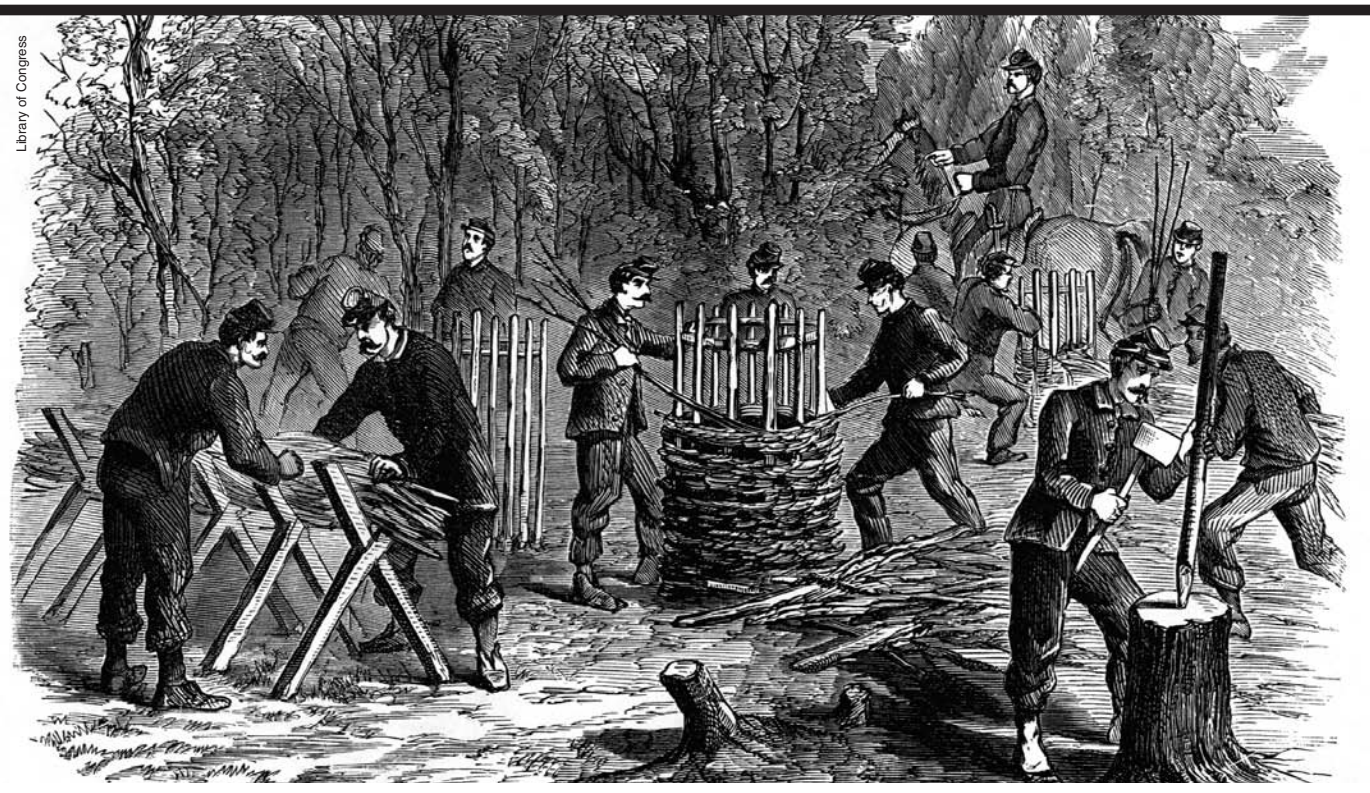
ABOVE: Sections of the chevaux-de-frise before the Confederate main works at Petersburg. OPPOSITE: Terms and dimensions for a typical field work trench.

embankments. The tops of trees used for revetments were cut off and used for agates. Other men cleared brush from the forward field of fire.

The entire process was neatly summarized by Union soldier Edward Tillinghast in a letter to his father in November 1863. "I will tell you how the breastworks are made," Tillinghast wrote. "The first works will be made along the line of the regiment, usually short of the crest of a hill. Fence rails and stones are piled in front, and then we cover this with dirt which is loosened with bayonets and moved in our plates. All this is done in a twinkling. After a while the axes, spades, and picks will arrive, along with an officer who will usually make us move parts of the works to create embrasures &c. Last we will cut away the brush and trees in front of our works and lace them together to create a sort of hedge that is difficult to pass [abatis]."

Union Colonel Theodore Lyman wrote of the troops after Cold Harbor: "They are throwing up dirt as hard as they could. No country could be more favorable for such work. The soldiers easily throw up the dirt so dry and sandy with their tin plates, their hands, bits of board, or canteens split in two, when shovels are scarce; while a few axes, in experienced hands, soon serve to fell plenty of straight pines that are all ready to be set up, as the inner face of the breastworks."



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Men of the 77th Pennsylvania Regiment construct fascines and gabions for breastworks.

While a sturdy revetment was preferred, in an emergency almost any available material was used, as one Pennsylvanian, Daniel Chisholm, recalled during the Battle of the Wilderness: "We fell back to the road (100 yards) and commenced to pile up old rotten logs, dry brush, &c. We had no shovels and we had to dig with our bayonets and throw up direct with our hands. We worked all night, and then our works were poor." Similarly, George K. Collins recalled the works at Culp's Hill: "The men grumbled a little and said it was the old trade of building works never to be used; nevertheless they brought sticks, stones, and chunks of wood, and felled trees and shoveled dirt for three or four hours."

Sometimes the contested ground was not conducive to fieldworks, and the soldiers made do with what was available. On the beaches off the Carolina coast, revetments to hold the sand in place were necessary. In elevated areas, brush and sod had to be removed to erect works. In some areas, ground was not readily "digable," forcing the soldiers to look for other means of protection. Minnesotan James A. Wright recalled of the hard, rocky soil on Gettysburg's Cemetery Ridge: "We gathered rails, stones, sticks, brush, &c., which we piled in front of us, and loosened the dirt with our bayonets and scooped it onto these with our tin plates and onto this we placed our knapsacks and blankets. Altogether it made a barricade from 18 inches to 2 feet high that would protect us from rifle bullets."

Most soldier accounts reported that trench life was a miserable experience, with the men exposed to the sun, rain, thirst and privation—not to mention enemy fire. One unhappy Wisconsin soldier wrote of life in the trenches during the fight for Globe Tavern, near Petersburg: "Saturday 20th [of August 1864], in breastworks; sat around all day in rain and mud; everything soaking wet; no fires; no coffee; lived on condensed milk and hardtack. Sunday 21st, clear and bright; hung our blankets and things to dry."

Sometimes the men managed small cooking fires in the works to boil coffee, but usually the soldiers reported being hungry in the forward trenches, where both cooking fires and hot food were rare. When not under direct enemy fire, the men went to the rear to relieve themselves. An irate Union soldier, Frank Wilkerson, recalled that at the North Anna River in May 1864, "There was an unwritten code of honor among the infantry that forbade the shooting of men while attending the imperative calls of nature, and these sharpshooting brutes were constantly violating that rule." During times when a visit to the sinks would probably have meant injury or death, men simply relieved themselves in their own works—making a bad situation even worse.

When the opposing lines were in close proximity to one another, particularly in 1864-65, sniper fire made life in the trenches miserable. As one Confederate related at Cold Harbor in June 1864: "Sharpshooters [of the 7th New York Heavy Artillery] were so vigilant and expert at their business that a head could hardly show itself above our earthwork without getting a ball through it. A hat put on a ramrod and raised a little would be perforated in a jiffy."

Entire regiments usually manned a line of works. Typically, entire brigades or larger units were kept as a reserve, and it was uncommon for a regiment to be split, with a portion in the line and the balance in reserve. However, it was common for a portion of a regiment to be on picket in front of the main line of works, with the rest manning the trenches.

Fieldworks were defended with everything their occupants possessed. Officers would order the men massed in the works to fire when the enemy was well within range—typically at less than 300 yards. Musketry at that range was murderous, particularly later in the war. After an opening volley, most of the firing was at will, as fast as each defender could load and fire. If the enemy was able to reach the works and the defenders stood their ground, close-in combat took place with bayonets, clubbed muskets, and even fists. Because traverses were a common component of fieldworks, breakthroughs were often contained to a fairly small area.

Troops ordered to attack a fortified enemy line usually experienced strong feelings of trepidation—this was true both for "fresh fish" as well as veterans. A member of the 1st Minnesota wrote of the regiment's dread the night before it was to assault the Confederate fieldworks at Mine Run in November 1863. "We could plainly see the line of earthworks on the crest of the gentle slope rising before us," noted William Lochran. "We could hear the incessant sound of entrenching tools in the enemy's works. We knew that it was expected that we should charge those works, and earnestly wished that the order would come to do so in the darkness, before they were made stronger and reinforced."

Often, it appeared to the attackers that the enemy works were deserted—not a man could be seen in them as the assaulting force approached. But as soon as the enemy skirmishers disappeared back into their own lines, hundreds of flashes from enemy muskets became visible, followed by puffs of smoke and whizzing bullets. Troops attacking stoutly defended earthworks were often unable to reach them at all, and were pinned down in no-man's-land until they were able to withdraw. Troops pinned down sought cover by any means possible, placing their knapsacks or blanket rolls in front of them, hiding behind cover—including dead bodies—and digging shallow rifle pits. If the assaulting columns were able to penetrate the enemy position, the resulting fighting was typically brutal and bloody. In the end, attacking Civil War fieldworks was almost always an extremely costly enterprise. □

Men of the 21st Ohio Regiment fire from behind hastily built breastworks atop Horseshoe Ridge at Chickamauga. The regiment was one of many cobbled together by Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas to hold Snodgrass Hill. Painting by Keith Rocco.

death IN THE DEEP WOODS

In the deep woods lining Chickamauga Creek, wary Union and Confederate soldiers thrashed through the underbrush, seeking a confrontation that all knew would be a fight to the death.

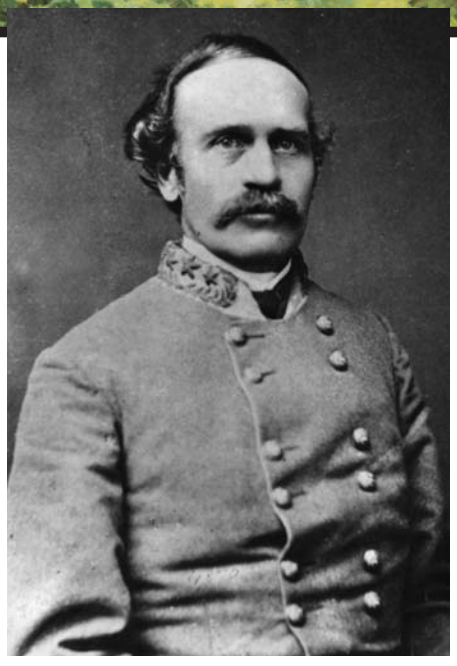
by cowan brew

It was nearly 11 on the morning of September 20, 1863, and the woods around slow-moving Chickamauga Creek in northwest Georgia were ominously quiet. It was much different from the day before, when savage fighting had erupted all along the LaFayette Road leading northward to Chattanooga, Tennessee, 10 miles away. For nearly 13 hours the Union and Confederate armies had torn into each other with a fury that was rare, even on Civil War battlefields. The hard-pressed Federals, commanded by Maj. Gen. William Rosecrans of Ohio, had been pushed back to the road—their only lifeline to Chattanooga—and nearly overrun several times by the gray-clad Confederates in General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. They clung to the roadway like a drowning man clings to a life raft in rough seas.

On a hillside at the extreme southern end of the battlefield, two other Ohio-born generals, one wearing Union blue, the other Confederate gray, moved into place for a life-altering confrontation. The two had met before, on another western battlefield, almost exactly one year earlier. William Haines Lytle, the Union general, was the scion of a prominent Cincinnati family. Almost startlingly handsome, with blue eyes, light brown hair, and a neatly trimmed beard, Lytle had achieved national fame as the author of a popular drawing room poem, *Antony and Cleopatra*. Thousands of men in both armies knew the poem by heart. A career politician, many expected Lytle to seek high office once the war was over. The White House itself did not seem beyond his reach.

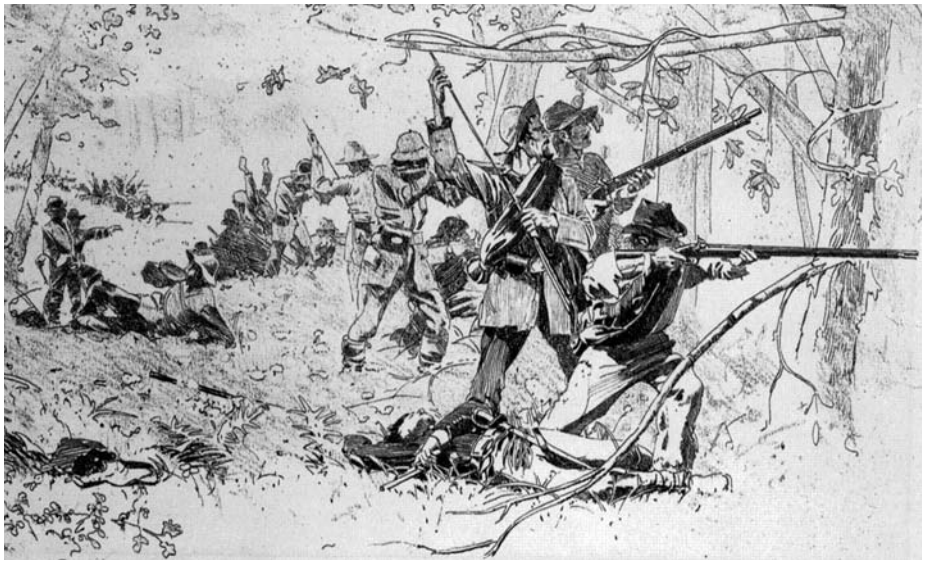
His Confederate counterpart, Bushrod Rust Johnson, had no such distinguished pedigree. The son of humble, peace-loving Quakers from Belmont County in eastern Ohio, Johnson had defied family wishes by enrolling in the United States Military Academy at West Point. His motivation seems to have been financial rather than patriotic; he was working as a low-paid schoolteacher at the time. Among Johnson's fellow cadets in the Class of 1840 were William Tecumseh Sherman and George H. Thomas. Rosecrans, now commanding the Union army in the woods opposite him, had been a couple of years ahead of Johnson at West Point.

The previous October, Lytle and Johnson had met briefly on the battlefield at Perrysville, Kentucky. Lytle had been struck behind the ear by a piece of shrapnel, knocked senseless, and was sitting atop a large rock still holding his unnoticed sword in his hand when Johnson's adjutant, Captain W.T. Blakemore, happened by. Lytle offered Blakemore his sword, but the captain told him suavely, "One who could command such men should never suffer such indignity." Instead, he escorted Lytle to Johnson's tent, where the fellow Ohioan took one look at Lytle's blood-smeared face and



ABOVE: Generals Bushrod Johnson, left, and William Lytle, right, met at the Battle of Perryville, where Lytle was wounded and captured. BELOW: Confederate troops load and fire into the thick underbrush around Chickamauga Creek, which gave the battle its name.

All: Library of Congress



vacant expression and sent him back to the brigade surgeon for emergency aid. The next day, Lytle was taken to Harrodsburg and paroled. Soon Lytle and Johnson would meet again, and this time there would be no chance for mercy.

For Lytle, Johnson, and the thousands of other Union and Confederate soldiers, the long road to Chickamauga had begun two and a half months earlier, when Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland had finally broken camp near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and commenced a long-awaited advance on Chattanooga, an invaluable railhead for three crisscrossing railroads that linked the major Confederate armies to each other and to vital ports on the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Still a comparatively young town, only 25 years old, Chattanooga stood as the gateway to the most valuable prize in the Deep South: Atlanta. Until the Union Army captured Chattanooga, the heartland of the Confederacy would remain untouched.

President Abraham Lincoln and his brain trust knew this, but Rosecrans seemed oddly unconcerned. Both the president and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton had expended countless hours and dozens of telegrams attempting to impress that fact on Rosecrans. But the general had almost come to grief outside Murfreesboro at the Battle of Stones River at the beginning of the year. There, the implacable Bragg had launched a surprise winter attack that came within a whisker of winning the day and liberating the entire Volunteer State from Union control. Rosecrans did not intend to let that happen again. He remained stubbornly in camp for the next six months while Lincoln and others implored him to move south. "I will attend to it," Rosecrans told them but did nothing until the end of June, when he finally began his long-delayed advance.

When Rosecrans finally broke camp, he quickly proved the rightness of Lincoln's patience and trust in his recalcitrant general by smoothly maneuvering Bragg's army out of Middle Tennessee and down to Chattanooga. There, protected on three sides by mountains and ridges and on the fourth by a wild and notoriously dangerous river, Bragg hunkered down to await Rosecrans's no doubt suicidal assault. But "Old Rosy," as well liked by his men as Bragg was despised by his own, did not intend to send them marching blithely into the mouth of Bragg's guns. Instead, he distracted his opponent by shelling the town from the northeast while he swung the bulk of his army behind Lookout Mountain and fell upon his target from the southwest.

By the time Bragg realized what was going on, Rosecrans had three full corps across the river and clambering up the opposite heights. Bragg had no intention of being trapped inside Chattanooga like his fellow Confederate general, John C. Pemberton, had allowed himself to be trapped at Vicksburg, Mississippi, a few weeks earlier. Instead, Bragg evacuated the town completely on July 4 and retreated into the nearly impenetrable hills of northwest Georgia.

Rosecrans might have rested on his laurels, having completed the near bloodless capture of his prize target. More than one of his subordinate generals, including his second in command, Maj. Gen. George H.

Thomas, had urged him to do just that. But Thomas had an army-wide reputation for stodginess, and Rosecrans had been hearing endless complaints for months about his own lack of initiative. Determined to prove Washington wrong, he ordered "a general pursuit of the enemy by the whole army."

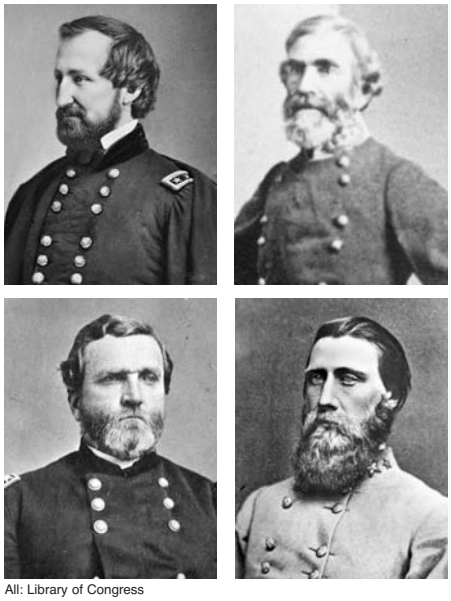
The order would prove easier to give than to obey. To pursue Bragg, Rosecrans had to divide his army into three wings to enable it to pass through three different gaps in the mountains below Chattanooga. Meanwhile, Bragg had recovered his nerve—if indeed he had ever lost it—and prepared a gigantic ambush of Rosecrans and his entire army. He sent selected "deserters" into the Union lines to tell their captors that the Confederates were hastening southward in abject retreat. It sounded plausible to Rosecrans given what he had seen of Bragg over the past several weeks. Like a bloodhound with a strong scent, the Union commander pressed forward against his leash.

But Bragg had always possessed an underrated sense of strategy—it was in the tactical handling of his army that he had fallen short at the previous year's battles at Perryville, Kentucky, and Stones River. Consolidating his own forces east of the mountain passes, Bragg laid plans to destroy the overextended Federals one wing at a time. Unfortunately for the Confederates, Bragg's generals lacked their commander's strong sense of strategy and any innate confidence in his leadership. At the site of Bragg's first planned ambush, McLemore's Cove, bungling, timid generalship allowed the Federals to escape the carefully laid trap and, even worse, alerted Rosecrans of the enemy's true intentions. Immediately he ordered his own widely dispersed wings to converge upon each other in the vicinity of Crawfish Springs, 12 miles south of Chattanooga. With any luck, they might come together again before the Confederate tornado descended on them and smashed them to bits.

With the help of some spirited skirmishing by the 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry, the three wings made it safely through the gaps and drew within supporting distance of one another on the night of September 17. Bragg, disappointed but not demoralized, sent his scouts along the eastern bank of Chickamauga Creek to find a place where he might cross and attack the Federals en masse. Two wooden bridges spanned the deep, slow-moving creek a mile and a half apart, on either side of Jay's Mill. Reed's Bridge to the north of the mill and Alexander's Bridge to the south were both ideal crossing points. Once across the swirling, black-water creek, Bragg intended to fall on the enemy's left flank somewhere in the vicinity of Lee and Gordon's Mill.

Fortunately for Rosecrans, who always seemed to have more luck than Bragg, two sharp-eyed Union colonels, Robert Minty and John T. Wilder, were already watching the bridges for enemy movement. When the first Confederate skirmishers came thrashing through the underbrush toward the creek, the Federals peppered them with gunfire and canister. Wilder's men, armed with new seven-shot Spencer repeating rifles, were particularly effective. Bushrod Johnson, directing the attempted crossing at Reed's Bridge, was convinced that "the whole Yankee army was in our front, on our right and rear, while our army was still on the east side of the Chickamauga." The delay cost the Confederates several valuable hours.

Johnson was relieved, in more than one sense of the word, when Maj. Gen. John Bell Hood rode up to him with a signed order from Bragg giving Hood overall command of the Confederate right. Hood had just arrived with the first batch of reinforcements from General Robert E. Lee's vaunted Army of Northern Virginia. In all, some 12,000 of Lee's battle-hardened infantrymen in Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's I Corps were en route to Georgia by train from Virginia. Longstreet, a Georgian himself, was not yet on the scene, so Hood assumed command in the interim. Hood, new to the ground, halted the Confederate advance for the night.



All: Library of Congress

LEFT: Principal commanders at Chickamauga, clockwise from top left: William Rosecrans, Braxton Bragg, John Bell Hood, George H. Thomas. BELOW: Union Colonel Robert Minty and his cavalrymen are driven off by enemy fire after attempting unsuccessfully to burn Reed's Bridge on the opening night of the battle.

The Federals, still badly strung out, did not have the luxury of resting. Rosecrans issued a flurry of orders, all with the same intent—keep moving northward to Chattanooga. The prize he had thrown away so cavalierly a few days earlier now seemed like the veritable promised land itself to Old Rosy and his footsore, bone-tired soldiers. Having failed to listen to Thomas's well-reasoned advice before, Rosecrans now placed full confidence in his generalship, ordering Thomas to anchor his XIV Corps on the LaFayette Road leading to Chattanooga. Under no circumstances, said Rosecrans, was Thomas to allow the Rebels to get around his left flank. The survival of the entire army depended on Thomas holding the road open.

Thomas's corps reached its designated location, the Kelly House, and set up camp. Not long afterward, Colonel Dan McCook, the younger brother of the army's XX Corps commander, Maj. Gen. Alexander McCook, informed Thomas that a lone Confederate brigade had gotten across Reed's Bridge. Immediately, Thomas sent Colonel John Croxton's brigade in search of the intruders. Croxton, a Yale-educated Kentuckian, soon sent back word that he would be happy to bring back the enemy brigade if Thomas would only be good enough to tell him which of the four or five enemy brigades now attacking him Thomas wanted Croxton to bring back.

Croxton's chief worry was an all too familiar adversary: Confederate cavalry legend Nathan Bedford Forrest. Having spearheaded Johnson's crossing at Reed's Bridge the day before, Forrest had dismounted his men and placed them in the woods around Jay's Mill. Pacing about like a panther, his face lit by a characteristic fiery glow, Forrest ignored the bullets clipping the leaves around him. "Hold on, boys, the infantry is coming," he reassured his men. "They'll soon be here to relieve you."

As the fighting around the mill intensified, Thomas sent new brigades into the woods to support Croxton. Without realizing it, Thomas had unintentionally seized the battlefield initiative from Bragg and the Confederates. Expecting no Union resistance, Bragg had been calmly making plans to "attack the enemy wherever I can find him." Now it seemed the enemy had found him first.

At this point, Bragg still had the numbers on his side. He could have easily cut through the Union line and isolated Thomas's corps from the rest of the Federal forces—something Rosecrans had repeatedly warned Thomas not to risk. Instead, Bragg froze. As was always the case with the gloomy faced career soldier from North Carolina, once a battle got under way, he readily abandoned his careful (and usually well-reasoned) plans and allowed events, real or imagined, to control his actions. Despite much evidence that the Union left, under Thomas, was still somewhere northwest of Jay's Mill, Bragg continued to believe that the enemy flank was farther south, at Lee and Gordon's Mill. As the day wore on, he sent his troops forward in piecemeal fashion, thus limiting their impact. Instead of one devastating hammer blow that might have split the enemy line fatally in two, Bragg began a series of short and largely ineffective jabs.

Shivering in their light jackets, the shaken survivors of the day's fighting were kept awake by the bone-chilling cold and the blood-curdling cries of wounded soldiers. One Indiana sergeant remembered, "To this day, that dying, wailing petition is still ringing in our ears."

For the next nine hours, the fighting intensified along the north-south axis of the battlefield. The heavily wooded, ravine-broken terrain was so rough that neither side could see the other. Towering trees blocked the sunlight, and clinging thorns and vines tore at the soldiers' coats. Company by company, regiment by regiment, brigade by brigade, the two armies groped toward each other in the underbrush while an angry, constant buzzing of bullets and shrapnel whirred over their heads and, all too often, into their bodies.

The battle moved irresistibly southward as Rosecrans kept feeding divisions into the fray. From Thomas's right around Reed's Bridge Road, the blue ranks extended past Alexander's Bridge Road into a cornfield just east of the Kelly House

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Patrick Cleburne's bark-tough Confederates advance at twilight on the first night of the battle. Encroaching darkness halted the fighting when men on both sides could only fire at muzzle flashes and sounds.

and the LaFayette Road. All afternoon the fighting continued, while the opposing commanders reacted in characteristic ways. Rosecrans was buoyant and almost giddy, convinced that he was "driving the Rebels in the center handsomely" and hopeful that by nightfall "we will drive them across the Chickamauga." Bragg entertained no such confidence. He interpreted every new development, said one of his aides, "as through a glass darkly." When Maj. Gen. A.P. Stewart rushed to headquarters and asked for more explicit orders before attacking with his corps, Bragg told him simply that he "must be governed by circumstances." It was not exactly ringing leadership.

Still, almost despite their commander, the Confederates came close to breaking the Union line on two occasions at twilight. Stewart's attack on the Union center near the Brotherton cabin found a soft spot in the enemy defenses, and only the timely arrival of Brig. Gen. William Hazen's brigade and the massed fire of 20 cannons from a narrow ridge behind Hazen stopped the Confederate advance. Meanwhile, on the far right, Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne's hard-fighting division almost turned Thomas's left before running out of ammunition and daylight. Both attacks gave the promise of victory the next day.

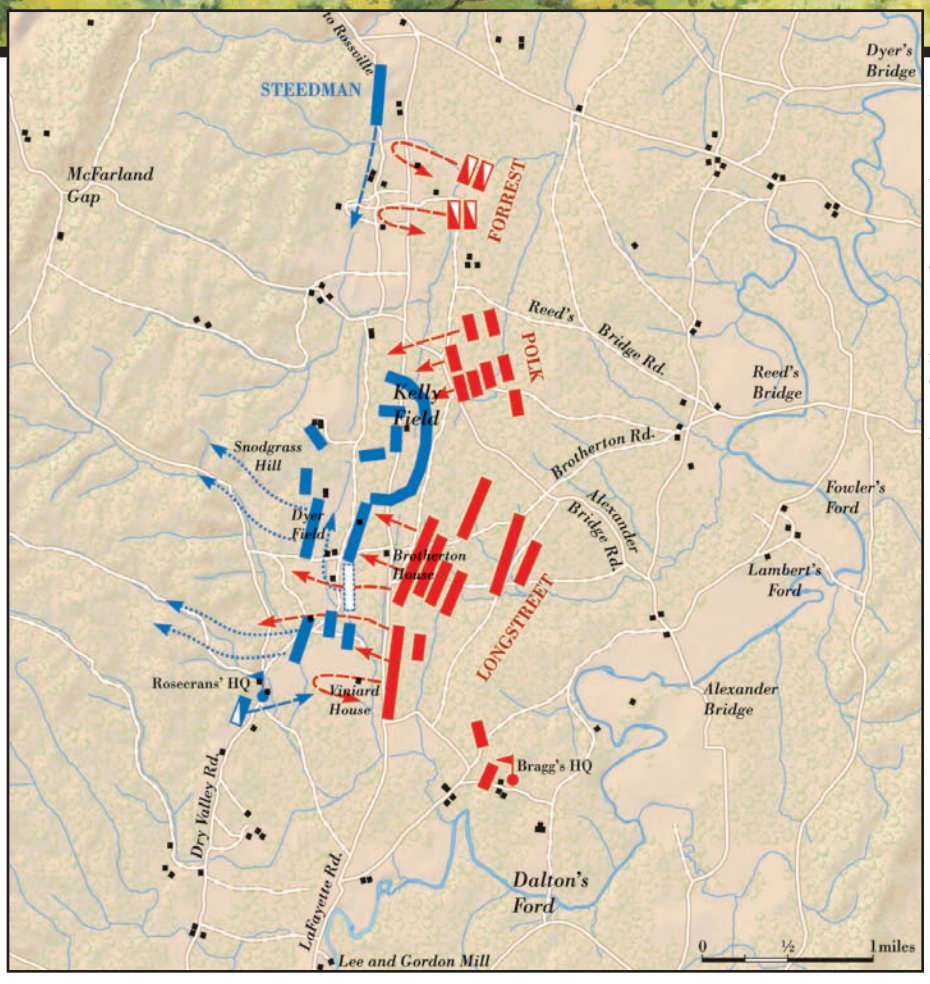
By the time firing died down on the 19th, some 15,000 casualties already littered the battlefield. The night turned cold, and several flash fires caused by forbidden campfires and scorched kindling broke out in the parched woods, fatally burning dozens of wounded men who were unable to crawl away. Shivering in their light jackets, the shaken survivors of the day's fighting were kept awake by the bone-chilling cold and the blood-curdling cries of wounded soldiers. One Indiana sergeant, Thomas McGee, remembered the sounds as a wave-like sobbing, a "storm of groans and cries for help that come on the black night air. To this day, that dying, wailing petition is still ringing in our ears." Another Hoosier, Private Alva Griest, called it simply "a terrible sound." Stretcher bearers on both sides were foiled by understandably nervous pickets, who shot at anything they heard moving in the dark.

At his headquarters near the Union right, a log cabin belonging to local widow Eliza Glenn, Rosecrans held a late-night strategy

session. He was uncomfortably aware that although he had fought Bragg to a standstill that day the initiative still lay with the Confederates, as the two twilight assaults had indicated. "We were greatly outnumbered, and the battle the next day must be for the safety of the army and the possession of Chattanooga," he recalled after the fact. Whenever he asked for advice from his assembled officers, a drowsy Thomas would respond, "I would strengthen the right." He couldn't tell Rosecrans where, exactly, such reinforcement could be found. All Rosecrans could do was order him to "defend your position with the utmost stubbornness. In case our army should be overwhelmed it will retire on Rossville and Chattanooga. Send your trains back to the latter place." It was not an order designed to inspire confidence.

Bragg, typically, held no strategy session. After the Confederate defeats at Perryville and Stones River, he was under no illusions about the confidence—or lack thereof—that his subordinate generals placed in him. Instead, Bragg climbed into an ambulance and fell asleep. He was still sleeping when James Longstreet arrived on the battlefield at 11 PM, having endured a bone-rattling train ride from Virginia and a near-fatal encounter with Union pickets in the dark. Longstreet was more than a little irked that Bragg had neglected to send anyone to meet him at the train station in Ringgold, forcing him and his staff to ride unguided to the battlefield. It was a less than welcoming reception for the celebrated commander of Robert E. Lee's I Corps in the much more successful Army of Northern Virginia.

Longstreet hid his annoyance long enough for Bragg to outline his plans for the next day's fighting. For inexplicable reasons, Bragg had decided to divide his already jumbled and confused forces into two new wings. Longstreet would command the Confederate left, while Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk would command the right. Polk was to initiate the fighting at dawn, with each brigade to attack successively, north to south, as soon as the brigade to its right had set off.



Map © 2013 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

ABOVE: The Battle of Chickamauga was essentially a battle for control of the LaFayette Road to Chattanooga. If the Confederates could turn the Union left, they would trap the entire enemy army in the thick woods of northwest Georgia. "Strengthen the left," Thomas endlessly advised. OPPOSITE: Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's troops disembark from various railroad cars after arriving at Ringgold Station from Virginia on the afternoon September 19 to reinforce Bragg.

It was a confusing plan, depending on a newly arrived general (Longstreet) leading forces he had never met, while Polk, an Episcopal bishop before the war with little military training or aptitude, took over the crucial role of attack initiator. The change left various Confederate generals to wander about the field all night trying to locate their new troops and sending couriers back and forth in the darkness in a vain attempt to determine their roles in the next day's attack. Bragg simply went back to bed, assuming that everyone understood the perplexing new plan as well as he did.

Predictably, things went wrong from the start. The next morning, Bragg waited confidently for the resumption of firing. Nothing happened. Polk, having received no written orders from Bragg, was casually lounging on the front porch of a farmhouse three miles behind the lines, waiting for his breakfast. Meanwhile, his subordinate commanders, Lt. Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill and Maj. Gens. John C. Breckinridge and Patrick Cleburne, sat around a campfire wondering what Polk was waiting for. It never occurred to Bragg to ride a mile to the front and see what was—or wasn't—happening.

The heaven-sent delay allowed Rosecrans's pioneer companies to continue strengthening the Union lines. They had worked all through the night felling trees and building breastworks, and canny veteran infantrymen had helped, scooping out foxholes with their canteens and constructing firing blinds with clear lines of sight trained on the dark woods lowering to the east. When the Confederate brigades stepped out of the tree line, they would be waiting for them.

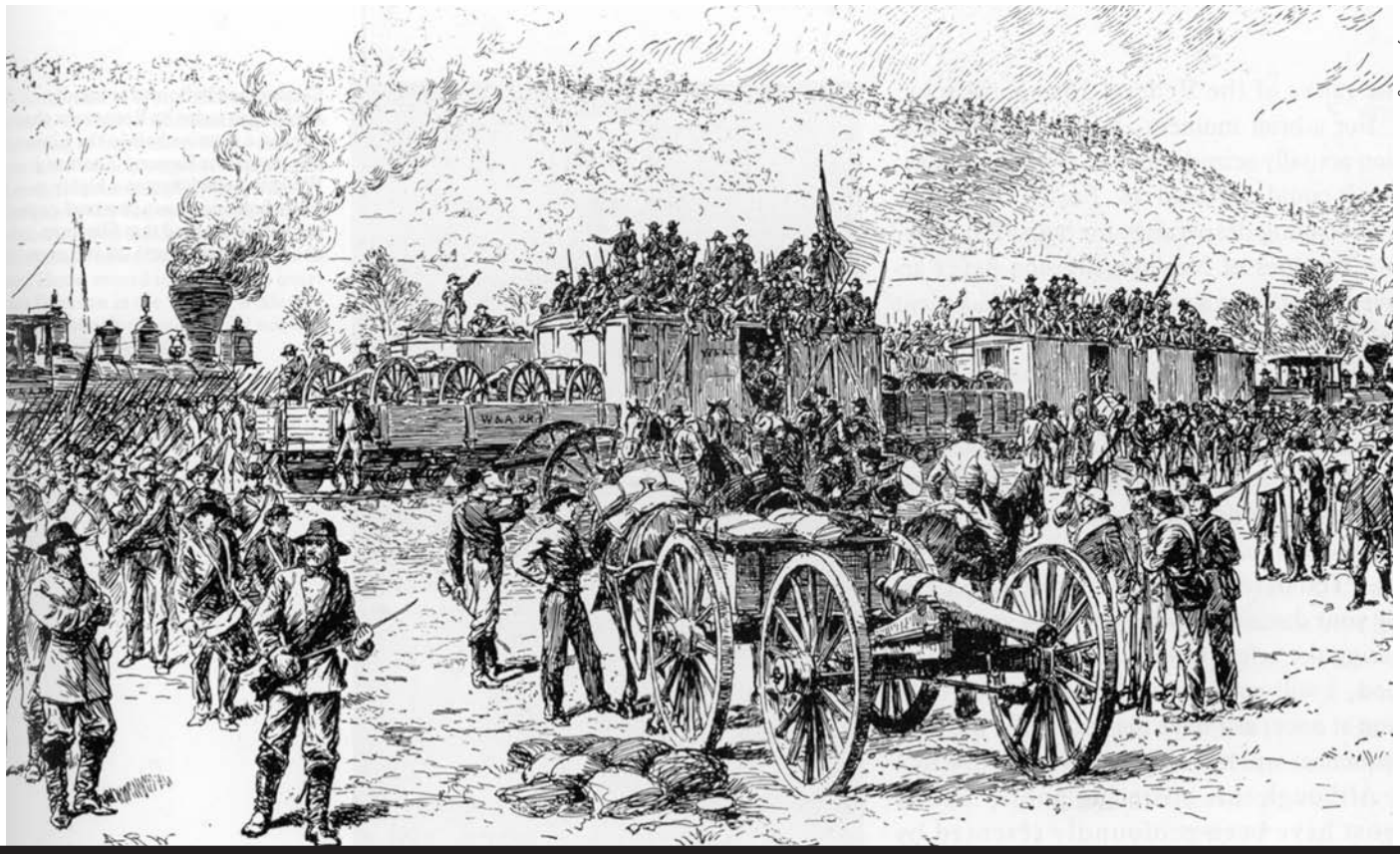
Nearly four hours behind schedule, the Confederate attack resumed at 9:45 AM. A "perfect tornado of bullets" greeted them, Kentucky Lieutenant W.W. Herr remembered. Herr's commander, Brig. Gen. Benjamin Hardin Helm, Abraham Lincoln's brother-in-law, fell in the first wave leading an attack on the Union breastworks. Dozens of futile attacks followed, doing nothing except to alarm Thomas, who frantically sent couriers galloping south to implore Rosecrans to send him reinforcements. And Rosecrans, himself uneasy and overly excited, delivered an impromptu tongue lashing to one of his division commanders, Brig. Gen. Thomas Wood, who was not moving quickly enough in his eyes. The brief outburst would soon prove to have disastrous consequences for the entire army.

Receiving yet another panicky demand from Thomas for reinforcements, Rosecrans decided to transfer Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan's division from the far right of the Union line to Thomas's left. At the same time, he ordered the just chastised Wood to move his men back into line to fill an erroneously reported gap left by Sheridan's movement. Wood was quick to obey the order, even though he knew there was no gap in the line. Either through blind obedience or simple spite, he immediately stopped his division from following Sheridan and headed back to close the nonexistent gap. "Gentlemen, I hold the fatal order of the day in my hand and would not part with it for five thousand dollars," Wood reportedly told aides.

At almost the exact moment that Wood was pulling out of line, Longstreet simultaneously unleashed his 11,000-man attack column, which he had massed just east of the Brotherton cabin. Bushrod Johnson, who had known Longstreet at West Point and in the peacetime army, was selected to lead the assault. It would be the highlight of his life.

"Our line now emerged from the forest into open ground on the border of long open fields, over which the enemy were retreated," Johnson reported. "The scene now presented was unspeakably grand. The resolute and impetuous charge, the rush of our heavy columns sweeping out from the shadow and gloom of the forest into the open fields flooded with sunlight, the glitter of arms, the onward dash of artillery and mounted men, the retreat of the foe, the shouts of the hosts of our army, the dust, the smoke, the noise of firearms—of whistling balls and grapeshot and bursting shell—made up a battle scene of unsurpassed grandeur."

For Union General William Lytle, his fellow Ohioan and brief acquaintance, the scene was more awful than grand. Seated on his horse on a nearby rise, ever afterwards to be known as Lytle Hill, the spruce little general watched in horror as the Union right dissolved with almost miraculous suddenness. Hordes of gray-coated demons, screaming themselves hoarse above the unremitting sound of musket and cannon fire, were now headed straight for him. Pulling on a pair of dark kid gloves, Lytle said, perhaps to himself, "If I must die, I will die as a gentleman." Then, turning to his men in the 1st Brigade, he shouted, "All right men. We can die but once. This is the time and place. Let us charge. If we can whip them



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today we will eat our Christmas dinner at home."

Lytle's counterattack, doomed from the start, fell apart as quickly as it began. The two sides came together at the base of the hill, fighting with bayonets, muskets swung like clubs, and even rocks picked up from the ground. Lytle, astride his charger, was an easy target. One bullet crashed into his spine; almost simultaneously, three more stuck him in the body and face, knocking out several teeth and exiting through his neck. He died, choking out his last words, "Brave, brave, brave boys."

Unaware of his old adversary's fate, Bushrod Johnson rode exultantly behind his own men, spurring them on. John Bell Hood, veteran of many of Robert E. Lee's battles in Virginia, gave him simple but dynamic advice: "Go ahead and keep ahead of everything." A moment later, Hood fell to the ground, his right leg shattered by a bullet near the hip. His arm was still in a sling from a serious wound suffered 10 weeks earlier at Gettysburg.

With Longstreet's breakthrough at the Brotherton cabin, the battle was effectively over, and both sides knew it. Rosecrans, stunned by the disaster, watched the Confederates pouring toward him on the hill where the Widow Glenn's cabin was located. Turning to Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana, a recent unwelcome visitor from the War Department who had come to observe—some said spy—on him, Rosecrans gave some terse, if well-chosen advice. "If you care to live any longer," said the general, "get away from here."

Rosecrans was not long in following his own advice, spurring his horse northward down the Dry Valley Road in the rear of the battlefield. At his side rode his chief of staff, Maj. Gen. James A. Garfield, yet another Ohioan. The two rode in silence for several miles, stopping from time to time to put their ears down Indian-style to the ground to listen for the direction of the heaviest firing. At a fork in the road between the bat-

The Union firing line at Snodgrass Hill pours lead into oncoming Confederates. Men in the rear passed reloaded muskets forward to keep up the fire. At dusk on September 20, the last Federal troops retreated from Chickamauga.

tlefield and Rossville Gap, they came literally to the turning point of their lives.

Rosecrans wanted to go back and organize a last-ditch defense with Thomas. Garfield, a political general with no prewar experience, convinced him to go instead to Rossville and prepare for the defense of Chattanooga while Garfield rode over to Thomas to find out what was happening. It was a spur of the moment decision that altered both their lives. Rosecrans would lose his command and his career for giving the appearance of abandoning his army at the height of its crisis. Garfield, cantering across the field alone, rode up to Thomas a few minutes later to give him the unnecessary news that the Union right had given way. Seventeen years later, canny campaign managers would turn "Garfield's Ride" into a stirring moment of high drama and heroism, propelling the rider straight into the White House where an assassin's bullet soon propelled him back out again.

Thomas, reinforced by the remnants of the Union right, fell back to a strong defensive position on Snodgrass Hill, the high-point of Horseshoe Ridge. There, he held off repeated Confederate assaults, winning for himself the somewhat ironic title, "The Rock of Chickamauga," which failed to take into account the fact that his incessant demands for more and more reinforcements had led Rosecrans to inadvertently create a gap in his own lines to provide those reinforcements.

At dusk, Thomas withdrew from the field, leaving behind a wrecked tableau and more than 34,000 casualties—the highest two-day total of the entire war—including the body of William Lytle, which was returned under flag of truce that night to Union lines. Standing atop Snodgrass Hill, the exultant Confederates poured cheer after cheer into the night air. It was, said Indiana soldier and future writer Ambrose Bierce, "the ugliest sound that any mortal ever heard—even a mortal exhausted and unnerved by two days of hard fighting, without sleep, without rest, without food and without hope."

> "My report today is of deplorable importance. Chickamauga is as fatal a name in our history as Bull Run. Our soldiers turned and fled. It was wholesale panic."
>
> —Charles A. Dana

> "Well, Rosecrans has been whipped as I feared."
>
> —Abraham Lincoln

Trudging back into Chattanooga, which they had abandoned all too readily 11 days earlier, the defeated Federals attempted to process the catastrophe. "We have met with a serious disaster, extent not yet ascertained," Rosecrans wired Washington. Dana had already beaten him to the punch. "My report today is of deplorable importance," he informed his superiors. "Chickamauga is as fatal a name in our history as Bull Run. Our soldiers turned and fled. It was wholesale panic."

Dana's report, motivated at least partly by vindictiveness over Rosecrans's brusque treatment of him personally, was considerably exaggerated, but not unexpected. "Well, Rosecrans has been whipped as I feared," said Abraham Lincoln. "I have feared it for several days. I believe I feel trouble in the air before it comes." Secretary of War Edwin Stanton chimed in: "I know the reasons well enough. Rosecrans ran away from his fighting men and did not stop for thirteen miles. [Alexander] McCook and [Thomas] Crittenden made pretty good time away from the fight to Chattanooga, but Rosecrans beat them both."

The fact that Rosecrans still held Chattanooga did not seem to register on anyone, not even the general himself. Only Nathan Bedford Forrest, an untutored genius of warfare, realized the true significance. Standing atop Missionary Ridge overlooking the town, Forrest sent message after message to Bragg, who was still loitering around the battlefield at Chickamauga, begging him to renew the attack while the Federals were still disorganized. Bragg, typically, refused. "What does he fight battles for?" Forrest wondered aloud. It was a question that would be asked and answered in the weeks to come. □

By Donald McConnell & Gustav Person

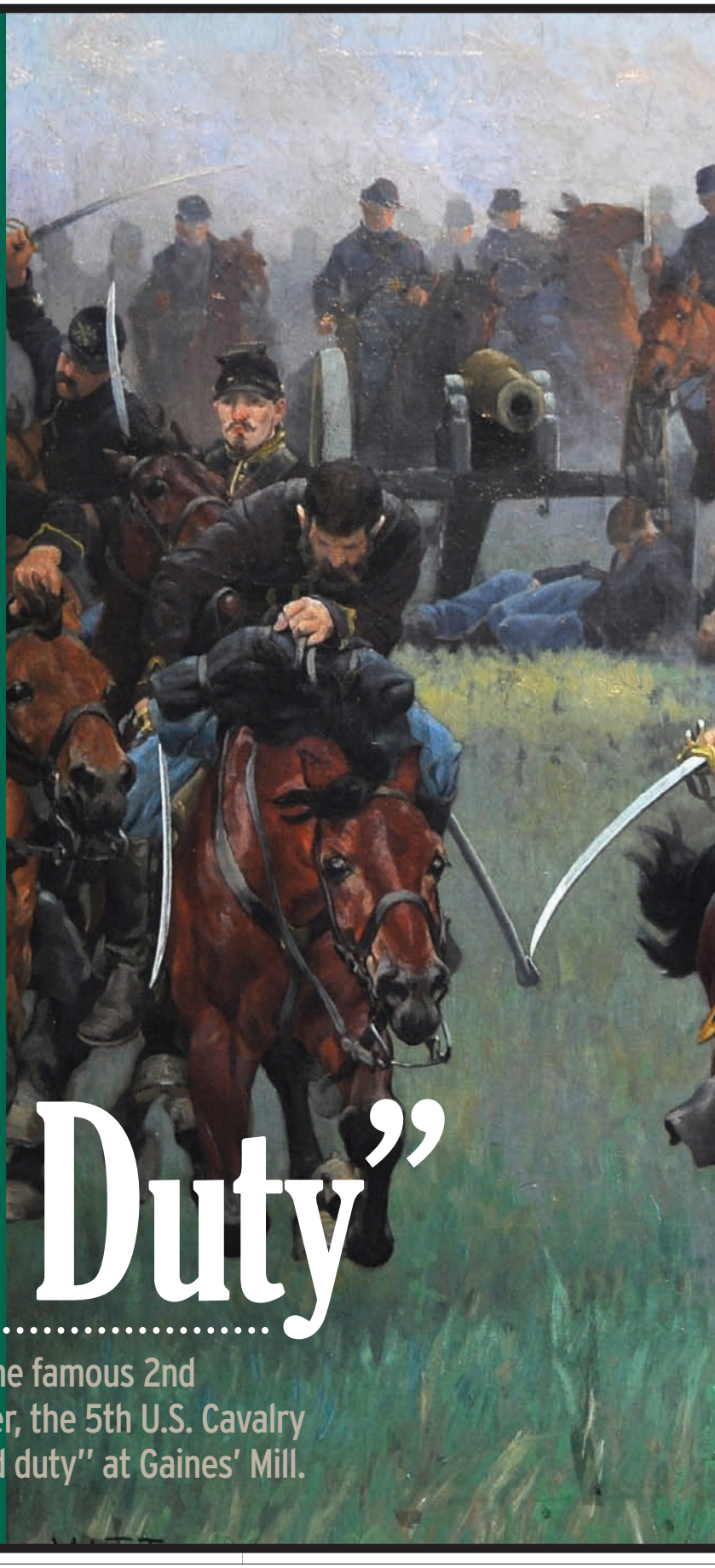
"A Hard Duty"

Newly organized from remnants of the famous 2nd U.S. Cavalry from the Western frontier, the 5th U.S. Cavalry found itself called to perform "a hard duty" at Gaines' Mill.

