

**A History of the
16th Louisiana Infantry Regiment, C.S.A.**

By

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Introduction

Much has been written over the years concerning the accomplishments and failures of the men who fought in the American Civil War. A large majority of historical research has been devoted to important military generals, major battles, famous regiments, and the various weapons employed in the war. Examining the regiments and companies that fought in the war helps historians understand the dedication, sacrifice, political ideologies, and social ties of the soldiers. This thesis specifically explores the important men and actions taken by the 16th Louisiana Regiment, C.S.A. during the Civil War. This regiment provides an example of a common infantry regiment that served as the backbone and foundation of the Army of Tennessee.

Of all the military units created during the first days of the Civil War, the 16th Louisiana deserves recognition for its contribution to Louisiana's and consequently the Confederacy's war effort. Comprised of men from all parts of the state, the soldiers of the 16th Louisiana answered the call to arms and performed their duty despite enduring great hardships. Not merely nameless men from small country towns and parishes, the volunteers of the 16th Louisiana defended their families, homes, and communities from what many considered an imposing Federal government. This paper defines the important role the regiment played in the defense of its home state as well as the Confederacy.

The State of Louisiana enrolled the 16th Louisiana into active military service in September of 1861. While in training at Camp Moore, near Tangipahoa, Louisiana, members of the regiment learned the important skills needed to defend their state.

Incorporated into the Confederate army, the 16th Louisiana eagerly joined the Army of the Mississippi in March 1862, before the Battle of Shiloh. After the Battle of Shiloh and the unsuccessful Kentucky Campaign of 1862, high casualties and the termination of many soldier enlistments forced General Braxton Bragg to consolidate regiments to create larger, more manageable fighting units. This reorganization led to the formation of the Army of Tennessee. During this reorganization, Bragg consolidated the 16th Louisiana and the 25th Louisiana Regiment. This new consolidated regiment, 16th & 25th Louisiana, fought as one until after the Nashville Campaign of 1864. The 16th Louisiana participated in the army's major campaigns, including the Battles of Farmington, Perryville, Stones River, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge, Atlanta, and Nashville.

An extensive search of secondary sources found no regimental history of the 16th Louisiana Infantry Regiment. Marcus Carter Rownd, a writer and historian from Livingston Parish, Louisiana, wrote a small paper mentioning the *Walker Roughs*, later designated as Company D, 16th Louisiana Regiment, but his paper focuses on only one company and does not provide a well researched and detailed history of the entire regiment. Military historians such as Peter Cozzens, Kenneth W. Noe, and Wiley Sword have briefly mentioned the regiment in their various works on Civil War battles but none have written a regimental history detailing the actions of the 16th Louisiana.

There exists a large amount of primary source material pertaining to the 16th Louisiana Regiment in various holdings across the United States. Southeastern Louisiana University possesses a complete set of *War of the Rebellion: Official*

Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, which contains the official after action reports, written by the commanders of the 16th Louisiana, as well as additional official correspondence relating to the 16th Louisiana. Southeastern also owns the complete set of *Confederate Veteran Magazine*, which contains stories members of the 16th Louisiana wrote detailing their individual war experiences. Louisiana State University houses the E. J. Ellis Papers, which contain close to one hundred personal letters of Lt. E. J. Ellis of the 16th Louisiana. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette stores the Louis Stagg Papers, which include several personal letters from Louis Stagg of the 16th Louisiana. Several letters from men of the 16th Louisiana are located in the research room of the Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, Louisiana. The Louisiana State Archives in Baton Rouge holds copies of muster rolls and casualty lists for the 16th Louisiana. Several letters, action reports, and journals exist in the research holdings of several state and national battlefields such as Shiloh, Perryville, Stone's River, and Chickamauga. In addition, Mr. Todd Gober of Tennessee graciously provided several letters of his great grandfather, Colonel Daniel Gober, who commanded the 16th Louisiana.

Chapter One

Political, social, and economic turmoil present in the state of Louisiana during the early days of the Civil War motivated many Louisiana communities to construct and support the 16th Louisiana Regiment. In many ways, researching this regiment provides historians with an excellent example of a typical infantry regiment. For example, all of the soldiers, for various reasons, volunteered to leave their ordinary lives as farmers, lawyers, or doctors and marched off to fight the war. Not unlike regiments from all over the South, the volunteers of the 16th Louisiana participated in community drill sessions and flag ceremonies. In addition, the volunteers also gathered and drilled at a state funded induction camp, which transformed them from common citizens to soldiers. Carrying the hopes, fears, and affections of the people of their community along the march, these soldiers consistently displayed the pride and courage reflected in their communities. This chapter will detail the important events particular to the 16th Louisiana Regiment's formation and the circumstances which motivated these men to enlist in the war.

During the late 1850's, diverging and clashing attitudes and ideologies regarding politics, economic markets, and cultural habits stirred much unrest among the citizens of Louisiana. Politically, Louisianians, majority Democrat, feared that the election of the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, would begin the North's enslavement of the South. Many Louisianians feared that the Republican Party would deny slavery's expansion into the new western territories. If the Republicans captured political control in the Federal government, Southern Democrats feared that their rights and institutions could not be defended through national politics. Southern

leaders tried to unite the Democratic Party before the election of 1860, in an effort to protect slavery through national politics. However, the Democrats split their voting power between two candidates, Stephen Douglas and John C. Breckinridge, negating the Southern bloc vote.¹

Lincoln won the election of 1860. The election spread fear throughout Louisiana. Since Lincoln won the presidency without the support of the Southern states, they feared he could also get the votes necessary to tip the fragile balance of power which existed between the slave and free states in the senate.

Lincoln's presidential election threatened to upset Louisiana's economic profitability. Cotton and sugar production gave the state economic and political power. Louisiana feared Lincoln would enact new tariffs through which to control export prices. Many felt that these new tariffs would benefit Northern businesses at the sacrifice of Southern profit. In fact, these very same fears swept much of the South in the 1830's during the Nullification Crisis. Up until 1860, the South possessed the political power necessary to combat new tariffs. However, Lincoln's election threatened the South's political power and ability to defend its economic policies.²

Questions concerning the continuation of the institution of slavery played a large role in Louisianians' fears. Lincoln campaigned on a platform that called for the exclusion of slavery in the new western territories. This "Free Soil" policy angered Southern slaveholders and threatened their political and economic expansion.

¹ John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), 276-285.

² McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation*, 12-48.

Historians such as Eugene D. Genovese have argued that the continued economic profitability of the Southern economy required slavery's expansion into the western territories. This expansion would encourage the continued profitability of the plantation system, which based its capital in slave labor and large tracts of arable land. Allowing slavery's expansion into the western territories would bring thousands of miles of new farmland as well as provide a good outlet to move surplus slave populations from the Deep South. Many Southern leaders believed that if Lincoln and the Republicans prohibited slavery's expansion into the territories, the collapse of the southern slave economy seemed likely.³

The fear of the political, economic, and social repercussions of Lincoln's election magnified the arguments of the secessionist movement. Louisiana's citizens divided between pro-union and pro-secession factions. After the election of 1860, the secessionists quickly played to the fears of most Louisianians. Their influence motivated the state authorities to convene a special convention, where the citizens of Louisiana decided its response to the election results. Gathering in Baton Rouge in January of 1861, secessionist delegates enticed, persuaded, and overpowered the convention into voting of an Ordinance of Secession. Despite attempts by pro-union delegates to stall the proceedings with calls for compromise, the convention decided Louisiana's fate. On January 26, 1861, the state of Louisiana, by a vote of 113 to 17, cut all ties with the United States and became an independent state.⁴

³ Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 13-41 and 243-75.

⁴ John D. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), 3.

After Lincoln's election and with the prospect of Louisiana leaving the United States, many Louisiana parishes organized volunteer militia units. These units provided the defense necessary to protect its community way of life. Governor Thomas Overton Moore ordered the accumulation of supplies and weapons for a future state-funded military force. Volunteers from almost every parish and community assembled and recruited local young men for temporary home guard units. Calls for improved fortifications and weapons sounded throughout the state. Acting on his own initiative, Governor Moore ordered Colonel Braxton Bragg and several local state units to seize the United States arsenal in Baton Rouge. Once in Louisiana hands, the valuable supplies filled most weapon, ammunition, and supply needs requested by the state's military units. On January 10, 1861, Louisiana troops secured the valuable arsenal and accumulated close to 50,000 rifles, four howitzer cannons, multiple pieces of heavy artillery, a battery of six pound guns, a battery of twelve pound guns, over three hundred barrels of gun powder, and a large inventory of ammunition.⁵

On February 5, 1861, Governor Moore, acting on the authority of the State Secession Convention, ordered the formation of a military force to provide the state with an adequate defense. The state Secession Convention also organized a state Military Board to help organize state defenses. Governor Moore hoped to receive at least one regiment of infantry and one regiment of artillery as soon as possible.⁶

⁵ Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 10.

⁶ Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 15.

On March 21, 1861, the state of Louisiana joined the newly conceived Confederate States of America, which elected Jefferson Davis of Mississippi its first president. Davis called for the immediate organization and mobilization of state defenses. Governor Moore used this policy to justify the seizure of all United States property within the state. State officials quickly targeted the quartermaster depots, military forts, the United States Mint, and the Customs House.⁷

Moore also quickly mobilized over 1,700 state troops into Confederate service and asked the Military Board to organize and equip an additional force of volunteers for extended military service. Also, Governor Moore shipped a large portion of the weapons and supplies seized by state forces from the Baton Rouge Arsenal to other needy Confederate states. In addition to mobilizing state forces into the Confederate army, Moore shipped extra state forces to re-enforce and improve state defenses and fortifications.⁸

Throughout the spring of 1861, volunteer companies formed in almost every parish. Many of these companies consisted of local volunteers. Men, both young and old, answered their communities' calls for freedom. Farmers, businessmen, professionals, and politicians filled the ranks of each new company. Men such as E. John Ellis, a young lawyer, joined a local volunteer company in his home parish of St. Helena. Dr. William Elliott Walker, a resident of Springfield, La., organized a volunteer company of over one hundred men, named the *Walker Roughs*. Farmers

⁷ Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 4-21.

⁸ Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 20.

such as Louis Stagg and John Forman from St. Landry and Avoyelles Parishes also left their fields to fight with the 16th Louisiana.⁹

Although many locals cared little for national politics, most volunteers did not openly advocate the desire to dissolve the Union, but instead pledged to defend their state and communities. For example, Ellis, a future lieutenant of the 16th Louisiana, recalled in his diary that he hoped Louisiana would remain in the Union, but after Lincoln's election "my hopes were well nigh dashed to the ground."¹⁰

Louisiana's political, social, and economic fears surrounding Lincoln's election alarmed the communities' volunteers into action. Formations and drill dominated the daily routines of the early companies. Despite their early organization and enthusiasm, most local companies did not possess weapons and uniforms. Instead, men drilled with their personal rifles and shotguns and wore their own clothes. Until the state advocated the endorsement of a full-scale military mobilization, many of these volunteer units waited to be enrolled into state service.¹¹

Throughout April of 1861, President Jefferson Davis continually requested more troops and supplies from Louisiana. Governor Moore obliged, but repeatedly warned the new Confederate government not to drain Louisiana of its defenses. After the shelling of Fort Sumter in mid-April, Davis called for another large quota of

⁹ E. John Ellis, "Personal Diary kept by E. John Ellis, 1865 (?)", (Photocopy of a transcription), Stones River National Battlefield, United States Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, Murfreesboro, TN., 4.; Marcus Carter Rownd, Sr. "A History of the Company D, 16th Louisiana Infantry, Confederate States Army (1861-1865), 1946(?)." (photocopy), p. 2, Livingston Parish Collection, Box 3, Folder 7, Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, Sims Memorial Library, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, La.

¹⁰ Ellis, "Personal Diary", 1.

¹¹ Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 21.

troops from each state for Confederate service. His request followed Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to destroy the rebellion. Moore required the organization of over 5,000 new volunteers from the state in order to fulfill the president's quota. He demanded that all new volunteers enlist for twelve months service in the Confederate Army. By the end of April 1861, Louisiana had mobilized over 9,000 of her sons for Confederate service.¹²

In order to enroll and train the new volunteers into military service, the state needed an isolated training facility. In late April of 1861, Louisiana organized its first official camp of instruction at the old Metairie racetrack near New Orleans. Volunteer companies from all parts of Louisiana responded to Governor Moore's request and proceeded to the new camp.¹³

Camp Walker offered recruits a difficult lifestyle. Common military duties such as drilling and guard duty, as well as strict military discipline, took away the volunteer's social independence and freedom of movement. Surrounded by swamp and sewage ditches, the racetrack's soft earth quickly disintegrated into a field of mud during heavy rains. Mosquitoes, stifling heat, lack of fresh water, and constant visitors from nearby New Orleans distracted the volunteers from gaining the military discipline and experience needed to survive in the field.¹⁴

These problems finally forced Governor Moore in early May of 1861, to order General Elisha L. Tracy to find a more suitable location for the military camp. Tracy

¹² Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 20-21.

¹³ Powell A. Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore and Life at Camp Moore Among the Volunteers* (Bourque Printing, 1985), 6.

¹⁴ Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 6.

traveled north of New Orleans, following the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad line, until he reached the small town of Tangipahoa. This area contained abundant amounts of suitable land, cool running water, and clean pine air. After receiving Tracy's report on the next possible camp location, Moore ordered the three organized regiments, 1st Louisiana, 2nd Louisiana, and 3rd Louisiana infantry Regiments, and the handful of volunteer companies, to relocate to the Tangipahoa site. On May 13, 1861, the Louisiana troops began the short journey north to Tracy's new campsite. Tracy named the new camp, Camp Moore, in honor of Governor Moore.¹⁵

Camp Moore, located a half-mile north of Tangipahoa station, provided the Louisiana volunteers with nearly everything they needed to live comfortably during military training. Bounded by the Tangipahoa River on the east and the cool waters of Beaver Creek on the south, Camp Moore contained abundant living space for multiple regiments of recruits. Fresh water, along with the high elevated pineywood landscape, gave the volunteer soldier a much cleaner living environment than the swampy mud of Camp Walker. Rows of company tents ran parallel to the railroad tracks, which formed the western boundary of the camp. Sutler stores, restaurants, and the quartermaster tents rested near the shore of Beaver Creek. A large parade ground, located near the center of the camp, provided a great drill and instruction area for newly formed regiments. Guard posts circling the camp, as well as the train depot in town, protected the camp from trespassers and kept recruits from leaving without permission. As new volunteer companies entered the camp during the next few

¹⁵ Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 22.

months, they cleared away brush to form new company streets, rows of tents lined up to resemble the buildings of a city street, on the northern boundary of the camp. No specific landmark can be found detailing the exact extent of the northern boundary of Camp Moore. Many historians believe it differed depending on the number of the troops present in camp at any given time.¹⁶

The atmosphere of Camp Moore differed from that of Camp Walker. Due to its isolation from the city of New Orleans, officers at Camp Moore tried to dispense with the distracting pleasures associated with city life. Instead they encouraged strict military discipline and the necessity of outdoor survival skills. However, remnants of city life showed up in the camp. A reporter for the *Daily Picayune* reported that Camp Moore resembled a canvas tent city, having both streets and restaurants. A reporter for the *Daily True Delta* amusingly described the many colorful signs hung on the tents of the soldiers of Camp Moore. Names such as “Our Woodland Home” “The Lions Den” “the Happy Retreat” and “Blood and Thunder” provided a personal touch to a uniformed camp.¹⁷

Camp Moore’s location along the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad allowed easy access of supplies and new recruits into the camp. Visitors from New Orleans traveled the sixty miles of railroad north to Tangipahoa to see their loved ones. The soldiers also acquired liberty passes to return home to visit loved ones and gain new recruits for their companies. Newspaper reporters visited the camp and described the living conditions to their readers in New Orleans. Letters and

¹⁶ Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 11-12.

¹⁷ *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), 28 May 1861.; *Daily True Delta* (New Orleans), 4 June 1861.

communication between the soldiers and their communities traveled back and forth over the rail line. The railroad also allowed the troops easy and quick access to other parts of the country. They could be shipped directly to parts of Mississippi, Tennessee, or Kentucky. Troops at Camp Moore also guarded this important supply line to New Orleans from any Yankee invasion.¹⁸

The men of the 4th Louisiana Regiment completed their entire training at Camp Moore and distinguished themselves as Camp Moore's first graduates. These men departed on June 9, 1861 for the Mississippi Gulf coast. Between June 4th and June 22, 1861, six additional volunteer regiments, the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th Louisiana Regiments, qualified for Confederate service and departed Camp Moore for Virginia. By early August, the 11th and 12th Louisiana Regiments quickly organized and departed for Columbus, Kentucky. Tennessee received the aid of the 13th Louisiana Regiment in September 1861.¹⁹

The volunteer companies that eventually composed the 16th Louisiana Regiment originated from several Louisiana parishes. Caddo, East Feliciana, St. Tammany, Rapides, St. Helena, Livingston, St. Landry, and Avoyelles parishes sent many sons and fathers to fight in the ranks of the new volunteer regiment. Each company chose a special name designation, which represented either the home community or the founding member. Names such as the *Caddo Fensibles*, *Rapides Tigers*, *East Feliciana Guards*, and the *St. Helena Rebels*, identified the home

¹⁸ Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 8.

¹⁹ Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 17.

parishes of the volunteer soldiers in each company. The *Edward Guards* and the *Walker Roughs* named their companies in honor of their founding captains, who usually funded most of their organization. Alternate names such as the *Pine Wood Sharp Shooters*, *Big Cane Rifles*, *Castor Guards*, and the *Evergreen Invincibles*, reflected the landscape or culture of their communities. These company names changed once admitted into Confederate service. In order to remove confusion and to improve efficiency, the volunteer companies received letter designations. For example, the *Walker Roughs* became Company D of the 16th Louisiana Regiment.²⁰

Each community valued its connection to its volunteer company. The safety of family and friends, protection of homes and farms, and the continuation of their way of life, motivated the communities to organize a defensive force. From these motivating factors, communities encouraged their members to pick up the rifle and defend their community. As the men organized their volunteer companies and elected their leaders, the community showed its allegiance to its fighting men by making uniforms, cooking food, and organizing fundraisers. Usually the ladies of each community worked hard to provide their men with all the essentials and luxuries available. As the men drilled and trained for military service, the local women formed sewing circles, cooking groups, and aid societies.

Not just nameless men from small country towns, the volunteers of the 16th Louisiana Regiment served their home state as representatives of their communities. Like volunteers from other regiments from all over the south, the men of the 16th Louisiana became an extension of their communities. A connecting bond between the

²⁰Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 70.; Rownd, “A History of the Company D, 16th Louisiana Infantry”, 2.

community and the volunteer motivated the men of the 16th Louisiana to endure the hardships of military life in order to ensure the protection of their homes, property, and families as well as display the good qualities of their home communities. The experience of the 16th Louisiana suggests that similar community-soldier bonds existed throughout the South.

In examining the 16th Louisiana, it is possible to observe this relationship. By reviewing the details of the regiment's formation, flag ceremonies, and personal letters, historians can see the importance of the soldier to the community. While the soldiers fought the enemy, the families of the communities inquired into the health of their sons and repeatedly tried to send support and solace to their fighting men. Likewise, the soldiers constantly wondered about the conditions back home and tried to reassure their families of their well-being. In addition, each soldier carried the good qualities of his community such as patriotic fervor, community pride, family devotion, and personal courage to other parts of the country and became a symbol of the community to others. Thus, even though the soldier ventured away, he never ceased being a member of his community.

