THE ROLE OF CAVALRY IN THE WESTERN THEATRE
OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR
FROM THE BATTLE OF SHILOH
TO THE TULLAHOMA CAMPAIGN

by

REGINALD CHARLES STUART
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Concepts of the Role of Cavalry by 1860</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Battle of Shiloh and the Advance on Corinth</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Summer of 1862 and the Battles of Iuka and Corinth</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. The Invasion of Kentucky</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. The Stone's River Campaign</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Civil War Cavalry Raids: Winter 1862-1863</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Murfreesboro Interlude and the Tullahoma Campaign</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problem and Thesis:

This thesis concerns itself with the role of cavalry as it emerged in western campaigns in the American Civil War from April 1862 to June 1863. The concepts of the role of cavalry that existed prior to the War, both in Europe and the United States are surveyed. This, like the historiographical scrutiny of cavalry studies, sets up a frame of reference for the reader to avoid the impression that the situation in the American Civil War existed in isolation.

The main problem was to separate role from the topics of tactical evolutions, styles of fighting, the effects of weaponry, the influence of terrain, and actual tactical employment in battle. It is the author's contention that these more obvious points have really only obscured the true nature of the role of mounted troops in the American Civil War. These problems are important, but entirely separate from role, or the duties and responsibilities of an arm of the service in war. The roles of the several arms have not altered significantly although sophistication has allowed greater refinement in approach and greater efficiency in execution. Thus it is the main argument of this thesis that the role of cavalry remained much the same during the American Civil War in spite of surface alterations in approach and efficiency in the waging of war.
Approach:

The Western Theatre was chosen as the area for study because it has been relatively neglected in Civil War Historiography and it was there that the genuinely decisive battles were fought. The fate of the South was really sealed in the Mississippi Valley and not in the East in the stalemate which was the general character of the war in that theatre. The study starts at the Battle of Shiloh, which was the first real test of combat in the West, and traces Braxton Bragg's Invasion of Kentucky. The failure of that and the Confederate repulse at Corinth assured eventual Federal control of the West.

Once the campaigns had been selected, a familiarity with the studies done on cavalry was undertaken and it was immediately obvious that the problem of the role of mounted troops had never really been undertaken. The bulk of the research for reconstructing the role of cavalry in the campaigns fell on the Official Records, the mainstay of any Civil War research. This was buttressed by other government sources, diaries, reminiscences, memoirs, letters and relevant secondary material. The role of the cavalry on both sides emerged fairly clearly from this research. It had a dual character, on the one hand being a shield oriented to the protection of the army at large and on the other hand being a dagger aimed for lightning-like thrusts at vulnerable points in the enemy's side. This analogy successfully explains the
role of cavalry that emerged from the campaigns studied. As a shield cavalry was defensive, subordinate, and tactical. The role of cavalry as a dagger was usually secondary to that as a shield, but it was nonetheless distinct and real. Then it was offensive, independent, and often strategical.

Conclusions:

A role for cavalry had emerged from the classic studies of Baron De Jomini, based on analysis of the Napoleonic Wars and written thirty years before. The role that emerged in the study was remarkably like that suggested by Jomini, although Jomini's influence is not the subject of this inquiry. It seems, that in this manner at least, the American Civil War, although it exhibited dramatic changes in many ways, was in others quite orthodox. The war did not see a significant alteration in the role of cavalry although it saw shifts in emphasis and approach to that role as well as increased efficiency, in many cases, in its fulfilment.
The relationship of the three arms of the service—infantry, cavalry, artillery—have constantly shifted with time as new weapons and new techniques of fighting have been developed. This relationship is often obscure in the American Civil War and there is a necessity to clarify it so as to be better able to understand how the nature of war was affected by the American conflict. Thus each arm must be put into its proper perspective and none is more in need of this than the cavalry.

This paper attempts to offer some suggestions about the role of cavalry in the American Civil War by an examination of campaigns in the Mississippi Valley from the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862 to the Tullahoma Campaign in June 1863. The role of an arm is its duties and responsibilities and should not be confused with tactics or style of fighting. Interest in the latter has eclipsed the nature of the former and this study attempts to cast new light on the role of cavalry.
The American Civil War is one of the most interesting conflicts of the nineteenth century, partly because it reflects a state of transition in the art and science of war and partly because it was the last of the romantic and the first of the modern wars, having elements of both without being really either. Although its military lessons were not always immediately apparent and even those who saw clearly were voices crying in a wilderness for several years, it was nevertheless important. Many military men in succeeding years turned to the Civil War campaigns for inspiration and instruction and antecedents to many modern concepts of war, most notably those of trench warfare that so dominated World War I and mobile, lightning warfare which was such a dramatic feature of the early part of World War II, are found there.¹

The war has received considerable attention by historians because of its profound effect on American society and it is almost a cliche that it now takes longer to read about than it did to fight. Certainly the voluminous publications, encompassing biographies, articles, monographs, and reprints of primary material, are eloquent testimony to the interest that the conflict has engendered. Not all of these are military studies by any means but the martial aspects have come in for more than their fair share of attention, inspiring considerable research. At the present time this interest seems to be increasing rather than abating and more and more better material appears every year as new sources are uncovered and old ground is reworked.
The armies as a whole have received considerable scrutiny in overall examinations of campaigns but this attention has seldom developed into studies of infantry, cavalry, or artillery as individual branches of the service. The cavalry had been examined the most but much of this has done it an injustice rather than a service. Seldom has there been any attempt to put the mounted forces of the American Civil War into any significant context. Until recently, anyone interested in cavalry had only a few sources of questionable quality to depend on. These were principally regimental histories and several emotional biographies of prominent cavalry leaders.

Cavalry in the Civil War was somewhat maligned by its contemporaries, particularly its sister arm the infantry. There were a number of popular epithets hurled at the troopers, usually variations of "whoever saw a dead cavalryman?" Bell Irvin Wiley, whose social histories of Union and Confederate soldiers have become standard works, believes that the cavalryman's status and demeanour were primarily responsible for this resentment but at the same time Wiley has found that there was a great deal of jealousy mixed in with this apparent contempt.

Certainly, for the first two years of the war, the Federal cavalry (which has received most of the derision) was considerably outshadowed by its Confederate counterpart and tangible evidence of its usefulness was slight. Also, cavalrymen were not as well disciplined and not as subject to close control and many had a habit of engaging in wide ranging individual "foraging expeditions" that did not increase the popularity of the mounted
troops. In spite of this the mounted service had considerable appeal and both sides flocked to join cavalry units in large numbers at the beginning of the war. Recruits came in such numbers that the North found it impossible to handle them because of the scarcity of equipment and the expense of outfitting troopers. Simeon Cameron, the Federal Secretary of War, wrote in 1861:

An item of very heavy expense is the large mounted force which has been organized, equipped, and made available... which was not computed for in the estimate. While an increase of cavalry was undoubtedly necessary, it has reached a numerical strength more than adequate for the wants of the service. As it can only be maintained at great cost, measures will be taken for its gradual reduction.5

Historically the cavalry had always been an elite corps and this partly accounts for its attraction. It had a certain snob appeal as well as was suggested by an unknown cavalryman in the British army during the Napoleonic Wars who is reputed to have said that cavalrmen were included to give tone to what would otherwise be merely a vulgar brawl. The colour and glamour of the cavalry has been picked up by historians and this elitist aspect has endured. Concentration on the cavalry's tone giving qualities, its dash, gallantry, and romantic aura has obscured its less exciting but more important significance as an instrument of war.

Three types of histories of cavalry are found. There are regimental histories, popular histories, and the serious studies. The last of these categories is the only one that,
along with biographies which often have aspects of all three, deserves earnest attention. The other two must be mentioned however, because they have in large measure been responsible for the perpetuity of the demi-myths about cavalry.

Regimental histories of the Civil War are legion but most are singularly undistinguished and display rampant partisanship. Some of the less one-sided do offer information that is of value, but great caution must be employed in making use of them. George F. Price's history of the old Second Cavalry regiment is useful because it spans almost three decades after 1855 and thus offers something of an overview of cavalry duties in the period surrounding the Civil War. The history of the old Second Dragoons covers from 1836 to 1875 and includes significant material on the employment of cavalry in the Mexican War. The regimental histories are invariably chronicles and offer little or no interpretation but they often include letters, reports, reminiscences, and character sketches of prominent cavalry personalities in their appendices that are of considerable value and they give a fairly clear picture of the social history of cavalry regiments as well as the more military aspects. In addition, they often make exciting reading and explain clearly why the dash and colour of the cavalry has survived so vividly.

The popular histories generally lack scholarly merit but some of the more responsible are a useful guide and often have significant bibliographies although they usually lack footnotes.
John K. Herr and Edward S. Wallace wrote one of these and they believe that cavalry in the traditional style never existed in the United States prior to the Civil War and that the mounted soldiers on both sides very quickly became little more than mounted infantry as the conflict progressed.\(^8\) James M. Merrill wrote a recently published work that is of similar quality and comes to similar conclusions.\(^9\) Both works concentrate heavily on the more prominent personalities and the more colourful features of cavalry service in their chapters on the Civil War.

George T. Denison was a militia officer in Canada in the 1860's and was fascinated in the cavalry service. His fascination was toned by insight into the possibilities of cavalry in war and careful observation. He emerged as the first prominent exponent of the mounted infantry theory of cavalry that gained considerable popularity in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He published two books expounding his views, the first of these appearing in 1868 and receiving very little attention. His second book on cavalry was written in response to a prize that was offered by the Czar of Russia and was a comprehensive history which asserted that the mounted infantry approach to the employment of cavalry was the climax to centuries of evolution in the use of the mounted arm.\(^10\)

Albert G. Brackett was a regular and volunteer cavalry officer both before and during the Civil War in the United States and he wrote a history of his service up to 1863. Although his work displays many of the vices of the regimental
history, Brackett was at the same time a careful observer and his interest in cavalry in general often transcends his more partisan approach and makes his work worthy of attention.\textsuperscript{11}

Although Denison's study qualifies as the first serious history of cavalry that included the Civil War, the more scholarly efforts waited until the twentieth century to make their appearance. Alonzo Gray wrote a history of cavalry in the American Civil War in 1910 that was really only a categorization of the many different kinds of service that cavalry had seen. He was a cavalry officer himself and like so many interested observers and military writers in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was concerned primarily with deriving lessons that could be applied for the future use of cavalry. He demonstrated clearly that there was virtually no military activity in which the cavalry did not engage in the Civil War. It did everything from scout and courier duty to digging and defending trenches. Gray successfully demonstrated the ubiquitous character of cavalry in war.\textsuperscript{12}

The next scholarly study of cavalry was in 1951 when Thomas Theile investigated the organization and evolution of mounted troops in both theatres of the war from 1861 to 1863. He concluded that the cavalry was less steady and reliable than the other two arms and that it developed more slowly as well. He found that tactical employment was fairly flexible and depended largely on the situation at hand but cautioned that the
cavalry did not deserve to be dismissed as mounted infantry merely because it displayed a penchant for fighting on foot.\textsuperscript{13}

The most recent study of Civil War cavalry was by Stephen B. Oates who concentrated on the trans-Mississippi area. The major Confederate war effort there was four large raids and Oates focusses on these concluding that they were useful but not decisive. His most interesting finding is that he believes cavalry was moving from a tactical to a strategic role and that the raids were a significant step in the direction of the latter.\textsuperscript{14}

In addition to the monographs specifically devoted to cavalry during the American Civil War there are a number of articles and biographies dealing with one or more aspects of the service.\textsuperscript{15} Most of these studies concern themselves with specific engagements or personalities and concentrate on leadership, weapons, organization, and tactical employment. Few touch on role in much more than passing and even Denison, who stressed mounted infantry so heavily, was really talking about the way in which cavalry went about fulfilling its role. Most historians have tended to confuse the terms "role" and "tactical employment". The role of cavalry is important because it, along with the tactical employment of that arm, was in a state of flux during the Civil War and it is important to see if it was affected by the changed conditions that saw an alteration of traditional approaches in so many other ways.
Cavalry was involved in virtually every significant battle and most of the thousands of smaller affairs and skirmishes that occurred between major combats. A scrutiny of the theoretical concepts of the use of cavalry and the role that emerged in the specific campaigns to be studied can offer suggestions as to the nature of the American concept and if it differed in practise from theory. It is tempting to associate influences of thought, both that of Europe on the United States, and in general to specific practises in the field but this is dangerous and could only be tenuously ascertained at best. The role of cavalry in the field can be reconstructed however and this may offer some suggestions that will either confirm or dispel many of the controversies that have centred around that most glamourous of the arms of the service.
Footnotes for Introduction:

1 See Jay Luvaas, The Military Legacy of the Civil War: The European Inheritance (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959) for an excellent discussion of contemporary European observers and military writers in the years immediately succeeding the Civil War. Luvaas found that many of the important lessons of the conflict were overlooked by Europeans who saw little relevance in them to their own sphere of activity.

2 This phrase has been credited to a number of authors. For a discussion of this antipathy in Federal armies see Bruce Catton, Glory Road (New York: Pocket Cardinal Edition, 1964), pp. 77-78. (Glory Road first published 1952)


5 O.R., Series III, Volume I, 700. The ratio of cavalry to infantry was later fixed at 1:9. Ibid., 921.


8. John K. Herr and Edward S. Wallace, *The Story of the U.S. Cavalry 1775-1942* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), p. 89. Herr was the last chief of cavalry in the United States army when there were still horses and it is therefore understandable when he is rather nostalgic at times.


12. Alonzo Gray, *Cavalry Tactics as Illustrated by the War of the Rebellion* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Cavalry Association, 1910), pt. I. Gray's work is based almost exclusively on the O.R. and his interest is primarily tactical.


15. The many biographies and articles will not be discussed in detail. Most of those relevant are cited in footnotes and all will be included in the bibliography. Some articles of particular interest are J.P. Dyer, "Some Aspects of Cavalry Operations in the Army of Tennessee", *J.S.H.* (1942) and Stephen Z. Starr, "Cold Steel: The Sabre and the Union Cavalry," *Civil War History* (1966). (*Civil War History* subsequently cited as *C.W.H.*)

16. Comparisons of this nature are often difficult because specific references are few and except in very broad terms it is difficult to know which sources would have been read. Certain similarities between ideas do stand out clearly however, but again, where the relationship between these is highly probable, it cannot be easily proven. This receives further discussion in Chapter 1.
In Europe cavalry had traditionally been divided according to function. Although horsemen were labelled as cavalry and dragoons, the distinction between these two types of mounted troops had largely disappeared. Originally, dragoons had been a type of mounted infantry that were to be adapted either for mounted or dismounted service, but in the Crimean War it had been seen that the real division in the regiments of horse was between light and heavy dragoons and cavalry. Generally, the light horse was armed with pistols, light sabres, lances or carbines, and mounted on light horses. Its duties were primarily outpost and reconnaissance patrolling with occasional courier and escort duty. The heavy cavalry was the focal point of interest and more attention was devoted to it in treatises on war than the light cavalry. It was armed with a heavy sabre and a pistol and often protected by defensive armour (by this time usually only a breastplate and helmet) and mounted on heavier horses. Its primary duty was to hold itself ready on the field of battle to be hurled against the enemy ranks at the appropriate moment to smash the opposition and clinch the victory by its sheer weight and power. Its only defense was in the attack and "shock action", as it was termed, was considered the ultimate weapon of cavalry for most of the nineteenth century.¹
The two most important theorists on the art of war before 1860 were the Baron Henri De Jomini and General Carl Von Clausewitz. In general, Jomini emphasized the necessity for maneuver and secure bases and stressed the enemy lines of communication as essential targets. He saw a primary differentiation between light and heavy cavalry, each having specialized functions. Although cavalry was only an auxiliary force he believed it important, and wrote: "An army deficient in cavalry rarely obtains a great victory, and finds its retreats exceedingly difficult." The cavalry was partially an arm of movement and its chief duty was to open the way for or complete a victory so it was clear in Jomini's mind that shock action was its principal weapon. It was also to be used in guarding flanks, covering retreats, and harassing a retreating enemy. As well as its combat duties, the cavalry was expected to mount outposts, escorts, orderlies, and guards for convoys. Jomini had very little to say about fire action and did not recommend it as a general rule but believed that it could be used in certain circumstances. Whenever it was employed in combat, cavalry had to have supports close at hand for Jomini did not believe that it could sustain itself otherwise.

Although he stressed heavy cavalry, Jomini had significant thoughts about light or irregular horse as well. He identified mounted infantry with dragoons and believed that if they were well trained and well led they could be profitably employed, but again, only under certain circumstances. He
stressed the necessity for mounted commanders to have dash and elan and believed morale a very important factor. Although cavalry was clearly a subordinate arm, Jomini did not underrate its significance and wrote:

> Whatever system of organization be adopted, it is certain that a numerous cavalry, whether regular or irregular, must have a great influence in giving a turn to the events of war. It may excite a feeling of apprehension at distant parts of the enemy's country, it can carry off his convoys, it can encircle his army and make his communications very perilous and destroy the ensemble of his operations.

Clearly, Jomini saw a balance necessary in the role of mounted troops. The focal point was still the charge but their duties and role extended beyond that. There is also an implication of finding a strategic role for cavalry as well as the tactical one of the battlefield charge. Thus the cavalry had a dual role, and it could be an offensive force in a larger sense than a mere tactical one, as well as being defensive by mounting escorts, guards, and patrols.

Clausewitz is considered the major writer on the art of war in the nineteenth century. Although he was not widely known in the United States at the time of the Civil War he had been read, and his later influence was considerable. His discussions of cavalry were not as detailed as Jomini's but he had definite views on the role of that arm. Infantry was the primary body and cavalry and artillery were subordinate and although he believed that a balance needed to be struck between the two subordinate arms he thought cavalry the most easily dispensed with. It was the arm of mobility however, and great sweeping
manoeuvres were implied if the war was fought in open country. Shock action was cavalry's principal weapon in battle and the horsemen had to be shielded from enemy fire until the moment for the charge. It was also to be used in covering retreats and to head pursuing forces. Clausewitz made an interesting comment on the relationship of firepower to cavalry and displayed a lack of foresight at the same time. He wrote:

"...cavalry has always decreased in importance according as improvements in the use of firearms have advanced." The possibilities that columns of horsemen could have considerable power by the use of firearms in place of the sabre and lance, in combination with their mobility was overlooked.

Clausewitz' concept of the role of cavalry was similar to Jomini's. He did not detail that role as much as his colleague but its principal focus was as a tactical arm on the field of battle--shock action--with strategic overtones that were more muted than Jomini's had been, but nonetheless distinct. In addition, the cavalry was of secondary and subordinate importance alongside the infantry.

In the United States prior to the Civil War the two most prominent indigenous writers on military affairs were H. Wager Halleck and Dennis Hart Mahan. Halleck's book was a general treatise on war and Mahan's was much more specific, being a manual for detachment and outpost service. Both devoted considerable attention to the role of cavalry however, and their thoughts on the employment of that arm emerge distinctly.
Halleck divided cavalry into light and heavy horse, the former for rapidity of movement and the latter "to appear on the field of battle and make the decisive charges". Generally, cavalry was to form advanced, flanking, and rear guards for an army on the march and could be used either to cover a retreating army or to head a pursuit. Halleck devoted considerable attention to the role of cavalry in combat and indicated that he believed it was still a shock weapon. In battle formation, Halleck recommended flexibility and pointed out that there were always a number of mitigating factors such as the numbers and dispositions of the enemy, the nature of the ground, the quality of the troops used, and so forth. The cavalry, generally speaking, should "be formed in echelon on the right and left, and a little in rear of the main body, in order to protect the flanks from the attack of the enemy's horse." In combat, troops of the line were used and immediate supports were always to be close at hand. Clearly, Halleck was talking about heavy cavalry.

Halleck was fairly traditional in his interpretation of the role of cavalry. He had very little to say about outpost, reconnaissance, or escort duty but perhaps he believed those duties were automatically done by light cavalry and did not require discussion. Clearly though, the sabre was the weapon and the charge the action. Halleck implied even less than Clausewitz a strategic role for cavalry and it was a subordinate and tactical arm for the most part.
Mahan's little book was concerned with all types of detachment service. This could be performed by troops of all arms but the cavalry was an integral part of almost any operation. In combat, Mahan's view of the role of cavalry mirrored Halleck's. The horsemen were to watch the flanks and he wrote:

The cavalry must be in readiness...to act promptly, either against any attempt upon the flanks of the infantry, or to profit by any faults, or disorder of the enemy.... In all movements of the infantry, either in advancing or retiring, the cavalry should be at hand to cover it from a sudden attack.13

The decisive action for cavalry was still the charge and supports had to be close at hand to sustain such action but until the moment for use it was to be held in readiness, masked from enemy fire. Only when cavalry was on outpost duty or on exceedingly unfavourable ground was it to depend on fire action.14

Mahan tended to divide the mounted role between light and heavy cavalry. Light cavalry received all the detached service and could be called upon to form armed reconnaissances or part of reconnaissances in force. It could escort its own convoys and mount raiding expeditions on enemy convoys.15 Mahan believed dragoons should only be used in mountainous country and his views on their role were quite clear:

The dragoon, when first instituted to combine the functions of both the foot soldier and the cavalier, was found...to have the qualities of neither in a very serviceable degree. He still retains his musquetoons, and on outpost duty, and skirmishing in broken ground, does a soldier's duty with this weapon.16
He went on to further describe very explicitly his views on the general role of cavalry:

In all states where the military art is justly appreciated, the cavalry arm is placed in second rank to the infantry. To it an army is often indebted for turning the scales of victory, and giving a decisive character to the issue. To it, the infantry, when exhausted by fatigue, or broken, often owes its safety, and through the respite gained by its charges, finds time to breathe and reform. Without it, much of the advanced-post duty, patroles, and detachment service requiring great celerity would be but badly performed.

But the arm of cavalry by itself can afford but little; and in many circumstances, does not even suffice for its own safety. The smallest obstacles are sufficient to render it powerless; it can neither attack nor hold a post without the aid of infantry; and at night is alarmed... at every phantom. 17

The Civil War would modify Mahan's dictums but in the times he was writing, he was quite correct.

Mahan constantly urged flexibility in the minds of commanders but at the same time it seems that the cavalry and the division of its functions was fairly rigid. Cavalry was clearly divided into light and heavy horse and the traditional functions outlined by Jomini were apportioned accordingly. The heavy cavalry's role was to hover on the edge of the battle waiting for the opportunity to charge, cover a retreat, or to pursue. The light cavalry's role was equally clear and its duties were to secure the flanks, escort convoys, supply orderlies, man outposts, make up the whole or part of reconnaissances, and in general assist in protecting the army at large. 18
A continuity of thought on the role of cavalry was visible in Halleck's and Mahan's works and both bore a great similarity to Jomini, and even parts of Clausewitz. The roles of light and heavy cavalry were distinct and consistent threads as were the views on the role of dragoons. Curiously enough, Jomini had outlined an implied strategic role for cavalry, either regular or irregular, that had found few and faint echoes in the later writings. The other writers had seen the cavalry's role as an almost exclusively tactical one and largely defensive except for brief moments such as a charge on the battlefield or an attack on enemy convoys. It generally seemed to be oriented to the security of the army at large and was clearly subordinate as well.

American military experience in the field was fairly slight prior to the Civil War. The War of 1812 was a fast dimming memory and there the role of mounted troops had been extremely limited. There had been some experience in small troop and garrison duty in action against the Indians. Here however, units seldom larger than a battalion were employed and usually only companies formed the majority of fighting patrols. The Mexican War offered some experience in the use of the three arms in battle and the Mormon War of 1857-1858 was more of a long and gruelling march than a war of combat. The Mexican War was the most important of these and it was where a number of the officers who were to become prominent from 1861-1865 first made their appearance. Other than in
this war, the role of mounted troops was largely that of a military police force that fought principally as dragoons. \(^{19}\)

The country in which the Mexican War was fought was ideal cavalry territory in some ways although it was rough in spots and also quite dry. The mounted troops nonetheless took little part in the combats, and their activity was confined mainly to scouting and escorting with a few minor tactical engagements involving small numbers of troops.

The cavalry attached to Zachary Taylor's army consisted of regular dragoons and mounted rifles, some Texas Rangers, and some volunteer units. It consistently did very little. A group of regular dragoons on a reconnaissance had the dubious honour of shedding the American blood on American soil that was the excuse for a declaration of war. \(^{20}\) In the fighting at Palo Alto the dragoons were on the right flank guarding a wagon train. Their only taste of combat was to come briefly under shell-fire. The Mexican cavalry made a charge but it was repulsed by American infantry and artillery fire. \(^{21}\) The activity of the mounted troops at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma was similar. A small troop charged an enemy battery and although it overran the guns it was not supported and withdrew in the face of a counter-attack. The Mexican cavalry seems to have feared American artillery as Taylor indicated in a report:

...the artillery and dragoons encountered a body of lancers about fifteen hundred strong, drawn up in a line across their path, with lances at rest ready for a charge. Ridgeley and Duncan...came into battery, action front; but the sight of the dread artillery was too much for the Mexican nerve. \(^{22}\)
Other than their slight charge, this was as close as the American cavalry got to combat. Just before Taylor reached Monterey, a regiment of Texas Volunteer Cavalry, fighting on foot and heavily supported by infantry and artillery, repulsed an attack of enemy horsemen.\textsuperscript{23} This was far from a cavalry combat however. At the Battle of Buena Vista the opposing cavalry forces did little more than glower at each other. The Mexican cavalry gave Taylor a bit of trouble but it seems that this was more a fear of what might happen because of the numbers of the enemy horse than because of any combat. Taylor quit a camp and chose a new site where "the features of the ground were such as to nearly paralyze the artillery and cavalry of the enemy...."\textsuperscript{24} Thus the role of mounted troops in Taylor's theatre was distinctly secondary, so much so in fact, that it was almost embarrassing. When cavalry had been employed it had invariably been in a minor tactical manner.

General Winfield Scott's column that marched from Vera Cruz to Mexico City had few mounted troops accompanying it. Part of the Second Dragoons was landed but had so few horses that only about one company could be mounted. The dismounted men served as infantry and those on horseback scouted and watched the Mexican guerrillas.\textsuperscript{25} Heavy bodies of enemy cavalry often appeared during Scott's march but only rarely did they attack the American divisions and then they were invariably repulsed. At Mexico City, some American dragoons made a gallant but insignificant charge and engaged in a few
The role of mounted troops in the Mexican War was quite minor on both sides. It was clearly tactical and defensive for the most part, with a few small charges that were significant only to those that took part in them. The main duties were scouting, escorting, and guarding. Cavalry's role generally conformed to that envisioned for light horsemen by the theorists. It is true that there were troops labelled "dragoons" and "mounted rifles" but this seems to have been only a semantic differentiation. The role of both types of forces was similar and titles should not confuse that point.

There were no official cavalry regiments until after 1855 and by 1861 all three types of mounted soldiers were remarkably similar. Albert Brackett believes that the differences were in name and armament only and that all three were actually light cavalry in the European sense. One rather amusing point that Brackett noted was that the sabres of the mounted troops were almost never sharp. A dull sabre is useful only as a club and it is curious what was in the minds of cavalrymen who did not sharpen them.
Views on the role of cavalry had emerged fairly clearly in theory by 1860 and further thoughts were found in more specific and probably more widely circulated sources than Jomini, Halleck, or Mahan. There were two important tactical manuals (which would now be called drill manuals) and the regulations for both Union and Confederate armies. The Confederate regulations were copied almost directly from the old regular army manual of 1857 so it is not surprising that both North and South expressed similar views for the role of cavalry in these sources.

Captain George B. McClellan was sent to the Crimea in 1855 and on his return wrote a report encompassing his observations with recommendations for American cavalry. Most of his book was a procedural manual for outpost and patrol duty but in several places he gave a clear indication of his views on the role of cavalry as distinct from drill. In general, he recommended that American cavalry be organized as light horse and armed as dragoons. He believed that this would meet all the requirements likely to arise in the North American context. The specific duties of the cavalry were to be escorting general officers and convoys, protecting forage details, and providing advance, flank, and rear guards for an army on the march. When an army was in camp the cavalry was to provide outposts and protective patrols. In addition to these purely defensive functions it had the tactically offensive role of mounting reconnaissances, forming pursuit forces, and sending out parties
to raid enemy convoys, forage parties, and outposts. McClellan did not emphasize shock action and this is understandable because at the outset he stipulated that American horsemen should be light cavalry and concerned primarily with the defensive functions of outposts and patrols. He seemed, in effect, to be repudiating the concepts of heavy cavalry and shock action. He was probably influenced by his observations of the Crimean War as in that conflict the only times shock action had been employed it was noticeably unsuccessful. McClellan's view of the role of cavalry was that it was defensive and tactical, oriented to the security of the rest of the army.

The second major tactical manual that emerged at this time on cavalry was by Philip St. George Cooke, an officer who had seen mounted service both on the frontier and in the Mexican War. He acknowledged that he owed many of his ideas to McClellan but he displayed a significantly different approach. Cooke, like McClellan, devoted much space to procedure and drill, but he especially stressed sabre practise and mentioned fire action by mounted troops only in skirmishing:

The objects of employing skirmishers are, to cover movements and evolution, to gain time, to watch the movements of the enemy, to keep him in check, to prevent his approaching so close to the main body as to annoy the lines of march, and to weaken and harass him by their fire; to prepare the way for the charge on infantry, by rendering them unsteady or drawing their fire. Shock action was the principal weapon of cavalry however, and Cooke waxed enthusiastic about the charge:
To charge is the decisive action of cavalry. Cavalry, like each of the three great arms, dependent on the others, the battle once begun awaits their action. Its opportunities pass in moments. Its successful commander must have a cavalry eye and rapid decision; once launched, its bravery is successful. Cooke went on to discuss various formations for charging, which depended on the force opposed, the type of dispositions the enemy had made, and the nature of the ground. Cooke's mind was fixed in one way however, and the charge was still cavalry's decisive purpose. Thus cavalry for Cooke was heavy cavalry and light cavalry functions were given short shrift. Although Cooke was opposed to McClellan in many ways, the role of cavalry was still tactical and subordinate. This, in addition to the general contention that cavalry could not sustain itself in combat, was a consistent thread in spite of the surface confusion over the approach to the role of the mounted troops.

