

## ABSTRACT

“We never met a foe in open field we did not drive, nor did we ever meet a foe who could drive us”: The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry

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The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry was formed at the start of the Civil War from companies recruited from North Texas. They fought with the Army of Tennessee until the end of the war. The men joined because of a variety of reasons from support for an independent Confederacy to a fear of being called cowards. They saw their first action in the opening assault at Shiloh, and fought in a number of battles including Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Atlanta, and Nashville, ending the war at Spanish Fort outside Mobile, Alabama. Always in the thick of the fighting, they suffered heavy casualties and were honored for their courage.

During the war, the men were exposed to disease, the hardships of camp life, and the rigors of military discipline. To survive, the men relied heavily on religion, their leaders, and each other. Those who survived carried their service with them the rest of their lives.

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ever meet a foe who could drive us": The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of History

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Call to Arms

The Civil War came as no surprise to most Texans. Issues such as slavery, state vs. federal power, and economic differences had divided the country ever since its creation, and Texas had been involved in the controversy since before statehood. Texas had been colonized by Americans who came mostly from the Southern slave states, and they brought their culture, along with their slaves, with them. Texas had initially been denied entry into the Union in 1836 and was finally annexed when Southern and Northern Democrats accomplished a congressional resolution that kept the balance between slave and free states. The war had been looming for years, from the heated arguments at the Constitutional Convention to the Nullification Crisis. Political deals like the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850 managed to postpone the conflict, but they were not able to solve the deep problems, such as the future of slavery, that divided the nation.

The crisis came to a head in the presidential election of 1860. Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, was elected on a platform of preventing the spread of slavery into the western territories. Southern states saw Lincoln's election as a failure of democracy. They felt that their needs were no longer being met by the federal government and that the government would in fact prey on the southern people, by taking their rights of self government and by destroying their way of life. Despite Lincoln's assertions that he

would not attack southern slavery, South Carolina seceded in December. Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida followed a month later.

Texans had been paying close attention to the crisis, and secession fever swept across the state. Sam Houston, founding father of the Republic, was against secession but could do nothing to stop it. He refused to call a statewide secession convention, but local meetings sprang up across the state calling for action. Eventually, Sam Houston bowed to popular pressure and called a convention in January. The Delegates voted overwhelmingly in favor of secession. The resolution was then put to a statewide vote, and the people voted overwhelmingly to secede, 46,188 to 15,149, with only ten counties having a majority voting against secession. On March 2, 1861, twenty-five years to the day after Texas declared her independence from Mexico, Texas joined the Confederate States of America.<sup>1</sup> Two weeks later, when it was time for Texas government officials to swear allegiance to the Confederacy, Sam Houston could not bring himself to abandon the United States and was replaced by Lieutenant Governor Edward Clark.

Texas was the last state to join the Confederate States before the opening of hostilities. Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Arkansas left the Union for the Confederacy after the firing on Fort Sumter. The new nation wrote its own constitution, selected Jefferson Davis as Provisional President, and created its own functioning government.

The Northern states were not going to let one third of the country's population leave without a fight, and so they began preparations to crush the rebellion and restore the

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<sup>1</sup> Oran M. Roberts, *Confederate Military History: Texas* (Gulf Breeze: eBooksOnDisk, 2003), 6-21.

Union by force. The South needed to defend itself from Northern aggression and from marauding Indians on the frontier. Troops were called up, and new units were created all across the South.

Texas, like the rest of the South, was willing to fight to preserve their new Independence. Tens of thousands of young men volunteered for service with the Confederate army when Texas seceded in early 1861. As in all previous wars, Texans had one of the highest volunteer rates, and many new units were formed across the state. The first recruits were part of temporary units to accomplish immediate goals. John S. Ford took a force down to the Rio Grande Valley to guard the border and forts there, while Ben McCulloch was sent to San Antonio to secure U.S. military stores. He led a force of about 1,000 men and forced U.S. Army General David E. Twiggs to surrender.<sup>2</sup> The arms and munitions captured there would equip the men raised to fight for the Confederacy and defend Texas from invasion. That McCulloch was ordered to San Antonio before the Secession Convention reached a decision showed that secession was a foregone conclusion.

These early volunteer units were disbanded in March after they fulfilled their missions. There was no reason to keep them because the war had not yet started. Fort Sumter would not be shelled until April, while the first land battle would not occur until the summer. Everyone knew that there would eventually be fighting, but most assumed that it would be of a small scale and would end quickly. The Confederacy had to create a military organization from scratch. Soon the South was ready for more permanent and

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 11-14.



official units. They began to be recruited that spring, as soon as the military organization was ready to handle them and sometimes earlier. Many men went into service ill-equipped, some even armed with antique rifles they brought from home.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry was raised and initially led by Samuel Bell Maxey. He was elected in August 1861, to the Texas Senate, but events like the Confederate victory at Manassas, Virginia, overshadowed the election, and by the time the results were posted, he had given his political office to his father. Instead, he travelled to the Confederate capital in Richmond, seeking an officer's commission and permission to raise a regiment of infantry. At first he was turned away because the Confederacy was experiencing problems equipping their new army. He was told that he would get his regiment only if he could arm and equip it himself. Undeterred, he met with the War Department and Texas politicians, and on September 3<sup>rd</sup> he triumphantly wrote home that he had received his authorization to "raise a Regiment of Infantry to be armed with the double barrel shot gun and common rifle and musket."<sup>3</sup>

The source of these weapons is unclear; as he had initially been told that the government could not arm his men. Possibly they came from Maxey's home of Lamar County. Anticipating a war, county leaders had sent agents to New Orleans with \$4,000 to purchase weapons. They returned that summer with rifles and powder. Where ever he got the weapons, a later advertisement calling for volunteers clearly states that the arms were coming from the government.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Louise Horton, *Samuel Bell Maxey: A Biography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 20-22.

<sup>4</sup> Smith Ragsdale, "Confederate Soldiers Wanted," *Clarksville Standard*, October 5, 1861, 3.

Maxey returned to Texas and set up his headquarters at Camp Rusk in Lamar County, outside of Paris. The regiment was formed from independent companies raised by the officers who would lead them. After the men elected officers, they travelled to join up with the rest of the regiment at Camp Rusk.

The men who would join the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas came mostly from North and Northeast Texas. Those counties had not voted overwhelmingly for secession, but after Fort Sumter they turned out to defend their new state. The initial companies, their homes, and the first captains of the 9<sup>th</sup> were:

Company A	Lamar County	Captain Eli Jenway Shelton
Company B	Red River County	Captain William E. Beeson
Company C	Grayson County	Captain William Hugh Young
Company D	Titus County	Captain James H. McReynolds
Company E	Lamar County	Captain James Hill
Company F	Hopkins County	Captain James A. Leftwich
Company G	Hopkins County	Captain Joseph A. Moore
Company H	Fannin County	Captain Wright A. Stanley
Company I	Collin County	Captain Joseph J. Dickson
Company K	Lamar County	Captain Miles A. Dillard

Significant numbers of men also came from Galveston County and other parts of the state.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Tim Bell, with Ron Brothers and Gary Wisler, "History of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry," 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, Confederate States Army, <http://gen.1starnet.com/civilwar/9thmain.htm>, 2000.

The men who joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas were mostly farmers from rural communities. Some had an excellent education, and these men usually became officers. They were predominantly Protestants and represented a wide range of denominations. Some were even ministers in civilian life. The 9<sup>th</sup> had an official chaplain, but Private John K. Street and Captain William E. Beeson were both preachers who enlisted as ordinary soldiers. Surprisingly few men were born in Texas. Much of Texas was frontier territory when the war broke out and white Southerners had first settled the area only a generation or two earlier. The years leading up to the war saw waves of immigrants moving west to settle the cheap, open land in Texas. They considered Texas their home and joined the army to defend it. While not all of the survivors lived in Texas after the war and most of the men were buried elsewhere, many considered Texas to be a paradise. J.K. Street claimed that there was no state he loved more than Texas and that he even loved “the name of ‘Texas’.”<sup>6</sup>

John Kennedy Street was born in Cornersville, Tennessee, in 1837. He was educated there before moving to Paris, Texas, as a young man. A deeply religious man, he was the Principal of the Paris Seminary. When the war broke out he enlisted on November 26, 1861, as a Private in Company A. While not a slave-owner, he was dedicated to the South and was proud to serve in the “glorious struggle for independence.”<sup>7</sup> He was not one of the most enthusiastic soldiers and stated many times in his letters to his expecting wife, Minnie, that he wished he were home and that when

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<sup>6</sup> John Kennedy Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters: 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry*, Transcribed by Julie Williams Coley (Wichita Falls: wehaveneatstuff.com, 2003), April 19, 1862.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, February 25, 1862.

his enlistment was over, he would come home and not sign up again. Homesick as soon as the regiment left camp, he stated that the reason he went with the army was that he “never wished to be called a coward or tory.”<sup>8</sup> He knew the dangers but told Minnie not to worry, not to “give yourself any uneasiness about me. I know that my pathway is a dangerous one but I have placed my confidence in God and I believe he will be my stay.”<sup>9</sup>

Thomas Wellington Blair enlisted at Sherman in Grayson County, Texas, on October 4, 1861. He was born in Whitmell, Pittsylvania County, Virginia, in 1841. He was the sixth (fourth son) of ten children of John Francis Blair and Christian “Kitty” Keen Blair. The family moved to Texas in 1858 along with other families from Pittsylvania County. The closely knit families set up a new community in Grayson County, and the area became known as Virginia Point because of the many settlers from that state. They were happy but soon faced many hardships. Typhoid, scarlet fever, and the mumps swept through the area in 1860, killing many, including John Francis Blair and one of Thomas’s brothers. Another epidemic the following year claimed one of his brothers-in-law. His sister Kitty, distraught over the losses and the death of her husband, committed suicide by jumping into a well. Thomas and four of his brothers sought their escape by joining the Confederate Army. He joined Company C a month after his sister’s death.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., January 14, 1862.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., January 30, 1862.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Charles Reed, *The Houston-Based Reeds* (Houston: 1994), 8-9.

William D. Beavers was born October 4, 1837, in Pittsylvania County Virginia, the same area as Thomas Blair. He was the first of his family to move to Texas, settling in Grayson County, and it is likely that he and Thomas Blair knew each other before the war. William Beavers started a tobacco wholesale business in Fannin County and travelled the state selling his products. Establishing the business proved difficult, and William admitted in a March 1860 letter home that he “did not expect to make a large amount on my first trip.”<sup>11</sup> Business had not improved much by September, and the low price of tobacco was making it a, “ticklish time for us now, but I am in hopes that the storm will soon blow over and times will improve. If they do not it will be a harder times on us natives.”<sup>12</sup> He could not resist the war and joined up. He was made a Lieutenant in Company C, elected to lead men he had known from Virginia.

John H. King also was not born in Texas but moved there at an early age. His family moved to Daingerfield in Titus County in 1845 when he was three years old. He grew up on a farm and sixty years later remembered defending the animals from panthers and shooting deer from his front porch. He also distinctly remembered watching two regiments of cavalry passing his house in 1846 on their way to Mexico, not knowing that he, too, would one day be a soldier. Growing up on the frontier in a one-room log cabin was a great experience for him, and he bonded with nature, saying that nature “intoxicated his little being, and has left visions and perfumes that I can never forget while memory lasts. There is nothing on earth like it now.”<sup>13</sup> King was nineteen when

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<sup>11</sup> William D. Beavers, *Civil War Supply Book of William D. Beavers Confederate Army, 1861-1863*, Compiled by Celeste Beavers (Moyock N.C.: Held and published by Family, 2009), 5-11.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-17.

<sup>13</sup> John H. King, *Memoir*, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington Special, 12.

the war broke out, and he enlisted in Beeson's Company D of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas. He firmly believed in slavery and thought that Lincoln and the Republican party were a real threat to the Southern white population, claiming that "we were for a black slavery, our opponents were for a white slavery." Even in 1906, King blamed Lincoln for the "blight on the country" that race relations had become.<sup>14</sup>

One of the few native Texans in the 9<sup>th</sup> was John Martin Dickson. He was born March 22, 1842, in Mount Pleasant in Titus County. He was descended from some of the earliest white families in Texas. His father was a successful rancher, and John grew up helping out on his father's ranch. He was eighteen when the war broke out, and he joined the rest of his family in supporting the Confederacy. More than one generation of the Dickson family fought in the war. His father had strongly supported secession and was killed defending Atlanta in 1864. An uncle and a brother also saw service. John joined Company K at Tollet's Prairie on October 12, 1861.<sup>15</sup>

The institution of slavery cannot be ignored as a cause for war. Most of the men were not slave holders and came from areas that did not have as high a slave population as other parts of the state. Their support for slavery was not based on a desire to keep a source of forced labor, but rather as a way to preserve the social structure of the South. They were afraid of the social upheavals that would accompany emancipation. They were also firmly against any form of government telling them how to live. The volunteers came from a wide range of backgrounds and joined for a variety of reasons

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 85-86.

<sup>15</sup> Roy S. Dickson, *John Martin Dickson: Private, Company K, 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry*, <http://gen.1starnet.com/civilwar/dicksnm.htm>, 1999.

ranging from the preservation of slavery, to a desire for independence, to the protection of their homes and families. Some were running away from tragedy, some saw it as an unpleasant duty, while others merely sought adventure.

When all ten companies had reported, they officially organized with regimental elections. Samuel Bell Maxey was of course elected Colonel. William E. Beeson was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and Wright A. Stanley became Major. James H. McReynolds was elected Captain of Company D to replace Beeson while Harvey Wise replaced Stanley in Company H. The Regiment was organized November 4, 1861. They were officially mustered into the Confederate Army a month later on December 1. The 1,120 men who joined Maxey were now committed to the defense of the Confederacy. They were eager, but they were far from combat ready. The leaders of the new regiment had to mold the civilian volunteers into a trained, effective fighting unit before they could hope to win or even survive a battle.

Battlefield tactics at the beginning of the Civil War were relatively unchanged from those used by Napoleon or Washington. They centered on masses of men standing shoulder to shoulder in a line two ranks deep. the tight grouping was important for command and control. When the men were together in a densely packed line it was easier for the officers to maneuver that line to get it to within firing distance of the enemy and try to deliver massed volleys into the enemy. In battle, the men were not individuals, but rather were small parts of a unified regiment. They fired not as individuals but together with their comrades. Even when not under fire, regimental maneuvers could become fairly complicated, especially in undeveloped country where rocks and trees

could break up the line, causing the regiment to lose its cohesion and effectiveness. The level of control over a regiment as large as a thousand men required many complicated commands and the men had to be highly disciplined, both to obey the officer's orders and to stand and face the enemy's shots without running in terror. To accomplish this goal, the instructions of training and tactics had been perfected and published in drill books.

American armies, modeling themselves after the more experienced European armies, copied these books. There was little independent military thought in the U.S. before the war. The first truly American drill book was produced later and was based on lessons learned during the Civil War. Winfield Scott's 1835 manual, *Infantry Tactics or Rules for the Exercise and Manouvers of the United States Infantry*, used in the Mexican American War, was almost a word-for-word translation of a contemporary French work by Brenier and Curial. The drill manual used by both sides during the Civil War was Lieutenant Colonel William J. Hardee's *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics for the Exercise and Manouvres of Troops When Acting as Light Infantry or Riflemen*, published in 1855. This manual was also based on a French model but included the latest in military thinking. It provided more emphasis on skirmishing and rapid movement across the battlefield. But these tactics were intended for only special occasions and for elite soldiers in groups like the French *chasseurs a pied*, or Zouaves as they were known in the U.S. These units were intended to offer an example that refined military tactics, but that had not happened by the time the Civil War broke out. The average infantryman was still expected to go into battle marching slowly in rank and file, shoulder to shoulder with his comrades and deliver volleys of fire at the enemy at close range.



Infantry weapons were now far more powerful. Innovations like the percussion cap made rifles more reliable and easier to load, and new manufacturing techniques provided more infantrymen with the highest quality weapons. The biggest advancement was in ammunition. In the past, soldiers had two options, they could use smoothbore muskets which were easy to reload but inaccurate beyond fifty yards, or they could use rifles. Rifle bullets fit more snugly in the gun, allowing them to grip the grooves cut in a spiral down the inside of the barrel. These grooves made the bullet spin as it was fired which made them far more accurate, allowing marksmen to hit targets hundreds of yards away. Rifles also took up to three times longer to load because the bullet had to be forced down the barrel. Commanders generally preferred rate of fire over accuracy, and so soldiers were armed with smoothbore muskets like the British “Brown Bess.” This is why battles were traditionally fought at ranges of only a few dozen yards, and why men could be relatively safe standing shoulder to shoulder. This changed with the invention of the minie ball which was developed in France and named for its creator, Claude Etienne Minié. The minie ball was a conoidal shaped bullet that was more aerodynamic, making it more accurate than the older, round balls. It was also hollow at the base, and so expanded when fired, gripping the rifling in the barrel of the gun. This allowed a slightly smaller minie ball to be easily dropped down the barrel, giving new weapons both the rate of fire of muskets and the accuracy of rifles. Minie balls were smaller than old musket balls but were still between .55 and .65 inches in diameter, and, being made of lead, expanded when they hit the body, causing devastating injuries.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> John K. Mahon, “Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics,” *Military Analysis of the Civil War: An Anthology by the Editors of Military Affairs*, (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1977), 253-265.

New rifles that could kill at 1,000 yards, and the concept of rapid movement was supposed to change battlefield tactics, but that did not happen, at least not at first. The effect of new rifles on combat proved irrelevant early in the war because units like the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas lacked modern weapons. The Texans were armed with double-barreled shotguns and old, obsolete muskets. They eventually upgraded to modern weapons but spent little time practicing marksmanship, and so while most of the soldiers knew how to shoot, they could not hit a man at 1,000 yards. Sometimes soldiers would open fire at longer ranges, but it was ineffective. Better accuracy made volleys of fire more effective, but the rate of fire that infantry units were capable of had not improved dramatically since the days of Napoleon. Front line rifles were still complicated muzzle-loaders. Ammunition was wrapped in paper cartridges which contained both gunpowder and minie ball. Soldiers carried as many as forty rounds of ammunition at a time. To reload, the soldier ripped the end of the cartridge off with his teeth and poured the powder down the barrel, packing it firmly with the ramrod. He then dropped the minie ball in, using the paper as wadding and setting it, too, firmly in place with the ramrod. Hopefully remembering to remove the ramrod, he replaced the old percussion cap with a new one from the pouch on his belt, and was finally ready to fire. This process was repeated for every shot and even the most experienced soldier could only get off three to four shots in a minute. Repeating firearms did exist, but they were expensive, and less reliable than muzzle-loaders. The Confederacy lacked the ability to manufacture either repeaters or their ammunition, so they could not even use captured weapons. The Union ordinance officers did not want to adopt repeaters because they were expensive and the new and

complicated ammunition would have created supply problems. They already had dozens of different types of ammunition to supply to the army and did not want to deal with any more. Some units did purchase their own repeaters and enjoyed the superior firepower they provided.<sup>17</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas would face repeaters at least once, at Allatoona, in October 1864.

The Zouave units also failed to have much impact on battlefield tactics. They were created before the war and were trained individually and not by the army high command. They performed well, but many were killed in the first few battles and were replaced by recruits who did not go through the same physical training as had the veterans. Also, advanced tactics required special training that the new volunteers did not have. The governments were trying to increase the size of the army a hundred fold and could barely give basic training to the new recruits.<sup>18</sup> The battlefield tactics used during the war, at least at first, were still to form ranks and slowly close head on with the enemy, opening fire when within one hundred yards, with the heaviest fighting taking place sometimes as close as forty yards.

Because of the rapid military buildup, little training was given to the new soldiers coming out of Texas. Training varied from camp to camp and consisted mostly of marching drills and handling weapons. Officers attempted nothing complicated but merely tried to instill the basics while weapons training focused on the reloading commands and volley fire. Little time was spent practicing accuracy. At times the camps

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<sup>17</sup> Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 74-90.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-102.

resembled summer camps more than military training centers, focusing on athletic competitions such as running and boxing. Much time was also spent socializing.<sup>19</sup>

The experience of the 9<sup>th</sup> was no different. The regiment was created in November and left for the front less than two months later. Disease hampered early training because most of the men soon fell ill. They trained as much as they were able, and Maxey wrote in a letter that despite the disease, no effort was spared to drill the men. He later made a speech in Little Rock claiming that he had the “best drilled regiment in the southern army.” J.H. King disagreed, noting that, “we were new troops to be sure; we had drilled but little at the camps of instruction before starting on our march,” and that the only “evolution we knew how to execute in Battalion drill... was dress parade,” and that maneuver, “we could not execute in any sort of military style.”<sup>20</sup>

In December 1861 Maxey and the 9<sup>th</sup> were ordered to the coast to defend against a possible invasion of Texas. Maxey had his heart set on heading east and joining fellow Texan, General Albert Sidney Johnston. He pulled some strings and new orders were received. They were now to join Johnston in Kentucky. The 9<sup>th</sup> left Camp Benjamin on January 5, 1862 for the long march to the front. Most were glad to leave as the camps had been harsh, and many men died of disease before they left. They were also eager to get into the action. J.M. Long, only seventeen years old, testified to being eager to fight. “I began to get restless for fear the war would be over before we had the opportunity of meeting the enemy and testing the difference between Southern chivalry

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<sup>19</sup> Ralph A. Wooster, *Civil War Texas: A History and a Guide* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1999), 6-7.

<sup>20</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 36-38.

and Northern grit.”<sup>21</sup> They would be gone for three and a half years; most would never come home.

They passed through Little Rock, Memphis, and Corinth, traveling by riverboat and train, and of course did a lot of marching. The trip was hard, they suffered catastrophes such as train wrecks, drowning, and accidents from poor gun safety along the way, circumstances that further weakened the regiment.<sup>22</sup> Disease also continued to plague them, and they left behind a trail of graves. While on the march they avidly followed the war news in each new town they passed, learned of the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, and were ordered to Mississippi. They arrived at Iuka on February 14.