Perhaps the best evidence of the importance of the community-soldier bond appears in the flag presentation ceremony. These ceremonies, widely common among communities all over the South, displayed the pride and honor the community and the men felt for each other. The community assembled either in the town square or near the main hall and presented the company with a flag. This flag, usually constructed from the dresses of the women of the community, symbolized the cause the volunteers wished to protect. The flag received the love, care, and respect of every

soldier. Robert E. Bonner's "Flag Culture and the Consolidation of Confederate Nationalism" examines the importance of the flag to Confederate nationalism. He argues that the flag presented the Confederate citizen the attraction of battlefield glory and the martyrdom of the soldiers who fought for it. Popular culture romanticized the flag's image by incorporating ideas of patriotic pride, community devotion, and protection of the family. The flag inspired the soldier to persevere for his nation, community, family, and women. The ladies also hoped the flag brought comfort to the volunteers during the stress of battle. Soldiers gazed at the flag and remembered the love and faith of the community behind them. Thus, during the flag ceremony, the flag became the link that connected the soldier with the community.²¹

Many of the volunteer companies that eventually joined the 16th Louisiana celebrated their own flag ceremony. E. John Ellis of the *St. Helena Rebels* described in his journal the atmosphere that surrounded the ceremony. "The brave and fair, the young and old assembled and joy and gayety unrestrained ruled the fast fleeting hours," he said. "Young love's dream perhaps found its reality then and hopes were born which...beckon me onward." T. G. Pegus of the *Caddo Fencibles* recalled that "streaming banners, the booming of cannon, and the inspiring strains of *Dixie*, filled our souls with patriotic ardor, and we thought: If it were a sin to covet honor, then we were the most affending [sic] souls alive." William Walker and his company of volunteers also participated in a flag ceremony in their community. Before the company departed for Camp Moore, the ladies of Springfield, Louisiana, presented

²¹ Robert E. Bonner, "Flag Culture and the Consolidation of Confederate Nationalism," *The Journal of Southern History* 68 (May 2002): 293-332.

Dr. Walker a beautiful hand-stitched first national flag. This flag served as the company colors during its training at Camp Moore. After being named Color Company of the 16th Louisiana, the *Walker Roughs*, renamed as D Company, proudly used these colors as the official regimental colors of the 16th Louisiana.²²

The 16th Louisiana's ranks were organized according to the common military structure of the period. For example, before the war, a regiment contained an organization of two battalions. Each battalion consisted of five companies of soldiers. Every company enrolled a minimum of sixty-four privates. This number of riflemen increased to one hundred by the summer of 1861. The company captain and the two lieutenants composed the commanding officers, while four sergeants and four corporals made up the noncommissioned officers of each company. The soldiers of each company elected the regimental officers such as colonel, lieutenant colonel, and major. In many cases, extensive politicking preceded every election. The elected officers normally appointed the senior noncommissioned officers. According to Louisiana historian, Powell A. Casey, "...each of the 10 companies was allowed to cast four votes for each office, with 21 votes being needed to elect a candidate or nominee to one of the ranks."²³

The men of the 16th Louisiana also held their own officer elections during their training at Camp Moore. On September 5, 1861, E. John Ellis, in a letter to his mother, described the soldiers' anticipation surrounding the coming officer election. He explained that Preston Pond led in the race for colonel, Enoch Mason remained

²²Ellis, "Personal Diary", 4.; "Reunion of Company C, Sixteenth Louisiana Regiment." *Confederate Veteran* 8 (1900): 405.; Rownd, "A History of the Company D, 16th Louisiana Infantry," 3.

²³ Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 2

hopeful for lieutenant colonel and the major position depended on the election of Carruth, Luria, and Gober. After reviewing the regimental roster composed at the time of the regiment's mustering, it appears that Ellis correctly identified the commanding officers. Preston Pond became colonel, Enoch Mason received the rank of lieutenant colonel, and Daniel Gober won the race for major.²⁴

After the volunteer companies enrolled in the Confederate States Army, the quartermasters of Camp Moore supplied the new volunteers the equipment needed for military service. Volunteers received one cartridge box, cap pouch, waist belt, belt buckle, bayonet scabbard (depending on which type of rifle the volunteer possessed), canteen, knapsack, gun sling, shoulder straps, and haversack. Typically, individual companies applied for the equipment needed before being incorporated into a regiment. Usually the captain of each new company filled out the order forms for the new equipment. These equipment request forms provide historians clues as to the company's size and troop strength at the time of its induction into Confederate service. Captain B. J. Kennedy of the *Caddo Fensibles* requested 77 cartridge boxes, cap pouches, bayonet scabbards, waist belts, shoulder straps, and gun slings. Captain William E. Walker ordered ninety cartridge boxes, bayonet scabbards, shoulder straps, waist belts, buckles, cap pouches, and gun slings. Volunteers received important living equipment as well. Tents, blankets, tin plates, tin cups, metal eating utensils, and kettles circulated among the volunteers.²⁵

²⁴Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to mother, home, 5 September 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 70.

²⁵ Confederate Accouterment Order Forms, Microfilm collection M346 of Record Group 109, reel #197, National Archives, (Photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Confederate Accouterment Order Forms, Microfilm collection M346 of Record Group 109, reel #197.

The volunteers living at Camp Moore also received daily supplies of food rations. Bacon, beans, rice, flour, hard bread, sugar, salt, and coffee sustained the volunteers over the course of their training at Camp Moore. The volunteers, usually organized into messes of five to ten men, received and cooked these rations over an open fire. Several volunteers wrote home about the food they received at Camp Moore. E. John Ellis consoled his mother about the living conditions at Camp Moore and explained that the camp provided him plenty of food and water. W. G. Richardson wrote that he gained over five pounds since his arrival at Camp Moore. Fred R. Taber of the 18th Louisiana Regiment wrote his sister that the meat provided by Camp Moore exceeded the quality of meat available in St. James Parish. He also enjoyed the quality coffee and cold ice water available at Camp Moore. However, Louis Stagg did not enjoy the food. He later wrote, "...there is not much choice in meals here; I would give anything to be home eating a good gumbo, milk, butter, things I've not seen since I've been here, except a little butter once, and some sour buttermilk, sour to the point of being undrinkable."²⁶

By October of 1861, food shipments to the camp had dwindled. E. John Ellis remarked that the quartermasters conserved as much food as possible; however, many volunteers, including himself, felt that the quartermasters and butchers secretly stole

²⁶ Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 19.; Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to mother, home, 3 October 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; W. G. Richardson, Camp Moore, to M. T. Carter, Springfield, 8 October 1861, Transcribed copy of letter, Rownd, Marcus Carter Sr., "A History of Company D, 16th Louisiana Infantry, Confederate States Army (1861-1865), 1946 (?)," (photocopy), Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, Sims Memorial Library, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, La.; Fred R. Taber, Camp Moore, to sister, St. James Parish, 12 September 1861. (photocopy). Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Louis Stagg, Camp Moore, to wife, 15 October 1861, (photocopy), Stagg Letters, 1855-1863, MSS:7, (Holdings of University of Louisiana at Lafayette).

portions of the food rations and possibly sold them to outsiders. After a heated meeting, several hundred volunteers stormed the quartermaster's tents and sutler stores in search of the food supplies. The volunteers ransacked the tents and forced the quartermaster and butcher to flee for their lives. Colonel Preston Pond of the 16th Louisiana along with officers from many other commands restored order and returned the volunteers to their company tents. After a few days, the officers procured a new supply of beef for the hungry men.²⁷

Throughout August, September, and October, heavy rains and the numerous troops deteriorated the dry piney wood soil into a thick field of mud. Living conditions for the men of the 16th Louisiana worsened considerably. Wet clothes and equipment plagued the new recruits. Many soldiers searched for any available comfort to relieve them from the weather. The many pine trees that circled the camp provided inadequate shelter from the sun and rain. Plank floors, mosquito nets, and bales of hay spread on the bottoms of the tents allowed the volunteers a dry living area.²⁸

Extra necessities acquired through family members helped the men live comfortably. Many soldiers wrote home to loved ones for these needed items. In Ellis's letter of September 5, 1861, he asked his mother to construct a small cot for his tent. W. G. Richardson requested his family send as much money as possible.

²⁷ Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to father, home, 12 October 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.

²⁸ *Daily True Delta* (New Orleans), 4 June 1861.; Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 11, 19.

Apparently, he needed new uniform items from the camp stores. John Forman wrote his sister Sarah to tell his mother to send his coat as soon as it was convenient.²⁹

Considerable misuse of available water sources near the camp by previous soldiers took its toll and spread bacteria and disease. By early September 1861, signs of disease showed up in almost every volunteer company at Camp Moore. Ellis, in his letter dated September 5, 1861, told his mother that two men in his company fell ill. Luckily, however, they were not in danger of dying. Over a month later, Ellis wrote his father that sickness struck over twenty men from the *St. Helena Rebels*, leaving the company resembling a small squad. However, Ellis believed that the men would be able to return to active duty. Measles spread throughout the camp in late October. J.S. Pittman counted over thirty soldiers who contracted the measles by November. Louis Stagg wrote his wife, “There is always a great deal of sickness in camp, and it is very difficult to get medicines, all those who fall seriously ill die from exposure and poor medical care, especially those who catch the measles; almost none of them recover.”³⁰

Training schedules were mainly standard for all volunteer companies stationed at Camp Moore. Men awoke before dawn and ate a hearty breakfast. After

²⁹ Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to mother, home, 5 September 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Richardson, Camp Moore, to M. T. Carter, Springfield, 27 October 1861.; John Forman, Camp Moore, to sister, home, 15 November 1861, (photocopy), Robert A. Newell Papers, Mss. 653, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5735: reel 14).

³⁰ Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to mother, home, 5 September 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to mother, home, 3 October 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to sister, home, 16 October 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; J. S. Pittman, Camp Moore, to Alice, home, 12 November 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Louis Stagg, Camp Moore, to wife, 6 October 1861, (photocopy), Stagg Letters, 1855-1863, MSS:7, (Holdings of University of Louisiana at Layette).

eating, these men attended several hours of drill sessions followed by an afternoon lunch break. By late afternoon, regiments participated in drill parades. These parades ended with a dress review and the lowering of the colors. Ellis recounted that his day began at 4:00 A.M. and lasted until 9:00 P.M. During those hours, he drilled repeatedly over the course of five hours and attended dress parade and guard review in the evening hours.³¹

During evening break the volunteers enjoyed several social liberties. Bands performed by firelight to liven up the camp atmosphere. Volunteers socialized near the sutler stores and camp restaurants. Some participated in religious meetings, while others ventured to the Tangipahoa River to bathe in the cool waters. Many enjoyed simply cooking dinner, writing letters, or socializing around the campfire.³²

The absence of friends and loved ones affected the volunteers at Camp Moore the most. Soldiers constantly worried about the health of their loved ones and the affairs of the community. For example, officers felt overwhelmed by the constant complaints from the men who wanted to obtain furloughs to visit loved ones back home. In fact, Captain D.W. Thompson of the *St. Helena Rebels* authorized so many furloughs and sick leaves to the men of his company that General Tracy arrested him.³³

³¹ Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to mother, home, 3 October 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.

³² *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans), 28 May 1861.

³³ Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to mother, home, 5 September 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to father, home, 12 October 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.

Occasionally, the friends and families of the volunteers traveled to Camp Moore to visit the men. However, hand written letters more commonly connected the volunteers to their families in the community. This valuable form of communication allowed the communities to inspire their soldiers to remain motivated despite hardships. It also allowed the soldier to remain connected to his loved ones and community affairs. In effect, this communication allowed the soldier to become an extension of his community.³⁴

These letters allowed the soldier to continue to be a part of the community while in the field. The thought of receiving news from home through these letters occupied the daily thoughts of the volunteers. Ellis wrote his family letters frequently asking about their health and conditions around the community. Daniel Blue wrote to his wife as often as possible. In his letters, he expressed the stress and sorrow he felt while away from her. He even mentioned that he never realized how much he truly loved her until he left her side. W. G. Richardson asked his sister to look after his financial affairs while he served his community during the war. Abraham Nesom vented about the frustrations of camp life to his father and asked for as many letters from home as possible. Louis Stagg complained to his wife that he had not received any recent news concerning other members of his family at home and told her, "It seems as though I'd not heard from you for a century, and this morning, after spending the night on guard duty with no sleep, and inspecting the troops, which

³⁴ Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 8.

lasted until 11:00, I set out on foot for the post office; it seemed to me that receiving a letter from you would be like a good night's sleep."³⁵

Consequently, the same feelings of absence appeared in the letters of the families of the volunteers. As soon as they received word from their boys, the family members hurried to reply. The communication between them and their fighting men eased their worries and solidified their determination to support the cause. Many families of the 16th Louisiana such as the Ellis family, Nesom family, and Newell family hoped to provide as much support to their brave boys as possible. For example, Abraham Nesom's father frequently wrote to his son, asking him about the conditions of the camp and inquiring whether he needed anything, like shoes. He also informed his son of the conditions at home and the continued health of the family. Mr. R.A. Newell wrote often to his brother in law, John Forman, and kept him informed the condition and affairs of his sister and mother.³⁶

Unfortunately, letters from home also brought additional heartache to the soldiers. Often news of the destruction of homes and the death of friends and family appeared in the letters from home. The psychological shock of the news combined with the uncomfortable separation from loved ones often depressed the soldiers. For example, Abraham Nesom's cousin, Nan A. Nesom, relayed the unfortunate news of his messmate's death in one of her letters. Lack of news also troubled the men. For

³⁵ Daniel Blue, Corinth, to wife, home, 6 April 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Richardson, Camp Moore, to M. T. Carter, Springfield, 8 October 1861.; Abraham Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 28 March 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Louis Stagg, Camp Moore, to wife, 15 October 1861, (photocopy), Stagg Letters, 1855-1863, MSS:7, (Holdings of University of Louisiana at Layette).

³⁶ Abraham Nesom Sr., St. Helena, to son, Corinth, 29 March 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; John Forman, Camp Moore, to sister, home, 22 October 1861.

example, Louis Stagg wrote his wife, “I really believe you no longer think about me at home, for I have been here nearly a month, and have thus far received only one letter from you; it is discouraging to be so far away and find that no one sends me any news of my family, when the very least little bit of news from you is so precious to me.”³⁷

Perhaps one of the most frequently discussed and or recorded topics in the letters of the volunteers centered on the various rumors among the men in Camp Moore. Rumors of potential troop movements and battle plans were common. W. G. Richardson informed his sister that he expected the regiment to move but admitted its departure could be anywhere from a week to a month away. By October, rumored attacks on New Orleans troubled many of the men in the 16th Louisiana. Many believed they would soon be shipped to defend the city. Ellis recalled that General Tracy posted a train at Camp Moore at all times in case of emergency deployment to New Orleans or Mississippi. Stagg wrote his wife that he heard that the regiment would “be called very soon to New Orleans for its defense, the orders are to be ready to march at a moment’s notice.” In his October 12, 1861 letter, Ellis, confirms this rumor and states, “Our regiment is under marching orders but we will not leave for 10 days or two weeks. The truth is the regiment is not sufficiently drilled to engage in active service. It is however improving rapidly and soon will be able to whip any two Yankee regiments—that can be stated.” W.G. Richardson wrote his friend that his regiment would most likely move to the entrenchments near the Berwick Bay area or to forts along the lower Mississippi River. By late November, rumors of the 17th

³⁷ Nan A. Nesom, home, to Abraham, Corinth, 18 April 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Louis Stagg, Camp Moore, to wife, 6 October 1861, (photocopy), Stagg Letters, 1855-1863, MSS:7, (Holdings of University of Louisiana at Layette).

Louisiana Regiment being ordered to New Orleans circulated around the camp as well as possible deployment to Columbus, Kentucky. In any case, preparations for deployment occupied the men of the 16th Louisiana for their remaining days at Camp Moore.³⁸

Excitement and anticipation played hard on the patience of the volunteers during their last few days at Camp Moore. Most eagerly awaited a chance to whip the Yankees. However, as the days dragged on, many volunteers' patience began to wear thin. T. G. Pegus recalled that many of the volunteers eagerly awaited the opportunity to fight but openly complained while doing manual labor details during training. They enlisted to fight Yankees and not to clear trees. General Tracy ordered all furloughs and travel passes denied, so as to keep as many men in camp in case of an emergency deployment.³⁹

As the Federal navy threatened to steam up the Mississippi River in November, General Mansfield Lovell, commander of the defenses around New Orleans, quickly organized the river defenses south of the city. Lovell stepped up construction of defensive entrenchments around New Orleans and organized the defense of Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip near the mouth of the Mississippi River.

³⁸Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore*, 9.; Richardson, Camp Moore, to Amanda Carter, home, 2 October 1861.; Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to mother, home, 3 October 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Louis Stagg, Camp Moore, to wife, 6 October 1861, (photocopy), Stagg Letters, 1855-1863, MSS:7, (Holdings of University of Louisiana at Layette).; Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to father, home, 12 October 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; Richardson, Camp Moore, to M. T. Carter, Springfield, 8 October 1861.; Ezekiel John Ellis, Camp Moore, to sister, home, 16 November 1861, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.

³⁹“Caddo Fencibles of Louisiana,” *Confederate Veteran* 9 (1901): 498.; Richardson, Camp Moore, to Amanda Carter, home, 2 October 1861.

By November of 1861, Lovell deployed the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Louisiana Regiments to military camps around the perimeter of New Orleans. According to the testimony of the assistant adjutant-general of Camp Moore, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Fry, most of these units possessed poor weapons, equipment, and no ammunition. However, each regiment's troop strength numbered close to 900 volunteers. These regiments moved by train to New Orleans from Camp Moore. Lovell hoped these additional troops would provide the manpower needed to defend the city.⁴⁰

General Lovell shipped the 16th Louisiana to man the defenses of the Mississippi River below New Orleans. The volunteers of the 16th Louisiana quickly adjusted themselves to the environment of their new home at Camp Chalmette. Located approximately one mile south of the Old Barracks and breastworks of the Chalmette battlefield, Camp Chalmette provided the defending force easy access to the city of New Orleans, through the use of the Mexican Gulf Rail Road. The 17th, 18th, and 19th Louisiana Regiments joined the 16th Louisiana shortly after its arrival to camp. As at Camp Moore, rumors of possible redeployment to other areas in the Mississippi Valley circulated among the volunteers. For example, John Forman informed his sister that while he knew of rumors of future deployment to other states, "General Lovell was here in camp yesterday and he says that the sixteenth regiment will not leave the state."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 64-5.; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, "hereafter cited as O.R." (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. 6, 594.

⁴¹ Richardson, Camp Carondelette, to Amanda Carter, home, 10 December 1861.; John Forman, camp, to sister, home, 15 November 1861, (photocopy), Robert A. Newell Papers, Mss. 653,

Many of the men welcomed the change of scenery and the chance to finally participate in the war. W. G. Richardson wrote that he enjoyed the conditions of the camp and gladly welcomed the regiment's new diet of vegetables, oysters, and fish. Many hoped to enjoy a break from the boredom of camp life during trips to nearby New Orleans. Unfortunately for the volunteers, General Lovell placed strict rules on the men stationed in the camp. Lovell denied liberty to officers and enlisted men except in emergency situations. He wanted as many men available for speedy deployment in case of a Yankee attack. This policy squashed the volunteers' hopes of visiting the city. These orders combined with cold weather conditions and the muddy grounds of Camp Chalmette soon dampened the enthusiasm of the volunteers.⁴²

By the end of 1861, over 23,000 of Louisiana's fathers and sons had left their communities to defend their state and country.⁴³ The 16th Louisiana Regiment, along with these other Louisianians, answered their community's call for action. This regiment provides historians important insight into the construction, organization, and mindset of the men of a typical regiment in the Civil War. Observing the important details of its formation as well as the different motivating factors of the volunteer soldiers of this regiment definitely proves this argument. Additionally, recognizing the existence of a community-soldier bond between the volunteers of the 16th Louisiana and their communities further emphasizes this regiment's importance to historical analysis.

(Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5735: reel 14).

⁴² Richardson, Camp Carondelette, to Amanda Carter, home, 10 December 1861.

⁴³ Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana*, 59.