The two approaches to the role of cavalry were in conflict before the Civil War and continued for most of the nineteenth century. It is clear however, that cavalrymen still thought in terms of "light" and "heavy" even though their experience had indicated all mounted troops performed essentially the same duties. On the frontier after 1855 it was difficult to distinguish the cavalry from the dragoons and if there had been the different troops in the Mexican War it is unlikely that they would have behaved very differently. Cavalry in battle was clearly a subordinate arm, tactical, and in many ways
defensive, devoted to the security of the rest of the army. Its offensive functions were limited, including the charge on the field of battle, and patrols against enemy outposts and patrols. It must be remembered that most of this was theoretical however, and American experience with mounted troops under the conditions of war that would exist after 1961 had been slight.

The army regulations only confirm the general tendencies that have been outlined above. There was still a differentiation between light and heavy cavalry, the former performing all duty out of the "line" and the latter holding itself ready for the charge. This was clearly the kind of division of function that Jomini had talked about and that had been stressed in different ways, but never uniformly, by the American writers. The regulations also had a section dealing with partisans and although the Federals paid little attention to this the Confederacy relied on partisans and guerillas heavily, often to the discomfort of their enemies. The description of partisan duty sounded very much like the general role that Jomini had set forth for cavalry:

The purpose of these isolated corps is to reconnoitre at a distance on the flanks of the army, to protect its operations, to deceive the enemy, to interrupt his communications, to intercept his couriers and his correspondence, to threaten or destroy his magazines, to carry off his posts and his convoys, or, at all events, to retard his march by making him detach largely for their protection.
Those detachments are sometimes composed of different arms, but the service belongs more particularly to the light cavalry, which can move at a distance by rapid marches, surprise the enemy, attack unexpectedly, and retire as promptly.37

Exactly how much the Confederates were influenced by their regulations is impossible to say but the type of activity that John Hunt Morgan and Nathan Bedford Forrest performed throughout the war was strikingly similar to this. It also suggested a strategic approach that contradicted the purely tactical approach that had been suggested elsewhere in the regulations. In battle, the role of the cavalry was traditional—occupy the wings and the centre when the ground was favourable and charge when the opportunity arose.

It is clear that there was some confusion about the role of cavalry by 1861. Certain points were consistent, such as the generally tactical role with the overtones of strategic use and the differentiation between light and heavy cavalry. All the Federal mounted troops were labelled "cavalry" in 1861 but the Confederate still differentiated between regulars and partisans.38 This often gave them problems as a letter from George Randolph to Jefferson Davis in August of 1862 indicated:

The act authorizing bands of partisan rangers has been carried into execution. Apprehending that the novelty of the organization, and the supposed freedom from control would attract great numbers in the partisan corps, the Department adopted a rule requiring a recommendation from a general commanding a department before granting authority to raise partisans. Notwithstanding this restriction there is reason to fear that the number of partisan corps greatly exceeded the requirements of the service, and that they seriously impede recruiting for regiments of the line.39
It seems that generally the approach to the role of cavalry at the outbreak of the Civil War in the United States was very similar to that suggested by Jomini. There was more stress on the auxiliary functions but by and large Jomini's ideas seem to have remained dominant. The theoretical concepts of the role of cavalry have been outlined to present an idea of how military men in the nineteenth century, both in Europe and the United States, thought about the role of cavalry. The exact influence of thought is difficult to trace and not within the scope of this study but it seems fairly clear that the concepts were consistent as many scholars have suggested.\textsuperscript{40} There was a transition in evidence however, as the confusion over approach indicated. There were significant departures from orthodoxy at the same time as there were adherences to it.

The basic role of cavalry was clear. It was subordinate, defensive more than offensive, dependent, tactical but with strategic overtones, and oriented generally to the security of the rest of the army. But most of this was theory and the role in practise really lay ahead, after the fighting broke out between North and South in 1861.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER I


3 Jomini, Summary, pp. 303-315 for general discussions.


5 Ibid., pp. 314-315.


7 Ibid., II, 20-21; III, 197, 199, 292.

8 Ibid., II, 17.


10 Halleck, Elements, p. 264.

11 Ibid., p. 111.

12 Ibid., pp. 270-271. See also pp. 127, 272. He considered the sabre the best weapon in a mêlée.

14Ibid., pp. 18-19, 20.

15Ibid., pp. 81-82, 138-139.

16D.H. Mahan, An Elementary Treatise (New York: John Wiley, 1853), p. 42. With the exception of two additional chapters that were deleted in the later edition this is identical to that published in 1861. (Citations hereafter will include year of publication to avoid confusion.) Many observers of the Civil War echoed Mahan's opinion of the value of dragoons. See Luvaas, The Military Legacy, pp. 56, 123, 118. Many more would see merit in this type of approach however. See ibid., pp. 56, 84-85, 109, 113, 156, 178.


18Ibid., pp. 42, 45.

19There are any number of histories of the Indian Wars. For a discussion of the part played by cavalry see Herr & Wallace, The U.S. Cavalry, Rodenbough, From Everglade to Canon, and Price, Across the Continent.

20Brackett, History of U.S. Cavalry, p. 55.


22Cited on Rodenbough, From Everglade to Canon, p. 111. See p. 106 for a description of the charge on the battery.

23Henry, The Mexican War, pp. 146-147.

24Cited on ibid., p. 245. Henry believes that the Mexican General Ampudia was well served by his own cavalry at this time acting as a screen shielding his movements. Ibid., p. 244. See also Herr & Wallace, The U.S. Cavalry, pp. 38-39, 41.

Otis A. Singletary, The Mexican War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 55-70 presents an able narrative of these marches.

Brackett, History of U.S. Cavalry, pp. 158-160. The differences in armament do not seem to have affected the role of the troops.


Ibid., pp. 19, 23, 26, 107, 112, 168.


Ibid., p. 132.

Ibid., p. 239.


Brackett, History of U.S. Cavalry, p. 224.

Army Regulations Adopted for the Use of the Army of the Confederate States (Richmond: West and Johnson, Publishers, 1861), p. 8. See also p. 57. J. Lucius Davis, The Trooper's Manual or Tactics for Light Dragoons and Mounted Riflemen (Richmond: A. Morris, Publisher, 1861). This is another drill manual but its approach is clearly indicated by its title.


Ibid., Series IV, Volume I, 48.
Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 150-151, 158-160 puts Jomini into a wider context. Ropp's book is one of the better one volume treatises on the art of war and pp. 175-194 puts the American Civil War into the context of the nineteenth century. Williams, American at War, pp. 68, 79-80 believes that Jomini's influence on American military thought was profound. It is interesting to note that in a letter written to Abraham Lincoln in December 1861, Simeon Cameron, the Federal Secretary of War, cited Jomini indicating that political figures also read military history and theory. O.R., Series III, Volume I, 700.
CHAPTER II  THE BATTLE OF SHILOH AND THE ADVANCE ON CORINTH

The campaigns in the Western Theatre of the American Civil War centered around the waterways of the Mississippi Valley during the first two years of fighting. Control of these lines of communication was vital for both sides as they were the principal transportation routes and ultimate control by the Federals allowed them to move and supply with relative ease the troops that dissected the Confederacy.

The Battle of Shiloh was the first major clash in this area. The campaigns of 1861 and the first part of 1862 had seen several significant fights but they had been minor in terms of the numbers of men engaged and the resultant casualties. The combination of the Southern defeats at Mill Springs on January 19, 1862 and the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson broke the Confederates first line of defense and forced them to pull back and form new positions.¹ Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston withdrew his headquarters from Columbus, Kentucky about the same time that Federal General Don Carlos Buell marched his army into Nashville, Tennessee, and set up his headquarters. Johnston retired south and set up his new line centering on Corinth, Mississippi.²

Corinth was the new strategic centre for important rail communications focussed there and this also made it a prime
target for the Federal armies. The Union plan was to try and cut Southern lines of supply before attempting to take the city, so early in March, General Ulysses S. Grant's army was ordered up the Tennessee River. Grant was temporarily suspended from duty at the time however, so the expedition was commanded by C.F. Smith who was to feel out the rebel forces that were known to be concentrating around Corinth. Smith was forced to turn back however because of the strong and alert Confederate pickets, the bad weather, and the swollen creeks. Gradually, the segments of the Union army began to collect around Pittsburgh Landing, on the West bank of the Tennessee River. The concentration began almost accidentally when General Lewis Wallace had led his division into camp at Crump's Landing on March 12 and the other Federal divisions gradually moved into the same general area. By March 17 Grant had been restored to his command and had journeyed upstream from Fort Donelson to join his army. The general plan was now to march on Corinth but Grant was cautioned by his superior, General Henry Halleck, to avoid any major confrontation until Buell's army could link up with him. Buell had been ordered to rendezvous with Grant either at Pittsburgh Landing or a short distance downstream, at Savannah.

In Corinth, the Confederates were well aware that the Federals were concentrating for an attack but they decided to take the initiative and strike first. Johnston hoped that he
could move up to Grant's army quickly, beat it, and then be ready for Buell when he arrived. The battle that followed cost Johnston his life and the Confederacy Corinth, however, and he was just a little too sanguine in his expectations at the end of March.

There were major obstacles that prevented a rapid movement of the Confederate army in the first place. Most of these lay within the rebel system, for it was poorly organized and the men badly trained, quite raw for the most part, and directed by an inefficient command setup. Nature contributed the second obstacle in the form of heavy rains that made the roads soggy and fast marching an impossibility. Therefore, instead of being ready to attack the Union camps on April 5, as Johnston had originally hoped, the rebel army was not in line of battle until the morning of April 6. This delay allowed Buell's army to get one day's march closer for his rendezvous with Grant.

The cavalry forces saw infrequent action but were more heavily employed on the Confederate side than on the Federal. The Union cavalry was considerably fragmented and companies and regiments were distributed throughout the divisions of the army in units seldom exceeding battalion strength. Grant revealed his thoughts on the organization of his cavalry in a cable to Smith: "...assign artillery and cavalry to divisions and leave them subject to the control of the division commanders." Evidently there was no such thing as a central commander for
the Federal cavalry unless Grant qualified. A few days later a general order was issued which stated: "The artillery and cavalry of this command will hereafter form a part of divisions and not be attached to brigades." Thus attachment to divisions was something of a concentration although it still left a fragmented cavalry force in the Union army.

The Confederate cavalry was supposedly organized into a single brigade but in reality it was dispersed piecemeal throughout the army. The Confederate army was organized into Grand Divisions and battalions of troopers were attached to each of these, in addition to some unattached units that were scattered around. General orders issued on March 29 confirmed the fragmentation of the rebel horse: "Divisions shall consist of not less than two brigades [of infantry] and one regiment of cavalry. All cavalry...not herinbefore assigned to divisions and brigades will be held in reserve...." Thus if the rebel cavalry was to be employed in battle it would probably have to be in a piecemeal fashion.

Prior to the Battle of Shiloh the cavalry on both sides was engaged principally in minor skirmishing arising out of scout and outpost duty. Early in March General William T. Sherman had ordered out all his cavalry to attack the Memphis and Charleston Railroad but this expedition proved unsuccessful due to swollen creeks and strong enemy patrols. On March 25, Colonel John Kennett led a Federal reconnaissance from Murfreesboro to Shelbyville, Tullahoma, Manchester, and McMinnville where some Confederate property was destroyed and
a few prisoners taken. This was country that Kennett's men would become increasingly familiar with over the next year. The Confederate cavalry was primarily on picket duty although John H. Morgan made his first appearance on a small raid that netted little of consequence. Buell detached some numbers of his cavalry to guard depots and roads, thus fragmenting an already dispersed force.\textsuperscript{16}

Throughout March and April, there were numerous small actions of this kind as the armies moved slowly around. Individually, these combats had little significance and meant no more than a few men captured or some property destroyed. At the same time, the cavalry on both sides performed valuable chore work, guarding depots and bridges, maintaining outposts, and mounting scouts and reconnaissances. Both armies were quite amateurish at this time and did not display the cool professionalism that slowly developed throughout the course of the war.

Many of the problems that beset cavalrmen were evident at this time. Lack of arms was a chronic problem and remained so for most of the war but it was never so acute as at this time.\textsuperscript{17} When he was on his little raid, Morgan had captured a small stock of weapons and promptly distributed them to his men. A Federal cavalry officer reported that the guns in his command would not always fire and that one company's ammunition was spoiled because it had been exposed to the rain. The reason for the exposure? The men had no cartridge boxes.\textsuperscript{18}
by Lieutenant Murray of the Fifth Ohio Volunteer cavalry gave a graphic picture of the arms problem:

At the same time the enemy advanced, and our men, most of whom were armed with nothing but a saber, gave way, and a general retreat followed. We have now but 7 carbineers to our company and no cartridges for them. We are in possession of but 28 pistols, and they were long since condemned as wholly unfit for service. They are a spurious weapon, made out of cast iron, and one half of the time will neither cock nor revolve. 19

The Confederates found conditions very similar as was revealed in a cable that reached the office of the Southern Secretary of War, Judah P. Benjamin:

I have however, no sabers or pistols. Of the latter, even our rich enemies are destitute. Cavalry's found most efficient with double-baralled guns, and cavalry officers report that after a month or two sabers are universally discarded as useless; men not thoroughly trained to the use of that arm. 20

The horse problem appeared for the Confederates as particularly bothersome because of their curious approach to mounting the cavalry. Humphrey Marshall gave vent to his frustration in a letter to General S. Cooper as is revealed in the following:

Men cannot buy their horses and equipments. That day has gone by. I supposed it was the law (and think so yet) to furnish Government horses for men enlisting for the war, and accordingly I ordered the purchases of some seven or eight; but my attention was called to a printed circular of the departmental regulations, which declares that the government will not furnish cavalry horses.... ...I never would mount a volunteer upon his own horse or have in cavalry service any animal but a public one. A long experience as a cavalry officer with volunteers has made this one of my fixed opinions. I have the equipments and sabers for a squadron of cavalry but no horses. 21

This approach of the Confederates would rear up every once in a while and cause considerable problems because it meant in
effect that each trooper had to be his own provider and this created problems in illegal foraging, men absent from their commands in search of mounts, and considerable numbers of dismounted cavalry, disgruntled because they could not serve on horseback as they had intended upon enlistment.

At the Battle of Shiloh it does not appear that either side expected its cavalry to do much. The Union troopers were largely inactive but their Confederate counterparts were busier, often in excess of their orders it seems. Sherman had his cavalry stationed according to the nature of the ground and felt that it did not necessarily have to be in line. The Confederates saw their cavalry as primarily a scouting and covering force for the advance from Corinth and other units of troopers were to delay the converging Federal columns. Part of the Confederate marching orders indicated clearly that the rebel horse was to be a flanking and covering force:

The cavalry, well thrown forward during the march, to reconnoitre and prevent surprise....
...
the Third Corps...supported on that flank by one-half of its cavalry, the left flank being supported by the other half. Wharton's regiment of Texas cavalry will be ordered forward at once to scout.... It will annoy and harass any force of the enemy....

In addition, the Confederate cavalry was to provide couriers and make up patrols and picket lines to the front of the infantry divisions.

On April 6 the Union army was attacked and barely had time to get into line of battle before the rebel brigades crashed down on it. For several days prior to the battle
there had been increased activity to the front but except for some outposts and pickets, the Union army had sat fairly still. Grant had been ordered by Halleck in very explicit terms not to allow himself to become engaged in a major battle if he could possibly avoid it. The evidence indicates, as Sherman stated in his memoirs: "We were all conscious that the enemy was collecting at Corinth...." but the Federals were shaken by the rebel assault that hit their camps on April 6. The Union brigades were forced back and the fighting was hot and heavy, with casualty figures soaring on both sides. But the attack slowed down, and stalled with the death of Albert Sidney Johnston, and nightfall saw both armies, bruised and bleeding, waiting for a renewal of the conflict on the following day.

It could be suggested that as a scout the Federal cavalry was a dismal failure but in reality it seems to have been more the fault of the senior Union division commanders that more was not known of the enemy activity to the front. There were few indications of displeasure at the behaviour of the cavalry and the duties that it performed except for a few instances where Union troopers broke somewhat prematurely in the face of the Confederate attack. Sherman's cavalry, for example, had had a brush with a strong enemy force and had pulled back quickly to report. Sherman noted this but was skeptical that any general attack was in the air and made no further efforts to find out what was going on to his front.
The cavalry was there but good use does not seem to have been made of it.

Other Federal cavalry units were engaged in minor duties in the course of the battle. When the fight developed to the right of John McClernand's division, he had his cavalry screen his advance but there is no record of how it fared.\(^{31}\) Wallace's cavalry was scouting for him all the time he was absent from the field on April 6 and although it is unclear exactly why he was lost it was probably a combination of un-aggressive cavalry scouts and lack of initiative on his own part.\(^{32}\) A detachment of regular cavalrymen was broken up, partly to provide support for a battery and partly to supply couriers between the various parts of the army, an important function in terms of staff work in the days before field telephones and wirelesses.\(^{33}\) Generals Alexander McCook and Thomas J. Wood both left their cavalry forces guarding baggage trains so they could not have considered the presence of horsemen vital to their interests in a battle.\(^{34}\)

In spite of these minor duties, the Federal cavalry was generally inconspicuous during the Battle of Shiloh. Part of the reason for this inactivity stemmed from topography. The ground on which the fighting occurred was a rough plateau, bounded on two sides by swollen streams, cut up with ravines and hills, and covered with brush, boasting few open places. It seems reasonable that this is what sparked Grant's comment:
"The nature of this battle was such that cavalry could not be used in front; I therefore formed ours in line in rear, to stop stragglers..." General Stephen A. Hurlbut noted the dispositions of the cavalry attached to his command:

Colonel Taylor's Fifth Ohio Cavalry was drawn up in order of battle until near 1 o'clock, in the hope that some opening might offer for the use of this arm, and none appearing, I ordered the command withdrawn from reach of shot. They were not in action again until the afternoon of Monday when they were ordered to the front, but returned to their camps.

It is clear the Hurlbut had the heavy cavalry concept firmly in his mind here and would have launched the troopers in a charge had he seen an opportunity. In addition to this, some cavalrymen were assigned as orderlies and aides, and the Federal cavalry attached to the divisions was ordered to whatever duty the divisional commander saw fit. There is no evidence of dissatisfaction with this system however, although the result seems to have been a fairly quiet day for the horse soldiers.

The Confederate cavalry saw more action in spite of the comment on an abstract of a field return which read: "The battlefield was so thickly wooded that the cavalry was useless and could not operate at all." This was far from the truth, and although the evidence is scanty it indicates clearly that the rebel cavalrymen found fairly frequent employment. Morgan and Nathan Bedford Forrest were attached to the reserve corps under General John C. Breckinridge. Forrest had been instructed to guard a ford over a creek but he soon tired of this and
wandered off in search of a fight. He found it at the "Hornet's Nest" and charged a Federal battery while supporting some of his infantry, capturing it handily. He then scouted down near the edge of the Tennessee River and during the night of April 6 camped in front of the main army as a picket. The following day the Confederates were attacked and pushed back in turn and the Confederate cavalry was assigned as a covering force, Forrest included. At one point, Forrest's men charged to within twenty paces of the enemy, fired their shot-guns, and charged home with pistols and sabres. The Union infantry had foolishly fired while the rebels were some distance away and the swift advance of the Southern horsemen did not allow time for reloading, so Confederate cavalry was able to break Federal infantry. Morgan had operated all through the first day on the left of Breckinridge's command and had covered the flank of the general advance. He was in action several times and assigned to the covering force on April 7 when the Confederates were forced to withdraw.

Several other rebel cavalry units also saw action at the Battle of Shiloh. Wharton spent April 7 supporting various Confederate artillery units, often fighting on foot in Skirmish formation and even attempted a charge down a road lined with brush on each side. He was moving in column and forced to retreat in the face of a Federal line of battle regretting "...exceedingly that the face of the country deprived the Rangers from charging...." Colonel Brewer's regiment scouted
for an infantry brigade and fought on Polk's left flank. Isaac Avery's Georgia Mountain Dragoons picketed on April 4, skirmished and scouted on April 5, fought in line of battle on April 6, and covered the withdrawal on April 7. All things considered, Avery's command was quite busy. Thus the Confederate cavalry was generally in the role of a tactical assistant, much like the Federal horse, but to a greater degree through more involvement in the fighting. The active leaders of the rebel cavalry seem to have been responsible for this involvement for organization and fragmentation was similar on both sides. In addition, the Confederate cavalry received some enthusiastic praise for its services.

Shiloh had been a vast and confused battle and the armies had resembled mobs of men rather than organized fighting machines. Their officers had herded them up together to hack and hew in a combat that was almost medieval in scope. Both sides suffered enormous casualties and although the Confederates had retreated neither side appeared to have won a clear cut victory. Shiloh was typical of many such battles that would follow, where it was difficult to see who was the winner and who the loser. The Confederacy lost in the long run of course, but at the time it must have been bewildering for the men involved. Even the benefit of hindsight does not always clarify the picture. Shiloh gave the Federals the upper hand however, in that the war had finally been carried in a real way into Confederate territory.
The Federals were far too disorganized to immediately follow up the Confederate withdrawal from the field of Shiloh. A concentrated cavalry force might have pressed the heels of the rebels but none was available. As Grant had written to Buell:

The great fatigue of our men, they having been engaged in two days' fight and subject to a march yesterday and fight to-day, would preclude the idea of making any advance to-night without the arrival of the expected re-enforcements. My plan, therefore, will be to feel on... until our cavalry force can be organized (...) and a sufficient artillery and infantry support to follow them are ready for a move.\(^5\)

The Federal cavalry did push out in individual units, but not in any concerted effort. Grant's Assistant Adjutant General, John Rawlins, ordered Taylor's cavalry out to scout the Corinth road and the rest of the cavalry to push on as well if the rebels were found retreating.\(^7\) Grant asked Buell to send forward his cavalry and Sherman pushed out a mixed force, his troopers skirmishing with the covering Confederates.

The general advance and seige of Corinth took over a month and a half to move twenty miles. Halleck had taken over command of the combined armies on April 11 and he instituted a series of highly complex entrenching manoeuvres that consumed vast amounts of time. Halleck did not want another general engagement and by adopting this strategy, which was essentially sound except that it was so slow, he forced the Confederates in Corinth to assault his numerically overwhelming army, sit still for a seige that could only end in Southern defeat, or withdraw. General P.G.T. Beauregard, whose reputation had
skyskated after Fort Sumter and who was now in command at Corinth, decided to withdraw and the slow Federal advance allowed him to do so almost at his leisure.48

The Federal cavalry performed a series of small chores during the siege, very similar to those before the Battle of Shiloh. Union troopers were often on picket duty and occasionally acted as military policemen to restrict the movements of both civilian and military personnel.49 The fragmentation continued and the cavalry officers received their orders from the infantry division commanders. But on April 24 there was a general reorganization of the army and the cavalry was concentrated under the command of General Gordon Granger. The mounted division was attached to the reserve and was always to camp according to the nature of the ground. Also:

Such details of cavalry as may be necessary to accompany the advance of the army or division will be designated hereafter. The commander of the cavalry will detail immediately 20 orderlies to report to each of the division commanders. These detachments...will be commanded by a commissioned officer, or by some discreet and trustworthy non-commissioned officer....50

Groups of Union horsemen accompanied advance infantry units and skirmished, although not always with distinction. Sherman commanded a reconnaissance which had pushed forth on April 8 and his lines were broken by charging Confederate cavalry who did not share Sherman's opinion that the ground was unfavourable for mounted action. His own troopers had been in rear of his infantry, and both forces had crumbled in the face of the enemy attack. Later in the month there was a sharp skirmish
near Farmington where a Federal cavalry force retired with unseemly and embarrassing haste. A court of inquiry decided that the fault lay partly with one officer who had not co-operated sufficiently and partly with the cavalry which had broken without putting up an adequate resistance.52

For the most part the Union cavalry detachments were involved in minor skirmishes while on outpost or patrol duty. On April 12 and 13 the cavalry from a reconnaissance drove Confederate guards from a bridge and tore up some railroad track and telegraph lines. Granger's report for this period suggests that the Federal cavalry was generally successful in its brushes with the enemy, in spite of a few significant exceptions.53 Halleck also seems to have been very impressed with the Federal cavalry's behaviour and General David S. Stanley noted particularly the efforts of Colonel W.L. Eliot's regiment.54

The Union horse soldiers did have some problems however, and Buell was forced to put his cavalry in the rear because of bad roads and lack of forage brought about by the unfavourable weather. Also, the terrain was often rough and thickly undergrown and therefore not ideal cavalry country. Horse problems cropped up too, as the following instructions from Grant indicated: "You will please direct the arrest of the 1st Lieut. of the 3d Ohio Battery, for improperly taking three horses belonging to the 4th Ills. Cavalry."55
The duties of the Federal cavalry were varied and its horses were often employed as pack and draught animals. Troopers even found themselves doubling as engineers by building bridges, roads, earthworks for batteries, and rifle pits. Sometimes cavalrymen even manned the trenches, like infantry. Cavalry seems to have been in short supply and both Buell and McClemand expressed the opinion that they were short of mounted men for escort, scouting, and picket duty. The Confederate cavalry was operating largely in guerrilla fashion at this time and it was very quickly discovered that infantry could not catch the small bands of enemy horsemen. Cavalry was the logical arm to employ but when so occupied it tended to break down very swiftly. O.M. Mitchell made this clear in a letter to Buell:

I hear the most deplorable accounts of the condition of our cavalry throughout my entire command. The company of scouts ... is in bad condition for service. A portion of the First Kentucky Cavalry, without proper arms, 350 in number, is at Shelbyville with but 65 fit for duty; men and horses are absolutely worn-out, and the Fourth Ohio and their horses nearly all unfit for service.

...beg for cavalry reenforcements if possible.

Another drain on the Federal cavalry was sickness and absenteeism. This is a problem that Civil War armies faced continually. An example of its effect is seen in a field return made by Granger which showed an aggregate strength of 4,237 but only showed 3,235 as fit for duty.
Immediately after the Battle of Shiloh and all through the seige of Corinth, the Confederate cavalry was in the role of a covering force. General Brexton Bragg had utilized the cavalry attached to his command to withdraw the artillery because the majority of his draught animals had been killed. For the same reason, the cavalry assisted in bringing the wounded off the field. In addition to these tasks the rebel troopers spent their time picketing and scouting. The Confederate cavalry was in short supply at this time and it had a vast territory to cover. Therefore it tended to be spread out too thinly and this broke horses down quickly from overwork. There were a number of instances where Confederate officers requested cavalry but few where they seem to have received any. General Patton Anderson, in reporting a skirmish, noted that his cavalry was worn out because of the muddy roads and difficult terrain. The lack of horses became so acute that several regiments were dismounted to serve as infantry. The constant wearying service and the breaking down of units would not have helped the morale of an army already in retreat.

The Federal seige had its desired effect and the Confederates at Corinth concluded that their position was untenable. General W.J. Hardee was convinced that the Southern army could not stand a seige and it could not attack the Federals and therefore withdrawal was the only practical alternative and Beauregard agreed on all these points. The cavalry was again given the job of covering the retreat. It
was to set up pickets to guard each infantry column and was to be under the command of the chief of cavalry who was to coordinate the whole movement. When the withdrawal was effected, the cavalry units were to catch up with their assigned infantry to protect the flanks and rear. The troopers were to skirmish with the advancing Federals and destroy roads and bridges whenever possible until recalled. The last rebel cavalry units pulled out of Corinth just as the Federal advance moved into the outskirts of the city.

About the same time, Federal cavalry under Elliot raided the Southern lines of communication around Booneville, Mississippi. A brigade of two regiments, one of which was under the temporary command of Philip H. Sheridan, detached itself from the main army on May 28 and reached Booneville two days later. Sheridan led half his regiment through the town to tear up some track but while he was engaged in this task he was attacked by Confederate cavalry. His reserve beat off the assault however and Sheridan's description of the fight gave a clear indication of the mixed style of fighting that cavalry was coming to adopt in the Civil War:

...a dash was made by a squadron of rebel cavalry at our rear...but was handsomely met by the reserve under command of Captain Campbell, who dismounted a portion of his command and when the enemy came within range received them with a volley, which caused them to break and run in all directions.65

The Federal cavalry wrought considerable damage before it withdrew and although it captured a large number of Confederate
convalescents, it had neither the time to parole them, nor the numbers to herd them back to friendly lines so the prisoners had to be released. But several railroad cars had been fired, 100,000 rounds of small arms and 1,500 rounds of artillery ammunition destroyed, clothing had been burned, and some guns had been spiked. The raid was a notable tactical success although there is no evidence that it had any serious strategic consequences.°6 The Confederates were quite embarrassed however and set up a board of inquiry to find out how such a thing could have happened. It seems to have happened because of the initiative of the Federal cavalry, fast marching, and brisk fighting when it was demanded.

