

The Monthly Muster

KEY WEST AVENGERS NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER, 2026

Upcoming Events

162nd Battle of Franklin

October 2-4, 2026

Lafayette, GA

Confederate (Florida Brigade)

Impression

Fort Clinch Confederate Garrison

October 9-11 2026

Amelia Island, FL

Confederate Impression

ATLANTACAMPAIGN.COM

★ ★

**BATTLE OF
FRANKLIN**

NATIONAL
REENACTMENT

★ ★

OCTOBER 2 - 4, 2026
WALKER COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DR.
LAFAYETTE, GA 30728

THE SCALE OF THE CONFEDERATE CHARGE
AT FRANKLIN RIVALED THAT
OF PICKETT'S CHARGE AT GETTYSBURG.

BATTLES 2PM SATURDAY
SUNDAY

OPEN DAILY SAT. & SUN.: 9AM-5PM

FOOD AND SUTLERS AVAILABLE AND THE OPPORTUNITY
TO TALK TO SOLDIERS IN THEIR CAMPS TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT YOUR HISTORY.

ADULTS: \$15
CHILDREN (6-17): \$5
CHILDREN 5 AND UNDER: FREE
PARKING: \$5

Captain's Desk

Captain David Hendrix





The wait is almost over, the Fall Campaign is almost upon us! The Reenactment of the Battle of Franklin will be held October 2-4, 2026. This will be the largest and best attended Civil War event in the South this year. As of this writing there are over 1500 Reenactors registered to attend with 18 Members of our Company and our Sister Company (3rd Florida) included. If you're not registered, please do so. We will have a Saturday night Captains Mess and lunch sacks for our Company. This event features 3 battles including the Battles of

Franklin and Nashville. Start rolling rounds! You really do not want to miss this reenactment.

Please check the rest of our Company campaign schedule on our website. Those who want a more laid back event will enjoy the Fall Garrison of Ft. Clinch, October 9-11. The Battle of Dade City is November 13-14, and offers a small event feel following the large event at Franklin. For the second year we were specifically invited to garrison Ft. McAllister, December 11-13. This is a fantastic event featuring a 5 hour battle! We camp in the fort and all meals will be provided by the Fort. For those who attended last year, encourage your pards to attend, this one is Big Fun!

I look forward to seeing you at the campfire!