Chapter Two

Throughout 1862, the men of the 16th Louisiana provided much needed strength and dedication to the Confederate Army. Moreover, during 1862, the 16th Louisiana experienced its second year of active service and its first taste of battle. Although the men fought on fields far from home, many remained connected to their communities and displayed the courage and dedication evident in their community-soldier bond. Many wrote home of the many horrors and hardships encountered while fighting at Shiloh, Perryville, and Stones River. Despite the harsh living conditions, terrifying carnage of battle, and loss of their fellow soldiers during these battles, the men of the 16th Louisiana continuously honored their duty to their families, communities, and country. The service and experience of this regiment provides historians with a fine example of a typical hardworking infantry regiment.

Confederate prospects in the Civil War in early 1862 appeared bleak. Federal forces breached Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston's exposed defensive line in southern Kentucky with victories at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. General Samuel Curtis's victory over General Earl Van Dorn's large Confederate army at Pea Ridge assured Federal control of Missouri and northern Arkansas. General Don Carlos Buell's Federal army moved to capture Nashville, Tennessee. General Ulysses S. Grant and his Federal army moved slowly up the Tennessee River towards Alabama and forced Confederate forces to retreat deep into the heart of the Confederacy. General Albert Sidney Johnston and General P.G.T. Beauregard believed that Grant and Buell would unite and drive towards Corinth, Mississippi. If the important railroad junction of the Mobile-Ohio and the Memphis-Charleston

Railroads in Corinth, Mississippi fell to the invading Federal armies, the Confederacy would lose possession of the Mississippi and Tennessee River valleys. The Confederacy needed a quick, decisive victory somewhere along the Tennessee River in order stop the Federal advance and reclaim lost Confederate territory.⁴⁴

President Jefferson Davis called upon Johnston to organize a large Confederate force and defeat the Federal armies before they united. Johnston and Beauregard quickly assembled as many Confederate forces and weapons as were available from the surrounding states. General Leonidas Polk's Army from Columbus, Kentucky and General Braxton Bragg's forces from Mobile united with Johnston's forces at Corinth, Mississippi. Despite the consolidation of these new divisions, Johnston knew he needed more men.⁴⁵

On February 25, 1862, Davis asked Louisiana for five and a half additional regiments for service in Tennessee. Initially, Governor Moore tried to fulfill the President's request, but quickly informed Davis of his inability to spare additional troops and equipment from the state's small defense force. Nevertheless, Davis persisted. Moore finally consented to mobilize a new force. He advised General Lovell of the new request and warned him not to weaken the state's defense. Lovell sent the Confederacy seven new regiments and two additional batteries on February 27, 1862. Of these forces, Lovell organized the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Louisiana Regiments into a new brigade commanded by General Daniel Ruggles. Lovell testified in the military trial after the fall of New Orleans that this request stripped

⁴⁴ James Lee McDonough, *Shiloh – in hell before night* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 6-12.

⁴⁵ McDonough, *Shiloh*, 11.

New Orleans of close to 5,000 defenders. He complained that he could not secure the safety of the city. Ruggles's Brigade prepared to depart for Corinth, Mississippi where it would join General Johnston's new Army of the Mississippi.⁴⁶

Rumors spread quickly around the campfires. Many volunteers hoped the regiment would be deployed to Kentucky or Tennessee. The boredom of camp life gnawed at their patience. The anticipation of action filled most conversations among the volunteers. By mid February, these rumors became reality. The regiments received their marching orders and prepared to leave for Corinth, Mississippi.⁴⁷

Ruggles's Brigade arrived at Corinth, Mississippi sometime after February 27, 1862. The Louisiana regiments built new campsites in the hills outside of town. This new campsite presented different environmental challenges than Camp Moore. Abraham Nesom described their campsite as a dry hilly area, which contained an abundance of oak and hickory trees. The availability of clean water did not completely satisfy the needs of the volunteers. The spread of sickness among the volunteers presented new concerns for the 16th Louisiana. Writing to his father, Nesom explained that sickness forced nearly 60 men in his company to report to the army hospital. This left a mere thirty men available for active duty. The army shipped

⁴⁶ John D. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), 77.; Powell A. Casey, *The Story of Camp Moore and Life at Camp Moore Among the Volunteers* (Bourque Printing, 1985), 18.; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, "hereafter cited as *O.R.*" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. 6, 561.

⁴⁷ W. G. Richardson, Camp Benjamin, to M. T. Carter, home, 10 February 1862, Transcribed copy of letter, Rownd, Marcus Carter Sr. "A History of Company D, 16th Louisiana Infantry, Confederate States Army (1861-1865), 1946 (?)," (photocopy), Livingston Parish Collection, Box 3, Folder 7, Center for Southeast Louisiana Studies, Sims Memorial Library, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, La.

many of these sick men south to Oxford Station, Mississippi for quarantine. Nesom could only hope many of these men would return to active duty.⁴⁸

Cold weather mixed with heavy rains and snow further made life miserable for most of the volunteers of the 16th Louisiana. Many wrote home to their families begging for overcoats, long underpants, and heavy undershirts. Making matters worse, the Confederate army provided poor quality food and coffee. Abraham Nesom complained in a letter to his father that the soldiers ate poor quality flour and fat meat.⁴⁹

By this point in the war, the effects of the Federal blockade of Confederate ports became increasingly apparent. The blockade forced the Confederate government to ration its small amounts of available supplies to its armies. The volunteers of the 16th Louisiana quickly learned the realities of the blockades' effects. For example, Abraham Nesom complained to his father that most soldiers bought new shoes for five dollars a pair. W.G. Richardson asked his friends back home for as much money as they could spare. Richardson explained that he needed to purchase some much-needed supplies and uniform items, which the Confederate government failed to supply. He also complained about the Confederate governments' failure to pay the volunteers for the past months service.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Abraham Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 28 March 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La..

⁴⁹ Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 28 March 1862.; Richardson, Camp Benjamin, to M. T. Carter, home, 10 February 1862.

⁵⁰ Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 28 March 1862.; Richardson, Camp Benjamin, to M. T. Carter, home, 10 February 1862.

Troops from all over the Mississippi Valley poured into the city everyday. Each new regiment camped in positions circling the city. These regiments guarded the city and its valuable railroads from invading Yankee forces. W. G. Richardson estimated approximately 50 to 60 thousand soldiers camped around the city. Other volunteers rumored a considerably bigger troop count, which varied from one source to another. Abraham Nesom thought that over 95,000 troops camped around Corinth. E. John Ellis believed that Johnston encouraged these rumors among his troops hoping they would raise morale as well as deceive Yankee spies of his real strength.⁵¹

Last minute drilling and instruction occupied the early days at Corinth. In March, several regiments, including the 16th Louisiana, participated in several forced marches to the Tennessee River in order to maintain its defense from the Yankee fleet. After brief skirmishes, in which the 16th Louisiana lost close to six men, the regiment returned to the safety of Corinth. Besides these marches, the regiment assumed guard positions along the Mobile-Ohio Railroad and the Memphis-Charleston Railroad.⁵²

Throughout March of 1862, rumors of enemy troop movements and strength circulated among the troops. Confederate cavalry patrols brought many Yankee prisoners to Corinth, who provided this information. These Yankee skirmishers appeared regularly and in large numbers near the Tennessee River. Johnston believed that the Federal army planned to cross the Tennessee River and attack the important

⁵¹ Richardson, Corinth, to M. T. Carter, home, 27 March 1862.; Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 28 March 1862.; E. John Ellis, "Personal Diary kept by E. John Ellis, 1865 (?)." (Photocopy of a transcription), p. 22, Stones River National Battlefield, United States Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, Murfreesboro, TN.

⁵² Richardson, Corinth, to M. T. Carter, home, 27 March 1862.

railroad junction at Corinth, or assault the city of Memphis, Tennessee. The volunteers could only speculate as to Johnston's battle plans.⁵³

By early April, Johnston's newly named Army of the Mississippi prepared to attack the Federal Army near the banks of the Tennessee River. The men of the 16th Louisiana eagerly awaited a fight with the enemy and felt confident in their training and preparations. The men knew they were carrying the hopes and fears of their families and communities and looked to their colors for further inspiration. None of the volunteers of the Confederate army could imagine the horrible terror awaiting them in the next few days.

The 16th Louisiana served in the 2nd Corps of the Army of the Mississippi commanded by General Braxton Bragg. Colonel Preston Pond Jr., recently promoted from commander of the 16th Louisiana, commanded the 3rd Brigade of General Ruggles's 1st Division. This division included the 16th Louisiana Regiment, 18th Louisiana Regiment, Crescent Regiment, 38th Tennessee Regiment, and Ketchum's battery. Because of Pond's promotion to command of the brigade, Major Daniel Gober assumed command of the 16th Louisiana. The regiment's ranks consisted of 330 men. Disease, sickness, and the assignment of Company B to guard duty around Corinth, decreased the effective force available for the coming engagement.⁵⁴

Early in the morning on April 6, 1862, Johnston's army engaged the Federal army encamped along the Tennessee River. Pond's Brigade occupied the extreme left

⁵³ Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 28 March 1862.; Richardson, Corinth, to M. T. Carter, home, 27 March 1862.

⁵⁴ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 10, 382.; 520.

flank of the Confederate battle line. Johnston ordered Pond's Brigade to seize and defend the bridge over Owl Creek to prevent Federal use.⁵⁵

Around 8:00 A.M., Pond sent two regiments to secure and defend the bridge while the remaining portion of his brigade, including the 16th Louisiana joined Ruggles's Division's advance toward McDowell Field. Pond's Brigade successfully repulsed and occupied the camps of Colonel John McDowell's Division (Federal) on the Purdy Road, northwest of Shiloh Church. Lt. T.G. Pegues of the 16th Louisiana later recalled finding that "...the enemy had left their breakfast cooking upon the fires, untasted." Abraham Nesom, remembered "... they [Yankees] have the finest Camp you ever saw. They had more stores of all kinds. I do not know what all the boys did get. Overcoats, boots, shoes, apples, tobacco. They got a little most of everything." L. M. Pipkin also recalled that members of his regiment discovered an un-issued box of greenbacks reportedly belonging to Sherman's Division's paymaster.⁵⁶

Sensing the enemy was in full retreat, Ruggles ordered the division to advance through Crescent Field at the double-quick and cut off their retreat. Unfortunately, Pond's Brigade received several volleys of friendly fire from Confederate troops on their right, which caused great confusion in the ranks. Fearing he had over-extended his brigade, Pond retreated a few hundred yards until the division's battle line

⁵⁵ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 10, 517.

⁵⁶ "Caddo Fencibles of Louisiana," *Confederate Veteran* 8 (1901): 499.; L.M. Pipkin, New Orleans, to Major D.W. Reed, Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, 26 November 1910, (photocopy), Shiloh National Park Archives.; Abraham Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 11 April 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 10, 516-9.; Wiley Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside House, Inc., 2001), 263-6.

reformed. Once the attack resumed Pond's Brigade advanced through Sowell Field stopping on a ridge in front of Tilghman's Branch of Owl Creek. On the opposite bank of the Branch, Federal forces quickly organized a new defensive line and pounded Pond's Brigade with deadly artillery fire. The men huddled behind trees and obstructions awaiting further orders.⁵⁷

Around 4:00 p.m., Pond's Brigade was ordered to advance through a deep ravine, cross the Branch, and charge up the opposite ridge in hopes of breaking the Federal line. Despite protesting to his superiors that advancing through such difficult terrain would be dangerous and ill-advised, Pond ordered the brigade, including the 16th Louisiana, to attack across the Branch. Casualties from deadly rifle and artillery fire from the Federal line as well as friendly fire from Confederate units from the brigade's right-rear disorganized the charge and forced the brigade to fall back close to 150 yards from the Branch. Pond hurried to reform his bloodied brigade and remained in position until nightfall. After dark, Pond ordered his brigade to send out advanced pickets and sleep on arms. He positioned his brigade less than a mile from the river with his left flank holding Owl Creek. However, during the night, the Confederate brigades to his right retreated several hundred yards to Pond's rear and failed to notify Pond of their new position.⁵⁸

Exhausted from the day's battle, the men of the 16th Louisiana needed rest before completing their victory the next morning. However, cold weather, rain, and the steady bombardment of Federal artillery made sleep almost impossible.

⁵⁷ Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April*, 263-6.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 10, 516-9.

⁵⁸ Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April*, 263-6.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 10, 518.

Additionally, Pond reported hearing cheers and band music coming from the Federal camps on the river as new riverboats arrived.⁵⁹ No indications pointed to a Yankee retreat and both sides prepared for the next day's fight.

Early on April 7th, Pond's Brigade awoke to sporadic rifle and artillery fire from enemy skirmishers close to 400 yards away. Under fire and realizing the Confederate main battle line no longer protected his right flank, Pond quickly ordered his brigade, which included the 16th Louisiana, to retreat and reform in accordance to the main battle line at the south end of Jones Field. General Ruggles ordered Pond's Brigade to take its position on the extreme left as per April 6th. However, before the brigade fulfilled the order, Hardee ordered Pond to move the brigade to support the extreme right of his battle line. After moving the brigade from the extreme Confederate left flank to its right flank, General Beauregard rode up and redirected Pond to advance against the Federal troops in a different location. However, before Pond could completely reposition the brigade, General Leonidas Polk ordered Pond to move the brigade to support his battle line. While moving the brigade, Beauregard again redirected Pond's Brigade and ordered them to return immediately to Army headquarters near Shiloh Church. Upon reaching the ordered position, Pond's Brigade and other hastily assembled Confederate units held the last battle line and allowed the Confederate army to retreat toward Corinth.⁶⁰

After the battle of Shiloh, Pond reported that his brigade lost close to 600 men killed, wounded, or missing. The 16th Louisiana accounted for ninety of that total. Out

⁵⁹ "Caddo Fencibles of Louisiana," *Confederate Veteran* 8 (1901): 499.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 10, 518.; Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April*, 375-9.

⁶⁰ Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April*, 384.; 404-6.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 10, 516-9.

of 320 men who stepped onto the field for the 16th Louisiana close to twenty seven percent were lost.⁶¹

Several members of the 16th Louisiana wrote home about their first experiences in battle. Abraham Nesom wrote his father, "...we have had a tremendous battle here...thank God I was spared. One bullet passed through my britches leg but it did not hurt me." E. John Ellis told his sister that he fired 28 times and killed close to 14 Yankees. Lt. T.G. Pegues later recalled the carnage of battle and said, "thousands of dead and wounded Yankees lay in our path for a space of a mile or more. The sight was a ghastly one...." Daniel Blue informed his wife of the army's fortunate victory but also expressed his sadness over the army reluctantly abandoning their fallen comrades unburied on the field.⁶²

The soldiers sent word home relating their current health and the health of their fellow soldiers. These letters listed the names of fallen friends and the recovery of wounded brothers. Most of the men complained of sickness due to their extended exposure to the cold rainy weather during the battle. Abraham Nesom wrote his father that he felt very sick and "...a great many of our boys [are] sick in camp...." Every soldier tried to ease the fears their loved ones had about their safety while continuing to motivate them to believe in the cause. For example, Daniel Blue reassured his wife

⁶¹ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 10, 519.

⁶² Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 11 April 1862.; E. John Ellis, Corinth, to unidentified person, 11 April 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).; Daniel Blue, Corinth, to wife, home, 9 April 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.; "Caddo Fencibles of Louisiana," *Confederate Veteran* 8 (1901): 499.

of his good health and safety by saying, "I cannot believe that any accident will befall me for my conscience bears not the remorse of a single crime."⁶³

For the next month, Beauregard fortified his supply base at Corinth. Confederate infantry and artillery units dug trenches and redoubts surrounding Corinth to protect the vital railroad line. Surgeons converted homes and stores all over town into makeshift hospitals for the many wounded and sick. Confederate quartermasters rationed the depleting food stores. By late April, General Henry Halleck's Federal army slowly moved the twenty-two miles to lay siege to Beauregard's smaller force.⁶⁴

In response to General Halleck's siege, Beauregard and Bragg organized their forces to repel any Yankee assaults on their works. In early May, Beauregard ordered Ruggles to lead his division in an attack against the advancing Federal column outside of Corinth. On May 9, 1862, Ruggles ordered his three brigades to attack the Federals near Farmington, Mississippi, located just outside of Corinth. Ruggles ordered his 2nd Brigade, temporarily under the command of Major Daniel Gober of the 16th Louisiana to reoccupy Farmington and repel the Federal advance toward Corinth.⁶⁵

On May 9, 1862, Gober's Brigade, consisting of the 11th Louisiana Regiment, 16th Louisiana Regiment, and 18th Louisiana Regiment, moved through Farmington and positioned itself to the left of the 1st Brigade's line of battle. Once in place,

⁶³ Nesom, Corinth, to father and mother, home, 11 April 1862.; Daniel Blue, Corinth, to wife, home, 20 April 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.

⁶⁴ Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: This Grand Havoc of Battle* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 20-4.

⁶⁵ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 11, 820.

Ruggles ordered the division to advance on the enemy. Gober's Brigade advanced toward Seven Mile Creek but halted momentarily to allow Ducatel's Battery a clear field of fire. The battery fired canister shot into the area, which quickly dispersed the Federal skirmishers. Next, Gober ordered his sharpshooters to advance and occupy the woods around the creek. However, Federal skirmishers returned to their positions and proceeded to pour rifle fire into the ranks of the halted brigade. After redressing the line, Gober led the brigade forward and through the combined efforts of Robertson's Battery and additional support from the 1st Brigade on Gober's left, the division forced the withdrawal of the Federal forces from the woods for over a mile. With the enemy in retreat, Ruggles ordered Gober's Brigade to return to Farmington. Gober's Brigade lost 41 men in the battle while the 16th Louisiana temporarily commanded by Captain William E. Walker lost 14.⁶⁶

Despite the efforts of regiments such as the 16th Louisiana to defend Corinth, conditions deteriorated. Lack of fresh water, meager food rations, mounting numbers of sick and wounded soldiers, continuous artillery bombardments and assaults on the Confederate works surrounding the city by advancing columns of enemy infantry and the shocking news of the Yankee capture of New Orleans made life miserable in camp. These deteriorating conditions motivated Beauregard to order the evacuation of the city. Beauregard did not believe his force could successfully protect the important railroad juncture and decided to retreat south to Tupelo, Mississippi, where they

⁶⁶ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 11, 811.; 820-1.

would find a clean water supply and a more defensible position. The army quickly and quietly evacuated Corinth on May 30, 1862.⁶⁷

Conditions in camp improved at Tupelo. E. John Ellis approved of the adequate shade of the oak trees, the clean spring water, and the accessibility of food. However, many also complained of the uncertain shipment of mail, the army's failure to deliver their pay, and the lack of replacement uniforms and shoes.⁶⁸

The morale of the men of the 16th Louisiana remained high. Many readied themselves for another great battle in which the Yankee army would be destroyed and the capture of New Orleans avenged. For example, E. John Ellis wrote his sister, "God help the Yankees if our men get to close quarters with them. Many are in favor of hoisting the black flag and I honestly believe that if the General were to order us to battle under it. It would be hailed with cheers of joy and shouts of gratification." Additionally, the men continued to believe in the abilities of their leaders. "We are confident", wrote Ellis, "of the future and of our ability to whip the enemy where our Generals see fit to engage them."⁶⁹

By July 1863, General Bragg received full command of the Army of the Mississippi and constructed plans for a risky offensive into Kentucky. Pressure from the Confederate government and the military high command motivated Bragg to

⁶⁷ Noe, *Perryville*, 20-4.

⁶⁸ E. John Ellis, Tupelo, to father, 17 June 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).; T.H. Wimberly, Tupelo, to brother, home, 27 June 1862, (photocopy), Camp Moore Confederate Museum, Tangipahoa, La.