Small units of cavalry headed the Federal advance for a short distance beyond Corinth and formed pickets and reconnoitering parties. Union General James Negley was most impressed by the performance of his escort and wrote: "My escort...led the charge with reckless daring, dashing into the midst of the enemy, using their sabers with terrible execution." Negley was probably far more enthusiastic than the occasion warranted but the principle of shock action was still in evidence even if it was on an extremely limited scale. Major Thomas J. Jordan of the Ninth Pennsylvania Cavalry described another action:

They [Union cavalry] continued to advance until stopped by the thick brushes, when they opened upon the enemy at 15 paces distance with their Colt's revolvers. Having but few carbines and no ammunition to spare...I withdrew my men..."
The shortage of the Confederate cavalry was again in evidence, unlike later when the rebel boasted massive mounted forces. Bragg wrote Beauregard and stressed this point, indicating at the same time the value he placed in mounted troops:

The enemy's cavalry followed us closely, and we had barely time to save our pickets and burn the bridge. No cavalry followed on my route so that we had no notice.... General Beall I learned, passed on this route with some cavalry...but left none with my rear guard. This leaves my rear in a very unprotected condition, and renders it difficult to withdraw my infantry and artillery. Can you send me a regiment....

Bragg was able to extricate his command safely however, in spite of a lack of cavalry and the Confederates moved to Tupelo. After this the war quieted down somewhat as the Federals were not disposed to press an active pursuit.

Wars generally alternate between times of furious activity and relative calm. The casualties at the Battle of Shiloh had been frightful and neither side could afford too many bloodlettings of this magnitude. In addition, the armies were almost invariably considerably disorganized by a major battle and required time to refit, sort themselves out, and tend their wounded before gathering for the next major combat. During this convalescent period the cavalry forces of both armies were instrumental in maintaining contact between the opposing forces.

The nature of the ground had prevented active employment of the cavalry for the most part. The Confederates differed from the Federals however, for the latter seem to have taken
it more or less for granted that mounted troops could not be
used even before the fighting started where the Confederates
seem to have found an active tactical role for their horse
soldiers in spite of the limitations. The most frequent
employment of cavalry was on outpost and patrol duty. Troopers
also served as escorts, guards, aides, couriers, and even
engineers. There was some evidence of heavy cavalry action
but this was infrequent and always limited in scope. Efforts
were made to employ the cavalry in this fashion even when the
ground was obviously unfavourable, as Granger noted:

The ground was much broken by hills and ravines and
utterly unsuited to cavalry movements, but, nevertheless,
upon receiving the order...to charge, Colonel Hatch
divided his force...[and] charged ...in splendid style,
driving in the strong force of the enemy's skirmishers
and battery support with great fury, and completely
silencing the fire of both batteries.... He retired
in good order, but with a loss of no less than 43 killed,
wounded, and missing, besides a large number of horses.
I cannot but express my conviction that this heavy loss
was attributable to the entirely unfit nature of the
ground....70

It is curious why a charge would have been made if the ground
was so obviously unsuited. No explanation is readily available
but perhaps a quick advance on the batteries was necessary and
cavalry was used in spite of the disadvantages of terrain.

The topography of the countryside was often a problem
in the employment of cavalry and the Mississippi Valley area
was vastly different from either the western areas of the United
States or the plains of Europe.71 Swamps, brushy and broken
ground, rivers and streams, forests, and a general lack of open
spaces as well as few roads restricted troops of any kind and inclement weather often exacerbated these natural conditions. In addition, wet weather presented cavalrymen with peculiar problems because horses legs tend to fall victim to diseases if the animals stand for any length of time in water and inexperienced troopers could cause the breaking down of large numbers of horses through improper care.

There were other problems that beset the cavalry in this period. Arms were in short supply, animals were scarce, and forage was often lacking. The Union, in the long run, was able to solve many of these problems because of its vaster resources, but by no means completely. The Confederates, on the other hand, found themselves often at a considerable disadvantage, particularly with weapons. They were able to augment their stock by seizing Federal arms but this created additional problems in ammunition supply because of the great variety of weapons in the hands of the troops that resulted.72

The role of the cavalry in this campaign can be easily illustrated by a rough analogy. If the army as a whole is thought of as a single soldier, then the cavalry can be interpreted as a shield and a dagger. It was used the same way the ancient soldier used his shield to protect himself from thrusts of the enemy and in the same way that he used his dagger to strike at vulnerable points of his enemy's armour. All through the Shiloh and Corinth campaigns the cavalry's primary duty was to shield its army, and it was even used as a dagger in the
strike at Booneville by the Federals. Although the Federal cavalry did not always behave well in battle, its failures were often due to the handling by more senior officers, such as Sherman before the attack on April 6. Scouts were available to the Federal commanders but they were not employed in a meaningful manner. The Confederate cavalry was quite active tactically at Shiloh but lack of numbers and mounts told in the siege of Corinth that followed and the Southern troopers simply could not be everywhere at once. Beauregard had a huge area to cover where the Federals could pick the points where they could move. But it seems that except for the Confederate shortage, the commanders on both sides were pleased, for the most part, with the performance of their cavalry forces. Better use on the part of the Federals would have produced better results however.

The role of the cavalry as a shield was reflected in the fragmentation of the mounted troops on both sides. Each division had its own contingent of horse and this was logical in some ways because each was like a miniature army and needed troops to scout, picket, escort, and so forth. The lack of concentration of the Federal cavalry was an admitted handicap to Grant after Shiloh because had it been together he could have mounted a quicker pursuit. Whether or not this was necessarily desirable is not the point. If an enemy retreats the alert and aggressive commander sends his mounted forces ahead to harass and delay just as the enemy commander sets up
his cavalry as a rear covering force. Grant could not have done this even if he had wanted to because the Union mounted troops were so scattered. The rebels too suffered from fragmentation of their cavalry but it does not seem to have prevented them from putting out a covering force fairly quickly. The fragmented nature of the cavalry allowed the Confederates to employ their troopers more actively in combat than the Federals did but this was also due to the more aggressive nature of the rebel cavalry leaders, such as Forrest, Morgan, and Wharton. These men often exceeded their orders, in an effort to get into the fighting, in fact. This does not seem to have met with disapproval however, on the part of the senior officers. The Confederate cavalry commands were apparently much more autonomous than their Federal counterparts. The Federal approach to the role of cavalry at this time did not include fighting, as an order from Sherman made clear:

They must guard their own camps and horses, but will not be called upon for working details or grand guards, but on halting for camp the chief of cavalry will report in person for instructions as to the cavalry pickets. Upon their intelligence and vigilance much depends. They are not posted to fight, but for watching the approach of an enemy at sufficient distance out to give early warning of danger.73

Actual employment in battle had been left to the discretion of the division commanders and this had resulted in the Federal cavalry being in the minor role of messenger, guard, etc. The role of the mounted troops on both sides was fairly clear however. It was a tactical force, oriented principally to the security of the rest of the army.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II


5Rich, Battle of Shiloh, p. 36, O.R., X, ii, 51, 55, 64. See map #1.


9O.R., X, i, 108. For Structure of cavalry regiments see Gray, Cavalry Tactics, p. 7. For strengths see Appendix I.

10O.R., X, ii, 62.

11Ibid., 87-88. Orders had been issued on April 4, 1862, which stated: "...cavalry officers will report to division commanders henceforth." Ibid., 92-93.
12Ibid., 363. See also i, 396.

13Ibid., ii, 319.


15O.R., X, i, 22.

16Ibid., 6, 16, 17, 20, 31, 79; ii, 330, 331, 350. This represents a sampling of several of the small actions and skirmishes that the cavalry was involved in. General Lewis Wallace even had his troopers corduroying a road. Ibid., X, i, 175.


18O.R., X, i, 16.

19Ibid., 79.

20Ibid., ii, 334.


22O.R., X, ii, 50.

23Ibid., 331.

24Ibid., i, 393-394.

25Ibid., ii, 367-368.

26Ibid., 51, 55.

27Sherman, Memoirs, I, 229. Catton, Terrible Swift Sword, p. 229 finds that Sherman received intelligence but "...dismissed the warnings with contempt."
28 Mahan, An Elementary Treatise (1861), pp. 82-83, 129-130 stressed the necessity for scouting but the senior Federal officers seem to have overlooked sending out proper reconnaissance patrols.


30 O.R., X, i, 89, 92, 249.

31 Ibid., 118.

32 Ibid., 180, 187.

33 Ibid., 169.

34 Ibid., 302, 377.


36 O.R., X, i, 206. If this is Hurlburt's idea of action for cavalry, it is little wonder that it was not more actively employed.

37 Ibid., 120, 173, 179, 310, 354, 358.

38 Ibid., 396. Duke, Morgan's Cavalry, pp. 79-80 mentions that the country was so undergrown that formations were broken up and periodic halts were required to reform ranks.


40 Duke, Morgan's Cavalry, pp. 77-89. See also O.R., X, i, 462.


42 O.R., X, i, 462.
43 Ibid., 612. See also Ibid., 367-368.
44 Ibid., 528.
45 Catton, Terrible Swift Sword, pp. 232-233, 238. For casualty figures see Appendix III.
47 Ibid., 97; i, 639-640.
49 O.R., X, ii, 100.
50 Ibid., 122.
51 Ibid., i, 639-640.
52 Ibid., 831-832, 832-833, 837-838.
53 Ibid., 644-645, 727-734.
54 Ibid., 778; ii, 237, 267.
56 O.R., X, i, 727.
58 O.R., X, ii, 211-212. Although Mitchell was not directly involved with Halleck's army his message indicates the problems involved in dealing with guerrillas. See also Ibid., i, 891.
59 Ibid., ii, 146.
60 Ibid., 405, 415, 464, 498, 518; i, 763, 765.
61 Ibid., i, 775; ii, 414, 433.

63*Ibid.*, 763, 775-777. W.R. Johnson, an aide-de-camp to Jefferson Davis agreed that the withdrawal from Corinth was a military necessity. See also *ibid.*, ii, 545-546. Catton, *Terrible Swift Sword*, pp. 306-307.

64*O.R.*, X, ii, 766-767.


66Personal Memoirs of Philip H. Sheridan (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1888), I, 147-151. See also *O.R.*, X, i, 862-863, 774. An inventory of the destroyed property drawn up by the Confederates in on *ibid.*, 793, 797.

67*O.R.*, X, i, 904.


71Only small units of cavalry had operated on the Western plains but the traditional picture of the employment of masses of cavalry came from Europe and it is not unlikely that European conditions were what was meant when cavalry officers referred to the ground as either favourable or unfavourable.


73*O.R.*, X, ii, 269-270.
CHAPTER III  THE SUMMER OF 1862 AND THE BATTLES OF IUKA AND CORINTH

After Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard had been displaced from Corinth by the Federal army under General Henry Halleck, the war in Northern Mississippi settled down to a period of relative calm. In early June, Halleck split his army and reassigned individual commanders while the Confederates rested at Tupelo and Braxton Bragg, who succeeded Beauregard, went about reorganizing and disciplining the Southern army. The immediate Federal concern was to hold the territory that had been won and open up lines of communication that had been blocked. The Confederates hoped to retake what they had lost and the recently occupied town of Corinth became a focus for attention on both sides.¹ Corinth was an important rail centre and important therefore to both the Federals and the rebels.

On July 11 Halleck was recalled to Washington to assume command of all Federal armies and local command devolved on General Ulysses S. Grant. Grant had several problems: he had his armies to keep organized and sustained, he had a vast territory to control, and he had important lines of communication to keep clear. The Confederates were not much help either, for although there were no major conflicts until September, Grant found his outposts, depots, and rail lines constantly sniped at
by small guerilla and cavalry bands. He therefore had to commit considerable numbers of troops to holding down the land that had recently been conquered.²

In addition to the Confederate army at Tupelo under Bragg, there was a second rebel force under General Sterling Price to the south, and a third under General Earl Van Dorn to the west, at Vicksburg. Don Carlos Buell slowly put his army in motion towards Chattanooga, but he moved so hesitantly that he became bogged down almost by a kind of reverse inertia and although he presented a severe enough threat to Chattanooga to cause Bragg to transfer his army there with extreme haste, the advance gradually ground to a halt. Late in August Bragg moved north for his invasion of Kentucky and then it was Buell who had to follow and react to the Confederate moves. Price had been ordered to unite with Van Dorn in West Tennessee and later to Join Bragg up in Kentucky. This was to be the great Confederate offensive in the West, one that would fail to consummate itself. The Federal forces in Mississippi under Grant watched Price and Van Dorn carefully to prevent any northward movement to reinforce Bragg.³ Grant had to be disposed of before the Confederates could move because his army was of formidable size and he would be a great danger to the rear of any army that turned and marched to link up with Bragg. By August 27, after much vacillation, Price and Van Dorn agreed to cooperate in an attack on Corinth and in the manoeuvering to unite, Price became involved in the clash at Iuka. Grant had hoped to be able to
deal with the two Confederate armies before they could unite, but Price was able to slip away from William S. Rosecrans' command to meet his colleague.\(^4\) The combined Confederate forces then attacked Corinth early in October but were repulsed after two days of savage fighting in which losses ran high. Although badly battered, the Confederate army was able to slip away once again because of the tardy and half-hearted Federal pursuit.

The role of the cavalry in these campaigns paralleled that seen in the events surrounding the Battle of Shiloh and the siege of Corinth. It was seldom involved in really heavy fighting but it performed important duties and often received commendation for its services. The general nature of the countryside was one inhibiting factor in the more active employment of mounted troops. It was wooded, often covered with thick undergrowth, interspersed with swamps, and it had but few roads and most of these were narrow.\(^5\) Bodies of cavalrymen much over battalion size would find it difficult to be used. There simply was not the available open countryside to accommodate them.

The organization of the cavalry forces remained relatively unchanged although there were a few minor alterations that made their appearance from time to time and changes on paper that had little effect on things in practise. On June 11, for example, Grant consolidated the Federal cavalry but he had second thoughts about this and a week later reassigned the mounted troops
to divisions, as they had been before. Infantry commanders had considerable discretion in the movements of the mounted forces and this is clearly reflected in a communication that Rosecrans received on June 22 which read: "Arrange your cavalry movements as you may deem best, and entirely independent of anything that may be done from here." Grant appointed a chief of cavalry on June 24 and all reports from the various mounted units were henceforth to be made through him but this figure was really more of an administrative head than a tactical leader and the cavalry continued to be spread throughout the army.

The picture was similar in the Confederate army although the rebel horse tended to be consolidated more into brigades. All of Bragg's cavalry was at first under the command of James R. Chalmers. In July, Price appointed Frank Armstrong to head his troopers, and W.H. Jackson became Van Dorn's head cavalryman. Joseph Wheeler later succeeded an ailing Chalmers as Bragg's chief of cavalry. This general structure of brigade organization was maintained with some consistency throughout these campaigns and indeed throughout the war as well. Later, when the rebel horse grew to a substantial size, it was organized into corps, as the Federal cavalry was, but throughout, the Confederates tended to concentrate their cavalrymen where the Federals tended to disperse them. But at the time of the Iuka and Corinth campaigns, neither side had had any extensive experience with cavalry forces and there had been few indications
of what ideal organization should be. Both had a chief of cavalry but he seems to have been more of an administrative head than a tactical leader, particularly in the Union army. In addition to this, there were always companies and battalions on detached duty, such as escorting, orderly, and courier service and in most cases all cavalry units found themselves commanded by the senior infantry officer present.

Neither cavalry force was in very good shape in the summer of 1862 in northern Mississippi and southern Tennessee. The horse soldiers were few in number and often ill-equipped, ill-armed, and inadequately mounted. On June 22, for example, Lewis Wallace reported that his Federal troopers were broken down from hard service and four days later Grant cabled Halleck that he had insufficient numbers of horsemen to deal with the problems created by guerrilla and small cavalry bands. General William T. Sherman reported that his cavalrymen were worn out and used up and a week later stated that his cavalry and General Stephen Hurlbut's were "...insignificant and...hardly enough for picket duty". He was even more eloquent about this on July 7: "...but I should have some cavalry. The Fourth Illinois is now a mere squad and it is worse than a toothache to call upon them for hard work." Rosecrans, throughout his career in the West, was to display a chronic concern, almost a fixation, about the condition of his cavalry and its inadequacy. His lengthy and frequent communications to his superiors often reveal a great deal
about the condition of the cavalry at that time and suggest what his concept of it was. For example, on July 19 he wrote:

Our cavalry is diminishing in numbers by contests with the superior rebel numbers on a front of 60 miles in extent. It is vitally important that they be mounted and armed well. The latter, if promptly done, will give temporary relief. Twelve hundred and fifty Colt's army revolvers and 1,100 carbines or revolving rifles are required for the cavalry division.

And again, on the following day:

What we need is that all the cavalry should be promptly and thoroughly armed. The utter fatuity of not arming them suitably for service may be inferred from the fact that the cost of maintaining a regiment of cavalry in idleness for one month would arm them with revolving rifles.

The regiments should be filled.... The cavalry are the eyes of the army. Nay more; I do not hesitate to say that the time will soon be here when a thousand cavalry will do more damage to the rebels by seizing and destroying their means of subsistence than a brigade of infantry.

Clearly Rosecrans saw his cavalry as a fighting force and did not want it sitting around. The arms he wanted would have given it considerable firepower and he could only have had in mind for the troopers to fight in addition to their other duties by making such demands. Grant echoed Rosecrans' feelings and said: "There is such a demand for cavalry that I will have to mount infantry making secessionists furnish horses and forage". This was a sound suggestion for augmenting a hard pressed cavalry force, and Rosecrans did just that in the spring of 1863 but there is no evidence that the idea got past the suggestion stage at this point. All this does indicate that the Union commanders saw value in the mounted troops and evidently believed that it was capable of significant
accomplishments. Little seems to have been done to act on the suggestions made by the field commanders however, and Rosecrans received some angry replies from Washington where his demands were viewed as unreasonable. It was clear in his letters that Rosecrans had much the same view of cavalry as a far ranging harassing force that had been suggested by Jomini and in the regulations. Exactly where Rosecrans got his ideas is unclear but the similarity is unmistakable.

There were other problems that faced the Federal cavalry at this time, one example of which was the often poor quality of the material that was received. Major John S. Mudd, for example, wrote:

I wish to report the carbine cartridges now furnished us as being of very poor quality. They shake to pieces in riding and at the end of each day's march many of the men find instead of cartridges a mixed mass of powder, ball, and paper.15

Any picture of the Confederate cavalry in similar terms is sketchy at best because of the paucity of material but a few glimpses are available. Cavalry seems to have been in short supply at times for the rebels, for early in August there was a brief exchange of letters between Bragg and Price. Price wanted more cavalrymen but Bragg replied that he was short himself and could not spare any. On August 19, Armstrong noted that the troopers in his command were inadequately armed.16 References to the condition are few however, and only a very broad picture of the cavalry in Price's and Van Dorn's army is possible. Things were probably very similar to what they had
been during the Shiloh and Corinth campaigns immediately preceding.

Up to the engagement at Iuka the cavalry of both sides was generally engaged in routine picket duty, scouting, reconnaissance, and the usual occasional skirmishing. On June 20 Sherman pushed some of his cavalry out to the Tallahatchie River to scout out where some railroad bridges had been destroyed by raiding Confederates. The next day General John McClernand reported that his cavalry scouts had penetrated the rebel picket lines and reported on the location and strength of enemy forces. Rosecrans had his troopers in an arc covering his front and from time to time, both Sherman and Grant had their horse soldiers escorting trains. There were often little clashes between outposts and patrols which had little significance except for the men immediately involved. Philip H. Sheridan made his first appearance in the field at this time as the colonel of a cavalry regiment and was involved in several reconnaissances. The bulk of the activity that the cavalry took part in during the American Civil War was usually this day to day duty, quite unspectacular and insignificant when taken individually but amounting to important work in shielding, guarding, and collecting information when taken as a whole.

A few cavalry actions are worthy of close examination. Booneville was again the scene of a sharp little combat when on July 1 a Federal cavalry camp under the command of Sheridan
was suddenly attacked by Chalmers and his rebel troopers. Sheridan's men resisted hotly and soon forced the attackers to deploy. Dismounted fire action proved able to repulse mounted charges and Sheridan sent part of his command to outflank the enemy and drove the Confederates off after a sabre charge which hit them in the rear. Here cavalry fought cavalry, and the men on both sides fought well but the combination of Sheridan's leadership and the firepower of his troopers created a tidy little Federal victory. Several classic features of cavalry combat were exhibited here as well as evidence of the combination approach in style of fighting that was to become increasingly apparent as the war progressed. On August 26 there was a short fight between some cavalry under General Gordon Granger and some Confederate guerrillas, and again there was a combination of fire and mounted action by which the rebels were repulsed. Granger took the opportunity to point out the inadequacies of the Federal horse:

...it is now becoming apparent to everyone that our present cavalry force must be quintupled and armed to the teeth. The small cavalry we have is not properly armed, and the extraordinary hard duty it is called on to do is fast breaking it down.

From August 30 to September 1 some operations were carried out by a mixed Union force against the Mississippi Central Railroad. There were some stirring little clashes between mounted troops in the course of the expedition and Colonel M.D. Leggett, its commander, wrote vividly of one:
He [Colonel Hogg] immediately ordered his men to draw their sabers, and...darting ahead of his men he fell pierced with nine balls. The next instant the two maddened lines came together with a clash of arms sublimely terrible. The enemy wavered and gave partially away, but Colonel Hogg having fallen...and another officer...[not yet] assuming command, our cavalry became partially disorganized and fell back a short distance, when Capt. M.N. Musser...took command and soon put them in shape for fighting again.20

Here was an instance of cavalry combat in the old style, with lines of men charging, sabres drawn. The concept of heavy cavalry was still very much in evidence in some cases.

The Federal cavalry seems to have done its job well during this period and the reports of senior officers indicate that displeasure was seldom in evidence with its behaviour. Rosecrans and Sherman are two examples of officers who believed that their cavalrmen were doing a good job, notwithstanding the complaints they had made about the lack of numbers and inadequacy of equipment.21 Sheridan and Granger, in their reports of combats, often noted that the Union troopers had conducted themselves well.22 Grenville M. Dodge wavered in his estimation of his cavalry but generally regarded it with favour. On August 16 he wrote:

I must say that I am very much gratified and disappointed [sic] with the behaviour of all my cavalry in these fights. They do much better than I expected. In only one case have they backed from any force, and I think I gave them a lesson that will cause them always to stand hereafter. I dislike very much to part with them, as I have just got them fairly to work.23

Evidently the Federal troopers needed some conditioning before they were fit but at the same time they performed creditably
once they had had a chance to settle in. In general, the Union troopers in this period performed well consistently under fire.24

This was marred by some mistakes and poor conduct however. On June 26, Grant wrote: "The additional escort followed in the morning, and with the usual cavalry stupidity took the wrong road, thus leaving the train protected only by the escort furnished by General Sherman."25 Grant's phrasing suggests that this kind of exasperating mistake was not uncommon. An example of plain poor conduct was seen in a combat that took place between some opposing cavalry patrols late in August. The officer in charge of the Federal troops emerged as a virtual coward in the manner in which he left the field after only a brief resistance.26

On the whole however, disparaging comments were few and favourable references many, and the evidence suggests that the Federal cavalry did its job well during this period. The reasons for this are not entirely clear but they probably stemmed from active leadership. Sheridan, Granger, and Benjamin Grierson were three officers who displayed steadiness and competence in the handling of their commands.

The Confederate cavalry during this period was engaged in activity similar to that of its Union counterpart, as a few episodes will illustrate. On June 30, Chalmers moved towards Blackland and the Federal outposts there and attacked Sheridan at Booneville on the way. He was repulsed for his pains however.
Through July and August, Armstrong was sent out front to attack any assailable point in the Union lines. This type of general harassment seems to have been the main rebel approach at this time as Bragg indicated in a letter to General Edmund Kirby Smith written on July 20. He said that the Federal force was superior in numbers and that he therefore could do no more than menace it "...as we constantly do with our cavalry by driving in his outposts and capturing his foraging parties and all stragglers from his lines."^27 The mobility of the cavalry made them ideally suited to this type of action, and again, was quite similar to what had been suggested in the Confederate regulations. From July 25 to August 1 Wheeler led a small expedition from Holly Springs to Bolivar and tore up some railroad track while keeping the Federals guessing as to where he intended to move next. He had originally intended to make a demonstration towards Jackson but was recalled to his lines first.\(^28\)

Federal reports confirm the activity of the rebel horsemen at this time. Leggett wrote that he had discovered from a spy that the main Confederate strategy at this time was to send continual cavalry expeditions in dashes against the Federal outposts, railroads, forage parties, and provision trains.\(^29\) Some indication of the success that the Confederates were having is seen in the harassed tone of many of the Union reports and cables which requested cavalry to deal with these minor but annoying depredations. Grierson gave an indication
of how the rebel cavalrmen were armed even, although his example is somewhat atypical: "The enemy were well armed with breech-loading carbines and revolvers, a portion (the mounted infantry) having muskets and rifles...." As far as the Confederates were concerned, it is very likely that all the mounted men that Grierson was talking about were considered cavalry. Granger made a distinction on the basis of how the men were armed but it is doubtful that there was any division of duty of function in reality however. The various types of mounted troops all performed essentially the same duties in the United States during the Civil War. Differences in approach and armament should not obscure that fact.

Bragg was quite enthusiastic about the small expeditions and often devoted considerable attention to them in his reports. Of one he wrote:

The commander of the forces is pleased to have occasion to commend to the emulation of the cavalry officers of this army to the intelligently conducted and enterprising expedition recently led by Capt. W.C. Bacot (Forrest's cavalry), sent to reconnoiter the enemy's movements on the right flank. Captain Bacot penetrated his lines, surprised a strong picket post, and killed and captured almost the whole detachment.31

Another raid also received his eloquent praise:

The commander of the forces has to announce to the army a well-planned and soldierly executed expedition within the enemy's lines by Col. W.H. Jackson, First Tennessee Cavalry...resulting in the capture of a Federal colonel and some...officers and privates and the destruction of a locomotive and a train of cars....32

Bragg was also happy about the guerrillas and partisans and believed that they were performing service vital to the cause.33
Much of his praise has an "official" ring to it but it seems apparent that Bragg was pleased with his cavalry and believed that the harassing duty they were performing was valuable and proper.

The only time that the Confederate cavalry seems to have failed was when Price was hovering around Iuka. He was in some doubt as to the location of both Van Dorn's army and that of the enemy and his troopers failed for some time to establish the necessary links of communication.34

Generally, until the clash at Iuka, the cavalry on both sides acted principally in the shield aspect of its dual role although there were examples of the dagger in the many small raids that were carried out. These small affairs had no overall strategic importance however, and therefore do not really classify completely as examples of the dagger aspect of the role of cavalry. Both sides unwittingly aided the other during this period for both had as their primary object the prevention of the departure of reinforcements to Kentucky where, by mid-September, Bragg was almost at the peak of his penetration of the North.35

As Price was hesitating at Iuka, trying to locate Van Dorn, Grant and Rosecrans conceived a plan that they hoped would result in the destruction of one at least of the enemy's armies.36 Federal General O.E.C. Ord was to move on Iuka from the northwest and Rosecrans was to come in two columns from the southwest, thereby sealing off a third road by which Price was
sure to attempt to escape. The hoped for coordination did not take place however. Rosecrans was delayed by bad weather, bad roads, and his own tardiness, and Grant changed plans slightly, deciding that Ord would attack when he heard the sound of Rosecrans's guns instead of at a prearranged time. Ord did not hear Rosecrans' guns because of unfavourable winds and the third road was not sealed. The Battle of Iuka was therefore little more than a fierce but small clash between parts of Rosecrans' army and a part of Price's. The latter was able to break contact when he found out about the formidable forces that were closing in on him and escape on September 20.37

The cavalry at the Battle of Iuka scouted, ran messages, formed picket lines, skirmished, and formed the vanguard of advance pursuit and rear covering forces. The rebel cavalry outnumbered its Union counterpart about two to one but not all of either force became engaged in any serious fighting.38 By September 17 Rosecrans had set up a courier line to Grant and his troopers had reconnoitered the enemy positions. It might appear that the failure of coordination was due to a failure in communications between the two columns but this is only partially correct. The reasons for this failure stemmed from the extreme difficulty of the country rather than any laxity of the cavalry couriers. The terrain was rough and long detours were necessary. Grant pointed out both in his report and later in his memoirs that the country was almost impassable to cavalrymen.39
The Federal cavalry was mainly employed in covering the advance and clashed with the enemy pickets as the opposing forces closed. The Union cavalry was still fragmented and there was one regiment with General C.S. Hamilton's division, four companies of which supported a battery, four of which fought dismounted with the infantry, and the remaining four of which spread out to the front as scouts. There was some cavalry in front of Ord's division but this was only engaged in very light skirmishing as Ord did not press forward until some time after the main Confederate army had withdrawn. When the Confederates started to retreat Colonel Edward Hatch took sixteen companies in pursuit but the rebel rear guard was strong and vigilant and he was able to do no more than harass the withdrawing enemy.

The Federal horse again displayed satisfactory, if unspectacular behaviour. J.K. Mizner, Rosecrans' chief of cavalry, was quite praising in his report and in the absence of contradictory evidence of any kind, his evaluation can be taken, with a few reservations for enthusiasm, as a general comment on the Federal cavalry in the Battle of Iuka. He wrote: "The usefulness and efficiency of the cavalry on this occasion cannot be too highly estimated, covering as they did so many important movements, guarding the flanks of the army, and rendering valuable service...."