THE CELEBRATED 2ND U.S. CAVALRY, LIKE ITS brother regiment the 1st U.S. Cavalry, was formally created by an act of Congress in March 1855. Both units were the brainchild of Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, who lobbied long and hard for their creation to safeguard American immigrants on the Western frontier. A remarkable number of future Union and Confederate generals served in the ranks of the two regiments, including such luminaries as Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, Joseph E. Johnston, J.E.B. Stuart, John Bell Hood, Edmund Kirby Smith, Earl Van Dorn, William Hardee, Fitzhugh Lee, George H. Thomas, John Sedgwick, and Charles Field. A stray Indian arrow here or there might well have changed the entire course of the Civil War.

Of the two regiments, the 2nd undoubtedly had the harder task. While the 1st was assigned to the rolling grasslands of Kansas, Nebraska, and eastern Colorado, the 2nd had to cover the more inhospitable region of Kansas, Oklahoma, and northern Texas, home to the most fearsome tribe on the plains, the Comanche. There were more than 15,000 Comanche warriors within its borders, almost four times as many as the dominant tribe, the Cheyenne, had in the 1st Regiment's area of responsibility.

Prior to the Civil War, the 10 companies of the 2nd Cavalry were spread across Texas in small, far-flung garrisons. The companies guarded the frontier, escorted streams of immigrants crossing the plains, and fought unceasingly hostile Comanche. Company H, stationed before the war at Camp Cooper, 275 miles west of San Antonio, was representative of the other companies of the regiment. Camp Cooper was a dreary frontier post named after the adjutant



U.S. Cavalry Museum at Fort Riley, Kansas

Swords glinting in the sun, troopers of the 5th U.S. Cavalry charge the Confederate line at Gaines' Mill in artist William Trego's evocative 1893 painting.

general of the U.S. Army and built on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River on the Comanche Reserve in West Texas. From there, Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee led a 40-day, 1,600-mile punitive expedition against the Comanche in the summer of 1856, but averaged sighting only one Indian every 20 days. Said Kirby Smith, who accompanied Lee on the expedition, "We traveled through the country, broke down our men, killed our horses and returned as ignorant of the whereabouts of Mr. Sanico [a Comanche chief] as when we started."

The 2nd Cavalry retained that designation until August 3, 1861, when all six mounted regiments were reassigned, resulting in the change of the unit's name to the 5th U.S. Cavalry. Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, the first regimental commander, relinquished his command when he resigned to accept a commission as a general in the new Confederate Army. He was replaced on May 3, 1861, by George H. Thomas, who, although he held a commission as a major general of Union volunteers during the war, retained the formal regular position of colonel of the regiment until October 1863.

Many other regimental officers resigned from the unit to accept commissions in the Confederate Army. At the close of 1860, Company H was commanded by Captain Nathan "Shanks" Evans of South Carolina, who took a leave of absence for two months starting in January 1861 and was declared absent without leave on March 27. Evans later saved the Confederate Army at the Battle of First Manassas. He was replaced in January 1861 by 2nd Lt. James E. Harrison, who subsequently received two brevet promotions for gallantry during the war. Captain Kenner Garrard took command on April 30, 1861. In June, the Army sent him to the United States Military Academy at West Point as commandant of cadets. Garrard subsequently rose to the rank of major general of volunteers by the end of the war.

First Lieutenant William McLean assumed command of the company on August 31, 1861, upon Garrard's transfer, and remained in command until he was

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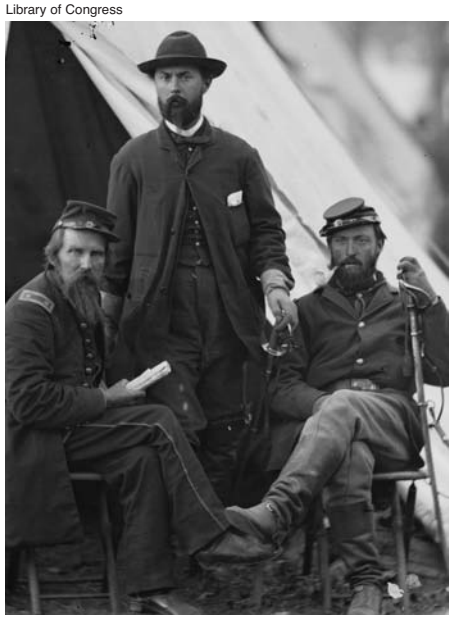
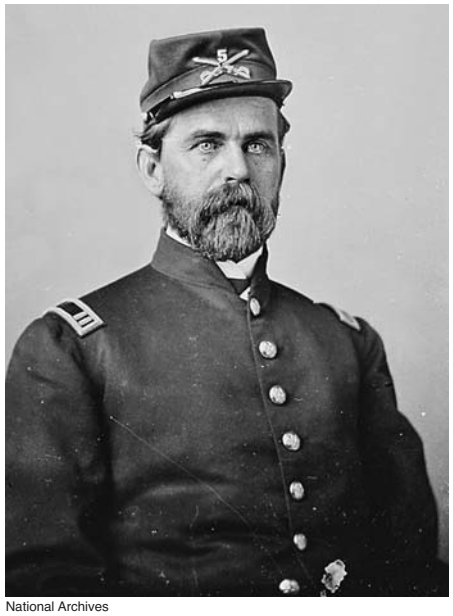


ABOVE: Major Charles J. Whiting, Captain James E. Harrison, and Captain Wesley W. Owens of the 5th, photographed after the battle. Whiting commanded the unit at Gaines' Mill. BELOW: Captain William P. Chambliss was wounded in the charge and taken captive.



National Archives

captured by Confederate cavalry during a skirmish at Old Church, Virginia, on June 13, 1862. The Confederates were commanded in this action by Fitzhugh Lee, a former officer in the 2nd Cavalry.

McLean was exchanged later that summer. Promoted to captain and appointed to command Company M in September, he remained absent without leave according to the regimental returns and muster rolls for the period. McLean was assigned to recruiting duty at Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania but died of unknown causes on April 13, 1863, at the Clarendon Hotel in Washington, D.C.

The vast majority of the company, including all eight noncommissioned officers, were veterans of hard frontier service in Texas, having served in the old army in the 2nd Cavalry prior to the Civil War. One of the most experienced soldiers was Private Thomas McDermott. Born in County Galway, Ireland, McDermott listed his civilian occupation as a clerk. Literate and physically imposing at six feet tall, he had enlisted in the 2nd U.S. Dragoons in November 1848, quickly moved up the ranks, and was discharged in 1853 as the company first sergeant. In 1859, he reenlisted and was assigned to Company H, 2nd Cavalry, while residing in Baltimore. McDermott was severely wounded at Gaines' Mill and was hospitalized until early 1863. After recovering, McDermott was appointed an ordnance sergeant and served in that capacity until his death on June 7, 1886, at Key West, Florida.

Typical of a regular army company, the majority of the men in Company H were immigrants, predominately Irish. In all, 30 men came from the Emerald Isle. There were also five Germans, and one man each from Austria and France. Only 19 men reported their birthplace as the United States: six from New York, three from Massachusetts, two each from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky, and one each from Indiana and the District of Columbia. According to the U.S. Army Enlistment Register, the majority of the men, 21 in all, were unskilled laborers prior to enlisting. Other occupations reported included five boot and shoemakers, four farmers, three clerks and hostlers, two teamsters, and a variety of other trades.

Desertion posed a constant problem for the regular army throughout the 19th century. In peacetime, garrisoned in dreary frontier posts, drawing low pay and usually serving under dangerous conditions, soldiers deserted in large numbers. Wartime drove more men out of the ranks.

A total of 320 men deserted from the regiment in 1861, and only 30 were apprehended. Company H had the third highest desertion rate with 42.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Army authorities quickly realized that the regulars would be needed in the East to form a professionally trained reserve force and train the multitudes of state volunteer troops then being raised to suppress the rebellion. Meanwhile, the Western Department commander, Brevet Maj. Gen. David E. Twiggs, had surrendered most of the Union forces in Texas to Confederate authorities. The regiment successfully deployed out of the state, although, to the troopers' sorrow, they had to leave behind all their horses.

Like many regiments of U.S. Army Regulars, the 5th Cavalry was commanded by captains and lieutenants for most of the war. Command of the regiment changed 34 times. Remounted at Carlisle Barracks, the regiment deployed two battalions of four companies each. While Companies D and H were stationed at Washington on provost duty, one battalion consisting of Companies B, E, G, and I saw action at Bull Run on July 21, 1861. During that campaign, the second battalion, consisting of Companies A, C, F, and K, served in the Shenandoah Valley under the command of Maj. Gen. Robert Patterson.

During peacetime, a regular cavalry company was authorized to include a captain, a first and second lieutenant, four sergeants, four corporals, two buglers, a farrier or blacksmith, and 50 privates, for a total of 61 enlisted men. At the beginning of the Civil War, the authorized strength was raised to 78 privates. Following the Bull Run campaign, the regiment remained on duty in the nation's capital. Prior to moving to the Peninsula in March 1862, Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, commanding the Army of the Potomac, formed three of the four regular cavalry regiments (the 1st, 5th, and 6th) into a Cavalry Reserve Brigade under the command of Brig. Gen. Phillip St. George Cooke, the father-in-law of former 1st Cavalry member and future Confederate legend J.E.B. Stuart.

National Archives

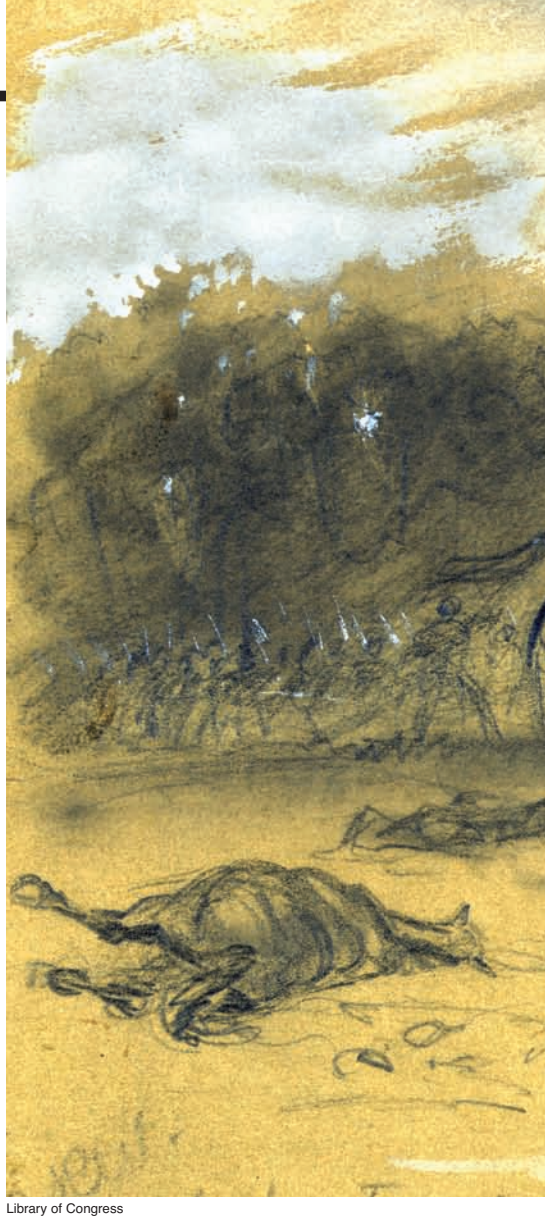
Federal cavalry uses a pontoon bridge to cross the Chickahominy River below Gaines' Mill in late June 1862. Major General Fitz-John Porter's handling of the V Corps was criticized after the battle.

After its disembarkation at Fortress Monroe at the end of the James Peninsula, the regiment slowly moved west toward Richmond. Company H had an aggregate strength on June 1, 1862, of 55 enlisted men. However, 10 soldiers were absent on detached service, sick, or on extra duty. That number was also decreased by the three soldiers missing in action at Old Church on June 13. First Sergeant Edward Preston dislocated a knee while helping to free a wagon from the mud just two days prior to the Battle of Gaines' Mill. He was evacuated to Washington, dropping the available manpower for the coming battle to just 41. With McLean missing and Preston hospitalized, the company was commanded by the remaining seven NCOs during the ensuing Battle of Gaines' Mill.

On the morning of the second day of the Seven Days battles, June 27, 1862, the Union V Corps, under the command of Maj. Gen. Fitz-John Porter, was positioned in a wide semicircle on the north bank of the Chickahominy River below Gaines' Mill. Porter positioned the Cavalry Reserve, now increased in size to two brigades, to the rear of the left of the infantry line deployed along Boatswain's Creek. What followed was the regiment's most desperate fight of the entire war. Commanded by Captain Charles J. Whiting, West Point Class of 1853, only five companies (A, D, F, H, and I) of the 5th Cavalry, numbering seven officers and 220 enlisted men, were present for duty.

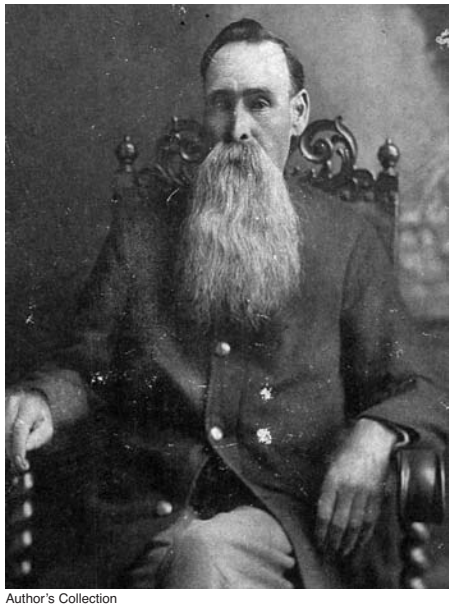
Around midday, the Confederates, in overwhelming numbers, launched their first attack, and the fighting went on until dark. Cooke had deployed the 5th Cavalry in two lines supported by the 1st Cavalry Regiment, positioned a little to the rear and filling the interval of two artillery batteries in the reserve line. The troops came under hot fire from Confederate muskets and artillery throughout the afternoon. Cooke instructed Whiting to charge "when the support or safety of the batteries required it."

The Confederate Texas Brigade, under the command of Brig. Gen. John Bell Hood, a former officer in the old 2nd Cavalry, made the critical breakthrough on the left of the Union line toward dusk. The supporting Confederates quickly overwhelmed the Union infantry and forced their disorderly retreat. The obvious target was the first line of Federal artillery, which was attempting to limber up and make an escape. All told, the batteries making up the first line of artillery defense on the plateau lost 10 guns to the Confederate assault.



Library of Congress

ABOVE: Another William Trego painting shows the Union cavalry in action. Trego was one of the most prolific historical painters of the late 19th century. RIGHT: A postwar photo of Jefferson Fitzpatrick, one of two brothers who participated in the cavalry charge. OPPOSITE: This battlefield drawing by Alfred Waud shows Confederate troops capturing Union guns at Gaines' Mill. The charge of the 5th Cavalry helped save many other artillery pieces.



Author's Collection

Receiving further orders from Cooke, Whiting prepared his regiment to charge to save the reserve line of artillery. The official cavalry tactics manual, authored by Cooke in 1861, prescribed a charge as beginning with a walk of 20 paces, 60 paces at the trot, 80 paces at the gallop, and then an all-out charge. A pace was defined as three feet. With drawn sabers, the 5th Cavalry moved forward with a wild cheer. Soon enveloped by dust and smoke, the five companies, forming a small battalion, veered to the left and right to avoid the guns. They charged 275 yards across the open plateau, where the Confederates met them with heavy gunfire. Musket fire emptied many Union saddles, and the charge degenerated into a stampede in reverse when the troopers reached the edge of the woods bordering Boatswain's Creek. Many horses went out of control, and their backward rush carried them into the reserve artillery line.

Whiting, his horse killed under him, fell stunned at the feet of the 4th Texas Infantry. Captain William Chambliss was grievously wounded in six places. Both were captured and interned at Libby Prison in Richmond. Lieutenant John Sweet was mortally wounded and died in Confederate custody. The battalion adjutant, 2nd Lt. Thomas Maley, although wounded, assisted in reforming the battalion after the charge. Both Lieutenants Louis Watkins and Abraham Arnold were also wounded. Watkins was severely injured when he was trampled by a number of troop horses. Only Captain Joseph McArthur survived unhurt to command the remnants of the battalion. In all, the total casualties were four killed, 30 wounded, and 21 missing in action and presumed captured. Unsupported and without most of its officers, the regiment rallied, reformed, and was soon assisted in covering the retreat of the Federal army across the Chickahominy River.

Meanwhile, most of the guns in the reserve line had been overrun. Nine of the pieces were captured by the enemy, raising the total of Federal guns captured to 19. While the charge had failed to stop the Confederate advance, it did give the artillery enough time to save most of its guns. Cooke succinctly summed up the incident, describing it as "a hard duty given this half of the Fifth Cavalry." The Comte de Paris, a French nobleman serv-

ing as a volunteer on Union General George B. McClellan's staff, wrote to Cooke in 1877, "The main fact is, that with your cavalry, you did all that cavalry could do to stop the rout."

Although the regimental historian later noted that the "regiment performed its most distinguished service" in the charge, Porter and Cooke carried on an extended dispute over the 5th's effectiveness in the battle. In charging that the cavalry action was unsuccessful, Porter sought an excuse for the events of the day that resulted in the defeat of his V Corps. For his part, Cooke solicited the testimony of many cavalry colleagues to argue that the charge had actually saved the entire V Corps from destruction. Historians have generally sided with Cooke.

Only the junior sergeant, Albert S. Wing, and two corporals, Thomas Tuffy and John J. Donnelly, escaped injury during the charge and led the company off the field when the regiment withdrew. Wing survived the war and continued to serve in the army until 1894 as a messenger with the adjutant general's office in Washington. Tuffy became the company first sergeant and reenlisted in July 1864, but deserted less than two months later. Donnelly survived the war and served with the 5th Cavalry until his appointment as an ordnance sergeant in 1883. He died in 1886 while stationed at Fort Grant in the Arizona Territory.

After the Battle of Gaines' Mill, the official muster rolls listed Company H with an available strength of just 32 enlisted men. That number reflected one man missing in action since a late May skirmish at Hanover Court House. He was identified as one Private John Byrnes, who was later exchanged and discharged for disability at New York City on December 18, 1862. It also included the three missing since June 13 and six missing in action at Gaines' Mill on the 27th. Of the six, only one, Private Jacob Dale, returned to duty. Dale, who was wounded in the fight and captured, was exchanged in August 1862. In all likelihood, the others died on the battlefield and were buried in unmarked graves. Ten men were reported wounded in action at Gaines' Mill. The company also lost a total of 18 horses in the action.

Second Sergeant Shaffholt J. Antoni

Continued on page 96

FIRE OVER TEXAS

BY R. THOMAS CAMPBELL

With the vital port of Galveston in Union hands, "Prince John" Magruder rode to the rescue with the help of his improvised cottonclads and Horse Marines.

Their decks swarming with self-proclaimed "Horse Marines," the Confederate gunboats *Neptune* and *Bayou City* make straight for the USS *Harriet Lane* in Galveston Harbor.

Harpers Weekly

When Texas seceded from the Union on February 1, 1861, it did not take long for the new Confederate government to realize that the state's 385-mile coastline was extremely vulnerable to enemy assaults. With most of Texas's newly raised troops shipped off to Virginia, where the first battles of the war would be fought, there were precious few soldiers left to guard against a Federal attack back home. To add to the state's anxiety, the Lincoln government in April 1861 declared a blockade of the entire southern coastline from Virginia to the Rio Grande. Proclaiming a blockade was one thing—having enough warships to enforce it was another thing altogether. With most of the Federal attention focused on the major harbors of Charleston, Mobile, and New Orleans, and with few vessels available to guard the approaches to Galveston, the port became a haven for Southern blockade runners whose profits were high and risks were low. Even before the war, the city had established itself as the busiest anchorage on the Texas coast. Of the 300,000 bales of cotton produced in Texas in 1860, 200,000 were shipped from Galveston.

On August 14, 1861, Confederate Naval Commander William Wallace Hunter was ordered to proceed to Galveston and report to Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn, the military chief of the district. Hunter's responsibilities included assuming the overall command of all Confederate naval forces in the area and, once in charge, "to take measures to guard against any surprise by the enemy in the harbor and bay of Galveston." Hunter was also instructed to fortify Virginia Point across the bay from Galveston Island and to protect the two-and-a-half-mile railroad bridge that connected the island with the mainland. Hunter immediately directed all his energies and talents to fortifying Galveston, Brownsville, Pass Cavailo, and Sabine Pass. With only a few improvised "cottonclad" river steamers under his command, Hunter rendered efficient service to the army, transporting troops and munitions and guarding the coast from marauding expeditions.

Both Hunter and Brig. Gen. Paul O. Hébert, who assumed command of the district when Van Dorn was transferred east, considered Galveston essentially indefensible. Accordingly, they concentrated what few forces they

had on Virginia Point and began fortifying the mouth of the Trinity River where it empties into the bay. All available guns, except for one 10-inch Columbiad that had to be left at Fort Point, were moved to the mainland, and all stores and ammunition were likewise salvaged. By the fall of 1862, when a Federal fleet suddenly appeared to threaten the city from the Gulf of Mexico, Galveston had become a ghost town.

At daylight on October 4, 1862, eight Federal vessels heaved into view off the bar of Galveston Bay. The fleet included the *Westfield*, a sidewheel steamer with six guns; the *Harriet Lane*, another sidewheeler carrying five guns; the *Owasco* with five guns; the *Clifton,* carrying eight guns; and the mortar schooner *Henry James*. Three additional schooners loaded with supplies also accompanied the Union flotilla. The Federal armada was under the command of Commodore William B. Renshaw, who flew his pennant aboard the *Westfield*. At 7 AM, *Harriet Lane*, flying a white flag, crossed the bar and steamed into the bay. Confederate soldiers watched apprehensively until she came opposite their position on Fort Point, at which time they opened fire with their lone 10-inch Columbiad, sending a shot whistling across the ship's bow as a signal to stop. Her commander, Lieutenant Jonathan M. Wainwright, immediately complied and the Federal warship abruptly came to anchor.

Wainwright sent an officer ashore in a small boat to ask for an immediate interview with the Confederate commander. Confederate Colonel Joseph J. Cook, heading up the island defense, hurried to Fort Point and was told that Wainwright wanted him to come by boat to Renshaw's flagship to meet with the fleet's commander. Not having a boat at the point, Cook returned to Galveston to make the necessary arrangements. After much difficulty, the colonel finally located a small skiff and dispatched two officers on their mission. By this time, however, Wainwright had grown impatient. Turning *Harriet Lane* around, he steamed back over the bar to communicate with Renshaw himself. Soon, Southern soldiers at the point were aghast to see the entire Federal fleet, white flags flying from their peaks, cross the bar and head for the harbor. Cook's messenger boat was making slow progress toward the oncoming Union warships, when suddenly the big Columbiad on Fort Point thundered again, sending another shell streaking across the bow of the lead Federal ship.

This time, however, the Union vessels refused to stop. Ignoring the white flags still flying from their own masts, they opened fire on Fort Point and the Confederate positions on the narrow neck of land between the fort and the city. The green Texas troops manning the Columbiad had never been under fire, and with shells from 20 heavy guns bursting around them, they quickly spiked their lone piece and fled toward the city. By this time, Renshaw's fleet had come alongside the Confederate flag-of-truce boat carrying the two Southern officers. Renshaw ordered his flotilla to drop anchor and cease firing.

Rosenberg Library, Galveston, TX

ABOVE: Leon Smith, a one-time riverboat captain, led the 250-man Confederate naval force manning the cotton-clad flotilla. BELOW: Confederate General John B. Magruder took command of the Department of Texas, and was determined to regain the harbors—including Galveston. OPPOSITE: The USS *South Carolina* shells Galveston's shore batteries prior to the Union capture of the key coastal city.

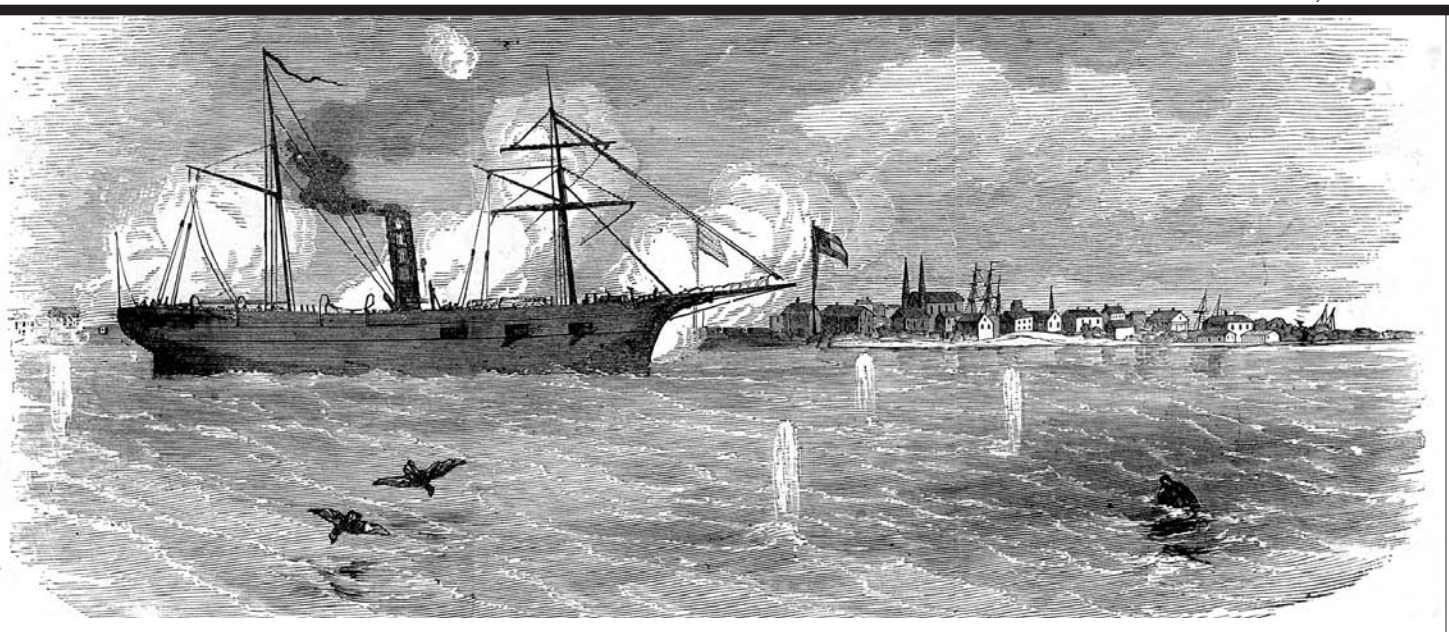
National Archives

An uneasy silence now prevailed, as the two Confederate officers conferred with Renshaw on board *Westfield*. In his report, Cook described the results of the meeting: "At about 3:00 p.m. our flag-of-truce messenger returned to the city, bearing a demand from the enemy for the surrender of the city and demanding an immediate answer. I sent a messenger with the answer that I should not surrender the city, directing the messenger also to say to the commander of the fleet that there were many women and children, and to demand time to remove them. After some negotiation it was agreed that no attack should be made upon the city for four days; that during that time we should not construct any new or strengthen any old defenses within the city, and the fleet not to be brought any nearer the city. This arrangement gave us ample time for the removal of all who desired to leave the island, and also for the removal of our troops and material of every kind."

Renshaw had no available troops with which to take possession of the city, but he effectively controlled every part of the town and island that lay within reach of his guns. At the end of the agreed four-day truce, the Federal commander was left with a stalemate. As a token gesture by Cook to avoid a useless bombardment, Renshaw was given permission to dispatch a detail to raise the American flag over the Customs House for a period of a few hours. With this done, the Union fleet closed the port and made access to the mainland over the railroad bridge a hazardous journey for the few Confederate troops still remaining in the city. Heavy planking was laid down on the bridge, and Confederate cavalry patrols frequently crossed over and visited the city, but for all intents and purposes, Galveston was now in Union hands.

On November 29, Confederate Maj. Gen. John B. Magruder, fresh from his stubborn

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection



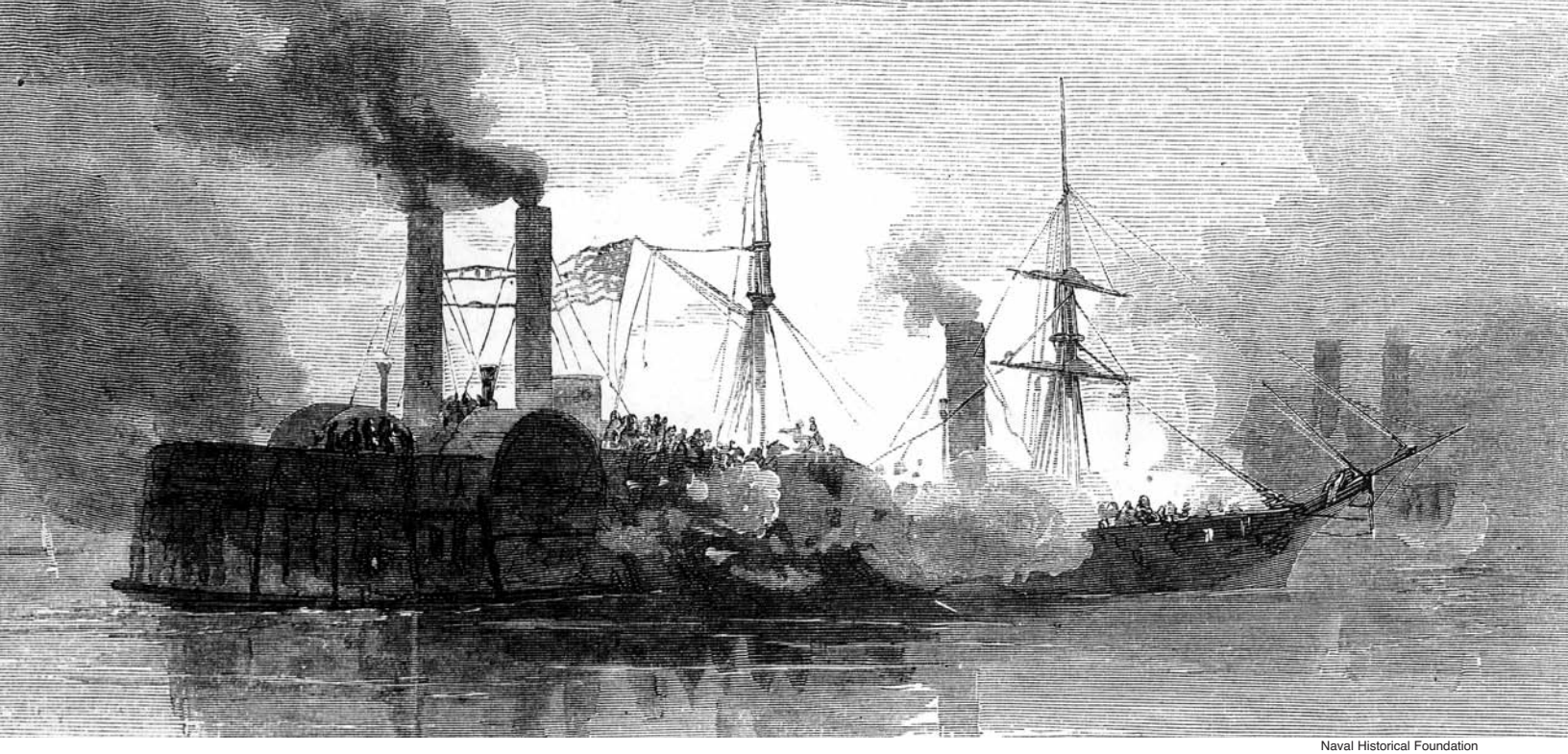
defense of the Peninsula in Virginia, arrived to assume command of the Department of Texas. The tall, courtly Virginian, nicknamed "Prince John" by his admiring men, found the situation desperate. "On my arrival in Texas," he wrote, "I found the harbors of this coast in the possession of the enemy from the Sabine River to Corpus Christi; the line of the Rio Grande virtually abandoned, most of the guns having been removed from that frontier to San Antonio, only about 300 or 400 men remaining at Brownsville. I resolved to regain the harbors if possible and to occupy the valley of the Rio Grande in force. I remained a day or two in Houston, and then proceeding to Virginia Point, on the mainland, opposite Galveston Island, I took with me a party of 80 men, supported by 300 more, and passing through the city of Galveston at night, I inspected the forts abandoned by our troops when the city was given up. I found the forts open in the rear, and taken in reverse by every one of the enemy's ships in the harbor. They were therefore utterly useless for my purposes. The railway track had been permitted to remain from Virginia Point to Galveston, and by its means I purposed to transport to a position near the enemy's fleet the heavy gun hereinafter mentioned, and by assembling all the movable artillery that could be collected together in the neighborhood, I hoped to acquire sufficient force to be able to expel the enemy's vessels from the harbor."

Acting on Magruder's orders, Hunter was making every effort to arm several new boats that had been purchased by the Confederate government. Two iron-strapped river steamers, which were being operated by the Texas Marine Department, were reasonably large and could carry a sizable boarding party. These two boats, *Bayou City* and *Neptune*, were moved to Harrisburg, on the Buffalo Bayou, where workers began building bulwarks of lumber and cotton bales. Workers stripped off *Bayou City*'s upper cabins and pilot house, and cotton bales were placed on their sides and stacked three tiers high. Another row, two bales high, backed these and provided a fortified firing platform for sharpshooters. Boarding planks were constructed on each side of the boat and hoisted beside the smokestacks, where they could be dropped on an enemy vessel. Mounted on a pivot and protruding from among the cotton bales on the bow was an old 32-pounder that had been reworked into a rifle.

A company of cavalry from Colonel Tom Green's 5th Texas and a number of volunteers from Colonel Arthur Bagby's 7th Texas Cavalry went aboard as sharpshooters. These troopers had fought well as part of Brig. Gen. Henry H. Sibley's famous brigade during the New Mexico campaign. From a distance the 165-foot *Bayou City*, under the command of Captain Henry S. Lubbock, resembled an ironclad ram. For her part, *Neptune* sported two small 24-pounder howitzers, and she too was armored with cotton bales. Commanded by Captain William H. Sangster, *Neptune* also carried a complement of sharpshooters from the 7th Texas Cavalry. Two transports, *Lady Gwinn* and *John F. Carr*, accompanied the tiny fleet. The latter vessels had cotton bales protecting their engines and machinery, but otherwise were unarmed. All the "Horse Marines," as the cavalrymen described themselves, were armed with Enfield rifles and double-barreled shotguns.

The Confederate naval force of approximately 250 men was under the command of one-time riverboat captain Leon Smith, who, like Green, had fought in the Texas war for independence. Magruder had met Smith while in California, and being impressed with his knowledge of steamboating, had offered him a position on his staff. Along with the navy, Magruder was marshaling his land forces. Again drawing upon the Sibley Brigade, the Confederate commander tapped the untried 20th Texas Infantry, the 21st Texas Infantry Battalion, and detachments of the 2nd and 26th Texas Cavalry for the land attack. The units had been preparing to leave for Louisiana, but had been delayed by lack of transportation. Magruder scraped together all the artillery pieces he could find, and by December he had accumulated 14 field pieces, six larger siege guns, and one 9-inch Dahlgren that he had mounted on a railroad flatcar.

Magruder's haste in preparing his forces was well founded. On Christmas morning, 240 members of Companies D, G, and I of



Naval Historical Foundation

the 42nd Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, under the command of Colonel Isaac S. Burrell, landed on Kuhn's Wharf at the end of 18th Street in Galveston. Working with haste, the New England troops ripped out the planking leading from the wharf to the main dock area, which was called the Strand, and proceeded to erect barricades and firing positions on the wharf itself. With the heavy naval guns at their backs, Burrell was confident that his men could successfully resist any determined Southern attack. Having learned through informants that more Union troops were on their way to Galveston as reinforcements, Magruder realized that he had to act quickly.

Wednesday evening, December 31, was clear and cold. A brilliant full moon cast its rays over the placid waters of Galveston Bay, where the Federal warships swung gently at their anchors. On board each vessel, deck watches began their usual rounds. Hammocks were lowered by tired Union sailors, who hoped the persistent rumors of a Rebel attack would prove untrue for at least one more night. On Virginia Point, however, Confederate Army forces were already on the move. Horses and mules strained at their harnesses as they pulled the six heavy siege guns across the wooden planking laid down on the long railroad bridge. Gray-clad troops trudged along beside, while other willing hands pushed ahead the old railroad flatcar carrying the 9-inch Dahlgren.

Captain S.T. Fontaine and the men of the 1st Texas Heavy Artillery had the farthest to go. Their objective was to occupy Fort Point at the mouth of the harbor and direct the fire of their heavy guns on the Federal fleet in the bay. Meanwhile, Captain George R. Wilson's six siege guns would engage the Massachusetts troops on Kuhn's Wharf, while the big Dahlgren was run up to a point only 300 yards from the *Harriet Lane*, which was anchored off the end of 29th Street. The remaining artillery pieces were positioned within the town, where they could bring their fire to bear on the other Federal vessels in the bay. In all, five formidable warships lay offshore, their 30 heavy guns covering the Union troops on the wharf. Meanwhile, Cook had assembled a determined attack force of 500 men whose mission was to storm the Northern troops barricaded on the wharf. Magruder planned to have everyone in place by midnight, at which time he would give the signal to open fire.

By the appointed hour, Smith and his cottonclad flotilla had reached a point just north of Pelican Island. Fearful that he would be spotted in the bright moonlight—he was, and lookouts aboard the *Harriet Lane* flashed the alarm—Smith ordered his forces to withdraw northward several miles up the bay. With the faint sound of hissing steam audible from the engine rooms, the weary Confederate Horse Marines dropped down behind their cotton bales for a short period of rest, while Smith and his anxious commanders waited for the opening sounds of the land attack.

Midnight came and went, and all was still quiet in Galveston. Confederate soldiers, careful to stay out of the bright moonlight, huddled in the shadows of the buildings and in alleyways along the waterfront. Weapons were checked and double-checked. Some men, aided by the moonlight, wrote letters to their families and sweethearts. Waiting was always the most difficult task for soldiers, and it was now well past the appointed time and the order to attack still had not come. Unknown to those awaiting the signal, Magruder had decided to delay the assault in order to be certain that Fontaine had reached his position at Fort Point. By 4 AM, the moon had slipped below the horizon and a thin mist spread its veil over the darkened bay. While their horses were hurried behind some of the brick buildings, Texas gunners jostled their pieces to more advantageous firing positions and squinted across their sights at the enemy vessels still visible by the faint light of the stars.

A little after 4 AM, Magruder walked to the center siege cannon located at the end of 20th Street and pulled the lanyard. The heavy gun

responded with a thunderous roar, and at once the entire Confederate line exploded in a sheet of flame as every gun opened up. The Battle of Galveston had begun.

It did not take the Federals long to reply. Within minutes every gun that had the range was sending charges of grape and canister whistling through the midst of the Confederates on the Strand. The deadly iron balls tore into buildings and flesh alike. Cries of the wounded mixed with the dust and smoke as Texas gunners struggled to return fire. The Union gunners began to alternate between shells and canister and the streets and alleys leading to the Strand became a fiery death trap of massive explosions and streaking canister.

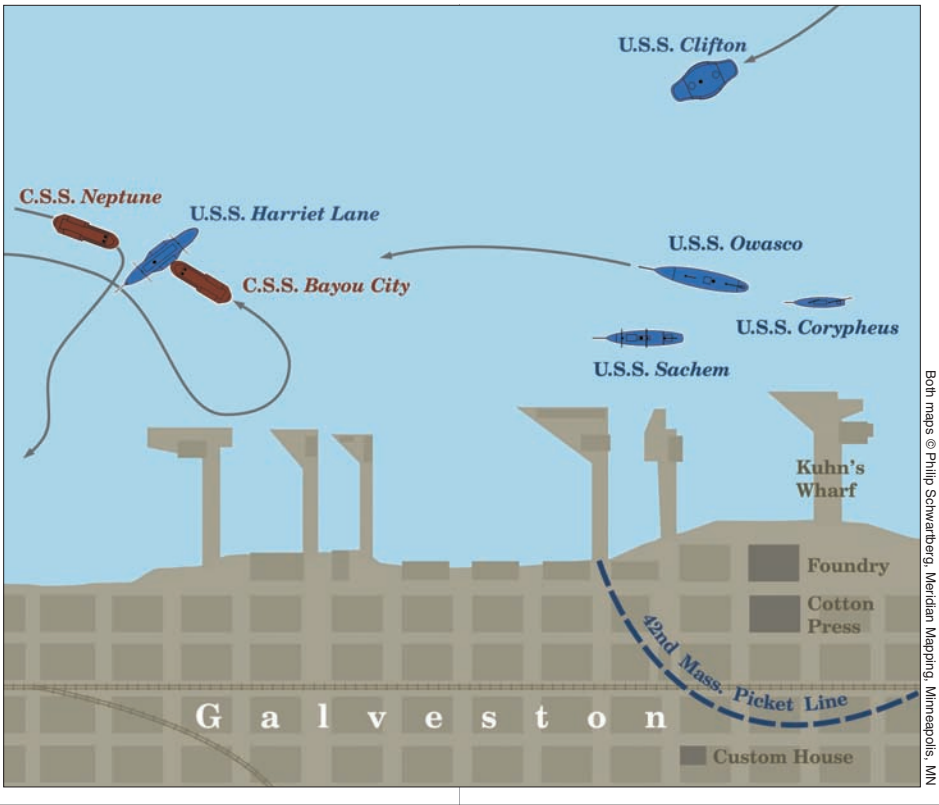
Four miles to the north, the thunderous discharges were distinctly heard. Smith, shouting into *Bayou City*'s speaking tube, yelled to the engine room, "Give me all the steam you can crack on!" *Neptune* came alongside and the two cottonclads' paddlewheels churned the water to foam as they began to pick up speed. Black smoke poured from their stacks as engines puffed and throbbed, while high-pressure steam hissed from escape valves. The sleepy Horse Marines were now wide awake, and with dry mouths and pounding hearts they scrambled for their positions behind the cotton bales.

On the Strand things were not going well for Magruder's Texans. Federal warships had edged in closer to the wharves and now, at less than 300 yards, were sending their charges tearing into the enemy positions. Some Confederate gun crews had abandoned their pieces, while others struggled bravely to maintain their fire. Even the heavy Dahlgren on the flatcar was abandoned. Some damage had been inflicted on the enemy vessels, but not enough to drive them off. Seeing the danger, Cook led his 500-man storming party in a desperate bid to dislodge the Massachusetts troops barricaded on Kuhn's Wharf. The green troops of the 20th Texas immediately ran into trouble. Wading through the cold water from the Strand to the wharf, they attempted to raise their scaling ladders, only to find that they had miscalculated the depth of the water and that the ladders were too short. Fire from the Union ships combined with the musket fire from the 42nd Massachusetts spread panic among the floundering Texans, and they scrambled for any cover they could find.

Knowing that it would be suicide to try to keep his troops and gunners in position at daylight, Magruder ordered his men to begin falling back. Exhausted and dazed Confederates troops, many encrusted with blood, dust, and gunpowder, stumbled through the town, some not stopping until they reached the Gulf shore. The decision to shield the horses behind the buildings proved fortuitous, for most gun crews were able to retrieve their pieces. Fontaine's exposed guns, however, were spiked and abandoned at Fort Point. As daylight began to reveal the carnage and destruction around them, a feeble cheer arose among the Confederate troops. Off to the north, through the smoke and early morning haze, the Horse Marines were coming.

Puffing and snorting from high-pressure steam, the Confederate cottonclads drove straight for the Union vessels. Rosin and turpentine had been thrown into the improvised vessels' furnaces to increase their speed. When *Bayou City* and *Neptune* drew within range, their bows suddenly belched smoke and flame as their 32-pounder and howitzers let fly at the Federals. While the Union gunners on board *Harriet Lane* hurried to pivot their pieces to meet the unexpected new threat, Texas cavalrymen aboard *Bayou City* loaded another round and sent it streaking toward the *Harriet Lane*. Their aim was true. The shell tore through the side of the Union gunboat, blasting a hole that was big enough for a man to crawl through. Someone

BELOW: While Kuhn's Wharf was held by Union infantry, the USS *Harriet Lane* was rammed by the Confederate ships *Neptune* and *Bayou City*. OPPOSITE: *Neptune* slams hard into the side of *Harriet Lane*, 10 feet behind her paddlewheel, in this engraving from *Harper's Weekly*.



shouted for them to give the Yankees another New Year's present, and the old 32-pounder exploded in a mass of flames, sparks, and spinning pieces of jagged iron. When the smoke cleared, the ship's captain and several others lay lifeless on the deck, their bodies torn to pieces by the misfired gun.

On came the cottonclads, *Bayou City* slightly in the lead. The Horse Marines opened a blistering fire on the Federal warship with their Enfield rifles. Blue-clad sailors scurried for cover, abandoning any attempt to return the fire. Captain Lubbock shouted for the pilot, Captain Michael McCormick, to ram the Union vessel. McCormick later reported, "The *Harriet Lane* was lying at anchor with steam on, swinging with a strong ebb tide, bow to the west. I was instructed to endeavor to so hit her as to allow the men a chance to board. Going with a strong ebb tide I dared not run against her bow, so I endeavored to strike forward of the larboard wheelhouse. Owing to the position of the *Lane* and the strength of the ebb tide, I missed my aim, struck a glancing blow and passed by. The wheelhouse and upper works of the *Harriet Lane*, being very strong, tore off the outside planking of the *Bayou City*'s larboard wheelhouse and side."

Blasts from double-barreled shotguns now mixed with the Enfields, while crewmen swung axes to cut the lines holding the port boarding ramp. The interval proved too great, however, and the ramp splashed into the water, where it swung to the rear and was smashed to pieces by *Bayou City*'s revolving wheel. The ship made a slow turn to port, as frantic crewmen tore at the wreckage in an effort to free the port wheel. Meanwhile, *Neptune* bore down on the beleaguered *Harriet Lane*. Captain Sangster ordered his helmsman to bring the bow a little more to port for a better ramming angle. Enemy cannonfire struck *Neptune*'s deck, sending cotton bales flying and deadly wooden splinters whizzing through the air. With a full head of steam, the charging *Neptune* slammed hard into *Harriet Lane*, 10 feet behind her starboard paddlewheel.

The men of the 7th Texas Cavalry, having been thrown to the deck, struggled without success to grapple and secure the enemy vessel. Other Union warships, notably the *Owasco*, approached to aid their stricken comrade, and a devastating fire was poured into the Confederate cottonclad. Sangster recognized at once that his ship was in trouble and ordered the engine room to reverse engines and back away. Water poured in through the shattered bow and several holes punched in her side by *Owasco*'s fire. The *Neptune* was sinking, and Sangster steered for the shallow water off 32nd Street. There, as she settled into the mud, the Horse Marines, standing knee-deep in water, continued to pour musket fire into the *Harriet Lane*.

