

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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Lieutenant Colonel Kelley. In a letter dated May 15, 1864, Kelley stated he commanded the regiment until relieved from duty on account of ill health, and then returned to duty under orders of General Forrest. Just when, or how long his leave of absence was, is not known. On June 15, 1862, R. M. Balch signed a communication as Major Commanding Forrest's Regiment, which at that time was still in Beall's Brigade.

On June 19, 1862, the Headquarters of the Army of the West, at Priceville, Mississippi, ordered: "Forrest's Cavalry command will prepare to march immediately with ten days' rations. The commanding officer will report in person at this Headquarters for orders. (Signed) Major General Earl Van Dorn." On July 2, 1862, Federal Colonel Sheridan reported an attack on his forces near Booneville, Mississippi, by Confederate forces, including "Balch's" Regiment, about 800 strong. On July 13, 1862, Forrest's Cavalry, Lieutenant Colonel Kelley commanding, (four companies) were stationed near Priceville, Mississippi, in Brigadier General Frank Armstrong's Cavalry Brigade, Army of the West. What had become of the other company is not known. Of this battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Kelley, in *Lindsley's Annals*, stated it accompanied General Armstrong through North Alabama, and charged, captured and almost annihilated the Fourth Michigan Cavalry at Okolona Church, near Courtland, Alabama. In the same sketch, he stated: "From Tupelo, one battalion of the regiment under command of Major Balch and afterwards Major McDonald, accompanied General Forrest in his expedition to and capture of Murfreesboro (July 13, 1862). This must have referred to the four Alabama companies under Captain Bacot; Kelley was in error in stating this battalion was with Forrest at the capture of Murfreesboro, as it did not join him until August. General Forrest, in his report of that raid, made no mention of any of his old regiment being with him at that time.

The battalion with General Armstrong continued with him on his expedition into West Tennessee, and, as Forrest's Regiment was reported as part of his command at the Battle of Britton's Lane on August 31, 1862.

Lieutenant Colonel Kelley tendered his resignation on August 18, 1862. It was not

accepted, but he must have been granted a leave of absence about this time, for the next reference to the regiment was as Balch's Battalion. Captain Crutcher's Company (originally Captain Overton's) had been transferred to the 2nd Kentucky Cavalry in December 1862. On January 18, 1863, Balch's Battalion, 234 men, was included in the list of Cavalry to go with General Van Dorn into North Mississippi, later into Middle Tennessee, and was assigned to the 1st Brigade of Brigadier General W. H. Jackson's Division. On February 2, 1863, the brigade was transferred to Brigadier General W. T. Martin's Division, with Brigadier General George B. Cosby in command of the brigade.

On February 25, 1863, General Forrest ordered the organization of the 11th Cavalry Regiment, and transferred Captain McDonald's company to the new regiment. About July 1, Forrest transferred McDonald's company back to the remnants of Balch's Battalion, and organized McDonald's Battalion, with the companies shown in the foregoing table. Balch disappeared from the records about this time. Major McDonald commanded the battalion until he was killed on October 7, 1863, after which Captain P. T. Allin became major in command.

On July 31, the battalion, now listed as McDonald's Battalion (Major Charles McDonald) was reported in Forrest's Cavalry Division, Armstrong's Brigade, composed of the 3rd Arkansas, 2nd Kentucky, 1st (6th) Tennessee (Colonel James T. Wheeler), McDonald's Battalion, and Captain John Bradley's Escort Company. As part of this brigade, then under the command of Colonel Wheeler, the battalion participated in the fighting at Chickamauga, September 19-20, sometimes under the personal direction of General Forrest, who reported that on September 23, with McDonald's Battalion, he gained the point of Lookout Mountain.

On October 29, Forrest was again detached from the Army of Tennessee, and sent to West Tennessee and North Mississippi "to organize such troops as he can."