⁶⁹ E. John Ellis, Corinth, to sister, home, 25 May 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss 136, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.; E. John Ellis, 30 miles below Corinth, to father, 2 June 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).

organize a campaign to liberate middle Tennessee and Kentucky. The political and military prospects of recovering the state appeared advantageous for the Confederacy. Many prominent Kentucky citizens persuaded the Confederate government that if given the opportunity, thousands of the state's native sons would flock to Bragg's Army. This campaign provided the Confederacy with a golden opportunity to regain Kentucky, draw Federal attention away from the Confederate armies in Virginia and the Mississippi Valley, and defeat a large Federal force in the West.⁷⁰

In mid-July 1862, Bragg moved his army by railroad to Chattanooga, Tennessee. In August, they advanced into Kentucky. In response, the Federal command sent General Don Carlos Buell and his Army of the Ohio to stop Bragg's movements. Unusually hot and dry weather forced both armies to do without proper supplies of water and food during their race for Kentucky. Despite the hardships of the march, the men of the 16th Louisiana remained upbeat. E. John Ellis wrote that "the army is in fine spirits and are eager to clear Kentucky and Tennessee of the invaders. This I think we will do in about 60 days and then we can go into winter quarters and await Abe Lincoln's deliberations."⁷¹

Bragg halted his advance at Bardstown, Kentucky, in hopes of enticing Buell to fight. This mistake gave Buell the needed time to move his tired and thirsty army to Louisville, Kentucky. Meanwhile, Bragg, believing he could whip Buell's force with his main force positioned at Bardstown, did not rush to unite his army with

⁷⁰ Noe, *Perryville*, 25-7.

⁷¹ Noe, *Perryville*, 30.; 41-78.; E. John Ellis, Tennessee, to father, home, 21 August 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss 136, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.

General Kirby Smith's force at Frankfort. Instead, in an effort to secure Kentucky's entrance into the Confederacy, Bragg assumed command of Smith's forces at Frankfort and ordered them to protect the town while Confederate politicians organized a new pro-Confederate state government and enrolled needed volunteers to the army. This allowed Buell to take the offensive. By early October, Bragg received reports of Buell's movements toward his army's position in middle Kentucky. After attending the instillation of the new Kentucky government, Bragg ordered all his forces to concentrate at the small crossroads town of Perryville. Once organized, Bragg's forces would crush Buell somewhere nearby.⁷²

On October 8, 1862, the two opposing armies practically stumbled into each other near the small town of Perryville. The Federal army quickly occupied the hills outside of town and awaited a concentrated attack from the Confederates the following morning. However, Bragg, recognizing an opportunity to exploit weaknesses in the Federal line, ordered an unexpected attack and proceeded to pound the Federals' left flank.⁷³

The 16th Louisiana, under the command of Colonel Daniel Gober, participated in the battle as part of General Daniel W. Adams's Brigade. Adams's Brigade consisted of the 13th Louisiana Regiment, 16th Louisiana Regiment, 20th Louisiana Regiment, 25th Louisiana Regiment, and the 14th Louisiana Battalion of

⁷² Noe, *Perryville*, 62-78.; 104-6.; 124-143.

⁷³ Noe, *Perryville*, 144-172.

sharpshooters. The brigade took its position at the extreme left flank of the Confederate battle line outside Perryville.⁷⁴

Sometime around 11:30 A.M., Adams formed his brigade in line of battle to the right of the 3rd Brigade of General J. Patton Anderson's Division. Once in line, the division advanced north up the Springfield Pike. Adams's Brigade deployed to the right of the pike while the 3rd Brigade deployed on its left. Both brigades approached Bottom Hill turning off the pike to the north, using the hill as a shield from Federal observance. Extremely rough terrain slowed the march of the 3rd Brigade, which caused Adams's Brigade, marching on smoother terrain, to move more rapidly and separate from the 3rd Brigade's line of battle.⁷⁵

Around noon, Adams's Brigade, including the 16th Louisiana, moved up the Mackville Road toward Squire Bottom's House. Ridges shielded the men while they crossed in front of Federal troops on Peter's Hill. By 2:35 P.M., Adams posted his artillery on a hill southeast of the house and ordered the battery to bombard the Federal skirmishers in the Bull Run Creek Valley. Heavy artillery fire forced these men out of the creek bed toward the main Federal line. At 3:45 P.M., Adams ordered his brigade to advance northwest towards the Bottom's House. His brigade linked up with General Bushrod Johnson's Brigade on his right. Together both brigades attempted to flank the Federal right wing by sweeping down the Mackville Road. After heavy fighting, mounting casualties forced Johnson to order his brigade to the rear. Around 4:30 p.m., General Patrick Cleburne's Brigade pushed forward to fill the

⁷⁴ *O.R.*, series 1, vol. 16, 1122.

⁷⁵ Noe, *Perryville*, 172-3.; *O.R.*, series 1, vol. 16, 1122

gap. While Johnson retired and Cleburne advanced, Adams's Brigade continued the attack and pushed the Federal troops out of Squire Bottom's orchard.⁷⁶

Just as these Federal troops retreated from the orchard, Cleburne's Brigade joined the attack and together both Adams's and Cleburne's men swept the Federal right wing farther down the Mackville Road. The Federal troops managed to reform their lines in the woods outside of the Russell House near the Mackville Road. Once again, the combined assault of Adams's and Cleburne's Brigades broke the Federal line forcing them to retreat farther down the Mackville Road to the last Federal battle line at the intersection of Mackville Road and Benton Road.⁷⁷

Despite repeated assaults, neither Adams's nor Cleburne's Brigades could break this hastily built battle line. Exhausted, low on ammunition, and fearing an assault from newly deployed Federal forces, Adams's Brigade reluctantly retired to a position near Doctor's Creek. However, once in position, General Hardee ordered Adams to retrace his steps and continue his assault. Adams led his brigade back toward the Federal battle line but nightfall forced the fight to end. Adams' Brigade including the 16th Louisiana held this position until 2:00 A.M. before retreating back to Perryville.⁷⁸

Adams's Brigade lost close to 152 men killed, wounded, or missing during the battle. The men of the 16th Louisiana later recorded ghastly images of the battle. E.

⁷⁶ Noe, *Perryville*, 220-30.; 263-276.; 292-4.; *O.R.* Series 1, vol. 16, 1122-4.

⁷⁷ Noe, *Perryville*, 220-30.; 263-276.; 292-4.; *O.R.* Series 1, vol. 16, 1122-4.

⁷⁸ Noe, *Perryville*, 220-30.; 263-276.; 292-4.; *O.R.* Series 1, vol. 16, 1122-4.

John Ellis wrote home about the "...short but terrible battle at Perryville." According to Ellis, "The Yankees were whipped at every front and driven back three miles. Our troops held the field; slept there that night and left it [the] next morning at 9 o'clock, as there was no sign of any enemy. Their dead lay very thick. Our dead were few."⁷⁹

Confronted with heavy casualties and reports of Federal reinforcements arriving, Bragg decided to retreat from the field. He ordered his forces to move from Perryville to Harrodsburg, Kentucky. The 16th Louisiana along with Adams' Brigade helped form the rear guard to protect the army as it retreated south of town.

The results of the Kentucky campaign weighed heavily on the minds of the men of the 16th Louisiana. E. John Ellis wrote his mother that the men were "...broken down, weary and dispirited...." J. P. Nugent remembered the regiment "...marching twenty-five miles a day barefoot and hardly clothes enough to cover their nakedness." The loss at Perryville upset many men who blamed the Kentuckians for their lack of cooperation at liberating their state from the Federal occupation. According to Ellis, "...few of them are willing to enlist and boldly draw the sword." Bragg's retreat from Kentucky after the harsh campaign also upset the men. Ellis summed it up by writing that "[Bragg's] 'skedaddle' from Kentucky was as sudden as it was unexpected."⁸⁰

Mounting Federal forces, lack of available provisions, and disappointment over the lack of volunteer enlistments from Kentucky, forced Bragg to move his army

⁷⁹ E. John Ellis, Tennessee, to mother, 21 October 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).; *O.R.* Series 1, vol. 16, 1123.

⁸⁰ J.P. Nugent, Alissonia, to mother, home, 18 November 1862, (photocopy), The Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC 03135.01#5, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York.; Ellis, Tennessee, to mother, 21 October 1862.

out of Kentucky. Bragg marched the army to Knoxville, and then transported them by rail to Chattanooga. Once re-supplied and rested, Bragg moved his army north, crossed the Tennessee River at Bridgeport, Tennessee, and organized a long defensive line in middle Tennessee just south of Nashville. Defense of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad motivated Bragg to garrison men in the town of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Rather than attack Federal forces at Nashville, Bragg hoped his movements would draw the Federal army out of their fortified positions in Nashville and allow him to fight a favorable defensive battle.⁸¹

The 16th Louisiana Regiment took position outside Eagleville, Tennessee, about twelve miles west of Murfreesboro. For the next month, the men constructed camps for winter quarters. E. John Ellis complained to his sister about the change in weather saying, “My stars how cold it is. One week ago there was a fall of snow, to the depth of about 8 inches. Every night since, the ground has been frozen hard as a rock, the snow unmelted still lies in the woods and on the creek upon which we are camped....” Tents, clothing, and mail were in short supply, but morale remained high. Ellis believed that the men of the 16th Louisiana “...are pretty hard to kill and have come to the conclusion that hardship is the best for soldiers.” Additionally, many soldiers celebrated the festive season with parties and gatherings in camp. Despite the

⁸¹E. John Ellis, Alisionia, Tennessee, to mother, home, 14 November 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss 136, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.; Peter Cozzens, *No Better Place To Die: The Battle of Stones River* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 8.; 30.

relative security of remaining in their winter camps, the men remained alert and ready for immediate movement to the front.⁸²

During late November and early December 1862, Bragg reorganized the Army of the Mississippi and renamed it the Army of Tennessee. During this reorganization, multiple regiments, brigades, and divisions shifted from one commander to another. Bragg constructed the army into two corps, one corps commanded by General Polk and the other by General Hardee. These two corps contained multiple divisions. The 16th Louisiana, as part of Adams's Brigade, shifted from General Patton Anderson's Division to General John C. Breckinridge's Division. Bragg also consolidated many undermanned regiments together in order to improve the efficiency of the army. The 16th Louisiana and the 25th Louisiana were consolidated under the command of Colonel S.W. Fisk. The combined regiment was designated the 16th\25th Louisiana Regiment.⁸³

After the battle of Perryville, President Lincoln assigned General William S. Rosecrans to command the Army of the Ohio. After several weeks of reorganizing the army, Rosecrans won the hearts of his men. He relied on the experience of George Thomas, Phil Sheridan, and others to compose his upcoming battle plans. During mid-December, Rosecrans decided to attack and dislodge Bragg's Army from middle

⁸² E. John Ellis, Eagleville, Tennessee, to sister, home, 12 December 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss 136, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.; Cozzens, *No Better Place To Die*, 43.; E. John Ellis, Shelbyville, Tennessee, to father, 29 November 1862, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).

⁸³ Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1971), 30-2.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 20. Part II, 446-56.; Ellis, Eagleville, Tennessee, to sister, home, 12 December 1862.

Tennessee, hoping to open the doorway to the important railroad junction at Chattanooga, Tennessee. On December 26, 1862, Rosencrans's Army began his offensive to attack the Confederate army near Murfreesboro.⁸⁴

In response to Rosencrans's movements toward Murfreesboro, Bragg quickly assembled his forces to protect this important strategic position. General Breckinridge's Division which included General Adams's Brigade consisting of the 16th 25th Louisiana, 13th 20th Louisiana, 32nd Alabama, and Austin's Louisiana battalion of Sharpshooters was placed in line of battle on the Confederate right wing on the east bank of Stones River.⁸⁵

On the morning of December 31, 1863, Bragg ordered his left wing to attack the Federal right flank. Bragg's early morning attack surprised the Federal troops and allowed the Confederates initial success. However, disorganized attacks, bad communications between units, and feuding among the high command caused the largely outnumbered Army of Tennessee to forfeit any chance to decisively destroy their foe. Despite nearly annihilating Rosecrans' right wing during the early morning hours, Bragg's troops never attacked as one collective body. This gave the Federal troops valuable time to construct a hastily built but strong defensive line centered on a wooded hill referred to as Round Forrest.⁸⁶

At 1:00 P.M., Bragg ordered General John C. Breckinridge to send Adams's Brigade across Stones River and to help General Polk's Corps assault the Round

⁸⁴ Cozzens, *No Better Place To Die*, 13-63.

⁸⁵ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 20. Part II , 659.; 793.

⁸⁶ Cozzens, *No Better Place To Die*, 81-160.

Forrest. An hour later, Adams's Brigade crossed the ford above the Nashville Pike and reported to Polk on the west side of Stones River. Polk immediately commanded Adams to assault the Federal batteries at Round Forrest. Adams quickly formed his brigade in line of battle placing the 16th 25th Louisiana at the center. Before Adams ordered the brigade forward, General Bragg rode up and rallied the troops.

"Louisianians" he said, "the enemy's right has been routed and we are steadily driving it back. He still stands firm in the center. He must be defeated there. It remains for you to do this and the victory is ours. Remember the wrongs of your state, your insulted wives and mothers, your polluted shrines and desecrated homes. Be men and strike for vengeance and for liberty." Thereafter, the brigade slowly advanced up the Nashville Turnpike toward the Federal position. Maneuvering through various obstacles around the Cowan House, however, slowed the assault to a crawl. As Adams's Brigade approached the summit of the Round Forrest, their rifle volleys swept back the Federal skirmishers. Once within 200 yards of the Federal line, Adams's Brigade received direct fire from entrenched infantry and artillery. E. John Ellis of the 16th 25th Louisiana later recounted that,

The Brigade was ordered up to storm a position from which three other Brigades had been repulsed. It was a high strong hill defended by the regular troops of the U.S. and swept by a formidable battery of 12 pound Napoleon guns. Forward we went when within half a mile their artillery opened upon us. Their first shell struck one of my men (J. J. Harrell) in the side, cut him literally in two and then bursted, killing another of my boys (Ed Parmile). They fell near each other and were dead in an instant. Steadily the ranks were

closed up and we went. Shells, grape, and canister were showered upon us and God's providence alone brought any of us out safe.

After repeated thrusts up the hill for about one hour, Adams's Brigade reluctantly withdrew from the summit.⁸⁷

Adams's Brigade lost 544 men dead and wounded during the assault. A shell fragment wounded General Adams in his left leg causing him to yield temporary command to his senior colonel, Randall Lee Gibson of the 13th Louisiana. Colonel S. W. Fisk of the 16th Louisiana died during the assault and was replaced by Major F.C. Zacharie. The 16th Louisiana lost 217 of the 457 men present during the assault.⁸⁸ This equates to a forty seven percent loss in the total strength of the regiment, which exceeded the percentage lost during the Battle of Shiloh.

During the night, the men of the 16th Louisiana hurriedly attended to their wounded comrades, accumulated new supplies, and bivouacked for the night. Many soldiers walked over the battlefield eager to find fallen comrades and lost gear. During one such walk, E. John Ellis observed the conditions on the battlefield and an interesting encounter with the enemy. He recalled,

We were bivouacked on the ground over which Hardees [sic] line had swept. Federal dead and wounded were piled around. Our men were busily engaged building fires and bringing the wounded to them, for the night was very cold. I was particularly interested in a young soldier, a private in an Indiana regiment.

⁸⁷ E. John Ellis, Tullahoama, Tennessee, to mother, 12 January 1863, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).; Ellis, "Personal Diary," 32.; Cozzens, *No Better Place To Die*, 161-4.

⁸⁸ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 20, 678.; 800-1.

He was not more than 17 years of age. His wound was mortal. He was shot through the bowels and from the character of the matter, which his wound exuded I thought his case hopeless. I lifted him gently as I could to the fire, arranged his blanket and threw my own over him. In the silvery voice of boyhood he told me of his widowed mother and breathed the hope that he would live to see her. His name was Bowns (I think) and his residence Indianapolis. I got a surgeon to dress his wounds and assisted in putting him in the ambulance. A large Irishman, a private of the 19th U.S. Infantry lay near this fire his leg was broken below the knee. I gave him some cornbread and beef and he ate with a seeming relish. Afterwards I filled his pipe, lit it and then his sullen reserve seemed to melt for hitherto he had maintained an almost unbroken silence. He told me that he had been but four or five months in the States and had enlisted at the time of his arrival. He had expected to be killed by the “rebels”, if he fell into their hands, for his officer told him the rebels never “gave quarter” even to the wounded. One of my company approached and called me “Captain”, Quickly the Irishman looked up and said “Are ye a Captain?” I had a plain Austrian grey [sic] uniform and in the faint firelight my badge of rank could not be distinguished; “Yes” I answered. He mused for a moment and then said “No officer in the fideral [sic] army spakes [sic] familiar like wid [sic] a private.” I told him that the men of my company were my earliest and best friends and that the best and wealthiest citizens of the south were, many of them, privates in the armies. Poor devil! Enlisted for

money, without interest in the struggle.⁸⁹

Neither army could continue the battle the following morning. Lack of food, ammunition, and fresh troops forced the fighting to a standstill. Despite his near defeat the preceding morning, Rosecrans used the first day of 1863 to collect his scattered command and plan a possible counterattack. Bragg, on the other hand, certain of a Federal retreat, failed to reorganize and position his troops for additional assaults. Instead, he feuded with his junior commanders and blamed them for not finishing off the Federal army when they had the chance. Despite his expectation of a Federal retreat, Bragg's loyal officers begged him to continue his assault the next day.⁹⁰

By midday on January 2, 1863, Bragg finished his new battle plan and organized his forces. Despite objections from General Polk and Breckinridge, Bragg ordered the Confederate right wing to charge the Federal guns entrenched in the hills on Rosecrans's left flank. Around 2:30 p.m., Bragg ordered Breckinridge to reorganize his division on the east side of Stones River. Proceeded by a furious cannonade of Confederate artillery, Breckinridge ordered his four brigades to assault the Federal left flank. Breckinridge organized his brigades to assault in two waves. Two brigades would charge the Federal line, while two brigades followed 150 yards behind to support the front line from reserve. Colonel Randall Lee Gibson's (Adams's) Brigade deployed on the left of the division's reserve wave. Gibson placed his regiments in two waves as well. The 16th and 25th Louisiana Regiments

⁸⁹ Ellis, "Personal Diary," 34-5.

⁹⁰ Cozzens, *No Better Place To Die*, 167-176.

occupied the first wave, while the 32nd Alabama Regiment and Austin's Louisiana battalion followed slowly in reserve. By 4:00 p.m., Breckinridge's Division was heavily engaged as it approached the Federal position. Countless men lost their lives before the deadly cannons of Rosecrans's artillery, which forced the four brigades' battle lines to intermingle. During the confusion, Major Zacharie, commander of the 16th\25th Louisiana, misunderstood one of Gibson's orders and led his men across the river in hopes of flanking the Federal line. This action forced Federal skirmishers to retreat but left Zacharie's men unsupported and in danger of being overrun by a Federal counterattack. Meanwhile, the Federals counterattacked and forced the Confederates to retreat to the safety of their defensive lines.⁹¹

Breckinridge's attack failed horribly and the unnecessary bloodshed was on Bragg's hands. Gibson's Brigade lost 159 men during Breckinridge's attack, while the 16th\25th Louisiana lost only 25. In total, Gibson's (Adams's) Brigade lost 703 men during the battle at Murfreesboro.⁹²

By now used to bloodshed and high casualties, several members of the 16th Louisiana wrote home about their experiences. E. John Ellis wrote his mother that the regiment, "...fought a great and terrible battle against tremendous odds." John Forman informed his sister that he fought through the battle without injury, but "I got my haversack shot off in the first engagement." Sadly, many others were not as fortunate. E. John Ellis later recalled the disturbing images witnessed while surveying the field.

⁹¹ Cozzens, *No Better Place To Die*, 177-198.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 20, 796-9.; 800-1.

⁹² *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 20, 678.