The regiment went into camp and continued to drill. Iuka proved to be a sick camp as well, and many more men died from disease. At one point the regiment was declared unfit for duty until its health improved. There was even talk of disbanding. They were at Iuka to guard against possible Union incursions up the Tennessee River at Eastport. Stationed at the rear, while they could hear Confederate artillery dueling with Union gunboats, they never saw the enemy.<sup>23</sup> The closest the men came to action was on February 21. They were told that a gunboat was landing troops and they would have a fight by 10:00 a.m. They formed up and exchanged their obsolete guns for Springfield muskets with bayonets, which the men did not have before. The men were tired of waiting and were eager for their first action. Street reckoned that “you never saw a more

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<sup>21</sup> J.M. Long, “A Seventeen Year Old Texas Boy at Shiloh, J.M. Long, Late Co. A., 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry,” *Blue and Gray*, I (1893), 278-279.

<sup>22</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 28-34.

<sup>23</sup> Street, J.K. *Street Civil War Letters*, February 18, 1862-March 25, 1862.

determined set of men in your life.”<sup>24</sup> The alert turned out to be a false alarm, and the men returned to the daily routine of camp life. Their first action would come soon at the battle of Shiloh. The 9<sup>th</sup> was ordered to join the main Army of Mississippi at Corinth and boarded a train for the short journey west on March 26. They left over a hundred dead from disease at Iuka.<sup>25</sup> While in camp, Colonel Maxey had been promoted to General and was transferred away from the regiment only a few days before they left for Corinth. Wright A. Stanley was elected to replace him as Colonel. When they arrived in Corinth, the 9<sup>th</sup> was assigned to General J. Patton Anderson’s Brigade, Ruggles’ Division, Bragg’s II Corps. They joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Florida Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Infantry Regiments, the Confederate Guards Response Battalion, and were supported by Hodgson’s Battery, 5<sup>th</sup> Company Washington Artillery.

Since the outbreak of the war, U.S. General Ulysses S. Grant had been pushing slowly south from St. Louis. He captured Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, forcing Johnston to abandon Kentucky and much of Western Tennessee. Johnston knew that he could not retreat forever and decided to counterattack to try to drive the Yankees out of Tennessee. Grant’s army was camped at Pittsburgh Landing on the Tennessee River near Shiloh, Tennessee, to wait for General Buell to link up with the main army.

Pittsburgh Landing was only about twenty miles north of Corinth, and the soldiers in the 9<sup>th</sup> knew that a big battle was coming. They had been hearing of Confederate victories in Virginia and expected to win a similar victory for themselves.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, February 25, 1862.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., March 10, 1862-April 1, 1862.

They thought that a Confederate victory in the West would force the North to give up as they would be losing on both major fronts. They were amazed at the massive buildup of troops, and rumors circulated that there were as many as “100,000 men here and near here.”<sup>26</sup> Lieutenant Jesse Bates was not alone in overestimating the size of Johnston’s army. A.J. Coffman of Company B, as well as men in other units reported the same number. The rumors flew unchecked even though men were not allowed out of their camps without a pass.<sup>27</sup> J.K. Street’s opinion was even more exaggerated, saying on the 30<sup>th</sup> that there were seventy-five regiments in Corinth with “75 thousand troops here – and [they] can run nearly as many more here in less than a day.”<sup>28</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas spent a week in Corinth in a high state of readiness, preparing for the battle. They were camped only “50-60 yards from the entrenchments” guarding against a possible Union attack.<sup>29</sup> Men were sent out daily for picket duty and patrols, and on April 1, they finally met the enemy. A small patrol led by Lieutenant J.M. Kennedy was sent about a mile from the camp and brought back “3 yankee prisoners.”<sup>30</sup> The waiting ended on April 3<sup>rd</sup> as Johnston’s Army of Mississippi, 45,000 strong, left its breastworks and began the march north to Pittsburgh Landing.

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<sup>26</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, March 27, 1862.

<sup>27</sup> A.J. Coffman, Letters to His Brother, 1861-1862, Copies at Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, March 29, 1862.

<sup>28</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, April 1, 1862.

<sup>29</sup> A.J. Coffman, Letters to His Brother, 1861-1862, Copies at Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, March 29, 1862.

<sup>30</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, April 1, 1862.

Early in the morning of April 6, 1862, his army attacked Grant's camp. They achieved complete surprise because the Union army had not been expecting an attack. The Yankees had no advance pickets stationed away from the camp and there were no cavalry patrols. They had not even constructed breastworks to defend the camp. Union regiments attempted to stand and fight, but being unprepared and unsupported, they were quickly forced to retreat.

Because of lingering disease and the detachment of two of its companies, the 9<sup>th</sup> had only 226 officers and men for the battle. Anderson's Brigade and the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas were initially in the second wave of the attack. They lined up 500 yards behind General William J. Hardee's Corps but because of the difficult terrain and inexperience of the troops, the two lines quickly merged together. The attack began at 5:00 a.m. and the 9<sup>th</sup> soon ran into their first Union encampment. The 9<sup>th</sup> took casualties immediately from Waterhouse's Battery E, 1<sup>st</sup> Illinois Artillery. J.M. Long remembered standing tall while under fire. More experienced units on either side were lying down for cover but the 9<sup>th</sup>

would not play the coward and show the white feather in her first battle. But as time passed on, and the shot and shell fell faster and thicker, now and then some of our boys being struck and wounded, and occasionally a bayonet bent down by a stray ball, we concluded "discretion was the better part of valor," and we lay down quietly like the old soldiers who had seen some actual service.<sup>31</sup>

Ordered to attack, the 9<sup>th</sup> fixed bayonets and charged but was thrown back behind a hill by a hail of grapeshot. The enemy battery was supported by the 53<sup>rd</sup> Ohio Infantry, and together they were able to repulse every attack the 9<sup>th</sup> made, inflicting heavy casualties. The whole brigade was forced to wait behind cover until their own

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<sup>31</sup> Long, "A Seventeen Year Old Texas Boy at Shiloh," 278.



Washington Artillery could come up and silence the Yankee guns. The brigade attacked again and the Yankees were forced to retreat. The 9<sup>th</sup> passed through several other camps and, after a couple hundred yards, came across a second pocket of resistance. The 1<sup>st</sup> Illinois had turned to make another stand, pouring a heavy fire into the advancing Confederates, and inflicting heavy casualties. Colonel Stanley had his horse shot out from under him. Street described the next charge.

We were ordered to take them at the point of the bayonet - again the New Orleans Confederate guards and another La Regt to our left deserted us – but the 9<sup>th</sup> Tex here covered herself with glory; for in the face of all this she pushed forward and drove the enemy from their battery and took and held it.<sup>32</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> Illinois had broken into two batteries, separated by about fifty yards. The 9<sup>th</sup> captured the first battery, and, making a second charge, captured the second. The Illinois soldiers tried to escape at the minute, but the Texans poured a volley into them at close range, killing wounding many of the men and horses. The surviving horses were so panicked that they jammed the guns they were pulling into the trees and were stuck. The Texans captured most of the guns and limbers of the battery

During this charge J.M. Long was shot twice in the leg and went down. He was one of many. Jim Smith was also hit in the leg, and the bullets were passing so close to the men that the flap of J.K. Street's cartridge box was torn off. The men replenished their ammunition and moved on toward the Tennessee River but came under fire from Union gunboats, taking shelter in a ravine. Exhausted, the men slept in abandoned Union camps, expecting to resume the offensive the next morning. The scene in the abandoned camps was horrific with dead and dying lying all around. J.M. Long talked a wounded

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<sup>32</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, April 12, 1862.

Federal into crawling on all fours to an aid station with Long riding on his back like a cowboy. In his short time on the battlefield he

passed on beyond and over the brave boys in blue, lying on the battle-field wounded, dead, and dying, I saw some around the tents and campfires with their pans and slap-jacks in their hands, as if to say to us: “Rebels from Texas, can't you wait until breakfast is over before you make this unceremonious call?”<sup>33</sup>

While the Confederate army enjoyed great success on the 6<sup>th</sup>, they lost their commanding general. General Albert Sidney Johnston, veteran of three wars, was shot in the leg and bled to death on the battlefield. He probably would have survived had he not sent his surgeon away to tend to some wounded Union soldiers. His loss would have a large impact on the battle's outcome.

The Federals were able to regroup and recover during the night. Reinforced by Buell and Wallace who together added 15,000 men to the Union army, Grant was able to launch a counter attack in the morning. General P.G.T. Beauregard, now in command of the Confederate army, hoped to renew the offensive in the morning and was caught off guard by the Federal attack.

The 9<sup>th</sup> arose that morning to find the Federals had fortified their positions with fallen trees. Street recalled:

We were ordered to charge them. Again the Regts on our right and left deserted us. When Col Stanley drew his sword, waved it over his head and cried to the Texas boys to follow him. We gave a long loud demon – like yell and rushed forward to what seemed immediate destruction: for minie balls, grape shot and shell flew over our heads as thick as hail stones – but we faltered not and soon gained the breast works and drove the enemy from their own position. They had to retreat right thro' an open field and you may depend we gave the subjugations \_\_\_\_\_ as they fled in utter confusion.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Long, “A Seventeen Year Old Texas Boy at Shiloh,” 278.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

In a similar charge later in the day, Colonel Stanley was asked by General Anderson to “bear the colors forward.” Stanley grabbed the flag “and galloped up within 50 yds of the enemy’s lines and planted them than rode round and faced the enemy by this time our boys were up with him.”<sup>35</sup> Stanley himself would describe the action in more modest terms.

We advanced and sustained our position for some time after the troops on our right and left had given way. I was compelled to fall back, though still keeping up our fire. We again rallied and formed in line, making a desperate struggle, and causing the enemy to fall back for a short distance.<sup>36</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas fought hard and the battle swept back and forth. At one point J.K. Street was clearing his jammed gun and did not see the regiment fall back. He realized he was all alone and was beating a hasty retreat when he heard wounded men call out for help. He “could not refuse them” and stopped to give them water. The Federals advanced again and Street picked up a new Belgian rifle and got off one shot before he was forced to run for his life. There were so many Yankees shooting at him that, “I could have thrown up my hand and caught it full of balls.”<sup>37</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> fought well, but on other parts of the battlefield the reinforced Union army was outflanking the worn out Confederates. The Southerners tried to hold their positions but were unable to stand up to the resurgent Union forces. Beauregard knew he could not save the battle and so ordered a retreat back to Corinth.

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<sup>35</sup> Street, J.K. *Street Civil War Letters*, April 12, 1862.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901, X, no. 177, p. 510.

<sup>37</sup> Street, J.K. *Street Civil War Letters*, April 12, 1862.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas suffered fourteen killed, forty-two wounded, and eleven missing, including Thomas W. Blair, one of the wounded. It had been a tough battle but the 9<sup>th</sup> performed well. General Anderson praised Colonel Stanley and the regiment in his official report:

The language of eulogy could scarcely do more than simple justice to the courage and determination of this officer and his valorous Texans. Ever in the thickest of the fight, they were always ready to respond to any demand upon their courage and endurance.<sup>38</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas made it back to Corinth and would have some time to recover from their baptism in blood, but harder battles were still to come.

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<sup>38</sup>OR, X, no. 173, p. 499.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Word of God

Religion played a major role in the Civil War. God was an everyday presence in most soldiers' lives. With so much uncertainty they were forced to put their faith in Him. To help the soldiers, a number of men ministered to the armies. Some were official army chaplains while others were simply volunteer missionaries. These religious leaders helped the soldiers in a number of ways and helped them to stay devoted to their faith, even after military disasters.

Before they joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, the men led fairly religious lives. They attended church regularly; those from more rural areas went when they could. The Texas troops represented a wide variety of denominations but this diversity went only so far; they were almost all Christian and most were Protestant. They thought that God was on their side and that they were doing His will. God and religion had been wrapped together with patriotism and the defense of their homes and families. The 9<sup>th</sup> was motivated with a slogan: “Our Mothers, our wives, our daughters, our sisters, our God and our country!”<sup>1</sup> They also did not hate the Yankees, at least not at first. They felt that God had made it their duty to fight. J.K. Street described his feelings towards Yankees after the Battle of Shiloh.

I know that God would do right. I submitted all to him and tried to do my duty like a brave and patriotic soldier should do. I had no malice towards the Yankees.

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<sup>1</sup> John Kennedy Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters: 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry*, Transcribed by Julie Williams Coley (Wichita Falls, Texas: wehaveneatstuff.com, 2003), May 20, 1862.

It hurt me to know that it was necessary for me to engage in deadly combat with an enemy who ought and might be my friend. Yes even while I was shooting at the yanks. I could carry out the injunction of scripture “pray for you enemies.”<sup>2</sup>

If God led them to the army, He was certainly needed once they were in the camps. One fact the soldiers learned quickly was that military discipline was different from the kind of supervision they had experienced at home. The army expected unquestioning obedience to superiors with harsh punishments for those who did not comply with an order. Men could even be executed for crimes such as desertion. Military discipline could be extremely strict, but that discipline rarely extended into the private lives and free time the soldiers had. Without the influences of a mother or a sweetheart whom the soldier was trying to impress, the men tended to act like the teenagers many of them were. This behavior got them into a lot of trouble, and the camps could be somewhat wicked places. Jesse Bates, one of the older men and one of the few who had a wife and children at home, complained to his wife about the behavior of the soldiers. “Some men turn wild when they come into camps, but I want you to be assured that it does not affect me in the least, only to disgust and make me more devoted.”<sup>3</sup>

As the war progressed and it became harder to feed and equip the troops, theft and other crimes became a problem in camp. Charles Douglas noted in his diary that in January 1864, a soldier in one of the other regiments of the brigade was shot while trying to steal potatoes from a local farm.<sup>4</sup> A few months later Andrew Fogle informed “Miss

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., May 20, 1862.

<sup>3</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, May 2, 1862.

<sup>4</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 26.

Loo” that “there is more stealing and meanness going on than you ever heard of.”<sup>5</sup> By the end of the Atlanta Campaign in 1864, robbing locals of food had become a real problem: “There is a great many that steal what few vegetables the poor women and children have in this place, but I thank God that Co. ‘G’ has no rogue at this time.”<sup>6</sup> One wonders if Co. “G” was actually completely innocent, but at least Lieutenant Bates thought highly of his men.

The wickedness in camp could range from the prostitutes who notoriously followed armies to simple youthful practical jokes and irresponsibility that could get soldiers in trouble. Not even officers were off limits to practical jokes. Others could get soldiers arrested like the two men who, according to Douglas, fired a stolen signal cannon, and nearly got arrested for blowing up ears of corn with gun powder.<sup>7</sup> Irresponsibility could lead to accidents that sometimes got soldiers killed.

A real problem in camp from the beginning was drunkenness, and it affected all ranks in the army. J.K. Street was against drinking in general and was disgusted by it enough to complain in letters to his wife. He mentioned several times that Samuel Bell Maxey was drunk, once so badly that it prevented him from commanding his brigade in a skirmish outside of Corinth.<sup>8</sup> Occasionally the men obtained a supply of alcohol; Street described one such occasion to his wife.

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, March 7, 1864.

<sup>6</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, August 7, 1864.

<sup>7</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, March 3 and June 2, 1862

Dear our Regt was unfortunate this morning – the boys got hold of some peach brandy, by some hook or crook last night and by 12 o'clock to-day many a man was drunk and by the time we left we had only 18 (eighteen) fights in the Regt.<sup>9</sup>

Another time he complained that a third of the brigade was drunk on Christmas Day, 1863. Street was not the only one in camp who hated alcohol. The commanding generals knew that alcohol was a big problem in an army and did what they could to prevent the men from obtaining it. They frequently outlawed alcohol in camp and were aggressive in enforcing the rules. Street applauded every effort to prohibit drinking in the army and prayed that God would, “shield me from the dangers of camp life.”<sup>10</sup>

Another common problem in army life was gambling. Soldiers are frequently bored and have always used gambling to fill their down time and lose the pay that burned holes in their pockets. Street was of course against gambling, too.

Since the boys drew there money this last time I have seen more gambling than ever I saw before in all my life – nearly every body seems to have run wild on the subject. To-day there was a bet of 2,000 dollars in our brig. made on a cock fight! You need have no fears of me dear. I detest gambling above all things else.<sup>11</sup>

It was hoped that the presence of a religious leader could tame the men in camp. He would remind them that God was still watching and that they had a responsibility to act like good Christians. Chaplains had their hands full trying to instill morality in the soldiers. The desire for chaplains to moderate the behavior and morality of soldiers was nothing new. George Washington himself greatly valued the presence of chaplains with the army. As a commander in the field, he could hold services himself, but he really

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., September 14, 1862.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., March 25, 1862.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., December 27, 1862.



wanted an official chaplain for the moral benefit. Without them his drunken men were running wild and demoralizing the Virginia Frontier. He hoped that a Godly presence would calm the men and compel them to return to their duty.

The relationship between a chaplain and the men was very special, similar to that between medics and soldiers, but chaplains have been around longer. That relationship had been forged out of centuries of shared hardships and service to one another. The men knew that the chaplain was there for them and would help whenever he could. In turn they protected the chaplain. This mutual trust and service formed strong bonds.

Chaplains have traveled with armies for as long as war and religion have coexisted. Holy men accompanied ancient armies to call on the gods for aid and to protect soldiers going into battle. Many of these holy men would also take part in the fighting. When Christianity became pervasive in Europe in the fourth century, Christian priests began traveling with armies. Though Christianity was a peaceful religion, in the ranks were Christian soldiers who needed men of God. Christian priests did not perform charms to make men stronger and invincible, but they undoubtedly prayed for success on the battlefield and for a safe return. They were there to look after the spiritual needs of the men.

By the time William the Conquerer invaded England in 1066, the lines between spiritual and military leaders had blurred. This confusion occurred naturally because of the political power of the Catholic Church and the feudal system, which emphasized military power. Military and spiritual leaders were frequently the same person. In fact one of William's generals was Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century an edict

was issued by the Synod of Westminster that forbade clerics from taking up arms, but several centuries passed before anyone paid serious attention.

With the decline of the political power of the church and the rise of a volunteer army in England, separate chaplains began to emerge again. Oliver Cromwell created a large professional army and required that each unit have an ordained minister.

The first military chaplains in America were Spanish priests who traveled with the first conquistadors venturing into the unknown looking for gold. They had a dual purpose: they were priests to the soldiers, but also intended to convert the Indians to Christianity. They sometimes would leave the exploration groups and venture out on their own to live with the Indians. Many were martyred trying to convert the natives.

The army in Colonial America was originally made up of local citizens in separate militia companies. The early colonists were a religious people, especially in Puritan New England, and so protestant ministers accompanied citizen soldiers as they went to war. They recognized that the parishioners in harm's way needed spiritual guidance more than those who remained safe at home. The ministers faced the same dangers and endured all the same hardships as the men. The Indians whom they fought did not respect Christianity and eagerly killed the ministers whenever they could. They recognized that this was a war between religions as well as people and so naturally saw the ministers as enemies. The men admired the dedication and sacrifice of the ministers.

When the wars between England and France broke out in the eighteenth century, chaplains again served in the British army. There were both official chaplains who served with regular army units as well as volunteers who travelled with local militia

units. Regardless of their official position, most served well, and many were honored for their bravery and dedication.

The position of chaplain in the U.S. army was officially created on July 29, 1775, when Congress established pay rates for the army. Chaplains were paid \$20 a month, a rate equal to that of a captain. This is the first record of military chaplains mentioned in official documents, and so July 29, 1775, is generally celebrated as the birthday of the chaplain service in the United States Army. Chaplains of course served with the Continental Army from the beginning. General George Washington wanted one chaplain for each regiment but could not find enough because of the low pay. Having a pay grade equal to a captain shows their importance within the military, but it was not enough to fill the need. Many of the military chaplains had to pay more than \$20 a month to substitutes back home. Washington urged a raise, and so the following January, their pay was increased to \$33.33 a month. Because of the pay raise, chaplains were now expected to look after two regiments each.

Chaplains served with distinction throughout the Revolutionary War and in both the southern and northern theaters. They crossed the Delaware with General Washington, and they stood alongside him at Yorktown. Other pastors served with local militia units to oversee members of their congregations, wherever they went. Some took up arms, but all were there for the men. They encouraged devotion to the worthiness of their cause and inspired the men to bravery. After the war, chaplains were a permanent fixture in the army. Even when the army consisted of only eighty men, it still had an official army chaplain.

During the Civil War chaplains played a big role on both sides. Once again clergymen felt called to the battlefield, but there were obstacles to their service; their position could be somewhat uncertain at times. They drew an officer's pay but only a private's rations. They could keep a horse but had to purchase its feed themselves, and they received no uniform and lacked rank. Their pay, while equal to that of a captain or major of infantry, was still not sufficient to lure enough chaplains out of their home churches. The Confederacy initially did not include official chaplains with the armies because of Southerners' dislike of government imposing itself upon the everyday life, including religion, of the individual. There were still some chaplains with the early units, but they were paid by the soldiers themselves or sent as missionaries by churches back home. The Confederate government soon realized that there was a growing need for chaplains with the soldiers, and consequently the War Department began appointing them to the armies. However they were not paid so well as Union chaplains were. As a result, there were shortages of qualified chaplains throughout the war. However, many did volunteer and ministered to the soldiers.

One reason for the apparent shortage of officially designated chaplains is that many certified pastors enlisted as regular infantry soldiers. It is estimated that about one hundred pastors served with the Army of Tennessee, but only half of them were official chaplains. The others were ordinary soldiers like John Kennedy Street who was a preacher at his home church in Texas but enlisted in the ranks as an infantryman. Like most in his situation, he wanted to do both soldiering and preaching. He always carried a rifle, but he also preached and led worship services whenever he could. He fairly quickly

decided that he wanted to be made an official chaplain and wrote hopefully about being elected chaplain of one regiment or another. He was interested in the increased pay as well as in the prestige and legitimacy that came with the rank. In the meantime, he wrote bitterly about the lack of respect he received as a common private.

My feelings have often been hurt. I have been at preaching places since I have been in the army - and when the preachers would find out that I was a minister generally they wished first to know if I was the chaplain of the Regt and on learning that I was a private there would be no more notice of me, but the Chaplain of the various Regts were generally honored with seats in the Pulpit invitations to preach and arm in arm with the station preacher they were led to some good bro's house to dinner. Let me meet one afterwards and he wouldn't know me. I would have to tell him my name, had clear forgotten me! All their attention has been bestowed on rank, I was a private individual and therefore unworthy of their notice.<sup>12</sup>

He never became a chaplain but kept preaching whenever he had the opportunity.