On November 7, Forrest, on setting out on this assignment, reported "McDonald's Battalion, my escort company, and one battery (Morton's) will comprise my entire command." Total effectives of this expedition were 271 men, of which McDonald's Battalion

comprised 139. McDonald's Battalion was part of Forrest's command at Okolona, Mississippi in February 1864, when he defeated the Federal force under Major General William Sooy Smith. On March 7, McDonald's Battalion was reported in the brigade commanded by Colonel R. C. McCulloch, of Brigadier General James R. Chalmers' Division, but on March 9, Duckworth's Regiment, and McDonald's Battalion, now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James R. Crews, were ordered to report to Forrest at Columbus, Mississippi, and accompanied him on his raid into West Tennessee, and his capture of Fort Pillow on April 13. Lieutenant Colonel Crews remained in command of the Battalion until the assignment of Lieutenant Colonel Kelley in July, 1864, although his appointment to the command was never confirmed.

On April 15, Forrest, on his withdrawal into Mississippi, reported he had left Duckworth's Cavalry Regiment and McDonald's Battalion in West Tennessee for the purpose of conscripting, and holding the guerrillas in check. The battalion continued to be reported in McCulloch's Brigade until July 18, 1864, when Forrest ordered; "The regiment now known as Forrest's Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel D. C. Kelley, will be assigned to duty with Neely's Brigade."

The authorities at Richmond had gotten the impression that Forrest's Old Regiment had lost its identity, but in May, 1864, General Forrest advised them that McDonald's Battalion was a part of his old regiment, and that he intended to increase it to a regiment by the addition of other companies. On July 19, 1864, the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office finally got around to confirming the changes which had taken place some time before, and ordered: "The four Alabama Companies heretofore attached to the organization known as McDonald's Battalion, or N. B. Forrest's 3rd Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, are hereby transferred to Russell's Alabama Regiment. The seven companies now composing N. B. Forrest's 3rd Tennessee Cavalry will constitute the 26th Battalion, to

the command of which Lieutenant Colonel D. C. Kelley is hereby assigned." However, Forrest called it Forrest's Tennessee Regiment, with Kelley as colonel; Allin as lieutenant colonel; and W. H. Forrest as major.

On August 30, 1864, Colonel E. W. Rucker was given command of a brigade in Chalmers' Division, composed of 7th (Duckworth's), 14th (Neely's), 12th (Richardson's), 15th (Stewart's) Regiments, and the 26th Battalion (Forrest's Old Regiment). The unit was, from this time on, sometimes reported as the 26th Battalion, sometimes as the 3rd Tennessee, and sometimes as Forrest's Old Regiment, commanded at times by Major P. T. Allin, at times by Lieutenant Colonel Kelley. It accompanied Forrest on his raid into Middle Tennessee in September, going from Athens, Alabama to Pulaski, and Spring Hill, Tennessee, and back through Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. It then went with Forrest into West Tennessee, the attack on Paris Landing and the firing of Johnsonville. Here Lieutenant Colonel Kelley, with the 26th Battalion captured the transport *Venus*, crossed the river with it, and seized the gun boat *Undine*, and returned with it.

On November 15, Forrest again joined the Army of Tennessee in command of all the cavalry of that army. As part of Chalmers' Division the regiment participated in Hood's Tennessee Campaign, and on December 3, under Colonel D. C. Kelley, with four field pieces, blockaded the Cumberland River at Bell's Mills, six miles below the city of Nashville, until the Battle of Nashville opened.

After the retreat from Nashville, with Forrest in command of the rearguard, Forrest continued to operate in Alabama and Mississippi after the Army of Tennessee transferred to North Carolina to join General Joseph E. Johnston. His were the last Confederate forces east of the Mississippi to surrender. The regiment, as part of the 3rd Consolidated Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, was surrendered and paroled at Gainesville, Alabama in May 1865.

4th (MURRAY'S) TENNESSEE CAVALRY REGIMENT

Organized August 1862 by addition of other companies to Spiller's Battalion (q.v.); disbanded January 23, 1863 and companies

distributed to other organizations.

This regiment should not be confused with 4th (Starnes-McLemore's) Regiment, but it

does have a direct connection with Baxter Smith's 8th (4th) Tennessee Cavalry Regiment into which a number of the companies went after this regiment disbanded. The exact date and place of organization is not known.

