

MAJOR GENERAL PHILIP H. SHERIDAN AND
THE EMPLOYMENT OF HIS DIVISION
DURING THE BATTLE OF
CHICKAMAUGA

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

MAJOR GENERAL PHILIP H. SHERIDAN AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF HIS DIVISION DURING THE BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA by MAJ Paul S. Sarat Jr., 178 page.

This thesis is a historical analysis of Major General Philip H. Sheridan and his division during the Battle of Chickamauga. Sheridan led an experienced division onto the battlefield on 19 September 1863 after completing a march of over one hundred miles over mountainous terrain the previous seventeen days. The division was deployed by brigade to protect the Union right flank. One brigade took heavy casualties the first day, when attacking to repel an enemy advance. On the second day, while moving to reinforce Major General Thomas' corps, the division was routed when Confederate forces attacked through a gap in the Union defense. Sheridan rallied his men, but inexplicably left the battlefield instead of returning to reinforce Thomas' right flank as ordered. Sheridan later moved to reinforce Thomas' left flank, after the battle was over.

Sheridan's performance was uncharacteristic for him, particularly his decision to leave the battlefield. Sheridan was not the subject of an official inquiry after the battle, although his actions were similar to other officers who were. Based on the analysis of the division's actions, this study draws conclusions to determine the causes for the unit's poor performance at Chickamauga: poor decision making, fatigue, and piecemeal employment.

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Finally, I must recognize the soldiers who fought at Chickamauga. Their experiences, documented so well in the diaries and letters they wrote, provided me with the opportunity to analyze the human dimension of war. That these men overcame so many obstacles and hardships, and fought so courageously is a testament to them. While we often think of the generals when studying wars in a historical context, we forget those who faced the greatest dangers-the men who did the fighting. The history of Sheridan's division at the Battle of Chickamauga is their story.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every war is rich in unique episodes. Each is an uncharted sea, full of reefs. The commander must suspect the reefs' existence without ever having seen them; now he has to steer past them in the dark. If a contrary wind springs up, if some major mischance appears, he will need the greatest skill and personal exertion, and the utmost presence of mind. The good general . . . must have exceptional abilities.¹

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

Philip H. Sheridan is one of the most respected Union commanders of the Civil War. However, his unit, Third Division, Twentieth Corps, performed poorly during the Battle of Chickamauga. This thesis will analyze the actions of Sheridan's division at Chickamauga, from 19 to 20 September 1863, to explain the reasons for its performance. The purpose of this thesis is to explain what happened, as well as to determine what lessons can be learned by studying actions of the leaders and the unit during the battle. The study of military history is most important for the professional officer in the insights gained, which may be useful in future assignments. According to the Command and General Staff College publication *The Evolution of Modern Warfare*, "The most adept practitioners of warfare in the past have capitalized on acquiring knowledge in times of peace as their ultimate defense in times of war."² In order to put the performance of Sheridan and his division at Chickamauga in proper context, it is important to examine the events that led to the battle.

As the Union Army of the Cumberland and the Confederate Army of Tennessee prepared to clash for control of Chattanooga in the summer of 1863, events in other theaters made victory critical to both sides. The Union Army's goal was to capture

Chattanooga, a critical location because of its rail network extending throughout the south. Seizure of Chattanooga would cut off Confederate supply lines and restrict troop movement between theaters while providing the Union Army a supply base from which to attack further in the south into Georgia and Alabama. Holding Chattanooga was critical to the Confederate Army for strategic purposes as well as morale due to recent losses at Vicksburg in the western theater, and at Gettysburg in the eastern theater.

On 30 October 1862, Major General William S. Rosecrans took command of the newly designated Union Army of the Cumberland.³ President Lincoln had General-in-Chief Henry Halleck relieve Major General Don Carlos Buell because of his failure to quickly engage and destroy Confederate forces in Kentucky and Tennessee. President Lincoln considered the liberation of Tennessee a major objective, since most of the population was loyal to the Union, though occupied by Confederate troops.⁴ Rosecrans, in turn, reorganized the army, and put Sheridan and his division, renumbered the Third Division, under Major General Alexander McCook (and what would be later named the Twentieth Corps). General Braxton Bragg commanded the Confederate Army of Tennessee. He withdrew from Kentucky after failing to gain the popular support and the recruits necessary to hold the state. Bragg was looking for the opportunity to defeat Union forces, but could not afford heavy losses due to the advantages the Union had in resources and manpower. A stalemate would be costly for Bragg, so his goal, while giving up territory, was to conserve the ability of his army to fight.

Rosecrans moved his army to Nashville, the capitol of Tennessee, in early November 1862 while Bragg moved south to Mufreesboro.⁵ In late December, the Army of the Cumberland defeated the Army of Tennessee at the Battle of Stones River, and

Bragg withdrew his army to Tullahoma (thirty-five miles southeast).⁶ Despite pressure from Washington to continue to pursue Confederate forces further south, Rosecrans stopped at Mufreesboro and stockpiled supplies. Pressure mounted on Rosecrans to attack throughout the winter and spring of 1863, as forces and resources from Bragg's army were diverted to support Lee's move north and the defense of Vicksburg. When Rosecrans finally moved against Bragg on 24 June 1863⁷, he was unable to decisively engage the Army of Tennessee. Bragg had again evaded him and retreated south of the Tennessee River at Chattanooga.

At the end of the Tullahoma Campaign, the Army of the Cumberland had successfully pushed Confederate forces south of the Tennessee River, liberating middle and eastern Tennessee, but only fought small skirmishes, allowing the Army of Tennessee to survive. Washington continued to encourage faster pursuit by Rosecrans, who moved his army cautiously down to the Tennessee River. While most of the Union force remained in the vicinity of Tullahoma, Rosecrans sent elements south to the Tennessee River, including Sheridan's division.⁸ Union forces repaired the railroad, tunnels, and bridges to establish supply lines to support the move of the rest of the Army of the Cumberland south. Additionally, these forces prepared bridges for the crossing of the Tennessee River.

Rosecrans moved his army south to the Tennessee River in late August. His plan to defeat Bragg's army and seize Chattanooga involved an attack in which all three corps moved on separate axis, with McCook's Twentieth Corps moving on the right (west) over rough mountainous terrain to cut off the Army of Tennessee from the south, splitting up the army. Bragg continued to avoid a decisive engagement, and evacuated Chattanooga

on 8 September, just before the arrival of the Army of the Cumberland.⁹ After his army failed to conduct a counterattack of Union forces isolated south of the Tennessee River near Chattanooga on 9 September, Bragg fell and withdrew again to Lafayette. Due to poor execution by his subordinates, several other planned counterattacks never materialized while the Union forces were spread out.¹⁰

With information that the Army of Tennessee consolidated in the vicinity of Lafayette, and reinforcements under Lieutenant General James Longstreet were on the way, Rosecrans ordered McCook to close up on Major General George H. Thomas' corps near Chickamauga Creek. The order was sent on 12 September, but did not reach McCook until 13 September, because of his distance from the rest of the army.¹¹ McCook's corps marched back over the mountains from 13 to 17 September in order to link up with Thomas, just before the battle of Chickamauga began.

This thesis will focus on Sheridan's division, providing the background on the units and their leaders. This information will provide the basis for the analysis of the division's actions at Chickamauga on 19 and 20 September 1863. Specifically, it will determine whether there was anything in the background or experiences of the unit or the commanders down to regimental level that can explain the division's performance at Chickamauga.

Chapter 2 will examine the personal and professional life of Major General Philip H. Sheridan, starting with his childhood as the son of Irish immigrants living in Somerset, Ohio. It will include his schooling at West Point and early assignments to First Infantry Division at Fort Duncan, Texas, and Fourth Infantry Division in the Pacific Northwest, as well as his assignment at the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation in Oregon prior to the start

of the Civil War. Then it will cover his meteoric rise and experiences early in the Civil War emphasizing the performances at Booneville, Mississippi; Perryville, Kentucky; and Stones River, Tennessee, which earned him fame and promotion to major general. It is important to understand Sheridan's background in order to properly evaluate his performance and the actions of his division at Chickamauga. How did his military experiences prior to the Civil War, earlier Civil War campaigns, and personal relationships with other officers involved in the battle affect his performance at Chickamauga?

Chapter 3 will focus on the composition of the division and its experiences prior to Chickamauga. Although there were several organizational changes, First and Second Brigades fought under Sheridan starting in September 1862. Third Brigade, as it fought at Chickamauga, joined the division in November 1862. This chapter will include an examination of the division's performance at the Battle of Perryville, the Battle of Stones River, and during the Tullahoma Campaign. It will also include background on the three brigade commanders: Brigadier General William H. Lytle (First Brigade), Colonel Bernard Laiboldt (Second Brigade), and Colonel Luther P. Bradley (Third Brigade), and the regiments assigned to each brigade. It will provide background on Major General Alexander McCook (Twentieth Corps Commander) and Major General William S. Rosecrans (Commander of the Army of the Cumberland) and the impact of their decisions and orders on the deployment of forces in earlier campaigns.

During the Tullahoma campaign, the division failed to force the Confederate forces into any decisive engagements and occupied most of its objectives either fighting small skirmishes against withdrawing forces or without any enemy contact at all. The

only significant fighting Third Division engaged in during the Tullahoma Campaign involved only Second Brigade at Fairfield. Was the lack of recent combat experience as a unit the reason the division performed poorly at Chickamauga?

Chapter 4 will describe the actions of Sheridan's division at Chickamauga on 19 September 1863. The chapter will provide background on how the division arrived at the battlefield, covering its experiences after the Tullahoma Campaign. As the Army of the Cumberland moved toward Chattanooga, Third Division spent most of its time repairing the railroad to provide supply lines for the attack on Chattanooga. Did this impact on unit readiness? Prior to the battle at Chickamauga, Third Division, as part of Twentieth Corps, moved south across the Tennessee River and over mountainous terrain to cut off the lines of communication of the Army of Tennessee. However, before the start of the battle at Chickamauga, the corps was ordered to move back to the Tennessee River to reinforce the Army of Cumberland's defense along the road to Chattanooga. Did this movement result in fatigue, and what impact did it have on the unit's ability to fight?

As the Battle of Chickamauga developed with a series of Confederate attacks along the road to Chattanooga on 19 September, Sheridan's Division was ordered to move to Crawfish Springs, a five-mile march, then given new orders to move to Lee and Gordon's Mills to reinforce the right flank of the Army of the Cumberland. What mission did the division have? What was the disposition of the brigades? What orders did Sheridan receive, and how did he relay those orders to his commanders? How did the division perform, and what was Sheridan's role? How did Sheridan react to changes in orders throughout the day? By the middle of the afternoon, McCook gave Sheridan new orders to move two Brigades to Viniard's farm, about two miles north of Lee and

Gordon's Mills, in order to plug gaps in the Union line. During the move, Bradley's brigade made contact, assaulted Confederate forces in the woods, and took almost three-hundred casualties, including Colonel Bradley, who was badly wounded. Where was Sheridan located, and what impact did he have on the division's performance? What was the final disposition of the division at the end of the day? What impact did the casualties have on the division? What missions were planned for the next day?

Chapter 5 will describe the actions of Sheridan's division at Chickamauga on 20 September 1863. What mission did the division have? What was the disposition of the brigades? What orders did Sheridan receive, and how did he relay those orders to his commanders? How did Sheridan's division fit into the overall Union scheme? As a result of the movement of divisions to reinforce the Union positions to the north, a gap was mistakenly opened in the Union defensive line. Major General McCook ordered Sheridan to move Laiboldt's brigade to fill the gap and to move the remainder of his division north to support Major General George H. Thomas, holding the center of the Army of the Cumberland. Longstreet's corps attacked through the gap as Union forces were moving to their new positions.

Colonel Laiboldt attempted to stop the attack and even counterattacked, but was overwhelmed and his brigade fled to the rear. At this point in the battle, Sheridan and his two brigades moving north were the only forces, along with Colonel John T. Wilder's mounted infantry brigade, left on the Union right flank. As Sheridan tried to maneuver his forces from a march column to a line of battle, the division took heavy casualties. Lytle attempted to counterattack to give Sheridan time to establish a new defensive line, but was killed.¹² Sheridan's division withdrew to the base of Missionary Ridge, as the

Confederate army turned the Union left flank, effectively separating the division from the rest of the Army of the Cumberland.

Rosecrans and McCook leave for Chattanooga, leaving Thomas as the senior Union commander on the battlefield. Sheridan met with Generals Negley and Davis, both of whom were also trying to rally their overrun divisions. At the same time, Colonel Thruston, McCook's chief of staff, left to meet with Thomas to get orders. Although Thruston returned and met with Sheridan at McFarland's Gap with instructions from Thomas for Sheridan to move north and reinforce his right flank, Sheridan decided to move back through McFarland's Gap and Rossville before moving south to Thomas' left flank.¹³ This decision took Third Division out of the fight for the remainder of the battle, and resulted in questions about Sheridan's leadership and performance at Chickamauga. Why did he make this decision? How did the division perform, and what was Sheridan's role in his division's performance? How did Sheridan react to changes in orders throughout the day? Where was he located, and what impact did he have on the performance of his subordinate units? Did the unit's casualties impact on his decision making? What was the final disposition of the division at the end of the day? What missions were planned for the next day?

Chapter 6 will conclude the thesis with an analysis of the division's performance at Chickamauga. How did the leaders perform? Did Sheridan make the proper decisions and clearly relay orders to his subordinate commanders? Were poor decision making at higher levels and an inability to read the enemy's intentions at Chickamauga the reasons for the division's poor performance? Were Sheridan's soldiers exhausted from the constant moving back and forth prior to the battle, and did exhaustion impact on their

ability to fight? Could Sheridan have done anything different that would have improved the division's performance? Was there anything in his background that could explain his decision making, especially on 20 September? Why did he choose to move out of the battle back to Rossville when the Union right flank was threatened? Was Sheridan's performance out of character?

¹Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* in Department of the Army, U.S. Army Command and Staff College, "Excerpts From *On War*," *Evolution of Modern Warfare*" (Fort Leavenworth, KS: USACGSC, July 2000), 250-251.

²Department of the Army, U.S. Army Command and Staff College, *Evolution of Modern Warfare* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: USACGSC, July 2000), i.

³Roger Zeimet, "Philip H. Sheridan and the Civil War in the West" (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985), 193.

⁴*Ibid.*, 177.

⁵William G. Robertson, *National Park Civil War Series: The Battle of Chickamauga* (Conshohocken, PA: National Park Service Civil War Series, 1995).

⁶*Ibid.*, 6.

⁷Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 17.

⁸Robertson, 15.

⁹*Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰Steven E. Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 76.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 74.

¹²Zeimet, 359.

¹³*Ibid.*, 362.

CHAPTER 2

PHILIP H. SHERIDAN

“It has been said that I was ‘lucky’ during the Rebellion in the success which attended me, but whether I was or not, I believe there was no general officer in the service who was subjected to harder tests. I was not only changed from one arm of the service to another, but was constantly being changed from one line of operations to another, each involving new geographical and topographical study, the necessity of overcoming the local prejudices of soldiers of different armies, and the old and bitter prejudices between infantry and cavalry.”¹

Sheridan, Address to the Illinois Commandery, 1882

Philip H. Sheridan, considered “one of the three Union generals who won the greatest fame in the Civil War,”² held a number of positions in the frontier army prior to the Civil War. Nothing in his early career indicated that he would quickly rise through the officer ranks and take a leading role when the war began. However, an examination of his background shows some of the same characteristics he displayed at Chickamauga in earlier situations. Additionally, he met a number of individuals who became key figures in the Battle of Chickamauga prior to the Civil War and in earlier campaigns, which may explain his attitudes toward them. This chapter will examine Sheridan’s life and military career prior to the Chickamauga Campaign and show the impact of his experiences and establish a pattern of behavior to use as a comparison to his actions on 19 and 20 September 1863.

Sheridan grew up in Somerset, Ohio, the third of six children of John and Mary Sheridan, Irish immigrants (from Cavan County). There are several different birth dates and locations listed for him, but no record of his birth to confirm which is correct. In his *Personal Memoirs*, Sheridan wrote that he was born on 6 March 1831 in Albany, New

York.³ In his application to West Point, Sheridan listed his birthplace as Massachusetts, and his age as eighteen years and one month in July 1848⁴ (putting his birth date in May or June 1830). Sheridan's mother told the chairman of the Sheridan Monument Association in 1888, "He was born on the ocean, when his parents were coming from Ireland"⁵ but recorded his birth in Albany, New York. *America and Ireland, 1776-1976: The American Identity and the Irish Connection* refers to Sheridan as "Cavan-Born" and the "first Irish-born West Pointer," stating that the reason he listed a birthplace in America was because "to gain his admission his nominator thought it necessary to pretend that he was American-born."⁶ While the location and date of his birth may not seem important, Sheridan always felt he had to prove himself because of the overt anti-Irish feelings of many people at the time.

The Sheridan family lived in a one-story frame house in Somerset, a small town in southern Ohio. He attended a village school until he was fourteen years old, receiving a basic education in mathematics and English, with a little bit of geography and history. His father was a contractor and later a farmer, and his work kept him away from home a lot, so Sheridan's mother had a great influence on him. After he completed school, Philip Sheridan went to work as a clerk holding several jobs at grocery and hardware stores.⁷

Sheridan decided to become a soldier when he was influenced by patriotism during the Mexican War, stating in his memoirs that his "wish was to become a soldier, and my brightest aspiration to go to West Point."⁸ William Tecumseh Sherman, a family acquaintance from Lancaster (sixteen miles from Somerset), may have influenced Sheridan. The Sherman family attended Catholic mass in Somerset, and Sherman wore his cadet uniform in Somerset on at least one occasion, although there is no proof that

Sheridan knew Sherman (who was at least eleven years older).⁹ Sheridan's opportunity came when a cadet from his congressional district dropped out of West Point. Sheridan, who had met his congressman, Thomas Ritchey, at his store, requested to fill the vacancy. Despite the misgivings of his parents, Sheridan accepted an appointment to West Point on 20 March 1848. As a sign of his work ethic to overcome problems in academics, Sheridan studied hard during the next few months to prepare for West Point.¹⁰

Cadet Sheridan entered West Point on 1 July 1848. Among his classmates was Alexander McCook, who would later be his corps commander at Chickamauga. Another future Union corps commander Sheridan encountered during his first year was George H. Thomas, his instructor for Cavalry and Artillery.¹¹ Sheridan was a mediocre student, but spent many late nights receiving tutoring to enable him to pass mathematics. He got into more than his share of trouble for minor rules violations including boisterous behavior and smoking in his room. The large number of infractions almost got him dismissed from the academy.¹²

An incident that occurred in September 1851 illustrates Sheridan's temper and occasional disrespect for authority. While in formation, Sheridan lost his temper at Cadet Sergeant William R. Terrill, who ordered him to "dress." Sheridan argued that he was properly dressed, and Terrill told him to stop talking in ranks. Sheridan responded by lunging at Terrill with his bayonet and threatened, "God dam you, sir; I will run you through!"¹³ Sheridan returned to formation, cursing Terrill, but took no further action at the time. The next day, Sheridan hit Terrill, who was sitting in front of his barracks. After several cadets separated them and broke up the fight, an officer had Sheridan arrested. Sheridan was suspended from West Point for one year.

Sheridan returned to West point in the summer of 1852 and graduated in July 1853. Although he performed well on his last major test at West Point, Cavalry Exercises, Sheridan graduated 34 of 52 in the class of 1853. His low class ranking likely cost him a regular commission, but he received a brevet appointment and orders for First Infantry Regiment at Fort Duncan, Texas.¹⁴

Sheridan arrived at Fort Duncan on 4 March 1854, assigned to Company D, First Regiment, United States Infantry. During this tour, Sheridan was the company quartermaster and commissary officer and participated in patrols to find raiding parties of hostile Indians in the area of the Rio Grande River. Sheridan performed his frontier duties well, although the assignment was uneventful. He was promoted to second lieutenant on 22 November 1854 and received a transfer to Company D, Fourth Infantry at Fort Reading, California.¹⁵

Sheridan arrived at Fort Reading in August 1855 and took command of a mounted escort for a topographical expedition, which was looking for a suitable railroad route between the Sacramento Valley and the Columbia River. Initially, the soldiers resented him, since he was an infantry officer, but eventually he won their confidence. He looked back on this experience fondly, referring to it as his “first cavalry command.”¹⁶ During this time he learned the importance of navigation skills and knowledge of terrain, lessons he would use later in his career to plan reconnaissance and hire guides for his move through unfamiliar territory in Kentucky and Tennessee during the Civil War. He also saw his first combat in skirmishes with the Chinook Indians.

In April 1856, Sheridan moved his command to Fort Yamhill, where he was given responsibility to police about 1,500 Indians of several tribes at the Grande Ronde Indian

Reservation in Oregon. He also had the mission to establish Fort Hoskins nearby to watch over the reservation. Sheridan faced several disputes at the reservation, handling a shortage in food rations and later a disagreement with the Department of Indian Affairs agent for the reservation. Based on the recommendation of his superiors, Sheridan was commended by General Winfield Scott for his performance.¹⁷ Throughout this period of frontier duty, Sheridan showed proficiency in problem solving and routine staff duties, but prospects for advancement were slim at the time.

As tensions grew after the Presidential Election of 1860, some officers resigned and left the Army to defend their home states. These resignations opened positions, and Sheridan was promoted to first lieutenant in March 1861, then Captain on 14 May 1861. He was assigned to the Thirteenth Infantry, at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, a unit commanded by William T. Sherman. Although Sheridan was eager to get to the fight, he could not leave Fort Yamhill until September, when his replacement arrived.¹⁸ During his wait, he expressed his patriotism and slight hope for promotion in letters to friends, writing, "Who knows? Perhaps I may have a chance to raise a major's commission."¹⁹ Due to the long distance he had to travel, including stops in New York and home for a day in Ohio, Sheridan did not arrive in Missouri until November.

When Sheridan arrived in St. Louis, he was appointed President of a board to examine claims by civilian contractors against the army by Major General Henry W. Halleck, the commander of the Department of Missouri. General Halleck inherited these claims when he took command due to poor accounting procedures by quartermasters. Captain Sheridan's experience and familiarity with civilian contractors made him ideal for the job. On 24 December 1861, after completing these duties, Sheridan was

appointed Chief Commissary for the Army of Southwest Missouri, commanded by Brigadier General Samuel R. Curtis. Sheridan also requested that General Halleck give him the position of Chief Quartermaster, and Sheridan consolidated the two departments when his request was approved.²⁰

Sheridan immediately moved to Rolla, Missouri, to join Curtis' staff. The Army of Southwest Missouri was stationed there, preparing to move against Confederate forces under Major General Sterling Price. When Sheridan saw the differences in supply trains among the regiments, he redistributed wagons and reorganized the supply system for the unit. Although several regimental commanders later agreed that this was a good idea, it caused problems at first because he did not go through command channels with his plan, instead executing it through quartermaster channels. In January 1862, Sheridan overcame a number of obstacles to support the move of the Army of Southwest Missouri to Springfield, including muddy roads and swollen streams. Brigadier General Curtis left Sheridan in Springfield as the army continued its move south into Arkansas in pursuit of the Confederates. He coordinated the movement of rations from Rolla, contracted with local mills to provide flour and meal, and confiscated available cattle. Curtis wrote to Governor Dennison of Ohio that Sheridan was a valuable asset, "ready accurate and honest," and recommended that the Governor give "favorable consideration" to place Sheridan in charge of an Ohio regiment.²¹ Privately, Sheridan was critical of his commander's slow movement in pursuit of Price, questioning his methods of attack to other officers.²²

Once the supply trains were running smoothly, Sheridan moved forward to visit Curtis' camp in Arkansas. At the camp, Sheridan and his commander had a disagreement

that later led to Sheridan's arrest. One of Sheridan's duties was to provide fresh horses for the army. Sheridan discovered that several officers in the command were stealing horses from local residents, then selling them to the government. Sheridan refused to pay the officers for the horses and confiscated them. The officers then complained to Curtis. When Sheridan met with him in Arkansas, Curtis ordered him to pay the officers for the horses, but Sheridan refused and requested a transfer. Sheridan then returned to Springfield, and upon his arrival, received reports that Curtis had defeated Confederate forces at Pea Ridge.²³

After the battle, Curtis had Sheridan arrested for insubordination. Curtis charged Sheridan with disobeying orders "to provide horses and replenish losses" and "to procure supplies for the Army of the Southwest," adding that Sheridan had "not provided transportation, forage and commissary stores" and "remained behind the Command where he was not needed."²⁴ He also added that Sheridan was disrespectful for not following his order to pay for the horses. Several officers, including Colonel Grenville M. Dodge, commander of the Fourth Iowa Infantry Regiment, recommended to Curtis that he should drop the charges against Sheridan. In the meantime, Sheridan wrote to General Halleck requesting a transfer. Halleck suspended Sheridan's arrest and had him reassigned. The court-martial was never convened, and Curtis quietly dropped the charges several months later.²⁵

Sheridan reported to St. Louis, where he became a member of General Halleck's staff. This assignment would lead to his first command of the Civil War, although he again had an altercation that almost ended his career. Sheridan moved forward with Halleck, who decided to accompany the army after Shiloh. Sheridan performed

quartermaster duties and helped supervise road repair for several weeks. On 1 May 1862, Halleck put Sheridan in charge of the headquarters camp, responsible for moving the equipment and personnel. When the mess had difficulty in obtaining fresh meat one day, General Halleck sent a member of his staff Colonel Joseph McKibben with an order for Sheridan to purchase beef. Sheridan refused the order, insisting that it was not one of his duties. Colonel McKibben had another officer acquire the beef, and that night General Halleck added commissary duties to Sheridan's responsibilities.²⁶

As the army continued its move toward Corinth, Sheridan would frequently ride to the front to watch the troops and learn about the topography of the land. During this time he started a friendship with the division commander Major General William T. Sherman, his neighbor from Ohio. Sherman wrote to Governor Dennison, trying to help Sheridan get command of one of the state's regiments. Although this was the second time that Sheridan was recommended for command of one of his home state's units, he did not get his first command from Ohio. Instead, he got command of the Second Michigan Cavalry on 27 May 1862, after Halleck appointed the unit's commander, Brigadier General Gordon Granger, as commander of his cavalry. Sheridan was fortunate to receive the command, getting the appointment because the governor of Michigan insisted on a regular army officer, although it was against War Department policy for a regular army officer to take command of a volunteer regiment.²⁷

The newly appointed Colonel Sheridan made a name for himself immediately after taking command of the Second Michigan Cavalry. At midnight on 27 May 1862, Sheridan led his unit on a raid to cut off Confederate supplies to Corinth and their line of retreat. The objective of the raid was to destroy the railroad at Booneville, Mississippi.

Unknown to Sheridan's brigade commander Colonel Washington L. Elliott, the Confederates, under General P. G. T. Beauregard, withdrew from Corinth on 29 May, prior to the Union Army's arrival. Sheridan's unit had captured over 500 prisoners at Booneville and destroyed the railroad track, while Colonel Elliott's troops burned the train station and supply depot. On 30 May, Elliott realized that Beauregard was on the way with a large force and decided to retreat to the east. Sheridan released all of the prisoners, except for a few officers (mounted on horses), and returned to Farmington. After a brief stop, Sheridan's unit was employed in a pursuit of Beauregard's army as the Union Army settled in at Corinth.²⁸ The Second Michigan was involved in a few minor skirmishes before returning to Corinth.

The raid was considered a complete success and distinguished the unit, which had covered over 200 miles in three and one-half days, destroying supplies and railroad track with minimal casualties. The action was considered "the first cavalry raid of the war"²⁹ and earned Elliott a promotion. On 11 June, Sheridan took command of the Second Cavalry Brigade of the Army of the Mississippi from Elliott.³⁰ During the same month, Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans (who would command the Army of the Cumberland at the Battle of Chickamauga) took command of the Army of the Mississippi,³¹ which included Sheridan's brigade. General Halleck moved to Washington to become the general-in-chief of the Union Army, and Major General Ulysses S. Grant took command of Union forces in the Mississippi Valley.

Brigadier General Rosecrans sent Colonel Sheridan back to Booneville on 26 June to watch for Confederate activity. On 1 July, the Confederates attacked Sheridan's brigade as a feint to cover the movement of an infantry division at Ripley (twenty-five

miles west). Despite being outnumbered (five-to-six thousand to eight-hundred twenty-seven),³² Sheridan's brigade held off the attack and began to fall back slowly. Sheridan requested reinforcements from Rosecrans, but was ordered to withdraw. Sheridan decided that Booneville was too important and ignored the order. Sheridan's men held off several frontal assaults, in part due to an advantage in firepower since most were armed with Colt repeating rifles, enabling them to fire five shots before reloading.³³

After the Confederates tried to envelop him, Sheridan sent his soldiers on the offense, sending two companies from each of his regiments on an attack around his right flank. When the flank attack was not initiated on time, Sheridan ordered his units forward. At the same time, a train arrived in town, which the soldiers assumed contained reinforcements. The train's arrival boosted the morale of Sheridan's men as they continued their frontal attack, and Sheridan had the train's engineer blow the whistle several times so the Confederates would know of its arrival as well. The Confederates heard the train just as the flanking attack made contact with their left flank and rear. The combination of the attacks and the train's arrival caused the Confederates to abandon the battlefield. Sheridan's men pursued the fleeing Confederates for several miles, until stopped by a swamp that evening.³⁴

Sheridan's success at the Battle of Booneville got the attention of his superiors. General Rosecrans wrote on 2 July, that the "fearless gallantry displayed by Colonel Sheridan and the officers and men of his command . . . deserve the thanks and admiration of the army."³⁵ He also recommended to General Halleck, "Sheridan ought to be made a brigadier."³⁶ Sheridan's performance at Booneville resulted in another promotion, but he did not receive official word of it until his arrival in Louisville on 14 September 1862.³⁷

After the battle, Sheridan's brigade moved near Rienzi, Mississippi, closer to the rest of the Army of the Mississippi. There he refitted his unit and conducted drills and parades. He also sent out reconnaissance patrols and raids against nearby Confederate positions. A 27 July raid on the town of Ripley netted valuable information on the Confederate strategic plan. Sheridan's soldiers captured the postmaster and found a bag of mail with letters from Confederate soldiers.³⁸ The letters provided information that General Braxton Bragg was moving his army east to Chattanooga. Sheridan quickly passed this information to his superiors. His performance led them to again recommend his promotion. On 30 July, Brigadier Generals Rosecrans, Granger, Asboth, Elliott, and Sullivan sent General Halleck a telegram:

Brigadiers scarce; good ones scarce. Asboth goes on the month's leave you gave him ten months since; Granger has temporary command. The undersigned respectfully beg that you obtain the promotion of Sheridan. He is worth his weight in gold. His Ripley expedition has brought us captured letters of immense value, as well as prisoners, showing rebel plans and dispositions, as you will learn from District Commander.³⁹

Sheridan's brigade continued conducting raids for the next month and had one more major engagement before leaving Mississippi. On 26 August, a Confederate cavalry force under Colonel William C. Faulkner pushed aside Sheridan's picket line and entered his camp near Rienzi, while most of the unit was relaxing. Alerted by the bugler's call "To Arms," the men grabbed their rifles and halted the attack with the assistance of the artillery. Sheridan then ordered two of his battalions (from the Seventh Kansas) to charge the Confederates. The counterattack sent the Confederates, who had not expected much resistance, fleeing.⁴⁰

On 4 September 1862, General Grant ordered Brigadier General Gordon Granger to move to Louisville with a division to reinforce the Army of the Ohio under General

Don Carlos Buell. Bragg's Army of Tennessee had invaded Kentucky and was moving toward Louisville in an attempt to turn the state for the Confederacy. Sheridan deployed under Granger's Fifth Division, Army of the Mississippi, as commander of the Second Michigan Cavalry after turning over command of his brigade.⁴¹ Prior to leaving, Sheridan was given a black horse he named Rienzi as a gift from Captain Archibald P. Campbell.⁴² Sheridan would ride Rienzi throughout the rest of the war.