Street discovered that it was difficult to achieve the switch from private to chaplain.

There was such a high demand for manpower in the infantry that many preachers were not allowed to become chaplains. Once a soldier was mustered into a unit there was usually no alternative. Many officers in fact considered it more important to hold a rifle than a Bible. There were also retention problems with chaplains. The home churches wanted their clergymen back, and many chaplains received letters begging for their return. A number of chaplains resigned during the course of the war, such as Parson James Finney of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Texas, who went home in August 1863.<sup>13</sup>

Other civilian preachers became regular military officers. While an officer, a minister could still conduct services, but he had other responsibilities in camp and on the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., November 30, 1862.

<sup>13</sup> Dee Hardeman Ridley, Letters, 1862-1865, Copies in the Gee Library Archives, Texas A&M University at Commerce, and from the files of Skipper Steely, Paris, Texas, August 21, 1863.

battlefield and so could not perform many of the same duties as a chaplain. Also, the relationships between officers in command and their men could not be the same as those between a chaplain and the men.

There were also some problems with the preachers who did serve with the army as chaplains. Being a chaplain was easier than being an infantryman, but it was still a difficult life. Chaplains were expected to sleep on the ground, spend all day in the saddle, and occasionally get shot at. It was a life for a young, healthy man, not an old priest, and some of the chaplains were quite old. There are many stories of chaplains always being sick or not being able to keep up with the army. They had good intentions of being there with the soldiers but just could not handle the physical hardships of army life. Many other chaplains succumbed to the vices that they were supposed to prevent. Some chaplains sought the company of loose women, were drunk, and even looted abandoned towns.

The official chaplain of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was John S. Matthews (or Mathis), and according to J.K. Street, he, too, had some problems. Street complained extensively to his wife about Matthews' inadequacies as a chaplain. However, Street was perhaps a little bitter that Matthews had been appointed chaplain rather than he. Matthews became chaplain because Colonel William Hugh Young had appointed him in May 1862, soon after his own election to Colonel. A commanding officer often wanted to hear a preacher from a denomination of which he was a member. Young, an Episcopalian, had appointed an Episcopal clergyman. Street though, claims that the men all wanted him instead.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, November 30, 1862.

Street complained bitterly to Minnie about Matthews' many faults, specifically for being too arrogant around the men. Matthews thought that as an officer and religious leader, he was better than the enlisted men. He never made any effort to minister directly to the common private outside of worship services. He carried an umbrella in the sun and never gave a soldier a ride on his horse and even refused to bring the men water on the march, claiming that what he had was reserved for Colonel Young. Street stated that Matthews conducted himself as if he was too good to associate with a common private.<sup>15</sup>

Despite all of these problems, (in surviving letters) J.K. Street is the only one who complained about Matthews. Most of the men only mention him in passing, usually when delivering mail when on furlough.<sup>16</sup> They did not praise or compliment him, but they did not complain, either. Street told Minnie of his concerns only after swearing her to secrecy. Even with the obvious friction between them, Street assured his wife that he defended Matthews with the men because he wanted them to be ministered to, and undermining his authority would prevent them from hearing the Gospel. Despite Street's complaints, Matthews certainly had his strengths, chiefly among them being his preaching. Street never suggested that Matthews was a bad preacher, and by defending his many faults, he shows that he does respect Matthews preaching ability. The rest of the men also liked his preaching. Dee Ridley wrote his sister that, "I have heard two sermons today by parson Matthews. He is a first rate preacher."<sup>17</sup> Jesse Bates laments

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, August 25, 1864.

<sup>17</sup> Dee Hardeman Ridley, Letters 1862-1865, Copies in the Gee Library Archives, Texas A&M University at Commerce, Tx, and from the files of Skipper Steely, Paris, Tx. March 1864.

his absence when on furlough because his replacements were inadequate preachers: “I never get to hear the Gospel in its Apostolic purity and simplicity as it came from the lips and pens of the apostles. I would to God that our Brother Atkins or Matthews was here to open the eyes of the deluded and those that have been misguided by false teachers.”<sup>18</sup> He may have had trouble relating to, and caring for the men, but his qualifications as a religious scholar and preacher were second to none.

The most serious complaint against most Civil War chaplains was that they were dull. Most of them would help their soldiers and were always concerned for them. They would walk into town to get paper and other items for the men, and they were always willing to stay up all night praying with a soldier. Most men had only glowing things to say about their chaplains as servants. The men in the 9<sup>th</sup> wrote most frequently about how the chaplains were always willing to carry mail when they went on furlough to Texas. The chaplains, not having an official role in the battle line, were able to get furloughs with surprising frequency. All the men sent letters through Parson Matthews and others. This means of communication could cause a problem however, because it left the regiment without a chaplain, a circumstance that happened to the 9<sup>th</sup> in January 1864. The several chaplains who had been serving the regiment all got furloughs at the same time and there was no preaching for several weeks. Charles Douglas was very upset; complaining that the chaplains had “left the poor soldiers exposed to the enemy of [the] Lord without our armor or shield to defend or ward off the darts of his adversary, the

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<sup>18</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, September 17, 1864.



Devil.”<sup>19</sup> Religion was important to Douglas and many others, and this complaint shows the degree to which the men relied on religious leaders to minister to them.

The chaplain’s place in battle was always open to debate. Some stayed safely behind the lines, but most did not. Most thought their place was with the other staff officers, walking a few paces behind the ranks of infantry, exposed to the enemy’s fire, and ready to help anyone who needed it. They were usually the only ones available to take wounded men back to a hospital. Many chaplains were wounded or killed in combat. Some even took part in the fighting, though that became increasingly rare. There is a famous story of a Union chaplain of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Indiana at the Battle of Arkansas Post, blazing away with his own rifle, repeating, “God bless your soul” every time he fired. Fighting chaplains were less common in Confederate units because Southern culture did not abide by a preacher trying to spread the Gospel while at the same time trying to kill his fellow man, but such chaplains certainly existed. Parson Matthews of the 9<sup>th</sup> never carried a rifle, but J.K. Street did, and he looked down on Matthews because he was not also a soldier, further distancing himself from the men.<sup>20</sup> A famous example of a fighting Confederate chaplain is the Rev. Abner C. Hopkins of the Stonewall Brigade. He was described as “broad in mind, sincere in purpose, noble in character, it was never a question with him whether a soldier was Gentile or Jew, his charity took in all those in need.” Hopkins’ regiment was surprised one morning by an attack, and was almost routed. Waving his frying pan in the air, Hopkins rallied the men and formed

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<sup>19</sup> Charles B. Douglas, *Douglas Family Journals*, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 21.

<sup>20</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, November 30, 1862.

them into line. They repulsed the attack, and Hopkins sat down and resumed cooking his breakfast.<sup>21</sup> He did not carry a rifle, but he certainly had an impact on the battle.

By the Civil War, death in war had become random; the experience and skill of the soldier seemed to have little or no affect on who lived and who died. Many soldiers therefore turned to religion as it promised a God capable of protecting the men and of granting eternal salvation to those who did not survive. Being surrounded by death would naturally make a man think more about the afterlife. As J.K. Street explained to his wife, “I believe that God will take care of me. My trust is in him... But should it be the will of God that I should never reach home again I am perfectly resigned to his will.”<sup>22</sup>

Such trust in the Lord was common. Andrew Fogle, once he had experienced combat and realized he might not make it home to his “Miss Loo,” wrote at the end of many of his letters that while he hoped they would meet again on earth, he knew that they would at least meet again in Heaven. For Fogle, an afterlife was one of the few things he could put his trust in. The men put their faith in God because they felt that He alone could possibly help them.

J.K. Street, having been a preacher before the war, was naturally religious. He mentioned God in every letter he wrote to his new bride. In one he advised her: “Dear you must pray God to be with me and trust all entirely to him and I am sadisfied [sic] all will come out right.”<sup>23</sup> He concluded every letter with a comforting statement such as

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<sup>21</sup> Ogden J. Murray, “A Fighting Chaplain,” *Confederate Veteran*, 30 (October 1922), 391, 398.

<sup>22</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, May 13, 1862.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, May 20, 1862.

“God Bless You.” God was a real presence for Street. Fogle was also a religious soldier; he advised “Miss Loo” to:

Fly to him who will take up thy burden for thee. Go cheerfully in obedience to his holy will in the course he has set thee. Peace shall come. I commend thee and all thine to the gracious protection and blessing of the lord.<sup>24</sup>

Fogle was typical in his strong religious beliefs. The soldiers and their families did not merely talk about faith on Sundays; they truly believed that God could and would watch over them. Lieutenant Jesse Bates wrote his family:

Our God tells us if we pray for anything believing that we would receive it, we should have it. I have prayed that our lives and health might be sustained and that we may [illegible] again and live together in happiness and I believe that we will receive it, but we must pray continually. I want us to strive to see which can be the most devoted Christian.<sup>25</sup>

Most soldiers, while accepting that they might die, were not resigned to fate and fervently prayed that God would physically protect them from harm. J.K. Street was one of those men, informing his wife, “Now dear I believe that God protected me in the battle of Shiloh and brought me safe thro’ unhurt – and I have faith to believe that he will continue his protecting care over me.”<sup>26</sup> Such trust extended late into the war, as Jesse Bates wrote during the siege of Atlanta, “There has been several shells bursted right over me since I have been writing. May god have mercy on us and shield us from death and danger.”<sup>27</sup> He had been in the army for three years and had seen thousands of men die

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<sup>24</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, January 18, 1862.

<sup>25</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, May 2, 1862.

<sup>26</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, May 13, 1862.

<sup>27</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, June 23, 1864.

from disease and battlefields littered with the dead and dying. His own regiment had plummeted from more than a thousand men to fewer than one hundred and fifty. He knew that many more would die, yet he still counted on God to see him through.

When soldiers escaped each battle they usually attributed their good fortune to God. Andrew Fogle knew why he had survived the Battle of Murfreesboro when so many of his friends had not. “You said for me to put my trust in the Lord. It was him that saved me I believe.”<sup>28</sup> Religious thoughts are not uncommon when people find themselves in great danger, and many even make wild promises to God if he will save them. However, for the Civil War soldier, a strong perception of God’s role in their survival lasted for the rest of their lives. Fifty-five years after the war, D.F. Daughtrey wrote an article in which he listed the things for which he was thankful. At the top of the page he wrote, “First of all, I am thankful that our Heavenly Father preserved my life and health through the war.”<sup>29</sup> Clearly, he was still as thankful to God as he had been while in uniform.

Religion did occasionally offer some tangible protection. Outside of Atlanta on Sunday, August 7, 1864, the almost constant Union shelling slacked off, and no shells were fired into the city. Jesse Bates noticed the lull in the fighting and speculated that the reason was “that it is Sunday for on every other day there is kept up a continuous shelling of the city.”<sup>30</sup> Other times religion itself was a target. J.H. King was at the siege of

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<sup>28</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, January 10, 1863.

<sup>29</sup> D.F. Daughtrey, “Gratitude of Veterans,” *Confederate Veteran*, 18 (February, 1910), 63.

<sup>30</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, August 7, 1864.

Jackson in July of 1863. He later recalled that “as soon as their artillery came up they fired every Catholic building in sight.”<sup>31</sup> King reported the reason for these attacks was that rumors were circulating Union camps that the Pope had promised 230,000 troops and \$2,000,000 in aid if President Jefferson Davis would make Catholicism the national religion of the Confederacy. There was no truth to the rumor, but the Union soldiers believed it enough that they turned their guns on civilian, religious targets.

The men prayed for more than personal safety. They were convinced that God was on their side and would actively help them win their independence, but only if the Southern people devoted themselves to God and to being good Christians. Jesse Bates was completely convinced that God would deliver Southern victory. He repeatedly implored his wife to pray for God’s help. “Tell them all to be good Christians and send up their prayers for the success of our arms and the preservation of our lives until our country is free and we return to home sweet home.”<sup>32</sup> In another letter he explained how they should each pray for God’s help, believing that faith was necessary both on the battlefield and at home.

I don’t want you to be uneasy about me, but put your trust in God without doubting and pray in faith believing that your prayers will be answered in the preservation of our lives and the independence and peace of our country and the happiness of meeting and enjoying the embrace of our loved ones. My prayer to God is that he will protect us from harm and deliver us from our enemies and free our country and give us peace and the privilege of again embracing each other in love and happiness.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 58.

<sup>32</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, May 2, 1862.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., June 23, 1864.

J.K. Street, of course, also believed that victory was possible only through God, though he knew that the Almighty was not going to do all the work for them. He merely hoped for a little help. “I think with our present position and force we can with God’s assistance ship any force that may be brought against us.”<sup>34</sup> Just as when they survived a battle, they knew whom to thank after a victory. Confederate President Jefferson Davis set September 18, 1862, as a “day of fasting prayer and Thanksgiving to God for our recent victories and success of our cause.”<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, soldiers believed that they could survive and win only with God’s approval. “God grant it, if we can have freedom and independence once more.”<sup>36</sup>

After the summer of 1863, the Confederacy experienced defeat after defeat. Union armies were rampaging through the South, and many areas were under Northern domination. But even as the war began to go badly for the South, the people’s faith was not shaken. From the beginning they had believed that God was on their side, and the many disasters they now suffered came not because they were being defeated, but rather, because God was chastising and testing them. They knew that because God was on their side the South would eventually win the war. The setbacks and horrible casualties were signs of God expressing His displeasure and punishing the Southern people for some mistake they had made. J.K. Street recognized God’s hand in their defeat as early as the winter of 1863-1864:

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<sup>34</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, April 1, 1862.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, September 26, 1862.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, July 12, 1862.

I feel assured that God will respect the right, and that we will some day gain our independence. But matters have taken such a turn, that the prospect now for peace is not near so good as it was twelve months ago. To explain the various cause which have produced the prest [sic] gloom and obscure our fair prospects, which we have had for peace would consume time and space – suffice it to say, that it is my opinion, that the people, citizens and soldiers, who some time since showed signs of growing better, are now growing worse every day, and until we do humble ourselves sufficiently before God we can never have peace. As to my self; I am not enjoying myself religiously as well as I did last winter, and summer. There is a disposition among the mass of the soldiery, to pay but little attention to matters of religion. May God help me to do my whole duty.<sup>37</sup>

He wrote this letter before most of the men subscribed to the theory that God was punishing them with defeat. As a preacher, he noticed a declining trend in the religious convictions of the men. At the time, most of his comrades still held out hope for a purely military victory. It took a few more defeats for the average soldier to think that maybe God was in fact punishing them. One perceived reason for the punishment was their faith that military power alone would win the war. For a time the Confederate army under General Robert E. Lee seemed invincible. Now it seemed that pride and confidence in Lee's prowess had caused them to move away from God, angering Him. They believed that if they became better Christians and put more of their faith in God, that He would still help them win independence. Andrew Fogle explained his convictions to "Miss Loo":

If the hearts of all the people would turn contritely and trustfully unto God and recognize in his chastening hand the correcting of a Father and submissively pray that the trials and sufferings which has so long born heavily upon us may be turned away by his merciful love, that his sustaining grace be given to our people and his divine wisdom imparted to our rulers. That the lord of hosts will be with our arms and fight for us against our enemies and that he will graciously take our

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., December 31, 1863.

cause into his own hand and mercifully establish for us a lasting, just, and honorable peace and independence.<sup>38</sup>

The natural solution to this problem was to move closer to God. Revivals and religious services became quite popular during the last year of the war, especially in the armies. While in winter camp in Mississippi in 1863-1864, the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry had religious services and meetings every Sunday but rarely during the week. Only in April 1864, as the regiment began to move to the front, did weekday prayer meetings happen.<sup>39</sup> However by September, after General William T. Sherman captured Atlanta, Jesse Bates noted that “there is preaching or meeting of some kind every night and frequently in day time.”<sup>40</sup> The frequency of religious services had clearly increased. The religious fervor was not because of any one, energetic, preacher. In the same letter, Bates mentioned that services were conducted in three different denominations: Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist, so at least three different chaplains were leading them.

Even in the last weeks of the war, many soldiers still held out hope that God would save them and ensure Southern independence. In another letter, Bates instructed his wife to trust in God even more, and to be a good Christian, for that was the only way things could end well:

My dear companion, we are told in the word of God that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong and that the prayers of the righteous availeth much and I want you to live a life that will be an example of righteousness and try to induce others to do likewise, for our country is convulsed and bleeding at every

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<sup>38</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, March 12, 1865.

<sup>39</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 52-56.

<sup>40</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, September 17, 1864.



pore and we need not expect peace as long as there is so much sin and wickedness in the country. To have peace the people of our country must humble themselves in the dust of humility and repent of their sin and confess the savior before men and put their trust in God and not depend on the puny arm of flesh for deliverance from the enemies of our country. My love, commit yourself into God's care and trust him. May the blessings of heaven rest upon you is my prayer to God for you.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Undated Letter to Wife and Children.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Army Life

It took several days for the Confederate army to return to Corinth after the Battle of Shiloh in early April 1862. The men were exhausted after two days of fighting, many were wounded, and the army was carrying as many of the captured weapons and supplies as they could. The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas, like the rest of the army, needed to recover from the battle and from the lingering illness they had suffered since the beginning of the war. At Corinth they went into camp and settled into the routine army life that they would endure for the next three years.

The biggest killer in Civil War armies, both North and South, was not the enemy, but disease. The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was no exception. From the first day that the men were mustered into Confederate service, they had been battling sickness and disease. Camp Rusk was not a healthy camp, and they began suffering almost immediately. A month after the regiment was formed Colonel Maxey decided to move the unit to Camp Benjamin, about twenty-six miles to the west in Fannin County. The soldiers had barely settled in when orders came for them to head east and join General Albert Sidney Johnston.

They left camp on January 5, 1862. While in the camps in Texas, 180 had died from disease, and the march to the front would not be any better. The men were already in poor health, and traveling several hundred miles during the winter did not help. They marched all day through the cold and rain, and many more became sick. Dozens could

not keep up with the regiment and fell out by the side of the road. Most were able to hitch a ride in the regimental wagon train that followed behind, but occasionally someone such as John K. Street would have to go back for them in an ambulance.<sup>1</sup>

When they reached a major town like Little Rock or Memphis, the sick would be sent to local hospitals to recover, hoping to rejoin the regiment later. The quality of the hospitals varied widely. Many of J.K. Street's friends were among the sick, and he visited often; describing their care.

Bill Neilson has been having the chills again he is now in Hospital. I was in the Hospital this morning. It's a large four story building containing three or four hundred rooms. Dear it would do you good to go in and see how well the sick are cared for. The Hospital is kept up by a charitable fund all done by the ladies of Memphis - it is called sisters charitable hospital. I reckon there are over a hundred ladies that stay in it all the time and wait on the sick. God Bless the women!! Dear they have wounded here sent from the Bellmont fight and for two or three hundred miles off – you see they can soon send them by rail road. They have three yankee prisoners, who are wounded here in the Hospital and God Bless those good good women, they pay the same attention to them that they do to our own men! The ladies who wait on the sick in the Hospital call each other sister. If I ever get sick or wounded I want to be sent right here to this Hospital. If it was not for the associations of home I'd as soon be here if I was sick as at home.<sup>2</sup>

The hospital at Memphis was one of the best hospitals Street saw, and unfortunately for the sick men in the regiment, they would not stay long. They encountered the opposite end of the spectrum at Iuka, where they camped for more than a month.

I went to the Hospital (an old school house which has been fitted up for the Tex Regt) to see my messmate, John Bennett, who has been there several days sick. Imagine my feelings! I found the Hospital in a wretchedly deplorable condition.

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<sup>1</sup> John Kennedy Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters: 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry*, Transcribed by Julie Williams Coley (Wichita Falls, Texas: wehaveneatstuff.com, 2003), January 14, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, February 11, 1862.

It appeared not to have been swept since it had been occupied, and the floor was covered with dirt, spit and every thing else nasty. The sick had no pots to get up to – had to use common wash pans, and being too weak to hold themselves straight part of their evacuations would go on the floor and part in the pans, when a shovel full of sand or ashes would be thrown on it, and there it would lay. I found John Bennett lying on his blankets, on the floor, covered with dirt and blood (his nose had been bleeding) he said he got medical attention every other day. Poor fellow, he was really suffering - very sick.<sup>3</sup>

The sick men were in bad shape but they were never abandoned. They had joined up with friends and family members from home, and the hardships of training and the march had bonded them. They took care of each other and frequently visited their sick comrades in the hospital. In fact the hospitals were so overwhelmed with patients that personal attention from comrades was sometimes the only care the sick received. J.K. Street was one of these caregivers.

Lieut Gains went and procured a private house for him Bro Doans, and I have since been here waiting on him and will continue to do so until he gets well or dies, (I hope he will not be the latter) I wait on him just like I would a brother. I am satisfied that he would have been in his grave, had I not waited on him as faithfully as I have.<sup>4</sup>

Of course he was not alone in caring for his comrades. All the men visited their sick friends, many staying with them through the night. A.J. Coffman sat with his good friend Samuel Ward and listened to him “talk all night about his parents and brothers and sisters, not sensible of anything.”<sup>5</sup> So many men were disabled from disease that the entire regiment was listed as unfit for duty. There was even talk of disbanding. The health of the regiment was a constant concern, and many wrote home about it.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., March 3, 1862.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> A.J. Coffman, Letters to His Brother, 1861-1862, Copies at Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, March 29, 1862.

Army camps were unhealthy for a variety of reasons. The rough life and diet combined to weaken the immune systems of the men. Many were used to much easier lives, and being outside every day and sleeping on the ground was difficult. Also, they lived in much closer quarters than in civilian life. Once a disease was introduced to the group, it spread quickly and many soon caught it. Many diseases, such as cholera, were transmitted through contaminated water, and in the larger camps, clean water was rare. Civil War camps were usually strung along creeks and rivers to provide a source of water. Unfortunately the streams also provided the only means of sanitation and the units downstream suffered from diseases caused by the bad water.

The health of the regiment improved enough before the Battle of Shiloh for it to be reactivated. But after making it through their first battle, men were still dying. Another wave of disease swept through the regiment after the battle. Street told his wife that “the health of our Regt had greatly improved before the battle of Shiloh but since that they are nearly all sick again.”<sup>6</sup> The stress of fighting at Shiloh and the exposure to the elements like the heavy rain before and after the battle caused a number of men who had been healthy to succumb to the diseases that had already killed so many of their comrades.

