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"Everyday Soldiers": The Florida Brigade of the West, 1861-1862

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

“EVERYDAY SOLDIERS”: THE FLORIDA BRIGADE OF THE WEST, 1861-1862

By

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A Thesis submitted to the
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in partial fulfillment of the
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“A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction”

Jeremiah 50:22

Dedicated to the memory of H. J. Keating, 1920-1987.

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Between 1861 and 1865 Florida placed 15,000 of its citizens under the Confederate banner. Nearly 6,000 of these civilians-turned-soldiers, in six regiments, would see service in the Western theater, or the area encompassing the lands between the Appalachian Mountains in the East and the Mississippi River in the West. Other than Fort Donelson, Florida troops were present in every campaign fought by the Army of Tennessee, the most well-known Confederate Army in the theater. Through casualties, sickness, and desertion, the brigade's number declined and at the surrender of the Army in 1865, little more than 350 remained to follow the colors.

Through “Everyday Soldiers,” the story of these regiments will be told, from their inceptions

in Florida in the first year and a half of the conflict, through the disastrous Confederate campaign into Kentucky in the late summer and early fall of 1862. Few other theses have dealt with this unit, and in the instances that some did, few pages were devoted to their activities. This thesis will eventually become apart of the first complete history of the “Florida Brigade.” Furthermore, through the letters, diaries, and memoirs of these soldiers from Florida, the lives of the soldier of the western theater can be discovered.

PREFACE

By midsummer 1862, Florida had placed 10,000 able-bodied men under arms for the defense of the new Confederacy. Of the eight infantry regiments that were raised since the states' secession, three were dispatched to Virginia while five rode the rails northwestwards to the Tennessee front. These five regiments, the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th, were joined by the 1st Florida Cavalry which was dismounted before it departed for the war. In November 1863, over a year after the Floridians arrived in the western theater, these six regiments were assigned to a new brigade that became known as the Florida brigade of the West. This is their story.

When the six regiments departed Florida in 1862 they were comprised of companies of amateurs who trained in disease-ridden camps across Florida. In these camps, the volunteers were drilled in the soldiering techniques of the day to teach them to act as a unit on the field of battle. By the time their training ended, the soldiers of the various companies would respond almost in unison to an officer's order. Ten such companies, each comprising about 100 men, were formed into a regiment which was the basic unit of organization for Civil War armies.

The regiment's identity was carried in the numerical designation and in its most precious possession: the battle flag. The regiment's battle flag, sewn by the nimble and loving hands of women from the communities that were represented in the organization, was carried proudly

before the column and would soon be in the fore of many a battle line. These regimental standards embodied the regimental identity, for not only were they emblazoned with the name of the organization, but also with its battle honors. To carry the flag was considered a great honor, but that soldier became the target of many enemy soldiers who would often fire at the multicolored banner. Each regiment carried its own flag when departing Florida in 1862.

Three years later the Florida regiments would be surrendered, along with the pitiful remnant of the Army of Tennessee, at Bennett's House in North Carolina. The men no longer resembled the enthusiastic volunteers who departed Florida a few years before. The soldiers' clothing was in tatters, and most were barefooted. Their frames were haggard and thin from the lack of food, which had been a prevalent hardship the survivors had endured. Many soldiers, roughly three hundred and fifty in number, had survived four years of war while their regimental identities in the Army had not. At the time of the surrender the Florida brigade no longer existed. Instead its six regiments were combined into a so-called consolidated regiment that barely had the strength of a battalion. Their battle flags, those proud symbols of the regiments, had been captured by Federal soldiers on the outskirts of Nashville in December 1864. Only the banners of the 7th, and 1st and 3rd Infantry Regiments were saved.

Even before the loss of their battle flags, the Floridians began losing their identity in the Army of Tennessee. It started in December 1862, when the 1st and 3rd Florida Infantry were consolidated due to drastic losses in the Kentucky Campaign the previous fall. A year later the 1st Cavalry and 4th Infantry were combined because of heavy losses on Missionary Ridge. Little

by little, casualties by combat and attrition chipped away at the strength of the brigade until it contained a very small number of soldiers. Finally, in the spring of 1865, the regiments of the brigade were placed in a single generic regiment. It was in this organization that the Floridians were surrendered.

The Florida brigade of the West has never had its story told in its entirety. To be sure, brief attempts have been made at various times over the past century to shed light on this rather average brigade. The first came in J. J. Dickison's Florida Volume of Confederate Military History. It was a dry and very abbreviated attempt to explain the Florida brigade's role in the western theater. Void of footnotes and any primary sources save reports from the Official Records, it gives the reader a decent knowledge of the battles of the regiments. However, when it was published in 1899 many veterans of the brigade were still living, yet no personal accounts appear within Dickison's work.

The 1960s gave scholars on Florida's Civil War two new accounts of the Florida brigade of the West, set within the topics of Florida's soldiers who served outside the state, and the organized militia of the state, respectively. The first, "In Defense of Florida: The Organized Florida Militia From 1821-1920" by Dr. George C. Bittle, looked at the troops Florida sent to the theaters of war from the prospective of the militia. His contribution was that he included several primary sources. However, because Dr. Bittle's dissertation is on the militia of the state over a broad period, the Florida brigade of the West is discussed in only eleven pages.

"Florida's Fighting Rebels" authored by Richard F. Nichols is perhaps the best account of the

Florida Brigade to present. Using battle reports from the Official Records combined with the John L. Inglis Diary of the Kentucky Campaign, Nichols ably pieced together a fairly accurate picture of the Florida brigade of the West's military history. Because Nichols was also covering the history of the troops from Florida that served in Lee's Army in Virginia, the space he was able to devote to the western brigade was limited. A shortcoming is the lack of primary sources used by Nichols in his writings.

Almost twenty years lapsed before the next work regarding an aspect of the Florida Brigade of the West was published. In 1986, David James Coles wrote an excellent article for EI Escribano, the journal of the St. Augustine Historical Society, entitled "Ancient City Defenders: The Saint Augustine Blues." This study of the militia unit that eventually became Company B of the 3rd Florida Infantry is a thorough and accurate depiction of the Company from its formation through the Battle of Murfreesboro. It is filled with primary resources in the form of diaries, letters, and enlistment rolls of members from that unit. In short, it is a must-read for any scholar of the Florida regiments of the west.

Thirteen years later Charlie C. Carlson published a unit history entitled "The First Florida Cavalry Regiment C. S. A." This history, which was written more for genealogical researchers, begins by stating that Florida did "succeed" from the Union. Carlson's sources are not supported by footnotes of any type, and the bibliography is scant. These two omissions make the book difficult for researchers to use, though genealogists may find the regimental roster and casualty reports reliable.

By studying the regiments of the Florida Brigade of the West I hope to spin a multifaceted tale that covers not only the military aspect but social as well. Through this thesis I hope to provide the first in-depth look at the first year and a half of the Florida regiments' existence. For until November 1863, the regiments served in separate brigades, in entirely different Armies. The 1st and 3rd Infantry, and the 4th Infantry was assigned to the Army of Tennessee. Meanwhile, the 6th Infantry, the 7th Infantry, and the 1st Cavalry were under the Department of East Tennessee. It was during this time that the regiments were formed and gained reputations in various battles of the Western Theater.

By studying their letters and diaries, the soldiers' activities in the battles can be discovered, but these portions comprised only part of the overall 'life' these men led during the War. Other details, such as what they ate, what kind of clothing they had, and their changing opinion of the war, can be gleaned from the study of their papers. I attempt to answer these questions and more in this thesis. I can only hope it is considered a worthy addition to the foundation that was laid by the great historians, Bell I. Wiley and Larry J. Daniel.

The sources used, for the most part, have been used before in various battle histories and research guides. I have, however, utilized at least three collections which have not been used in conjunction with the Florida brigade of the West. These are the letters of Captain Samuel D. McConnell and Private William Duvall Randolph, and the memoirs of Private William H. Trimmer.

Perryville was chosen as a stopping point because after that battle the 1st and 3rd Infantry

Regiments would never operate independently again, their identities forever bound with their sister regiment with whom they were consolidated. Following the 1st and 3rd Regiments' return to Tennessee, the 4th Florida would join the brigade, creating a command arrangement that would last for roughly a year. Also, following the Kentucky campaign, Braxton Bragg would give his soldiers a new identity when he renamed his army the Army of Tennessee, and kept this title until the end of the war. It is my sincere hope to continue this history in a dissertation which will follow the Floridians' activities in this Army.

CHAPTER I

“I Came Here For the Purpose of Making A Soldier Of Myself”

April - December 1861

Amidst spring blossoms and reappearance of green leaves on the trees, the people of America were shaken by reports of a large battle that had taken place in southwestern Tennessee. The 20,000 casualties suffered by both sides brought the reality of war home to hundreds of families in the Midwest and the deep South. Shiloh reminded the citizens of both the Confederacy and the United States that the war which most felt would be over after one battle was still raging after a year. Thousands of husbands, sons, and brothers, gone for soldiers the previous year, now filled shallow graves. For the Confederacy especially, the prospects of Spring seemed foreboding indeed.

By April 16, the 30,000 men of the Confederate Army of the Mississippi were busy constructing fortifications around the small railroad town of Corinth in northeastern Mississippi. The Army was reorganizing and licking its wounds from the week-old defeat it suffered at the hands of the combined Union Armies of the Tennessee and the Ohio at Shiloh. The Confederate survivors of that horrible carnage braced themselves for an attack by the large Union army that gathered at the Shiloh battlefield.

In the east the Union Army of the Potomac, 100,000 strong, had landed on the Virginia Peninsula in late March, and by mid-April were opposite a Confederate defensive line at Yorktown. The Federal Army was at the time within thirty miles of Richmond, the Confederate capital. The Confederate Army that stood between the Army of the Potomac and its goal had half the effective strength of its Union counterpart. Before the month passed New Orleans, the Confederacy's most important port and commercial and banking center, fell to a combined attack

by the United States Navy and Army.

Beside the setbacks the Confederate armies suffered on the fields of battle, the greatest loss incurred during this time was in manpower. As one-year enlistments ended, many of those who joined with patriotic fervor and enthusiasm the spring before returned to their homes, their thirst for glory on the fields of battle slaked by the disease of the camps and the realities of war. The 1st Florida Volunteers was one such regiment whose soldiers melted away once their tours of duty ended. Though in Montgomery, Alabama, en route to join the Army of the Mississippi on the eve of Shiloh when their enlistments ended on April 3, 1862, all but 250 men of the regiment returned to Florida.

Casualties, both battle and non-battle related, also depleted the Confederate armies of a portion of its field strength. In mid-February, the Confederacy was deprived of 18,000 soldiers, a full quarter of its western army, when the garrison of Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland River, surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant. Another 10,000 men of the western Confederate Army were lost in the two-day conflict at Shiloh. A further blow to Confederate strength in the west came while the Army of the Mississippi was encamped at Corinth, which was one of the unhealthiest camps of the entire war. The decline in health of the men of the Army of the Mississippi, due among other things to the consumption of tainted water, led Sam Watkins of the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment to describe Corinth as “one vast hospital.”¹

On April 16, to bolster its fledgling armies in the field, the Confederate Congress passed its first conscription law of the war, calling for all males, ages eighteen to thirty-five, to enlist for three years in the Confederate Army. The law also extended all standing one-year enlistments to three years. Another clause of the law allowed, until May 17, for those not in service when the law was enacted, to “volunteer in corps, heretofore authorized to be raised by the Secretary of

¹Sam R. Watkins. Co. Aytch: A Sideshow of the Big Show. (Collier Books: 1962), 49.

War, or by the Executive of any State. . . .”² One such volunteer who took advantage of this thirty-day grace period was Washington M. Ives, Jr. of Lake City, Florida.

Washington M. Ives, Jr. was eighteen and living with his parents in Columbia County when news of the Conscription Act arrived on April 17. For his age, he was above average in education and had kept, for several years, a journal full of colorful accounts of his daily life in Columbia County. Before the war Ives and his childhood friends, Charlie Hemming and Seth Barnes, had dreamed of going to Texas for the purpose of killing buffalo and Indians.³ The coming of the conflict ruined this ambition, when all three enlisted in the service of the Confederacy.

Already a Sergeant Major and clerk of the Thirteenth Regiment of Florida Militia which was called out the month before, Washington Ives did not hesitate in obeying the new conscription law. On April 21, Ives noted in his diary that he “did no work today as I am expecting to join a company and go off in a few days.”⁴ The next day he traveled to Jacksonville with his father to view the various companies encamped near that city for the purpose of selecting a suitable command to join. Two days later, before leaving Jacksonville on Wednesday, April 24, he enlisted in Captain William H. Dial’s Company C, 4th Florida Regiment Volunteers.⁵ Ives was heavily influenced in making his decision by the fact that in the ranks of Company C, which was

²The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. (Washington: 1880-1901). Series VI, Vol. I., 1098. (Hereafter Official Records)

³Washington M. Ives, “Friends and Comrades” in Confederate Veteran. Vol. XXIV. January 1915 - December 1915, Reprinted. (Wilmington: 1987), 426.

⁴Washington M. Ives. Diary, 1860-1862, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee. April 21, 1862. (Hereafter Ives Diary)

⁵*Ibid.*, April 24, 1862

raised primarily in Madison County, he recognized several familiar faces. Given until Monday, April 29 to report to camp, he returned to Columbia County to say his goodbyes to family and friends. Writing in his diary as he left Jacksonville on the 24th, Ives scrawled, “As I will probably not have the opportunity to complete a diary in camps I will bring this to an end.”⁶

The 4th Florida Infantry Regiment that Washington Ives joined in late April 1862 had been in existence some ten months since it was mustered into Confederate service on July 1, 1861. The regiment was raised in response to a quota assigned to Florida by the Confederate War Department. By May 1861, three requests had been issued which called for Florida to provide 4,000 men for Confederate service for the duration of one year.⁷ This call was answered by the formation of the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Florida Infantry Regiments and the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment. Despite its designation, the 4th was actually the second regiment to enter Confederate service from the state.

The 4th Florida consisted of men from every region of their state. The North Florida counties of Marion, Levy, Columbia, Lafayette, Madison, and New River (now Bradford), with their game-rich hammocks and swampy lowlands, provided Companies C, D, E, F and G for the new regiment. From the panhandle counties of Jackson, Gadsden, Washington, Liberty, and Franklin came Companies A, B, H, and I. South Florida’s lone representative in the regiment was Company K which hailed from Hillsborough County.

The original field officers were elected in the summer of 1861; one was Colonel Edward Hopkins who in 1860 had, as a Constitutional Unionist, unsuccessfully challenged John Milton for the governorship of the state. The Lieutenant Colonel was Whit Smith, a Columbia County

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Richard S. Nichols. “Florida’s Fighting Rebels: A Military History of Florida’s Civil War Troops” M.A. Thesis. Florida State University. 1967. (Hereafter Nichols)

lawyer. The Major was twenty-three years old Wylde Lyde Latham Bowen. A native of Grainger County, Tennessee, Bowen owned property in Putnam County and was a recent graduate of Carson College when he joined the 4th Florida.⁸

Immediately after the 4th Infantry Regiment was accepted into Confederate Service, it was assigned to the Department of Middle and East Florida; its ten companies were dispersed to various coastal inlets and towns to discourage the landing of Federal raiding parties.⁹ In September, under the command of Colonel Hopkins, five companies of the 4th Florida were marched to Apalachicola on the Gulf of Mexico in response to a supposed Federal attack. The threat proved to be unfounded and on October 2 Governor John Milton wrote Stephen R. Mallory, Florida's representative in the Confederate cabinet as Secretary of the Navy, and argued for sending the 4th Infantry west to Pensacola. "Under General [Braxton] Bragg's command," Milton believed, "Colonel Hopkins' regiment would be drilled and made useful. . . ."¹⁰

As it was, however, the regiment remained dispersed at strategic locations on the Gulf Coast. Companies D, E, and K were encamped about Tampa. Companies B, C, and I spent the fall near Saint Marks, while Company F was charged with defending the islands that comprised the Cedar Keys. The last two companies, H and G, were stationed at Fernandina.¹¹ On October 29, Governor Milton again put his pen to paper, this time in an address to Confederate President

⁸John Perry Bowen Papers, 1881-1900, "Biographical Sketch of Wylde Lyde Latham Bowen," Tennessee State Library and Archives.
<http://www.state.tn.us/sos/statelib/techsvs/manud/94-013.pdf> (Accessed 2004).

⁹Official Records, Series I, Vol. VI., 286.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 288.

¹¹J. J. Dickison. Confederate Military History.

Jefferson Davis. In a critical attack on the disposition and leadership of the 4th Infantry Regiment, Milton wrote:

The eight companies said to compose the Fourth Florida Infantry are some of them in a deplorable condition, and scattered as follows: Three of the companies are on Saint Vincent's Island, 12 miles from Apalachicola . . . one company at Saint Mark's commanded by Captain Dial, an efficient officer; one at the lighthouse, 12 miles off, . . . that would have made fine soldiers if properly commanded, are much demoralized; one company is at Tampa, and an effort making there to get another, commanded by a major [W. L. L. Bowen] of no military education, and if, I am informed rightly, on an accidental visit to Florida; the other two companies at Cedar Keys, commanded by Lieut. Col. M. Whit. Smith, who is said to drink to great excess.¹²

Milton continued his attack on the regiment in his letter and charged that his former political rival, Colonel Hopkins, "who I now believe most honestly to be too irritable, involved himself in difficulties at Apalachicola, and was ordered by General Grayson to remain on Saint Vincent's Island, with his three companies but left without permission and came to Tallahassee."¹³

Despite the objections raised by Governor Milton, the regiment remained scattered at Saint Marks, Tampa, Fernandina, and Cedar Keys. It was the company encamped at Tampa under Wylde Bowen, the 'major with no military education,' which gained the 4th Florida's first victory of the war. On October 10 and 11, men of the 4th Florida seized two sloops flying the United States flag, the *William Batty* and the *Lyman Dudley*. In his report dated October 16, Major Bowen related that the ". . . sloops have been duly turned over to the prize commissioner as legal prizes to the Confederate States. . . ." ¹⁴ In December 1861, some five months into its

¹² Official Records, Series I, Vol. VI., 301.

¹³ *Ibid.* Fifty-four year old General John Grayson was an 1826 graduate of West Point. He resigned his commission as Major in the U.S. Army to become a Confederate Brigadier General. He died in October 1861 while commanding the Department of Middle and East Florida.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 294-295.

enlistments, the 4th Florida counted 39 officers and 669 enlisted men present for duty. The aggregate, or total number of troops enrolled for service, including those both present and absent at the time the bi-monthly muster roll was issued, numbered 881.¹⁵

The 4th Florida Infantry Regiment was not the only regiment to feel the harsh words of Governor Milton. The 3rd Florida was mustered into Confederate service on August 1, 1861 at Amelia Island. It was formed to assist the 4th in defending Florida when the 2nd Florida Infantry was ordered to Virginia in mid-July. For the most part, its composition was much like the 4th. From the north central Florida counties of Madison, Wakulla, Columbia, Jefferson, and Suwannee came Companies D, E, G, H, I, and K respectively. Duval County and Jacksonville provided Companies A and F. Company A, otherwise known as the Jacksonville Light Infantry, was a prewar militia unit organized in 1859 by Dr. Holmes Steele, then Jacksonville's mayor. According to one historian, the outfit "included a number of the wealthiest and most successful business and professional men in town, most of whom served in the ranks."¹⁶ Captain John Lott Phillips, a native of St. Helena, led the men of Company B, the St. Augustine "Blues", another pre-war militia company.¹⁷

Again, as with the 4th Florida, the 3rd Florida mustered a lone company from South Florida: Company C, the Hernando County "Wildcats," captained by Walter Terry Saxon who was well respected by his men. Twenty-six years old Saxon, a native of Alabama, earned his living as a surveyor before the war. He was reportedly paid \$20,000 for work done in the Everglades, most

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 364.

¹⁶Richard A. Martin, "Defeat in Victory: A Yankee Experience in Early Civil War Jacksonville" in Florida Historical Quarterly. Volume 53, Issue 1. (St. Augustine: 1974), 4.

¹⁷David J. Coles, "Ancient City Defenders: The St. Augustine Blues" in El Escribano. (St. Augustine: 1986), 65.

of which was spent on the arming and equipping of his Company.¹⁸ Thomas Benton Ellis of the “Wildcats” related that Captain Saxon’s men “idolized him and would follow him wherever he led.”¹⁹

William Scott Dilworth, a slave-owning planter and lawyer from Jefferson County, was elected colonel of the regiment. Dilworth, whose mansion still stands in Monticello, was quite active in state politics and a pro-voting member in the Florida Secession Convention. The Lieutenant Colonel was Arthur T. Wright and the Major Lucius A. Chruch.

After its formation, the 3rd Florida remained on the Atlantic coast. The regiment was dispersed “with two companies (B and E) at St. Augustine, two companies (A and F) at the Bluff on the St. John’s River, near the river’s mouth, and the six remaining companies at Fort Clinch on Amelia Island.”²⁰ On August 12, eleven days after the organization of the regiment, Colonel Dilworth wrote to Richmond reporting that, “My regiment is composed entirely of civilians. I would be glad to have two drill officers attached to this regiment immediately.”²¹ Apparently these instructors arrived, for while the companies were encamped on Amelia Island, Benton Ellis remembered that the companies were “drilled and were engaged in building batteries of sand.”²²

A month and one-half later, on October 29, Governor Milton criticized the 3rd Florida Infantry

¹⁸Hartman, David W. and David Coles. Compiler and Associate Compiler, Biographical Rosters of Florida’s Confederate and Union Soldiers, 1861-1865. 5 Volumes and Index. (Wilmington: 1995), 285. (Hereafter Hartman and Coles)

¹⁹“Short Record of Thomas Benton Ellis, Sr.,” Thomas Benton Ellis Collection, Special Collections, University of Florida, Gainesville. (Hereafter “Short Record”)

²⁰Nichols, 18.

