

been told, "it would not do to get the new tents dirty." Drunkenness of officers was discussed thoroughly.

The "Irish Sergeant-Major" was also singled out in the same letter for criticism for having disciplined a fatigue detail which had been excused from further duty by the captain; after the captain corrected him, the sergeant-major informed the captain that the men were "brutes" and deserved anything they got.⁶⁷

Loomis came under direct criticism for having given an unauthorized pass to one of the men. When the fellow was stopped and taken to General Reynolds, a charge of forgery was lodged against him. However, for some reason the fortunate trooper happened to secure a discharge before the matter went very far.⁶⁸

"PLAIN TALK" was not quite as critical of Captain Loomis as of the other officers, with the exception again of Lts. Gillam and Van Pelt who were regarded as good officers and were said to be ready to resign unless matters were soon corrected.

The crowning blow, or the most damning accusation, was saved to last when "PLAIN TALK" revealed that an outrage had been committed which called to high heaven for redress. It referred to the "entire consumption by the commissioned officers of dainties sent to the hospital by ladies of Coldwater."⁶⁹

Reaction to letters such as these was not long in coming. The mayor of Coldwater, Robert Chandler, wrote a solid defense of the battery and its leadership,⁷⁰ but, as a later editorial in the Advertiser pointed out, Mr. Chandler was not on the scene when offenses were alleged to have been committed. In addition, his son was Lieutenant Robert G. Chandler, then serving as First Lieutenant in the battery.⁷¹

Meanwhile, additional accusations continued to filter through the mails. Some of them were quite petty, such as the accusation that on the march from Philippi to the railroad, the sick were forced to ride on top of the baggage while the "ladies" occupied the ambulance. Food complaints were most numerous, but a few cases of "abuse" were dredged up from the previous summer which included loss of baggage in Ohio.⁷²

The ruckus prompted interested parties to travel to Kentucky to look into matters. One such traveler wrote a lengthy comment in the Tribune on January 28, 1862, which lauded the battery for its accomplishments, basing most its praise on such things as the responsibilities given it by higher authority, markmanship, camp discipline and cleanliness.⁷³ Two days later another article continued to uphold the battery's reputation and leaned heavily on comments by Generals Reynolds and Mitchel.⁷⁴

The editor of the Detroit Tribune chose to have the last word in the matter, as editors often do. On January 30, 1862, a very long editorial criticized the previous defenses, and generally did so on pretty good grounds. The governor had dispatched a member of his staff to make an investigation, but it consisted of a cordial visit with battery officers and not much more. This report was carefully criticized by the Tribune. Additional private letters were reported to be in the hands of the editor, and they confirmed the essential details reported by "Spencer" and "PLAIN TALK." By this time, however, the Tribune could report that most of the problems had been corrected since the battery arrived in Kentucky and was within the command of General Ormsby M. Mitchel. Speaking of its correspondents, the

Tribune commented: "They all even now speak in high terms of Captain Loomis personally, but contend that he does not control some of the officers under him."⁷⁵

During the latter part of January and early February, 1862, the grumbling correspondents generally began to quiet down. This was probably due to some improvement in living conditions, as reference is made to the issue of Sibley tents and the purchase of stoves designed for these.⁷⁶ At least one of the correspondents went to the guardhouse for a forty day period,⁷⁷ which may have tempered the verbosity of some of the others. The Tribune claimed that General Mitchel had taken an interest in battery affairs and that rations were more plentiful, in spite of Lieutenant Chandler (the commissary officer of the battery) who protested that the men of the battery ate more than other men.⁷⁸

During this same time, Loomis continued to improve the versatility and efficiency of the battery. Training in cavalry tactics, swordsmanship and horsemanship appears to have continued, and the men were fully armed with Sharps carbines in addition to sabres and revolvers.⁷⁹ This should be considered unorthodox and would have been criticized by some of the artillery tacticians of that day.⁸⁰ Most important, however, was the opportunity to engage in extensive live fire artillery practice while in northern Kentucky. Both the Detroit and Cincinnati newspapers described the remarkable accuracy of the battery's ten pounder Parrotts. At a range of three-quarters of a mile (1320 yards), ten out of twelve shots were regularly kept within a five foot circle.⁸¹ In one demonstration a sheet of newspaper was consistently hit at a range of 1000 yards.⁸² Most certainly, credit must be given

to the commanding officer whose men became this proficient. However, some of the credit must also go to General Ormsby M. Mitchel, who no doubt encouraged this kind of practice and would have had to authorize the expenditure of ammunition. Innovation and experimentation occurred under the influence of Mitchel, a native of Cincinnati who was an internationally known scientist, astronomer, successful engineer and railroad executive.⁸³ He designed and built a "Telescopic Pointer," which was tested by the battery and judged to be a success.⁸⁴ At least one mention was made to improvements in the "preparation of shells" which was attributed to Captain Loomis.⁸⁵

Mid-February of 1862 could be called a turning point in the history of the battery. It had been on active duty ten months. During most of that time it had undergone constant training, not only in its own branch specialty, but also in cavalry and, to some minor extent, in infantry tactics. It had observed or participated in several minor battles in western Virginia; in one of these, at Greenbriar, it played a very busy role. Based on the tenor of its published correspondence, the battery as a whole seems to have maintained a genuine enthusiasm for the war, in spite of apparent internal difficulties. For the next eleven months the battery was to have ample opportunity to put all of this to constant use. The 1862 campaign in the Kentucky-Tennessee theatre would prove to be a severe test of the battery's training and leadership.

