

TENNESSEANS
IN
THE CIVIL WAR

*A Military History
of Confederate and Union Units
with
Available Rosters of Personnel*

In Two Parts

Part I

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Felix H. Blackman, in a letter dated September 25, 1902, stated he had first served in the 1st (McNairy's) Battalion, and when that battalion was merged into the 22nd, usually called 2nd, (Bartean's) Cavalry Regiment, "I gave way, and obtained a commission from General Price, and came back to Tennessee and recruited a company, and we, with Major

Dick McCann did service until after the Battle of Murfreesboro as McCann's Squadron. McCann's commission having been obtained from General Morgan (John Hunt), we were ordered to report to him and was with him on his Ohio raid. I was surrendered with General Morgan when he surrendered and was not released until June, 1865."

HAMILTON'S TENNESSEE CAVALRY BATTALION

Also called 4th Tennessee Cavalry Battalion: 4th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment
Later known as Shaw's Tennessee Cavalry Battalion

Organized in Jackson County December, 1862; Confederate Service April 11, 1863; consolidated with Allison's Squadron July, 1864.

FIELD OFFICERS

Lieutenant Colonel—Oliver P. Hamilton
Major—Jo Shaw

CAPTAINS—D. J. Shaw, Richard N. Coffey (or Coffee), W. B. Carlen, Thomas L. Dodd, Winton B. Harris, A. W. Norris, William Hutchison, Ed Cullom, Jo Coffee, R. V. Wright, R. B. Rease, George W. Stephens, Thomas L. Bransford, R. J. C. Gailbreath, Benjamin H. Ford.

The only muster roll of the battalion which was found was that of Captain O. P. Hamilton's Company, dated December 21, 1861, which was organized in Jackson County. Prisoner of war records make reference to eight companies, "A" through "H", but from them it is not possible to identify the captains with the various companies. Captain Richard M. Coffey, from Overton County, was listed as captain of Company "F". Practically all the men covered by the prisoner of war records were from either Overton or Jackson County.

The Adjutant General's Office, State of Tennessee, advised Adjutant General S. Cooper, Richmond, Virginia April 18, 1863: "Hamilton's Company was mustered into service for the local defense of the border counties lying up the line of Tennessee where the counties and mountains strike the Kentucky line pursuant to an order from General Johnston authorizing the muster of companies for that purpose. This company has done good service, and is now organized, and has been, and is now, in general service."

Information available indicates Hamilton

was first elected Major of the battalion, and was promoted to lieutenant colonel on July 1, 1863, at which time Captain Jo Shaw was elected major. Hamilton was captured at Celina, Tennessee on March 4, 1864, and his prisoner of war records list him as lieutenant colonel 4th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, but there was nothing found to indicate that he was ever connected with any of the regiments that were known by that number. He was charged by the Federal officials with being a guerrilla, and was being forwarded to Lexington, Kentucky for trial, when he was killed by his guard, circumstances not known.

A communication from Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton, dated July 25, 1863, reported that the battalion, with six companies, was mustered into Confederate Service April 11, 1863. On April 20, 1863, Federal General E. H. Hobson reported that troops of his command had attacked Hamilton's command at Celina, Tennessee, destroying his camp and killing seven of his men. On the next day, they took possession of the town, killing 30, and reported the rebels in full retreat and in perfect disorder.

On June 9, another Federal report described the total rout of Hamilton's command at Kettle Creek, with 40 killed, 36 captured, and the capture of two howitzers and the entire wagon train and equipment. At this time, Hamilton's command was a part of Brigadier General John H. Morgan's forces, who, in reporting the disaster, stated; "Major Hamilton had been ordered to report to Colonel R. C. Morgan, but refused."

At Chickamauga, September 19-20, Shaw's Battalion, O. P. Hamilton's Battalion, and Allison's Squadron, all under the command of Major Joseph Shaw, were reported in the

brigade commanded by Colonel George G. Dibrell, in Brigadier General F. C. Armstrong's Division, of Brigadier General N. B. Forrest's Cavalry Corps. On October 31, and again on November 10, Hamilton's Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel O. P. Hamilton, was reported in Brigadier General J. H. Kelly's Division, of Major General Joseph Wheeler's Corps, in the brigade commanded by Colonel J. Warren Grigsby.

On November 24, 1863, Colonel John C. Carter, 38th Tennessee Infantry Regiment, in command at Charleston, Tennessee, made mention of a detachment of 17 cavalymen under Major Shaw as being there with him. Hamilton's Battalion continued to be reported in Grigsby's Brigade through December 31, 1863, but in the report for January 20, 1864, Hamilton's Battalion was reported to be with Lieutenant General Longstreet in East Tennessee. A Federal report told of a skirmish with "Hamilton's Marauders" at Flynn's Lick, Tennessee, on January 31, and their pursuit in the direction of Livingston, Tennessee. As already mentioned, Hamilton was captured at Celina, Tennessee on March 4, 1864, and from this time on the battalion was reported under the command of Major Shaw.