He wrote, “The earth was burdened with the Yankee dead...it was horrible to look upon.”⁹³

By the first few weeks of 1863, the men of the 16th Louisiana had completed their first year of war. They had endured bloodshed, disease, malnutrition, harsh weather conditions, clothing shortages, and bouts of homesickness. In addition, the men of the 16th Louisiana also dealt with the demoralizing news of the fall of New Orleans and the imminent threat of Federal occupation to their home communities and families. Despite these hardships, morale remained high. The 16th Louisiana Regiment's participation in the major battles of Shiloh, Perryville, and Stones River demonstrated their devotion to their communities, their families, and their new country. Despite never receiving fame for their exploits, such as the 6th Mississippi Regiment won at Shiloh, the 16th Louisiana brought needed strength and determination to the ranks of the Army of the Mississippi and helped form the foundation which allowed the army to endure.

⁹³ John Forman, Tullahoama, Tennessee, to sister, home, 10 January 1863, (photocopy), Robert A. Newell Papers, Mss. 653, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5735: reel 14).; E. John Ellis, Tullahoama, Tennessee, to mother, 12 January 1863, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).

Chapter Three

By the spring of 1863, the men of the 16th Louisiana Regiment had become veteran soldiers. During the campaigns of 1862, the men of the 16th Louisiana consistently displayed courage and loyalty to their communities while fulfilling their duty to the army. Throughout 1863, the regiment continued to provide the Army of Tennessee with needed strength, dedication, and endurance while participating in every major engagement. The regiment fought bravely at Jackson, Chickamauga, and Missionary Ridge. During their third year of service, the men of the 16th Louisiana continued to think about their families and communities in Louisiana. Many wrote home detailing their personal experiences and hardships and effectively continued the community-soldier bond. The regiment's endurance, dedication, and service during 1863 provide historians with a fine example of a common hardworking infantry regiment.

The year 1863 marked the beginning of the third year of the Civil War. Much remained uncertain during its initial few days. In Tennessee, the Battle of Stones River left no clear-cut victor. While the Confederate Army of Tennessee failed to destroy the Army of the Cumberland during the three-day battle, the Confederates continued to threaten the Federal army's hold on middle Tennessee. The men of the 16th 25th Louisiana readied themselves for another hard year of fighting and hoped that their fortunes would change during the upcoming campaigns. Many also hoped that the year would coincide with the end of the war.

After two bloody days of battle near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, General Braxton Bragg ordered his army to retreat south and deploy along a new defensive

line paralleling the Duck River in southern Tennessee. Bragg hoped this new line could protect his supply lines from Chattanooga and provide an unbreakable barrier against any invading Federal force. Once in position, the Army of Tennessee remained stationary along the Duck River line for nearly six months. Meanwhile, General William Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland reorganized its ranks and continued to occupy the city of Murfreesboro.⁹⁴

The Battle of Stones River took a heavy toll on the ranks of Adams's Brigade. General John C. Breckinridge's report of January 29, 1863, listed only 1,355 men available for active duty in Adam's Brigade. Additionally, General Adams received a wound during the brigade's assault on the Round Forrest forcing Colonel Randall Lee Gibson of the 13th 20th Louisiana to assume command until his return to active duty. Colonel Daniel Gober continued to command the 16th 25th Louisiana.⁹⁵

Of the original 800 men enlisted in the 16th Louisiana after Camp Moore only around 300 remained. The hardships of service and the loss of comrades played hard on the minds of the men. E. John Ellis wrote home telling his brother not to enlist in his regiment because they were "...born to bad luck and hard service." However, Ellis held much respect and friendship for the men of his regiment. Ellis explained, "I came out with them, they have conferred upon me all that was in their power to give,

⁹⁴ Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound: The Battle of Chickamauga* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 3.

⁹⁵ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, "hereafter cited as *O.R.*" (Washington, D.C.:U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. 23, 619.

we have toiled and suffered together, and together have faced the longest of battle.”⁹⁶

Many of the men of the 16th Louisiana wrote home of the conditions in camp along the Duck River. They reported numerous wounded and sick present in camp. In February, the army sent many of these sick and injured to hospitals farther south to recover during the bitter cold weeks of winter. For example, Ellis and others from his regiment recovered in hospitals in Tullahoma, Tennessee and Ringgold, Georgia. Morale fluctuated among the men. Ellis wrote his mother that “we are all ready to fight the Dutch Yankee (Rosecrans).” While most believed the war would end before the end of the summer, they eagerly wished to return home on furlough during the winter. However, their requests were denied by order of General Breckinridge. Throughout the spring, Bragg’s Army of Tennessee continued to hold its positions along the Duck River. Everyday more and more of the sick and wounded returned from the hospitals to active duty. By May, Adams’s Brigade reported 2,375 men present for active duty.⁹⁷

The officers constantly drilled the men in hopes of improving their efficiency and fighting abilities. General Breckinridge held a spirited drill contest between two brigades of his division. The regiments from both Adams’s and Helm’s Brigades

⁹⁶ E. John Ellis, Tullahoama, Tennessee, to mother, 15 February 1863.; E. John Ellis, Tullahoama, Tennessee, to father, 23 February 1863.; E. John Ellis, Ringgold, Georgia, to parents, 18 March 1863, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).

⁹⁷ Ellis, Tullahoama, Tennessee, to mother, 15 February 1863.; J.P. Nugent, Jackson, Mississippi, to mother, home, 21 May 1863, (photocopy), The Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC 03135.01#6, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York.; John Forman, Mississippi, to sister, home, 10 January 1863, (photocopy), Robert A. Newell Papers, Mss. 653, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5735: reel 14). E. John Ellis, Ringgold, Georgia, to parents, 18 March 1863.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 23, 846.

competed against one another. John S. Jackman of Breckinridge's "Orphan Brigade" recorded this competition, which took place on May 19, 1863. According to Jackson,

I went to brigade Hd. Qrs. with papers, and while there, witnessed a trial drill between the 6th Ky. and 16th La. regiment, Adams's brigade, which took place in a field close by. Looked like "fair times." Carriages were drawn up all about the field, which had brought ladies to witness the grand military turnout. Gen's Hardee, Breckinridge, H. Marshall, Palmer, Brown, Adams, and Helm, present—Palmer and Brown, Judges. Both regiments drilled admirably. The Judges decided in favor of the 6th Ky.⁹⁸

In late May, fortunes looked bleak for Confederate forces fighting in Mississippi. General Ulysses S. Grant's forces consistently outmaneuvered the Confederate forces protecting Vicksburg. General Joseph E. Johnston, commander of the department, requested troops from Bragg's army in hopes of relieving Vicksburg from Grant's siege. Bragg sent Breckinridge's Division to help support Johnston. Adams's Brigade consisting of the 32nd Alabama Regiment, 13th 20th Louisiana Regiment, 16th 25th Louisiana regiment, 19th Louisiana Regiment, and the 14th Louisiana Battalion, accompanied Breckinridge's Division to Mississippi.⁹⁹

The men of the 16th 25th Louisiana welcomed the chance to return to the Mississippi Valley and whip the Yankees out of Mississippi. Many wondered about the condition of their families and communities. Once in Mississippi, the men

⁹⁸ John S. Jackman, *Diary of a Confederate Soldier: John S. Jackman of the Orphan Brigade*, Edited by William C. Davis (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 74

⁹⁹ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol.24 part 3, 952.

witnessed the cruelty of war as they observed the burnt remains of the city of Jackson. Louis Stagg wrote that he “...never spent a sadder time than here; the town is almost entirely burned, the railroads are destroyed for two to three miles from the town...” Witnessing this destruction only heightened their fears and concerns for their own community’s well being. Through a short letter, Louis Stagg questioned his wife about the condition of the family and their farm. He feared the Yankees would destroy his farm and terrorize his family. Men wrote home promising to ask for furloughs after the coming battle at Vicksburg. Many recalled hearing the distant thunder of the Yankee artillery shelling the city of Vicksburg.¹⁰⁰

On June 30, 1863, Breckinridge ordered his men to cook five days’ rations and prepare to march out at once with Johnston’s Army to fight the Yankees surrounding Vicksburg. However, just a few days later on July 4, 1863, Grant succeeded in his campaign to capture Vicksburg. Grant ordered General William T. Sherman to utilize his corps and fend off any attempt by Confederate forces from liberating the city. Realizing the threat posed by Johnston's Army grouping in Jackson, Grant instructed Sherman to march east and drive Johnston's forces from the Mississippi capitol and destroy the railroad in its vicinity. On July 4, 1863, Sherman led his force out of Vicksburg toward Jackson. Sherman commanded an army of 46,000 men compared to Johnston's force of 23,000.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Louis Stagg, Jackson, Mississippi, to wife, 9 June 1863, (photocopy), Stagg Letters, 1855-1863, MSS:7, (Holdings of University of Louisiana at Layette).

¹⁰¹ J.P. Nugent, Jackson, Mississippi, to mother, home, 30 June 1863, (photocopy), The Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC 03135.01#7, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York.; Stephen Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall: Sherman, Joe Johnston and the Yankee Heavy Battalions* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2001), 3-7.

In response, Johnston ordered his men to dig earth works around the city in hopes of holding the city in the event of a siege. By July 10th, Sherman's forces besieged the town and shelled the Confederates with heavy artillery. In addition, Sherman sent skirmishers to systematically test the strength of the Confederate defenses around Jackson. On July 12th, Adams's Brigade received an attack by Federal skirmishers from Baily's Hill outside of Jackson. The skirmishers advanced within 800 yards of the works before Adams's men fired musket and artillery volleys into their ranks. The Federals suffered heavy casualties and retreated after a thirty-minute engagement. Adams's Brigade reportedly captured close to 40 prisoners and counted close to 250 Yankees dead, while receiving no major casualties. R. H. Lindsay of the 16th Louisiana later recalled,

After a day or two skirmishing with the enemy, Gen. Adams, commanding the Louisiana Brigade, ordered me to burn that large dwelling (belonging to Mrs. W.W. Scott) in the rear of my line if I had to fall back. I went through the house and found much of value in it, such as [a] library, costly carpets, and furniture, but I determined to save the fine piano if I had to burn the house. Finding it would be impossible to hold my line, I had the piano moved near the Washington Artillery, and my command passed over the ruins of that fine house, but that piano was saved and was played by Sergeant Andy G. Swain during that fatal Federal charge in which the loss to the enemy was not less than one to two thousand men, killed, wounded, and captured. This piano was left on the field and fell into the enemy's hands, but afterwards was restored to the rightful owner. It was subsequently put in excellent order, and thirty-nine

years afterwards was presented to the Memorial Hall of the Washington Artillery, in New Orleans.”

W.H. Duff of 16th\25th Louisiana also reported the incident of the piano during the siege of Jackson.¹⁰²

Overwhelming odds, deadly artillery fire, and lack of sufficient supplies forced Johnston to order the evacuation of Jackson. On July 16th, Johnston ordered the city’s evacuation and marched his army east toward Brandon, Mississippi. Adams’s Brigade lost 30 men during the siege. Eighteen of that number came from the ranks of the 16th\25th Louisiana. Sherman's forces occupied the city the next day.¹⁰³

Following the evacuation of Jackson and the loss of Vicksburg, the men of the 16th\25th Louisiana Regiment lamented their feelings of loss and concern for their families and country in their letters home. E. John Ellis reported that the men were “...all recovering from the shocks of Port Hudson and Vicksburg. John Forman remarked to his sister, “...this plagued war will never stop it seems and our soldiers are deserting for fear of our being whipped. [I]t is enough to dishearten and drive old satin mad.” Despite these sour feelings, Ellis remained optimistic about the South’s chances in the upcoming fall campaign. He comforted his father by writing, “...in an open field and fair fight, we shall rout and destroy their armies. I shall not be discouraged when I see all of our cities & strongholds in the hands of the enemy...if

¹⁰² *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 24 part 2, 654-6.; Colonel R. H. Lindsay, “More Of That “Vicksburg” Piano” *Confederate Veteran* 9: 23.; “Inquiry For And About Veterans” *Confederate Veteran* 16: 347.; Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 4-7.

¹⁰³ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 24 part 2, 655-6.; Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 4-7.

we all go to Bragg, he will have at his disposal 75,000 of the finest troops. He can crush Rosecrans.”¹⁰⁴

By late June, Rosecrans’ Army of the Cumberland initiated an offensive aimed at driving the Confederates out of Tennessee and capturing Chattanooga. Occupying Chattanooga would deny the Confederates further access to middle Tennessee, the Nashville-Chattanooga Railroad, and navigation of the Tennessee River. In addition, taking the city would effectively open the door for an invasion of the Deep South. Rosecrans’ army forced Bragg to order an evacuation of his army’s defensive works along Duck River. Bragg rushed to regroup his troops and plan for the defense of Chattanooga. At a cost of only 560 men during an eleven-day campaign, the Army of the Cumberland successfully recovered the remaining territory lost during the Kentucky Campaign of 1862.¹⁰⁵

The Army of Tennessee continued to occupy Chattanooga throughout the summer. Facing a numerically superior foe, Bragg begged Richmond for reinforcements. He also wired Joseph E. Johnston and asked him to send eleven brigades of infantry from his department. Johnston initially hesitated to send any aid. After a direct order from Richmond, however, Johnston relented and sent Bragg two divisions, General W.H.T. Walker’s Division by rail on August 23rd and General Breckinridge’s Division, two days later. Adams’s Brigade composed of the 13th–20th

¹⁰⁴ E. John Ellis, Mississippi, to mother, 19 August 1863, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).; John Forman, Mississippi, to sister, home, 7 August 1863, (photocopy), Robert A. Newell Papers, Mss. 653, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5735: reel 14).; E. John Ellis, Mississippi, to father, 25 August 1863, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).

¹⁰⁵Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 2.

Louisiana Regiment, 16th Louisiana Regiment, 19th Louisiana Regiment, 32nd Alabama Regiment, and the 14th Louisiana Battalion accompanied Breckinridge's Division.¹⁰⁶

On August 16th, Rosecrans launched a campaign to capture Chattanooga. His army cautiously scaled the Cumberland Mountains, crossed the Tennessee River, and prepared to assault the city. Bragg continued to organize his forces and pleaded for additional troops from Virginia. To the relief of Bragg, Breckinridge's Division arrived from Mississippi on September 2, 1863. Bragg assigned Breckinridge's Division to General D. H. Hill's Corps. Hill positioned Breckinridge's Division to guard Tyner's station from any Federal assault. Despite receiving reinforcements from Johnston, Bragg feared that Rosecrans' Army would besiege the city and cut off the army's access to Atlanta, Georgia. Therefore, on September 6, 1863, Bragg ordered the Army of Tennessee to evacuate the city.¹⁰⁷

On September 9th, President Jefferson Davis ordered General Robert E. Lee to send General James Longstreet, commanding two divisions of infantry, to Georgia. In addition, General Joe Johnston sent two additional brigades to Georgia. Combining these new troops with Bragg's original force, the Army of Tennessee nearly doubled in size. With increased numbers and supplies, Bragg commanded the largest Confederate force in the West and prepared to beat Rosecrans' Army back across the Tennessee River.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 22-33.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 30 part 2, 216.

¹⁰⁷ Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 33-58.

¹⁰⁸ Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 59-60.

After Bragg evacuated Chattanooga, Rosecrans sent his army south hoping to catch Bragg's demoralized army and defeat it somewhere near Rome, Georgia. However, after a few days, Rosecrans learned of Bragg's newly arriving reinforcements and decided to pull back to Chattanooga until his own reinforcements arrived. Bragg, sensing an opportunity, hoped to catch Rosecrans' Army before it reached the defenses of Chattanooga. Bragg decided to capture the Rossville Gap and block Rosecrans' access to the La Fayette road, which was the quickest route north to Chattanooga.¹⁰⁹

On September 19th, Bragg's forces engaged the Federal army in the hills near Lee & Gordon's Mill, Georgia and Chickamauga Creek. General D.H. Hill's Corps composed the extreme left of the Confederate battle line near Lee & Gordon's Mill. Breckinridge's Division, which included the 16th Louisiana, remained in support outside of Lee & Gordon's Mill. Throughout the day, the Confederate Army pressed their attacks against the Federal Army's hastily organized battle lines. Breckinridge's Division saw little action that day but continued to threaten the Federal forces near Lee & Gordon's Mill.¹¹⁰

That night, Rosecrans hurriedly reorganized his forces and concentrated them on ridges along the La Fayette road. His line extended from Lee & Gordon's Mill in the south to Kelly field in the north. Bragg also reorganized his force and prepared for a dawn attack. Bragg gained the last of the reinforcements from Virginia and quickly ordered them into line. Longstreet's timely arrival boosted Bragg's available troop

¹⁰⁹ Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 60-90.

¹¹⁰ Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 170.

count around 68,000 to 72,000 combatants. This gave the Confederates a numerical advantage over Rosecrans's 57,000 man force.¹¹¹

Before retiring for the evening, Bragg solidified his battle plans for the morning of September 20, 1863. In hopes of providing the punch needed to turn the Federal left flank, Bragg ordered Breckinridge's Division to march through the night from their position on the extreme left to the extreme right of the army's battle line. Once in position, the division, along with the entire army, would attack at dawn. Importantly, a breakdown in communication between the Confederate corps commanders, prevented the Confederates from launching a coordinated and timely dawn attack on September 20th. Instead, the Confederates initiated piecemeal attacks all along the Federal line.¹¹²

By 9:30 A.M., Breckinridge's Division launched an attack against Federal forces on the northern edge of Kelly Field and the McDonald farm along the La Fayette road. Adams's Brigade occupied the extreme right flank with General Marcellus Stovall's brigade on his left. Together these brigades beat back Federal skirmishers positioned near the McDonald farm and forced them to quickly retreat back south toward Kelly Field. Their attack successfully cut off the Federal army's avenue of escape by occupying the La Fayette road near the McDonald farm. Breckinridge quickly directed the two brigades to sweep south down the road and link up with his other brigades attacking the Federal troops around Kelly Field.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 294-300.

¹¹² Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 294-305.

¹¹³ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 30 part 2, 221-4.; Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 319-26.

Adams's and Stovall's Brigades charged south into the woods encircling the northern edge of Kelly Field. Their overconfidence and excitement from their previous success caused them to act rashly. The individual regiments of Adams's Brigade tore through the woods as if racing one another to see which regiment would whip the Yankees first. Unexpectedly, the brigade ran headlong into a heavy burst of musket fire from Federal infantry. The volley halted Adams's Brigade in its tracks and caused great confusion and casualties. General Adams fell with a serious wound to the left arm. The commander of the 19th Louisiana, along with 150 men in its ranks, fell from the volley causing the regiment to break and run back toward the McDonald farm. The 16th and 25th Louisiana lost 107 of the 293 soldiers from its ranks not including three officers. While under fire, Colonel Randall Lee Gibson and Colonel Daniel Gober managed to regroup the men of their regiments and resumed the fight.¹¹⁴

Stovall's Brigade did not fare much better. Federal forces fended off their frontal attacks and forced the brigade to fall back out of range around 11:15 A.M. Stovall's retreat isolated Adams's Brigade. Without support and demoralized from the loss of their brigade commander, Colonel Gibson assumed command and pulled Adams's Brigade back north toward McDonald Field. Gibson reformed the brigade behind a hill occupied by his artillery.¹¹⁵

Without additional troops to support his division, Breckinridge was forced to cease his attack. Bloodied and tired, the men of his division tried to regroup and

¹¹⁴ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 30 part 2, 221-4.; Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 317-331.