Eventually the health of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas improved. In the summer of 1862, Jesse Bates reported that their health was, “better than it has been in a long time.”<sup>7</sup> Street also commented on the improved health in August, “at present I am in as fine health as I ever

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<sup>6</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, March 3, 1862.

<sup>7</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, July 11, 1862.

was in my life. I think the good fruit I get here is advantageous to my health.”<sup>8</sup> After the summer of 1862, the health of the unit was hardly mentioned except when soldiers voiced personal complaints. They had lost hundreds of men to disease, but the worst was over. Fighting through the rest of the war at less than their intended strength, the men who were left would still occasionally get sick, and some would spend time in various hospitals. The men learned through experience how to set up healthier camps and those men with stronger immune systems had survived to become resistant to the diseases that had killed their comrades. They also began to receive vaccinations by the summer of 1862.<sup>9</sup> As a result, while disease would still be a concern, it would never again be a major problem threatening the regiment. For the rest of the war the Texans would be able to focus on fighting the enemy.

While at Corinth during the spring of 1862, the regiment was reorganized in accordance with the new Conscription Act. All soldiers in the army were automatically enlisted for a minimum of two years instead of the twelve months for which the men in the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas had volunteered. Also, men younger than eighteen or older than thirty-five were discharged, and all other able-bodied men were compelled to join the Confederate army. There were some exceptions such as government workers, school teachers, and those owning twenty or more slaves. It was also possible to buy a replacement. These new rules caused much grumbling and dissatisfaction. The men complained that the

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<sup>8</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, August 14, 1862.

<sup>9</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, July 11, 1862.

struggle had become “a rich man’s war and poor man’s fight.” Because of the new draft law, desertion increased all across the South.

The draft law also formerly reorganized the Confederate armies and the Army of Mississippi was renamed the Army of Tennessee. As part of the reorganization, the men re-elected their officers. Wright A. Stanley, who had led the regiment well at Shiloh, was not re-elected. William Hugh Young was promoted to lead the regiment and Miles A. Dillard was elected Major. Young and Dillard would lead the 9<sup>th</sup> through the rest of the war.<sup>10</sup> They would see the regiment through its greatest triumphs and its most difficult trials. Leander Franklin Ely became the new Captain of C Company.

The regiment spent several weeks at Corinth recovering from disease and their wounds from Shiloh. The men took their place in the picket lines where they skirmished almost daily with Union pickets as the Union army advanced. They were involved in some heavy skirmishing on May 28 to cover the evacuation of Corinth. The 9<sup>th</sup> suffered a few light casualties and showed their superiors that they were still eager to fight. They were exchanging fire across an open field when General Daniel Smith Donelson yelled, “Forward! Forward!” The men leapt up, gave a yell, and charged. They were about halfway across the field when ordered to halt and fall back. They learned later that the general had meant to move only about twenty yards and take a position behind a fence, “never dreaming that those wild Texans were fools enough to charge in the face of such danger right thro’ that open field.”<sup>11</sup> The Confederates had been forced to evacuate

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<sup>10</sup> Tim Bell, with Ron Brothers and Gary Wisler, “History of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry,” 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, Confederate States Army, <http://gen.1starnet.com/civilwar/9thmain.htm>, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Street, J.K. *Street Civil War Letters*, June 2, 1862.

Corinth because, as Lt. William Beavers noted, “we could not get water enough hardly to drink.”<sup>12</sup>

The Confederate Army of Tennessee was now under the command of General Braxton Bragg, and in July, the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was transferred to General Preston Smith’s Brigade in Benjamin Cheatham’s Tennessee Division. The other regiments in Smith’s Brigade were the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 47<sup>th</sup>, and 154<sup>th</sup> Senior Tennessee Infantry Regiments. They were supported by P.T. Allin’s Sharpshooters and Bankhead’s Battery. The brigade participated in Bragg’s invasion of Kentucky and advanced to within sight of the guns of Cincinnati before turning around to reinforce the main body under attack by General Buell at Perryville.<sup>13</sup> The Texans took their place in the battle line on the morning of October 8<sup>th</sup> but most of the fighting was to their right, and Smith’s Brigade was never called on to close with the enemy. They were subjected to heavy fire from artillery though, and here they suffered their only casualty, Capt. John Lane of G Company.<sup>14</sup>

After the Battle of Perryville, Bragg’s army suffered from serious supply problems and was forced to retreat into Tennessee. Union General William Rosecrans pursued him, and the two armies met at Murfreesboro (Stones River), Tennessee, a few days after Christmas. The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas took part in the attack on Rosecrans’ Army of the Cumberland on New Year’s Eve, 1862. J.K. Street, in a letter to his wife, described the beginning of the battle:

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<sup>12</sup> William D. Beavers, *Civil War Supply Book of William D. Beavers Confederate Army, 1861-1863*, Compiled by Celeste Beavers, Moyock N.C.: Held and Published by Family, 2009, 34.

<sup>13</sup> John H. King, *Memoir*, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 45.

<sup>14</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, October 9, 1862.



The sun rose this morning bright and clear and soon the mist of the morning was dispelled: As far as the eye could reach might be seen standing the two contending armies silently and motionless their bright bayonets glistening in the sun light and sparkling like so many diamonds and bathing the gay colors which floated to the breeze with a ray of refulgence and rifling in glorious showers thro' the emerald fringe of cedars which enclosed the field. At length the death like stillness was broken by a volley of musketry from the extreme left... which told too plainly that the work of death and destruction [sic] had commenced, and in a moment more the strife had leaped from left to right centre and soon the whole line was one solid sheet of flames. So terrible was the cannonading and bursting of shells and roar of musketry that it was almost impossible to hear the human voice even right at you. The earth trembled with the roar of cannon – the cedars rocked and quivered like an aspen leaf in the fire beast and the very air was rent with the explosion of shells.<sup>15</sup>

J.H. King was also shocked by the violence as “the fusillade opened from both sides. I never heard such musketry for half an hour before.”<sup>16</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas advanced across the field with Smith’s Brigade but, because of the difficult terrain, separated and formed on another brigade to their left. The enemy was placed in a strong position in the woods on the other side of a tall fence. The Confederates took heavy casualties while the obstacles protected the Yankees from the 9<sup>th</sup>’ fire, and so either retreating or closing with the enemy were the only options. The rest of the division was ordered to fall back, but Colonel Young never received the order, and so, finding themselves alone on the battlefield, the 9<sup>th</sup> did what Texans do, and attacked.

While crossing the fence, J.H. King’s cousin, Doc King, was shot. “He hallowed for me... His screams were in my ears all day.”<sup>17</sup> But once on the other side, their advance stalled as the men stopped to return fire. They were in a very bad position,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., January 3, 1863.

<sup>16</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 47.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 49.

cut off and caught in a deadly crossfire by two Union regiments, the 35<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Illinois, who outnumbered the Texans nearly four to one. The Yankees “poured into our ranks most deadly and destructive [sic] fire. Man after man fell either killed or wounded but our onward course was not to be staid.”<sup>18</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> quickly lost more than a hundred men in a matter of minutes. Colonel Young, knowing that he had to do something or else lose the regiment, passed down the line and “notified each company of my intention, and then, taking the colors, I ordered the regiment to move forward with a shout, both of which they did *a la* Texas.”<sup>19</sup> J.K. Street joined in the reckless charge when “Col Young seized the colors and bore them almost within the abolitionists ranks and the boys rushed forward yelling and shouting at the top of their voices and the enemy broke and fled in wild confusion leaving the ground covered with their dead and wounded.”<sup>20</sup> Their courageous bayonet charge drove the Yankees from the woods.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas then linked up with a Mississippi Brigade and rejoined the main body. Now properly supported, they renewed their advance and continued to drive the Yankees for several miles. At one point in the battle, though the Texans were out of ammunition, General Benjamin Cheatham ordered them to take a Union battery, which they did with fixed bayonets and empty guns. When the regiment was complimented by a captured Union Colonel, General Cheatham replied that if he had “50,000 such men I could bridge Jordan and storm Hell in a week.”<sup>21</sup> He also singled out the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas in his

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<sup>18</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, January 3, 1863.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901, XX, no. 216, p. 749.

<sup>20</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, January 3, 1863.

<sup>21</sup> John H. King, *Memoir*, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 52.

official report, writing that when the rest of the army retreated, the 9<sup>th</sup> “remained in the woods and continued to fight the enemy, and at last charged them on their flank and drove them from the woods on their entire right, losing very heavily.”<sup>22</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> was the first Confederate unit on that side of the battlefield to break the Union lines, creating a rout.

Lieutenant Colonel Miles Dillard later heard of two men who believed that they would die in the coming battle. They were advised to take their fears to Dillard but had refused because they would “rather die than be thought a coward.” Both were dead at the end of the day. Another man, Joe Russel, saluted a rabbit as it fled the field, saying “Go it cottontail! If I had no more at stake than you, I would be leaving, too.”<sup>23</sup> The Texans had seen combat before and knew the battle would be bloody, but, as always, the men of the 9<sup>th</sup> did their duty. The battle had been costly for the Texans. Colonel Young was shot in the shoulder and had two horses shot out from under him. At one point Lieutenant Colonel Dillard had to take command. The 9<sup>th</sup> had taken 323 officers and men into battle; they lost eighteen killed, one hundred and two wounded, and two missing. They would never replace those losses and the regiment would never again number more than 200 men at any one time. Praise for the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas came from all levels. Lieutenant Colonel Dillard and eight other Texans were nominated for the Confederate Roll of Honor for their heroism in the battle. Several high ranking officers commended the 9<sup>th</sup> for its conduct, but the best praise came from the men who were there. Colonel Young wrote in his report that “I cannot speak in too high terms of the conduct of my officers and men.

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<sup>22</sup> OR, XX, no. 193, p. 706.

<sup>23</sup> Mamie Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray*, (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside), 1986. 187.

My commissioned officers all did their duty bravely, so I will not specify any in particular.”<sup>24</sup> J.K. Street also commended the regiment as a whole:

It would be unjust to particularize any where all did their duty so heroically and manfully – both our Lts Crook and Tanner used guns during the fight and were particularly conspicuous. Too much cannot be said of the bravery of Col Young – he three times bore the color up to the enemies lines – it is enough to say that we gave the miserable abolition invaders one of the worst whippings they have ever had.<sup>25</sup>

The general excellence of the regiment worked somewhat against the men, as it was nearly impossible to single anyone out to honor him for his bravery. J.H. King later wrote that any words he could say would be “poor tribute to their valor and patriotism which was as pure, and as sublime as that of the Spartans at Thermopylae, as Travis, Crocket, and Bowie at the Alamo.”<sup>26</sup> However not everyone was happy to praise the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas: Orren A. Hearne, a private in the 154<sup>th</sup> Senior Tennessee Infantry, complained that up until the battle, his regiment “held the position of honor [in the brigade], but when we lay down on the field, the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas kept going forward till the line of the enemy was being flanked. The enemy had fallen back until we were relieved, but we lost our position of honor, which was given to the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas.”<sup>27</sup>

The rest of the Confederate army also fought well, winning a stunning victory on the first day of the Battle. Both armies rested on New Year’s Day, resuming the fight on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. General Braxton Bragg sent former presidential candidate General John C. Breckinridge to attack the Union left but this time the Union soldiers held their ground

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<sup>24</sup> OR, XX, no. 216, p. 750.

<sup>25</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, January 3, 1863.

<sup>26</sup> John H. King, *Memoir*, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 50.

<sup>27</sup> Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray*, 322.

and inflicted terrible casualties on wave after wave of attacking Confederates. Unable to continue the success of the first day, and weakened by his losses, Bragg retreated.

After the battle, the men went into winter quarters at Shelbyville, Tennessee. They had been on the march to Tullahoma where General Bragg planned to camp, but when the 9<sup>th</sup> passed through Shelbyville, the ladies came out and begged General Cheatham not to abandon them to the Yankees. Cheatham said that he “would die before moving his command another foot on that retreat,”<sup>28</sup> and so General Leonidas Polk’s entire corps camped at Shelbyville. The rest of the winter was uneventful. In January, the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was transferred to General Matthew Ector’s Texas Brigade, a move welcomed by the men who were glad finally to be able to fight alongside fellow Texans. J.K. Street was one of those celebrating the move, writing:

History will, as of yore, record the gallant deeds of Texans, according to them their justly earned fame as the best fighters, in the cause of liberty, in the world. I am proud of the Lone Star state, and equally proud to reply, when asked from what state I hail, that “I am a Texan.” The Texas troops, in the present war for liberty and independence have nobly done their duty, and have won a name that will live in the annals of history: ready to meet the enemy, to bear the trials and hardships of war without a murmur, never refusing to go where, in the judgement of their leader, their services were most required.<sup>29</sup>

The regional differences and independence had led to localized nationalism.

Texans were proud of their martial reputations, and they were always eager to serve with other Texans. As Dee Ridley put it just after Shiloh, “We have plenty of Texans here now the enemy have a wholesome dread of them and will they may for a fight they think of

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<sup>28</sup> John H. King, *Memoir*, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 55.

<sup>29</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, January 31, 1863.

nothing going ahead without counting noses.”<sup>30</sup> They believed that Texans were simply better than other Americans. So far, the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas had bounced around the western army, spending time with four different brigades in two years and fought major battles with two of them. They would find a home with General Ector; joining the 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 32<sup>nd</sup> Texas Cavalry Regiments, all of which had been dismounted to fill the army’s need for infantry.

Most of the soldier’s time during the war was not spent fighting, but in camp, waiting for orders and the next battle. While in camp the officers tried to keep their troops busy with drill and other duties, and Fogle lamented that the officers “won’t hardly let them off three days after they are dead.” The men were kept busy with constant drill. They had gone into combat at Shiloh unprepared, and so the officers wanted to make sure that did not happen again. They drilled almost every day to become a more efficient unit. Fogle groused, “At 5 o’clock in the morning the tattoo beats for roll call. At Eight we have to go on drill and then we drill until 11... At 1 we have to go on drill again till 4.”<sup>31</sup> The men, of course, complained about the constant work, even when it was not really so bad. In February 1864, Charles Douglas complained in his diary about the men marching two miles to town and back, “very much against their will.”<sup>32</sup> By that point they were capable of marching up to twenty-five miles a day with less complaining. Other times

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<sup>30</sup> Dee Hardeman Ridley, Letters 1862-1865, Copies in the Gee Library Archives, Texas A&M University at Commerce, Tx, and from the files of Skipper Steely, Paris, Tx. May 20, 1862.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, April 12, 1863.

<sup>32</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 22-23.

the drilling did not bother them. Douglas also wrote about a “very nice time” practicing forming skirmish lines and charging riverboats on the Tombigbee River.<sup>33</sup>

In March 1864, Ector’s Brigade held a competition for the best drilled company. The regiment of the winning company would receive four days off from guard duty. Charles Douglas was in the selected company, and they practiced hard every day. Competition was fierce, and the 32<sup>nd</sup> Texas backed out before the contest. The 9<sup>th</sup> proved to be the best and won.<sup>34</sup>

Despite efforts by the officers to keep the men busy, they still had a lot of free time, and most of that time was spent in extreme boredom. They tried to amuse themselves by playing a number of games like “Base,” “Bull Pen,” and “Towne Ball,” an early form of baseball. Most of the men were under twenty years old when they enlisted, and when they had a chance, they acted like children. They ran and jumped; wrestled and roughhoused; and swam in the rivers.<sup>35</sup> At night they sat around the campfire talking or playing music. They would “fiddle and dance and cut up all sorts of devilment.”<sup>36</sup> They also played jokes on each other, and with the democratic culture of Civil War regiments, not even officers were safe. Dee Ridley, a lieutenant who had been leading Company K, informed his sisters about a time that:

the boys are all laughing at my position. I was lying down on my elbows with my feet near the edge of the tent. Some two or three of them slipped round and

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 39-41.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 15-52.

<sup>36</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, January 13, 1862.

gathered me by the feet and away I went feet foremost. I had to promise to sit up and write before they would let me loose.<sup>37</sup>

The men lived so closely together that it was impossible to get any privacy.

This closeness could cause problems when receiving letters from home, and even though they were all homesick, they still made fun of anyone who revealed too much of that emotion. Andrew Fogle wrote that, “there are 5 men in my mess and when ever one goes to write, the rest is trying to read it all the while.”<sup>38</sup> Once again, officers were not immune and were forced to escape for privacy. Lieutenant Bates admitted to his wife that he was, “in the woods by myself as there is no chance to find a secret place in the camp to shed tears while I read and write.”<sup>39</sup> He would not dare cry over a letter in front of the other soldiers.

The men spent their down time seeking news of the outside world and the progress of the war. Fighting the war, they were desperately concerned with what was happening and how it might affect them, where would they be sent next, and if there was a battle looming. The endless boredom and close quarters allowed rumors to spread like wildfire through the camps. Official sources of information were unreliable and, for security reasons, real information was purposefully kept from the men, so rumors were frequently the only source of information the men had. All the men tell of new rumors circulating the camps almost daily. These stories were about everything from

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<sup>37</sup> Dee Hardeman Ridley, Letters, 1862-1865, Copies in the Gee Library Archives, Texas A&M University at Commerce, and from the files of Skipper Steely, Paris, Texas, March 1864.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, January 13, 1862.

<sup>39</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, May 11, 1862.



exaggerating the size of the army, to decisive confederate victories, to promises of foreign intervention on behalf of the Confederacy. As most of Ector's Brigade was dismounted cavalry, there were frequent, hopeful rumors of being remounted. The most common rumors were about their own immediate future. They speculated on where and how long they would be in camp and where they would be sent next. One day they were being transferred to Texas in the Trans-Mississippi Department and the next they were ordered to join Lee's army in Virginia. The one common trait of the rumors was their optimism. According to the soldiers, Confederate forces were crushing the invaders every day and victory was always just around the corner. Even the rumors of future battles and troop movements were optimistic. They were anxious for the next fight as it was always going to be a decisive Southern victory.

Even with the homesickness and boredom. The men were nearly always in good spirits. Early in the war Fogle wrote, "We have got as jolly set of boys that ever you saw or ever heard of."<sup>40</sup> High morale lasted late into the war. Jesse Bates claimed that even after the fall of Atlanta "our army is generally in good spirits."<sup>41</sup> The men got along fairly well and there were few fights. J.K. Street described one dispute that Colonel Young settled by having the two men fight it out. Neither gave in, but both were satisfied with having released their frustrations on each other, and the matter was dropped.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, January 13, 1862.

<sup>41</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1864.

<sup>42</sup> Street, J.K. *Street Civil War Letters*, June 2, 1862.

The 9<sup>th</sup> remained at Shelbyville until May when Ector's Brigade was reinforced by the 29<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry and sent south to join General Joseph E. Johnston's feeble attempt to break General Ulysses S. Grant's siege of Vicksburg. When Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863, the Texans fell back to Jackson, Mississippi, occupying the breastworks there on the 7<sup>th</sup>. The Federals arrived a couple of days later and laid siege to Jackson. They quickly brought up their artillery and began shelling the town, first firing on the house belonging to Jefferson Davis' family. When that was destroyed they turned the guns on the Catholic church buildings in town because of the rumors of Catholic support for the Confederacy.<sup>43</sup> The Federals heavily outnumbered the defending Confederates but did not directly assault their defenses, preferring to skirmish and to shell the town from a distance while trying to outflank the defenders. On the night of the July 15, knowing that he could not hold out against the superior Union army, Johnston retreated. The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas suffered a few casualties in the weeklong siege. Colonel Young was wounded in the leg; J.H. King lost his left arm to a twelve pound cannonball on the night of the evacuation, and Lt. William Beavers of Company C, known as "Billy" to his men, suffered a mortal leg wound on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

In early September 1863 Rosecrans consolidated his forces scattered in Tennessee and Georgia and headed south. General James Longstreet brought a corps down from Virginia, reinforcing Bragg, and with the new men, Bragg was determined to recapture Chattanooga. On the 17<sup>th</sup> Bragg headed north, intending to meet and defeat the Union XXI Corps under General George Thomas. Fighting began in earnest in

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<sup>43</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 58-59.

Northwest Georgia on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Bragg's men hammered but did not break the Union line. The Battle of Chickamauga was fierce with each side sending more men into battle through the day.

Ector's Brigade was reinforced by Pound's Battalion, made up Companies A, F, H, I from the 43<sup>rd</sup> Mississippi Infantry, and Company A from the 38<sup>th</sup> Mississippi, and Stone's Battalion, composed of Companies A, D, and I from the 40<sup>th</sup> Alabama. These battalions were part of the Vicksburg garrison but had been on detached service when the fort surrendered. Assigned to General Ector temporarily, they were waiting for the rest of their units to be exchanged.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas and Ector's Brigade started the day in reserve, but were quickly called on to fight. General Nathan Bedford Forrest was on the Confederate Left and was in danger of being overwhelmed. Ector's Brigade, along with Colonel Claudius Wilson's Brigade, bolstered Forrest's lines, saving him from defeat. They were ordered to attack and capture Loomis' West Virginia Battery, who were supported by Rousseau's Brigade and reinforced by the 1<sup>st</sup> California Infantry. General Ector rode in front of the men and yelled "charge!" He barely got the order out before "we were dashing forward yelling like demons."<sup>44</sup> When they reached the battery the Yankees got one final shot off, the men suffering the "blinding, withering fire of the entire battery. The slaughter was fearful... [The men] had gone down like ripened grain before the sickle."<sup>45</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> California, concealed behind the battery, now stood and let loose a "blinding sheet of

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<sup>44</sup> Samuel H. Sprott, *Cush: A Civil War Memoir*, Edited by Louis R. Smith, Jr. and Andrew Quist, Livingston (Alabama: Livingston Press, 1999), 52

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

flame and leaden hail. Our brigade already fearfully cut up by the morning's work, was unable to cope with this new and formidable force and there was nothing to do but fall back."<sup>46</sup> The Texans were repulsed twice, loosing their entire skirmish line; finally, on the third try, they drove the Yankees who broke "in the utmost confusion and fell back on Chattanooga."<sup>47</sup>

Union General Thomas requested reinforcements that night but they never arrived. The next day Bragg continued his assault on the Union left, and Thomas grew desperate for reinforcements. He sent several staff officers to Rosecrans, one of whom reported to Rosecrans that he had a gap in his line. There in fact was no gap; the soldiers had simply been behind some trees out of sight of the staff officer who happened to be riding past. Rosecrans ordered the gap closed, and by moving units to shore up the supposed gap, he opened one that Longstreet's men quickly exploited. Union forces tried to plug the gap, but were repeatedly forced back. The Confederates drove a third of the Union army, including Rosecrans, from the field. Thomas took over command and began consolidating forces on Horseshoe Ridge and Snodgrass Hill. The Confederates launched determined assaults on these positions but failed to dislodge Thomas, who would later be known as "The Rock of Chickamauga." After dark Thomas led these men from the field leaving it to the Confederates. The Union army retreated to Chattanooga while the Rebels occupied and dug in on the surrounding heights.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

<sup>47</sup> William E. Whitsett, Letter from William Whitsett to His Brother, July 13, 1900, <http://gen.1starnet.com/civilwar/whitsett.htm>, 1999.