On February 13, 1862, General O. M. Mitchel's Third Division began a rapid march toward Bowling Green, Kentucky.⁸⁶ Late in the morning of February fourteenth, Mitchel received word that

retreating Confederates were about to destroy the bridges over the Barren River, and he ordered a section of Loomis' Battery (two guns) along with the Fourth Ohio Cavalry to try and take the bridges as quickly as possible.⁸⁷ In the headlong dash to Bowling Green, the battery covered the last four miles in twenty minutes, or maintained a roadspeed of twelve miles per hour,⁸⁸ which was two and one-half times faster than the most rapid marching speed authorized by the drill manuals.⁸⁹

Although the rapid march was too late to secure the bridges, the movements of the Confederates could be seen at the railroad depot from Banker's hill overlooking Bowling Green. Loomis opened fire at a range of almost two miles and with the first few shots succeeded in knocking out one of the Confederate engines.⁹⁰ A harrassing fire was kept up for about one hundred rounds and at least partially blocked the evacuation. As a result, large quantities of military stores were captured the next day when the town was occupied.⁹¹

Following the capture of Bowling Green, a rapid advance was made on Nashville, capturing it without serious resistance. During mid-March, the battery was detailed to participate in armed reconnaissance in the area about Nashville where the men's horsemanship and sense of humor were tested. On March tenth a supply train of twenty-six wagons was captured by the Confederate John H. Morgan with a company of Confederate cavalry. The teamsters were taken prisoners and instructed to cut loose their wagons and mount their teams. Within minutes after Morgan left, General Mitchel happened on the abandoned wagons; he instantly rode into the battery's camp nearby and sent sixty artillerymen

and two companies of the Fourth Ohio Cavalry to pursue Morgan. With some hard riding the force caught up with Morgan and, with a brisk skirmish, re-captured the teamsters and their mounts.⁹² Apparently the artillerymen had been well trained by cavalry-oriented Sergeant Major O'Riordon, as they were able to function as well as troopers of the Fourth Ohio.

A few days later Loomis' men had an even more interesting encounter with Morgan. For a march on Murfreesboro, General Mitchel devised a rapid moving column, consisting of two hundred wagons filled with infantry, plus one gun and twenty-five artillerymen from each battery in the division. Loomis' Battery was called on to act as cavalry, composing a rear guard of seventy-five men under Captain Loomis.⁹³ The force was organized for a night march and had come to a halt after seven miles. Colonel Morgan rode into the column under a flag of truce and was accompanied by General Mitchel, who escorted him to an interview with General Buell, who came out from Nashville. Morgan's party consisted of fifteen well dressed and well mounted rebels, who struck up cheerful conversation. One of them asked Sergeant John M. Hoyt of the battery about the number of Federals between the expedition and Nashville. Without hesitation, Hoyt replied, "We have three hundred and sixty thousand, every man armed with Parrott ten pounders for side-arms."⁹⁴ The Confederate did not ask any more questions.⁹⁵

Other unconventional operations were in store for the battery after the capture of Huntsville, Alabama, on April 11, 1862. As a part of Mitchel's Third Division, the battery continued to get a taste of counter-guerrilla warfare among a hostile

citizenry.⁹⁶ The possibility of being ordered to shell an unarmed population center, such as Huntsville, in order to discourage guerillas, could not have been too pleasant.⁹⁷ Fortunately that threat by Mitchel, if actually made, was only a bluff.

On April twenty-sixth, General Mitchel took a section of Loomis' Battery on a surprise attack designed to secure a large bridge over the Tennessee River at Bridgeport, Alabama. In this case, the Union forces rode trains to within rapid striking distance of the objective. After detraining, the artillery had to be hauled by hand, as no animal transport could be provided.⁹⁸ The overland route was extremely difficult and required a one day's delay while a three hundred foot floating bridge was constructed for the guns from cotton bales.⁹⁹ Although extremely tedious, the route chosen by Mitchel for the attack was so obscure that it succeeded in completely surprising the bridge defenders. The attacking forces were so close that Loomis' Battery opened the fight with cannister.¹⁰⁰ Captain Loomis' two guns succeeded in providing adequate close support for the small scale attack led by General Mitchel which saved the bridge from destruction by retreating Confederates. The battery in turn scattered Confederate reinforcements which blundered into the fight.¹⁰¹ The return trip to Huntsville was made in somewhat better style with the guns, both the Loomis' pieces and two captured iron six pounders, drawn by local oxen teams.¹⁰²

Several testimonials to the sharpshooting ability of the battery and destruction of rebel trains are mentioned in the newspaper account of the Bridgeport expedition, but are not well confirmed through official reports. One account went well out

of its way to point out that the hardships of the march were increased by Lieutenant Rolland Root, who elected to ride on the limber of a gun while his men were pulling it through the mud by hand. The men rebelled at this, and Root was made to get off and walk. Other complaints were leveled at Root for not issuing rations and for cowardice.¹⁰⁴ If much of this was true, the battery's role in the Bridgeport expedition tends to indicate that it contained a good number of capable, energetic and, above all, powerful enlisted men.