Sheridan arrived in Louisville on 14 September with the Second Michigan Cavalry and the Pea Ridge brigade. He reported to Union headquarters there, under the command of Brigadier General William Nelson. Nelson had commanded the Fourth Division, Army of the Ohio, but relinquished command and went to Kentucky under orders from Buell to organize troops assembling for the defense of the state. Nelson informed Sheridan that he was promoted to brigadier general effective 1 July 1862, the date of the Battle of Booneville. He also told Sheridan that he would assume command of the rest of the division and set up a defense of the city. He would get several regiments of recruits when they reached Louisville.⁴³

When Buell arrived in Louisville, he reorganized his army into three corps to incorporate the new units. Sheridan was initially placed in command of an infantry brigade in a division in Brigadier General Charles C. Gilbert's Third Corps. Sheridan complained to Colonel James B. Fry, Buell's Chief of Staff, when he found out that Gilbert's promotion was probationary, not even approved by Congress. Technically, Sheridan outranked Gilbert. Buell responded by placing Sheridan in charge of the Eleventh Division. Although still under Gilbert's command, the responsibility of the larger command satisfied him.⁴⁴

The Army of the Ohio left Louisville on 1 October to begin a campaign to destroy the Confederate army in Kentucky and liberate eastern Tennessee. Facing Confederate skirmishers from the time they began the march, the Union forces arrived at Bardstown on 4 October, only to find that the Confederates had abandoned it earlier. The Army of the Ohio continued moving southeast, with each corps on a separate route. When Buell received reports that Confederates were located at Perryville, he ordered his units to converge there.⁴⁵

Sheridan's division encountered skirmishers as they approached Perryville on 7 October. Gilbert ordered Sheridan to seize the heights above Doctor's Creek, west of Perryville. Sheridan moved on the heights with Colonel Daniel McCook's (brother of Alexander McCook) brigade and an artillery battery in the lead, and drove Confederate forces off the hill early in the morning on 8 October. The soldiers had little water on the long, hot march from Louisville, so Sheridan sent another brigade forward to flush out sharpshooters and get water from Doctor's Creek. This upset Gilbert, who was afraid the move would start a battle before Buell and the rest of the army was prepared. Sheridan's position was in the center of the Union line.⁴⁶

The Confederates attacked just as First Corps (under Major General Alexander McCook) moved into position on Sheridan's left flank in the early afternoon. Sheridan tried unsuccessfully to signal First Corps elements of the impending attack. Sheridan's division fought back five Confederate assaults during the battle, holding the Union center. Confederate assaults came close to Sheridan's lines as his left flank was temporarily open, but his troops fought them off, at one point counterattacking with a bayonet charge.⁴⁷ Additionally, Sheridan's artillery helped stop the rebel advance against

First Corps. Sheridan's division lost forty-four killed, two hundred ninety-two wounded, and fourteen missing in the fighting that day.⁴⁸ Killed in the fighting on Sheridan's left was Brigadier General William R. Terrill (whom Sheridan had clashed with at West Point), and captured was Brigadier General William H. Lytle (later one of Sheridan's brigade commanders at Chickamauga).⁴⁹

The Battle of Perryville was Sheridan's first major engagement as a division commander. His performance impressed both his superiors and subordinates. A soldier from the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin described Sheridan's command presence, "He was always seen in every battle that followed--clear to the front. He was on foot and down among the guns directing their fire on the advancing lines of the enemy."⁵⁰ Sheridan also showed great concern about the welfare of his troops after the battle by convincing Gilbert to allow him to move forward his wagon train to resupply the troops as a reward for their performance. This was in contradiction to Buell's order to keep all wagons in the rear for their safety. Sheridan wrote in his memoirs that this act "was a great boon, and at that moment a more welcome result than would have been a complete victory minus this concession," since his troops had gone several days without rations.⁵¹

Buell prepared his army for an attack by the Confederates the following morning, but the Army of Tennessee withdrew from Perryville. Although he had limited tactical success and inflicted greater casualties than he took, Bragg decided to abandon Kentucky and withdraw into Tennessee.⁵² Remaining in Kentucky did not offer Bragg the opportunity for success since he was low on supplies and had erroneously based the campaign "on the premise that large numbers of Kentuckians would rise to help rid their state of Union troops."⁵³ Buell's army did not start its pursuit of Bragg's army until 10

October. The Army of the Ohio spent 9 October taking care of wounded soldiers, burying the dead, and resting.⁵⁴ Sheridan's division took part in the pursuit, fighting skirmishers along the way, finally stopping at Crab Orchard. Bragg's forces had escaped the slow pursuit of the Army of the Ohio and passed through the Cumberland Gap. As a result of his failure to destroy Bragg's army and move south to liberate eastern Tennessee, Buell was relieved of command and replaced by Major General William S. Rosecrans on 30 October 1862.⁵⁵

Sheridan marched his division from Crab Orchard to Bowling Green, Kentucky, arriving on 1 November 1862.⁵⁶ Major General Rosecrans arrived at Bowling Green on 2 November and reorganized the army.⁵⁷ Renamed the Army of the Cumberland, Rosecrans' new command retained the three corps structure of the Army of the Ohio. However, Gilbert was no longer a corps commander, replaced by Major General George H. Thomas. Rosecrans moved Sheridan's division under Major General Alexander McCook's corps, redesignated as the Third Division of the right wing.⁵⁸ Brigadier General Joshua Sill, a West Point classmate of Sheridan's, requested assignment to his division and became one of his brigade commanders.⁵⁹ This arrangement put Sheridan under command of a former West Point roommate, who graduated a year ahead of him because of his suspension.

Under pressure from Washington, Rosecrans set out to move against Bragg's army. Intelligence sources indicated that Bragg was moving his army to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, so Rosecrans decided to move the Army of the Cumberland to Nashville, the state capitol, approximately thirty-five miles northwest of Murfreesboro. Sheridan's division left Bowling Green on 5 November as one of the lead elements of the Army of

the Cumberland. Sheridan faced little resistance on the way and arrived in Nashville on 7 November. For the next month, Sheridan's division manned a skirmish line about seven miles west of the city due to Confederate activity, while Rosecrans had his rail lines repaired and accumulated supplies.⁶⁰

During this time, Sheridan made a significant change on his staff that would positively impact his operations through the Battle of Chickamauga. He hired a civilian scout James Card, a Tennessee native who supported the Union. Card met with Sheridan one morning and "offered to the Union cause his services in an capacity in which they might be useful."⁶¹ Card's knowledge of the terrain and contacts among other Union supporters in Tennessee would prove invaluable.

On 26 December, the Army of the Cumberland started its move south to attack Bragg's Army of Tennessee at its winter quarters in Murfreesboro. President Lincoln pushed Rosecrans to make the attack when he learned that Confederate President Jefferson Davis weakened Bragg's army to reinforce Vicksburg, Mississippi, which was under siege by Grant.⁶² Rosecrans had each of his corps moving along separate routes toward Murfreesboro, and McCook's corps moved on the right flank down the Nolensville Turnpike. McCook's corps, led by Brigadier General Jefferson C. Davis' division, with Sheridan's division second in the order of march, took four days to travel the thirty-five miles to Murfreesboro; encountering Confederate skirmishers from the time they left Nashville. The Army of the Cumberland was also slowed by bad weather, heavy rain and fog every day.⁶³

At Murfreesboro, Rosecrans planned to attack Bragg's army by holding on the right flank (McCook's) and attacking on the left.⁶⁴ After heavy skirmishing on 30

December, McCook emplaced his corps in a defensive line two to three miles west of Murfreesboro with Brigadier General R. W. Johnson on the right, Davis' division in the center, and Sheridan's division on the left, tied into Brigadier General Negley's division of Major General Thomas' corps (the center of the Army of the Cumberland). McCook received information on the enemy's disposition to his front from a civilian living in the area (examination of the battlefield after the battle proved the information was accurate) and sent the man back to Rosecrans' headquarters for further questioning. On the night of 30 December, Rosecrans ordered McCook to build large fires on his right flank to deceive the enemy that Union troops were massing there.⁶⁵

The Battle of Stones River started at about 0630 on 31 December, as the Army of Tennessee attacked the Army of the Cumberland right flank. (Both Bragg and Rosecrans had the same plan, attacking the enemy's right flank, and Bragg struck first).⁶⁶ The Confederates quickly overran Johnson's and Davis' divisions, which retired "in great confusion," opening up Sheridan's right flank.⁶⁷ The Confederate troops attacked Sheridan's right flank, Sill's First Brigade, at 0715. Through massed artillery, followed by rifle fire when the attackers were within yards, Sill's brigade repelled the attack. Sill died leading a bayonet charge counterattack. As Johnson's and Davis' divisions continued their retreat, Sheridan moved Sill's and Colonel Frederick Schaefer's (Second) brigades at a right angle, oriented to the south, to protect the Union right flank.

Sheridan's division repulsed four more attacks during the day, losing two more brigade commanders killed (Schaefer and Colonel George W. Roberts, Third Brigade), before it was forced to withdraw for lack of ammunition. One of Sheridan's two artillery batteries, Battery G First Missouri Light Artillery, commanded by Captain Henry

Hescock, played a key role in disrupting the early attacks.⁶⁸ However, the First Missouri ran out of ammunition and lost a section when troops were unable to move the guns during the withdrawal because all the horses were killed. Sheridan's other artillery battery, Captain Houghtaling's Battery C, First Illinois Light Artillery, lost all of its equipment.⁶⁹

Sheridan's Second and Third brigades reentered the fight after getting a resupply of ammunition and made a counterattack, recapturing two artillery pieces. At the end of the day, Sheridan's division took up positions facing south, with Davis' division to the right. The division fought back one more brigade-sized charge on 1 January 1863, and attacks and skirmishing on 2 and 3 January, the last fighting of the Battle of Stones River.⁷⁰ Bragg withdrew his army thirty-five miles south to Tullahoma, leaving the battlefield and a costly victory to Rosecrans.⁷¹

At Stones River, Sheridan lost two hundred thirty-seven killed, nine hundred eighty-nine wounded, and four hundred seven missing, a total of one thousand six hundred thirty-three⁷² of his strength of four thousand one hundred fifty-four, over 39 percent. Sheridan was recognized by McCook for "gallant conduct" and "conscientious attention to duty"⁷³ and recommended for promotion to major general by Rosecrans.⁷⁴ Sheridan's men fought well in the face of an enemy attack with an estimated strength advantage of three to one,⁷⁵ holding the Union right flank long enough for a reorganization of the lines when the other two divisions of McCook's corps fled.

After the battle, Sheridan's division spent 5 January caring for wounded and burying the dead. On 6 January, the division moved three miles south of Murfreesboro and set up camp near the banks of Stones River. Sheridan immediately reinstilled

discipline by punishing four officers found guilty of abandoning their units during the battle. He formed the division in a square and had the officers marched to the center of the formation. There he told “them that I would not humiliate any officer or soldier by requiring him to touch their disgraced swords, I compelled them to deliver theirs up to my colored servant, who also cut from their coats every insignia of rank.”⁷⁶ Sheridan later wrote that the action was effective since “from that day no officer in that division ever abandoned his colors.”⁷⁷

Sheridan’s division would spend the next few months in this camp. During that time, the Army of the Cumberland was reorganized, and McCook’s corps redesignated the XX Corps. Within Third Division, all three brigades received new commanders. First Brigade was temporarily commanded by Colonel Francis T. Sherman (Eighty-eighth Illinois) until the end of April, when Brigadier William H. Lytle took command. Lieutenant Colonel Bernard L. Laiboldt of the Second Missouri Regiment, who took over the Second Brigade when Schaefer was killed, remained in command. Colonel Luther P. Bradley, who replaced Roberts at Stones River, retained command of the Third Brigade.⁷⁸ Thus, during the next few months while the army gathered supplies, Sheridan’s division reorganized into the formation it would fight in at Chickamauga. Sheridan was promoted to Major General on 10 April 1863, with an effective date of 31 December 1862.⁷⁹

The Army of the Cumberland stayed in the vicinity of Murfreesboro until 24 June 1863, when it started the Tullahoma campaign. Sheridan’s Division spent the winter manning skirmish lines, resting, and training. Sheridan prepared for the next campaign by sending out his civilian scout James Card on reconnaissance missions. These missions

were successful in that Sheridan gained valuable information on the terrain he would travel, but resulted in the loss of one of Card's brothers, who was captured and hanged by Confederate troops.⁸⁰

Philip H. Sheridan rose quickly in the Union army from the beginning of the Civil War. After receiving no promotions in almost eight years of service on the frontier, he rose from second lieutenant to major general in twenty-one months. He displayed a belligerent attitude toward superiors with whom he disagreed, on several occasions almost ruining his career. However, impressing the right people with a good performance in quartermaster duties led him to command, where his courageous performances earned him the respect of his superiors and subordinates and promotions.

Sheridan did not devise any revolutionary tactics, but he was an effective combat leader because he was always at the front, knew how to deploy his troops, and used his artillery properly. He established a good intelligence network in Tennessee, gaining valuable information from Union supporters, but he did not always use this information well. Although he knew the disposition of the enemy the day before the start of the Battle of Stones River, he did not prepare for the Confederate attack. His soldiers ran out of ammunition quickly and had to fight with their bayonets before withdrawing for resupply. Since Sheridan knew that he would face a numerically superior enemy in the attack, he should have pre-positioned more ammunition with his front-line soldiers. Instead, his ammunition wagons were captured. His care for his soldiers' welfare at times outweighed tactical preparedness. At Perryville his primary concern was feeding his troops, despite the need for ammunition at the front after the battle on 8 October 1862.

Major General Philip H. Sheridan was an experienced and proven division commander by the time he fought at Chickamauga. He had great knowledge of his brigades, regiments, and soldiers, since most had fought with him at the Battles of Perryville and Stones River. He knew his officers and their capabilities well, with few exceptions. He also knew the abilities and limitations of his peers and superiors, specifically Alexander McCook. Philip H. Sheridan was prepared to lead a division in battle when he arrived at Chickamauga on 19 September 1863.

¹Roger Zeimet, "Philip H. Sheridan and the Civil War in the West" (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1985), 479.

²Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 437.

³Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1888), 1:2.

⁴Zeimet, 6.

⁵*Ibid.*, 5.

⁶David N. Doyle and Owen D. Edwards, ed., *America and Ireland, 1776-1976: The American Identity and the Irish Connection* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 227.

⁷Sheridan, 1:5-7.

⁸*Ibid.*, 7.

⁹Zeimet, 9.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹Sheridan, 1:13-14.

¹²Zeimet, 13.

¹³*Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 16.

- ¹⁵Sheridan, 1:35.
- ¹⁶Ibid., 93-94.
- ¹⁷Zeimet, 55.
- ¹⁸Ibid., 72.
- ¹⁹Sheridan, 1:124-125.
- ²⁰Zeimet, 72-74.
- ²¹Ibid., 82.
- ²²Ibid., 75-79.
- ²³Ibid., 80-81.
- ²⁴Ibid., 82.
- ²⁵Idem.
- ²⁶Ibid., 85.
- ²⁷Ibid., 88.
- ²⁸Ibid. 97-102.
- ²⁹Warner, 141-142.
- ³⁰Zeimet, 103.
- ³¹Warner, 410.
- ³²Paul Andrew Hutton, ed., *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 30.
- ³³Zeimet, 107-108.
- ³⁴Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 29.
- ³⁵Zeimet, 112-113.
- ³⁶Ibid., 113.
- ³⁷Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 42-43.
- ³⁸Ibid., 35.

³⁹*The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 70 volumes in 128 parts (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. 17, pt. 2, 139 (cited hereafter as *OR*; all Series 1).

⁴⁰Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 37-38.

⁴¹Zeimet, 123; and Frank J. Welcher, *The Union Army 1861-1865, Organization and Operations*, volume 2, *The Western Theatre* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 190.

⁴²Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 38-39.

⁴³Zeimet, 140; Warner, 344; and Welcher, 203.

⁴⁴Zeimet, 144.

⁴⁵Lowell Harrison, "Death on a Dry River," *Civil War Times Illustrated* (May 1979): 9.

⁴⁶*OR*, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1081-1082.

⁴⁷Zeimet, 164.

⁴⁸*OR*, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036.

⁴⁹Harrison, 46.

⁵⁰Zeimet, 163.

⁵¹Sheridan, 1:198-199.

⁵²Grady McWhiney, *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1969), 319, 321.

⁵³Steven E. Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 7-9.

⁵⁴Zeimet, 171.

⁵⁵Lowell Harrison, 47.

⁵⁶Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 56.

⁵⁷Zeimet, 193.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 196.

- ⁵⁹Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs* , 58.
- ⁶⁰Zeimet, 197-198.
- ⁶¹Sheridan, 1:206-207.
- ⁶²Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns*, 2-3.
- ⁶³OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 252-254.
- ⁶⁴Ibid., 192.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., 254-257.
- ⁶⁶Stanley F. Horn, “The Seesaw Battle of Stone’s River,” *Civil War Times Illustrated*, February 1964, 8.
- ⁶⁷OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 348.
- ⁶⁸Ibid., 349-351.
- ⁶⁹Ibid., 352-353.
- ⁷⁰Ibid., 350.
- ⁷¹Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns*, 9.
- ⁷²OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 209.
- ⁷³Ibid., 257.
- ⁷⁴Ibid., 198.
- ⁷⁵Ibid., 257.
- ⁷⁶Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 79.
- ⁷⁷Ibid.
- ⁷⁸Zeimet, 289-290, 297-298.
- ⁷⁹Ibid., 297.
- ⁸⁰Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 83-85.

CHAPTER 3

THIRD DIVISION, TWENTIETH CORPS BEFORE THE BATTLE

To our subordinates we owe everything we are or hope to be. For it is our subordinates, not our superiors, who raise us to the dizzyest of professional heights, and it is our subordinates who can and will, if we deserve it, bury us in the deepest mire of disgrace. When the chips are down and our subordinates have accepted us as their leader, we don't need any superior to tell us; we see it in their eyes and in their faces, in the barracks, on the field, and on the battle line. And on that final day when we must be ruthlessly demanding, cruel and heartless, they will rise as one to do our bidding, knowing full well that it may be their last act in this life.¹

Colonel Albert G. Jenkins, Eighth Virginia Cavalry

Third Division, Twentieth Corps was organized in three brigades, each of which consisted of four infantry regiments and an artillery battery. First Brigade and Second Brigade were assigned as part of Sheridan's division in September 1862 and fought their first action under him at the Battle of Perryville. Third Brigade joined the division in November 1862 and saw its first action under Sheridan at the Battle of Stones River. However, the heavy losses during the Battle of Stones River, 39 percent casualties in the division, resulted in a large turnover of personnel, including three brigade commanders and several regimental commanders. This chapter will focus on the composition of the division, the training and experience of the division's units and commanders, its actions during the Tullahoma campaign, and the events leading to the Battle of Chickamauga.

After the Battle of Stones River, the War Department approved the reorganization of the Army of the Cumberland (Major General William S. Rosecrans). As a result, the grand divisions were designated corps, the Fourteenth (Major General George H. Thomas), the Twentieth (Major General Alexander McD. McCook), and the Twenty-first

(Major General Thomas L. Crittenden).² Sheridan's division became Third Division, Twentieth Corps.

First Brigade was organized as follows:

First Brigade, Brigadier General William H. Lytle

Thirty-Sixth Illinois

Eighty-Eighth Illinois

Twenty-First Michigan

Twenty-Fourth Wisconsin

Indiana Light Artillery, Eleventh Battery

Brigadier General William H. Lytle, commander of First Brigade at the Battle of Chickamauga, was born on 2 November 1826 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was the oldest of four children and only son of Robert and Elizabeth Lytle, the third generation of one of the leading families in the Midwest. His family had a distinguished history of military and public service. Lytle's great grandfather, Captain William Lytle, fought in the French and Indian Wars and commanded Fort Pitt before the American Revolution. He moved his family to Kentucky in 1781 after receiving land in the Virginia territory for his military service. Lytle's grandfather, William, established the town of Williamsburg, Ohio in 1801. He moved the family to Cincinnati in 1806. A businessman and philanthropist, he became one of Cincinnati's leading citizens. William Lytle held several positions in public service, including surveyor general of the United States and major general in the Ohio Militia, and served in the War of 1812.³

Robert Todd Lytle, the father of William Haines Lytle, was a lawyer and U.S. Congressman. He also held the positions of surveyor general of the United States and

major general in the Ohio Militia and was involved in politics until his death in 1839 at age thirty-five. Both father and grandfather introduced young William H. Lytle to the military, regularly participating in local parades and ceremonies, and displays of equipment and uniforms filled the Lytle mansion. Robert Lytle also passed on to his son his passion for education and public service.⁴

William H. Lytle graduated first in his class at Cincinnati College in 1843 at the age of sixteen, then studied law. Inspired by patriotism during the Mexican War, Lytle entered the military in September 1847 and was elected lieutenant in Company L, Second Ohio Volunteer Regiment. Lytle arrived in Mexico in November and did not see any combat. Most of his experience was garrison duty, as he learned that “war was not all glamour: it included long marches, unpleasant weather, and short periods of action between long intervals of routine.”⁵ He returned home in 1848, attaining a promotion (by election) to captain.

Lytle practiced law and entered politics, and was elected to the Ohio legislature on the Democratic ticket in 1851. He served one term and lost in his reelection bid. He remained active in law and politics during the remainder of the 1850s. He supported the rights of slaveholders and campaigned for Stephen A. Douglas in the 1860 presidential campaign. He did not believe that abolition could be achieved by peaceful means. Despite his support for states’ rights and sympathy for slave owners, Lytle “held a national view and strong Pro-Union sentiments.”⁶

Lytle continued his military service during this period, and held the position of major general of the First Division, Ohio Volunteer Militia, when the Civil War hostilities opened at Fort Sumter in April 1861. An accomplished poet, most of his work

had a military theme. One of his earliest poems “The Soldier’s Death,” written in 1840, was one of several he wrote describing death on the battlefield.⁷

At the beginning of the Civil War, Lytle set up Camp Harrison near Cincinnati for recruits. Due to his desire for action, he took the position of colonel of the Tenth Ohio Volunteer Infantry and deployed to western Virginia in June 1861. Lytle saw his first combat on 10 September at Carnifex Ferry and was wounded in the leg leading a charge against Confederate entrenchments. Lytle gained a reputation for personal courage for his actions, although “some believed he had a propensity for unnecessary risk taking.”⁸ He returned to Cincinnati after the battle to recover from his wound.

Lytle next fought at the battle of Perryville on 8 October 1862. He commanded the Seventeenth Brigade in Brigadier General Lovell Rousseau’s division, Major General Alexander McCook’s corps (on Sheridan’s left flank). Lytle was shot in the head and captured while trying to hold his position when the Confederates overran the Union left flank. He received parole and returned to Cincinnati. Lytle’s parole agreement stated that, “I will not bear arms against the Confederate States, nor will I in any way aid or abet its enemies, until I am regularly exchanged, under penalty of death; nor will I disclose anything that I have seen or heard in said Confederate States Army to its prejudice.”⁹

Lytle returned to active duty after the exchange was completed on 4 February 1863.¹⁰ He reported to Rosecrans’ Army of the Cumberland at Murfreesboro and took command of First Brigade, Third Division, Twentieth Corps, on 22 April 1863.¹¹ Although pleased to take the command, Lytle was disappointed that he did not get a division command and sent several letters asking friends to encourage Governor Dennison of Ohio to appoint him commander of an Ohio division.¹²

First Brigade was formed under Sheridan's Eleventh Division at Louisville in September 1862. The unit fought at the Battle of Perryville as Thirty-seventh Brigade under Colonel Nicholas Greusel. In heavy fighting, the brigade lost fifteen killed, one hundred twenty-four wounded, and four missing or captured.¹³ Although Sheridan "was very loath to relieve Colonel Greusel" and thought that he had "indicated much military skill and bravery, and at the battle of Perryville had handled his men with the experience of a veteran,"¹⁴ Brigadier General Joshua Sill replaced him when Rosecrans took command and reorganized the Army of the Ohio. Sill, a roommate of Sheridan's at West Point, previously commanded a division at Perryville, but was replaced by the more senior brigadier Richard W. Johnson, during the reorganization.¹⁵ Greusel returned to the Thirty-sixth Illinois Regiment.

First Brigade experienced heavier fighting during the Battle of Stones River. Positioned on the right flank of the division, the brigade repelled the first Confederate assault at daybreak on 31 December 1862 which overran Johnson's and Davis' divisions. General Sill counterattacked and was killed leading a charge.¹⁶ Colonel Greusel led the brigade through the remainder of the battle, holding off a second charge. The soldiers ran out of ammunition after the second charge, withdrew under pressure, and got an ammunition resupply from Brigadier General Rousseau's trains. Greusel reformed the defensive line at a right angle to prevent Sheridan's division from getting flanked, but did not face any more heavy activity during the battle.¹⁷ The brigade suffered heavy casualties: one hundred four killed, three hundred sixty-five wounded, and two hundred missing or captured.¹⁸

Colonel Greusel resigned from the army after the Battle of Stones River, and Colonel Francis T. Sherman took command of the brigade.¹⁹ Sherman held command until replaced by Lytle on 22 April 1863, and returned to the Eighty-eighth Illinois. Lytle kept the brigade staff intact, except for two changes. One of the new officers he added to his staff was Lieutenant Alfred Pirtle, as one of his Aides de Camp.²⁰

Thirty-sixth Illinois, Colonel Silas Miller

The Thirty-sixth Illinois Regiment was organized at Aurora, Illinois, and mustered on 23 September 1861.²¹ The regiment was attached to the Army of Southwest Missouri in January 1862 and participated in Curtis' campaign against Price, fighting in the Battles of Pea Ridge (Arkansas), 6 to 8 March 1862. Next, the regiment was involved in the occupation of Corinth, Mississippi, 30 May 1862, and the pursuit to Booneville, 31 May to 6 June 1862. Under the command of Colonel Nicholas Greusel, the Thirty-sixth moved to Louisville, Kentucky, 6 to 19 September 1862, and was attached to Thirty-seventh Brigade, Eleventh Division (commanded by Sheridan), Army of the Ohio. Greusel commanded the brigade during the pursuit of Bragg and the Battle of Perryville, where the regiment saw action.²² When the Army of the Ohio was designated the Army of the Cumberland, the regiment remained under Sheridan's command in First Brigade, Third Division, Right Wing and Colonel Greusel returned as commander.

During the Battle of Stones River, Greusel took command of the brigade when General Sill was killed leading a charge after repelling an assault on the morning of 31 December 1862. Major Silas Miller assumed command of the regiment.²³ The regiment fought courageously, sustaining heavy losses: forty-six killed, one hundred fifty-one wounded, fifteen missing or captured.²⁴ Colonel Greusel again returned to the regiment,

but resigned his commission, and Major Miller took command on 13 February 1863.²⁵ The Thirty-sixth Illinois stayed in First Brigade, Third Division when the Right Wing of the Army of the Cumberland was redesignated Twentieth Corps on 9 January 1863.²⁶

Eighty-eighth Illinois, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander S. Chadbourne

The Eighty-eighth Illinois Regiment, also known as the “Second Board of Trade Regiment,” was organized at Camp Douglas, Chicago, Illinois, and mustered on 4 September 1862.²⁷ The regiment, commanded by Colonel Francis T. Sherman, left Chicago on 4 September 1862 and deployed to Louisville, where it was attached to Thirty-seventh Brigade, Eleventh Division (commanded by Sheridan), Army of the Ohio.²⁸ The unit participated in the pursuit of Bragg in Kentucky and saw its first action at the Battle of Perryville on 8 October. The regiment held off an attack in the center of the Union line, losing five killed and thirty-eight wounded in the battle.²⁹

The unit’s next major engagement was at the Battle of Stones River. After skirmishing on 30 December, the regiment fought off two Confederate assaults on 31 December, reforming its defensive line after conducting an orderly withdrawal when overwhelming enemy forces turned the Union right flank.³⁰ The regiment lost fourteen killed, fifty wounded, and forty-eight missing in the battle.³¹ After the battle, Colonel Sherman temporarily commanded the newly designated First Brigade, Third Division, Twentieth Corps, until Lytle’s arrival. Colonel Sherman returned to the Eighty-eighth Illinois and commanded the unit through the Tullahoma Campaign, but was not present at the Battle of Chickamauga, where Lieutenant Colonel Alexander S. Chadbourne led the regiment as acting commander.³² Chadbourne was the unit’s second in command from the time it was organized.

Twenty-First Michigan, Colonel William B. McCreery

The Twenty-first Michigan Regiment was organized at Ionia and Grand Rapids and mustered on 9 September 1862.³³ The regiment, commanded by Colonel Ambrose A. Stevens, left Ionia on 12 September 1862 and deployed to Louisville, where it was attached to Thirty-seventh Brigade, Eleventh Division (commanded by Sheridan), Army of the Ohio.³⁴

The unit saw its first action at the Battle of Perryville as part of the pursuit of Bragg. Initially held in reserve, Sheridan employed the regiment to support the division's artillery batteries firing to repel an enemy attack. Captain C. E. Belknap described the unit's first combat:

stray bullets came zipping above our heads, and a moment later that corn field seemed alive with men in gray in long lines, coming with yells and cheers right at us. They were after our battery in earnest.

Back came our skirmishers out of the fence corners on the run, taking their places in the ranks. The battery guns were depressed a bit, their shells striking and throwing rails into the air, and it seemed Old Nick had let loose all his imps. Grape and canister followed the shells; the regiment opened with their muskets, a continuous roar. Still on came those rebel battleflags until the line of the fence was reached, where they halted. The cornfield was swept by a tornado of lead, and those brave Southerners went down in hundreds.³⁵

Twenty-first Michigan stopped three Confederate assaults during the battle.

Colonel Greusel, the brigade commander, wrote about the unit's performance, "The coolness and bravery of both officers and men of this regiment during the engagement was truly commendable."³⁶ The regiment had casualties of twenty-two wounded in the battle, including Colonel Stevens.³⁷ After the battle, Colonel Stevens resigned due to ill health, and Colonel McCreery took command of the regiment.³⁸

The regiment saw its next action at the Battle of Stones River. Initially in a position supporting the Eighty-eighth Illinois, the regiment repelled the first Confederate assault it faced as the Union right flank was turned. The Twenty-first then fell back under pressure several times, protecting two of the division's artillery batteries, finally forming a defensive line to the right of the Eighty-eighth Illinois in the evening of 31 December 1862. The regiment suffered heavy casualties: eighteen killed, eighty-nine wounded, and thirty-six missing or captured.³⁹ At the conclusion of the battle, the Twenty-first Michigan was an experienced, battle-hardened unit.

Twenty-fourth Wisconsin, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore S. West

The Twenty-fourth Wisconsin Regiment was organized at Milwaukee and mustered on 15 August 1862. The regiment left Wisconsin on 5 September 1862 and moved to Cincinnati. On 18 September it deployed to Louisville, where it was attached to Thirty-seventh Brigade, Eleventh Division (commanded by Sheridan), Army of the Ohio.⁴⁰ The regiment participated in the pursuit of Bragg, but saw very little action at the Battle of Perryville, where it was held in reserve under Colonel Greusel, the brigade commander. The unit suffered only one casualty during the battle.⁴¹

Led by Major Elisha C. Hibbard, the Twenty-fourth saw its first major combat at the Battle of Stones River. After skirmishing late in the day on 30 December, the regiment took up a position on the right flank of the brigade. Due to the proximity of the enemy, the soldiers could not light fires and suffered through an intensely cold night. Early the next morning, the regiment faced a Confederate assault and initially held its ground. However, when the unit on its right broke and exposed its flank, the Twenty-fourth also broke ranks in the confusion. The unit reformed in an open field to the rear of

its earlier position and conducted an orderly withdrawal. Later in the day, the regiment took up a position with the rest of the brigade near the Murfreesboro Pike, but did not see any more action during the battle.⁴² The Twenty-fourth Wisconsin lost nineteen killed, fifty-seven wounded, and ninety-eight missing or captured.⁴³ Major Hibbard, the third commander in the regiment's short history, resigned after the Battle of Stones River, and was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Theodore S. West of Waukesha, Wisconsin.⁴⁴

Indiana Light Artillery, Eleventh Battery, Captain Arnold Sutermeister

The Eleventh Indiana Light Artillery Battery was organized at Indianapolis and mustered on 17 December 1861. The regiment left Indiana on 20 December 1861 and moved to Louisville, Kentucky. The battery served in the Army of the Ohio, participating in several campaigns under Major General Buell including the advance on Nashville in February 1862, the march to Savannah, Tennessee, 16 March to 7 April 1862, the siege of Corinth, Mississippi, 29 April to 30 May 1862, and the attack on Booneville, Mississippi, 31 May to 6 June 1862. The battery was sent back to Nashville, taking part in the siege, 12 September to 7 November 1862, and occupation as part of Fourteenth Corps, Army of the Cumberland. In January 1863, after the Battle of Stones River, the battery moved to Murfreesboro and served there until June 1863. The battery, consisting of two light twelve-pounder sections (four guns, Napoleons) and one rifled three-inch section (two guns), was attached to Sheridan's Division in June, just prior to the start of the Tullahoma Campaign.⁴⁵

Second Brigade was organized as follows:

Second Brigade, Colonel Bernard Laiboldt

Forty-Fourth Illinois

Seventy-Third Illinois

Second Missouri

Fifteenth Missouri

First Missouri Light Artillery, Battery G

Colonel Bernard Laiboldt, a naturalized German citizen from St. Louis, formerly a noncommissioned officer in the German army, first commanded the Second Missouri Regiment as a Lieutenant Colonel, and later the brigade in which it served. The brigade consisted of the Second and Fifteenth Missouri Regiments and Battery G, First Missouri Light Artillery, made up of German-Americans, and the Thirty-sixth and Forty-fourth Illinois Regiments with about half German-American soldiers.⁴⁶ While fighting as First Brigade, First Division, Army of Southwest Missouri, the unit distinguished itself at the Battle of Pea Ridge in March 1862, and was nicknamed the Pea Ridge Brigade.⁴⁷ In June 1862, the brigade, still under Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt's command, was designated Second Brigade, Fifth Division, commanded by Brigadier General Gordon Granger, in the Army of the Mississippi.⁴⁸ When General Grant ordered Granger to move to Louisville with his division to reinforce the Army of the Ohio under General Don Carlos Buell on 4 September 1862, the brigade moved again, redesignated as the Thirty-fifth Brigade in Sheridan's Eleventh Division.⁴⁹ One change was made to the organization, as Thirty-sixth Illinois moved to Thirty-seventh Brigade and the newly formed Seventy-third Illinois took its place, in order to spread experienced units throughout the new division.⁵⁰

Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt led the brigade at the Battle of Perryville. Due to an enemy advance, Sheridan ordered Laiboldt to clear the woods to the front of the division. Laiboldt led two advances with his Missouri regiments, while the Illinois regiments supported them with direct fire. The brigade was successful driving back Confederate forces across Chaplin Creek, enabling the division to hold the center for the Army of the Ohio.⁵¹ The brigade lost twenty-two killed, one hundred two wounded, and one missing or captured.⁵²

Colonel Frederick Schaefer took command of the brigade on 5 November 1862, as part of the reorganization of the Army of the Ohio into the Army of the Cumberland under Major General Rosecrans.⁵³ Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt moved back to take command of Second Missouri despite earning recognition from Sheridan for “great gallantry” at the Battle of Perryville.⁵⁴ On 31 December 1862, during the Battle of Stones River, the brigade reinforced First Brigade. Two regiments held off three Confederate assaults, despite getting flanked when the divisions on the right side broke. After running out of ammunition, the regiments fixed bayonets and conducted an orderly withdraw under heavy pressure. The other two regiments from the brigade covered the withdrawal until they ran out of ammunition, enabling Sheridan to reestablish his defensive line near the Murfreesboro Pike. About an hour later, after two regiments collected some ammunition from the trains of an adjacent unit, Schaefer led them forward and covered the withdrawal of Brigadier General Wood’s division. Colonel Schaefer was killed during this action, and Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt took charge of the brigade. The brigade prepared heavy breastworks and held its position for the remainder of the

battle.⁵⁵ Second Brigade's losses for the battle were seventy-one killed (including seven officers), two hundred eighty-one wounded and forty-six missing or captured.⁵⁶

Laiboldt retained command of the brigade during the reorganization of the Army of the Cumberland following the Battle of Stones River. He was promoted to Colonel, and led the command through the Tullahoma Campaign and the Battle of Chickamauga.