Chickamauga was the largest Confederate victory in the west and the high point of the Army of Tennessee. Once again the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry was in the thick of the fighting. The day after the battle they assisted in chasing the defeated Yankees back to Chattanooga, although there were only 1000 men left in the entire division. The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas suffered six killed, thirty-six wounded, and eighteen captured. Such low numbers might not seem too bad, but the regiment had taken only 145 men into battle, and suffered more than 41% casualties. One of the captured men, Noah Moody, was killed in Camp Chase by a prison guard. All but one of the men in the skirmish line had been killed or captured; the only one to make it back was Lieutenant Stephen Tanner of A Company. Colonel Young was also one of the wounded; he received a serious chest wound and three more minor wounds. Ector's Brigade as a whole suffered 536 casualties.<sup>48</sup> General Ector himself was wounded four times. William Whitsett was part of the burial detail after the battle. After the war, he told his brother that, "we put in two days and nights packing in and burying the dead, the most awful and sore hurting job I ever in my life had to go through."<sup>49</sup> Samuel H. Sprott, of Stone's Battalion, was also detailed to bury the dead. He described a terrible scene of death and destruction.

The dead were lying in almost every conceivable position; some lying where they had fallen looking as if they had fallen into a peaceful slumber while others with faces distorted indicated that they had died in great agony. Scattered around were knapsacks, broken guns, blankets and clothing and all the debris of a battlefield. At one point where a battery had been stationed, I counted twelve large fine looking horses, lying dead, while near by were broken gun-carriages, trees shattered, the ground torn and blood stained, all going to show how desperate had been the struggle. Here was the reverse side of the picture,

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<sup>48</sup> OR, XXX, no. 321, p. 243-244.

<sup>49</sup> William E. Whitsett, Letter from William Whitsett to His Brother, July 13, 1900, <http://gen.lstarnet.com/civilwar/whitsett.htm>, 1999.

robbed of the “pomp and circumstance of glorious war.” How many hearts had been made sad and desolate by these two days work? How many eyes grew dim waiting and watching for loved ones who never returned? How many child would ask mother, “When will father come?” who never more to know a father’s love?<sup>50</sup>

After the battle, Ector’s Brigade was reassigned to General Leonidas Polk’s Corps, which was a part of Samuel G. French’s Division. The men left Bragg’s army outside Chattanooga and headed to Mississippi to join French in winter camp. They were officially there to help protect Jackson, Mississippi, from Federal raids, but the winter was fairly quiet. They would spend the time in winter camp recovering from the campaigns of 1863 and preparing for the defense of Atlanta in 1864.

Winter camps for Civil War armies were far more active than they had been for Washington and Napoleon. They fought battles such as Murfreesboro the previous winter, and while the 9<sup>th</sup> was in camp, the rest of the army would fight and suffer defeat at Missionary Ridge in November. But these battles were exceptions. For most soldiers, winter was still a period of inactivity. After Murfreesboro, the 9<sup>th</sup> had camped at Shelbyville until May, and a year later, after Chickamauga, they would spend the winter in the vicinity of Meridian, Mississippi.

When they arrived, the soldiers built dozens of cabins to shelter them during the winter. The cabins were finished in early December but the men would not get much chance to enjoy them. Soon after, Ector’s Brigade received orders to move out. They would spend the next several months moving back and forth, sometimes on trains, other times marching over twenty miles a day. They stayed in the general area of Meridian,

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<sup>50</sup> Sprott, *Cush*, 57

sometimes moving to Jackson, Brandon, or Demopolis, Alabama. Despite all the movement, the closest they came to a fight was in early February when they went back to Jackson to defend against an attack by General Sherman. The Texans had been roused in the middle of the night on the February 2<sup>nd</sup> and rushed to Jackson. On the 5<sup>th</sup>, Douglas noted that “the cannons opened on our front early this morning. The enemy advancing in heavy force. All government stores are being loaded onto the cars.” Confederates authorities evacuated everything they could and burned the rest, including 225 bales of cotton.<sup>51</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> beat Sherman to Jackson but was heavily outnumbered. They almost immediately turned around and retreated, rushing to stay ahead of the advancing Union Army. Three days later they formed a line of battle across a road near Maston, Mississippi. “The enemy fired one cannon shot at sunset which was answered by a shout from the line,” showing that the 9<sup>th</sup> still had the spirit for a fight. After dark they moved out again.<sup>52</sup>

Ector’s Brigade managed to stay one step ahead of the Federals, who eventually gave up pulled back to Vicksburg. The 9<sup>th</sup> spent the rest of the winter camped along the Tombigbee River in Alabama. They spent a relatively comfortable winter receiving somewhat regular pay, being paid in January, March, and April. This frequent payment is notable because they would not be paid again until the end of the year.

The weather was cold and wet, but they were reasonably well equipped with clothing and blankets. The other regiments in the brigade were issued new tents on

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<sup>51</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 29-31.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 25-29.

December 22, but the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas had kept their old ones. Their blankets and tents eventually did give out that winter. They were issued brand new tents on March 4, and were “now very comfortably situated,” at least until the first hard rain. On the 21<sup>st</sup> Douglas reported that the tents were very thin and leaked. The men grumbled and complained about the conditions, Douglas at one time lamenting that “none can describe the sufferings of a soldier, but he who has tried it.”<sup>53</sup> Despite the hardships, no one froze to death that winter, and sickness was rare, with the notable exception of Lieutenant Colonel Dillard, who left for Texas to recover from an illness. Douglas also described many happy times spent with his comrades that winter.

One thing the men did have plenty of was food. They were issued rations regularly from the commissary and were able to supplement them quite well from the surrounding areas. They were able to get fresh produce from the local population, as when Lieutenant Robert Jackson brought a wagonload of potatoes into camp. They were also able to fish along the Tombigbee River. Douglas reported that on May 5, they caught between 200 and 400 pounds of fish. He also described several lazy days spent lying on the riverbank fishing. They were catching so many that they could eat as much as they wanted. On the 4<sup>th</sup> he wrote that they were “living fat.”<sup>54</sup>

Although the men were generally enjoying the peaceful camp life, there were still dangers. Accidents took a heavy toll on the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas from the first day they were mustered into the army. One of the first towns they passed through as they were leaving Texas was Clarksville. They marched through at the same time as the 10<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry,

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 38-45.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 57-59.



which they would later join in Ector's Brigade. The city leaders decided to salute the departing troops and fired an old cannon they had in town. The cannon exploded, and a piece of shrapnel hit and killed one of the 10<sup>th</sup> horses and wounded a soldier. While no one from the 9<sup>th</sup> was hurt, it was a close call. But a few days later they were not so fortunate. Private David Darby was on guard duty at night, and when relieved, he made his way back into the shed where his squad was sleeping. In the darkness he kicked a rifle leaning against a post. The rifle had been loaded against orders by some "damn fool" soldier, and it discharged. The load hit a man named Bob Baker in the head as he slept a few feet away, killing him instantly. That was not the only accident before the men reached the front. While on the riverboat that took the regiment to Memphis, John Turner was on deck at night and reached for a handrail to steady himself. "The post was loose at the bottom, it gave way and precipitated him into the dark, cold, raging waters of the river... His body was never recovered."<sup>55</sup> Another man from the same company fell overboard and drowned on July 26.<sup>56</sup>

Trees posed a surprising hazard. On that same march, J.K. Street had a close call when some soldiers cut down a tree and it fell on him. He knew how lucky he was to have escaped unhurt, writing his wife: "God be praised, it never hurt me in the least. Two limbs fell, one on each side of me; surely God was with me. 'And he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.' I am truly thankful to God – what a wonder. I can't tell how it is, but I never received even a

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<sup>55</sup> John H. King, *Memoir*, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 28-35.

<sup>56</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, July 31, 1862.

scratch.”<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately the men of the regiment did not learn their lesson. On New Year’s Day 1864, Charles Douglas wrote in his diary that “some of the regiment downed a large oak in the camp for wood. It fell in an opposite direction from the one they intended. It [illegible] smashing a tent perfectly flat in which a person was laying asleep.”<sup>58</sup> Douglas did not give the soldier’s name.

One of the most dangerous non-combat activities was riding on the trains. One accident in particular affected the regiment. While on the march leaving Texas, the men thought they were fortunate to get a ride on a new rail line. The train was large and required two engines, one at the front and another at the back. During the trip the train separated at the middle, and the front half pulled some distance ahead. It was forced to stop, and the back end, not seeing this, rammed into the cars in front which were full of men. J.K. Street described the wreck to his wife:

The car in front of the rear train was lifted off its tracks and ran up on the car that I was on. As soon as the rear train struck us I jumped off before the other car ran on to us and escaped unhurt, Bro was butted of heels over head in to a mud whole – lost his blanket he had around him and his gun but was not hurt. I held on to my gun and my blanket. Four or five of our Co were badly hurt none that you knew – two men got their legs broken and one got his arm broken. I suppose there was about 23 or 30 tolerably badly hurt but none killed or mortally wounded. We were then in a bad fix.<sup>59</sup>

On a dark and freezing night, the men were now stuck outside after the shock of the crash, without access to their baggage, and so they had no tents or blankets. Luckily, no

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., February 25, 1862.

<sup>58</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 18.

<sup>59</sup> Street, J.K. *Street Civil War Letters*, February 4, 1862.

one was killed, but they lost a lot of equipment and about 200 rifles were destroyed.<sup>60</sup>

Charles Douglas noted in his diary that on almost every trip they made on a train, some cars went off the tracks. They were fortunate that they avoided extreme disasters on the trains.

Of course, many accidents occurred in combat zones. Street mentioned that on July 10, during the siege at Jackson, that the only man wounded that day accidentally shot himself in the wrist.<sup>61</sup> Another man was accidentally shot on October 18. Fogle wrote about another accident during the siege of Atlanta and described a couple of men playing with an unexploded shell that burst, killing one and breaking the leg of the other.<sup>62</sup> Friendly fire was also a problem. William Fields of Company G was accidentally killed by friendly fire from another regiment in Ector's Brigade near Kennesaw Mountain on June 17, 1864.<sup>63</sup>

The only hope of escape from the army, short of death or peace, was to get a furlough. Furloughs offered the men a chance to leave camp, sometimes for months, and many who received one were able to make it all the way back home to Texas to see family. Short passes to visit relatives living near-by were common. These short breaks were pleasant and many of soldiers took advantage of them, but the men really wanted furloughs long enough to visit home. These long furloughs, usually one to three months, were far more difficult to get approved.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., July 16, 1863.

<sup>62</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, October 18, 1863, August 25, 1864.

<sup>63</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, June 23, 1864.

Tom Blair, after being wounded at Shiloh in April 1862, was given a month-long furlough by General Patton Anderson. He was one of the fortunate ones, for not only did he survive his wound, but he also got to go home. Soon after he departed, a general order was issued preventing any soldier from receiving a furlough. Commanders expected another battle and did not want to deplete the fighting strength of the army. Despite the obvious reasoning behind the order, it did not go over well with the men. J.K. Street bitterly complained about the “perfectly tyrannical and cruel” order in a letter home on April 17.<sup>64</sup> For the rest of the war, obtaining a furlough was almost impossible for enlisted men. Most of the officers were able to get at least one furlough during the war, sometimes using recruitment or supplies as an excuse, but they still had a chance to go home. Men on furlough also provided a valuable service to the regiment. With the breakdown of the postal service, the most reliable way to send mail came when someone went home and delivered letters for the regiment. By the end of 1862, the majority of letters were sent via furlough.

After the fall of Vicksburg in the summer of 1863, going home proved a dangerous journey. The Union controlled the entire Mississippi River and much of the surrounding region. Going home meant traveling through hundreds of miles of enemy controlled territory. However, many risked the dangers to see loved ones. Some were captured, e.g. M.J. Chapin in February 1864 while making his way back to the regiment. He managed to escape but lost the mail he was carrying, greatly disappointing the men

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<sup>64</sup> Street, J.K. *Street Civil War Letters*, April 19, 1862.

who had been eagerly anticipating letters from home.<sup>65</sup> J.K. Street was not so fortunate. He, too, received a furlough that winter, finally getting a chance to see his daughter. He was captured on his way home on January 14, 1864, just east of the Mississippi River. He was not able to escape, spending the rest of the war in a prison camp at Vicksburg, Mississippi.

In May, the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas received orders to join General Joseph Johnston in Dalton, Georgia, to help defend Atlanta. Cheering crowds met them in the towns they passed through, sending them to the front. Hard fighting lay ahead for the Army of Tennessee, but the men felt victory was in sight and they were eager to go.

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<sup>65</sup>Charles B. Douglas, *Douglas Family Journals*, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 36.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Leadership

Leadership, as one might expect, was vital to Civil War units. The massive mobilization needed to create the Civil War armies meant that very few soldiers had previous military experience before the war began. Entire regiments were created without a single member having any formal military training. The success or failure of these regiments depended solely on the officers. Good leaders, some with little formal training themselves, had to quickly shape their eager volunteers into disciplined, trained soldiers. The best leaders succeeded in creating units that were both effective in combat and also able to keep their men alive. Some commanders, like Robert E. Lee and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, have been almost deified since the war. Even lesser known leaders molded and shaped their soldiers and were loved by those men long after the war. The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry was fortunate to be led by some of the best officers in the Confederate Army.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas began as the brainchild of Samuel Bell Maxey, a prominent lawyer living in Paris, Texas. Maxey graduated from West Point and saw action in the Mexican War. Though he was a civilian when the war broke out, he was qualified to lead a regiment in the expanding army. In May 1861, he led a company of volunteers into Indian Territory to claim a chain of forts abandoned by Federal forces and to make contact with Indian tribes there. In August he travelled to Richmond, Virginia, to make in person, his case for a commission in the Confederate Army and to gain permission to

raise a regiment of Texas troops. President Jefferson Davis, because of illness, could not receive him, and the commanding generals of the army were all in the field and would not allow civilians to enter camp. Fellow Texan, John H. Reagan, the Confederate Postmaster General, advised Maxey that he would be more likely to receive authorization if he could arm and equip the men himself because the Confederacy lacked the necessary resources. Several had already been turned away with that news, but Maxey was undeterred. He met with the Confederate senators from Texas and members of the War Department and managed to gain their support.

Maxey's efforts paid off, and on September 3, he triumphantly wrote home that he had received his authorization to "raise a regiment of Infantry to be armed with the double barrel shot gun and common rifle and musket."<sup>1</sup> He returned to Texas and set up his headquarters at Camp Rusk in Lamar County where the ten companies would gather to form the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry. He immediately sent for his West Point Diploma and hung it, along with his certificate of brevet commission in the Mexican American War, on the wall of his tent to advertise his military qualifications.

Samuel Bell Maxey was born in Tompkinsville, Kentucky, in 1825. He studied at the United States Military Academy at West Point and graduated in the class of 1846. He was a roommate of Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson and, like Jackson, served in the Mexican American War. He fought well and was brevetted for gallantry. After the war he left the army to become a lawyer like his father. They moved to Texas together in

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<sup>1</sup> Louise Horton, *Samuel Bell Maxey: A Biography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 20-22.

1857, setting up their practice in Clarksville.<sup>2</sup> They were successful enough to advertise in the *Clarksville Standard*, with an ad appearing on February 9, 1861, offering to investigate land titles, pay taxes, and attend to the collection of debts.<sup>3</sup>

Maxey, with his characteristic ambition, regarded the war and Confederate independence as a great opportunity for personal advancement. An early supporter of secession, he quickly made a name for himself as a leader in the movement for secession. He had long hoped to enter politics and when the new Confederate Constitution called for elections, he travelled to the Democratic State Convention in Austin and put his name on the ballot for state senator. By the time it was revealed that Samuel Bell Maxey had won, he had already given the office to his father. He knew that military success was a better path to fame and advancement, and being a West Point graduate with military experience, he was definitely qualified to lead a regiment.

The company Maxey had raised in May for service in the Indian Territory became Company A and the core of his new regiment. The rest of the men came in during the next several weeks. Though many of the men grew sick, Maxey drilled the regiment daily. Having seen combat, he knew that the men needed to be trained and disciplined if they were going to survive their first battle. Despite the sickness and necessity to move camps, Maxey noted that, "no pains have been spared to drill and discipline the Reg't. which on both will compare favorably with any in the service at

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<sup>2</sup> Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 216.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Bell and Rice Maxey, *Clarksville Standard*, Advertisement, February 9, 1861, p. 3.



[this] time."<sup>4</sup> Maxey received orders to move to the coast but the regiment was still not complete. He published a personal, last ditch appeal to fill the ranks in local newspapers:

At an early hour this morning, I received by express from Gen. P.O. Hebert, commanding the Department of Texas, orders to proceed with my Regiment to Camp at Sim's Bayou near Harrisburg. This point is on the Rail Road near Houston, one of our most important commercial points, and in close proximity by Railway to Galveston. Every feeling of patriotism, love of home and country, should prompt the brave, manly Texians, to take up arms and strike a stalwart blow for their beloved State. We lack a few yet in the different companies.

Let no man join for fancy service, but let every one who can, and is willing to brave danger, difficulty and hardships in defense of the South and our lovely State, at once flock to our common country's Standard, the glorious Stars and Bars of the Sunny South.

S. B. Maxey      Col. Comd'g<sup>5</sup>

The regiment did not move quickly. The men were mustered into Confederate service in early December, but Maxey moved to Camp Benjamin to continue training. One reason for the delay is that Maxey did not want simply to garrison coastal defenses. He wanted to head east and join the main western army. He sent messages to Albert Sidney Johnston and soon received new orders. In January the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas finally left camp to participate in the war.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the two months that passed between first receiving orders and finally leaving camp, the 9<sup>th</sup> was not fully prepared for combat. As noted by J.H. King, "we were new troops to be sure; we had drilled but little at the camps of instruction before

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<sup>4</sup> Tim Bell, with Ron Brothers and Gary Wisler, "History of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry," 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, Confederate States Army, <http://gen.1starnet.com/civilwar/9thmain.htm>, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Bell Maxey, "Forward March," *Clarksville Standard*, October 26, 1861, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Horton, *Samuel Bell Maxey*, 23.

starting on our march.” The only “evolution we knew how to execute in Battalion drill...was dress parade” and that “we could not execute in any sort of military style.”<sup>7</sup>

Maxey knew that he had been hampered by time and the rough, independent nature of his rural recruits. He had done his best and knew also that all other new regiments would be limited by the same circumstances. Thus he had no qualms in claiming publicly in Little Rock that the 9<sup>th</sup> was the “best drilled regiment in the southern army.”<sup>8</sup>

The men continued to drill and fought exceptionally at Shiloh in April 1862, making up with their enthusiasm and bravery what they lacked in military discipline. Their reputation for boldness would not change throughout the war. Always known for their bravery, several times though, they would get into trouble for their lack of discipline.

Maxey again travelled to Richmond just before the battle of Shiloh and was promoted to Brigadier General when he returned. He left to join his new brigade, and Wright A. Stanley was elected to replace him as Colonel of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas. Maxey was well respected by most for his leadership and for his military ability. His men clearly trusted him; C.S. Dyer informed his wife that “our Colonel is of the right stripe. I believe that most of his men believe that and that is alright.”<sup>9</sup> J.H. King was even more lavish

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<sup>7</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 36-38.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>9</sup> Charles S. Dyer, Letter to M.A. Dyer, January 26, 1862, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas.

with his praise, believing Maxey “was the finest militiaman in the Southern Confederacy.”<sup>10</sup>

Maxey’s only fault, at least to his men, was a slight penchant for alcohol, as mentioned several times by J.K. Street. He mentioned a specific incident when Maxey, now commanding the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade, was too drunk to lead the Brigade in a skirmish near Corinth on May 28, 1862. Instead they were commanded by General Daniel Smith Donelson.<sup>11</sup> Despite this, Street still admired Maxey. When the 9<sup>th</sup> was transferred to a different brigade he wrote: “I was sorry to leave. I don’t know when we will get under another man we like as well. I believe Dear that Gen Maxey withstanding his fault is one of the most popular men in the service.” He was not the only one who was disappointed at the separation. As they left, Maxey “came out and bid us all fare well. He was loath to give us up. His troops all like him. As the cars left we gave three hearty cheers ‘for Gen Maxey.’ The old Gen raised his hat and turned off crying. Most all the Regt shed tears at leaving.”<sup>12</sup> Despite his faults, Maxey formed the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas into a fighting unit.

Fortunately for the men, there was no shortage of outstanding leaders in the regiment. Wright A. Stanley, the next Colonel, was the first captain of Company H. When the regiment formerly organized, he was elected to be its first Major, Harvey Wise replacing him in Co. H. Stanley was promoted again when elected Colonel on March 19, 1862. He led the Regiment admirably at Shiloh. J.K. Street described Stanley’s actions on the second day of the battle: “Col Stanley drew his sword, waved it over his head and

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<sup>10</sup> John H. King, *Memoir*, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 36.