Of the many unorthodox functions in which the battery was involved, perhaps the most unusual was its role in the operation of the gunboat "Tennessee." In order to provide some control of the river banks in the vicinity of Huntsville, General Mitchel directed the First Michigan Engineers and Mechanics to build a gunboat.¹⁰⁵ A horse ferry, fifty-two feet long by twelve feet wide, was secured. A stationary engine from a nearby sawmill was modified by adding a homemade reversing gear.¹⁰⁶ At least one gun from Loomis' Battery was assigned to the gunboat as armament, the officer in charge being the newly appointed Lieutenant Callahan H. O'Riordon.¹⁰⁷ The gunboat proved to be an unwieldy thing and was apt to get out of order.¹⁰⁸ The original plans to armor plate it were abandoned due to the weight factor. Instead, the Tennessee, as it was called, was barricaded with cotton bales.¹⁰⁹ When in use, the gunboat would patrol the river. If it drew fire from the shore, it would answer with cannister from the Parrott on board. Although it was in use only a short time, quite a bit of action occurred, and the battery suffered two casualties on board.¹¹⁰ In the long run,

the gunboat was not a practical success since it tended to break down often, and there was a fear that it might drift into rebel hands if it lost power at a critical moment.¹¹¹

The stir of active campaigning seems to have assisted in improving morale by early summer of 1862. Complaints generally stopped, and the membership of the battery seems to have been quite content, at least with its commander. On June fourth, an assembly of the battery requested Captain Loomis to meet with them to "listen to public protest because of certain mismanagements."¹¹² The captain granted their request. Instead of lodging protests, the assembly formed a hollow square about the captain and presented him with a sash, sword belt, gold bullion sword knot and a pair of silver spurs. A short time later an engraved sword, which was not ready at the time of the presentation, was given to the captain.¹¹³ The appreciation of the men was not limited to Loomis alone, as Lieutenant O'Riordon also received the gift of a sash, knot, belt and spurs.¹¹⁴ These presentations also provided the opportunity for a general party. A regimental band, (Tenth Ohio), was engaged to provide music, and spiritous refreshments were served.¹¹⁵

The balance of the summer was mildly active. A number of minor expeditions usually kept a section of the battery on detached service most of the time. One such foray to Guntersville, Alabama, was typical of these operations. On July twenty-seventh, a section of the battery, commanded by Lieutenant Chandler, accompanied a battalion of the Third Ohio Cavalry with the objective of destroying ferries on the Tennessee River which were used by guerrillas. In four days the contingent was involved in three

skirmishes and destroyed seven large boats; most of them were destroyed by sharpshooting artillery fire from the Union side of the river.¹¹⁶ The best shot sunk one of the boats which had been cut adrift by rebel pickets and was a mile downstream when demolished by the first round fired by one of Chandler's guns.¹¹⁷

The relatively quiet summer ended abruptly on August thirty-first when the battery pulled out of Huntsville at 4 A.M. to begin the rapid pullback into Kentucky¹¹⁸ necessitated by the invading Confederates under General Braxton Bragg. On September twenty-fifth the battery arrived in Louisville, Kentucky, after a march of 363 miles.¹¹⁹ After a brief rest, the battery accompanied Buell in the pursuit of Bragg and participated in the battle of Perryville, Kentucky, on October eighth.

By most standards, Loomis' Battery was considered a veteran organization. Even though it had been in combat often, it had not fought an extended battle. Although one year earlier at Greenbriar the engagement was quite lengthy, it still had only the character of a reconnaissance operation of brigade size, not of a full fledged battle. Also at Greenbriar, opposition artillery was definitely outnumbered and outclassed. The battle at Perryville was the first large scale engagement in which the performance of Loomis' Battery could be placed in a perspective and compared effectively to its companion units.

On the morning of October eighth, Loomis' Battery marched the sixteen miles from Mackville to the opening scene of the battle,¹²⁰ about three miles west northwest of Perryville. On this march, it was located in the van of General Lovell H. Rousseau's Third Division.¹²¹ Contrary to what was written in the brief entry

on the battery's morning report, it was not the first to open artillery fire on the Confederates. Sharp fighting had occurred the night before about a mile south of the battery's first location and had been resumed by the cavalry force under Captain Ebenezer Gay early on the morning of the eighth.¹²² A pair of guns from the Second Minnesota Battery, part of Gay's cavalry force, had been feeling out the Confederates when Rousseau arrived about 10:30 A.M..¹²³ By then the Confederate pickets had retired beyond the range of the Second Minnesota's howitzers.¹²⁴ Captain Loomis was ordered up to about the same location and with a pair of his Parrotts, he continued a searching fire to try and see if opposition could be located beyond Doctor's Creek one mile ahead.¹²⁵ When no response occurred, a one hour lull gave the Federal troops some much needed rest.¹²⁶

At about 11:30, General Rousseau ordered his column to advance to the river to draw water. The lead column had barely got within a hundred yards of Loomis' position when some Confederate infantry appeared, along with three batteries which opened a determined fire, indicating that an attack was probably forming.¹²⁷ Rousseau ordered the balance of Loomis' pieces into action and directed Captain Simonson's battery (Fifth Indiana) to move into position on the left of Loomis.¹²⁸

Initially, the eighteen Confederate guns poured a heavy fire into Loomis and Simonson's batteries. One of the opposition batteries was recognized as the "Washington Artillery," a well known Louisiana battery.¹²⁹ In the Loomis' Battery morning report entry, a comment was made that five of the guns of the Washington Artillery were dismounted and that the other