¹¹⁵ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 30 part 2, 216-7.; Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 331-7.

prepare for the attack to resume. Miscommunication between the Confederate corps commanders over the availability of reinforcements prevented supporting troops from arriving in time to take advantage of Breckinridge's Division's initial success. Reinforcements did not arrive until later in the afternoon. While awaiting these troops, Gibson's (Adams's) Brigade took position 300 yards to the rear of the Confederate main battle line.¹¹⁶

Around 5:00 P.M., Breckinridge's Division in conjunction with newly arriving reinforcements attacked south toward Kelly Field. This attack coincided with the Federal army's retreat from this field. As the Federal army retreated, the Confederates pressed the attack. Gibson's Brigade, including the 16th Louisiana, along with Breckinridge's Division, charged the Federal line and forced them to vacate the field. The brigade captured close to 400 Yankee prisoners during the charge. Following the charge, Gibson held his brigade in position seventy yards west of the La Fayette road.¹¹⁷

Nightfall halted the Confederate attacks, which allowed the Army of the Cumberland to escape toward Rossville. Around 10:00 P.M., the last Federal troops marched quickly down the McFarland's Gap road. Consequently, the Army of Tennessee allowed the Federal army to escape before delivering the deathblow. Apparently, Bragg and the other corps commanders believed the Federal army remained on the field and would resume the attack the next morning.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 30 part 2, 217.; Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 333-7.

¹¹⁷ Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 488-501.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 30 part 2, 217-8.

¹¹⁸ Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 510-8.

Adams's Brigade lost close to 396 men out of the 1,314 present during the Battle of Chickamauga. General Adams fell wounded and was taken prisoner by the Federal troops. No final tally of casualties for the 16th 25th Louisiana Regiment appears in the after action reports other than the 107 mentioned after the regiment's charge around mid-day. However, by using this number as a basis for total loss, the 16th 25th Louisiana suffered a thirty seven percent loss in strength.¹¹⁹

After the Battle of Chickamauga, several members of the 16th 25th Louisiana Regiment wrote home detailing their experiences during the battle. Louis Stagg wrote his wife and told her that the regiment had participated in "another terrible battle." He reassured her that he did not receive any wounds. E. John Ellis wrote his brother of his good health following the battle but admitted, "The battle was the stubbornest I have yet known."¹²⁰

Bragg failed to pursue his foe to Rossville which allowed the Federal army the much-needed time to escape. By September 22nd, Rosecrans's Army slipped quietly into the defenses of Chattanooga. Later that night, Bragg's Army slowly occupied the heights surrounding the city and prepared for a siege campaign. For weeks, the Army of the Cumberland endured the Confederate siege. Lack of supplies, food, and ammunition slowly eroded the Federal army's confidence and morale. Many of the troops languished under the harsh conditions. The Lincoln administration decided to send Grant to take command of operations in Chattanooga. Grant dismissed

¹¹⁹ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 30 part 2, 219-224.

¹²⁰ Louis Stagg, Chattanooga, Tennessee, to wife, 29 October 1863, (photocopy), Stagg Letters, 1855-1863, MSS:7, (Holdings of University of Louisiana at Lafayette).; E. John Ellis, Chattanooga, Tennessee, to brother, 4 October 1863, (photocopy), E. John, Thomas C.W. Ellis and Family Papers, Mss.136, (Confederate Military Manuscripts. Series B, Holdings of Louisiana State University, Microfilm 5738: reels 21-2).

Rosecrans from command of the Army of the Cumberland in mid-October and appointed General George Thomas to command the army.¹²¹

The Confederate army faced slightly better conditions during the siege. Enthusiasm over their victory at Chickamauga and their newfound position of superiority over the besieged Federal army kept troop morale high. However, the Confederates had their own problems acquiring supplies, rations, and new men to replenish the ranks of the depleted regiments. Despite holding a commanding position over their foe in Chattanooga, the war was slowly taking a toll on the psyche of the Confederate fighting men. Desertion levels in the army as well as in the 16th Louisiana remained high throughout the siege. Colonel Gibson, commanding Adams's Brigade, which included the 16th Louisiana, adamantly requested General Breckinridge to recall all members of the regiments of his brigade from any quartermaster or commissary posts. Without these men returning to rejoin the ranks of the regiments, Gibson feared the regiments would "disappear."¹²²

Infighting between Bragg and his subordinate commanders over the failure to destroy the Federal army at Chickamauga preoccupied Bragg for much of the siege. In an effort to eliminate his opponents, he reorganized the army's command structure. For example, General Breckinridge received a promotion to corps commander while General Polk was reassigned to Johnston's Army in Mississippi. Because of Breckinridge's promotion, General A. P. Stewart took command of Breckinridge's

¹²¹ Peter Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes: The Battles For Chattanooga* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 8-22.; Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound*, 522-8.

¹²² Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 28-31.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 30 part 4, 722.

former division. This meant that Gibson's (Adams's) Brigade, which included the 16th Louisiana, was now apart of Stewart's Division of Breckinridge's Corps.¹²³

Bragg organized the siege of Chattanooga by posting his army in the heights surrounding the city. Louis Stagg of the 16th 25th Louisiana described his regiment's position:

we are occupying the nearby mountains facing it [Chattanooga]; as I write you I hear the cannon to our left, all day yesterday and all last night we heard it; we were occupying the center of the line, where we had built small shacks to protect ourselves from the weather, which is very rainy and cold; but the day before yesterday just after midnight they moved us, and consequently deprived us all protection from the fury of the elements.

E. John Ellis enthusiastically told his brother about the strength of the line saying that "...in our present position we are able to whip 300,000 Yankees." Unfortunately for the 16th 25th Louisiana, however, Bragg did not have the troop strength necessary to hold the Federal army in Chattanooga. According to Peter Cozzens,

Bragg had a mere forty-six thousand infantrymen stretched out along a seven-mile front that ran from the foot of Lookout Mountain to Missionary Ridge and then northward along the base of the ridge to a point a half-mile south of the Chattanooga and Cleveland Railroad. Bragg lacked even the troops needed to extend the line to the Tennessee River, which was the only way truly to hem in the Federals.

¹²³ Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 21-6.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 31 part 2, 661.

Bragg deployed his troops as best he could to cover the major avenues of escape from the city.¹²⁴

In many places, only a few hundred yards separated the Confederate and Federal picket lines. Pickets fired upon one another continuously during the siege. Ellis had an interesting encounter while on picket duty, which he detailed for his brother. According to Ellis,

My company were stationed in front of our line as videttes. We could see the Yankees, hear them talking & laughing. Their advanced videttes were not over 75 yards from us. There we remained all day our orders being not to fire unless they advanced or fired. About an hour by Sun a Yankee stepped out holding up his hat and sung out "Halloo Rebel" "How are you Yankee?" was the reply. Said Yank, "If I come over there will you take me prisoner?" "No" was the answer. He came up there within 30 yards of us unarmed and one of my boys advanced unarmed to meet him. They shook hands very cordially and in ten minutes four or five more Yankees & as many Rebels were freely mingling together. They were Kentuckians. They freely admitted a good defeat & that their loss was terrible. They said they had nothing against the South & were willing for us to be free. Many could not help their present situation.¹²⁵

The Federal army's concentrated defenses surrounding Chattanooga and the

¹²⁴ Stagg, Chattanooga, Tennessee, to wife, 29 October 1863.; Ellis, Chattanooga, Tennessee, to brother, 4 October 1863.; Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 32.

¹²⁵ Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 32.; Ellis, Chattanooga, Tennessee, to brother, 4 October 1863.

Army of Tennessee's lack of available troops for an effective punch, forced Bragg to disregard any idea of ordering a frontal assault on the city. Instead, he tried to shell the Federal army to surrender the city. However, after a week of shelling without results, Bragg ceased this operation. Next, he ordered cavalry raids against the Federal supply lines across the Tennessee River. He hoped that cutting the railroads would delay reinforcements from Mississippi and starve the Federal army into surrender.¹²⁶

On November 24th, Grant's forces successfully broke through the Confederate lines by capturing Lookout Mountain. Instead of retreating, Bragg decided to hold his ground. That night, he ordered Breckinridge's Corps to hold Missionary Ridge against all hazards. Bragg hoped that this position would anchor the Confederate line against any additional Federal assault the next day. Bragg also ordered the remaining portions of the army to entrench to the left and right of Breckinridge's Corp. Breckinridge ordered Stewart to remove his division, which included the 16th Louisiana, from picket duty at the base of the ridge and deploy upon its crest to the right of Bragg's headquarters. The 16th 25th Louisiana deployed on the extreme left of Gibson's (Adams's) Brigade's battle line. However, due to the sudden redeployment, the brigade did not have time to build up defensive works until the last minute, which provided only meager protection.¹²⁷

¹²⁶Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 33-4.

¹²⁷ "Report of Colonel Daniel C. Gober, Sixteenth and Twenty-fifth Louisiana Infantry Volunteers, C. S. Army, on the Battle of Missionary Ridge, Tennessee, November 25, 1863." Confederate States Army Papers, Collection No. 169. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.; Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 195.; 248-251.

On November 25th, Grant ordered an assault on the remaining Confederate troops deployed in the rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge. Colonel Gober, commander of the 16th\25th Louisiana, recalled witnessing the assault from the regiment's position at the crest. According to Gober, "Many of the remorseless foe, were seen to leap up on the parapet and shoot our men in the trenches. This served to exasperate the men of my regiment, and they determined to share no quarter, if the relentless foe should venture near." By 4:00 P.M., the Federal troops attack succeeded, giving them possession of the rifle pits. However, once in position, the Federal troops became trapped in a deadly crossfire of Confederate artillery and musket fire. Gober later recalled,

As soon as they [Federal troops] came in range, we opened fire upon them, and the roar of cannon and volleys of musketry for several minutes was truly deafening, so much so that in giving orders I had to go near each officer in order that he might hear them.¹²⁸

While under fire, the veteran Federal soldiers took matters into their own hands and charged up the ridge without awaiting further orders. As the Federal troops charged repeatedly up the ridge, the men of the 16th\25th Louisiana fired volley after volley in an attempt to fend off the attack. Gober walked up and down the battle line ordering each man in his regiment to conserve ammunition by taking deliberate aim before firing. After they beat back a few waves of attackers, the ammunition finally ran out. Gober later claimed telling his men to "...use stones until the enemy came

¹²⁸ "Report of Colonel Daniel C. Gober."

near enough and then [to use] the bayonet, as no ammunition of the proper caliber could be obtained.”¹²⁹

Despite the courageous actions of the men in the 16th\25th Louisiana, lack of ammunition and reinforcements allowed the Federal troops to break Stewart’s Division’s battle line. E. John Ellis later recalled,

...there were no troops on our left and a division of the enemy moved up the ridge without opposition and came down on our left and rear. The left began to give way but I could as yet see no cause for it. Soon a Yankee came running parallel with our line, but 30 yards in rear of it Lieut. McArthur thought him one of our own men, for they sometimes, out of sheer necessity, dress in Yankee uniform, and running towards him with uplifted sword, ordered him back to the line. The Yankee raised his gun, it almost touched McArthur’s face, and fired. The brains of the gallant Scotchman were spattered over the ground and he fell dead without a groan. Lieut. J.F. Kent rushed forward and snapped his pistol in the Yankee’s face. It failed to fire and the Yankees sprang behind a tree. Then a whole platoon of the enemy discharged their guns at Kent. They were not over twenty yards distant and how he escaped I can not divine. Now for the first time I saw the extent of my danger. I could see myriads [sic] of Yankees in our rear and I started to retreat. But it was too late.....we were totally surrounded.

Hastily, Stewart ordered his division to retreat and regroup south of the ridge.

However, many men fell prisoner to the Federal troops before they could evacuate the

¹²⁹ “Report of Colonel Daniel C. Gober.”

ridge. E. John Ellis and Louis Stagg were among the men of the 16th25th Louisiana captured during the attack. Gibson's (Adams's) Brigade lost many men during the Battle of Missionary Ridge. Unfortunately, an official account of wounded, killed, or missing from the brigade does not exist. Colonel Gober did submit an after action report, but failed to include the casualty numbers from the 16th25th Louisiana.¹³⁰

With the center of his defense breached, Bragg realized his position on Missionary Ridge was untenable. After dark, Bragg ordered the army to retreat from its positions and regroup to the south at Chickamauga Station. Disorder and chaos reigned among the troops at Chickamauga Station. Regiment, brigades, and divisions were intermixed, which caused confusion in the ranks. Bragg and his commanders labored to reorganize the army and march it south toward Ringgold, Georgia.¹³¹

Grant failed to pursue Bragg until late on November 26nd. Bragg's rearguard fended off the Federal army's advance upon Ringgold and the Confederate army retreated farther south to Dalton, Georgia. Bragg had escaped destruction because Grant had let him go.¹³²

The loss of Chattanooga and Tennessee sounded the death knell for the Confederacy in the West. The Confederacy lost important manufacturing facilities and farmland in Tennessee as well as the important railroad junction in Chattanooga. Grant's breakout of Chattanooga saved the Federal army from another devastating

¹³⁰ E. John Ellis, "Personal Diary kept by E. John Ellis, 1865 (?)." (Photocopy of a transcription), p. 50-1, Stones River National Battlefield, United States Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, Murfreesboro, TN.; Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 262-313.; 318.; "Report of Colonel Daniel C. Gober."

¹³¹ Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 344-9.

¹³² Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 349-60.

loss and opened the door for an invasion of Georgia and South Carolina. Four days following the retreat to Dalton, Bragg resigned his command of the Army of Tennessee. President Jefferson Davis quickly accepted the resignation and searched through the winter for a qualified replacement. Initially, Davis offered command to General William Hardee, but Hardee declined the offer. In the end, Davis awarded command to Joseph E. Johnston.¹³³

The men of the 16th Louisiana Regiment endured much hardship and sacrifice during 1863. The lack of sufficient rations, shelter, and replacements worsened during their third year of service. Casualties both on and off the battlefield dwindled their ranks. While many resolved to fulfill their duty to their country and their communities, their continued service away from home without the hope of furlough lowered their morale. Despite these hardships, the men of the 16th Louisiana participated honorably during Johnston's loss of Jackson, Bragg's stunning but incomplete victory at Chickamauga, and Bragg's devastating loss during the battle of Missionary Ridge. Displaying courage in the face of deadly adversity, the men of the 16th Louisiana fulfilled their duty and provided needed strength and manpower to the Army of Tennessee.

¹³³ Cozzens, *The Shipwreck of Their Hopes*, 385-398.

Chapter Four

The beginning of 1864 marked the fourth year of the war for the men of the 16th Louisiana Regiment. Bloody defeats at Jackson and Missionary Ridge demoralized the remaining veteran soldiers. Enduring numerous hardships along the march, the men of the 16th Louisiana must have felt anxiety while anticipating the strain of another year of war. Many of the original members did not survive the ordeals of the last three years. These irreplaceable losses made their effective fighting strength very low. Nevertheless, the men of the 16th Louisiana continued to serve their community, state, and country throughout the year. The men of the 16th Louisiana fought bravely during the Atlanta and Nashville Campaigns. Their endurance, dedication, and service during 1864 deserves recognition and provides a great example of a common infantry regiment.

Many veteran members of the 16th Louisiana such as E. John Ellis and Louis Stagg were captured at the Battle of Missionary Ridge. The loss of these veteran soldiers made the amount of accessible or surviving letters from members of the 16th Louisiana during 1864 relatively non-existent. The absence of these sources hinders the availability of details pertaining to the everyday experiences and personal observations of the men of the regiment. Despite the absence of these letters, it is not difficult to believe that the men continued to write letters home that would have continued their community-soldier bond. However, general attitudes, anxieties, and

experiences highlighted by Thomas Connelly's work on the Army of Tennessee should provide some of this missing information.¹³⁴

During the early spring of 1864, the soldiers of the Army of Tennessee languished in their winter quarters. The men huddled together in makeshift huts in hopes of gaining some relief from the bitter cold weather. The demoralizing loss of Chattanooga following the evacuation of Missionary Ridge along with shortages of food, supplies, and shelter led to high desertion rates among the regiments. Additionally, discipline broke down among the troops in camp. Drunkenness and brawling constantly plagued the commander's attempts to conduct drill sessions and dress parades. The newly appointed commander, General Joseph E. Johnston, labored to reorganize his demoralized and battle-weary troops. Johnston pardoned all 'deserted' troops, secured supplies of fresh food and clothing, and granted furloughs to all soldiers who chose to reenlist.¹³⁵

The command structure of the Army of Tennessee changed during the spring of 1864; General William Hardee remained in command of the 1st Corps, General John Bell Hood commanded the 2nd Corps, and General Leonidas Polk commanded the 3rd corps. The 16th and 25th Louisiana remained in Adams's Brigade, which was temporarily commanded by Colonel Randall Lee Gibson, until Adams recovered from a wound received during the Battle of Chickamauga. Once he recovered, Adams received command of a cavalry brigade and was reassigned to service in northern

¹³⁴ Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee 1862-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971).

¹³⁵ James Lee McDonough and James Pickett Jones, *War So Terrible: Sherman and Atlanta* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 46-67.

Alabama. Gibson received a promotion to General and was given command of Adams's Brigade on February 1, 1864. Colonel Joseph C. Lewis received command of the 16th\25th Louisiana. Gibson's Brigade was apart of General A. P. Stewart's Division under Hood's 2nd Corps.¹³⁶

During late winter and early spring of 1864, the Federal army went into winter quarters and the Federal commanders organized their commands and solidified supply lines between Nashville and Chattanooga. Meanwhile, General Ulysses S. Grant authored a new plan to invade the Deep South. However, he would not be present to lead it. In March, Lincoln promoted Grant to command of all Federal forces. Before leaving for Washington, Grant appointed Sherman to command all Federal forces in the West. While Grant dealt with Lee in Virginia, Sherman was pressed to begin a campaign to take Atlanta. Once he had it in his possession, Sherman would continue his invasion of the Deep South. He planned to disrupt the Confederacy's ability to support its war effort in the West. Destroying railroads, bridges, cornfields, and factories would likely limit the South's ability to continue the fight. Throughout April, Sherman organized his forces and prepared his resources for such a major campaign. On May 6, 1864, Sherman ordered his forces to leave Chattanooga and begin his quest for Atlanta.¹³⁷

From May 6th through July 18th, Sherman's forces marched south along the railroad toward Atlanta. Johnston's army continually attempted to block the Federal

¹³⁶ Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 313-4.; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, vol. 38, part 3, "hereafter cited as *O.R.*" (Washington, D.C.:U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), 676-7.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 32 part 2, 587-9.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 863.; William C. Davis, ed., and Julie Hoffman, Ass. ed., *The Confederate General* (National Historical Society, 1991), vol. 1, pg. 3; and vol. 2, pg. 188.

¹³⁷ McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 14-45.

advance by constructing strong defensive lines along ridges, mountains, and rivers such as at Rocky Face Ridge, Cassville, Pine Mountain, Kennesaw Mountain and the Chattahoochee River. Johnston hoped to draw Sherman into ordering a costly frontal assault. In response to Johnston's defensive tactics, Sherman consistently feinted frontal assaults upon Johnston's line with small portions of his forces while ordering his reserves to conduct flank attacks around Johnston's line. These tactics effectively allowed Sherman to circumvent costly frontal assaults against a fortified position and forced Johnston to repeatedly fall back south to protect his line of retreat to Atlanta. During this campaign, the two opposing armies skirmished regularly at different battlefields between Chattanooga and Atlanta.¹³⁸

The 16th Louisiana participated specifically at the Battles of Resaca and New Hope Church. The Battle of Resaca occurred on May 13, 1864. During this battle, Johnston positioned his forces along three miles of ridges and hills north and west of Resaca, Georgia. Hood's Corps held the right portion to the north of town. Stewart's Division, which included the 16th Louisiana, was deployed into a position spanning the railroad to the banks of the Connesauga. Sherman aligned his forces to confront the Confederate battle line. Next, he ordered skirmishing and light assaults upon the Confederate battle lines in order to hold Johnston's troops in their present positions, while he moved his right wing farther south in hopes of flanking Johnston's battle line. On May 14th, heavy fighting broke out up and down the Confederate line as Sherman initiated his plan. Realizing Sherman's plan, Johnston ordered Hood's Corps to send two divisions forward in an attempt to flank the Federal left. Hood

¹³⁸ McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 89-209.

ordered Stewart's Division, including the 16th Louisiana, and an additional division to carry out the flank attack. About 5:00 P.M., these two divisions attacked the Federal left flank. The attack caught the Federal troops unprepared and forced them to retreat. However, Federal artillery and reinforcements quickly stepped up and stopped the flank attack.¹³⁹

Sherman continued the fight the next morning in an effort to break Johnston's line along his right flank. However, the Federal attack failed to dislodge the entrenched troops of Hood's Corps. Sensing an opportunity, Johnston ordered Hood to counterattack. Hood sent Stewart's Division forward to flank the Federal line. Gibson's Brigade, which included the 16th Louisiana, followed behind in reserve. Stewart's Division failed to break the strongly entrenched Federal line losing over 1,000 casualties in the process. That night, fearing Sherman's forces would flank his line and cut his army's line of retreat, Johnston ordered his army to retreat south toward Atlanta. Gibson's Brigade and an additional brigade composed the rearguard for the army as they retreated south. Colonel Lewis of the 16th Louisiana later reported losing two men killed and thirteen men wounded during the regiment's actions at Resaca.¹⁴⁰

The Battle of New Hope Church occurred on May 25, 1864. After confronting Johnston's defensive line at Allatoona Pass, Sherman moved his forces southwest from the railroad toward Dallas, Georgia. In response, Johnston ordered his army to

¹³⁹ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 816-7.; McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 107-118.