<sup>11</sup> John Kennedy Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters: 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry*, Transcribed by Julie Williams Coley, Wichita Falls, Texas: wehaveneatstuff.com, 2003, March 3, 1862, June 2, 1862.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, August 26, 1862.

cried to the Texas boys to follow him. We gave a long loud demon – like yell and rushed forward to what seemed immediate destruction [sic].” Later that same day, Stanley was commanded by General Patton Anderson to lead yet another charge because other units had failed. The General asked him:

if he could get the colors borne forward? Col Stanley told him he could and he rushed forward seized the colors himself and galloped up with in 50 yds of the enemy’s lines and planted them than rode round and faced the enemy by this time our boys were up with him, it seemed to put new life into the whole brigade, for soon all the Regts were with us and again we drove the enemy before us.<sup>13</sup>

Stanley had proved himself to be a capable leader, and he was praised for his conduct by General Anderson, who said, “the language of eulogy could scarcely do more than simple justice to the courage and determination of this officer and his valorous Texans. Ever in the thickest of the fight, they were always ready to respond to any demand upon their courage and endurance.”<sup>14</sup>

Wright A. Stanley seemed to be on a path for greatness, but he was replaced less than a month after the battle. No reason is given for his replacement at the reorganization in early May. He was listed on the muster roll for April 1862, as being sick in camp. Disease had recently swept through the regiment, and the exposure from the battle and retreat from Shiloh had made many soldiers sick again. Stanley received ten days leave on April 13, possibly to recover from the illness.<sup>15</sup> The regiment re-elected its officers

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., April 14, 1862.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901, X, no. 173, p. 499.

<sup>15</sup> Confederate States Army, Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Wright A. Stanley.

after the reorganization and William Hugh Young replaced Stanley. J.H. King remarked that when Stanley was replaced, he resigned and went home to Texas.<sup>16</sup> It is probable, though there is no mention of any medical discharge in his record, that he was too ill to continue with the regiment and went home to recover. Stanley never held another command.

The entire Confederate Army reorganized under the new Conscription Act on May 8, 1862. Many of the officers of the 9<sup>th</sup> changed at this time. William Hugh Young was elected to be the new Colonel. He would stay with the regiment for most of the war and lead it through some of its most difficult fighting.

William Hugh Young was born in Booneville, Missouri, on New Year's Day 1838. His family moved to North Texas while he was still a baby, eventually settling in Sherman, in Grayson County. His father was an Indian fighter and served in the Mexican American War, and so William was no stranger to military life. He attended several colleges before transferring to the University of Virginia, and was a twenty-three year-old student in Charlottesville when the war broke out. Young remained in Virginia for several months to go through a course in military tactics offered at a local military school. While there he became a leader of one of two companies of cadets. Robert E. Lee, Jr., led the other company.

While at the University of Virginia, Young met Frances Kemper, the sixteen year-old niece of his uncle's wife. He later claimed it was love at first sight, at least for him, though Frances would have nothing to do with him. She was an attractive girl and

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<sup>16</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 40.

had too many suitors to pay any attention to this “serious young man.” He tried to attract her attention for two years without success. Eventually he had the idea of building his own house near campus and inviting her brother and cousin to live with him. His plan worked and he returned to Virginia after the war and married her.<sup>17</sup>

He returned to Texas in the summer of 1861 to raise troops. He formed a company in Grayson County that included William Beavers, Thomas Wellington Blair, and Charles Douglas. His company became Company C in the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas, and he was elected Captain. When elected to replace Wright A. Stanley, he was only twenty-four years old.

Colonel Young’s courage and leadership showed early on. During the retreat from Kentucky after the battle of Perryville in October 1862, Colonel Young rode calmly alongside his men despite being the target of many Union sharpshooters. J.H. King repeatedly offered to return fire but was restrained by Young, who endured their “fusillade” all day without effect.<sup>18</sup>

A few months later Young led his men into battle at Murfreesboro (Stones River), Tennessee, where the Texans gained their greatest glory. During the attack, they were separated from the rest of the brigade and found themselves alone when Young did not receive an order to retreat. Instead, without authorization, he ordered the 9<sup>th</sup> to attack. Their advance stalled and the regiment sustained heavy fire from two sides. Young was able to move the unit forward again only after running down the line, personally giving

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<sup>17</sup> Hugh H. Young, “Two Texas Patriots,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 44 (July 1940), 22-23, 29.

<sup>18</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 46.

instructions to his officers. Then, despite being wounded, he grabbed the colors and charged. The men followed. Heavily outnumbered and having already taken terrible casualties, they routed the Yankees. Colonel Young and the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas were praised by both their brigade and division commanders. General Cheatham noted that the 9<sup>th</sup>, led by “that gallant officer” Young, “remained in the woods and continued to fight the enemy, and at last charged them on their flank and drove them from the woods on their entire right, losing very heavily.”<sup>19</sup> Vaughn, in command of the Brigade, singled Young out for conspicuous gallantry when he “seized the colors of his regiment in one of its most gallant charges and led it through.”<sup>20</sup>

The regiment fought well at Jackson in July 1863, and again at Chickamauga in September. Colonel Young was always in the thick of the action and suffered many wounds. He was wounded in the shin at Jackson, and at Chickamauga, along with three small wounds, he took a minie ball in the chest that took a month to heal; rejoining the 9<sup>th</sup> in winter camp in Mississippi on November 14.

William Young was well known for his bravery in the face of the enemy and he did what he could to inspire this quality in his men. One veteran told a story to Young’s son about a time when the regiment was lying in a trench, with the Yankees sniping at them from their own positions several hundred yards away. One of his men could not take to strain any more and tried to run. He was caught and after a stern lecture by Young, was taken to a tree in front of the Confederate lines. Young held him to that tree, in full view of the Federals, for five minutes while the entire Union army blazed away at

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<sup>19</sup> OR, XX, no. 193, p. 708.

<sup>20</sup> OR, XX, no. 212, p. 746.

them. Neither was hit and they returned to the safety of the trench. Young wanted to show the man that he had nothing to fear and that the Yankees were such bad shots they could not hit anything any way. The lesson worked, and a short time later, the man was at the front of a Confederate charge against the Union lines.<sup>21</sup>

William Young also maintained good relations with local civilians. He knew that because his men were fighting on civilians' home territory, the soldiers could gain crucial support. His men were able to get food, medical care, and more from civilians. Young was sure to show his gratitude, such as he demonstrated in the letter he wrote to the people of McMinnville, Tennessee, shortly before the battle of Murfreesboro. He thanked them for their "kindness and patriotic zeal" and singled out ladies of the community for caring for the sick. He wrote further that, "The remembrance of our stay at McMinnville will long continue to be a bright ground of the privations and hardships of war. In return, we can only promise that we will vie with the boldest and bravest of your noble sons and brothers in defense of your altars and firesides."<sup>22</sup> The men were grateful for the aide, as noted by J.K. Street while passing though Alabama.

I must say of the ladies of Ala as of those of Ga. They are ever ready to show by their acts that they sympathize with, and love confederate soldiers. One lady sent us in a wagon load of provisions here this evening meat, bread, English peas and milk. We were met at the depot this evening by a large concourse of ladies and many were invited to go and take supper. We might enumerate many instances of their kindness, but enough has been said to show the material of which the ladies of Ala are made.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Young, "Two Texas Patriots," 26.

<sup>22</sup> M.C. Saufley, "Tribute to Patriotic Citizens," *Confederate Veteran*, 4 (February, 1896), p. 55.

<sup>23</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, May 24, 1863.



Young continued to enjoy good relations through the rest of the war. Soon after settling into camp in Mississippi for the winter of 1863-1864, Young and the other officers of the brigade threw a party for the people of Meridian. They had a picnic and danced late into the night. The gathering was described by the *Mississippian* newspaper as one of the “pleasantest little affairs we have recently attended.”<sup>24</sup>

The following spring, local women were invited out to the camp to look at the regimental colors, “as it had been pierced several times by bullets.” A month later, as they marched through Jacksonville to rejoin Joseph Johnston in Georgia, Charles Douglas noted that, “Col. Young got several very nice bouquets” from the “many ladies present.”<sup>25</sup> Colonel Young was quite popular, to say the least, which occasionally did annoy the men, who were jealous of the attention that local girls paid to Young and the other officers. Street, even though he was married, complained about some of these girls, even writing a poem hoping to change their mind.

I noticed a disposition on the part of some on our way from West Point to Montgomery to pay attention to officers to the neglect of privates and I wrote the following determined to give it to the first one it would suit. The opportunity was not long in showing itself. A young lady at Auburn made herself conspicuous by giving bouquets to the officers – inquired of me if “the Col was a young man” on being informed that he was she sent him by a Negro a nice bouquet. And seizing the opportunity I hand her the following;

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<sup>24</sup> *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, November 10, 1863, p. 1, c. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Charles B. Douglas, *Douglas Family Journals*, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 57, 69.

Sweet lady fair, canst tell me why,  
That gold-laced stripes and gilded bars,  
Are courted by the young and fair,  
And why they worship much the stars?

Sweet lady fair, canst' tell me shy,  
The private soldiers oft forgot,  
And why the ladies are so shy,  
Of privates brave, and court them out?

Sweet lady fair, canst tell me why,  
Officers have their dinners given,  
While the private his must buy,  
Or from the hose in scorn be driven?

Sweet lady fair, O say, O say,  
Why smile on officers, alone,  
And give to them a nice bouquet,  
And pass the privates by with none?

Does office make with thee the man?  
True merit oft is seen, you know,  
To lead off foremost in the vain,  
Tho humbly dressed-oft void of show.<sup>26</sup>

Young's Texans were heavily engaged around Atlanta during the summer of 1864. Young was wounded again at Kennesaw Mountain, injuring his neck and jaw. He stayed with the regiment and was promoted to Brigadier General after General Matthew Ector lost his leg on July 27. Young was officially promoted on August 15, making him one of the youngest generals in the Confederate Army.

The confirmation process for promotion involved letters of recommendation from as many officers as possible, and many came out in support of Young. Ector called him "certainly one of the best officers in the service... A man of marked character and decided ability, of sound judgement... whose

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<sup>26</sup> Street, J.K. *Street Civil War Letters*, May 24, 1863.

promotion is a just tribute to his ability and distinguished service.” General Patton Anderson said that he displayed “those marks of a leader that entitle him to higher command.” Major General William H.T. Walker claimed that he usually did not go to such lengths praising candidates for promotion to general, but that Young deserved it. He went on to commend Young for his gallantry, discipline, and skill. Recommendations poured in from fellow colonels and former commanders. They all praised Young’s courage, his gallantry, and other qualities. But none said it better than General Alfred Vaughan, who wrote that Young was:

ever conspicuous for his great gallantry, his skill as an officer, and his undeviating attention to the various details so essential to the perfection of the skill and discipline of his command. It was my privilege to have commanded him at the Battle of Murfreesboro and there I saw displayed on the field those sterling qualities of a good leader which I had always expected from my knowledge of him... It was my decided conviction that there is no Colonel in the service more worthy of promotion. Certainly none who can carry with it more of a great fitness and superior qualifications for an increased command<sup>27</sup>

Young was not praised by just his commanders; the men who served under him had very high opinions of him as well. Many disliked the strict discipline he enforced, but they admired him anyway. William E. Whitsett would remember him forty years later as, “a tyrant in camps, on the battlefield in the thickest and hottest all the time and as brave and true as the good Lord makes a man.”<sup>28</sup> Charles Douglas called him “our noble

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<sup>27</sup> Confederate States Army, Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865, National Archives. Washington, D.C., William Hugh Young.

<sup>28</sup> William E. Whitsett, Letter from William Whitsett to His Brother, July 13, 1900, <http://gen.lstarnet.com/civilwar/whitsett.htm>, 1999.

Colonel.”<sup>29</sup> J.K. Street wrote his wife after Murfreesboro that, “too much cannot be said of the bravery of Col Young – he three times bore the colors up to the enemies lines.”<sup>30</sup>

William Young did not serve as General for long. After the fall of Atlanta, General John Bell Hood (Johnston’s successor) decided to take the Army of Tennessee on the offensive. Young and the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas were sent with the rest of General Samuel French’s Division to attack the railroad lines at Allatoona. W.F. McLanahan of the 10<sup>th</sup> Texas remembered General Young once again leading from the front. Allatoona was a bloody battle, and, “in that desperate charge his horse was soon shot from under him, but he continued leading his men until wounded himself.”<sup>31</sup> William Young was seriously wounded in the leg, and in the retreat his ambulance was cut off by Union reinforcements. General Young was captured and taken to General Sherman’s headquarters where he was interviewed by the Sherman himself. Young then languished for several days without medical treatment until finally being taken to a hospital. His leg wound had become gangrenous and quite possibly could have killed him had he not been treated by an intelligent doctor who knew of a radical new treatment. Young was strapped to a stretcher and pure nitric acid was poured into his wound “which crackled until the smoke reached the ceiling.” The acid ate away at the rotten flesh while Young screamed in agony. The treatment worked, and not only did Young live, he also kept the leg. His son wrote later of seeing a large depression in his leg where the acid had eaten

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<sup>29</sup> Charles B. Douglas, *Douglas Family Journals*, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 44.

<sup>30</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, January 3, 1863.

<sup>31</sup> W.F. McLanahan, “Gen. W. H. Young,” *Confederate Veteran*, 10 (January 1902), 31.

the tissue.<sup>32</sup> He was finally released from Johnson's Island Prison in Illinois, on July 25, 1865.<sup>33</sup>

William Young's slave, Lee, had stayed with him for his entire service. His primary responsibility was to take care of Young's horse. When he was wounded at Allatoona, Lee took care of him and even followed him to the prison camp. The Union soldiers would not let him stay in the camp, and so he lived nearby, bringing food and other aid to his master. When Young was moved suddenly, Lee was left behind. Distraught, Young tried to reach Lee but was unable to find him. They met again several years later in Atlanta, where Young had left Lee, who waited for his return. Lee had even saved Young's sword and returned it at their reunion. The devotion shown by Lee, who, since Young's capture had had every opportunity to escape the oppression of slavery, shows what kind of a man Young was.<sup>34</sup>

William Young survived to return to his family and lived a long, successful life in San Antonio. When he died on November 28, 1901, nature finally accomplished what a dozen wounds could not. His obituary in the *Confederate Veteran Magazine* was written by W.F. McClanahan, who served not in Young's 9<sup>th</sup> infantry, but in the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, which fought alongside the 9<sup>th</sup> through most of the war and was in the brigade briefly commanded by Young. He described Young as a "quiet, unassuming gentleman, and as a commander a strict disciplinarian, but was lenient and kind to his men who bore

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<sup>32</sup> Young, "Two Texas Patriots," 24-25.

<sup>33</sup> David V. Stroud, *Ector's Brigade and the Army of Tennessee: 1862-1865* (Longview: Ranger Publishing, 2004), 222.

<sup>34</sup> Young, "Two Texas Patriots," 26.

the record of good soldiers... No braver officer ever lived than Gen. William H. Young.”<sup>35</sup>

While the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas served under a number of brigade commanders during the war, they are most closely associated with General Matthew Ector. They joined his Texas Brigade in spring 1863 and served there for the rest of the war. Not only were they finally given a chance to serve alongside fellow Texans, but they also were led by a superb General.

Matthew Duncan Ector was born in Georgia in 1822. He graduated from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, and returned to Georgia to study law. After the death of his first wife, he moved to California but soon settled in Henderson, Texas, where he remarried and resumed his law practice. When the Civil War broke out he enlisted as a private in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Texas Cavalry. He rose quickly through the ranks and in May 1862, was in command of the 14<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry. Five months later, in October, he was promoted to General and given command of the Brigade. His meteoric rise through the ranks came as a result of his natural leadership abilities. As a regimental commander, he led his men in the critical attack that broke the Union lines at Richmond, Kentucky, in August 1862, resulting in one of the most complete victories of the war. He, along with several other officers, were praised by his Brigade commander, Colonel Thomas H. McCray, who wrote that they “particularly distinguished themselves being in the front of battle and cheering their men during the entire engagement.”<sup>36</sup> Promoted to General soon after the battle, he continued to lead from the front and distinguish himself as a combat

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<sup>35</sup> McClanahan, “Gen. W. H. Young,” 31.

<sup>36</sup> Ralph A. Wooster, *Lone Star Generals in Gray*, (Austin: Eakin Press, 2000), 177-178.

leader. Like the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas, one of General Ector's greatest moments was at Murfreesboro (Stones River). On December 31, 1862, on another part of the battlefield, Ector was the first to attack and led his Brigade against the Union right that turned their flank and drove them back over two miles. His brigade lost a third of its men in casualties, but they were successful. Ector was commended for his "cool and dauntless courage, as well as skill, in handling [his] command."<sup>37</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas joined Ector's command shortly after Murfreesboro, and he subsequently led them through a number of battles. The men of the regiment would even come to identify themselves as much through Ector's Brigade as through the regiment and Colonel Young. While serving in the other brigades, the men saw other regiments in their brigade frequently fall back, leaving the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas to attack alone as had happened at both Shiloh and Murfreesboro. In their letters they mention only the regiment. After joining Ector, they had comrades who would not only stand beside them, but also charge with them through withering fire. The 9<sup>th</sup> would longer split off on their own, but remained with the rest of the brigade. The letters written by the men support this idea of a larger unit. They write of the actions of Ector's Brigade as a whole. The men were even identified by other soldiers not by their regiment, but by their brigade. In 1863, all of the soldiers in the brigade were nicknamed "Chubs" regardless of regiment.<sup>38</sup> The men were proud of the brigade as a whole, not just a part of it. Colonel Ryland Todhunter, in his brief history of Ector's Brigade in *Confederate Veteran Magazine*

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>38</sup> J.G. McCown, "About Ector's and McNair's Brigades," *Confederate Veteran*, 9 (March 1901), p. 113.

described the Texans as “one of the best brigades in the Confederacy.” He went on to write that he, “deemed it a duty while esteeming it a privilege to say that we never met a foe in open field whom we did not drive, nor did we ever meet a foe who could drive us.”<sup>39</sup>

Ector was seriously wounded on July 27, 1864, during the Atlanta Campaign. He was in a redoubt, inspecting the forward defenses when a shell exploded, shrapnel hitting him above his left knee. He was evacuated, and after his left leg was amputated, he was sent back to Texas to recover. While at home, despite his recent injury, he was nominated for promotion to Major General. He had the support of at least five Texas members of the Confederate Congress who wrote a letter of recommendation to President Jefferson Davis. Major General Edward C. Walthall also sent a letter of recommendation to praise his “gallantry and efficiency as an officer, his long and faithful service, his zealous discharge of duty, and his unselfish devotion to the interests of the cause and country.”<sup>40</sup> Colonel Young also honored Ector in his official report after Ector’s wounding:

Before proceeding I must be permitted to pay tribute to the gallantry and sterling worth of General Ector. During most of the campaign, having but a single staff officer, he had borne upon his own shoulders to an unusual degree the burden of the management of his brigade. Yet, though often feeble, by his patriotic zeal, his tireless energy, his undaunted bravery, he was enabled to perform every task imposed with promptness, and to conduct his brigade through every contest and trial with great credit and honor.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ryland Todhunter, “Ector’s Texas Brigade,” *Confederate Veteran*, 7 (July 1899), p. 312.

<sup>40</sup> Confederate States Army, Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Matthew Duncan Ector

<sup>41</sup> OR, XXXVIII, no. 703, p. 910.



The promotion to Major General never happened; he was scheduled to return to his brigade, but the war ended before he left Texas. After the war, he settled in East Texas with his third wife, Sallie, and returned to his law practice. He was several times elected to be a judge and served until his death in 1879 in Tyler, Texas.<sup>42</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was also fortunate to have good officers at lower levels. Men like Lieutenant Colonel Miles A. Dillard formed the backbone of the regiment. Dillard, born in 1819 near Jackson, Tennessee, first joined the army during the Mexican American War and saw seventeen months of combat in Mexico. He was one of the few men in the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas who had seen combat or knew anything about military life. Because of his experience, he was elected the first Captain of Company K. At the reorganization he was promoted to Major. As one of the oldest men in the regiment and the one with the most military experience, he was instrumental in shaping the volunteers into a disciplined military unit.

Dillard was a brave and effective combat leader. Like Young, at Murfreesboro he had his horse shot out from under him, and although he was not wounded, a musket ball passed through his beard. Despite these close calls, he was next to Colonel Young when he took the colors and made his charge into the Union line. In his official report after the battle, Young commended Dillard for being “conspicuous for the zeal, energy, and bravery he displayed during the whole day.”<sup>43</sup> He was later named to the Confederate Roll of Honor for his actions.

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<sup>42</sup> Wooster, *Lone Star Generals in Gray*, 180

<sup>43</sup> OR, XX, no. 216, p. 750.

Dillard also cared about the men, and despite being twenty years older than most, and an authority figure, he always made time for them. He took time out on the firing line outside Corinth to talk with J.K. Street, who wrote that he “was sitting down at the time conversing with Col Dillard and a stray ball struck a man just in front of me.”<sup>44</sup> Street referred to Dillard affectionately several times in his letters. In the winter of 1863-1864, Dillard requested and received a three-month furlough to return to Texas and recover from a disease from which he had suffered for more than a year. Though sick, he delivered mail for the regiment, carrying it through hundreds of miles of enemy held territory. The time at home did not completely cure him, but he returned anyway, bringing mail from home to his men. Dillard was with the regiment in the Atlanta campaign, but because he had to go to a hospital in July when his illness grew worse, he missed the fall of Atlanta and the Battle of Allatoona. He rejoined the men just before the end of the war.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas benefited from good service and leadership at all levels. Lieutenants like Jesse Bates of Company G performed admirably throughout the war. He enlisted October 8, 1861. To do his duty for the South, he left a wife and two small children behind. He was willing to go to war, “praying for the success of our arms and the preservation of our lives until our country is free and we return to home sweet home.”<sup>45</sup> His thoughts were never far from home, and he several times admitted that he valued his wife’s “letters more than money. The words in them are so dear.”<sup>46</sup> Though

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<sup>44</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, June 6, 1862.

<sup>45</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, May 2, 1862.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, May 11, 1862.

he was homesick and did not really want to be in the army, even attempting to resign in the summer of 1862,<sup>47</sup> he was always thinking of his men. Like all officers, Lieutenant Bates carried mail for the men when he went home on furlough. He was also willing to give what little money he received in pay to the men. He wrote his wife during the siege of Atlanta, to inform her that he “had not had any money for some time. I drew [sic] one month’s pay since I left home and I loaned the most of it to the boys of the company.”