The Confederate cavalrymen were cast in much the same role. Price had finally opened communications between himself
and Van Dorn when he ran into Rosecrans' army. On September 19 Colonel W.C. Falkner's troopers were attacked by Federal cavalrymen deployed as skirmishers. There was a brisk fire exchange and Falkner charged his enemy, but the Union force proved too strong and he had to pull back. The fighting on September 19 was furious, considering that only a small part of each army became engaged, and that evening, Price was convinced that he was vastly outnumbered and that the only sensible course was to withdraw, which he promptly did. His cavalry was disposed to cover the retreat and it apparently carried out this task with some efficiency as is indicated by one of his subordinate general officers, Dabney H. Maury. Maury wrote:

I desire to acknowledge the great efficiency and skill with which the cavalry forces were handled. My rear and flanks were always securely covered and information was given of every movement of the enemy from the moment of our arrival at Iuka until that of our return to this point. The cavalry had been put in the role of a shield once again here, and it was plain that it was designed to protect the army at large.

Although the cavalry forces took part in some small skirmishes their dispositions prevented them from engaging in any serious and heavy combat. The major fighting was almost invariably between opposing infantry forces with occasional examples of reliance on the supporting arms but both cavalry and artillery were clearly subordinate arms. The job of the cavalry was that of an assistant and it was oriented principally to the security of the rest of the army. The clash at Iuka had
indicated this clearly but this fight was only a preliminary to the major battle when the Confederate assaulted the Union lines at Corinth early in October.46

Surprisingly enough, the Union cavalry took a fairly active role in the battle considering that it was an assault on fixed positions. On October 3 Rosecrans had pushed out a reconnaissance to locate the enemy he knew was close at hand. Federal pickets had been so dispersed to cover all the approaches to Corinth and as the Confederates advanced they pushed back the Union cavalry outposts in a series of small skirmishes. The main assault spread itself over October 3 and 4. After skirmishing on the first day, Hatch was in action on the Union right flank where, supported by artillery, he held his ground against rebel infantry until relieved by his own foot brigades.47 Colonel Lee, who had also skirmished with the approaching enemy on October 3, was in rear of the Union left on the second day where he found it relatively quiet.48 Major Snoddy and the Seventh Kansas Cavalry were also on the left and guarded a bridge, repulsing several attacks by small Confederate forces. For the most part, Snoddy reported on the enemy movements and other Federal cavalry units, often only in company strength, helped to keep the infantry in line, gather stragglers, and generally preserve order. Some troopers were also detailed as couriers between Rosecrans' headquarters and the various parts of the field.49 It is clear that the cavalry was again an assistant, albeit a fairly active one considering the nature
of the battle, and its duties were generally minor. Mizner was afraid that his cavalymen would not get sufficient recognition for their services for he wrote in his report to Rosecrans:

It is due the cavalry to remark that, although the nature of their service in this wooded country is such that they are frequently denied a participation in general engagements, yet those whose praise and approbation is most to be desired do not lose sight of valuable services performed by them.50

Mizner also reaffirmed the difficulties of employing cavalry in the Mississippi Valley and it is obvious that he was thinking about the concept of heavy cavalry when he mentioned cavalry in heavy engagements. Cavalry had never been involved in heavy fire action although it had often engaged in severe skirmishing so any other interpretation of Mizner's meaning is virtually impossible.

The attack on Corinth resulted in a hard fought battle that was a near thing at moments for Rosecrans, and losses were heavy on both sides, but Van Dorn failed to take the key points on the battlefield and was forced to withdraw. Rosecrans started to organize himself for a pursuit and it was clear that he expected his cavalry to play a cardinal part in this from his orders:

Colonel Mizner, chief of cavalry, will detail a battalion of cavalry to accompany the advance of each column, one battalion to report...for camp and garrison guard duty; with the remainder of the cavalry he will join the pursuit and dispose it according to circumstances, covering the flanks of our column and feeling for those of the enemy.51
The fragmentation continued, even in pursuit, although the individual commanders seem to have been given a fair degree of latitude in conducting their troops. Again this was a classic role for the cavalry, and one that all theorists had talked about as an integral part of its responsibilities.

Stephen Hurlbut had been moving slowly with his command to reinforce Rosecrans and by the time he reached the Hatchie River he ran into the rebel rear guard and was drawn into a sharp little fight. His force was not strong enough to hold onto the Confederate army however, and Van Dorn had little trouble in slipping away. Hurlbut's cavalry had screened his approach, scouting for the enemy, and had been involved in the first skirmishes. It performed satisfactorily and elicited praise in Hurlbut's report. He wrote:

The cavalry made an ineffectual effort to reach the Hatchie, but I soon perceived that the force in front was too heavy to be driven in by cavalry alone, especially cavalry badly armed for this service....

...I desire especially to call attention to the conduct of my cavalry and artillery. The Fifth Ohio Cavalry had but an average of eight carbines to a company. As a charge is an impossible thing in the country over which the column passed, they were compelled to do skirmishing duty in thick timber and undergrowth with the revolver alone. They kept firmly to the front, well advanced, and covered the column. Their duty was well done....52

Hurlbut revealed the difficulties of operating in wooded country, the deficiencies of armament of his troopers, and the fact that the concept of the heavy cavalry action was still very much in the minds of Civil War officers. It was also obvious that the terrain was forcing the replacement of shock action by fire action although sabre charges still appeared from time to time.
The Confederate cavalry was largely inactive during the battle. Before the general advance it had been mainly engaged in scouting but once the forces closed, it was left to minor duties. Wirt Adam's cavalry guarded the trains and a bridge across the Hatchie River and after the Federal pickets had been driven in Jackson's cavalry was posted on the flanks where it did very little except watch for Federal movements.\(^53\) Evidently, Van Dorn did not believe that the cavalry would be very useful in the assault. Later, when it became obvious that he would have to withdraw, Van Dorn sent his cavalry ahead to secure his line of retreat. Van Dorn took a reasonable approach to the employment of his cavalry for whatever the role of mounted troops, it was not to assault fixed and entrenched positions.\(^54\)

There were several commendations for the behaviour of the cavalry at this time but it is difficult to see why. The Confederate troopers really did very little. Hurlbut's men ran into infantry and not horsemen and about all the rebel cavalry really did was sit still throughout the battle. Evidently Van Dorn deemed this sufficient however.\(^55\)

The Confederates retreated to Holly Springs, briefly followed in a half-hearted fashion by the Federals and then the war in Grant's theatre settled down to relative calm for a while so that the armies could reorganize and collect fresh supplies and reinforcements. Both Van Dorn's and Rosecrans' commands had been badly mauled in the assault and the time of continuous offensives had not yet arrived. The Confederates
were thrown on the defensive however, and one-half of the great Southern counter-move in the West had been defeated. Van Dorn's repulse meant that Bragg had to rely on his own resources up in Kentucky. He could expect no reinforcements from the South. Gradually, the Federals tightened their grip on the Mississippi Valley until piece by piece, the rebel defense lines crumbled.

The cavalry had been very lightly engaged at the Battle of Corinth and the casualty lists bear this out. There had been few losses in the cavalry forces of either side in spite of the blood-letting that had characterized the infantry and artillery units. Since the cavalry received commendation for its behaviour, it can be suggested that no one thought that it should get involved in heavy fighting, but more than one officer, Mizner for example, wanted it to. Cavalry's role was apparently oriented principally to the security of the rest of the army by scouting, reconnoitering, manning outposts, guarding the flanks, heading pursuits, covering withdrawals, or running messages. Its role did not necessarily involve head-on conflict.

The analogy of the shield and dagger aptly describes the role of the cavalry in these campaigns. As a shield it was generally a tactical and defensive force and above all, clearly subordinate. As a dagger, its role was not as clear, for the small thrusts of the Confederate cavalry in the latter part of the summer of 1862, although they represented the
general Southern strategy in the area at that time, could not be termed strategic in their effect. They were annoying, but they were not significant. The concept of heavy cavalry was on the mind of several officers however, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the ground. At the same time, the terrain was forcing an increased dependence on fire action and several examples of this were evident. As a communications link, the cavalry laboured under the handicaps again of the rough countryside but Price's troopers seem to have been a conspicuous failure just prior to the clash at Iuka when they failed to locate either Van Dorn or the enemy. The fragmented nature of the organization of the Federal horse seems to have allowed it to get involved in combat more than the Confederates, but neither mounted force was conspicuous in the heavy engagements. Again, the restrictions of the terrain made the use of large bodies of cavalry a virtual impossibility. The Federals seem to have had the advantage in leadership in both the shield and dagger aspect of the cavalry's role, although the relative lack of significant activity by which to gauge the effect of leadership does not permit any firm conclusions in this.

The role of the cavalry was clear however. It was a force oriented to the security of the rest of the army. The infantry, with the support of the artillery and occasionally cavalry units, was still the mainstay of any combat. The mounted troops were subordinate and a combination of assistant and guard. The cavalry was also important as a scout in this
regard and the Federals seem to have actively used their horse soldiers to reconnoitre enemy positions and movements here where the Confederates, particularly Price at Iuka and Van Dorn at Corinth, did not do so.\textsuperscript{57} The function of security was carried out by mounted forces that were generally fragmented. Both sides had a chief of cavalry, but he seems to have been largely an administrative figure for the Federals, leading only small forces if active on the field. For the Confederates, the chief of cavalry was usually an active leader, commanding brigade sized units. Both Price and Van Dorn did not actively utilize their cavalry however, and the failures of the Southern horse probably stemmed more from this than from any intrinsic faults. The security of the army was the general focal point for the cavalry forces and this was clear. That neither cavalry force enjoyed resounding victories or humiliating defeats does not mean that this job was not important, and neither does it mean that it was not generally competently, if quietly, carried out.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1 Bruce Catton, Grant Moves South (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1960), p. 278. Catton believes that the Federals slipped badly in giving the Confederate breathing time after the evacuation of Corinth. On pp. 280-281 he sees a behavioral continuity to the breaking up of the Federal army after the occupation of Corinth consistent with the concentration and subsequent dispersion of armies for combat in the prewar period.


4 Catton, Grant Moves South, pp. 309-310. Grant, Memoirs, I, 408.

5 O.R., XVII, i, 22, 46, 67, 68; ii, 180,222.

6 Ibid., ii, 4, 20. For the complete organization of the Federal armies see ibid., 143-144.

7 Ibid., 24.

8 Ibid., 30, 148.

9 Ibid., 629, 631. The exact nature of the distribution is not clear because of the scarce and incomplete records.

10 Ibid., 642.

11 Ibid., 49. For Wallace's, Grant's, and Sherman's communications see ibid., 25, 36, 39.
Sherman noted that some of his cavalrymen lacked carbines although there were a few regiments that were extremely well equipped for so early in the war. The Second Michigan Cavalry, for example, which was commanded by Sheridan, had revolving rifles, revolvers, and sabres. Marshall P. Thatcher, *A Hundred Battles in the West* (Detroit: Published by the author, 1884), p. 30.

Grant was short of cavalry at the time.

These references are often not very helpful, merely mentioning that a certain unit was on picket duty.

are some of the references to small combats.


*O.R.* XVII, i, 40.

*O.R.*, 46-47.

*O.R.*, ii, 66, 84, 139.


*O.R.*, XVII, i, 132.


Ulysses S. Grant to Henry Halleck, June 26, 1862; Grant Papers, Series 5, Volume 4, (Reel #7).

*O.R.*, XVII, i, 32-34.

*O.R.*, ii, 651.
Price's lack of information is an explanation for his apparent hesitation at Iuka.

Ulysses S. Grant to Henry Halleck, September 9, 1862, Grant Papers, Series 5, Volume 5, (Reel #8). The cavalry is not merely being praised out of hand. In terms of the job that it was set it apparently performed well.

Sneed, "With Price," Battles and Leaders, II, 726, 728. Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, IV, 70-71. Both Price and Van Dorn were suspended in effect at this time. It appears that Van Dorn did not know what was going on either but this was due to his own failure to aggressively employ his cavalry for reconnaissance. Robert J. Hartje, Van Dorn: The Life and Times of a Confederate General (Vanderbilt University Press, 1967), p. 213.

Grant, Memoirs, I, 408-410. Catton, Grant Moves South, p. 310 concludes that the plan looked "...good on paper but it was a little too ambitious." Wolseley, An English View, p. 177 believes that the affair was poorly timed but given the circumstances it seems difficult to see how else it could have gone. William M. Lamers, The Edge of Glory; A Biography of General William S. Rosecrans (New York; Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961), pp. 106-110, 119.

O.R., XVII, ii, 247. See Appendices I and II.

Grant found the behaviour of his cavalry eminently satisfactory. For Rosecrans' estimation of his mounted troops see O.R., XVII, i, 77.

Ibid., i, 70-77 passim.
41Ibid., 139-140.

42Ibid., 115. Mizner's report is on ibid., 114-115. See also ibid., 115-117.


44O.R., XVII, i, 138.

45Ibid., 137. See also, Snead, "With Price", Battles and Leaders, II, 726, 733. Price had a number of dismounted cavalry serving as infantry because of a shortage of horses. O.R., XVII, ii, 29.

46Ibid., ii, 258, 259. The Confederates wanted to destroy Grant's army piecemeal if they could. Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, IV, 85. Lamers, Edge of Glory, pp. 133, 134-135, 142.

47O.R., XVII, i, 243.

48Ibid., 242, 243.

49Ibid., 243, 244.

50Ibid.

51Ibid., ii, 266.

52Ibid., i, 305-307.

53Ibid., 377, 378. Van Dorn's biographer believes that one of the Confederate general's major mistakes was in not using his cavalry to scout out the ground to his front. On the evening of October 3, while Rosecrans strengthened his defenses and worked hard to prepare for the next day's fighting, Van Dorn was content to rest on knowledge of the ground that no longer was valid. Hartje, Van Dorn, p. 218. See also, Lamers, Edge of Glory, p. 142.

54O.R., XVII, i, 377, 378.

55Ibid., 406.

56See Appendix III.

57Hartje, Van Dorn, p. 218.
CHAPTER IV  THE INVASION OF KENTUCKY

After June 20, 1862, Braxton Bragg was in command of the Army of Tennessee and the Union army that had taken Corinth under Henry Halleck had broken up into individual commands under Generals William S. Rosecrans, Ulysses S. Grant, and Don Carlos Buell. The first two commanders settled to the task of holding onto the territory that had recently been won and the army under Buell moved slowly on Chattanooga. Loss of that city would have opened up Georgia to invasion and the Confederates had to make every effort to counter the Federals. Bragg moved quickly from Tupelo, transferred his infantry by railroad, and once in Chattanooga, waited for his cavalry and artillery to come overland. His swift movement and the harassing that Buell was getting at the hands of the Confederate cavalry and guerrillas contrived to stall the Federals. Actually, Bragg could have taken his time because Buell had moved so slowly that he could not have beaten anyone to Chattanooga. His supply lines were long, getting longer, and because they lay parallel to the Confederate front were an open invitation to the rebel horsemen to raid railroad lines, supply trains, and forage parties. The continued threats to his lines of communication forced Buell to pause frequently for repairs and to secure vital points and this, when added to Bragg's swift move and Buell's lack of haste, saved Chattanooga for the Confederacy.
The Confederate cavalry was particularly active at that time and a serious menace to the Federals. The testimony of several officers at the Buell Commission inquiries bore this out. The cavalry raids constantly forced Buell to stop. The Federal cavalry seems to have been inferior in numbers and generally in poor condition and as events proved, it was unable to cope with the active and aggressive Confederate horse. T.J. Wood testified:

In the months of July and August last the rebels were active in organizing guerrilla bands to prowl through the country, and their cavalry force was actively employed in efforts to cut our lines of communications in rear of us, and this was frequently done.

...I regret to say that I think the rebel cavalry generally showed much more efficiency and activity than ours did.

In early August Buell wrote to Halleck: "We are operating lines of great depth. They are swarming with the enemy's cavalry and can only be protected by cavalry. It is impossible to overrate the importance of this matter." Buell mentioned his problems with the enemy cavalry several times, both then and later at the inquiry and although much of what he said can be discounted partly because he was making every effort to clear himself from the charges that had been levelled, there was at least a grain of truth in what he said.

The evidence bore out Buell's claims to a considerable degree. Thomas Wood testified to the inferior numbers of the Federal cavalry as well as its inferior quality. He believed
that the rebel horse had been in such numbers as to make it difficult for Buell to secure his supply lines on the one hand, and impossible to live off the countryside on the other. The problem of the lack of Federal troopers was not helped when they were dispersed in small units to the several garrisons that had been left to secure the supply lines at strategic points. Also, the brigades were broken up first for picket duty and then for escorting wagons when Buell started back to Kentucky. This escorting service wore down the Federal cavalry very quickly and by the Battle of Perryville about two-thirds of Buell's horse soldiers were not in shape to take the field without extensive refitting.

Buell's cavalry force received a heavy blow on August 21. A large part of the Union horse had been concentrated under General Richard W. Johnson to track down the Confederate raider John Hunt Morgan, who had been raiding in Kentucky and Tennessee, destroying depots and parts of Buell's rail lines. Johnson spent some time chasing around without accomplishing much and at one point even had part of his force taken away from him by General Nelson. Finally, near Hartsville, Tennessee, where Morgan had been destroying the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, the two forces clashed. There was a furious skirmish which resulted in the dispersal and capture of a large part of Johnson's command. Buell was quite disturbed over this and wrote: "This disaster is most unfortunate as it costs us the services of a valuable officer and a large part of the small cavalry force I have." Buell was right about it being a
disaster but if he had moved quickly and resolutely on Chattanooga he would have had a substantial success in the capture of that city that would have rocked the Confederacy back on its heels.

The Confederate cavalry at this time was moving swiftly, moving often, and striking hard. The rebel troopers always had the benefit of active and aggressive leaders and most of the more famous and able made their appearance at this time. These men brought in a series of small victories that were heartening in the face of the major setbacks that the South had been faced with at that time. Morgan's raid has already been mentioned. At the same time a column under Nathan Bedford Forrest, who proved to be the Confederacy's most resourceful and ferocious cavalry leader in the course of the war, moved into Middle Tennessee and captured Murfreesboro. He then hovered around Nashville, spreading alarm and looking very menacing indeed.10 In addition to the two major columns there were several small expeditions and guerrilla raids that were a constant nuisance to the Federals.

The organization of the cavalry forces on both sides did not alter significantly from what had been seen in earlier campaigns. The Federal cavalry was ostensibly organized into brigades but it seems to have operated more frequently in battalion sized detachments in scouting, picketing, and escorting duties.11 The Confederate horse was also organized into brigades but these seem to have acted more as tactical
units and the fragmentation that plagued the Union cavalry was not as much in evidence. Two brigades operated with Bragg's main army, one under Joseph Wheeler attached to William J. Hardee's corps, and the other under John Wharton attached to Leonidas Polk's corps. The small guerrilla bands operating at this time behaved much like militia, coming together for a raid and then dispersing, and the brigades of Morgan and Forrest usually operated separately, mainly because of the highly individualistic streak of their commanders. The exact nature of the chain of command was not always as clear. The Federals had a chief of cavalry in John Kennett but he spent more time in command of a brigade on escort duty than anything else. Richard Johnson was subject to General Nelson's orders when out of Buell's immediate reach, in spite of his more general instructions to chase raiders. It seems that for the Federals the cavalry detachments were usually subject to the orders of the senior infantry officer present and that these could supersede more general orders from higher up. There was a similar situation in the Confederate army where the hierarchy of command was fuzzy overall but immediate command usually resting with the most senior officer present.

In late August of 1862 Bragg led his army across the Tennessee River on the first stage of what was to prove a disappointing venture. It was believed that a strike into Federal territory at that time could prove exceedingly embarrassing to the Union cause and Bragg was convinced that Kentucky would rise
and declare for the Confederacy once a Southern army was on her soil. Bragg's invasion was part of a general rebel counter-offensive at that time, the several parts of which would individually meet with failure. Buell's army was really the immediate objective and Bragg moved so as to stay between him and a second Confederate army under General Edmund Kirby Smith which had gone up to invest the Cumberland Gap. At the same time, Sterling Price and Earl Van Dorn were to unite and defeat Grant and all the armies were to ultimately unite in Kentucky. If the moves had been successful, the Confederacy might have won the war in the West with a few bold strokes. The Southern hopes were dashed however, because Price and Van Dorn, after considerable vacillation, were repulsed with heavy losses from their assault on Corinth early in October. Rosecrans had conducted an able defense and if he had not mounted an active and aggressive pursuit he had insured that Bragg's army would not receive reinforcements from the south. At the same time, the powerful Federal armies sat triumphant in northern Mississippi and southwestern Tennessee.

The second part of the plan did not fare much better for the rebels. Bragg never suffered a clear cut defeat during the Kentucky campaign but he never won a clear cut victory either. His army marched hard and fought well but when the smoke of battle had cleared he was back in Tennessee and the great events that had been hoped for never came to pass. The Confederates were troubled with command problems throughout and
Bragg seemed to lack decisive leadership abilities. The difficulties created by two armies that were supposed to cooperate rather than function under one commander bred hesitation and lack of coordination. The people of Kentucky never did rise and declare for the Confederacy although they seemed friendly and enthusiastic, so this vital part of the Southern hope also crumbled. But all this was not evident when Bragg set out in late August and the situation looked favourable. Kirby Smith had defeated a raw Union force under Nelson at Richmond and had moved on triumphantly to the Cumberland Gap. Bragg's army marched hard and by September 14 was at Glasgow, Kentucky, where it paused to rest.

The Confederate cavalry played a noteworthy role in the campaign and in almost all instances outshone its Federal counterpart. Before the Battle of Perryville, the majority of conflicts were clashes between skirmish lines or between outposts and patrols. Exactly what Buell wanted his mounted force to do is unclear but it spent a good deal of time scouting and escorting trains as he marched back to Kentucky. The detachment of Kennett's and Lewis Zahm's brigades and Johnson's defeat severely cut down the cavalry operating with the main Federal army. The remainder did not constitute a force sufficient to do more than scout and small units of horse soldiers were kept out constantly, keeping Buell at least partly informed although they seldom had the power to penetrate the Confederate cavalry screens. Buell and others noted later
that the large cavalry force of the enemy allowed Bragg considerable freedom of movement by providing a shield that denied complete information to the Federals. ¹⁸ There was a slight skirmish at Dunlap where a Federal cavalry patrol was thrown back by Confederate pickets on August 30 and Buell's few troopers constantly met with rebuffs of this nature. The Union general was concerned more about being able to concentrate, reinforce, and resupply however, so that he could move on the enemy. ¹⁹

Bragg's cavalry was riding on the crest of a wave at that time. The initial part of the Kentucky campaign saw the Confederate troopers in the Army of Tennessee at the height of their power and although they were formidable opposition throughout the war, they declined relatively speaking, after the Battle of Murfreesboro. The effectiveness of the rebel horsemen was frequently referred to by Buell later in the course of testifying at the Commission investigating his conduct. At Altamont, on August 30, Wheeler's cavalry drove in Federal pickets and on September 7 he moved close to Nashville, hovered on Buell's flank, and made himself a constant source of concern by disrupting Union rail and telegraph lines. By September 18 he was screening the front of Bragg's army as it approached Munfordville. ²⁰ In combat, the Confederate cavalry seems to have had little trouble in dispersing its Federal counterpart. It is true that the rebels were usually in superior numbers but at the same time the leaders were much more active and aggressive than those in the Federal army. On August 23
there had been a skirmish at Big Hill, Kentucky, where Union cavalrymen took to their heels in the face of an attack by Confederate horsemen, leaving the infantry they were supposed to be supporting alone on the field. This was not merely an instance of discreet withdrawal in the face of superior odds either, as was indicated by the order issued subsequently to arrest for cowardice any member of the regiment that could be found. 21 Early in September General Alexander McCook's disgust with the Union cavalry serving under him was plainly evident in a note to Buell: "If my cavalry do not fight you will never hear from them. I have given my infantry orders to shoot every one of them that runs to the rear." 22 Much of the fault for the Federal cavalry's unsteadiness at that time must be attributed to the fact that the troopers were, by and large, raw. James S. Jackson, a Union cavalry officer on a scout after Nelson's defeat, received orders not to risk an engagement because his troopers were mostly raw recruits and could not be counted on in a fight. 23 James Negley had severe problems dealing with Confederate guerrillas and the antics of his inexperienced cavalymen gave him added headaches. 24 As late as September 28 it was estimated that only one-third of 2,800 cavalry present for duty with Buell's army was considered effective. 25 Most of the ineffectives were composed of raw recruits. All this served to make the Federal cavalry very much the underdog and the only time it was able to embarrass the Confederate horse soldiers was when Kennett had the good
fortune to be able to surround and capture intact, an entire Southern cavalry regiment on picket duty.\textsuperscript{26} By and large though, the Confederate cavalry had the virtual run of the country during the Kentucky invasion.

About the middle of September things stalled for Bragg. Kirby Smith's army had by then taken Cumberland Gap with slight loss, although a Federal force under George W. Morgan had been allowed to escape. Smith had not yet linked up with Bragg however, and he was not to do so until after the Battle of Perryville. On September 13, John Scott, the cavalry commander under Smith, rode up to the Federal garrison at Munfordville, and backed only by a brigade of troopers, had demanded that it surrender. He was politely refused and soundly repulsed when he attacked. A second Confederate attack by infantry under James Chalmers was equally unsuccessful and Bragg decided that he had to make these failures good but the garrison's commander, John T. Wilder, did not capitulate until he was convinced that he was surrounded by the entire rebel army and that further resistance was suicidal.\textsuperscript{27} Bragg then hesitated, apparently expecting Buell to attack him there, but the Union commander had no such intention and took advantage of the lull to run into Louisville to gather himself for an advance. From this point on the Confederate plans began to crumble piece by piece.

Confusion and indecision seemed to settle on the Confederate command. Bragg wanted to link with Kirby Smith but he was some distance away and his forces were scattered.
In addition, Bragg took time out to attend to some political affairs and thus was absent from his army at what proved to be a vital moment. Part of the Confederate problem stemmed from the confusions of the command system and part stemmed from the failings of the men running it. Bragg did not live up to the promises that the invasion of Kentucky had held forth in late August and early September.  

One of Bragg's major problems was that he did not know exactly what the Federals were up to. On the surface of things he should have. He had a large and active cavalry force, which was well led and could be sent out to gather the necessary intelligence. But the cavalry was under the control of the wing commanders and Wheeler and Wharton were reporting directly to Hardee and Polk. The wing commanders were not as active as they could have been in mounting reconnaissances and what information they did gather was passed on to Bragg in a highly modified form. Bragg was clearly at fault for not running an efficient command and relying too heavily on the information obtained by his subordinates. The cavalry can be partly blamed for the lack of intelligence but it was more a lack of direction than efficiency in the regiments of horse soldiers that led to the general darkness that the Confederate command found itself in. In addition, the wing commanders only passed on what they thought was relevant and thus Bragg did not even have the total information that was available. Polk was falling back on Bardstown in the first part of October and not Frankfort as
he had been ordered to do because his cavalry reports had convinced him that it was at Bardstown that the advancing Federals had to be countered.\textsuperscript{29}

By October 1 Buell had considered himself ready and had moved out from Louisville to find and attack Bragg. His army moved in four columns, each headed by a small cavalry advance. The Federal cavalry was, with the exception of a brigade under Captain Ebenezer Gay, distributed throughout the army in battalion sized units.\textsuperscript{30} Gay was acting as chief of cavalry at the time because of Kennett's absence, although there was a more senior cavalry officer present. The advance Federal cavalry units skirmished with Confederate pickets, and supported by infantry and artillery, drove the rebels back. The two brigades under Kennett and Zahm did not join Buell's army until after the battle and Zahm indicated why:

At least one-third of my men (Third Ohio) are dismounted, the horses having sore backs and given out otherwise on these long hard trips of late. The horses we have on hand are very much jaded and fatigued. Then the command is without haversacks and canteens; in a great measure many out of clothing. We likewise need more horse equipments of all kinds and arms....

With the other two regiments...it is about the same thing.\textsuperscript{31}

From the first Federal advance on October 1 until the battle was joined on October 8 there were daily skirmishes. On October 3 Colonel Minor Milliken captured a small squad of Confederate pickets and the next day General George Thomas' cavalry, reinforced by infantry, brushed with a Confederate
cavalry force and drove it back. Joshua Sill's advance guard was in considerable strength and forced John Scott's cavalry pickets to retire as it advanced. A rebel cavalry force was concentrating at La Vergne but cavalry from Negley's division, backed by powerful infantry forces, pushed it out and took the town. A major point of contention that proved to be the site of the Battle of Perryville was the area surrounding a few small pools of water which were very valuable in the then dry countryside. On October 7 Gay's brigade had driven back the Confederates rearmost pickets and taken possession of the pools.32

The Confederate cavalry generally proved an excellent screen for its army at this time. The Federal advance guards were in considerable strength and had infantry and artillery supports so the rebel troopers could do little more than delay as they fell back on the main columns then concentrating under Polk's command. The Southern horse soldiers were active and sent back intelligence constantly and this seems to confirm the suspicion that the failure lay in the command system and did not lie with the scouting capabilities of the Southern cavalry. Polk was highly commendatory about his troopers, and believed that they had been both an excellent rear guard and an excellent reconnaissance force.33 There was a gap however, between what Polk learned and what Bragg learned that obviated much of the vigour and activity of the Confederate cavalry.
In the battle on October 8 the cavalry forces on both sides played an active but often minor part. Gay's cavalry was to the front of Lovell H. Rousseau's division and the section of artillery that he had as support found more employment than his troopers. When McCook's corps came up Gay moved to the left and front and occupied a piece of ground between the two infantry commands. Gay had his artillery shell the Confederate lines when they first advanced but was later forced to fall back to conform to the movements of McCook's corps, which received a frightful mauling from the furious rebel assault. Gay's conduct had been commendable but aside from minor covering action he had done very little of any consequence. The Federal cavalry as a whole did little more than skirmish with the Confederate pickets as the two armies closed.