Forty-fourth Illinois, Colonel Wallace W. Barrett

The Forty-fourth Illinois Regiment was organized at Chicago and mustered on 13 September 1861. Wallace W. Barrett, a captain at the time, commanded Company B.⁵⁷ It moved first to St. Louis, Missouri, on 14 September, then on to Jefferson City 22 to 25 September. The regiment was attached to First Brigade (commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt), First Division, Army of Southwest Missouri in January 1862 and participated in Curtis' campaign against Price, fighting in the Battles of Pea Ridge (Arkansas), 6 to 8 March 1862. Next, the regiment was involved in the siege of Corinth, Mississippi, 29 to 30 May 1862, and the pursuit to Booneville, 31 May to 12 June 1862. The regiment remained under Laiboldt's command when the brigade became Second Brigade, Fifth Division (Granger), Army of Mississippi, in June 1862 and moved to Louisville, Kentucky, 17 to 19 September 1862. There it was attached to Thirty-seventh Brigade, Eleventh Division (Sheridan), Army of the Ohio.⁵⁸

The Forty-fourth saw little action at the Battle of Perryville, supporting two assaults by the brigade's Missouri regiments and securing the division's artillery. The regiment lost one killed and eleven wounded in the battle.⁵⁹ It experienced much heavier fighting during the Battle of Stones River. Commanded by Captain Wallace W. Barrett, the regiment was one of two from the brigade that reinforced First Brigade early on the

morning of 31 December 1862, fought off several Confederate assaults before conducting an orderly withdrawal when pressured and out of ammunition. The Forty-fourth Illinois lost twenty-nine killed, one hundred nine wounded, and seventeen missing or captured in the battle.⁶⁰ Barrett was later promoted to Colonel, the rank he held during the Battle of Chickamauga.

Seventy-third Illinois, Colonel James F. Jaques

The Seventy-third Illinois Regiment was organized at Camp Butler, Illinois, and mustered on 21 August 1862. The regiment deployed 23 to 25 August to Louisville, where it was attached to Thirty-fifth Brigade, Eleventh Division, Army of the Ohio.⁶¹

The Seventy-third was also known as the “Preacher Regiment” since all of its field grade officers and six of its captains were Methodist preachers.⁶² The regiment was formed by Colonel James F. Jaques, President of Quincy College, when the Civil War began. He “enlisted as a Chaplain of the Sixth Illinois cavalry, with rank of Captain,, but when President Lincoln called for three hundred thousand volunteers in July 1862, he was “commissioned by Governor Yates, his life long friend, a Colonel, with authority to raise what he was pleased to term, a Methodist Regiment.”⁶³ The unit had a tradition of holding formations in the morning and evening for prayer, but stopped it after deployment when the soldiers found items missing from their tents after each formation.

The regiment saw its first action at the Battle of Perryville on 8 October 1862. When the brigade moved forward to attack Confederates threatening the Union center, the Seventy-third took up a position supporting the Missouri regiments and protecting the artillery. Despite his deep religious convictions, Colonel Jaques showed a disposition for fighting, instructing his men, “War means killing; therefore let every shot be well

directed-aim at the head or at the heart and make sure work of it. Ready! Aim! Fire!⁶⁴
Facing heavy enemy fire, but well protected by timber, the regiment lost two killed and thirty-three wounded, while successfully holding its position.⁶⁵

At the Battle of Stones River, the Preacher Regiment initially was held in reserve by Colonel Schaefer and given the task of securing the artillery. However, as Confederate forces turned the right flank and units withdrew under heavy pressure, the regiment moved forward to stop the enemy advance. Captain Bergan, temporarily acting as commander of the First Battalion, repelled three charges by Confederate cavalry, protecting the rest of the brigade while it obtained ammunition and established a new defensive line.⁶⁶ The regiment lost sixteen killed, sixty-four wounded, and eight missing or captured during the Battle of Stones River.⁶⁷

Second Missouri, Major Arnold Beck

The Second Missouri Regiment was organized at St. Louis and mustered on 10 September 1861. It moved to Jefferson City later in the month and participated in Fremont's Campaign against Springfield 4 October to 8 November. The regiment was attached to First Brigade (commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt), First Division, Army of Southwest Missouri in January 1862 and participated in Curtis' campaign against Price, fighting in the Battles of Pea Ridge (Arkansas), 6 to 8 March 1862. Next, the regiment was involved in the advance to and siege of Corinth, Mississippi, 27 to 30 May 1862, and the pursuit to Booneville, 31 May to 6 June 1862. The regiment remained under Laiboldt's command when the brigade became Second Brigade, Fifth Division (Granger), Army of Mississippi, in June 1862 and moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, 26 August

to 4 September and Louisville, Kentucky, 17 to 19 September 1862. There it was attached to Thirty-fifth Brigade, Eleventh Division (Sheridan), Army of the Ohio.⁶⁸

The Second Missouri saw the most action in the brigade at the Battle of Perryville. It conducted two attacks in front of the brigade position driving enemy forces, including sharpshooters, down the hill, out of the woods and across Chaplin Creek. It suffered eighteen killed, fifty-one wounded, and one missing or captured in the battle.⁶⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt returned to command of the regiment on 5 November 1862 when Colonel Frederick Schaefer took command of the brigade as part of the reorganization of the Army of the Ohio into the Army of the Cumberland.⁷⁰ Initially held in reserve on 31 December 1862 at Stones River, the regiment soon deployed in a skirmish line to slow down the enemy advance when the Confederates broke through and turned the right flank. The regiment slowly fell back when attacked by overwhelming forces, although the two right flank companies were cut off and scattered. The regiment took up positions near the Murfreesboro Pike and halted the enemy advance, running out of ammunition. After another regiment relieved the Second Missouri, the unit drew ammunition and returned to the fight, holding off another enemy assault. At this point in the battle, Colonel Schaefer was killed. Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt resumed command of the brigade and Major Francis Ehrler took his regiment. The regiment ran out of ammunition for the second time that day, and moved back to the unit trains, returning to the defensive line the following morning.⁷¹ The Second Missouri lost seven killed, forty wounded, and fifteen missing or captured at Stones River.⁷²

Fifteenth Missouri, Colonel Joseph Conrad

The Fifteenth Missouri Regiment was organized at St. Louis and mustered in August and September 1861. It moved to Jefferson City later in the month and participated in Fremont's Campaign against Springfield 4 October to 8 November. The regiment was attached to First Brigade (Lieutenant Colonel Laiboldt), First Division, Army of Southwest Missouri in January 1862 and participated in Curtis' campaign against Price, fighting in the Battle of Pea Ridge (Arkansas), 6 to 8 March 1862. Next, the regiment was involved in the advance to and siege of Corinth, Mississippi, 27 to 30 May 1862, and the pursuit to Booneville, 31 May to 6 June 1862. The regiment remained under Laiboldt's command when the brigade became Second Brigade, Fifth Division (Granger) Army of the Mississippi in June 1862 and moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, 26 August to 14 September 1862, and Louisville, Kentucky, 17-19 September 1862. There it was attached to Thirty-fifth Brigade, Eleventh Division (Sheridan), Army of the Ohio.⁷³ The Fifteenth Missouri saw its next action at the Battle of Perryville on 8 October 1862. The regiment followed the Second Missouri in two assaults against the Confederates in the Union center. The regiment lost one killed and seven wounded in the fighting.⁷⁴

At the Battle of Stones River, the regiment fought its most intense combat in over six months. Under command of Lieutenant Colonel John Weber, the Fifteenth Missouri moved to reinforce First Brigade on the morning of 31 December 1862 and was soon heavily engaged as Confederate forces overran the Union right flank. Weber held the regiment in position, even when the units on both flanks broke, but finally had to withdraw when attacked from the flanks and front. The regiment made an orderly withdraw and counterattacked, recovering by hand an artillery piece, abandoned by a

battery in Brigadier General Davis' division. The regiment fought courageously, facing an enemy force six columns deep and finally withdrew again when it ran out of ammunition. Due to the support of the Second Missouri, which deployed skirmishers to cover the withdrawal, the Fifteenth Missouri lost minimally during its movement. The regiment linked up with the rest of the brigade and received ammunition. Colonel Schaefer ordered the regiment forward again, and was killed in the heavy fighting that ensued. The regiment then took up a position along the Chattanooga railroad, where the Brigade set up a new defensive line, and remained there for the rest of the battle.⁷⁵ During the fighting, the Fifteenth Missouri lost twelve killed, fifty-five wounded, and five missing or captured.⁷⁶

First Missouri Light Artillery, Battery G, Lieutenant Gustavus Schueler

Originally formed as part of Laiboldt's German-American brigade in St. Louis, Battery G was first commanded by Gustavus Schueler.⁷⁷ Battery G, First Missouri Light Artillery, also known as 'Hescock's' Battery saw its first action from October to November 1861 during Fremont's campaign in Missouri while attached to the Army of the West and Department of Missouri. Next it participated in the battles for New Madrid, Missouri, and Island No. 10, Mississippi River from 28 February to 8 April 1862. In April, the unit was attached to the First Division, Army of the Mississippi, and took part in the advance upon and siege of Corinth, Mississippi 29 April to 30 May 1862 and the pursuit to Booneville, 30 May to 12 June 1862. Later in June, the battery was attached to Fifth Division, under General Granger, Army of the Mississippi. It moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, 26 August to 4 September 1862 and continued on to Louisville, Kentucky, 12 to 19

September 1862. There it was attached to Eleventh Division (Sheridan), Army of the Ohio.⁷⁸

Sheridan kept the artillery under division control, and it saw its first combat with him at the Battle of Perryville on 8 October 1862. Battery G First Missouri was commanded by Captain Henry Hescok, Sheridan's Chief of Artillery. Sheridan sent the battery with Laiboldt's brigade to support his assault. When Sheridan saw McCook's corps on his left flank get hit by artillery, he moved Hescok's battery forward where it had enfilading fire. The battery was so effective from this position that the enemy had to move its artillery after less than ten minutes due to the heavy losses inflicted by the accurate fire from Battery G. Sheridan also credited the battery with stopping the enemy advance on McCook's corps.⁷⁹

In November 1862, Battery G First Missouri was attached to Second Brigade. It saw its first action in the Battle of Stones River on 30 December 1862, providing counterbattery fire and driving out skirmishers while the division moved into position near Murfreesboro. On 31 December, the battery was heavily engaged trying to stop the Confederate advance as the Union right flank broke. The battery fired until it ran out of ammunition before displacing in the morning as the division withdrew. Later in the day, First Missouri's Parrott section, under First Lieutenant R. C. M. Taliaferro, was sent forward to reinforce Captain Houghtaling's Battery C, First Illinois Light Artillery. The unit received heavy fire, losing a number of soldiers and horses. Taliaferro was shot in the head and killed trying to save his guns. Three guns from the First Missouri got back into the fight to support an advance before the unit took up position in the division's defensive line along the railroad. The battery fired again on 1 January 1863 against an

enemy brigade attempting to advance, and stopped it, killing forty soldiers in a five-minute battle. Battery G, First Missouri lost six killed, thirteen wounded, and one missing or captured in the Battle of Stones River.⁸⁰ For the Battle of Chickamauga, the battery had two sections of Napoleon light twelve pounders (four guns) and one Parrott section (two ten-pounder guns).⁸¹

Third Brigade was organized as follows:

Third Brigade, Colonel Luther P. Bradley

Twenty-second Illinois

Twenty-seventh Illinois

Forty-second Illinois

Fifty-first Illinois

First Illinois Light Artillery, Battery C

Third brigade, as organized for the Battle of Chickamauga, was First Brigade, Thirteenth Division, Army of the Ohio, in garrison at Nashville, Tennessee, from September to November 1862, under command of Colonel George W. Roberts. During the reorganization of the Army of the Ohio into the Army of the Cumberland, the brigade changed places with Thirty-sixth Brigade, commanded by Colonel Daniel McCook, and became Third Brigade, Third Division, of the army's right grand division.⁸² Sheridan thought highly of Roberts, writing that he was "an ideal soldier, both in mind and body. He was young, tall, handsome, brave, dashing, and possessed a balance-wheel of such good judgment that in his sphere of action no occasion could arise from which he would not reap the best results."⁸³

The brigade saw its first action under Sheridan at the Battle of Stones River. On 30 December 1862, at about 0900 hours, the brigade made contact with Confederate skirmishers as it advanced south on the Winchester Pike toward Murfreesboro. Roberts rotated skirmishers from his regiments throughout the day, losing seven killed and thirty-five wounded. The following morning, at about 0830 hours, Roberts led a charge, with two regiments forward, two following to the rear, into the Confederate columns as they broke through the Union right flank. After a short advance, the brigade gave up the position it held as it was engaged from the front and left flank. Roberts set up a new defensive line to counter the attacks from two sides, but the brigade took heavy artillery fire. The brigade held this position for two hours, suffering almost four hundred casualties, including Colonel Roberts and Colonel Harrington, commander of the Twenty-seventh Illinois, killed. Colonel Luther P. Bradley of the Fifty-first Illinois took command of the brigade, but could not make contact with Sheridan. He found Brigadier General Davis, and reinforced his division in a fight later that morning. Bradley led a charge with the Twenty-seventh and Fifty-first Illinois against a Confederate brigade as Union troops continued to fall back in disorder, and defeated the brigade, capturing about two hundred prisoners. About 1300 hours, Bradley established a new defensive line, and the soldiers were rearmed, having run out of ammunition during the earlier firefights. The brigade had contact again on 1 January 1863, while fortifying its defensive position. A Confederate brigade advanced toward the brigade's position, and Bradley sent out an element of the Twenty-seventh Illinois that captured one hundred nineteen men, including two lieutenants. Although the brigade was involved in some skirmishing the next few days, this was its last major action of the battle.⁸⁴ The brigade lost sixty-two

killed, three hundred forty-three wounded, and one hundred sixty-one missing or captured during the Battle of Stones River.⁸⁵

Colonel Luther P. Bradley retained command of the brigade after the Battle of Stones River. Born on 8 December 1822 in New Haven, Connecticut, Bradley received his military education as a member of the Connecticut militia, where he held several commands. Bradley moved to Chicago in 1855 and worked as a bookkeeper. He also served in the Illinois militia prior to the Civil War. He was mustered into service with the Fifty-first Illinois regiment as a Lieutenant Colonel, and served with the unit until taking command of Third Brigade at Stones River.⁸⁶

Twenty-Second Illinois, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Swanwick

The Twenty-second Illinois Regiment was organized at Belleville, Illinois, and mustered on 25 June 1861. Initially attached to the District of Cairo, the regiment fought at Charlestown-Bird's Point, 19 to 20 August 1861, and Belmont, 6 to 7 November 1861.⁸⁷ Colonel Henry Dougherty, the regimental commander, was wounded in both of these operations, and captured at Belmont. Although he was released several weeks later, he never returned to duty with the regiment.⁸⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Harrison E. Hart took command of the regiment, which was attached to Second Brigade, Fourth Division, Army of the Mississippi, in February 1862 and participated in operations at New Madrid, Missouri, and Island No. 10, Mississippi River, 28 February to 8 April 1862. Later in April, the regiment was attached to First Brigade (under Colonel Roberts), First Division, Army of the Mississippi. Hart led the regiment during the advance and siege of Corinth, Mississippi, 29 April to 30 May 1862, and the pursuit to Booneville, 31 May to 12 June 1862.⁸⁹ Next, the regiment spent a month at Cherokee, Alabama, guarding the Memphis

and Charleston Railroad, then marched to Nashville, Tennessee, 26 August to 12 September 1862. Hart died on 26 July, and Lieutenant Colonel Swanwick took command. Swanwick was a captain, commanding Company H when the unit was organized, and moved up through the ranks with experience as higher ranking officers became casualties.⁹⁰ The regiment stayed in Nashville under First Brigade (Roberts), Thirteenth Division, Army of the Ohio, until Rosecrans arrived with the Army of the Cumberland.

On 14 December 1862, the regiment was attached to Third Brigade, Sheridan's Third Division. The regiment was the lead element for the division as it approached Murfreesboro on 30 December, the beginning of the Battle of Stones River. On 31 December, the regiment was in the lead as the brigade made its charge against Confederate forces breaking through the right flank. After withdrawing, the regiment made a bayonet charge, but again could not hold its position due to the overwhelming enemy force and artillery fire. The Twenty-second lost over half its men during a two-hour period including Lieutenant Colonel Swanwick, who was wounded in the arm and captured. (After Swanwick was captured, he was taken to Murfreesboro for two days, then sent through Atlanta to Libby prison in Richmond, Virginia. On 5 May, he was exchanged and returned to the regiment on 17 May, still suffering from the wound.)⁹¹ Captain Samuel Johnson, commander of Company A, led the regiment during the rest of the battle, as the unit formed part of the brigade's defense. The Twenty-second Illinois lost twenty-one killed, one hundred sixteen wounded, and fifty-six missing or captured; nearly two-thirds of the unit were casualties at Stones River.⁹²

Twenty-Seventh Illinois, Colonel Jonathan R. Miles

The Twenty-seventh Illinois Regiment was organized at Camp Butler, Illinois, and mustered on 10 August 1861. It was attached to the District of Cairo and first fought at Belmont, 6 to 7 November 1861. Later attached to the Flotilla Brigade, Army of the Mississippi, the regiment participated in combat at New Madrid, Missouri, and Island No. 10, Mississippi River, 14 March to 8 April 1862.⁹³ After the battle, Colonel Napoleon Buford, the regimental commander, was promoted to brigadier general, and Lieutenant Colonel Fazillo A. Harrington took command of the regiment.⁹⁴ Later in April, the regiment was attached to First Brigade (Roberts), First Division, Army of the Mississippi. Harrington led the regiment during the advance and siege of Corinth, Mississippi, 29 April to 30 May 1862, and the pursuit to Booneville, 30 May to 12 June 1862. Next, the regiment spent a month at Courtland, Alabama, guarding the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, then marched to Nashville, Tennessee, 3 to 12 September 1862. The regiment stayed in Nashville under First Brigade (Roberts), Thirteenth Division, Army of the Ohio until Rosecrans arrived with the Army of the Cumberland.⁹⁵

In late November 1862, the regiment was attached to the Third Brigade of Sheridan's Division. The regiment's first action during the Battle of Stones River occurred on 30 December in skirmishing as the unit approached Murfreesboro. On 31 December, the regiment was forward of the brigade, skirmishing, when the Confederate forces broke through the Union right flank. The Twenty-seventh covered the brigade flank during its advance and withdrawal, and helped establish the brigade's defensive position. Lieutenant Colonel Harrington was killed leading a charge at about 1045 hours, and Major William A. Schmitt took charge of the regiment. When the brigade withdrew

again, the regiment was the last to leave its position. Later in the morning, the regiment charged a Confederate brigade, along with Fifty-first Illinois, routing the brigade and capturing about two hundred prisoners. The Twenty-seventh was again involved in fighting on 1 January, as Lieutenant Hanback led a large contingent of skirmishers against an enemy brigade and captured one hundred nineteen prisoners.⁹⁶ Twenty-seventh Illinois lost nine killed, sixty-nine wounded, and twenty-five missing or captured during the Battle of Stones River.⁹⁷

Forty-Second Illinois, Lieutenant Colonel John A. Hottenstein

The Forty-second Illinois Regiment was organized at Chicago, Illinois, and mustered on 17 September 1861 under command of Colonel William A. Webb.⁹⁸ The regiment was attached to the Department of Missouri later that month and first fought during Fremont's campaign against Springfield, Missouri, 18 October to 9 November 1861. Later attached to the Flotilla Brigade, Army of the Mississippi, the regiment participated in combat at New Madrid, Missouri, and Island No. 10, Mississippi River, 28 February to 8 April 1862. Later in April, the regiment was attached to First Brigade (Roberts), First Division, Army of the Mississippi, and took part in the advance and siege of Corinth, Mississippi, 29 April to 30 May 1862, and the pursuit to Booneville, 31 May to 12 June 1862. Next, the regiment spent a month at Iuka, Mississippi, and Courtland, Alabama, guarding the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, then marched to Nashville, Tennessee, 3 to 12 September 1862. The regiment stayed in Nashville under First Brigade (Roberts), Thirteenth Division, Army of the Ohio, until Rosecrans arrived with the Army of the Cumberland.⁹⁹

In late November 1862, the regiment was attached to the Third Brigade of Sheridan's Third Division. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Nathan H. Walworth, the regiment saw its first action skirmishing on 30 December 1862 during the Battle of Stones River. The Forty-second was one of the lead regiments in Colonel Roberts' charge against the Confederate column as it broke through the Union right flank. After initial success, the regiment had to change its direction of fire, when the Confederates attacked the brigade from the front and left flank. The regiment fought hard, withdrawing with the rest of the brigade when it ran out of ammunition. By 1300 hours, the regiment reformed after several hours of intense combat, and reformed its defensive line. The regiment only saw minor skirmishing during the rest of the battle.¹⁰⁰ The Forty-second Illinois lost nineteen killed, ninety-six wounded, and forty-six missing or captured during the Battle of Stones River.¹⁰¹

Fifty-First Illinois, Lieutenant Colonel Samuel B. Raymond

The Fifty-first Illinois Regiment was organized at Camp Douglas, Chicago, Illinois, and mustered on 24 December 1861. It was attached to Second Brigade, Fourth Division, Army of the Mississippi, in March 1862 and participated in combat at New Madrid, Missouri, 13 and 14 March 1862, and Island No. 10, Mississippi River, 7 March to 8 April 1862.¹⁰² Lieutenant Colonel Bradley took command of the regiment on 27 April 1862, after Colonel Gilbert W. Cumming was overcome by an illness.¹⁰³ Bradley led the regiment during the advance upon and siege of Corinth, Mississippi, 29 April to 30 May 1862, and the pursuit to Booneville, 31 May to 12 June 1862. Next, the regiment spent a month at Decatur, Alabama, guarding the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, then marched to Nashville, Tennessee, 4 to 12 September 1862. Bradley was promoted to

colonel on 30 September 1862. The regiment stayed in Nashville under First Brigade, Thirteenth Division, Army of the Ohio, until Rosecrans arrived with the Army of the Cumberland. On 12 December 1862, the regiment was attached to the Third Brigade of Sheridan's Third Division.¹⁰⁴

The regiment saw its first action under Sheridan at the Battle of Stones River. Under command of Colonel Bradley, the regiment was involved in skirmishing as the unit advanced along the Winchester pike toward Murfreesboro on 30 December 1862. At 0830 the next morning, the regiment charged into enemy columns then attacking the Union right flank. After initial success, the regiment was unable to hold its position due to overwhelming enemy forces attacking from the front and flanks, and withdrew to a new position along the Murfreesboro Pike, facing south. There the regiment faced another Confederate assault, during which Colonel Roberts was killed. When the regiment ran out of ammunition, Bradley ordered a withdrawal, coordinating movements between the regiments of the brigade, though not yet aware that Colonel Roberts was dead. When Bradley found out that he was the brigade commander, he sought out Sheridan for instructions, but could not find him. Instead, he reported to Brigadier General Davis, who ordered him to reinforce Harker's Brigade. Fifty-first Illinois, along with Twenty-seventh Illinois, charged a Confederate brigade and captured about two hundred prisoners. The regiment fell back into a defensive position at about 1300 hours and got resupplied with ammunition, but did not see any more fighting.¹⁰⁵ The Fifty-first Illinois lost seven killed, forty-one wounded, and nine missing or captured during the Battle of Stones River.¹⁰⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Samuel B. Raymond, who had been third

in command (in the rank of major) when the regiment was mustered, took command when Bradley retained command of the brigade after the battle.

First Illinois Light Artillery, Battery C, Captain Mark H. Prescott

Battery C, First Illinois Light Artillery, also known as “Houghtaling’s” battery, was organized at Ottawa, Illinois, and mustered on 31 October 1861. The battery was attached to the Military District of Cairo until February 1862, then to the Army of the Mississippi. The unit participated in operations against New Madrid, Missouri, and Island No. 10, Mississippi River, 28 February to 8 April 1862. Later in April, the battery was attached to First Division, Army of the Mississippi, fighting at Corinth, Mississippi, 29 April to 30 May 1862, and Booneville, 31 May to 12 June 1862. From September to November 1862, the battery was attached to the Thirteenth Division, Army of the Ohio, seeing action in the defense of Nashville, Tennessee, 12 September to 7 November 1862. Later that month, Battery C First Illinois was attached to the Third Brigade of Sheridan’s division.¹⁰⁷

Houghtaling’s battery saw its first action under Sheridan’s command at the Battle of Stones River. On 31 December 1862, the battery was heavily engaged fighting against the Confederate assault that broke the Union right flank. Enemy artillery fire inflicted a high rate of casualties on the battery. Captain Houghtaling asked for and received reinforcements, but took fire from another battery on his left flank. He asked for permission to move from his position since he was flanked by Confederate infantry, and lost nearly one-half his men killed and wounded, as well as a large number of his horses, but Colonel Roberts told him, “Sheridan’s orders were to hold that position at all hazards.” Houghtaling held the position until his battery ran out of ammunition,

managing to evacuate three of his guns to the rear before all his horses were killed. As the unit broke for the rear, some of the survivors joined nearby artillery units, while others picked up muskets and fell in with nearby infantry units. The battery's casualties during the battle were five killed, twenty-one wounded, including Captain Houghtaling, and twenty-five missing or captured, as well as ninety-five horses lost.¹⁰⁸ For the Battle of Chickamauga, the battery had two sections of three-inch rifled guns (four guns) and one section of twelve-pounder howitzers (two guns).¹⁰⁹

Sheridan's division was an experienced, battle-tested, and tight-knit unit after the Battle of Stones River. He had been in command of the division for ten months and led two of the three brigades in the Battles of Perryville and Stones River. Although the brigade commanders were not in place until after Stones River, they were experienced regimental commanders with brigade command experience in combat. Third brigade, the last to join the division, had fought at Stones River and combined with the time in camp near Murfreesboro and the Tullahoma campaign, had proven itself. While six of the twelve regimental commanders and one of the three battery commanders changed after Stones River, all moved up from within the ranks and had the confidence of their men.

Second Brigade was the most experienced of the three brigades, fighting in more battles than the other brigades. It saw action at Pea Ridge, Corinth, and Booneville prior to joining Sheridan's division in Louisville in September 1862. It had the most experience with its brigade commander, as Laiboldt had commanded the brigade since January 1862, with the exception of November and December 1862, when Colonel Schaefer took command, and Laiboldt returned to the Second Missouri Regiment. When

Schaefer was killed at Stones River, Laiboldt retained command of the brigade and held it through the Battle of Chickamauga.

Second Brigade was also the tightest, as most of the men had a bond as German-Americans, in addition to their ties to their states. When the unit joined the Army of the Ohio, one of its regiments, the Thirty-sixth Illinois, was moved to another brigade and replaced by the recently formed Seventy-third Illinois. The “Preacher Regiment” soon proved its mettle at the Battle of Perryville, and later at the Battle of Stones River as part of the brigade. While two of the regimental commanders took charge after Stones River, they had experience fighting with their units and the confidence of their soldiers.

First Brigade had the best of the three brigade commanders, Brigadier General William H. Lytle. Although he took over the brigade after Stones River, he had experience in the Mexican War, and had led both a regiment and brigade in combat earlier in the Civil War. Holding several political as well as military positions, he had been in leadership positions for most of his adult life. Remarkably well-rounded, he had keen insight into the behavior of his men, and he was one of the most famous officers in the Army of the Cumberland due to his poetry, which was recited in schools throughout the country. Always carrying himself with an air of confidence, he was known for his courage in battle (having twice been wounded leading charges), and respected by his soldiers for the way he treated them. Lytle also had experienced regimental commanders under him, although two took command after Stones River. His brigade had fought together in two battles, Perryville and Stones River, and the soldiers were experienced veterans.

Third Brigade, although the last assigned to Sheridan's division, also had a great deal of experience. I had fought at New Madrid, Missouri, Island No. 10, Mississippi River, Corinth, Booneville, and the defense of Nashville prior to joining the division for the Battle of Stones River. The unit lost its brigade commander, Colonel Roberts, early in the Battle of Stones River, but his replacement, Colonel Bradley, handled the brigade well for the remainder of the fight. In addition to Bradley's move resulting in one change in regimental commanders, one other regiment also changed command after Stones River. Though the newest brigade in the division, Third Brigade was not a green unit.

Battle of Stones River to the Tullahoma Campaign

The Army of the Cumberland stayed in the vicinity of Murfreesboro, stockpiling supplies, until 24 June 1863, when it began the movement later characterized as the Tullahoma Campaign. Sheridan's division set up camp about three miles south of Murfreesboro. While the unit spent most of the winter and spring manning skirmish lines, resting, foraging, and training, it was involved in one raid. On 4 March 1863, Sheridan moved part of his division toward Franklin, Tennessee, to fight General Earl Van Dorn's force near Spring Hill. Due to shortages of most food items in camp, Sheridan deployed with a large train of empty wagons for forage. This move brought unexpected success, as the Confederates attacked the supply train, enabling Sheridan to locate them and pursue the forces. Sheridan had a cavalry brigade attached and chased the Confederate force through Unionville to outposts at Shelbyville. Sheridan returned to the camp near Murfreesboro late in March.¹¹⁰

Life in the camp was monotonous for the soldiers; they performed guard and skirmishing duties and foraged for food. However, it also gave the units a chance to

bond, better preparing them to work together in future operations. The story told by Captain C. E. Belknap of the Twenty-first Michigan regiment describes camp conditions after the battle of Perryville, and some of the measures his unit took to gain the acceptance of the more seasoned regiments in the brigade.

These comrades of mine varied their ration of hardtack and bacon with blackberries and green corn in season, with pigs and chickens in all seasons. He who could not find forage of some kind in addition to that furnished by the Commissary was a mighty poor soldier.

. . . The country through which he tramped, the base of supplies often many hundred miles distant, developed new lines of warfare before unknown to military students, bringing to the surface the qualities of the true American soldier.

. . . It was but a few weeks after Perryville that one of our boys found "Mary's little lamb" in a back lot. They left the hide on the fence and toted the mutton to camp, hanging it out to cool in the edge of the evening just back of the tents. It had not been there long enough to get acquainted with its new quarters before it disappeared. Next morning after reveille those Thirty-sixth fellows formed a line between the two regiments and "bleated" for five minutes.

. . . Our fellows did not say a word, although the air that came that way was appetizing with the smell of broiling chops. All day our boys had their eyes fixed on the big Newfoundland dog that had followed the Thirty-sixth from Pea Ridge, and that night a new carcass of mutton was left out after dark and again the smell of broiling meat filled the air. Next morning at reveille our fellows lined up between the two regiments and barked in seventeen tongues. Then the Thirty-sixth knew where their dog had gone. Thus their confidence in our ability was greatly strengthened, and they swore by us all--by spells--during the Winter.¹¹¹

Another incident that occurred after Stones River involving the Twenty-first

Michigan provides a look at the mentality of battle-hardened soldiers.