The Florida Brigade at Franklin

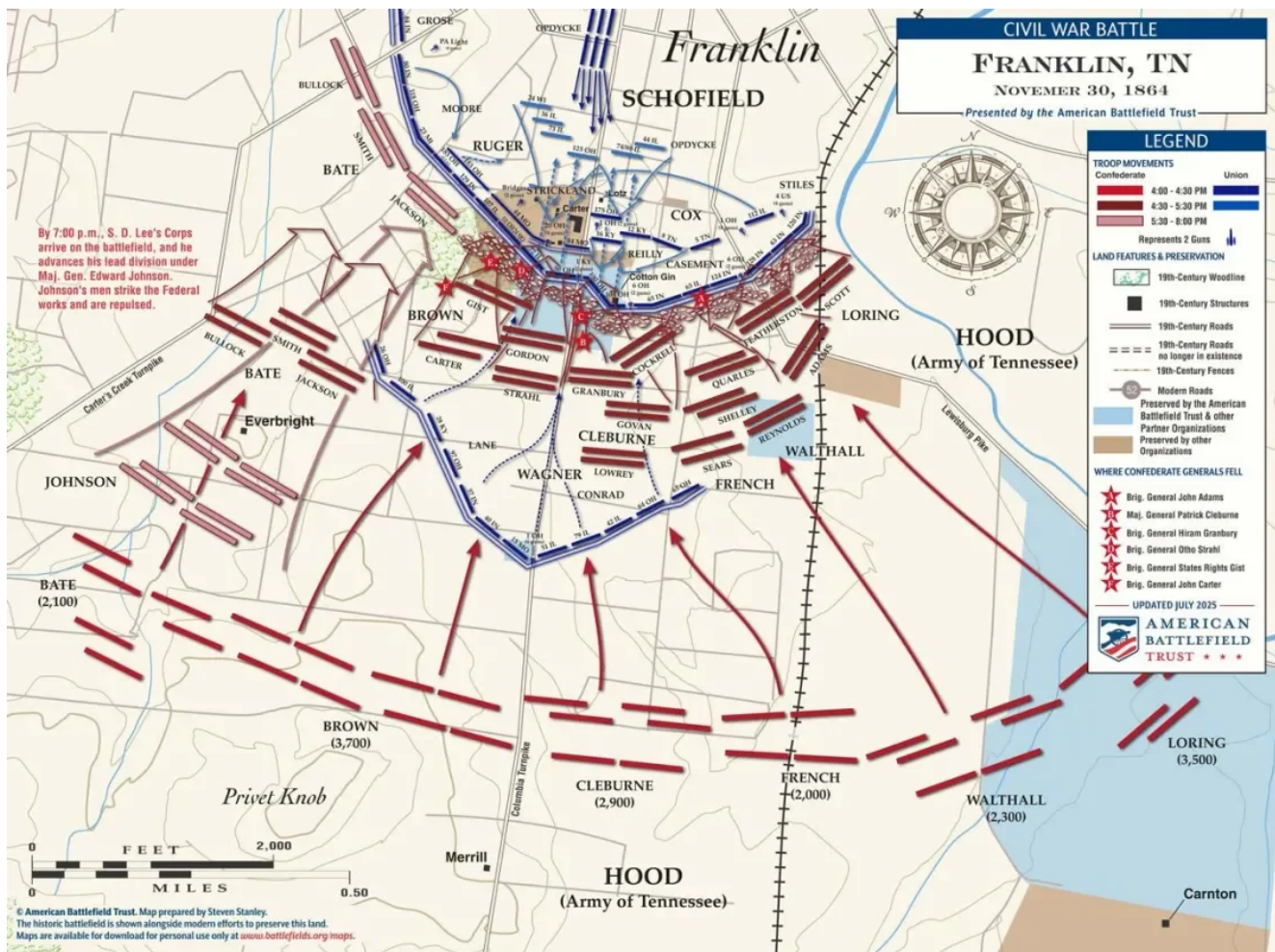




During Hood's Tennessee Campaign, the 7th Florida was brigaded with the other Florida regiments in the Army of Tennessee, as they had been since before Chattanooga. The brigade numbered no more than 800 men as they marched into Tennessee in November 1864, roughly 200 of that being the 7th Florida. Commanding the brigade was Colonel Robert Bullock, the longtime Colonel of the 7th who had been commanding the brigade, off and on, since just after Resaca six months prior. With their colonel commanding the brigade, the 7th was commanded by Major Nathan S. Blount from Company E, and aided in command by Captain Robert Blair Smith of Company K.

By the time the Army of Tennessee got to Franklin, they had already let the retreating federal army under Major General Schofield slip away from them twice: once at Columbus, and once at Spring Hill. General John Bell Hood was determined to not let that happen again, and he ordered an attack across open ground against the fortified Federal position.

As part of Bate's Division of Cheatham's Corps, the Florida Brigade was placed on the left end of the line. Bate had arranged his Division in two lines, with the Floridians marching in the rear. The Federal line had curved back in that area, causing Bate's men to march farther and execute more complicated maneuvers to face the enemy.



As the division moved forward, the Florida Brigade marched along the Carter's Creek Pike while the rest of the division drifted off to the east of the road. This left the Floridians alone on the far left flank of the attack. As they moved up the Pike, they encountered heavy rifle and artillery fire, particularly from Battery B of the Pennsylvania Light Artillery, which was armed with four Napoleon guns, and all of Brigadier General Nathan Kimball's Division, numbering roughly 5,000 men.

Sergeant Washington Ives of the 4th Florida did not participate in the attack but he did watch it from the rear. He recorded the following entry in his journal.

“At 4 p.m. our lines began advancing. I remained on the ridge to see the battle, as I had never had such an opportunity before. At the first charge our men took the first line of works capturing and killing a great many of the enemy, but instead of reforming Cleburne and Cheatham's [Brown's] Div. and part of [Alexander] Stewart's Corps charged the main works where- they lost many gallant men but after getting on the yankees [sic] works were compelled to fall back to the captured line. After dark our men charged and gained the outside of the mainworks [sic] which they held until late night... The fighting had been terrible.”



Thought to be Sgt. Washington Ives

Though Hood's attack was repulsed with heavy losses, Schofield pulled out of Franklin overnight. Within the following days, Sergeant Ives walked the battlefield, and recorded seeing *“...human blood 3 inches deep in the ditch at the main line and running like water. It was impossible to bury our dead in one day.”*

Florida Brigade at Shy's Hill (Nashville)



After the slaughter at Franklin, Bate's Division was sent to Murfreesboro to engage the 8,000 man Federal garrison there, while the rest of the army moved on Nashville. He had no more than 1,600 under his command, including artillery and a detachment of Cavalry. There, they were involved in several engagements. During one, Colonel Bullock was severely wounded and the brigade broke, fleeing in disorder for around a mile. After his wound, Bullock went back to Florida to recover, and never returned to the war. The Florida Brigade was then commanded by Major Jacob Lash of the 4th Florida. Bate's attack on Murfreesboro was another failure.