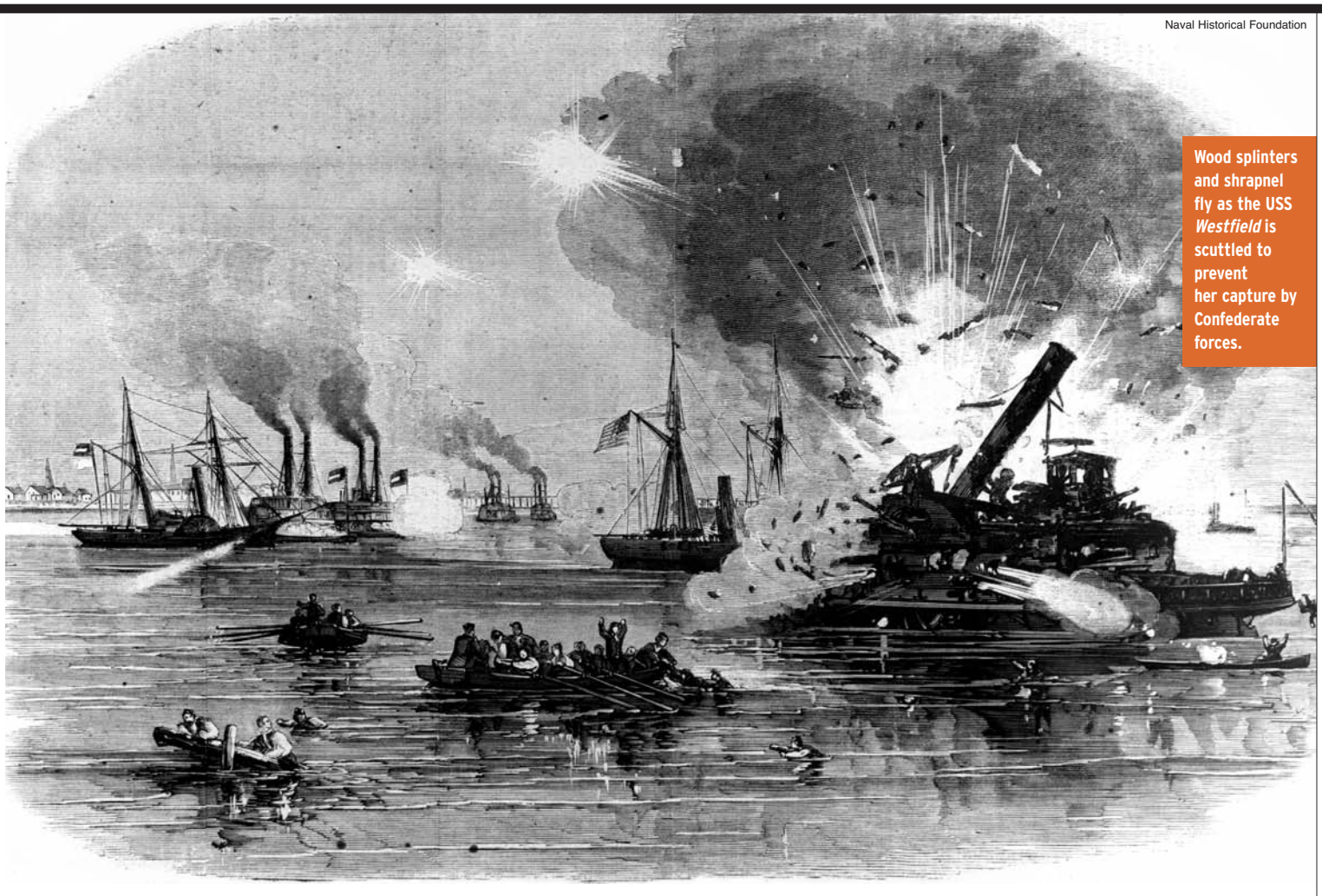
By this time, the crew aboard *Bayou City* had cleared the debris from her port wheel and Lubbock hastened toward *Harriet Lane*, which was attempting to back down the channel. With the musket fire from the Horse Marines keeping the Federal bluejackets from manning their guns, *Bayou City* was able to maintain her collision course without drawing enemy fire. With a tremendous crash, the Confederate boat drove her pointed bow deep into the portside paddlewheel of the Union ship. The crash sent stunned men on both ships tumbling across the decks as iron and wood splinters hurtled through the air. *Harriet Lane* heeled far over to starboard. Timbers buckled and broke as the iron wheel braces impaled the *Bayou City*, locking the two vessels together in a death embrace.

Smith scrambled to the shattered bow and began slashing at the netting with his cutlass. Cutting the ropes free, he called for his men to follow him and bounded onto the deck of *Harriet Lane*. With a Rebel yell, the Texas troops downed the rest of the netting and scrambled aboard with pistols drawn. The scene on the Federal vessel was one of absolute carnage. Dead Union crew members lay sprawled across the deck, along with their commander, Wainwright. *Harriet Lane*'s executive officer, Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea, lay dying with five bullets in his abdomen. As the excited Texans surveyed the scene of destruction, a Federal sailor stepped out from behind a hatch, raised his hands, and surrendered the ship.

Once the commander of *Owasco,* the closest Union warship to *Harriet Lane*, realized what had happened, he ordered his ship underway in an effort to recapture her. Soon *Owasco*'s guns were delivering a hot fire at her beleaguered sister ship. From a distance of 1,000 yards, *Owasco's* powerful 11-inch Dahlgren hurled round after round of shell and canister at the Confederate boats. Gray-clad troops scurried for cover. Several men attempted to train *Harriet Lane*'s guns on the other Federal warship, but she was listing so badly from the collision that the guns could not be brought to bear. Confederate Enfields

The CSS *Neptune* (left) heads toward the beleaguered USS *Harriet Lane*. CSS *Bayou City* can be seen in the distance approaching from the right.

John Horton, artist. Texas Seaport Museum



Naval Historical Foundation

Wood splinters and shrapnel fly as the USS *Westfield* is scuttled to prevent her capture by Confederate forces.

continued to bark, their fire swelling in intensity as more and more Texans fought savagely to retain their prize. Union sailors aboard *Owasco* were soon driven from their guns by the intense fusillade, and their commander ordered his vessel to back away.

An uneasy quiet now settled over the bay. A white flag fluttered from *Harriet Lane*'s stern, while the Horse Marines, fearful that the Federals would renew the attack, worked to separate the two vessels. It was no use—*Bayou City's* bow was jammed tightly into the wheel braces of the Union ship. The tender *John F. Carr* was called and, passing a line, attempted without success to pull the two boats apart. The two antagonists were dragged slowly toward the 27th Street wharf, where Texas troops gathered on the bow and tried rocking them apart. *Bayou City*'s stem, however, still would not budge. It would take the skill of several mechanics and carpenters to eventually separate the two vessels.

While the Confederates struggled to untangle the two warships, Lubbock and Smith initiated a daring bluff to guarantee complete victory for Magruder's forces. Ordering a small boat lowered, Lubbock and *Harriet Lane*'s acting master, J.A. Hannum, ordered the oarsmen to row him to the closest Union vessel, *Clifton*. Clambering aboard the Union warship, Lubbock boldly demanded the surrender of the entire Federal fleet and instructed the Federal commander to choose one ship that would be allowed to carry the surviving Union crews out of the harbor. Captain P.L. Law, *Clifton*'s commander, explained that he did not have authority to surrender the entire Union flotilla, but would have to communicate with Renshaw. Lubbock agreed to the request and stipulated a period of three hours in which Law was to transmit the demand to Renshaw and return with the commander's answer.

While the demand for surrender of all the Northern vessels was being carried to the *Westfield*, Magruder ordered the 130 prisoners from the *Harriet Lane* removed and marched through town to safety in the event that shelling should begin anew. Also removed were the dead and wounded, including *Harriet Lane*'s ill-fated commander, Wainwright, and his executive officer, Lea. As the bodies were carried ashore, Texas cavalrymen watched in silence as the stretcher bearing the lifeless form of Lea passed by. Walking beside the litter was the young Union officer's father, Major A.M. Lea of the Confederate Army, a member of Magruder's staff. The following day, Wainwright and Lea were buried with full military honors. Confederate and Federal officers stood quietly together, while a grieving Major Lea read the solemn service of the Episcopal Church for the burial of the dead.

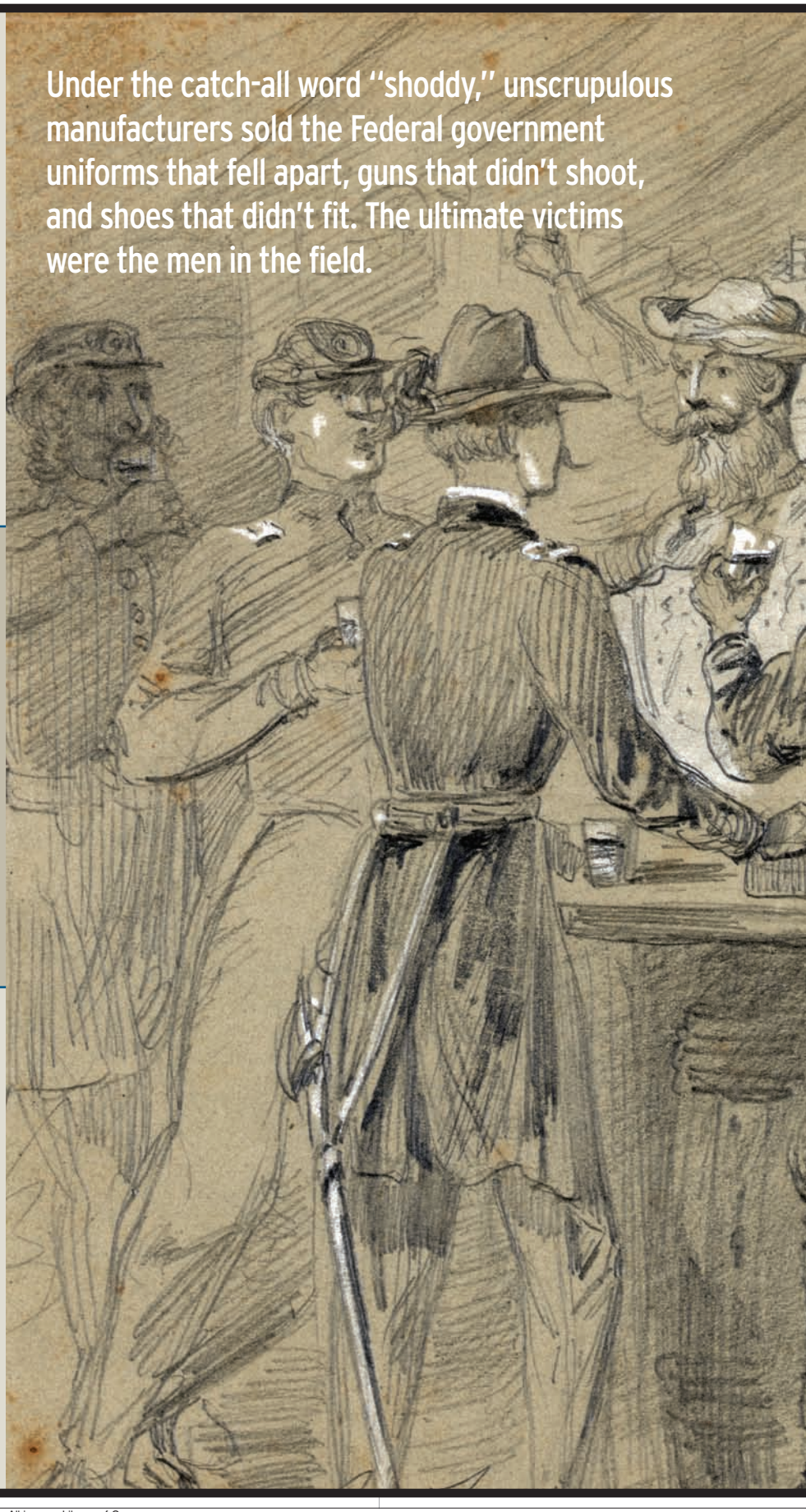
Back on Kuhn's Wharf, Burrell's three

Continued on page 98

The Days of Shoddy

BY TIMOTHY KOENIG

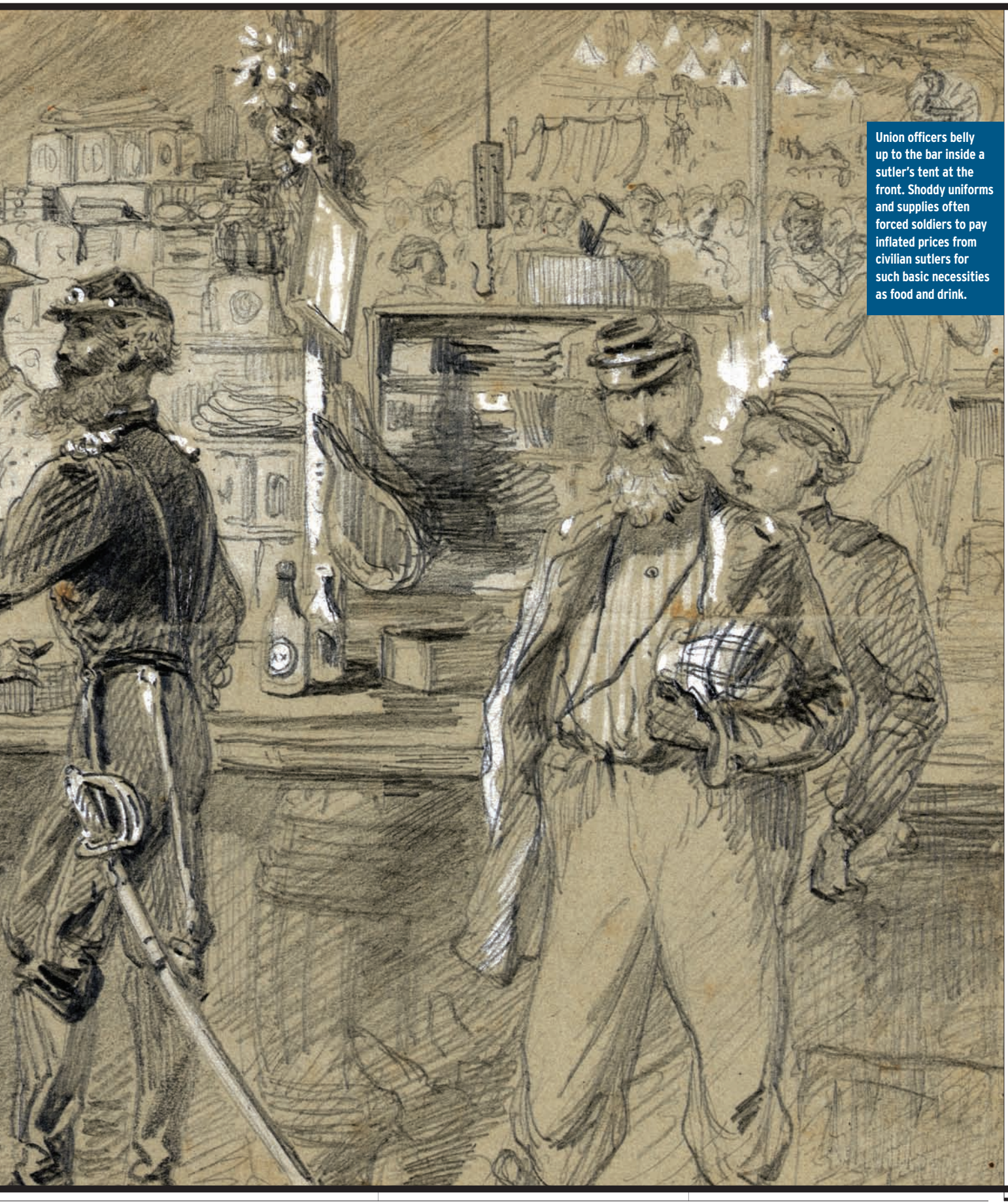
Under the catch-all word "shoddy," unscrupulous manufacturers sold the Federal government uniforms that fell apart, guns that didn't shoot, and shoes that didn't fit. The ultimate victims were the men in the field.



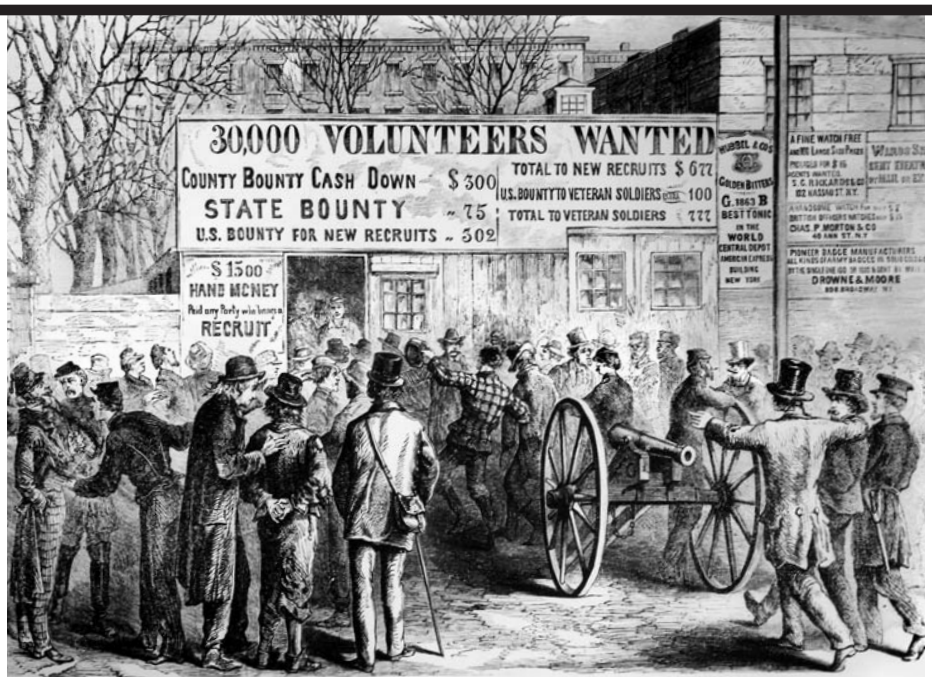
"For sugar the government often got sand; for coffee, rye; for leather, something no better than brown paper; for sound horses and mules, spavined beasts and dying donkeys; and for serviceable muskets and pistols, the experimental failures of sanguine inventors, or the refuse of shops and foreign armories." So wrote *Harper's Monthly* journalist Robert Tomes in July 1864. What Tomes was describing was far from uncommon during the American Civil War, a war that many have put on high moral ground beneath the umbrella of righteousness. But in that war, as with most wars throughout history, thievery and corruption ran rampant. This corruption, involving not only suppliers and manufacturers in the North but also high government officials, resulted in the unnecessary loss of life for many Union soldiers and was so costly as to prolong the war many months after it might have come to an end.

Corruption in all forms was familiar to Americans long before the Civil War. The struggle with corruption can be seen in one of the earliest debates surrounding Alexander Hamilton's economic policies, particularly his views on the need for increased manufacturing. Many common people feared that new economic policies would be the basis for systematic corruption. Southerners, especially, were wary of an industrialized manufacturing society and centralized government itself.

All images Library of Congress



Union officers belly up to the bar inside a sutler's tent at the front. Shoddy uniforms and supplies often forced soldiers to pay inflated prices from civilian sutlers for such basic necessities as food and drink.



Volunteers throng to a Union recruiting office at the beginning of the war. Many of these same volunteers would receive ill-fitting uniforms, flimsy-soled shoes and misfiring weapons from unscrupulous government manufacturers.

Andrew Jackson, who had been cheated out of the White House in 1824 by political chicanery between his main rivals, John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay, built much of his political platform on the struggle against corruption. He greatly feared systemic corruption, which he viewed as inevitable if the national bank was rechartered, owing to the large amount of power a small percentage of financiers would hold over the government. Ironically, Jackson himself was accused of corruption by Clay, the key partner in the "Corrupt Bargain of 1824" that swung the presidency to Adams, despite the fact that Jackson had received a clear majority of popular votes. Clay, who was more or less immune to shame, said of Jackson's free exercise of executive powers: "The question is no longer what laws will Congress pass, but what will the Executive veto?"

Although the idea of popular sovereignty was favored by many Americans, the susceptibility of the people to be controlled by a demagogue made Clay and other politicians uneasy. By the mid-1850s, corruption had spread even into the lowest political levels. "Congress is a humbug and Washington is no place for an honest man," Benjamin French wrote in 1853 of his fellow United States representatives. Bribery and self-interest were commonplace in Washington, and French was one of the few officials who cared about the issues that were forming the nation rather than the personal rewards of his actions.

Corruption would have a large and deleterious impact on the Union war effort. At the beginning of the war, thousands of new soldiers had to be supplied, leaders had to be appointed, and some form of military organization had to be established. In many wars, an economic boom can follow the sudden need for material and labor. The Civil War was no exception. The railroad system was already on the rise due to its advantages over existing canals, but the Civil War would take railroad usage to another level. A more humble industry that prospered during the war was the lamp oil industry.

The institutions that were most vulnerable to corruption during the war were those with the responsibility of supplying Union armies in the field. As ordnance and munitions contracts poured out of Washington, production of iron, brass, and bronze weapons proceeded at record levels. Many of the metal foundries were also put to use making rails for the emerging railways. Uniforms, blankets, tents, oil cloth, wagons, chemicals, and ships were all in high demand, and there were plenty of willing men in the North to fill the orders. What Northern manufacturers lost from their Southern markets they more than made up for through government contracts. The loss of Southern markets did have an impact on the textile industry of the North, since other means of acquiring cotton were necessary. These contracts not only provided commerce for small Northern companies, but also opened up the national market.

At the beginning of the war, unscrupulous wheelers and dealers swooped into Washington, drawn by unbridled profits from government contracts. The initial rush of raw recruits to answer President Abraham Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion was accompanied by a similar rush of businessmen eager to nab government contracts. An army of lobbyists, contractors, and speculators, in the words of one historian, "hurried to the assault on the treasury, like a cloud of locusts. They were everywhere; in the streets, in the hotels, in the offices, at the Capitol, and in the White House. They continually besieged the bureaus of administration, the doors of the Senate and House of Representatives, wherever there was a chance to gain something."

The start of the war was marked by official confusion as well as corruption. With more than 700,000 men in uniform by early 1862, the efforts to adequately supply them were woefully slipshod. Indiana Governor Oliver Morton voiced the frustrations of many Northern governors at the government's faulty administration of supplies. "Twenty-four hundred men in camp and less than half of them armed," he fumed. "Why has there been such delay in sending arms? No officer here has yet to muster troops into service. Not a pound of powder or a single ball sent us, or any sort of equipment. Allow me to ask what is the cause of all this?"

Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant, then commanding the Union camp at Cairo, Illinois, echoed the criticism. "There is a great deficiency in transportation," said Grant.

"I have no ambulances. The clothing received has been almost universally of an inferior quality, and deficient in quantity. The arms in the hands of the men are mostly the old flint-lock repaired. The Quartermaster's Department has been carried on with so little funds that Government credit has become exhausted." Lincoln ruefully conceded as much in his annual July 4 message to Congress. "One of the greatest perplexities of the government," said the president, "is to avoid receiving troops faster than it can provide for them."

In the sprint to supply the first volunteer soldiers, many less than acceptable products were sold to the government. Although many of the poorer quality items were passed because of sheer haste or careless-ness, many more were okayed due to the bribery of government officials at every level. Large contractors would take the high-priced orders they received from the federal government and subcontract them to smaller companies for lesser prices, still making a large profit without actually producing any goods themselves. For example, the Sibley, Tyler, Laugham and Dyer Company was offered a contract of eight cents per pound of cattle, which it then subcontracted to Williams and Alerton for six and a half cents per pound, making a profit of more then $32,000 without moving a single head of cattle.

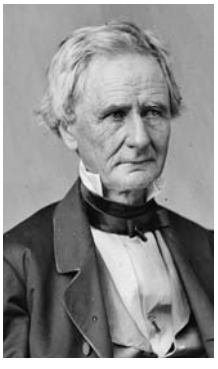
Many high government officials, including Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont, head inspector George Updyke, and Secretary of War Simon Cameron, were later exposed for allowing or encouraging this sort of behavior, but dozens of lesser officials partook in the thievery unmolested. The New York-based company Brooks Brothers produced pocketless, buttonless, and overall inferior-quality pants but somehow still received a government contact to do so. Even rejection did not sway contractors from their dealings. An arms manufacturer once bribed a government official with $10,000 to approve a pistol that shortly beforehand had been deemed unfit for service by the chief of ordnance.

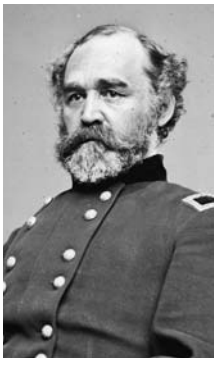
The federal government was cheated on many types of items. In September 1861, Fremont commissioned a fort to be built in St. Louis. The majority of the fort had already been built, but a separate builder received $150,000 for the seven days of work that it took to complete the fort. Quartermaster General Robert Allen was able to catch the closing stages of this deceit and stop another $60,000 from being paid. Animals were also the subject of corruption. The government once bought 411 horses from contractors in St. Louis—76 were in working condition, but all but five were too sick, worn out, or old to be used. The other five were already dead. Another $40,000 was lost on the transaction.

Secretary of War Cameron played a large part in crippling the Union war effort. He commissioned his good friend Alexander Cummings, whom he described as "a capital man," to buy supplies for the War Department. Cummings did purchase some military-related items, including completely unserviceable carbines for $15 apiece, but he also spent more than $21,000 on such debatable items as herring, porter, ale, straw hats, linen pantaloons, and 23 barrels of pickles for the soldiers. Union supply trains were often needlessly rerouted through Cameron's home state of Pennsylvania on the flimsiest of excuses, further lining the pockets of his political allies.

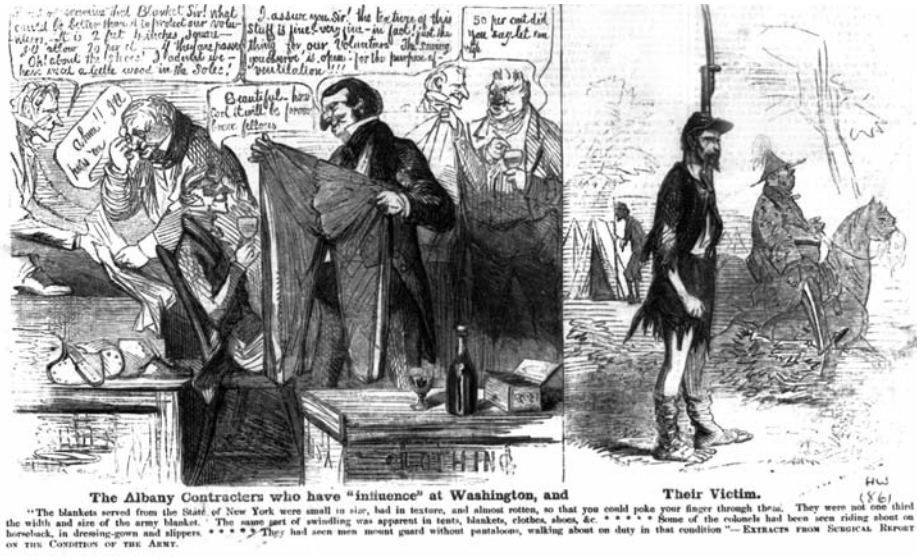
Individual Northern states attempted to take up much of the slack left by the inefficient national government. State legislatures appropriated funds to equip and supply regiments at state expense, and governors sent private purchasing agents to Europe to bid for surplus arms. Contracts were made with local textile mills and shoe factories for better uniforms and shoes.

Neither the citizens back home nor the government in Washington were completely oblivious to the fraudulent practices. After Lincoln summarily got rid of Cameron, shipping him off almost literally to Siberia by making him ambassador to Russia, a special Congressional committee was organized to investigate the government's dealings with private contractors. This committee found that the Colt firearms company





ABOVE: Secretary of War Simon Cameron, left, and Union Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs.
RIGHT: An 1861 cartoon shows chiseling Albany contractors selling shoddy clothes to corrupt government agents. A Union soldier stands guard in rags—an exaggeration, but not much.



The Albany Contractors who have "influence" at Washington, and Their Victim.

"The blankets served from the State of New York were small in size, bad in texture, and almost rotten, so that you could poke your finger through them. They were not one third the width and size of the army blanket. The same sort of swindling was apparent in tents, blankets, clothes, shoes, &c. * * * * * Some of the colonels had been seen riding about on horseback, in dressing-gown and slippers. * * * * They had seen men mount guard without pantaloons, walking about on duty in that condition."—Extracts from Surgical Report on the Condition of the Army.

ABOVE: The plight of the soldier and his hard-pressed family is contrasted with the relative comforts of a government contractor and his wife. BELOW: An 1864 cartoon depicts an incompetent Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet carelessly "running the machine" of the nation's war effort.

RUNNING THE "MACHINE".

was selling revolvers for $25, while the normal asking price was less then $15, providing the company with a tidy profit of $325,000 in one year alone. At the same time, Remington was producing a more or less equal quality revolver for $15, but received only one-sixth the of the volume of government orders that Colt enjoyed.

By the end of the committee's investigation, it was estimated that fully one-fourth of the government's spending had been lost to fraud. The blame was hard to place, however. The inspectors blamed the contractors for providing false samples, while the contractors claimed the samples were genuine and blamed the inspectors for approving them in the first place. But even if there wasn't always someone specific to take the blame, there were still consequences. Eventually, much of the corruption ended after the removal of Cameron and the subsequent appointment of Edwin M. Stanton as secretary of war. Stricter regulations were put in place for approving government contracts, and canny contractors had to adjust their dealings in light of the changed circumstances. Stanton chose a new and industrious quartermaster general, Montgomery C. Meigs, who before the war had overseen a number of large government construction projects, including the building of the new Capitol dome and the Potomac Aqueduct. Meigs immediately instituted a system of competitive bidding, while administering the outlay of some $1.5 billion—one third of the government's entire war budget.

Corruption, of course, did not stop altogether because of the new measures, but it was severely limited. Later in the war, under the new regulations, a few contractors tried to make money off the government by changing the ratio of corn to oats in horse feed. Assistant Secretaries of War Charles Dana and Peter Watson caught the practice and were able to put an end to the misconduct, saving the government more than $60,000 in feed costs.

The major consequence to all the double dealing and corruption was the unnecessary loss of life among Union soldiers because of the poor quality of their equipment and uniforms. Because the individual states had fewer men to equip than the national government, they were able to provide quality uniforms to their volunteers. The problem at first was that there was no uniformity between units, and different units received and wore a variety of different colored uniforms. Early in the war, for instance, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania regiments wore blue, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Vermont regiments wore gray, Minnesota regiments wore black trousers and red flannel shirts, and some New York regiments wore the famous Zouave outfits of baggy red pants, purple blouses, and red fezzes. Said one historian with little exaggeration: "The Union

A vast mound of military supplies is unloaded at the major Union Army depot at City Point, Va., during the 1864 siege of Petersburg. By then, improvements instituted by Montgomery Meigs had gone into effect.

forces gathering in Washington looked like a circus on parade."

Eventually, all Union troops would receive the traditional blue trousers and coats. The government-issued uniforms were known to be of inferior quality. When it came time to trade in their state uniforms, many units refused. During the First Battle of Bull Run, several units came under fire from their fellow Union soldiers because they were wearing gray uniforms. A similar situation was present at the Battle of Cheat Mountain, when Ohio troops killed or wounded several Indiana soldiers due to a case of mistaken identity.

There were other hardships besides the danger of being shot by one's own side in battle. In the early years of the war, overcoats were in short supply, and those that were available were of such poor quality that it was almost useless to wear them. During the winter months, many Union soldiers suffered from frostbite and died due to the excessive cold. "Lincoln, look here," a man in the so-called "Ragged-Assed 2nd Wisconsin" called to the president during a parade. "Here is a specimen of the soldiers! Give us good guns and respectable clothing and there will be no trouble."

Northern novelist Henry Morford, himself a Union Army veteran, issued a sweeping indictment of government practices in a novel that gave a new word (or at least a new usage) to the English language: shoddy. In his scathing 1864 novel *The Days of Shoddy,* Morford defined the word as "a wide and disgraceful synonym for the miserable pretense of patriotism—shoddy coats, shoddy shoes, shoddy blankets, shoddy tents, shoddy horses, shoddy arms, shoddy ammunition, shoddy boats, shoddy beef and bread." Charging that government officials had been "fearfully weak if not actually sharing dishonest profits with contractors," Morford said the fraudulent practices "began with the beginning and it is evident that they will not end until the close. The leech has fastened upon the blood of the nation, and it will not let go its hold until the victim has the last drop of blood sucked away."

Morford was relentless in his indictment. "Every shoddy suit, every defective blanket, and every pair of shoes with the soles pasted to the uppers has been the means of making a Union soldier suffer what he need not have suffered in the chances of war," he wrote. "Every mouldy biscuit or parcel of gangrened beef has been a bid for sickness in the field, or fever, disease and death in the hospital. Every defective arm, every sawdust shell and every worthless horse has left him at the mercy of a fierce and unscrupulous enemy. Every dollar swindled from the public purse has been subtracted from the very lifeblood of the nation. Every swindling contractor has been a murderer."

During the first months of the war, while the federal government was struggling to supply its recruits with weapons, it resorted to buying outdated Austrian models, flintlock muskets, or Belgian rifles instead of the higher quality Springfield or English-made Enfield rifles. Some soldiers deserted rather than go into battle with such arms. Others stayed faithful and paid the ultimate cost for their fidelity. When a piece of equipment would break, the cost of repairing or replacing the piece would come out of a soldier's pay. For some this meant not being able to send money back home to support their loved ones.

When the men were given food that had spoiled long before the government even bought it, they would either starve or, like with their clothing, pay privately for extra

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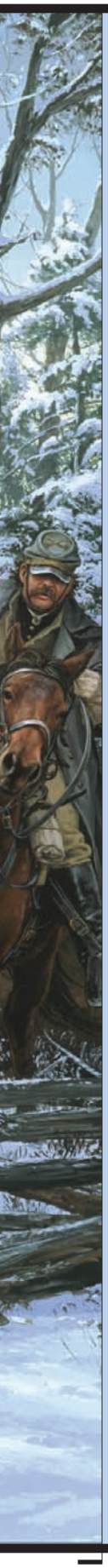


UNDER A NEWLY ARRIVED BRIGADE COMMANDER, UNION INFANTRY MOVED DANGEROUSLY INTO CONFEDERATE-HELD TERRITORY IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE. THEY WERE ABOUT TO GET A NASTY SURPRISE.

UNION DISASTER AT Thompson's

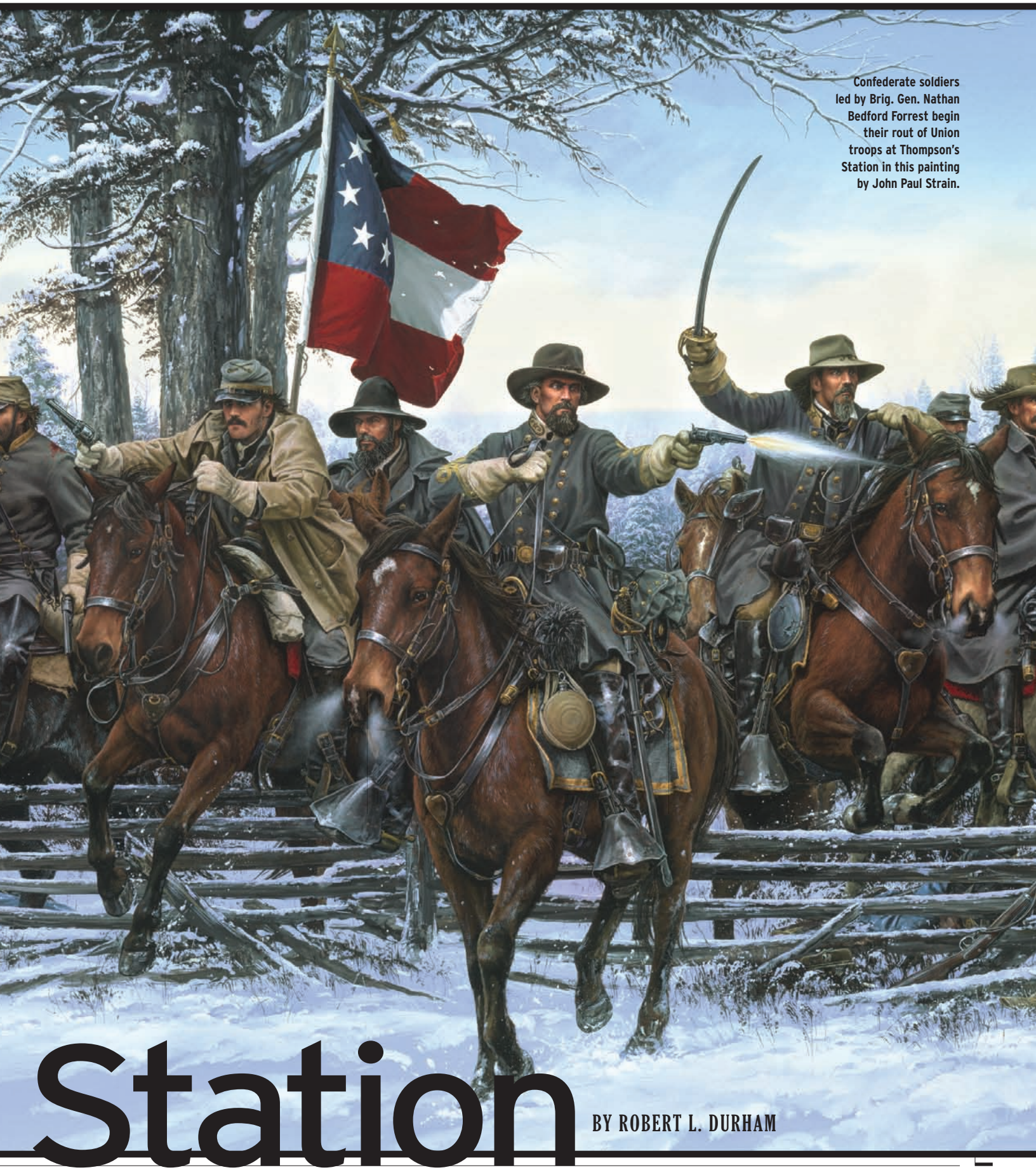
The winter of 1863 was a time of general inactivity for the exhausted armies in middle Tennessee. On January 2, 1863, following the bitter, two-day Battle of Stones River, Confederate General Braxton Bragg retreated some 40 miles south from Murfreesboro to Tullahoma. His main concern remained the Union Army under Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, which occupied Murfreesboro as soon as the Rebels evacuated the town. After two days of vicious fighting, the troops of both sides were bled dry, and things remained relatively quiet throughout the first month of the new year.

The Confederate high command did not expect such inactivity to continue for long. It was only a matter of time until Rosecrans decided to advance against them; therefore, they had to stay constantly on the alert for any enemy movement. The Union line stretched in a semi-circle from Lebanon through Murfreesboro to Franklin, with the Southern position roughly parallel to it. The Confederate line was twice the length of the Union, which meant that many more cavalry pickets were required for adequate protection. With that in mind, General Joseph E. Johnston, commander of the Confederate Department of the West, ordered most of the cavalry in Mississippi to reinforce their fellow Southerners in Tennessee. Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn, chief of cavalry in Mississippi, immediately began preparations to move his division northward.

While awaiting the arrival of reinforcements, the Confederate cavalry in Tennessee was far from idle. Near the end of January, newly minted Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler, with his own cavalry brigades and another commanded by Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, made a long swing around the Federal right into northern Tennessee. On February 2, they made a surprise attack on Fort Donelson, site of a crushing Confederate defeat almost exactly one year earlier. The assault was beaten back by the garrison of the fort, but the daring raid made Rosecrans more than a little nervous. If Confederate horsemen could ride with impunity through the heart of occupied Tennessee, they could just as easily gallop into his rear, disrupting his supply and communication lines.

On February 17, the Southern troopers returned from the Fort Donelson raid. Wheeler took up position covering the Confederate right flank and gave Forrest the responsibility of protecting the left. Forrest immediately established his headquarters at Columbia and set up picket posts south of Franklin. The next day these outposts beat back a Union reconnaissance sent from Franklin, preventing the blue-clad soldiers from gathering much-needed strategic information.

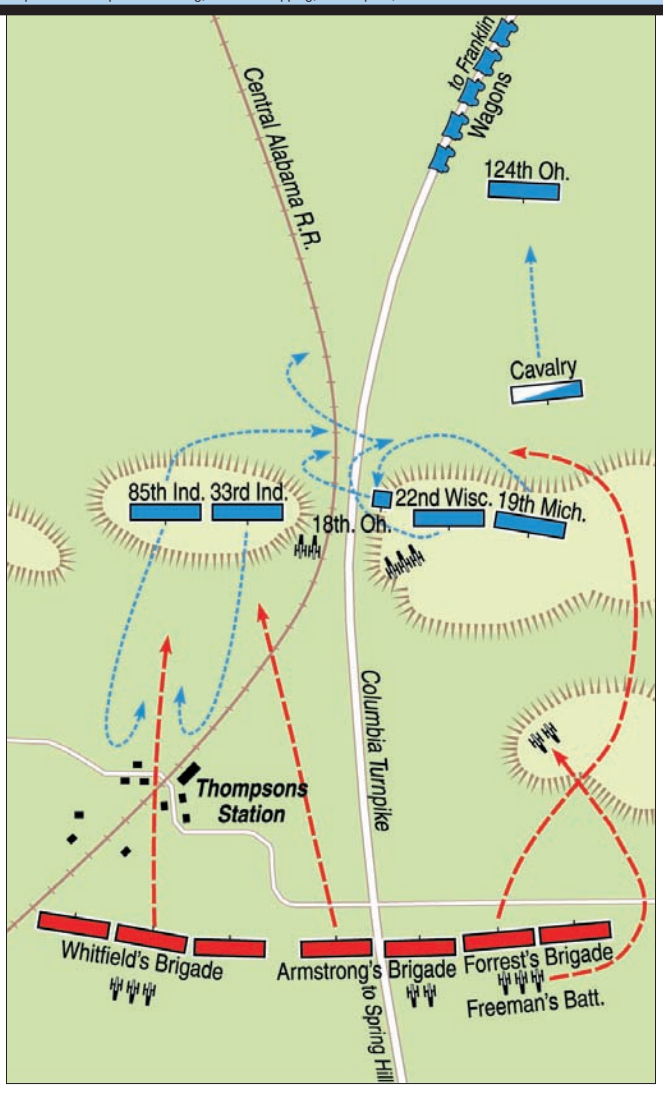
On February 20, Van Dorn arrived in Columbia with three veteran brigades of cavalry. He was a bold and impulsive leader, particularly suited to large cavalry commands. At the end of December, he had led one of the most successful cavalry forays of the war, a lightning raid on Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's base of supplies at Holly Springs, Miss., which delayed Grant's crucial campaign against Vicksburg. Van Dorn arrived in Tennessee eager for opportunities to earn new glory.



Confederate soldiers led by Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest begin their rout of Union troops at Thompson's Station in this painting by John Paul Strain.

Station

BY ROBERT L. DURHAM



Bragg gave Van Dorn's command two more brigades to make it equivalent to Wheeler's cavalry corps. Now commanding five brigades—those of Brig. Gens. Forrest, Frank C. Armstrong, George B. Cosby, W.T. Martin, and Colonel John W. Whitfield—Van Dorn assumed responsibility for the Confederate left. He moved quickly to establish outposts near Franklin and Triune and advanced his headquarters from Columbia to Spring Hill, 12 miles south of Franklin. The Southern pickets were pushed so close to the Union lines that skirmishes became a daily routine.

The scanty information Rosecrans was receiving gave him the false impression that his cavalry was now outnumbered by at least 5-to-1. There was some fear that Van Dorn had also brought an infantry division from Mississippi. Actually, Rosecrans's cavalry of 8,000 faced roughly 15,000 Confederate troopers. Rosecrans was convinced that the build-up of enemy forces foreshadowed a movement in strength against Franklin. To counteract this supposed threat, he ordered infantry reinforcements down from Nashville. The next day these regiments, under Colonel John Coburn, marched south to Brentwood. On March 2, Maj. Gen. Charles C. Gilbert, the Union commander at Franklin, received false intelligence that Van Dorn and Wheeler had combined forces. He immediately ordered Coburn to march to Franklin. Coburn started at once, arriving that night.

On the evening of March 3, Rosecrans ordered division-strength expeditions from Murfreesboro. Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Reynolds was directed to move against Readyville, Brig. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan against Unionville, and Brig. Gen. James B. Steedman against Chapel Hill. At the same time, Gilbert was instructed to send an infantry brigade and a cavalry force south out of Franklin. They were to march down the Franklin-Columbia Pike to Spring Hill, where they would divide, one party going toward Columbia and the other to the Lewisburg Pike, where they would rendezvous with Steedman's division. They had a two–fold mission: to ascertain what force the enemy had in their front and to collect much-needed forage (a wagon train was provided for this purpose).

Gilbert's troops were scattered throughout Franklin, so he decided to send Coburn's brigade. Having just arrived the night before, the brigade was described as "compact and ready to move." Coburn's infantry consisted of the 33rd and 85th Indiana, the 19th Michigan, and the 22nd Wisconsin, all untested in battle. To this force, Gilbert added the 124th Ohio Infantry of Colonel William P. Reid's brigade and cavalry detachments from the 4th Kentucky, 2nd Michigan, and 9th Pennsylvania.

The use of Coburn's brigade enabled Gilbert to ready a reconnaissance with no delay, but it is doubtful that it was a wise decision. Coburn had never served under Gilbert—in fact, he had just reported to him—and the reinforcements from Gilbert's division had never served with Coburn. All would be fine if the expedition went smoothly but, in the event of trouble, Coburn would have to trust and be trusted by unfamiliar men.The next morning, March 4, Colonel Thomas J. Jordan, commander of the 600 cavalry assigned to Coburn, suggested that they take an artillery battery along. Coburn reluctantly agreed, and Jordan galloped to Gilbert's headquarters to obtain the battery. Gilbert assigned Captain Charles C. Aleshire's 18th Ohio Battery of six rifled Rodman guns to join the column. Finally, at about 9 AM, Coburn's force departed. Altogether, it was almost 3,000 strong. The infantrymen were in light marching order, their blankets rolled over their shoulders. All were in high spirits, believing that they were only going on a foraging expedition. The weather was cool and favorable, and the force made good time traveling down the paved turnpike.

At 10:30, four miles south of Franklin, a large number of mounted men augmented by a battery of artillery were seen in Coburn's front. This was the Confederate cavalry division of Brig. Gen. William H. "Red" Jackson, approximately 2,800 men, which Van Dorn had sent out on a forced reconnaissance from Spring Hill. Northern intelligence had led Coburn to believe that there would be no enemy artillery, and the presence of such a battery came as an unpleasant surprise. He ordered the four artillery pieces traveling with his advance to unlimber on the east side of the Franklin-Columbia Pike and open fire. The Confederate gunners quickly replied. Coburn deployed his cavalry and infantry on both sides of the road and sent

for the section of artillery with the wagon train, having them deploy and open fire from the right side of the turnpike.

The artillery of both sides thundered away at each other for an hour, with neither side delivering or taking significant losses. Meanwhile, Coburn advanced part of his cavalry and three regiments of infantry. The Confederates fell back and moved to the east, trying to outflank the Union troops. Coburn ordered his own men to fall back to their original position and sent a cavalry detachment to stop the Southern flanking force. The artillery section on the right of the Columbia Pike was sent over to the left. During this movement one of the cannon broke an axle tree, putting it out of action.

Coburn reported the skirmish to Gilbert, requesting permission to send the wagon train back to Franklin. He commanded Lieutenant Edwin I. Bachman, assistant quartermaster, to turn the train back, saying that a cavalry force threatened their left. As soon as Bachman got the train turned around, he received a conflicting order to turn around again and advance, then still another order to take the train back to Franklin. Thoroughly confused, Bachman moved the train to within sight of town, where he received still another order to halt and fill the forage wagons.

The Southern troopers eventually pulled back and Coburn advanced to the former Confederate position, where he vainly awaited orders from Gilbert. Justifiably worried about being cut off from Franklin, Coburn sent another note explaining the situation with the Rebel flanking force and asking, "What shall we do? I think we can advance, but there will be at once a force in our rear." The only instructions he received from Gilbert were permission to send back the forage wagons and a pointed reminder "that he had quite a large margin and a wide discretion." Coburn interpreted this to mean that he should continue his advance. After sending new orders to Bachman to send the forage wagons back to Franklin and bring the 40 ammunition and supply wagons back to the front, Coburn moved his troops forward a few miles, where he halted for the night.

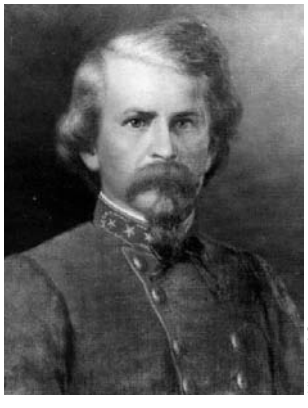
From his campground, Coburn sent a final request to Gilbert, again stating the danger of being outflanked and pointing out that he did not have sufficient force to prevent it. Having resigned himself to continuing toward Spring Hill in the morning, he ended the letter with a request for more artillery ammunition and a replacement for the Rodman gun that had been sent back for repairs.