The Southern troopers were more active and their part in the battle was correspondingly more significant. Wheeler and Wharton had disputed the Federal advance and fought briefly over the pools of water that Gay took on October 7. Only part of both armies became engaged at the Battle of Perryville but Wharton was on the right and led the attack by Polk's wing. Polk wrote: "The attack was then ordered. Wharton charged the enemy's left with great fury, passing over stone walls and ravines and driving back the enemy's infantry several hundred yards." This charge allowed the Confederates to gain possession of a strategic point on the field. Polk attacked McCook's corps and sent it reeling back, badly crippled but
the Federal centre stood firm and the end of the fighting on October 8 saw the majority of the Federal army unscathed simply because most of it had not been aware that a battle was taking place.

Wheeler had been on the left and although he was not as active in the fighting as Wharton he appears to have bluffe an entire Federal corps into sitting still during the battle. Thomas L. Crittenden's command was to Wheeler's front and Crittenden had sent out some cavalry to scout but Wheeler had driven it back with great fury and it retired swiftly to its infantry. Crittenden then stopped and took no further action and his lack of initiative never allowed him to discover that he was only opposed by a cavalry brigade.37

The results of the battle were confused and uncertain. A Confederate staff officer later described it as a favourable incident for the South which decided nothing and a more apt description probably could not be found.38 Indeed, there are few historians who would disagree for Bragg was not aware that a major confrontation was taking place and Buell was in much the same position. Polk's attack had effectively put McCook's command out of action for the moment but Bragg decided, for several reasons that he had to retreat. It was clear by this time that Kentucky was not about to rise and rally to his support. In addition, he was short of supplies and his scouts had informed him that the Union forces were rapidly concentrating and being reinforced. He decided that he had to save his
army and therefore ordered a retreat. He later learned of Van Dorn's repulse at Corinth and this only confirmed the necessity for withdrawal in his mind. So, covered by his cavalry forces, Bragg led his army out of Kentucky and back into Tennessee.

The Federal pursuit was scarcely worthy of the name. Buell moved very slowly, as always, and his advance units did no more than nip at the heels of the retiring Confederates. Wheeler was in command of the covering forces and he conducted an able rear guard action which often seriously delayed the advancing Union detachments. Bragg's chief of staff, George Brent, conveyed Bragg's admiration for Wheeler on this point in a communication: "Your services have been most valuable and brilliant. No cavalry force was ever more handsomely handled and no army better covered." David Urquhart, a Confederate staff officer, described Wheeler's activity in an article written some time after the war:

General Wheeler and his cavalry brought up the rear—fighting by day and obstructing the roads by night. Before the pursuit was abandoned...that officer was engaged over twenty-six times. His vigilance was so well known by the infantry that they never feared a surprise.

Wheeler, in another article, also described his actions:

Our cavalry at times dismounted and fought behind stone fences and hastily erected rail breastworks, and when opportunity offered, charged the advancing enemy. Each expedient was adopted several times each day, and when practicable the road was obstructed by felling timber.
Federal officers in command of the advance pursuing units confirmed that the Confederate cavalry was active and effective in this period. Buell later stressed this point at the Commission's inquiries and W.S. Smith, who commanded one of the leading detachments, wrote:

They have obstructed the road by felling timber so that our progress is very slow. A cavalry force could prevent this, but our infantry cannot get ahead fast enough. They [the Confederates] fell trees until we come up to them, then fall back rapidly and chop away again.43

Another problem faced by the Federals was supply. Buell was forced to keep his cavalry back and send forward infantry because the country had been denuded of forage by the Confederates and sufficient supplies could not be passed to the front quickly enough.44 A large part of the reason for the failure of a pursuit lay with Buell however. He just lacked the decisive and aggressive character needed for a successful commander.45

There were a few skirmishes in the course of the token Federal chase. On October 9 Gay occupied Harrodsburg after Bragg had withdrawn and Kennett and his brigade finally caught up with the Union army and took a minor part in the pursuit until it was finally called off near Crab Orchard about the middle of October. Wheeler was in charge of all Bragg's cavalry by this time and in addition to covering the main army he constantly sent back information about the strength and movements of the Federal troops.46 But the end of the Perryville campaign marked the tacit defeat of the Confederate counteroffensive in the West.
Buell retained command of the Federal army for only another few weeks. Washington had finally tired of his dilatoriness and Rosecrans, fresh from his triumph at Corinth, was his replacement in command. Until Rosecrans took over there was comparatively little contact between the opposing armies.

There had been a lack of unity of purpose at this time in the operations of the Federal cavalry and this had been a chronic condition all through the period of Buell's command. The Union cavalry was highly fragmented and often in poor condition and seems to have been directed in a hap-hazard manner. Much of the Federal problem stemmed from the large numbers of raw recruits and the lack of effective leaders. Johnson had been incautious in his pursuit of Morgan and had been drawn into an unequal combat where he was no match for the active and aggressive rebel raider. Kennett and Zahm had done satisfactory but relatively insignificant work, for Buell could just as easily have had infantry escort the slow moving wagon trains and thus had more horse soldiers for scouting and reconnaissance purposes. Also, this escort service wore down a highly expensive arm of the service very quickly. Gay was competent but subdued in his conduct at Perryville and his activities had no genuine consequence. In combat, the Federal cavalry was almost invariably beaten by its Confederate counterpart and only when it was backed up by infantry and artillery during the advance from Louisville did it show much spirit. In small units on scouting details it made an effort to keep Buell
informed but it was not in sufficient strength to effectively accomplish this purpose. The Confederate cavalry screens were simply too strong. In spite of this singularly modest activity, Buell praised his cavalry constantly. Given its behaviour, it is curious what he expected of it that he was so easily pleased.

The Confederate cavalry stood out in marked contrast. During the advance into Kentucky and in the rear guard actions in which it played so prominent a part, the Southern horse fulfilled its duties generally with vigour and resourcefulness. It set up a screen that the Federals had extreme difficulty in penetrating and it served as an effective force at gathering intelligence. If the information that it turned in did not enlighten Bragg as it should have this was more the fault of the Confederate command system and Bragg's lack of direction than poor scouting. The Confederate cavalry lacked effective direction but it was at the level of Polk and Bragg and not that of Wheeler and Wharton. The Confederate cavalry leaders were active and aggressive and clearly foreshadowed their future formidable reputations. In combat, the Confederate troopers were steady and aggressive, and the concept of heavy cavalry reared once again in Wharton's charge on the Federal left at the Battle of Perryville.

The role of both cavalry forces at this time was clearly a shield oriented principally to the security of the army at large. It was a defensive and tactical arm, subordinate to
the demands of the whole army. The functions of escorting, scouting, picketing, covering, and screening demonstrate this clearly. There were strategic overtones in the raids of Morgan and Forrest although these were not as clear in their form as the later raids in December would be. This was plainly a case of the cavalry being used as a dagger, the second aspect of its dual role, to strike at a hopefully vulnerable point. The role of the cavalry in general was strikingly similar once again to that suggested by Jomini and it seems that the horse soldiers did give a clear indication of influencing the general events of the campaigns although their activities cannot be termed decisive. The dual role of shield and dagger for the cavalry can scarcely be disputed however, and the invasion of Kentucky gives ample evidence in support of the suitability of the analogy.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV


2Catton, Terrible Swift Sword, p. 379. Catton believes that Buell moved so slowly that he simply bogged himself down. O.R., Series I, Volume XVI, Part i, 9. (All subsequent O.R. citations to series I unless otherwise noted and form consistent with previous chapters.)

3O.R., XVI, i, 32, 34, 265, 269, 327.

4Ibid., 157, 164-165.

5Ibid., ii, 361. See also Van Horne, Army of the Cumberland, I, 150.

6O.R., XVI, i, 158.

7Ibid., 327, 513, 514. See also ibid., ii, 564-565, 568.

8Ibid., i, 265.

9Ibid., ii, 388. Catton, Terrible Swift Sword, p. 374 believes that the Federals languished so at this time that the war deteriorated into a precarious state of balance where these small cavalry raids had a disproportionate effect. See also O.R., XVI, i, 872-873, 874-876, 878. Duke, Morgan's Cavalry, pp. 146-152.


11O.R., XVI, i, 265-267; ii, 484.

12Ibid., ii, 781-782.


14O.R., XVI, i, 265.


17 See McWhiney, "Controversy in Kentucky", *C.W.H.* (1960) for a complete analysis of the campaign.

18 *O.R.* XVI, i, 43.

19 Ibid., 48, 455.

20 Ibid., i, 893-896.

21 Ibid., 885.

22 Ibid., ii, 489.

23 Ibid., i, 910.

24 Ibid., 258.

25 Ibid., ii, 552-553.

26 Ibid., i, 1016-1017. The Confederate officer in command was later suspended and fined for his negligence.


28 Jones, *Confederate Strategy*, pp. 105, 108. Catton, *Terrible Swift Sword*, p. 415. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, p. 244 believes that Bragg's cavalry did not act with unity of purpose at this time and he is largely correct but the fault must be put at the feet of the overall commander who did not exercise tight enough control over his forces.


30 *O.R.*, XVI, ii, 591-596 passim. See Appendix I and II.
Both authors believe that Polk was the major contriver of the Confederate grief at this time. It is evident that the failure was at the levels of high command, and not in the role of the cavalry or the fulfillment of that role. See also Williams, *Lincoln Finds A General*, IV, 124. O.R., XVI, i, 1109.

Gay's role was purely tactical and had no overall significance. O.R., XVI, i, 1038, 1043, 1073. Thatcher, *A Hundred Battles*, pp. 76-77.


For casualties from this battle see Appendix III.


David Urquhart, "Bragg's Advance and Retreat", *Battles and Leaders*, III, 603.


O.R., XVI, i, 1140.
"Don Carlos Buell, "East Tennessee and the Campaign of Perryville", Battles and Leaders, III, 51. O.R., XVI, i, 56, 63, 199, 515, 575.

Catton, Terrible Swift Sword, p. 473. Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, IV, 135. T. Harry Williams, Lincoln and his Generals (New York: Vintage Books, 1952), pp. 182-185 believes that Buell's assessment of the situations was generally correct but that he was too slow in doing anything about them and the relationship between the political body and the military results in the field was such that unsuccessful generals were in severe danger of dismissal. Hence Buell was replaced by someone the authorities in Washington believed would get things done. Williams book is an excellent discussion of the Federal command system during the American Civil War.

O.R., XVI, i, 513-514; ii, 596, 600-601, 932, 943, 949, 950.

Ibid., i, 1030. See Map #2 for a general picture of the area that has been under discussion.
The Battle of Perryville and the Kentucky campaign had been disappointing because there had been no clear cut victory for either side and a bewildered feeling pervaded the armies and public of both North and South at its conclusion. General Braxton Bragg had led his Confederate army back to the Murfreesboro area, hoping to be able to hold onto Middle Tennessee. General William S. Rosecrans made Nashville his headquarters and settled down to reorganize his army and collect supplies in preparation for a new offensive against the Confederates. Bragg did not feel strong enough to take the initiative on his own and Rosecrans was not inclined to move until he considered that everything was ready and favourable and therefore there was a lull before the next period of major campaigning.\(^1\)

One of Rosecrans' primary concerns was his cavalry. Throughout November and December of 1862 he constantly stressed the inadequacy of his mounted force in both numbers and equipment. He had lofty ideas about what his cavalry would be able to do and once wrote: "My cavalry are the eyes and feet of my army and will be its providers."\(^2\) He repeatedly requested arms and equipment and on occasion prompted annoyed replies from Henry Halleck in Washington but his persistence paid off and he was able to obtain considerable numbers of arms for his cavalrymen. By the time of the Murfreesboro campaign it was
quite well armed. The First Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry, for example, "...in addition to a breech loading carbine, carried a revolver and a light cavalry sabre...."\(^3\) Also, the evidence indicates that a number of repeating weapons, particularly revolving rifles, found their way into the hands of the combat troops.\(^4\) Rosecrans' cavalry was not as destitute of arms as his continual cables suggested.

The Federal cavalry was not in consistently good shape however, and therefore some of Rosecrans' concern was genuine. Early in December 7,417 cavalrmen were shown as present in the army but there were only 2,496 carbines for them. The Assistant Secretary of War, P.H. Watson, cabled on December 8: "...3,600 carbines and Colt's revolving rifles...and all the swords and pistols for which you have called had been shipped."\(^5\) In addition, Rosecrans lacked a competent chief of cavalry and he spent considerable time campaigning for David S. Stanley to fill that position. Stanley had first served with Rosecrans during the Siege of Corinth and at that time he was with Ulysses S. Grant's army that was beginning the first of the Vicksburg campaigns. Rosecrans prodded continuously for Stanley and finally had his transfer effected. When he arrived, the new cavalry chief found that his troops "...had been badly neglected. It [the cavalry] was weak, undisciplined, and scattered around, a regiment to a division of infantry."\(^6\) He set about consolidating the mounted troops, relying on Rosecrans to back him up when infantry officers balked at letting the
troopers go. He betrayed some old-fashioned and orthodox views when he let it be known that he considered the Federal cavalry poorly trained because it relied on firearms instead of on the sabre. From the way Stanley and Rosecrans went about reorganizing and supplying the Federal cavalry, it seemed that the troopers would do more than be the "eyes and feet" of the army. It is doubtful that Rosecrans would have gone to such lengths to arm his cavalry as he did unless he intended it to fight.

A few minor efforts were made along the way to streamline Federal cavalry operations. In early November, Captain Elmer Otis of the Fourth Regular Cavalry was appointed chief of couriers. All the mounted but unarmed men were to report to him and all those on courier duty that were fully equipped were to be transferred to more active service. At the same time, officers were instructed to thoroughly scout the roads that they operated on and pick up any stragglers.

Little seems to have happened to the Confederate cavalry at this time. It was not as well armed as the Federal horse but this was nothing unusual because armament was one area where Southern soldiers were continually forced to make do. Wharton implied a lack of pistols in his command when he wrote:

The Rangers, being armed with revolvers, are better prepared to meet the enemy's cavalry than the other regiments in the brigade. The battle of Wednesday was fought at great disadvantage on our part, the enemy's cavalry being much more efficiently armed and equipped. The proper weapon for cavalry has proven to be the revolver.
The Confederates had a variety of weapons, many of which had been captured from the Federals and the great diversity that resulted presented constant problems in ammunition supply. Also, the Federals had a number of breech loading and repeating weapons where the Confederates had mainly muzzle loading muskets, carbines, and shot guns and their firepower was therefore somewhat inferior.\textsuperscript{10}

The organization of the Confederate cavalry did not change either and Joseph Wheeler's brigade was still attached to Leonidas Polk's wing, as was John Wharton still attached to William Hardee's. More and more however, the cavalry commanders were coming to report directly to Bragg than to either of the two subordinate commanders.

Through November and up until Rosecrans advanced from Nashville there was a series of minor clashes between outposts, patrols, and forage parties with the occasional serious engagement. Before Stanley arrived, John Kennett had command of the Federal cavalry and he screened the army's approach to Nashville, cooperating with General T.L. Crittenden but having the option of operating on his own if he believed that the situation warranted it.\textsuperscript{11} In December, Rosecrans sent out large forage trains and cavalry usually formed part of their guard, often fighting off raiding rebels. On November 12, a group of Federal couriers foolishly allowed themselves to be captured and a week later a cavalry unit accompanying a reconnaissance from Nashville broke and ran when Confederate pickets were encountered.\textsuperscript{12}
By behaviour like this, the Federal cavalry did not exactly distinguish itself and Rosecrans excused this with notes like the following, penned to his superiors in Washington:

Our great difficulties will come from their numerous cavalry harassing us and cutting off our forage parties and trains. I am arming our cavalry, who are not much more than one-half their effective force, and much cowed from that fact and want of arms.13

The Confederate cavalry, on the other hand, performed well enough in combat but during this period it was badly handled from the top. Nashville was at the end of a long and vulnerable supply line and in the past the Confederate cavalry had proven itself very capable of seriously disrupting such lines, or at least being a sufficient hazard to slow down their use. But all through November and the first part of December the Federal supply lines were left very much alone. Nathan Forrest's command spent its time harassing forage trains and during the first two weeks of December prepared for the projected raid on West Tennessee.14 John Hunt Morgan's men were similarly employed and neither force was sent against Rosecrans' lines of supply.15 Morgan did descend on Hartsville on December 7 and captured the Union garrison there which surrendered after an embarrassingly brief resistance. This was a satisfying little incident and increased Morgan's fame and popularity as well as making the Federals much abashed, but the affair had no genuine importance. Bragg had allowed his cavalry commanders too much freedom and their efforts at this time were uncoordinated and largely wasted.16 Part of
this stemmed from Bragg's opinion of the two men, whom he considered as fit only for partisan duty. In the past however, they had demonstrated that their talents transcended mere guerrilla-like activity and if Bragg had used a little more imagination he might have been able to seriously delay the Federal advance. As it was, Rosecrans was allowed to collect sufficient supplies and secure his lines of communication. The Southern cavalry was strategically idle at a time when it could have made a significant impact of the Union war effort.  

The failure seems to lie squarely with Bragg. He did not keep tight control over his admittedly volatile cavalry leaders and was content to let them operate largely at will. Later, he sent Forrest and Morgan on large raids and both did extensive damage although only Forrest's had any genuine strategic significance. It would have been more logical for Bragg to use his cavalry in this manner before Rosecrans had accumulated sufficient stores to give the Federal army freedom of movement, and not after. Bragg did not feel strong enough to take the offensive with his whole army but he could have taken it with his cavalry columns, ably led as they were. It appears that the Southern General overlooked the strategic potential of far ranging mobile strike forces sent against enemy lines of communication, at least at this time. What the Confederate raiders did accomplish they did as much on their own initiative as on Bragg's direction. This lack of
imagination is curious because Bragg had had a strong indication of what cavalry could accomplish during Don Carlos Buell's advance on Chattanooga six months before.

The other part of Bragg's cavalry was on picket duty and from the beginning of November until when Rosecrans marched his army out of Nashville Wheeler and Wharton were to the front in a vast screen. Late in December, Wheeler was ordered to push forward to see what was going on. Bragg believed that the Federals were contemplating an immediate advance and he wanted positive information. 18

Bragg had been right and he received confirmation of the Union advance on December 26. Rosecrans had been under heavy pressure from his superiors to start moving. They had had enough of slow moving generals with Buell and he had been replaced with the understanding that things would start to happen. But Rosecrans was nothing if not deliberate and he was not inclined to initiate a campaign until he was convinced in his own mind that everything was ready. His decision to advance late in December was therefore made for several reasons. One of these, of course, was the pressure from Washington. Another was the departure of a large part of Bragg's cavalry on raiding expeditions. Rosecrans had always been vitally concerned about the inferiority of his cavalry and when Forrest and Morgan left Rosecrans had approximate parity between his own mounted forces and those of the enemy. This was something that he had been striving for. 19 Also, he had collected a
sufficient stockpile of supplies to allow him freedom of movement in case something happened to his lines of supply. So Rosecrans believed that everything was ready and accordingly issued his marching orders.

On December 26 the three corps of the Federal army moved out on three roughly parallel routes towards Stone's River. Stanley's cavalry was divided to provide a brigade to cover the advance of each column. The Federal penchant for fragmenting their cavalry force appeared again but this time, it had a logical object. It was a function of cavalry to cover an army that was advancing and therefore only logical that if the army advanced in three columns then the cavalry be so divided to provide a screening force for each column. In the past the Union cavalry had done this as well but the fragmentation had continued far past the immediate objects in mind to the point where the force had been seriously weakened. The recent reorganization of the Federal cavalry suggested that changes were in the offing.

The cavalry also had the responsibility of maintaining communications within the army as Rosecrans' chief of staff, Colonel J.P. Garesché, indicated in a note to Stanley:

> From the reserve you will furnish General McCook with the means of keeping up communications with you and these headquarters.... Direct the commander of each of your cavalry detachments to keep a regular communication with each other and the leading divisions in their rear. Make arrangements also for courier line....21
Federal cavalry organization seemed to be improving and responsibilities were more precise. This was the clearest statement of the duties of the mounted troops in this regard that had yet emerged.

The main duty of the Federal cavalry was to scout, seek out the enemy positions, and drive in the opposing pickets during the advance. It was a prime responsibility of the troopers to prevent the leading infantry units from being surprised. General Alexander McCook had confidence that the cavalry heading his column would do a good job:

I have Colonel Zahm and three regiments of cavalry on that road, and one-half of his men in the saddle patrolling. I will have timely warning. I have cavalry in search of Negley...Stanley will attend the roads south.22

There was a series of small but brisk skirmishes as the Federal army advanced. General Jefferson C. Davis had only one company with his infantry brigade but he sent the horsemen ahead with "...instructions to drive in the enemy's pickets, and attack him on his flanks at every opportunity."23 Davis may have expected rather too much from one company but this shows that he was prepared to put it to use and was not about to be satisfied if it merely sat around watching the enemy. He clearly expected his cavalrymen to fight.

The Union army advanced slowly, through unfavourable country in inclement weather, and gradually pushed the Confederate pickets back on their reserves and those in turn back towards where Bragg was concentrating his army near
Stone's River. The rebel cavalry was in some strength, as Stanley indicated:

...I met the enemy's pickets, who, as they fell back before us were continually reenforced...they disputed our progress with a force of 2,500 cavalry and mounted infantry supported by four pieces of artillery under the command of General Wheeler. 24

At one point Federal troopers made a dash and seized a bridge, holding it until supporting infantry columns came up. Generally, there were many little combats and cavalrmen on both sides fought both mounted and on foot, occasionally charging enemy positions on horseback.

As soon as Bragg had discovered that the Federals were moving he had to concentrate his own army but it was strung out in a line with Murfreesboro as the centre. He therefore needed time and he depended on his cavalry to buy him that time. Wheeler assured Bragg that he could delay the Federals for four days and the general orders that Bragg issued on December 28 made the role of the Confederate cavalry very clear:

Cavalry to fall back gradually before enemy, reporting by couriers every hour. When near our lines, Wheeler will move to the right and Wharton to the left, to cover and protect our flanks and report movements of enemy; Pegram to fall to the rear, and report to the commanding general as a reserve. 25

Clearly the cavalry was a covering and a delaying force and this was a job that Wheeler was particularly adept at. He had demonstrated his aptitudes before the Battle of Perryville, during it, after it, and was to do so again in this campaign.
It did take the Federal army four days to grope its way to Stone's River and put itself in battle array but this was not due to the efforts of the Confederate cavalry alone. Wheeler did well, and this is not to detract from his carefully conducted rear guard action but there were other factors involved.

The other factors stemmed from the caprices of nature and there was really very little that could be done about them. The weather in that Tennessee winter proved to be particularly foul and more than one comment found its way into the official reports. Davis wrote: "...my advance was over a rugged country rendered almost impassable by the incessant rains." McCook wrote on December 27: "The fog is so thick in these hills that I cannot see 300 yards in my front. I have ordered a halt until the fog rises." Colonel Joseph Dodge wrote: "...owing to the ground being very much softened by the rain, the men's clothing were so saturated with water that it was impossible to ...[advance] at the rate of speed desired." General George Thomas reported that the rains that had fallen one night had made the roads to his front almost impassable. All in all, nature was not very kind to two armies that were struggling valiantly to get close enough to shoot each other up.

In addition to the difficulties provided by the weather, the topography also proved hostile. Rosecrans wrote descriptively of the lay of the land:
...rolling or hilly routes, skirted by cedar thickets, farms, and intersected by small streams, with rocky bluff banks, forming serious obstacles....

...the road rough, through rolling country, skirted by bluffs covered with dense cedar thickets, tops open timber. ...this whole country is a natural fortification.30

A large army, forced to move through country like this, dragging all the impedimenta of war, in rains that made heavy clothing heavier and more restricting on men already loaded down with knapsacks, cartridge belts, canteens, and weapons, would not have been able to move quickly. It was no wonder that it took Rosecrans four days to get his army up into position to offer battle.

The Battle of Stone's River, or Murfreesboro, proved to be a hard fought and bloody affair. Both generals had essentially the same plan; to hold with the right wing and strike with the left. Bragg took the initiative however and Hardee's corps drove in on McCook's men while they were still cooking their breakfasts and watering the artillery teams. December 31 saw Rosecrans' army come close to a debacle, but he had faced an analogous situation at Corinth and tough fighting mixed with determination had won the day there. McCook's corps was sent reeling back, badly crippled, but the Federal centre stood firm and the Confederates lacked the reserve power to drive through to a complete victory. The Union troops rallied and disaster was staved off.
The Union cavalry found much active employment in the fighting and this was perhaps one of the few times that troopers had been sent into heavy combat on the Union side. Detachments were hurled almost piecemeal into the lines. Otis, who had been stationed near Rosecrans' headquarters as a reserve with a much reduced regiment, was sent galloping off to the right when Rosecrans first learned of McCook's peril. Otis led his men in charges and countercharges against attacking Confederate cavalry and was instrumental in saving McCook's reserve ammunition train when it was threatened by rebel horsemen. Otis was later reinforced by other cavalry units that had been rallied or sent from other parts of the field. Colonel R.G.H. Minty of the Fourth Michigan Cavalry reported spirited mounted action that suggested the old concept of heavy cavalry was not entirely forgotten by any means, but at the same time it displayed some new features: "...I charged the first line on our front with the Fourth Michigan and the First Tennessee, supported on the right by a fire from the Fifteenth Pennsylvania.... I reformed my men and again charged." The Federal cavalry seemed to be fighting a dragoon kind of action here depending on its firearms in combat. This impression is confirmed in the report of Captain Valentine Cupp of the First Ohio Cavalry, who was engaged on another part of the field: "...receiving three heavy charges from the enemy's cavalry, but repulsed them every time with fire from our carbines." John Kennett reported similar action: "I rallied
the Third Ohio... and formed it in rear of a fence, where volley after volley had the effect of driving back the rebels, they [the Third Ohio] charging upon them effectually."  

This indicates fairly clearly that the Federal cavalrymen were relying on their firearms quite heavily and that fire action was sufficient to repel mounted charges.

When Hardee's corps had gone forward in the early hours of December 31 Wharton's cavalry had moved on the left flank. His troopers hit the Federals in the flanks and rear at the same time as the rebel infantrymen attacked the front. Wharton wrote of combat that he had later when he was faced by the Union cavalry:

A heavy body of cavalry was drawn up... to give battle.... Ashby and Hardy were ordered to charge.... They were met by a countercharge of the enemy, supposed to be the Fourth Regulars, with drawn sabers. At the same time Harrison's command was ordered to charge.... 

...2,000 horsemen were hurled on the foe. The ground was exceedingly favorable for cavalry operations, and after a short hand to hand conflict, in which the revolver was used with deadly effect, the enemy fled....

The heavy cavalry activity of the Union horse was apparently mirrored on the Confederate side and in addition revolver met sabre in a melee, indicating that the use of firearms extended to mounted as well as dismounted combat.

Most of the heavy fighting took place on the Union right on December 31 and the organization of the Federal cavalry seems to have been fairly fluid with the troopers now operating in battalion or regimental sized units, and occasionally being concentrated in brigade size. Rosecrans' cavalry was well
suited to assist in shoring up the sagging right wing. It was well armed on the whole and highly mobile. Although much of the Union cavalry bolted at the first attack, it was rallied and fought fairly steadily thereafter. The Confederate horsemen had displayed their customary aggression and performed well for the most part. When the Southern advance had finally stalled, Wharton remained temporarily on the flank as a covering force.

There was little activity on the Union left but the failure of rebel cavalry to scout actively and aggressively may have saved the Federal army from disaster. The Northern cavalry force there was small and did little except skirmish briefly in defense of some fords over Stone's River, but as the Confederates did not appear in strength, this did not prove a very hazardous task. The Southern cavalry was under the command of John Pegram, who, until a short time before, had been Edmund Kirby Smith's chief of staff. General John C. Breckinridge commanded the infantry immediately to Pegram's rear and depended on him to relate what was happening to the front. Early in the morning on December 31 Pegram dutifully reported that Federal troops had crossed Stone's River and were moving up on Breckinridge. Rosecrans was preparing for his assault on Bragg's right but this attack was never launched. The troops were withdrawn almost immediately when McCook was attacked but Pegram either failed to notice this or he failed to notify Breckinridge. It is not clear which was the case
in this instance. About noon, Bragg called on Breckinridge to send reinforcements to drive home the attack that was going so well on the left wing. Breckinridge replied that he was expecting an attack momentarily himself and therefore could not possibly spare any men. The Federals did not show up however, and by the time Breckinridge had moved forward and discovered that the Union force was fiction the attack by Hardee was beginning to run down. Exactly how much difference Breckinridge's men would have made even if they could have arrived in time is only conjecture. The central point is that as a scout, Pegram was a miserable failure.38

The remainder of the Federal cavalry was engaged escorting trains between Nashville and the front. Lewis Zahm's brigade drew this assignment and it was a job with which Zahm was quite familiar as he had spent most of the time before the Battle of Perryville on escort duty. He fought several little seesaw actions, of which, the following is typical: "...discovered the enemy charging up the pike in our rear. I met them and repulsed them, they charged again. I repulsed them again and charged them back for two miles...."39

Wheeler was given more active duty during the battle and he assumed the role of a dagger aimed directly at the Federal communications. This arose out of Bragg's overall battle plan, and demonstrated that the Confederate general had a good tactical grasp of the use of cavalry:
Tonight, if the enemy has gained his position on our front ready for action, Wheeler and Wharton, with their whole commands, will make a night march to the right and left, turn the enemy's flank, gain his rear, and vigorously assail his trains and rear guard, blocking the roads and impeding his movements in every way, holding themselves ready to assail his retreating forces.\textsuperscript{40}

Wharton had been diverted to assist Hardee but Wheeler proceeded as ordered. He went to Jefferson, La Vargne, Rock Springs, and Nolensville and in the course of his raid destroyed an estimated one million dollars worth of Federal property and paroled hundreds of prisoners. His raid had been swift and successful but the fast marching had been hard on his horses and by the time he rejoined Wharton on the Confederate left flank on the afternoon of December 31, his animals were quite jaded.\textsuperscript{41}

Tired horses notwithstanding, Wheeler went to the Federal rear again the following day, this time reinforced by Wharton's brigade. He was able to inflict only minimal damage however because of the strong infantry guards and heavy escorts that Rosecrans had set up to protect his supplies. Colonel William Innes described an attack by Wharton's men on his position while Wheeler chased a wagon train: "The enemy attacked us with great fury, making several distinct charges upon us, attacking us on every side, mounted and on foot...but were again and again severely repulsed...."\textsuperscript{42} Evidently, a strongly posted infantry force could still withstand attacks by horsemen. In the course of the foray, Wheeler noted that heavy Federal reinforcements were moving up from Nashville and his reports to Bragg partly convinced the Confederate commander that he had to withdraw.
New Year's Day was comparatively quiet for both armies but the day following, Bragg made his last effort to beat Rosecrans. After the battle of December 31 Rosecrans had decided that he was not going to be beaten and that he was not going to retreat and this decision made the battle a Federal victory because Bragg could not muster sufficient power to overthrow the Union army, although he hurt it badly.  