Major General William Bate

With no reason to remain in Murfreesboro, Bate was sent to join the main army at Nashville, and got there in time to see the Federal attack during the first day of fighting, though they were mostly uninvolved. As the army retreated, Bate was moved to the left flank and ordered to take position on a hill called Compton's Hill (now called Shy's Hill). His line wrapped around the steep slope, his right wing facing north and his left wing facing east, with his artillery near its peak. The now tiny Florida Brigade was at the salient, where the line bent. There were only around 400 Floridians entering this fight, occupying one of the most important positions on the entire battlefield.

When the Federals attacked, the Floridians had divisions from two different Federal Corps converge on their position. All of Shy's hill was under relentless attack, leaving no chance for the Confederate defenders to hold off the attack. The line broke, and the army fled in disarray all the way back to Alabama. Over 150 Floridians were captured during or immediately after the battle, and there were at least dozens if not over 100 men killed or wounded. Florida made it back to Alabama with less than 200 men remaining.

The once proud brigade began the campaign with around 800 men, suffered damage to their reputation for their rout at Murfreesboro, and lost 75% of their manpower, all in just a few weeks. Their reputation would suffer even more in the decades after the war, when the famous memoir written by Sam Watkins of the 1st Tennessee, Company Aytch, blamed the Florida Brigade for the disaster at Nashville, claiming the Floridians retreated first, causing the rest of the line to break. General Bate's own report refutes this, though, documenting Colonel Shy's 20th Tennessee as the first to break, to the left of the Floridians. That regiment was hit so hard, only 65 of them made it out of the battle. They lost their Colonel to a mortal wound in the head, who the hill is now named after.



First Sergeant's Report

First Sergeant Lawrin Ellis



Continuing with the theme of Civil War weapons, this month's focus is the "Artillery Hell: In the Line of Fire" at the Battle of Franklin, TN, by Eric A. Jacobson, *originally published in the Battlefield Dispatch Vol. 1 No. 3 Fall 2013.*

One of the most under-appreciated elements of the Civil War is the role played by artillery. While it is commonly known that the Confederate Army of Tennessee went into battle on November 30, 1864, with very little artillery support, the role of the Federal artillery is not often discussed. In truth, the

Federal guns played a vital role during the battle and produced an "artillery hell," which was a term S. D. Lee used to describe Antietam. It could just as easily be applied to Franklin.

Throughout the morning hours, seven batteries of artillery were positioned at various points along the Federal defensive line. The cannons employed were a lethal combination of smoothbore, 12-pounder Napoleons and incredibly accurate 3-inch rifled guns. The 3-inch guns could easily strike targets at 6,000 feet. The artillery covered nearly 4,000 feet of the Federal line, from Carter's Creek Pike east to the Harpeth River. In addition, one battery was posted inside Fort Granger east of the river.

All totaled, thirty-four pieces of artillery were rolled into position. They were:

- Battery B, Pennsylvania Light Artillery (four Napoleons)
- Bridges' Illinois Battery (four 3-inch guns)
- 20th Ohio Light Artillery (four Napoleons)
- 1st Kentucky Battery (four 3-inch guns)
- 6th Ohio Light Artillery (four Napoleons)
- Battery G, 1st Ohio Light Artillery (six 3-inch guns)
- Battery M, 4th U. S. Regulars (four Napoleons)
- Battery D, 1st Ohio Light Artillery (four 3-inch guns)



“Artillery is being placed near the gap at the pike and just a few steps away, the 6th Ohio, have placed a two-gun battery. The battery was pulled by mules which have been trained to lie down in action. The leader mule is called May-Me and wears an old felt hat with holes cut in it for her ears to stick through...These guns are called Napoleons, as you well know, a smooth bore, muzzle loading 12 lbs cannon. May God have mercy on the souls of the Rebel boys, who must face the fire of these terrible cannons inside the 400 yard area, where they work best.”

*— Pvt. Adam Weaver, Co. I,
104th Ohio Infantry*

In addition, Battery A, 1st Ohio Light Artillery (four Napoleons) was posted in reserve not far north of the Carter House.