Gilbert, considering Coburn's reports "wild and extravagant," sent Captain Thomas W. Johnston, "a man of cool judgment," to assess Coburn's position. Johnston examined the scene of the skirmish and concluded that the Confederate force opposing Coburn consisted of less than 1,000 cavalry. He reported Coburn as being "in a good deal of doubt as to the intentions of the enemy, and not overconfident." Gilbert decided that there was no reason to change his original orders. He did, however, send Coburn a new supply of artillery ammunition and the cavalry some new Burnside breech-loading carbines.

The next morning, two 12-year-old black youths were brought to Coburn's headquarters. They were servants who had fled from the Confederate Army, and they reported that Van Dorn's main force was close by and advancing toward Franklin. This information convinced Coburn that the enemy force was considerably larger than his own. He sent the two escaped slaves, with a mounted escort, back to Gilbert. Then, after studying his orders, he remarked to Bachman, "My orders are imperative, and I must go on or show cowardice." Upon being asked what he intended to do, he said, "I am going ahead; I have no option in the matter."

Ordering Jordan to send cavalry detachments to watch two roads on the flanks, Coburn delayed the beginning of his advance until they could get into position. At 8 AM, the Union column was again moving forward and the cavalry advanced as skirmishers, forcing the Confederate pickets steadily back. The countryside was wooded and hilly. The Franklin-Columbia Pike wound through the hills, roughly parallel and to the east of the Nashville & Decatur Railroad that ran from Franklin to Columbia. Both the pike and the railroad ran in a southwesterly direction. Three-quarters of a mile north of Thompson's Station, the pike cut to the south away from the railroad. At the depot, the pike and railroad were separated by 300 yards of open field. Thompson's Station was a small hamlet consisting of the depot, a school, a church, and a few residences. Fifty yards north of the depot was a wooded hill, the land between being flat, marshy, and open. East of the pike was another tree-covered hill. South of Thompson's Station lay open fields for 200 yards. A stone fence and a gully ran between the railroad embankment and Columbia Pike south of the open land.

Van Dorn had three brigades of his cavalry dismounted and in line of battle across the hills south of Thompson's Station. On the left were the two brigades of Jackson's division under Whitfield and Armstrong. Whitfield's Texas Brigade was in position on the hill that ran between the railroad and the Columbia Pike, with two guns of Captain Houston King's 2nd Missouri Battery posted on each flank. East of the pike, on the next hill in line, were the troopers of Armstrong's brigade. To the right of them were two regiments and a battalion of Forrest's Tennessee brigade, with the two four-gun batteries commanded by Captains S.L. "Sam" Freeman and John Watson Morton, Jr. The Tennesseans were in a valley with a cedar-covered knoll to their front. Forrest's other two regiments were some two miles to the east, guarding the Lewisburg Pike.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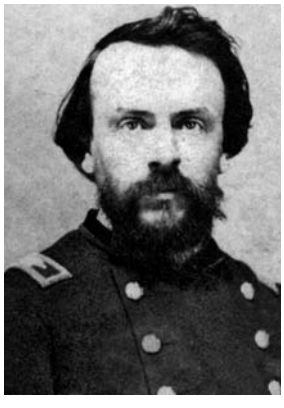
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OPPOSITE: As the main Southern force pushed up the Columbia Pike, a smaller group skirted the Union column and attacked from the rear. ABOVE, LEFT: Flamboyant Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn; RIGHT: By war's end Colonel John Coburn would see himself rise to the rank of brigadier general.

The three Confederate cavalry brigades numbered roughly 4,400 men, but since approximately a quarter of the troopers were detailed as horse holders, there were about 3,300 in line. At least one regiment, the 9th Texas, assigned its unarmed men as horse holders. The Texas Brigade and the 3rd Arkansas of Armstrong's brigade had previously served as infantry at the bloody Battles of Iuka and Corinth, Miss. Coburn was about to run into something new to his experience. Infantry, with its greater firepower, could normally push aside the lighter armed cavalry, even when outnumbered. However, the new breed of Confederate cavalry developing in the West was writing a new chapter in Civil War cavalry tactics. Under leaders such as Van Dorn and Forrest, the Southern horsemen combined the mobility of cavalry with the striking power of veteran infantry. These men would not easily be pushed aside.

Coburn was ready for any eventuality as he moved south on the Columbia Pike. His cavalry, with one of the Rodman guns, led the column, followed by an infantry regiment, the other four guns, and three more infantry regiments. The supply and ammunition wagons followed, guarded by the 124th Ohio Infantry.

"SUDDENLY THE REPORT OF A CANNON WAS HEARD IN FRONT, AND THE CAVALRY WHIRLED THEIR HORSES AND DASHED DOWN THE PIKE. THE REPORT WAS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER ONE WHEN WHIRR-ZOO-O-O—CAME A SHELL CLOSE ALONG OUR RIGHT PARALLEL WITH THE PIKE."

As the Union cavalrymen started appearing in the hills north of Thompson's Station, Van Dorn ordered Jackson to advance Whitfield's brigade, dismounted, to the stone wall in front of his position, with orders not to show themselves. There was a church near the stone wall, and the first regiment kept behind it to conceal their presence from the enemy. When they reached the wall, they filed off to form a battle line. The other three regiments were equally cautious, and the Federals spotted none of them. The trees masked the guns of King's battery on the hill behind, and Forrest's brigade was hidden by the hill in its front. The only forces visible to the Union scouts were a few skirmishers.

The Texans of Whitfield's brigade were still getting into position when the Union column appeared on the pike, north of the depot. Coburn, in the advance with his cavalry, pointed out the hills on both sides of the pike north of Thompson's Station, saying to Jordan, "On these two points I thought the enemy were going to make a stand." Just then, a gun in King's battery fired on the approaching Union column, showering them with dirt and stones but doing no real damage. Quickly, the Federals took cover beside the road, sheltered behind the hill on the east.

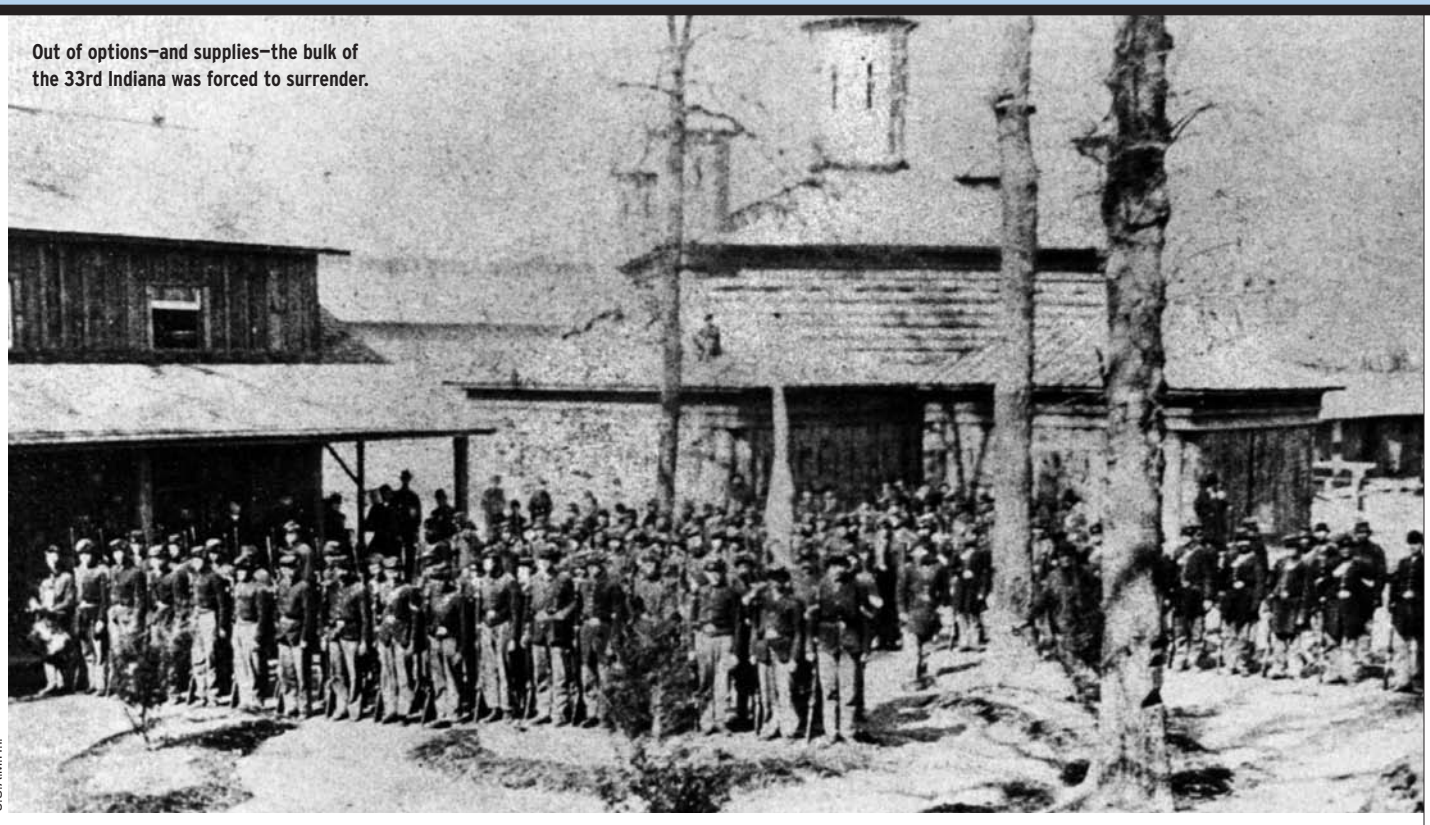
Coburn galloped back to deploy his infantry and artillery, sending a two-gun section across the railroad to take position on the hill north of Thompson's Station and the other three guns to the top of the hill east of the pike. He dispatched two infantry regiments to support each position, the 33rd and 85th Indiana to the right, the 19th Michigan and 22nd Wisconsin, with a detachment of the 2nd Michigan Cavalry, to the left. Meanwhile, the Confederates were responding to Coburn's maneuvers. The last regiment of Whitfield's brigade lined up behind the railroad embankment out in front of the other troopers. This gave them a more direct field of fire against the Indiana regiments.

On the Confederate right, Forrest ordered his men to move forward and form a new line on the heights in front. The knoll was higher than the one on which the Union left was anchored, and a heavy growth of cedar effectively concealed Forrest's position from view. Forrest took advantage of the terrain to move his artillery, unseen by the enemy, into a position where they could enfilade the Federal forces. When Forrest's guns opened fire on the Union lines, a startled Coburn could not tell where the shells were coming from.

Coburn sent Jordan forward to ascertain the location of the enemy artillery. Just as Jordan sighted the battery, one of the guns fired a shell directly at him. He leaned over to his left as far as possible, and his experienced horse also tried to avoid the shot, bending down until its stomach almost touched the ground. The shell passed over Jordan's head, hit a tree stump 50 yards behind him, and bounced high into the air. The subsequent explosion did no damage.

Jordan reported back to Coburn, who was with the Indiana regiments on the western hill. The main Confederate line was still concealed, the only enemy forces observable from Union lines being the Rebel artillery and the skirmishers at Thompson's Station and along the railroad embankment. Three companies of the 33rd Indiana were sent to dislodge the enemy sharpshooters in and around the buildings at the depot. The Union infantry advanced under a cross-fire from the two enemy batteries and the skirmishers. The Confederates retreated into the fields south of the depot, and the action on this section of the battlefield settled down to an artillery duel for the next half hour. The Union artillery concentrated on a section of King's battery near the turnpike, but initially overshot their mark. A correspondent for the *Mobile Advertiser and Register,* who was present at the battle, reported: "They then changed the range of their rifled pieces so as to command the hill upon the left of the pike opposite our battery, and threw several shells with remarkable precision into the position occupied by Generals Van Dorn and Armstrong, and staff, and your correspondent. We quickly 'changed our base,' and spread out so as to avoid making a target of the party."

East of the Franklin-Columbia Pike, the Confederate guns were firing on the Federal left. They drove off the detachment of the 2nd Michigan Cavalry and forced the 19th Michigan Infantry to fall back behind the crest of the hill. Harvey Reid, a young member of the 22nd Wisconsin, described his first experience under fire: "Suddenly the report of a cannon was heard in front, and the cav-



Out of options—and supplies—the bulk of the 33rd Indiana was forced to surrender.

U.S.A.M.H.I.

alry whirled their horses and dashed down the pike. This report was immediately followed by another one when whirr-zoo-o-o—came a shell close along our right parallel with the pike. It was so near that the whole regiment involuntarily crouched to the earth, the command was immediately given 'Over the fence and lie down!' and that command was obeyed about as quickly as any command ever was."

The three guns of Aleshire's 18th Ohio Battery retreated to the pike. Forrest's dismounted cavalry then joined the attack, firing on the foot soldiers of the 22nd Wisconsin under Colonel William L. Utley. Van Dorn ordered Forrest to get behind the Union force and cut them off from Franklin. Forrest placed Colonel James W. Starnes of the 4th Tennessee in command of his troops on this section of the field and raced off with his escort to gather up the two regiments he had left on outpost duty on the Franklin-Lewisburg Pike.

Meanwhile, the 22nd Wisconsin Infantry, never before in combat, stood alone against half a brigade of dismounted cavalry and part of an artillery battery. The Wisconsin foot soldiers, in line on the forward slope, moved back to the crest of the hill previously vacated by the artillery. The 19th Michigan had also moved up to the crest, and the 22nd fell in on their left. The height of the Union-held hill was lower than that held by Starnes' Confederates. The difference exaggerated the men's natural tendency to fire too high, and most of the Confederate bullets passed over the heads of the Federal troops.

The green troops from Wisconsin handled themselves admirably. According to their commander, Utley, the same could not be said of some of the officers of the regiment. "Upon the very first fire of the enemy," Utley reported, "[the officers] retreated to a safe position, and remained there during the entire engagement on the hill, never once offering to assist in rallying the stragglers or seeing to the wounded. During the engagement the lieutenant-colonel, from his safe retreat, annoyed me by sending word to me to retreat." This must have had an unsettling effect upon the men, but they maintained control of this part of the field.

Colonel Henry C. Gilbert, the commanding officer of the 19th Michigan, experienced a similar problem with one of his company commanders. According to Gilbert, Captain Elisha B. Bassett of Company B, who had been unsuccessfully attempting to resign for several months, "took shelter behind a large tree 15 or 20 yards in the rear of our line. I found him there & asking what he was doing there & why he was not with his company he replied that he could not take any part in the fight, that I must not depend upon him for anything, that the Lieut could command the Company & begged me to excuse him." Refusing to obey Gilbert's direct orders to resume his command duties, he eventually commandeered a cavalry horse and rode off to Franklin, leaving the command of his company in the capable hands of Lieutenant Samuel Hubbard.

On the Union right, events were about to come to a head. Enemy artillery shells continued to rain down on the troops around Thompson's Station. To remedy this, Coburn decided to capture or drive away King's battery. He was still unaware of the Confederates hidden behind the stone wall. Whitfield's men had strict orders to keep their heads below the level of the fence, but the officers had to keep reminding the men not to show themselves. One impetuous member the 6th Texas managed to make a hole in the fence, through which he watched the Union soldiers

approach. Another soldier appropriated the peephole and refused to yield, leading to a fistfight with the first Texan. Both parties were arrested and taken to the rear.

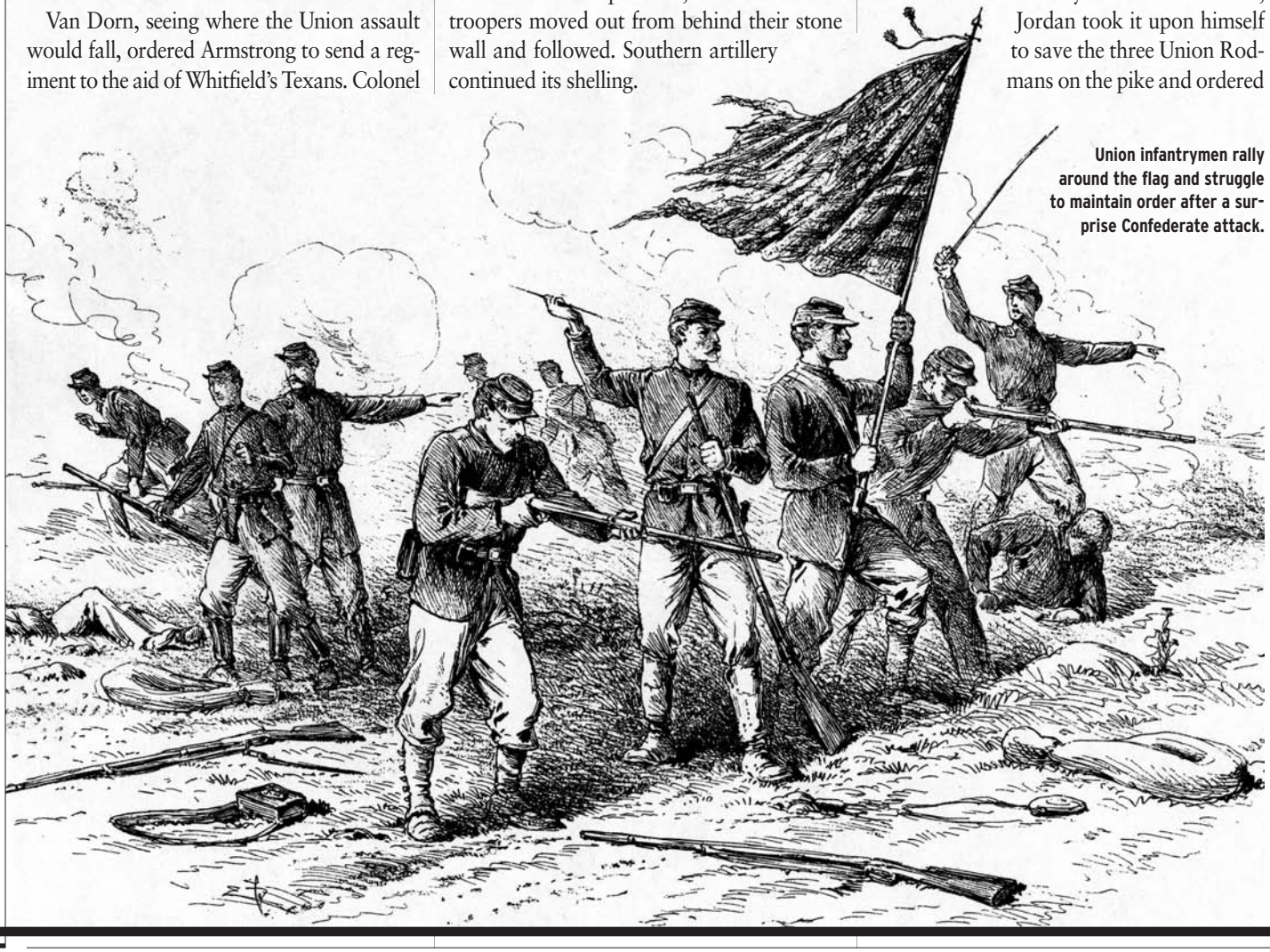
Coburn ordered the two Indiana regiments to advance to the depot and cross the railroad track to attack the enemy battery. The Hoosiers responded gallantly, moving down the forward slope of the hill and across the open field to the depot in the face of a withering crossfire from the Confederate artillery. Everyone who saw the charge was impressed. Jordan left behind an eloquent account: "The column was formed, and moved from its position behind the guns over the crest of the hill and down into the valley below, prepared to charge the battery, while the enemy's guns thundered their shells upon it from front and flank. It bravely withstood the shock, and moved steadily forward, though its track through the fields could be plainly marked by the human mile-stones left in its rear."

Van Dorn, seeing where the Union assault would fall, ordered Armstrong to send a regiment to the aid of Whitfield's Texans. Colonel Samuel G. Earle's 3rd Arkansas moved rapidly across the turnpike to join their fellow Westerners along the stone wall. Meanwhile, the Federals reached the depot and, as they crossed the railroad tracks, came under fire from the Confederates hiding behind the stone fence. Taken completely by surprise, the attackers halted in confusion as the men sought shelter in and around the depot buildings and behind the railroad embankment.

Amid the confusion, Coburn received word that 1,000 Confederate cavalry had been sighted moving up the Franklin-Lewisburg Pike toward the Federal rear. This was Forrest's flanking force. Coburn recalled the Indianans and ordered Jordan to bring two companies of cavalry forward to support their retirement. Jordan, apparently misunderstanding the order, rode off to hold the road open for the retreat of the whole expedition. As the Union infantry fell back across the field toward their old position, the Confederate troopers moved out from behind their stone wall and followed. Southern artillery continued its shelling.

The situation was rapidly deteriorating for Coburn's command. The three guns of Aleshire's artillery battery that had fallen back from the hill on the east remained on the pike but out of action. Lieutenant Hamlet I. Adams, Coburn's acting assistant adjutant general, tried to convince Aleshire to open fire with canister on the Rebel troops pursuing the Indianans, but Aleshire refused, claiming that he was low on ammunition. He kept his guns limbered, prepared to retreat at the first sign of danger.

Coburn ordered Bachman to start the ammunition wagons back to Franklin. Bachman was prompt in executing the order, but unfortunately took the train escort, the 124th Ohio, with him. Coburn's only reserve marched off the field in the middle of the battle. In the excitement, Coburn had apparently forgotten they were there and never ordered them forward to his assistance. Making an already bad situation worse, Jordan took it upon himself to save the three Union Rodmans on the pike and ordered



Union infantrymen rally around the flag and struggle to maintain order after a surprise Confederate attack.

Library of Congress.

their premature retirement from the field. Aleshire, no doubt grateful for the interference, accepted the unauthorized order without question. When the retreating Union infantry regained the summit of the hill, they found much of their artillery support gone, headed back toward Franklin.

Whitfield's Texans and Earle's Arkansans chose this moment to charge up the slope toward the Union position. The Federals waited behind the crest and, as the Southern troopers swarmed over the summit, countercharged with bayonets fixed. They drove the Confederates back down the hill and across the field, all the way to the depot. When the onrushing Federals reached the depot, they found the guns of King's battery waiting for them. The Confederate troopers rallied around their artillery and the Union infantry was pushed back across the field, retreating to the top of the original hill.

"THE CAUSES OF THIS LOSS ... APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN WANT OF PROPER CAUTION ON THE PART OF COLONEL COBURN TO FEEL HIS WAY AND KEEP GENERAL GILBERT ADVISED, AND TOO MUCH INDECISION ON THE PART OF GENERAL GILBERT ... TO RE-INFORCE HIM."

During one of the attacks, three privates from Company E, 3rd Texas Cavalry—Lon Cartwright, Drew "Bully" Polk, and Hugh Leslie—moved forward as part of Whitfield's attacking line. When Cartwright saw a Yankee taking aim on Polk, he tried to shoot the enemy skirmisher first, but his rifle misfired. The Federal shot Polk in the head, killing him instantly. Too late to save their friend, Leslie avenged his death by killing the Union soldier.

Twice the Texas and Arkansas troopers charged up the hill, only to be forced back to the railroad. The loss in Whitfield's Texas Brigade was frightful. The 1st Texas Legion under Colonel John H. Broocks lost 75 of 225 men, with one company losing half its number. The loss was especially severe in the Legion's officer corps, with Captain James A. Broocks, the brother of the commander, being one of those slain. The Southern troopers formed a third time and again advanced under galling fire to the hilltop, and this time they would not be driven off.

Already facing twice their number of dismounted troopers, the Indiana infantrymen had worse awaiting them. Coburn could see the Rebel cavalry of Armstrong's brigade mounting up and forming a column on the Franklin-Columbia Pike. If they attacked down the pike, the Federal command would be fatally split. Coburn sent orders to the 19th Michigan on the other side of the pike to cross over and extend the left flank of his Indiana soldiers. He then ordered his right-flank regiment to the left of the 19th Michigan, shifting his line closer to the pike in an effort to protect his only line of retreat.

The 19th Michigan responded quickly, moving across the pike and railroad, leaving the 22nd Wisconsin to face Starnes' Confederates alone. During a temporary lull in the firing, Lt. Col. Edward Bloodgood decided that it would be a good time to abandon the fight. While Utley was encouraging the men on the left of the regiment, actually joining them in the firing line with a rifle, Bloodgood ordered the right-hand companies to retreat. When Utley saw the right half of his regiment marching down the hill, led by Bloodgood, he ran after them to try to stop their retreat. The left of the regiment, seeing their colonel running down the hill after their departing comrade, understandably panicked. They abandoned their own position, streaming down the hill to the valley below, where Utley finally got them stopped and reformed along the railroad track.

The Confederates took advantage of the confused situation, their dismounted troopers and two guns of Freeman's battery moving forward into the vacated Union position. Utley ordered his men to fix bayonets and attempt to retake the hill. When he reached the right of the line, he looked back in astonishment to see Bloodgood leading the left half of his regiment up the pike toward Franklin—resolutely away from the enemy.

The section of Aleshire's battery stationed west of the pike chose this same moment to abandon their position. Harvey Reid, one of the men who Bloodgood led away from the battle, recalled: "Just as we reached the pike some one behind shouted, 'Get out of the road, the battery is coming,' and we could hardly get off the road, when the two guns which had been on the right, dashed by, every one of the horses being on a wild gallop. It was now too late to think of rejoining them [the remainder of the brigade] and we kept on down the pike, firing as we ran."

With half his regiment gone, the frustrated Utley abandoned all thought of retaking the hill and instead moved the remnant of his command to support the Indiana and Michigan troops. Coburn's only remaining reserves were the remnants of the four regiments of his own brigade. As Armstrong's brigade dismounted and prepared to charge, Coburn formed his men in the best defensive position he could. The 33rd Indiana formed in line facing south, with two companies thrown far out to the right to protect the flank. The 19th Michigan formed on the left and at right angles to the 33rd, facing east toward the turnpike and railroad. Next to them was the 85th Indiana, then the remainder of the 22nd Wisconsin. The left of the 19th Michigan and the right of the 85th Indiana were barricaded inside a schoolhouse.

The Federal infantry thought their cavalry had abandoned them, but Jordan's troopers were still deployed in the fields east of the pike, holding the road open for the infantry's retreat. Unfortunately for Coburn, even if he had known Jordan was holding the road open for him, retreat by that route was now impossible—Armstrong's Confederates blocked the road.

At this juncture, Forrest's flanking column appeared. Tough and disciplined, the men dismounted and moved against Jordan's cavalry, who fired on them from behind stone fences. The Southern troopers made two charges. At

the beginning of the second, Forrest's horse, Roderick, was badly wounded. Forrest exchanged horses with his son, 17-year-old Lieutenant Willis Forrest, who took the injured animal to the rear. There, the horse holders unsaddled and unbridled him. Roderick, accustomed to following Forrest around like a faithful dog, broke free and ran back after the general. Jumping three fences on the way, the old war horse reached his master, only to receive a fatal wound.

After 15 hard-fought minutes, Jordan's men were forced from the field. Harried by cavalry sent in pursuit, Jordan retreated toward Franklin. Forrest paused to reform his men in the fields east of the turnpike, while Whitfield's and Armstrong's brigades launched their own attack against the remaining infantrymen of Coburn's brigade. The 33rd Indiana faced Whitfield's Texans and Earle's Arkansas regiment and gallantly held them off. One volley killed Earle, blowing off half his head, and downed the entire 3rd Arkansas Color Guard. Seventeen-year-old Alice Thompson rushed from her residence outside the village, picked up the fallen flag, and defiantly waved it, rallying the faltering Southerners.

The 3rd Texas also lost its flag. When the staff was broken by a shot, the color bearer snatched it up and ran off. Unfortunately, when he was making his escape through a plum thicket, the flag was torn into ribbons and left hanging on the bushes. Meanwhile, the Union troops on the left of the 33rd Indiana were being attacked by Armstrong's men. The fighting was at close quarters, especially fierce around the schoolhouse. One Southern soldier was shot by an 85th Indiana infantryman from a window as he was trying to break in the front door. During the hand-to-hand fighting, the 19th Michigan captured the battle flag of Armstrong's brigade.

The Union troops forced the Confederates back, but they were running low on ammunition. The colonel of the 33rd Indiana sent a detail to find the missing wagon train, but the ammunition wagons were gone. There would have been no time to bring back any ammunition even if they had found the train—the Confederates were attacking the hill again, this time reinforced by Starnes' men of Forrest's brigade.

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- William M. Lamers, *The Edge of Glory: A Biography of General William S. Rosecrans,* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961.
- Steven Z. Starr, *The Union Cavalry in the Civil War*, Vol. 3. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981.
- Brian Steel Wills, *A Battle from the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

The Federals could not hold out much longer. Forrest's two flanking regiments faced them across the valley. Morton brought up his battery, commanding the new position taken by the Federals, and at the same time cut off their retreat toward Franklin. The Union forces were almost surrounded. To the north was Forrest, to the east were Armstrong and Starnes, and to the south was Whitfield. As if the outlook were not already bleak enough for the Federals, the Confederates now received reinforcements. General Cosby arrived with his Mississippi and Kentucky brigade. He sent two regiments to support Whitfield and two to attack Coburn on the west, making the encirclement complete.

Coburn ordered his men to fix bayonets and prepare to charge Forrest's position, but Forrest anticipated him and began his own attack. His Tennesseans moved forward against a heavy enemy fire. Lieutenant John Johnson was killed while at the front with the colors. Private Clay Kendrick of Colonel J.B. Biffle's cavalry regiment caught the flag as it was falling and held it aloft until his arm was broken with a bullet. The fight was vicious, and Forrest lost two of his best officers, Captain Montgomery Little, the commander of his escort, and Lt. Col. Edward Buller Trezevant, in command of the 10th Tennessee Cavalry.

It was apparent to the Northern commander that further resistance was useless. Nearly surrounded and almost out of ammunition, any attempt to escape would be senseless. Before Forrest's attacking cavalrymen reached his line, Coburn gave the order for his men to surrender. The Southern commanders instructed their men to cease fire, and the cavalrymen quickly complied, but the guns of King's battery continued to blast away at the Union position. Couriers were hurriedly sent off, informing the artillerymen of the surrender. These guns, too, fell silent.

While Coburn's brave troops fought against hopeless odds, other Union forces back at Franklin stood by helplessly, waiting for orders to go to their assistance. Early in the day, Colonel Emerson Opdyke had urged Gilbert to send support to Coburn, but Gilbert delayed until heavy firing indicated serious trouble, when he ordered Opdyke to advance. The 125th Ohio Infantry moved rapidly to the front until it met the retreating force and discovered that the movement was too late. The 125th Ohio was the only unit to attempt to aid Coburn's command. The other troops stood at their guns around Franklin and listened to the rattle of musketry and the roar of artillery, but Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger, commander of the Army of the Ohio, would not give the order to assist.

The Union captives were gathered up and marched to Columbia. According to the newspaper correspondent from Mobile, "The commander of the Yankee forces says that yesterday he was directed to advance and occupy this place, but after finding our force returned word that he could not do so as the enemy were too strong for him. His superior then sent word that that was no answer from a soldier, and directed him to advance to day and occupy Spring Hill. The Yankee commander of the surrendered forces did occupy the place this evening with his forces, *en route to Bragg!* Hurrah for the cavalry victory."

Of the 2,500 men engaged, the Federals suffered 1,446 casualties, 1,151 of whom were captured. Still, Van Dorn's Confederate horsemen had not achieved an easy victory.

The Southern forces numbered approximately 6,000 men, but only about 3,450 were actively engaged. These men suffered 354 casualties, almost exactly 10 percent of their number.

The ordeal of the Union captives did not end when they reached Columbia. After a few days' stay, at short rations, they were marched through Shelbyville to Tullahoma. The two-day march from Shelbyville was grueling—the weather had become cold and rainy and the roads turned into quagmires. The prisoners often had to wade waist-deep through icy streams. When they reached Tullahoma, their overcoats and blankets were taken from them and they were loaded aboard open railroad cars and sent through Chattanooga and Knoxville to Richmond. The rains turned to snow, and 18 inches of snow lay on the ground when they finally arrived at Libby Prison. Eighty-five men died from the effects of the journey and their subsequent confinement before they were exchanged two months after their capture.

Ironically, the other Federal expeditions that had been sent out from Murfreesboro were successful in accomplishing their missions. Reynolds's division pushed as far east as Readyville and Auburn before returning. Steedman's division raided Chapel Hill, while Sheridan's division sent a cavalry brigade as far south as Unionville, where they routed the Confederate cavalry stationed there. The day after Coburn's surrender, Sheridan was ordered to advance to Spring Hill in an effort to revenge Coburn's disastrous defeat, but Van Dorn retreated behind the safety of Duck River.

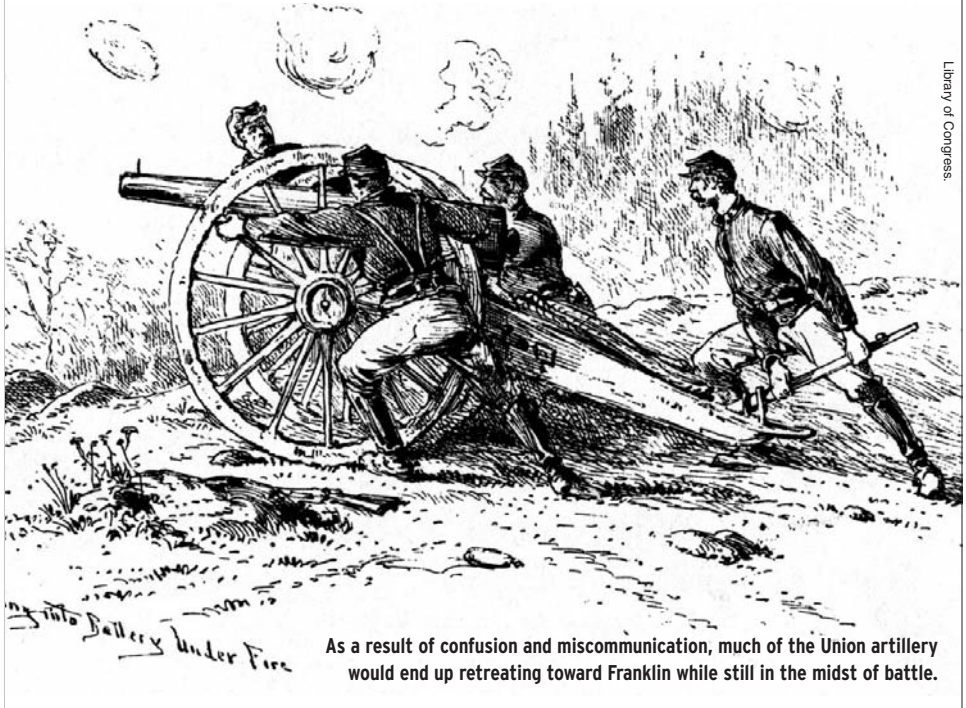
The prevailing opinion of the Union high command immediately after the disaster at Thompson's Station was that Coburn had been too rash in attacking the Southern forces. Many in the Union Army shared this attitude. Colonel Francis T. Sherman of the 88th Illinois Infantry, part of Sheridan's command, was among the troops sent to Thompson's Station after the battle, too late to be of any help. Sherman wrote a letter home to his father, referring to the calamity as "one of the most stupid and disgraceful affairs that has happened in a long time." He believed that "if Coburn had shown a little more grit he could have brought his brigade out."

Gilbert was at least as much at fault as Coburn, which Rosecrans quickly realized. "The causes of this loss, which was wholly unnecessary, appear to have been want of proper caution on the part of Colonel Coburn to feel his way and keep General Gilbert advised," Rosecrans reported, "and too much indecision on the part of General Gilbert in either giving orders to Colonel Coburn to retire or going out at once to re-enforce him." A writer for the *Indianapolis Daily Journal* used even stronger words against Gilbert, saying, "He has been the evil genius of Indiana soldiers from the first [and] he had better walk into a furnace seven times heated than get into the hands of Hoosiers." By doing nothing, Gilbert had effectively abandoned Coburn to his fate.

The Union soldiers of the 19th Michigan and 22nd Wisconsin not captured at the Battle of Thompson's Station, either because they fled, or because they were sick or on detached duty at the time, did not enjoy their respite for very long. Reinforced, they were placed under the command of Bassett and Bloodgood, respectively, and stationed in Brentwood, Tenn. The cowardly Bassett was assigned to man the stockade guarding the railroad bridge over the Little Harpeth River at Brentwood and Bloodgood was stationed in the town itself.

On March 25, Forrest made a raid on Brentwood. True to form, both Bassett and Bloodgood surrendered their commands, giving only a token resistance. After being exchanged, Bassett was dismissed from command due to cowardice at Thompson's Station. Bloodgood was court-martialed six months after the battle and also dismissed from the service, but later was reinstated due to political influence. Although disliked intensely by Utley, Bloodgood was popular with most of his men, especially those he led away from Thompson's Station, and he later redeemed himself as he gained experience. He continued serving until the end of the war, eventually succeeding to command of the 22nd Wisconsin, and even commanded the brigade at times. After the war he joined the Regular Army.

Coburn's bad-luck brigade would disgrace itself yet again during the Confederate siege of Chattanooga, when many of the troops surrendered to a Confederate raiding force under Wheeler. Fortunately for them, they were paroled on the spot and did not have to spend time in a Confederate prison. The brigade would finally redeem itself during Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's campaign against Atlanta and the March to the Sea. By then, of course, it was too late for the 85 members of the unit who had already perished inside Libby. □



Library of Congress.

As a result of confusion and miscommunication, much of the Union artillery would end up retreating toward Franklin while still in the midst of battle.

The Kilpatrick-Dahlgren RAID

By Arnold Blumberg

A bold cavalry raid to liberate Union prisoners of war in the Confederate capital was launched in February 1864. Many questioned if such a risky enterprise could succeed under a rash leader known for sacrificing his men needlessly.

Muskets at the ready, alert Union troopers forge a stream in Don Stivers's painting, *Going into Action.* They would need every bit of pluck and luck to carry out their daring raid on Richmond.

Painting by Don Stivers

In mid-winter 1864, Union Brig. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick had a bright idea. The chief of the 3rd Cavalry Division, Army of the Potomac, had seen newspaper accounts of an aborted attempt to release Union prisoners of war held in and near Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capital. Kilpatrick was convinced he could succeed where others had failed. Others were not so sure. Even his nickname, "Kill-Cavalry," referring to his careless handling of the troops under his command, did not inspire confidence.

The original idea for the rescue mission was broached by Elizabeth Van Lew, a member of a prominent Richmond family who was not only a Northern sympathizer but also a self-appointed spy. To hide her espionage activities, she took on the character of a demented woman, thus earning her the unflattering nickname "Crazy Bet." Van Lew brought the idea to Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler, commander of the Army of the James, stationed at Fortress Monroe on the Virginia Peninsula. She provided Butler with detailed information concerning the number and location of Union captives in and around Richmond. There were more than 1,000 officers in the Libby Warehouse, 6,300 enlisted men at Belle Isle, and 4,300 others scattered around the city in smaller buildings.

After securing the promise of a diversionary move by elements of the Army of the Potomac along the Rapidan River in northern Virginia, Butler directed his subordinate, Brig. Gen. Isaac J. Wistar, to lead 4,000 infantry and 2,200 cavalry straight up the Peninsula to Richmond. Secrecy and surprise were vital to the success of the mission. Moving out on the morning of February 6, the force reached Bottom's Bridge, 12 miles east of the Southern capital, the next day. There, the Federals found their path blocked by strong Confederate forces. The raid had been exposed by William Boyle, a Union soldier whose death sentence for murdering a superior officer had been set aside and who had then escaped to the South and revealed details of the raid.

After a weak-hearted assault on Bottom's

Bridge, Wistar took his troops back to Fortress Monroe. The Butler raid ended in a well-publicized fiasco. Although Butler and the administration of President Abraham Lincoln were chagrined and embarrassed by the episode, Kilpatrick saw the failure as a golden opportunity. In late January 1864, the young cavalry general told Michigan Senator Jacob Howard that he was prepared to lead another assault on Richmond to free Union prisoners. As Kilpatrick hoped, his scheme reached the notice of the White House. On February 11, Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick, temporarily commanding the Army of the Potomac, ordered Kilpatrick to report to Washington and present his proposal in person to President Lincoln.

The next day, the general met with Lincoln—it was the president's 52nd birthday—and Lincoln asked if it would be possible during the raid for Kilpatrick to distribute the government's amnesty offer granting pardons to all Southerners who took an oath of alliance to the United States. Kilpatrick assured the president that would be a priority, thus gaining Lincoln's instant approval for his foray. Four days later, Kilpatrick submitted a formal proposal.

The plan called for a force of 3,600 cavalry accompanied by six cannons to cross the Rapidan River at Ely's Ford and head for Spotsylvania Court House. The expedition would carry five days' rations and dispense with supply wagons, the idea being that the marauders would move rapidly and live off the land. After arriving at Spotsylvania, the strike force would split into two groups: 500 men would proceed to Frederick's Hall, ripping up as much of the Virginia Central Railroad as they could along the way, then move south to the James River. Once there, they would destroy the James River & Kanawha Canal above Richmond, then cross to the south side of the river doing as much damage to the Richmond & Danville and Richmond & Petersburg Railroads as possible. Finally, they would rush into Richmond from the south while Kilpatrick and the main body of troops assailed the city from the north.

ABOVE: Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick amply justified his nickname, "Kill Cavalry." BELOW: Well-born Colonel Ulric Dahlgren gave an aura of patrician glamour to the reckless raid.

Both: Library of Congress

Once inside Richmond, Kilpatrick would free all the Federal prisoners and arrest Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Kilpatrick gave himself the option of returning the way he had come or riding to join Butler's army on the Peninsula. Kilpatrick's plan depended on two diversionary moves by friendly forces: first, a thrust by Butler at Richmond to draw Confederate forces from the city; and second, a cavalry raid toward Charlottesville to keep the gray cavalry of Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart occupied and away from Richmond.

Although rankled by Kilpatrick going over their heads to the president and convinced that the venture would turn out poorly, Maj. Gen. George G. Meade, commander of the Army of the Potomac and Kilpatrick's immediate superior, and Maj. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton, chief of the Cavalry Corps, cut the appropriate orders for the raid's execution. At the same time, Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, the 21-year-old son of Union Admiral John A. Dahlgren, joined the venture, assuming command of the force that would cross the James River. Dahlgren had just returned to active duty after losing a leg at Hagerstown, Maryland, during the Gettysburg campaign, and it is not unlikely that the White House pressured Kilpatrick to include him in the raid. It is also likely that Kilpatrick saw the value in having a politically well-connected ally—and potential scapegoat—on board.

At 5:20 PM on February 28, 3,600 handpicked troopers from 15 regiments of the Cavalry Corps moved out of Stevensburg, Virginia. In the lead rode Dahlgren's advance guard, numbering about 460 men. The main body of horsemen followed. Behind them were a number of Army ambulances carrying land mines (called torpedoes) and copies of Lincoln's amnesty proclamation. Bringing up the rear was Captain Dunbar Ransom's Battery C, 3rd U.S. Artillery, which was equipped with six 3-inch rifled guns. A Pennsylvania officer summed up the feelings of the participants at the time: "Everybody was in excellent humor, for nothing delights the heart of a cavalryman as to go on a scout or a raid."

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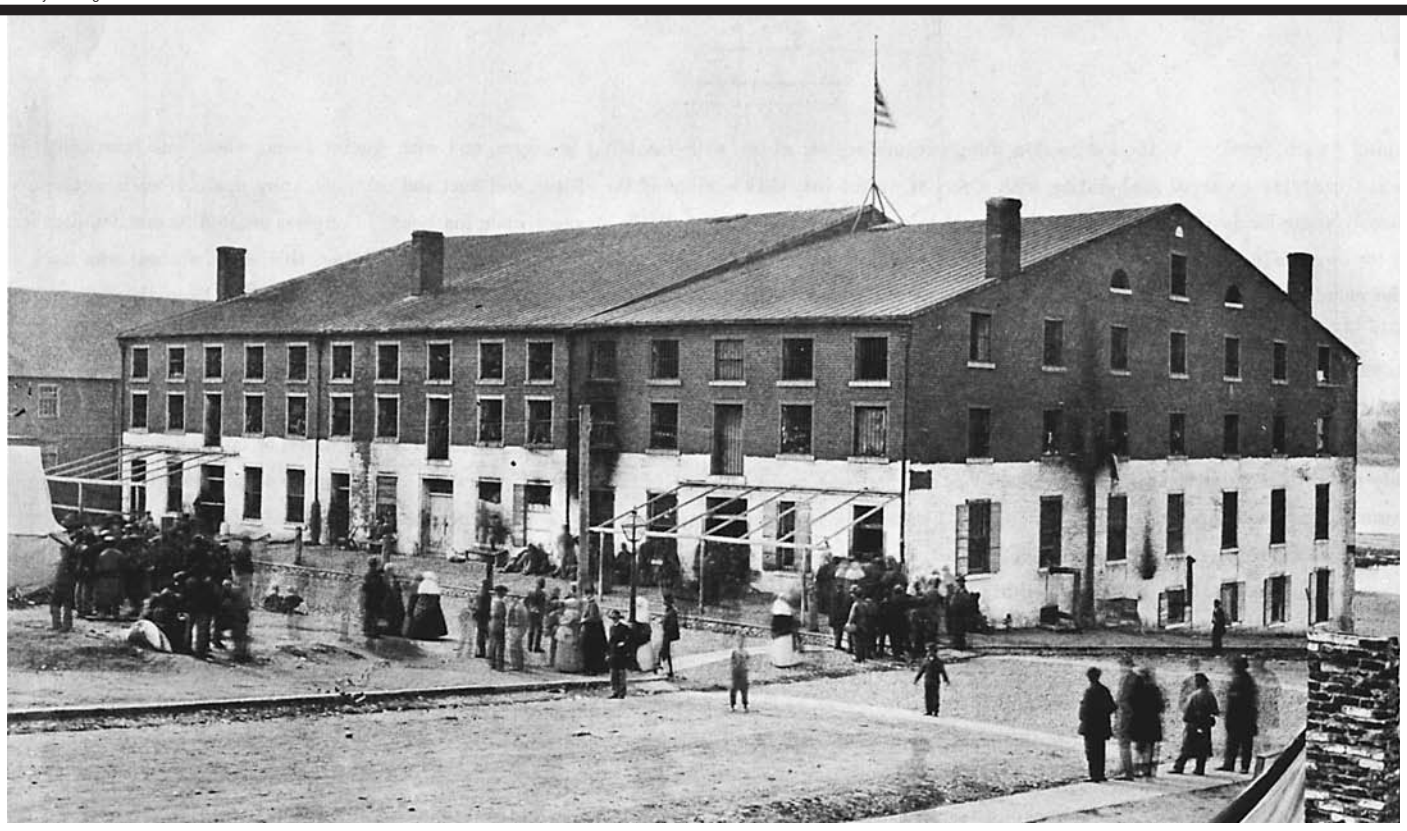

Richmond's notorious Libby Prison, photographed shortly after the war, was the unwelcome home of more than 1,000 Union officers captured during combat. It was far from the worst Civil War prison, but it was bad enough.

The first obstacle for Kilpatrick's command was to capture the crossing at Ely's Ford on the upper Rapidan. If that could be done without alerting the enemy, the bluecoats would stand a much better chance of slipping around the Confederate right flank. Luckily for the raiders, a 40-man advance party was able to surprise the enemy pickets guarding the ford. With the river crossing secured, Dahlgren's detachment passed over and made for Spotsylvania Court House, which it reached at 2 AM on the 29th. Kilpatrick's main body next arrived at the ford, crossed at midnight, and moved on to Spotsylvania at a rapid gait, arriving there six hours later.

After a 20-minute rest, the united command moved on to Mount Pleasant near the Po River, where Dahlgren separated from his commander, taking his contingent to Frederick's Hall while Kilpatrick steered for Beaver Dam Station on the Virginia Central Railroad. Before moving off from Mount Pleasant, Kilpatrick sent a cocky message to Pleasanton: "Twenty miles closer to Richmond, and all right. Will double my bet [of $5,000] that I enter Richmond."

Unbeknownst to the bluecoated troopers, their progress had already been detected by sharp-eyed Confederate scouts even before Dahlgren crossed the Rapidan. Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton, one of Stuart's division commanders and the senior cavalry leader in the Richmond area, received reports of enemy activity at his headquarters at Milford. He immediately alerted Stuart, who was at Montpelier, near Charlottesville, informing him of the Union cavalry's approach.