²¹Official Records, Series I, Vol. I., 471.

²²“Short Record.”

in the same letter in which he attacked the leadership of the 4th Florida. Of the 3rd Florida, Milton wrote:

The Third Regiment, commanded by Col. W. S. Dilworth, a civilian, is scattered from Fernandina to the mouth of the Saint John's River and Saint Augustine, and, if I am correctly informed, is in a deplorable condition. I presume there is not a field officer attached to it, unless it may be Major Church at Saint Augustine, of strict sobriety;²³

However, Milton also broke from his familiar attitude and complimented Dilworth in this letter saying that he "is improving, and will, I think, make an efficient officer."²⁴

Dilworth was away from the regiment at the time for he was given temporary command of the Department of Middle and East Florida in October following the untimely death of General Grayson. He held the post until General James Trapier could arrive to take command in late December. In November Dilworth wrote Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin reporting that he had on hand on Amelia Island 659 soldiers. Venting his frustrations over Milton's attitude towards his regiment, Dilworth complained that: "There has been in Florida East too much politics mixed with the military in organizing the regiments."²⁵ Dilworth went on to plead his case:

God knows I have worked harder here than I ever did in my life, and my only motive has been to serve my country. I volunteered and was a private in the ranks until this (the Third) regiment was formed, when I was elected as a colonel, and to day would have been a private, had I not been elected to the colonelcy of the regiment.²⁶

During the remainder of 1861 the companies of the 3rd Florida remained in their encampments

²³Series I, Vol. VI., 300-301.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*, 317.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 317-318.

on Amelia Island, at the mouth of the Saint John's and at Saint Augustine. The only change in this order came in the winter of 1862 when "Companies E and H under Captain Bird were sent to New Smyrna to protect supplies brought from Nassau by blockade-runners."²⁷ In the December abstract for the strength of the units stationed in Middle and East Florida, the 3rd Florida reported present for duty forty-four officers and 800 men.

The system under which early Civil War regiments were created allowed for advancements such as that of William S. Dilworth of the 3rd Florida. The men of the various regiments elected by ballot their own company and regimental officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned. The results of these elections were made binding when the regiment was mustered into Confederate service and commissions were authorized.²⁸ Thus could a man who enlisted as a private, such as Dilworth, find himself commissioned a colonel and in command of the entire regiment. This system did not always work, as many of the more popular men who were often elected into positions of authority proved incompetent. The Florida regiments were able to replace these officers during reorganization, provided for by Section VI of the Conscription Act.

In December 1861 the only other infantry regiment stationed within the state was the 1st, or "Magnolia" Regiment. The first regiment raised for state service, it was organized at the Chattahoochee Arsenal on the Apalachicola River on April 5, 1861. The need for the regiment arose on March 25 when the Confederate War Department issued its first quota to the state. It called for 500 troops from Florida to join the 4,500 requested from Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi in the defense of Pensacola. The first Colonel of the Regiment, J. Patton Anderson, wrote of the formation of the 1st Florida Infantry in his autobiography:

²⁷ Nichols, 18, from Fred L. Robertson (compiler), Soldiers of Florida. (Live Oak: 1903), 100. (Hereafter, Soldiers of Florida)

²⁸Official Records, Series IV, Vol. I., 766.

On the 26th of March, while at my home near Monticello, the Governor [Madison Starke Perry] wrote me that he wished to send a regiment of infantry to Pensacola for Confederate service. My old company was immediately reorganized and on the 28th of March started for the Chattahoochie [sic] Arsenal, the place appointed for all the companies to rendezvous and elect field officers. On the 5th of April I was elected Colonel of the 1st Florida Regiment (Infantry) without opposition, and that night started with the regiment to report to General Braxton Bragg at Pensacola. We reached Pensacola on the 11th and 12th of April. Went into camp and commenced drilling and exercising the troops.²⁹

As was the case with many of the companies that Florida sent forth to Confederate Service during the first two years of the war, many had existed as militia companies prior to the secession of the state. John R. Blocker, a member of Company D 1st Florida, remembered that his company, formed in the fall of 1860, “was organized in Tallahassee as much for its social as for its military features. We would meet in the courthouse on Thursday night and talk and plan for the future.”³⁰ Following the secession of the state, “the captain of the Lion Artillery called a meeting of the company. Every member was present and voted to offer our services to the Governor. We were accepted.”³¹ The company was comprised, in Blocker’s words, of about “sixty” men, “all Tallahassee boys, young, healthy, and many of them wealthy.”³²

According to William Trimmer of the 1st Florida’s Company B, who wrote his memoirs in

²⁹James Patton Anderson Collection, “Sketch of General Anderson’s Life”, Special Collections, PK Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville. Anderson’s old company to which he refers was one of two under way for Pensacola in January. It was encamped at Saint Marks awaiting passage to Pensacola when the order came for it to disband.

³⁰John R. Blocker, “Company D, First Florida Infantry.” Confederate Veteran, Vol. XX. January 1912 - December 1912, Reprinted. (Wilmington: 1987), 156.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²*Ibid.*

1909, the soldiers of the 1st Florida were armed with weapons distributed from the Chattahoochee Arsenal. Trimmers' company was armed with rifles which were the short Model 1855 Rifle Musket.³³ While most weapons carried during the Civil War possessed the percussion cap priming device, this model was fired using Maynard Tape. This tape, as Mark Boatner III notes, was "made of two narrow strips of varnished paper between which there were glued pellets of fulminate mercury. The strip was coiled in a magazine, and each time the hammer was cocked a pellet was brought into position to be exploded by the fall of the hammer."³⁴ Soldiers in the "Quincy Guards" carried smoothbore percussion muskets while their fellow soldiers in a Leon County company shouldered old flintlocks.³⁵ Trimmer remembered that in early 1862 the soldiers' "guns were turned in and each soldier was given a smoothbore Springfield musket. . . ."³⁶ This musket was the Model 1842 which had originally been manufactured in 1822 with flintlock ignition. The improved 1842 model which the Floridians carried used the percussion cap system and was a capable of firing a .69 caliber ball accurately up to 100 yards.³⁷

In March 1861 a small Confederate Army composed of soldiers from Louisiana, Mississippi,

³³William H. Trimmer, "A Volunteer in Co. B. 1st Florida Infantry from Apalachicola" in United Daughters of the Confederacy Scrapbooks, 1900 - 1935, Vol. 1. Florida State Archives, Tallahassee. (Hereafter Trimmer). The description given by Trimmer in his memoir, point to the Model 1855 known as the Harper's Ferry. In a telegram from Governor Madison Perry to Confederate Secretary of War Walker on March 23, 1861, regarding the armament of the 1st Florida, these rifles are listed among the possible choices for arms.

³⁴Mark Mayo Boatner III, The Civil War Dictionary Revised Edition, (New York: 1988) 522.

³⁵Trimmer.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷Boatner, 860.

Alabama, and Georgia under the command of Brigadier General Braxton Bragg was in occupation of the Naval Yard and Forts McRee and Barrancas near Warrington, three miles from Pensacola. From their fortifications on the mainland the Confederates could peer three-quarters of a mile across the blue waters of Pensacola Bay and view the Stars and Stripes flying above Fort Pickens. The fort, which was constructed on Santa Rosa Island and commanded the channel into the bay, had been abandoned the previous decade.³⁸

On January 10, 1861, the day Florida seceded from the Union, Lieutenant Adam Slemmer, acting commander of the Federal troops garrisoning Fort Barrancas, moved his 80 regulars from that mainland fort across the bay to Pickens. As state troops from Alabama and Mississippi poured into the Pensacola area to secure the Naval Yard and mainland fortifications, an attack on Pickens was contemplated. In the long run cooler heads prevailed and a lull descended over the area as the Confederates were not prepared to attack a fortification with raw troops; Lt. Slemmer was not inclined to surrender his position. An uneasy truce was negotiated in which the Confederates agreed not to attack Fort Pickens, if Federal reinforcements did not land.³⁹ Not long after the arrival of the 1st Florida, the Union garrison itself was reinforced and the truce was broken.

The 1st Florida's trek to Pensacola set the standard for the journeys of the other state regiments that were to leave the state for the western theater. At the time the frontier of northeastern Florida was crossed by two railroads. First, the Florida Railroad traversed the state from northeast to southwest, beginning at Fernandina and ending in Cedar Key. The second, named the Florida Atlantic & Gulf, began in Jacksonville, bisected the Florida Line at Baldwin, then ran due west

³⁸Virginia Parks, "The Relief of Fort Pickens" in Pensacola in the Civil War. Vol IX, No. 2 (Pensacola Historical Society: 2000) 7th Printing, 11.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 12.

through Lake City. From there it crossed the Suwannee River north of Live Oak and continued on through Tallahassee, ending in Quincy just northwest of the capital. A spur of this line also ran southward from Tallahassee to Saint Marks on the Gulf.

The problem was that neither of these lines was connected to the rest of the Confederacy. Only the Alabama & Florida Railroad which connected Pensacola with Montgomery gave Floridians rail access to one of its fellow Confederate States. Roads which led north from Florida into Georgia intersected with the Savannah, Albany, and Gulf Railroad, but this line's engines ran southeast to the Atlantic, not northwest to Tennessee. Roads which traversed Florida from the Apalachicola River to Pensacola were poor and the time lost in marching would have been significant.

Thus it was that the Florida regiments that left the state bound for Tennessee and Pensacola, for that matter, were embarked at the town of Chattahoochee upon steamers which sailed up the Chattahoochee River to Columbus, Georgia. From Columbus, the Florida regiments boarded trains for their respective destinations. The 1st Florida Cavalry was the only Florida regiment that served in the western theater which marched from the state.

William H. Trimmer of Company B remembered that on the journey from Columbus to Pensacola, the train stopped at Auburn where "the young ladies from the college turned out en masse and could not do enough for us."⁴⁰ He also recalled that while in Alabama, the regiment learned of the fall of Fort Sumter. Once encamped at Pensacola, William Trimmer recalled that "six hours were spent daily in drilling."⁴¹ Also, men of the regiment were detailed to fatigue duty, which consisted of ". . . constructing sand batteries along the outside beach, mounting big

⁴⁰Trimmer

⁴¹*Ibid.*

Columbian [sic] and Dalghren guns, building bomb proofs and magazines”⁴²

The soldiers of the 1st Florida Infantry hailed from the north central and panhandle regions of the state. The regiment “was composed of two companies from Leon, two companies from Alachua, and one each from Franklin, Jackson, Madison, Gadsden, Jefferson, and Escambia county. . . .”⁴³ The total strength of the 1st Florida Infantry upon its departure for Pensacola, including both officers and men, stood at around 580.⁴⁴ Company K, the “Pensacola Guards,” joined the Regiment once it disembarked from the trains in Pensacola.

James Patton Anderson, the first Colonel of the 1st Florida Infantry Regiment, learned of war during the conflict with Mexico where he served as Lieutenant Colonel in a regiment of Mississippi volunteers. Born in Tennessee in 1820, and university educated, he had lived in Washington territory for sometime, representing it as a non-voting member in the House of Representatives in 1855. The year 1860 found him living as a slave owning planter in Monticello, Florida. A member of the Secessionist Convention in Tallahassee, he voted in favor of Florida’s separation from the Union, and had in 1860 formed a militia company in Jefferson County, of which he was voted the Captain.⁴⁵ Before his appointment to command the 1st Florida, Anderson had served as a Florida delegate to the Provisional Confederate Congress which met in Montgomery. His Lieutenant Colonel was William K. Beard, and Thadeus McDonald served as Major.

The monotony of drilling and fatigue duty of the soldiers of the 1st Florida lasted until October

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Soldiers of Florida, 38.

⁴⁴Official Records. Series I, Vol. LII., Part II, 34.

⁴⁵Dickison, 196.

when soldiers of the regiment saw their first action. On the morning of October 8 one hundred soldiers of the 1st Florida under the command of Colonel Patton Anderson became part of a 1,000 man Confederate attack force which was ordered “. . . against his [Federal] outpost on Santa Rosa Island.”⁴⁶ That evening, under the cover of darkness, the Confederates landed four miles from Fort Pickens. An attack was then carried out on the camp of the 6th New York Zouave Infantry and succeeded in “burning the camp and stores in the vicinity.”⁴⁷ As the sun broke over the eastern horizon, a counterattack was mounted on the raiders by reorganized Union forces that pushed them from the camp and caused a withdrawal to their boats which brought them to the mainland.

It was in this action that the Floridians lost their first men to enemy fire. Patton Anderson, in a letter to Governor Milton, reported that “the Florida Regiment only had 100 men in the expedition out of the 1,060, and lost six killed, eight wounded, and 12 prisoners.”⁴⁸ Richard Bradford, the twenty-five years old Captain of Leon County’s Company F, was the lone Florida officer to fall in the assault. Colonel William Wilson, commanding the 6th New York, related in his official report that “Private William Scott of Company C, on the approach of the enemy from the Gulf beach, waited until they approached to within 10 feet, and shot Captain Bradford, who was leading them on deliberately.”⁴⁹ Besides Bradford, Sergeant William Routh, and Privates John Hale, Henry Tillenghast, Lewis F. Thompson, and William Smith were killed. In his letter, Patton Anderson noted that three lieutenants of the regiment that were captured were taken while

⁴⁶Official Records, Series I, Vol. VI., 458.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 299.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 448.

“standing as a safeguard over the enemy’s hospital to prevent it from sharing the fate of the balance of the camp.”⁵⁰ Following the raid on Santa Rosa, the 1st Florida returned to the daily routine of drill and guard duty. It would remain in this capacity until March 1862.

Like the men of the 1st Florida, the soldiers of the 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th Florida Infantry Regiments and the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment were introduced in 1861-1862 to the camp life that consumed so much time of the Civil War soldier. While in these camps the men were drilled in the instructions of war and underwent a transformation from civilians to soldiers. The men also found themselves with a good deal of time to dwell on their circumstances and position. They wondered about how they were adjusting to camp life and if they would make good soldiers.

Private Roderick [Roddy] G. Shaw from Company G of the 1st Florida answered this question in a letter home on May 13, 1861, “I came here for the purpose of making a soldier of myself as long as I was here and lay off the ‘Gentleman’ and ‘Dandy.’ I act it as well as any of the boys.”⁵¹ William Trimmer and others of his regiment, amateurs playing war, “imagined they came for a nice easy pleasant time.”⁵² Trimmer went on to write, “[t]he heavy details daily imposed upon each company soon learned us differently.”⁵³ Another private in the 1st Infantry Regiment, William Duvall Randolph, longed for the real war he read of in the papers, not the endless guard duty he stood on the shores of Pensacola Bay. In July he wrote his father about a company that was forming to go to Virginia. “I know you think I am too young and inexperienced,” Randolph argued, to travel to the “seat of war where actions are so fierce and frequent. But you must

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 299.

⁵¹Roderick G. Shaw Letters, 1861-1864. Florida State Archives, Tallahassee. (Hereafter Shaw Letters)

⁵²Trimmer.

⁵³*Ibid.*

remember I am seventeen, and how many great heroes at even a younger age than that.”⁵⁴

First Lieutenant Samuel Darwin McConnell of the Seventh Florida, who had been a teacher at the East Florida Seminary before the Secession of Florida, wrote to his wife in April 1862 relating that, “I have stood camp life remarkably well, and have not been sick in the least, though we have had very fatiguing marches, over bad roads.”⁵⁵ Major William Tennent Stockton of the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment described his experiences at Camp Trapier, near Callahan: “It is very wet and rainy, and the camp being on low ground (only four feet to water) it is very disagreeable while it lasts. But I know so much of camp life, and my previous arrangements so good, I get on very well.”⁵⁶ Lieutenant Hugh Black of the 6th Florida Infantry’s Company A, which was organized in early 1862, boasted that “[w]e are soldiering in the fashion of Bonapart [sic] that is we have no tents but take it in the open air rain or shine as old Master sees proper to send upon us but we are enduring it with the patience of Job. (Not Job Freeman)”⁵⁷

Writing his mother from Montgomery, Alabama, on June 16, 1861, some two months after his enlistment, Washington Ives proudly proclaimed: “. . . I will probably be a private until the end of the war but if so I will be conscious of having served in that sphere as becomes a gentleman

⁵⁴Randolph Family Papers, 1814-1978. Florida State Archives, Tallahassee. (Hereafter Randolph Papers)

⁵⁵Samuel Darwin McConnell Papers, 1859-1876. Special Collections, PK Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville. (Hereafter Samuel D. McConnell Papers)

⁵⁶The Correspondence of Will and Ju Stockton, 1845-1869. Herman Ulmer, Jr. Trans. (1989), 83. Florida State Archives, Tallahassee. (Hereafter Stockton Correspondence)

⁵⁷Hugh Black, Letters of Captain Hugh Black to his family in Florida during the War Between the States, 1862-1864. Compiled by Elizabeth Caldwell Frano. (Newbury: 1998), (Hereafter Black Letters)

and citizen soldier. . . .”⁵⁸ Robert Watson, while serving in early 1862 with a Coast Guard Company that would become Company K of the 7th Florida Infantry, described in his journal his company, which was stationed at Tampa taking target practice: “. . . a great many of the company did not hit the target and I hit in the same place, my gun gave me an awful kick and I really thought my jawbone was broke.”⁵⁹ Watson also wrote that while not on the drill field, the men fished, hunted, and at night played cards and sang round the campfire.⁶⁰ Watson’s only complaint about his new military lifestyle was that “the fleas are awful.”⁶¹

Some of the soldiers became quickly disgusted and tired of army life. Roddy Shaw admitted after viewing the officers of his company in drill that he had decided to “apply for an office in the army as there are so many applications now on hand and a great many are from persons who do not know half as much about military tactics as I do. There are several officers now who know nothing at all scarcely about it.”⁶² Washington Ives, writing from Mobile on June 26, 1862, asserted the view of many of the Floridians who left their state for the theaters of war in Tennessee and Virginia: “. . . if I ever get back to Florida no desire to travel will cause me to

⁵⁸Civil War Journal and Letters of Serg. Washington Ives, 4th Florida C.S.A., Trans. Jim R. Cabaniss, 20. Special Collections, Strozier Library, Florida State University, Tallahassee. (Hereafter Cabaniss)

⁵⁹R. Thomas Campbell, Editor. Southern Service on Land & Sea: The Wartime Journal of Robert Watson, CSA/CSN. (Knoxville: 2002), 18. (Hereafter Southern Service)

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 15, 16.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 23.

⁶²Shaw Letters. After his enlistment in the 1st ran out in April, 1862, Shaw enlisted in Company A of the 4th Florida, where he eventually rose to the rank of Lieutenant. During the Atlanta Campaign in May 1864, while directing his company’s skirmish line, 23-year-old Shaw was killed.

leave it. . . .”⁶³ Hugh Black expressed in a letter to his wife that “. . . the day I left Florida was the sadest [sic] day of my life.”⁶⁴ There was little the men could do to return to their native state, as few furloughs were issued. Medical discharges and a debilitating wound were grounds for discharge, but early in the war many of the men thought themselves invulnerable to Federal bullets.

In fact, this feeling of invincibility many of the Floridians possessed before they faced the realities of war bordered almost on cockiness. Lieutenant Black exclaimed, “I have no idea of being killed in a fight. I think I would rather fight than plough any time.”⁶⁵ When his wife, who was in Marietta, Georgia, expressed concern over Federal incursions up the Tennessee River into Alabama, Lieutenant Samuel McConnell reassured her, “I do not think there is any probability of their coming to Marietta. It is too far into the interior for them to go. They will not leave their gunboats for they know we can whip them upon land.”⁶⁶ Major William T. Stockton wrote to his wife Ju, upon receiving orders for Tennessee, “[w]e must go, and I am in my best position. Cheer me darling”⁶⁷ Young William Duvall Randolph, while standing guard on the mainland opposite Fort Pickens, claimed that hearing “Yankee Doodle and other national airs of the United States” made his “spunk rise” and he “only wanted to have a thousand kegs of powder under the

⁶³Cabaniss, 21.

⁶⁴Black Letters.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶Samuel D. McConnell Papers.

⁶⁷Stockton Correspondence, 99.

fort with a long train.”⁶⁸ Randolph wrote he would “willingly risk my life to touch it off.”⁶⁹ Such were the feelings of those who answered the call to arms in 1861 and 1862.

The lone Cavalry regiment organized in 1861 that eventually saw action in the western theater was the First Florida Cavalry. William George Mackey Davis, a rather wealthy Leon County lawyer, “. . . widely known as a gentleman of great legal ability and high rank in his profession . . .”⁷⁰ took it upon himself to form a regiment of Cavalry in the summer of 1861. The regiment, like the 3rd and 4th Florida Infantry Regiments formed during that summer, consisted of men from the north central area of the state. The counties of Nassau, Clay, Suwannee, Columbia, Levy, Duval, and Alachua were all represented in the regiment. In midsummer the companies, “assembled at Camp Mary David, six miles south of Tallahassee, where” they “went into camp of instruction, and was mustered to service in July 1861.”⁷¹

For the first several months of its existence, the 1st Cavalry was known as Davis’s Cavalry Battalion, with its strength listed as eight companies. Though William Davis was elected colonel, for the months the companies were listed as a battalion, he was commissioned by the Confederate War Department as Lieutenant Colonel, with George Troupe Maxwell, a physician who had previously served in the 1st Florida Infantry, elected Major. William T. Stockton was commissioned captain. Later upon gaining ten companies and officially becoming a regiment in the winter of 1862, Davis was promoted to Colonel and George Maxwell became the Lieutenant Colonel. Captain William T. Stockton’s commission as Major came through in February 1862.