I also remember that just before every battle the road was checkered with playing cards. No fellow wanted to be found dead with a pocket full of nine spots and trays, and yet one day we surprised some Confederates at a game of euchre. A shell had dropped in the midst of four fellows sitting on the ground, with others watching the game. Six of the party lay on their backs dead. The cards remaining in the hands of the players when our boys came up, four of them picked up the cards and played out the game. I then admired the nerve that would allow a man to handle spades and clubs that were spattered with red something like the color of hearts and diamonds.¹¹²

The Tullahoma Campaign

Rosecrans' victory at Stones River came at a critical time for the Union. Operations at Vicksburg, Mississippi, failed to seize the Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River, and the Army of the Potomac suffered a humiliating defeat at Fredericksburg. President Lincoln was pressured by a divided cabinet and the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War to show progress toward victory over the Confederacy, and was losing popular support for the war. Although Rosecrans lost more men than Bragg at Stones River, Bragg's withdrawal to Tullahoma left him control of the battlefield and gave Washington a reason to highlight the battle as a Union victory. Lincoln summed up the importance of the victory when he later wrote to Rosecrans, "I can never forget, whilst I remember anything, that about the end of last year, and beginning of this, you gave us a hard-earned victory which, had there been a defeat instead, the nation could scarcely have lived over."¹³

Lincoln wanted Rosecrans to continue his advance against the Army of the Tennessee. However, Rosecrans wanted to wait until he built up his supply base and used his success at Stones River to get the materiel support he needed. Lincoln encouraged him to move throughout the winter and spring of 1863, with pressure also applied by Secretary of War Stanton and the General in Chief, Major General Henry W. Halleck.¹⁴

To Rosecrans, the delay was necessary due to the difficult terrain between Murfreesboro and Tullahoma, thirty-five miles to the south-southeast. The area of operations was west of the Blue Ridge of the Appalachian Mountains, on the Cumberland Plateau. The plateau rose about nine hundred to a thousand feet above the Tennessee

Valley and was barren, providing nothing of forage for an army. To get to Tullahoma, the Army of the Cumberland would have to travel through the Highland Rim, cross the Duck River and The Barrens, where Tullahoma was located. There were only four gaps through which the Army of the Cumberland could pass to get to Tullahoma, from west to east: Guy's Gap (Murfreesboro to Shelbyville turnpike), Bell Buckle Gap (Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad), Liberty Gap, and Hoover's Gap (Murfreesboro to Manchester turnpike). Bragg deployed his forces to cover all four gaps.¹¹⁵

With good intelligence of the disposition of Bragg's forces, Rosecrans developed a plan for the Tullahoma campaign. Major General Thomas' Fourteenth Corps would move down Manchester Pike toward Hoover's Gap, behind Colonel John T. Wilder's brigade of mounted infantry. Major General Crittenden's Twenty-first Corps would move on the far left and await orders to conduct a deep turning movement. Major General Granger's Reserve Corps would move toward Shelbyville and conduct a feint to fix Confederate forces at Guy's Gap. Major General McCook's Twentieth Corps would follow Granger's Corps, then shift toward Liberty Gap.¹¹⁶

Although Sheridan had advanced notice of the movement, his orders to move out as the lead element of Twentieth Corps came from McCook's Assistant Adjutant General, G. P. Thurston, at 0200 hours on 24 June 1863, with instructions to start on Shelbyville Pike at 0400 hours. His supply trains were to follow the other divisions in the corps. Sheridan gave the following orders to Colonel Bradley on 23 June in anticipation of the move:

immediately prepare your command for the march in accordance with the communication from the Headquarters of this Department of this date.

Six wagons will be allowed to each regiment; three days rations will be carried in the men's haversacks and nine days rations and three days forage carried in these wagons. The ration to consist of hard bread, coffee, sugar, salt, and a half ration of pork, as designated in the communication above referred to. The forage to be corn.

The men will carry one woolen blanket and one rubber blanket or shelter tent. The knapsacks will not be taken but will be sent together with extra baggage and to the fortifications.

One wall tent will be allowed to each Brigade Headquarters and to each Regimental Headquarters.

You will detail a Regimental Quartermaster and a small guard from such men as you are able to march to take charge of the wagons and baggage and from your command to be left at the fortifications.

So soon as orders are received to strike tents the knapsacks, baggage and will at once be packed in the remaining wagons and sent inside the fortifications in charge of the Quartermaster which you will detail as described above.¹¹⁷

Captain George Lee, Assistant Adjutant General of the division, sent out this guidance from Sheridan to Captain Hescoek for the artillery: "General Sheridan directs me to say that Batteries will be allowed to take all their wagons."¹¹⁸

Bradley's brigade led the march on Shelbyville Pike at 0700 on 24 June. Morale was high, and there was great hope for success among the soldiers. After marching about six miles in the rain, Bradley's brigade encountered skirmishers and formed into a line of battle. Despite receiving enemy artillery, the brigade pressed the Confederates back several miles and took up a position to allow the trail divisions of the corps to pass by to Liberty Gap. The division moved approximately twelve miles the first day and set up camp near Millersburg, Tennessee.¹¹⁹

The division did not move on 25 June because of heavy rains, although the soldiers were kept ready to move at a moments notice. On 26 June, the soldiers were awakened at 0300 hours and started moving at 0600 hours, despite heavy rain. It took the division over twelve hours to march about four miles through Liberty Gap in water and

mud from ankle to waist deep, finally making camp at about 2300 hours (without the supply trains to provide any relief). Many experienced soldiers of the Thirty-sixth Illinois described it as the hardest day they had ever seen. The soldiers were up at 0300 the next morning and marched through Hoover's Gap, then crossed the Duck River near the town of Fairfield, where the Missouri regiments of Laiboldt's brigade encountered skirmishers, who fled after a short engagement leaving three men dead. The division moved about fourteen miles, stopping to set up camp at 2100 hours in an orchard about four miles outside of Manchester.¹²⁰

On 28 June (Sunday), the division arrived at Manchester, completing a four-mile march late in the morning. The Confederates had abandoned the town, so the soldiers had the opportunity to rest. They were given a chance to bathe, received mail, and had a religious service. The division continued to march on 29 June on the Lynchburg road toward Tullahoma, in another rainstorm. The roads were in particularly bad shape, at times the soldiers wading through water waist deep, and the unit had to make several rest stops. The soldiers set up camp about five miles from Tullahoma that night, expecting a big fight the next day. However, the unit moved very little the next day, as it waited for the artillery, slowed by the heavy rains, to move up.¹²¹

The division entered Tullahoma on 1 July unopposed, as the Army of Tennessee had evacuated the town early that morning. The soldiers were surprised, anticipating a fight especially after seeing the defensive preparations made there. Marching into Tullahoma, the Third Division captured about one hundred fifty prisoners as well as supplies left behind including three hundred sacks of meal and one hundred sacks of

salt.¹²² Rosecrans decided that he would pursue Bragg and try to destroy his army. He sent the following order to McCook at midnight on 1 July:

start General Sheridan with his Division at 3 o'clock in the morning (July 2d) on the Winchester road in pursuit of the enemy directing him to push forward with the utmost vigor and if possible assault the enemy's rear, and inflict a heavy punishment on him. Send one other Division to follow within supporting distance. Send a mounted party in advance to reconnoiter the crossing of Elk River and report to you as speedily as possible whether the bridge is destroyed or whether the enemy is in force on the other side. You will occupy this place with your remaining Division and make your Headquarters here.¹²³

Third Division moved out on the Winchester road at 0300 hours on 2 July and reached the Elk River after marching seven miles, at about 0800 hours. The Army of the Tennessee had destroyed the bridge as it withdrew. Because of the heavy rains, the river was swollen and had a strong current. At this time, Sheridan's civilian scout James Card played a major role. He directed the division to a fording site up the river, where Sheridan's attached cavalry chased out Confederate skirmishers. Because the current was so strong, the unit had to stretch a cable across the river as a lifeline. The infantry forded the river, carrying their cartridge boxes on their shoulders to keep their ammunition dry. The unit then seized the Winchester road and continued its pursuit.¹²⁴

On 3 July, the Third Division marched through Winchester and camped at Cowan. Late in the day, Sheridan was sent the Sixth Kentucky Cavalry, commanded by Colonel Louis D. Watkins. He sent the cavalry on a reconnaissance of University, the site of a school established by Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk (then an Episcopal bishop) before the war, but still under construction on a mountain southeast of Cowan. On 5 July, Sheridan sent Watkins out, supported by an infantry brigade, to pursue Brigadier General John Wharton's cavalry brigade that was reported in the area. However, by the time the Sixth Kentucky arrived at University, all enemy forces were gone. Sheridan sent

Watkins back to Cowan, and decided to ride back to the camp by rail car since he was “greatly fatigued by the hard campaigning of the previous ten days” and wanted to return “in a more comfortable way than on the back of my tired horse.”¹²⁵ The enemy had not damaged the railroad track, and the Third Division had captured a handcar at Cowan, so Sheridan sent for it by courier. He also persuaded Colonel Sherman, commander of the Eighty-eighth Illinois, to join him. When the last of his soldiers passed on the way back, Sheridan and Sherman sent their horses back with their orderlies and started walking down the track, expecting to meet the car at any time. Night soon overtook them, with no sign of the car. They continued walking, fearing capture by guerrillas, but stopped at a cabin for water enroute. Sheridan and Sherman walked eleven miles, arriving in Cowan after midnight, exhausted. The next day Sheridan found out that the crew of the rail car had taken a wrong turn at a rail junction and been captured. Sheridan wrote in his *Personal Memoirs*: “I had reason to remember for many a day this foolish adventure, for my sore bones and bruised muscles caused me physical suffering until I left the Army of the Cumberland the next spring; but I had still more reason to feel for my captured men, and on this account I have never ceased to regret that I so thoughtlessly undertook to rejoin my troops by rail, instead of sticking to my faithful horse.”¹²⁶

The Tullahoma campaign ended on 4 July 1863, with Sheridan’s Division camped at Cowan, the southernmost unit in the Army of the Cumberland. The soldiers were exhausted after the difficult march through heavy rainstorms, which made movement nearly impossible. The unit’s trains did not catch up for several days, and the soldiers foraged in the area to supplement the half rations they had to survive on. However, morale was high and the soldiers had great confidence in their leaders. They had

successfully pushed the Army of the Tennessee out of the area, taking minimal casualties. Morale improved again on 7 July when the division received word of Grant's 4 July victory at Vicksburg, and Lee's defeat at Gettysburg. The soldiers forgot about their rations shortages, as the band played patriotic songs most of the night. In the morning, the artillery fired thirteen round salutes for Grant, Meade, and Rosecrans.¹²⁷

The unit performed well in all actions, always ready to move on short notice. Although bloodied at Stones River, the soldiers conducted an organized withdrawal when other units broke, but sustained heavy casualties. The men showed great courage in their combat actions, receiving accolades for their conduct. The division's reputation earned it the lead in the movement out of Murfreesboro by the corps commander, and the commander of the Army of the Cumberland specified that he wanted Sheridan's division to lead the pursuit of the Army of Tennessee after arriving unopposed at Tullahoma. The men pushed themselves to their limits during the Tullahoma Campaign, making difficult marches despite limited rations.

On the other hand, the unit's performance also provided the background for its ultimate failure at Chickamauga. The soldiers of the division were fatigued by the end of the Tullahoma Campaign. Most of the soldiers had been on the march from Louisville, Kentucky to southern Tennessee, experiencing extremes in weather and half rations much of the time. In two major battles and minor skirmishing, the unit had suffered over 40 percent casualties. Additionally, the success of the Tullahoma Campaign, coupled with Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg, made the soldiers overconfident. Many believed the war would soon be over, and the limited contact during the Tullahoma

Campaign may have given them the idea that victory could be attained with minimal fighting.

While Sheridan earned a reputation as a courageous leader, always at the front in battle, he also displayed some flaws. First, he tried to do too much himself. There is hardly any record of the work of his staff, other than mention in his report after the Battle of Stones River. He credits the staff with “delivering my orders faithfully, and promptly discharging the duties of their respective positions.”¹²⁸ Given his quartermaster background, Sheridan should have performed much better in the placement of his trains at several key moments. After the Battle of Perryville, with his trains far back from his position, the soldiers short of ammunition, and the threat of another attack the following morning, Sheridan requested to move forward his rations wagons. While this was good for morale and the strength of his men, it was a big risk. Fortunately for the division, Bragg withdrew the next morning. Then, despite heavy skirmishing on 30 December and a plan for a major fight the next morning, Sheridan placed his ammunition wagons too far to the rear to be of any support. He could have either moved them up closer to the division or had them issue more ammunition to the soldiers. As a result, the division ran out of ammunition and had to withdrawal under heavy pressure, leaving the right flank of Brigadier General Negley’s division exposed.

Sheridan also showed the capability to make poor decisions due to fatigue. Specifically, his decision to ride a handcar back to Cowan from University on 5 July 1863 was an act of poor judgment. It resulted in several soldiers getting captured. Not only did this decision display poor judgment, trying to do something the easy way, but it also showed he was not necessarily willing to share in the hardship of his soldiers when

he was tired. While it is impossible to know a man's thoughts, one must question Sheridan's physical and mental toughness when complaining of fatigue after riding a horse during ten days of campaigning with little contact, when the soldiers who completed the same movement on foot quietly walked the eleven miles back to Cowan after walking the same distance to University the same morning.

¹Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Department of the Army: Washington, D.C., 31 August 1999), 1-15.

²Roger Zeimet, "Philip H. Sheridan and the Civil War in the West" (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1985), 289.

³Ruth Carter, ed., *For Honor, Glory and Union: The Mexican and Civil War Letters of Brigadier General William Haines Lytle* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 4-6.

⁴*Ibid.*, 5-7.

⁵*Ibid.*, 12.

⁶*Ibid.*, 17, 22.

⁷*Ibid.*, 10.

⁸*Ibid.*, 23.

⁹*Ibid.*, 25-26.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 64.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 158.

¹²*Ibid.*, 177,189.

¹³*OR*, vol.16, pt. 1, 1036.

¹⁴Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1888), 1:209.

¹⁵Zeimet, 199-200.

¹⁶*OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 357.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., 209.

¹⁹Zeimet, 289.

²⁰Carter, 158-159. The Lytle and Pirtle families were close before the war. Lytle's father, Robert, studied law with Henry Pirtle from 1822 to 1824. Lytle kept in contact with Judge Henry Pirtle throughout his life, including correspondence during the war. Alfred Pirtle was the son of Judge Henry Pirtle.

²¹Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, pt. 2 (Des Moines, IA: F. H. Dyer, 1908), 1061.

²²Ibid.

²³OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 357.

²⁴Ibid., 209.

²⁵Dyer, pt. 1, 448.

²⁶Ibid., 447.

²⁷Dyer, pt. 2, 1083.

²⁸T. M. Eddy, *The Patriotism of Illinois, a Record of the Civil and Military History of the State in the War for the Union* vol. 2 (Chicago, IL: Clark and Company, 1865), 71.

²⁹OR, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036.

³⁰OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 360-361.

³¹Ibid., 209.

³²Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 440.

³³Dyer, pt. 2, 1290.

³⁴J. N. O. Robertson, Adjutant General, *Michigan in the War* (Lansing, MI: W. S. George and Company, State Printers and Binders, 1882), 412.

³⁵Captain C. E. Belknap, "Army of the Cumberland: Molding an Aggregation of Young Wolverines into a Splendid Regiment," *The National Tribune*, 14 April 1904, 4.

³⁶Robertson, *Michigan in the War*, 413.

- ³⁷ *OR*, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036.
- ³⁸ Robertson, *Michigan in the War*, 416.
- ³⁹ *OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 362-363.
- ⁴⁰ Dyer, pt. 2, 1683.
- ⁴¹ *OR*, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036.
- ⁴² *OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 363-364.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 209.
- ⁴⁴ Chris Slocombe (site maintainer), "24th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry: History," available from <http://www.geocities.com/wisconsin24th/History.html>; Internet; accessed on 9 April 2001.
- ⁴⁵ Dyer, pt. 2, 1115; and *OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 235.
- ⁴⁶ Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1959), 115, 219-220; and Wilhelm Kaufmann, *The Germans in the American Civil War* (Carlisle, PA: John Kallmann, Publishers, 1999), 305.
- ⁴⁷ Captain Henry A. Castle, U. S. Volunteers, "Opdycke's Brigade at the Battle of Franklin," *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, Minnesota, vol. 6 (Minneapolis, MN: Aug. Davis, Publisher, 1909), 385; and Dyer, pt. 2, 1065.
- ⁴⁸ Dyer, pt. 1, 478.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 432.
- ⁵⁰ Castle, "Opdycke's Brigade at the Battle of Franklin," *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, 386; and Dyer, pt. 2, 1061.
- ⁵¹ *OR*, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1081-1082.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 1036.
- ⁵³ Dyer, pt. 1, 432.
- ⁵⁴ *OR*, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1082.
- ⁵⁵ *OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 348-351, 365-367.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.
- ⁵⁷ Eddy, 2:220.

⁵⁸Dyer, pt. 2, 1065.

⁵⁹OR, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036, 1082.

⁶⁰OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 209, 351, 365-367.

⁶¹Dyer, pt. 2, 1077.

⁶²A. Castle, Captain, U.S. Volunteers, "Opdycke's Brigade at the Battle of Franklin," *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, Glimpses of the Nation's Struggle, Minnesota Commandery L.L., Minnesota*, vol. 6 (Minneapolis, MN: Aug. Davis, Publisher, 1909), 385; Dyer, pt. 2, 1065.

⁶³William G. Jaques, "Account of My Experience in, and Capture, in the Battle of Chickamauga: September 1863," *Southwestern Historical Society Annals*, 1920-1925, 1-2.

⁶⁴Eddy, 2:414.

⁶⁵OR, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036, 1081.

⁶⁶OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 366.

⁶⁷Ibid., 209.

⁶⁸Dyer, pt. 2, 1322.

⁶⁹OR, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036, 1081-1082.

⁷⁰Dyer, pt. 1, 432.

⁷¹OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 365-369.

⁷²Ibid., 209.

⁷³Dyer, pt. 2, 1329.

⁷⁴OR, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036, 1081-1082.

⁷⁵OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 365-367.

⁷⁶Ibid., 209.

⁷⁷Lonn, 115.

⁷⁸Dyer, pt. 2, 1315.

⁷⁹OR, vol. 16, pt. 1, 1036, 1081-1082.

⁸⁰*OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 209, 352-353.

⁸¹*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 234.

⁸²*Dyer*, pt. 2, 1054, 1056, 1064, 1069; *Zeimet*, 199.

⁸³*Zeimet*, 201.

⁸⁴*OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 369-371.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 209.

⁸⁶*Warner*, 40-41.

⁸⁷*Dyer*, pt. 2, 1054.

⁸⁸*Eddy*, vol. 2, 307-309. At the same time, Captain Francis Swanwick, the commander of Company H, moved up as the Regiment's Adjutant. Major Enadies Probst, who held the position, resigned during the winter of 1861-1862 due to injuries he sustained "riding a fiery horse."

⁸⁹*Dyer*, pt. 2, 1054.

⁹⁰*Eddy*, 2:308-310.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 311-312.

⁹²*OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 209; *Eddy*, vol. 2, 312.

⁹³*Dyer*, pt. 2, 1056-1057.

⁹⁴*Eddy*, 2:53-56. Captain Jonathan R. Miles, who commanded the regiment at Chickamauga, was commander of Company F from muster until the Battle of Stones River.

⁹⁵*Dyer*, pt. 2, 1057.

⁹⁶*OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 369-371.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 209.

⁹⁸*Eddy*, 2:62-63. Captain Nathan H. Walworth, who commanded the regiment when it was first engaged during the Battle of Chickamauga on 19 September 1863, commanded Company C at muster.

⁹⁹*Dyer*, pt. 2, 1064.

¹⁰⁰*OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 369-371.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 209.

¹⁰²Dyer, pt. 2, 1069.

¹⁰³William H. Powell, *Officers of the Army and Navy (Volunteer) Who Served in the Civil War* (Philadelphia, PA: L. R. Hamersley, 1893), 400; Eddy, 2:235; and William Gardner, *Some Footprints of the Army of the Cumberland, From the Privates' Standpoint* (Washington, IL: Herald, 1883), 2.

¹⁰⁴Powell, 400; Dyer, pt. 2, 1069.

¹⁰⁵OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 369-371.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 209.

¹⁰⁷Dyer, pt. 2, 1036.

¹⁰⁸OR, vol. 20, pt. 1, 209, 354.

¹⁰⁹OR, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 235.

¹¹⁰Sheridan, 1:256.

¹¹¹Belknap, "Army of the Cumberland: Molding an Aggregation of Young Wolverines into a Splendid Regiment," *The National Tribune*, 14 April 1904, 5-6.

¹¹²Ibid., 5.

¹¹³Steven E. Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 3-4.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 4-6.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 9-15.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 20-21.

¹¹⁷George Lee, Captain and Assistant Adjutant General to Colonel L. P. Bradley, Commanding 3rd Brigade, Camp Schaefer, 23 June 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The typical division in Twentieth Corps had a supply train consisting of about two hundred thirty wagons (carrying two thousand five hundred pounds each) and thirty ambulances. Each regiment had three baggage wagons to carry: one wall tent for the headquarters, two extra tent flies, regiment and company desks, cooking utensils for the soldiers, medical supplies (up to five hundred pounds), camp tools, officers' baggage (mess chest, personal effects), and three days forage for the regiment's animals (horses and mules). The artillery batteries also had three baggage wagons to carry: one wall tent, battery desks, cooking utensils, officers' baggage, three

days' forage for horses, and three days' rations for the soldiers (optional). Each brigade had three baggage wagons: two wagons for tents and camp equipage, desks, officers' baggage, and three days forage for the animals; one wagon for blacksmith tools and materials to keep animals shod and wagons running. The division headquarters had ten baggage wagons: four for tents and camp equipage, desks, officers' baggage, and three days' forage for the animals; four wagons for shoes for the soldiers (eight hundred pairs), small supply of clothing, blacksmith tools and materials, supply of horse and mule shoes and nails; two wagons for commissary stores for the officers and any surplus rations. The division had fifteen to eighteen ammunition wagons to carry one hundred ten rounds of small arms ammunition per soldier and two hundred fifty rounds of artillery ammunition per gun. The division had three tool wagons for tools for pioneer and entrenching work, and about one hundred twenty-five wagons for rations (twenty-four day supply). Each division usually had four or five medical wagons and about thirty ambulances. Command and General Staff College, A655: The Staff Ride, Logistics Handouts.

¹¹⁸Captain George Lee and Assistant Adjutant General to Captain Hescocock, Battery Commander, near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 23 June 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹¹⁹“Diary of William Montgomery Austin, Company A, Twenty-Second Illinois,” Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, IL; “Diary of George A. Cooley, Company A, Twenty-Fourth Wisconsin,” Wisconsin State Historical Association, 1; L. G. Bennett and William M. Haigh, *History of the Thirty-Sixth Regiment Illinois Volunteers, During the War of the Rebellion* (Aurora, IL: Knickerbocker and Hodder, Printers and Binders, 1876), 436-437; and William H. Newlin, *A History of the Seventy-Third Regiment of Illinois Infantry Volunteers* (published by authority of the Regimental Reunion Association of Survivors of the Seventy-Third Illinois Infantry Volunteers, 1890), 174-175.

¹²⁰Paul Andrew Hutton, ed., *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 91; “Diary of William Montgomery Austin, Company A, Twenty-Second Illinois,” Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, IL; “Diary of George A. Cooley, Company A, Twenty-Fourth Wisconsin,” Wisconsin State Historical Association, 1; Bennett and Haigh, 437; and Newlin, 175-178.

¹²¹Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 91-92; “Diary of William Montgomery Austin, Company A, Twenty-Second Illinois,” Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, IL; “Diary of George A. Cooley, Company A, Twenty-Fourth Wisconsin,” Wisconsin State Historical Association, 1; Bennett and Haigh, 438; and Newlin, 179-181.

¹²²Newlin, 182.

¹²³J. A. Garfield, Brigadier General and Chief of Staff to General McCook, Tullahoma, midnight, 1 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹²⁴Hutton, *General Philip Sheridan: Civil War Memoirs*, 92-93.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 94.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 94-96.

¹²⁷Newlin, 188.

¹²⁸*OR*, vol. 20, pt. 1, 351. Sheridan's staff at the Battle of Chickamauga included Surgeon D. J. Griffiths, medical director; Major F. Mohrhardt, topographical engineer; Captain Henry Hescocock, chief of artillery; Captain George Lee, assistant adjutant general; Captain A. F. Stevenson, inspector; Captain W. L. Mallory, commissary of subsistence; Captain P. U. Schmitt, acting assistant quartermaster; Captain J. S. Ransom, provost marshal; Lieutenant A. J. Douglass, ordnance officer; Lieutenants F. H. Allen, M. V. Sheridan, and T. W. C. Moore, aides-de-camp, and Lieutenant J. Van Pelt, acting aide-de-camp (*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 582). The typical division-level Civil War staff was divided into two groups, the General Staff, consisting of the Chief of Staff, Aides, Assistant adjutant general, and Assistant inspector general, and the Staff Corps, consisting of an Engineer officer, Ordnance officer, Quartermaster, Subsistence officer, Medical officer, Pay officer, Signal officer, Provost marshal, and Chief of artillery (Dr. William G. Robertson et al., *Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 18-20 September 1863* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1992), 7-8.) Commanders assigned responsibilities to their staff officers based on their personal preferences. Sheridan's personal staff consisted of his aides, and he did not utilize a chief of staff. Sheridan also considered James Card, his civilian scout, part of his personal staff for intelligence, an area that many staffs neglected. This was a position which proved invaluable to Sheridan throughout his career, and he always assigned someone to this post.

CHAPTER 4

19 SEPTEMBER 1863

Brilliant campaigns without battles, do not accomplish the destruction of an army. A campaign like that of Tullahoma always means a battle at some other point.¹

Lieutenant Henry M. Cist, Assistant Adjutant-General,
Army of the Cumberland

At the end of the Tullahoma campaign, Rosecrans set up his headquarters at Winchester and began stockpiling supplies for his next advance, toward Chattanooga. Bragg took his Army of Tennessee to Chattanooga, and though he had problems due to personal differences with his subordinate commanders, his army was still a viable threat. Although the Tullahoma campaign had gained the Army of the Cumberland control of a large amount of territory, with little loss in casualties, Rosecrans had failed to achieve the goals outlined by Washington: gain control of Eastern Tennessee and defeat Bragg's army. Coupled with the success of other Union commanders at Vicksburg and Gettysburg, Rosecrans soon found himself under pressure to continue his advance.² By early August, angry over the delays in Rosecrans' movement south, Halleck issued the following directive: "Your forces must move forward without delay, . . . You will daily report the movement of each corps till you cross the Tennessee River."³

Chattanooga was Rosecrans' objective because of its strategic value. Chattanooga was a major rail center, with the Nashville and Chattanooga, the East Tennessee and Georgia, and the Western and Atlantic passing through the city, providing a line of communications for the Confederate Army throughout the south, and from the Atlantic coast to the Gulf of Mexico.⁴ For the Confederacy, the area near Chattanooga

was valuable for its resources, agricultural as well as mineral. Mines near Ducktown, Tennessee provided ninety percent of the South's copper, necessary for the manufacture of percussion caps and artillery munitions.⁵ For the Union, seizure of Chattanooga would both deny the Confederacy resources and provide a logistical base for operations against the industrial and agricultural centers in Georgia and Alabama.

The terrain between Tullahoma and Chattanooga required the Army of the Cumberland to cross the Cumberland Plateau, undulating with thick forests, but little water or forage. The army was forced to follow the Nashville and Chattanooga rail line, carving its way through the mountains to Bridgeport on the Tennessee River. Because of the need to use the rails to supply troops, Rosecrans sent Sheridan's division to Bridgeport to prevent its destruction. Although the critical tunnel through the mountains south of Cowan was undamaged, several bridges along the route were destroyed, and the Army of Tennessee destroyed part of the bridge crossing the Tennessee River at Bridgeport, leaving troops to prevent a surprise attack on Chattanooga from the southwest.⁶

Chattanooga is surrounded on three sides by mountains and the Tennessee River. Rosecrans planned to seize it by moving the army of the Cumberland to Bridgeport, then sending each of his three corps to surround it and cut off Bragg's logistical lines and escape routes. His plan was for Crittenden's corps to threaten Chattanooga from the west, distracting Bragg while the other two corps crossed the Tennessee River further south. Thomas would cross the river at Bridgeport and lead his corps over Lookout Mountain, approaching Chattanooga from the south. McCook would cross south of

Stevenson, and lead his corps over Sand Mountain and Lookout Mountain and occupy Alpine, Georgia, cutting Bragg's supply line by threatening the railroad to Atlanta.⁷

Sheridan, the southernmost division in Rosecrans' army, at Cowan, received the following order:

Headquarters Twentieth Army Corps

Winchester, July 8th 1863

Maj. Gen. P. H. Sheridan

General:

The following dispatch is just received from General Garfield: Major General McCook. Your dispatch from Sheridan is received. The General Commanding desires you to send forward reconnoitering parties as far as Bridgeport if possible. We cannot send forces to guard the R. R. till supplies come up but a strong reconnaissance may keep the rebels away from the bridges for the present.

General McCook wishes you to carry out these instructions into execution by pushing forward early tomorrow morning a force of say one brigade from your Division in the direction of Bridgeport as far as is found to be safe and practicable. We have applied to the General Commanding for a regiment of cavalry to accompany the reconnoitering party. Send the force on the road that will best serve to protect the bridges. It may be best to place a 2d Brigade within supporting distance on top of the mountains. You are best informed as to roads and supplies and the General leaves the conducting of the reconnaissance to your own excellent judgement.

G. P. Thruston

A. A. G. and Chf. of Staff⁸

Sheridan accompanied Bradley's brigade over the mountain through University to Burnt Station, which is located in Sweden's Cove, one of the passes the army could use to reach the Tennessee River, on 9 July. He planned to march through the cove to Jasper, Tennessee, then follow the Tennessee River west to Bridgeport. Sheridan was angry that he had to give up the Sixth Kentucky Cavalry Regiment before starting his movement. He requested a cavalry unit from McCook, arguing, "No cavalry has yet reported to me, and unless it is sent the reconnaissance will be a stupid one . . . The Crow Creek road is badly cut up. It will be impossible to get infantry and artillery over it. Only cavalry can

be used on it.’⁹ Bradley’s brigade reached Burnt Station on 10 July, and was met that afternoon by the Second Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, commanded by Colonel Daniel M. Ray.¹⁰ However, Sheridan decided he could not reach Jasper due to the lack of forage.¹¹ He sent the following message to Laiboldt to initiate movement to Bridgeport along the railroad:

In camp near Burnt Stand

July 11th, 1863

Captain George Lee
Capt. and A. A. G.
Captain:

General Sheridan directs that there be two regiments of Laiboldt’s detailed to make a reconnaissance as far as Anderson Station on the N. and Chattanooga Rail Road. They will of course be unable to take either wagons or ambulances as the command must go on the Rail Road track.

Three days rations will be placed in haversacks of the men. The officer in charge of the expedition will be held responsible for any pillaging that may be committed.

The needed amount of fresh beef will be taken from the country through which the command passes, and will be accounted for by the proper officer. Unless orders to the contrary are given the command will return on the third day.

Respectfully &c
T. W. C. Moore
Lt. and A. A. G.¹²

At the same time, Sheridan sent Ray through Sweeden’s Cove to conduct a reconnaissance of Bridgeport, then to link-up with Laiboldt at Anderson’s Station. Ray sent Sheridan the following information in a report dated 11 July:

I proceeded to Bridgeport according to directions. I found no enemy on this side of the river. I could see a small force on the south side of the river . . . The bridge is burned and all the ferryboats along the river destroyed as far as I can hear . . . Forage is scarce in this country.¹³

Laiboldt sent Colonel Joseph Conrad, commander of the Fifteenth Missouri Regiment, as the leader of the two regiments from Cowan. He led his regiment and the Second Missouri along the rail line seven miles to Tantalum on 11 July. He reported that

the track was in good shape most of the way, except that the three bridges across Crow Creek were burned, and the Crow Creek Valley Road was badly damaged, preventing movement of wagons. On 12 July, Conrad's force marched eight miles to Anderson Station and captured seven prisoners, all deserters. The prisoners provided a lot of information, specifically that the rebel army was in bad shape, nearly starved, and that two brigades of cavalry had crossed the Tennessee at Bridgeport. They also said that the bridge was burned from the north bank to an island in the river. Conrad also reported that the four brigades crossing Crow Creek south of Tantalum were in good condition, but needed a continuous guard, since they were "very high above the ravines they span, and would if destroyed require a long time to reconstruct."¹⁴

In the meantime, Rosecrans dispatched engineers to repair the rail lines. Sheridan sent Ray to Stevenson on 16 July to secure the bridges there, and Laiboldt's brigade to Bridgeport on 19 July.¹⁵ Laiboldt sent Sheridan the following report upon his arrival and initial reconnaissance of the area:

Headquarters 2nd Brigade 3d Division

Near Stevenson, Ala. July 21st 1863

Capt. George Lee A. A. G.