On April 30, it was reported in Grigsby's

Brigade, Brigadier General W. Y. C. Humes' Division, Wheeler's Corps. On June 30, it was reported in Brigadier General John S. Williams' Brigade, Humes' Division, but on July 10, Williams' Brigade was reported in Kelly's Division again. On July 31, it was back in Humes' Division, with Allison's Squadron and Hamilton's Battalion consolidated into a field unit under Major Shaw. An isolated report from the battalion showed it stationed near Marietta, Georgia on June 30, 1864. Major Shaw was killed near Savannah, Georgia, in the Savannah Campaign later in 1864.

On January 31, 1865, Colonel George G. Dibrell, at Grahamsville, South Carolina, in reporting on the distribution of his troops listed Shaw's Battalion as being at Grahamsville. On January 31, Dibrell's Brigade of Humes' Division was reported as composed of 4th (McLemore's), 13th (Dibrell's) Regiments and Shaw's Battalion under Captain R. V. Wright. On April 8, Dibrell's Brigade was reported in General Joseph E. Johnston's Army, and as such was included in the convention which Johnston made with General Sherman at Greensboro, North Carolina April 26. No specific record of the parole of Shaw's Battalion was found.

HOLMAN'S TENNESSEE PARTISAN RANGER BATTALION

Organized October 13, 1862; consolidated February 25, 1863 with Douglass's Battalion and three other companies to form the 11th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment.

FIELD OFFICER

Major—Daniel W. Holman

Holman's Battalion had an organized life of only a little over four months. It was composed of four companies:

CAPTAINS—M. M. Swaim, Co. "A". Organized September 8, 1862 at Chapel Hill, Marshall County. Became Company "B", 11th Regiment.

Jacob T. Martin, Co. "B". Organized August 16, 1862 at Thompson Station, Williamson County. Became Company "C", 11th Regiment.

Andrew R. Gordon, Co. "C". Organized September 10, 1862. Men from Cornersville, then Giles, now Marshall County, and Lewisburg, Marshall County. Became Company "E", 11th Regiment.

James W. Rivers, Co. "D". Organized October 13, 1862 at Pulaski, Giles County.

Major Holman had previously served as major of the 1st (Turney's) Tennessee Infantry Regiment, Provisional Army, Confederate States.

About the 1st of December, the battalion reported for duty to Brigadier General Joseph Wheeler, who was encamped near LaVergne, Tennessee. Major Holman reported on December 4, that the previous night, starting from their camp on Stone's River, near LaVergne, a detachment from his battalion surprised and put to flight a Federal force at Stewart's Ferry, on Stewart's Creek.

The battalion took part in the fighting prior to, and in the Battle of Murfreesboro, December 31, 1862, as part of Brigadier General Wheeler's Brigade. General Wheeler reported that on December 26, his force was encamped on Stewart's Creek, was engaged on that day, and also on the 28th and 29th. On

the 30th, it made a sweep entirely around the rear of the Federal Army, completing the circuit in time to take part in the battle on the 31st.

After the battle, the battalion, in Wheeler's command, was engaged in scouting and skirmishing along the Cumberland River below Nashville, culminating April 8 in an attack on Dover, Tennessee, by the combined forces of General Wheeler and General Forrest. Here Major Holman was severely wounded, and the battalion lost 25 men in killed and wounded.

McCANN'S CAVALRY BATTALION Major J. Richard McCann

This was a Partisan Corps under the command of Major J. R. McCann, and was organized in the Summer of 1862 to operate within the enemy's lines for the purpose of procuring information of his movements, interrupting his communications, and creating divisions of his forces. The companies from Davidson were Captain William J. Bass's, Hays Blackman's, Carter's and Shaw's. The company of Captain Thomas Perkins, from Williamson, had many men from Davidson County. Some of these companies were on Morgan's raid into Kentucky in the summer of 1862. The battalion operated with Wheeler in the circuit of Rosecrans' Army in 1862, and in the expedition to the lower Cumberland in 1863, where it captured several transports. McCann on December 23, 1862 became

NAPIER'S TENNESSEE CAVALRY BATTALION

Organized December 1862; consolidated with Cox's Battalion February 25, 1863 to form 10th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment.

Muster rolls of this battalion show five companies, under Colonel Thomas Alonzo Napier, all mustered in at Waverly, Humphreys County, Tennessee:

CAPTAINS—William E. DeMoss, Co. "A". Organized December 5, 1862. Men from Davidson County. Became "D", 10th Regiment.

John Minor, Co. "B". Organized December 7, 1862. Men from Montgomery County. Became "E", 10th Regiment.

W. W. Hobbs, Co. "C". Organized November 10, 1862. Men from Humphreys County. Became "F", 10th Regiment.

A few weeks later, by order of General Forrest, Holman's Battalion, Douglass' Battalion and three other companies were consolidated to form the 11th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment. Both battalions protested against the merger, but to no avail. General Forrest appointed J. H. Edmondson as colonel of the new regiment, but Major Holman, on recovering from his wounds rejoined the regiment, first as lieutenant colonel, later as colonel, and commanded it for the remainder of the war.