⁶⁸Randolph Family Papers

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰Dickison, 199.

⁷¹Soldiers of Florida,

Major William T. Stockton, was a Pennsylvania-born West Pointer, having graduated eighth in the Class of 1834. During his service in the United States Army, Stockton served as an assistant instructor of artillery at West Point during the summer of 1834. Following this, he reported for duty with the 2nd Artillery and remained with that unit until the death of his brother Richard at the Alamo caused him to resign his commission in 1836. Since the early 1840s he had been a resident of Quincy where he served as a captain in the State Cavalry.⁷² He was a planter, and also employed by the post road service. Stockton was not able to join the 1st Florida Cavalry at its inception at Camp Mary David in the summer of 1861. Instead, as a representative of the Confederate War Department from July to November, he traveled to various camps around the state mustering the troops into Confederate service.

Governor John Milton was against the raising of a regiment of cavalry from the time he took office. His argument, sent to Jefferson Davis on October 18, 1861, relayed how the cavalry had corrupted possible recruits for the infantry regiments: “The large majority of those who were willing to serve as soldiers of infantry are now in favor of riding into service. . . .”⁷³ He further made a contention that a cavalry regiment was not needed, for “a battle will never be fought in Florida by cavalry, unless the want of proper coast defenses, artillery, and infantry shall induce an invasion, and then be fought at a great disadvantage.”⁷⁴

Milton’s pleas for the disbandment of the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment fell on deaf ears in the Confederate War Department. In fact, his mood seemed to have changed when on November 7

⁷²Stockton Correspondence, 57-b.

⁷³Official Records, Series I, Vol. VI., 290. The 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment was authorized by Milton’s predecessor Madison Starke Perry. When Milton was sworn into office, the cavalry battalion, as it was then, had already been accepted into Confederate service.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

he sent a telegraph to Judah P. Benjamin exclaiming, “Seven companies Davis’s regiments mustered. Much needed now. No field officers appointed. Send commissions.”⁷⁵ In December he was again for disbanding Colonel Davis’s regiment. In another letter addressed to Judah P. Benjamin he predicted that General Trapier would “be more anxious to get rid of what is known as Davis Cavalry Regiment than he was to receive it. It will prove useless and vastly expensive.”⁷⁶ Four days later Governor Milton had another change of heart about Colonel Davis’s regiment, saying the soldiers were “a fine body of men, are good citizens and if they shall be armed and equipped and properly drilled upon any occasion that may be presented will do credit to themselves and the country.”⁷⁷ The Battalion which became the target of Governor Milton’s whims remained outside Tallahassee for instruction during the remainder of 1861. In January 1862, the newly named 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment had present thirty-five officers and 761 enlisted men. Not long after the new year began, seven companies of the regiment moved to Camp Trapier near Callahan, northwest of Jacksonville.

The men who flocked to the colors of the Florida regiments were citizen soldiers from every walk of life. Benton Ellis remembered his Company C of the 3rd Infantry “was composed of young men from 18 to 25 and 30 years old, and from all classes, farmers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, and students.”⁷⁸ He added, “[m]y brother and I were attending school at the Brooksville Academy and left it to join the army.”⁷⁹ The average age of the eighty-seven men of

⁷⁵Official Records, Series I, Vol. LIII., 185.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 209.

⁷⁸“Short Record.”

⁷⁹*Ibid.*

Company C was twenty-five, with twenty-eight of that number enlisting before they were yet twenty. The youngest volunteer was fifteen while the oldest was forty-four. The largest number represented in any of the age groups of the Company was twenty-three, which ten listed as their age. At least twenty-four of the eighty-seven were born outside the state, with eighteen being natives of Georgia, three Alabamians, two from South Carolina, and one from North Carolina. Surviving records show that eight listed their occupation as farming, while one was a mechanic. Captain Saxon, as mentioned, was a surveyor.⁸⁰

Robert Watson described his Coast Guard company which became the nucleus of Company K of the 7th Florida as a:

cosmopolitan company, it is composed of Yankees, Crackers, Conchs, Englishmen, Spaniards, Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, Poles, Irishmen, Swedes, Chinese, Portugese, Brazilians, 1 Rock Scorpion Crusoe; but all are good southern men. There are also Scotsmen, Welshmen, and some half Indians, surely this is the greatest mixture of nations for a small company that I ever heard of.⁸¹

Though many of the Coast Guardsmen were discharged from the service when the Company was converted to infantry, enough remained to give Company K an international flavor. Most were mariners and fishermen who had lived in Key West prior to the conflict, and like Robert Watson fled that place in favor of the mainland. Six had been born as British subjects in either the Bahamas, West Indies, or Gibraltar. Two were from England itself. Spain also was represented by a pair of soldiers within the Company, as was Germany. Italy had one of its sons in the ranks as well.⁸²

⁸⁰Hartman and Coles, Volume I, 285-293.

⁸¹Southern Service, 27.

⁸²Hartman and Coles, Volume II, 769-778.

Washington Ives noted that “3/4ths [three-quarters] of Co. C are boys of about my age.”⁸³ Maybe not quite three-quarters, but at least half were under the age of twenty-one, which also was the average age of the men in the Company. Like Company C, 3rd Florida, twenty-four soldiers in Ives’s Company were immigrants who had moved to Florida in the 1850s in search of cheap land and a new start. These included Georgians, North and South Carolinians, and one “Connecticut Yankee.”⁸⁴

The average age and number of those born outside the state rose considerably when looking at Company A, 1st Florida Cavalry. Of the 115 who were mustered into the company in the summer of 1861, forty-eight were born in either Alabama, South Carolina, or Georgia. Forty were listed as farmers while one was a physician, another was a lawyer, and one had been a clerk in civilian life. The majority of these men were in their twenties and teens, with seventy-nine being under the age of thirty. A further thirty-nine of this number were not yet twenty when they enlisted. The youngest was but fourteen, while the oldest had been born in 1803.⁸⁵ They were both discharged soon after their enlistment.

The men, regardless of their ages, status and positions in civilian life, all shared the same hardships as soldiers. They enlisted, fought, and died for various reasons. Earl J. Hess, in his overview of the Kentucky Campaign Banners to the Breeze, claimed the Confederate States had three war goals: “[A]chieve independence, to protect their homeland, and to preserve slavery.”⁸⁶ Similar to most regiments raised in the Confederacy, those Floridians who served in the Florida

⁸³Ives Diary,

⁸⁴Hartman and Coles, Volume I, 386-396.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, Vol IV, 1319-1329.

⁸⁶Earl J. Hess, Banners to the Breeze. (Lincoln: 2000), 27.

Brigade of the West were men who fought for each of the above reasons. Men like Colonels Madison Starke Perry, J. Patton Anderson, and William G. M. Davis went to war to protect their Planter Society.

Others such as Samuel D. McConnell seemed to favor fighting for independence and the protection of their new country. McConnell wrote that he would “. . . render what aid there may be in my power, in defense of my country. If so, I will go in the conviction that I am fighting in a just cause. . . .”⁸⁷ One of the men who ‘followed’ in Company H, 3rd Florida Infantry, Michael Oliver Raysor, wrote his wife reasserting his reason for enlisting: “[Y]ou know the situation of our country and some body will have to do the fighting and it is much my duty to defend our state as any body else.”⁸⁸ Another soldier of the 3rd Florida, Archibald Livingston, maintained after the conflict at Perryville, Kentucky, in October 1862, that he was “still cheerful & ready to persevere longer for Confederate freedom & independence.”⁸⁹ Major Stockton explained to his wife in 1862 that in Tennessee “. . . is the danger and there I must go. No attack will be made on the interior except from the North-west. And, darling, I go to drive them back.”⁹⁰ Indeed, in Tennessee was the danger, and the 1st Florida Cavalry, and 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th Florida Infantry would be ordered to that distant state to fight. But as 1861 closed, the destination for the Regiments in Florida was still unclear and they passed that Christmas in camps across the state.

⁸⁷Samuel D. McConnell Papers.

⁸⁸Michael O. Raysor Papers, 1861- 1864. Special Collections, PK Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville. (Hereafter Raysor Papers)

⁸⁹John M. Coski, Editor. “I Am In Anything For Success: The Letters of Sergeant Archie Livingston, 3rd Florida Infantry” in North and South, Vol. VI, No. 3, April 2003, 77. (Hereafter Coski)

⁹⁰Stockton Correspondence, 97.

As 1861 faded into 1862, the volunteers of the 1st Cavalry, and 1st, 3rd, and 4th Florida Infantry were being transformed into soldiers, well drilled and disciplined. As the New Year dawned, no doubt many shared Robert Watson's prayer for 1862: that it would be a "more peaceable and happy year to us all."⁹¹ However, the real war still lay ahead and peace was three long years away.

⁹¹Southern Service, 13.

CHAPTER II

“Hurra For Florida”

January - June 1862

The new year brought the 4th Florida’s first defeat in combat. On January 16, sailors from the *U.S.S. Hatteras* made a bold foray onto several of the islands that lie off Cedar Key. Besides succeeding in destroying the railroad depot, two pieces of heavy artillery, the telegraph office, rail cars, and several vessels, the sailors also made away with fourteen soldiers of Company F, 4th Florida Infantry.¹ George F. Emmons, Commander of *Hatteras*, noted in his report of four prisoners, “. . . upon the recommendation of the medical officer, I thought it advisable to permit them to go, taking the oath not to take up arms against our Government until regularly exchanged. . . .”² In the January monthly report for the Department of Middle and East Florida, the 4th Florida Infantry Regiment was listed as having present for duty thirty-seven officers and 474 enlisted men. Its aggregate total was 777, down one hundred four men from the previous month. The 4th Florida remained on coastal duty for the rest of its service in Florida. In January, Augustus Henry Mathers, an assistant surgeon stationed with the regiment, noted that the soldiers were “fully fitted out with every-thing proper for a Soldier to have Cartridge Box full of powder

¹Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. (Washington: 1892-1922) Series I, Vol. 17, 48.

²*Ibid.*, 49.

and balls Caps & Led for action.”³

The 4th Florida suffered its second defeat of the war on February 25 when the companies of the regiment, then stationed on Amelia Island off Fernandina, were ordered to evacuate that place and retreat to the mainland. The order, which called for the evacuation of Amelia Island, came from the headquarters of the department which encompassed the coastal areas of South Carolina, Georgia, and East Florida, commanded by General Robert E. Lee. After the debacle at Roanoke Island off the North Carolina coast in early February, the Confederate War Department was not prepared to lose more soldiers in the forlorn defense of a coastal island. Colonel Edward Hopkins successfully coordinated the evacuation of all Confederate forces from the island in the early hours of March 3, along with civilians who fled from Fernandina. The only casualties suffered by the 4th Florida during the evacuation were six soldiers who accompanied a Lieutenant Colonel D. P. Holland out to a “bark, wearing French colors” on March 2, that “hoisted signals for a pilot.”⁴ After the Floridians arrived at the vessel under a Flag of Truce, they abruptly discovered the ship “proved to be a Federal vessel,” and the men were “captured by the perfidious craft.”⁵ The men were released from Federal custody not long after.

While the forces of Florida were struggling to protect their coastline against incursions by Federal troops, the situation in the ‘Heartland’ of the Confederacy was growing critical. By March the Union Armies of the Tennessee and the Ohio had swept a Confederate Army from

³Franklin A. Doty, ed. “The Civil War Letters of Augustus Henry Mathers, Assistant Surgeon, Fourth Florida Regiment, C. S. A.,” in The Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol. 36, Issue 2. (St. Augustine: 1957), 116. (Hereafter Doty)

⁴Official Records, Series I, Vol. VI., 95.

⁵*Ibid.*, 95. For Colonel Edwards Hopkins report on the evacuation of Amelia Island, and Brigadier General James H. Trapier, commanding the Department of Middle and East Florida, see 93-95.

Kentucky and taken the Tennessee capital of Nashville. Union gunboats penetrated up the Tennessee River as far as Huntsville, Alabama. As the month wore on, the Union Army of the Tennessee, Ulysses S. Grant commanding, disembarked at Pittsburg Landing in Southwestern Tennessee, less than twenty miles from the rail town of Corinth. If this town was captured, one of the most important east-west supply and communication lines of the Confederate 'Heartland' would be severed.

In mid-March, Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston and his second-in-command, General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, began gathering the components of their Western Army at Corinth to counter any Union advance. To supplement the outnumbered soldiers of the Western Army, on February 18, Braxton Bragg's Gulf Coast forces were ordered, along with other Confederate forces in New Orleans and Mobile, to proceed to Corinth. The first regiments began departing Pensacola on February 26.⁶

The 1st Florida, encamped at Deer Point just south of Gulf Breeze, was one of the last regiments of General Bragg's force to depart the Pensacola area. Lieutenant Colonel William K. Beard was in command of the regiment, for the news of Patton Anderson's promotion to Brigadier General arrived at Bragg's headquarters on February 8.⁷ On March 7, these instructions were given to Colonel Beard:

You will keep constantly on the alert, and if attacked by an overpowering force, or if you should discover two or more buildings in the naval yard to be on fire, you will take your men on the steamer [*Tom Murray*] first firing the buildings, if possible, and proceed immediately to Bagdad and Milton, and there burn every foot of lumber, the saw-mills, and boats, including

⁶Official Records, Series I, Vol., 828, 836.

⁷*Ibid.*, 823-824. There existed in early February a problem of command in the Pensacola Army when S. A. M. Wood of Alabama and junior to Patton Anderson was promoted to Brigadier General. For the details of this 'controversy' see the above pages and 820.

the steamer *Tom Murray*, and everything that can be of any service to the enemy.⁸

On March 10 an order given by Bragg's successor, Major General Samuel Jones, was received by Colonel Beard instructing him to execute the orders of March 7. The only change in the directive was that the *Tom Murray* was to be spared its fiery fate and instead, it was to be used to ferry the command "as far up the Escambia [River] as near to Pollard [Alabama] as you can approach. . .

."⁹ The raid was a success, but the regiment was delayed in leaving for Corinth due to the time lost in reassembling the unit. Writing from Jackson, Mississippi, Braxton Bragg sent a query to his successor in Pensacola: "Where is Florida Regiment and Eighth Mississippi?"¹⁰ The answer came the following day when General Jones ordered the four companies of the regiment that remained behind in Pensacola and on Deer Point to rendezvous at Pollard, Alabama, with the remainder of the regiment. The 1st Florida Infantry Regiment was to proceed to Corinth, Mississippi, as soon as the regiment was assembled.

The Confederate Naval Department was not very pleased with the destruction caused by Beard's detachment. The burning of two nearly completed gunboats, thirty-five miles up Escambia Bay from Pickens, by Beard's men on the night of March 10, caused rancor in the Confederate Naval Commander overseeing the boats' construction. "When I was at Pensacola," Eben Farrand complained to Confederate Naval Secretary Stephen Mallory, "I saw no unusual number of enemy's ships off the port, nor could I discover the necessity for the destruction of the gunboats."¹¹ The situation reached Jefferson Davis, who had then Secretary of War G. W.

⁸*Ibid.*, 843.

⁹*Ibid.*, 849.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 857.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 894.

Randolph order General Sam Jones to “make a report of the facts of the case.”¹² On April 28, Jones was relieved of command of the Department of Alabama and Florida and given command of the garrison of Mobile.¹³

Only two hundred and fifty men of the 1st Florida Infantry Regiment ever reached Corinth. The rest remained in Montgomery until April 3, 1862, when their enlistments were due to end. However, those who arrived in Corinth were reenlisted for three years and organized into the 1st Florida Battalion of four companies under Major Thadeus McDonnell, Lieutenant Colonel Beard having been assigned to Braxton Bragg’s staff. The four companies were commanded by William G. Poole, T. S. Means, W. Capers Bird, and John E. Miller. The 1st Florida Battalion was placed in the brigade of its former commander, J. Patton Anderson. Anderson commanded the Second Brigade of Daniel Ruggles’s Division, which was the first of Major General Braxton Bragg’s Second Corps, Army of the Mississippi.

That Army, some 40,000 strong, General Albert Sidney Johnston commanding, moved from its encampments at Corinth toward Shiloh on April 3. The design which Johnston’s second-in-command, P. G. T. Beauregard, envisioned was a surprise attack on the Union Army of the Tennessee, designed to push the Army away from its supply line on the Tennessee River. Once isolated in the wilderness of southwestern Tennessee, Beauregard reasoned, the Federal army could be effectively destroyed. The attack was rushed for fear the other Union army in Tennessee, the Army of the Ohio, would reinforce Grant’s Army of the Tennessee, making a Confederate victory almost impossible. A rough march, confusion in the ranks, and rain caused a delay in the plans, moving the attack from the morning of April 5 to the morning of April 6. On that Sunday morning the lead skirmishers of the Confederate Army moved out of the mist and

¹²*Ibid.*, 893.

¹³Official Records, Series I, Vol. XV., 764.

began engaging the pickets of advance Federal units. At five a.m. the firing began in earnest and the battle to save the 'Heartland' was on.

The Floridians, along with the remainder of Anderson's brigade, arrived on the field at Shiloh two hours after the battle had begun. The 1st Florida Battalion splashed across Shiloh Branch, a small stream which bisected the southern edge of the battlefield from northwest to southeast, and entered Rea Field making their way northeast toward the Tennessee River. The Floridians, along with two other units from Anderson's brigade, the 17th Louisiana and the Confederate Guard Response Battalion [also from Louisiana], "made a charge up a hill into the edge of the enemy's camp, [that of the 53rd Ohio] but his battery [Battery E, First Illinois Light Artillery] was playing upon them with such vigor that they fell back a short distance to a point where they were sheltered by the brow of the hill."¹⁴ It was probably in this attack that Major McDonnell was wounded.¹⁵

As the Major was carried to the rear, command of the battalion was passed to Captain W. G. Poole of A Company. Company A First Lieutenant Lawrence Anderson took command of the company in Poole's stead. In the first charge made against the camp of the 53rd Ohio, Poole related that he "lost several of my command in killed and wounded."¹⁶ Reorganizing at the base of the hill, the Floridians waited out the next attack and then joined the brigade's advance northwestward toward Shiloh Church and the main encampments of William T. Sherman's Fifth Division of the Army of the Tennessee. However it was probably during the 3:30 p.m. attack on

¹⁴Official Records, Series I, Vol. X., 497.

¹⁵Both Patton Anderson and W. G. Poole's reports of Major McDonnell's wounding give only vague details. Poole writes that McDonnell was "wounded early in the action" and Patton Anderson reports that the Major was "borne wounded from the field before the action had fairly begun." Both reports are *Ibid.*, 502, 504.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 504.

the Sunken Road, or “Hornet’s Nest” where Poole related that “our battalion suffered most.”¹⁷

The Sunken Road was held by roughly two divisions of U. S. Grant’s Army of the Tennessee, those of Benjamin Prentiss and W. H. L. Wallace. Colonel James M. Tuttle’s brigade of Iowans formed the right of the defensive line, directly in the path of Patton Anderson’s advancing Confederates. Tuttle, in his report, claimed that the Confederates made four attacks upon his position, “but were each time baffled and completely routed.”¹⁸ Moving through a cotton field towards Tuttle’s Iowans, the Florida battalion drew the fire of several of the Federal regiments. First Lieutenant Lawrence Anderson, leading Company A forward, was struck in the forehead by a round and killed instantly. E. C. Stevens became the third commander of Company A in the course of the morning. Poole wrote, “[i]n a few minutes, he was also severely wounded.”¹⁹ Command of the company then passed to Lieutenant Joseph Turner of Company C. Also in this attack Captain T. S. Means, the Commanding Officer of Company B, and his second-in-command both were wounded, as were the acting-commanding officer of Company C and O. P. Hull, the Lieutenant in command of D Company.

In the span of only minutes the Florida Battalion was deprived of many key officers and its dead and wounded enlisted men lay like a carpet on the field. Nevertheless, the 1st Florida Battalion advanced on April 6 to, in the words of Captain Poole, within the “range of the heavy guns on the Tennessee River, where we were for some time exposed to the enemy’s shells.”²⁰ The Floridians lost two men to the concentrated fire of Union artillery positioned along a ridge

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 149. Also for an illustration of the 3:30 PM attack see Map 9, p. 205 in Larry J. Daniel’s Shiloh. (New York: 1997).

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 504.

²⁰*Ibid.*

running west from the banks of the river. As darkness descended and a curtain of rain began to fall in an attempt to screen off the horrible butchery, the survivors of the 1st Florida Battalion lay down among the dead and tried to sleep, despite the drenching downpour and the cries and pleas of the wounded.

The attack on the Union Army, while succeeding in gaining ground and throwing the Federal ranks into some initial confusion, was an overall failure. By the end of the day the Union Army of the Tennessee held a strong line around Pittsburg Landing. As long as the Union Army held that precious stretch of land along the banks of the Tennessee it could be supplied and reinforced. That is exactly what happened.