FIELD OFFICERS

Colonel—John P. Murray

Lieutenant Colonels—C. C. Spiller, Baxter Smith

Majors—Baxter Smith, Willis Scott Bledsoe

CAPTAINS—George W. Carter, Co. "A". Organized June 14, 1862 at Chattanooga, Hamilton County. Became 2nd Co. "D", 1st Confederate Cavalry; later an independent company; in 1864 consolidated with 1st Co. "A", 13th Tennessee Cavalry.

M. A. Christian, Co. "B". Organized October 2, 1862 at Mill Creek, Putnam County. Became Co. "H", 22nd Tennessee Infantry Battalion.

Cyrus H. Ingles, Co. "C". Organized August 14, 1861 at Knoxville. Men from Sullivan County. Formerly Co. "F", 5th Tennessee Cavalry Battalion (q.v.); then served in Spiller's Battalion (q.v.). Became Co. "B", 8th (4th) Tennessee Cavalry Regiment.

J. M. McMillan, J. J. Amonett, Co. "D". Organized November 11, 1861 at Livingston, Overton County, as James W. McHenry's Company, "Brown Rangers." Became 2nd Co. "C", 1st Confederate Cavalry.

R. J. C. Gailbreath, Co. "E". Organized August 22, 1862 from Smith and Jackson Counties. Became Co. "K", 22nd Tennessee Infantry Battalion.

Willis Scott Bledsoe (to major), R. H. Bledsoe, Co. "F". Organized August 10, 1861 at Camp McGinnis, Overton County. Men from Fentress County. Attached to this regiment September, 1862. Became Co. "I", 8th (4th) Tennessee Cavalry.

Ephraim Hixson, Co. "G". Organized August 28, 1862 at Pikeville, Bledsoe County. Became Co. "G", 22nd Tennessee Infantry Battalion.

Francis Cunningham, Co. "H". Organized July 22, 1861 at Nashville, Davidson County as Q. C. Sanders' Company. Men from Smith County. Became Co. "C", 8th (4th) Tennessee Cavalry.

Samuel H. Glover, Co. "I". Organized August 11, 1861 at Chattanooga, Hamilton County as C. C. Spiller's Company. Formerly Co. "B",

5th Tennessee Cavalry Battalion; then in Spiller's Battalion. Became Co. "H", 8th (4th) Tennessee Cavalry.

Oliver P. Schoolfield, Co. "K". Organized July 31, 1862 at Pikeville, Bledsoe County. Became Co. "F", 22nd Tennessee Infantry Battalion.

Reports from Companies "D" and "F" give accounts of their operations, both before and after they became a part of this regiment. These reports, not verbatim, but in substance, were as follows: Company "D" on Kentucky-Tennessee border until January 15, 1862, when ordered to report to General Felix K. Zollicoffer, but the Battle of Fishing Creek was fought before reaching him. Ordered by General George B. Crittenden to Decatur, Alabama, when the army retreated to that place; then ordered back to Kentucky border by General A. S. Johnston. "Remained on border till August 1862, during which time we had various skirmishes with the enemy. Made two trips with General John Hunt Morgan through Kentucky. At Cave City, Kentucky on first trip, helped to destroy two large trains. Marched over 300 miles in three days. Next trip within 50 miles of Cincinnati, had ten or 12 skirmishes, and severe fights at Cynthiana, Lebanon, and Tompkinsville, Kentucky. Were gone 17 days. In August, went into Murray's Regiment. Went to Kentucky with Bragg's Army, via Lebanon, Murfreesboro, Nashville, to Glasgow, Kentucky to Munfordsville, Kentucky, there having heavy skirmish. In fact, were skirmishing almost daily from time they left Sparta to the Battle of Perryville, in which they were engaged. Retreated with army to Tennessee. On December 12, lost Captain J. M. McMillan in skirmish near Nolensville. Was in Battle of Murfreesboro; charged the Infantry at various times; helped capture and burn great many enemy wagons between Nashville and Murfreesboro. During all fights lost but one killed, two wounded, but had good many horses killed."