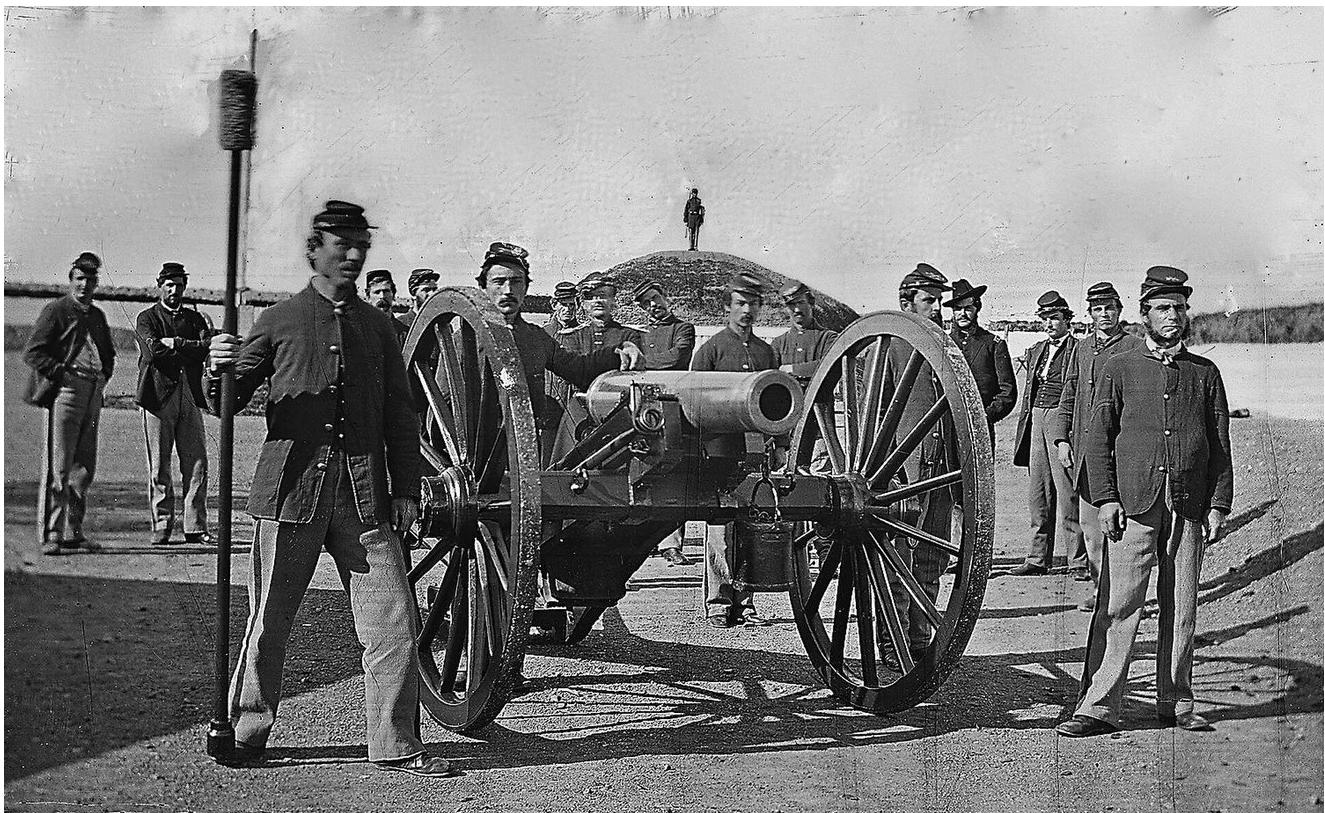
Not long after the battle began at 4 pm the pageantry of the Confederate attack was brutally shattered by the Federal artillery. Troops in A. P. Stewart's Corps and Frank Cheatham's Corps were taking incoming fire within ten minutes. In fact, Capt. Theodore Thomasson of the 1st Kentucky Battery, whose unit was posted on the immediate east side of Columbia Pike, said his artillerists began firing on Southern troops as they formed “on a ridge about 1,700 yards in front of the battery.” The Kentuckians were thus certainly striking elements of Patrick Cleburne's Division as it moved out of some low ground and crested the ridge just south of modern day Downs Boulevard. Incredibly, this also means Thomasson's men were firing over the two advanced brigades of George Wagner's Division, who were posted a half mile in front of the main line. Among Wagner's men there was fear and confusion. They had Confederate troops deploying barely a half mile in front of them, while friendly fire streaked in from the rear, screamed over their heads, and exploded among the enemy ranks. Wagner's men soon broke under the weight of the Southern assault and a mad rush toward the center began. But to the east, the worst of the artillery storm was already unfolding.