While the rain fell that night, the advance elements of the Union Army of the Ohio that had reached the east bank of the Tennessee River by marching from Nashville began to move across and disembarked at Pittsburg Landing. The next morning, Monday, April 7, with fresh forces on the field, the combined Union Armies counterattacked.

The 1st Florida Battalion was that morning under Captain W. Capers Bird of Company C, who assumed command when Captain Poole found he was too hoarse to give orders. During the day the Battalion, along with the rest of the Confederate Army, was forced back across the ground they had advanced across the day before. No report exists of the Floridians' activities on the second day of the battle. Nevertheless, the battalion is mentioned in the reports of the second day's fight by the Commanding Officer of the Confederate Guards Response Battalion, Franklin Clack, who when rallying his troops on a hill overlooking the Union camps around Shiloh Church, noticed that some 1st Florida soldiers were included in the ranks.²¹ General Patton Anderson related that when several of the regiments began running short of ammunition on the afternoon of April 7, he "detailed a non-commissioned officer and two men from the First Florida

²¹*Ibid.*, 511.

Battalion to go in search of ammunition.”²² Later that night Anderson’s brigade was ordered from the field and told to make its way back to Corinth.

Of the two hundred and fifty men engaged at Shiloh, the Floridians lost two officers (Lawrence Anderson and O. P. Hull) and fourteen enlisted men. A further fifty-eight were wounded. In his report, Patton Anderson lauded the conduct of his former command and its acting commander W. G. Poole. The way “in which Poole handled his command reflected the highest credit upon him as an officer,” and the battalion’s conduct in the fight “brings new luster to the arms of the State they represented, and paints imperishable fame upon the colors they so proudly bore.”²³ The Floridians retired to Corinth where the remainder of the Army of the Mississippi, P. G. T. Beauregard commanding since Albert Sidney Johnston was killed on the first day of Shiloh, waited for the advance of the combined Federal armies that was sure to come. In late April as the Union Armies made a slow march toward the Army of the Mississippi, the Floridians were consolidated with the two Louisiana companies of the Guards Response Battalion to form the Florida and Confederate Guards Battalion.²⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Franklin Clack of the Guards Battalion became the commander of the combined forces.

The 3rd Florida Infantry and 1st Florida Cavalry experienced some skirmishing in March outside Jacksonville and along the beaches at New Smyrna. Jacksonville came under Union occupation for the first time during the war on March 9, 1862. When this occurred Colonel William Dilworth, then acting commander of the Department of Middle and East Florida, moved his eight companies of the 3rd Florida Infantry to a point within “10 miles of the city” to observe enemy movements and to “commence a system of annoyances by attacking their pickets, foraging

²²*Ibid.*, 501.

²³*Ibid.*, 502.

²⁴Soldiers of Florida, 39.

parties, &c.”²⁵ On the night of March 24, Lieutenant Thomas Strange of K Company, along with two other lieutenants and ten men, attacked a Federal outpost at the “Brick Church” located “where LaVilla Junction now stands.”²⁶ In a brief but sharp firefight four Federal soldiers were killed and three were captured. Lieutenant Strange, a veteran of the Mexican War, was mortally wounded, thus becoming the first man of the 3rd Florida to die in action.²⁷ The 1st Florida Cavalry under Colonel Davis was then moved toward Jacksonville and continued the raids against the Union perimeter. On April 9 the Federal garrison was evacuated.

On March 23, one day prior to the expedition undertaken by Lieutenant Strange outside Jacksonville, the companies of the 3rd Florida under Captains Daniel Bird and Matthew Strain, who were in New Smyrna guarding munitions unloaded by blockade-runners, ambushed an expedition launched from the United States Navy gunboats *Penguin* and *Henry Andrew*. In the ensuing skirmish Bird reported that Union party abandoned its launches when fired upon and suffered seven killed, “about thirty wounded,” and three taken prisoner.²⁸ Among those killed was the captain of the *Henry Andrew* and a lieutenant from *Penguin*. There were no Confederate casualties.

While small, isolated skirmishes like those mentioned above occurred, for the most part the regiments which remained in Florida battled an unseen enemy. This killer which lurked in the camps reaped victims like the Angel of Death: it was disease. Augustus Henry Mathers, the assistant surgeon serving with the 4th Florida Infantry, wrote to his wife in December 1861 relating to her the situation of health at Fernandina: “. . . there is quite a number of Sick here,

²⁵Official Records, Series I, Vol. VI., 131.

²⁶Soldiers of Florida, 100

²⁷Dickison, 44.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 111-112.

more than ought to be at this Season of the Year. I fear this is a Sickley place, and if So, what will it be in the Spring and Summer.”²⁹ Writing from the 1st Florida Cavalry’s Camp Trapier near Callahan on February 16, 1862, Major William Stockton informed his wife that “[t]he measles are quite rife here. In one company of 70 men, 23 were laid up as shown by the sick reports.”³⁰ The ex-professor turned First Lieutenant of the 7th Florida Infantry’s Company G, Samuel Darwin McConnell, who bragged earlier that he ‘wasn’t sick in the least,’ let his wife know in a May letter that one of the men of his company had died of sickness. At the time he noted that it was the second death which occurred in his company due to disease. The Lieutenant added, “. . . we have a great many sick with measles, and one of them very ill. The ladies have a hospital fitted up in town, and, are very kind in attending to the sick soldiers.”³¹ In the same letter, written from Camp Lee near Gainesville, he told of his own bout with the sickness that existed in his camp:

On Sunday, the day after my return, [from Tallahassee] I was very much surprised to find I had the measles. I was surprised because I had passed through an attack of them when I was a child. I am glad to inform you, that my attack this time proved to be very light; so much so, that I did not go up to the Hotel, but remained in Camp, and was not sick enough to keep my bed, but remained in my tent to avoid taking cold.³²

McConnell recovered from his light bout of measles; others were not so fortunate. He later wrote in June that he was ready for Tennessee because “I don’t [sic] think there is any more danger in

²⁹Doty, 111.

³⁰Stockton Correspondence, 91.

³¹Samuel D. McConnell Papers.

³²*Ibid.*

active service, than there is from disease in an idle life in camp.”³³ Many of the men who attempted to make soldiers of themselves were never given the opportunity. Instead they filled shallow graves, killed by the attack, not of the enemy, but of invisible germs that flourished in the unhealthy climates of the camps.

Besides disease, brushes with death in the camps came from the most unexpected places. For Major William T. Stockton, his scare came on March 22 after six deserters were captured and Stockton, then the acting commander of the camp at Callahan, had them placed under arrest and bound. Later that evening he was approached by civilians who were disgruntled over Stockton’s treatment of the men. Stockton refused the civilians’ requests to have the men untied, although “[one] woman had a double barreled gun, and several had revolvers.”³⁴ The civilians eventually melted away when they found Stockton’s will unwavering, and nothing came of the incident.

While Robert Watson was still serving in the Coast Guard Company that would eventually become Company K, 7th Florida Infantry, he witnessed one of those situations that could have resulted in accidental death. “After breakfast,” Watson noted in his diary on February 13, 1862, “as I sat on my bed smoking my pipe and looking at Bill Tolbert, his pistol, a Colt’s revolver, went off. The ball passed through his hip but luckily only going through the flesh without striking the bone or chords, I acted doctor.”³⁵

These dangerous camps in Florida grew in number in the early spring 1862 when the 6th Florida and 7th Florida Infantry Regiments were organized for the defense of the state. These new regiments, along with the 5th Florida which saw service in the Army of Northern Virginia, were deemed necessary because on March 1, 1862, a telegraph arrived at the headquarters of General

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴Stockton Correspondence, 106-a.

³⁵Southern Service, 24.

Trapier ordering the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment to Corinth along with any “troops not necessary to prevent the enemy from penetrating into the interior.”³⁶ This meant the 3rd and 4th Florida Infantry Regiments would be moving to the western theater as soon as the arrangements could be made. Robert E. Lee, on March 13, telegraphed Governor Milton telling him that he “desired General Trapier to see what arrangements could be made for the defense of the State by organizing new troops for local defense.”³⁷ Lee also suggested to Milton that it would be “determined under instructions by the War Department what other forces could be spared to reinforce our operations in the West.”³⁸ John Milton replied to Secretary of War G. W. Randolph on April 10 to say two new regiments, the 5th and 6th, would be organized in the coming weeks and explained these regiments would “serve during the war, and wherever their services may be necessary.”³⁹

The 6th Florida selected its officers and was mustered in on April 14, 1862. Its companies, which in late April were stationed at the Mount Vernon Arsenal at Chattahoochee and Ricco’s Bluff, a strategic location on the Apalachicola River, consisted of men from Gadsden, Jackson, Union, Collier, and Washington counties.⁴⁰ In late April those present for duty numbered 542.⁴¹

The Colonel of the 6th Florida was Jesse Johnson Finley. He was born in Lebanon, Tennessee, on November 18, 1812, and by the time he moved to Florida in 1846 he had been a State senator

³⁶Official Records, Series I, Vol. VI., 400.

³⁷Official Records, Series I, Vol. LIII., 223.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹*Ibid.*, 231.

⁴⁰Joseph H. Crute, Jr. Units of the Confederate Army, (Gaithersburg: 1987), 76.

⁴¹Official Records, Series I, Vol. XIV., 488.

in Arkansas and the mayor of Memphis. Finley was also involved in politics in Florida. In 1850 he was elected to the state Senate and in 1853 he was elected as judge of Florida's Western Circuit.⁴² He served in this capacity until Florida seceded from the Union in January 1861. In fact, Finley was in Tallahassee for the Secession Convention, where he swore in President John C. McGehee.⁴³ He originally was chosen to serve as a Confederate judge, but gave up this position to join the Army. In November 1863 he was promoted to Brigadier General and would be the first commander of the Florida Brigade of the West. His second in command was Lieutenant Colonel Angus McLean who, while serving as Colonel of the regiment, was killed at Dallas, Georgia, in 1864. The Major was Daniel Kenan. Finley's regiment remained in camp along the Apalachicola River until June when it was ordered to Tennessee. At that time it numbered 1,100 men and was described as "fully armed."⁴⁴

The 7th Florida was organized in Gainesville on April 11, 1862. It contained companies which had been mustered into service earlier in the year and each had operated independently in various regions of the state. K Company for instance, to which Sergeant Robert Watson belonged, had been a Florida Coast Guard Company stationed in Tampa before it was converted to infantry and assigned to the 7th Florida. Its Colonel was Madison Starke Perry, the ex-governor who had served from 1857-1861 and pushed so hard for the secession of the state. Robert Bullock, a lawyer from Ocala was elected as Lieutenant Colonel. He served as Colonel of the Regiment from December 1863 through 1864, and would command the Florida Brigade from the latter date until he was severely wounded at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on December 4, 1864. The First

⁴²James M. Denham. "From A Territorial To A State Judiciary: Florida's Antebellum Courts and Judges" in Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol. 73, Issue 4. (St. Augustine: 1995), 451.

⁴³Dickison, 7, 202.

⁴⁴ Official Records, Series I, Vol. XIV., 512.

Lieutenant of Bullock's Company, Samuel D. McConnell, was promoted to Captain following Bullock's election to Lieutenant Colonel. The Major was Tillman Ingram.

The 7th Florida's companies were raised in the counties of Bradford, Hillsborough, Alachua, Manatee, and Marion. The ranks of Company K included several men from Key West who dubbed their Company aptly, the "Key West Avengers." Watson was a mariner and skilled carpenter from Key West who fled that place in September of 1861, because as in his words, ". . . it is rather unsafe for a southern man to live here."⁴⁵ He joined the Coast Guard in December of 1861 and remained in Tampa from that time until Company K departed for Tennessee on June 27. On the days following his mustering into Confederate service by a Major Thomas on April 25, Watson and K Company engaged in much drill, and on April 28 Watson was elected as 2nd Sergeant of the company. He and several of his fellow soldiers were not pleased however with finding themselves in the Infantry when many had worked as mariners for the better part of their lives. In a rather bizarre episode which took place on May 1, 1862, and seemed more like a scene from the production *Mister Roberts*, Watson and several of his comrades drew up the following petition to send to Secretary of the Navy, Stephen R. Mallory:

Fort Brooks, Tampa, Fla. May 1 1862. To the Hon. Stephen R. Mallory, Director of the Navy, Confederate States of America, Sir: The undersigned Marines, Citizens of Key West, Fla., would respectively represent that they have been in the service of the State of Florida Coast Guard since the month of December last, that lately they have been reorganized and are now members of Captain Robert B. Smith's Company, 7th Regt. Florida Volunteers regularly mustered into the service of the Confederate States for three years of the war and stationed at Tampa, Fla. That they are sincerely anxious to render good and efficient service to their country and are satisfied that the Army is not the proper place for them, that they have been informed that Seamen in the Army can be transferred to the Navy, and therefor make this their application, and pray to be transferred to a Gun Boat or other vessel of war where they may have a chance to meet the enemy and strike for their Country's cause. Very respectfully/

⁴⁵Southern Service, 5.

Your obedient servants.⁴⁶

In all twenty-five men signed the petition. On May 4 it was sent on its way to Richmond and as Watson described, “Capt. Smith is dreadfully put out, he says we want to break up the company.”⁴⁷ No reply to the men’s request came from Stephen Mallory in May nor in June. On June 27, when Company K began its march to Tennessee, Watson and the other Key West Conchs were still with the Company. It would be two years before their request was granted.

While Companies K and B were encamped around Tampa, the other eight companies of the 7th Florida Infantry were stationed at Camp Lee outside Gainesville. In early April the companies that would become the 7th Florida Infantry Regiment began to converge on Gainesville for the purpose of being mustered into Confederate service. Samuel McConnell’s company was in Ocala on April 3, 1862, when he informed his wife Mary “next Monday our company will proceed to Gainesville to be mustered into Confederate service.”⁴⁸ It was McConnell’s opinion that the 7th Florida “. . . will be sent off after a while, as soon as we are well drilled.”⁴⁹ When they first arrived in Gainesville the men of Bulloch’s company occupied vacant houses, as they possessed no tents. Problems for the regiment still existed in early May when Captain McConnell complained to his wife that:

Our company organization is still incomplete. The Governor has decided that there can be no promotions to fill the vacancies in companies belonging to this Regt, in as much as the vacancies occurred before the Regt. was turned over the Confederacy, though we have been mustered into Confederate service nearly two months. This decision has grown much

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 33-34.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁸Samuel D. McConnell Papers.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

dissatisfaction in the Regiment for there are several vacancies.⁵⁰

Despite these delays, the Regiment would be ready to move when the order came in June.

In March blockade-runners brought 10,000 Enfield rifles and munitions into New Smyrna. These weapons and munitions were ultimately bound for Corinth and the Army of the Mississippi, but first they had to make it out of Florida. Fifty-six of the new rifles did not even leave New Smyrna, for they were snatched immediately by Captains Bird and Strain to help arm their companies of the 3rd Florida. The 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment seized one hundred and eighty rifles from wagons as they passed by camps near Baldwin. The coup-de-grace came near Gainesville where companies of the 7th Florida seized 552 Enfield rifles and numerous barrels of powder and boxes of percussion caps and cartridges as the shipment sat on railcars. Though several Confederate War Department agents were sent to gather as many of the stolen weapons and munitions as possible, Governor Milton arranged for the Floridians to keep the weapons they acquired. In May the 7th Florida was listed as four-fifths armed.⁵¹

Larry Daniel, in his work Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee, makes an estimate, that at Shiloh, the Confederate Army possessed some 6,500 Enfield rifles.⁵² This meant only one in seven soldiers carried the potent .577 English-manufactured rifle. In fact, most Confederates carried a motley assortment of “squirrel rifles, percussion muskets, flintlocks, and shotguns.”⁵³ A

⁵⁰*Ibid.* Replacing vacancies which appeared in the ranks should not have been left to the Governor’s discrepancy. In the Act establishing the Confederate Army, Section 11 relates that vacancies would be filled by promotion according to seniority. Milton, who it seems was unfavorable to everyone was probably trying to stymie his predecessor Colonel Madison Starke Perry’s organizational efforts.

⁵¹Official Records. Series I, Vol. LIII., 249. See also Series I, Vol. XIV, 512.

⁵²Larry J. Daniel. Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee. (Chapel Hill: 1991)

⁵³Larey J. Daniel. Shiloh. (New York: 1997), 94.

sure rarity would have been the 7th Florida Infantry when it arrived in Tennessee that June almost entirely armed with the deadly and accurate Enfield. Likewise, two companies of the 3rd Florida and three companies of the 1st Florida Cavalry carried the deadly weapon. The 4th Florida Infantry was not so fortunate, for they were sent to Tennessee armed with smoothbore muskets. For the most part though, the Floridians would be some of the best equipped men in the western theater.

The 1st Florida Cavalry was ordered to move to Tennessee to “report to A. S. Johnston”⁵⁴ on February 19, 1862. However, on March 25 the regiment had not moved from its location and was instead requested to remain in place and guard the Smyrna arms shipment as it moved through that area of the state. The request was necessary because, according to General Trapier “[t]he forces in East Florida were so much weakened by sickness.”⁵⁵ At this time, the regiment was moved to Baldwin where it harassed Union forces around Jacksonville.

In the two months after the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment received its orders directing it to Tennessee, it became the center of political intrigue. On March 5, 1862, Governor Milton, faced with losing some 800 men of his State’s defense force, wrote to Judah P. Benjamin, then Secretary of War, informing him that the State’s Executive Council had passed a resolve requesting the Governor to “. . . correspond with his excellency Jefferson Davis, the Secretary of War, General R. E. Lee, and the officers of Colonel Davis’s regiment, as to the necessity of the regiment being converted into an infantry regiment and remain in the State for its defense.”⁵⁶ Milton, who just in January had wanted the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment disbanded, now asked for them to remain in the State for its defense.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, Series I, Vol. VI., 400.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 417.

⁵⁶Official Records. Series I, Vol. VI., 404.

During the next two weeks, Major General John C. Pemberton, the newly appointed commander of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Middle and East Florida, made an official visit to inspect the Florida troops at Apalachicola and Tallahassee. In his report to the Confederate Inspector General Samuel Cooper, Pemberton related that he was informed Davis's regiment was "in a state of mutiny positively refusing . . . to move until the arranges of pay due are received and until satisfied that a sufficient army is left in Florida for the protection of their families."⁵⁷ Pemberton also claims to have been shown a petition for such demands by General Trapier, claiming it "was signed by several captains, lieutenants, and apparently by some of the rank and file of the regiment"⁵⁸

This informed report was probably bogus. At the time the inspection took place three companies of the 1st Florida Cavalry were encamped outside Tallahassee, while the remaining seven were under the command of William Stockton at Callahan. Major Stockton's writings mention no such mutiny, and in fact tell of good discipline in the camps. On February 25, he wrote his wife that, "[a]ll is well in our camp. The men recognize the necessity of obedience to orders, and they look to me as the embodiment of them."⁵⁹ On March 20, two days after Pemberton penned his report, Major Stockton, in another letter to his wife, bragged that Colonel W. S. Dilworth, then temporary commander of the Department of Florida, "just left here, recognizing the discipline of my camp which is due to me."⁶⁰ The supposed mutiny rumor was more than likely created in an effort to keep the 1st Florida Cavalry in the state. Besides the Pemberton report of March 18, 1862, there is no mention of a mutiny in the camp of the 1st

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 408

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹Stockton Correspondence, 97.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 104.

Florida Cavalry in either the Official Records or Major Stockton's correspondence,

On April 15, Milton again wrote the Confederate War Department regarding the disposition of the 1st Cavalry, claiming that "since the abandonment of the coast defense, the regiment can render very efficient service in the state."⁶¹ Milton further suggested, ". . . I think it may be best to remain in the State, as nearly half the time in which they were mustered in has elapsed."⁶² Again, Milton's pleas fell on deaf ears at the Confederate War Department, for on April 29 the order was still in effect for the regiment to move.

The two viable reasons that could have kept the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment in Florida was the poor condition of their mounts and the March 25 request that the regiment remain in East Florida to protect the New Smyrna arms shipments. As early as March 2 Major Stockton was arranging for parades to be held at Camp Trapier near Callahan for the purpose of having ". . . such horses as are unfit for the journey to Chattanooga, condemned."⁶³ Colonel William G. M. Davis of the 1st Florida Cavalry listed the horses as the reason for the delay in moving to Tennessee.

An April 8 report contended that as soon as Davis arrived at the regiment he "caused an examination to be made of the condition of the horses of the First Regiment Florida Cavalry, with a view to ascertain their fitness to be marched to Tennessee."⁶⁴ The horses were much worn down, "owing to hard service, want of all food for days at a time, and an entire absence of long

⁶¹Official Records. Series I, Vol. XIV., 475.

⁶²*Ibid.* This is not true. In a December 1861 report, Davis's Cavalry Battalion is listed as being enlisted for the duration of the war.

⁶³Stockton Correspondence, 100.