¹⁴⁰ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 817, 854, 864.; Stephen Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall: Sherman, Joe Johnston, and the Yankee Heavy Battalions* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2001), 49.; McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 107-118.

march southwest to block Sherman's route to Dallas. Rough terrain and hot weather slowed the Federal advance, which allowed Johnston's army the necessary time to reach the town and construct a strong defensive line that ran northeast from Dallas to New Hope Church about four miles from town. Hood's Corps deployed on the right of the line near New Hope Church. Stewart's Division held the crossroads at the center of Hood's battle line near New Hope Church. Gibson's Brigade was held in reserve a few yards to the rear of Stewart's line. During the early hours of May 25th, the 16th Louisiana and the 14th Louisiana Battalion of sharpshooters were deployed as skirmishers a few yards in front of the battle line. During the regiment's assignment as skirmishers, Colonel Lewis of the 16th Louisiana reported losing six men wounded and two men missing.¹⁴¹

Later that morning, Federal troops assaulted Stewart's position along Hood's battle line near New Hope Church. After a few hours of heavy fighting the Federal force retreated north and entrenched along a ridge. Sherman rode up and ordered the attack to resume. After some delay, the three Federal divisions renewed the attack at 4:00 p.m. As the Federal troops approached the line, Stewart recalled Gibson's skirmishers, which included the men of the 16th Louisiana, and alerted his troops of the coming assault. Stewart's Division received the full brunt of the attack. Concentrated artillery and musket volleys from Stewart's Division hammered the Federal lines and repelled assault after assault. During the middle of the battle, a thunderstorm opened up and drenched the two sides, but this did little to stop the carnage. Veterans later referred to the battle zone as the 'Hell Hole'. The Federal

¹⁴¹ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 818, 864.; McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 141-7.

forces withdrew around nightfall leaving over 1,600 casualties in their wake. Colonel Lewis of the 16th\25th Louisiana reported losing four men wounded and one man mortally wounded.¹⁴²

During the campaign from May 7th to May 28th, Gibson reported losing thirty-four men killed and one hundred and fifty men wounded or missing of the 899 enlisted men in the brigade. The brigade also lost four officers killed and thirteen wounded during combat. Among the officers killed was Lt. J.T. Craddock of the 16th\25th Louisiana. Colonel Lewis reported losing eleven men killed, forty-seven men wounded, and five men reported missing from duty.¹⁴³

Following Johnston's final retreat from his entrenchments along the Chattahoochee River, President Jefferson Davis and the Confederate government completely lost faith in Johnston's ability to repel the invaders. Davis grew impatient with Johnston's constant retreats and decided to appoint a new commander committed to attack rather than retreat. Davis dismissed Johnston on July 17, 1864, and offered the command of the Army of Tennessee to General John Bell Hood. Hood accepted the position and quickly formulated an attack strategy aimed at destroying Sherman's forces around the outskirts of Atlanta.¹⁴⁴

Hood's appointment to command of the Army of Tennessee shuffled the command structure of the army. President Davis gave General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham temporary command of Hood's old Corps until General Stephen D. Lee

¹⁴² *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 855, 864.; McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 147-53.

¹⁴³ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 855, 864.

¹⁴⁴ McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 205-9.

arrived from Alabama to take full command. Due to General Polk's death at Kennesaw Mountain in June, Davis promoted General A. P. Stewart, a division commander in Hood's 2nd Corps, to command of Polk's old Corps. General Henry D. Clayton assumed command of Stewart's old Division.¹⁴⁵

As Sherman approached the northern outskirts of Atlanta, he divided his forces. He wanted to swing his forces east and cut the Georgia Railroad, which connected Atlanta to South Carolina. Sherman sent two large forces east toward Decatur, with orders to cut the railroad line. Meanwhile, he held a large force north of Atlanta to guard his supply lines with Chattanooga.¹⁴⁶

Receiving reports of Sherman's movements, Hood devised a plan to destroy Sherman's army before it could reach Decatur. This led to two bloody battles north east of Atlanta. The men of the 16th Louisiana did not engage the enemy during these battles because of their position in reserve. These two attacks cost the Army of Tennessee close to 8,000 men while only inflicting close to 3,700 casualties to Sherman's forces. These losses allowed Sherman to cut the Georgia Railroad and forced Hood to stop his aggressive offensive battle plans. His army needed to regroup and rest before attempting another attack. Hood regrouped his army in the defenses surrounding Atlanta but this yielded the initiative to Sherman.¹⁴⁷

Having successfully cut Atlanta's access to the Georgia Railroad from the east, Sherman decided to cut off Atlanta from the lower Confederacy. On July 27th,

¹⁴⁵ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 679.; Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 406, 421.

¹⁴⁶ Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 131.

¹⁴⁷ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 819.; McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 236.

Sherman ordered his forces to swing around west of Atlanta aiming for the only two railroad lines still available to the Confederates in the city. Hood, receiving reports of Sherman's movements, sent General Stephen D. Lee's and Stewart's Corps to stop Sherman's forces. According to Hood's battle plan, Lee's Corps would march west along the Lick Skillet road and stop Sherman's forces from seizing the road. Once in line of battle before the advancing Federal column, Stewart's Corps would pass behind Lee's entrenched troops farther west and then turn back east to attack the Federal column from the rear. However, this attack failed to unfold as planned. On July 28, 1864, Federal troops seized control of Lick Skillet road near Ezra Church before Lee's Corps could arrive. This forced Lee's and Stewart's Corps to scrap Hood's battle plan and instead organize a frontal assault aimed at driving the Federal column from the road.¹⁴⁸

Lee's Corps attacked around noon that day. His divisions attacked in piecemeal thrusts up and down the line. For example, as the brigades of Clayton's Division arrived on the field, Lee's Assistant Inspector-General Lt. Colonel Cunningham, rushed them into the fight. Gibson's Brigade, which included the 16th Louisiana, was ordered to make a frontal assault without waiting for the rest of the division. Apparently, as Gibson's Brigade was forming into line of battle, Gibson rode to his right in search of the other brigades in the division. Once alerted to their placement, Gibson returned to find that Lee's staff officer had ordered his brigade to the front without his authorization. Due to this order, Gibson's Brigade took severe punishment from the Federal troops as they assaulted the works unsupported. By the

¹⁴⁸ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 821.; Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 148-55.; McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 249-62.

time the remaining portions of the division joined the assault, Gibson's Brigade lost over half of his brigade and was forced to retire. Stewart's Corps joined the assault as they arrived on the field. After several bloody attacks, the Confederates failed to break the Federal line and retreated south to construct a defensive line to prevent any further Federal advance upon the railroad. Hood's third attack outside of Atlanta cost him another 5,000 casualties.¹⁴⁹ However, no casualty figures have been found from the 16th 25th Louisiana.

Hood's determination to fend off Sherman's attempts to break the railroads west and south of Atlanta motivated Sherman to order a siege of the city. Sherman employed 223 cannon to bombard the city and its defenders during the first three weeks of August. Hood organized his army to defend as many key points around the city as possible. Lee's Corps, including the 16th Louisiana, built and manned new entrenchments southwest of the city toward East Point, Georgia, an important railroad junction of the Atlantic & West Point and Macon & Western Railroads.¹⁵⁰

However, the shortages of available men made Hood's lines dangerously thin. In an effort to boost the fighting strength of his army, Hood issued an order recalling all absentee soldiers to their respective regiments. Cooks, teamsters, hospital aides, and staff assistants were incorporated into several regiments to help replenish their ranks. In addition, Hood mobilized the Georgia militia to protect Atlanta and asked

¹⁴⁹ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 821.; Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 148-55.; McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 249-62.

¹⁵⁰ Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 156.

Richmond for more reinforcements from Virginia and Alabama. These actions did boost Hood's numbers but did not give him a force equaling that of Sherman.¹⁵¹

While Sherman's artillery bombarded the city, Federal forces continued to probe south toward the railroad junction at East Point. From August 5-7th, Federal troops continually skirmished with Lee's Corps defending East Point. Lee's men continually repulsed attacks upon their works inflicting over a thousand casualties to Schofield's forces.¹⁵²

After several weeks of siege, Sherman grew impatient with Hood's failure to evacuate the city. On August 25th, Sherman ordered his army to sweep around the western defenses of the city and cut the two rail lines. Sherman left one corps to defend the supply line north of Atlanta. Meanwhile, the remaining portions of his forces, over 60,000 men, marched southwest around Hood's trenches surrounding Atlanta. Sherman planned to march his men fifteen miles southwest cutting the Atlantic & West Point Railroad then turn back east to cut the Macon & Western Railroad below East Point near Jonesboro. Sherman's forces marched southwest for over two days before Hood's men discovered their movement. Sherman captured and destroyed important stations along the Atlantic & West Point Railroad such as Red Oak and Fairburn. While Sherman succeeded in destroying a major railroad to Atlanta and threatened to cut the Macon & Western Railroad near Jonesboro, Hood

¹⁵¹ McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 269-90.; Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 164-5.

¹⁵² Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 156-7.

failed to respond, initially believing that Sherman may have ordered a retreat from Atlanta.¹⁵³

By the evening of August 28th, Hood recognized Sherman's intentions and sent Hardee's Corps to defend East Point, Rough and Ready, and Jonesboro along the Macon & Western Railroad. The next day, Hood moved Hardee to Rough & Ready a few miles north of Jonesboro while ordering Lee's Corps including the 16th Louisiana to East Point. Hood gave Hardee command of the two corps and ordered him to defend against any Federal attack against the railroad between East Point and Jonesboro. Neither Hood nor Hardee knew where Sherman planned to attack.¹⁵⁴

Late on August 30th, Hood received reports of Federal troops approaching Jonesboro. These troops pushed back Confederate cavalry throughout the afternoon and crossed the Flint River, a mile from Jonesboro by 6:00 P.M. In response to these reports, Hood ordered Hardee to march his corps to Jonesboro and fend off any Federal attack against the town. After engaging the Federal troops near Jonesboro, Stewart's and Lee's Corps would link up at Rough and Ready and march to Hardee's aide. Once on the field, Lee's and Stewart's Corps would attack the Federal line from the flank while Hardee ordered a frontal assault on the line.¹⁵⁵

Hardee's Corps arrived around daybreak of August 31st and quickly went into line of battle. Lee's Corps, not leaving its position until midnight, arrived between 10:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. This forced Hardee to delay the attack until 3:00 P.M. Once in

¹⁵³ Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 173-80.

¹⁵⁴ McDonough and Jones, *War So Terrible*, 291-9.

position, Hardee ordered the Confederate forces to attack the Federal line. Gibson's Brigade along with the 16th Louisiana supported Clayton's Division's main battle line from its assigned position in reserve. Once Clayton's front brigades began to receive heavy musket fire from the Federal line, However, Gibson's Brigade rushed forward to help fill in the gaps. Hardee's attack failed to break the Federal line leaving over 2,200 casualties on the field. Gibson reported losing over half of his command during this assault, including Colonel J. C. Lewis, commander of the 16th 25th Louisiana.¹⁵⁶

Meanwhile, Federal troops succeeded in reaching and breaking the Macon Railroad near Rough and Ready. These troops occupied the very trenches abandoned by Hardee's and Lee's Corps due to their rush to defend Jonesboro. By 5:00 p.m., Hood received reports of Sherman's break in the last railroad to Atlanta. With the railroad broken, Hood ordered his troops to return as best they could to Atlanta, only to abandon the city to Sherman's troops on September 2, 1864.¹⁵⁷

The defense of Atlanta took a heavy toll on the Army of Tennessee. Only about 39,000 men remained ready for active duty in Hood's Army after September 1st. Historian Thomas Connelly estimates that the army lost close to 50,000 men killed, wounded, or missing during the campaign. This figure includes an estimated 13,000 deserters. The army also lost valuable ammunition, weapons, and food supplies, which were burned upon Hood's evacuation of the city. Undermanned and undersupplied, the army's future appeared grim.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 183.

¹⁵⁶ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 38 part 3, 858.; Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 181-7.

¹⁵⁷ Davis, *Atlanta Will Fall*, 184.

¹⁵⁸ Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 467-8.

President Davis quickly traveled to Hood's new headquarters at Palmetto, Georgia, to discuss the affairs of the Atlanta campaign, the condition of the army, and future military plans. Hood vented his frustrations over losing Atlanta and blamed the loss on the mistakes of his subordinate commanders and the unwillingness of his troops to fight an entrenched enemy. Hood also informed Davis that morale in the army was dangerously low; he feared many men would desert. Hood also tried to save face by detailing a new offensive campaign to Davis. Hood proposed to march his army to northern Georgia and cut Sherman's supply line, the Western & Atlantic Railroad, between Dalton and Atlanta. If successful, this would force Sherman to turn north to pursue the Army of Tennessee, effectively keeping him from invading southern Georgia and South Carolina. A few days later, Davis authorized Hood's plan.¹⁵⁹

Morale in the Army of Tennessee fell drastically when the men learned of Hood's scorn for their performance during the Atlanta campaign. Making matters worse, he openly stated that the army lacked the courage exhibited by Lee's Army in Virginia. Many resented Hood's accusation that the army had grown soft under Johnston's command and that Hood blamed the loss of Atlanta on his troops' refusal to assault a fortified position. Many of the men felt that Hood was too reckless in his command and could not lead the army to victory. Unfortunately, the men did not have the power to choose their commanding General. That job belonged to Davis.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Wiley Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah: Springhill, Franklin, & Nashville* (University Press of Kansas, 1992), 37-48.

¹⁶⁰ Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 430-1.

As Davis decided the future course for the Army of Tennessee, Hood busied himself with reorganizing the army and preparing for his newly proposed campaign. Hood reported 40,403 men present for active duty on September 20, 1864. The 16th Louisiana, now commanded by Lt. Colonel Robert Lindsay, remained apart of Gibson's Brigade in Clayton's Division of Lee's Corps. Clayton's Division accounted for 2,029 of Hood's reported total. Reinforcements arrived from other departments to boost the army's fighting strength. However, Hood also lost some veteran units, which Richmond reassigned to other posts. For example, Clayton's Division of Lee's Corps lost Baker's Brigade to service in the defense of Mobile, Alabama leaving only Stovall's, Gibson's, and Holtzclaw's Brigades.¹⁶¹

From September 29th through October 19th, Hood's Army marched north, destroying miles of railroad and capturing depot garrisons along the route. Sherman pursued the Army of Tennessee as far as Gaylesville, Alabama, before deciding to abort the chase. Instead, Sherman decided to resume his planned march through Georgia, leaving General George Thomas's Army of the Cumberland, which had been transferred to Nashville, to deal with Hood.¹⁶²

By mid-October, Hood decided to march into Tennessee. He hoped that a quick capture of Nashville would help restore Tennessee to the Confederacy and allow his army to possibly reinforce Lee's besieged army in Virginia. Along with the rest of the army, the 16th Louisiana marched through northern Alabama looking for a safe place to ford the Tennessee River. Federal garrisons at important crossings, as

¹⁶¹ *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 39 part 2, 850-4.

¹⁶² Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 59.

well as Federal gunboats patrolling the river, forced Hood to attempt a crossing near Florence, Alabama.¹⁶³

Once across the river from Florence, Hood ordered his lead corps commanded by Lee to send a brigade forward to protect the engineers as they assembled the pontoon bridge across the river. During the night of October 29th, Lee ordered Gibson's Brigade, including the 16th Louisiana, to cross the river in small boats and secure the opposite bank near Florence. Once across, Gibson's men successfully scattered a Federal cavalry brigade and took control of the town. After the war, Lt. John Dicks of Company E, 4th Louisiana, which was apart of Gibson's Brigade, recalled,

I was in the third or fourth pontoon boat launched into the Tennessee River in that memorable affair. The attachment of troops engaged in the capture of Florence consisted of a detail from several if not all the regiments of the beloved Gen. R.L. Gibson's Louisiana Brigade. I believe that Col. Lindsay [commander of the 16th\25th Louisiana] had command of the detachment, and the balance of his detailed account is vividly correct. I read it with much pleasure. Florence was garrisoned by a part of the Tenth Federal Cavalry, and they were totally ignorant of the whereabouts of Hood's army. Our division (Clayton's) had been a day or so in the vicinity of Florence, but across the river. The crossing of our troops under the fire of artillery was a grand sight to those looking on, as Col. Lindsay graphically describes it. We had, however, more than four pontoon boats. In each boat there were nineteen men, two

¹⁶³ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 63-6.

being sharpshooters, and in the bow, firing as skirmishers. Our propelling power consisted of paddles made hurriedly from fence pickets and boards from houses near by. A section of Cobb's Battery and some Napoleon guns formed our artillery, and were masked on the bluffs near the riverbank. Some of our men had strolled up and engaged the enemy in conversation, and deceived them as to the whereabouts of Hood's Army; and they were well fooled, for they seemed ignorant of all danger, leisurely lolling about the old house, some in shirt sleeves, others sitting quietly on the river bank, talking with the "Johnny Rebs." At a given signal our masked battery opened fire. The pontoons were launched, and were soon in line of battle like a genuine fleet of naval vessels. Every shell fired seemed to go direct to its mark with fuse properly cut, bursting in or close about the warehouse. Like bees from a hive, the Yankees went running in all directions. They thought not of firing at us. When we landed a line of battle was formed with skirmish line in front, and up Todd's Hill (as Col. Lindsey calls it) we went, and in less than one hour the Yankees were miles in the rear of Florence....

By November 2nd, engineers finished building the bridge and the army slowly started crossing to the north side of the river.¹⁶⁴

Years of continuous campaigning took a heavy toll on the ranks of the 16th Louisiana as it prepared for the march into Tennessee. Disease, desertion, and battle casualties lost while fighting with the Army of Tennessee at Shiloh, Perryville, Stones River, Jackson, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Resaca, Ezra Church, Jonesboro

¹⁶⁴ "More About the Capture of Florence, ALA." *Confederate Veteran* 5: 214.; Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 66.

and Florence effectively drained the regiment of its numerical strength. For example, upon induction into Confederate service in 1861, the regiment totaled over 900 men and officers. After years of continuous fighting on numerous battlefields only 73 original members were present for active duty on November 7, 1864.¹⁶⁵ Despite the loss of so many fellow soldiers, the remaining members of the regiment continued to fulfil their duty while serving in the up coming Nashville Campaign.