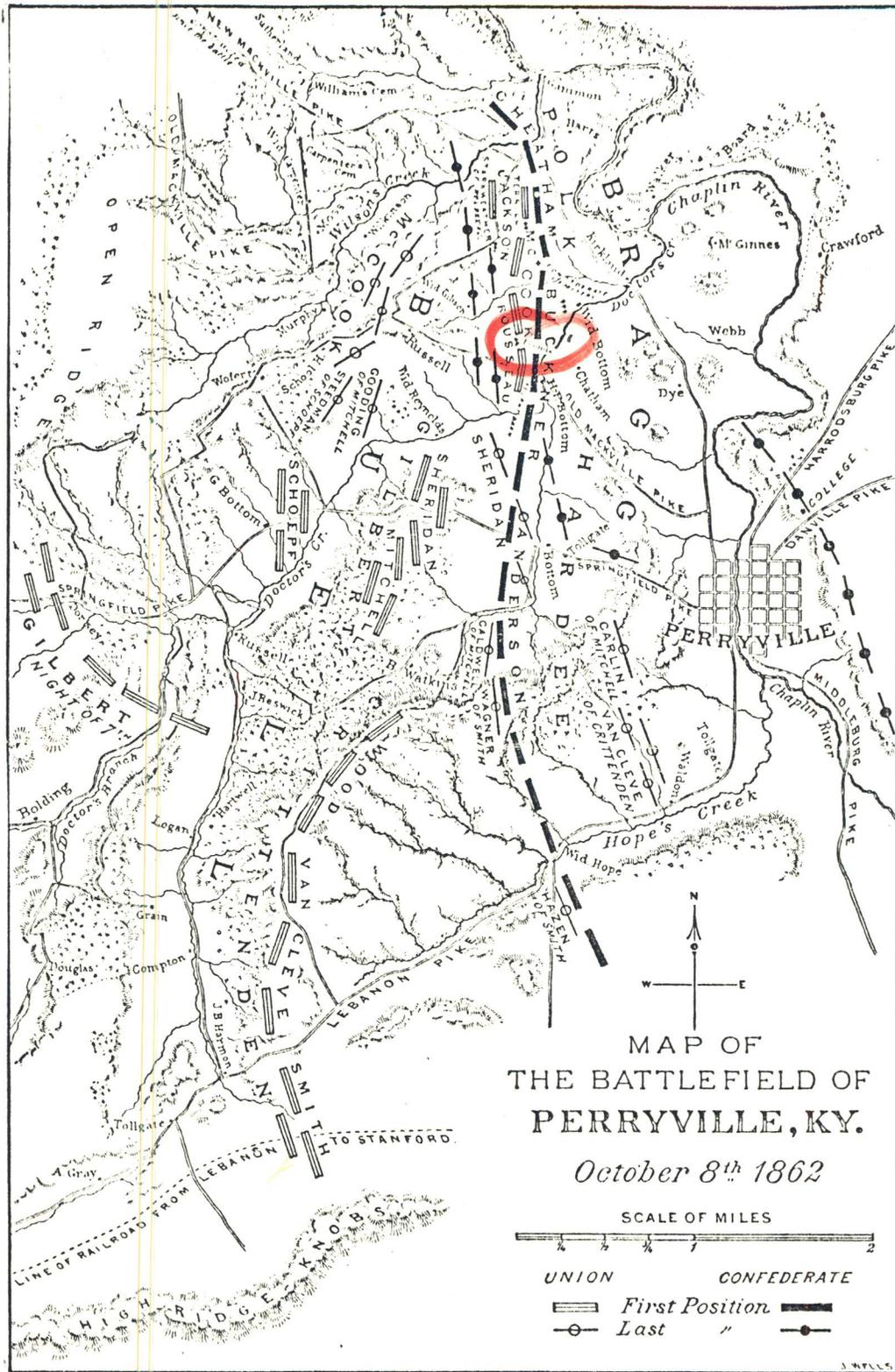
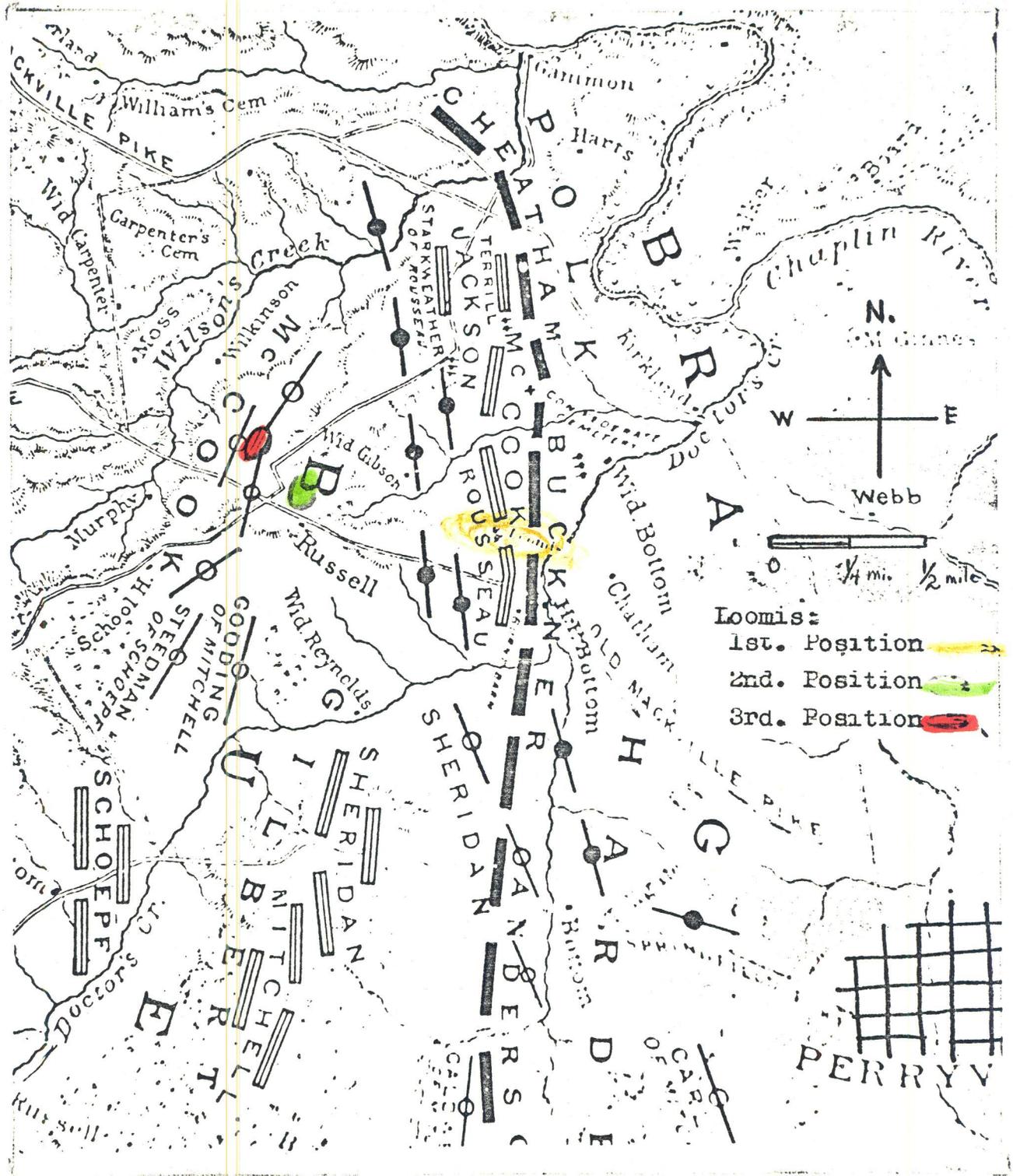