Breckinridge’s division was to make an assault on the Federal left and it was to have the support of Wharton’s and Pegram’s cavalry. Pegram failed the infantry once again however, although it would be stretching the evidence to claim that his absence caused the Confederate repulse. Breckinridge had been told that he was to have cavalry support and he sent off staff officers to find it but the time for the attack arrived before these aides returned and Breckinridge moved off anyway. Pegram had been ordered to report to Wharton to cooperate in the attack and he had endorsed the order as "received" but when the assault on the Federal lines began Wharton expressed astonishment. Somewhere the lines of communication between the several segments of the Confederate army had broken, and the point of breakage seems to have been John Pegram. Wharton, accompanied by an apparently equally surprised Pegram, rushed forward to provide a cover for Breckinridge’s division, which had been sent staggering back by heavy artillery and musket fire from the strong Federal positions. Throughout the battle, Pegram had been a singularly undistinguished cavalry officer. This repulse saw the end
of the major fighting and the next few days saw minor skirmishes as Bragg, covered by his cavalry, pulled back to form a new line along the Duck River, where he sat for six months before Rosecrans moved out on him again.

In some respects the battle had been drawn as neither side had actually been defeated although both had suffered tremendous casualties and serious disorganization. The principal reason Rosecrans did not mount a vigorous pursuit was that his army was exhausted and needed to rest and refit before it could take up active campaigning again. The victory really went to the Federals however, because Bragg pulled back and gave up territory, thus presenting the appearance of a repulse although his army was hardly beaten. Bragg's efforts to cut Union supply lines had resulted in considerable damage but Rosecrans had not been seriously embarrassed by the Confederate cavalry thrusts. The Federals had a considerable stockpile of supplies and river communications were soon available so Rosecrans was not immediately dependent on the railroads which had been Bragg's main targets. The time for Bragg to send his cavalry against the Federal lines of communication with telling effect had really passed and only Forrest's raid into West Tennessee had any serious consequences.

At the tactical level, the cavalry on both sides had found frequent employment in this campaign. The Federal horse had displayed increased aggressiveness and efficiency and
Stanley's guiding hand in combination with Rosecrans' lavish attention seems to have had beneficial effects. Rosecrans was eminently pleased with the behaviour of his cavalry and although he was guilty of an excess of enthusiasm and a slight distortion of the truth, there was some substance to what he said, particularly when the Federal cavalry here was compared to the period when Don Carlos Buell was in command. On the other side, Bragg credited his cavalry as having been the main reason why the Federal consumed so much time in moving from Nashville to Stone's River but although Wheeler had conducted an able and inspired rear guard action he had had some assistance from the topography which favoured defense and the inclement weather which severely restricted the Federal movements. In battle, both cavalry forces were active and Rosecrans was the first Federal commander in the West who displayed little hesitation in hurling his cavalrymen into the thick of the fight. Although part of the Federal horse had bolted at first, it had rallied and fought well for the most part.

The dual role of the cavalry was evident once again. It was a dagger in Wheeler's raid to the Federal rear and in Morgan's thrust at Hartsville. These were spectacular and bothersome but did not produce significant results. Wharton was also a kind of dagger when he charged the Union right on December 31. The dagger concept found immediate use in a tactical sense in this campaign, and it was not until after the middle of December that Bragg attempted to use his mounted columns in any meaningfully strategic manner.
The second part of the cavalry's dual role was equally as apparent and clearly in the ascendent in this campaign. The cavalry was a tactical defensive force as well as a tactical and strategic offensive force. All the duties of escorting, scouting, screening the advance of the Federal columns, and covering the concentration and retreat of the Confederate army were oriented to the protection of the main part of the forces. In this the cavalry was clearly a subordinate and auxiliary arm.

A clear indication of the approach to role was given by the cavalry at the Battle of Stone's River as well. It was increasingly evident that the troopers were fighting like dragoons, often combining mounted and dismounted action in a short space of time. In addition, fire action was considerably important, and evidence of reliance on the sabre was scant in spite of Stanley's interest in its use. Troopers on both sides used their firearms both mounted and on foot. All this does not class the cavalry as mere mounted infantry either. The vast majority of duties were cavalry duties, and the troopers assumed the parts of light or heavy horsemen, as the occasion demanded.

Necessity was responsible for this. Opportunities for heavy cavalry activity were few and in previous campaigns cavalrymen had done very little because they were often held, presumably for the opportune moment. It became apparent that it was not practical to divide the mounted troops according to
function and the employment and behaviour of both Union and Confederate troopers presents implicit evidence of this. All the types of mounted functions were performed by the same men. In addition, the men placed increased reliance on their firearms. Improvements in weaponry, indifferent horsemanship, restricted terrain, and inexperienced officers seem to have been largely responsible for this. Although it was never explicitly stated, an inexperienced officer would have far better control over his men fighting on foot than fighting mounted.

In spite of all the surface changes, and alterations in approach, the dual role of the cavalry remained essentially the same and it can still be interpreted as a shield and dagger.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V


Lamers, Edge of Glory, p. 187.

2O.R., Series I, Volume XX, Part ii, 9. (All subsequent O.R. citations in this chapter refer to Series I unless otherwise noted and form will be consistent with previous chapters.)

3W.R. Carter, History of the First Regiment of Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry 1862-1865 (Knoxville: Grant Ogden Co., 1902), p. 62. Other than a few references of this nature Carter's work is of little value.


5O.R., XX, ii, 59, 127, 135.

6D.S. Stanley, Memoirs (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), p. 120. See also O.R., XX, ii, 8, 30, 94.


9Ibid., i, 969.


11O.R., XX, ii, 8, 15, 17, 20.

- 135 -
12Ibid., i, 13-14.

13Ibid., 41.


16See Edwin C. Bearss, "The Battle of Hartsville and Morgan's Second Kentucky Raid", The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society (1967), Vol. 65, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, for a detailed narrative of this affair. Holland, Morgan, p. 170 believes that although the affair had no strategic significance it provided a morale booster by providing a victory that was sorely needed. Duke, Morgan's Cavalry, p. 226. O.R., XX, i, 44, 47, 52.

17O.R., XX, i, 64; ii, 402, 411, 420-421. Holland, Morgan, p. 164 states that Bragg believed Forrest and Morgan were fit only for partisan duty. Dyer, "Cavalry Operations", J.S.H. (1942), pp. 215-216. Horn, Army of Tennessee, p. 194 disagrees but the evidence does not bear this out. See the following chapter for a more detailed discussion of the larger raids.

18O.R., XX, ii, 393, 457.

19Ibid., 219. Rosecrans wrote that the absence of Forrest and Morgan would "...materially aid us in our movement". See also Lamers, Edge of Glory, pp. 197, 199. Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, IV, 253, 285. Jones, Confederate Strategy, p. 123. Forrest and Morgan had about 5,000 men between them. See also Appendices I and II. O.R., XX, i, 189.

20Catton, Never Call Retreat, p. 38.


22Ibid., 27, 271.

23Ibid., i, 262.

24Ibid., 623.

26. O.R., XX, i, 262.

27. Ibid., 252.

28. Ibid., 19.

29. Ibid., 372.


32. O.R., XX, i, 625.

33. Ibid., 640.

34. Ibid., 621.

35. O.R., XX, i, 967. See also 961. Hardee's orders to Wharton are discussed on Ibid., 966. The reports of Union officers confirm that the Confederate cavalry and infantry attacked simultaneously. Ibid., 306, 314, 343, 621.

36. Ibid., 634-638.

37. Ibid., 879.


39. O.R., XX, i, 634. Zahm's complete report is on Ibid., 633-638. See also Ibid., 626.

40. Ibid., 672.

42O.R., XX, i, 651. See also ibid., 968 for Wharton's report.


44O.R., XX, i, 688, 969 (Wharton), 790 (the order to Pegram endorsed "received"), and 785-787 (Breckinridge's report).

45See Appendix III for casualty figures.

46See the next chapter for a more thorough discussion of the cavalry raids of this period.

CHAPTER VI  CIVIL WAR CAVALRY RAIDS  WINTER 1862-1863

The long range cavalry raid has been a topic of some interest in Civil War studies. The raids were usually daring, swift, and had the added attraction of being conducted by dashing and romantic leaders. John Hunt Morgan and Nathan Bedford Forrest are two prominent examples of Confederate raiders whose exploits thrilled the South as they swept through Federal territory, capturing small outposts, burning bridges and trestles, destroying track, and eluding the columns of troops sent to capture them. They captured the imagination in much the same manner as J.E.B. Stuart did by his famous rides around the Federal Army of the Potomac in the Eastern theatre. Historians have often romanticized the raiders to such an extent that the real role of the cavalry foray and the actual nature of the accomplishments have been obscured behind a veneer of heroic idealism. The cavalry raiders deserve attention, but they, like the raid itself, must be put in proper perspective.

Many military men and contemporary observers recorded thoughts on the cavalry raid. B.H. Liddell Hart believes that the raids were only occasionally of significant effect. To him, the results of a raid depended on the skill of the leader, the choice of the target, and the thoroughness of the troops in their work. J.F.C. Fuller summed up his opinion of cavalry raids quite succinctly. He said that they were "...too distant to influence the main operations". Justus Scheibert, a Prussian
observer, believed that the importance of cavalry raids had been exaggerated and that even under ideal conditions they brought only limited success. 3 Captain Charles Chesney of the Staff College in England, another contemporary observer, also questioned the value of raids and concluded that they merely wasted horseflesh. He later softened his opinion and admitted that cavalry could be used in short ranged operations, but he never condoned the far reaching expeditions. 4 French authors displayed considerable interest in the cavalry raid but contrary to the general English view, believed it to have been of significance. Vigo Roussillon, for example, a professor from the French Staff school, believed that the increased firepower evident had decreased cavalry's tactical role with the main army and increased its strategic role in the form of the raid. 5 Other observers believed that the real value of a command like Forrest's was in that the men were fought as infantry utilizing their horses only for transportation and mobility. Some qualified their views and maintained that they should have been carried out by regulars instead of partisans. 6 How this could have been done by the Americans, whose armies were composed overwhelmingly of citizen volunteers and conscripts which could not have been called "regulars" until the closing days of the war, they did not say. They were presumably thinking of future relevance for the European context. Viscount Wolseley, who later published his own observations on many aspects of the war, was particularly enthusiastic about the activities
of Forrest. He thought that Forrest's raids were most successful and useful although he did not like the idea that the Confederate's command was usually composed of freebooters.7

Scholars and authors of military studies subsequently have also considered the cavalry raid. Thomas Theile believes that the raid was a new concept in the use of cavalry but one that required a number of factors all melding well to be of any significance. He maintains that the cavalry forces seldom had sufficient time to do more than superficial damage to railroads, which were generally the main objectives. To be sure, bridges and trestles were destroyed, track was torn up, and buildings and supplies often demolished. These were generally things that could quickly be replaced or improvised however, and the way to really cripple a railroad was to destroy the tunnels, but this required time that the fast moving raiders could not spare as they were usually only a few steps ahead of superior pursuing forces and it was axiomatic that a raiding column not get involved in a serious fight.8

Certainly there is much in what Theile says. The Federals in particular were quite well organized in the maintenance of their railroads and the damage that was done was usually repaired quickly. With its superior resources and hard working engineering troops, the North had a definite advantage over the South in this matter.

An historian of Confederate strategy has discovered that the rebels planned to rely almost exclusively on cavalry raids
early in 1863 to delay the Federal advances in the West. There was to be an interdepartmental concentration under Earl Van Dorn but this force was diverted from its semi-independent role when Braxton Bragg retreated from Murfreesboro following the Battle of Stone's River. It was subsequently employed to guard the flanks of Bragg's new positions.9

Alonzo Gray believes that the raids were not productive in terms of the cost in men and horses and he maintains that they worked best if carried out in friendly territory where the invaders could count on the support of the local population and that the raids had to be swift to have any chance of success.10

James M. Merrill, the author of one of the better popular histories of cavalry, pays little attention to the role of the raid and concentrates his attention on the more romantic personalities.11

Stephen Oates, in his study of cavalry in the trans-Mississippi West, concentrates on the four raids that were the main Confederate war effort there. He concludes that lack of success stemmed from failures in leadership but he also believes that it was the purpose of cavalry to operate in self-sustaining bodies. This is a curious conclusion because nothing in previous theory or experience had suggested such a role for cavalry, and this was something that slowly developed throughout the war, seldom plainly evident at any one time. Oates does make a noteworthy point when he states that the raids were really the
only way that the Confederates could take the offensive in the Western plains. This was evident in several of the campaigns discussed above, and Bragg's apparent failure to make better and more coordinated use of his cavalry through November and early December of 1862 is a possible explanation for the Federal success in the Stone's River campaign. If Rosecrans' lines of communication had been hit and broken repeatedly, he could have been delayed some time before being able to advance, but Bragg had his cavalry engaged in minor or uncoordinated activities.

George T. Denison, although he was the author of the definitive history of cavalry in the nineteenth century, did not attempt to examine the role of the raid. He was concerned instead with the mounted infantry approach and style of fighting seen in the Civil War, particularly as practised by the Confederates.

Thus the general consensus of opinion seems to be that the value of raids was slight and even those who believed that they did have significance had serious reservations about extending their unqualified support and doubted their overall value.

Presentation of a concurring, dissenting, or qualified judgement on the role of the cavalry raid can only be made on the basis of an independent examination. Certainly the raid did represent the ultimate in the danger concept and it was an effort to find a strategic role for cavalry as well. Brigades and even divisions of horse soldiers detached themselves from
the main armies and rode hard and far to cut lines of communication or destroy depots of supplies. Speed was essential, as the enemy garrisons soon concentrated columns of troops that came up in pursuit, and the troopers were often involved in several small skirmishes before the raid ran its course.

The three raids examined here occurred in the winter of 1862-1863 and were concurrent with the campaigns conducted in Tennessee at the time between the armies under Bragg and William Rosecrans. Forrest's raid into West Tennessee was from December 15, 1862 to early January 1863 and was conducted in coordination with a raid on Ulysses S. Grant's supply depot at Holly Springs by a second Confederate cavalry column under Van Dorn. Morgan's second Kentucky raid (his first had been in the summer of 1862) was from December 22, 1862 to January 2, 1863 and it was an attempt to cut Rosecrans' lines of supply. The sole Federal raid was a small expedition into East Tennessee under the command of Samuel Carter and was from December 29, 1862 to January 2, 1863 and its objective was to cut the Confederate railroad between Eastern Tennessee and Virginia.

Later in 1863 there were two more major raids conducted by the Federals. In April Colonel Abel Streight led an abortive run from Corinth to Tuscumbia which resulted only in the capture of his force by Forrest who had kept up intolerable pressure through one of the most aggressive and relentless pursuits of the war. About the same time Benjamin Grierson led a Federal column south from La Grange to Baton Rouge and although he did
little real damage to the Confederacy, the psychological effect of his expedition on the South and its dramatic impact on the North were considerable.\textsuperscript{14}

But in December of 1862, things had not yet advanced that far. Grant was advancing on Vicksburg and presenting a serious menace in the minds of the Southern high command. Vicksburg was the last major citadel on the Mississippi River in the hands of the Confederates and if it fell control of the whole river would fall to the Union. Joseph E. Johnston and Braxton Bragg thought that a move on Grant's communications by a combined cavalry movement could have a beneficial effect and as events turned out they were right.\textsuperscript{15} On December 10, Forrest received orders to march into West Tennessee and assault the railroads. Van Dorn was to attack Holly Springs.

Forrest's command was not in ideal condition and from October to early December he had been at Murfreesboro recruiting. His old command had been taken over by John A. Wharton and was operating with Bragg's main army. His new men were raw and ill-equipped for an expedition of this nature, but this was partially offset by Forrest's intrepid leadership and their own enthusiasm. This did not entirely dispel the doubts that Forrest had about the proposed foray however.\textsuperscript{16}

Forrest left as ordered and arrived at Clifton on the Tennessee River about December 15. There were no bridges and the command had to be crossed on flatboats, the horses being swum. This consumed two days and the rebels had to keep a
sharp eye out for patrolling Union gunboats. Once on the opposite bank Forrest moved quickly. On December 18 a Federal cavalry force under Colonel Robert Ingersoll was defeated near Lexington where the Union troopers were soundly routed by a charge and a large number, including Ingersoll, were captured. Both men had relatively raw troops under their command but Forrest's aggressiveness and determination seem to have been the chief contributing factors to a Confederate victory. In addition, the Federals probably laboured under a psychological disadvantage just facing a man of Forrest's formidable reputation. He then drove in the Union pickets at Jackson and kept the large force there cowed while he moved on to disrupt the railroads. On December 20 he captured prisoners, arms, and supplies at Trenton but part of his force was repulsed at Humboldt. On December 23 the garrison at Union City was captured.

The Federals were getting a graphic illustration, although it is doubtful that they really needed one, of the problems involved in controlling extended lines of communication and the vast territory that they had ostensibly conquered. The Union garrisons had been alerted to the presence of the raiders but they were generally small and not within quick supporting distance of each other. Individually they were seldom a match for Forrest and by the time they had concentrated the raiders had moved on, out of immediate reach.
Forrest continued to destroy Federal property and he paroled all the prisoners he captured. From December 23 to 25 he hovered near the Kentucky border and demolished bridges, trestles, and several miles of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad's track. By December 26 he was near Dresden but by now pursuing Federal columns were closing in. On December 31 he fought a sharp little engagement at Parker's Cross Roads where he was gaining the upper hand when a second Union force arrived and surprised his rear. He lost several hundred men and horses before he could withdraw. On January 2 he recrossed the Tennessee River after brushing aside a cavalry force sent out by Grenville Dodge. Forrest then rejoined the main army and later picketed around Franklin, Tennessee, on the left flank of the new Confederate positions around Tullahoma.

Forrest had created considerable alarm and although Grant had given instructions for all reasonable dispositions, Forrest's ability, the bad weather, the bad roads, and Federal caution and tardiness allowed the Confederates to escape. The Federals had some reason for alarm as Forrest had wrought considerable damage in the course of his expedition. He had captured and paroled about 1,530 prisoners, destroyed several bridges, culverts, and trestles, and burned whatever stores he was unwilling or unable to carry off.

This raid was as successful strategically as it was tactically. In conjunction with the raid made on Holly Springs by Van Dorn, Forrest upset the Federal plans completely. Grant
had to postpone his offensive against Vicksburg and fall back on a new base at Memphis, Tennessee.\(^{22}\) On December 23 he wrote: "Raids made upon the railroad to my rear by Forrest northward from Jackson, and by Van Dorn...have cut me off from supplies, so that further advance by this route is impracticable."\(^{23}\) Furthermore, the second column that had been moving to cooperate with Grant under the command of William Sherman was repulsed at Chickasaw Bluffs. Credit for this goes to Forrest as well for the troops that turned the balance for the Confederates there had been sent from Vicksburg by John Pemberton, for they were no longer needed to stop Grant.\(^{24}\)

There were other features of Forrest's raid that are worthy of note. Once again the futility of sending infantry to catch cavalry was demonstrated. Grant did not even have much confidence in his cavalry and believed that Forrest would probably escape from the infantry forces that were sent out to track him.\(^{25}\) The raid exacted only a slight toll on the Confederates but Forrest had to rest his command before taking up active duty once again.\(^{26}\) Also, he did not return from the raid as well equipped as many historians have suggested for he wrote in his report:

> We have already been short of shot-gun caps, and as we captured nothing but musket-caps, all the men using shot-guns were out, or nearly out, of caps after the action [Parker's Cross Roads] was over. Considering our want of ammunition for small arms and artillery and the worn down condition of our men and horses I determined at once to recross the Tennessee River and fit up for a return.\(^{27}\)

The Confederates were elated over Forrest's raid and believed it a huge success. Bragg effused praise:
During the time the operations at Murfreesboro were being conducted, important expeditions, under...Forrest and Morgan, were absent.... The reports already forwarded show the complete success which attended these....

Bragg elaborated further on Forrest:

His [Forrest's] reports attest the excellent bearing of his troops and show the results of his expedition to have been most brilliant and decisive. The enemy... have been compelled to throw back a large force from Mississippi and virtually to abandon a campaign which so seriously threatened our safety.

Certainly much of what Bragg said was true. It does not tell the whole story however, and obscures some important points. It was Van Dorn's raid in combination with Forrest's that had produced the dramatic effect that so pleased Bragg. At the same time as his line of communications was cut, Grant found his stockpiles of supplies destroyed and the two events occurring simultaneously was more than he could handle. As noted above, Grant knew full well that it was the combination of the raids that had hurt him. This does not detract from Forrest's achievement, which was of considerable strategic significance, but it would not have had the impact it did had it been carried out in isolation. Secondly, Bragg's retreat after the Battle of Stone's River nullified the effects of the raid to some extent. Bruce Catton writes: "The retreat of Bragg's army was clear announcement that those cavalry blows at Grant's communications had been mere episodes rather than a turning of the tide."

About the same time that Forrest was raiding in West Tennessee Morgan was raiding in Kentucky. Again, the lines of
communication were the targets. Morgan moved quickly and audaciously, capturing headlines and imaginations as well as prisoners and supplies. He had a division of about 3,900 men reinforced by seven guns and he left Bragg's army on December 22. Two days later he reached Glasgow where there was a brief skirmish with Union cavalry pickets. The Federals were driven back and the following day there was a series of small fights where Morgan emerged the victor. On December 26 he captured a stockade and destroyed a bridge near Nolin and the next day he moved on to Elizabethtown where he captured more prisoners. On December 28 he moved leisurely along the railroad and destroyed track, trestles, and bridges as he went. In total it was estimated that he demolished 2,500 feet of bridging, three water stations, three depots, and some miles of track as well as capturing and paroling about 2,000 Federals.

After this Morgan set about to return. Bragg had instructed him not to dally and with the Federal columns closing in around him Morgan doubtless had little intention of doing that. The horsemen crossed the Rolling Fork River on December 29 but not before the pursuing Union troops caught up with the rear guard and there was a brisk little action. Morgan broke contact and escaped safely across the river however and by December 30 he left Bardstown only a few steps ahead of more enemy forces. Once again he was able to elude his foes and he recrossed the Cumberland River on January 2, 1863, halting at Smithville three days later to "...rest and recruit men and horses, both terribly used up by the raid." Evidently a killing
pace had been set and not all the troopers and their mounts were able to match up to it.

This raid was much like Forrest's outwardly but it lacked a decisive character. The Federals had been quite alarmed and cables had flown back and forth and different garrison commanders tried to marshall troops in an effort to stop the raider. As early as December 15 Rosecrans had suspected that Morgan was about to depart on a raid and four days later his suspicions were confirmed. Federal officers were told to be alert although none of the small garrisons that were spread throughout the country was really big enough to be a serious obstacle to Morgan's division of veteran troops. General H.G. Wright had immediate command of the area and he was doubtful that the Confederates could be stopped because of the inferiority of the Union cavalry. Wright became quite agitated and called for more and more troops to help protect the territory and railroad.

Although Morgan did considerable damage and withdrew his command largely unhurt except for exhaustion, his Kentucky raid cannot be called strategically significant. Bragg had intended the raid to force Rosecrans back by cutting his supply line and thus make the campaign that culminated in the Battle of Stone's River even more decisive, but the Confederate raider turned out to have little more than nuisance value in spite of his efforts. Colonel John Harlan had led some infantry in an effort to cut Morgan off and commanded the force that
skirmished with the rebel rear guard near the Rolling Fork River. He believed that the damage done could easily be repaired. More important, the severance of his lines of communication caused Rosecrans to do little more than change step. He was able to quickly establish communication by water as Wright mentioned: "The Cumberland is now navigable, and supplies are being sent that way to General Rosecrans, so that the results of the raid will not be very important." General J.T. Boyle confirmed this:

I have sent boats up the Green River to Bowling Green, whence railroad is in order to Nashville, with provisions for Rosecrans' army. Also sent boats up Cumberland. With control of gunboats on Cumberland, can easily supply General Rosecrans' army.

In addition, instructions went out almost immediately for repair of the railroad and by December 30 crews were at work. On January 8, Rosecrans wrote Halleck and indicated that he was having no trouble supplying himself. There is in fact a touch of irony in the whole affair because Rosecrans was earlier convinced that the absence of the cavalry divisions from Bragg's army would be of material benefit to him in the projected advance towards Murfreesboro. Also, prior to his advance, Rosecrans had been able to accumulate a sufficient reserve of supplies to enable him to survive. The time for Bragg to send his cavalry columns against Rosecrans' lines of supply was in late November and early December. As it was, Federal control of the waterways gave them a route of supply that the rebels could not easily injure as long as the rivers remained navigable.
Thus Morgan's second Kentucky raid, which was hard on men and horses and deprived Bragg of close to 4,000 men on the eve of a major battle, was more apparent than real in its success.

The shortcomings of the Federal cavalry had been demonstrated once again however as Colonel William Hoskins indicated:

Our cavalry was much worn down by scouting.... They were also in bad condition to attack a superior force, inasmuch as they were poorly armed, the Sixth Kentucky having no arms but pistols and sabers.\textsuperscript{43}

Evidently Hoskins believed that cavalrymen in combat required more than pistols and sabres. Colonel Edward Hobson was satisfied with the behaviour of his men but reported at the same time that they had to return to camp to get new arms.\textsuperscript{44}

Just at the end of December the Federals launched a raid into eastern Tennessee to cut Confederate communications to Virginia. Wright had been planning a strike for some time and had concluded that the risk to the troops was justifiable.\textsuperscript{45}

By December 25 Samuel Carter headed 950 men on an exciting trek through Crank's Gap in the Cumberland mountains and reached Zollicoffer without incident. There an enemy stockade was captured and a bridge destroyed. The raiders moved on to Watauga where another bridge and a nearby saltworks were razed. Carter then retraced his steps and although he was occasionally fired on by bushwackers his force was never seriously threatened. If nothing else, Carter had proven that the Confederates were not the only ones that could raid enemy railroads although he did not really do very much damage. As in the Confederate raids, the expedition had a depreciative effect on the men and horses
and the troops had to rest and refit before they could take the field again.  

Carter's raid, although a tactical triumph, did not have any genuine strategic value. It was really not much more than a gesture and was not coordinated with any of the campaigns then in progress. Carter had moved quickly and demonstrated skill in the handling of his troops but the rebels had engineers out surveying the damage as early as January 1 and James Seddon, then the Confederate secretary of war, indicated that the lines should be repaired as quickly as possible and that the government would even bear all of the expense. The Federal secretary of war, Edwin M. Stanton, was evidently impressed with the raid and sent glowing congratulations to Rosecrans as head of the department. A congressman from Tennessee, Horace Maynard, quoted a column from the Richmond Dispatch that indicated the Confederates attached considerable importance to the area attacked. The rebel war clerk, Jones, noted in his diary that estimates for repairing the damage ran to a month but the Confederates had supplies running over the route in less time than that by the simple expedient of hauling railroad cars directly over the stream beds without the benefit of rails. This was quite unorthodox but it seems to have been effective. What the Confederates lacked in materials they evidently compensated for by imagination. A Confederate officer that had commanded some of the forces attempting to find Carter had noted that he believed the raid more significant in terms of
the encouragement that it gave the East Tennessee unionists than because of the damage it caused.\textsuperscript{52}

Certainly Carter had caught the Confederates unawares and they had sent troops hither and yon in a familiar manner to try and track down the raiders. Colonel H.L. Giltner and his cavalry regiment marched 105 miles in just under two days without coming in contact with the enemy.\textsuperscript{53} Carter led his men over 470 miles in ten days with a total loss of nineteen.\textsuperscript{54} Thus Carter's raid, like Morgan's, was a tactical success but also like Morgan's it had no strategic value.

If these raids can be taken as typical, and in terms of those that were seen in previous campaigns and those that came after there is little reason to doubt that they can, then the dagger aspect of the role of cavalry rarely had any genuine significance. The value of raids was generally more apparent than real and although they created a great deal of smoke there was little damaging fire. Therefore, the Civil War cavalry raids must be evaluated on two levels: the tactical and the strategic.