After three weeks of delay, Hood finally set out on November 21st for Tennessee with Lee's Corps, including the 16th Louisiana, heading the march. Hood planned to march north along the Mount Pleasant and Columbia Pike toward Columbia, Tennessee. Once securing Columbia, his army would cross the Duck River and begin to advance on Nashville. Meanwhile, General George Thomas had received reports of Hood's movements into Tennessee and quickly ordered General John Schofield's Corps garrisoned at Pulaski, Tennessee, to hurry to Columbia to block Hood's advance. Thomas also hoped that Schofield could slow Hood enough to allow reinforcements from Missouri to arrive in Nashville. Schofield managed to arrive in Columbia before Hood's troops could secure the crucial river crossing. Initially, Schofield entrenched south of the town hoping to keep Hood away, but once Hood's troops arrived and deployed into line, Schofield decided to abandon Columbia for a more tenable position along a ridgeline a mile north of the river. Schofield's evacuation of Columbia allowed Hood to secure the town and the river crossings on November 28th.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵*O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 39 part 3, 897-8.

¹⁶⁶ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 87-123.

Not wishing to confront Schofield's fortified position, which blocked the direct road to Nashville, Hood decided to flank Schofield's line. Hood ordered Lee to cross the river at Columbia and hold Schofield's troops in their trenches, while the remainder of the army crossed farther east at Davis's Ford. Hood hoped to flank Schofield's line and march north to Springhill, Tennessee. Once entrenched at Springhill, Schofield would be forced to attack Hood's fortified position in order to rejoin Thomas's Army north at Nashville.¹⁶⁷

Around 3:00 P.M. on November 29th, a few brigades from Lee's Corps crossed the Duck River on small boats and gained a foothold on the opposite bank, despite taking fire from Federal snipers. These brigades protected the engineers as they assembled the pontoon bridge Lee used to cross the rest of his corps. After crossing the river, Lee's Corps, which included the 16th Louisiana, slowly advanced upon Schofield's lines a mile north of the river. Earlier that morning, the remainder of Hood's Army crossed the river and marched toward Springhill. By 3:00 P.M., Hood arrived at the outskirts of Springhill and ordered an attack on the small Federal force entrenched south of town. After a quick skirmish, the Confederate troops managed to position themselves south of town between these forces and Schofield's. Hood's army was poised to inflict a severe blow to the Federal army the next morning.¹⁶⁸

Reports of Hood's presence in Springhill forced Schofield to retreat back toward Nashville. Schofield ordered his troops to move out after dark. Lee's Corps followed slowly up the road to Springhill at daylight the next morning. Somehow,

¹⁶⁷ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 114.

¹⁶⁸ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 125-30.

Confederate picketts never blocked the road leading into town. This mistake allowed Schofield's column to silently march through the Confederate lines into Springhill. Once past the Confederate forces, Schofield ordered his troops to hurry north to Franklin, Tennessee. Consequently, Hood's army lost a perfect opportunity to destroy a large Federal force.¹⁶⁹

On November 30th, Hood awoke to discover Schofield's escape. Hood blamed his corps commanders, Cheatham and Stewart, as well as Generals Cleburne and Brown, for failing to detect and stop Schofield's troops from escaping during the night. Hood ordered Cheatham's and Stewart's Corps to pursue Schofield's troops north to Franklin up the Columbia-Franklin pike, while Lee's Corps, which had just completed a forced march, would remain in Springhill to regroup and rest. Once rested, Lee's Corps, including the 16th Louisiana, would bring up the rear of the column.¹⁷⁰

As Schofield's forces arrived in Franklin that morning, Schofield quickly ordered a defensive line constructed and artillery placed along the line. He hoped this line could guard the Harpeth river crossings from any Confederate assault as Schofield crossed his army and wagon trains to the opposite side of the river. Once across he could construct better defensive lines and receive reinforcements from Nashville. Schofield ordered his troops to begin crossing the river after dark on November 30th.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 140-55.

¹⁷⁰ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 156-9.

¹⁷¹ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 159-69.

Hood's army arrived on the southern outskirts of Franklin around noon on November 30th. Hood decided to send the bulk of Cheatham's and Stewart's Corps forward to break the Federal line protecting Franklin. Despite the protests of his generals, Hood would not change his plans and ordered his force of 22,000 men to make a frontal assault across open ground against a well-fortified position without artillery support.¹⁷²

Fortunately for the men of the 16th 25th Louisiana, Gibson's Brigade did not take part in the deadly charge against Schofield's trenches at Franklin. As part of Lee's Corps, they arrived on the field around the time the assault began and were held in reserve. The men could only watch the horrible spectacle of carnage. Hood lost close to 7,000 casualties during the charge, while Schofield only lost 2,500. Among the dead were Generals Cleburne, Adams, Granbury, and Strahl.¹⁷³

The bloodshed of Franklin deeply affected the Army of Tennessee. According to historian Wiley Sword, "The immediate aftermath of Franklin proved the point that the Confederate army would never again be the same." The slaughter of so many men and commanders stayed with their fellow soldiers. Morale fell among the men of the Army of Tennessee as they undertook the sad task of burying the many dead. Hood failed to moderate the bad situation with displays of kindness and compassion. Instead, He lashed out at his men, blaming his generals and their men for failing to destroy the enemy. While the army did not meet complete destruction at Franklin, the

¹⁷² Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 170-84.

¹⁷³ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 245-50, 263, 269.

fall out of the battle inflicted a mortal wound from which the army never recovered.¹⁷⁴

Hood planned to renew the attack on the morning of December 1st. However, Schofield ordered his army to evacuate to the north side of the river during the night. Once across, Schofield's troops burned the railroad bridge and marched north to join Thomas's Army at Nashville. By 5:00 A.M., Cheatham's Corps learned of Schofield's departure and moved forward to occupy the town. Cheatham's troops also secured the river crossing despite Federal skirmishers on the opposite bank. After learning of Schofield's retreat, Hood aborted his assault plan and instead ordered his army to pursue the Federal army to Nashville. Lee's Corps, which included the 16th Louisiana led the pursuit and arrived around the outskirts of Nashville on December 2nd.¹⁷⁵

Hood's Army arrived before the outer defenses of Nashville on December 3rd. He quickly ordered a siege of the city and positioned his three corps along ridges opposite the Federal earth works located just south of town. The 16th Louisiana along with Lee's Corps, held the center of the line. The Confederates cut off several major roads and rail lines south of Nashville. In addition, Hood positioned artillery along the banks of the Cumberland River to the south of Nashville in order to keep reinforcements from arriving from the river. He also sent General Nathan Bedford Forrest and his cavalry to block any reinforcements from the Federal garrison at Murfreesboro a few miles to the southeast. Hood wanted to shell the city with heavy

¹⁷⁴ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 267-8.; Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 503-8.

¹⁷⁵ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 265-79.

artillery. He hoped that if his army shelled the city long enough, Thomas would march his army out of their trenches and foolishly attack his army's own entrenchments.¹⁷⁶

Hood did not have enough men to completely cut off the city from Federal reinforcements and supplies. His lines could not completely span the entire length of the Federal outer defenses. Therefore, he had to construct redoubts or makeshift log forts to defend important areas. Also, cavalry troops were deployed to protect the army's flanks and report any concentrated movement of the enemy upon the line. Once alerted, Hood planned to send troops to the area to block the enemy's movement. While Hood's line did cut several major roads and railroads to the south of town, the army could not stop Thomas's access to a railroad line coming from the north across the Cumberland River into Nashville. In addition, Hood did not have the ammunition required to sustain a long siege and artillery bombardment. These factors made the success of his siege unlikely.¹⁷⁷

Hood's Army remained in position south of Nashville for two weeks during the siege. Constant skirmishing up and down the battle line, extremely cold weather, little or no shelter, lack of sufficient food and clothing, as well as reoccurring memories of the carnage witnessed by the troops during Franklin made life hard for the men of the Army of Tennessee. Morale remained low after Franklin and did not improve much while the men experienced such harsh conditions. While no letters

¹⁷⁶ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 279-316.

¹⁷⁷ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 279-316.

exist detailing the thoughts of the men of the 16th Louisiana, they likely suffered from the same harsh conditions and felt the same low morale as the rest of the army.¹⁷⁸

Pressure from General Ulysses S. Grant, who threatened to replace Thomas if he failed to attack Hood as soon as possible, motivated Thomas to leave his entrenchments and attack Hood's Army. On the morning of December 15th, Thomas ordered his army to march out of their positions below Nashville and assault Hood's Army entrenched on the hills opposite the city.¹⁷⁹

Initially, Hood's Army held off the Federal advance, but by 3:00 P.M., the line broke forcing Hood's men to flee farther south. Due to the break, Hood ordered the army to retreat under cover of darkness and reform along a new battle line on ridges a few hundred yards to the south. Instead of retreating back to Franklin, which would have surely resulted in his removal from command, Hood decided to continue his siege. He realized he had to protect his only avenues of escape south down the Franklin Pike and Granny White Road. During the night, he organized a new defensive line along the Brentwood Hills just south of his previous position. Hood's troops quickly constructed new earth works along a two and a half-mile line. Lee's Corps, which included the 16th Louisiana, composed the right wing and dug in around Overton Hill just east of the Franklin Pike. Hood believed that Thomas would attempt to turn his flanks and accordingly placed his strongest corps to hold those flanks.¹⁸⁰

The morning of December 16th dawned without an attack. Thomas's

¹⁷⁸ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 300-7.

¹⁷⁹ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 290-299.

¹⁸⁰ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 319-344, 348.

commanders failed to carry out the dawn attack fearing heavy losses from a frontal assault on Hood's entrenched troops. Additionally, rain began to fall around mid-day, which also concerned the commanders. Finally, Thomas orders his commanders to commence the attack despite their misgivings. Around 2:45 P.M., Federal troops attacked Lee's Corps anchored on Overton's Hill. Clayton's Division dug in on the left side of the hill until the line reached just west of the Franklin pike. The men of the 16th Louisiana along with the remainder of Gibson's Brigade deployed behind a stonewall guarding the west side of the Franklin pike. The Federal troops attacked in a southeasterly direction through dense thickets and cornfields and up the steep slope of Overton Hill while taking tremendous musket and artillery fire from Lee's entrenched troops. Colonel Abel D. Streight's Brigade of Wood's Corps (Federal) assaulted Gibson's Brigade's battle line deployed behind the stonewall. Gibson's men repulsed Streight's attack and along with the other brigades of Clayton's Division denied the Federal forces control of the Franklin pike. Lee's Corps succeeded in holding their positions during the attack.¹⁸¹

Despite Lee's courageous stand on the right flank, Hood's troops on the left broke under the weight of Thomas's attack. After breaking the line, the Federal troops began rolling up Hood's line toward the east. Countless Confederates broke and ran as the Federal troops swarmed around their trenches. Thousands surrendered without a fight, while many others discarded their weapons as they fled south down the Granny White Road. During the route of the left flank, Stevenson's Division of Lee's Corps got swept along with the stream of fleeing Confederates. In an attempt to

¹⁸¹Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 356, 357-368.; *O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 45 part 1, 702.

protect the army's escape down the Franklin pike, Lee quickly assembled Clayton's Division, including Gibson's Brigade and the 16th Louisiana, and deployed them to block the Federal advance upon the army's retreat. As darkness fell, the remnants of Lee's Corps slowly held off the advancing Federal troops as Hood's Army fled for its life south toward Franklin. Gibson's Brigade took heavy casualties during its participation in Lee's rearguard action. Lee's heroic stand combined with renewed rainfall saved the Army of Tennessee from complete destruction.¹⁸²

Hood's Army slowly reassembled in Franklin during the night. Officers laboriously recollected and organized their commands as best they could. Lee's Corps camped a few miles north of Franklin and reported little action by Thomas's advanced skirmishers. Hood was stricken with despair and depression and did nothing to help salvage the situation. Fortunately for the Army of Tennessee, Thomas's men were too tired and cold to muster any night attack. This gave the Confederates the necessary time to begin their march south at daybreak on December 17th.¹⁸³

On the morning of December 17th, Thomas ordered his army to pursue Hood's demoralized and depleted forces as they fled south. Federal cavalry rushed ahead of the Federal column toward Franklin. However, bad weather and miscommunication between his commanders did not allow Thomas's Army to seize their opportunity to finish off the Confederates. During Hood's retreat, Lee's Corps as well as Confederate cavalry protected the army's retreat south. Gibson's Brigade including the 16th Louisiana composed one of the important skirmish units of Lee's

¹⁸² Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 368-87., O.R., Series 1, vol.. 45 part 1, 702-3.

¹⁸³ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 392-403.

rearguard. The brigade lost 100 men dead and captured during a skirmish near Hallow Tree Gap, which successfully stalled the Federal advance down the Franklin pike. The brigade also fended off the Federal cavalry as the last portions of Hood's Army crossed the Harpeth River. Gibson's men were the last to cross the pontoon boat bridge and provided covering fire for Lee's pioneers to sink the bridge, effectively keeping it from Federal use. Gibson lost another forty men during this skirmish. Once across the river, Hood's Army marched farther south toward the Tennessee River, while the rearguard continued to hold off Federal skirmishers. The army crossed the Tennessee River near Bainbridge by the morning of December 28th and next marched to Corinth, Mississippi.¹⁸⁴ Surprisingly, Thomas allowed Hood's Army to escape from almost certain destruction.

The Army of Tennessee lost severely during the campaign in Tennessee. Sword estimated that only about 14,000 men remained in the ranks of the army while in camp in Mississippi. Over 8,600 men died during combat while another 13,000 to 15,000 men were either captured or deserted which does not include eight Confederate generals. Thomas reported capturing seventy-two cannons and over 3,000 muskets and pistols, while only losing 6,000 men dead during the campaign.¹⁸⁵

On January 14, 1865, General P.G.T. Beauregard, the Department commander of the Western Confederacy, traveled from Richmond to ascertain the condition of Hood's Army with an eye to reassigning a few brigades for service in the Carolinas against Sherman's forces. Beauregard discovered that the army was decimated after

¹⁸⁴*O.R.*, Series 1, vol. 45 part 1, 702-3.; Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 394-442.

¹⁸⁵ Sword, *The Confederacy's Last Hurrah*, 425-6.

the Tennessee campaign. The troops deserted in great numbers during the army's march from Nashville to Mississippi. Those few remaining lacked food, clothing, and shelter needed to survive the harsh winter. Morale reached an extreme low. Upon Beauregard's arrival, Hood asked to be relieved of command and Beauregard replaced him with General Richard Taylor on January 16th.¹⁸⁶

The 16th/25th Louisiana courageously fulfilled its duty to the Army of Tennessee throughout 1864. Consistently throughout the year, the regiment participated in every campaign of the army. The regiment fought valiantly at Resaca, New Hope Church, Ezra Church, Jonesboro, Florence, and Nashville. The regiment also played a major part in saving the army from complete destruction during the rearguard action as Hood retreated from Tennessee. By the end of 1864, the men of the 16th/25th Louisiana were half starved, under clothed, and seriously demoralized. Not unlike other regiments in the army, the regiment lost many men during the year, which seriously deteriorated the regiments' effective fighting strength. The few surviving members languished from the harsh weather during the army's winter quarters. Many could only speculate what hardships 1865 would bring. The actions of the 16th Louisiana during 1864 further prove that the regiment provided strength and dedication to the Army of Tennessee and provide historicans with a great example of a common infantry regiment.

¹⁸⁶ Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 512-4.

Conclusion

The close of 1864 marked the end of the 16th Louisiana Regiment's service as part of the Army of Tennessee. Due to the loss of so many of its members during the course of four years of hard fighting, the 16th/25th Louisiana's numbers were too small to allow the regiment to remain in active service as an independent unit. Instead, the men of the 16th Louisiana Regiment were allocated to other regiments after they were assigned to protect Mobile, Alabama, in March of 1865. As part of Gibson's Brigade, the remaining portion of the 16th Louisiana Regiment traveled with the brigade to Spanish Fort outside of Mobile. Once in garrison, General Randall Lee Gibson consolidated the remnants of the 16th Louisiana Regiment, 1st Louisiana Regulars, and the 20th Louisiana Regiment together in one unit. The remaining portion of the 25th Louisiana Regiment consolidated into a new unit with the 4th Louisiana Battalion. Under Gibson's command of the garrison, the men of the old 16th Louisiana Regiment participated in the defense of Spanish Fort while under siege from March 27th -April 8th. Following the retreat from Mobile, the men of the old 16th Louisiana were again consolidated into a new regiment named the Chalmette Regiment. On May 8, 1865, this regiment surrendered to Federal forces at Gainesville, Florida.¹⁸⁷

While the 16th Louisiana Regiment is not the most highly decorated or famous regiment in the Civil War, it provides an example of a common regiment in the Army of Tennessee. Similar to other regiments in the army, the men were inducted into

¹⁸⁷ William C. Davis, Ed., and Julie Hoffman, Ass. Ed., *The Confederate General*, Vol. 2 (National Historical Society, 1991), 184-9.; Arthur W. Bergeron, *Guide to Louisiana Confederate military units, 1861-1865*. (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 112-5.

Confederate service in 1861 and sent by the state to protect their new country. They also experienced the same hardships and dangers as every other unit in the army. The regiment served in every major campaign and battle while enduring four years of disease, malnutrition, scarce rations, harsh weather, and costly battle casualties while a part of the army. The men also sent numerous letters home detailing their experiences similar to other soldiers in other regiments.

The 16th Louisiana acted as the backbone of the Army of Tennessee, providing strength in manpower and endurance. Its dedicated service allowed the army to remain in the field despite suffering demoralizing losses and hardships. The men of the regiment exhibited endurance and dedication while participating in every major campaign and battle of the army from early 1862 to early 1865. This proves that the men faithfully fulfilled their service. During four years of active duty, the 16th Louisiana provided dependable strength in manpower, firepower, and battle experience. The regiment fought valiantly at the battles of Shiloh, Perryville, Stones River, Jackson, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Resaca, New Hope Church, Atlanta, Ezra Church, Jonesboro, Florence, and Nashville. In addition, the regiment fought away from Louisiana during their entire service in the army, demonstrating their dedication to their community's, state's, and county's cause. Throughout the war, the regiment lost countless men to disease, battle, and desertion. For example, many volunteers died of measles while awaiting induction into service at Camp Moore. Also, the regiment lost close to forty seven percent of its manpower while assaulting the Round Forest at Stones River. Despite numerous hardships and losses, the regiment's dedication to duty apparent through its consistent participation in

battles and campaigns rightfully qualifies it as one of the typical hard working regiments that composed the backbone of the Army of Tennessee.

Composed of men from all across Louisiana with different professions, the 16th Louisiana Regiment provides the historian with a perspective of Louisiana's participation during the Civil War. It also shows how the events of the war brought these different Louisianians together to form the 16th Louisiana. The men of the regiment fulfilled their duty throughout their military service. Answering the call, these men, for many different reasons both personal and political, stepped up and volunteered to defend their families, communities, state, and country from what they saw as a threat to their way of life.

Examining the formation and battle history of the 16th Louisiana provides valuable insight into the military contributions of Louisiana during the Civil War. Additionally, however, the 16th Louisiana's story highlights the personal trials, hardships, feelings, and experiences of the common soldier. Not just nameless or mindless pawns in the war's deadly game, most of the men of the regiment were common citizens who answered the call to arms by fellow members of their community and state. The letters written between the volunteer and his family detail the feelings and experiences while away from the community. The letters connect the soldier with the community that asked him to fight for their defense. Included in almost every letter, the soldier assured his family of his and his friends' good health and reminded his family to continue to support him and his cause. He also relayed important battle experiences and listed the various hardships he and his fellow comrades faced on a daily basis.

Examining the 16th Louisiana Regiment gives our generation of Louisianians an opportunity to recognize the circumstances that motivated other Louisianians to fight against other Americans. It also details the hardships and experiences they endured. Hopefully, exploring the regiment's experience will allow students of our generation to respect these men's sacrifice and understand this regiment's role in American history. Also, this manuscript will keep the memory of these volunteers alive and ensure that their deeds and actions will not be forgotten.

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