Capt.:

I would most respectfully report to the Major General Commanding 3rd Div. That I arrived with my command at the R. R. Bridge near Stevenson. One Regiment is stationed at Anderson. I have pickets posted to protect my position and relieved the cavalry pickets at 3 different R. R. bridges. The cavalry will go on a scout today. No signs of enemy so far.

The General Commanding will oblige me if he would order a handcart to this place as means of communication between the pickets along the R. R.--as it is impossible to operate on horseback on account of swamps.

B. Laiboldt

Col. Comdg. 2nd Brig. 3rd Div.¹⁶

On 22 July, McCook took leave in Nashville, and Sheridan became the acting corps commander, while Lytle took charge of the division. McCook left Sheridan with the following guidance:

Headquarters Twentieth Army Corps

Winchester July 22nd 1863

Major General Sheridan

General:

I am directed by General McCook to inform you that he leaves for Nashville this morning--to be absent from this place and his command three or four days.

As his absence places you in command of the Corps, I take great pleasure in the name of the general in inviting you and such of your staff as you may wish to these Headquarters to pass the interval while you are in command.

This is a more central position than Cowan and you will find every convenience here to enable you to conduct business. The General will take his aides de camp with him, his chief of artillery also.

G. P. Thruston

A. A. G., Chf. of Staff¹⁷

McCook did not return for almost two weeks.¹⁸ Sheridan, as corps commander, decided that instead of moving back to Winchester, he would move his entire division to Stevenson and Bridgeport. He justified the move to Rosecrans as necessary to save the remainder of the bridge at Bridgeport by covering it with artillery. During this time, Sheridan had a dispute with a railroad conductor that required Rosecrans to adjudicate. Sheridan was taking Thomas on an inspection from Cowan to Bridgeport, when the train stopped at one of the stations for a long time. Sheridan asked the conductor the reason for the delay, and claimed he only got a reply "saucy and impertinent in language and manner." Sheridan then told the conductor to start moving, but the conductor said "that he received his orders from the military superintendent only." Sheridan responded by hitting the conductor, kicking him out of the car, and arresting him. Rosecrans later told Sheridan that the arrangement with the rail workers was "necessary in order to prevent

collisions and irregularities of trains that R. Road employees should not be interfered with except in very extreme cases.” He took no action against Sheridan, who took the opportunity to complain to Rosecrans about the “villainously [*sic*] managed” railroad and its “dishonest and worthless” conductors.¹⁹

Sheridan planned to have Bradley occupy Bridgeport with his brigade, with two of Laiboldt’s regiments attached, and the rest of the division move to Stevenson, sending Lytle the following instructions:

Headquarters, 20th Army Corps

Winchester, Tenn. July 29, 1863

Brigadier General Lytle
Comdg 3rd Div. 20th Army Corps
General:

Order Colonel Bradley to move down via Sweden’s Cove and occupy Bridgeport; he should have at least three days rations for the movement and can be supplied at Bridgeport by rail. The movement to be made immediately if he has the rations on hand, if he has not, send them to him in Division wagons to save time unless he has brigade wagons at your camp.

Additional instructions will be forwarded for Colonel Bradley. Start Bradley today if possible.

P. H. Sheridan
Maj. Gen. Comdg²⁰

Sheridan, as corps commander also sent instructions to Bradley:

Headquarters, 20th Army Corps

Winchester, Tenn. July 29, 1863

Colonel Bradley
Commdg Brigade
Colonel:

The General Commanding directs that on the arrival of your command at Bridgeport, you will take up a position where your artillery will command the remaining portion of the Bridge, and if possible, that you will prevent the enemy from destroying it. Colonel Laiboldt is ordered to send you two regiments of his Brigade which will make your command six regiments.

The general wishes you to reach Bridgeport tomorrow if possible. Colonel Ray will be instructed to report to you with his cavalry, which you will keep in hand, and not allow to go about the country on fruitless expeditions. The telegraph operator will be directed to open an office a Bridgeport as soon as you

get established there. You may perhaps find the works erected there by the enemy of some advantage to you, if not, the general desires you to erect such as you may deem necessary for your safety. The Hd Qrs of the Div. Will be moved to Stevenson and 2 regts of the 1st Brig. added to the Bridgeport force.

G. P. Thruston
A. A. G. and Chf. of Staff²¹

Colonel Bradley sent a report to Sheridan on 2 August, after arriving at the bridge, including: "The guns cover it perfectly, but we cannot protect it without taking possession of the island for the rebels can burn it any night in spite of us."²² This message would prove prophetic.

Sheridan set up his headquarters in Stevenson, and rotated units between there and Bridgeport. Rosecrans took time to build up supplies as engineers repaired the railroad and roads to Bridgeport. The soldiers of the division took advantage of this time to rest in between camp and picket duties. Confederate soldiers were stationed on Long Island, in the center of the Tennessee River. They had destroyed the bridge from the west bank to the island, but not from the island to the east bank. Soldiers on both sides bathed in the river, traded items, and swapped stories, under an informal truce.²³ While conditions in the camp by the river were generally clean, Colonel Bradley expressed concern after nearly a month in the area at the loss of some of his troops to illness:

Headquarters 3d Brigade 3d Division 20th A.C.

August 25th 1863

Capt. George Lee, A. A. G.

Captain:

I have to report a constant and rather alarming increase of sickness among the men of my command, all from diseases of malarious type. There has been a steady increase of these malarious cases for a week, and the Surgeons tell me there is no probability of a change for the better while we lay on the river bank. Our camp ground has been used so long by the rebels that there is a great deal of hidden impurity that we cannot remove. This, and a scarcity of good water help to make the location an unhealthy one. If we are to remain here, even a short

time, I request the General's permission to remove my camp back half a mile or so, where I can get the protection of the timber, and a supply of good water.

L. P. Bradley
Col. Comdg.²⁴

By the time the message reached Sheridan, the division was preparing to build a bridge, and needed to maintain the camp near the river.

On 10 August, the officers of the Tenth Ohio gave Lytle a jeweled Maltese cross as a gift from his first Civil War command. Lytle made a speech predicting a Union victory. Lytle said:

But come victory or come defeat, come triumph or come disaster, this I do know, that against rebels in the field, or traitors at home, despite the plots of weak-kneed and cowardly politicians of the North, and the machinations of foreign despots and aristocrats, the scarred and bronzed veterans of the warlike West, the men on whose banners are inscribed Mill Springs and Donelson, Pea Ridge and Vicksburg, Shiloh, Carnifax and Stone River, will make no terms, accept no truce, indorse no treaty, until the military power of the rebellion is crushed forever, and the supremacy of the national government acknowledged from the Potomac to the Rio Grande.²⁵

He also stated that it would be necessary to heal the war wounds to reestablish the Union: "heal up the sores and scars and cover up the bloody footprints that war will leave, to bury in oblivion all animosities against your former foes and, . . . to carve the flowing epitaph that tells of Southern as well as Northern valor."²⁶ The speech was printed in Cincinnati newspapers, gaining Lytle further notoriety, and many men pushed him to run for Governor, but he politely declined.

On 12 August, Sheridan forwarded to McCook a message from Lytle that deserters informed him that there were five regiments on the opposite side of the river, and the bridge was prepared to burn.²⁷ The Army of the Cumberland received numerous, usually conflicting reports of Confederate troop movements from deserters and civilians during this time. The next day Lytle reported hearing chopping at night, and again

expressed his concern that the rebels were destroying the second bridge at Bridgeport.²⁸

On the night of 14 August, the Confederate forces burned the remaining portion of the bridge, the artillery proving incapable of preventing it. Lytle reported:

STEVENSON,
August 15, 1863-1.40 a.m.

Brigadier-General GARFIELD:

The following dispatch from General Lytle just received:

BRIDGEPORT-midnight.

The bridge was fired about 11.30 p.m. Our batteries threw over a few shells, to which there has been no response.

W. H. LYTLE.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Major-General²⁹

Lytle described the incident in a letter to his sister:

I sprang out of body cot, got into my clothes as well as I could in the dark and rushed to find the bridge just bursting into a blaze, calling my staff together I ascended the high hill in the side of which I live and mounted the parapet of the redoubt. From there the scene was grand beyond description. The immense bridge rammed full of dry resinous wood and saturated with turpentine was soon enveloped in flame. The river could be seen for miles lighted up like molten lava, whilst in the background the tall mountains looked down on the scene like black and stern old giants. Soon to all this was added the roar of artillery. My orders were to open fire as soon as they attempted to burn the bridge.³⁰

Sheridan had ten companies at Stevenson guarding bridges and four companies guarding the Crow Creek bridges. On 15 August, McCook requested relief of the Crow Creek guard duties and received guidance on 24 August from Rosecrans' headquarters to have Sheridan turn over these sites to Negley.³¹

On 22 August, Sheridan reported that Confederate General Patton Anderson's division moved from the Bridgeport area toward Shellmound, and that there were no infantry forces across the river from Bridgeport.³² On 22 August, Lytle sent

sharpshooters across the river in boats to clear the east bank of the river; they had minor contact with a small force that quickly withdrew. On 26 August, Lytle sent two companies to occupy the island and the east bank of the river before daylight. They reported no rebel pickets on the far bank.³³

Rosecrans decided to use four crossing sites over the Tennessee River to maneuver his army on Chattanooga and cut off Bragg's supply line from the south. The bridge crossing the Tennessee River at Bridgeport was critical to Army of the Cumberland since it would provide a logistical line from the Union supply depot Rosecrans had set up there. The supply base at Bridgeport enabled the Army of the Cumberland to move supplies by rail from Nashville through Cowan and Stevenson to the river. Rosecrans planned to have Thomas' corps cross ahead of Sheridan's division at Bridgeport and approach Chattanooga from the south. Sheridan would then move southeast over Sand Mountain to join the rest of Twentieth Corps, which crossed the Tennessee River on a pontoon bridge further south at Caperton's Ferry. McCook's corps would then occupy Alpine, cutting off Bragg's withdrawal route and supply line from Atlanta.³⁴

Sheridan put Lytle in charge of the construction of the bridge, but he had to wait due to a lack of supplies and tools. The Army of the Cumberland did not have enough pontoons to span the 2,700 foot river, so Sheridan volunteered to build a trestle bridge from Bridgeport to Long Island, and a pontoon bridge the rest of the way across, sending the following dispatch to Rosecrans' headquarters:

STEVENSON,
August 27, 1863--9.45 a.m.

Brig. Gen. J. A. GARFIELD:

I will, in conjunction with the Michigan Mechanics and Engineers, construct a trestle bridge over the Tennessee River in a very short space of time if you desire me to do so.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Major-General³⁵

There was a great deal of pressure on Rosecrans to continue his move toward Chattanooga, and Sheridan pushed his division to complete the bridge as quickly as possible. He tasked Bradley to cut down timber, and shape it at a nearby sawmill, and when that did not provide sufficient flooring, he had the troops strip boards from houses in the town.³⁶ Bradley wrote about his brigade's part in the construction of the bridge:

My brigade cut down 1,500 trees, and with the assistance of three companies of Engineers, put up the bridge 400 yards long in four days. The weather is very hot, but being in a mountain region we get more air, and suffer less than we did last summer. We shall have a hot march and expect to melt some of our men.³⁷

Lytle received the following guidance from Army of the Cumberland headquarters:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE CUMBERLAND,
Stevenson, Ala., August 30, 1863-9.30 p.m.

Brigadier-General LYTLE,
Bridgeport:

A train loaded with pontoons will reach Bridgeport at 11 p.m. this evening. The general commanding directs you to make a detail to unload them as rapidly as possible. The train will then return for another load, which will reach you a little before daylight. Have you another detail to unload the second lot as soon as they arrive?

J. A. GARFIELD,
Brigadier-General and Chief of Staff³⁸

Despite the hard work, the soldiers were in good spirits, believing the war would be over soon. William D. Hynes of the Twenty-second Illinois described the mood in Bridgeport at the end of August:

From an occurrence [*sic*] of the other day you will see that anticipations of a speedy termination of the war are not confined to common soldiers but an uncommon [*sic*] one: no other than Genl Rosecrans himself also has the same belief. He was standing on the R.R. track here the other day watching a detail unloading a car, when in the way of encouraging the boys he said: “work lively boys I wouldn’t be surprised if we should have peace in two months.” Ah how much [*sic*] rejoicing there will be, if his anticipations [*sic*] are only to be realized, for when “Roseys” peace comes it will be one of the right kind, no compromise with traitors will be contained in it.³⁹

On 1 September, at 6 p.m., George Burroughs, Lieutenant of Engineers reported to Lytle that the pontoon-bridge from the island to the south bank was in place, and requested “at least two regiments of infantry” to secure the south bank. He also noted that the soldiers would have to be transported by pontoon boats to the island (the trestle bridge from the north bank to the island was not finished).⁴⁰ By this time, Rosecrans was pressuring Sheridan, sending several messages asking when the bridge would be complete until Sheridan replied that it would be ready on the morning of 2 September.⁴¹ Sheridan’s division marched three miles to get to the bridge, then one mile after crossing.⁴² The brigades crossed in order First, Third, and Second, followed by the division trains, maintaining the same order of march for the next two weeks because of the lack of space on the trails to move units past each other.

Although the bridge was in place, the division was delayed in its movement. When the division crossed the river, 700 feet of the trestle bridge fell into the water in the afternoon, causing the loss of one mule and damage to several wagons.⁴³ As a result, the division camped on the south side of the river on 2 September without its supplies. The engineers immediately started repairing the bridge, and supported the move of the rest of the division and Thomas’ corps across the river the next morning.

The Army of the Cumberland encountered other problems in its movement from Bridgeport as the bridge became a choke point for units trying to make their ordered movements. Although separated from McCook, Sheridan still had to coordinate through him, and received a dispatch from his headquarters dated 2 September 1863, 1445 hours, stating, “General Rosecrans will arrange with General Thomas to give you the road to start at 3 a.m. to-morrow.”⁴⁴ However, there was no command and control from the Department of the Cumberland headquarters, so units blocked each other on the east side of the river. Instead of trying to work out a solution, the commands started blaming each other for the problem. Negley, a division commander in Thomas’ corps, sent the following dispatch:

HDQRS. SECOND DIVISION, FOURTEENTH ARMY CORPS,
Moore’s Spring, Ala., September 2, 1863.

Major-General THOMAS,

Commanding Fourteenth Army Corps:

GENERAL: I send copy of communication of 1 p.m. to-day, which I sent per Captain Wilson, General Beatty’s staff, who proposed crossing at Bridgeport, but may be prevented by the falling of the bridge. Since then General Sheridan’s division has arrived here, and rather unceremoniously assumed a part of my camping-ground. I was consequently compelled to halt my third brigade one-half mile back. General Sheridan’s commissaries are applying for rations, theirs being on the other side of the river. Their men marched without any rations in haversacks, so stated. Shall I supply them? The conduct of some of their troops has been so discreditable as to cause us to regret our proximity.

By reference to Captain Merrill’s map you will observe that the road I refer to in my communication is not laid down correctly by him.

I have the honor to remain, yours, very truly,

JAS. S. NEGLEY,
Major-General.⁴⁵

General Thomas also sent correspondence to Garfield blaming Sheridan for blocking the road, preventing his corps from moving forward.⁴⁶ Sheridan responded two days later:

BIG SPRING, HOG JAW VALLEY,
September 4, 1863-8.25 a.m.

Brigadier-General GARFIELD:

I crossed the river with all my wagons yesterday afternoon, and went into camp at this place. I will be delayed here for some time by General Negley's wagons. There is still a large number to go up the mountain.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Major-General⁴⁷

On 3 September, Third Division started what would turn out to be a one hundred eight mile march over mountainous terrain to reach the battlefield at Chickamauga on 19 September.⁴⁸ The first day the unit had to climb Sand Mountain. Bradley described the difficulty moving up the mountain on 3 September, writing:

After a nights halt we struck out for this valley, crossing a high mountainous country, with the steepest ridges I have ever seen. East and West rocks are nothing to these spires of the Cumberlands. It took half a day to get my battery one mile, with ten horses to a gun, and our teams suffered materially, some of them rolling down the mountain and literally going to smash.⁴⁹

Sheridan was moving separate from the rest of Twentieth Corps, which crossed at Stevenson. McCook planned to have Sheridan link-up with the rest of the corps near Alpine, Georgia.

Third Division completed the march over Sand Mountain on 5 September and set up camp in Lookout Valley, near Trenton, Georgia. The division spent the next few days in Lookout Valley.⁵⁰ During the march, Sheridan continued to receive taskings from corps, requiring him to divide his unit, like this one dated 6 September: "General McCook directs that you detail one company of infantry (of about 30 to 35 men for duty) from the Third Division, to report as soon as practicable, with arms and baggage, at these

headquarters to Capt. A. T. Snodgrass, provost-marshal of the corps. One commissioned officer will be sufficient to take charge of the company, which will be assigned to duty at these headquarters.’⁵¹

On 9 September, Union forces reached Chattanooga and found that Confederate forces had evacuated it. Rosecrans immediately sent out orders for his corps to pursue the Army of Tennessee, following the plan he devised for the campaign. Although he had not yet consolidated his corps, McCook pushed forward toward Alpine.⁵² He sent Sheridan the following order:

LONG’S SPRING, ALA.,
September 9, 1863-3.15 p.m.

General P. H. SHERIDAN:

The enemy is reported as having evacuated Chattanooga and moving southward. This corps is ordered in pursuit. General McCook directs that you break camp by daybreak in the morning and move directly to Winston’s. Your troops will provide themselves with three days’ rations, and move with all supply and baggage wagons in their rear under a strong escort. Supply wagons will be placed in advance of baggage wagons so that they can be moved forward to ration the troops if necessary. When you get to Winston’s your troops will move up the mountain, leaving the trains behind, except your ammunition train, which will follow the troops. The trains of Johnson and Davis are also left at Winston’s, to enable your division to close up with them and not be impeded. Colonel Post’s brigade (First Division) will guard and bring forward the trains as rapidly as possible, supply trains taking the precedence. General McCook expects that you will be able to get your division up on the mountain by to-morrow night, and encamp at a small stream about 2 miles from the crest of the mountains. The road up the mountain at Winston’s is the best that your troops have found, and your teams can take an ordinary load up without difficulty. The escort guarding your trains will be left with them at Winston’s, as Colonel Post’s brigade will not be able to take charge of more trains than are already assigned to it. It has charge of Stanley’s trains.

G. P. THRUSTON,
Assistant Adjutant-General and Chief of Staff.⁵³

By the time Sheridan received the message, he was enroute to Indian Falls on top of Lookout Mountain. Sheridan’s division approached Alpine on 11 September and set

up camp in Broomtown Valley. McCook sent the following guidance based on information of enemy dispositions nearby: “General McCook directs that your supply wagons only shall be brought down the mountain, and that all your baggage wagons should be parked at the stream on Lookout Mountain.”⁵⁴

At 0830 on 13 September, McCook sent a message to Headquarters, Department of the Cumberland acknowledging delayed receipt of the 12 September order to move his corps north to link-up with Thomas.⁵⁵ Rosecrans realized that by sending his corps beyond supporting range of each other, he had provided Bragg the opportunity to isolate and defeat each one piecemeal. He immediately issued orders to bring his army together to try to hold Chattanooga, while destroying the Army of Tennessee. After the war, Bradley wrote that Sheridan disagreed with the march toward Alpine, telling him:

“This is all wrong. We have no business here, we ought to be in Chattanooga. If we whip Bragg down here we’ve got to fall back to the Tennessee for supplies. We can’t advance till we re-build the railroad.”⁵⁶

McCook had Sheridan hold his position outside Alpine, then tasked him (and each of the other divisions) to provide a brigade (Lytle’s) to escort the corps trains on the mountain while the rest of the corps traveled through the valley to expedite link-up with Thomas.⁵⁷ Lytle received the following instructions in a dispatch from Twentieth Corps headquarters, near Alpine, dated 13 September 1863 at 2 p.m.:

Instructions are received from the general commanding the department directing General McCook to send two divisions of his corps immediately, in light marching order, to support General Thomas, and to draw back the trains of the corps, under escort of one division, to near the crest of the mountain in front of Winston’s, holding it in readiness either to move forward to La Fayette or Stevens’ Gap, or to be withdrawn into Lookout Valley. Three detached brigades will be left instead of an entire division--your brigade, from Third Division; Dodge’s, from Second Division, and Post’s brigade, from First Division. The latter is now located near Winston’s, with its trains, &c. You will have command of the three brigades, and have charge of the baggage and supply wagons of the

entire corps, except the few wagons necessary to take forward the three days' rations for the troops.

One-third of the division ammunition train will be left with you . . . Empty supply trains will be sent to Stevenson for rations with suitable guards . . . It is reported that one or two small detachments of rebel cavalry have been sent around to try and capture our trains . . . General Stanley is to leave you a detachment of cavalry.⁵⁸

The march had been long and difficult for the soldiers, and the push to move quickly toward Thomas' corps, over the mountains they recently climbed, took even more out of them. Second Lieutenant Henry M. Weiss, Twenty-seventh Illinois, wrote:

For the first time since we commenced this movement we march night and day. Those night marches! Between the darkness and the thick mantle of dust, which seems to pervade all creation, one cannot see where to place the foot. The roads are new byroads too, and thickly sprinkled with stumps, roots of trees, logs, etc . . . We glide along in the wake of one another like an army of grey [*sic*] ghosts, not always silent ones.⁵⁹

Captain John A. Glenn, commander of F Company, Twenty-seventh Illinois, described the impact the march had on him as he marched into battle:

For the past two weeks I have been run down, worn out and half dead. Since we left Bridgeport up to the time of the fight we marched every day under a burning sun and in deep, deep dust which made it perfectly awful [*sic*] and to add to this the crossing of five mountains when we had to put ten and twelve horses to each gun and then a company of men with ropes to pull . . . in this state on the morning of the 19 we were double quicked for six miles to enter the fight late in the afternoon.⁶⁰

On 14 September, Third Division (minus Lytle's brigade) started the long march back. The unit traveled twenty-three miles, crossed Lookout Mountain into Wills Valley, and camped at Stevens' Mill, where it had camped on 7 September. On 15 and 16 September, the division recrossed Lookout Mountain at Stevens' Gap, and set up camp in McLemore's Cove.⁶¹ Meanwhile, Lytle's brigade and the corps trains moved on top of the mountain, as ordered. There was no gravel road like the one through the valley,

making the movement even more difficult, and frustrating the soldiers. Second

Lieutenant C. F. Belknap of the Twenty-first Michigan Regiment described the mood:

We retraced our steps backup the mountain to the summit, then along a road on its top mile after mile until long after midnight; then filing out into the woods by the side of the road we lay down to rest, some to sleep. All that night and part of the next day the train-guards worked with the mules to get the trains back up the mountain. We lost in the movement an entire day. We could have marched up the valley over gravel roads to the same point in six hours and saved much valuable time to the army. As nearly every man in my company were Major-Generals in planning campaigns, they fully cussed and discussed the situation. Every man knew full as well as Gen. Rosecrans that we were going to have a battle somewheres [*sic*], and they all knew Chattanooga was the prize we were after.⁶²

Lytle's brigade rejoined the division on 18 September at Pond Spring.

Due to enemy demonstrations, Sheridan deployed his division in a line of battle in front of McLamore's Cove on 17 September. Confederate forces made "slight demonstrations against me from the direction of Lafayette," and Sheridan kept the line of battle formed throughout the day and a picket line at night.⁶³ That evening he received the following instructions:

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH ARMY CORPS
Sept. 17th 5:30 P.M. 1863

Maj. Gen. Sheridan
General:

Instructions just received from the general commanding direct that your division shall be posted near Lee's Mills (which was General Brannan's old encampment), refusing the right so as to attack any column in flank which may attempt to seize Stevens' Gap. General McCook directs that you throw one brigade forward to the vicinity of John Davis', to observe the gap. I send you herewith a copy of the order directing these dispositions. General McCook has been absent from here (Pond Spring) for some hours, so I make no further comment, sending you only the orders received. If he wishes any change or has more specific instructions, I will notify you promptly.

G. P. THRUSTON,
Assistant Adjutant-General and Chief of Staff

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH ARMY CORPS
Camp at Foot of Stevens' Gap, September 17, 1863.

Maj. Gen. P. H. SHERIDAN,

Commanding Third Division:

GENERAL: General McCook wishes you to get your command ready to march as soon as practicable.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant.

G. P. THRUSTON,
Assistant Adjutant-General and Chief of Staff.⁶⁴

Lytle, escorting the division trains, arrived at Pond Spring on the evening of 17 September.⁶⁵ Lytle's soldiers had a very difficult march over the mountains, one soldier from the Thirty-sixth Illinois described the final push to Pond Spring: "our progress was extremely tedious, many of the men lying down by the roadside to sleep, and officers in danger of falling from their horses through sleep; but on we went, lighted by burning fences, until we bivouacked at Pond Spring."⁶⁶

On 18 September, the two brigades with Sheridan near Stevens' Gap were awake at 0400 hours, and drew two days rations. This allowed the trains to fall back to the rear of the formation, as Sheridan anticipated a fight. The unit marched about six and a half miles in rain to Pond Spring, and set up camp.⁶⁷ Sheridan, after arrival at Pond Spring, received the following messages from McCook:

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH ARMY CORPS

Alley's, September 19, 1863-4 p.m.

General SHERIDAN:

Take a position near the one occupied by General Negley last night. Keep your transportation well back, and keep a good watch to the front. Harrison will picket in front of the gaps. I await orders here and will join you this evening.

A. McD. McCook
Major-General⁶⁸

(Note: According to the *OR*, though dated 19 September, 18 September is probably the correct date for this dispatch. Alley's, at Pond Spring, was the location of the corps headquarters on 18 September, not 19 September.)

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH ARMY CORPS

Pond Spring Sept. 18, 1863-5 p.m.

Maj. Gen. P. H. SHERIDAN,

Commanding Third Division:

General McCook directs that you move your command immediately in rear of General Davis', on the main road leading toward these headquarters. Further orders designating your new position will reach you on the way. Orders from department headquarters, just received, direct this movement to be made.

Very respectfully,

G. P. THRUSTON,

Assistant Adjutant-General and Chief of Staff.⁶⁹

Twentieth Corps concentrated vicinity of Pond Spring on night of 18 September because the road north was blocked for several miles with advancing troops.⁷⁰ The Army of the Cumberland was moving north along the Dry Valley road. Rosecrans was concentrating his army to meet the Army of Tennessee, and his greatest concern was his left flank, where Bragg could cut him off from Chattanooga.⁷¹

Early on 19 September, Sheridan was ordered to move his command to Crawfish Spring:

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH ARMY CORPS

Pond Spring, September 19, 1863-3.30 a.m.

General P. H. SHERIDAN,

Commanding Third Division, Twentieth Army Corps:

General Johnson has orders to move his division at early dawn this a.m. upon the road from here to Crawfish Spring, and close up upon General Thomas, who is now 4 miles in advance. General Davis is directed to follow him, keeping well closed up. General McCook directs that you move your division immediately in the rear of General Davis.

The officer in charge of your train will report in person here to Colonel Boyd, who will inform him of the direction your train will take and the position it will occupy. When on the road directions will meet you where to camp andc.

General McCook directs that if you have any information from your front you do not fail to communicate it.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. C. McCLURG,

Captain and Acting Assistant Adjutant-General.⁷²

Sheridan prepared his soldiers to move into battle. The division conducted a five-mile march to Crawfish Spring (approximately twelve miles south of Chattanooga), while the wagons went to Chattanooga. Upon arrival at Crawfish Spring, the soldiers filled their canteens, and extra ammunition was distributed to the companies.⁷³ Sheridan received the following order:

Headquarters Department of the Cumberland

Crawfish Spring, Sept 19, 1863 8:45 A.M.

Maj. Gen. Sheridan

General:

Explanatory of orders to General McCook the General Commanding directs you to put your command in position to support General Negley in watching and holding the fords of the Chickamauga Creek. Consult with General Negley and select the best position that the ground offers; allow the enemy to cross in small force and attempt to cut him off. Resist the crossing of any large force. Report when you have taken any position how your forces are situated.

J. A. Garfield

Brig. Gen. Chf. of Staff⁷⁴

The division moved next to Negley's division and set up a line of battle, forming the right flank of the Army of the Cumberland.

Sheridan met with McCook when he arrived at Crawfish Spring that morning. McCook ordered Sheridan to take up a position at Lee and Gordon's Mills, when another Union division vacated its position and moved north. Sheridan positioned Lytle's brigade at Lee and Gordon's Mills, and the other two brigades on the high ground to the right and rear of Lytle's brigade.⁷⁵ Lytle led his brigade into position, one soldier from the Thirty-sixth Illinois describing his bearing:

calmly smoking a cigar, receiving his orders with that stately courtesy at once so becoming and winning. There was not the slightest change in the manner or intonation of the chivalric Lytle. I felt, as his horse bore him quickly away, that I was gazing upon the incarnation of manly courage and nobility.⁷⁶

Lytle's brigade drove the skirmishers out of the area of Lee and Gordon's Mills soon after they occupied their position. This would be the brigade's only action on 19 September, as the brigade held the position on the Union right flank when the rest of the division was deployed a few hours later to reinforce the divisions of Wood and Davis near Viniard's Farm.

McCook sent the following dispatch to Rosecrans' headquarters, reporting his actions, as well as the disposition of Negley's division, which was under his control at that time.

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH ARMY CORPS

Near Crawfish Spring, September 19, 1863-1:40 p.m.

Brigadier General GARFIELD,
Chief of Staff:

I am sending Sheridan's division to Gordon's Mills to occupy the ground just vacated without my knowledge by General Wood. I will retain Negley here until further orders, as I think this point needs great attention, and I do not know how far I am without support on my left. General Wood has gone to my left; how far I do not know. All quiet here thus far. Lieutenant Yaryan reports Bushrod R. Johnson in front of Gordon's Mills.

Alexander McD. McCook,
Major-General, Commanding⁷⁷

(Note: It was actually Hindman's division in front of Gordon's Mills.)
Sheridan soon received orders to move about one mile north to support Davis' division, which was under heavy pressure. McCook received the following guidance:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE CUMBERLAND,

Widow Glenn's, September 19, 1863-3 p.m.

Major-General McCook,

The general commanding directs me to say that he thinks you had better send one brigade from Sheridan to support Davis, who is hardly pressed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
FRANK S. BOND,
Major, and Aide-de-camp⁷⁸

McCook decided to send two brigades of Sheridan's division, instead of one, as directed in the order he received from Rosecrans' headquarters. He sent Sheridan the following order, and an update as he moved:

HEADQUARTERS TWENTIETH ARMY CORPS

September 19, (1863)-3.15 p.m.

Major-General SHERIDAN, Commanding:

General McCook directs that you move two brigades up the road in the direction of Mrs. Glenn's, and leave one brigade to hold the position at Gordon's Mills. He wishes this order carried out immediately.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. P. THRUSTON,

Assistant Adjutant-General, and Chief of Staff⁷⁹

EN ROUTE, September 19, (1863)-4 (p.m.)

Major-General SHERIDAN,

Commanding Third Division:

General McCook directs that instead of moving those two brigades up toward the center, you keep them there well in hand, and re-enforce Wood, on your left, as he needs them. Communicate with General Wood. Do not give up the position at Gordon's Mills. All goes well on the left. Send General Wood reinforcements, brigade at a time, as he needs them.

Very respectfully,

G. P. THRUSTON,

Assistant Adjutant-General, and Chief of Staff.⁸⁰

Bradley's Third Brigade led the movement to Viniard's Farm, followed by Laiboldt's Second Brigade. As Sheridan and his staff passed through Colonel John T. Wilder's mounted infantry brigade, his staff officers shouted, "Make way for Sheridan! Make way for Sheridan!"⁸¹ Sheridan led Bradley's brigade in a charge across an open cornfield east of Lafayette Road after Bradley formed his brigade. Laiboldt's brigade formed on to the right (south) of Bradley's brigade and took up a position near the road with the Second and Fifteenth Missouri regiments to the front and Forty-fourth and Seventy-third Illinois regiments to the rear.⁸² Bradley continued the charge into the woods at the edge of the cornfield with two regiments in advance, the Fifty-first Illinois

on the left, the Forty-Second Illinois on the right, and two in reserve.⁸³ The brigade was successful initially, driving back the enemy, and recovering the guns of Lieutenant Estep's Indiana battery from Davis' division. The rebels soon mounted a counterattack, forcing Bradley to withdrawal.

As Sheridan made his way back through Wilder's brigade, the soldiers derisively called out, "Make way for Sheridan! Make way for Sheridan!"⁸⁴ Sheridan wanted to continue the attack. He found Major General Crittenden, and recommended they combine forces for an attack, but Crittenden's troops had been engaged all day and were in no condition to conduct an offensive or pursuit.⁸⁵

Colonel Bradley described the action:

My brigade was ordered into action at Chickamauga about four o'clock on the afternoon of the first day. The rebels had turned our right and captured Estep's battery. So, it was an old fight and a pretty hot one. Sheridan ordered me to drive back two brigades--Teggs and Robinsons [*sic*] (Note: It should be Gregg's and Robertson's brigades.)--of Longstreets corps, which had made the trouble on our right, and recapture Estep's battery, and it had to be done in a hurry. I charged them with the brigade in two lines and we had a monkey and a parrot time of it for a while: but we pushed them back finally and secured the battery, which my men hauled off by hand. When we reached the battery every horse of the twelve teams on the limbers and caissons was on the ground, dead, or wounded so that he couldn't stand.