Figure No. 4-- From Battles and Leaders of the Civil War. Vol. 3, p.24

was forced to seek cover.¹³⁰ Although the Washington Artillery had its share of troubles at Perryville,¹³¹ Confederate reports do not substantiate any dismounted guns. Although the effect of Loomis' fire may not have been as dramatic as was thought by observers in the battery, it was, nonetheless, effective since the Confederate batteries shifted to less exposed positions and cut their fire.¹³²

While Rousseau was placing his troops on the far left of the line, General Alexander D. McCook, commander of the First Army Corps, arrived on the scene and ordered Simonson and Loomis to cease firing and save ammunition, since no enemy infantry was in sight,¹³³ and opposition artillery was minimal.

At 2:00 P.M. a large scale attack developed all along the center and left wing of the Union line.¹³⁴ The battery's position was on the extreme right of Rousseau's line, next to the barn on the Mackville-Perryville road.¹³⁵ About the time the attack began, Loomis' Battery fell back, having run out of long range ammunition.¹³⁶ It took a position to the rear of the Russell house, which had been used as headquarters, and waited.¹³⁷ The Union line held in this position for about an hour. Simonson's battery had remained on the line, and although opposed by two rebel batteries, one of which had advanced to a distance of 800 yards, few casualties were suffered until the Confederate infantry began to close in at about 3:30.¹³⁸ By 4:00 P.M. the Union center began to give way and pull back in an orderly manner.¹³⁹ As the lines receded past Loomis' men, that battery went into action using double cannister¹⁴⁰ and was credited with having contributed a great deal to retarding the Confederate



Loomis:
 1st. Position
 2nd. Position
 3rd. Position

Figure No. 5
 Detail of the Perryville Map

advance¹⁴¹ which ground to a halt by 5 P.M. a quarter of a mile west of the Russell house. Although heavy firing continued on into the evening, the battle of Perryville had effectively ended. During the night, the Confederate positions were evacuated.

During the action at Perryville, Loomis' Battery suffered eight casualties (one killed, seven seriously wounded), one prisoner and thirty-two horses lost.¹⁴² These are certainly serious losses; however, in terms of men lost, the other Union batteries in the Third Division suffered much more. Captain Simonson (Fifth Indiana Battery) lost twenty-one men, and Captain Stone (Battery A, Kentucky Light Artillery) lost thirteen men.¹⁴³

It is most unfortunate that no complete report of the Perryville battle was made by Captain Loomis, or at least none was published in the Official Records, and none has been located through searches in the National Archives. Even the newspaper accounts do not cover the battery's actions in any detail, possibly since many of the "special correspondents" in the battery no longer wrote the Detroit papers too often.

Although a thorough analysis of the battery's performance is not really possible, enough had been pieced together from other accounts to allow us to come to some conclusions. It cannot be denied that Loomis' Battery had done a creditable job, particularly since it was commended in the official reports of General McCook.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, the management of the battery can be criticized, possibly for an excess of enthusiasm which had caused it to squander its ammunition early in the battle so that it was not on the main line when the major attack developed. Rapid fire is dramatic and commendable when circumstances require it, as in the use of double cannister to break up close quarter infantry attacks.

The battery did this late in the afternoon at Perryville. But rapid fire was thoroughly discouraged by the more experienced artillery officers during the Civil War, because it was often wasteful. Probably the most respected artilleryman of the war, Colonel Henry Hunt, Chief of Artillery in the Army of the Potomac, eventually took serious action against some battery commanders in that theatre by accusing them of cowardice when they shot away their ammunition so quickly that they had to be relieved at critical moments prior to infantry attacks.¹⁴⁵ There is no way of knowing whether the ammunition shortage in this case was semi-deliberate or purely coincidental, but the fact remains that the battery would have been very useful on the main line between 2:00 and 4:00 P.M. and would certainly have prevented the rebel batteries from moving within 800 yards of the Federal line and inflicting some of the casualties which Simonson's battery suffered.