As the Confederates pondered the extent and purpose of the mounted invasion, Dahlgren's detachment pushed southwest from Spotsylvania Court House, crossed the North Anna River, and arrived at the Virginia Central Railroad depot at Frederick's Hall at 3 PM on February 29. Frederick's Hall was the lightly guarded campsite of 83 artillery pieces attached to Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell's II Corps. Approaching within 300 yards of the vulnerable and extremely valuable target, a credulous Dahlgren decided to bypass Frederick's Hall and move southeast to Bumpass Station. A recently captured Confederate had told him that Frederick's Hall was well-guarded by Southern infantry, and Dahlgren did not bother to check out the report.

Having missed the rich prize of Ewell's unguarded artillery park, Dahlgren also missed a golden opportunity to capture the most important general in the Confederacy—Robert E. Lee. An hour before the Union horse soldiers reached Frederick's Hall, a train carrying the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia had passed through the station en route to Richmond. How the war would have been affected by Lee's capture can only be imagined.

Three miles beyond the depot, some of Dahlgren's troopers stormed a house where Confederate court-martial proceedings were being held, taking prisoners. However, most of the captured soldiers managed to escape their captors later that night. Meanwhile, the raiders commenced to tear up track and telegraph wire near Bumpass Station before proceeding to the South Anna River. After crossing the river at Turkey

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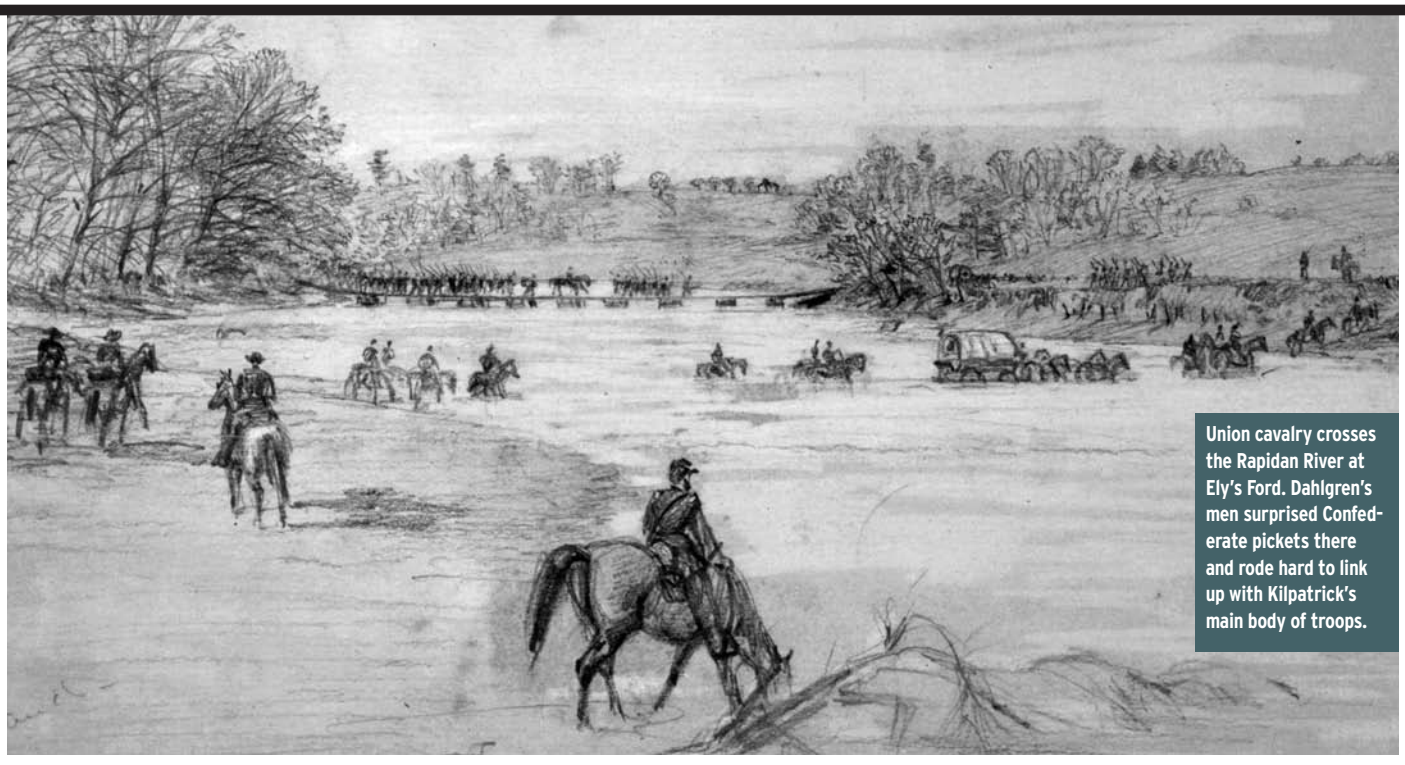

Union cavalry crosses the Rapidan River at Ely's Ford. Dahlgren's men surprised Confederate pickets there and rode hard to link up with Kilpatrick's main body of troops.

Creek Ford in a cold driving rain, Dahlgren's badly straggling column halted about 3 AM on March 1 to close up ranks.

Two hours after Dahlgren's command veered away from Frederick's Hall, the main raiding force under Kilpatrick, having previously ridden through Mount Pleasant, New Market, and Chilesburg at a fast rate, crossed the North Anna River at Anderson's Ford and entered Beaver Dam Station on the Virginia Central Railroad. The destruction of station, track, and telegraph lines was momentarily interrupted by the appearance of a train from Richmond that stopped short of the station and disgorged 25 Confederate soldiers who fired a volley at the Union marauders before dispersing. As the guard detachment scattered into nearby woods, the engineer threw the train into reverse and headed back in the direction he had come. The destruction continued. Meanwhile, Kilpatrick tried to contact Dahlgren, who was thought to be 10 miles to the west at Frederick's Hall. The attempt failed. Rain mixed with snow and sleet began to fall, turning the roads into muddy quagmires.

While the Federal invaders continued their operation, the Confederates plotted to intercept them. Not having heard from Stuart, Hampton had to improvise. He moved the only force he had at hand, 253 troopers from the 1st and 2nd North Carolina Cavalry Regiments, two guns of Captain James F. Hart's South Carolina Horse Artillery Battery, and the 60-man mounted contingent of Colonel Bradley T. Johnson's Maryland Line, to Mount Carmel Church.

Dahlgren attempted to cross the James River west of Dover Mills. When his guide led the raiders to one and then another nonexistent ford on the river, Dahlgren, convinced the man had betrayed him, had the guide hanged. It was then after noon, and there were still seven miles between Dahlgren and Richmond.

About 1 AM on March 1, Kilpatrick left Beaver Dam Station and began stumbling around the countryside, lost. He intended to cross the South Anna River at Ground Squirrel Bridge, but the young slave who was guiding the column became disoriented by the storm and darkness and led the bluecoats to Ashland instead. There, a 450-man task force under Major William Hall peeled off the main body to destroy the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad bridge over the South Anna at Taylorsville. The move was designed to interrupt Lee's supply line, protect the raiders' rear, and draw local enemy forces to Taylorsville while Kilpatrick went south and slipped across the South Anna at Blunt's Bridge, which he did at 6 o'clock that morning.

Meanwhile, Hall's party, harassed constantly by sniper fire, abruptly abandoned its quest to capture the crossing at Taylorsville. Hall, like Dahlgren before him, had been told by some locals that the bridge was guarded by a strong force of Confederate infantry and artillery. He withdrew and splashed over the South Anna at Beech Tree Ford in search of Kilpatrick, whom he joined the next day in front of Richmond.

As Kilpatrick and Dahlgren made their

separate ways south, Confederates increased their efforts to nab the intruders. During the morning of March 1, Hampton led his skeleton command from Mount Carmel Church to Hanover Court House. Finding no enemy there, he rode on to Hughes' Crossing. Maj. Gen. Arnold Elzey, commanding the Department of Richmond, ordered Colonel Walter H. Stevens, the officer in immediate charge of the city's defenses, to occupy key road junctions along the city's intermediate line of works with light artillery units. Bradley Johnson, at Hanover Junction, was also alerted to be ready to move at any moment.

Having halted briefly during the early hours of Mach 1, Dahlgren got his men moving again, pushing them hard past Goochland Court House at about 10 AM. They were 20 miles from Richmond and still far from the point where they could attack the target simultaneously with Kilpatrick that morning as the Union plan dictated. Near the James River & Kanawha Canal, Dahlgren sent 100 troopers under Captain John Mitchell to do as much damage as they could, while Dahlgren and his main body crossed to the south of the James River and came up from the south of Richmond near Belle Isle. Mitchell destroyed a good deal of property before rejoining Dahlgren, who had spent the afternoon wrecking enemy buildings and goods.

Dahlgren attempted to cross the James River west of Dover Mills. When his guide led the raiders to one and then another nonexistent ford on the river, Dahlgren, convinced the man had betrayed him, had the guide hanged. It was then after noon, and there were still seven miles between Dahlgren and Richmond. The colonel could hear Kilpatrick's artillery firing north of the city. After four hours of deliberation, he moved southeast toward Richmond on Three Chopt Road, passing through the city's empty outer works to strike the capital.

While Dahlgren attempted to cross the James, Confederate forces coalesced near Richmond. Kilpatrick spent the early morning hours of March 1 traveling south from Ashland. Later that morning the van of Davies's brigade crossed the Chickahominy River and turned down the Brook Turnpike, approaching the outer defense line of Richmond at 10 AM. The civilians they encountered assured the raiders that no one had expected the Yankees to get this close to Richmond. With the element of surprise apparently still with them, the troopers continued forward. Said Captain James H. Kidd of the 6th Michigan Cavalry: "We could look into the streets and count the spires on the churches."

Kilpatrick called a halt to his command and listened for the sound of battle indicating that Dahlgren was attacking Richmond from the south. The only commotion he heard was from the north, where Hall was exchanging shots with the Confederates guarding the Taylorsville Bridge. Moving off once more, Kilpatrick advanced slowly through the vacant outer perimeter of the Richmond defenses, five miles from the city. As he cautiously rode down the Brook Turnpike, he met only token resistance. At 10:30 AM, a mile from the city's intermediate defensive works, the Union horsemen were fired upon by two pieces of artillery belonging to Confederate Captain J. Henry Rives's 2nd Nelson Virginia Artillery Battery.

Kilpatrick reacted by ordering his own artillery to deploy on the west side of the Brook Turnpike and deployed the 5th New York Cavalry 250 yards from the Confed-

Kilpatrick and Dahlgren led separate columns south toward Richmond, depending on precise timing and coordination—two things that almost never happen under battle conditions.

Custer's Diversionary Raid

The plan that Judson Kilpatrick presented to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton outlining his proposed raid on Richmond included only one diversionary effort: the request that Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler threaten the Confederate capital from the east while Kilpatrick moved on it from the north. When Stanton forwarded Kilpatrick's scheme to Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade for recommendations, Meade altered the plan to include a simultaneous advance by Union infantry toward Madison Court House and a cavalry advance toward Charlottesville.

The foot soldiers would be provided by Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick's Union VI Infantry Corps along with Maj. Gen. David D. Birney's III Corps infantry division. The cavalry contingent, 1,500 men strong, was to be led by Brig. Gen. George A. Custer, one of Kilpatrick's brigade commanders. Meade chose Custer for the assignment for two reasons: first, he was considered a bold and fearless leader who could be depended upon to handle such a dangerous mission, and second, Custer's appointment was bound to irritate Kilpatrick, who didn't want Custer, a rival general, involved in the raid. Meade wanted to show Kilpatrick that, as commander of the Army of the Potomac, Meade could still call the shots.

On February 27, Sedgwick's corps initiated the planned diversion by veering toward the Confederate left flank around Madison Court House and advancing west to Robertson's River. The next day Custer and his command moved to join Sedgwick. The young cavalry general expressed concerns about his role in the operation. Custer's goal was the railway bridge over the Rivanna River near Charlottesville. If his route back to the Union lines was cut by the enemy, he was to make for the Shenandoah Valley. But Custer had heard that the Valley contained over 5,000 Confederate mounted troops. He was worried that the Army was preparing to sacrifice him and his command in order to ensure that Kilpatrick succeeded.

After listening to the cavalryman's concerns, Sedgwick replied that he need not worry—the high command had considered all possibilities. Whether or not Sedgwick's reassurance soothed him, Custer set out.

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Battlefield artist Alfred Waud accompanied George Armstrong Custer on his diversionary raid on Charlottesville and sketched Custer interrogating Confederate prisoners.

At 2 AM on February 29, he and his men waded across the Robertson River at Banks' Mill Ford and rode south toward Standardville. The movement was immediately detected by a patrol under Lieutenant J.N. Cunningham of the 1st Virginia Cavalry.

As soon as Confederate cavalry chief Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart learned of Custer crossing the Rapidan River, Stuart rounded up 400 horsemen and led them forward to meet the threat. He also wired news of the enemy movements to headquarters, which dispatched four infantry regiments under Brig. Gen. William Mahone on a train from Gordonsville to Charlottesville.

Upon reaching the Rivanna River, Custer dispatched one squadron of the 1st Cavalry upriver and one from the 5th Cavalry Regiment downriver. The latter formation, under Captain Joseph Ash, rode by chance into the artillery park holding Stuart's four batteries of horse artillery under Captain Marcellus Moorman, six miles from Charlottesville. Without any infantry or cavalry support, the Confederate gunners were sitting ducks.

Warned of the approaching enemy by Cunningham, who had been shadowing the Federals, Moorman knew that he could neither fight nor flee—all his draft horses were out to pasture. To gain time and make the oncoming enemy think a mounted force was present to protect his guns, Moorman saddled some of his artillerists and paraded them around as though they were cavalry. When the Union horsemen advanced, the Confederate artillery opened fire. Some of the Federals entered the artillery camp and pushed back the mounted skirmishers. The Federals abruptly called off their attack after two groups of them started mistakenly shooting at each other. The Confederates lost two men, seven horses, and two mules in the scrape.

Custer arrived on the scene expecting to

find large numbers of enemy infantry present. His expectations seemed confirmed when Ash pointed out Wickham's abandoned camp 300 yards in the distance. Custer directed his men to withdraw. As the Union forces were leaving, Stuart attempted to cut them off, but his progress was slowed by a sudden sleet storm that reduced visibility and made the ground a quagmire for horses and men. Moving as rapidly as he could, Custer divided his force into two columns. Eight miles from Standardville, he halted his force to rest and feed the artillery horses.

While Custer made camp, Stuart was hot on his heels. He reached a fork in the road and, after learning one group of Federals had already passed by, led Wickham's men to Banks' Mill Ford, placing his command behind a rail fence adjacent to the road to wait in ambush. When the Federals approach, Stuart's men attacked. Custer took cover in a ravine and placed his two artillery pieces on a small slope.

After a short covering bombardment from his guns, Custer charged, crumbling the vastly outnumbered Confederates, who fell back toward the ford. For the next two miles the two antagonists conducted charge after charge as Custer's men raced back down the road to cross the Robertson River at Burton's Ford. Stuart tried to follow, but his exhausted men could not keep up with the fleeing enemy. Within 20 minutes he suspended the pursuit. Soon afterward, Custer and his men were across the river and out of harm's way.

Custer's diversionary raid had penetrated 60 miles behind enemy lines, destroyed the wooden bridge over the south fork of the Rivanna River, wrecked Wickham's camp, and seized 50 prisoners, 100 slaves, and 500 horses. In exchange, he lost only one man wounded. A gratified Meade later compared Custer's achievement to Kilpatrick's. The former, he stated, was "perfectly successful," while the latter was "an utter failure." It gave Meade a large measure of satisfaction to say so. □

Library of Congress

The battle-tested 3rd Indiana Cavalry, photographed in camp at Petersburg, took part in the Richmond raid. Tough Midwesterners made the best Union cavalrymen.

erate position. Once the Union skirmishers drove the enemy artillery back into the intermediate defense line with carbine fire, Brig. Gen. Henry Davies was ordered to devise a plan to dislodge the enemy facing the raiders. Davies decided that because the terrain on either side of the highway was soft and muddy and intersected by wide and deep ditches, the only practical thing to do was to stage a dismounted frontal attack across the open 1,000-yard front.

While the Federal guns engaged the Confederate works and the 5th New York maintained its skirmish line, Davies dismounted 500 men of the 3rd Indiana and 1st Maine Volunteer Cavalry Regiments, under Major William Patton, on the east side of the road. Fifty Union sharpshooters were detailed to move farther to the east and closer to the Confederate line in order bring more effective small arms fire on the enemy. At the same time, Colonel Edward Sawyer's cavalry brigade was stationed in column of fours on the turnpike in the rear of the attackers, ready to exploit any success their dismounted comrades might achieve. For two hours Patton's men edged up to their opponents' position, getting within 200 yards of the enemy. One trooper recalled that the "bullets flew like hail stones." Then, at 4 PM, Kilpatrick unexpectedly broke off the fight.

The general's reasons were many. First, he did not know where Dahlgren was. Second, the expected diversionary attack on Richmond by Butler had not materialized. Third, Hall's detachment was missing. Fourth, the Southern defenders were making a determined and resolute stand. Whatever the reasons, at a critical juncture during the operation, the infamous "Kill-Cavalry" lost his will to continue. He ordered his command to withdraw. He suffered 60 casualties.

As the fighting north of Richmond ended, Dahlgren and his men started to probe the outer defense line southeast of the city. There, they ran into 300 volunteer civilians who formed the town's Armory Battalion under Major Charles H. Ford. As Dahlgren's advance guard, the 2nd New York Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, approached, the Southerners loosed a volley that drove the surprised Federals to shelter. Dahlgren ordered his next regiment in line, the 5th Michigan, to charge and clear out the enemy. This was done, and as the Armory Battalion broke and ran the 1st Vermont Volunteer Cavalry Regiment pursued its citizen soldiers down the road.

A mile from the intersection of Three Chopt and Westham Roads, the Federals confronted two other local defense organizations that from their concealed posi-

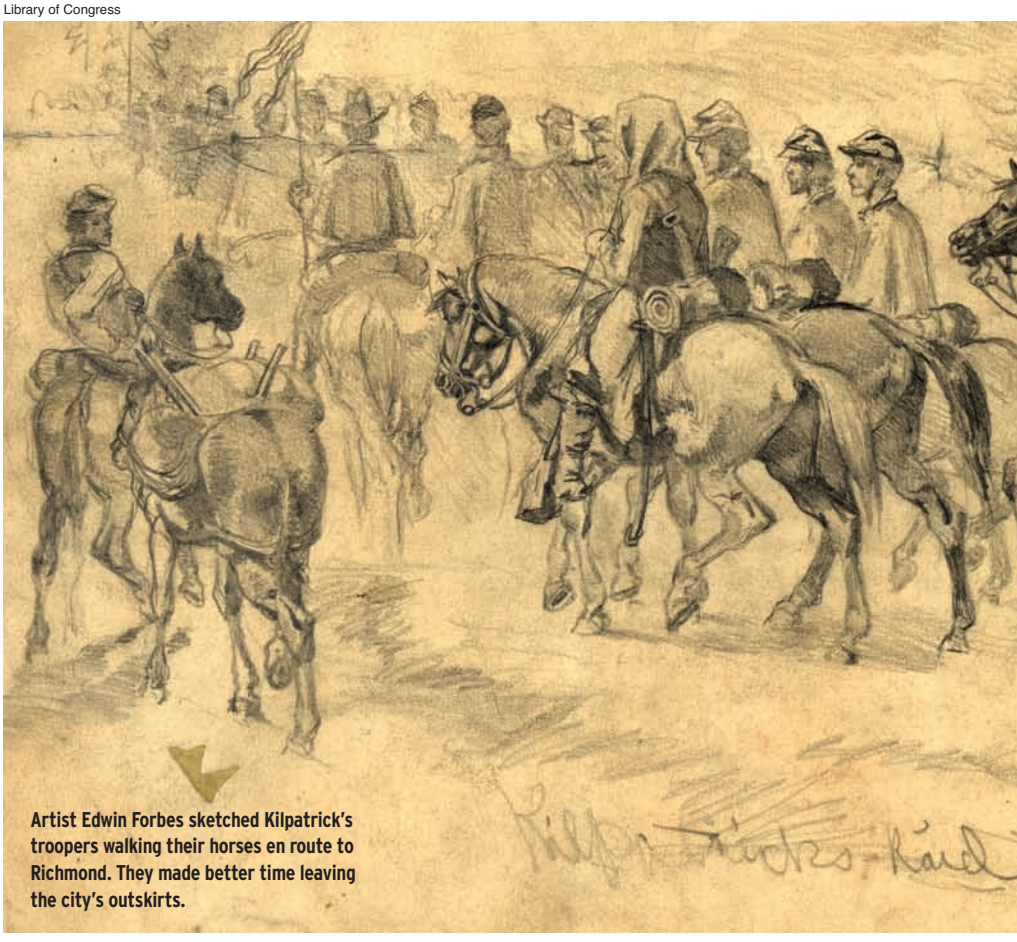
tions delivered two effective small arms volleys. Stunned by the fusillade, Dahlgren ordered a retreat back up the Three Chopt Road at 8 PM. Since attacking the Richmond defenses, Dahlgren had suffered 22 killed, 26 wounded, and 32 captured.

After concluding the contest above Richmond, Kilpatrick's column, covered by Davies's rear guard and joined by Hall, crossed the Chickahominy River at Meadow Bridges at 5 PM. The command then went into camp in a rain and sleet storm two miles southwest of Mechanicsville. Not long afterward, Kilpatrick received word from his scouts that the way into Richmond via the Mechanicsville Road was undefended. All available Confederate defenders had been concentrated to the north.

The now elated officer formulated a new plan to enter the city. Two groups of 500 men each, under Lt. Col. Addison Preston of the 1st Vermont Cavalry and Major Constantine Taylor of the 1st Maine Cavalry, were detailed to assault Richmond at 2 AM. One group was to liberate Union prisoners held in Libby Prison, while the second was to capture Jefferson Davis. The rest of the force—about 2,500 men—would cover the smaller detachment's withdrawal.

As Kilpatrick issued orders for his new assault on Richmond, Wade Hampton and his 300 warriors pounced. After riding for 25 hours, Hampton arrived near Atlee's Station on the Virginia Central Railroad at 9 PM. The mounted Confederates immediately unleashed small arms and artillery fire on the unsuspecting pickets of the 7th Michigan Cavalry Regiment, while 100 dismounted men of Colonel William Cheek's 1st North Carolina Cavalry charged the 7th's camp. With enemy shot and shells falling around them, the Michiganders broke and ran. A company of the 5th Michigan Cavalry coming to the 7th's aid was also swept away in the rout. Some Union formations, including the 9th New York Cavalry, temporarily stood their ground, but within 30 minutes of the attack Kilpatrick ordered his two brigades to retreat west to Old Church.

Library of Congress



Artist Edwin Forbes sketched Kilpatrick's troopers walking their horses en route to Richmond. They made better time leaving the city's outskirts.

At 8 AM on March 2, a frustrated Kilpatrick halted his retrograde movement to strike at the pursuing enemy. A new battle line was formed, and a charge was made that dispersed the small band of Confederates hounding Kilpatrick's column. Kilpatrick remained in place for five hours hoping to see Dahlgren's party come into view. It did not. Finally, at 1 PM he headed east to Tunstall's Station bound for the Pamunkey River and safety with Butler's army on the Peninsula.

Meanwhile, Dahlgren, demoralized by defeat, miserable weather, and extreme fatigue, made for the Pamunkey River himself with only 70 men, Mitchell and 250 others having become separated during the night. Dahlgren reached the waterway at 9 AM on March 2. Mitchell's unit found its way blocked near Tunstall's Station by 200 Confederates. The New York officer formed his men and led a saber charge that broke through the enemy lines at the cost of 20 of his troopers. Mitchell was finally able to hook up with Kilpatrick at Tunstall's two hours later.

As Kilpatrick's column neared Tunstall's and took a much-needed rest, Dahlgren and the few score troopers remaining with him crossed the Pamunkey. Dogged by Southern bushwhackers, the desperate small party was forced to make so many detours that little forward movement was made before night fell. At midnight, after crossing Garnet's Creek, they ran into an ambush composed of 150 Confederate regulars and militia. Dahlgren attempted to brazen it out, demanding that the unknown force surrender "or we will shoot you." He pointed his pistol and pulled the trigger, but the wet weapon misfired. An answering volley of fire erupted, and Dahlgren fell dead from his saddle, riddled by five bullets. Some 30 surrounded Federals surrendered, while 40 others made their escape.

Later that morning, while Dahlgren's body still lay facedown where he had been

shot, a curious 13-year-old named William Littlepage rifled through the dead Union officer's personal effects. He found three pieces of paper and a notebook that soon found their way to the authorities in Richmond. The sheets of paper, apparently an address Dahlgren planned to give his men, called for the Union troops to "destroy and burn the hateful; and do not allow the rebel leader Davis and his traitorous crew to escape." On another scrap of paper Dahlgren supposedly had written, "Once in the city it must be destroyed and Jeff Davis and cabinet killed."

The authenticity of the Dahlgren papers has been questioned ever since, with defenders of the dead colonel arguing that they were forged, at least partly, as a pretext to justify already planned Confederate terrorist activities in the North. Authentic or not, the papers created a firestorm of controversy, and many Confederate officials called for the execution of all the captured Union raiders in response. Robert E. Lee contacted Meade, who hastily assured him that such heinous acts had not been authorized by the Lincoln administration, essentially putting the blame on the planned acts of arson and murder solely on the shoulders of the dead Dahlgren.

In a private letter to his wife, Margaretta, Meade was far less convinced. "This was a pretty ugly piece of business," the general wrote, "for in denying having authorized or approved 'the burning of Richmond or killing Mr. Davis and his cabinet,' I necessarily threw odium on Dahlgren. I, however, enclosed a letter from Kilpatrick, in which the authenticity of the papers was impugned; but I regret to say Kilpatrick's reputation and collateral evidence in my possession, rather go against this theory. However, I was determined my skirts should be clear."

Kilpatrick, as Meade observed, had also disclaimed the inflammatory remarks. "I have carefully examined officers and men who accompanied Colonel Dahlgren on his late expedition," Kilpatrick reported. "All testify that he published no address whatever to his command, nor did he give any instructions, much less of the character alleged in the rebel journals in the memorandum following his address. All this is false and published only as an excuse for the barbarous treatment of the remains of a brave soldier."

Dahlgren was initially buried where he fell before being removed to Oakwood Cemetery for reburial. Someone put his wooden leg on display in a Richmond store window, and someone else cut off one of his fingers to remove a ring. Union sympathizers organized by Elizabeth Van Lew later removed his body and hid it on a farm near Hungary Station to prevent angry Virginians from further desecrating the corpse. The body was eventually returned to Admiral Dahlgren and reburied a final time in Philadelphia's North Hill Cemetery.

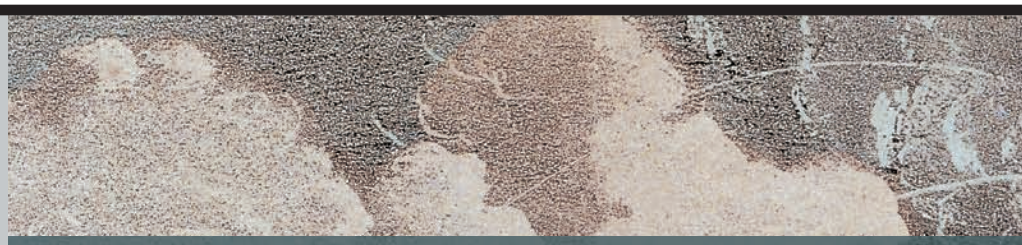
On March 3, with Dahlgren lying dead and his notorious papers being examined by Confederate authorities, Kilpatrick and his surviving raiders closed in on New Kent Court House and the safety of the relief column sent by Butler. During the evening of March 4, the combined force entered Yorktown, officially ending the raid. The operation had cost the Union 340 men and 600 horses. By March 18, most of the soldiers who had embarked on the raid were back in camp at Stevensburg.

Historians have argued ever since about why the raid failed. The reasons include Kilpatrick's poor leadership, lack of supplies, not enough military force, and Dahlgren's and Butler's failures to adequately support the mission's commander. While all these factors played some role in the fiasco, in the final analysis the venture failed because it was too ambitious, demanding perfect timing and coordination by the attacking forces, something that rarely occurs in war. Furthermore, the plan never took into consideration the quick reactions of the Confederates, whose stubborn stand was both unexpected and fatal. In war, simple is usually better, and the unexpected almost always happens. Even "Kill Cavalry" should have known that. □

Cracking the Nut of Island No. 10

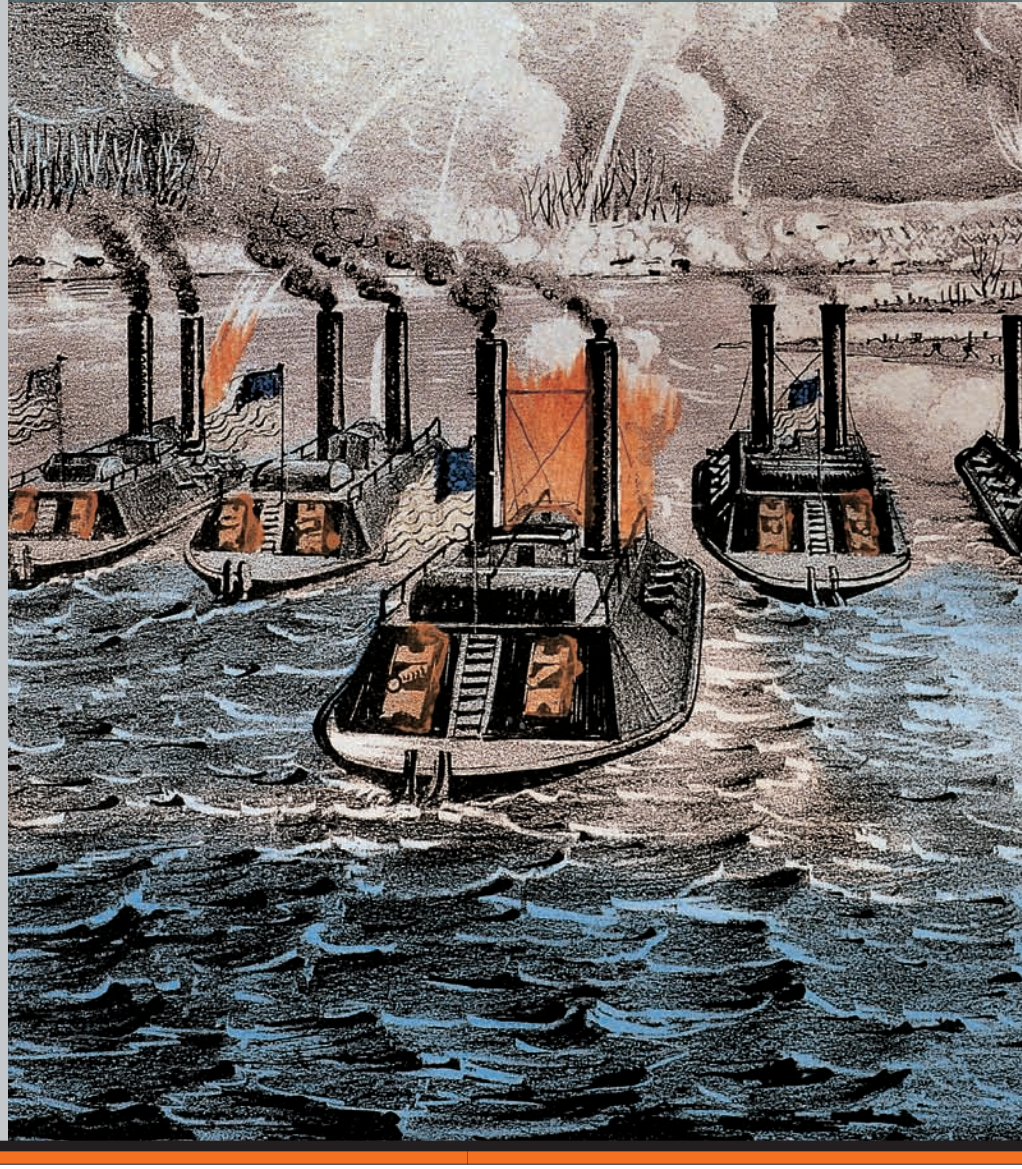
Pope used geography, intelligence, engineering, and sweat—with a big dose of courage from the *Carondelet*—to win control of the middle Mississippi.

By Robert Collins Suhr



With its whistle blaring, the Confederate gunboat *Grampus* steamed into Madrid Bend, where Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Arkansas come together on the Mississippi River. Within days the reason for this excitement became evident as six ugly ironclad gunboats anchored a few miles upriver near Island No. 8. The Union Navy's long anticipated attack down the river had begun.

The Confederacy's highwater mark on the Mississippi came at Columbus, Ky. On September 4, 1861, Gen. Leonidas Polk violated the Bluegrass State's self-proclaimed neutrality by seizing the heights at Columbus and—farther downstream—Hickman on Kentucky soil just north of the Tennessee border. That tactical success was followed by an immediate strategic defeat as Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant seized Paducah and Smithland, at the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, advancing the

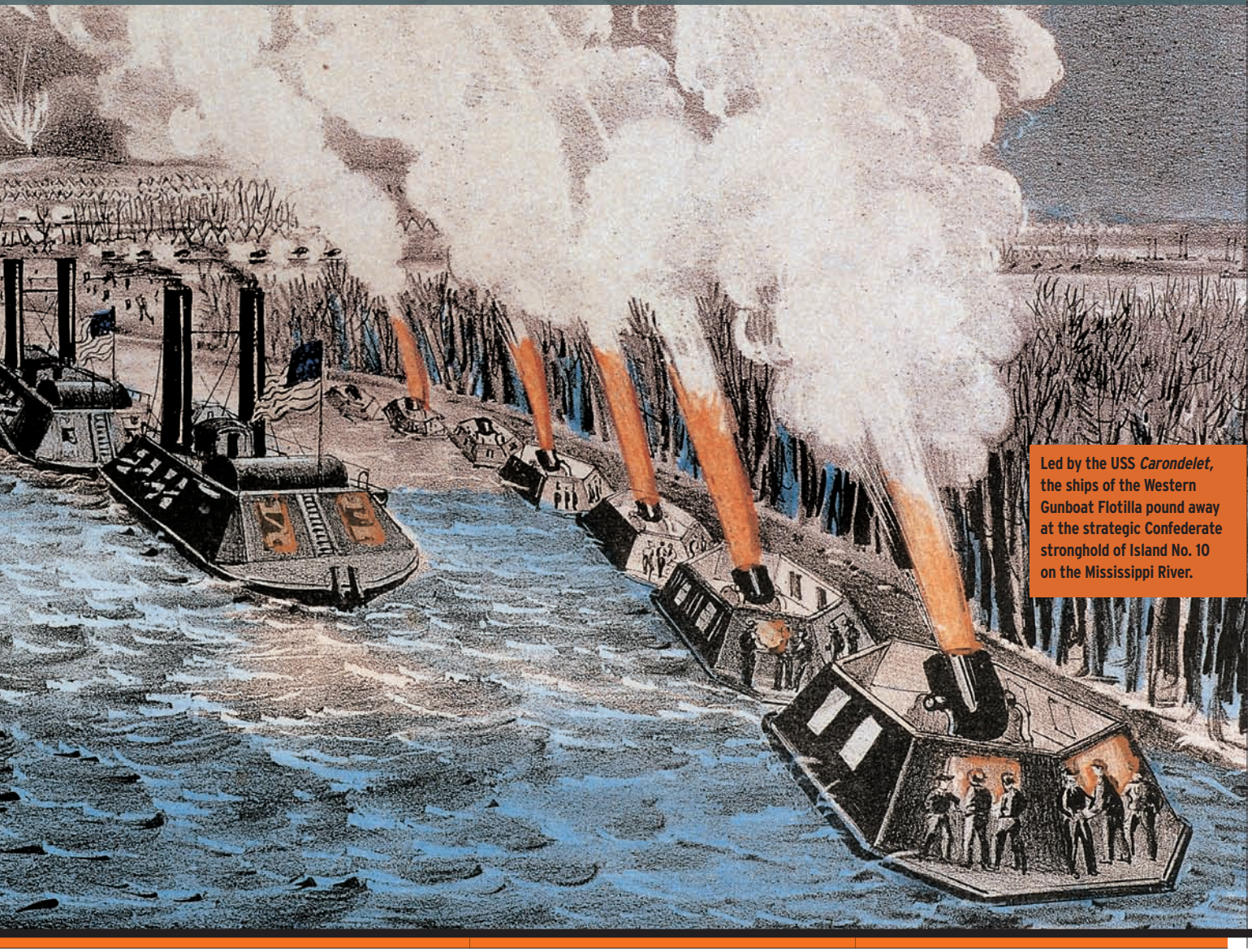


Union front line from the Ohio River to the Tennessee border.

Still, the proximity of Confederate forces at Columbus to the large Union depot at Cairo, Ill., was a constant worry to Union commanders, forcing them to maintain a large garrison there. On January 20, 1862, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, commander of the Military Department of Missouri, suggested to his superior, Maj. Gen. George McClellan, that he attack New Madrid, 30 miles downriver from Columbus. Such a move would trap the Confederate garrison, relieve the pressure on Cairo, and allow Halleck to use the Cairo garrison's troops elsewhere.

In 1811, a massive earthquake centered at New Madrid altered the geography of the area, giving the area unique terrain characteristics that would make it a logical defensive position. At Madrid Bend, the Mississippi River twisted back and forth in a pair of serpentine curves. In the first bend was Island No. 10, so named because it was the tenth island south of where the Ohio flows into the Mississippi. The town of New Madrid was in the second bend. Island No. 10 and its environs onshore would be a natural stronghold and barrier to Union shipping from the north.

Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee anchored the Confederate right; a swamp between it and the river made it impossible for any force to advance from that direction. The Great Mingo Swamp in Missouri formed a 30-mile-



Led by the USS *Carondelet*, the ships of the Western Gunboat Flotilla pound away at the strategic Confederate stronghold of Island No. 10 on the Mississippi River.

U.S. Navy

wide barrier north of New Madrid. At Madrid Bend, the western peninsula made by the two river bends and jutting up from Tennessee toward New Madrid, was another swamp that protected the Confederate left in Tennessee. Moreover, heavy rains during late winter flooded the Mississippi. The water in the swamps was several feet higher than normal, making them even more difficult to pass through.

When the Confederates eventually abandoned Columbus in late February, the position being made untenable by Grant's moves deep into Tennessee, they brought many guns that added to the area's natural defenses. Eventually, 45 cannons were in batteries on the Tennessee shore, on Island No. 10, and in forts protecting New Madrid. To force enemy boats to steam close to the island, they sank the steamer *Winchester* in a channel opposite.

Another part of the Confederate defenses at Island No. 10 was a unique weapon of the war, the floating battery *New Orleans*. Originally the Pelican dry dock in Algiers (on the Mississippi opposite New Orleans), the floating battery resembled an immobile boat with cannon on both sides. When it arrived at Island No. 10, the Confederates removed the cannon from the starboard side and anchored it on the upriver end of the island with the port guns pointed north. To protect New Madrid, the Confederates erected a pair of forts on either side—Fort Bankhead upriver, and Fort Thompson downriver from the town.

The Confederates believed the Union attack on New Orleans would come from the north, where they had heard about construction of the Union ironclads. Commanding the Confederate naval force at New Orleans was Commodore George Hollins. When Union ironclads began operating on the western rivers, Richmond ordered Hollins to take most of his fleet north to help defend the Mississippi.

Thus, the Confederates had a number of boats at Madrid Bend, but they were gunboats in name alone. In reality, they were nothing more than steamers with cannon mounted on them. The most heavily armed was the *McRae* with eight guns. The ships were unarmored except for the *Maurapas,* which had iron plating over its engines. The fatal flaw in the Confederate defenses was that they were all geared toward a naval attack coming downriver.

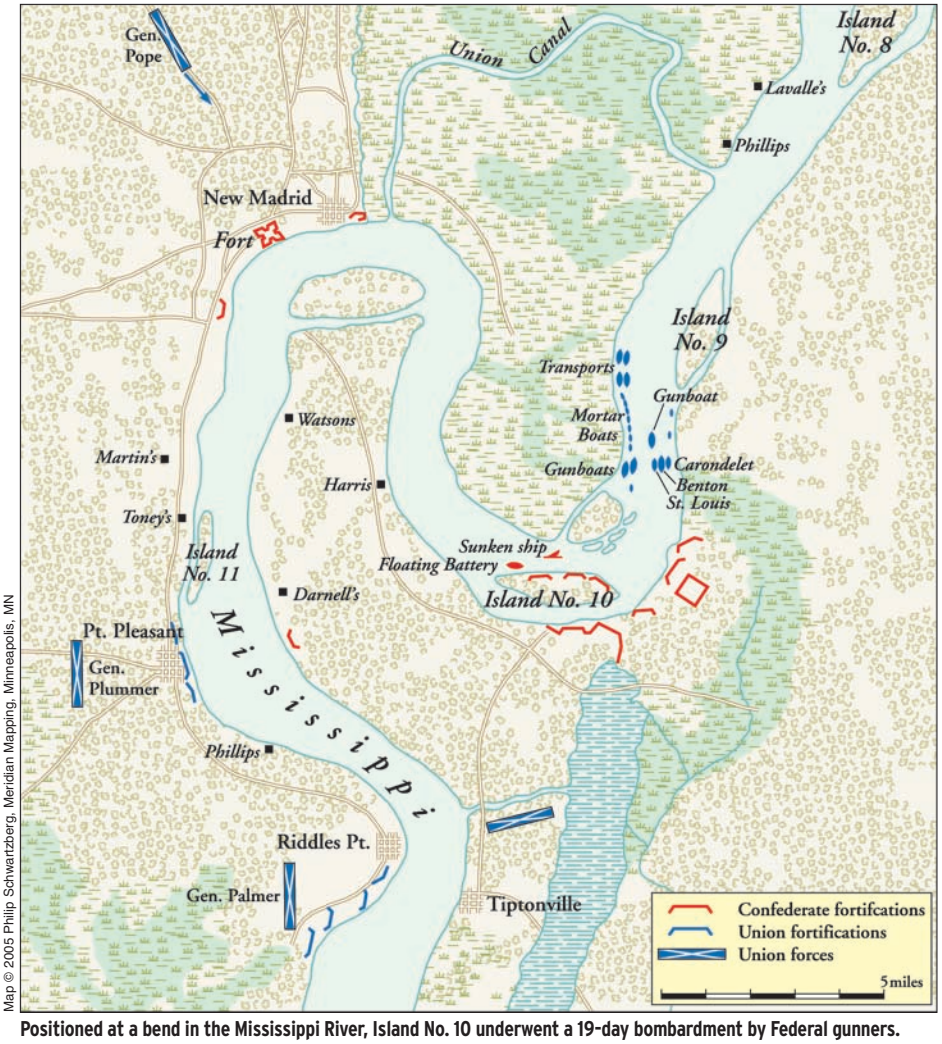
At this time, the Union's Western Flotilla was under army command. Though Halleck could order Flag Officer Andrew Foote to support any operation he wished, he had committed the gunboats to helping Grant reduce Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. To attack Island No. 10 and New Madrid, Halleck had only infantry.

By mid-February, McClellan had given Halleck permission to begin the operation. Halleck chose Brig. Gen. John Pope to command. Pope was at Jefferson City, Mo., on February 14 when he received Halleck's orders. He immediately traveled to St. Louis to meet with Halleck, who promised him all the support he needed. From there he went to Cairo and established his headquarters.

While there, Pope heard rumors that the Confederates were about to attack Cairo from Columbus. Halleck ordered Pope to remain in Cairo as long as there was the risk of a Confederate assault.

By February 21, Pope, deciding the Southerners were not going over to the offensive, moved his headquarters 30 miles up the Mississippi to Commerce, Mo. This put the Union Army on the same side of the Mississippi as New Madrid, at the end of an old corduroy road that ran through the swamp.

The force Pope commanded could hardly be called an army. His original force was the 140 men of his personal escort. The units assigned to him were green and untrained, many not receiving their arms until they were about to cross the river. In three days he was able to report to Halleck: "There are now



Positioned at a bend in the Mississippi River, Island No. 10 underwent a 19-day bombardment by Federal gunners.

here nine regiments of infantry, one battery Eleventh Ohio, and six companies of the First U.S. Infantry, about 6,500 men." Within days he had 10,000 men.

With the arrival of Brigadier Generals David Stanley, Schuyler Hamilton, John Palmer, and Gordon Granger, Pope organized his force into four divisions. A week after his arrival, Pope was ready to move south at the head of the force that would later be named the "Army of the Mississippi," but at that time was simply referred to as "the Union Army at New Madrid."

On the last day of February 1862, two weeks after Grant took Fort Donelson, Pope set out for New Madrid, 30 miles south. As if Pope did not have enough problems, it began to snow, and measles struck the army.

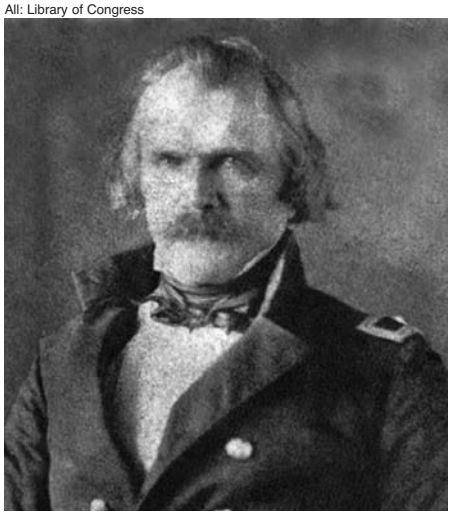
The Confederate belief that the swamp would protect the area from the north was not unfounded, even with the presence of the old track through it. The corduroy road was built on a crumbling embankment that had collapsed in several places. To make the road passable again, men had to wade into the freezing water to build supports.

Pope's intentions were known to the Confederates almost as soon as he landed at Commerce. As he started south, Confederate Brig. Gen. M. Jeff Thompson, "The Swamp Fox," rode north from New Madrid to stop him. Though Thompson had been a thorn in the side of Union forces for months, he could only muster fewer than 100 soldiers and two or three small cannon to stop Pope's 10,000 men.

At two o'clock on the morning of March 1, elements of the 1st Illinois Cavalry and the 10th Illinois Infantry encountered Thompson's force on dry ground three miles south of Sikeston, Mo. Pope ordered Hamilton to send forward the 7th Illinois Cavalry under Col. W. P. Kellogg. Without taking time to change from a column to a line, Kellogg led a charge that routed the Rebels, capturing a couple of officers and several privates. Kellogg's troopers continued the chase to within four miles of New Madrid.

Halleck's vague plan of cutting off the Confederate garrison at Columbus (one of the original reasons for marching on New Madrid) came to naught because of Union successes to the east. Grant's position at Fort

All: Library of Congress



ABOVE: General Albert Sidney Johnston. BELOW: Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote (left), Brig. Gen. John Pope (right).

Donelson was due east of Columbus, and the movement of his Army of the Ohio toward Nashville placed a large Union force between Columbus and the army General Albert Sidney Johnston was assembling to protect the important rail crossing of Corinth, Miss. Afraid that Grant would come west to cut off the forces at Columbus and Hickman, General P. T. Beauregard, who commanded the Army of Mississippi under Johnston, ordered Leonidas Polk, commanding his First Grand Division, to evacuate Columbus.

After Forts Henry and Donelson, the Union Army's objective in early 1862 was Corinth, where the east-west Memphis & Charleston Railroad crossed the north-south Mobile and Ohio. The loss of Corinth would sever supply lines east-west, forcing the Confederacy to abandon the Mississippi as far south as Vicksburg. Union gunboats were already steaming up and down the Cumberland and Tennessee, and Grant's army was about to move to Pittsburg Landing, only 30 miles northwest of Corinth. To repel the northern invaders, Johnston drew troops from all over the Confederacy. Johnston's plans would result in the Battle of Shiloh on April 6-7.

As part of the concentration of forces, Beauregard sent the bulk of the troops from Columbus to Union Junction, Tenn., to join Johnston. Only one brigade moved to the area of Island No. 10.

On February 24, Polk had sent Brig. Gen. John McCown to Island No. 10. What he found there was less than encouraging. While Columbus was considered the "Gibraltar of the West," the area about Island No. 10 had only two incomplete batteries. McCown immediately ordered the construction of several more.

Polk began evacuating Columbus on February 25, sending his sick out first. During the remaining few days of February, he moved the commissary and quartermaster supplies and almost all the heavy guns south. By March 1, only cavalry remained in the fort.