I got a couple of wounds in the charge, and as soon as our line was secure I turned over the command and started for the rear. I was faint and a little shaky, and one of my staff had his arm round my waist to steady me. When we got well back toward the ambulance a horseman dashed up and called out, "What are doing here sir. What are you doing, a Colonel helping off wounded men." I looked up, and there was Crittenden. He recognized me, and, apologising hastily, he rode off.⁸⁶

The Twenty-second Illinois Regiment saw fierce action:

Within ten or twelve minutes after they fired the first gun, ninety-seven out of less than three hundred men were cut down by a murderous front and flank fire, the left flank being entirely unprotected, and having advanced within twenty paces of an overwhelming mass of enemy concealed among the undergrowth, fell back. It

rallied in a ditch in an open field and then repulsed a desparate [sic] attack. The regiment remained all night in the ditch.⁸⁷

The Fifty-first Illinois helped recapture and recover the guns of the Eighth Indiana Battery. The regiment lost eighteen killed, seventy-five wounded, and five missing, and the regimental commander, Colonel Raymond had his horse shot out from under him.⁸⁸

Colonel Nathan H. Walworth, commander of the Forty-second Illinois, took charge of the brigade upon Bradley's wounding. He had the two regiments in reserve cover the withdrawal of the two lead regiments, and take up a position on the west side of Lafayette Road. The brigade held this position until 0400 hours the next morning, when it was pulled about three-fourths of a mile west up a hill with the rest of the division.⁸⁹ A soldier from the Twenty-second Illinois recalled:

The regiment remained all night in the ditch. Although so early in the season, it was very cold, and all suffered severely. The cries of the wounded were heart-rending; all was done for them that could be, but it was a fearful night. After carrying in all the wounded that could be found, the regiment collected all the guns within reach and loaded them, giving each man from two to five loads, but the night wore away without an attack, and the brigade was withdrawn about daylight under cover of a dense fog.⁹⁰

After the battle on 19 September, the wounded were evacuated to the division hospital, located at Crawfish Spring. Prisoners provided information that caused additional concern among the soldiers:

From the prisoners we captured, it is learned, that Bragg is expecting some heavy reinforcements at any moment, said to be [James] Longstreets corps from the rebel army in the east, which news has a depressing effect on our men.⁹¹

That evening, conditions were difficult on the already tired soldiers of the division. Private Smith, Sheridan's courier, wrote:

The losses on both sides are heavy. No camp fires are lighted, as that would expose our position to the enemy. They also take the same precaution. Soon after night spread its mantle over the scene, hiding from view the worst

features of the bloody strife. It set in cold and frosty. Fires would have added some comfort to the weary soldiers, as they lay down upon the cold ground to seek much needed rest.⁹²

At 2300, Sheridan moved Laiboldt's brigade back to a position near Widow Glenn's house, on high ground about three-fourths of a mile west of Lafayette Road. Sheridan ordered Laiboldt to fortify the position. Sheridan made the following request to McCook based on the reports of the pickets and his desire to consolidate his division:

HDQRS. THIRD DIVISION, TWENTIETH ARMY CORPS,

September 19, 1863

Major-General McCOOK:

GENERAL: My pickets report that the rumbling of carriages can be heard in front of them, and that the sound indicates a movement to the left. I would request that General Lytle be relieved from his position at the ford at Gordon's Mills and allowed to join me, as I may need the entire strength of the division. There is quite an interval on my immediate left which should be filled up.

I am, general, yours, respectfully,

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Major-General.⁹³

McCook responded with the following order, which was actually published at

11:45 P.M.:

Headquarters Twentieth Army Corps

Widow Glenn's, Sept 19th 1863 11:45 A.M.

Maj. Gen. Sheridan

General:

The general Commanding directs you as soon as practicable after receipt of this order to post your command so as to form the right of the new line of battle front, and hold this place. Leave your outposts and grand guards where they are till they are driven in by the enemy, when they fall back on the main body of your command contesting the ground inch by inch.

J. A. Garfield
Brig. Gen. Chf. of Staff⁹⁴

That night, Sheridan attended a war council at Rosecrans' headquarters, located at Widow Glenn's house. The meeting started at 2000 hours, with twelve of the nineteen corps and division commanders present. The group discussed plans for the defense, the

left flank being Rosecrans' primary concern. Major General Thomas, who commanded the corps in the center of the Army of the Cumberland, kept asking for reinforcements. Since two of Sheridan's three brigades had seen little contact, and McCook's corps held the right of the Union line, he was the most likely to reinforce Thomas. However, Rosecrans made no decision on that issue. Rosecrans decided to protect Lafayette Road to his front (east), and Dry Valley Road to his rear (west), and protect his lines of communication to Chattanooga. Because of the concern about the size of Bragg's force, especially with confirmation of the arrival of Longstreet's corps, Rosecrans wanted to tighten up his lines, but did not give any guidance over what units should move, or where they should go. After the meeting broke up about 2200 hours, Rosecrans kept his generals around to socialize, although they were exhausted, several sleeping through the meeting. There is no record of how long Sheridan stayed, but based on his personality, and anger over the events of the day, he probably left within an hour to prepare his command.⁹⁵

Sheridan returned to his headquarters, nearby, frustrated, angry, and tired. He later wrote in his *Personal Memoirs*, "There did not seem to be any well-defined plan of action in the fighting, and this led to much independence of judgment in construing orders among some of the subordinate generals. It also gave rise to much license in issuing orders: too many people were giving important directions, affecting the whole army, without authority from its head."⁹⁶ Corporal Hasty of the Seventy-third Illinois was on guard duty at division headquarters that night. Although he was posted outside the tent, he had a unique insight into Sheridan's disposition that night:

the corporal could not fail to determine that a feeling of anxiety, extra seriousness, pervaded the head-quarters, from the general down to the orderlies. It was not long until McCook, our corps commander, arrived at Sheridan's tent . . . The meeting may have been previously appointed, but it is thought may not have been: that it was suggested, or necessitated, by an emergency . . . An animated and somewhat protracted consultation was held. In the course of the discussion, General Sheridan grew still more restless and uneasy. He was greatly displeased at the rough usage his 3d (Bradley's) brigade had received late in the evening . . . from the plan of operation agreed on, he was apprehensive that there would be more of the same kind of usage for his two remaining brigades the next morning.

The interview came to an end at a late hour, and participants in it, except Sheridan, departed; then the latter paced back and forth in his tent, and bewailed the situation, past, present and prospective, especially prospective, using language more emphatic than elegant, as General Sheridan only could do.⁹⁷

At the end of the day, Sheridan's division was spread out, with Laiboldt's brigade fortifying its position at Widow Glenn's, Lytle's brigade about to receive orders to move from Lee and Gordon's Mills (over a mile away), and Walworth's (formerly Bradley's) brigade holding its position near Lafayette Road after sustaining heavy casualties, including the loss of its commander. The soldiers were fatigued from the long movement to get to the battlefield from Bridgeport, covering over one hundred miles of mountainous terrain in seventeen days. They had been awake since about 0400 hours, completed five to six miles of movements, changed positions several times, and were separated from their wagons. They had experienced extremes in the weather, suffering from the heat during much of the march, then freezing temperatures on the night of 19 September, many without blankets, and unable to light warming fires due to security concerns. There was also anxiety among the soldiers, from the realization that the enemy was much stronger than expected, to the effect the casualties had on them psychologically. Many listened to the cries for help of the wounded that night.

Sheridan was clearly angry with his superiors for their conduct of the campaign, from poor planning in his eyes to poor utilization of his division. He was clearly upset at the way McCook piecemealed his division, and did not agree with the vague plans being developed for fighting the defense the following day. He was also tired, getting very little sleep between planning, preparing to move early and frequently experiencing delays due to overcrowded roads as the army moved toward Chattanooga. He would go into battle on 20 September even more tired from lack of sleep, and concern for his soldiers.

Sheridan handled the changing plans well, but at a cost of eroding his confidence in the leadership of the Army of the Cumberland. The division was always prepared to move on time, and fought hard when called upon, even though it had had little contact since January. In battle, Sheridan led from the front, and had the confidence of his men. However, as the division prepared for its greatest fight, there was a feeling of anxiety that the unit had not experienced before, even during the heavy fighting at Stones River.

¹Henry M. Cist, *The Army of the Cumberland* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), 170.

²Steven E. Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 42-47.

³*Ibid.*, 48.

⁴Roy Morris, Jr., "Chickamauga: Pyrrhic Victory for the South," *Military History*, 17 (5) (December 2000), 66.

⁵William G. Robertson, *The Battle of Chickamauga* (Conshohocken, PA: National Park Service Civil War Series, 1995), 2.

⁶*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 47-50; Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns*, 12-13.

⁷Robertson, *The Battle of Chickamauga*, 12.

⁸Thruston to Sheridan, 8 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

⁹*OR*, vol. 23, pt. 2, 525.

¹⁰Thruston to Sheridan, 10 July 1863, 11:30 A.M., *Philip H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

¹¹Roger Zeimet, "Philip H. Sheridan and the Civil War in the West" (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1985), 320.

¹²Lee to Moore, 11 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

¹³Ray to Sheridan, 11 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

¹⁴Conrad to Lee, 14 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

¹⁵Zeimet, 321.

¹⁶Laiboldt to Lee, 21 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. During this time, Colonel James F. Jaques, commander of the Seventy-third Illinois Regiment was reportedly away on a peace mission. He wrote a letter on 22 July 1863 to President Lincoln after he returned from Richmond, where he had unsuccessfully attempted to meet with Jefferson Davis. He wrote that he had "valuable information" but could not set up a meeting with Lincoln, although he waited two weeks to pass on this information. In 1893, Donn Piatt, with the assistance of Herbert V. Boynton, wrote a biography of Thomas and included the following: "Col. Jaquess of the Seventy Third Illinois who had come up from the South, tried in vain to gain admittance to Washington to communicate this fact of Longstreet's movement to Halleck and Stanton and then, without accomplishing it, started West, and reached his command in time to fight with his regiment at Chickamauga." Jaques returned to his regiment on 14 September 1863. Lester L. Swift, "The Preacher Regiment at Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge," *Lincoln Herald*, vol. 72, No. 2, 1970, 51-52. There is no other mention of Jaques' long absence from his command before the Battle of Chickamauga. It is possible, given his religious background that he may have made such an attempt, and that during his time in Richmond he would have heard rumors of troop movements to reinforce the Army of Tennessee. However, it is highly doubtful that he would have been allowed to move freely about Richmond if his identity was known, which it must have been if he attempted to meet with Jefferson Davis. Since there is no record from Jaques specifying the "valuable information," there is no certainty that it was about Confederate troop movements, and if so, whether it would have significantly changed the outcome of the Battle of Chickamauga if acted upon by Union military or political leaders. Colonel Jaques' son, William, was also a member of the regiment and

was captured at Chickamauga, but escaped several days later. He wrote that his father met with Jefferson Davis on a peace mission in June 1864. After discussing the war, Colonel Jaques thanked Jefferson Davis, on a personal note, for the kind treatment his son received in captivity. William G. Jaques, *Account of My Experience In, and Capture, In the Battle of Chickamauga, September 1863*, Southwestern Illinois Historical Society Annals, 1920-1925, 6-7. William Jaques version of the peace mission is more credible than the others. The other writers may have mistaken the year the visit occurred, then speculated on the information Colonel Jaques would have collected in Richmond at the time.

¹⁷Thruston to Sheridan, 22 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

¹⁸Ruth Carter, (ed), *For Honor, Glory and Union: The Mexican and Civil War Letters of Brigadier General William Haines Lytle* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 190, 194. In a letter to his sister, Josephine Lytle Foster, dated 4 August 1863, Lytle writes that he is still in command of the division. In a letter to his sister, Elizabeth Lytle Broadwell, dated 16 August 1863, Lytle writes that he moved to Bridgeport when “Gen. Sheridan was relieved of command,” and that he had been there “since the 5th of August.”

¹⁹Zeimet, 322-323.

²⁰Sheridan to Lytle, 29 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

²¹Thruston to Bradley, 29 July 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

²²Bradley to Denning, 2 August 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

²³Zeimet, 325; Benjamin T. Smith, “Recollections,” Benjamin T. Smith Papers (Fifty-first Illinois), Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.

²⁴Bradley to Lee, 25 August 1863, *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

²⁵Dr. and C. Kemper, late Assistant Adjutant-General U. S. V. “William Haines Lytle,” *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, Sketches of War History 1861-1865, Ohio Commandery L. L. Ohio*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clarke and Company, 1888), 30.

²⁶Carter, 29.

²⁷*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 14.

- ²⁸OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 20.
- ²⁹OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 39.
- ³⁰Carter, 195.
- ³¹OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 38, 152.
- ³²OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 113.
- ³³OR, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 116; vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 175.
- ³⁴Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns*, 55-60.
- ³⁵OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 187.
- ³⁶Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1888), vol. 1, 272-273.
- ³⁷Luther P. Bradley, Bradley to his mother, dated 3 September 1863, *Luther P. Bradley Papers* (Personal Correspondence, 1861-1865), U.S. Army Military History Institute.
- ³⁸OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 235.
- ³⁹William D. Hynes, Hynes to his father, dated 31 August 1863, *William D. Hynes Letters* (Twenty-second Illinois), Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, IN.
- ⁴⁰OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 285.
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*, 286.
- ⁴²William D. Travis Papers (Twenty-second Illinois), Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.
- ⁴³OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 296.
- ⁴⁴OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 978.
- ⁴⁵OR, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 300.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 341.
- ⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 347.
- ⁴⁸OR, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 579; Clyde C. Walton (ed.) *Private Smith's Journal: Recollections of the Late War* (Chicago, IL: The Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley and

Sons Company, 1963), 85-90; “Diary of William Montgomery Austin, Company A, Twenty-Second Illinois,” Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, IL; “Diary of George A. Cooley, Company A, Twenty-Fourth Wisconsin,” Wisconsin State Historical Association, 12-15; Map sheet: Chickamauga-Chattanooga, 1:100,000, USCGSC 100-136.

⁴⁹Luther P. Bradley, Bradley to Buel, dated 8 September 1863, *Luther P. Bradley Papers* (Personal Correspondence, 1861-1865), U.S. Army Military History Institute.

⁵⁰*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 579.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 389.

⁵²*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 993.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 994.

⁵⁴*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-A, 542-543.

⁵⁵*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 603.

⁵⁶Luther P. Bradley, “Recollections of Service in the Civil War, 1861-1865,” *Luther P. Bradley Papers*, U.S. Army Military History Institute.

⁵⁷*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 606.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 1003-1004.

⁵⁹Henry M. Weiss, Excerpts of letters from 2nd Lieut. Henry M. Weiss to his wife in Shipman, Ill., 1.

⁶⁰John A. Glenn, letter to James, dated 29 September 1863, *John Glenn Papers* (Twenty-seventh Illinois), Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁶¹*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 579.

⁶²Captain C. F. Belknap, “Chickamauga. Personal Reflections of One of the Hardest Fought Battles of the War of the Rebellion.” *The National Tribune*, 6 April 1893. Belknap was a Second Lieutenant at the time of the incident.

⁶³Sheridan, vol. 1, 276; “Diary of William Montgomery Austin, Company A, Twenty-Second Illinois.”

⁶⁴*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 707.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 726.

⁶⁶L. G. Bennett and William M. Haigh, *History of the Thirty-Sixth Regiment Illinois Volunteers, During the War of the Rebellion* (Aurora, IL: Knickerbocker and Hodder, Printers and Binders, 1876), 454.

⁶⁷William H. Newlin, *A History of the Seventy-Third Regiment of Illinois Infantry Volunteers*, published by authority of the Regimental Reunion Association of Survivors of the Seventy-Third Illinois Infantry Volunteers, 1890, 222.

⁶⁸*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 133.

⁶⁹*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 728.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 727.

⁷¹Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns*, 77.

⁷²*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 740.

⁷³Bennett and Haigh, 456.

⁷⁴Garfield to Sheridan, 19 September 1863, 8:45 A.M., *P. H. Sheridan Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

⁷⁵*OR.*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 487, 579.

⁷⁶Bennett and Haigh, 457.

⁷⁷*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 129.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 74.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 132.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 133.

⁸¹Zeimet, 344.

⁸²Newlin, 223-224.

⁸³Charles W. Davis (Major, Fifty-first Illinois) to Major George B. Davis, War Records Office, dated 13 August 1889, Office of the Adjutant General, Union Battle Reports, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁸⁴Zeimet, 345.

⁸⁵Sheridan, vol. 1, 278.

⁸⁶Luther P. Bradley, "Recollections of Service in the Civil War, 1861-1865," *Luther P. Bradley Papers*, U.S. Army Military History Institute.

⁸⁷T. M. Eddy, *The Patriotism of Illinois, a Record of the Civil and Military History of the State in the War for the Union* (Chicago, IL: Clark and Company, 1865), vol. 1, 313.

⁸⁸Charles W. Davis (Major, Fifty-first Illinois) to Major George B. Davis, War Records Office, dated 13 August 1889, Office of the Adjutant General, Union Battle Reports, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁸⁹*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-B, 594-595.

⁹⁰Eddy, vol. 1, 313.

⁹¹Walton, 91.

⁹²*Idem*.

⁹³*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 740. Although this request from Sheridan to McCook is published in the *OR* prior to the order of 19 September 1863 at 0330 directing Sheridan to move his division from Pond Spring to Crawfish Spring, it could not have been sent until after Sheridan arrived in the vicinity of Widow Glenn's and noticed the large gap in the Union defense. At that time he had only two brigades, with Lytle's brigade still positioned at (Lee and) Gordon's Mills.

⁹⁴*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 488. McCook writes that the order should read 11.45 p.m., which is consistent with the location of his headquarters.

⁹⁵Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 292-295. Rosecrans had a reputation of staying up late, involving unlucky bystanders in discussions on a variety of topics. Sheridan must have left in time to order Laiboldt to move his position, while also getting permission from McCook to move Lytle from Lee and Gordon's Mills. McCook was one of the generals who stayed late, among other things singing "The Hebrew Maiden's Lament" to entertain Rosecrans.

⁹⁶Sheridan, vol. 1, 292.

⁹⁷Swift, 53-55.

CHAPTER 5

20 SEPTEMBER 1863

We were in an old field where the ground was covered with dry grass and logs which the bursting shells set on fire. A thick cloud of smoke had risen about as high as our heads and seemed hanging like a funeral pall in the air. Under this we could see, away down the slope of the hill and across the little valley just as far as the eye could reach, moving masses of men hurrying toward us. In our front, not more than seventy or seventy-five yards distant, the enemy's front line lay secreted behind a low rail fence. We set to work with a will, while the ranks of the enemy belched forth a stream of fire, and a battery of artillery on the right flank tore the ground with grape and shell.¹

Lyman G. Bennett, Thirty-sixth Illinois Regiment

Although the fighting on 19 September was bloody, it did not determine the outcome of the battle. Both Rosecrans and Bragg met with their subordinate generals that night to plan for the battle the next day, making several adjustments. On the Union side, Rosecrans continued to concentrate his Army of the Cumberland, bringing the right wing, McCook's Twentieth Corps, on line with the rest of the Union force. Although he did not designate specific positions, Rosecrans arrayed his forces with Thomas' Fourteenth Corps on the left, and Crittenden's Twenty-first Corps in reserve, behind the right-center of the Union defensive line. Additionally, Major General Gordon Granger and his Reserve Corps were positioned at the Rossville Gap. Rosecrans planned to defend, protecting his left flank and the lines of communications to Chattanooga.²

On the Confederate side, Bragg still had troops arriving by train. General Robert E. Lee had sent two divisions, under Lieutenant General James Longstreet, to reinforce Bragg. The divisions, commanded by Major General John Bell Hood and Major General Lafayette McLaws, were part of Longstreet's corps from the Army of Northern Virginia.

Bragg divided his Army of Tennessee into two wings: Polk's wing on the right, and Longstreet's left wing. Bragg planned to initiate his attack at daybreak, with Polk's right wing turning the Union left flank then attacking southward, separating the Army of the Cumberland from Chattanooga. While the attack did not start as planned, Sheridan's division would eventually fight Hindman's division from Longstreet's left wing on 20 September.³

Sheridan spent the night of 19 September and early morning of 20 September consolidating his division near Widow Glenn's, which was also the location of Rosecrans' headquarters. Laiboldt's Second Brigade moved first, late in the evening of 19 September, taking up a position south of Widow Glenn's. The soldiers worked throughout the night to prepare defensive positions. Bradley's Third Brigade, commanded by Colonel Nathan H. Walworth after Bradley was wounded and evacuated in the fighting on 19 September, moved at about 0400 hours to a position to the left rear of Laiboldt's brigade, in reserve with the regiments in column near the top of the hill.⁴ Lytle's First Brigade started its move from Lee and Gordon Mills at 0330 and arrived in the division area near sunrise, taking a position to the left of Laiboldt's brigade.⁵ Sheridan's division defended the right flank of the Union main defensive line, although Wilder's mounted infantry brigade was about four hundred yards south of Sheridan's right flank.

The soldiers suffered through a miserable night. Temperatures dropped to near freezing, and the soldiers slept on the ground trying to stay warm, while listening to the cries of the wounded. Private Smith, one of Sheridan's couriers, lay on the cold ground without the comfort of a fire. He fell asleep thinking about the day's events:

Four of us lay under the friendly branches of a large tree, lying close together for mutual warmth. I looked up at the clear blue sky, thinking over the events of the day, and watched the bright stars, and the queen of the night, the round silver moon, resting in peace up there in the blue vault, of Heaven, while its light reflects down upon the upturned white cold faces, of hundreds of dead, motionless they lay all over the field; they are at peace. At the roll of the drum, in the morning, calling to arms again, to renew the strife, they will not respond, but sleep peacefully on through the deadly strife to follow. No doubt the wires have flashed the news to the north of the great battle being fought, down here in Georgia, and mothers, wives and sweet hearts, are praying for the safety of their loved ones.⁶

Private John Ely of the Thirty-sixth Illinois, Lytle's brigade, described his unit's role in an entry in his diary:

Our brigade was now the extreme right of the army. We remained at the mills during the night our Regt doing [sic] picket duty. There was not much firing during the night and occasional volley would once in a while break the stillness enough to show that the pickets were not asleep. We are all anxious to know what the result will be tomorrow . . . 20th . . . Last night was extremely cold with a heavy white frost. I pity our poor wounded. During the night our whole army has to move by the left flank. This looks as if Bragg was trying to get between us and Chattanooga. At three o'clock this morning we drew rations and moved to the left about three miles. The right of our regt resting at the Widow Glens House. . . . We formed our line of battle on the brow of a hill with an open field in front. We stood in line for more than an hour, shivering with the cold.⁷

Ely's diary shows more than just a good description of his unit's actions, adding great insight into the overall situation, particularly in regard to Bragg's intentions.

Lytle was sick from a cold, and could barely move when he woke up early on the morning of 20 September. According to Peter Cozzens in *This Terrible Sound*:

"Lytle told his orderly that he was completely exhausted. The orderly begged him not to go into battle, but the general was insistent. He had never shrunk from duty and would not do so now. But, Lytle added, should he fall, he hoped the orderly would see to it that his body was carried from the field and his beloved little sorrel horse was well cared for."⁸ According to his aide and family friend Alfred Pirtle, Lytle thought there

would be a terrible battle that day. As he ate, he told Pirtle, “My boy, do you know we are going to fight two to one today?” Lytle believed that the Confederates would have a tremendous advantage due to the arrival of Longstreet and his corps.⁹

When Sheridan awoke on 20 September, he moved his lines, holding “a strong position on the extreme right, but disconnected from the troops on my left.”¹⁰ Third Division fortified its position by emplacing rails and logs as barricades. According to Sheridan, the fog was so thick that it prevented any observation, so both armies held their positions from the previous evening. Rosecrans started reorganizing his defense, moving units from the right to the left to meet the expected Confederate assault and protect the left flank.¹¹ While Rosecrans moved up and down the line, checking on his defense, he stopped by some soldiers of the Thirty-sixth Illinois, First Brigade, eating breakfast after their move from Lee and Gordon’s Mills. Although he looked like he was in bad shape, he told them in a strong voice, “Boys, . . . I never fight Sundays, but if they begin it we will end it.”¹² At 0900, fighting started as musket and cannon fire were heard to the left, but it was quiet in front of Third Division.¹³

Private John Ely described the condition he was in that morning, which was probably a good reflection of most of the brigade’s soldiers:

The sun was hidden by a dense fog until nearly nine o'clock A.M. Everything appeared quiet along the whole length of the line we stacked our arms and built fires. I spread my Rubber where the sun would shine upon me when it did appear and layed down to get what rest I could for no one knew what might be called upon to pass through . . . It may appear strange to some to read of a person sleeping when he is liable to be called into action at any moment but strange and improbable as it may seem it is nevertheless true. A soldier that has seen much active service learns to enjoy a moments rest whenever he may be placed regardless of what the next hour may bring forth...about ten o'clock firing commenced on the extreme left and slowly rolled towards the center. I hastily eat a few crackers, filled my canteen, . . . and awaited events for I well knew that by

being in reserve yesterday, that if there was a general engagement today, that we would have a share in the contest.¹⁴

While the firing moved from the Union left (north) to right (south), a mistake in moving units along the Union line opened a gap across from where Longstreet's left wing was preparing to assault. Thinking there was a gap in the Union line to the right of Major General Joseph Reynolds' Fourth Division, Fourteenth Corps (Thomas), Rosecrans ordered a shift in the Union line to the left. He sent a vague order to Brigadier General Thomas A. Wood, moving his First Division, Twenty-first Corps to support Reynolds' Division. Rosecrans thought that Brigadier General John M. Brannan had moved his division, which was on Reynolds' right flank, and wanted Wood to take its place. However, Brannan had not left his position, so Wood's division was not needed. Unfortunately, Wood, complied with the order immediately. He had twice been publicly reprimanded by Rosecrans for not acting on orders quickly enough, most recently that morning. Wood told McCook that he was leaving and recommended that McCook move his command to cover the gap. McCook started to move Martin's brigade of Davis' division to cover the gap as Longstreet's attack commenced.¹⁵

About 1100 hours, McCook found the gap between Third Division and the main defensive line was getting larger due to the movement of Wood's Division, and he ordered Sheridan to have Laiboldt's brigade "occupy a portion of the front which had been covered by General Negley." Before Laiboldt's brigade got into position, Carlin's brigade from Davis' division moved into the area. Sheridan ordered Laiboldt "to form in column of regiments on the crest of a low ridge in rear of Carlin's brigade, so as to

prevent Davis's right flank from being turned."¹⁶ Sheridan reported the movement to McCook, who approved.

McCook received the following order shortly afterward:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE CUMBERLAND, IN THE
FIELD, September 20--10.30 A.M.

Major-General McCook, Commanding Twentieth Army Corps:

The general commanding directs you to send two brigades of General Sheridan's division at once, and with all possible dispatch, to support General Thomas, and send the third brigade as soon as the lines can be drawn sufficiently. March them as rapidly as you can without exhausting the men. Report in person to these headquarters as soon as your orders are given in regard to Sheridan's movement.

Have you any news from Colonel Post?

J. A. GARFIELD.

Brigadier-General and Chief of Staff.¹⁷

Sheridan wrote in his *Personal Memoirs* that he was located with Laiboldt's brigade, and was in the process of sending for his other two brigades to reinforce the position due to enemy movement in front of Davis, when he received the order from McCook to reinforce Thomas. However, several other accounts place Sheridan at Widow Glenn's with First Brigade when he received the order. Since Sheridan wrote his memoirs about twenty-five years after the battle, it is likely that he made a mistake on this point. Sheridan was in the process of checking the positioning of his brigades, and rode back toward Widow Glenn's about the time McCook received the order. At the same time, the enemy broke through Davis' position.¹⁸

McCook ordered Laiboldt to charge to the front. However, the overwhelming size of the Confederate assault, combined with the retreat of Davis' division to his front, prevented Laiboldt from employing effective fire.¹⁹ Laiboldt held a strong defensive position on the hill, overlooking a large, open field including a Tan Yard. His four

regiments were formed in column, each regiment in line, with Battery C, First Illinois Artillery in the rear. Laiboldt objected to McCook's order to attack, and even recommended changing his formation before moving forward, but McCook insisted he attack immediately.²⁰ McCook's order to charge, and the formation in which he ordered Laiboldt to deploy, were bad decisions that would prove costly for Second Brigade. The frontal charge prevented the two artillery batteries from providing effective fires, left the brigade's flanks unprotected, and limited the musket fire of the soldiers following the lead regiment.

Laiboldt ordered a bayonet charge, abandoning his position on the hill, as ordered by McCook. The brigade rushed into the woods nearly one thousand yards to its front with the Seventy-third Illinois Regiment in the lead, followed by the Forty-fourth Illinois, the Second Missouri, and the Fifteenth Missouri, while Battery G, First Missouri Light Artillery stayed on the hill in support with Third Brigade's artillery battery. The enemy was advancing in a formation eight lines deep, and met the brigade with volleys of musket fire.²¹ The brigade was pushed back in the confusion of fleeing troops from Davis' division and enemy fire from the front and flanks. Second Brigade soon joined in the retreat, consolidating about forty-five minutes later to the rear near the mountains. The brigade was unable to recover its dead and wounded.²² This action was another in a series of orders from McCook to Sheridan's subordinates that Sheridan objected to, creating friction between the two.

The "Preacher Regiment" was at the front of Second Brigade, and during the charge Colonel Jaques was wounded as he had two horses shot out from under him.²³

Private C. H. Castle of Company I, Seventy-third Illinois Regiment, Laiboldt's brigade, who was wounded during the battle, described his unit's actions:

At about 11.30 A. M. General McCook came to Laiboldt, our brigade commander, and in person ordered him to immediately charge to rescue the division of general Jeff. C. Davis, which was being overwhelmed by the enemy. We were in fine position at the crest of a hill in heavy timber, and with our battery well located. Our formation was in four lines by regiments, the Seventy-third in front. Capt. J. L. Morgan was on Laiboldt's staff and distinctly remembers that when McCook gave the order Laiboldt suggested that we deploy, and that McCook replied with a peremptory order to charge as we were. Sheridan was not present at the moment, but was starting the march of his other two brigades, under an order from Rosecrans, toward our left, to fill a gap to the right of General Thomas. We charged down the hill, across the open field in front of our battery and under galling fire, passing the ravine and to a piece of timber which was swarming with Confederates. There in that hot-bed we remained fighting until they flanked our lines at both ends...It seemed that two-thirds of the men in my vicinity were either dead or prostrated with disabling wounds before we began to pull for the rear. In the meantime Sheridan, learning of our critical situation, marched his other brigades to our relief, and to that fact alone most of us who escaped death or imprisonment are indebted. So that while Sheridan was not there to put us in he was there to help us out, and he was reported to have expressed himself on the following day in language more forcible than polite regarding the manner of our going in.²⁴

Second brigade lost thirty-eight killed, two hundred forty-three wounded, and one hundred eight missing or captured.²⁵

According to Alfred Pirtle, Lytle's aide, Sheridan was at Widow Glenn's house with Lytle when he received the order to move two brigades to support Thomas. Lytle was in the process of showing Sheridan the disposition of his brigade in a fortified defensive position when Lieutenant Colonel Gates P. Thruston, McCook's chief of staff, rode up to give Sheridan the order. When Sheridan did not respond, Thruston repeated the order. Sheridan reportedly then said to Lytle, "You have heard the order General, put your Brigade in motion at once." Pirtle thought both generals disagreed with the order,

but obeyed, leaving behind a prepared defense when the enemy was moving in their direction.²⁶

First Brigade and Third Brigade started moving in column on the Kelly-Glenn Road toward Thomas' position with Lytle's (First) brigade in the lead. Lytle's brigade was led by the Eighty-eighth Illinois, followed in order by the Thirty-sixth Illinois, Twenty-first Michigan, Twenty-fourth Wisconsin, and Eleventh Indiana Artillery Battery. This was not the order that Lytle directed for his units, and the Indiana Battery was most out of place since it should have been in the middle of the brigade formation. The road was too narrow to permit units to adjust their place in the column, so they remained in the order they fell in on the road. Walworth's brigade marched behind Lytle's in order: Twenty-second Illinois, Fifty-first Illinois, Forty-second Illinois, and Twenty-seventh Illinois. The soldiers were marching four abreast in column of companies, boxed in by the woods and moving quickly toward Thomas' position.²⁷

Lieutenant John M. Turnbull of the Thirty-sixth Illinois, a member of Lytle's staff, moved to the front to get information on the enemy from the brigade's skirmish line. He could hear the voices of rebel officers giving commands in the woods, but could not see them. Based on what he heard, he was certain they were preparing to move forward. When he returned to Lytle to report, he insisted that Lytle form the brigade in a line of battle. However, an aide to Rosecrans, in the rank of Colonel, was also with Lytle and told Lytle he had just come from the front and it was safe. Lytle then told Turnbull, off to the side, "Perhaps you are right, Turnbull; but I believe I will not order the men into line of battle now."²⁸ After marching about one quarter mile, Lytle's brigade came under heavy musket fire from the woods.