⁶⁴Official Records. Series I, Vol. XIV., 473.

forage for nearly two months. . . .”⁶⁵ Even Davis, it seemed, wanted to delay the march to Tennessee, for he requested that “the placing of the broken-down horses in pasture would in six weeks put them all in good condition that are capable of being made serviceable.”⁶⁶

Another suggestion put forth by Colonel Davis was that the Confederate Government could remount the men once they arrived in Tennessee. Davis closed his report by first concluding that the mounts were “rendered unserviceable by reason of the inability of the Government to furnish forage and by exposure to the weather,” warning the government that “[t]he officers have become security for the men who bought the horses on credit, and pay now due would not indemnify them. I do not therefore recommend the condemnation of the horses unless some compensation is made the men.”⁶⁷

According to Brigadier General Joseph Finnegan, who succeeded General Trapier as commander of the Department of Florida, Samuel Cooper allowed him the option to retain “the regiment in Florida, reorganize them, and send an infantry regiment in their place.”⁶⁸ When Finnegan told Colonel William Davis of the choice, Davis let Finnegan know that “seven companies of his regiment were moving from Madison as Infantry, and then almost beyond the department, and three from Tallahassee as cavalry.”⁶⁹ The three companies which were kept in the cavalry service, A, E, and F, departed Tallahassee on May 8 with Major Stockton in

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸Official Records. Series I, Vol. LII., 351.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

command. The infantry marched from Madison a few days later.⁷⁰ Throughout its service in the west the regiment would be known as the 1st Florida Cavalry, Dismounted.

Also on May 8, the 3rd Florida Infantry was gathered at Midway “. . . which place is about ten miles North of Tallahassee; and after awhile,” Benton Ellis recalled, “we marched to Chattahoochie, [sic] and from there we were shipped by steamer to Columbus, Georgia, thence to Montgomery, Alabama.”⁷¹ At Midway, elections were held for Field Officers and Company commanders. William Dilworth retained his Coloneley and former Major Lucius A. Church was elected Lieutenant Colonel. Edward Mashburn, the new Major, had served since the previous August as 2nd Lieutenant of Company G. Two captains of the 3rd Florida resigned during this time and new officers were elected. As soon as the reorganization was completed, the 3rd Florida began its move to the western theater. In a show of the men’s ‘ferocity’ Benton Ellis recollected, because C Company was the Wildcat Company, the soldiers “. . . had a wild cat skin stuffed and placed at the head of the engine that bore us to Montgomery.”⁷²

On May 9, while the regiments in Florida were preparing for their departure to the front, the Florida and Confederate Guards Battalion saw its second action at Farmington, Mississippi, a few miles north of Corinth. The offensive the Union Armies from Pittsburg Landing launched against the Confederates at Corinth was not as rapid as anticipated. The combined armies were under the overall command of Henry Halleck, who ordered his men forward at a cautious pace and to entrench each night to discourage attacks. As a result of their slow pace, it required a month for the entire Union force to move from the Shiloh battlefield to Corinth. Nevertheless, because Halleck ordered the entrenchments, it gave the Confederate Army little opportunity to launch any

⁷⁰Official Records. Series I, Vol. XIV., 244.

⁷¹ “Short Record.”

⁷²*Ibid.*

form of counterattack.

One opportunity did arise on May 9 when Daniel Ruggles's Division, which included Anderson's brigade and the Florida and Confederate Guards Battalion, struck Union forces near Farmington. The Floridians were engaged all day in heavy skirmishing which cost the battalion eight wounded, one of whose injuries was mortal. In their second engagement, the Floridians garnered "fresh laurels in the field by their discipline, valor, and promptness; both officers and men fully sustained the high reputation they had won on the bloody hills of Shiloh, never faltering, ever in the van."⁷³

The 4th Florida Regiment, save the two companies at Tampa Bay, was encamped along the railroad at Sanderson, Florida, when Washington Ives, Jr. joined Company C in late April. The monthly abstract for the 4th listed some thirty-five officers and 480 men present for duty, with an aggregate total, both present and absent, of 812.⁷⁴ On the day William Stockton's men departed for Tennessee the two companies of the 4th stationed at Tampa were ordered north to Sanderson to concentrate the regiment for its move. On May 25 it departed from Sanderson for Tallahassee and was then marched to Chattahoochee, on the Apalachicola River.

Once there, it held its reorganization elections, which saw James P. Hunt, the former Captain of F Company, elected Colonel and Wylde L. L. Bowen, Lieutenant Colonel⁷⁵ The new Major Edward Badger had been a private in Company G prior to his election. Besides a change in the regimental field officers, many Companies experienced a change in leadership as well. William Dial, Washington Ives's Captain, resigned and was replaced by Jacob Lash. Three other

⁷³Official Records, Series I, Vol. X, pt. I, 814.

⁷⁴ Official Records, Series I, Vol. XIV, 488.

⁷⁵Both Colonel Edward Hopkins and Lieutenant Whit Smith retired from active service in May, 1862.

companies also gained new leaders as a result of the reorganization.

In a report dated June 10, 1862, Joseph Finnegan wrote that the “Fourth Regiment Florida Volunteers, fully armed and equipped, leave Chattahoochee to-day for Columbus, Ga., en route to join General Beauregard.”⁷⁶ In the same note, he also mentioned that the reason for the delay was because of the two companies which had to join the regiment from Tampa. Mentioning the other two regiments which were destined for Tennessee, Finnegan related that:

The Sixth Regiment and eight companies of the Seventh Regiment are now being paid their bounty and will leave at an early day for Chattanooga to report to General E. Kirby Smith. Two companies of the Seventh now at Tampa Bay will follow the regiment to Tennessee as soon as possible. Both regiments are fully armed and equipped and composed of good material and are well officered.⁷⁷

On June 17 the 7th Florida was ordered to report to Chattanooga. Hugh Black’s Company A of the 6th Florida departed from Ricco’s Bluffs on the Chattahoochee in steamers bound for Columbus on June 13. The regiment then took the rail from Columbus to Chattanooga, arriving at the latter location on the morning of June 18.⁷⁸ These two infantry regiments, along with the 1st Florida Cavalry under Colonel William G. M. Davis, were to be placed in a brigade “which will be commanded by that officer.”⁷⁹ Eight companies of the 7th Florida arrived at Chattanooga on June 21, 1862. Robert Watson’s Company K reached that place on July 17, 1862. On June 9, a week before he departed for the front, Samuel McConnell found out he was the father of a baby boy. “The news reached me,” he penned to his wife, “as I was going out to drill my company,

⁷⁶Official Records, Series I, Vol. LII, pt. II, 321.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 321-322. E. Kirby Smith was at that time the Commanding Officer of the Department of East Tennessee.

⁷⁸Black Letters.

⁷⁹Official Records, Series I, Vol. XV, pt. II, 692.

and I can assure you that I could scarcely keep my attention on my company for thinking about the little stranger.”⁸⁰ His company did not have to drill that day.

On May 29 the Confederate Army of the Mississippi, in the face of incredible odds and unhealthy conditions, evacuated Corinth. The Army retreated south to Tupelo, Mississippi, and the men of the 3rd and 4th Florida Infantry Regiments, already on their way, were redirected to Mobile. While camped at Montgomery enroute, the sight of two raw Alabama Regiments caused Washington Ives to exclaim with excitement: “I saw nearly 1000 men yesterday who had never seen a musket or bayonet in their lives. Hurra [sic] for Florida I’d rather be a soldier from her than any other state in the Confederacy.”⁸¹

⁸⁰Samuel D. McConnell Papers.

⁸¹Cabaniss, 20.

CHAPTER III

“Everyday Soldiers”

June - September 1, 1862

Gray clouds rolled over the city of Mobile as its inhabitants prepared to celebrate Independence Day, 1862. Despite the threatening skies, the citizens turned out in large numbers to mark the occasion. Even though Alabama and its fellow Confederate States had declared independence from, and were at war with the United States, its citizens could not escape the past they shared with their former countrymen. Thus it was across the fractured nation, citizens marked the eighty-eighth anniversary of Independence from Great Britain. The day’s activities in Mobile centered around a parade that was to feature the seven regiments that comprised the garrison of the city. Included were the 3rd and 4th Florida, raw regiments which had just recently departed Florida for the front. Originally destined for Corinth and the Army of the Mississippi, the regiments’ orders were countermanded and by mid-June both were encamped on the outskirts of Mobile.

The soldiers of the 3rd and 4th Florida, the majority in the service for nearly a year, were familiar with the rigors of inspections and dress parades. On June 25 the Florida regiments, along with the other regiments of the Army of Mobile, were inspected by General P. G. T. Beauregard, in Mobile for his health. So on July 4, had the sun managed to sneak through the clouds, its light would have gleamed off the polished barrels of muskets and shimmered on the brass of the men’s belt buckles and uniform buttons.

Instead, as the regimental colors were unfurled and the troops formed their lines of march and shouldered arms, the weather was very foreboding. A soldier in the 3rd Florida, Private Michael Oliver Raysor wrote home that as his regiment neared the city, he could see the crowds which lined

the streets. In his own words, “it was a grand sight - thousands of spectators but just as we got into town good they came up a heavy rain and give us a good ducking the streets were awful mud, they was one continual slough slough in mud and water all the time but us were everyday soldiers therefore we did not mind it.”¹

The spectators who remained to watch the parade would have seen only two stars on the collar of the officer who rode at the head of the 4th Florida. Lieutenant Colonel Wylde L. L. Bowen had been in command of the regiment since July 1 when Colonel James Hunt was arrested for an incident that occurred the previous month in Montgomery. Washington Ives related to his parents that Colonel Hunt was placed in irons for “stopping and allowing us to cook,” when “we were actually suffering.”²

The small garrison at Mobile was under the command of Brigadier General Samuel Jones, formerly the commander at Pensacola, and was a part of the larger Department of Southern Alabama and West Florida. The garrison served as police for the city and guarded Federal prisoners who had been captured in the western theater over the past year. Though the Floridians had nearly a year’s service under their belts, the duty at Mobile was the most strenuous they had endured so far. “I am under such discipline that I can’t leave the lines 2 hours in a day,” Washington Ives complained to his sisters on July 6, “and am kept drilling or standing guard that I just get along and manage to get sleep enough. . . .”³

William [Willie] Augustus Bryant, a private in the 3rd Regiments’ Company A, wrote to his brother in Florida, “. . . the duties are pretty tough for this warm weather; I ought to be well satisfied to remain here, but I am tired of the monotony of this d---d camp life, have no social associations

¹Raysor Papers

²Cabaniss, 23.

³*Ibid.*, 21.

which I really enjoy, and I want to be where there is something to encourage and stimulate a man.”⁴ Michael Raysor, who bragged of being an ‘everyday’ soldier, also expressed discontent with the monotonous duty of standing guard and drilling: “[O]ur Regt. had to perform so much duty and we had to stand guard and do police duty in the city of Mobile and guard yankee prisoners that we come on guard every day and we could not stand up at all.”⁵

Ranking high in the soldiers’ complaints other than the arduous duty were the rations received. Raysor described the fare in a July letter to his wife as “. . . mighty little hog meat we get one pound in seven days and one pint of syrup and the balance of the days we get beef”⁶ The scanty amount of food, combined with the tiresome military existence the men lived and constant rain, caused more men to become ill, and was responsible for several deaths. Washington Ives was appointed acting-Regimental Clerk of the 4th Florida on July 18, and as a result gained access to the morning reports which were compiled to give the strength of the regiment following morning roll calls. Ives related in a letter to his parents that his regiment lost seven men while encamped at Mobile.⁷ Raysor let his wife know that he had been ailing with fever and observed “[w]e have a good deal of sickness in our regiment . . . this is a sickly place.”⁸

Thankfully, soldiers of the Army of the Mississippi could not make the same claim of their new encampment at Tupelo. William Rogers, a Pensacola native serving in the Florida and Guards

⁴Willie Bryant to Davis Bryant, June 15, 1862 in Arch Fredric Blakely, Ann Smith Lainhart, and Winston Bryant Stephens, Jr. Eds. The Rose Cottage Chronicles. (Gainesville: 1998), 122. (Hereafter Rose Cottage Chronicles)

⁵Raysor Papers

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Cabaniss, 22.

⁸Raysor Papers.

Response Battalion, referred to Tupelo as a “[b]eautiful place” and added, “it is very healthy also splendid water two things that we were sadly in want of at Corinth.”⁹ The Confederates evacuated Corinth on the last day of May in favor of the central Mississippi town where the Mobile and Ohio Railroad provided an effective line of supply and communication for the Army. More importantly, the Army of the Mississippi had successfully evaded the three Federal Armies which advanced on Corinth with the purpose of destroying the Confederate force. Though the Confederates could rejoice that the Army was saved, much of middle and western Tennessee and northern portions of Mississippi and Alabama had been forsaken to the Federal Armies.

The Army of the Mississippi also had a new commander: Major General Braxton Bragg. Ascending to command on June 30, 1862, Bragg superceded General Pierre G. T. Beauregard as commander of not only the Army, but of also Department Number 2, which consisted of Tennessee, west of Chattanooga, Alabama, Mississippi, and northwest Georgia. Some of the soldiers including Will Rogers welcomed the change in command. “I think Old Bragg will take us to where the yanks are at least he says so” wrote Rogers in early July. “He says he intends to take Cincinatti [Sic] to pay for New Orleans. . . .”¹⁰

The two hundred Floridians of the Florida and Confederate Guards Response Battalion were veterans of Shiloh, and both the siege and evacuation of Corinth. The men who served under Braxton Bragg at Pensacola were for the most part good soldiers and well-disciplined. Having been in the field under strenuous conditions for the past four months, they were accustomed to such difficulties as hunger and exposure to the weather. Still, it did not keep them from writing of matters of hardship to their families back home. Underlying the complaints, a hint of boastfulness can be detected in the

⁹William D. Rogers Letters, 1862-1865. Florida State Archives, Tallahassee. (Hereafter Rogers Letters)

¹⁰*Ibid.*

writing in which the soldiers seemed to say: I can take this, can you? Will Rogers wrote home to his brother in early July describing the rations issued to the men at Tupelo:

[W]e draw for seven days at a time it is one lb. of bacon to the man and three quarters of fresh beef a day for six days out of seven, is all the meat we get. We have plenty of bread though but no coffee of any kind, not even Rye Coffee . . . We have Boil Beef and dry Bread every day except one and then we have no beef for variety do you think you could stand kind of living?¹¹

Fortunately for the soldiers of the Army who were forced to subsist on such rations, civilians in the area were more than happy to share the products of their farms with the Army . . . for a price! “The price of Eggs up here is \$1.00 pr [per] doz [dozen] and chickens \$1.00 apiece. Butter \$1.00 pr lb. Tobacco \$1.00 pr plug, don’t you think them prices are high enough,” Rogers asked of his brother.¹² Though he did not have money at the time to purchase any of these goods he related that when he got paid, “I intend to have a good bait [bit] of Eggs, Butter, and Chicken I don’t care what they cost for I never wanted something to eat so bad in all my life as I do now.”¹³

The Army of the Mississippi remained in Tupelo nearly two months. By early July, its strength was listed at 31,000 and many of these men were eager to break their encampment and engage the enemy. The enlisted soldiers in the ranks could not know at the time that a campaign was already being planned that would take the Army to Chattanooga, into Kentucky, and back. Braxton Bragg and fellow Major General E. Kirby Smith, the commander of the Department of East Tennessee, planned an offensive into Middle Tennessee and Kentucky that would, in theory, force the Federal Army to withdraw from its positions in northern Alabama and northern Mississippi, for fear of having its supply lines severed. With any luck, Tennessee might be cleared of Federal occupation, Nashville

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*

liberated, and especially with a Confederate victory in Kentucky, recruits gained for the Confederate Army. Furthermore, a major victory over a Union Army in the field could help bring about English and French recognition of the Confederacy. The plan, however, contained a fatal flaw from the beginning, for since Bragg and Smith were the same rank, their forces would operate independently during the campaign. Only when their Armies combined would Bragg assume seniority over Smith's East Tennessee soldiers.

On July 21, Bragg issued Special Orders No. 4 to his Department. This outline provided the orders to transport the infantry of the Army of the Mississippi to Chattanooga by rail. The artillery and wagons would move overland using the dusty roads of central Alabama. To bolster the strength of his army for the coming campaign, Bragg ordered that the "available infantry force now at Mobile and Pollard will be thrown forward to Chattanooga with all possible dispatch."¹⁴ As a result, the 3rd and 4th Florida regiments would move north to join the army for its summer excursion.

Thomas L. Connelly, in his book Army of the Heartland, an extensive work on the command structure of the Army of the Mississippi / Army of Tennessee in 1861-62, called the move from Tupelo to Chattanooga "the finest hour of Confederate railroads. . . ."¹⁵ The soldiers, according to Connelly, "stole apples and flirted with girls, and at every station were showered with fruits, flowers, and ardent admirers."¹⁶ The 4th Florida's journey was not all thrills and enjoyment, for early in the morning of July 23, just north of Pollard, Alabama, the car on which Company D rode derailed, throwing all of its passengers into a clay ditch. "As soon as lights could be procured," wrote Washington Ives, who had been riding in another car and assisted in the search for wounded, "we

¹⁴Official Records. Series I, Vol. XVI., Part II, 731.

¹⁵Thomas L. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862. (Baton Rouge: 1967), 203. (Hereafter Connelly)

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 204.

found 8 of Capt. Miots co. [company] hurt.”¹⁷ The injuries included several broken legs, with one soldier suffering a fractured skull. The wounded were put under care in Greenville, Alabama, and the regiment continued on its way north.

With the worst of their travels behind them, the soldiers of the 4th Florida were able to enjoy the perks of the journey which Connelly described as their trains steamed through Georgia. Ives wrote to his sister Katie that “all along the railroads as we came, girls . . . threw us Confederate flags. Peaches and apples generally given to us also. The girls were from 5 to 12 in a group and at Marietta, Georgia an opera troupe of young ladies sang finely.”¹⁸ The 3rd Florida moved from Mobile by steamer to Montgomery where it embarked on trains for the journey north. Both regiments arrived at Chattanooga the last week of July and pitched their tents at the foot of Lookout Mountain.

As the Army of the Mississippi began its relocation to Chattanooga, advance units of Major General Don Carlos Buell’s Army of the Ohio were but thirty miles from the Tennessee city. The Federal Army moved east following the occupation of Corinth in early June, its objective being Chattanooga, which was seen as a gateway to Georgia and eastern Tennessee. Because drought conditions had lowered the Tennessee River to a point where Union supply vessels could not operate safely, the advance would be supplied by three rail lines: the Memphis and Charleston, which ran between Corinth and Chattanooga; the Nashville and Decatur, connecting the Tennessee capital with this river city in northern Alabama; and the Nashville and Chattanooga, which bisected middle Tennessee before intersecting the Memphis and Charleston line just west of Chattanooga. These proved inadequate due to ravaging attacks by Confederate raiders that tore up track, burnt bridges, and in one instance collapsed a tunnel. The Union supply effort slowed to a trickle while engineers moved to repair the damage. The advance halted with two Federal divisions just thirty miles west

¹⁷Cabaniss, 22.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 24.

of Chattanooga, at Bridgeport, Alabama.

Opposite the river from Bridgeport and the two Federal divisions was the 1st Florida Cavalry. The regiment had been posted to the mountainous area west of Chattanooga as soon as it arrived in Tennessee. This regiment, along with the 6th and 7th Florida Infantry Regiments and the Marion Artillery, a Florida battery, was brigaded under Colonel William G. M. Davis, the former commander of the 1st Cavalry. The brigade belonged to the division of Brigadier General Henry Heth, in Major General E. Kirby Smith's Department of East Tennessee. Throughout much of June the regiment was engaged with Federal soldiers on the north bank of the river.

Atop a spur of Sand Mountain, the Floridians enjoyed a panoramic view of the river valley and constructed fortifications to secure from Federal advance the road and the portion of the Memphis and Charleston which ran from Bridgeport to Chattanooga. Will Stockton, the West Point educated major of the regiment boasted to his wife, "I have engineered our position so much that I think our three hundred & [and] fifty can hold against a thousand or more."¹⁹ Fortunately for Major Stockton, whose brother perished at the Alamo, Confederate cavalry leaders John Hunt Morgan and Nathan Bedford Forrest's raids on the railroads ensured that Union soldiers would never cross the river and put his bluster to the test.

Still, the soldiers fired at each other from across the river. At times, the 1st Cavalry made forays across to capture prisoners and gain information about the enemy's troop dispersion. After one such raid on June 20, Major Stockton wrote his wife questioning the nature of war he had witnessed since his arrival in Tennessee: "It is very strange, this deliberate shooting at human beings, as coolly as it [if] they were only a large species of game and quietly taking arms and equipment, as one would the hide and venison."²⁰

¹⁹Stockton Correspondence, 115.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 117.

On July 4, eight companies of the 7th Florida arrived at the 1st Cavalry's location to bolster the defense against a feared Federal advance. For the men of the 7th Florida, like those of the 1st Cavalry, the sight of the high ridges that seemed to rise upward all around probably awed them. As stated earlier, many of the soldiers of the Florida regiments were born in places other than the state from which they enlisted. However, for others it was their first venture outside of Florida since moving into the state years earlier with their families. For numerous Florida natives, or "crackers," the movement north was their first time out of the state. More than a few had never seen such topography before their rail journey carried them through the red clay hills of north Georgia. Even more unfamiliar sights greeted the men of Florida as their train steamed around the northern end of Missionary Ridge and the imposing height of Lookout Mountain came into view, rising above Chattanooga. Across the river rose blue, hazy ridges that dominated the horizon.

Probably even more to their amazement, from their encampment on Sand Mountain the Floridians of the 1st Cavalry and 7th Infantry could see the enemy. The Stars and Stripes waved above a ridge across the expanse of the Tennessee where the Federal soldiers had placed an artillery battery. Captain Samuel McConnell wrote his wife exclaiming, "The enemy's forces are encamped on the opposite side of the river [Tennessee], several miles off, but near enough for their drums to be distinctly heard. Their camp can be seen from the top of a high hill near this place."²¹ The regiments of Davis's brigade remained in the standoff with Federal troops until mid-July, when they were ordered to Knoxville.