One of the greatest misconceptions about the Federal artillery fire on the east side of the battlefield is the role played by the guns that were located inside Fort Granger. The facts clearly indicate the two batteries located behind the Federal left flank did the worst damage in that sector. Capt. Alexander Marshall's six 3-inch guns and Capt. Samuel Canby's four Napoleons let loose with a torrent of fire that gashed and tore the advancing Confederates. The divisions led by W. W. Loring and Edward Walthall took the brunt of this ruthless fire. In fact, Marshall's guns began pounding the attacking force as it swept across John McGavock's property. Artillery evidence has been uncovered around Carnton over the years, and nearly all can be tied to the type of ammunition used by 3-inch rifled guns. The guns in Fort Granger simply did not have the range to reach the ground closest to Carnton, but Marshall's guns certainly did.

The Confederate troops were staggered but continued to advance. Casualties began to mount. The Southern troops were soon under small arms fire as well, and eventually the Federal artillerists switched from solid shot and explosive shells, to the deadly canister rounds. The struggle culminated in the area where Lewisburg Pike and the railroad tracks intersect, as the Federal firepower simply swept Confederate troops away. Capt. Marshall said at one point some of the enemy troops were crawling along the tracks on their hands and knees. Lt. Milton Mitchell's gunners cleared the area with violent blasts from the 3-inch guns. Canby said his men completely swept the river bank of opposition. This area, which is today the location of Thompson Alley, was a scene of horror and devastation. The Fort Granger guns, commanded by Capt. Giles Cockerill, added their weight to the fury and tore at the Confederates with vicious enfilade fire.

By the time the battle ended, the ten guns commanded by Canby and Mitchell had fired over 1,100 rounds. All of the rounds were fired in a roughly four hour time period, as the guns were withdrawn from the line by 8 pm. Not only did each gun fire about 110 rounds each, but a simple breakdown shows that they were firing, at a bare minimum, five rounds per minute. At the height of the battle it was likely ten to fifteen per minute, as the firing slackened dramatically after 6 pm. By contrast, the four guns inside Fort Granger fired 163 rounds during the battle, or about 40 per gun. This is less than half of what Canby and Mitchell expended. It is little wonder that the men of Loring and Walthall's command suffered such grievous losses and were unable to penetrate the Federal defensive line.

Meanwhile, in the Federal center the situation was markedly different. Because Confederate troops, mostly from two divisions, broke through a substantial section of the Federal line the 1st Kentucky guns and those of the 20th Ohio fired little more than did the Fort Granger guns. In fact, for a very short time both batteries were overrun by the attacking Confederates, and with the resulting bedlam around the guns and on both sides of Columbia Pike, firing them was almost impossible. Not until the Southern troops were repulsed did the batteries resume normal firing. Capt. Thomasson's report indicates that his guns repeatedly sprayed the field south of his position for several hours after the Federal line was stabilized. His job was, in essence, to keep the Confederates pinned down.



To the west, the four guns of Bridges' Battery fired over the heads of Federal troops in their front and into the Confederates. Archaeological evidence uncovered last year indicates that Bridges' men were cutting down the fuses of some shells about as close as was possible – perhaps down to as little as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a second. Hotchkiss, or 3-inch, shell fragments were found less than 150 yards from where Bridges' Battery was located, which indicates his men were doing everything possible to hold back the desperate, but massive, Confederate assault.

Adding to the Southern misery was an effective and deadly crossfire that was produced by Bridges' Battery and Capt. Jacob Ziegler's Pennsylvania Battery's firing at different angles into the same general location. This made the area anywhere in the vicinity of the locust grove, which fronted some of the Federal line southwest of the Carter House, a nightmarish spectacle. By the time the battle concluded these eight guns had fired some 900 rounds and decimated portions of three enemy divisions.

There can be little doubt that the Federal artillery fire at Franklin was a decisive factor. Like at so many other battles, the role of the big guns helped to turn the tide.

Disunion: A Civil War Podcast

Hosted by 1st Lt. Hendrix and Col. Welch

Check out the Disunion Podcast, a Civil War podcast focused on the lesser known side of the Civil War, hosted by members of the company and battalion. Episodes come out every other Tuesday, and you can find it on Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Follow the links below to listen!



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