On March 3, the Union army reached New Madrid. Though he did not admit it, Pope arrived outside the little town with no plan for capturing it and the Confederate forts. Moreover, the Confederate gunboats rode so high on the flooded Mississippi that their cannon could sweep the flat countryside. Union troops could not deploy to properly invest the Confederate position without being battered by fire from the gunboats.

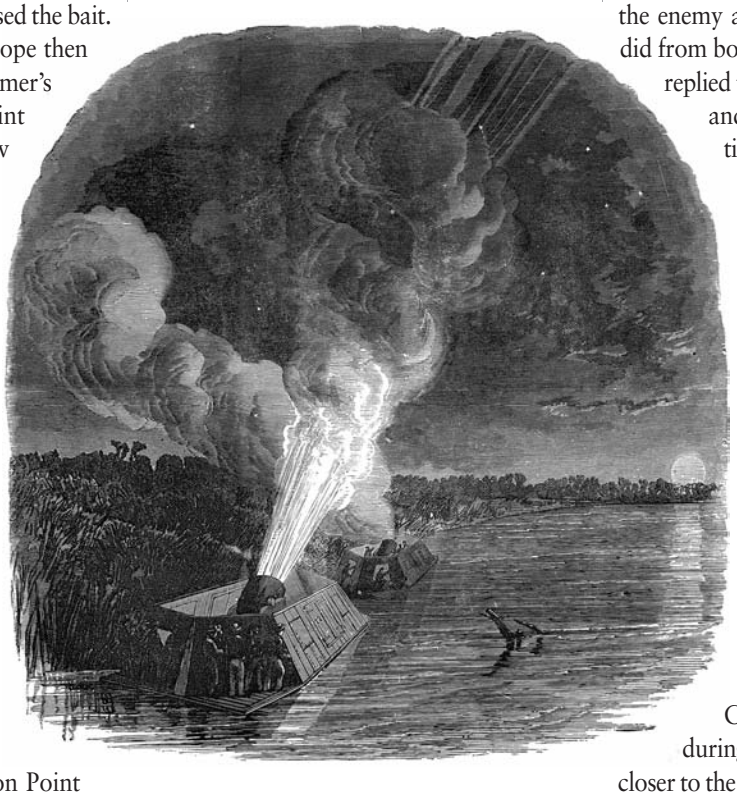
The first day, Pope was content to probe the Confederate position. He concluded that five regiments held the forts about the town and that the environs could be swept by 60 large guns in the forts and on the boats. He bivouacked the army at the end of the swamp, beyond the range of the Confederate cannon.

Instead of attacking, Pope decided instead to blow the Confederates from their positions using siege guns. He sent Col. Josiah W. Bissell of the Engineer Regiment of the West to St. Louis to ask Halleck for some heavy artillery. "If we can get them here matters will soon be settled." On March 10, the ordnance officer at Cairo turned over three 24-pounders and an eight-inch rifle to Bissell. Meanwhile, Pope's little army continued to grow as Halleck added new regiments. Colonel H.E. Paine arrived with an additional five regiments. Pope created a fifth infantry

division under Paine's command and put Granger in charge of a cavalry division.

While waiting for the siege guns, Pope conducted a series of reconnaissance-in-force probes of the Confederate defenses. He hoped to lure the Rebels out of their works to fight in the open where his superior numbers could prevail, but the Confederates refused the bait.

Still awaiting the large guns, Pope then ordered Colonel Joseph B. Plummer's brigade to the river town of Point Pleasant, six miles south of New Madrid. Plummer planned to take the town at dusk so that by dawn his position would be fortified. The direct road to Point Pleasant, however, lay along the river where the Confederate gunboats could pummel the Union column with harassing and interdicting fire. To avoid this, Plummer's men had to march a circuitous route 14 miles long to reach the town. As a result, the troops were still three to four miles from their objective at dusk and too tired to continue. Plummer chose to bivouac where he was and wait for dawn.



The Union infantry advance on Point Pleasant the next morning caught the steamer *Mary Keene* tied up at the riverbank. Union troops moved into the town while infantry and artillery fire peppered the boat until it finally managed to escape. This arrival of Union troops in the Confederate rear drew the gunboats to the town. Plummer pulled his cavalry and artillery from town at their approach. The infantry stayed despite the scream of gunboat shells hitting the town.

On March 7, Plummer put a battery on the riverbank. Both Union batteries and Confederate gunboats fired away at each other during the day without success, but the presence of the battery at the river's edge forced the Confederate boats to hug the eastern riverbank going up and down the river.

When he knew the siege guns were on the way, Pope ordered Maj. Warren L. Lothrop, his artillery commander, to find a suitable position for them. On the 11th, accompanied by Captain Louis Marshall of the 1st U.S. Infantry and a squadron of dragoons, Lothrop moved within half a mile of the forts. He reported: "From this position (northwest of the town) I could see distinctly their gunboats and lower fort. I determined at once, from my observation, where to plant the battery." The next day Marshall and Bissell confirmed this was the best position.

Lothrop returned at dusk with Colonel James Morgan's brigade, consisting of the 10th and 16th Illinois Infantry. One regiment formed a skirmish line 50 yards in advance, while the other dug the emplacements for the batteries.

Although Pope lacked artillerymen to handle the heavy guns, he did have Capt. Joseph A. Mower with the 1st U.S. Infantry. During the night, two companies of the 1st Infantry brought up the heavy guns. Mower, with Company H, emplaced one 24-pounder and the eight-inch rifle in Battery No. 1 on the left facing Fort Bankhead. Lt. Charles Fletcher commanded Company A in Battery No. 2 with the other two 24-pounders facing Fort Thompson. In case of a sally by the defenders, Pope placed Brig. Gen. David S. Stanley's division a short distance away to support the guns.

Because he had limited ammunition, Pope ordered Mower to concentrate his fire on the Confederate gunboats in hopes of driving them away. On March 15, Mower gave Pope his report of the bombardment: "I was ordered by General Stanley to open fire on the enemy at daylight on the 13th, which I did from both batteries. Our fire was briskly replied to by the fort, which was in front, and the gunboats, which took position both in front and towards our left flank. They threw rifled shot, shell, and round shot. At about 10 o'clock a.m. a round shot struck one of the guns in Battery No. 1, breaking a piece out of it, and killing one man and wounding six. In the afternoon the gunboats withdrew from our front, and taking position beyond the reach of our guns, kept up a steady fire, with occasional intermissions, until sundown."

During the day, the Union men continued to dig trenches, gradually moving closer to the Confederate works. Pope hoped during the night to move the batteries closer to the forts. A heavy thunderstorm that struck at 11 PM and continued throughout the night kept Mower from advancing the guns. To increase pressure on the Confederates, Pope sent Brig. Gen. Schuyler Hamilton's division to replace Stanley's division just before dawn.

Mower's fire had driven back the Confederate gunboats. Without their support, McCown believed he could not hold the forts. During the thunderstorm, he sent gunboats and a steamer to the forts to remove the garrisons. One naval officer would later write: "A darker and more disagreeable night it is hard to conceive; it rained in torrents, and our poor soldiers, covered with mud and drenched with rain, crowded on our gunboats, leaving behind provisions, camp equipments and artillery."

As Mower prepared to resume the bombardment at dawn, he received an order from Hamilton to hold his fire; a man with a white

flag was approaching. Mower took 20 men forward to determine if the Confederates had abandoned Fort Bankhead. Not having the colors of the 1st Infantry, Mower borrowed the regimental colors of another unit. "I proceeded to the fort and found that the enemy had deserted it. I raised the flag upon the ramparts and took possession of the works."

An officer in the 5th Iowa remembered: "The enemy had left in awful haste. I recall finding a dead Rebel officer, lying on a table in his tent, in full uniform. He had been killed by one of our shells. A candle burned beside him, and his cold hands closed on a pencil note that said, 'Kindly bury this unfortunate officer.' His breakfast waited on a table in the tent, showing how unexpected was his taking off." Without a major fight, Pope had broken the back of the Confederate defenses.

Beauregard supported McCown's action of abandoning New Madrid. With the situation deteriorating at Madrid Bend, Col. Thomas Jordan, Beauregard's assistant adjutant general, sent a message to McCown describing the area as the "Thermopylae of the Mississippi." Almost immediately Beauregard had second thoughts about McCown's ability to hold Island No. 10. He ordered him to take most of the troops to Fort Pillow further downriver on the Mississippi. When McCown returned to Tiptonville, he discovered Beauregard had replaced him with Brig. Gen. W. W. Mackall.

It was not until the next day that the Union Western Flotilla finally arrived upriver from Island No. 10. The backbone of the Western Flotilla at this time comprised the seven ironclad gunboats named for river towns. Built in Carondelet, Mo., they were nicknamed "Eads Ironclads" after their builder, James Eads, or "Pook Turtles," for Samuel M. Pook, the naval constructor.

The ironclads were 175-feet long with a beam of 51.5 feet. Drawing only six feet of water, they were designed to steam at nine miles per hour. The boats were underpowered and in the flooded Mississippi had trouble moving against the current.

With little room to maneuver in the river, they became floating gun platforms rather than warships. Each carried three 9- or 10-inch bow guns, four 32-pounders on each

Library of Congress

ABOVE: Federal engineers break up a log jam in Wilson's Bayou. OPPOSITE: A Union floating battery lets loose with a massive blast from its 32-pounder mortar.

side, and two light guns on the stern. Although the gunports were only a foot above waterline, the gunners could not elevate the guns.

What made "Eads Ironclads" unique (and unmanageable) was the iron plating. An oak casemate covered the topsides, with 2.5 inches of iron plate on top of that. The casemate was sloped 35 degrees to deflect cannonballs. The flagship of the flotilla was the *Benton,* a former snag-boat converted to an armored gunboat. The *Benton* had even less power than the other ironclads and could barely make progress against the current. Nevertheless, they were effective. These ironclads were first used at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. Though the Confederates held out longer than the ironclad sailors had hoped, naval gunfire forced Fort Henry to surrender before Grant had his army in position to attack.

It was a different story at Fort Donelson. Twenty years later, writing for *Century Magazine,* Henry Walke described what happened as cannonfire pounded the *Carondelet*. "Another ripped up the iron plating and glanced over; another [roundshot] went through the plating and lodged in the heavy casemate ... and still they came, harder and faster, taking flag-staffs and smoke-stocks, and tearing off the side armor as lightning tears the bark from a tree." During the bombardment, the *Carondelet* was struck 54 times.

The situation at Island No. 10 put Foote in a quandary. If the army had Corinth as its objective, the Navy's objective was to reach Memphis before the Confederates could finish their ironclad rams *Arkansas* and *Tennessee*. Though he had to move downriver quickly, Foote knew he could not afford to have one of his ironclads disabled. Being upriver from the Confederates, a boat without power could drift down into their hands and, once repaired, could then be used against its former owners.

On the 13th, Foote wrote the Navy Department of the problems in using the ironclads to bombard the Confederate defenses. He told them that when anchored so the armored bow pointed toward the enemy's guns, the river current flowing against the hull caused the boats to weave, making accurate aim impossible. The alternative was to expose the unprotected sterns to enemy fire. Foote concluded the primary bombardment would come from the mortarboats, with the gunboats offering what support they could.

Foote decided days before to limit the use of his ironclads and to concentrate the naval bombardment with the mortarboats. These ungainly craft were the brainchild of Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont, created during his short tenure as commander of the Department of the West. They were little more than wood rafts upon which were mounted 13-inch siege mortars.

On March 17, the Navy began a 19-day bombardment of the Confederate defenses. Along the eastern riverbank, the *Benton* was lashed between the *Cincinnati* and *St. Louis* with the *Pittsburgh* joining them. The *Mound City* and *Carondelet* were on the west bank. Beginning at 1:20 PM, each boat fired one round per minute.

Though the Confederates struck the *Benton* several times, due to the long range none of the hits caused much damage. The Union Navy had no better results. They managed to dismount some guns in Battery No. 1, and at one point holed the *New Orleans*, which the Confederates let drift out of range so they could repair it. By April 4, the opposing forces were as strong as they had been on March 17.

Capt. Edward W. Rucker commanded Battery No. 1. At the onset of the firing, Captain A. Cummings established a signal station there because flooding had isolated the bat-

tery. Cummings selected as his signaling device a white flag. When Foote saw a white flag waving, he sent a tug downriver under a white flag to see if Rucker wanted to surrender. Rucker did not.

Later, a certain E. Jones took over signaling duties in Battery No. 1. The Union artillery shells landing about the guns sent tons of mud flying about, ripping the flag from his hands three times. Eventually Jones found himself without a staff, forcing him to hold the flag in his hands to signal the next station.

None of this was really doing the job. Pope was soon convinced the only way he could capture Island No. 10 was by crossing the Mississippi and cutting the road through Tiptonville that supplied the Confederates by land, the water supply route having already been severed by the presence of Union batteries near New Madrid. The southerners, anticipating such a cross-water attack, had erected batteries at every landing spot between Madrid Bend and Tiptonville. The Union Army needed troop transports to get the men across as well as some sort of gunboat to escort the transports and suppress enemy fire near the landing zone.

Trying to get Foote to run his gunboats past the defenses of Island No. 10, on March 20, Pope sent engineer Bissell by dugout canoe across country through the bayou to talk to him. Bissell expected to return to New Madrid with the gunboats. Foote held a council of war with his captains to discuss their options. In his own article for *Century Magazine,* Bissell wrote: "The officers, with one exception, were decidedly opposed to running the blockade, believing it would be certain destruction to all the vessels that should attempt it." The officer who argued about trying it was Cmdr. Henry Walke of the *Carondelet*. Foote remarked, "When the object of running the blockade is adequate to the risk, I shall not hesitate to do it."

The naval officers believed the army was ridiculing them. Indeed, when Pope asked what the Navy was doing, one of his officers was reported to have replied, "Oh! It is still bombarding the state of Tennessee at long range."

The next day, Bissell explored the eastern bank with two tugs to insure the Confederates could not escape in that direction. He then examined the western bank to see if St. James Bayou, seven miles above Island No. 8, was linked to St. John's Bayou.

On the morning of March 22, while waiting for his guide to return with the dugout, Bissell saw an opening through the flooded fields that turned out to be a wagon road. At Bissell's request, the guide drew a map of the bayou. The two men then explored the area, arriving back at Pope's headquarters about dark.

While Pope complained about Foote's refusal to run past the Confederate defenses, Brig. Gen. Schuyler Hamilton suggested building a canal from above Island No. 10 to New Madrid to bypass the Confederate defenses. Bissell then produced his map and said he could get a channel cut and boats through in 14 days.

When the engineers cut the bank, the water poured so swiftly from the river into the swamp that the men had to let the steamers in gradually, using ropes to hold them back.

With the Navy not responding to his pleas, Pope planned his own "floating batteries" to provide covering fire. The plan was to put three heavy guns protected by four feet of timber on a barge. On each side would be barges with layers of water-tight barrels, cotton bales and cottonwood rails so that a shot had to pass through 20 feet of "armor" to reach the center barge. The barrels and cotton bales would be arranged so that even if a barge was hit and filled with water it would not sink Protecting the battery from boarders would be 80 sharpshooters. The barges were to be hauled through the canal to New Madrid. Transports for the troops could come through the canal as well, but not the gunboats, which had too deep a draft.

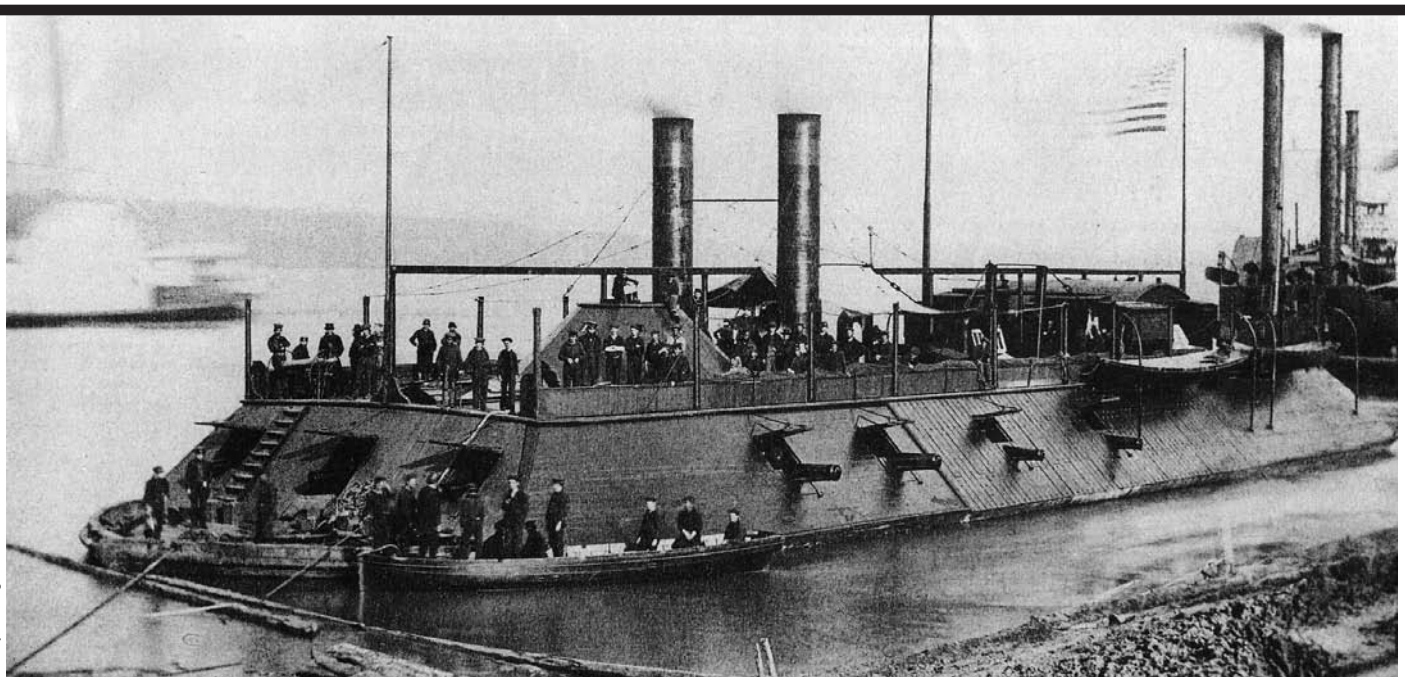
Pope had no shortage of volunteers to man these makeshift firing platforms. He intended to tow them across the river from New Madrid, at the tip of Madrid Bend, where the swamp kept the Confederates from erecting any batteries. The barges would drift down to the landing points where the men would throw out anchors and man the guns.

That night engineer Bissell met with some of his officers, Capt. William Tweeddale and Lt. Mahlon Randolph, to plan the operation. At daybreak on March 23, these two officers started north toward Cairo with 100 men to get equipment for the barges. They were to come down the Mississippi to join Bissell at Island No. 8. The other 600 men of the regiment soon followed them north.

When they returned to Island No. 8, Bissell found Tweeddale and Randolph had four sternwheel steamers, six coal barges, cannon, saws and two million board feet of lumber.

The swamp at this time had eight to ten feet of water in it, but was still much lower than the height of the water in the river. When the engineers cut the bank, the water poured so swiftly from the river into the swamp that the men had to let the steamers in gradually, using ropes to hold them back. Thus, water was plentiful and the Union troops had no trouble getting through the flooded cornfield. Bissell put a steamer with a powerful steam capstan in the lead. The other steamers followed with the barges behind. Tweeddale took charge of cutting the channel, while Randolph remained in the rear working to turn the barges into floating batteries.

Meanwhile, soldiers on small platforms cut down giant cottonwoods eight feet above the water. Another group secured lines to the cut timbers and used the steam capstan to pull them from the channel. Next, soldiers used giant curved crosscut saws to cut the high stumps four and one-half feet *below* the surface. Men on two barges—one on either side of a stump—manned a saw's ends, always above water. But the lower curve of a saw was below water. The soldiers would touch the lowest part of the bend of the saw to a stump and then sweep the blade back and forth using ropes. Thus, each end of the saw was always above water for operation by the men,



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ABOVE: The most famous of James Ead's seven ironclads, the USS *Carondelet* sustained more fire than any other vessel in the Western Flotilla.

but the cutting teeth were below water cutting through a stump.

Once through the swamp, the Union soldiers no longer had to deal with the giant cottonwoods, but they did have to remove numerous snags and dead trees imbedded in the mud. They labored at this work for 19 days.

By March 27, Foote began to rethink his policy. Once the steamers were through the bayous, Pope would have the means to ferry troops cross the Mississippi. If Pope's floating batteries worked, they would make the ironclads unnecessary. That night he summoned his captains on board the *Benton* to question them again. Once more, all but Walke thought trying to run past the Confederate batteries was suicidal. Foote asked Walke if he was willing to try it with the *Carondelet* and received another affirmative reply.

While all this was going on, Pope had been increasing pressure on the Confederate supply line by placing batteries along the western bank of the Mississippi at Point Pleasant and the point opposite Tiptonville. The Confederate gunboats, congregated at Tiptonville after their withdrawal from New Madrid, saw the batteries as a threat to the Confederate supply line. Lieutenant C. W. Read, the executive officer of the *McRae,* would later write, "Early one morning we perceived a number of men on the opposite side of the river from us, engaged in throwing down a large pile of wood that had been placed on the bank for the use of our transports. About the time Commodore Hollins had made up his mind to send over and ascertain who the party were, a puff of smoke was seen to rise near the men, and a shell came screaming across the river, striking the bank near us. Fortunately our boats had steam up. The signal was hoisted on the *McRae* to engage the battery at 'close quarters.'"

The ensuing engagement revealed that Hollis shared Foote's fears about ship-to-shore engagements. "The *McRae* fired away at long range, but soon perceiving a small yawlboat adrift (which had been cut from the *Maurapas* by a shell), we ceased firing, and went a mile below to pick up the boat. In the meantime the *Polk* had received a shot between wind and water, and signaled that she was leaking badly. The Yankees had left all their guns except one and were firing slowly and wildly, when the *McRae* signaled to 'withdraw from action.' So we all steamed down the river five or six miles and anchored."

This skirmish tightened the screws on the Confederate defenders. Now the only way to get supplies to Island No. 10 was to send a gunboat up the river under the cover of darkness to Tiptonville, then be hauled overland by the Tiptonville Road.

By April 3, Bissell's men were through the swamps. The men brought the steamers and barges to the mouth of the bayou, keeping them hidden while Randolph finished the floating batteries.

On March 30, Foote had given Walke written orders to run past the Confederate defenses. Walke and his men worked for days placing loose material over the *Carondelet*'s deck to protect her from plunging shot, and wrapping thick ropes and chains around the pilot house. A coal barge filled with hay and coal, lashed to port, protected the magazine where the *Carondelet* had no iron plating. Walke would later write, "It was truly said that the *Carondelet* at that time resembled a farmer's wagon prepared for market." In addition, the engineers re-routed the steam's exhaust pipes to the paddle box to keep them from making a puffing sound when blown through the smokestacks.

What appeared to be the greatest risk to the ironclad was Battery No. 1, a floating battery two miles above Island No. 10. If the defenders there spotted the *Carondelet* steaming past, they would open fire, giving all the Confederate gunners downstream ample time to prepare a reception.

To eliminate this threat, Foote turned to the brigade of infantry accompanying the gun-

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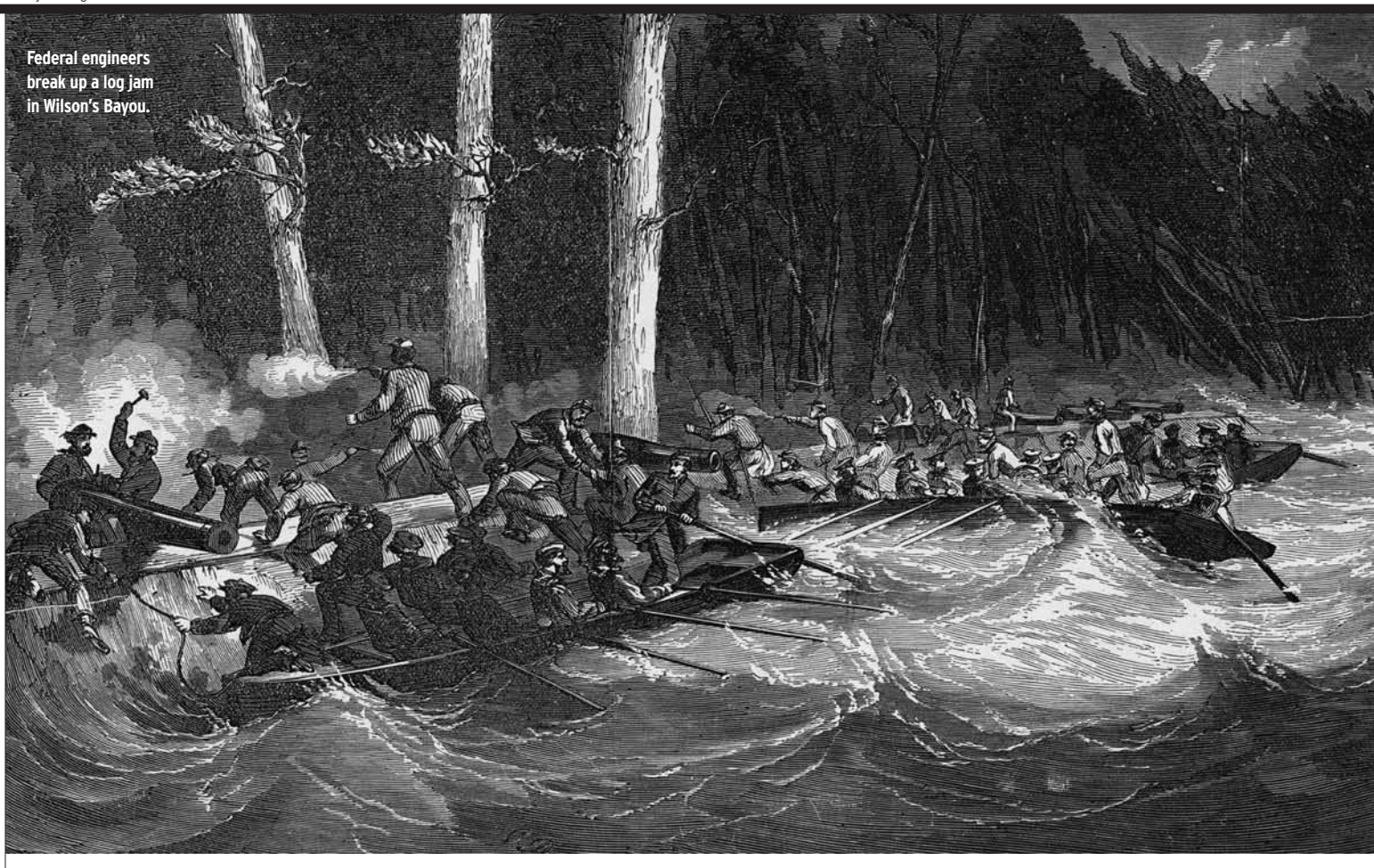


Federal engineers break up a log jam in Wilson's Bayou.

boats. Their objective was to spike the guns of Battery No. 1 and to capture the sentinels. Colonel George W. Roberts of the 42nd Illinois led 50 volunteers in five boats provided by Foote. Leaving the *Benton* at 6 PM, the boats drifted along the edge of the river, moving in among the trees short of the battery. At 11 PM, they moved back into the river.

Two Rebel sentries were on high ground behind the flooded battery. When the boats were a few yards from shore, a flash of lightning revealed them and the sentries fired. The Union soldiers did not return fire, but stormed ashore as soon as the boats touched ground. In three minutes Roberts's men had spiked the guns and returned to their boats, eliminating the threat.

As part of his preparations, Walke augmented his crew with 23 sharpshooters from the 42nd Illinois. The sailors were themselves armed with muskets, boarding pikes and hand grenades. The engineers attached a hose to the boiler to douse any boarders with scalding water. If it appeared the *Carondelet* might be captured, Walke vowed to scuttle her.

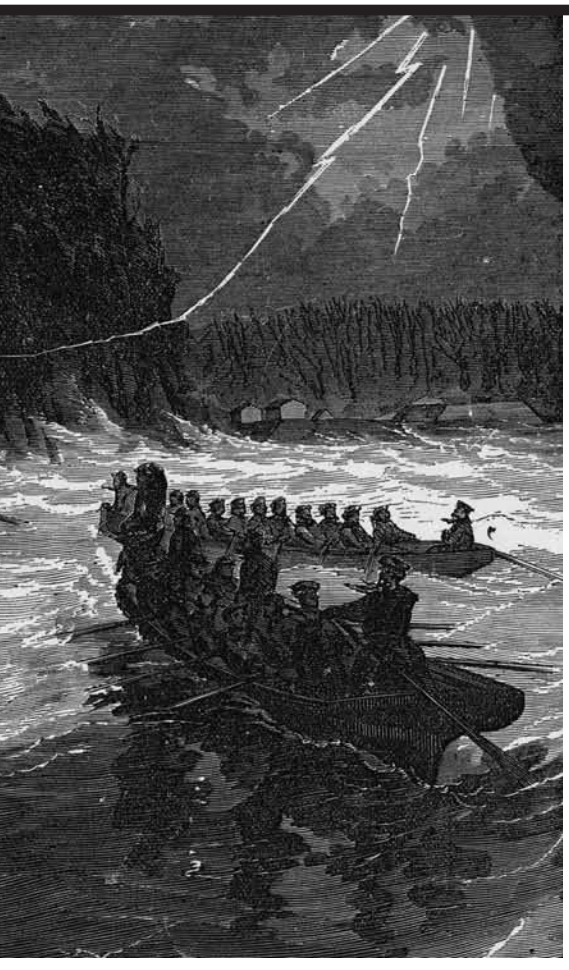
April 4/5 was set as the night to try to run the gauntlet. At first it appeared it was going to be a clear night, so Walke decided not to leave until the moon set about 10 PM. As Walke ordered the master to cast off, "Dark clouds now rose rapidly over us and enveloped us in almost total darkness, except when the sky was lighted up by the welcome flashes of vivid lightning, to show us the perilous way we were to take. Now and then the dim outline of the landscape could be seen, and the forest bending under the roaring storm that came rushing up the river."

When opposite Battery No. 2, trouble cropped up. Because the steam exhaust pipes no longer terminated in the main stacks, the soot there had dried out. The main fire exhaust ignited the soot, sending columns of flame high over the stack heads. The fire was put out, but a short time later the soot flared again. Although the Union men extinguished it a second time, the Confederates had seen enough and opened fire.

Only two men were on the deck of the *Carondelet*. Seaman Charles Wilson stood on the bow where the waves splashed over the prow to knee-level. Casting the leaded line into the river, he called out depth levels to Theodore Gilmore by the pilot house, who repeated the message to the pilot, William Hoel. Hoel had volunteered to pilot the ironclad because of his familiarity with the Mississippi before the war. At one point, a lightning flash revealed the *Carondelet* was about to ram Island No. 10. Hoel brought the helm hard to starboard to avoid running aground.

As they passed Island No. 10, an officer on the *Carondelet* heard a Confederate officer shout, "Elevate your guns!" Walke speculated that the Confederates had depressed their guns to keep the rain out. So he had Hoel steer close to the island believing the Confederates would overshoot. They did.

The final obstacle was the floating battery at the end of the island, which Walke called the "war elephant" of the Mississippi. The



floating battery fired six or eight shots and scored the only hit of the night. A ball struck the coal barge and was later found embedded in a bale of hay.

By midnight the *Carondelet* arrived at New Madrid having suffered no casualties. Walke ordered a ration of rum distributed, or in the parlance of the day, the crew "spliced the main brace."

On the night of April 6, the *Pittsburgh* repeated Walke's action by running past the Confederates defenses without suffering any damage.

Now Pope could get his men across and with the protection they needed. He selected for his landing point a place called Watson's Landing, about midway between Tiptonville and the tip of Madrid Bend. It had rained all night on the 6th and the morning was dark and gloomy with low-hanging black clouds. At dawn, the four regiments of Paine's division boarded the steamers.

The *Carondelet* and *Pittsburgh* dropped down the river past Watson's Landing, then came about and started upriver. Pounding the Confederate position at close range with their starboard guns, Walke signaled Pope at noon that he had silenced the Confederate guns. Then the transports steamed down the river from New Madrid, the rest of Pope's army lining the bank and cheering them on.

Days before, Hollis had refused to risk his wooden boats against shore batteries. Now he refused to risk them against the two Union ironclads. Writing years later, one Confederate naval officer complained: "One day we received information that the tinclad was ferrying the men of General Pope's army over to a point above Tiptonville, and the general commanding at No. 10 urged Commodore Hollins to attack the gunboat with his fleet, for if the enemy got possession of Tiptonville, and the road by which supplies were sent to No. 10, the evacuation or capture of that place was certain. Commodore Hollins declined to comply with the request of the general, saying that as the *Carondelet* was ironclad, and his fleet were all wooden boats, he did not think he could successfully combat her." Three captains asked Hollins for permission to attack the ironclads, but were refused.

A spy told Pope the Confederates had abandoned most of their positions along the river and were withdrawing toward Tiptonville. Pope signaled Paine to leave a guard at the landing and to press on to Tiptonville with his division. Once the steamers had unloaded Paine's division, Pope had them ferry Hamilton's division across to support Paine.

The same terrain features that had stopped a Union advance overland now prohibited the Confederates from withdrawing. The only means to escape south of Tiptonville was along the riverbank, where any refugees would be susceptible to fire from the Union gunboats. A few men escaped across Reelfoot Lake, but the main force was trapped between Tiptonville and Island No. 10.

Upon landing at Watson's Landing, Paine decided that speed was key to capturing the Confederates. Paine's first brigade led the advance, followed by the second brigade. Almost as soon as they set out, the advance and flankers began sending in prisoners. Nine miles down the road, Paine came across a strong force of Confederates deployed in line of battle. Paine deployed to attack, but before he could the enemy fled. The Confederates reformed, but a volley from a Union skirmish line sent them fleeing again. This happened several times until the Union force reached the Confederate camp.

Mackall knew the only means of escape was along the riverbank. If the two Union ironclads remained at Watson's Landing to protect the crossing, his men might be able to escape unscathed. Paine's aggressive pursuit kept him from organizing anything. The Confederates were boxed in. Paine bivouacked for the night, and at 2 AM April 7, a staff officer from Mackall arrived with a note offering the unconditional surrender of the entire force. The Confederates tried to scuttle the floating battery and let her drift downriver where she eventually became lodged against the river bank. The defenders on the island waved white flags to signal the Union Navy they wanted to surrender.

Pope claimed to have captured three generals, 6,000 men, 7,000 stands of small arms, 23 heavy guns, and 30 field artillery, and all without the loss of a single man. This was a bad enough loss for the Confederacy, but the loss of geography was worse. The North had a new hero—high-foreheaded, full-bearded John Pope.

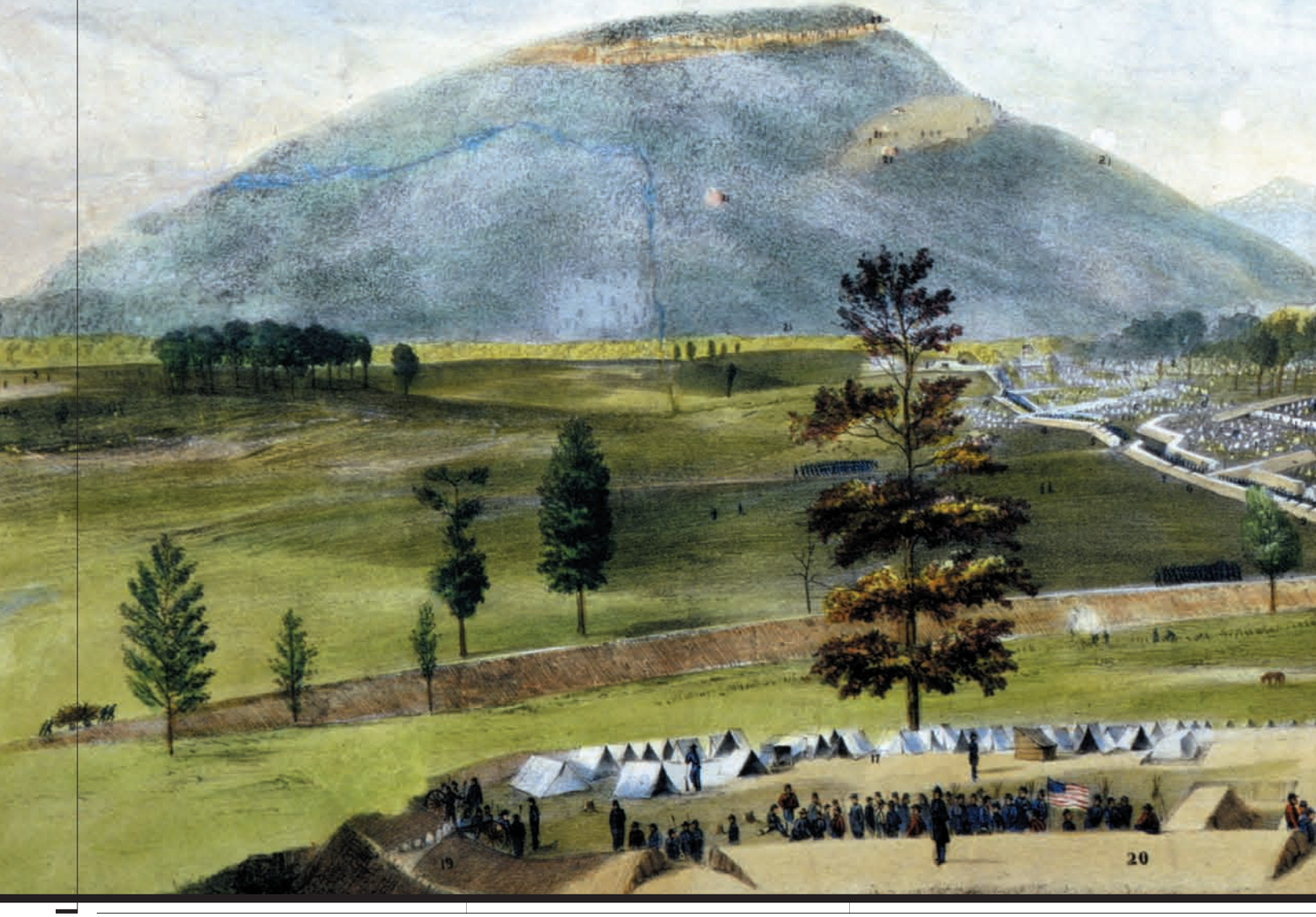
Perhaps the epitaph for the Island No. 10 campaign was written by Edward Pollard, an editor for the Richmond *Examiner* during the war. "The Southern people had expected a critical engagement at Island No. 10, but its capture was nearly accomplished without it; and, in the loss of men, cannon, ammunition, and supplies, the event was doubly deplorable to them, and afforded to the North such visible fruits of victory as had seldom been the result of a single enterprise."

The Union triumph at Island No. 10, coupled with the victory the same day at Shiloh, made the Confederate position along the central Mississippi untenable. Corinth would not fall for another two months, but when it did, the Confederacy would have precious little of the Mississippi River for transport, trade, or even for moving armies across, save the stretch around Vicksburg, some 330 river miles below Island No. 10. □

miracle at Missionary Ridge

BY MIKE PHIFER

While Braxton Bragg dawdled on the heights overlooking Chattanooga, newly arrived Union commander Ulysses S. Grant and his industrious lieutenants set about preparing one of the grandest and most improbable charges of the Civil War.



Peering through a pair of field glasses, Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest perched in an oak tree on Missionary Ridge, overlooking the Tennessee town of Chattanooga, and observed a Union army in complete disarray. The day before, September 20, 1863, the Confederate Army of Tennessee had smashed the Army of the Cumberland after two days of bloody fighting at Chickamauga, GA., 10 miles due south of Chattanooga. The Yankees were falling back on Chattanooga. From what Forrest could see, the bluecoats were abandoning the town in a headlong rush.

Climbing down from the tree, Forrest dispatched a message to his superiors, recommending that they press the enemy as soon as possible. Despite Forrest's urging, the Confederate commander, General Braxton Bragg, did little. A second message from Forrest indicating that the Federals were fortifying their position and time was at the essence to strike them did not stir Bragg into action either. With over 18,400 casualties from the two-day battle of Chickamauga, Bragg was in no hurry to pursue the Federals. Eventually he did order troops toward Chattanooga later in the day, only to discover that Forrest been right—the Federals were fortifying Chattanooga. "What does he fight battles for?" the ever-aggressive Forrest wondered aloud.

Nestled in southeastern Tennessee astride the border with Georgia, Chattanooga was surrounded by rugged mountains and ridges. Dominating the town on the east was Missionary Ridge. Southwest loomed Lookout Mountain. West of town and two miles beyond Lookout Mountain lay Raccoon Mountain. North of town was Walden's Ridge, which ran northeastward for 40 miles. Curving around Chattanooga on three sides was the turbulent Tennessee River, which jutted south, then swung north, creating a peninsula called Moccasin Point, and sped through the deep gorges between Raccoon Mountain and Walden's Ridge, eventually passing the Union supply depot at Bridgeport, AL.

At the start of the Civil War, Chattanooga was a comparatively young town, founded less than three decades earlier, but it had risen to a position of primary importance for the South as a key railroad hub in the western theater of the war. Railway lines connected directly or indirectly with Nashville,

Dwarfed by Lookout Mountain, the Union Army of the Cumberland hunkers down in besieged Chattanooga in this idealized painting. Actual conditions were much worse.

Charleston, Atlanta, and Richmond. By controlling the rail lines and hampering the South's movement of supplies, the North could use them to move their own supplies to Chattanooga and use the town as a base of operations for a push into Georgia.

Although shaken over his bloody defeat at Chickamauga, where his army had suffered over 16,000 casualties, Union Maj. Gen. William Starke Rosecrans was determined to hold on to Chattanooga. Fearing large Confederate reinforcements that were rumored to be coming, Rosecrans pulled his army into Chattanooga proper, giving up vital strategic positions such as Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. The Federal troops quickly began to dig in and fortify a three-mile-wide semicircle around Chattanooga in preparation for either a lengthy siege or a sudden attack.

The Confederates occupied the high ground as they began to set up a siege line around Chattanooga. With roughly 46,000 men, Bragg spread his army in a seven-mile semicircle. The Confederate left was anchored at the foot of Lookout Mountain, running eastward to Missionary Ridge. From there it progressed north to Chickamauga Creek, located about two miles from the point where the creek flowed into the Tennessee River. Roughly a mile of open farmland separated the two armies.

The left flank of the Confederate position was under the command of Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, temporarily assigned to Bragg with his I Corps from the redoubtable Army of Northern Virginia. Longstreet, whose eleventh-hour arrival at Chattanooga had led to the stunning Confederate breakthrough on the morning of the 20th, was ordered by Bragg to put guns on top of Lookout Mountain and bombard the Federals. It took three long, backbreaking nights for mule teams to drag Colonel Edward Porter Alexander guns up the mountainside to avoid enemy artillery fire from Moccasin Point. Once at the summit, Alexander moved 20 guns up beside Captain James Garrity's two Parrot guns, which were already on the mountain. On September 29 the guns opened up for the first time, but they would prove to have little effect.

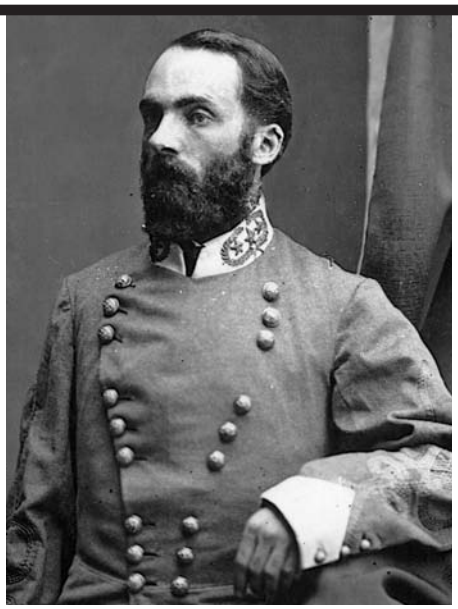
A Confederate cannon overlooks Moccasin Bend in this panoramic modern-day view from Lookout Mountain.

If Confederate artillery fire was ineffective, their near-total control of Union supplies lines was much more so. It was not long before the Federal troops were beginning to have their rations cut. Getting supplies into Chattanooga was by no means easy. They had been coming in from Nashville by rail to Stevenson, AL, then northeast, pass Bridgeport and across the Tennessee River on to the junction at Wauhatchie, and finally into Chattanooga. With the two railroad bridges across the Tennessee River and Chickamauga Creek destroyed, and with Lookout Mountain in Confederate hands, which this route was no longer useable. A wagon road running beside the tracks was cut off as well.

Travel on the Tennessee River was hampered by a summer drought, as well the treacherous parts of the river and Rebel presence along one bank. A fourth route into town, by road led from Bridgeport to a small place called Prigmore's Store. From there, Haley's Trace was taken to the Tennessee River, where the trace followed the north bank of the river for a few miles before joining the Anderson Road, which led to Chattanooga down Signal Mountain. This route was cut on October 8, when the 4th Alabama Regiment from Brig. Gen. Evander Law's brigade of Longstreet's corps shot down the mules in the Union wagon trains moving along the road.

This left only one other route for Rosecrans' hungry men to get even a meager amount of supplies. It originated from Bridgeport and moved past Prigmore's Store farther up the Sequatchie Valley until it reached Anderson Road. It then followed this road over the rugged Walden's Ridge, where water and forage proved to be scarce. Intermittent heavy rains made the route even more difficult. For the hungry Federals at Chattanooga, the supply situation was critical—and about to get worse.

With 4,000 troopers, Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler, commander of the Army of Tennessee's cavalry, forded the Tennessee River 30 miles above Chattanooga on October 1 with orders to strike the Federal supply line. He did this on October 3, when Wheeler's command plundered and torched a large Federal supply train stretching for five miles up Walden's Ridge. Another part of Wheeler's command sacked the enemy garrison at nearby McMinnville. There, Wheeler's force reunited, and for the next few days they rode deeper into Tennessee, stirring up trouble as they went. With Federal cavalry closing in on them, Wheeler's troopers fought running battles, shucking their loot as they attempted to escape back to Confederate lines. On October 7, Wheeler stopped to



ABOVE: Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler's Confederate cavalry cut Federal supply lines into the city, further shortening rations. RIGHT: Commanding General Braxton Bragg dithered fatally after winning an astonishing victory at Chickamauga.

fight the Yankee cavalry at Farmington and was defeated. Suffering heavy casualties, the weary Confederate troopers then slipped back over the Tennessee River, disorganized and in bad shape.

Wheeler's raid made a bad situation worse for the Union troops in Chattanooga. "This is starvation camp," complained one Federal soldier as the food shortage in Chattanooga became critical. Rations dropped to half-rations, and some troops got even less. Forage and feed was also scarce for the horses and mules, and some soldiers even took the desperate initiative of stealing grain from the animals or picking fallen pieces out of the mud. One Kansas soldier watched with extreme distaste as his comrades caught and ate a dog that wandered unsuspectingly into camp. An Indiana private paid his own brother-in-law $14 for 14 crackers, and a cow's tail went for $10 on the open market.

The lack of provisions also prevented Union reinforcements, consisting of the XI and XII Corps from the Army of the Potomac under the command of Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, from moving into Chattanooga. As things stood, they would only be more hungry mouths to feed. Instead of moving into Chattanooga, XII Corps was strung out along the railroad leading into Bridgeport to guard it against further cavalry depredations by Wheeler. The rest of Hooker's troops waited near Bridgeport.

Conditions were little better for the besieging Confederates. "The soldiers were starved and almost naked, and covered all over with lice and camp itch, filth and dirt," wrote Confederate private Sam Watkins, who lived through the siege. Food supplies were readily available, but Bragg hoarded them at Chickamauga Station for future use. Besides being poorly fed, the Confederates were mostly bivouacked in open air, with little shelter from the heavy rains and early-autumn cold. Life for the men was miserable and many of them were sick with colds and flu. Like the Yankees' horses and mules, the Rebels' own livestock suffered terribly from a lack of forage.

Hunger was not only problem plaguing the Confederate army. Braxton Bragg was not a popular commander, to say the least, and there had been frequent contention between him and his subordinates for some time now. With a major, if inconclusive, victory under his belt after Chickamauga, the petty and vindictive Bragg turned his attention to purging his worst critics within the army. The first to go were Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk and Maj. Gen. Thomas Hindman. Bragg, however, was not the only one on the offensive. A petition was circulated among the senior generals of the army asking Confederate President Jefferson Davis to remove Bragg. The generals, as spelled out in the petition, were concerned that any gains made at Chickamauga were in danger of being thrown away. The army, they said, had unwisely been forced on the defensive "and may deem itself fortunate if it escapes from its present position without disaster." Twelve generals signed the extraordinary document, including corps commanders Longstreet, Lt. Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill and Maj. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner.