The cavalry raids had more than mere military significance however. Major Dunn, the Confederate officer who commented on the encouragement given the Unionists, hit one aspect of this significance. One of Morgan's biographers stresses a point that is closely related to this for he believes that the raider's significance lay more in the moral boost he gave the Confederacy than in any military effect.\textsuperscript{55} Certainly
it must have been embarrassing for the Federals to have columns of troops riding with apparent impunity and seeming unvulnerability through territory that they were allegedly controlling. The damage done to bridges and track could be easily repaired but the contributions to Southern morale could only be stripped away by painful and hard fought victories. The mythical aura that these raiders had has clung to them and pervades the many biographies that have centered on their exploits.56 Confederate newspapers reported the raids in some detail and the news from Forrest and Morgan was one that rang of victory in contradistinction to the news from Bragg which was news of retreat after apparently favourable combats with the enemy.57 Diaries had entries that spoke of Morgan with awe and admiration and Jones wrote in response to news of the second Kentucky raid: "Our Morgan has been in Kentucky again...Glorious Morgan!"58 The glee and worship in these few short phrases is obvious.

The Confederate raids were significant in another sense as well, because they pointed out to the Federals future keys to victory. Rosecrans, for example, fell back on the rivers for his supplies and Grant, although he was forced to switch bases and retreat, discovered that he could live off the countryside if necessary and this proved a key to victory in the final operations against Vicksburg when he cut loose from his base entirely.
In retrospect the raids provided evidence of a new approach to the role of cavalry. The raiders usually used their horses only for transportation, doing most of their fighting on foot with firearms. To be sure, there were often mounted charges, but these were more and more rare as the war progressed. Viscount Wolseley noted this particularly and believed that Forrest and his men were more like old fashioned dragoons than true cavalry and believed that the topographical conditions of the theatres, the length of time available for the training of the troops, and the tactical roles that were consequently forced on most of the commanders made the development of the mounted infantry approach quite logical. Certainly Denison would have agreed with him and the increasing evidence of the dependence of the mounted troops on their firearms underscored this heavily.

The raids also represented an effort to find a strategic role for cavalry and were the antecedents of the long ranged and fast moving strikes of mobile columns that were such a dramatic feature of the early days of World War II. It would be misleading to labour this too heavily but it clearly implies what the dagger concept of the role of cavalry was all about and how it was evolving. The overtones in Jomini's suggestions, and in the regulations had coalesced into a fairly clear cut function for the horse soldiers. The raid was intended to be an independent blow, hopefully fatal or crippling and was really a logical extension of previous American experience in combination
with the suggestions of theorists and application of some imagination on the part of the military commanders. The theorists had never acknowledged that cavalry could be an independent arm but the possibility had always existed. Henry Halleck, for example, had noted in his treatise that detachments of cavalry could be sent out as distant advance or flank guards and that parties could also be detached for reconnaissance purposes. D.H. Mahan believed that although cavalry should operate principally with the main army it could take part in armed reconnaissances and for offensive intelligence gathering patrols. It was only a small step from this to having the troopers attack depots, outposts, and bridges. In the Mexican War in the far west independent columns of mounted troops had formed the bulk of the war effort and although they had done little actual fighting the example was still there. Also, in campaigns against the Indians, long range offensive mounted patrols was really the most efficient way of dealing with the recalcitrant redmen. These parties were admittedly small but again the example was present. The Civil War often saw long and exposed lines of communication, particularly for the Federals who were committed to invading the South and thus had ever lengthening supply routes. These were an open invitation to sudden attack, particularly for men like Forrest and Morgan who had a penchant for operating on their own.

As a strategic operation, the Civil War cavalry raid was only occasionally of genuine significance however, although
it could be a benefit from less obvious points of view. On the tactical level the raids were almost invariably successful and usually considerable damage was caused. They also represented the ultimate in the dagger aspect of the dual role of cavalry and they were an attempt to find a strategic role for the horse soldiers who found the tactical scope for their employment on the wane because of the terrain in which the war was fought. If this was not altogether successful it must be remembered that innovations are seldom successful in their first applications and the raids were innovations, even though they were only a logical extension of what had gone before.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

1 Luvaas, *The Military Legacy*, pp. 243-244.

2 Fuller, *The Generalship of Grant*, p. 60.


5 Ibid., pp. 146, 148.

6 Ibid., pp. 157, 158.

7 Viscount Wolseley, "General Viscount Wolseley on Forrest", Henry ed., *As They Saw Forrest*, pp. 41, 45.


9 Jones, *Confederate Strategy*, pp. 140, 142, 161. Jones believes that under the circumstances in Bragg's theatre that this was a more practical employment for Van Dorn's cavalry.


13 Denison, *History of Cavalry*.


- 160 -

O.R., XVII, i, 554-555.

Ibid., 566.


O.R., XVII, ii, 463. See also Ulysses S. Grant to Henry Halleck, January 8, 1863, Grant Papers, Volume 7 (Reel #8).

Catton, *Never Call Retreat*, p. 35. Catton wrote: "Between them, Forrest and Van Dorn destroyed any chance that the amphibious expedition [Sherman's] might succeed...."

O.R., XVII, i, 477. It is not clear whether this is because he lacked confidence in its ability or whether he considered it too small.


O.R., XVII, i, 597. Catton, *Never Call Retreat*, p. 33 believes that Forrest returned completely equipped at the expense of the Federals, but this completeness is in some doubt.

O.R., XVII, i, 591. See also *ibid.*, XX, i, 672.

Ibid., XVII, i, 592.
30 Catton, Never Call Retreat, p. 46.
31 Duke, Morgan's Cavalry, pp. 231-232.
32 Ibid., pp. 239-240. O.R., XX, i, 153, 673.
33 Duke, Morgan's Cavalry, p. 247. Holland, Morgan, p. 188 comments on the hardship to men and horses.
34 O.R., XX, i, 180, 200.
35 Ibid., 208, 210, 222, 237.
36 Ibid., 133, 233, 240.
37 Ibid., i, 136-138.
38 Ibid., 133.
39 Ibid., 134.
40 Ibid., 186.
43 O.R., XX, i, 145.
44 Ibid., 148, 149.
46 Ibid., pp. 98-112. James Seddon expressed surprise at the initiative of the Federals in mounting the raid. O.R., XX, ii, 484.
47 Thatcher, A Hundred Battles, p. 112. O.R., XX, i, 91.
48 Ibid., ii, 475, 484, 486.
Maynard was busily engaged in castigating Halleck for conducting an unauthorized raid but he did little except display his own ignorance about what was going on in the War Department.


O.R., XX, i, 130.

Ibid., 120. See also ibid., 94, 123-124; ii, 471, 473, 480.

Ibid., 92, 93, 94. Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, IV, 261 believes that Carter's raid was daring and successful. Its daring is unquestioned but its success was limited.

Holland, Morgan, p. viii.


Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, Ben Ames Williams (ed.) (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1961), pp. 210, 273, 353, 354-355, 434 mentions Morgan and although they are not in connection with the raid under discussion the remarks indicate the hold that the raider had on imaginations.


Wolseley, "Viscount Wolseley on Forrest", pp. 21-24.
61 Oates, Confederate Cavalry, p. 30.


63 Mahan, An Elementary Treatise (1861), pp. 81, 82, 87-128, 138-139.

64 Oates, Confederate Cavalry, p. 85.

65 Ibid., pp. 114, 154. Oates has come to a similar conclusion about the area he studied. Morgan's Ohio raid and Streight's raid are two glaring exceptions to this generalization.
CHAPTER VII  MURFREESBORO INTERLUDE AND THE TULLAHOMA CAMPAIGN

In early January 1863 Braxton Bragg led his Confederate army into its new positions at Shelbyville and Tullahoma and William S. Rosecrans exhausted command staggered into the town of Murfreesboro, for which they had fought so hard. Although there were practically daily reconnaissances and forage details with many minor skirmishes and a few major affairs, the war in Tennessee settled down to a period of relative calm for about six months. ¹ By the time Bragg was forced to retreat from Tullahoma the military fortunes of the Confederacy were clearly on the wane. The retreat following the Battle of Perryville had admitted tacit defeat of the Kentucky invasion and the withdrawal after the Battle of Stone's River had only confirmed the downhill slide of the Southern power in the West. By July, when Bragg had settled into Chattanooga, the military outcome of the American Civil War had virtually been decided. Ulysses S. Grant had taken Vicksburg and Robert E. Lee had been repulsed from Gettysburg. It was really all over but the fighting.

During the Murfreesboro interlude Rosecrans spent much time building up his army and he was particularly concerned about his cavalry, constantly besieging Washington with requests for men, arms, equipments, and mounts. ² He was almost more persistent in this campaign than he was in the one against the Confederates and he often provoked irritated replies from
Henry Halleck, who indicated official displeasure in no uncertain terms from time to time. Rosecrans was insistent however, and even after the Tullahoma campaign had come to a successful conclusion reminded Washington of the necessity and importance of the cavalry:

To enable this army to operate successfully in advance of this position [Murfreesboro], it was necessary, first, to establish and secure a depot of supplies at this point, and, second, to organize an adequate cavalry force to combat that of the enemy, protect our own line of communication, and take advantage of the enemy should he be beaten or retreat. The depot was established...but the inferior numbers of our cavalry and the scarcity of long forage wore out our cavalry forces faster than we could replace them, and it was not before the 15th of June that we had brought what we had available into condition. Rosecrans was partly interested in excusing his long delay but Philip Sheridan indicated that there was at least a partial truth in his assertions:

The feeding of our army from the base at Louisville was attended with a great many difficulties, as the enemy's cavalry was constantly breaking the railroad and intercepting our communications on the Cumberland River at different points that were easily accessible to his then superior force of troopers. The Confederate cavalry was not a significant strategic threat to the Federals but it had considerable nuisance value both for the river traffic and the constant Union forage parties.

Rosecrans' repeated requests exasperated his superiors and were not always necessary. On January 26 he wrote: "I wish to have cavalry enough to destroy the enemy's cavalry, and, this done, I can occupy the whole country with my forces and procure enough forage for my army." Four days later he pleaded
for 2,500 breech loading or revolving rifles. Halleck rebuked his requests as unreasonable and yet Rosecrans persevered and wrote again: "I want superior arms, to supply in place of numbers. We must have cavalry arms, and the difference between the best and worst is more than a hundred percent in the daily cost of troops." When Halleck did not respond, Rosecrans sent his requests directly to Edwin Stanton and stressed the necessity for mastering the enemy cavalry. In fact, he sent so many telegrams that he was politely requested to write more letters to keep the cable bills down. In spite of the fact that his cavalry increased both in numbers and efficiency in this period Rosecrans seldom relented in his demands but it is unlikely that any commander in the field has ever been really satisfied with what his government did for him. Rosecrans was just more vocal about it than most.

"Mounted Infantry" made an official appearance at this time to supplement the cavalry. James A. Connolly was an officer in John T. Wilder's brigade, and early in the year his infantry command received horses. His letters are often revealing about the nature of mounted service and soon after his unit became horse soldiers he wrote about a reconnaissance he had been ordered on:

I knew nothing about reconnoitering, never did such a thing and didn't know how to go about it, and here now I was to take four or five hundred men with a guide, and strike out among the cedar thickets, rocks, hills and ravines of this abominable Stone River country to find the location, strength &c of an enemy who knew the country well, and were reported to be five or six thousand strong.
The unknown demands of cavalry service evidently held some uncertainties for the neophyte horse soldiers but at the same time Connolly noted that his men grew accustomed to the duties fairly quickly and later wrote:

It may be that I shall like this mounted service better than I thought I would. I can't tell yet. There is more life, sport, adventure and good living in it, with less hard fighting but more chance of capture.  

Obviously the glamour of cavalry service was still very much apparent and it had attractions in spite of the disadvantages. An additional note is that Wilder's brigade was armed with Spencer repeating rifles and Connolly often mentioned them with awe and admiration.

In spite of the exaggerated nature of many of Rosecrans' claims the Federal cavalry did suffer from some inadequacies during the six month interlude. Union General Jefferson C. Davis, the Confederate president's namesake, reported in February that he had his troopers to the front scouting although they were in bad shape for any kind of service.  

Andrew Johnson, the governor of Tennessee, noted that some cavalrymen he had seen had horses that were in poor condition and the regiment obviously needed time to refit for active service. General George Crook commanded a garrison at Carthage, Tennessee, and he wrote more than once that he was badly in need of horse soldiers to patrol the surrounding countryside.  

John Foster, who commanded the post at Henderson, Kentucky, wrote:

...I have at present only four companies of cavalry, and they very much reduced by sickness and hard service. My infantry will be almost useless against the guerrillas, unless they are mounted.
Crook also wrote of the problems of dealing with guerrillas with infantry alone:

I was never completely beat out before, but I have to acknowledge that I can do nothing against this cavalry with my infantry. I cannot entrap them in any possible way, for they have their spies and scouts all over this country, and I can make no movement without their being apprised of it before I can get to them with my infantry....

Returns for this period showed that the Federal cavalry force generally hovered around 10% in relation to the rest of the army. Jomini had recommended that in country like the Mississippi Valley area, the proportion of cavalry should be about 16% so if this can be taken as a base, there was some justification to Rosecrans' claims. He was insistent on receiving more horses to mount infantry and remount his troopers, and April 12, 17, and 24 were only three of the many days that saw telegrams being sent to Washington on this subject. He did receive considerable numbers of animals but constant use combined with lack of forage and men unused to proper care caused many of the horses to become quickly unfit for service. Quartermaster General M.C. Meigs sent Rosecrans a long and patient letter which set forth in very clear terms just how many mounts had been sent and suggested that the problems of the cavalry had been somewhat exaggerated. He seemed to understand the proper use for cavalry and wrote:

The main body of cavalry should...be thrown upon the rear of the enemy, to live off the country, cut his communications, and harass the country generally; take every horse seen, good or bad; shoot all those that cannot follow, and thus put the rebels to straits while mounting your own men.
Operate on their communications; strike every detached post; rely more on infantry and less on cavalry, which in the whole war has not decided the fate of a single battle rising above a skirmish, which taxes the resources of the country, and of which we now have afoot a larger animal strength than any nation on earth. We have over one hundred and twenty-six regiments of cavalry, and they have killed ten times as many horses for us as for the rebels.  

Meigs' letter is quoted at some length because although much of what he said was coloured by his eye for costs, most of it came close to the truth about cavalry and his recommendations were quite realistic.

The organization of the Federal cavalry did not change significantly over this period but Rosecrans made some minor alterations in an effort to streamline operations. General orders issued on May 17 indicated that each corps commander was to have only one company of horse soldiers for escort and orderly duty. All the rest was to report to the chief of cavalry, General David S. Stanley, and he was to have charge of all the grand guards and vedettes, and if the troopers served infantry on detached duty they were to act on the orders of the senior cavalry officer who operated with the approval of the senior infantry officer. Rosecrans was concentrating his cavalry on paper and attempting to make his command system more efficient.

Stanley's job had two aspects for he was an administrative head on the one hand and a tactical leader on the other. His duties as an administrator had some curious twists for at one point he was ordered to take all the dismounted cavalry to
Louisville and find horses for them. This job could easily have been done by a subordinate but Rosecrans gave the job to Stanley.\(^2^2\) As a tactical leader Stanley seldom handled units above a brigade in spite of the fact that the cavalry was organized as a corps of two divisions, each division being composed of several brigades with artillery support.\(^2^3\) The cavalry was quite consolidated at this time however, as distinct from the previous fragmentation, and detached units were seldom in evidence.

The Confederate cavalry did not receive the constant attention that its Federal counterpart did but it did increase in size because of a constant trickle of recruits and the addition of Earl Van Dorn's brigade. With this large mounted force the rebels were easily able to control the countryside.\(^2^4\) The Southern horse was constantly to the front of Bragg's army at this time and when not on one of the many small expeditions, spent its time on picket duty. Its condition was often poor however, and seemed gradually to deteriorate from a lack of proper and sufficient supplies. Forage was often scarce and John Pegram's brigade was forced to invade Kentucky early in February just to support itself.\(^2^5\) Horses too were in short supply and the rebel cavalry often suffered from its policy of not mounting men on public animals.\(^2^6\) In March, much of Van Dorn's command was inactive because the horses were worn down and there were no remounts available.\(^2^7\)

The Confederate horse soldiers suffered from a dramatic lack of arms during this period as well, and this was not merely
a want of modern weapons but a serious deficiency in the total number of guns in comparison to the total numbers of men. Joseph E. Johnston had noted how poorly equipped Van Dorn's cavalry was when it joined Bragg's army, for example.\textsuperscript{28} Leonidas Polk noted that the cavalry in his command also suffered from a shortage of weapons.\textsuperscript{29} In April an aide-de-camp to President Davis generally found the army in good condition but discovered that it was short of arms and ammunition. In a report presented by Bragg's chief of ordnance the cavalry showed 9,862 small arms of all kinds, including pistols, muskets, carbines, shot-guns, etc., and returns for the period indicate the strength of the mounted troops present for duty was around 15,438.\textsuperscript{30} The problems created by the lack of guns were augmented by the great variety of weapons which created additional headaches about ammunition supply.

The organization of the rebel horse remained much the same as it had during the Murfreesboro campaign and it remained under the command of Joseph Wheeler.\textsuperscript{31} There were some discipline problems during this period, which were symptomatic of one of the great difficulties posed to commanders by the Civil War cavalry forces. Kinloch Falconer, Bragg's assistant adjutant general, wrote:

> The great number of men who have joined cavalry commands, and avail themselves of that peculiar service to roam over the country as marauders, avoiding all duty, renders it necessary that cavalry commanders should...search out such characters, and have them transferred to infantry regiments.\textsuperscript{32}
The cavalry seemed to have more than its share of men who had a liberal interpretation of the term "foraging".

Some small organizational changes did occur but these had little consequence as far as the employment or role of the cavalry was concerned. On February 25 two main divisions were created under Van Dorn and Wheeler and the cavalry now came under Bragg's direct control but this had little genuine significance except on paper.³³ By March 16 these divisions had become so large that they were now termed "corps" and the two commanders were instructed to carry out further internal reorganization.³⁴ In spite of these efforts at closer control, many of Bragg's cavalry leaders remained an individualistic lot, the supreme example of which was Morgan when he went on his Ohio raid in disobedience of orders. His ride was spectacular and thrilling but it ended with the destruction of most of his command and his own imprisonment. His once formidable force was destroyed as an effective fighting unit.³⁵

In the many small affairs that characterized the six month interlude, the cavalry played a prominent part. Few expeditions lacked their quota of troopers and many were composed exclusively of cavalry. In late January Elmer Otis led a relief force to rescue a wagon train that had been captured but he was only able to snare a few enemy pickets for his pains. R.G.H. Minty led another Union expedition from Murfreesboro to Franklin and was involved in a few skirmishes. He even got a chance to lead a sabre charge.³⁶
Wheeler and Forrest went on a raid to the Cumberland River in late January to interrupt the Union supply lines and they forced a temporary suspension of water traffic but were soon forced to leave.\(^{37}\) Wheeler did not want to return empty handed and he determined to attack Dover, near Fort Donelson even though Forrest advised heavily against it. The Union garrison fought stoutly and the rebels made some tactical blunders, the combination of which resulted in the repulse of the attackers. Several assaults had been made, both mounted and on foot before Wheeler pulled back. He was running short of ammunition and Federal reinforcements were closing in and he decided to retreat.\(^{38}\) There was a stormy scene between Wheeler and Forrest the evening after the fight where Forrest blamed his commander for the debacle and swore never to serve under him again.\(^{39}\) Aside from this internal dissention between the Confederate cavalry commanders, the raid had no genuine consequence, and it was evident that the rebels could only be an indifferent threat to the Union river traffic.

The small, almost daily affairs went on apace. The men on both sides generally behaved creditably in these and it was evident that the Union cavalry in particular was stiffening up in combat.\(^{40}\) On February 23, at Tuscumbia, Federal horse soldiers successfully assaulted Van Dorn's pickets and captured about one hundred prisoners, double that number of horses, and a quantity of stores.\(^{41}\) On March 1 there was another brisk skirmish near Bradyville, Tennessee, where Union troopers under
Stanley saved a Federal forage train by dismounted fire action and a mounted pistol and sabre charge that drove off the attacking Confederates. Few of these small skirmishes had any overall significance but they indicated clearly that the power of the Confederate cavalry was declining where that of the Federal horse was increasing. The Union troopers were led out and took the initiative far more than they had in the past and in many cases the rebels were forced to sit and wait in order to counter the many enemy thrusts. It appeared that Stanley's leadership and Rosecrans' attention were having salutary effects.

A few larger combats did occur in this period but again, these had little strategic significance. In early March there was a heavy little combat near Spring Hill where Van Dorn and Forrest captured most of a sizeable Union expedition after brisk fire action. The Union cavalry managed to escape with the artillery and wagons and the Federal commander blamed the unsteadiness of his horsemen for the defeat. Other testimony did little more than obscure the issue and added the charge that the cavalrmen had not kept their commanders fully informed. It does appear that the Union troopers were premature in their departure from the field although it could not be said that this was a major cause of the defeat. The Federal commander displayed little caution in his conduct of the affair.

There were a number of other actions, many of which afforded evidence of the new style of fighting of cavalrmen.
Rosecrans was quite ecstatic over a spirited little fight that took place on a reconnaissance from Murfreesboro to Columbia and wrote:

I have the pleasure to report the gallant conduct of our cavalry under the brave Colonel Minty. They drove the rebel cavalry wherever they met them, captured one of their camps, 17 wagons, and 64 prisoners. They used the saber where the carbine would delay.\textsuperscript{45}

Sheridan confirmed this and wrote that the "...Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry charged with the saber splendidly...."\textsuperscript{46}

The Union horse soldiers had been supported by heavy columns of infantry on this expedition and it undoubtedly gave them added confidence. On March 19 there was another skirmish near Spring Hill, although this was much smaller than the previous one and this time Union cavalrmen fighting dismounted drove off enemy pickets. Three days later Confederate cavalry drove in and captured Mount Sterling, Kentucky.\textsuperscript{47} Pegram invaded Kentucky again to round up some cattle and although his little expedition met with initial success he was defeated near Somerset when part of his command broke and ran from the field. Pegram blamed this cowardly behaviour for his defeat and he was at least partly correct.\textsuperscript{48} There were more small affairs, mostly seesaw actions, and Rosecrans took every advantage to talk about the great work his cavalry was doing and how much greater its work would be if the force were larger and better armed. At one point he wrote: "The cavalry appear to have behaved gallantly, I am glad to observe, and call attention to the evidences of its increasing effectiveness. With proper
officers and arms, it will soon be able to cope with its rebel forces effectually." The Federal cavalry had been very well armed in some fights however, as General Clay Smith pointed out: "The five-shooters of the Second Michigan, and the rapidity with which the Burnside carbine could be loaded, poured...a constant and deadly volley into their ranks..." Evidently, the Federal troopers were relying quite heavily on their firearms in combat.

Part of the Federal cavalry was insufficiently armed, just as Rosecrans often claimed. General J. White noted a skirmish and wrote:

...the Second Battalion, Tenth Kentucky Cavalry, which, being armed only with pistols and sabers, is in this mountainous region comparatively useless, except for guard or outpost duty. The enemy, dismounting, take the steep, broken hillsides, which are inaccessible for cavalry, and, keeping out of pistol range, render light cavalry little more than spectators.

White's commentary is noteworthy for several reasons. He evidently wanted his men to fight in the first place. In the second, he seemed to distinguish his men as light cavalry because of their lack of carbines but this is curious since in the traditional sense, the term light cavalry did not have that implication at all. His men were really armed as the old heavy cavalry would have been, with only pistols and sabres. Another point about White's commentary is that fire action was obviously the order of the day in broken countryside. A former member of Wilder's brigade had some thoughts about fire action at a reunion held long after the war:
...if the enemy have long range guns, fight on foot, and take advantage of trees, stumps, fences, ditches, and barricades, you must fight him dismounted, with long range guns and take like advantage....

That fighting massed with sabres was alright on the plains of Europe, where there was opportunity for maneuvering heavy bodies of cavalry, where the momentum of heavy cavalry columns charging en masse was difficult to meet or break, but it amounted to nothing in a new country covered with groves, mountains, marshes, ditches, stone fences, stumps and trees. The conditions of battle...were entirely changed.

The old soldier was right. The conditions of battle had changed and so had the weapons, a fact that he recognized only implicitly. The role of the cavalry did not alter significantly but the approach to that role did alter and more reliance was placed on fire than mounted sabre action.

The small actions continued in much the same manner with evidence of varied styles of fighting. Colonel F. Cornyn commanded some cavalry on the diversion in favour of Abel Streight's raiding column and described the combat there:

I ordered two squadrons of the Seventh Kansas, that were armed with Colt's revolving rifles, to dismount and attack them on foot, supporting them with two squadrons of the Tenth Missouri (mounted)...with orders to charge with the saber as soon as the enemy's line should break.

The diversion failed to fool the Confederates however, and Streight's column was run to earth after a series of rear guard actions. The changing approach was evident once again and the dependence on firepower was obvious. The Federal cavalry was just beginning to place reliance on firearms in combat, something that the rebels had been doing virtually since the
beginning of the war. Rosecrans saw this and his insistence on the Federal cavalry being well armed with good weapons was evidence of his awareness. His dispatches indicate also that he saw his cavalry as a shield and a dagger although he would not have used those terms. Evidence of the recognition of the new approach to the role of cavalry arises also in the fact that the Federal troopers were much more efficient and steady in combat in this period. Stanley even went so far as to venture that his troopers were becoming a terror to the enemy. Although this may have been overstating the case his men did perform well on a series of small expeditions which whittled away at the Confederacy's resources. The Union had the resources to make good its losses but the rebels did not and these many small affairs, although they had no strategic importance, were more costly for the South than the North. The Confederate cavalry commands saw similar action, and spent most of their time on small expeditions and picket duty to the front of Bragg's army.

Both sides sat relatively still during this six month interlude and there was a lack of overall direction to the operations that took place. Bragg did not feel strong enough to take the initiative on his own, so the Federals had it by default although they did little with it until late in June 1863. Rosecrans was nothing if not thorough and methodical and he was not inclined to advance until he believed that everything was ready. Once he started to move however, he displayed
a good grasp of strategy and how to conduct a large campaign and the Tullahoma campaign saw Bragg neatly fooled and flanked out of his positions. When it was over the Federals were that much further along the road that led to ultimate Confederate defeat in the West. 57

The campaign was not made any easier by the foul weather that unseasonably made its appearance in Tennessee in late June. It rained almost continuously and all roads but the macadamized turnpikes became impassable except to the maximum efforts of men and animals. Stanley wrote:

The incessant rain and consequent condition of the roads rendered the operations of cavalry difficult and exceedingly trying to men and horses. The impossibility of bringing up forage in wagons, and the absence of feed in the "Barrens" of the Cumberland Mountains, the constant rain depriving our poor beasts of their rest, has reduced the cavalry considerably. They now require some little rest and refitting. 58

What Stanley said about the effect on the cavalry applied to the whole army. Men and animals alike floundered in a muddy morass to drag themselves forward, and it was just like the advance on Stone's River from Nashville, only worse. After a time the marching columns gave the appearance of moving in slow motion and the Federal difficulties were compounded because of their ever lengthening supply lines.

The role of the cavalry was similar in this campaign to that seen in the Stone's River operation. The Federal horse headed the advance of the columns and the rebels covered their army. Bragg's first line of defense lay along the mountains and the three major gaps were Rosecrans' prime objectives. The bulk
of the cavalry under Stanley backed up by the reserve corps under Gordon Granger feinted to the right, on Guy's Gap. This was captured when the Confederate cavalry on picket duty was pushed back fairly quickly. Wilder's mounted infantry stormed into Hoover's Gap ahead of George Thomas' division and took that while General Alexander McCook's corps captured Liberty Gap and this laid Bragg's lines of communication open and he had to fight in the open or run.\

Stanley led his cavalry into Guy's Gap with determination and pushed the rebel cavalry back across the Duck River. The Confederates made little attempt to stand and fight in their trenches but there were some spirited actions nonetheless:

The rebels fled to the town, where they attempted another stand...but a part of Colonel Minty's brigade charging them on the pike, in the teeth of their battery, and Colonel Campbell's brigade cutting of their retreat at the upper bridge over Duck's River, the enemy was over-thrown, routed, his cannon and 591 prisoners captured....

Here also, the Federal cavalry had the immense satisfaction of forcing Wheeler to leap into the river and swim for his life when he was cut off.

Wilder captured Hoover's Gap and made Stanley's success even more real. He dashed in and pushed the Confederate pickets out rapidly and decided to hold his position until the infantry supports came up. He then pushed on to raid the enemy lines of communication but strong rebel guards in combination with the bad weather did not allow him to inflict more than minimal damage. He managed to destroy some track and a trestle but this did not impair Bragg's retreat. In these actions Wilder's mounted
infantry was behaving exactly like the cavalry although its approach to its role was different, as will emerge below.

McCook only had one regiment of mounted infantry with him, and again its role was exactly like that of the cavalry units. It drove in the enemy pickets at Liberty Gap and preceded the general advance. General Richard Johnson, who had been defeated by Morgan near Gallatin the previous summer, noted:

...Colonel Harrison became warmly engaged with the rebel advance. He at once communicated with me. The ground being rough and unfavorable for the operations of cavalry, I directed him to halt until the arrival of my First Brigade...62

McCook described the activity of his mounted regiment in some detail:

They led the advance, watched the flanks, skirmished on the 24th and 25th of June at Liberty Gap, did all the patrolling and vedette duty, kept up communication with the forces on my right; four companies charged the enemy at Tullahoma, Winchester, and at the ford of Boiling Fork of the Elk River, and accompanied Colonel Watkins on his reconnaissance...63

McCook's testimony makes it plainly evident that the difference between cavalry and mounted infantry was not one of role whatever else it was. The duties that this regiment performed were classic cavalry responsibilities.