Sheridan was accompanying Lytle's brigade when Laiboldt's brigade passed through in retreat. McCook ordered him to deploy Lytle's and Walworth's brigades into the fight. Moving at double-quick, Sheridan tried to form the brigades for the fight, under heavy musket fire. Many of Lytle's soldiers were killed before they faced to the front from the movement formation.²⁹

As soon as he started taking fire, Lytle ordered, "Forward into line." Lytle then led the Eighty-eighth Illinois in a charge up the hill where Confederate soldiers were firing on them. The men of the Eighty-eighth cheered as they drove the Confederate force off the hill. Lytle then moved the Thirty-sixth Illinois into position to the left of the Eighty-eighth. As this movement occurred, McCook rode up and directed Pirtle to move the Indiana Battery to a position in the woods, then departed. Lytle remained on his horse, directing unit movements by waving his saber while heavy firing continued around him.³⁰ Lytle, speaking in chivalrous terms told one of his staff officers, "If I must die, I will die as a gentleman," as he pulled on his gloves.³¹

Twenty-first Michigan moved up next, followed slowly by the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin. Lytle sent the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin to relieve the Thirty-Sixth Illinois, which had suffered the highest number of casualties in the brigade. Lytle tried to rally the Eighty-eighth Illinois. As the regiment faced an attack on its flank he told the men, "All right, men, we can die but once. This is the time and place. Let us charge."³² Captain E. B. Parsons of Company K, Twenty-fourth Wisconsin heard Lytle say, "Boys, if we whip them today, we will eat our Christmas dinner at home."³³

Lytle then sent Pirtle to get two rifled pieces from the battery. As soon as the pieces arrived, they fired canister into the soldiers advancing on the brigade's position.

Although this slowed down the enemy to the front, both the left and right flanks were still heavily pressed. Because of the restrictive terrain including dense vegetation and a lack of roads or trails to move the artillery, the battery divided into sections. Third section Rodman guns (three-inch rifled guns), commanded by First Lieutenant Henry M. Williams, was in the middle of the fight and took the heaviest casualties. After initially firing into the open field, the section had to cease firing when friendly units maneuvered to its front. In the confusion of the battle, the section lost its infantry support when the soldiers retreated. As a result, there was no one to cover the section while it limbered its guns. As soon as Lieutenant Williams realized his perilous situation, he ordered a retreat, but it was too late to save his section's two guns. Williams was hit in the wrist while remounting. It took the efforts of several of his men to get him off the battlefield, and Edward Shell, his blacksmith, finally took Williams out on his horse.³⁴ The two twelve-pound gun sections survived only because Captain Sutermeister, battery commander, ordered their withdrawal before the infantry fell back.³⁵ The battery lost three killed, twelve wounded and four missing or captured in addition to both of its three-inch rifled guns.³⁶

The noise of the battle was overwhelming. Pirtle, on a horse next to Lytle could not hear the orders he was shouting. At one point Pirtle leaned over toward Lytle to hear what he was saying and Lytle told him, "Pirtle I am hit . . . In the spine--if I have to leave the field, you stay here, and see that all goes right." Then Lytle ordered another member of his staff, Lieutenant Boal, to move forward another regiment. When Boal did not respond, Pirtle did and left Lytle's side to get the Thirty-sixth Illinois.³⁷

As the Thirty-sixth started to move forward, four shells exploded near the unit's right flank and Pirtle's horse bolted. He saw Lytle's riderless horse pass by, but did not learn of the general's fate for a few days.³⁸ Colonel McCreery, commander of the Twenty-first Michigan, and Private William Silcox of the Eighty-eighth Illinois tried to carry Lytle from the field. McCreery was hit several times and went unconscious, waking up several hours later as a prisoner of war. Silcox was killed.³⁹ Corporal Edward Glenn of Company D, Twenty-fourth Wisconsin also tried to assist Colonel McCreery. Though already wounded, Glenn stopped to help, and was hit again, this time in the right side. He tried to escape as rebel forces moved toward him, and was hit a third time, on the right leg below the knee. Glenn was captured and later paroled, left on the battlefield.⁴⁰ Before receiving his final wound from a bullet in his face which killed him instantly, Lytle passed his sword, a gift from a departed relative, to David Hunter of the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin. He did not want it to fall into enemy hands.⁴¹ According to Sergeant Thomas H. Ford, Company H, Twenty-fourth Wisconsin, Lytle's dying words were, "Brave boys, brave boys."⁴²

Soon after Lytle fell behind the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin, the unit was hit by overwhelming fire on its left flank. Two companies moved to the rear to counter the fire, but could not hold the position. The regiment gave way and retreated, its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore S. West, wounded and later captured. Major Carl von Baumbach took command of the regiment, rallying the soldiers about four hundred yards to the rear of its position, where it joined the rest of the brigade. The Twenty-fourth Wisconsin lost three killed, seventy-three wounded, and twenty-nine missing or captured in the fighting.⁴³

The Thirty-Sixth Illinois stood its ground under fire, taking heavy casualties. Its color-bearer, William R. Toll, kept the flag flying high, though it was torn and the staff shattered by musket fire. Ezra Parker, a member of the color guard, was killed by a bullet through his forehead, but the colors never fell.⁴⁴ The regiment took the highest number of casualties in First Brigade, losing twenty killed, one hundred one wounded, and twenty missing.⁴⁵ The atmosphere of the battle was captured in the *History of the Thirty-sixth Illinois Volunteers*:

The air seemed alive with bullets, and every moment the ranks were growing thinner. The column which had dashed on to the field fifteen minutes before with three hundred and seventy men, had already lost one half, while the enemy in growing ranks were swarming around both flanks as well as pressing on the front. The command was given to fall back, which was executed in good order, every step of the ground being contested . . . As the last file of men disappeared in the woods now half hidden in dust and smoke, the roll and crash of musketry was so terrible that it seemed impossible for any one to come out of such a storm alive.⁴⁶

John Ely of the Thirty-sixth Illinois described the action in his diary:

We double quicked to gain a ridge and form our line to meet the shock but to late the bullets began to whiz and the men commenced falling long before we could reach the desired point. The second and third brigade first met the shock but were quickly forced back. Our brigade now wheeled into line. As we advanced up the hill, we met the second brig comeing back in confusion. Gen Sheridan spoke cheerfully telling us to keep cool and we would surely check them but I am almost ashamed to own that I thought far differenc [*sic*], for the second brigade was the best and largest in our Div . . . and until then had never been repulsed. The rebs were flushed with success . . . On come the Rebs yelling like demons, . . . they were flanking us and we had nothing to oppose to them. Slowly we fell back to the foot of the hill, we then rallied and charged up the hill but were again flanked and forced by the mear [*sic*] power of numbers to fall back. This time they planted their collors [*sic*] on a line in rear of our regt. Six times in succession did our regt rally and charge up the hill.⁴⁷

Among those who died immediately in the fight was Lieutenant Colonel Wells of the Twenty-first Michigan, First Brigade. On the evening of 19 September, he seemed to

have a premonition that he would die. As he watched the ambulances carry the wounded past the regiment's position at Lee and Gordon's Mills to the field hospital, he had a serious conversation with one of the unit's soldiers, J. C. Taylor. Wells remarked, "What does it profit a man to win military glory, if he meets death in the shock of battle?"⁴⁸

Company B, Twenty-first Michigan was separated from the rest of the regiment. Thirty men from the company, and seven from Company H under Second Lieutenant C. E. Belknap were skirmishers when the regiment moved into position at Widow Glenn's house early in the morning, and were not called back when the brigade started moving. When the fight started, the skirmishers fell back to a position at the Widow Glenn's house.⁴⁹ There they were engaged in heavy fighting for nearly two hours. Andrew McDonald of Company B described the scene in his diary:

The rebels were too strong for us and run two pieces of our cannon off by hand. The horses were being killed by their shells. A terrible roar of muskets and artillery was deafening and our boys were being killed and wounded all around us at a terrible rate. Our revolving rifles were so hot we could not hold them in our hands and we were ordered by an officer to fall back to the rear as the rebels were flanking us at this time.⁵⁰

Company B was surrounded at Widow Glenn's house, isolated from the rest of the division, on the far right flank. After fierce fighting and heavy losses, it was saved by Wilder's "Hatchet Brigade" of mounted infantry. Second Lieutenant C. F. Belknap took charge of the soldiers. He later wrote about the unit's defense of the position and rescue:

Twice we drove them back. The third time they came completely over our works, fighting hand to hand, every man on his own hook. The men rallied from every point, and from tree to tree the enemy were driven back...One young boy, a member of Co. B, sat near the base of a large tree, shot in the leg and unable to stand. He loaded a comrade's gun who stood by his side, and later these two men got away, the wounded man carried on the back of his more fortunate comrade. All around the Glenn House the blue and gray mingled in deadly conflict, their bodies strewing the ground, the cheers and shouts of the excited warriors

mingling with the cries of the wounded and dying. The unequal conflict had gone on for two hours. One-half of the men lay dead and wounded about the house. Between the conflicts I had the wounded men brought in under the shelter of our works as much as possible. The Glenn House was full of them. There was no place for them to go; there was no rear, no Surgeon, no water; there was nothing but determined men; there was no time to think of anything else but fight. In the midst of one of these conflicts there came cheers from what had been our rear. . . . The cheers were the first noise except that made by ourselves for some time, and there came charging down through the woods long lines of boys in blue, driving the enemy like chaff in the wind before them. It was but a moment, and Gen. Wilder, of the "Hatchet Brigade," was at my side. I cannot describe my feelings when I knew we had help.⁵¹

When ordered to retreat, the soldiers broke ranks and moved to the rear quickly.

The disorganized retreat probably saved lives. As J. C. Taylor of the Twenty-first Michigan observed, "the scattered men did not present nearly so easy a mark for bullets as would men moving in a compact body."⁵² Major Seymour Chase, the third ranking officer of the Twenty-first Michigan, took command during the withdrawal with the loss of Colonel McCreery, wounded and captured (initially thought to be killed), and Lieutenant Colonel Wells, killed.⁵³ The Twenty-first Michigan lost sixteen killed, seventy-three wounded, and seventeen missing or captured during the battle.⁵⁴

Third brigade was in position near Widow Glenn's after returning from its line of battle from the fighting the evening of 19 September. About 1030, the fighting along the Union line started. The brigade moved behind Lytle's brigade when ordered to the left of the Union line. Third Brigade was hit by heavy musketry fire while in column, and Colonel Walworth immediately ordered the lead regiment, the Twenty-Second Illinois into a line of battle, followed by the Fifty-first Illinois. The brigade, already weakened by the losses sustained in fighting on 19 September and without its artillery battery, was unable to hold its position, and withdrew after a short, intense fight.⁵⁵ Battery C, First

Illinois Light artillery was firing in support of Second Brigade, in front of Third Brigade, and lost three guns, two rifled Rodman guns and one twelve pound Napoleon howitzer.⁵⁶

Second Lieutenant Henry M. Weiss, Twenty-seventh Illinois, described the scene:

From the sounds of the fight the Rebels must have an advantage and be driving our men . . . March! away we go to join the furious fray. Down the hill 'double quick' in goes the Brigade . . . We endeavor to stay an overwhelming tide of foes already victorious, having broken the center and smashed up Davis' Division. We are into it, and that before we can take a position . . . On come the Grey-coats in multitudes like locusts-thro' the woods to the left, across an open field in front and right; they are lapping around us in every direction . . . The other Regiments of the Brigade I could not see on account of the thick woods; but it was not long until we understood that the Rebels had broken thro' them and they were scattered everywhere.⁵⁷

The Fifty-first Illinois initially had success. It was positioned to the front of the brigade, with the Twenty-seventh Illinois to its right. In a counterattack, the regiment captured the flag of the Twenty-fourth Alabama Infantry.⁵⁸ Lieutenant Boyd of D Company collected a force of about two hundred men, including some stragglers, and led the charge after the artillery had fired its last rounds. Among the captured was the color guard. According to Benjamin T. Smith, "Boyd tore the flag from its staff and folding it up, put it inside his blouse."⁵⁹ The success was temporary, and the Fifty-first Illinois, along with the Twenty-second and Forty-second Illinois regiments broke under heavy pressure during the next assault, and followed Sheridan back to Rossville. The Twenty-seventh Illinois, on the right, was separated from the rest of the brigade and took a "circuitous route" before linking up with the brigade.⁶⁰

The Twenty-seventh Illinois regiment held its position on the far right when the rebel assault overran the rest of the division. At about 1:30 P.M., Colonel Jonathan R. Miles, the regimental commander, withdrew the unit two hundred fifty yards to the

summit of the hill and linked up with a portion of Colonel Wilder's mounted infantry. The Twenty-seventh picked up stragglers from every regiment in the division on the way back, then moved about three miles to the rear along the Dry Valley Road.⁶¹

When the regiment, about six hundred strong with stragglers, reached the division ammunition and ambulance trains, it got a resupply of ammunition and found out that the rest of the division was about one and a half miles to the north. Miles was advised by Captain Merrill, Rosecrans' chief topographical engineer, to guard the wagon train and take it to a safe place. He marched the train to a place about five miles from Chattanooga, and stopped for dinner about 6 P.M. While the soldiers ate, Miles sent Lieutenant Lewis Hanback, the brigade inspector, to Chattanooga to receive guidance from McCook. McCook sent orders for Miles to move the train about two and a half miles closer to Chattanooga to a tannery, and the unit stayed there that night. The next morning, Miles learned of Sheridan's location, and marched his regiment four miles to Rossville.⁶²

The major portion of the division retreated to an area near the Dry Valley Road. As the soldiers retreated, leaders at all levels tried to rally them. Sergeant Thomas J. Ford of Company H, Twenty-fourth Wisconsin was among a group that ran into Major General Rosecrans. Ford recalled the scene:

Rosecrans said, "The rebels are defeated and are retreating at another part of the line, and if you could have held them here five minutes longer the battle would be ours." Some stood and listened, and three times as many went on.

The general took off his hat and said, "Boys, form a line here; there are enough of us to whip those rebels. We have them on the run in another part of the field. If you won't do it for my sake, do it for God's sake and for your country's sake." That brought a great many to halt and ready in line when a rebel solid shot, about fifteen-pounder, came along and took off the right hand of one of the generals and part of the saddle he was resting on. That was seen too quick. Some

one started, and away we went until we found ourselves near a gap leading into Ringgold.⁶³

Sheridan also tried to rally and reorganize the men. According to a member of the Thirty-sixth Illinois, Sheridan told the soldiers gathering near him, “You are doing good work; have the men fall back to the next ridge and gather up every straggler.”

Ambulances loaded up the wounded, and soon several hundred stragglers had been organized into “a force ready and willing to follow him anywhere.”⁶⁴ At this time, Sheridan held a short council of war with the officers of the division. Sheridan told them, “We are cut off from the main army and must reach Gen. Thomas with the least possible delay. This, I think, from my field notes, is -----Ridge, and, if I am right, by following it we shall come to a cross-road, where, I hope, we can communicate with the General.”⁶⁵

While Sheridan was rallying his forces, Rosecrans passed behind his line and asked to see him. Sheridan thought that the situation was “too critical” to take time to speak to the commander of the Army of the Cumberland, and Rosecrans rode off to Chattanooga. Sheridan later wrote about the incident: “It is regretted that he did not wait till I could join him, for the delay would have permitted him to see that matters were not quite such bad shape as he supposed; still, there is no disguising the fact that at this juncture his army was badly crippled.”⁶⁶ Although not an act of insubordination, this is another situation in which Sheridan felt his problems were more important than those of his superiors.

The Eighty-eighth Illinois provided skirmishers to cover the withdrawal, and by the time the division reached the Dry Valley Road, it had fifteen hundred men. As the regiments and brigades finally formed, Colonel Silas Miller of the Thirty-sixth Illinois

took command of First Brigade, and Lieutenant Colonel Porter C. Olson the Thirty-sixth Illinois.⁶⁷

As the various units from the Union right flank were collected near the opening of McFarland's Gap, Sheridan, Negley, and Davis met to discuss their options. This meeting, and the actions each officer took, form the greatest controversy over the generals' performances at Chickamauga. Sheridan does not mention this meeting in either his report after the battle or in his *Personal Memoirs*. However, the meeting was a topic of discussion in the Courts of Inquiry held for McCook, Crittenden, and Negley, and is mentioned in several other accounts. The three generals discussed what to do with the troops they had gathered, specifically whether to return to Thomas' right flank. Sheridan argued that the troops could not reach Thomas' right flank because of the size of the enemy force there. Colonel Thruston, McCook's chief of staff met with Thomas, at that time the senior commander on the battlefield and brought back verbal instructions for the three generals to reinforce his right flank. Thruston made the following statement:

Being the adjutant and chief of staff of the Twentieth Corps, to which their divisions belonged, I reported to them General Thomas' position and situation, and requested them to return and take position as directed by him. Davis ordered his men to "right about" at once, and marched back under my guidance, some of Negley's and other troops joining us. General Sheridan said he preferred to go to Rossville, and go out on the Lafayette road. I told him it was getting late, and he could scarcely get on the field by that route before night, but he insisted on going that way, which was several miles round.⁶⁸

Sheridan decided that he would move to Thomas' left flank by going through Rossville because the rebel assault cut off his division, along with Negley's and Davis' from the rest of the Army of the Cumberland. The two officers above him in the chain of command, Rosecrans and McCook, had gone to Chattanooga to prepare for the defense

of the city, thinking that their forces had been routed. Taking care not only of his troops, but also of the stragglers from Negley's and Davis' divisions, Sheridan collected the wagons with as many wounded as possible and headed four miles through McFarland's Gap to Rossville. Sheridan wrote in his *Personal Memoirs*:

Shortly after my division had rallied on the low hills already described, I discovered that the enemy, instead of attacking me in front, was wedging in between my division and the balance of the army; in short, endeavoring to cut me off from Chattanooga. This necessitated another retrograde movement, which brought me back to the southern face of Missionary Ridge, where I was joined by Carlin's brigade of Davis's division. Still thinking I could join General Thomas, I rode some distance to the left of my line to look for a way out, but found that the enemy had intervened so far as to isolate me effectually. I then determined to march directly to Rossville, and from there effect a junction with Thomas by the Lafayette road.⁶⁹

Negley testified in his Court of Inquiry that the generals decided that Sheridan should move through Rossville to support Thomas, while escorting the trains back, due to the threat of Forrest's cavalry in the area.⁷⁰ In the version told in *The Edge of Glory*, Rosecrans "ordered Davis and Sheridan to withdraw northward, and to stand at the first strong defensive point on the Dry Valley road."⁷¹ Rosecrans wanted them to hold this position to prevent Longstreet from following the Army of the Cumberland up the Dry Valley road and capturing the unit's commissary stores and Rossville, effectively cutting the army off from Chattanooga. This supports Negley's testimony. Since it is speculation to argue why Sheridan decided to move through Rossville, effectively leaving the battlefield, and Thomas' right flank exposed, possible answers will be analyzed in Chapter 6.

At about five o'clock, Colonel William B. McCreery, commander of the Twenty-first Michigan, regained consciousness. Wounded three times and surrounded by the

dead and wounded of his command, he found himself behind rebel lines. He was helped to a field hospital by a Confederate soldier and a chaplain. This was the start of his long journey as a prisoner from the battlefield to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia.⁷²

Sheridan arrived at Rossville at about five o'clock, with stragglers from several units in addition to fifteen hundred men from Third Division. He also had eight artillery guns, forty-six caissons, and numerous ammunition wagons.⁷³ Sheridan received the following message at Rossville:

CHATTANOOGA, September 20, 1863-5 o'clock.
General SHERIDAN,
Rossville:

Verbal message by Captain Hill received. Support General Thomas by all means. If he is obliged to fall back he must secure the Dug (Dry) Valley. Right falling back slowly, contesting the ground inch by inch.

By order of Major-General Rosecrans:

C. GODDARD,
Assistant Adjutant-General.⁷⁴

Sheridan continued moving his division past Rossville and marched south along Lafayette Road toward Thomas' left flank. Encountering skirmishers along the way, the division reached Cloud's Church, three miles south of Rossville before 6:00 P.M. At Cloud's Church, Sheridan met one of his staff officers, Lieutenant Michael V. Sheridan, his brother, sent ahead to coordinate with Thomas. Thomas ordered Sheridan to set up a defense at Rossville and cover the withdrawal of his corps the following morning.⁷⁵

Sheridan also met with Thomas and accompanied him back to Rossville. They stopped outside the town and sat down on a fence, watching the troops pass by them. Sheridan wrote in his *Personal Memoirs* that Thomas "appeared very much exhausted." As Sheridan prepared to leave, Thomas told him "he had a little flask of brandy in his

saddle-holster” and offered Sheridan a drink. After a sip, Sheridan returned to his troops as they started setting up their camp and defense.⁷⁶

When Sheridan got to Rossville, he checked on his troops as they attempted to organize in the dark. Sheridan lay down, “very tired, very hungry, and much discouraged by what had taken place since morning.” The losses of his men, including two brigade commanders, “was most depressing--and then there was much confusion prevailing around Rossville; and, this condition of things doubtless increasing my gloomy reflections.”⁷⁷

John Ely of the Thirty-sixth Illinois (First Brigade) wrote in his diary: “We remained standing in the road until ten o'clock p.m. when the troops commenced falling back, when we retraced our steps to Rossville which place we reached about midnight and camped, if camping it might be called, for it was one mass of troops mixed indiscriminately together.”⁷⁸

The Battle of Chickamauga pitted brother against brother, literally. Corporal Mike Murphy of the Twenty-first Michigan, First Brigade, had a twin brother named Pat. Pat moved to the South before the war, and joined a Mississippi regiment when the war started. Mike was selected as the regiment's color-bearer for his courageousness. On 20 September, Mike was shot in the chest when a bullet hit the flagstaff, but he did not let the colors touch the ground. He was loaded on a wagon and taken to Chattanooga, where he spent the night in a shed with a large number of wounded from both sides. Mike was told by the surgeon that he could not help him due to the severity of his wounds.⁷⁹

As Corporal Mike Murphy lay dying, the man on the cot next to him began singing a lullaby. Mike recognized the lullaby and the voice. Although weak, Mike

raised himself from his cot and embraced the wounded Confederate soldier crying out, “Patsy, my brother!” The following morning, members of the Twenty-first Michigan found the brothers together, wrapped in their blankets outside the hospital. They were reportedly put in a garden nearby, side by side, and later buried in the National Cemetery at Chattanooga.⁸⁰

Third Division lost one hundred fifty-one killed, nine hundred thirty-nine wounded, and two hundred seventy-six missing or captured for a total of one thousand three hundred sixty-six casualties, nearly 40 percent of the unit.⁸¹ Third Brigade took the highest number of casualties, five hundred seventeen, fighting engagements on both days of the Battle of Chickamauga, while the other brigades only fought on 20 September 1863. Among the losses were two brigade commanders, Brigadier General Lytle, killed, and Colonel Bradley wounded, and two regimental commanders, Colonel McCreery of the Twenty-first Michigan and Lieutenant Colonel West of the Twenty-fourth Wisconsin, captured. The casualties caused two brigades and four regiments to change commands during the battle.

The soldiers, though exhausted, fought hard whenever they faced the enemy. However, the orders of the officers put them in several positions that resulted in greater casualties than necessary. The poor tactical judgment, from leaving a gap in the line for the Confederate assault to pour through, to moving units from fortified positions to fight in the open were critical to the right flank of the line breaking, and the division retreating. While many of the bad decisions were made by Sheridan’s superiors, especially McCook, Sheridan bears some responsibility for the disaster. He should have spoken up if he disagreed with the plan, especially at the war council on the night of 19 September.

Rosecrans asked for input from his generals at that time, but there is no record of Sheridan making any recommendations. Instead, he returned to his tent, ranting and raving about the plan and the treatment of his division.

Sheridan's decision to leave Thomas' right flank and pass through Rossville to his left flank will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 6. The route Sheridan took north along Dry Valley Road, then west and north to McFarland's Gap was over five miles. Next, Sheridan moved his division another three miles through McFarland's Gap to Rossville in order to move behind Missionary Ridge when he passed the rear of Thomas' corps. He knew he could not complete this movement and return to Thomas' position before the battle ended for the day. Sheridan seemed to have made up his mind before Thruston sought out orders from Thomas. If so, he should have sent one of his officers to tell Thomas what his plan was, and executed it. The fact that he did not take this action leads to three possible conclusions: he thought it was wrong and knew Thomas would not agree, he had instructions from McCook or Rosecrans and hoped that Thomas would change them, or his judgment was impaired by the combination of lack of rest and the catastrophic events of the previous twenty-four hours. By avoiding the battle, Sheridan put the entire Army of the Cumberland at risk. Had Thomas' corps not held out, earning him the moniker, "The Rock of Chickamauga," Sheridan probably would have faced the Court of Inquiry brought against all the senior officers who left the battlefield, except him.

¹L. G. Bennett and William M. Haigh, *History of the Thirty-Sixth Regiment Illinois Volunteers, During the War of the Rebellion* (Aurora, IL: Knickerbocker and Hodder, Printers and Binders, 1876), 469.

²Steven E. Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 102.

³*Ibid.*, 102-104.

⁴*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-B, 595.

⁵*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 582.

⁶Clyde C. Walton (ed.) *Private Smith's Journal: Recollections of the Late War* (Chicago, IL: The Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley and Sons Company, 1963), 91-92.

⁷*John Ely Diary*

⁸Peter Cozzens, *This Terrible Sound* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 288.

⁹Alfred Pirtle, "Leaves from my Journal: A Brief Sketch of the Last Campaign of Brig. Genl. Wm. H. Lytle" (Louisville, KY: 1864).

¹⁰*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 580.

¹¹Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1888), vol. 1, 280-281.

¹²Bennett and Haigh, 465. Rosecrans was a deeply religious man, and followed his convictions, rarely operating on the Sabbath, unless forced to do so by enemy actions.

¹³Philip H. Sheridan, vol. 1, 280-281.

¹⁴*John Ely Diary*

¹⁵Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns*, 113-116; William M. Lamers, *The Edge of Glory* (New York, NY: Harcourt and Brace, 1961), 342-344; *OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 192.

¹⁶Sheridan, vol. 1, 281; *OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 580.

¹⁷Thomas B. Van Horne, U.S.A. *History of the Army of the Cumberland*, vol. 1 (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1988), 372.

¹⁸Sheridan, vol. 1, 281-282; *OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 580.

¹⁹*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 580, 590.

²⁰Cozzens, 378-379.

²¹*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 589-591, pt. 1-B, 593-595; William H. Newlin, *A History of the Seventy-Third Regiment of Illinois Infantry Volunteers*, published by authority of the Regimental Reunion Association of Survivors of the Seventy-Third Illinois Infantry Volunteers, 1890, 225.

²²*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 590-592.

²³Lester L. Swift, "The Preacher Regiment at Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge," *Lincoln Herald*, vol. 72, No. 2, 1970, 56.

²⁴Henry A. Castle, Captain, U. S. Volunteers, "Sheridan with the Army of the Cumberland," *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, District of Columbia, Vol. 34 (N: Broadfoot, 1993), 171-172.

²⁵*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 175.

²⁶Alfred Pirtle, "Leaves from my Journal: A Brief Sketch of the Last Campaign of Brig. Genl. Wm. H. Lytle" (Louisville, KY: 1864).

²⁷*Ibid.*, 383.

²⁸John M. Turnbull, "A Lieutenant-Colonel Tells of the Pt. His Brigade Took," *National Tribune*, 14 April 1898.

²⁹Sheridan, vol. 1, 282-283; *OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 580.

³⁰Alfred Pirtle, "Leaves from my Journal: A Brief Sketch of the Last Campaign of Brig. Genl. Wm. H. Lytle" (Louisville, KY: 1864).

³¹Glenn Tucker, *Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West* (Dayton, OH: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1961), 293.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴John Otto, *History of the Eleventh Indiana Battery, Connected with an Outline History of the Army of the Cumberland, During the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865*, U. S. Army Military History Research Collection, 38-43.

³⁵*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 588-589.

³⁶*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 175.

³⁷Alfred Pirtle, "Leaves from my Journal: A Brief Sketch of the Last Campaign of Brig. Genl. Wm. H. Lytle" (Louisville, KY: 1864).

³⁸ *bid.*.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Thomas T. Keith Letter, Chickamauga-Chattanooga NMP. This letter appears to be written to a member of Corporal Glenn's family. Thomas T. Keith was a Second Lieutenant in Company D, Twenty-fourth Wisconsin. He starts the letter by mentioning that Corporal Glenn requested he write it to tell about his condition. After he was captured, the Confederates paroled Corporal Glenn and left him on the battlefield, where he remained for six days and seven nights. What little food and water he got was from merciful rebels, although some refused his requests for water. His story is common among the many wounded left on the battlefield, which was under Confederate control. The wounded that could be evacuated were taken prisoner, and moved by rail to prisons in the south. The ones the rebels could not care for were left on the field. On 26 September 1863, Corporal Glenn was brought to Union lines under a flag of truce. His right leg was amputated below the knee in a field hospital near Chattanooga. According to the letter, Corporal Glenn would be sent home in a month. While this story and others like it of wounded left on the battlefield may seem inhumane, both sides generally did the best they could to care for the wounded. The large number and percentage of casualties, limited number of surgeons and medical supplies, and ongoing conflict made it impossible for either side to treat all the wounded. Many of those who survived tell of former enemies doing small acts to comfort them. Their stories show that there was a great deal more "chivalry" and mutual respect than appear by only telling half of the story--about the large number left on the field to die slowly and painfully.

⁴¹Alfred Pirtle, "Leaves from my Journal: A Brief Sketch of the Last Campaign of Brig. Genl. Wm. H. Lytle" (Louisville, KY: 1864).

⁴²Thomas J. Ford, *With the Rank and File. Incidents and Anecdotes During the War of the Rebellion, as Remembered by One of the Non-Commissioned Officers* (Milwaukee, WI: Press of the Evening Wisconsin Company, 1898), 22.

⁴³OR, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 175, 586-588.

⁴⁴Bennett and Haigh, 470.

⁴⁵OR, vol. 30, pt.1-A, 175.

⁴⁶Bennett and Haigh, 470-471.

⁴⁷*John Ely Diary*

⁴⁸J. C. Taylor, "Lights and Shadows: In the Recollections of a Youthful Volunteer In the Civil War," *Ionia Sentinel-Standard*, n.d.

⁴⁹OR, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 586.

⁵⁰Andrew McDonald, *Daily Diary of Andrew McDonald During Civil War Years* (Cedar Springs, MI: Cedar Springs Rotary Club, 1987), 6.

⁵¹Captain C. E. Belknap, "Chickamauga: The Gallant Defense Made by a Very Few Men at the Celebrated Widow Glenn's House," *The National Tribune*, 6 April 1893, 5-6.

⁵²J. C. Taylor, "Lights and Shadows: In the Recollections of a Youthful Volunteer In the Civil War," *Ionia Sentinel-Standard*.

⁵³*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 584.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 175.

⁵⁵*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-B, 594-596.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 599-601.

⁵⁷Henry M. Weiss, Excerpts of letters from 2nd Lieut. Henry M. Weiss to his wife in Shipman, Ill., 4.

⁵⁸Charles W. Davis (Major, Fifty-first Illinois) to Major George B. Davis, War Records Office, dated 13 August 1889, Office of the Adjutant General, Union Battle Reports, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁹Benjamin T. Smith, "Recollections," *Benjamin T. Smith Papers* (Fifty-first Illinois), Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.

⁶⁰Charles W. Davis (Major, Fifty-first Illinois) to Major George B. Davis, War Records Office, dated 13 August 1889, Office of the Adjutant General, Union Battle Reports, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶¹*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-B, 596-599.

⁶²*bid.*

⁶³Thomas J. Ford, *With the Rank and File. Incidents and Anecdotes During the War of the Rebellion, as Remembered by One of the Non-Commissioned Officers* (Milwaukee, WI: Press of the Evening Wisconsin Company, 1898), 23-24.

⁶⁴Bennett and Haigh, 472-473.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 473.

⁶⁶Sheridan, vol. 1, 283.

⁶⁷Bennett and Haigh, 473-474.

⁶⁸Van Horne, vol. 1, 374.

⁶⁹Sheridan, vol. 1, 283-284; *OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 581.

⁷⁰OR, vol. 30, pt. 1-B, 1048.

⁷¹Lamers, *The Edge of Glory* 351, 354.

⁷²William B. McCreery, "My Experience as a Prisoner of War, and Escape from Libby Prison," *Commandery of the State of Michigan, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the U.S.*, vol. 1 (Detroit, MI: Winn and Hammond, Printers and Binders, 1893), 4.

⁷³Sheridan, vol. 1, 284.