"Company "F" armed with Navy pistols. Attached to Zollicoffer's Brigade. Had four skirmishes prior to Fishing Creek. Engaged in that battle as advance guard; in the retreat as the rear guard. Lost all horses in crossing the river (ordered by Colonel Cummings, commanding brigade to leave horses on north side of the river). Remounted themselves and

went to Decatur, Alabama, with the army under General A. S. Johnston. Ordered by him to return and guard Tennessee-Kentucky border. Severe skirmish near McMinnville March 25, 1862; lost four killed, three wounded. Remained on border till September, 1862 when ordered to join General Bragg on march to Kentucky, being attached to Colonel Murray's Regiment. Skirmished at Munfordsville, Shepherdsville, Salt River, Bardstown. Also engaged and charged the enemy at Perryville; two wounded, seven horses killed. In rear during retreat under General John A. Wharton. Had five skirmishes while on picket in vicinity of Brentwood between December 1st and 25th. On that day engaged the enemy as advance pickets on McCook's march to Nolensville. Skirmished with enemy every day until December 31, when as part of Wharton's Brigade were in the different engagements and charges made on the enemy's rear and wagon trains during the battle. Engaged again at LaVergne January 1, 1863."

As indicated in these company reports, the regiment was first assigned on September 14, 1862 to General N. B. Forrest's Brigade. When Forrest was sent back to Tennessee by General Bragg on September 25, the regiment was placed in Colonel (later Brigadier General) John A. Wharton's Brigade. On September 26, Wharton, near Bardstown, Kentucky, reported: "I find that I have now in camp seven companies of Colonel Murray's Regiment." On the 27th, at High Grove, Kentucky, Wharton reported he had placed three companies 4th Tennessee Cavalry, under Captain C. H. Ingles, at Salt River on the Louisville and Bardstown Pike. Another dispatch, on the same date, stated: "I have three Cavalry Regiments; the Texas Rangers, 2nd Georgia, Murray's Tennessee Regiment, and three Kentucky Companies. Three companies of Murray's Regiment were sent to Bragg yesterday. I have sent all Murray's Regiment subject to my orders on the Shepherdsville Road. As soon as the other companies of Murray's Regiment report, I will dispose of them as ordered."

On November 25, Wharton's Brigade was reported as consisting of the 3rd Confederate,

2nd Georgia, 4th Tennessee, Bledsoe's Battalion, 8th Texas, White's Artillery, and Captain Anderson's Cavalry Company. There seems some confusion here, as Bledsoe's Battalion was presumably a part of the 4th (Murray's) Regiment. It seems that somewhere about this time when Colonel Murray was elected to the Confederate Congress, an attempt was made to make two regiments out of Murray's Regiment, for in the history of Baxter Smith's Regiment in *Lindsley's Annals*, (officially designated as the 8th, but usually known as the 4th), the organization date is given as November 1, 1862, at Nolensville, Tennessee. Also on November 27, Brigadier General Joseph Wheeler was authorized to increase Bledsoe's Battalion to a regiment when practicable, and on December 25 complained: "I cannot get the companies to complete Smith's and Murray's Regiments, although they have been promised to me for some time." From the above, it would seem that the 4th Tennessee Regiment reported in Wharton's Brigade on November 25, was the forerunner of Baxter Smith's Regiment which was not officially organized until January, 1863.

This is further confirmed by the fact that in the Battle of Murfreesboro, December 31, 1862, Wharton's Brigade was reported as composed of the 14th Alabama Battalion; 1st Confederate, 3rd Confederate, 2nd Georgia, a detachment from 3rd Georgia, 2nd (Ashby), 4th (Baxter Smith) Regiments, John R. Davis' Battalion, 8th Texas, Murray's Tennessee Regiment, under Major W. S. Bledsoe, Anderson's Escort Company, Hardy's Escort, and White's Battery. Of the battle, General Wharton reported that Major Bledsoe rendered prompt and efficient service in burning wagons which could not be removed; also that the loss in Murray's, Smith's, Cox's Regiments, and Malone's Battalion in officers and men was considerable.

The attempt to organize separate regiments for Baxter Smith and Bledsoe failed, and Baxter Smith's Regiment was not officially organized until January, 1863, when Murray's Regiment was broken up, and four companies were placed in Baxter Smith's Regiment, of which Bledsoe became Major.