Despite having reached Tennessee and the rather mild climate the mountains afforded, the Florida regiments were still suffering from the diseases that had weakened so many men in the unhealthy Florida encampments. As his regiment moved through Georgia in late May, Major Stockton related

²¹Samuel D. McConnell Papers.

to his wife that the baggage and commissary wagons, “have sick as well as baggage on board.”²² Several soldiers of the 1st were left in the homes of kind and patriotic Georgians until they could recover sufficiently to rejoin their respective companies. Captain McConnell wrote home that “[n]umber of the men are sick and number have been sent back to the Hospitals at Chattanooga and Atlanta. I have now at Atlanta eight of my men and will have to send some more if they don’t improve.”²³ Washington Ives noted that several of the men in his regiment had bathed in the chilly streams that snaked down Lookout Mountain. As a result, some caught cold and became ill.

For most though, the duty at Chattanooga and in the Tennessee River valley was welcomed by the Floridians. When not being drilled or performing other camp duties, the soldiers visited the camp of the old 1st Florida, seeking out old friends and relatives. Many newly arrived Floridians like Washington Ives were shocked at the sight of the Florida veterans of Shiloh, claiming “they have endured so much weather they looked wild.”²⁴ In the evenings, the soldiers of the 3rd and 4th Florida gathered around the campfires and listened with interest as the troops of the Florida and Guards Response Battalion related their battle experiences. Others like Willie Bryant took in the scenery, writing home that he “. . . spent nearly a day at Look Out Mountain . . . and tho a very fatiguing trip on foot, enjoyed it and got a good dinner too.”²⁵

The regiments in Chattanooga were joined by more of their fellow Floridians in late August, when six companies arrived under the command of Colonel William Miller. Miller was a forty-two years old New Yorker who had settled near Pensacola following service in the Mexican War. There he

²²Stockton Correspondence, 113.

²³Samuel D. McConnell Papers.

²⁴Cabaniss, 27.

²⁵Willie Bryant to Davis Bryant, August 16, 1862 in Rose Cottage Chronicles, 138.

read law and operated a successful lumber business.²⁶ When Florida seceded, Miller was elected Captain of a local militia company. When the company was mustered into Confederate service, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and given command of a six-company battalion to which his old company belonged. Five of the companies of his battalion hailed from the Panhandle, while one was raised in Brewton, Alabama.

Ordered north in August, the battalion moved to the western theater bringing news and parcels of food and clothing from home to their relatives and friends already in Tennessee. The new arrivals were an inviting sight, and even more welcome to the Floridians of Miller's battalion and the Response Battalion was that Colonel Miller "applied to have the four companies organized from Colonel [Patton] Anderson's Regiment assigned to me, thus completing the full regiment."²⁷ The application was approved, and the Floridians of the Response Guard Battalion were transferred to the new 1st Florida Infantry Regiment that consisted of ten companies.

The camaraderie which existed in the camps among the men of the various regiments assisted to alleviating the hardships of Army life. It helped the men take their minds from the rations issued at Chattanooga which were, in the words of Washington Ives, "scanty."²⁸ Each day the men received from their Quartermaster a quarter pound of flour and a pound of beef.²⁹ The beef was boiled and the flour rolled in grease and then baked. A pinch of salt was given to each soldier for flavoring. Willie Bryant noted, "[i]t is very hard getting along on Flour 2 meals of rice sometimes and reduced

²⁶E. W. Carswell. Washington: Florida's Twelfth County, (Tallahassee: 1991), 124.

²⁷William Miller. Report of General Miller to Anna Jackson Chapter United Daughters Of The Confederacy, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, 2. (Hereafter Miller)

²⁸Cabaniss, 23.

²⁹*Ibid.*

rations of bad meat, but we still make out.”³⁰ The meager fare caused Washington Ives to lament in a letter home, “I want some good fresh butter, eggs, fruit, pork, peas or something.”³¹

These foodstuffs listed by Ives were not available in Chattanooga as they had been in Tupelo. Because the town was in such close proximity to Union forces and had experienced a bombardment by Federal artillery in July, many of the civilians fled the area with their belongings and livestock. Jacob Mickler, a Lieutenant in the 3rd Florida, observed the deserted nature of the area in a letter home in which he wrote “. . . everybody except soldiers has left the country. The Villages and farms look so desolate. . . .”³² W. C. Middleton, a private in 3rd Florida’s Company B, the St. Augustine “Blues”, noted in his diary: “Hard looking place this is and do not care how soon we move.”³³ Soldiers of the 4th Florida were warned that because of the close proximity of the enemy, “if you eat or drink outside of the camp, you are almost sure to be poisoned.”³⁴

While at Chattanooga the soldiers of the 4th Florida were provided with enough tents to shelter the entire regiment, thanks to the efforts of the twenty-year-old regimental quartermaster. Major James McKay studied for two years at the Kentucky Military Institute prior to the secession of Florida, and received his commission through family connections with Confederate Naval Secretary and former U.S. Senator, Stephen Mallory.³⁵ Despite his youthfulness, he was well suited for the task

³⁰Willie Bryant to Davis Bryant, August 16, 1862 in Rose Cottage Chronicles, 138.

³¹Cabaniss, 25.

³²Jacob Mickler Papers, 1860-1866. Special Collections, PK Yonge Library of Florida History University of Florida, Gainesville.

³³W. C. Middleton Diary, July 24, 1862, United Daughters of the Confederacy Scrapbook, Vol. 5, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Fl. (Hereafter Middleton)

³⁴Cabaniss, 25.

³⁵Dickison, 309.

which was placed before him. Even soldiers of the 3rd Florida benefitted from McKay's resourcefulness. Benton Ellis recalled that "my brother [James L. Ellis] generally known as Jimmy and I had a wall tent furnished us by Major James McKay, Quartermaster of the 4th Florida Regiment, which Regiment was side by side with us. Up to this time, we had mattress, sheets, comforts, blankets, and pillows. . . ." ³⁶

While at Chattanooga, Major McKay also procured uniforms, shoes, and underdrawers for the soldiers of his regiment to prepare them for the coming autumn. The \$20.00 cost of the uniform and shoes was subtracted from the soldier's pay. ³⁷ The 7th Florida also received new uniforms upon their arrival in Tennessee, which Sergeant Robert Watson described as being "coarse as corn sacks and nearly the same color." ³⁸ The soldiers' clothing was often supplemented by the arrival of packages from home which included homespun shirts, hats, scarfs, and in some cases, pants and jackets. By the time the Kentucky campaign ended, the soldiers' apparel could hardly be called uniform at all.

The march into Kentucky began for the Floridians of Davis's brigade on August 13. After striking and turning their tents over to the regimental quartermasters, the soldiers of the 6th and 7th Infantry Regiments and 1st Cavalry fell into ranks, their columns facing north. "We took up our line of march at 5 P.M. for Kentucky via Big Creek Gap," wrote Robert Watson in his diary. ³⁹ "We have no tents in future and have to carry our knapsacks, rifle, forty rounds of ammunition, haversacks and three days provisions, and canteens." ⁴⁰

³⁶"Short Record."

³⁷Cabaniss, 27.

³⁸Southern Service, 27.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

Big Creek Gap was one of several cuts which bisected the Cumberland Mountains north of Knoxville. The largest and probably most famous of these passes was Cumberland Gap, but it was in the hands of a Federal infantry division that occupied strong fortifications guarding the Gap. The Wilderness Road that passed through Cumberland and served as the supply route to the garrison there had been cut through the thick forests of the region by Daniel Boone and the early Kentucky pioneers. Earl Hess relates that Boone's trail "had been widened into a wagon toll road in the 1790s," and "served as the transportation artery of the region."⁴¹ From Cumberland Gap, the road stretched northward towards Kirby Smith's first objective of the campaign, the town of Lexington.

Not wanting to risk lives nor time by attacking or besieging the Federal positions at Cumberland Gap, Kirby Smith elected to send his divisions of the Department of East Tennessee through the smaller gaps such as Big Creek. After penetrating the mountains, the soldiers would move onto the Wilderness Road just above Cumberland Gap. By this strategy, Kirby Smith's army would have access to the best road in the region and at the same time cut the supply and communications of the Cumberland Gap garrison.

Just north of Knoxville the roads got steep and rough. For the infantrymen, it became a struggle just to place one foot in front of the other. No doubt, many Floridians fell out of ranks to nurse sore, blistered feet, and seek refuge from the heat as the march wore on that first day. More than likely, there were a few discarded articles of clothing and other equipment suddenly declared unnecessary by their owners that littered the road after the soldiers passed. By midnight the regiments had halted and Watson, before drifting off to sleep, penned in his diary, "I was never

⁴¹Earl J. Hess, Banners to the Breeze: The Kentucky Campaign, Corinth, and Stones River. (Lincoln: 2000), 31. (Hereafter Hess)

so tired in my life.”⁴²

The next morning at four the sergeants passed among the men in the chilly predawn, shaking the soldiers from their slumber. With sleepy eyes and aching muscles they rose slowly and started to build fires and eat breakfast. An hour later, the call to form ranks was sounded and the regiment was once again on the march. After six hours the soldiers had covered 14 miles, and then halted to wait their turn to cross the mountains.⁴³

Following behind the 7th, the soldiers of the 6th Florida literally ate the dust raised by their fellow Floridians. Lieutenant Hugh Black, writing from camp at the foot of the Cumberland Mountains, observed, “[t]he road from Knoxville to this place was the dustiest road I ever saw, It was just like marching through a solid bed of ashes and the heat was very great and the road was crowded with a solid mass of soldiers for miles.”⁴⁴ Some in the ranks such as Black believed the movement was an offensive against Cumberland Gap itself. When an orderly arrived at the headquarters of the 6th Florida with directions for the issue of three days’ rations at Clinton, Tennessee “[t]his order began to rouse our curiosity,” Black wrote, “for we had thought we would not be sent any further that Clinton.”⁴⁵

On the morning of August 17, Davis’s brigade began crossing the mountains. Though Earl Hess writes that of the two gaps used by Kirby Smith’s force, Big Creek offered the much “easier passage,” the Floridians were not accustomed to such exacting marches, over extremely rugged

⁴²Southern Service, 46.

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴Black Letters

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

terrain.⁴⁶ The men of the 7th began their march through the gap at daylight. Robert Watson wrote with disgust of the gap and its poor road, claiming “of all the rough and steep roads for wagons and men to pass through it beat all.”⁴⁷ The men trudged all day through the heat with little relief. The drought which plagued the area did not spare the mountains and as a result the streams dried up. The little water which could be located was found in stagnant pools and was generally unhealthy.

The 6th Florida had a somewhat easier journey as it followed in the tracks of the 7th. Beginning at dusk later in the same day, the men marched throughout the evening in rather mild temperatures and completed their journey after midnight. Upon reaching the valley on the northern end of the gap, the regiment was halted and ordered to assist the 1st Florida Cavalry in getting the wagons and artillery through the mountain pass.

The seven dismounted companies of the 1st Cavalry were assigned to escort the division artillery and supply trains through the gap. The men had a rough time as they assisted the teamsters in wrangling the wagons up the steep and terrible mountain roads. Writing from Kentucky on August 22, Major Stockton remembered crossing the mountains in a letter to his wife, relating: “[t]he dust was awful, and was very hard on us. But the mountains, the mountains! They used up the men & the wagon-horses.”⁴⁸ By the time the cavalymen began ascending the gap, what little water remained a week earlier had long been devoured by thirsty soldiers. The lack of water combined with the heat and swirling dust which caked the men from head to toe and collected in their eyes, noses, and mouths, caused Major Stockton to complain, “[d]on’t talk to

⁴⁶Hess, 32.

⁴⁷Southern Service, 47.

⁴⁸Stockton Correspondence, 124.

me, hereafter, of mountains in connection with good water.”⁴⁹

The three mounted companies of the regiment, serving under Captain William Footman, were far ahead of their comrades. Riding with Colonel John W. Scott’s Cavalry Brigade, the troopers of the 1st Cavalry performed reconnaissance and engaged in screening the main body of the Army from the eyes of Federal scouts. The most impressive act executed by Scott’s troopers came during the first three days of the campaign, when they rode 160 miles in seventy hours to seize London, Kentucky. The Cavalry captured 150 supply wagons destined for Cumberland Gap and effectively opened the Wilderness Road for the infantry. Their work was tiring and never ending, but carried out admirably. Hess writes that Scott’s Brigade “performed excellent service, and was a key element in the campaign.”⁵⁰

To add to the discomfort of the infantry, the supply wagons of the brigade were behind the 1st Cavalry and took longer in crossing Big Creek Gap. The men were forced to do without rations for several days until the wagons reached the brigade. The staple for the soldiers as they crossed the mountains was corn. “Corn fields and apple orchards is completely eat out,” wrote Lieutenant Black on August 17. Black added, “I had a fine mess of roasting ears last night and have a pretty extensive pile lying by me at this time.”⁵¹ Despite the lack of rations, Major Stockton boasted, “roasting ears were plentiful, and we lived on them.”⁵²

The rations were some better at Barboursville, which the brigade reached on August 24. But at this town, goods taken from the wagons captured by the cavalry were made available to the dust-caked and tired infantrymen. Major Stockton, in an August 27 letter to his wife, exclaimed,

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 127.

⁵⁰Hess, 35-36.

⁵¹Black Letters.

⁵²Stockton Correspondence, 124.

“[w]e now get coffee & sugar - coffee, 6 lbs. to the dollar!!!”⁵³ Of the spoils captured, Lieutenant Black recalled “a large amount of coffee and sugar . . . added a great deal to our comfort.”⁵⁴

There is no accurate figure to determine the number, but perhaps as many as one hundred Floridians never reached Barboursville. Instead, they fell out along the way, too tired or sick to continue. South of Barboursville, Robert Watson fell ill; he and “ [Anderson] Wood, Gus Archer, and [Bill] McLaughlin were left together with many more sick men from different companies.”⁵⁵ McLaughlin died of his ailment; Watson and the remainder, too weak to offer any resistance, surrendered to a small Federal patrol. Paroled by their captors, Watson and his comrades walked back through Big Creek Gap, subsisting on caches of supplies left by the 7th Regiment, and reached Knoxville on September 7, where they were to wait until exchanged.⁵⁶

While in Camp Direction, the convalescent camp outside Knoxville, Watson obtained a certain cynicism for the bureaucracy of the Confederate Army. In his diary entry for September 23, Watson bitterly wrote:

I will here say that Confederate soldiers are treated like dogs everywhere that I have been since I left Tampa. They are not allowed one half the rations that the army regulations call for, the quartermasters and other officers give them just what they like and pocket the balance and yet the soldiers knowing all this are foolish enough to put up with it.⁵⁷

This forceful outburst came after the paroled soldiers were informed they would not be paid as

⁵³*Ibid.*, 127.

⁵⁴Black Letters

⁵⁵Southern Service, 47.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 49.

scheduled, and clothes promised to the men were not delivered.

On the last day of September, Watson penned in his diary, “[m]any of the paroled men have gone home without permission and I don’t blame them for we don’t get enough to eat and no prospect of getting any money or clothing or of being exchanged.”⁵⁸ On October 4, after a request to visit Atlanta was approved, Watson departed Knoxville. By the end of the month, he was in Lake City, Florida. After his exchange in December Watson obtained a sixty-day furlough due to ill health. He left Florida in early March with a dozen other soldiers of the 7th Florida, returning to the regiment by April.

Late August found the soldiers of Kirby Smith’s army moving northward through the fertile Bluegrass region toward Lexington. The men moved along good roads and met minimal resistance as they marched northward. It was not until the lead elements of the Army reached Richmond, twenty miles south of Lexington, on August 31, that a Federal force offered battle. The resulting fight was perhaps one of the most complete victories of the entire war for either side. The Federal force was put to rout, leaving one thousand casualties on the field and another 4,300 prisoners in the hand of the enemy. The total Confederate casualties numbered just over 400.

“The silence of the heavens were broken by the loud and continued roar of cannon in the direction of Richmond, . . .” remembered Lieutenant Hugh Black of the noise that found the ears of the Floridians who were a day’s march from the field of battle.⁵⁹ Black wrote the sounds of the fight cheered up the men of the 6th Florida, whose morale had taken a turn for the worst the night before when rations received included “four ounces of beef and one biscuit.”⁶⁰ Though the

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 50.

⁵⁹Black Letters.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

soldiers were tired, filthy, and suffering from hunger, Black recalled the sounds of battle, “seemed to animate our boys with a renewed spirit and all went on finely during the day.”⁶¹

Upon reaching Richmond on September 1, Hugh Black and the men of the 6th Florida witnessed horrible scenes that were often common in the towns that were located close to the fields of battle. “Every church in the Town and surrounding country were converted into Military Hospitals,” Black recalled, “and in every hospital that could be established there was piles of arms and legs as high as the tables.”⁶² Despite the atrocious sights and smells that invaded their town along with the Confederate Army, the citizens of Richmond were, according to Lieutenant Black, “exceedingly kind to our soldiers, both sick and well, giving them every luxury that the country could afford.”⁶³

Davis’s brigade departed Richmond on September 4 and arrived in Lexington the following day. The reception was magnificent. “Upon our arrival in the city,” wrote Lieutenant Black, “the streets were crowded with men, women and children to greet our coming. We were received amidst loud and continued applause, waving of handkerchiefs, throwing up of hats, hurrahs for rebel soldiers and the Confederacy.”⁶⁴ Major Stockton wrote the 1st Cavalry was “welcomed with cheers, with smiles, with tears of joy. Never have I witnessed such an ovation.”⁶⁵ He added, “Confederate flags are flying from every window.”⁶⁶

⁶¹*Ibid.*

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵Stockton Correspondence, 133.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

“I Have Been In A Most Terrible Fight”

August 17 - October 8, 1862

The courier from General Bragg’s headquarters arrived at the camp of the 4th Florida on the afternoon of August 17 with a copy of General Orders No. 4. As the messenger guided his horse through the encampment, he passed soldiers at work striking their tents and readying equipment for the anticipated campaign. Nearing the command tent, he passed more troops, busily engaged in loading equipment such as field desks, camp chairs, and various chests containing regimental records onto a nearby wagon. Washington Ives, serving as the adjutant, stopped his work long enough to receive the rider, accept the order, and pass it onto Major Edward Badger, then acting-commander of the regiment.

Major Badger found himself in command because, though Colonel Hunt had been released from arrest earlier in the month, both he and Lieutenant Colonel Bowen fell ill in Chattanooga and were confined to hospitals there. Badger scanned the carefully written note which began, “The following-named officers and troops will be left for the base of operations at and near Chattanooga, Tenn., Maj. Gen. Sam. Jones in command. . . .”¹ His eyes skipped down to read the six regiments which were to remain behind. Second to last on the list was the 4th Florida. As the news reached the 4th that it would not march into Kentucky, just over Lookout Mountain, where the Tennessee made a sharp hairpin turn, the van of the Army was beginning to cross to the northern bank.

¹Official Records. Series I, Vol. XVI., Part II, 761-2.

It took four days for the entire Army to cross the river, and eight more to assemble munitions and supplies on the northern bank. Three days' rations and forty rounds of ammunition were issued to each man. Forage was given to the artillery batteries and teamsters for their animals, and at Army headquarters marching instructions were drawn up, copied, and delivered to the respective commanders. Finally, on August 29, as Kirby Smith's army pressed towards Richmond, the soldiers of the Army of the Mississippi were set to begin their own offensive into Kentucky.

As the men of the new 1st Florida stood in the heat of the late afternoon awaiting the order to march, the color sergeant unfurled the regiment's new battle flag. The banner, the now familiar blue St. Andrew's Cross standing on field of red, had twelve six-sided stars upon it. Just above the middle of the blue "X," the words "1st Florida" were stitched in large white block letters. Below the X was the battle honor, "Shiloh" also in white lettering.² The new banner fluttered a few moments before it was snapped by the breeze and stretched to its full length for all to see. The men who were standing at ease, probably conversing with their friends in the ranks, stopped to glance at the regiments' new emblem and then straightened as the command, "Attention!" rang in the late summer air. "Shoulder arms! . . . Forward at the route step, march," next echoed from officer to officer along the line, and the gray and brown colored mass began to move forward, rifle barrels glistening in the light of the low hanging sun.

The 3rd Florida, directly in line behind the 1st, came to attention as Lieutenant Colonel Lucius Church rode down the line and took his place at the front of the regiment.³ The order to march

²Howard Michael Madaus, "The Battle Flags of the Confederate Army of Tennessee" (Milwaukee: 1976), 34. Compliments of Bruce Graetz, Curator and Historian, Florida Museum of History, Tallahassee.

³The question as to why Colonel Dilworth did not accompany his regiment to Kentucky remains unanswered. One source indicates he was arrested during the journey from Mobile to

was given and the mass of men began to move forward in step with the music played by its brass band that was out in front. The strains of “Cheer, Boys, Cheer,” “Dixie,” and other favorites filled the air as the 3rd Florida followed in the path of the 1st.

The first day’s march found the columns ascending a precipitous height known as Walden’s Ridge, just north of Chattanooga. The soldiers of the 3rd reached the crest of the ridge at 9 p.m., and in the falling twilight the soldiers were allowed to fall out of ranks for rest and food. At 11 p.m. the men once again formed columns and were on the move northward.