Davis, one of Bragg's few personal friends, quickly waded into the feud, arriving at Bragg's headquarters on October 9. A formal meeting was held where Davis, with Bragg in red-faced attendance, heard from the four corps commanders. (Maj. Gen. Benjamin Franklin Cheatham had temporarily taken over Polk's corps.) The president asked the corps commanders to give their opinion of Bragg openly and to his face. It was none too favorable. Bragg endured the public embarrassment, knowing that he would not be replaced—Davis had already promised him that he would retain his command.

With his position secure, Bragg turned his full ire on the conspirators. With Davis's intervention, charges were dropped against Polk, but he was transferred to another department. D.H. Hill was suspended and Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge was given command of this corps. Next in line came Buckner, who besides commanding a corps also commanded the Department of East Tennessee. Davis, at Bragg's request, disbanded that department, leaving Buckner with only a division to command. Longstreet survived Bragg's wrath, but in the coming days the feud would intensify between the two, with dire consequences for the Army of Tennessee.

Meanwhile, great changes were about to take place in the Union camp. Aboard a train headed for Louisville, KY, Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in a secret meeting with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, was given command of the newly created Military Division of the Mississippi, which encompassed the Armies of the Cumberland, the Ohio and the Tennessee. As the commander of the new Military Division, Grant was given power to

decide who would command the Army of the Cumberland. Stanton's assistant in Chattanooga, Charles Dana, had been sending a stream of unflattering telegraphs to Washington, warning falsely that Rosecrans's was preparing to abandon the city. Abraham Lincoln, irritated and perplexed by Rosecrans' supposed actions, observed ruefully that ever since Chickamauga the general had been acting "confused and stunned, like a duck hit on the head." Grant, equally bemused, tersely telegraphed Rosecrans, informing him that he was relieved of command and appointing his erstwhile second-in-command, Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, as the army's new head. Grant sent a second telegram to Thomas, ordering him to "hold Chattanooga at all hazards." "I will hold the town until we starve," Thomas wrote back.

Arriving at Bridgeport by rail, Grant, despite a bad leg suffered in a recent fall off his horse, mounted up and rode through the pelting rain over Walden's Ridge. As darkness was setting in on October 23, Grant and his staff arrived at Chattanooga, heading straight for Thomas's headquarters. After hearing a baleful description of the conditions inside the city, Grant listened to a plan outlined by his chief engineer, Brig. Gen. William "Baldy" Smith, to open a new supply line from Bridgeport to Chattanooga. After crossing a pontoon bridge from Chattanooga, a road cut west across Moccasin Point to Brown's Ferry. On the other side of the Tennessee River, the road cut through a gorge in the foothills overlooking the river and proceeded south to the small settlement of Wauhatchie, where it split onto another road and passed west through Lookout Valley to Kelley's Ferry. There the road led to Union forces at Bridgeport. If the Rebels could be forced from their position at Brown's Ferry and the surrounding area, this key supply route could be opened up. The following day, after seeing Brown's Ferry himself, Grant authorized Thomas and Smith to implement the plan.

In the early morning of October 27, 1,400 men from Brig. Gen. William Hazen's brigade boarded 50 specially constructed pontoon boats and two flatboats and slipped silently down the rive to make a surprise attack on Brown's Ferry. A light fog helped shroud the flotilla as it rowed seven miles through enemy territory. Confederate pickets could be spotted warming themselves by campfires, but no one observed the makeshift flotilla. Eventually, a signal fire near Brown's Ferry on the Union side of the river was spotted, and the flotilla pulled hard for the Rebel side. Suddenly rifle fire opened up from a handful of Confederate pickets. With all surprise gone, the Federals rushed ashore and drove off the pickets, seizing the two key hills. Meanwhile, the pontoon boats rowed to the east bank of the river, where the rest of Hazen's command, 750 men under the command of Lt. Col. E. Bassett Langdon, waited to cross over. With them were another 3,500 men from Brig. Gen. John Turchin's brigade, who made up the second force in Smith's plan.

WHILE THE FIREFIGHT BLAZED AWAY, BRATTON SENT THE PALMETTO SHARPSHOOTERS TO FLANK THE UNION RIGHT. HAMPTON'S LEGION, MEANWHILE, HAD ORDERS TO FIND THE FEDERALS' LEFT FLANK. WADING THROUGH A SWAMP WITH RELUCTANCE, HAMPTON'S LEGION MOVED OUT OF A GULLY AND HIT THE WAGON TRAIN.

While the advance party quickly fell to cutting down trees to built breastworks on the hills they held, the Confederates were on their way to dispute the landing. Colonel William Oates of the 15th Alabama led six companies of his men into the darkness and fog toward the ferry. The men, part of Law's brigade, were soon joined by the 4th Alabama of the same brigade. The Federals were driven out of their position and back toward the river, where Langdon's men, who had just crossed over the river, reinforced them. Now outnumbered and with Oates wounded, the Confederates fell back toward Lookout Mountain. With their bridgehead secure, the Federals quickly threw a pontoon bridge across the Tennessee River to hurry across reinforcements.

While the Federals secured Brown's Ferry, Hooker was on the move from Bridgeport with the XI and XII Corps to join them. After a rugged march along the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, Hooker's men camped at Whiteside, a small railroad station about 10 miles from Brown's Ferry. Longstreet was not greatly alarmed by the capture of Brown's Ferry. In his mind it was only a feint; the real threat was about 20 miles southwest of Lookout Mountain, where scouts had reported seeing large numbers bluecoats on the march from Shellmound. Bragg, on the other hand was greatly disturbed by the loss of Brown's Ferry and ordered an immediate counterattack. Longstreet did nothing all day, but toward evening he did inform Bragg where he believed the real Federal threat was. The following day, October 28, Bragg rode over to see Longstreet, where he found him on the summit of Lookout Mountain. Fiery words were exchanged between the two over Longstreet's inaction, but the conference was cut short when word reached them that a large Federal column was marching through Lookout Valley toward Brown's Ferry.

The column was Hooker's two corps. Ineffective Confederate artillery fire greeted the Union troops as they marched into the valley. After easily brushing aside the 6th South Carolina Regiment, Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard's men, in the lead, marched past Wauhatchie and joined up with Hazen's troops at Brown's Ferry around 5 PM. About an hour behind Howard was Maj. Gen. John Geary's division, which made camp at Wauhatchie for the night. Longstreet was again ordered by Bragg to attack the Federals at Brown's Ferry, but he decided to hit the isolated Geary instead. Rugged terrain slowed Brig. Gen. Micah Jenkins' command as it moved through the darkness, some brigades not reaching their assigned position until nearly midnight. Concerned over the reinforced Federals at Brown's Ferry, Longstreet and Jenkins weakened their original plan by sending only one brigade, under Colonel John Bratton, to engage the enemy. Two other brigades were sent to reinforce

Law's brigade, which was posted on a hill between Lookout Creek and Brown's Ferry to block any Federal reinforcements..

Driving in the Federal pickets, Bratton attacked the Federal encampment, which was now busy extinguishing their campfires and forming up. Four guns from Knap's Pennsylvania Light Artillery, positioned on a slight hill 50 yards behind the Union lines, opened up on the advancing Rebels. A wild firefight flashed through the darkness, each side shooting at the enemy's muzzle blasts. "Pick out the artillerists," came a shout from the attacking Confederate troops. Almost half the artillerymen were picked off along with the bulk of the artillery horses.

While the firefight blazed away, Bratton sent the Palmetto Sharpshooters to flank the Union right. Hampton's Legion, meanwhile, had orders to find the Federals' left flank.

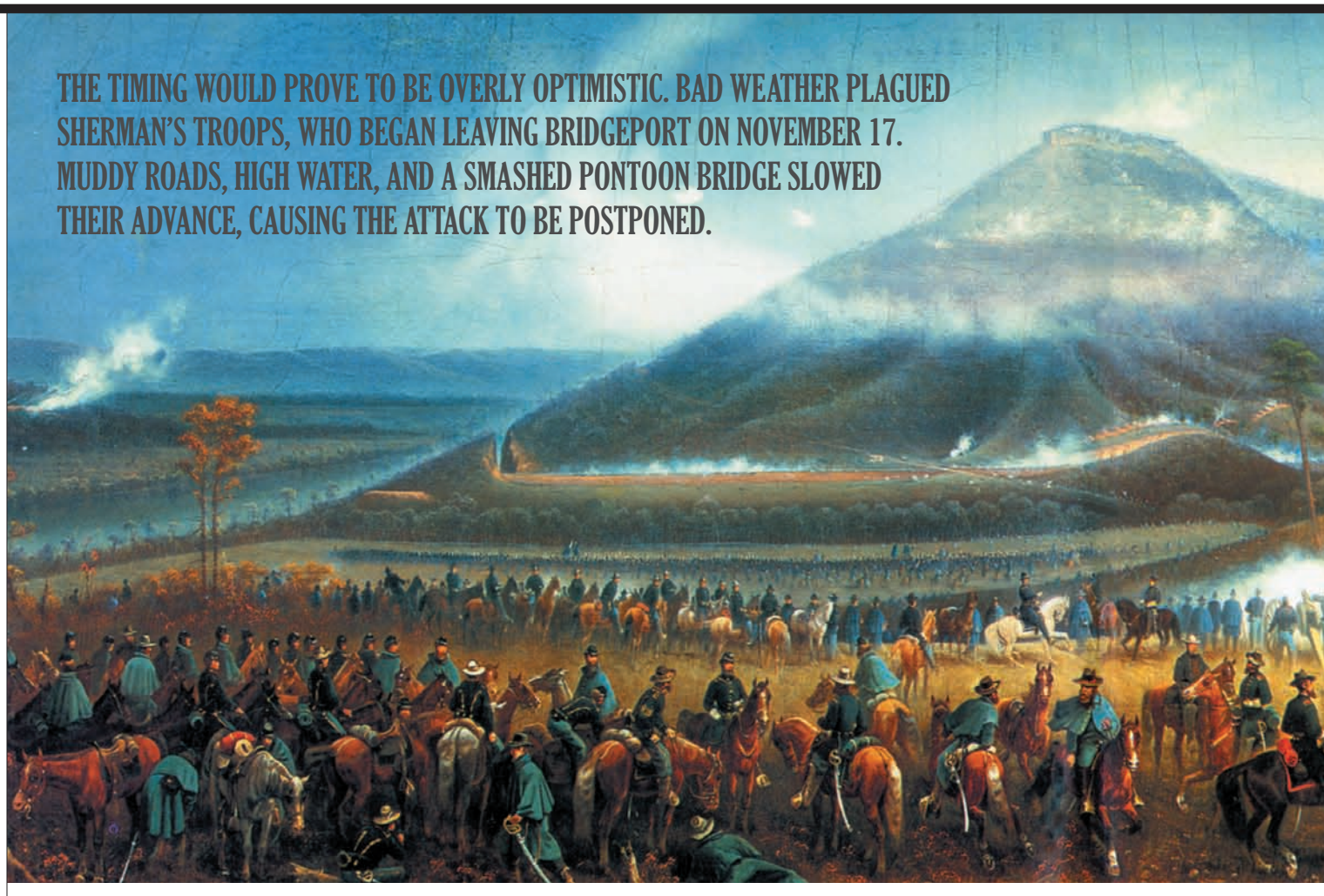
Battlefield artist Alfred R. Waud depicts Brig. Gen. John Corse's ill-fated attack on the Confederate right at Tunnel Hill on November 25.

Wading through a swamp with some reluctance, Hampton's Legion moved out of a gully and hit the Federal wagon train, driving off the teamsters. Frightened mules stampeded and caused confusion for both sides as they bolted for freedom. The 137th New York quickly arrived on the scene and managed to force Hampton's Legion back into the swamp

On the Federal right, the Palmetto Sharpshooters took cover along a railroad embankment and opened up on the 111th Pennsylvania's exposed flank. The Pennsylvanian refused their left with two companies, but they would need reinforcement's if the Rebels decided to assault them. Colonel William Rickards Jr., seeing this threat, ordered the artillery commander to take one of his remaining two guns to a position on the railroad embankment and blast the Rebel sharpshooters in their flank. Not having enough horses to pull the guns, Rickards ordered two companies of the 29th Pennsylvania to wheel them into in position. The gun soon drove off the Palmetto Sharpshooters, who with the 6th South Carolina who were getting ready to charge. Bratton pulled back his brigade after receiving word that Federal reinforcements were on the way.

Hooker was alarmed at the sound of artillery fire coming Geary's encampment. Wasting no time, he ordered Howard to send help. Howard in turn ordered two divisions, under the command of Maj. Gen. Carl Schurz and Brig. Gen. Adolph von Steinwehr, to move out. Not far out of camp, the Federals came under fire from Law's men, who were dug in on timbered ground overlooking the Brown's Ferry-Wauhatchie Road. Hooker, fearing Rebel intentions, ordered them attacked. For two hours, Law's men held off the Federals before being driven from their hill. It was 7 AM before the first Federal troops reached Geary.

The new supply line, immediately dubbed "the cracker line" by delighted bluecoats, was



THE TIMING WOULD PROVE TO BE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC. BAD WEATHER PLAGUED SHERMAN'S TROOPS, WHO BEGAN LEAVING BRIDGEPORT ON NOVEMBER 17. MUDDY ROADS, HIGH WATER, AND A SMASHED PONTOON BRIDGE SLOWED THEIR ADVANCE, CAUSING THE ATTACK TO BE POSTPONED.

now open; Lookout Valley was firmly in Federal hands. Besides much-needed food supplies, reinforcements were also on the move to Chattanooga. After Rosecrans' Chickamauga defeat, Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman had been ordered north from Mississippi to come to his aid. Sherman's advance had been slowed by the need to repair railroads along the way. On October 27, Grant ordered Sherman to leave the railroad repair to others and hie his Army of the Tennessee to Chattanooga as fast as he could.

While the Federal forces was growing to over 60,000 men, Bragg unadvisedly weakened his own forces on November 4 by ordering Longstreet's corps, along with Wheeler's cavalry, to move north against Knoxville, TN, drive off Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside and hopefully force Grant to weaken his position at Chattanooga by sending aid in that direction. With the loss of Longstreet, whom Bragg was glad to get rid of, the Army of Tennessee, consisting of two corps, now numbered around 35,000 men. Lieutenant General William Hardee, who returned in late October, commanded Polk's former corps, while the other was commanded by Breckinridge.

With Longstreet on the move against Burnside, Grant was pressured by Washington to do something to aid his fellow general. Grant believed an attack against Bragg would force a recall of Longstreet. On November 7, he ordered Thomas's army to attack the north end of Missionary Ridge and threaten the Rebel line of communication between Dalton, GA., and Cleveland, TN. Thomas was shocked by the order, as was Smith, an old friend of Grant's from West Point days who managed to get his former classmate to countermand the hasty order. Grant wisely decided to do nothing until Sherman arrived.

Late in the afternoon of November 14, Sherman arrived at Grant's headquarters in advance of his army and received his orders. Once Sherman got his army over Brown's Ferry and through the hills north of Chattanooga, he was to conceal his force in the woods along the Tennessee River, across from the mouth of Chickamauga Creek. Under the cover of darkness he was to cross the river and hit the north end of Missionary Ridge at Tunnel Hill and roll up the Confederate right. Next, Sherman was to move onto Chickamauga Station in an attempt to get in the rear of Bragg's army and cut off his retreat.

Thomas's Army of the Cumberland was to play merely a supporting role, holding the center of the Federal line. Once Sherman had smashed the Confederate right, Thomas was to advance up Missionary Ridge and link up with Sherman. Hooker, meanwhile, was to threaten the Confederates on Lookout Mountain. The attack was scheduled for November 21.

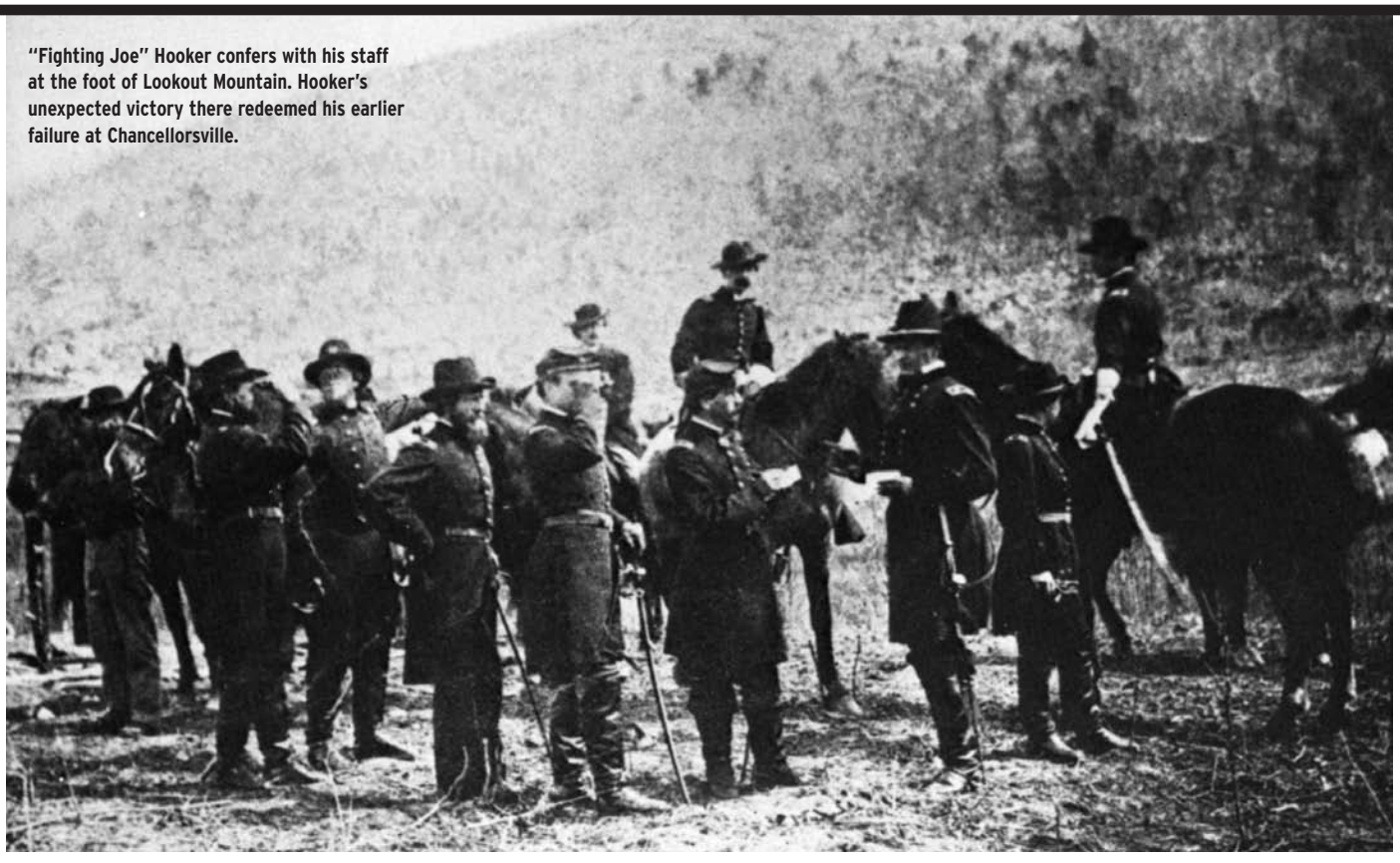
In this highly romanticized 19th-century painting, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, riding the white horse in the center, directs massed artillery fire on Rebel positions on Lookout Mountain.

The timing would prove to be overly optimistic. Bad weather plagued Sherman's troops, who began leaving Bridgeport on November 17. Muddy roads, high water, and a smashed pontoon bridge slowed their advance, causing the attack to be postponed. Thomas, worried about Sherman's delay, urged Grant to have Hooker attack Lookout Mountain in the meantime, thereby threatening the Confederate left flank. Grant, not totally trusting Hooker, said no.

On the night of November 22, Confederate deserters brought word that Bragg was retreating. A couple of days earlier, Grant had received a puzzling note from Bragg advising him to remove all noncombatants from Chattanooga. Grant wondered if Bragg wanted him to believe an attack was imminent while his real intention was to retreat. The last thing Grant wanted Bragg to do was pull out now—he was confident that once Sherman was in position, the Confederates would be trounced. In actuality, Bragg wasn't retreating after all. Instead, he had merely dispatched Irish-born Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne, another of his critics, to take his division to Chickamauga Station to catch the rails and reinforce Longstreet.

Early on November 23, Grant ordered Thomas to find what Bragg was doing. Thomas in turned ordered Brig. Gen. Thomas Wood's division to make a reconnaissance in force toward Orchard Knob, a 100-foot-high elevation that was held by Confederate pickets midway between the Federal line and Missionary Ridge. To the right of Wood, Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan's division was to play a supporting role in case of a Rebel counterattack. Howard's XI Corps took up position on Wood's left. With flags flying, the drums beating and bugles sounding, almost 25,000 Union soldiers wheeled into line. It was an impressive sight, awing the Confederate pickets and civilian onlookers.

At 1:30 PM, Wood and Sheridan moved forward. Wood's men captured the knob and began reversing the Confederate breastworks. The outnumbered 24th Alabama put up minimal resistance before wisely withdrawing up Missionary Ridge. The 28th Alabama, on the other hand, held their position, stalling Hazen's brigade. Eventually, however, the Federals overran the position and captured the regimental colors in the process. Instead of withdrawing after making his reconnaissance, Wood received orders to dig in. Sheridan began constructing breastworks on Wood's right. Howard's men, who began their advance two hours after Wood's, ran into trouble. Their attack was stopped cold by the Confederates, causing Wood to send one of his brigades to their



"Fighting Joe" Hooker confers with his staff at the foot of Lookout Mountain. Hooker's unexpected victory there redeemed his earlier failure at Chancellorsville.

assistance. There was no question now that Bragg was staying put.

If the attack confirmed in Grant's mind that the Rebels were not retreating, it also indicated to Bragg that the Yankees were concentrating on his weak right flank. He quickly took measures to remedy this by recalling Cleburne from Chickamauga Station. Bragg also recalled Kentucky troops guarding the station as well and began shifting units from Lookout Mountain. Hardee was ordered to take command of the Confederate's right flank. Breckinridge held the center, while Maj. Gen. Carter Stevenson was to command atop Lookout Mountain.

While the Federals were digging in on Orchard Knob, Sherman's army began to move out for the woods along the Tennessee River in preparation for a crossing sometime after midnight. Two regiments in 116 pontoon boats, moved out from North Chickamauga Creek and down the river landing on the Rebel side, where they quickly captured the enemy pickets. With the east side of the crossing secured, troops began being ferried over at 1:30 AM. Fiver hours later, two divisions were across. While this was going on, engineers were busy constructing a pontoon bridge across the river.

Once his three divisions were across the river, Sherman moved out at around 1:30 PM to seize Tunnel Hill, at the north end of Missionary Ridge. A railroad tunnel underneath the hill had given it the name. An hour later, Cleburne arrived on the scene and was met by Major D.H. Poole, a staff officer of General Hardee's who directed him where he was to deploy his men. Before Cleburne had taken up position, word reached him that the Yankees were coming up the far side of a detached hill northeast of the ridge. Cleburne's immediately sent a brigade of Texans under Brig. Gen. James Smith to capture the hill first. They were too late. Driven back by Sherman's troops, the Texans quickly redeployed on Missionary Ridge proper and easily repulsed a weak enemy assault. While they held off the bluecoats, Cleburne positioned the rest of his division carefully behind large rocks and thick trees. Any chance Sherman had of quickly seizing the Confederate right was gone.

Due to bad maps and poor reconnaissance, Sherman had misread the lay of the land. The detached hill his men captured, he believed wrongly, was Tunnel Hill. Instead of making a general assault after discovering his mistake, Sherman had his men dig in and they would attack the next day. As darkness fell, Cleburne prepared to withdraw believing the order would be given as disaster had befallen the Confederate left flank.

While Sherman's troops were crossing the Tennessee River on the morning of November 24, Hooker was preparing to take Lookout Mountain. Originally he was only to "make a demonstration" against the mountain, but after the pontoon bridge broke at Brown's Ferry, trapping Brig. Gen. Peter Osterhaus's division in Lookout Valley, Hooker's orders were changed. With the addition of Osterhaus's troops, Hooker now had three full divisions, numbering around 10,000 troops, at his disposal, Grant cautiously gave him permission to take the mountain if it proved practical.

Geary's division moved out around 8 AM in a heavy fog, alongside a brigade from Brig. Gen. Charles Cruft's division of the Army of the Cumberland. They overran and captured 40 Confederate pickets and crossed Lookout Creek. Geary's formed his men into three

lines, with skirmishers out ahead. With his left flank along the creek and his right stretching all the way to the steep mountain wall, Geary sent his bluecoats forward along the side of the mountain, climbing over boulders and through heavy timber.

To defend the mountain and left flank of the Confederate line, Stevenson had six brigades, two of which he had dispatched into the valley to plug the gap left by Bragg in shifting more troops over onto Missionary Ridge. Two brigades were kept on top of the mountain, the remaining two were posted half down the promontory. A little less than half of Brig. Gen. Edward Walthall's brigade stretched out as pickets and skirmishers from Lookout Creek to the palisades. The other half of his brigade Walthall positioned about 500 yards from the Cravens house, a local landmark that was located on a plateau just below the mountain summit. It was here that the bulk of Brig. Gen. John Moore's brigade was posted.

Spotting the Federals coming, Walthall formed his men up behind crude breastworks and prepared to meet the enemy. Unfortunately for them, the breastworks were designed to defend from an attack from below, while the Federals were coming from the side. With flags waving, the Federals mounted a bayonet charge that overran the Southern position and scooped up many prisoners. Supporting Union artillery fire intensified as the Confederates attempted to escape up the mountain. Walthall was in desperate need of help, but he would find little from his immediate superior, Brig. Gen. John Jackson, who remained in the rear for most of the fighting.

By 11:30 AM, Geary's 2nd Brigade, commanded by Colonel George Cobham, and the 3rd Brigade, commanded by Colonel David Ireland, stalled when they came into contact with the remainder Walthall's brigade near Cravens house. Taking enemy fire from farther up the mountain, the Federals charged Walthall again through a heavy fog, and broke the outnumbered Rebels, forcing the survivors back around the point of the mountain to Craven's farm. Ireland's and Cobham's brigades were quick on their heels, overrunning two abandoned guns.

While Geary's men pushed toward the farm, a second Union force began it advance. Colonel William Grose, leading the other brigade of Cruft's division along with Osterhaus's division, captured a bridge over Lookout Creek. Pushing back the Rebels, the Federals started up the mountain toward Lookout Point, capturing most of the small force facing them. Meanwhile, Moore moved his brigade toward the breastworks near Cravens house, at the edge of the plateau. They had not gone far when they ran into Walthall's broken men, with the pursuing Yankees not far behind. It was nearly 1 PM when both sides let loose a terrific volley at each other through the fog. The Federals fell back, but only briefly. Fearful of being outflanked and outnumbered, Moore fell back near the Summertown Road. Walthall's formed the remnants of his brigade on Moore's left. Help was desperately needed.

Brigadier General Edmund Pettus's brigade arrived just in time from the top of the mountain to reinforce the Confederate line. Fighting raged until after dark, but the Confederate line held. Hooker seemed content to hold what his troops had captured, but Bragg around 2:30 PM informed Stevenson that no relief would be coming and that he was to withdraw from the mountain once nightfall masked his moves. During the night the Confederates conceded Lookout Mountain to the Federals, and the dispirited troops were shifted over to the Missionary Ridge.

With the loss of Lookout Mountain and a strong threat to both of his flanks, Bragg was in a quandary as to his next move. Meeting with corps commanders at his headquarters, he uncharacteristically sought their advice. Hardee was for falling back past South Chickamauga Creek and, if necessary, deeper into Georgia. Breckinridge believed that Missionary Ridge still could be held. Bragg agreed. "Tell Cleburne we are to fight, that his division will undoubtedly be heavily attacked, and that he must do his best," Hardee informed the Irishman's assistant adjutant general. With no retreat in order, Cleburne recalled his artillery and positioned his 4,000 men to repel Sherman's next assault, which was expected to come in the morning.

Grant intended for Thomas's army to play only a supporting role on the 25th by capturing the Confederate rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge and threatening the main Rebel position. After the Stars and Stripes were seen atop Lookout Mountain that morning, Grant expanded Hooker's role and told him to move down into Chattanooga Valley and push for Rossville Gap, where the enemy's left flank was anchored. Grant still pinned most of his hopes on Sherman's ability to roll up the Rebel right.

Despite some skirmishing, Sherman's general assault against Tunnel Hill didn't commence until around 10:30 AM and was undertaken by two brigades from his brother-in-law Brig. Gen. Hugh Ewing's division. Brigadier General John Corse's brigade drove in the Confederate pickets and, enduring stiff artillery fire, pushed to with 50 yards of the Cleburne's Texas brigade. The attack was thrown back, and the Texans counterattacked and drove the Federals back down the hill. A second Federal attacked was repulsed as well, and the bluecoats took cover and opened up on the Rebels, many concentrating on dropping Confederate artillerymen. Troops from the 7th Texas were sent to help man the guns, and the Federals who were forced back when Cleburne had two guns from another battery wheeled into action.

The other Federal brigade, under Colonel John Loomis, was stalled to the right of Corse by Confederate artillery fire. The Northerners were forced to take cover behind a railroad embankment far short of Tunnel Hill. A large gap now separated Loomis and Colonel Charles Walcutt, who

THE FEDERAL OFFICERS WERE CONFUSED—WERE THEY SUPPOSED TO TAKE THE RIFLE PITS, OR THE RIDGE ITSELF? REBEL ARTILLERY OPENED UP ON THE FEDERALS AS THEY MOVED OUT INTO THE OPEN AND BEGAN THEIR ADVANCE. SHELLS SCREAMING OVERHEAD, THE FEDERALS QUICKENED THEIR PACE.

had taken over for Corse after he was wounded. Threatening the gap and Loomis's left flank were two Georgia regiments from Stevenson's division. Two Pennsylvania regiments from Colonel Adolphus Bushbeck's brigade were given the job of clearing the gap. This they did in style, forcing the Georgians back up Missionary Ridge and pushing their way up the western side of Tunnel Hill to within 30 yards of the summit.

Despite the progress, the Pennsylvanians did little to alleviate Loomis's concern over his exposed left flank. Loomis sought assistance from Brig. Gen. John Smith's division. Two of Smith's brigades, under the command of Brig. Gen. Charles Matthies and Colonel Green Raum, were sent into the fray. Matthies's men led the way, immediately coming under enemy artillery fire as they advanced toward Tunnel Hill. Matthies's charge failed, as did Raum's a short time later, but intense fighting continued to rage. One of Cleburne's brigade commanders suggested they mount a bayonet charge instead of wasting ammunition. Cleburne gave the go-ahead.

Four regiments under Brig. Gen. Alfred Cummings launched the charge around 3:30 PM. The Confederate advance temporarily stalled as the troops had trouble getting through a narrow opening in their breastworks. Regrouping, the Confederates rushed into Matthies's men, and after some brutal hand-to-hand fighting they forced them to retreat. Loomis and Walcutt, seeing the apparent hopelessness of the situation, fell back as well. Sherman, having suffered nearly 2,000 casualties, finally called a halt to the fighting. Outnumbered four-to-one, Cleburne had managed to hold the Confederate right. The situation on the left was not going nearly so well.

Observing the enemy positions on Missionary Ridge from Orchard Knob, Grant was convinced that Bragg was weakening his hold on the ridge to reinforce Cleburne. To aid Sherman's faltering attacks, Grant ordered Thomas to move against the Rebel rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge. The Confederate position was not nearly as imposing it appeared. Bragg and Breckinridge had been lax in ordering breastworks constructed on the ridge. The poorly constructed breastworks that were built were placed on the top of the ridge, instead of the military crest a few yards below, which would have allowed the defenders a better field of fire down the slope. Half of Brig. Gen. Patton Anderson's division (formerly Hindman's) were posted in the rifle pits at the base of the ridge, as well troops from other brigades.

Six cannon shots from Federal batteries signaled the 23,000 Federal troops from the divisions of Brig. Gens. Thomas Wood, Richard Johnson and Abasalom Baird and Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan to begin the assault. The Federal officers were confused—were they supposd to take the rifle pits, or the ridge itself? Rebel artillery opened up on the Federals as they moved out into the open at 3:40 PM and began their advance. Shells screaming overhead, the Federals quickened their pace, some breaking into a run. Federal artillery fired in support of the blue wave sweeping across the 500 to 700 yards of open ground below the ridge. Most of the Confederates in the rifle pits let loose a single volley at the Federals and then, as ordered, retreated up the ridge. Those staying behind were either killed or captured.

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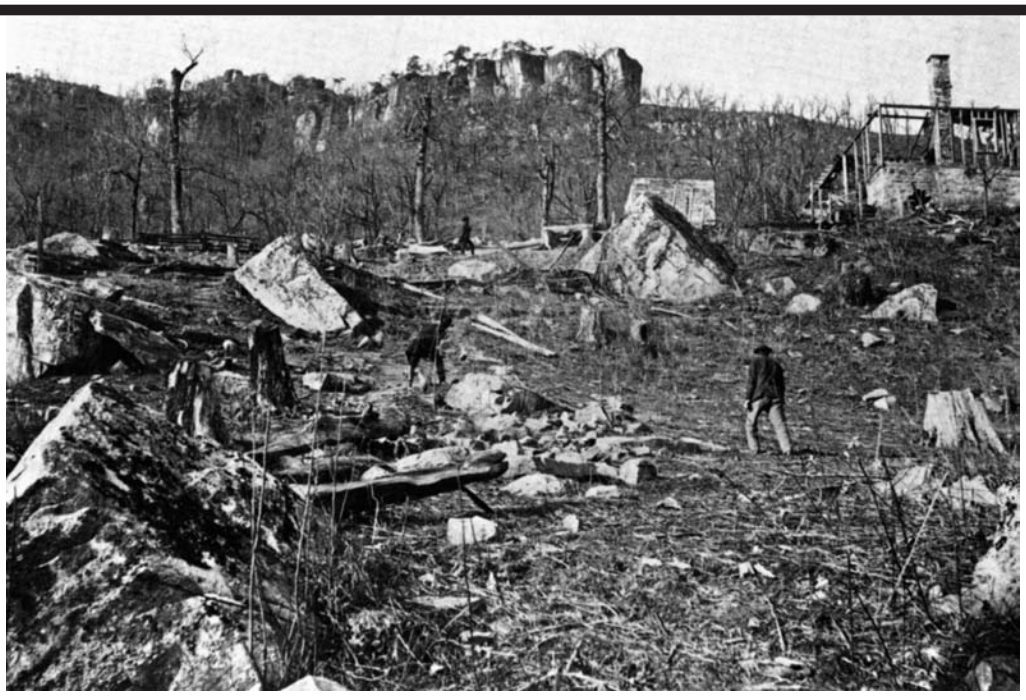
As the Federals piled into the rifle pits trying to catch their breath, they soon discovered that they were vulnerable to fire from the ridge. "It was evident to everyone that to stay in this position would be certain destruction," Brig. Gen. August Willich remembered. "The only place of safety was in the enemy works on the crest of the ridge." After a brief delay, some of the junior officers, believing that their orders had been to take the ridge all along, urged their men forward. Others, sensing the trap they were in, spontaneously ordered their men up the ridge. Still others, veteran fighters with two years of bloody battles behind them, needed no orders to understand that they had either to go forward or die where they stood. Whatever the case, seemingly as one, the Army of the Cumberland began an incredible, fully unauthorized surge up Missionary Ridge.

As the bluecoats climbed out the rifle pits and began to advance up the ridge, Grant, watching from Orchard Knob, was appalled. He immediately demanded to know called for the assault. "Thomas, who called for those men up the ridge?" he demanded. Thomas said he did not know. Major General Gordon Granger, commander of the IV Corps, also denied any responsibility for the charge, but added excitedly, "When those fellows get started, all hell can't stop them."

Up the 400-foot-high ridge the Federals advanced in small, V-shaped clusters, following their regimental flags. Disorganized Confederates withdrew before them, stumbling backward over rocks and stumps. Their comrades on the summit held their fire, for fear of hitting their own men. At the foot of the ridge, ever-combative Phil Sheridan sportively lifted a silver whiskey flask to toast the Confederates watching from above. "Here's to you!" he called. A Rebel cannonball landed nearby, spraying him with dirt and debris. "That's damn ungenerous," Sheridan cried. "I shall take those guns for that."

Following close behind his troops, General Carlin shouted, "Boys, I don't want you to stop until we reach the top of that hill!" Other Union officers challenged their men to race Carlin's boys to the top. Bending over at the waist as they climbed the steep hillside, like men facing into a stiff breeze, the



Photograph taken just after the battle shows Union soldiers searching through the grounds at Cravens House for souvenirs. The house itself, at right, shows ravages of the battle.

Federal troops moved ever upward. Closing in on the crest, the Federals lost formation as they struggled up the slope and through ravines that provided some cover from the Rebel fire. It was around 5 PM when troops from Wood's division surged over the crest and caused a break in Confederate line. Simultaneously, the crest was carried in at least five other places. As more Federals broke through the enemy breastworks, capturing numerous enemy guns, the Confederate's center position on the ridge became desperate. With any attempt for a serious counterattack hampered by the narrow ridge top, and with more and more Yankees pouring over the ridge, the Confederate center abruptly collapsed.

On the summit, Sheridan leaped astride the same cannon that had fired at him a few minutes before. Wrapping his stumpy legs around the barrel, the banty Irishman swung his hat and cheered. Brig. Gen. Charles Harker soon followed suit but made the mistake of choosing a recently fired gun, scorching his seat so badly that he could not sit on a horse for weeks. Everywhere, stunned Federals watched in amazement as their hated, eared, and grudgingly admired rivals simply ran away. "My God," cried an Indiana private, "come and see them run!" Wood rode among his men, laughing, "Soldiers, you ought to be court-martialed, every man of you," he joked. "I ordered you to take the rifle pits and you scaled the mountain." Seven soldiers won Medals of Honor that day, including Lieutenant Arthur MacArthur, the father of future World War II general Douglas MacArthur. It was the most won in a single day in American history.

On Orchard Knob, Grant and the other generals watched, transfixed. Assistant Secretary of War Charles Dana, whose ceaseless vilification of Rosecrans had undermined that general's authority and led directly to Grant's arrival, was beside himself with joy. "Glory to God," he wired Washington. "The day is decisively ours. Missionary Ridge has just been carried by a magnificent charge of Thomas's troops." Grant himself was considerably less sanguine. "Damn the battle" he was heard to say. "I had nothing to do with it."

While Grant grumbled, the situation on the Confederate left was deteriorating. Breckinridge had rushed there just before the Federal assault on the army center. With only five regiments, Breckinridge could do little to stop Hooker's three divisions from moving through the gap and heading north, rolling up Bragg's left. Driven out of their positions and finally routed, Breckinridge yelled at his surviving troops, "Boys, get away the best you can." With his men fleeing all around him, Bragg attempted personally to rally them. Instead all he got was the old army jeer, "Here's your mule," as the men pointedly ignored him.

The Confederate right, too, was in serious danger. Hardee immediately sent word to Cleburne to take his division, as well as the divisions commanded by Brig. Gen. States Rights Gist and Carter Stevenson and stop the Union advance. Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Franklin Cheatham, positioned on Cleburne's left, was attempting to do just that. In the growing darkness, two brigades from Cheatham's division were pushed back by Baird's troops, now only a mile from Tunnel Hill. Cheatham ordered in another brigade at 6 PM and halted the Union advance. Most of the other Federal divisions had halted as well, except for Sheridan, who pushed on through the darkness, bagging more prisoners and guns before finally halting his division at South Chickamauga Creek around 2 AM.

Cleburne withdrew his division that night and the next day acted as the rear guard of the demoralized Army of Tennessee. After burning provisions hoarded at Chickamauga Station, the Confederates began a retreat for Dalton. Shortly after midnight,Bragg ordered Cleburne to proceed to Ringgold Gap to try to buy more time for the army and their wagon train to escape. Early on the morning of November 27, Cleburne arrived at the gap and positioned his division to defend the narrow opening in the ridge. For over four hours Cleburne successfully beat back Hooker. Shortly after noon, Bragg informed Cleburne that the wagons were safe and that he could withdraw. Grant ordered no further pursuit.

A few days after the battle, Braxton Bragg resigned as commander of the Army of Tennessee. Jefferson Davis accepted his resignation without comment. Tennessee was lost to the Confederates now, and the "Gateway to the South" was wide open for William Tecumseh Sherman to begin planning his campaign for Atlanta, a campaign that would spell even more disaster for the embattled Confederacy. □

Artist Rick Reeves' painting, *The Orphans*, shows members of the 6th Kentucky Regiment during the 1864 Atlanta campaign. By then, the brigade had been in action for more than two years.

The hard-fighting brigade of Kentucky Confederates etched a remarkable chapter in the history of the Civil War as perhaps the ultimate example of divided loyalties.

THE SOUTH'S FAMOUS ORPHAN BRIGADE

BY MICHAEL E. HASKEW

ON APRIL 15, 1861, three days after the bombardment of Fort Sumter, President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteer troops. Their purpose was to augment the Federal Army that would put down the burgeoning rebellion and save the Union. Pro-Southern Governor Beriah Magoffin's response was terse and to the point. "I will send not a man nor a dollar for the wicked purpose of subduing my sister Southern states," he said.

Although Magoffin was forceful in his reply, the governor apparently did not speak for the majority of his own people. For years, partisan rhetoric and posturing had wracked the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and by the spring of 1861, when both Unionists and Southern sympathizers were in the midst of raising and training their own state militias, nearly 20 percent of the population was slaves. Despite their personal loyalties, Magoffin and other prominent Kentuckians sought to avert secession, maintain the Commonwealth's neutrality, and possibly play a role as a mediator in the conflict.

However, the hope that Kentucky might avert its share of the sorrow and destruction to come proved fleeting. A flimsy proclamation of neutrality issued in May 1861 had little lasting effect. The home state of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln, Confederate President Jefferson Davis, former U.S. Vice Presidents John C. Breckinridge and Richard M. Johnson, and the late Senator Henry Clay, architect of the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850 that had staved off civil war for a while, was not to be spared. Perhaps more than any other state, the Bluegrass State would come to know the dreadful meaning of the phrase "brother against brother."

The story of the Confederate 1st Kentucky Brigade is indicative of the tragedy spawned by divided loyalties among the citizens of a state. The largest formation of Kentucky soldiers raised by either North or South during the Civil War, the 1st Kentucky has become known to history as the Orphan Brigade. These men left their homes and families to serve the Confederacy, and when the state remained in the Union, they were essentially cut off from the lives they previously had known. As long as the Confederacy survived, they could not, in a very real sense, go home again.

In response to growing concerns in the wake of terrorist John Brown's 1859 raid on the Federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, Governor Magoffin and the Kentucky legislature approved a restructuring of the state militia in the spring of 1860. Known as the State Guard, the small army was organized and trained under Simon Bolivar Buckner, an 1844 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and a veteran of the Mexican War.

Elections in the summer of 1861 resulted in Kentucky Unionists winning nine of 10 seats in the U.S. Congress, along with control of the state house and senate. Magoffin was substantially weakened politically,

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and funding for the State Guard dried up as most lawmakers believed erroneously that the militia was staunchly pro-Confederate. (Buckner actually favored neutrality.) Another militia, this one dubbed the Home Guard, was authorized to counter the State Guard. Recruiting was feverish, and at times passions ran so high that it appeared fighting could erupt at any moment. "Blue coats and gray coats rubbed against each other in public places with a smothered energy that told too plainly the conviction of the wearers of each that the others would furnish a most desirable and beautiful target for practice at musket range," wrote one observer.

The neutrality declaration forbade either side from recruiting actively within the state, but clandestine efforts continued. Amid the rising tide of Unionism, it soon became apparent that organized forces with Confederate sympathies would not be welcome in Kentucky. In September, all Confederate troops were ordered to leave the Commonwealth, and the state legislature ended formal neutrality. Kentucky would remain in the Union. During the course of the war, 60 Kentucky infantry regiments would serve with the Union armies and nine with the Confederate.

In early July, while the first major battle of the Civil War was unfolding at Manassas, Virginia, Kentucky Confederates established a pair of training sites, christened Camps Boone and Burnett, across the state line in Montgomery County, Tennessee, a few miles from the city of Clarksville. Hundreds of volunteers arrived and were organized into the 2nd and 3rd Kentucky Infantry Regiments. Two months later, the 4th Kentucky was organized.

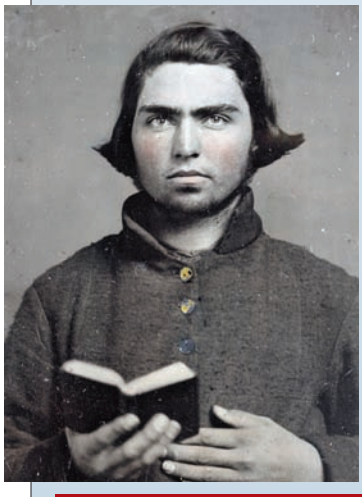
Even as the Kentucky Confederates were legislated out of their home state, President Lincoln, sensing that he had the upper hand in the Bluegrass State, refused to honor Magoffin's request that a Union recruiting post be moved from Kentucky to Ohio. Almost simultaneously, the Confederate Army launched an invasion of Kentucky. On orders from Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk, then the commander of Confederate forces at Memphis, Tennessee, Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow marched into Columbus, Kentucky, on the Mississippi River. Federal forces under Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant then moved into Paducah, near the confluence of the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers.

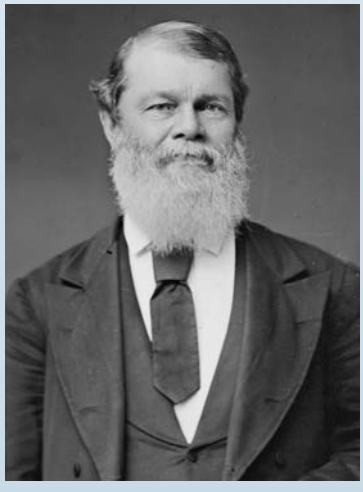
Meanwhile, on the day that Kentucky declared its solidarity with the Union, Buckner ordered his three infantry regiments to board trains for Bowling Green, an important rail center. Buckner had declined a brigadier general's commission in the Union Army and accepted an appointment from General Albert Sidney Johnston, commander of Confederate armies in the West, as a brigadier. An artillery battery of brand-new bronze, six-pounder guns was placed aboard flat cars for the rail trek to Bowling Green. Kentucky-born Edward Byrne had paid with personal funds for the battery's guns, horses and equipment.

Young men intent on fighting for the Confederacy kept arriving in Bowling Green, as many as 900 in two days. Organizing and equipping the new recruits was a significant challenge, but by the end of November a full brigade had been assembled. In addition to those units constituted at Camps Boone and Burnett, the 6th and 9th Infantry Regiments came together at Bowling Green, as did an artillery battery under Major Rice E. Graves and the 1st Kentucky Battery under Captain Hylan B. Lyon. The formation of the 1st Kentucky Cavalry was authorized in October 1861, and command was given to 30-year-old Colonel Benjamin Hardin Helm, Abraham Lincoln's brother-in-law.

The 9th Infantry Regiment had originally been constituted as the 5th Infantry, but another unit in eastern Kentucky had already organized with that designation, and in October the regiment became the 9th Infantry instead. Another formation of note was the Lexington Rifles, commanded by Captain John Hunt Morgan, a young cavalryman destined to become the stuff of legend.

On October 28, Johnston formally combined the assembled units into the 1st Kentucky Brigade, whose command he gave to Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge, who a few months earlier had been the sitting vice president of the United States in the administration of James Buchanan. Breckinridge, the most prominent Kentuckian of his time, had sought to avoid





ABOVE LEFT: Private Thomas McCreary fought with the 3rd Kentucky Cavalry, part of the Orphan Brigade. CENTER: Kentucky Governor Beriah Magoffin. RIGHT: Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge, served as vice president of the United States under James Buchanan. OPPOSITE: At Shiloh, the Orphans assaulted Union troops at the Hornet's Nest on the first day of fighting, then fought fellow Kentuckians under Union Generals William Nelson and Thomas Crittenden.

secession and favored neutrality for Kentucky, but also interpreted the Constitution as favoring state sovereignty. Breckinridge had finished second to Lincoln in the presidential election of 1860. Kentucky Unionists falsely branded him a secessionist and tried to have him arrested, fearing that his mere presence would interfere with their efforts to suppress Confederate influence in the state.