James Connolly's letters reveal clearly that the mounted infantrymen came to think of themselves as cavalrymen. There was a difference in approach however, for his men immediately dismounted under fire and dug in to repel the enemy counter-attacks, doing all of their fighting on foot.64
Colonel Robert Klein's cavalrymen at Guy's Gap behaved slightly differently although their role of covering the advance was the same as that done by the mounted infantry. Klein wrote:

...my men got somewhat formed, when, firing a volley, we drew saber and charged into their ranks. They fought...desperately, using saber and clubbing muskets and pistols. The fight was hand-to-hand for 300 yards, when both parties plunged into the river. Even here we used the trusty saber with effect.

Major Frank Mix reported similar action by his cavalrymen and in addition shows that they operated on horseback even though the ground was unfavourable for mounted activity:

Two miles out we came on the enemy's pickets. We drove them sharply for about a mile, when I was ordered to form my regiment in line.... In this manner we advanced 2 miles through a dense cedar thicket over ditches and stones, almost impassable for our horses (and let me say that nearly one-third of my horses were ruined by that afternoon's scout.)

Clearly Mix could have easily dismounted his troops, for it is unlikely from his descriptions that progress would have been any slower and the horses would probably not have suffered as much.

Several things are evident from this. The role of all mounted troops was very much the same. They were a shield screening the advance of the army and occasionally raided enemy communications, and ran messages, etc. In short, the duty of the mounted men in the Federal army was similar to that seen in the advance from Nashville in December of the previous year. There was a contrast in approach and style of fighting however for the mounted infantrymen dismounted and fought on foot where the cavalrymen stayed on their horses and fought with pistols.
and sabres. Thus both types of troops tended to retain their
traditional fighting styles in combat although there was much
cross over, with cavalrymen often fighting on foot with their
firearms. The heavy cavalry concept was still alive, as Klein
noted, and even the mounted infantry adopted this pose briefly,
as McCook related. Reliance on the sabre was slight however,
as most of the cavalrymen had not had sufficient instruction
in the use of that weapon and were more of a danger to their
horses and file partners than the enemy. Thus it seems that
Civil War cavalrymen, mounted infantrymen, or whatever, were
really more like the old fashioned dragoons in their approach
although the role of all was very similar. The dragoon was a
compromise, a middle path, and a logical and practical solution
to the problem of the proper approach for American mounted troops.

The Federal cavalry remained concentrated largely on
paper and the old system of fragmentation still continued. One
of the division commanders pointed this out clearly:

...General Garfield telegraphed to Generals Brannan and
Thomas to send back to camp half the cavalry force that
was on the front, and ordered me to send one battalion
forward to re-enforce the remaining half. I sent one
battalion...to the front, which, like the others, was
accepted, but no cavalry was sent back to camp. In this
manner the whole brigade was scattered in battalions, under
command of majors and lieutenant-colonels, on the front of
the two army corps, the regimental and the brigade commanders
remaining in camp with twelve companies of different regi-
ments, and at the head of all was the division commander
himself. The fragmentation in the handling of the Federal cavalry in
active campaigning was not much different here than it had been
in previous operations under scrutiny.
The Confederate cavalry was mostly on picket duty to the front of Bragg's army and could do little except meet the thrusts of the Federal advance. Bragg was fooled by Rosecrans' feints and caught off guard. He lacked information about the enemy and whether this was due to a failure of his own initiative or that of his cavalry officers is not clear. The rebel troopers were strangely inactive just prior to the Federal advance and it probably could have been more actively employed on reconnaissance duty. The situation was similar to the one at Perryville in many ways, where Bragg also had not taken firm enough direction and insured that he was properly informed. At the same time the cavalry officers themselves were partly to blame for they did receive orders to scout but they were strangely apathetic about them. The Confederate cavalry was a competent shield and rear covering force, but it seemed to lack something as a scouting and reconnoitering unit.

In spite of their numerical superiority the power of the Confederate troopers was on the wane at this time. In addition, the Federal cavalry was a more formidable threat than it had ever been and the Confederates were hard pressed to be everywhere at once. Polk found that the rebel troopers were lacking sufficient strength to both guard the lines of communication and carry out the normal cavalry duties. Infantry temporarily relieved the pressure, but Bragg was forced to retreat because overnight he had a major crisis on his hands and he had neither the men nor the information to deal with it properly. Almost before he knew what had happened,
he was neatly flanked out of his defensive positions by a numerically superior enemy. 70

The main job of the Confederate cavalry was once again as a delaying force and Wheeler had a further chance to enhance his reputation as a coverer of retreats. The rebel horse soldiers found themselves confronted with an active and strong enemy in attempting to defend the gaps and could do no more than temporarily delay the Federal advance. General Bushrod Johnson found that the Union troops were in such strength that they could hold onto his force with one hand and outflank him with the other. The rebel infantry brigades had to retreat covered by their cavalry, before they were cut off and destroyed. 71  Wheeler was busy, and attempted to fell trees in an effort to stem the Union tide but the enemy was so strong and there were so many roads by which he could be outflanked that he was forced to abandon this procedure. He retired by stages, his men tired and his horses lacking forage, but the force as a whole providing a competent and able cover for the retreating army. 72

The Confederates did not really have to worry about a close Federal pursuit. The Union army was exhausted, more from fighting the mud than the enemy and Rosecrans' supply trains were somewhat disorganized. In addition, he had to secure his lines of communication and bring up new supplies before he could advance again. 73

In spite of Rosecrans' achievement in the conduct of the campaign, the Confederates do not seem to have considered the loss of Tullahoma significant and certainly, in comparison
to the loss of Vicksburg and Robert E. Lee's repulse from Gettysburg, the forfeiture of Middle Tennessee seemed almost trifling. Indeed, taken out of context, the Tullahoma campaign was not particularly significant. The losses had been slight and the Confederates had moved back to a new defense line, relatively unhurt, but it indicated the general military malaise that was coming to grip the South and it was one more step on the road to ultimate Confederate defeat. The ability of the Confederacy to withstand the repeated blows of the Federals grew less and less and most of the Mississippi Valley was now in the hands of the Union. Although Rosecrans was caught flat-footed at Chickamauga and only narrowly escaped disaster, the Civil War in the West was now largely a matter of tidying up.

The role of the cavalry in this campaign can still be explained in terms of the shield and dagger analogy. There was strong evidence of changes in approach with the appearance of mounted infantry and the increased dependence of all horse soldiers on their firearms but this does not mean that the role altered significantly. The mounted troops were still tactical, defensive and subordinate, and occasionally they emerged as strategic, offensive, and independent, but these instances were rare and not always successful. The organization of the mounted troops generally reflected this and the fragmentation of the Federal cavalry allowed it to fulfill its role much more easily. In spite of its concentration, the Confederate cavalry was
fragmented as well in being spread out in front of Bragg's army. It was logical here, as before, that when an army was split into fragments each section have its complement of cavalry for there were picketing, scouting, screening, and reconnoitering duties that could only be carried out by mounted troops. The cavalry's role was consistent with what had been suggested by the theorists in spite of changes in approach and the attempts to find more of a strategic role for the horse soldiers. The increased dependence on fire action strictly limited the heavy cavalry concept although there were still occasionally sabre charges to be seen. Thus all American cavalry, both North and South, became essentially light cavalry, which was armed and fought largely like dragoons, in a tactical, defensive, and subordinate role on the one hand and occasionally adopted the role of a strategic, offensive, and independent force on the other. Throughout, the cavalry was a shield on the one hand and a dagger on the other.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VII

1 Horn, Army of Tennessee, p. 228. Van Horne, Army of the Cumberland, I, 288. Lamers, Edge of Glory, p. 247. Catton, Never Call Retreat, p. 46. Rosecrans was seldom inclined to move until he considered that everything was just right but he seems to have waited at Murfreesboro for an inordinate length of time.

2 Lamers, Edge of Glory, pp. 253-254. Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, V, 155 believes that many of Rosecrans' claims were false.

3 Stanley, Memoirs, p. 141. See also Appendix I. Rosecrans' cavalry was numerically inferior but these mere numbers are deceiving, and in terms of power, the two forces were close to parity.

4 O.R., XXIII, i, 403. (All O.R. citations are to Series I unless otherwise noted.)


6 O.R., XXIII, ii, 14.

7 Ibid., 22-23.

8 Ibid., 34.


10 Ibid., p. 65. After the Tullahoma campaign he wrote: "...with all its risk and privation I love this kind of service and would like to be engaged in it all the time." Ibid., p. 99. Evidently cavalry service wove a spell around Connolly for he had become a firm convert.

11 Ibid., pp. 78, 79, 80, 83.

12 O.R., XXIII, ii, 14.

13 Ibid., 52. 
14Ibid., 91, 99, 130.

15Ibid., 118.

16Ibid., 157.


19Ibid., 281, 282.

20Ibid., 303-304.

21O.R., XXIII, ii, 336-337.

22Ibid., 246.

23Ibid., 574-580 passim. Carter, First Regiment, p. 72. Stanley, Memoirs, p. 135 notes that by then he had put the Federal cavalry in shape, at least in his opinion.

24Jones, Confederate Strategy, pp. 160-161. This was part of Johnston's hope that the cavalry could be used to stop the Federals the same way Forrest and Van Dorn had done with Grant in December of 1862. Ibid., p. 180. Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), p. 161. O.R., XXIII, ii, 633, 646.

25O.R., XXIII, ii, 623.

26Braxton Bragg to William W. Mackall, May 26, 1863, Bragg Papers (Reel #3).


29O.R., XXIII, ii, 622-623. See also George Brent to Joseph Wheeler, March 25, 1863, Bragg Papers, (Reel #3). Brent was curious about a 5,947 disparity between the number of effective troops that Wheeler had and the number of small arms he reported.

30For arms reports see O.R., XXIII, ii, 762-763. See Appendix I.

31Ibid., 614.
32Ibid., 636. Thatcher, A Hundred Battles, p. 123 noted that a few ne'er-do-wells could colour the reputation of a whole regiment.

33O.R., XXIII, ii, 650.

34Ibid., 701.


36O.R., XXIII, i, 25-27.


38Dodson, Campaigns of Wheeler, p. 70. O.R., XXIII, i, 37, 40-44.

39Dodson, Campaigns of Wheeler, pp. 70, 71. Wyeth, Life of Forrest, pp. 147, 151.

40O.R., XXIII, i, 62, 63.

41Ibid., 64.

42Ibid., 65, 67, 68, 70.

43Duke, Morgan's Cavalry, pp. 275, 287-290. Duke even believes that there was official discrimination against the cavalry although there is no evidence to substantiate this and it is therefore difficult to attach much credance to his obviously bitter remarks. See also Dodson, Campaigns of Wheeler, p. 76.

44For testimony supporting the Federal cavalry see O.R., XXIII, i, 100, 115 and Thatcher, A Hundred Battles, pp. 118-119. For contrary testimony see O.R., XXIII, i, 90, 105, 107, 117.

45O.R., XXIII, i, 127.

46Ibid., 128.
Again, Union and Confederate cavalry fought both mounted and on foot. Thatcher, *A Hundred Battles*, seldom fails to mention the revolving rifles of his troop.

O.R., XXIII, i, 196.


O.R., XXIII, i, 257. See also *ibid.*, 211, 232.


O.R., XXIII, i, 541. See also *ibid.*, 403, 426, 442.


60 O.R., XXIII, i, 539. See also Dodson, Campaigns of Wheeler, pp. 89-92. Stanley, Memoirs, p. 148. Thatcher, A Hundred Battles, p. 133. For other Federal cavalry reports see O.R., XXIII, i, 544, 547. The Confederate reports are regrettably scarce.

61 Williams, General Wilder, pp. 19, 23. O.R., XXIII, i, 456-461. Connolly, Three Years, pp. 95-98.

62 O.R., XXIII, i, 483.

63 Ibid., 468, 486.

64 Connolly, Three Years, pp. 67, 77, 89-91.

65 O.R., XXIII, i, 559.

66 Ibid., 560.

67 Starr, "Cold Steel," C.W.H. (1966), for an author who has found considerable emphasis placed on the use of the sabre in the volunteer regiments of Union cavalry.

68 O.R., XXIII, i, 553.


70 O.R., XXIII, i, 621, 622, 623.

71 Ibid., 589-593, 608-609.


74 Williams, Lincoln Finds A General, V, 236-237. O.R., XXIII, i, 584.
CONCLUSION

The role of cavalry that emerged in the campaigns studied in the Western theatre of the American Civil War from the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862 to the Tullahoma campaign in June 1863 did not alter significantly from that which had been suggested by Jomini over thirty years before. Jomini had pictured cavalry as an essentially tactical arm with strategic overtones. Its duties and responsibilities were subordinate and oriented principally to the security of the rest of the army through providing escorts, manning outposts, gathering intelligence both on scouting patrols and larger reconnaissance forces, and so forth. In addition to these defensive functions there was another side to its role that was offensive and this included charging on the battlefield, attacking enemy outposts and convoys, and even more far ranging expeditions against enemy lines of communication.

The role of cavalry that emerged in practise differed little from this. The old division of cavalry into light and heavy horse according to function had largely disappeared however. Northern and Southern cavalrmen assumed "light" and "heavy" functions as the occasion demanded, and there was no official differentiation although the Confederates seemed to see a distinction between "regular" and "partisan" cavalry. Confederate General Braxton Bragg demonstrated this clearly in his attitude towards Nathan B. Forrest and John H. Morgan and
allowed it to colour him to such an extent that he overlooked the broader possibilities of far ranging cavalry columns employed and coordinated in a meaningful strategic fashion. The approach to cavalry was slightly changed in the campaigns studied but it was consistent for the most part with previous thought and prior American experience. The Union and Confederate cavalry had many dragoon-like qualities and easily combined the functions of mounted riflemen and cavalry. The appearance of mounted infantry in 1863 carried this one step further. The duties and responsibilities of this force revealed that it was essentially cavalry in terms of its role although it demonstrated an attempt to find a new approach and if the styles of fighting and the weaponry were slightly different from those of cavalrmen this did not obscure the fact that the role was still basically the same.

Therefore, the cavalrmen in the American Civil War probably should not be glibly labelled "mounted infantry" even though they displayed a distinct penchant for fighting on foot and an increased dependence on firearms. The restrictive terrain, the tendency of cavalry to be employed as skirmishers in battle to cover an advance or a retreat, the lack of training, the large number of indifferent horsemen, the inexperience of the company, battalion, and often regimental commanders added to improvements in both the rate and range of fire of weapons all contributed to making cavalry look very much like mounted infantry although its duties were still essentially cavalry duties.
In terms of behaviour and leadership the Confederate cavalry clearly had the upper hand. The Federals had few distinguished cavalry leaders in the West, with only Philip Sheridan, who made a very brief appearance, and David Stanley qualifying. The Confederates had a plethora of good leaders and if they sometimes displayed weaknesses of character and ability this should not detract from their other qualities. Nathan Forrest, for example, seldom got along well with his fellow officers, but he operated well on his own and this may have been part of the reason that Bragg allowed him such freedom. John Morgan also displayed brilliance and dash but he had a marked tendency to stretch or even disobey orders as he saw fit. But these two men brought in a series of small and spectacular victories for the Confederacy. Their efforts were often individual however, and with a few significant exceptions the effects only immediate and easily rectified by the Federals. It is noteworthy that the only time there was a genuine coordination of raiding cavalry columns in the case of Forrest's expedition to West Tennessee and Earl Van Dorn's raid on Grant's supply lines at Holly Springs, a definite alteration in Federal plans was the direct result. The Confederate cavalry brigades in the Mississippi Valley were large and well led if not always well equipped but the potential of mobile striking columns was only dimly seen at the time.

There is little doubt that the use of cavalry on raids was an effort to find a strategic role for troops whose tactical
possibilities had diminished. The campaigns examined gave ample evidence of this. The main functions of cavalry were still security oriented but at the same time this was something of a waste for such an expensive branch of the service. Cavalry found some employment on the field of battle and as the imagination of commanders expanded this increased but it was most often fighting on foot with firearms, its mobility wasted. Jomini had suggested a strategic role for mounted troops in his general remarks about cavalry and the section on partisans published in the regulations in 1861 had been even more explicit but the influence of thought and ideas is difficult to trace. The similarity between Jomini's and the regulations' with the emerging strategic role of cavalry is nonetheless striking.

There were several minor points about cavalry that were evident as well. The horse had declined as a fighting machine and was becoming more and more a means of transportation from combat to combat. The Confederate cavalry and John Wilder's mounted infantry displayed this most clearly although the other Union cavalry units also showed tendencies in this direction as the war progressed. Also, in terms of their armament, horsemen in the Civil War were generally armed as light cavalrymen, much as George McClellan had suggested. Civil War cavalry took on more duties and responsibilities than McClellan had implied, but the behaviour and equipment of both Northern and Southern cavalrymen in the campaigns examined indicates clearly that they
were very similar to old fashioned light cavalry although their approach to their duties often had dragoon-like qualities.

All the emphasis on changes in weaponry, tactics, styles of fighting, and so forth, does not obscure the fact that basically, the role of cavalry altered little. Cavalry still had a dual role, on the one hand being a shield by escorting officers, convoys, and foraging parties, manning outposts and picket lines, composing scouting and reconnaissance patrols, and screening an army, whether advancing or retiring. The minor auxiliary functions of orderly and courier duty also fit into this. On the other hand cavalry was a dagger used to strike at enemy outposts, picket guards, convoys, supply depots, and lines of communication. Its employment on the battlefield had elements of both concepts but more properly belongs in the former. Through all its duties and responsibilities the cavalry was a tactical arm, oriented principally to security and defense, although it could take the tactical offensive on the battlefield and even the strategic offensive with the long range raid. The changes that have received so much attention from historians have tended to eclipse the fact that although cavalry changed its approach and at the same time was made more efficient as a fighting arm, its role remained essentially the same. On the basis of this study it was dependent, subordinate, defensive, and tactical for the most part, and independent, offensive, and strategic for the remainder. The campaigns conducted from April 1862 to June 1863 did see alterations in
the relationship of these two aspects of the cavalry's dual character but they did not see changes in the cavalry's basic duties and responsibilities. The role of cavalry, and the arms of the service that have taken over its duties, have remained essentially the same.
I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. Manuscript Collections


B. Federal Government Printed Publications


C. Confederate Government Printed Publications


D. Tactical Manuals and Regulations


D. Published Letters, Diaries, Speeches.


F. Memoirs, Reminiscences.


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E. Atlases

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PREFACE TO APPENDICES:

Many of the figures presented in these appendices are admittedly estimates and compromises. This does not distort or obviate the purpose of the charts however. The intention is not to present a highly detailed analysis of numbers and losses but rather to give general guides that will help the reader better understand the nature of the campaigns by giving the relative sizes of the armies, the relative numbers engaged, and a breakdown of the losses suffered by each side in specific battles.

Three sources were used. The *Official Records* provided the mainstay of the statistics and Thomas L. Livermore's *Numbers and Losses in the American Civil War* and the articles and footnotes in *Battles and Leaders of the American Civil War* provide a basis for comparison and compilation. The result of consulting these three sources is that the figures presented here are generally correct.

The returns for Civil War armies, although relatively frequent in many cases, have not all survived and there are often considerable gaps in the available data. In addition, many of the returns that have survived are incomplete and this is particularly true in the case of the cavalry reports. Also, many of the returns are not in very much detail and do not break down the organization sufficiently to enable the numbers of cavalrymen attached to the several divisions, corps, and wings to always be readily apparent. Thus, many of the figures presented are often estimates or projections.

Some general conclusions may be drawn from these charts that support suggestions made in the text. The casualty figures suggest that the cavalry was not heavily engaged in combat in comparison with the army as a whole. Even when it was, such as at the Battle of Stone's River or during the Tullahoma Campaign, its casualties were still much slighter than the rest of the army. This seems to stem from the fact that cavalry generally fought in skirmish formation and thus was not a mass target like a regiment of infantry in line of battle.

The Confederate cavalry was usually superior to the Federal in numbers. This was further emphasized by the Southern tendency to operate cavalry in units of brigade size. The Union cavalry generally tended to be broken up into smaller units and brigade concentrations were rare. The apparent superiority of the Union cavalry in many of the figures that are compared is misleading because there were a number of partisan brigades, such as those of Nathan Forrest and John Morgan, that operated intermittently with the main army and were large and well handled, making them formidable foes for Union troops.
It is interesting to note that the cavalry in William S. Rosecrans' army gradually grew from November 1862 to June 1863 and this, augmented by the fact that the Federal troopers were given generally more efficient weapons, gave the Union general approximate parity in mounted forces, particularly when one or more of the Confederate partisan brigades happened to be absent as was the case at Stone's River and the Tullahoma campaign.
APPENDIX I:

Proportion of Cavalry to Total Strength of Armies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union:</th>
<th>Confederate:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Battle of Shiloh and the Advance on Corinth:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>8,605 - 9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-June 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>5,170 - 4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>126,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Battles of Iuka and Corinth:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>4,500 - 7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>7,797 - 12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Invasion of Kentucky and the Battle of Perryville:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>4,981 - 8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>6,399 - 11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Battle of Stone's River:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>7,417 - 9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 31 1862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>5,916 - 9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Murfreesboro Interlude and the Tullahoma Campaign:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1863</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>6,741 - 8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1863</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>4,295 - 7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58,112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 211 -
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Cavalry</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Cavalry %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1863</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>102,136</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1863</td>
<td>7,424</td>
<td>103,283</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1863</td>
<td>7,076</td>
<td>95,986</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1863</td>
<td>12,281</td>
<td>97,142</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1863</td>
<td>13,161</td>
<td>105,655</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes to Accompany Appendix I:

The Battle of Shiloh and the Advance on Corinth:
The cavalry was distributed throughout the Union and Confederate armies and the returns were not always complete, particularly in the case of the Confederates. The figures for May and June represent the approximate strength of P.G.T. Beauregard’s army just prior to the evacuation of Corinth. The Union figure for April represents the combined armies of John Pope, Ulysses Grant, and Don Carlos Buell. Not all of these fought at the Battle of Shiloh. See Appendix II.

The Battles of Iuka and Corinth:
The July figure for the Union represents the total Federal forces in the area. There is no comparable figure available for the Confederates but it was probably around 60,000 men including the armies at Vicksburg, Tupelo, and Chattanooga. See Appendix II for numbers engaged. The breakdown of the Union cavalry is not available but it was probably around 2,000 men. The figure for the Confederate cavalry is a composite.

The Invasion of Kentucky and the Battle of Perryville:
The figures for this period are sparse and an accurate picture is difficult to construct but the data presented is fairly close. The figure for the Confederate cavalry is misleading because there were numerous small guerrilla bands and the partisan brigades that were not included and these represented at least 5,000 men. Edmund Kirby Smith’s army is not included in the figure. He had about 4,000 cavalry in an army of approximately 26,000.

The Battle of Stone’s River:
The Union figure includes all of Rosecrans’ department. See Appendix II for numbers engaged at the battle. Many of these troops were scattered around in small garrisons and each of these usually had its complement of cavalry for scouting and picket duty.

The Murfreesboro Interlude and the Tullahoma Campaign:
This period had the most complete returns for the time studied. The figures for the Union cavalry were probably low and the real total hovered around 10,000 men. This is indicated by the jump in May and June. There is no evidence that Rosecrans received such numbers of cavalry reinforcements at that time and this jump probably reflects a greater concentration of the cavalry with a correspondingly higher return. The Confederate returns were not always complete, the partisan brigades in particular being negligent in their paperwork. The drop in July represents the casualties from the Tullahoma campaign and the departure of Morgan on his ill-fated Ohio raid.
APPENDIX II:

Numbers engaged in the campaigns studied:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Confederate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shiloh campaign:</strong></td>
<td>There were 2,073 cavalry-men in the 38,733 man army that marched from Corinth on the eve of the battle. The cavalry was more actively engaged than the Union horse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant had 37,731 men engaged on April 6, 1862, and was reinforced by Lewis Wallace's 5,000 men and about the same number from Buell's 40,866 man army that began arriving on April 7. The cavalry was not engaged except as escorts and orderlies or scouts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iuka:</td>
<td>Price had about 16,800 men in all and only about 4,179 of these became heavily engaged. He had about 3,000 cavalry and this force was not heavily engaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosecrans and General Ord had about 17,000 men between them but only about 4,000 men of Rosecrans' army became heavily engaged. The number of cavalry probably did not exceed 1,500 although the data is unavailable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinth:</td>
<td>Van Dorn had 5,566 cavalry in a total army of 22,000. The Confederate cavalry did not become heavily engaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosecrans' army was from 21,000 to 23,000 with about 2,000 cavalry. The cavalry was not engaged heavily.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perryville:</td>
<td>Bragg's army was about 26,000 and 15,000 men bore the brunt of the combat, mostly Polk's wing. About 3,100 cavalry were present on the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buell's army was 54,000 but only one-half of these was close to the scene of combat and not all of those were engaged. The number of cavalry with the army did not exceed 1,500 and was not heavily engaged.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone's River (Murfreesboro):</td>
<td>Bragg's army numbered 37,712 at this time and included 4,300 effective cavalry after Morgan and Forrest had left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosecrans marched from Nashville with about 43,400 men, including 3,200 cavalry, virtually all his troops becoming fairly heavily engaged in the course of the battle.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Tullahoma Campaign:

Rosecrans advanced from Murfreesboro with 50,617 men. About 10,000 of these were cavalry. The actual numbers engaged were few and most of the work was done by the cavalry and a few leading infantry brigades.

Bragg's army numbered 46,665 at this time and his cavalry was from 12,000 to 13,000. At the time, Morgan was again absent. The Confederates also had relatively few men engaged, most of the work being done by the cavalry and a few infantry brigades.

Note:

The numbers of men presented as engaged in the above have often been approximations but these are not out to such an extent as to warp the evidence and present a distorted picture. The available data is incomplete and even contradictory at times. In addition, the number of men shown on returns do not all get up to the firing line, in spite of being labelled "present for duty". Although this is the best criterion to follow, considerable numbers of troops guarded baggage trains, did orderly duty, acted as hospital guards, and so forth. In spite of being approximations however, the figures presented here give a reasonably accurate picture of the numbers of men in all and the numbers of cavalrymen engaged in the campaigns studied.
APPENDIX III:

Losses in the Campaigns studied:

Percentage of Cavalry to total:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Union:</th>
<th></th>
<th>Confederate:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiloh:</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.18% - .95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,047</td>
<td>10,694</td>
<td>.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iuka:</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1.6% - .60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>1,581</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinth</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.14% - .04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,520</td>
<td>4,838</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perryville:</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.07% - (negligible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,241</td>
<td>3,396</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone's River:</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>3.0% - 4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,249</td>
<td>10,226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullahoma:</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>24.3% - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>2,139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of loss to forces engaged:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Union:</th>
<th></th>
<th>Confederate:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Losses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiloh:</td>
<td>13,047</td>
<td>10,694</td>
<td>27.3% - 27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>47,731</td>
<td>38,733</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iuka:</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>1,581</td>
<td>4.6% - 9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>16,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinth</td>
<td>2,520</td>
<td>4,838</td>
<td>10.9% - 21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perryville:</td>
<td>4,241</td>
<td>3,396</td>
<td>7.8% - 13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>54,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone's River:</td>
<td>13,249</td>
<td>10,226</td>
<td>30.5% - 30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>43,400</td>
<td>37,712</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tullahoma:</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>2,139</td>
<td>1.1% - 4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>50,617</td>
<td>46,665</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Cavalry loss to Cavalry forces engaged:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Union:</th>
<th></th>
<th>Confederate:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Losses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiloh:</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>2,073</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iuka:</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 216 -
Corinth: Losses 38 - 1.9% 21 - .4%
      Engaged 2,000 5,566

Perryville: Losses 30 - 2.0% 2 - (negligible)
      Engaged 1,500 3,100

Stone's River: Losses 404 - 12.4% 449 - 10.5%
      Engaged 3,200 4,237

Tullahoma: Losses 139 - 1.4% unknown -
      Engaged 10,000 13,000

Notes:

Shiloh:

Most of the cavalry on the Union side was not engaged in actual combat although much of it was present on the field. The Confederate cavalry was relatively more engaged, as is indicated by the great disparity in casualties.

Iuka:

The cavalry in this battle was engaged only in minor skirmishing either covering an advance or a retreat. See Appendix II.

Corinth:

The cavalry in this battle was quite inactive. The figures here suggest that assaulting troops suffered heavily in comparison to the defenders.

Perryville:

The Confederate cavalry returns are so incomplete that it is not even possible to guess with any certitude. The two casualties cited were orderlies. The Southern cavalry was involved in more heavy fighting than the Union cavalry so it is likely that its casualties were correspondingly higher.

Stone's River:

It is evident here that the cavalry was involved in combat to an unprecedented extent. Both Bragg and Rosecrans gave evidence of having no hesitation in committing their mounted troops to action. The Confederate returns were not complete, John Pegram having filed neither a report nor a casualty return. His brigade was not involved in any more than minor skirmishing so the missing figures would not likely raise the list significantly.
Tullahoma:

See Appendix II. The advance Union cavalry and the covering Confederate horse bore the brunt of the combat in this campaign which was relatively bloodless generally speaking. There were not returns for the Confederates but their casualties in the cavalry forces were probably similar to the Federals.