As their fellow soldiers in Davis’s brigade had done earlier in the week, the men began to lighten their load to make the journey more bearable. “Jimmy and I had a knapsack packed with good clothes sent us from home, and with this and a pair of blankets we began that march,” Benton Ellis remembered in his memoirs, “. . . we had not gone three miles before we discarded the blankets and knapsacks . . . In fact, we left everything except our shirts and pants, shoes and hats.”⁴

William A. Bryant wrote, “the first days journey was of course hard on us, unused to a hilly country too, and then we were all overloaded in our anxiety to carry luxuries.”⁵ Not one to do without, he went on to note, “I have reduced my wardrobe to 2 flannel shirts, 2 prs [pairs] wool socks, 1 pr drawers, 2 prs pants, 1 thick jacket, 2 silk hadkrfs, [handkerchiefs] and have an oil cloth besides; With other things I carry in my knapsack a box pills, a small quantity of E. Salts,

Chattanooga. However, another source, the letters of Jacob Mickler, indicates that in August, at Chattanooga, Dilworth remained in command of the regiment. Nevertheless, Samuel Pasco noted in his diary that Dilworth returned to the regiment on November 16, 1862.

⁴“Short Record.”

⁵Willie Bryant to Rebecca Bryant, August 24, 1862, in Rose Cottage Chronicles, 139.

some cayenne pepper, a btl [bottle] linement, and plenty of soap. . . .”⁶

John Livingston Inglis, a twenty-four years old immigrant from Liverpool, had overseen an iron works at Newport before Florida’s secession. Enlisting in Company D of the 3rd Florida in July 1861, he was elected sergeant. Then, in the May 1862 regimental reorganization, the men of his company elected him 2nd Lieutenant.⁷ On the day his company ascended the ridge, Inglis wrote in his diary “. . . here knapsacks were emptied, and anything thrown away possible to do without.”⁸ Among the items that Inglis would not part with included soap, a towel, a blanket, one shirt, and a pair of socks.⁹

The 1st and 3rd Florida Infantry Regiments comprised two-thirds of Brigadier General John Calvin Brown’s newly formed brigade. The 41st Mississippi, a relatively large regiment which was also untested in combat, made up the third unit of the brigade. John C. Brown had been a lawyer and politician before his native state of Tennessee seceded in April 1861. Joining the 3rd Tennessee at the outbreak of war, Brown was elected colonel, a position he held until the regiment was surrendered at Fort Donelson in February. Exchanged in early August, he was promoted to Brigadier General on the last day of that month and was given command of the small brigade. The division commander was the former colonel of the 1st Florida, Brigadier General Patton Anderson. His division was part of Major General William Hardee’s Left Wing in Bragg’s army of the Mississippi.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷John L. Inglis, “Commander Florida Division, U.V.C” in Confederate Veteran, Volume XXII. January - December 1914, Reprinted. (Wilmington: 1987), 159.

⁸John L. Inglis Diary, August 29, 1862, Strozier Library, Special Collections, Florida State University, Tallahassee. (Hereafter Inglis Diary)

⁹*Ibid.*

From Walden's Ridge, Brown's Brigade descended into the valley of the Sequatchie River. The day and night marches over forbidden terrain took a heavy toll on the men, especially the 3rd Florida, whose men had never marched such long distances. "[F]eet blistered, shoulders sore, and worn out," wrote Inglis in his diary on August 30.¹⁰ Their day began before the first sunlight crept over the eastern mountains and ended long after its last rays disappeared on the western horizon. After a day's march over terrible terrain, W. C. Middleton noted that all the men in his company were "nearly perished for water and covered with dust."¹¹ In the words of Willie Bryant: "[W]e are invariably aroused at 3'oclk in the mornng. [morning] to start, and keep going until after dark, and every 2d or 3d night are obliged to be up late cooking rations ahead."¹² This stage of the campaign consisted of slow, fatiguing marches up narrow mountain roads under a hot, late summer sun. Then a brief respite was earned as the long columns descended into the valleys that cut through the mountains. However, as the soldiers entered a valley, they had but to look forward to see yet another ridge rising before them and know that process would soon repeat.

Many soldiers, weakened by disease contracted either in Florida, Mobile, or Chattanooga, found the strenuous marching too hard. The heat also affected the Floridians and other soldiers in the Army. These men fell out of the line of march by the hundreds and made their way back to Chattanooga. Others, too sick even to walk according to Willie Bryant, were ". . . left sick at houses and hospitals established along the road, and by the side of the road to make their way *somewhere* the best they could, and many of the hardest and strongest are of the number."¹³

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Middleton, September 4, 1862.

¹²Willie Bryant to Rebecca Bryant, September 7, 1862 in Rose Cottage Chronicles, 144.

¹³*Ibid.*, Willie Bryant to Davis Bryant, September 14, 1862, 148.

The major problem encountered along the line of march was one the men of Smith's army had already discovered: the lack of healthy water in the area. This subject became a common theme in almost every Floridian's account of the march into Kentucky. "I had been weakened from diarrhoea [sic] caused by drinking some cider and eating fruit, and from bad water and the scarcity of it," Willie Bryant told his mother.¹⁴ On September 9 as the Floridians struggled to cross the Cumberland Mountains southeast of Nashville, John Inglis wrote in his diary ". . . water scarce, men straggling, some fainting, and all so tired."¹⁵ Middleton noted one instance in his diary when a hole of bad water was found "there had to be a guard with bayonets fixed round this water to keep the nearly perished men out of it."¹⁶

The disappearance of the harsh terrain came on September 10 when the men topped a ridge to view the Cumberland River sparkling in the valley below. The river was waded by Brown's Regiments on the same day, and in the process the men were given a chance to clean off the grimy dust and filth that had accumulated during the hard march. The respite was short, for the regiments marched fifteen miles the following day, eighteen the day after that, and crossed into Kentucky on September 13. "The average of the march is about 16 or 17 miles pr [per] day," Willie Bryant related to his brother, and "some days they have driven us 22; O! It has been inhuman!"¹⁷

The line of march passed through Glasgow, Kentucky in ". . . good order, quick step, at right

¹⁴*Ibid.*, Willie Bryant to Rebecca Bryant, September 7, 1862. 144.

¹⁵Inglis Diary, September 9, 1862.

¹⁶Middleton, August 30, 1862.

¹⁷Inglis Diary, September 11-13, 1862. Willie Bryant to Davis Bryant, September 14, 1862 in Rose Cottage Chronicles.

shoulder arms.”¹⁸ From there, John Inglis recorded the Floridians marched “. . . all night no rest to Cave City, men falling out badly, could not stand it.”¹⁹ From Cave City the Army moved in the direction of the railroad town of Munfordsville. This town, in the words of Kenneth Noe, “occupied a crucial point on both the railroad and the Louisville Pike.”²⁰ Federal soldiers numbering 4,500 manned fortifications which guarded the railroad bridge that spanned the Green River below the town.

Bragg moved his entire force to deal with the Federal garrison, and by morning on September 16, his divisions encircled the Federal fort. The following day, after declaring he would not surrender until shown he was outnumbered, Federal commander Colonel John Wilder was invited on a tour of the Confederates’ lines. After viewing a portion of the Confederate Army, Wilder agreed to surrender his outnumbered garrison to Bragg. The soldiers of the Army of the Mississippi lined the road as the paroled Federal prisoners marched out. The Union soldiers marched from their works on the morning of September 17. Passing by the 3rd Florida, Inglis declared the prisoners “. . . looked fat, clean, and had new uniforms and we dirty, ragged, barefooted, and hungry”²¹ He continued, “. . . they took hours to pass, our men and they joking each other, our Bands played “Get Out Of The Wilderness” “Ain’t I Glad” here we got coffee, and beef and hard tack. It was all good.”²² Private Samuel Pasco of the 3rd Florida’s Company H, reflected on the surrender and commented in his diary:

¹⁸Inglis Diary, September 15, 1862.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Kenneth W. Noe, Perryville. (Lexington: 2001), 68. (Hereafter Noe)

²¹Inglis Diary, September 17, 1862.

²²*Ibid.*

We were soon ordered into ranks and marched out to where we could see the prisoners pass. It was quite an interesting site and they looked finely in their blue uniforms; there were about 4000 of them in all. Quite a trade in canteens sprung up as they passed. I followed them for a little while . . . Bought a Yankee overcoat and india rubber cloth.²³

Following the surrender of Munfordsville, Braxton Bragg's army began entrenching on the south bank of the Green River. Having positioned his 30,000 soldiers between Buell's army of the Ohio and its supply depot at Louisville, Bragg reasoned Buell would be forced to attack his fortified position. However, Bragg's own force was outnumbered, and despite the spoils gathered from the Munfordsville garrison, was facing an acute shortage of rations. For three days Bragg vacillated between keeping his force at Munfordsville or withdrawing to the east to unite with Kirby Smith's 15,000 soldiers before offering battle. Bragg's decision was ultimately made for him when Buell refused to immediately move against the Rebels' Green River position. Earl Hess notes because Buell had an ample supply train, thanks to the emptying of depots in Northern Alabama he "could afford to wait in his Cave City line, but Bragg could not wait at Munfordsville."²⁴

During the three days over which Bragg pondered his possible options, the Confederate privates became the pawns in a deadly waiting game. For the men of the 3rd Florida, uncertainty began to build as news of a fight loomed in the rumors and gossip of the camps. "Lay in line of battle, no noise, no leaving ranks, silently expecting Buell's men from Nashville, got anxious for their approach," noted John Inglis of the three days.²⁵ As the regiments waited beneath the hot

²³Private Pasco, A Civil War Diary, September 17, 1862, transcribed by Suzanne Ripely Kranc and William Conrad Gibons. Privately Published in 1990 for the Pasco Family. (Hereafter Pasco Diary)

²⁴Hess, 70.

²⁵Inglis Diary, September 18 -20, 1862.

September sun, Lieutenant Inglis and his fellow officers walked behind the lines, encouraging the men and giving instructions on firing, such as the one recorded by Inglis in his journal: “Men cautioned to not waste a shot, be sure of your hind sight and only fire when distance and aim was sure as for a . . . deer.”²⁶

On the fourth day, September 21, Bragg decided he would move his Army east to unite with Kirby Smith’s force. His men abandoned their works the same day and began marching to the northeast. In the words of Colonel William Miller of the 1st Florida, “[W]e flanked off the Elizabeth Pike and went through the Muldrow Hills to Bardstown, leaving the road to Louisville open to Buell. . . .”²⁷ Over the next two days, the Floridians passed fields full of ripe corn and pumpkin vines. Those scarecrow-like figures, filthy, many with bare feet and clothes hanging in tatters, seemed right at home in the cornfields as they moved about seizing ears. After a raid on a field, the men reemerged from the long rows, their haversacks bulging with plunder. Water was still an issue for the men, but occasionally the regiments marched by a farm owned by a Pro-Secession family who would allow the use of their well. Or cider and whiskey were sometimes proffered to the soldiers for a handsome profit by roadside entrepreneurs.

The Federal Army did not fare much better. Marching under the same conditions as their Rebel counterparts, the Union soldiers suffered from thirst, and many ruined their shoes and clothing on the march north to Louisville. Upon reaching the city on September 24, however, the famished men gained access to mountains of supplies and munitions which had accumulated on the wharfs of the Ohio River. The men collected new equipment and the Army was reinforced by several new divisions that had assembled at Louisville for its defense. With his Army

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷William Miller. Report of General Miller to Anna Jackson Chapter United Daughters Of The Confederacy, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, 2. (Hereafter Miller)

recuperating from its long and tiring march, Don Carlos Buell and his staff began making their plans to deal with the Rebel Invaders.

On the afternoon of September 24, following a six-mile march of “slow going,” the regiments of Brown’s brigade reached the outskirts of Bardstown.²⁸ The men could hear cheering from the town, and from the front ranks the soldiers could see the streets ahead crowded with spectators. The Floridians could see the regiment in front close ranks and march smartly in step as it passed the first of the jubilant citizens. Then it was the 3rd Florida’s turn to pass in what Kenneth Noe called “a grand review of the army.”²⁹ And so, with:

. . . colors unfurled, bayonets fixed, “Right Shoulder Shift”, dressed files, Bands to front and fine order and style at a quick swinging step we went through B. Town streets lined with citizens and Ladies waving handkerchiefs “Dixie” and “Bonnie Blue Flag” playing, artillery booming with Old Bragg, Generals Polk, Chalmers, Pat. Anderson, Buckner, all in fine uniforms, and staffs too Making speeches, we swept along our road . . . this high regalia gold, braid brass buttons and pomp and parade behind us. The Ladies look so sweet.³⁰

The next morning the Floridians were ordered six miles northwest of Bardstown, to a position on the road which led to Louisville.³¹ The regiments remained on picket duty at this location until October 4.

Meanwhile, in Bardstown, Braxton Bragg “received news that Kirby Smith had actually recruited scarcely a brigade, although he boasted twenty-five thousand Kentuckians would enlist.

²⁸Inglis Diary, September 24, 1862.

²⁹Noe, 99.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Henry W. Reddick. Seventy-Seven Years in Dixie: the Boys in Gray of 61-65. (Santa Rosa: 1910), 15.

And as for Bragg himself - he had received no recruits.”³² In one final attempt to rally the Kentuckians to the colors, Bragg made the decision to enforce the Confederate Conscription Act in Kentucky. But first he had to formally bring Kentucky into the sphere of Confederate Law. To do this he rode to Frankfort, the state capital, on October 1, to preside over the inauguration of Richard Hawes, the exiled Confederate-sponsored governor who had accompanied the Army of the Mississippi into Kentucky.³³ The capital city, situated just north of Lexington on the border of the Bluegrass Region, had been under Confederate control since September 13, the occupying troops none other than the 1,000 Floridians of Davis’s brigade.

In his reminiscences of the campaign, Hugh Black did not seem to have much affection for the city and its inhabitants, probably because they possessed none for the invaders. “Our reception at this place was cold in consequence of the large Union population of the City,” remembered the Lieutenant. “Frankfort is the Capital of the State and consequently is a place of great importance to the people of the state. It contains a great deal of wealth, but it is not a place of gay appearance. We remained here doing Guard duty until October 4.”³⁴

On that early fall day, the town was bustling with excitement and celebration as it was to be the day Governor Richard Hawes was sworn into office. Lieutenant Black remembered:

This day (Oct. 4th.) will never fade from my memory, it being the day appointed for the

³²Thomas L. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862. (Baton Rouge: 1967), 240. (Hereafter Connelly)

³³Richard Hawes was the Provisional Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky until Provisional Governor George Johnson was killed in the ranks of a Kentucky Regiment on the second day of Shiloh. Hawes thus became the Provisional Governor of Kentucky, though except for Bragg’s Campaign in 1862, his “Governorship” was spent in absentee.

³⁴Black Letters.

inauguration of the rebel Military governor Hawes. The hour appointed for this inauguration was Eleven in the morning; at which time every thing had been arranged and the governor was inaugurated amidst booming of cannon, of playing of Brass Bands and loud Continuous applause of the people—the scene was a grand one but had scarcely passed away before the firing of hostile cannon commenced nine miles from Frankfort on the Louisville road.³⁵

The Federal Army of the Ohio had stolen a march on Braxton Bragg. That evening Black noted, “precisely at 6 o'clock P.M. the Railroad and Turnpike bridges [over the Kentucky River] were set on fire and our heavy columns of Infantry, Artillery, and Cavalry were put in Motion. At 12 o'clock that night we arrived at Versailles a distance of fourteen miles from Frankfort.”³⁶ Among the columns was Governor Hawes, an exile once again.

The Federal force that threatened Frankfort was but one division, that of Brigadier General Joshua Sill. It marched as a decoy for Buell's real force, three corps numbering seventy thousand, as it moved down three separate roads, each of which converged on Bardstown. With so few men to face the oncoming Federal wave, Major General Leonidas Polk chose not to live up to his Spartan namesake and fight a forlorn defense. Instead he abandoned Bardstown and marched his columns east toward Springfield, and Kirby Smith's reinforcements. Left in Bardstown were hundreds of sick, including a good many from the 1st and 3rd Florida. These men, along with those left to care for them, became prisoners of war when Buell's Army passed through the town a day later.

On October 5 Brown's reduced brigade covered twenty-two miles and passed through Springfield. All the while, soldiers like John Inglis were wondering, “. . . what was up.”³⁷ “Still on,” Inglis wrote in his diary on October 6, “through Mount Vernon and Perryville, firing in rear,

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷Inglis Diary, October 5, 1862.

know now Yank's were behind us-we went to within two miles of Harrodsburg and camped. Heard Kirby Smith was near."³⁸ Harrodsburg was the rallying point for the far-flung divisions of Bragg and Kirby Smith. However, lack of intelligence and sufficient information about Federal troop positions hindered any effort to coordinate an effective assemblage of the troops of both Armies. Both Bragg and Kirby Smith had their own ideas about which Federal column was the real force, and therefore which to concentrate their soldiers on to meet the threat they believed was Buell's main thrust. On the night of October 6, Major General William Hardee would make Bragg's mind up for him.

Hardee, cautious for his soldiers' well-being, allowed the division of Simon B. Buckner to halt in Perryville because, "[t]here was a little water in the bed of Doctor's Fork, a small stream that ran across the Springfield road, two and a half miles west of Perryville."³⁹ Throughout the day and night of October 6, Hardee became annoyed at the Union force that was known to be tailing his divisions and the constant 'pop, pop' of skirmishing that occurred with his rear guard. Thinking the Union force which plagued his column was small, he was authorized to "brush aside the annoying force at Perryville. . . ."⁴⁰

"I have been in a most terrible fight and *came out without a scratch*, . . ." wrote Willie Bryant of the battle which was fought near the sleepy town of Perryville on October 8, 1862.⁴¹ On October 7, General Patton Anderson's division, with the 1st and 3rd Regiments, "about faced and made a rapid march back to meet the enemy who were pressing our rear. Men came on in fine

³⁸*Ibid.*, October 6, 1862.

³⁹Connelly, 256.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 257.

⁴¹Willie Bryant to Rebecca Bryant, October 11, 1862 in Rose Cottage Chronicles, 159.

spirits, all liked Genl. Brown. Men joked, and all hoped to be first in.”⁴² General Brown’s brigade, with that of Colonel Thomas Jones’s Mississippi brigade of Anderson’s division, were moved into line between the divisions of Generals Simon B. Buckner and Benjamin F. Cheatham. The remainder of the division took up position on the far left of the Confederate line. Brown’s brigade camped that night on the eastern slope of a hill, two miles west of Perryville. From their position, they could see the innumerable campfires of 14,000 of their comrades glowing in the twilight. Across the valley, the twinkling campfires of their enemies could be seen. Around their own fires, the men silently ate their rations, each lost in his own thoughts.

And as the sun vanished in the west behind the Federal lines, the Floridians spread their blankets on the cool grass and lay in the gathering darkness. Many could not sleep, so they spent the long, crisp night staring blankly at the starry sky, their minds dancing with uncertainties of what the next day would bring.

As the dawn spread across the eastern sky, soldiers of General Brown’s brigade slowly pulled themselves from their blankets and ate a breakfast that consisted of cold beef and corn mush. Following the meal, soldiers could be seen through the mist, sitting on the ground reading their testaments and making peace with God. More were found releasing rings of smoke as they enjoyed a morning pipe. Near the headquarters tent of the 1st Florida, members of the color guard laughed quietly at a joke told by one of the sergeants trying to relieve the tension felt by all.

Beneath a hastily erected canvas lean-to, the surgeons of the regiments prepared for the expected casualties by constructing a crude operating table simply by laying an unhinged door across two chests. On a small table beside the makeshift work area, the surgeons lay their saws, tourniquets, and probes. Outside the hospital in the mid-morning sun, members of the regiments’s brass band waited, bearing litters instead of their musical instruments.

⁴²Inglis Diary, October 7, 1862.

Then from somewhere in the haze came the constant pattering of a drum that the men called the long roll. The soldiers made a pile of their baggage and knapsacks which would be kept under guard throughout the fight, and formed ranks. These 'everyday soldiers' who, just a year and a half earlier had been clerks and merchants, farmers and students, now stood shoulder to shoulder. They had marched over 350 miles in the previous month, a feat which few would have thought possible in their civilian lives. They had learned the drill and had endured the monotony of camp life; now they were faced with the task for which they had enlisted, that of fighting, and if need be, killing. Then, when the order to move forward was given, the men began to slowly advance, and to their dismay, the soldiers of Brown's brigade discovered they would be held in reserve.⁴³

In the hills west of Perryville that day, three divisions of the Army of the Mississippi numbering 16,000, squared off against the 13,000 men of Major General Alexander McDowell McCook's I Corps, Army of the Ohio. South of McCook's Corps, the remaining 42,000 Union troops of Major General Thomas Crittenden and Brigadier General Charles Gilbert's Corps stretched the Union line several miles to the south. The fighting remained in the north in McCook's sector due to what has been attributed to an atmospheric anomaly. Because of the disturbance, the sounds of the guns were bounced back to earth, and therefore the soldiers just miles from the action could hear nothing.

Colonel William Miller recalled the brigade "advanced over unwooded but broken ground until we were within the line of artillery fire. We were halted behind a ridge, and the shells going over the crest, exploding in our rear, striking up the dust in a dry, plowed field."⁴⁴ Ahead of the Floridians, occupying the crest of the hill, was Captain Charles Lumsden's Alabama battery. It

⁴³*Ibid.*, October 8, 1862.