He shared his money with the men because officers were paid far more frequently than the men. While Bates had received some of the back pay he was owed, the men “had not drawn any for more than nine months.”<sup>48</sup> With the supply problems the Confederacy was experiencing, soldiers had to purchase a number of items on their own, and the officers were there to help. Other officers in the regiment also provided for their men. Such as Lieutenant James H. Jenkins, who left for Texas on furlough but returned a couple of days later with a wagon load of potatoes.<sup>49</sup>

Officers also helped to furnish clothing for their men. While retreating from Kentucky in late 1862, the Texans were in bad shape. General Maxey rode ahead to Knoxville and found tents, clothes, and a blanket for each man.<sup>50</sup> Another time Lieutenant William Beavers and another man were sent back to Texas for more clothing. Officers would sometimes pay for these clothes out of their own pockets. Aron Wilburn

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., July 4, 1862.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., August 7, 1864.

<sup>49</sup> Charles B. Douglas, *Douglas Family Journals*, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 22.

<sup>50</sup> Mamie Yearly, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1986), 187.

remembered, even forty years later, how, “Lt. B.M. Orton of our company went round over the country and bought all the goods he could find. Some of the people cut it out of the looms and sold it to him.” The officers had been paid when the army returned from Kentucky, but once again, there was not enough money for the men as well. Wilburn went on to praise Orton, saying, “a better man never lived, at least when it came to dividing with his comrades, and today he would give the last cent he had to relieve an old confederate soldier.”<sup>51</sup>

All the men were full of praise for their favorite officers. William Whitsett remembered Captain John G. Lane, the regiment’s one casualty at Perryville, as “one of the Lord’s true, best and noblest specimens of humanity, brave and generous and humane to a fault. It made all heartsore to see him fall.”<sup>52</sup> King, who barely mentioned Young in his memoir, described Lieutenant E.B. Parham as a “fine officer, and an elegant gentleman, and as brave a man as ever wore the gray. He was shot dead by my side at Murfreesboro.”<sup>53</sup> The officers in the regiment served alongside the men until the last shot, and while they enjoyed certain privileges like more furloughs, better and more reliable pay, and sometimes better food, they faced the same dangers. They led from the front and suffered casualties at the same rate as their men.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry had outstanding officers to see them through the war. Two of their commanders became generals and were promoted out of the regiment, but most stayed with the 9<sup>th</sup>. They trained their men, creating a potent fighting force out of a

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 793.

<sup>52</sup> William E. Whitsett, Letter from William Whitsett to His Brother, July 13, 1900, <http://gen.1starnet.com/civilwar/whitsett.htm>, 1999.

<sup>53</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 42.

bunch of undisciplined volunteers. They led the men courageously in battle and did what they could to take care of them. They would need superb leadership in the coming campaigns; 1864 and 1865 would see the 9<sup>th</sup> in some of the most desperate battles of the war.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Bitter End

In February 1864, General Leonidas Polk's Corps held a grand review at Demopolis, Alabama. Most of the regiments in the various brigades had new uniforms and flags, but Matthew Ector's Texans did not. A woman commented about the tattered appearance and wondered why anyone would follow that flag. Captain Thomas H. Skidmore, the regiment's quartermaster, overheard the woman's comment and retorted, "that wherever the beautiful colors that had gone before could tell the same tale of blood and carnage and all that goes to prove the noble and daring of its' followers. Then will these followers be more proud of them than today." As the Texans passed General Polk they gave a Texan Rebel Yell, and General Polk raised his hat into the air and yelled just as loud in return. Skidmore again turned to the woman and said, "General Polk has not treated any other banner with a tenth of respect that he has given that 'old tattered rag.'"<sup>1</sup>

The soldiers of the 9<sup>th</sup> had every right to be proud of their flag. It was not only the symbol of their cause, but it also bore testimony to the many hard fought battles the soldiers endured. A few months later they invited some of the local ladies out to the camp to see the flag "as it had been pierced several times by bullets."<sup>2</sup> The holes in the flag were battle scars that testified to the valor of the men as well as their determination

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Skidmore Kuras, "Thomas Henry Skidmore: The Story of a Texas Pioneer with Tales of Early Times in Lamar County and History of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry," <http://gen.1starnet.com/civilwar/skidletr.htm>, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 57.

to continue. In March, after the drill competition, Colonel Young led the regiment out to a field where he gave a stirring speech. The men then unanimously passed a resolution which read:

Whereas the U.S. are waging a cruel and diabolical war for our subjugation. Resolved 1<sup>st</sup>. That we, the officers and men of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, pledge our energies, our lives, and sacred honor, to the service of the Confederate States, till this war is ended and our independence achieved. Resolved 2<sup>nd</sup>. That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the Mississippian and another to Abe Lincoln in defiance of his threats of subjugation.<sup>3</sup>

This was of course a symbolic gesture, but it verified their determination. A month later every man in the regiment re-enlisted for the duration of the war, however long that may take. They no longer had any hope of going home early when their term was done. Now their duty was to see the war to its end, win or lose. They were eager to leave for the front. They had been in winter camps in Mississippi for eight months, the most time they had spent between battles since the start of the war. As early as November 1863, Charles Douglas had expressed excitement at the prospect of a long campaign. Again, outside of Jackson, Mississippi, in February, they had answered a cannon shot with a cheer, and now as they marched to their third year of war, they knew more than ever what they were fighting to accomplish. It was no longer about excitement or a simple fear of not being thought a coward. They were fighting to protect their homes and families from the invaders. Stories about the cruelty of the Union soldiers abounded.

A tragical scene was enacted just over the river a few days since between some yankee soldiers and a citizen. Five yankee soldiers went to his house and attempted to force his wife and cousin (her husband being in the southern army) when he drew his knife and went to work on them. He killed one of them dead on the spot. The other four fell to work on him and came near killing him. Beat

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 43-45.

him up most shamefully. He, his wife and cousin were sent across the lines to our pickets and he has for several days past been under the treatment of our surgeon. He was some better this morning and was sent to a private house. I think perhaps he will get well. I hope so. And this is the treatment that we are to receive from the hands of the ruthless invaders of our country. They seek to destroy our property and desecrate our homes and urged on by their beastly passions to insult the fair and virtuous daughters of the south. The question arises will we the husband the father the brother tamely submit to these wrongs and be on our backs until the enemy shall have bound us hand and foot? Will we be free men or will we be slaves to a Northern despotism. Rather let the stain wiped away with blood and sooner than be unslaved let us make first southern soil the grave of freemen and never let it become the soil of abolitionists.<sup>4</sup>

Andrew Fogle complained about getting only beef and cornbread to eat, but in the next line of his letter stated that, "I reckon when the Yankees get to northern Texas that you all will be glad to get beef and bread."<sup>5</sup> His "Miss Loo" had earlier expressed her fear of getting shot by Yankees if she left her house. Jesse Bates went further in describing what would happen if the enemy invaded. "There is thousands of women and children that the Yankees have stripped of everything in the world and insulted and abused in the most outrageous and in [page torn] manner."<sup>6</sup> Fogle, while expressing doubts that the war could be won, vowed in his last letter home before the end of the war, to fight on. He would die before allowing his home to be subjugated.<sup>7</sup>

The tattered regimental flag also represented the suffering the Texans had gone through since the start of the war. They had lost hundreds to disease in the first few

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<sup>4</sup> John Kennedy Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters: 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry*, Transcribed by Julie Williams Coley (Wichita Falls, Texas: wehaveneatstuff.com, 2003), August 22, 1862

<sup>5</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, October 18, 1863.

<sup>6</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, November 28, 1862.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, March 12, 1865.



months. Since then they had dealt with all manner of problems from bad food to twenty mile night marches and inadequate clothing and shelter. They had shivered at night sleeping on the open ground and had almost drowned in torrential rains. The entry for March 1, 1864, in the Douglas diary reads: "Today has been cold and rainy. We have only one blanket a piece, and no tents. None can describe the sufferings of a soldier, but he who has tried it."<sup>8</sup> Despite Douglas' sentiments, the men tried to make their families back home understand what they were going through. Lieutenant Bates admitted to his wife and children during the Atlanta Campaign, "We are all living very hard and dirty. I washed today for the first time since we left Alabama."<sup>9</sup> Andrew Fogle wrote Minnie that, "we all have suffered a great deal and there has been a many good man that has lost his life for our independence."<sup>10</sup>

One of the biggest complaints was about the food. The usual rations were beef or bacon with cornbread and sometimes parched corn. They had variety whenever they could find it, usually by paying local farmers out of their own pockets. The Confederacy was always able to feed her troops but never with as much nor as well as the soldiers hoped for, so there was never "enough to satisfy our appetites, although there is no danger" of starving.<sup>11</sup> Sometimes though, the food they were issued was inedible, as

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<sup>8</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 38.

<sup>9</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, June 23, 1864.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, March 7, 1864.

<sup>11</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, August 7, 1864.

Charles Douglas wrote in January 1864: “C.S. issued us some [illegible] but the boys would not have them.”<sup>12</sup> What exactly was issued is illegible.

Some of the worst times that they had come during the invasion of Kentucky in late 1862. The men were short of everything. Fogle wrote that, “we are seeing very hard times now. We don’t draw more than half rations to eat and every thing that we buy we have to pay double price for it.”<sup>13</sup>

The retreat from Kentucky was even worse. The men had almost nothing to protect them from the harsh weather, as described by Lieutenant Colonel Dillard: “It was snowing and we had but one tent and that was occupied by the medical department. We had been without shoes, coats, hats and I do not suppose that we had more than a dozen blankets in the regiment.”<sup>14</sup> The men were resupplied when they reached Knoxville, Tennessee, but the supply situation was never good. From the beginning they had been forced to fend for themselves. When the regiment was created, everything from uniforms to equipment was in short supply. Many of the men had even supplied their own guns. Charles Dyer was one of those men. The War Department had reimbursed him for the use of his gun, appraised at twenty-seven dollars, but the fact remains that he was forced to bring it from home.<sup>15</sup> They had exchanged their personal weapons for old Springfield muskets while at Iuka, Mississippi, so at least they went into battle with military

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<sup>12</sup> Charles B. Douglas, *Douglas Family Journals*, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 26.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, *Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935*, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, August 28, 1862.

<sup>14</sup> Mamie Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1986), 187.

<sup>15</sup> Charles S. Dyer, Letter to M.A. Dyer, January 26, 1862, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas.

weapons. But the old muskets were obsolete, and some men picked up better rifles from dead Yankees at Shiloh. J.K. Street was able to find a nice Belgian rifle the second day of the battle.<sup>16</sup> They traded up again after Perryville, exchanging their smoothbore muskets for modern Springfield and Enfield rifles that had been captured.<sup>17</sup> It took over a year of service before the regiment was outfitted with modern weapons.

The Texans seemed to be always short of everything. J.K. Street left Texas with no haversack, receiving one in the mail from his wife. Before then he had carried his “dinner in Bill Neilsons haversack.”<sup>18</sup> They would be deprived for the rest of the war. Items like clothes and shoes wore out faster than they could be replaced. Jesse Bates was traveling back to the regiment after a furlough and had to, “walk with the quarter of my shoe under my foot and if it gets very muddy it will be bad walking.”<sup>19</sup> He walked all the way from Texas to Alabama.

Homesickness continually compounded the men’s suffering. Problems with homesickness were common as most of the men in the regiment had never travelled far from their families. Despite the constant drill and camaraderie of the men, they were left with a lot of time with nothing to do, and their thoughts always returned to home. All the men were homesick and wished for nothing more than to hear from their loved ones.

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<sup>16</sup> John Kennedy Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters: 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry*, Transcribed by Julie Williams Coley (Wichita Falls: wehaveneatstuff.com, 2003), April 12, 1862.

<sup>17</sup> William E. Whitsett, Letter from William Whitsett to His Brother, July 13, 1900, <http://gen.lstarnet.com/civilwar/whitsett.htm>, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, January 30, 1862.

<sup>19</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, March 21, 1864, April 6, 1864.

They poured over letters from home bearing news and spent hours thinking about happier times.

Jesse Bates confided to his wife that he valued her letters “more than money. The words in them are so dear.”<sup>20</sup> He even admitted to crying every time he read one of her letters. J.K. Street had been married for only a few months when he enlisted, and despite their short time together, his wife was pregnant when he marched off to war. In October 1862, he still had not heard news from home about the new baby. “I have no way of knowing. Have I a little boy or girl at home is it well?” He received news a few weeks later:

It informs me that I have a sweet little girl at home! God bless its pure spirit. Love let us dedicate it to God. Try my dear to train it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. May God’s richest blessings attend her thro’ life and may she ever be found in the path of virtue. May she when young learn to cherish and practice the principles of Christianity and when she is old may she not depart from them. God grant she may grow an ornament to society and an honor to her parents. And if perchance I should fall in the defense of my country tell my sweet babe that a fathers blessings rest upon her. Keep my letters and when she is old enough give them to her and tell her tho’ I have no legacy to give her I can leave her a father’s love and can give her an honest name and that with a mothers training such as I know she will have, advice that will always be for her good – she will never disgrace it. Call her Lizzie K – O how I wish I could see my sweet little babe. God bless my little darling, kiss her love, for me.<sup>21</sup>

Street had been gone for the entire pregnancy and of course had not seen his child. He knew that he might never see her, and despite his obvious joy at being a father, he deeply regretted that the letter might be the only way his daughter would ever know him.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., May 11, 1862.

<sup>21</sup> Street, *J.K. Street Civil War Letters*, October 29, 1862.

Street typified many in the regiment who worried about their families at home. Andrew Fogle, who had sent dozens of letters home to the girl he loved, wrote in late 1863 that “life is very uncertain and death is sure and Miss Loo, if you should meet with a good chance to marry you might do well to not let it slip. For you are left alone.”<sup>22</sup> He loved her more than anything and missed her terribly, but he knew there was a good chance he would die far from home and he did not want her to wait for someone who might never come home. He was willing to give her up so she could be happy.

Sometimes the barriers preventing men from showing emotion broke down and they were able to support each other, like when Charles Douglas and John Logsdon “took a long walk into the forrest, seated ourselves on an old log and talked of the lazy days that we had spent in the west.”<sup>23</sup> Homesickness naturally grew worse around Christmas, and Douglas lamented on Christmas Eve, 1863 that there was “no kind mother near to great me with her smile, no loved sister near to make our hears full of gladness, no fond father’s or brother’s voice I hear as in days of yore.” And the next day wrote, “lass [sic] night did not seem to me that today would be Christmas. I heard no sweet children’s voices. I saw no preparations being made for Christmas. I have no [illegible] to drink. I hear no fire or acorn popping.” Even on Christmas, the men could not escape the war, as Douglas heard several cannon in the distance.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, October 18, 1863.

<sup>23</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 40-41.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

Another effect of being far away from home during wartime was increased fear that the Union would successfully invade Texas. Fogle wrote of the worry this caused the men. He said that “the boys have become very much dissatisfied on this side of the river since they have heard that the yankees was getting so near Texas.” He mentioned that this fear caused two more from his company to desert and go home.<sup>25</sup> They were caught and placed under guard, but their case was far from unique.

As the war progressed, more and more men took “French Furloughs” by deserting their units. Desertion became a serious problem after 1863. Some left to try to defend their own homes. Others, tired of the terrible conditions and losing faith in the cause, simply gave up. Soldiers had been growing dissatisfied ever since the Conscription Act in the spring of 1862. J.H. King observed after the war that the draft law “did more to dampen the ardor of the patriotic freedom and independence of men, than all else during the war.”<sup>26</sup> Desertion picked up and became a real problem as the South began to lose and independence seemed hopeless. It was not a question of cowardice; most of the men who left had stood their ground in terrible battles like Shiloh and Murfreesboro and stayed with the army during long retreats.

Deserters were often hunted down and arrested. They were treated harshly and without mercy by the soldiers who remained because they felt that they, and their cause, were being abandoned. The men depended on one another to survive. Charles Douglas describes one day in winter camp when his squad was sent to flush some suspected

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<sup>25</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, November 20, 1863.

<sup>26</sup> John H. King, Memoir, Special Collection, University of Texas Arlington, 43.

deserters out of a cane break. Before they entered the break, “five rounds of cannon shot were fired through the thicket.”<sup>27</sup> They fired before even giving the those inside a chance to surrender. When caught, deserters could be executed, which happened at least twice in the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas. Andrew Fogle described such an event in a letter home on October 18, 1863:

I saw a very bad sight the other day: there was three men shot for desertion. Those men was marched out in to a old field and their coffins was set in a row and each man sat on his coffin and there was twelve men to each one with their guns and took a shot and they all fell dead. It looked worse to me then to see thousands shot on the battlefield.<sup>28</sup>

A few months later, in March, this scene was repeated, but at the last minute two of the condemned were given reprieves. The unfortunate man who was not had been found with the enemy. His desertion had become treason.<sup>29</sup>

Desertion hampered he 9<sup>th</sup>, but not enough to have a pronounced impact on the unit. Most of the soldiers talked about going home, but for most, it was just talk. The men stayed because their honor would not let them leave their comrades, and their sense of duty would not let them abandon their country. One side effect of desertion was that the men who remained were the most committed, and so the regiment as a whole become more dedicated. Late in the war, Fogle wrote that he was in it for the war or for his life.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Charles B. Douglas, Douglas Family Journals, Copy in Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 53.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, October 18, 1863.

<sup>29</sup> Dee Hardeman Ridley, Letters, 1862-1865, Copies in the Gee Library Archives, Texas A&M University at Commerce, and from the files of Skipper Steely, Paris, Texas, March 1864.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, March 7, 1864.

The Texans left Demopolis in the spring of 1864 in high spirits. General William Tecumseh Sherman had assumed command of the Union Armies in the West after Grant was promoted and transferred east. Sherman took his new army in an attempt to capture the Heart of the South, Atlanta. The Atlanta Campaign consisted of protracted sieges and fighting retreats. General Joseph E. Johnston, hoping to block Sherman's advance, prepared defensive lines across his path. Sherman, reluctant to charge into the teeth of a prepared defense and repeat the bloodbaths seen earlier in the war, tried to outmaneuver him. Sherman's army outnumbered Johnston's and was able to outflank every one of Johnston's positions. The result was that while Atlanta eventually fell to Sherman in early September 1864, it took four months of constant fighting.

The regiment arrived at Rome, Georgia, on May 17, 1864, where Ector's Brigade was reinforced by the 39<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry. The men saw constant action over the next 110 days. The regiment fought at Cassville, New Hope Church, Latimer House, Kennesaw Mountain, Smyrna, Chattahoochie, Peachtree Creek, Pine Mountain, and many other nameless battlefields. The soldiers on each side had been expecting another pitched battle and were caught off guard by the constant campaigning. This was trench-style warfare few had ever seen. They were under constant fire for four months, and while no one battle was very bloody, casualties mounted. As usual, the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was in the thick of the action.

Lieutenant Jesse Bates was one of those surprised by the new trench warfare. "We have had no regular battle yet, but there has been a great deal of skirmishing and now at this time the cannon is roaring and the shells are screaming and bursting all round



us.”<sup>31</sup> Two months later he was resigned to a long campaign, but he was tired of the daily stress and threat of death. Bates wrote:

The campaign continues and there is no telling where it will end... The firing along the line of skirmishers seldom ceases longer than a few minutes at a time. There is somebody hurt every day by stray balls or an occasional shell.<sup>32</sup>

The constant combat took a heavy toll over time. In trench warfare, death could come at any time, and no one was safe unless he had been evacuated to the hospital.

Bates recorded one such incident: “Hall was killed while eating his supper Saturday evening. He was shot through just above the heart. He was hit in the back.”<sup>33</sup> Andrew

Fogle also wrote his girlfriend about the casualties his company was taking:

We haven’t got but ten more left in our company now and we have to go on picket tomorrow and then we may lose several more. We are never safe here no place. There is more or less that gets killed and wounded every day and knight as the bum shells is flying over.<sup>34</sup>

Sherman’s army was taking casualties from the harsh battle conditions similar to those of Johnston’s army, but his superior numbers meant that he steadily gained the upper hand, and unless something changed, the outcome was inevitable. Despite the Yankees’ slow, steady success, battle conditions were wearing them down as well. Aaron Wilburn later recalled that the Union soldiers did not have much fight in them and

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<sup>31</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, June 23, 1864.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., August 7, 1864.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., August 16, 1864.

<sup>34</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, August 25, 1864.

apparently had to be forced to do their duty. “The Federal Soldiers Seemed to be drunk and were being forced on to victory, but poor fellows, many of them bit the dust.”<sup>35</sup>

President Jefferson Davis became severely disappointed with Johnston’s many retreats and so replaced him with the far more aggressive John Bell Hood just before the siege of Atlanta. Johnston was liked by his troops but Hood, at least, had the favor of the Texans. Lieutenant Bates wrote, “I think the gallant Gen. J.B. Hood will thwart the plans of Mr. Sherman to occupy Atlanta until he will have to abandon the undertaking and call it a failure.”<sup>36</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was involved in the battle for Atlanta on July 22, becoming one of the last units to be evacuated from the city as it fell on September 1, 1864. After the capture of Atlanta, Sherman threatened Macon and other communities to the south, and the 9<sup>th</sup> was sent to intercept him. They fought again at Lovejoy’s Station and Jonesboro. Casualties were heavy as usual. At the end of the campaign, now a General, William Young praised the 9<sup>th</sup> and the rest of the Brigade in his official report:

The officers and men of this brigade have evinced the highest qualities of the soldier, though they have not participated in a pitched battle. Their courage, patience, and endurance have been frequently severely tested. They have never been found wanting in either.<sup>37</sup>

Casualties for the entire campaign numbered sixteen killed, thirty-nine wounded, and one man captured. This record amounts to a third of the men they had left in the regiment. Among the dead was Charles Douglas. Recently promoted to color-

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<sup>35</sup> Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray*, 793.

<sup>36</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, August 7, 1864.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901, XXVIII, no. 703, p. 912.

bearer, he was shot in the chest in his first engagement in the new position. They also lost a couple of their leaders. Colonel Young was wounded in the neck and jaw at Kennesaw Mountain in June. He was back with the regiment a couple of weeks later but on July 27 General Ector lost a leg while fighting in the trenches in Atlanta. Colonel Young was promoted again, and now the former company commander was leading the brigade. Thus the 9<sup>th</sup> lost their greatest leader to promotion. Because Miles Dillard was still sick on furlough, Major James H. McReynolds was promoted to lead the regiment.