While Loomis' Battery did nothing which merited outstanding laurels at Perryville, it met the test of large scale combat and did quite well. When Captain Loomis finally got his commission as a Colonel (news of the promotion arrived on December 19, 1862), it was backdated to October 8, 1862, and no doubt was intended as a reward for his part in the battle.

After the battle at Perryville, changes in the battery's leadership occurred. On October thirty-first, Lieutenant Chandler was reported as absent without leave.¹⁴⁷ His status remained A.W.O.L. until he was dropped from the morning report on November twenty-first. On that date he apparently resigned for reasons of "disability," at least the record read that way.¹⁴⁸ Chandler

was the twenty year old son of the mayor of Coldwater and over the past year and a half, had incurred frequent criticism, at least from those battery members who were "correspondents" to the Detroit newspapers. Lieutenant Roland Root, a forty-five year old pioneer of the Coldwater area, had often been carried on the rolls of the battery as "sick," particularly since the rapid retreat from Huntsville. Following the battle at Perryville, Root was carried on the sick list until November seventh when he was reported back for duty.¹⁴⁹ However, on November twenty-third, Lieutenant Root resigned for the reasons of "disability."¹⁵⁰

Following the battle of Perryville, Loomis was rarely with the battery.¹⁵¹ Lieutenant George W. Van Pelt became the officer in charge,¹⁵² which meant that the entire officer cadre which had been elected back in Detroit was now gone and that their places were taken by men who had been appointed from the ranks. For the most part this was to constitute an improvement for a while. To fill the vacancies, Almerick W. Wilbur and August H. Bachmann were elevated to the rank of Second Lieutenant.¹⁵³ During the Murfreesburo campaign which was soon to follow, the battery was to render distinguished service under its new leadership.

On December 26, 1862, the battery left Nashville with Rousseau's division on the march toward Murfreesburo.¹⁵⁴ Since this division was kept in the rear of the column, it bivouacked near the Nashville Pike after most of the Union troops had been deployed.¹⁵⁵

When the crushing attack on the Federal right began on the morning of December thirty-first, Rousseau's infantry were initially posted in the extremely dense cedar thicket, and the