During the winter of 1861-1862, the 1st Kentucky Brigade numbered roughly 3,800 men. Days of drill, camp life, and homesickness were made more difficult by a measles epidemic that kept many men sick. Hundreds lay feverish, and many died. The weather was harsh, and extended marches to meet phantom foes left nothing but tired, footsore men who discarded much of their equipment along the muddy roads back to camp.

The first battle casualties among the Orphans occurred in early December. Two men of the 5th Kentucky were killed and one wounded when a detachment of 13 guarding a railroad bridge were set upon by 90 Union men of the Home Guard. The rest of the Confederates were taken prisoner. In February 1862, the pace of war quickened as the 2nd Kentucky Infantry, under Colonel Roger Hanson, along with Graves' Battery and a company of the 4th Kentucky, were detached for service at Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River in Tennessee. While some Confederates, including the cavalry commanded by fearsome legend-in-the-making Nathan Bedford Forrest, slipped through the Union siege lines under cover of darkness, Buckner cataclysmically surrendered more than 12,000 troops. During the brief fighting at Fort Donelson, the detached Orphans lost 13 killed and 62 wounded. The rest headed to Northern prison camps.

Following the fall of Fort Donelson, it became apparent to Johnston that his defensive line in Kentucky could not be held successfully. Breckinridge's men regretfully turned their backs on their home state and marched south to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where the brigade was augmented with the arrival of two battalions of infantry and a company of cavalry from Alabama and a single battalion of Tennessee infantry. By early March, the 1st Kentucky Brigade had fallen back another 100 miles to Decatur, Alabama.

A few days later the Kentuckians boarded trains for Corinth, Mississippi, where Johnston was gathering his scattered forces and planning an offensive against the relentless Grant, who had moved deep into western Tennessee and was thought to be in the vicinity of Pittsburg Landing, a few miles across the state line from Corinth. Johnston reorganized his command structure as a major engagement loomed. His Army of Mississippi included three corps led by Maj. Gens. Braxton Bragg, Leonidas Polk, and William Hardee, with Breckinridge taking command of the reserve corps when its initial commander was cashiered for drunkenness.

With Breckinridge elevated to corps command, Colonel Robert P. Trabue of the 4th Kentucky took over lead of the brigade. A 38-year-old lawyer who had gone to war in Mexico as a volunteer pri-

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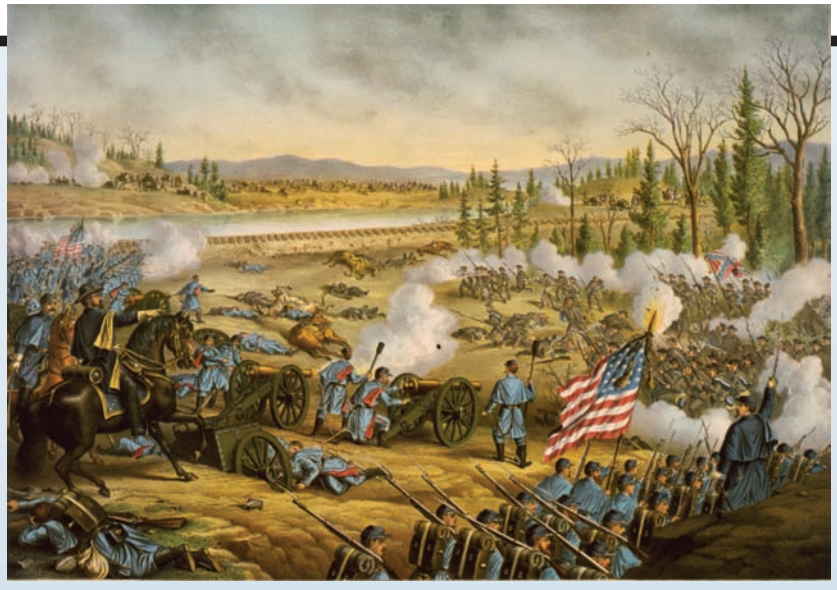

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vate and returned with the rank of captain, Trabue had settled in Mississippi, but as war clouds gathered, he came home to marshal his own regiment, which became the 4th Kentucky.

On Sunday morning, April 6, Johnston's Confederates attacked Grant's forces, achieving near total surprise. About 2:30 PM, while directing troops, Johnston was struck by a bullet behind the left knee and bled to death in half an hour. Overall command devolved to General P.G.T. Beauregard. The fighting was intense throughout the day, and the Federals clung to a salient in their center that came to be known as the Hornet's Nest, slowing the increasingly sluggish Confederate advance.

With Trabue having been in command for only a few days, the Orphan Brigade descended into the maelstrom at Shiloh. The 3rd and 4th Kentucky deployed forward, and Trabue maintained contact with Polk's left flank. At about 9:30 AM, just as he came upon a substantial concentration of Union troops threatening to fall upon the unsuspecting Polk, Trabue was stripped of the 3rd Kentucky, 4th Alabama, and several other units and ordered by Bragg to move to the right.

Trabue believed his command to be greatly outnumbered but coolly directed three of his regiments as the fighting grew in intensity. Eventually, he committed his reserve, the 31st Alabama, and picked up other troops to his rear. The 4th Kentucky and the 46th Ohio closed to within 50 yards of each other and blazed away. The order to fix bayonets was passed along the Confederate line, and Trabue led the ensuing attack. The Union regiment broke and ran. The Orphans surged forward, overrunning Union campsites and capturing a silk flag emblazoned with the goddess of liberty and the mottos, "We will die for our country" and "Victory or death." Since both the camp and the flag had been abandoned and the Union troops to which they belonged were nowhere in the vicinity, the incident provided some fleeting amusement for the Confederates.

Virtually everywhere, it appeared, the enemy was in retreat. The lone exception was the Hornet's Nest, the sunken road where troops under Brig. Gen. Benjamin Prentiss refused to budge. For seven hours the Confederates hurled themselves against Prentiss's rock. As Trabue's front cleared, he wheeled to the right. His soldiers leveled their rifles and delivered several volleys into the ranks of Union troops attempting to slip away from the Hornet's Nest. The Orphans slammed the door shut as other Confederate units closed in, compelling Prentiss and more than 2,200 enemy troops to raise the white flag.

AS AUTUMN TURNED TO WINTER, THE RESTIVE KENTUCKIANS CAUSED THEIR SHARE OF TROUBLE, STEALING AND PILFERING FROM FARMERS IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE, DESERTING, AND GENERALLY MISBEHAVING. A NUMBER WERE TRIED AND DISMISSED FROM SERVICE OR SERVED TIME IN THE GUARDHOUSE.

Amid the carnage of the Hornet's Nest, Trabue saw Breckinridge for the first time since early morning when the reserve corps commander had been called to another part of the field with two brigades. With daylight fading, Breckinridge prepared for a final assault to drive Grant into the Tennessee River, but Beauregard ordered an end to the fighting before the attack could be launched.

On the night of April 6, most of the Orphans camped on ground they had taken from the 46th Ohio earlier in the day. They gorged on cheese, coffee, tea, and fruit that had been abandoned by the Union soldiers. Sleep was fitful for many, and the cries of the wounded lying unattended on the battlefield could be heard.

When morning came, Trabue assembled his command, and while Byrne's Battery dueled enemy artillery, the Kentuckians stood their ground against several charges. The din of battle increased toward the center and right of the Confederate line as Union counterattacks increased. Turning to meet this new threat, the Orphans became hotly engaged, and for the next half hour the opposing lines ebbed and flowed.

The troops facing the Orphans were fellow Kentuckians from Maj. Gen. William Nelson's division, which included four Kentucky regiments of the 22nd Brigade, and the 6th Kentucky of the 19th Brigade. As the Orphan 4th Kentucky blazed away, the Orphan 6th locked in combat with the Union 9th Kentucky of Brig. Gen. Thomas Crittenden's division. A number of the men in the Rebel 6th and Federal 9th were from Adair County in south-central Kentucky. Undoubtedly, some were neighbors and even relatives. "They retired slowly and sul-

lenly, fighting over and disputing well every inch of ground, taking advantage of every tree, thicket, log, or other protection," remembered Colonel Benjamin Grider as his 9th Kentucky pressed its attack against the Confederate 6th. One Confederate soldier later observed, "Wherever Kentucky met Kentucky, it was horrible."

As the day wore on, Union reinforcements continued to arrive on the field, and sometime after 2 PM Beauregard ordered a general withdrawal. Trabue pulled his command back from its positions near the Shiloh Church, and Breckinridge and the reserve corps served as the rear guard, covering the Confederate retirement. At nightfall on April 7, the Orphans camped less than two miles from the battlefield. The next day, they continued to cover Beauregard's retreat and moved three more miles south toward Corinth.

On April 10, the Orphans were safe in Mississippi. They had shown tremendous courage at Shiloh, but the cost was high. The 4th Infantry had lost more than half its number. More than one-third of the brigade's strength, nearly 850 of 2,400 men, were killed or wounded. Several senior officers were dead or injured. The Orphans had endured the great and costly battle, but more stern tests were still to come.

The respite at Corinth was temporary, and within weeks Beauregard had retreated south to Tupelo. In the meantime, without explanation, he divided the Orphans into two brigades. Breckinridge protested to no avail, and the rank and file grumbled. At the end of June, the Orphans were serving garrison duty in Vicksburg, experiencing shelling from Federal gunboats on the Mississippi River. In July, Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn ordered Breckinridge's command, now designated a division, to capture the Union garrison at Baton Rouge. It was an ill-advised adventure, and during the march through Jackson Breckinridge lost 600 men to disease or desertion.

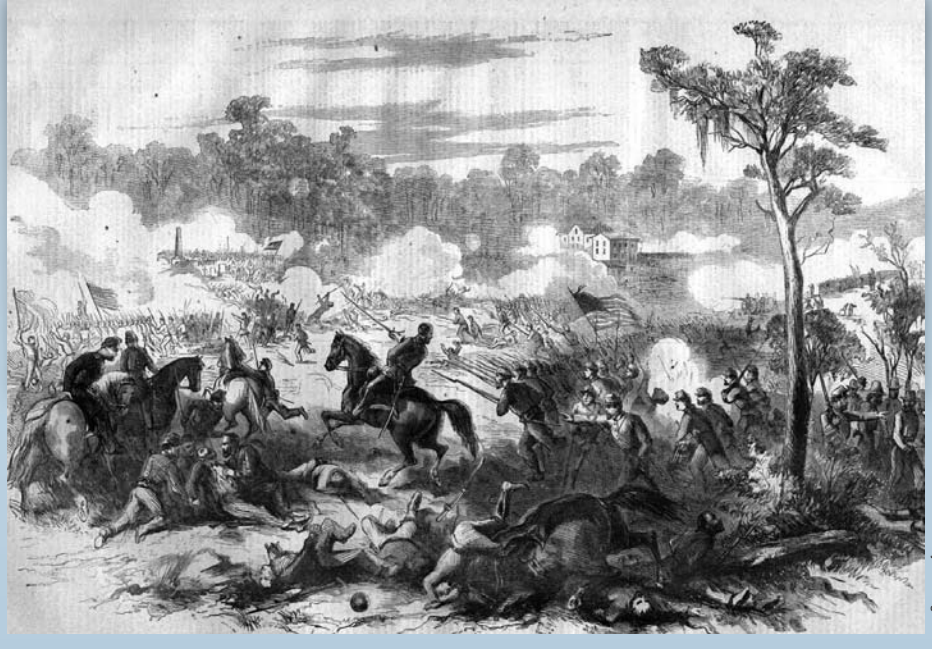
The Orphans stood tall among the Confederates assaulting Baton Rouge. During fighting on August 5, they lost more than 100 killed or wounded. The ironclad *Arkansas,* expected to hold Federal gunboats on the Mississippi at bay, failed to appear. There was no alternative but to withdraw northwest to Port Hudson. Breckinridge was commended for his performance.

There was talk of joining Bragg for an offensive into Kentucky. Van Dorn declined to release Breckinridge's division, however, and valuable time was wasted in political wrangling. By the time Breckinridge's command reached Knoxville, Tennessee, via a circuitous route by foot, steamer, and rail, more precious time had elapsed. Bragg had been defeated at Perryville, Kentucky, and retreated, blaming Breckinridge's late arrival for the failure of his offensive. Along the way, Breckinridge not only had to contend with transportation difficulties and political infighting, but also with a mutiny of sorts among some of the Orphans whose one-year enlistments were up. The contentious Bragg rubbed salt in the wound, and his enmity for the Kentuckians would soon cost them dearly.

Disappointed that their ambitions to return to Kentucky soil were once again thwarted, the men of the Orphan Brigade joined Bragg's retreating army at Murfreesboro. The lone bit of good news during the late summer was the return of Colonel Hanson and the bulk of the 2nd Kentucky, released through a prisoner exchange program after more than six months in Northern prisons. General Buckner was also exchanged and had already moved to join Bragg.

By late October, Breckinridge had reorganized the brigade as the 3rd and 7th Kentucky, the 1st Kentucky, and Morgan's Cavalry, and Byrne's Battery was reassigned for the duration of the war, leaving the Orphan Brigade with the 2nd, 4th, and 6th Infantry Regiments, the 5th now officially redesignated the 9th. There were also Graves's and Cobb's batteries and the newly arrived 41st Alabama Infantry. Hanson was soon elevated to command of the entire brigade.

As autumn turned to winter, the restive Kentuckians caused their share of trouble, stealing and pilfering from farmers in Middle Tennessee, deserting, and generally misbehaving. A number were tried and dismissed from the service or served time in the guardhouse. Meanwhile, one deserter, Private Asa Lewis of the 6th Kentucky, was



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ABOVE: The Orphans' participation in Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn's ill-conceived Baton Rouge expedition in July 1862 cost the brigade another 600 men to disease or desertion. OPPOSITE: The doomed charge of the Orphan Brigade at Stones River caused Breckinridge to moan, "My poor Orphans! My poor Orphans! They have been cut to pieces!"

returned by bounty hunters and put on trial. Bragg decided to make an example of Lewis, and the prisoner was executed by firing squad on the day after Christmas. The resulting enmity between the Orphans and Bragg persisted throughout his command of the Army of Tennessee.

In early December the Orphans participated in the rout and capture of more than 1,800 Union troops at Hartsville, Tennessee, 40 miles north of Murfreesboro on the Cumberland River. A much larger battle was looming. The Union Army of the Cumberland, commanded by Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, was on the march from Nashville. Rosecrans intended to drive the Confederates out of Tennessee, and both sides formed plans of attack.

The ensuing Battle of Stones River, also known as the Battle of Murfreesboro, opened on December 31, and fighting raged west of the stream. The Orphan Brigade was situated near the town along a cluster of hills, and Cobb's Battery fired throughout the day in support of attacking Confederates across the river. Hanson moved his troops several times to escape accurate counterbattery fire from Union guns. When Bragg struck first, two divisions made good progress against the Union right flank, and as the wintry daylight faded he was confident that he had won a significant victory. The expected Union withdrawal did not happen, and January 1, 1863, was spent with the two armies warily eyeing one another.

The following morning, Rosecrans fully expected the Confederates to renew their attacks. He had strengthened his entire line and ordered Brig. Gen. Samuel Beatty to deploy his division across a ridge along the east bank of Stones River. From there, the Union troops could cover two primary fords that the enemy might use in its advance. Bragg was cheered for a moment with word that a Union wagon train was headed toward Nashville, 30 miles north. Rather than a full-scale retreat, it was simply the steady removal of the Federal wounded.

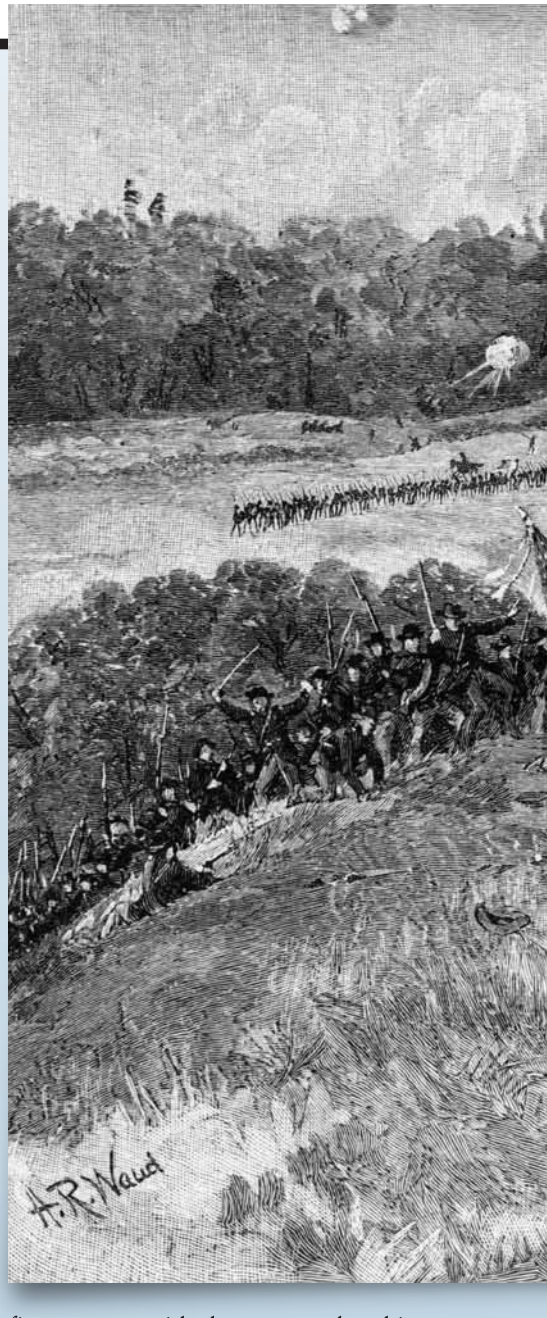
Bragg frittered away the morning of January 2 then suddenly became aggressive again. The Orphan Brigade had suffered little during the earlier fighting, and Bragg intended to have the high ground where Rosecrans had ordered Beatty the day before. With the ridge in Confederate hands, Bragg's artillery could rake the length of the Union battle line. Breckinridge had seen Beatty's earlier movement and scouted the ground himself. A direct assault would be suicidal, he concluded. Not only was Beatty in a strong position, with two lines of infantry backed by the division artillery, but just west of the river the six guns of the 3rd Wisconsin Artillery were placed on a hill to fire at any enemy movement across the open ground.

In the early afternoon Bragg met Breckinridge under a large sycamore tree near the river. He informed Breckinridge of his plan and ordered the Orphans to prepare for an assault that would jump off at 4 PM. Breckinridge was dumbfounded. He protested the order without success. When Hanson was told of the order, he had to be restrained from riding to Bragg's headquarters and personally shooting the commanding general.

Reluctantly, Breckinridge obeyed and set about deploying his division. The divisional artillery was placed between two lines of infantry. The Orphan Brigade stood to the left in the front line, while a brigade under General Pillow was on the right. Two hundred yards behind, two more infantry brigades followed.

While the Confederates arrayed for the assault, Beatty's Union troops were reinforced with elements of two more divisions and two brigades posted east of Stones River. Meanwhile, Major John Mendenhall massed 58 artillery pieces along the high ground east of the river. At 4 PM, General Polk's artillery began firing on Beatty's positions. Simultaneously, Breckinridge roared, "Up, my men, and charge!"

The Confederate tide rolled forward across open ground, around a large pond, and through knee-high scrub brush. Federal artillery began to blast gaping holes in the ranks. Observers were impressed by the discipline in the advancing ranks. Hanson led his men to within 150 yards of Beatty's line, and there the Orphans made



first contact with the enemy, absorbing a volley from three Union regiments partially sheltered behind a rail fence. Among these Federals were the men of the 8th Kentucky Infantry.

The Orphans and Pillow's men, mostly Tennesseans, returned fire and then charged to the crest of the hill with bayonets fixed. Hand-to-hand fighting ensued, and the hard-pressed defenders began to fall back. One Confederate remembered, "Our intrepidity demoralized the enemy, and they began to flee like blackbirds." Hanson's 6th Kentucky routed the Union 19th Ohio and forced a reserve brigade to retire, but along

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At the Battle of Resaca, Georgia, on May 14, 1864, the brigade suffered severe losses from Union artillery. Lieutenant Thomas McLean was among those killed.

the crest of the ridge the Confederates were now exposed, and Union artillery opened with telling effect. A spherical case shot detonated among the Orphans, spraying lead balls in every direction while the spent fuse careened into Hanson's left knee, severing a major artery. Carried from the field, he died two days later.

Breckinridge and other Confederate commanders had won their objective and issued orders to consolidate the hold on the ridge. However, flush with victory, the foot soldiers refused to halt and pursued the retreating Union troops to the river's edge. Elements of the 2nd and 6th Kentucky actually forded the stream in their frenzy to catch the enemy. The headlong pursuit brought the Confederates into the open, and Mendenhall's guns began to blaze away at the rate of 100 shells per minute. The carnage was fearful, and one Union soldier remarked that the Confederates had "opened the door of Hell, and the devil himself was there to meet them."

Union forces reorganized and counterattacked the confused, often leaderless Confederates, driving them steadily back. Trabue tried desperately to stop the reversal, attempting to hold the dearly won hill. In the chaos of the retreat, at least seven color bearers of the 2nd, 4th, and 6th Kentucky were shot down, and Breckinridge's shattered brigade only reached safety when its remnants returned to their original positions.

In despair, Breckinridge rode among the survivors of the ill-fated charge and loudly lamented, "My poor Orphans! My poor Orphans! My poor Orphan Brigade! They have cut it to pieces!" For the Kentuckians, the butcher's bill was indeed steep at Stones River. More than 430 were dead or

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wounded, a casualty rate of approximately 25 percent. The 2nd Kentucky lost 108 of 422 soldiers, and 13 of the 23 officers of the 4th Kentucky were killed or wounded.

Six weeks after the defeat at Stones River, General Helm, recovered from a serious wound at Baton Rouge, took command of the 1st Kentucky Brigade in Middle Tennessee. Meanwhile, Rosecrans maneuvered Bragg out of Tennessee and captured Chattanooga, an important railhead, without firing a shot. By that time, Breckinridge and the Orphan Brigade were back under Bragg's command, and the Confederates prepared for battle along the banks of Chickamauga Creek, just across the Georgia line from Chattanooga.

Fought on September 19-20, 1863, Chickamauga was the largest battle of the Civil War in the West. The Orphans were engaged on a limited basis on the first day of the battle, losing 14 men to Union artillery fire. That afternoon Breckinridge was ordered to march six miles northward to the extreme right of Bragg's line. The next morning, he ordered his three brigades to attack the Union left flank. At approximately 9:30, Helm received the order to attack with his 2nd and 9th Kentucky, while the 41st Alabama and 4th and 6th Kentucky Regiments deployed left to right.

The Orphans hit the Union troops of Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas's corps hard, forcing the 88th Indiana to change its front 180 degrees to counter a threat of encirclement by the charging Confederates. The Orphans closed to near point-blank range, a distance of only 30 yards in some places. As some Kentuckians made progress around the Union flank and reached LaFayette Road, running north to south through the Union line, others mounted a frontal assault against Thomas's breastworks and were thrown back three times. A private in the 9th Kentucky recalled that the Orphans were "giving and taking death blows which could last but a few minutes without utter annihilation."

IN AN ATTEMPT TO HOLD THE RAIL LINE TO MACON OPEN, THE ORPHAN BRIGADE MOUNTED A LATE AFTERNOON ATTACK ON WELL-ENTRENCHED UNION POSITIONS WEST OF JONESBORO. THE CHARGE WAS THROWN BACK, LEAVING A NUMBER OF MEN DEAD IN A 10-FOOT-WIDE GULLY OR WAITING FOR DARKNESS TO MAKE THEIR WAY OUT.

Moving forward with the 2nd Kentucky during the first attempt to carry the breastworks, Helm was struck in the side by a bullet fired from the ranks of the Union 15th Kentucky Infantry Regiment. He died a short time later at the age of 32. When President and Mrs. Lincoln learned of Helm's death, the president reportedly wept and remarked to a member of his staff that he felt like King David when told of the death of his son Absalom. The Lincolns kept their mourning private to avoid condemnation over their sorrow at the death of a Rebel general. Emilie visited the White House briefly, then was given a pass to return to her home in Lexington. She never accepted Lincoln's offer to rejoin the Union by publicly swearing an oath of allegiance to the United States.

In all, the 2nd Kentucky lost 146 of its 282 soldiers at Chickamauga, while the 9th Kentucky suffered 102 killed, wounded, and missing from a morning muster of 230. These two regiments had repeatedly assaulted Thomas's formidable breastworks and sustained more than half the brigade's casualties. The regiments that attacked the Union flank lost 58 men. Roughly one third of the Orphans engaged at Chickamauga were killed or wounded.

Although his battered army did not possess sufficient strength to hold such a vast ring around the city, Bragg chose to besiege Chattanooga. The Orphan Brigade moved first to Missionary Ridge, south of the city, then back to Tyner Station about seven miles from the Confederate lines. Two months of relative inactivity followed.

Grant replaced Rosecrans in Chattanooga, and elements of three Union armies opened a trickle of supplies into the town and prepared to lift the siege. In three days of hard fighting, the Federals did just that. On the extreme eastern end of Missionary Ridge, the 9th Kentucky was called up to support Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne's position at Tunnel Hill and repulsed a charge by Union troops under the command of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman. The 1st Kentucky Brigade, now part of the division of Maj. Gen. William B. Bate, remained in reserve. Breckinridge, now commanding a corps, was nearly killed, and his son, Cabell, was captured. Bragg retreated to Dalton, Georgia, with the Orphan Brigade covering the withdrawal as it had so often done.

The Orphans wintered in Dalton. Breckinridge was ordered to take command of the Department of Southwest Virginia and

left in February. General Joseph Johnston had replaced the hated Bragg in command of the Army of Tennessee, and early on May 12, the Confederates were again on the move. The combined Union army, outnumbering them by one third, had begun its inexorable march toward Atlanta under the command of Sherman.

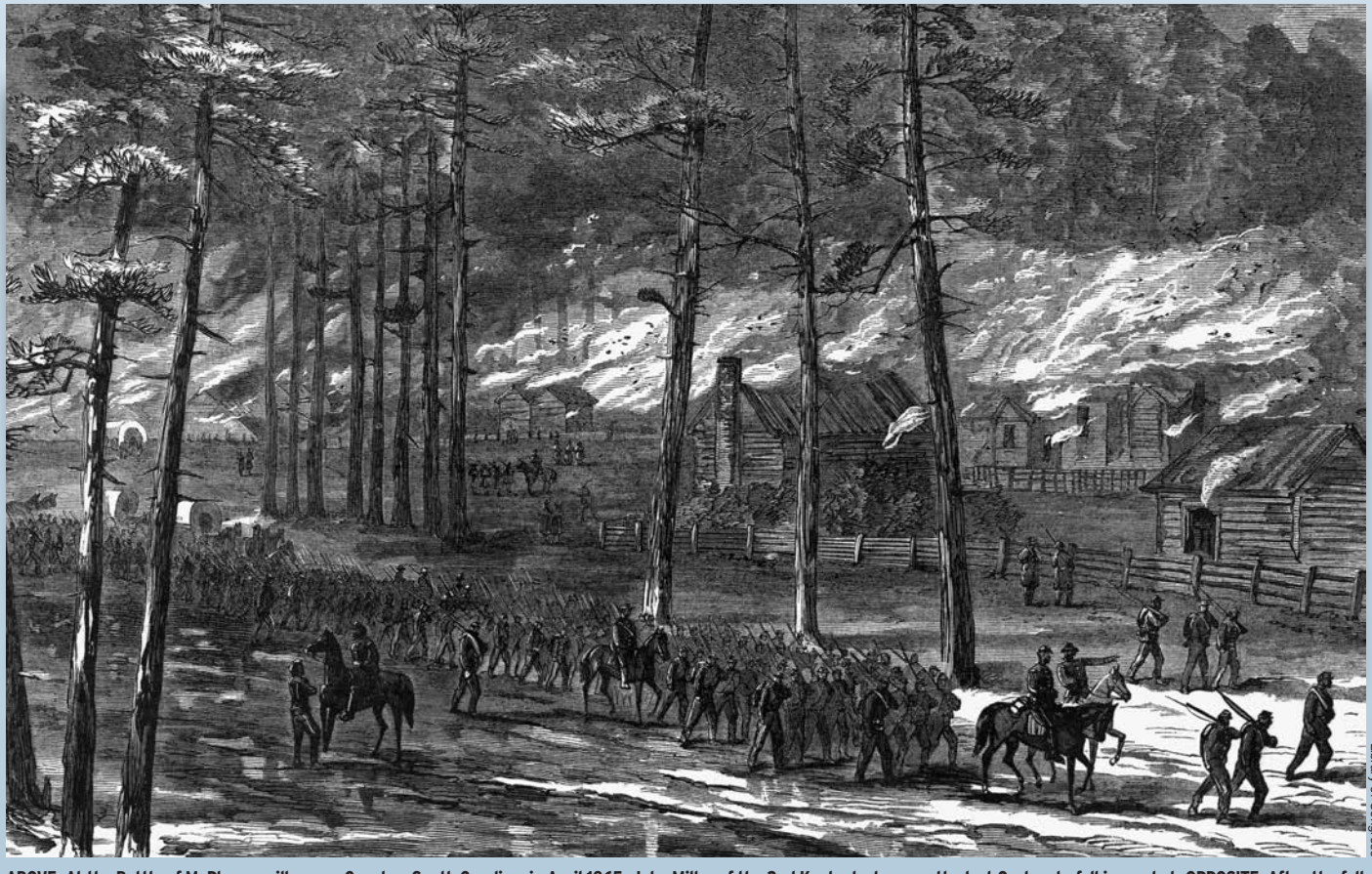
For the next 100 days during the summer of 1864, Johnston proved skillful at defensive warfare, although he was repeatedly outflanked by the Federals. On May 14 at the village of Resaca, 60 miles north of Atlanta, Johnston stood and fought. The Orphans defended an angular position in the Confederate line, and the 5th, 6th, and 9th Regiments were only lightly engaged to the west. The 2nd and 4th withstood several heavy assaults and took serious casualties. Union artillery took a fearful toll. Two men lost arms to shell fragments. As night fell, Lieutenant Thomas McLean of the 9th lost a leg to a shell, and as he was being placed on a litter, a second shell cut him in half and killed two attendants.

Johnston retreated ever southward. On the morning of May 28, the Kentuckians received new uniforms—the first fresh clothing they had seen in months. That afternoon, Johnston ordered them to move against the Union right near Dallas, Georgia, reasoning that Sherman's multiple troop movements must have weakened that portion of his line. Mistaking gunfire to his left as the signal to advance, Bate sent the 1st Kentucky Brigade forward about 4 PM with a brigade of Florida troops on its left. Bate expected the Union entrenchments to be only lightly defended or even abandoned, but elements of the Federal XV Corps were there in strength.

"As soon as we came in sight of them," recalled one Orphan, "we knew we had met them in vain." The Florida troops retired under orders, but somehow word never reached the Kentuckians, who overran one line of Union earthworks and captured a battery. When the thinning ranks advanced another 50 yards, they encountered a withering fire. One Confederate remembered, "Their line was a sheet of flame, and death was feasting in our midst."

The Union fire was so intense that Private James Cleveland of the 5th Kentucky, whose regiment closed to within 20 yards of the Union positions, was shot five times before crawling back to his lines after dark. He died a week later. Captain David McKendree, believed mortally wounded at Stones River, recovered and rejoined the Orphans, only to fall victim to a bullet through the neck that severed his spinal column. Nearly 200 Orphans were killed or wounded in fighting that lasted scarcely an hour. Finally, the Kentuckians responded to the order to retire. The 5th Infantry flatly refused to comply until its commander, Lt. Col. Hiram Hawkins,

Continued on page 97



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ABOVE: At the Battle of McPhersonville, near Camden, South Carolina, in April 1865, John Miller of the 2nd Kentucky became the last Orphan to fall in combat. OPPOSITE: After the fall of Atlanta, the Orphan Brigade mounted a last-ditch defense at Jonesboro, losing another 320 men, bringing the brigade's total losses during the campaign to nearly one thousand.

GAINES' MILL

Continued from page 29

was the ranking noncommisioned officer in the company at Gaines' Mill. Antoni, whose real name was Joseph Antoni Shaffholdt, hailed from the Alsace region of France. He enlisted in 1855, reenlisted in June 1860, and had been a sergeant since that November. Reported as missing in action at Gaines' Mill, he was almost certainly mortally wounded. His wife, Diana, claimed in her application for a widow's pension that an officer in the 5th Cavalry had sent her a letter telling her that her husband had been wounded and died on the field. Investigation of prisoner of war records by the adjutant general's office noted that one "S. Antonia, Co H 5th USA" had been admitted with a chest wound to a Confederate field hospital at nearby Savage Station, Virginia, but no other information could be found.

The third regimental sergeant, Thomas Barrett, was among the most experienced men in the company. A native of County Mayo, Ireland, Barrett enlisted in the 3rd U.S. Infantry at the age of 18 in June 1849. Discharged in New Mexico Territory in 1854, Barrett ended up in San Antonio, Texas, where he enlisted in Company H, 2nd Cavalry, in August 1856. Having reenlisted in June 1861, Barrett was severely wounded at Gaines' Mill and died of his wounds on September 29, 1862, in a Philadelphia hospital.

The senior corporal was William Kenney, from Leitrim, Ireland. Kenney enlisted in June 1855 and reenlisted in April 1860. Reported as missing in action at Gaines' Mill, Kenney never returned to duty and was probably killed in action and buried on the field by the Confederates. The junior corporal, George Anthony Hess, had been a landsman in the U.S. Navy before enlisting in Company H in September 1860. Serving as a sergeant during the charge on June 27, Hess was shot in the left arm near the shoulder. He was hospitalized in Washington until late September 1862 when he returned to duty. Rising to first sergeant, Hess was discharged on February 12, 1865, at Camp Russell, Virginia.

Of the 10 men wounded in action at Gaines' Mill, Privates John T. Coffey, James D. Cavins, Thomas Crawley, Bernhardt Miller, Michael Hallahan, and Jacob Dale recovered quickly and were returned to duty before the end of August 1862. Private William Gregory returned to duty in September 1862, and was promoted to corporal at the end of that month. Gregory was later reported as missing in action on March 17, 1863, after the large-scale cavalry action at Kelly's Ford, Virginia, and was probably killed. Hess returned to duty in September 1862, and Private John W. Fitzpatrick that October.

The 5th Cavalry had a long and distinguished service record during the Civil War. It was initially engaged at First Bull Run, where it covered the Union retreat and helped stop the last advance of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox, Virginia, on April 9, 1865. In between, the unit fought in 125 battles or minor skirmishes. Company H was a notably cohesive unit as evidenced by the many veterans serving in the ranks and the absence of deserters while under active service. The unit history was largely a story of immigrants seeking to make their own way in a new country or native-born Americans who may have been down on their luck and decided to give the army a try. Most remarkable of all was their unit discipline and cohesion despite the fact that no officers or first sergeants were available to command them at Gaines' Mill.

The charge at Gaines' Mill continues to play a major role in the history and heraldry of the 5th Cavalry. The central shield of the regimental coat of arms and the distinctive unit insignia bear a Cross Moline, which symbolizes the charge at Gaines' Mill. The Cross Moline represents the iron pieces of a mill stone (*moulin,* the French word for mill). Certainly, the officers and men of the 5th Cavalry who took part in the battle on June 27, 1862, more than lived up to the regiment's motto: Loyalty and Courage. □

DAYS OF SHODDY

Continued from page 43

food. Satirizing the situation, a cartoon in *Harper's Weekly* portrayed a fat contractor and a ragged soldier. The contractor asks the soldier: "Want beefsteak?" The soldier replies: "Good gracious! What is the world coming to? Why my good fellow, if I get beefsteak, how on earth are contractors to live? Tell me that." The answer was implied.

In the absence of effective government supplies, the soldiers often turned to civilian sutlers—private peddlers who held official licenses to travel with the armies and, in the words of the U.S. Articles of War, "supply the soldiers with goods and wholesome provisions or other items at reasonable prices." The vast majority of sutlers paid little attention to army regulations, particularly the ones limiting the prices they could charge for their goods. A correspondent for the *Pennsylvania Press* estimated that a typical sutler charged five times an item's usual cost. It was a seller's market. One Massachusetts soldier noted that the sutler in his camp made about a 300 percent profit, and another Union soldier claimed, "Our sutler cheats us terrible—but he is a necessary evil." Still another bluecoat noted, "Our sutler is such a crooked snake, I hope he gets smashed out of business—but not until I'm gone from here."

Sutlers' supplies fell into two general categories, "necessaries" and "non-necessaries." The first category meant primarily clothing and food, including replacement articles of official clothing and such non-essential articles as shoestrings, suspenders, gloves, extra socks, and handkerchiefs. There was a lengthy and comical debate about whether tobacco constituted a necessary or unnecessary item. Many Union doctors sided with the smokers, believing that the smoke from cigars and pipes helped keep down mosquitoes and malaria and was also useful in treating diarrhea and chronic fatigue. Congress, in its considered wisdom, refused to approve an official tobacco ration. Accordingly, all

sutlers carried pipes, chewing tobacco, cigars, snuff, papers, and matches. A plug of tobacco could cost as much as a half-month's pay.

Food items varied at different times and locations but generally included fresh and preserved fruit, fresh and smoked meat, crackers, coffee, molasses, rice, potatoes, cheese, and butter. Also ruled essential, at least early in the war, was the sale of intoxicating beverages, whose medicinal purposes were highly touted by the soldiers. Patent medicines were also carried, sporting such colorful names as Carminative Balsam ("a cure for every ill known to man") and Redding's Russia Salve, which claimed to be equally effective for consumption and foot itch.

Perhaps the most tangible effect that corrupt business practices had during the Civil War was the extreme loss of money the government suffered because of the widespread fraud. It was later determined that fully one-fourth of the government's spending had been lost through fraud. In the first year of the war alone, $50 million was spent for general sustenance of the soldiers, and another $50 million for quartermaster's supplies, where much of the corruption occurred. By the end of the war, those figures had risen to $369 million and $678 million, respectively. With the cost of moving and packing all these supplies, the various branches of government spent approximately $750 million dollars during the war. A great portion of that money was handed over to unscrupulous contractors.

"There was never so glorious a cause so poorly served, so utterly ruined through the instrumentality in about equal degrees of incompetence and knavery," said Massachusetts Senator Henry Dawes. It seems like a fair assessment. While a contractor raising the price of his caps an extra couple of dollars did not have nearly as much impact on the war as the battlefield ineptitude of Maj. Gen. George McClellan, economic corruption did affect the way the war was carried out. And as with all wars, it was the common soldier who suffered the greatest consequences and ultimately paid the highest price. □

ORPHAN BRIDGADE

Continued from page 95

grabbed the regimental colors and personally waved them back.

Johnston retired to Kennesaw Mountain, protecting the Western & Atlantic rail line that supplied his army, and erected strong log and earthen fortifications. On June 27, Sherman lost 3,000 men in frontal assaults against the Confederates, while the Orphan Brigade was spared the brunt of the fighting. Within the week, Sherman was back to his flanking maneuvers, compelling Johnston to retreat to Smyrna on the north bank of the Chattahoochee River. Outflanked yet again, Johnston moved eastward to Peachtree Creek, just five miles north of Atlanta.

Although Johnston had traded land for time and blood, the effort cost him his command. In mid-July, he was replaced by General John Bell Hood, a Kentuckian who had an arm mangled at Gettysburg and lost a leg at Chickamauga. Hood had a well-desrved reputation as a fighter. He pulled his army inside the defenses of Atlanta and ordered Bate's division west to attack the Union left flank. The Orphans attacked on July 22.

From the beginning, the assault was mishandled. Supporting units failed to appear, difficult terrain impeded progress, and a number of Orphans were shot down in the mud of a large mill pond. Behind heavy fortifications, the Union troops poured a murderous fire into the attackers. The Kentuckians managed to capture a portion of the Union line but could not hold. Unsupported, they withdrew. The senseless assault cost the Orphan Brigade 135 killed and wounded. Only 809 soldiers remained fit to fight.

By late August, the endgame played out in Atlanta. Sherman again tried to sever the Confederate supply lines, which he believed would force them to evacuate the city. In an attempt to hold the rail line to Macon open, the Orphan Brigade mounted a late afternoon attack on well-entrenched Union positions west of Jonesboro on August 31. The charge was thrown back, leaving a number of men dead in a 10-foot-wide gully or waiting for darkness to make their way out of the pit and back to their own lines.

The following day the Federals assaulted the Confederate positions at Jonesboro, and furious fighting broke out. The dead and wounded Orphans at Jonesboro numbered 320. The brigade had been shattered, suffering nearly 1,000 casualties since the beginning of the campaign in May. Barely 500 men were still able to carry a rifle, and the battered 2nd Kentucky could muster only 69 soldiers. Hood abandoned Atlanta on September 1, while the remnants of the Orphan Brigade bought him precious time with their blood.

Sherman began his famous March to the Sea on November 15, and the Orphans skirmished, briefly defended the city of Savannah which fell in late December, and held on until the spring of 1865. On April 18, nine days after General Robert E. Lee had surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia to Grant at Appomattox, John Miller of the 2nd Kentucky became the last member of the Orphan Brigade killed in action, shot during a brief clash near Camden, South Carolina.

On April 17, Johnston surrendered his tattered Confederate army at Durham Station, North Carolina. Breckinridge, now serving as the last Confederate Secretary of War, briefly rejoined his old command at Washington, Georgia. There, on May 7, the 1st Kentucky Brigade surrendered. Originally, they had numbered more than 4,000. Barely 600 were paroled.

In the coming days, the survivors of the Orphan Brigade made their way home. Some eventually rose to prominence and prosperity. Others wrote of their experiences and returned frequently to old battlefields to mark the places where their comrades were buried. Still others struggled to get by or died prematurely from the lingering effects of wounds suffered in battle. Truly, the Orphan Brigade had given life and youth to the Lost Cause, while winning deathless fame as one of the finest fighting units in the Confederate Army. □

GALVESTON

Continued from page 37

companies of the 42nd Massachusetts were still holed up behind their barricades. Peering over the obstructions, Burrell observed a flag-of-truce team approaching, headed by Brig. Gen. William R. Scurry, commander of the 2nd Texas Cavalry. Scurry demanded the immediate surrender of the 240 Union troops on the wharf. Seeing the white flags flying from all the Federal vessels in the bay, Burrell felt that he had little choice but to surrender his entire command.

It was now after 7 AM. The end of the three-hour truce period was approaching and still no word had come from Renshaw. The Federal commander, whose flagship, *Westfield*, had run aground near Pelican Island at the beginning of the engagement, apparently was panic-stricken. He refused to surrender his vessels, but rather than order continued resistance to the Southern forces, Rendshaw instructed Law to order the commanders of the remaining Union warships to attempt to escape as best they could. Against the remonstration of his own officers, Renshaw ordered his crew to board the nearby transports *Mary Boardman* and *Saxon*, and laid a fuse to the magazine, intending to blow up his flagship. Once the crew and their belongings were safely aboard the transports, Renshaw poured turpentine over the deck and lit the fuse. As he descended the ladder into his gig, *Westfield* exploded in a thunderous blast, killing Renshaw, three other officers, and the entire crew in the waiting boat.

While the Federal commander was suicidally destroying his flagship, Law had proceeded down the channel toward the wharves, informing the commanders of the four remaining warships, the schooners *Velocity* and *Corypheus* and the screw steamers *Sachem* and *Owasco*, that they must escape or destroy their vessels. Lubbock, still awaiting Renshaw's response to his surrender demand, hurriedly rowed out to confer with Law and ascertain why the *Westfield* had exploded. Even while the two men spoke, the *Clifton* was getting underway. Angrily, Lubbock accused Law of a breach of faith and returned to his boat. Along the wharves, Confederate officers watched in growing astonishment as all the Federal vessels, white flags still flying from their masthead, began running for the bar.

Southern artillery crews unlimbered their guns and, with some hesitation because of the white flags, opened fire on the fleeing vessels in an attempt to prevent their escape. Smith dashed aboard the *John F. Carr* at the 27th Street wharf and, calling for volunteer sharpshooters, ordered the tender in pursuit. Even at full throttle, however, the little steamer was unable to catch the Union warships before they had crossed the bar. With the rough waves of the Gulf breaking over the *John F. Carr*'s fragile bow, Smith abandoned the chase and returned to the city. He was consoled somewhat by capturing and towing back with him the Federal coal bark *Elias*. It had been six hours since Magruder had jerked the lanyard of the center artillery piece to signal the beginning of the Confederate attack.

The retaking of Galveston was not without a price. Confederate losses amounted to 27 killed and more than 100 wounded. The *Neptune* sank into the mud off 32nd Street as a result of her collision with the *Harriet Lane*, and the *Bayou City* was badly damaged. Federal forces counted five fatalities and 12 wounded on board the *Harriet Lane*. The remaining crewmembers were taken prisoner. *Owasco* sustained 16 casualties, and 12 crewmen had died in the premature explosion of the *Westfield*.

Harriet Lane would be repaired and later enter Confederate service as the CSS *Harriet Lane*, while the guns from *Westfield* were salvaged and employed in the defenses of the city. Galveston, although blockaded, would remain in Southern hands until the very end, becoming the major port of supply for the beleaguered Confederate forces west of the Mississippi. In addition to becoming a safe haven for blockade runners, the recapture of Galveston denied the port to the Federals as a forward base of operations and, more importantly, protected the interior of the state from northern invasion. Through the courage and determination of the Confederate naval forces and their Horse Marines, the largest port west of New Orleans had been returned to the Southern cause. □

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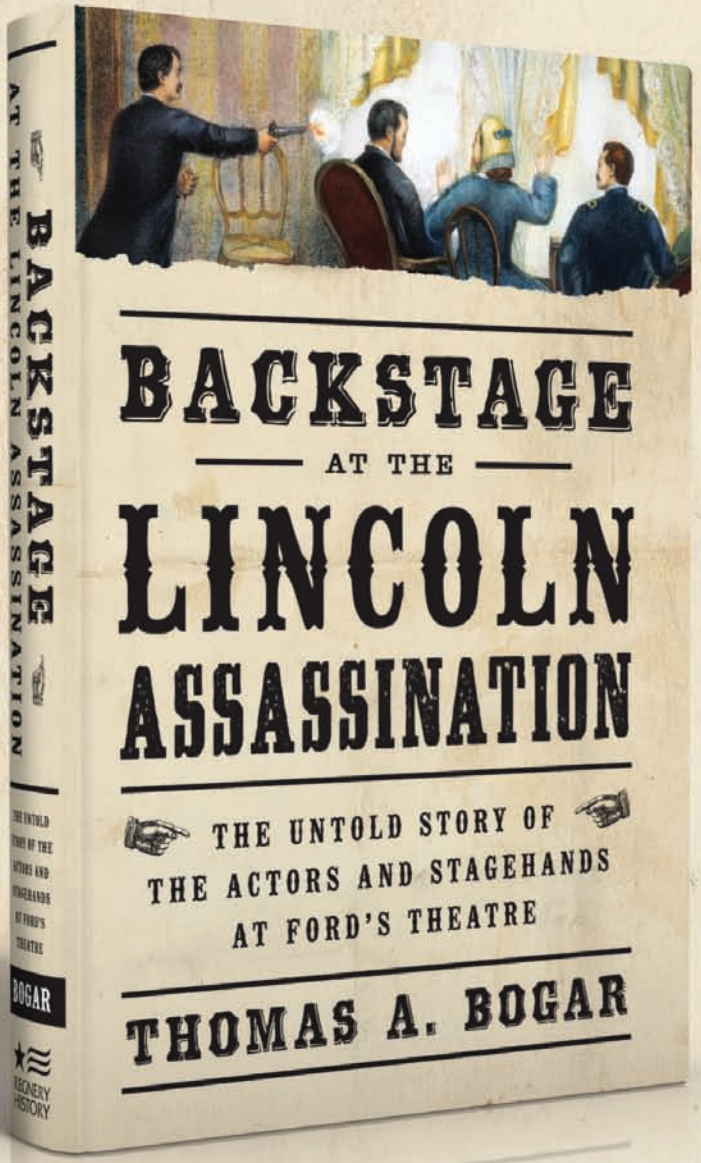

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