After the fall of Atlanta, General Hood decided to invade Tennessee in an attempt to recapture that state and cut off Sherman's massive army in Atlanta from its base of supply in Chattanooga. The first step was to cut the supply lines to the north of Atlanta. Hood sent out raids that destroyed miles of railroad track and eliminated several small garrisons. He then ordered French's division to march on Allatoona, Georgia, destroy the rail-road track and clog the pass with debris, and then move on to destroy the bridge at Eutaw Springs.

Allatoona is a manmade pass cut into the mountain forming a deep, narrow gorge. The Confederates had constructed formidable defenses at the pass, which the Federals had augmented. There were redoubts at the top of each side of the pass with a wooden plank bridge spanning the gap between them. The Yankees had strengthened the western redoubt into a star fort and had also constructed a strong defensive line around the mountain with two rings of trenches and abatis; the star fort was the strongest position and was intended as a final fallback position. Lieutenant Colonel John E. Tourtelotte's garrison of fewer than 1,000 men was also armed with repeating rifles they had

purchased on their own. The rifles gave them a rate of fire many times that of the single-shot rifles the Confederates were using.

The Union had also established a supply depot at Allatoona that included many thousands of rations of hardtack and 9,000 head of cattle. Hood's starving Confederates desperately needed these rations. Sherman recognized the importance of Allatoona Pass and sent General John M. Corse's Brigade to reinforce the garrison. Corse arrived at 1:00 a.m. on October 5, 1864, and took command. Total Union forces now numbered a little more than two thousand men. Corse got there just in time. Confederate General Samuel G. French arrived with his division two hours later.

As soon as French arrived, Corse began frantically sending messages to Sherman asking for reinforcements because he was outnumbered nearly three to two. At 8:30 a.m. French's adjutant approached the fort under a flag of truce and demanded their surrender to prevent "a needless effusion of blood." Corse replied that, "we are ready for the 'needless effusion of blood' whenever it is agreeable to you."<sup>38</sup> The Union defenders had every advantage of terrain, fortifications, and superior weaponry. The Confederates were forced to attack uphill, across open ground, and with inferior, muzzle loading, single shot rifles. Their attack should have been doomed from the start. But the Southerners were all battle hardened veterans who were still enthusiastic for a fight. Their courage and skill would make up for any disadvantages they faced.

The assault began at 10:30 a.m. when French ordered Sears' Brigade to attack from the north, but Sears was delayed. In frustration, French ordered Cockrell's and

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<sup>38</sup> David Evans, "Hold the Fort," *Military History Magazine Presents Great Battles*, vol. 5, no. 6 (September, 1992), 29.

Ector's Brigades to move in from the west. Heavy fire halted the initial Confederate advance, and a second attack was launched on the Federal left, centering on the point where the outside wall of the fort crossed the Alabama Road. Cockrell's men were in front leading the charge. Fierce hand-to-hand combat marked the battle for Rowett's Redoubt, which Union soldiers later named for an injured officer. As the Confederates overran the enemy's first line of defense, Sears finally began his attack up the north side of the mountain.

The first assault had been costly, but more were to come. The 9<sup>th</sup> moved in front with the rest of Ector's Brigade to attack the second line. The men rushed ahead with their guns loaded but held their fire until they stormed the breastworks and fired down into the faces of the enemy. Using their rifles as clubs, they then dived into the survivors. The fighting was vicious, the men using whatever they could to batter each other. They were even using rocks. A half hour later the surviving Yankees retreated into the star fort and eastern redoubt.<sup>39</sup>

The Southerners paused to rest after the heavy fighting and to replenish their ammunition. French then attacked the star fort four times over two hours but was repulsed each time. He was preparing a fifth assault when he received information that Sherman had sent a large force to reinforce Corse. French did not want to get trapped inside the fort by a much larger Union force, and so he cancelled the fifth attack and retreated to Hood's army.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray*, 446-447.

<sup>40</sup> Ryland Todhunter, "Ector's Texas Brigade at the Battle of Allatoona," *Confederate Veteran*, 26 (August 1918), 340-341.

Allatoona was a very costly battle. There were only 1,500 total casualties but there were a mere 5,000 men involved, making it the battle with the highest casualty rate in the entire war. Casualty totals were split evenly between the Union and Confederates, with each side suffering between 700 and 800 killed, wounded, and missing. Despite the overwhelming advantages held by the Union, the Texans still matched the Yankees, blow for blow. General Corse was shot in the face about 1:00 p.m., but stayed in command of what was left of the Union Garrison, replying to Sherman's query, "I am short a cheek-bone and an ear, but am able to whip all hell yet! My losses are very heavy."<sup>41</sup> General Young, former commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas, was severely wounded for the last time. His ambulance was captured, and, after meeting with General Sherman, was sent to a POW camp in Ohio. Of the 101 men of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas who began the battle, forty-three were killed or wounded and two were missing. One of those killed was Thomas Wellington Blair. He was twenty-three years old when he was killed and had been at war for three years and two months.

The brigade was now under the command of Colonel Julius Andrews from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Texas Cavalry, but it was nearly finished as a fighting force. The men could not replace any of their losses and were running low on food and ammunition. Their clothes were in tatters and many were barefoot, but their spirits remained high. They still managed to participate in the disastrous Tennessee campaign under General Hood, though they were fortunate to be guarding pontoon bridges and miss the battle of Franklin in November 1864. Colonel Andrews was wounded on December 4, and Colonel

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<sup>41</sup> William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 147-148.

Coleman of the 39<sup>th</sup> North Carolina took over the brigade. Under Coleman, the Texans fought in the Battle of Nashville on December 15-16, 1864, although there were only 400 men in the entire brigade. Temporarily assigned to Cheatham's Division, they built breastworks on what is now known as Shy's Hill. The hill would be the focal point of the Union assault, but the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade had returned to French's command. The Brigade was in reserve on the 16<sup>th</sup> and so were not involved at the critical moment of the battle when the Confederates were overwhelmed and forced to retreat. The retreat soon became a rout as the Federals pursued the shattered Confederate Army of Tennessee. General Hood ordered the reserves to hold the Yankees back and act as a rear guard. The weakened Brigade of Texans, along with General Daniel H. Reynolds' Arkansas Brigade, rushed forward and managed to halt the onrushing Yankees, but only briefly. They were quickly overwhelmed and nearly surrounded, finally retreating with the army back to the Tennessee River.

Even in defeat the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was praised by commanders for its bravery and conduct under fire. The regiment's delaying action saved the army, allowing it to escape back across the Tennessee River. Even the Union commander, General George Thomas, complimented the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas. In his official report he wrote that the Confederate army had become a disorganized and panicked mob, but that, "the rear guard, however, was undaunted and firm and did its work bravely to the last."<sup>42</sup>

At least nine men were wounded and sixteen captured in the campaign but official totals are unknown because Confederate records from that late in the war are

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<sup>42</sup> James H. M'Neilly, "The Retreat from Tennessee," *Confederate Veteran*, 26 (July 1918), 305-306.

incomplete. Casualties were heavy as the 9<sup>th</sup> was once again involved in heavy fighting, being vastly outnumbered and nearly overwhelmed. The Nashville campaign was the last gasp of the Confederacy, representing the last major offensive to be attempted by a Confederate army.

After the defeats in Tennessee in late 1864, the war now seemed hopeless to many. The Army of Tennessee, the main Confederate army in the West had been nearly destroyed in Hood's campaign. Many of the survivors now believed that the war could not be won. As late as the Atlanta campaign, the men had still expressed hope and a confidence that the war would end favorably. Jesse Bates wrote his wife on August 16, 1864, that the little war news he heard was good. He also believed that, "we will have peace before next spring and maybe before Christmas." Even a month after the fall of Atlanta, Bates wrote that the "army is generally in good spirits and determined to be free or sacrifice their lives trying."<sup>43</sup>

After Tennessee however, the men seem resigned and fatalistic about Confederate chances. Dee Hardeman Ridley wrote in January 1865 that while he would continue to do his duty, he would be more careful than before. He knew the war was winding down, and he had no intention of getting killed. In January, seven men received furloughs. Ridley openly considered the possibility of their deserting, simply wondering if they would return. While he still considered deserters "devoid of that principle of honor which it takes to make a gentleman,"<sup>44</sup> he acknowledged that many were giving up

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<sup>43</sup> Jesse P. Bates, Letters to Susan A. Bates, 1862-1864, Historical Research Center, Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, September 17, 1864.

<sup>44</sup> Dee Hardeman Ridley, Letters, 1862-1865, Copies in the Gee Library Archives, Texas A&M University at Commerce, and from the files of Skipper Steely, Paris, Texas, January 19, 1865.



and even expects that a number of them would not return. Andrew Fogle also expressed fatalism in the Southern cause when he wrote from Spanish Fort, Alabama, where the 9<sup>th</sup> was transferred, that if the Yankees ever tried to take the fort they would succeed. He went on to say that he expected Richmond to fall soon as well. Despite not holding out hope for Confederate victory, he vowed to fight on, though he never was in “favor of secession, never will I be in favor of subjugation.”<sup>45</sup> He also began to doubt that he would live through the coming fight. He asserted that the only hope for victory would be divine intervention.

The Texans who were inclined to give up and desert the army had already done so by the spring of 1865. Those who remained, fewer than a hundred, were going to see the war through to the finish. Some still held out desperate hope, but all put their faith in God and their fellow soldiers: they were surely not going to abandon their comrades. Dee Ridley wrote his sisters that, “my fortunes are cast with as gallant a regiment that ever tread Confederate soil and I have been with it until they all seem as brothers.”<sup>46</sup>

Andrew Fogle had similar feelings about his comrades.

I may be unknown to some but I am known to my comrades in arms. We have been introduced to each other fifty times in line of battle. We went forth in the beginning at the first not of the fife and drum to sustain the name and fame of our country in this struggle for self government while other sons of freedom were called to arms through fatigue and hunger and thirst and cold and heat and sickness and [illegible] and the rage of battle when the death [illegible] fly thick around us and many fell to rise no more but our hearts are fixed as steel

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<sup>45</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, March 12, 1865.

<sup>46</sup> Dee Hardeman Ridley, Letters, 1862-1865, Copies in the Gee Library Archives, Texas A&M University at Commerce, and from the files of Skipper Steely, Paris, Texas, January 19, 1865.

and we risk all and dare all for independence. All this and more we have born with cheerfulness.<sup>47</sup>

The men had bonded through the suffering and hardships they had endured. By the end of the war they had become a close group of friends and knew that they could rely on each other. They had also developed immense pride in their regiment. Though vastly under strength, they resisted efforts near the end of the war to consolidate with other units, preferring to remain the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, no matter how small. This bond would continue long after the war.

In March 1865 the war was still not over for the survivors of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas. French's entire division had only about 1,000 men, but it was ordered south to help defend Mobile, Alabama. They were assigned to the garrison at Spanish Fort. Aaron Wilburn was one of the few men remaining with the regiment. He was put in charge of a group of fourteen year-old boys called out to help defend Mobile.

On April 8, 1865, after two weeks of bombardment by naval ships, Union General E.R.S. Canby attacked the lightly defended forts. Wilburn was on picket duty when the attack came and told the boys to turn and run. One of the boys refused, saying, "I will not leave the rifle pit till you do." Wilburn got one shot off and reloaded for his second before he turned and ran.

With shells and bullets flying thick I struck out for the breastworks and when I had run about forty yards I jumped over the little boy with the top of his head shot off. I have no doubt that his parents never heard from him again or ever saw his corpse. I had to command this boy the second time to go to the breastworks.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Andrew J. Fogle, *Fogle (Andrew J.) Papers, 1862-1935*, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, March 12, 1865.

<sup>48</sup> Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray*, 793-794.

The Confederates were certainly brave, but they knew a hopeless cause when they saw it. Most fired only one or two shots before running to escape the far larger and better equipped Union forces. Some were captured, but as the Union soldiers penetrated the front of the fort, the 9<sup>th</sup> went out the back. They, along with the remnants of Ector's Brigade, escaped and remained a cohesive unit. At least fourteen men from the 9<sup>th</sup> were wounded and eight captured at Spanish Fort.

The remnants of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas and the rest of Ector's Brigade moved north. Organized Confederate resistance had ended by then, and they received no orders. They finally surrendered at Brandon, Mississippi, a month later on May 4, 1865. At the surrender, they were required to turn over their guns and their regimental colors. But the men of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas were proud of their flag and of the sacrifices they had made for it. They refused to surrender their colors, and C.P. Matthews cut it from the flagpole and hid it in his shirt.<sup>49</sup> He made it back to Texas with the flag, and so the men of the 9<sup>th</sup> could always claim that their flag was never captured, not even at the end of the war. The flag still exists today in the Texas Civil War Museum in Fort Worth. Fortunately the men were paroled quickly, gaining release on May 11. What was left of the regiment was consolidated into two companies under the command of Captain Robert M. Board of I Company and Lieutenant James Jenkins. The men were then left to find their way back home and get on with their lives.

At the surrender only eight officers and seventy-nine enlisted men remained out of 1,120 who had served with the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry during the war. In three and a half

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<sup>49</sup> John E. Lozedon, "Flag of the Ninth Texas Infantry," *Confederate Veteran*, 17 (September 1909), 455.

years they had suffered more than 92% casualties. There were other survivors scattered around, but most of these men were missing limbs or still struggling to overcome diseases they had caught in camp.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion

The survivors of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas returned home and were reunited with family and friends, including many of the wounded and sick who had been forced to leave the regiment. J.H. King, who lost an arm at the Battle of Jackson, relished the many happy reunions he had with the men of the regiment when they returned after the war.

The returning soldiers tried to lead normal, happy lives. General Samuel Bell Maxey, the original regimental commander, became a United States Senator. Andrew Fogle returned home and married his “Miss Loo.” J.M. Long and J.H. King both became lawyers and prospered despite their missing limbs. Captain Robert Board settled in McKinney, where he operated a mercantile business for the next sixty years. He died in 1931. J.K. Street, captured while on his way home on furlough, was kept in a prison camp at Vicksburg and survived the war, finally getting a chance to see his daughter. He later became a newspaper publisher in Central Texas, dying in Waco in 1914. The last known survivor of the 9<sup>th</sup> was William H. Wooldridge from Lamar County. He died on New Year’s Day 1936 at the age of 95.

The war record of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas was superb. The experience of the regiment stands as an example of the hard service done by many units throughout the Army of Tennessee. The men of the 9<sup>th</sup> had fought well from Shiloh to Spanish Fort, but they had done so next to other Southern soldiers. What makes their service unique is that, at least in their eyes, they were never defeated. At the battles that history remembers as Southern

defeats, the 9<sup>th</sup> was always in another part of the field. At Shiloh, they were fighting successfully when the retreat began elsewhere. In fact years later, they considered the battle to be a Southern victory. They drove the Yankees on the first day of Murfreesboro (Stones River), but were not involved in General John C. Breckinridge's failed assaults. The Texans supported Vicksburg but did not surrender with the garrison. They fought hard in the victory at Chickamauga, but missed the rout at Missionary Ridge. Even at Nashville, they were a part of the only Confederate success, saving what was left of the Army of Tennessee through their stubborn rear guard defense. The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas did occasionally retreat, but only when faced with overwhelming numbers, such as at Jackson, Mississippi, in July 1863. At Allatoona, Georgia, they did not make their final assault on the star fort because they would have been trapped by a Federal relief force. As Colonel Ryland Todhunter put it: "In some battles a brigade or command on the right or left of ours giving way, it was necessary to move by the flank in retreat. In that event firing of small arms did not cease, nor did the enemy's loss lessen."<sup>1</sup>

The 9<sup>th</sup> Texas fought hard and enjoyed success while the army around it suffered defeat. The men were repeatedly singled out for their courage and prowess. They had joined the Confederate cause for a variety of reasons, from a desire for independence to the necessity of protecting their homes from a ruthless enemy. They also paid a terrible price, suffering 92% casualties, losing hundreds of men to disease and combat. Those who survived formed close and permanent bonds with their comrades through the routines of camp life and the terror of battle. During the war, all they had to depend on

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<sup>1</sup> Ryland Todhunter, "Ector's Texas Brigade," *Confederate Veteran*, 7 (July 1899), p. 312.

was each other, officers and enlisted men together, and they knew that they could continue to depend on one another in peace.

The men who served with the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry carried their experiences with them for the rest of their lives. they would look back with pride on what they had accomplished and always remained thankful that they had survived. Most, like D.F. Daughtrey, were grateful for their experiences. Daughtrey wrote in *The Confederate Veteran Magazine* fifty years later that he was “thankful that I was a member of Company C, 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, and served with that regiment from its organization to its surrender.”<sup>2</sup> At least one, however, was not so happy. A.C. Reynolds had served until the end of the war and had been promoted for his bravery at Murfreesboro. He felt that the war had “cheated him out of four years of his life.”<sup>3</sup> Reynolds, however, was an exception. Nearly all remembered the intense days of their youth and revered the comrades who never came home. Dee Ridley recorded some of his memories in 1892 for a fellow veteran’s newspaper. His words provide an appropriate ending.

I think first of the old 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry, of which I was a member, more than 1,000 strong, the bright eyes and robust forms, the buoyant spirits... But where are the Thompsons, Dicksons, Huffs, Provine, Worthington, Allen Patterson, Baker and hosts of others. Alas, they sleep the last long sleep on the battlefields... But the memory of their brave deeds lives on as bright today in the hearts of their comrades as on the day they fell. What gallant times were those! What excitement! What uneasy brooding before the battle. But when once in it, what exhilaration, what madness! The boom of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the shriek of the bomb, the angry hiss of the minie ball, the shouts of command, the charge, the counter charge, the advance, the retreat - all flash across memory as we live over again the days of the past, and I think of time intervening between the close of the war to this good hour. Our comrades who did their duty so grandly in war have been no laggards or cowards in the every-day battle of life.

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<sup>2</sup> D.F. Daughtrey, “Gratitude of Veterans,” *Confederate Veteran*, 18 (February, 1910), p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Mamie Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray* (Dayton, OH: Morningside, 1986), 637-638.

Everywhere, in all walks, they are found now as then in the forefront. They were not willing to rest on the laurels won in battle, but strove to redeem the country from the results of war. How nobly they have succeeded, let history speak.<sup>4</sup>

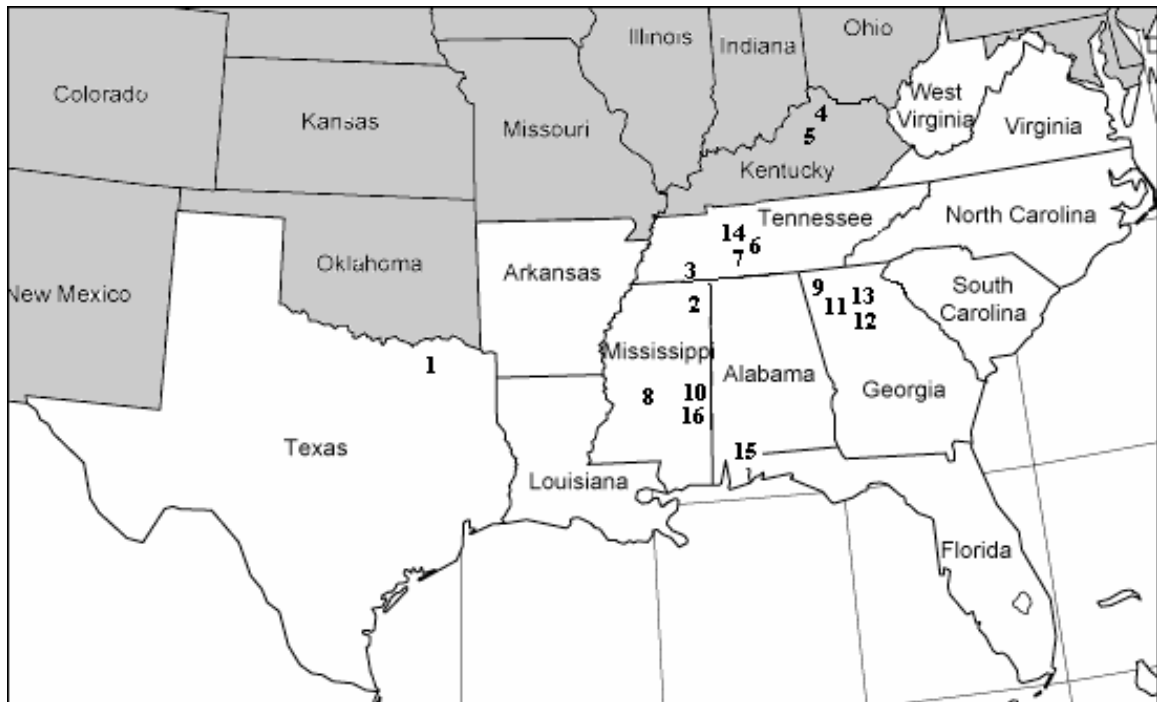
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<sup>4</sup> Diane Skidmore Kuras, "Thomas Henry Skidmore: The Story of a Texas Pioneer with Tales of Early Times in Lamar County and History of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry," <http://gen.1starnet.com/civilwar/skidletr.htm>, 1998.



## APPENDIX

## Service Area of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry



1. Recruitment and training camps.
2. Joined the army in camp at Corinth and Iuka, Mississippi.
3. Battle of Shiloh, April 6-7, 1862.
4. Northernmost advance.
5. Battle of Perryville, October 8, 1862.
6. Battle of Murfreesboro (Stones River), December 31, 1862-January 2, 1863.
7. Winter camp at Shelbyville, Tennessee.
8. Siege of Jackson, July 9-15, 1863.
9. Battle of Chickamauga, September 19-20, 1863.
10. Winter camp near Meridian, Mississippi.

11. Atlanta Campaign, May-August 1864.
12. Siege of Atlanta, August 1864.
13. Battle of Allatoona, October 5, 1864.
14. Battle of Nashville, December 15-16, 1864.
15. Spanish Fort, March-April 1865.
16. Surrender at Brandon, Mississippi, May 4, 1865.

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