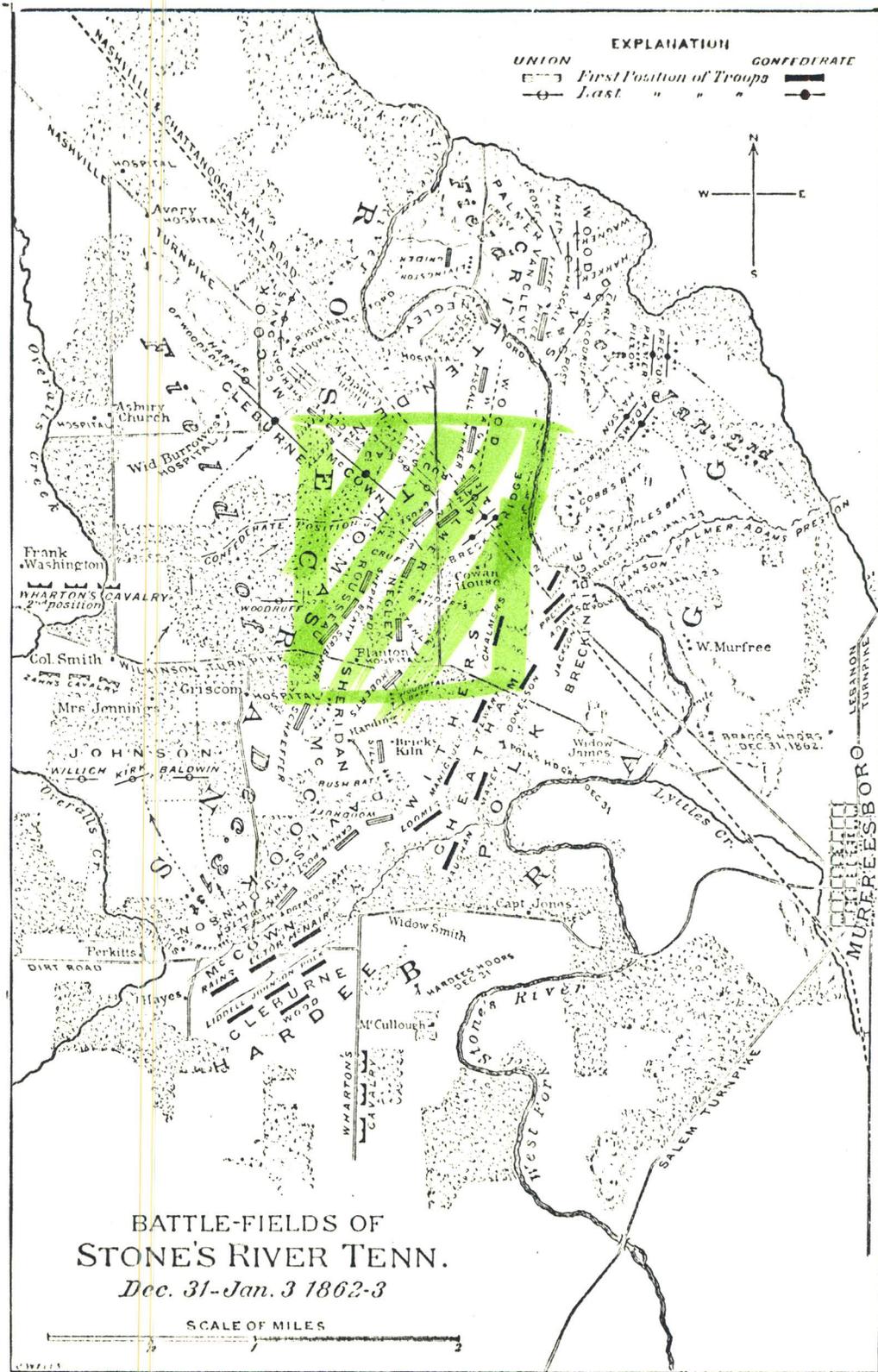
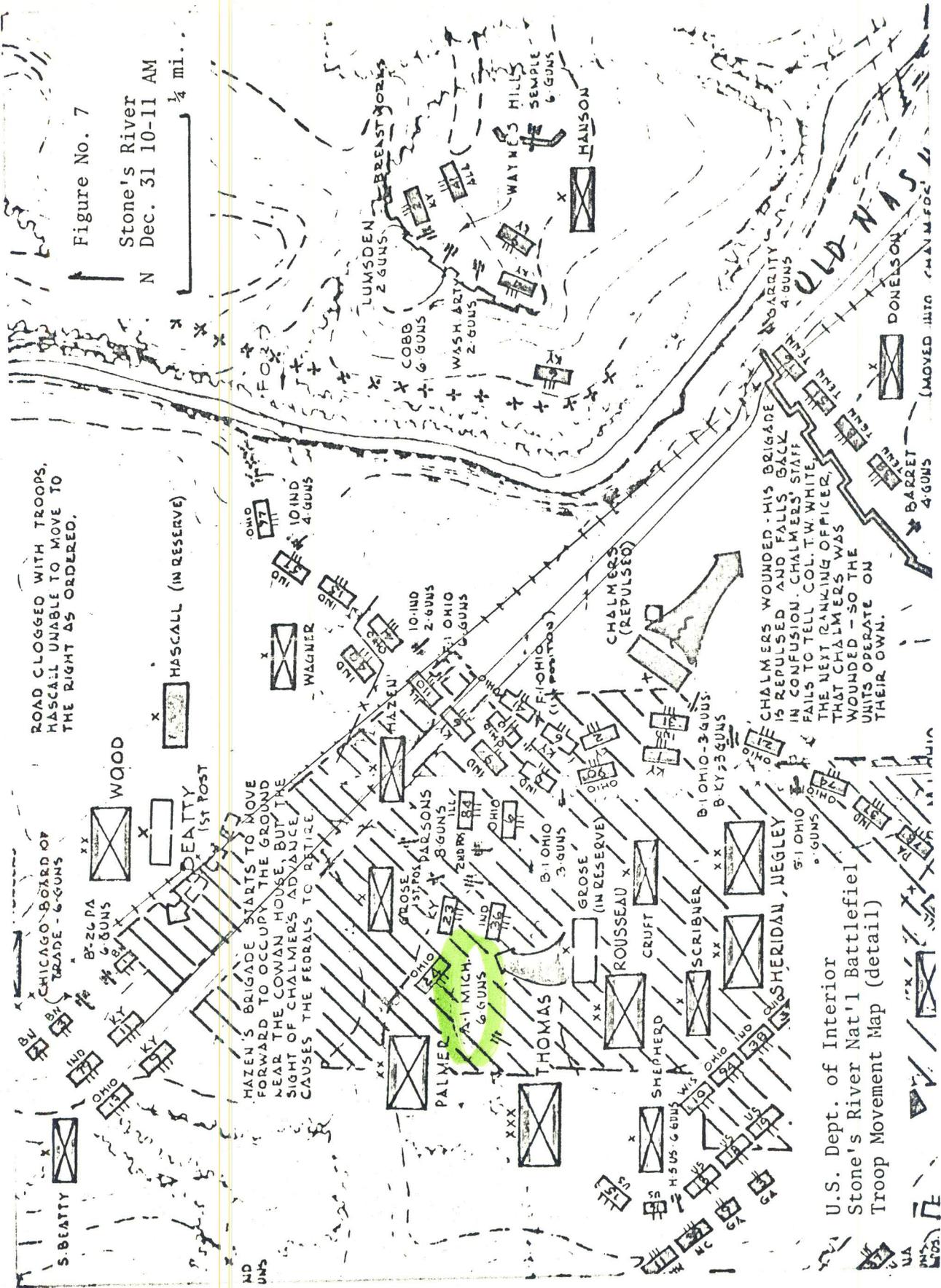


Figure No. 6--From Battles and Leaders of the Civil War.
Volume 3, p. 616. The shaded area approximates the area of operation for Loomis' battery.

Figure No. 7

Stone's River
Dec. 31 10-11 AM

1/4 mi.



CHALMERS WOUNDED - HIS BRIGADE IS REPULSED AND FALLS BACK IN CONFUSION. CHALMERS' STAFF FAILS TO TELL COL. T.W. WHITE, THE NEXT RANKING OFFICER, THAT CHALMERS WAS WOUNDED - SO THE UNITS OPERATE ON THEIR OWN.

U.S. Dept. of Interior
Stone's River Nat'l Battlefield
Troop Movement Map (detail)

artillery (Loomis' and Guenther's Battery II, Fifth U.S. Artillery) were placed in an opening about 500 yards behind the infantry.¹⁵⁶ When it became apparent that McCook's troops were being driven back, Rousseau gave his infantry orders to fall back and line up with the batteries. This was done in good order. When the Confederates began to charge across the quarter mile of open ground, the batteries opened with double cannister. They were well supported by infantry, and in all, four very determined charges were beat back with extremely heavy losses for the Confederates.¹⁵⁷

According to a newspaper report, at the end of the action a small party of fifteen rebels were captured along with a flag, and General Rousseau declared that the flag should have gone to the artillery, which was most responsible for the capture.¹⁵⁸ In his own report Rousseau only commented that an advance was ordered after the last Confederate charge and that his staff and orderlies captured seventeen prisoners within 130 yards of the batteries.¹⁵⁹ The Second Ohio Infantry, located next to Guenther's battery, reported the capture of thirty prisoners and a flag belonging to the Thirteenth Arkansas Volunteer Infantry. Major A. G. McCook of the Second Ohio gave credit to the batteries for making the capture possible.¹⁶⁰ Regardless of who got or kept the trophies, the artillery performance was as good as any of the war, under similar circumstances.