Major of the 9th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment which operated with Morgan on his raid into Indiana and Ohio, and finally served in Duke's Kentucky Brigade in East Tennessee and Western Virginia.

The companies commanded by Captains McCann, Blackman, Carter, and Perkins were also listed as belonging to Douglass' Cavalry Battalion. Nothing is known of Captain William J. Bass's Company, and the only cavalry company known commanded by a Captain Shaw was in Hamilton's Battalion, of which Jo Shaw later became Major. No muster rolls of the battalion organization were found.

J. R. McCann had first served as captain, Company "B" (originally "F") of the 11th Tennessee Infantry Regiment.

Thomas S. Easley, Co. "D". Organized December 13, 1862. Men from Hickman County. Became "G", 10th Regiment.

D. F. Alexander, Co. "E". Organized December 13, 1862, men mainly from Henry County. Became "I", 10th Regiment.

However, there was an organization known as Napier's Cavalry in operation before this battalion was organized. The muster rolls of Minor's and Hobbs' Companies show they were formerly in "Napier's Cavalry." Federal reports as early as July 1862, made mention of cavalry commanded by Napier. Brigadier General J. S. Negley, commanding at Columbia on July 1, 1862, testifying in a court of inquiry as to the operations of the Federal

Army in the summer and fall of 1862, stated that when he took command at Columbia, "Napier was raising a regiment in the vicinity of Charlotte and Centerville, nearly west of Columbia." On August 17, he reported the defeat of Napier's and Anderson's guerrillas near Kinderhook. On August 21, 1862, another report stated: "Captain Dougherty, Captain Gilliam and Captain Napier, with about 500 men were on the Tennessee River in Benton County on Monday last. They captured and burned two steamboats, and attacked another, but failed to get it." On October 29, an engagement near Waverly with Napier's guerrillas was reported.

On the Confederate side, General Bragg, on November 27, 1862, ordered: "Colonels Biffle and Napier, will, with their commands, report to Brigadier General Wheeler for duty at LaVergne."

Thomas Alonzo Napier enlisted November 7, 1861, in Benton County. He was captain of Company "I", 49th Tennessee Infantry Regiment, and was captured at Fort Donelson. While being transferred to Johnson's Island, he escaped on April 26, 1862. The records of the 49th Tennessee Infantry state he did not re-enlist, but recruited a regiment of cavalry, and was killed at Parker's Cross Roads, December 31, 1862. The date of his commission as colonel was not found.

When Bragg ordered Colonel Napier, with his command, to report to General Wheeler, on November 27, he was evidently referring to this prior Cavalry organization. Whether Napier actually reported to General Wheeler is not known, but some time about this date, instructions were evidently issued to organize a battalion of cavalry, which was done at Waverly, Tennessee on December 15, 1862.

SPILLER'S TENNESSEE CAVALRY BATTALION

No muster rolls, nor record of organization of this battalion were found. However, it is mentioned several times in the *Official Records*, with C. C. Spiller as lieutenant colonel, and Baxter Smith as major. C. C. Spiller was captain of Company "B", 5th (McClellan's) Battalion until that battalion was merged into 2nd (Ashby's) Tennessee Cavalry Regiment in May, 1862. Baxter Smith was major of the 7th (Bennett's) Battalion until June 13, 1862.

On December 18, 1862, General Grant reported that "Forrest and Napier are now on this side of the river, with five to ten thousand men, near Jackson, Tennessee." Another report said Napier, with 2000 to 3000 men, was crossing the Tennessee River at Carrollville. A later report stated: "You are mistaken as to Napier's force. He has 700 men and two pieces of Artillery."

Captain John Minor, in *Lindsley's Annals*, said the battalion joined General Forrest at Middlesburg, Tennessee and met the enemy for the first time at Parker's Cross Roads, on December 31, 1862, where Colonel Napier was killed, and that Captain DeMoss commanded the battalion from that time until its merger into the 10th Tennessee Regiment. General George G. Dibrell's account of the Battle of Parker's Cross Roads speaks of Napier's Battalion being engaged there.

In January, the battalion, with some of Brigadier General Wheeler's Cavalry forces, was engaged in patrolling the Cumberland River below Nashville, and on February 3, 1863, took part in the assault on Fort Donelson, at Dover, Tennessee. Following this battle, it moved to Columbia, Tennessee, where on February 25, 1863, it was merged into the 10th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, of which Captain DeMoss became Major and later Colonel.

One minor mystery remains. T. A. Napier was also listed as colonel of the 10th Cavalry Regiment, which was not organized until after his death. The only explanation would seem to be that plans had been made for the organization of the regiment, and he had been promised a commission as colonel, but was killed before the commission could be delivered.

Both Spiller's Company "B" and David McClellan's Company "F" of the 5th Battalion were later mustered as part of the 4th (Murray's) Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, which was organized in August, 1862, and both companies were later in the 8th (also called 4th) Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, of which Baxter Smith was colonel.

This battalion was a temporary organization, lasting only a few months, the nucleus of which was the two companies of McLel-