⁷⁴OR, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 142

⁷⁵Captain Henry A. Castle, "Sheridan With the Army of the Cumberland. History of the Masterly Service of Little Phil from Perryville to Missionary Ridge" *The National Tribune*, 25 October 1900; Henry A. Castle, Captain, U. S. Volunteers, "Sheridan with the Army of the Cumberland," *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, District of Columbia, Vol. 34 (N: Broadfoot, NC, 1993), 171.

⁷⁶Sheridan, vol.1, 285-286.

⁷⁷Ibid., 284-287.

⁷⁸*John Ely Diary*.

⁷⁹Captain C. E. Belknap, "Army of the Cumberland: Molding an Aggregation of Young Wolverines into a Splendid Regiment," *The National Tribune*, 28 April 1904, 5-6.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹OR, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 175.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Battle is the final objective of armies and man is the fundamental instrument in battle. Nothing can wisely be prescribed in an army--its personnel, organization, discipline and tactics, things which are connected like fingers of a hand--without exact knowledge of the fundamental instrument, man, and his state of mind, his morale, at the instant of combat.¹

Ardant du Picq

The Battle of Chickamauga was a victory for the Army of Tennessee, though not the decisive one that Bragg had sought. While Confederate soldiers held the battlefield, they had not destroyed the Army of the Cumberland, and had sustained greater casualties. Bragg was unable to exploit the tactical success his army gained at several points in the battle, allowing the defeated Union force to withdraw to Chattanooga and set up a fortified defense. On the Union side, Rosecrans was physically and emotionally beaten. In ten days, his triumphant pursuit of the Army of Tennessee had turned into a retreat. However, the Army of the Cumberland held Chattanooga, one of the major objectives of the campaign.² Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana, sent by Secretary of War Stanton to watch Rosecrans, sent a dispatch to Washington at 4 P.M. on 20 September 1863 exaggerating the severity of the defeat, "Chickamauga is as fatal a name in our history as Bull Run."³ In a later dispatch he admitted:

I am happy to report that my dispatch of 4 P.M. to-day proves to have given too dark a view of our disaster. Having been swept bodily off the battlefield by the panic-struck rabble into which the divisions of Davis and Sheridan were temporarily converted, my impressions were naturally colored by the aspect of that part of the field.⁴

As a result of the Battle of Chickamauga, the Army of the Cumberland was reorganized at Chattanooga. Rosecrans, McCook, and Negley lost their commands in large part for their actions on 20 September when they left the battlefield. Although McCook and Negley were later cleared by a Court of Inquiry, neither held important command again during the Civil War. The Army and Department of the Cumberland was reorganized by General Order #322 on 28 September 1863. Sheridan's division became the Second Division, Fourth Army Corps, and all of the regiments of Third Division, Twentieth Corps stayed with him. The regiments of the First and Second Brigades formed First Brigade, Second Division, and the regiments of Third Brigade became part of Third Brigade, Second Division.⁵

The performance of Third Division, Twentieth Corps at the Battle of Chickamauga was uncharacteristic for the unit. The division had been together for ten months prior to the battle, and fought at the Battle of Stones River in December 1862 and January 1863. First and Second brigades had been under Sheridan's command for over a year, and had also fought in the Battle of Perryville in October 1862. The division had a great deal of experience, and combat-tested leaders at all levels, with well-trained troops who had proven themselves on a variety of missions. Based on the unit's background, it should have performed much better at the Battle of Chickamauga. What can account for the unit's poor performance?

First, the soldiers were fatigued when they arrived at the battlefield on 19 September, before they got into the fight. Over the past year, most of the soldiers had marched from Louisville, Kentucky to northern Georgia, with numerous detours along the way. During the Tullahoma Campaign, they overcame terrible weather, marching

over fifty miles in nine days in late June and early July, then pursued the Army of the Tennessee to the Tennessee River. The success of the Tullahoma campaign, coupled with Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg, also made the soldiers overconfident. Many believed the war would soon be over, and the limited contact during the Tullahoma campaign may have given them the idea that victory could be attained with minimal fighting.

The soldiers spent a month in a camp on the Tennessee River, suffering from heat and disease, and built the bridge Fourteenth Corps used to cross the river, before moving across themselves. Finally, the unit marched over one hundred eight miles over hazardous mountain terrain in an attempt to surround Bragg's army, only to have to cross back over the mountains to join the rest of the army of the Cumberland on the battlefield. During the movement over the mountains of northern Georgia, the troops were on half-rations, and frequently separated from their supply trains. Because of the great difference in temperatures, the soldiers suffered from the heat during the days, and struggled to stay warm during the nights, further taxing them. The six days before the battle consisted of a hard movement to avoid being isolated from the rest of the army, with several movements at night that deprived the soldiers of much needed sleep.

Second, the division fought separate engagements by brigade during the battle. The deployment of his brigades was not totally Sheridan's fault, as both McCook and Rosecrans bypassed him on several occasions. The engagement on Saturday, 19 September was fought only by Third Brigade. Sheridan had been required to leave a brigade behind at Lee and Gordon's Mills, so the best he could have done was to employ two brigades. Bradley wrote after the war, "Sheridan said to me in after years that he felt

sure if he had gone in with his whole division on Saturday afternoon when he sent me in -we would have rolled up their left that night: and with the Chickamauga river behind them, if they had once got started they would have never stopped.”⁶ Sheridan may have believed this after the war, but in truth, he did not even get two brigades into the fight that day, even when his lead brigade was pushed back. Having a third brigade available is useless if it is not used in the fight. Failure to exploit the initial success Bradley’s brigade had on 19 September lies with Sheridan for not deploying his trail element (Laiboldt’s Second Brigade).

On Sunday, 20 September, the division’s first engagement involved only Laiboldt’s brigade. Laiboldt’s brigade was moved from the division’s position at the Widow Glenn house to fill a gap in the unit line. Sheridan accompanied the brigade, and saw that Laiboldt set up a strong defense. Sheridan left to check on his other two brigades when Longstreet’s troops broke through the gap, overrunning Davis’ division to Laiboldt’s front. Unfortunately for Second Brigade, McCook was at its position, and ordered a charge, over the objections of Laiboldt. Laiboldt did not want to leave a prepared position, dominating an open field, with two artillery batteries available for support (Sheridan had moved Battery C, First Illinois Light artillery from Third Brigade to support Laiboldt). The soldiers of Second Brigade made a courageous charge, but soon joined in the retreat when they couldn’t effectively fire on the overwhelming rebel force due to the large number of friendly soldiers in their path.

While it is debatable whether Laiboldt could have held his position if not forced to abandon it by McCook, the brigade would not have suffered as much if McCook had not interfered. Second Brigade was the best fighting force in the division, with more

battle experience, and greater cohesion as a result of ties not just to a state, but a common background as hard working German-Americans. Sheridan's move to provide Laiboldt with additional artillery assets was a good one, and may have proved decisive as the Confederates would have had to cross over six hundred yards of open field under heavy fire to dislodge the unit. McCook's intervention, which had bothered Sheridan in the past, was the cause for Second Brigade's defeat.

The division's second major engagement on 20 September occurred while the First and Third Brigades were moving to the left to reinforce Thomas' corps, by order of Rosecrans. The brigades were hit while moving in column by a Confederate force outnumbering them three to one. While the gap in the Union line that enabled this force to charge through virtually unopposed was not the fault of Sheridan, his units should have been better prepared for the attack. Lytle, in the lead, had and ignored information from one of his staff officers that the rebels were massed on his flank, preparing to attack. Based on the advice of a member of Rosecrans' staff accompanying him, he chose to ignore the recommendation of his subordinate to form a line of battle. While following this advice would not have resulted in victory, it would have limited the number of casualties the brigade took in the first volley, and enabled the brigade to fight more effectively, and get its artillery battery involved. The soldiers fought bravely initially pushing the rebels off the hill, but could not hold off the enemy for long. Also, due to the location of the artillery battery in the movement formation, the guns were never effective in the battle. Lytle led from the front rallying the soldiers and positioning units despite heavy musketry fire. He proved again that he was a courageous, gallant leader, and the respect and admiration his soldiers had for him made them a better combat unit.

However, soon after Lytle fell, the brigade broke, and did not get organized again for over an hour, rallying on the Dry Valley Road. While the circumstances under which the brigade fought were not of its making, a change in movement formation or set line of battle would have improved the unit's performance.

Third Brigade, already weakened during the previous day's battle, and under a new brigade commander, was separated from First Brigade by the speed of the rebel assault. Without any supporting artillery, the unit fell back initially, then bravely defended, holding back the enemy for nearly two hours. The brigade was further splintered, but managed to rally after withdrawing due to the excellent junior leadership in the regiments. Sheridan could not affect this fight as a division commander because all of his assets were in contact. He should not be blamed for taking the artillery away from Third Brigade, because it was placed where it could be most effective (although this move was undermined by McCook's meddling).

All four major engagements the division fought at Chickamauga were brigade level. Sheridan could not affect the employment of his brigades during the battle because of the way his force was divided by his superiors. In each case, though fatigued, the junior leaders and soldiers fought hard; countless acts of courage will never be told because the stories died with the soldiers on the battlefield. Sheridan moved throughout the battlefield, making his way to the front whenever there was contact, as he had in previous battles.

The only "blame" Sheridan should assume is in not trying to prevent the piecemeal employment of his division by speaking up to his superiors. Sheridan met face-to-face with McCook several times, and should have pressed the issue of how his

unit would be used. Additionally, Rosecrans asked for input from his generals at the war council he held late in the evening on 19 September. There is no record of Sheridan speaking up at that time. In fact, he left the meeting, then vented his frustration with McCook at Third Division headquarters, but did not come up with an alternative recommendation for the employment of his division the following day. According to one of the guards at Sheridan's tent, he continued pacing and verbally expressing his displeasure to himself long after McCook left.

Could Sheridan have held his position on the right flank if allowed to control the movements of his division? Yes, although he probably would have been separated from the rest of the Army of the Cumberland for several hours because of the gap in the Union line. Sheridan had his brigades fortify their positions from the time they occupied the area around Widow Glenn's. His brigades were arrayed in mutually supporting positions on high ground, dominating the open field to their front, with almost six hundred yards of visibility at some points (when the fog lifted).

Longstreet argued after the war that Union forces could not have held off his assault, even if Wood's division had not moved, due to the size of his force: "Rosecrans' line could never have withstood the force of the assault I sent against it that day, no matter how well his plans had been observed or his orders obeyed . . . Our assaulting column was five brigades deep, each within easy supporting distance."⁷ However, his troops, also tired after a long trip to the battlefield, would have had to charge across open ground, up a hill, under heavy fire from three batteries and small arms fire from fortified positions. These same troops were exhausted to the point they could not pursue when they charged the same hill on the day of the battle, against troops moving in column

without effective artillery support. They probably could not have completed the same assault against a prepared position.

Sheridan's performance at the Battle of Chickamauga will always be evaluated by his decision to move his unit through McFarland's Gap to Rossville, instead of returning by a direct route to support Thomas. The facts are: Sheridan rallied his men at Dry Valley road after taking heavy casualties, nearly forty percent, including the loss of two brigade commanders and two regimental commanders. After meeting with Negley and Davis, Sheridan decided to fall back to Rossville with the troops he had gathered. He knew that his superiors, McCook and Rosecrans, had left for Chattanooga, and that Thomas' corps in the center was pressed by a large enemy attack, his right flank exposed. He later found out from Colonel Thruston, McCook's chief of staff, that Thomas, the ranking Union officer on the battlefield, wanted him to return and cover his right flank, but the order was not put in writing.

The post battle reports in the official records are of limited value in analyzing Sheridan's actions and the decision he made at McFarland's Gap. Generally, the official records contain reports that place commanders and units in a positive light. Units that are noted in soldiers' diaries and letters home as retreating in panic, are reflected in the official records as making orderly withdrawals. Post-battle reports praise commanders for their performances. In fact, though they were relieved after the battle, Rosecrans, McCook, and Negley all receive praise for their gallant actions during the Battle of Chickamauga in the official reports. Dana, writing about the "disaster" at Chickamauga, also praises Rosecrans, "I can testify to the conspicuous and steady gallantry of

Rosecrans on the field. He made all possible efforts to rally the broken columns; nor do I see that there was any fault in the disposition of his forces.”⁸

Sheridan’s report on Chickamauga, dated 30 September 1863, in the official records is three pages long, with over a page containing a list of casualties.⁹ It contains no analysis of the battle, simply covering unit movements and a brief synopsis of actions. It does not mention the meeting with Davis and Negley, but justifies his decision to move through Rossville:

After crossing the road my division was again formed on the ridge which overlooked the ground where this sanguinary contest had taken place, the enemy manifesting no disposition to continue the engagement further. I here learned positively what I had before partially seen, that the divisions still farther on my left had been driven, and that I was completely cut off. I then determined to connect myself with the troops of General Thomas by moving on the arc of a circle until I struck the Dry Creek Valley road, by which I hoped to form the junction . . .

On reaching Dry Creek Valley road I found that the enemy had moved parallel to me and had also arrived at the road, thus preventing my joining General Thomas by that route. I then determined to move quickly on Rossville and form a junction with him on his left flank via the La Fayette road.¹⁰

This report, in context of the reports in the official records, does little to clarify why Sheridan made the decision to go to Rossville, while omitting several pertinent facts. His recollection of the event is also vague in his *Personal Memoirs*, written over twenty years after the Civil War ended. This is the result of his desire to write his memoirs to set the record straight shortly before he died, and the lack of personal or professional papers he had from the time, since they were lost in the fire that nearly destroyed Chicago on 8 October 1871.¹¹

Many authors have attempted to justify Sheridan’s actions, including Archibald Gracie, who praises Sheridan in his book, *The Truth About Chickamauga*:

The evidence indicates that General Sheridan owes no apology for his conduct or for any order that he delivered that day. On the other hand, when we consider the extraordinary movement made by his division, from the extreme right wing of the army to the extreme left, after receiving the terrible punishment in the morning, we cannot but consider the performance a remarkable one, which, so far as I can learn, has not its counterpart in any other great battle. . . . Had the Confederates followed up their success, as was to have been expected, Sheridan's Division alone was ready there at Rossville Gap on the Lafayette road to block their passage and entrance to Rossville.¹²

Others try to downplay the incident, like Richard O'Connor who writes in *Sheridan the Inevitable* that "the "controversy" over Sheridan's conduct actually arose out of the postwar "battle of the memoirs" rather than the battle of Chickamauga."¹³

There is some truth to his point, as Don Piatt and Henry Van Boynton wrote in their 1893 book, *General George H. Thomas: A Critical Biography*, a chapter entitled "Sheridan Deserts the Field," including:

General Davis found no difficulty in marching direct to the support of Thomas, and the intervention of Confederate troops to prevent such a move is an afterthought of General Sheridan's to cover and excuse not only his failure to obey orders, but his lack of loyalty, as shown by his moving, as we have said, his troops to the rear at the sound of the enemy's cannon . . . Thruston, in making his statement, omitted from the writing precisely what Sheridan did say, and this language the gallant young chief of staff omitted from a mistaken sense of propriety. The fact is, the insubordinate subordinate, in a sentence glaring with profanity, swore he would obey no such orders and take his men into a slaughter organized by fools . . . His mind was clear and his nerves calm, and he knew that in that roar that rose behind him as he marched away brave men were being done to death, while heroic officers were looking eagerly to the right and left for aid in this hour of death-tainted anxiety.¹⁴

It is speculation to try and determine what Sheridan was thinking at the time he made the decision, but outlining his situation sheds light on the controversy. Sheridan was a proven combat leader, admired by his soldiers for his courage, always seen at the front during battles. He was greatly concerned with the welfare of his own men, as displayed by his actions in earlier battles. He was angry with his superiors for the way

they had conducted the campaign. He knew from experience that men die in wars, but could not tolerate heavy losses without purpose. Thruston recalled, “General Phil was furious . . . he was swearing mad, and no wonder,” when he met him in conference with Negley and Davis.¹⁵

By this time, Sheridan had conducted the move to Alpine, Georgia, which he disagreed with, and watched as a pursuit of the enemy that was to lead to victory turned into a bloody defeat. He was extremely tired, getting about three hours of sleep each night for the previous week, between long days of marching, meetings, and planning sessions at night. He had been up most of the previous night, ranting in his tent about the lack of a plan for the battle. He was particularly angry because of the casualties he had taken at Chickamauga, which he felt were unnecessary and the result of the constant shifting of divisions by his superiors, creating a gap in the defensive line. He had lost a lot of men, and two of his finest leaders, Lytle and Bradley. Sheridan’s care for his troops had been a key factor in his decisions in previous battles. His attitude toward them, and casualties is best summed up in his own words:

“It has been said that I was rash, that I was dashing and reckless. I say in reply, that there never was an officer more careful of his troops. I never lost a man without a just equivalent, if I could help it. There never was an officer who was more painstaking to obtain information of the enemy-his strength and his instructions-than I was. I took good care of my men. I encamped them well. I watched their rations and their comforts, and when we fought the enemy, I showed the men the confidence of victory from my knowledge of the enemy, and my confidence in them.”¹⁶

At best, his judgment at the time was clouded. Even his men were concerned before the battle, knowing that they would face superior numbers with the confirmation that Longstreet had arrived. Their anxiety grew as word spread of Sheridan's behavior and mood the night of 19 September from Corporal Hasty of the Seventy-third Illinois Regiment, who returned several times from his post at Sheridan's tent to update his comrades.¹⁷ They were more concerned after Second Brigade was beaten back, since the men all looked at Laiboldt's brigade as the best fighting force in the division, further eroding their confidence. Sheridan described his mood at the time in his *Personal Memoirs*: "I had lost 1,517 officers and men, including two brigade commanders. This was not satisfactory--indeed, it was most depressing--and there was much confusion prevailing around Rossville; and, this condition of things doubtless increasing my gloomy reflections . . . Exhaustion soon quieted all forebodings."¹⁸ Sheridan's description of Thomas at the time also probably applied to himself: "...his quiet, unobtrusive demeanor communicating a gloomy rather than a hopeful view of the situation. This apparent depression was due no doubt to the severe trial through which he had gone in the last forty-eight hours, which strain had exhausted him very much both physically and mentally."¹⁹

All of this must have had a psychological impact on Sheridan. When he made the decision to move toward Rossville, he probably did believe that the enemy was too strong between himself and Thomas. He also probably decided that he would do what was best for his men, his division, since in his mind no one else knew how to conduct this battle. He probably did not even consider the impact his decision would have on the Army of the Cumberland.

As he marched back toward Rossville, he came to the conclusion that he should at least attempt to help Thomas. That is when he decided to move toward Thomas' left flank. Circumstances gave him justification for his actions, although he could not have known about them prior to his arrival at Rossville. Granger and his Reserve Corps were supposed to be at Rossville to ensure that the Army of the Cumberland could not be cut off from Chattanooga. But earlier in the day, Granger, of his own accord and without orders, had deployed his men to reinforce Thomas, leaving Rossville unprotected.²⁰ Simply by his presence there, Sheridan could help the Army of the Cumberland. By moving toward Thomas and then covering his withdrawal, as ordered, Sheridan saved face.

What other options did Sheridan have? He could have tried to reach Thomas' right flank. There were Confederate forces directly between Sheridan and Thomas, but probably not enough to overpower the force Sheridan had assembled. He also could have mounted a counterattack to retake his position on the Union right flank near Widow Glenn's. Colonel Wilder's mounted infantry brigade was able to counterattack the enemy near Widow Glenn's and drive them back after Sheridan's division had left. They even recaptured two of the guns lost by the Eleventh Indiana Battery (Lytle's Brigade) and helped evacuate wagon trains, including ambulances, ammunition, and supplies, as well as stragglers from Sheridan's, Davis', and Van Cleve's divisions.²¹ Sheridan could have coordinated a counterattack with Wilder, and possibly gained and retained his position on Thomas' right flank, but would have had to clear out Confederate forces in the woods between his left flank and Thomas' right flank.

Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership*, defines leadership as “influencing people--by providing purpose, direction, and motivation--while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization.”²² Doctrinally, the U.S. Army considers competent and confident leadership to be:

The most necessary dynamic of combat power . . . Leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win. They provide purpose, direction, and motivation. Once a force is engaged, superior combat power derives from the courage and competence of soldiers, . . . and, above all, the quality of their leadership.²³

Sheridan’s leadership was a contributing factor to the division’s poor performance. Combined with the poor judgment of his superiors, resulting in his unit arriving at the battlefield in no condition to fight, and their failure to plan a cohesive defense, the division was doomed at the Battle of Chickamauga. While Sheridan was able to get the most out of his troops during the fight, and he rallied them after a crushing defeat, he was not able to bring order to the chaos of the situation when he made the decision to march through McFarland’s Gap toward Rossville. It is possible that because of these circumstances, he was not relieved of command after the battle.

Sheridan’s decision to go around the battlefield through Rossville before linking up with Thomas was more than a battle between authors of biographies. The decision haunted him so much that despite never being charged with any offence, he sought exoneration. Both he and Davis participated in a board in 1879 to investigate the incident, specifically trying to map the locations of units from both sides on the battlefield. The subject had become an issue great debate among veterans of the battle. The Board of Officers for the inquiry into the Battle of Chickamauga is first mentioned in a memorandum, dated 13 September 1879, from the Adjutant General’s office:

Aug. 2, 1879 the Chief of Engineers forwarded to the Secretary of War proof sheets of maps of the Battlefield of Chickamauga, and owing to the difference of opinion of correctness of position of the troops as laid down among certain officers named, participants in the battle suggested the propriety of convening a Board of Officers familiar with the battle, to settle disputed points.

The suggestion of the Chief of Engineers was approved by the Secretary, and the Board (the members of which were selected by the General of the army) consists of: Lieut. General Sheridan, Brig. General Crook, and Colonel J. C. Davis, was ordered to meet in Chicago at the call of the Lieut. General.

Sept. 9, 1879. General John M. Palmer (late Major General of Volunteers) in a communication addressed to the Adjutant General states that he has seen notice in the papers of the appointment of such a Board, and is at a loss to understand the particular circumstances that are supposed to make such an inquiry necessary, nor does he understand whether it includes any other troops than those commanded by Generals Sheridan and Davis themselves.

He says the inquiry may deeply interest every officer who was present at Chickamauga, especially those officers who, like Generals Sheridan and Davis, commanded divisions...²⁴

Sheridan, commanding the Military Division of the Missouri at the time responded to the Adjutant General:

Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri

Chicago, August 14, 1879

General E. D. Townsend
Adjutant General
Washington, D.C.
General:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant enclosing copy of Special Order 185 extract 2 CS (Note: CS stands for current series.) and a letter referring to the position of troops at the battle of Chickamauga together with the letters and maps which were received this day by express.

I am General

Very respectfully

Your obedient servant

[signed "P. H. Sheridan"]

Lieut. General²⁵

Special Orders Number 102 of the Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, dated 19 September designated the first meeting of the Board as 1 October, and detailed Captain William J. Volkmar of the Fifth United States Cavalry as Recorder for

the Board.²⁶ The selection of Sheridan as President of the Board, with Davis and Crook as the only other members was controversial with other veterans, as highlighted by Palmer's concerns. Both Sheridan and Davis had their divisions overrun in the battle, and neither got back in the battle after meeting at McFarland's Gap. Crook commanded Second Division of the Cavalry Corps at Chickamauga. His division was with McCook's corps during its move toward Alpine, but was on the right flank of the Army of the Cumberland, south of Crawfish Springs during the Battle of Chickamauga, so he could not have had firsthand knowledge of the disposition of forces. The Board was also tasked with investigating the location of units during the Battle of Stones River, the only other time Sheridan failed to hold his position.

While the Board requested input from other brigade and division commanders at Chickamauga who were still alive, they received little by mail. Another memorandum listed the names and locations of fifteen other living corps, division, and brigade commanders, including Alexander McCook (Twentieth Corps, Sheridan's commander), Thomas L. Crittenden (Twenty-first Corps), and Luther P. Bradley (commander of Third Brigade in Sheridan's division). None of these officers was invited to participate in the proceedings.

Although there is no record of the proceedings of the Board in the microfilm from the National Archives, there is a memorandum in which Sheridan acknowledged that the Board completed its investigation of the Battle of Chickamauga:

Headquarters Military Division of the Missouri

Chicago, Ill., Dec. 5, 1879

General E. D. Townsend
Washington, D.C.

Will you please notify General Sherman that the Board of Officers convened at these headquarters had finished proceedings in the case of the Battle of Chickamauga before the demise of General Davis, and can in a few days finish that of Stones River. Does the general of the Army wish to fill the vacancy caused by General Davis death?

(signed P. H. Sheridan)
Lieut. General²⁷

(Note: Jefferson C. Davis died on 30 November 1879 in Chicago.)

While Sheridan reported that the Board's work was complete with regard to Chickamauga, there is no record of its findings or conclusions. There is also no mention of the Board in the Annual Report of the Secretary of War in 1879, although Sheridan listed the activities and accomplishments of the Military Division of the Missouri, and the collection of the *Official Records of the Rebellion* is addressed in several sections.²⁸ In fact, on 5 October 1888, William S. Rosecrans, in his capacity as President of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland sent a letter to the Secretary of War, W. C. Endicott that suggested the Board never completed its work. In the letter he wrote:

Complete topographical maps of the battlefield of Chickamauga were made in 1867-8 under the direction of Col. W. E. Merrill, Chief Engineer Department of the Cumberland, and are on file in this office; but the locations of troops have never been definitely determined upon. A Board organized for this purpose in 1879, consisting of Lieut. Genl. P. H. Sheridan, Brig. Genl. Geo. Crook, and Col. J. C. Davis, never completed its labors or made recommendation; consequently the maps have never been published for distribution.²⁹

Rosecrans also suggested that Captain Sanford C. Kellogg, of the Fifth United States Cavalry be sent to the battlefield to map the locations of the troops by each day of the battle to clear up areas of confusion.³⁰ On 8 October 1888, Kellogg was tasked with this mission by the War Department, and provided with a list of surviving brigade and division commanders, and their addresses.³¹ Kellogg did publish a series of maps of the battlefield, but they were not very accurate.

If Sheridan really believed his actions were justified, he should not have had a need to seek official exoneration. He was given the opportunity as President of the Board, consisting of two officers not likely to disagree with him, to record the positions of forces (both Union and Confederate) to support his decision to withdraw to Rossville. Sheridan also had the support of William T. Sherman, the General of the Army, a friend and mentor who later designated him to take his position upon retirement. So why did the Board not publish the conclusions Sheridan reported it found? There are several possible reasons, but without any additional evidence, all require a degree of speculation. Most likely is that when the Board's investigation became common knowledge among veterans, Sheridan realized that he could not totally exonerate himself without public backlash. Sheridan had aspirations to rise higher in the Army, and knew that controversy could hurt his chances. It is possible that he forwarded the findings to Sherman, who hid them to protect his protégé.

It is also possible that with the lack of feedback from other officers, and the limited firsthand knowledge of the members of the Board, the Board's findings were inconclusive, and were never made public as a result. With all of the debate and confusion as to unit locations, it is likely that any report would have been questioned, if not harshly criticized. However, this is not likely since Sheridan reported that the investigation into Chickamauga was complete. If lack of information was a concern, he could have taken more time and conducted hearings with other surviving participants. That would have given the Board credibility.

A third possibility is that the evidence the Board collected showed that Sheridan and Davis could have reinforced Thomas' right flank by moving directly from their

position at Dry Valley Road. If this is true, the only way for Sheridan and Davis to hide the evidence (and protect their reputations) would have been to keep the findings from the public. Regardless of the reason the Board never published its findings, it is also strange that although he knew about the Board, Rosecrans waited until after Sheridan's death to request another investigation. Unless he and the other veterans in the Society of the Army of the Cumberland believed Sheridan was too powerful to confront, they should not have waited nearly ten years to make an inquiry.

Wilder summed up the causes for the disaster at Chickamauga better than anyone. He made the following observation of the battle at an 1890 reunion of Confederate veterans:

All this talk about generalship displayed on either side is sheer nonsense. There was no generalship in it. It was a soldiers' fight purely, wherein the only question involved was the question of endurance. The two armies came together like two wild beasts, and each fought as long as it could stand up in a knock-down-and – drag-out encounter. If there had been any high order of generalship displayed the disasters to both armies might have been less.³²

Sheridan would continue his meteoric rise after the battle of Chickamauga. Two months later, Sheridan led his new division, consisting of the survivors of Third Division and several new regiments, on a successful charge at Missionary Ridge, the decisive action in the Department and Army of the Cumberland's breakout from Chattanooga. He caught the eye of Rosecrans' replacement, General Ulysses S. Grant, who took Sheridan east with him to command the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac when he was made commander of all Union forces. He continued to have success, driving Confederate forces out of the Shenandoah Valley, culminating with the Battle of Cedar Creek. He returned to the Army of the Potomac in time to cut off Lee's retreat at Appomattox Court House, participating in the final action leading to Lee's surrender.³³

After the Civil War, Sheridan was sent to Texas to prevent the outbreak of hostilities with Mexico, under the control of Emperor Maximilian, sponsored by France. After successfully forcing the French to withdraw their territorial claims, Sheridan became the commander of the Fifth Military District, supervising compliance with the Reconstruction Acts in Texas and Louisiana in 1867. Sheridan was removed by President Johnson from this position after only six months because of his severe policies. He was appointed as commander of the Division of the Missouri, and ordered to place the Indians in the west on reservations. He took over at a time when uprisings were common, and supervised the Centennial Campaign, including the Federal disaster at the Battle of Little Big Horn.³⁴

Sheridan held a variety of other posts before rising to the nation's highest military position, commanding general of the army, in 1884, when his friend and mentor William T. Sherman retired. In 1888, in poor health after several heart attacks, Sheridan was promoted to full general on 1 June, only the fourth man to receive the honor. Philip H. Sheridan died on 5 August 1888, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.³⁵

While this analysis focuses on Sheridan's Division at the Battle of Chickamauga, it highlights the timeless human dimension of war. The study of military history is important for professional officers. The challenges a unit faces in combat provide lessons that can help the officer understand the importance of leadership. A thorough study of a unit's combat actions and the decisions of its leadership can help a leader apply these lessons in future assignments, providing a framework for decision-making in a military environment that is constantly changing.

¹Ardant du Picq, *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Science Publishing Co., 1946), 39.

²Steven E. Woodworth, *Six Armies in Tennessee: The Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 130-134.

³*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 1-A, 192.

⁴*Ibid.*, 193.

⁵Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, pt. 1 (Des Moines, IA: F. H. Dyer, 1908), 452-453.

⁶Luther P. Bradley, "Recollections of Service in the Civil War, 1861-1865," *Luther P. Bradley Papers*, U.S. Army Military History Institute.

⁷John Otto, *History of the Eleventh Indiana Battery, Connected with an Outline History of the Army of the Cumberland, During the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865*, U. S. Army Military History Research Collection, 40-41.

⁸*OR*, vol.30, pt. 1-A, 194.

⁹*Ibid.*, 579-582.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 580-581.

¹¹Roy Morris, Jr, *Sheridan: The Life and Wars of General Phil Sheridan* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, Inc, 1992), 336.

¹²Archibald Gracie, *The Truth About Chickamauga* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), 129-130.

¹³Richard O'Connor, *Sheridan: The Inevitable* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), 120.

¹⁴Don Piatt and Henry Van Boynton, *General George H. Thomas: A Critical Biography* (Cincinnati, OH: Robert Clark and Company, 1893), 430-431.

¹⁵O'Connor, *Sheridan: The Inevitable*, 117.

¹⁶Roger Zeimet, "Philip H. Sheridan and the Civil War in the West" (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1985), 478. Sheridan made this comment in an 1882 address to the Illinois Commandery.

¹⁷Lester L. Swift, "The Preacher Regiment at Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge," *Lincoln Herald*, Volume 72, Number 2, 1970, 53-55.

¹⁸Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1888), vol. 1, 287-288.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 286.

²⁰O'Connor, *Sheridan: The Inevitable*, 116.

²¹*OR*, vol. 30, pt. 3-B, 751.

²²Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Department of the Army: Washington, D.C., 31 August 1999), 1-4.

²³Department of the Army, FM 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, June 1993), 2-12.

²⁴Adjutant General's Office Memorandum, 13 September 1879, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series) 1871-1880, Microcopy No. 666, Roll 521, 1879 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1966).

²⁵Sheridan to Townsend, 14 August 1879, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series) 1871-1880, Microcopy No. 666, Roll 521, 1879 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1966).

²⁶Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, Special Ordes No. 102, 19 September 1879, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series) 1871-1880, Microcopy No. 666, Roll 521, 1879 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1966).

²⁷Sheridan to Townsend, 5 December 1879, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series) 1871-1880, Microcopy No. 666, Roll 521, 1879 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1966).

²⁸George W. McCrary, Annual report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1879 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1879), 42-46.

²⁹Rosecrans to Endicott, 5 October 1888, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series) 1871-1880, Microcopy No. 666, Roll 521, 1879 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1966).

³⁰*Idem.*

³¹Adjutant General's Office Memorandum 4762-A-G-O-1888, 8 October 1888, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant

General (Main Series) 1871-1880, Microcopy No. 666, Roll 521, 1879 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1966).

³²Glenn Tucker, *Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West* (Dayton, OH: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1961), 291.

³³Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 438-439.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*

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