The stubborn Union defense along the Nashville Pike was the most dramatic event of the battle on December thirty-first. In the report of General L. E. Polk, commander of the Confederates First Brigade, a comment was made indicating that the artillery and infantry near the Nashville Pike and the railroad had produced havoc in his ranks and accounted for the heaviest losses of

the day.¹⁶¹ The Confederate infantry was not the only branch to suffer from superior artillery performance that day. Lieutenant Thomas J. Key, commanding the Helena Battery (C.S.A.), reported:¹⁶²

The fifth position was in the field west of the enemy's concentrated artillery, where we fought them until we had exhausted our ammunition, losing in this engagement one of our bravest and most expert No. 1 cannoncers. The enemy turned a triple number of pieces upon us, and the missiles of death fell among us singing, whizzing, bursting, and crashing through the trees, as if Mount Vesuvius had at one instant poured all its pent-up furies into our midst. Our escape from beneath those powerful guns was fortunate, if not miraculous.

The sixth and last action was near that same intertwined and matted grove of cedars. Here the contest was also unequal. It was in this engagement that Lieutenant Fitzpatrick lost his left hand by a canister, and a cannoner's head was shot off, and a number of horses were killed, and one howitzer slightly damaged. Finding that we could not move the enemy from his strong position, and that smooth-bore guns could not cope with Parrott and rifled guns, we withdrew from the contest.

Again, it is unfortunate that no official battle report from Loomis' Battery at Stone's River, or Murfreesburo, has been found. Even though the newspaper account does not mention extensive counterbattery fire in the late afternoon of December thirty-first, the writer is inclined to think that some of the damage to the Helena Battery may have come from Loomis' guns since not many of the Union batteries on the far right were armed with Parrotts.¹⁶³

Although January first was relatively quiet, the correspondent to the Detroit Advertiser-Tribune reported an action in which the battery was called up from a rest position to silence a rebel battery which was annoying the Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania Infantry. According to the newspaper report, the rebels were silenced very quickly.¹⁶⁴ The official records do not mention this action although they do indicate that Loomis' Battery had

been sent a half mile to the rear,¹⁶⁵ on that date.

On January second, Loomis' men returned to the line and took up positions in field fortifications which had been prepared. Intermittent fire was exchanged during the day, but the battery remained in position and was not called to take part in the massed battery on the left where Breckinridge's late afternoon attack was destroyed by a fifty-seven gun concentration of Union artillery.

Late in the afternoon of January third, General Rousseau obtained permission for a limited objective advance to remove the enemy from woods to the left front of the line. A coordinated assault began with six rounds per gun from Loomis' and Guenther's batteries. These were fired at twilight, as rapidly as possible. The Third Ohio Infantry and the Eighty-eighth Indiana Infantry advanced quickly under the cover of the barrage which lifted as the attackers hit the Confederate line.¹⁶⁶ Stiff resistance occurred, and Confederate reinforcements were rushed up, but accurate fire from Loomis' guns prevented them from entering the fight until the Third Ohio secured the woods and captured about thirty prisoners.¹⁶⁷ The fight was quite hot, and eventually the Federal infantry pulled back due to ammunition shortages.

The Stone's River battle was the most costly engagement for Loomis' battery to that time. Although only one man was reported killed in action, eleven others were seriously injured.¹⁶⁸ Of the latter, one was a corporal who was struck by pieces of an incoming shell which hit the muzzle of the gun he was aiming and broke up without bursting.¹⁶⁹ Another man, a Number One crewman, lost both hands when he was ramming a charge, and the gun fired

prematurely, due to alledged carelessness of another crewmember.¹⁷⁰
Both of these injured men soon died.

The performance at Stone's River would probably rank as the highpoint in the history of Loomis' Battery. In that engagement, it frequently broke up close attacks, it retarded formation of enemy attacks, it effectively suppressed opposition artillery, and it provided close support to attacking infantry. In other words, its performance was almost textbook perfect. The battery's leadership was excellent. Colonel Loomis was not in direct command, but achieved praise for his conduct as a chief of artillery.¹⁷¹ Lieutenants Van Pelt and Hale were highly praised by Brigade Commander Colonel John Beatty, General Rousseau, and others.¹⁷²

Following the action at Stone's River, the battery spent several months of deserved inactivity. During this time Colonel Loomis and Lieutenant Hale made another of their frequent trips to Michigan for the purpose of recruiting.¹⁷³ Lieutenant Van Pelt began taking a number of measures which vastly improved the morale of the unit. Although sutler's prices for edibles remained exorbitant, with butter and cheese costing fifty cents a pound and eggs five cents each, Van Pelt made arrangements for the boys to get whatever they wanted on his account.¹⁷⁴ Paydays became more frequent, and with each one came a stern warning that misconduct resulting from drinking, whether on the part of officers or enlisted men, would not go unpunished.¹⁷⁵ A company fund was established whereby surplus rations were commuted into money, which was controlled by an elected treasurer, Sergeant August Bachmann, who accepted the job after Van Pelt refused the honor. The fund was used to purchase comforts for the battery