⁴⁴Miller, 2.

was trading shots with Federal batteries located across the valley that was the ‘no man’s land’ between the two armies.

Some of the shot and shell meant for the Alabamian artillerists “came tumbling past the battery in amongst us,” wrote Lieutenant Inglis and we “could see them, many knocking men out of their places wounding several.”⁴⁵ While in Company A, in line to the right of Inglis’s Company D, Willie Bryant recalled in a letter written on October 11, “. . . for over an hour before we fired we lay on the ground under a hill exposed to shot and shell which killed and wounded several”⁴⁶ Indeed, “fragments of bursting shells” also fell among the 1st Florida, positioned in line just to the left of the 3rd, remembered Colonel Miller, “. . . wounding several of our men.”⁴⁷

Eventually, the Alabamians began receiving the worst of the artillery duel and Inglis remembered “. . . men getting enough of this, no way to hit back, and battery not replying to every shot.”⁴⁸ The barrage began falling on the Floridians and Lumsden’s battery as soon as the Confederate attack began around 1:30 P.M. At that time, the division of Benjamin Cheatham slammed into the left flank of General Alexander McCook’s Federal Corps. Cheatham’s veteran Tennesseans rolled the Federal lines back several hundred yards and seized many cannons before Union officers were able to stabilize their forces.

At 3:30 P.M. a courier found General Brown and after a brief exchange, Brown wheeled his own horse and rode the length of his brigade before reining up his mount in front of the 1st Florida. “ ‘Attention’ rang along our line, up jumped the 1st Brigade, Gen. B. lines us up as if on

⁴⁵Inglis Diary, October 8, 1862.

⁴⁶Willie Bryant to Rebecca Bryant, October 11, 1862 in Rose Cottage Chronicles, 160.

⁴⁷Miller, 2.

⁴⁸Inglis Diary, October 8, 1862.

drill.”⁴⁹ The soldiers pushed themselves up from the high grass and formed their lines of battle. Firing instructions were given to the soldiers by their lieutenants and captains, while other officers dressed the lines. Aligning on the regimental colors and guides, the companies took up their places. The line of double ranks extended several hundred yards and consisted of the 41st Mississippi and its 450 men on the left. In the center was the 1st Florida that carried a scant 167 soldiers into action. To the right of the 1st was the 3rd Florida, with 275 untested and anxious soldiers.

Benton Ellis had been assigned to act as a guard for the brigade’s wagons during the fight, but deserted his post to fight beside his brother in the coming battle. He rejoined his company as it was in line of battle, ready to advance. In his excitement to fight Benton left his rifle with the wagons. There was no time to retrieve it, and instead of joining the battle line, he “with one or two more men, was detailed to take all the canteens of the company, and go to a spring not very far and fill and bring [the canteens] back.”⁵⁰ As Ellis left the line of battle, John Inglis wrote in his diary that General Brown, in front of the lines, “[d]rew his sword, and with the command ‘forward,’ ‘guide right, march’ we started from a march to a trot.”⁵¹ At the same time Brown’s brigade advanced, the commands of Generals Bushrod Johnson, Patrick Cleburne, and Daniel Adams were also moved forward against the right flank of McCook’s Corps.

“Over the ridge we went,” recalled Colonel Miller, “meeting a severe fire of musketry and shells.”⁵² In front of the Floridians, the ground sloped upwards to the crest of a ridge which was held by the Federal brigades of Colonels William Lytle and Leonard Harris. These two brigades

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰“Short Record.”

⁵¹Inglis Diary, October 8, 1862.

⁵²Miller, 2.

represented the extreme right of McCook's Corps and were the objective of the afternoon attack. Between the ridge from which they came and the Federal line, lay an overgrown field which was covered with briars. This ground somewhat hampered the Floridians' attack before it even began, for "[o]wing to the fact that some of the men were virtually barefooted, and that there were many black locust thickets, some of the first regiments could not go into battle."⁵³

Once the advance was ordered, no thickets were going to hamper the men of the 3rd Florida. The thorns ripped at their trouser legs as they took step after deliberate step towards the enemy. The greater sting by far came from the rounds fired by Federal skirmishers that began cracking through the air over the heads of, and around the Floridians. The skirmishers were placed in advance of a large formation to discover enemy dispositions. On the defense, they were also deployed to slow the advance of a foe. Behind the double ranks of the advancing regiments, sergeants and lieutenants moved about, making certain men did not break ranks and falter under the withering fire of the enemy. Then the smacking sound of a minie bullet hitting flesh and bone resonated from somewhere in the ranks, and a gap opened as a soldier gasped, and then pitched forward toward the ground.

The men around the fallen soldier panicked, and human nature overcame discipline. The soldiers broke from a trot into a much brisker pace, to cover the open ground as quickly as possible. Soon, the 3rd Regiment was charging forward, leaving the 1st Regiment and the Mississippians far behind. "[W]e was soon at a run," recalled John Inglis, "and into the brambles high as our heads, and in horrible bad order."⁵⁴ General Brown called a halt to the brigade's advance and then rode forward to the scattered ranks of the 3rd Florida where he, in Inglis's words, "cussed us for being too quick, dress up or you 'will be cut to pieces in such order.' Men

⁵³*Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁴Inglis Diary, October 8, 1862.

and officers were soon in line as balance of the brigade was now ok we again started, and bullets began to whistle.”⁵⁵

The men of the 3rd Florida made inviting targets as they reformed their ranks and waited for their comrades in the 1st Regiment and 41st Mississippi to move to their position, and several fell during this time. Finally, after what seemed like ages to the soldiers, the order to move forward was given and the line of gray and brown surged forward again. Shot and shell from Federal artillery fell into the ranks, and with the deadly ‘crack’ of enemy bullets, created holes in the reformed battle lines. The cries of “Close up!” and “Keep Moving!” was yelled by officers over the commotion of battle as men from the second file moved to the front ranks to fill the place of the fallen. The wave pushed on, topped by the red and blue of the Cassidy pattern battle flag of the 1st Florida that flapped freely in the breeze above the lines. The Federal skirmishers fell back little by little in the face of the advance, until they reached their own line of battle.

Behind them were the Confederates who moved in a slow stride until they reached a point one hundred yards from the Federal lines, when the order to halt was given. The line staggered to a stop, and the soldiers of the 1st Florida brought their rifles to their shoulders, while men of the 3rd fell to the ground to return fire. The call to fire was repeated by the company commanders and by various officers along the line of battle. Then came the deliberate moment when the triggers were depressed by the soldiers.

Following the first volley, the order was given for independent fire, or as fast as the soldiers could load their weapons, which were a motley assortment of imported Enfields, the popular Mississippi rifles, and old .69-cal. smoothbore muskets. The line became a confusing fury of brown, swirling smoke, broken by stabs of yellow flame each time a deadly missile was fired toward the enemy.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

The briar-filled pasture became a killing ground, as hundreds of bullets flew through the smoke-filled air at any given minute. The poor visibility caused the men to fire in the general direction of the enemy, and though many of these rounds buried themselves in the dirt or flew harmlessly overhead, enough found their marks to cause grief in the Confederate ranks. General Brown fell soon after the firing began, the recipient of a severe wound. Colonel William Tucker of the 41st Mississippi assumed command of the little brigade, but after a few minutes he too fell wounded. Through the smoke and confusion of the fight, a courier found Colonel Miller and told him “. . . you are in command of the brigade.”⁵⁶

In the line of the 3rd Florida, on the brigade’s right, the situation was horrible. Men were falling by the dozens, including both commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Among the first to fall was Lieutenant Colonel Church, who was hit by a shell fragment that broke his collar bone. As he was carried from the field Captain Daniel Bird of Company E took command of the regiment. Very soon after this, Lieutenant Inglis was slightly wounded in the chest. The St. Augustine “Blues” lost all three of its lieutenants to serious wounds as the action progressed. In all, throughout the engagement at least twelve commissioned officers of the 3rd Florida were killed or wounded.⁵⁷

Non-commissioned officers, their chevrons emblazoned on their jacket sleeves, became conspicuous targets for enemy soldiers who were able to glimpse through the smoke. Archie Livingston, a corporal in Company G, wrote that of those who fell, “none were more loved than Thos [Thomas] Mosley.”⁵⁸ Mosley had recently been promoted acting-sergeant major of the regiment. He died early in the fighting after being struck by shell fragments. Sergeants and

⁵⁶Miller, 2-3.

⁵⁷The Florida Sentinel, November 11, 1862.

⁵⁸Coski, 77.

corporals all along the line of battle began falling into the tall grass and briars as Federal bullets and artillery projectiles found their marks.

Despite the growing casualties, the Floridians and Mississippians kept up a steady fire against the Federal line for over half an hour. By the end of that time many had expended the forty rounds carried in the soldiers' cartridge boxes. Twenty extra rounds were carried in the brigade wagon train but, as Colonel Miller charged, "[t]he Ordinance Officer, a nephew of General Brown, was drunk, and supplies of ammunition had not arrived."⁵⁹ As a result, ". . . officers passed along the line, cutting the cartridge boxes of the wounded from the bodies of the dead and receiving them from the suffering wounded."⁶⁰

It was during this time that many officers of the 1st Florida fell. Major Glover Ball, then commanding the regiment, fell with a terrible neck wound. At the same time Captains William Poole, who commanded the Florida Battalion on the first day at Shiloh, and Capers Bird, who commanded on the second, were both seriously wounded in their thighs as they carried cartridge boxes to men on the firing line. The casualties among the officers were so great that at the end of the day the survivors of the 1st Florida were led by a lieutenant.⁶¹

"[T]he groans of the dying, and the cries for water of the wounded was terrible," remembered John Inglis.⁶² "I of course had many escapes," wrote Willie Bryant, "men shot down on every side of me, balls striking near me and once as I lay on the ground, taking aim a ball so filled my

⁵⁹Miller, 3.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 4.

⁶²Inglis Diary, October 8, 1862.

eyes with dirt to blind me for some time.”⁶³ Those who were severely and mortally wounded lay suffering on the field as the hot sun beat down upon them. Next to the squirming and screaming wounded lay the still and torn bodies of their dead comrades.

After a time even the ammunition taken from casualties ran short. Fortunately, the ordnance sergeants managed to bring up additional ammunition. Time was needed for the sergeants to make their way down the line, filling each man’s box with the extra cartridges. As he walked down the line of the 1st Florida encouraging the soldiers, Colonel Miller “saw a boy sitting on the ground looking at a trickle of blood which came through his pants. The Colonel asked him if he could walk. ‘Yes Colonel,’ ‘Then go to rear’ The brave little fellow said, ‘Colonel, I am not going to quit for that’, and he went to his place and was again wounded and left on the field.”⁶⁴

As the last cartridge box was filled with the additional supply of ammunition, a general advance was ordered by Colonel Miller. Benton Ellis remembered, “[w]hen I got back with the water, the company was ordered to charge, and me without a gun; but it was only a short time before there were plenty of guns beside the dead and dying, so I was armed and joined in the charge. . . .”⁶⁵ Led by the few remaining commissioned officers, sergeants and corporals, the line staggered forward. As the brigade neared the enemy line, a soldier tried to shout. “His excitement was so great that he only let out a squeak. The effect was electric. The shout commencing on the left, swelled along the line until it became a great roar.”⁶⁶ At a double quick pace the men reached the fence which ran along the ridge the Federals held. Many of the 3rd Florida troopers, including John Inglis, moved across the field on hands and knees to avoid the

⁶³Willie Bryant to Rebecca Bryant, October 11, 1862 in Rose Cottage Chronicles, 160.

⁶⁴Miller, 3.

⁶⁵“Short Record.”

⁶⁶Miller, 3.

devastating Federal fire. The Federal regiment that remained to oppose the Confederate advance, the 10th Ohio, whose ammunition was nearly spent, fired one scattered volley to check the onrushing Confederates and then withdrew. Inglis wrote that the 3rd Florida reached the fence, “pushed it down, and was right at . . . the 10th Ohio. Here it was close to each other, . . . and then chase the 10th Ohio, as they, fell back but few of them left.”⁶⁷

One of the casualties suffered in this advance was Benton Ellis, who was hit in the left arm as he raised his rifle to fire at the enemy. At the same time Frank Saxon, Captain Walter Saxon’s brother, was wounded severely in the leg. As the company moved forward, Captain Saxon asked Benton to remain with Frank, and Benton agreed. Benton and Frank remained on the field until an ambulance arrived to transport them to a field hospital where they remained throughout the night. The following morning they were captured by advancing Federal soldiers.⁶⁸

The 10th Ohio was the last regiment of the two Federal brigades that offered the Confederates any resistance. The others, their ammunition gone, and under pressure from the brigades of Dan Adams, Patrick Cleburne, and Bushrod Johnson, had long since fallen back. Once the 10th Ohio began its withdrawal, the Confederate attack gained momentum. To the north Brigadier General S. A. M. Wood’s brigade of Mississippians pursued Federal soldiers of Leonard Harris’s brigade. While the 1st Florida and 41st Mississippi continued in pursuit of the 10th Ohio, soldiers of the 3rd Florida began firing into the flanks of Harris’s retreating Federal troops. However, in the confusion of the fight the 3rd Florida mistakenly fired into the ranks of the 41st Mississippi.⁶⁹

At the top of the ridge Inglis, by this time wounded twice, found he could go no further.

⁶⁷ Inglis Diary, October 8, 1862.

⁶⁸“Short Record.”

⁶⁹Bell Irvin Wiley. The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy. (Baton Rouge: 1943), 339.

Soldiers of his Company D stopped firing long enough to make a pallet of Federal knapsacks and blankets for their wounded Lieutenant to lie on. Captain Daniel B. Bird of Company E, then commanding the regiment, upon hearing of Inglis's condition, made his way to where the Lieutenant sat. As Bird leaned down to give Inglis a drink of water from his canteen, a round struck the Captain in the heart, killing him instantly. His corpse toppled over the wounded Inglis.⁷⁰

It was late afternoon when the swirling and confused fighting finally died down in front of the Floridians. The setting of the sun and a counterattack by elements of Phil Sheridan and Robert Mitchell's divisions stopped the Confederate advance. "The brigade went into the meadow," remembered Colonel Miller, "lay down on a soft sward to rest their weary limbs. Behind them lay the . . . battlefields strewn with the dead, wounded, and dying."⁷¹ That night the Floridians "slept right on the line, amongst the dead and wounded of the 10th Ohio, stiff and full."⁷² Willie Bryant related that "I had an opportunity of seeing a battle field as I have read of it; I have seen one in all its point, I left nothing unseen, and never will I forget it. . . ."⁷³

Bryant, like many other Confederates, plundered the bodies of his foes for trinkets and food. "I was too busy attending to the wounded on the battlefield that night to get many trophies," he wrote his mother, "but I have a carnelian ring, which I took off a young chap's finger. . . ."⁷⁴ He

⁷⁰"Commander Florida Division, U. C. V.," in Confederate Veteran, Vol. XXII. January 1914 - December 1914. Reprinted. (Wilmington: 1987), 159.

⁷¹Miller, 3-4.

⁷²Inglis Diary, October 8, 1862.

⁷³Willie Bryant to Rebecca Bryant, October 11, 1862 in Rose Cottage Chronicles, 159-160.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 160.

further listed his spoils as “ a good pocket knife, and a canteen, and tin cup which I cut from a dead yankee . . . I also took a haversack with some parchd. [parched] coffee and hard bread, which was a rarity and I enjoyed it. . . .”⁷⁵ Others exhausted by the day’s fight simply fell into the grass and went to sleep.

At the same time, miles behind the advance position of Brown’s brigade at the headquarters of General Bragg, the decision was made to withdraw the Army from Perryville. The word to pull back never reached Brown’s regiments. Colonel Miller wrote, “We became aware that the army had retreated, and our brigade which had received no order was alone in front of the enemy. At 2 A.M. the men were quietly aroused, formed in line and without noise moved over the battle field to the Perryville and Harrodsburg road.”⁷⁶

At 3 A.M., the survivors of the 3rd Florida shouldered arms and the tired men slowly began the retreat. Under the pale light of the moon, the soldiers of Company D looked quite ghostly with their stooped shoulders, tattered uniforms, and smoke and blood-stained faces. Beside his marching soldiers, Lieutenant Inglis rode atop a swaybacked mule captured during the fight from an abandoned Federal wagon team.⁷⁷ The column slowly descended into the valley over which the soldiers had fought so hard the previous afternoon and disappeared into the night as it moved in the direction of Harrodsburg.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶Miller, 4.

⁷⁷Inglis Diary, October 8, 1862.

CONCLUSION

The Army of the Mississippi did not stop retreating at Harrodsburg. Instead, the wounded from Perryville remained in this small town. Among the several thousands which were abandoned when the Army moved south were around 120 Floridians. These wounded of the 1st and 3rd Florida Regiments represented twenty-seven percent of the 442 soldiers the two regiments carried into the fight.¹ A further twenty-six were killed outright on the field of battle, and around the same number died of mortal wounds.²

For their first action the soldiers of the 3rd Florida and those who were new to the 1st performed relatively well in the battle. They stood up to withering Federal fire for over thirty minutes, and then were able to successfully drive the Federal units from their position. There were of course, several miscues, such as the 3rd Florida breaking into a run during the advance, and then firing into the ranks of the 41st Mississippi. And to be sure, there were skulkers who ran from the firing line for the safety of the rear, though there is no finger pointing in any of the sources used for this account of the battle.

However, enough of these ‘everyday soldiers’ who a year before had been in school, tending crops, or reading law, stayed in the line of battle and made the advance. These soldiers gained the 3rd Florida a positive fighting reputation, and helped further solidify the reputation of the 1st Florida. And though their courage and skills would be criticized in latter engagements such as

¹The Florida Sentinel, November 11, 1862.

²*Ibid.*

Missionary Ridge and Nashville, their performance on that early autumn day at Perryville, and in the Kentucky campaign, for the most part, cannot be questioned.

Besides those that were wounded at Perryville, countless others, too sick and tired to carry on, also remained at Harrodsburg, and looked for mercy in the form of the Federal Army. When the regiments marched through Cumberland Gap in late October, they were mere shadows of their former selves. The 1st Florida had less than 100 men in the ranks, and the 3rd, around 150. The three regiments of Colonel W. G. M Davis's brigade did not fare much better. The rough marches and small amounts of food the soldiers received on the march took a toll on the ranks so that they too were much reduced by the time Tennessee was regained. To make matters worse, the first snow began to fall in the mountains of east Tennessee in late October and the Floridians were dreadfully unprepared.

In November Major General Braxton Bragg, in an attempt to erase the losses at Shiloh and Perryville from the memory of the Army of the Mississippi, renamed his force the Army of Tennessee. This new identity served to give the soldiers a renewal of sorts, in a manner of speaking, a clean slate in which their battle record was perfect. In addition to this change, regiments which were reduced by the Kentucky Campaign were consolidated, including the 1st and 3rd Florida. It was the first time in which regiments within the Army were combined. It would certainly not be the last.

In December and January, the regiments would undergo both command changes and shifts in their organizations. Just prior to the battle of Murfreesboro, the 4th Florida, then commanded by Colonel Wylde Bowen, would be brigaded with the 1st and 3rd Florida under the command of Brigadier General William Preston.³ Besides the command change in the 4th Florida after Colonel William Miller was severely wounded at Murfreesboro, Colonel William S. Dilworth returned

³Colonel James Hunt died of disease at Chattanooga on September 1, 1862. Following Hunt's death, Wylde Bowen, at the age of twenty-four, was promoted to command the regiment.

from his absence and regained command of the combined regiments. This brigade would remain intact for the next eleven months.

Davis's brigade underwent command changes as well. Following the retreat from Kentucky, Colonel Madison Perry of the 7th Florida resigned his commission. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Bullock was promoted to colonel and commanded the regiment. Colonel Davis was first promoted to brigadier general, and in the spring of 1863 ascended to command the Department of East Tennessee.⁴ His regiments were brigaded with the 54th Virginia Infantry in spring 1863, and would remain in that organization until November 1863.

In late 1862 the end of the war was nowhere in sight. For the Floridians the winter meant temperatures which many just were not accustomed too. There was little prospect of returning home, though on Christmas Day packages containing food and warm winter clothing for the soldiers arrived from home, helping to alleviate the separation on this second Christmas of the war. For many it was their last Christmas, for on December 31, 1862, the Battle of Murfreesboro began thirty miles south of Nashville. For two days along the banks of the meandering Stones River Bragg threw his soldiers in desperate attacks against the Federal lines, suffering heavy casualties all the while.

That was still in the future, as the column moved slowly under cloudy skies and gusting winds as it passed through Cumberland Gap. The soldiers had been without tents since the beginning of the campaign and their clothing was in tatters. The men shrugged their shoulders and shivered in their thin jackets and trousers as they struggled to place one foot in front of the other.

These newly christened veterans were in the final stages of a march which had covered hundreds of miles, and in the worse possible conditions. In the beginning they suffered under a raging, late summer sun, with little water to alleviate their suffering. To make matters worse,

⁴Davis would resign his commission in May 1863.

food had been in short supply and many of the daily marches had been made on empty stomachs. As the men entered the mountains of east Tennessee during the retreat, the temperatures plunged. Yet despite the deprivations many Floridians, like those who volunteered to fight on both sides, remained to follow the colors. They would have probably proudly agreed with Michael Raysor's view on the weather and hardship: they "were everyday soldiers" and they "did not mind it."⁵

⁵Michael Raysor Papers

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