

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE JACKSON PURCHASE AREA OF KENTUCKY, 1862 - 1865

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Continued from the July, 1965, *Register*.

It might be well at this juncture to make some comment regarding the source and nature of the guerrillas in West Kentucky, or for that matter, in all Kentucky. The entire state in 1864 was the scene of considerable partisan activity. The partisans themselves could possibly be placed in three general categories, to wit: 1) bands composed in whole or in part of irregular Confederate soldiers and led by officers sent into Kentucky for the express purpose of waging partisan warfare, conscripting troops, and serving any other purpose benefiting the Confederacy; 2) mounted units of Confederate regulars detached from their commands for deep patrolling or raiding purposes behind Union lines; and 3) those not coming within either of the other two categories—typically bands of deserters from both sides, or civilians.

It has been a popular tendency with historians to write off most partisan activity in Kentucky as of primarily the last category.¹³⁰ This theme has been reiterated tiresomely. Certainly there were many bands of riffraff, deserters from both sides, who were and acted as outlaws, criminals in the eyes of both the United States and the Confederate States. These men robbed and killed indiscriminately, so long as they stood to derive private gain. But, at least insofar as the Purchase is concerned, it would seem to be a mistake to so brand all guerrilla activity not actually and directly led or composed of regularly enrolled Confederate troops or officers. Unless the Federal authorities were complete fools, then we must give some credence to their frequent reports, referred to and often quoted hereinbefore, of the activities, often nocturnal, of Purchase natives—"farmers," "leading citizens," etc.—who inflicted damage,

¹³⁰For example, see Thomas D. Clark, *A History of Kentucky* (New York, 1937), pp. 466-68; E. Polk Johnson, *A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians*, 3 volumes (New York and Chicago, 1912), I, 367-69; John E. L. Robertson, unpublished Master's Thesis: *West to the Iron Banks*, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

whether of a property or personal nature, detrimental to the military effort of the United States. Such men, whether or not they had a technical right to wear gray uniforms, were actively engaged in the military struggle of the Confederate States against the United States.

As to the second category, detached units of mounted Confederate regulars, we cannot discount their activities as inconsequential, in relation to the total guerrilla picture. There are simply too many Union reports (and we have seen them) giving rise to the impression that disciplined Confederate troop units, not mere uncontrolled bands, were quite active in the Purchase. There is very little to be found in official Confederate reports alluding to such small unit activities. But certainly, reliance can be given to the Union reports. There was apparently much of this type operation.¹³¹ Standard military doctrine then or now would recommend such operations where circumstances permit.

The first category, authorized partisan operations for the purpose of conscripting and otherwise, is even more in the twilight zone as far as direct evidence is concerned. That is to say, we know that Richmond directed and commissioned people for such work behind Federal lines, but records and other documentary evidence are less than complete.¹³² However, in the last full year of the war, the beginning of the throes of desperation for the Confederacy, a web of circumstances makes it clear that devious minds in Richmond were formulating and putting into action a scheme of unorthodox warfare behind enemy lines.¹³³ The authorized partisan

¹³¹See footnote 129, *supra*. Federal reports almost invariably referred to guerrillas as Rebels, or described them as such. The reports frequently mentioned Rebel Cavalry. For these and other reasons, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that not all guerrillas encountered were of the rag-tag rabble variety. For example, see text relative to footnote 137.

¹³²Thomas Speed, *The Union Cause in Kentucky*, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-65. John E. L. Robertson, unpublished Master's Thesis: *West to the Iron Banks*, *op. cit.* p. 225. See also Adam R. Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, *op. cit.*, concerned to a great extent with the operations of him and others on partisan missions in Kentucky. Col. C. W. Faulkner was unquestionably engaged in such operations before he joined Forrest's command. See footnotes 28 (and related text), 62, 66, etc.

¹³³For what it may be worth, see James D. Horan, *Confederate Agent* (New York, 1954), pp. 65, *et seq.*, tracing the war service of Thomas Hines, with particular emphasis on the Northwest conspiracy. Hines' formal orders initiating his secret service were dated 14 March 1864. Adam R. Johnson, in June of 1864, was ordered into West Tennessee and West Kentucky to conduct partisan operations. Adam R. Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, *op. cit.*, pp.

activity in Kentucky was simply another element of the overall scheme. However, at this point, lest we drift too far into the debatable, let us return to facts.

The Federals frequently commented upon Confederate recruiting activities in the Purchase. However, on their own part, they occasionally encountered obstacles in this field of endeavor. On 15 May, it was reported that Capt. R. H. Hall, Provost Marshal of the 1st District of Kentucky (all the counties lying west of the Tennessee River and within the Military District of Cairo) was being "impeded in his work of enrolling and drafting the national forces by armed bands of the enemy and by disaffected inhabitants acting in the enemy's interest." A formal request was made that the Captain be supplied with an armed escort for his protection.¹³⁴

Rail travel was also hazardous at times. Guerrillas on 20 May fired on a train going from Paducah to Mayfield. One Federal soldier and one Rebel guerrilla were reported killed, and the train engineer wounded in this encounter. In addition, a bridge and a tank were burned.¹³⁵

Another railroad bridge went up in flames on the following Monday night. This one was over the Little Obion River at a point between Columbus and Clinton. It was reported that the deed was accomplished by the "James guerrilla band of twenty-five; the same that was in Hickman." They also reportedly "carried off a Union man near Moscow."¹³⁶

Two days later, Federal officers were alarmed by the report of a sizeable body of regular Confederate cavalry in the area. A Yankee reconnaissance patrol was sent to Feliciana where they took two civilians (a Mr. A. G. McFadden and a Dr. Lockridge) into custody. However, after they left that place, they encountered a squad of mounted guerrillas. One Yankee soldier was captured. He

163-64. See also Thomas Speed, *The Union Cause in Kentucky*, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-65.

In August of 1864, Robert J. Breckinridge requested President Davis to permit him to go into Kentucky, with Kentuckians of his selection from all parts of the state, to recruit, to communicate with discontents, and to form "a secret Southern society, the object of which shall be to throw all obstacles possible in the way of the Lincoln Administration in the State." *O. R.*, Ser. 4, III, 601-02. One of the officers ordered into Kentucky with Col. Breckinridge was Maj. Theophilus Steele, 7th Kentucky Cavalry. *Ibid.*, p. 661.

¹³⁴*O. R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 2, 35.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 45. It is possible that the engineer might also have become a fatality since his wound was described as probably mortal.

¹³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 47.

later escaped. He told of having seen a column of Confederate cavalymen ride into Feliciana from Dukedom. The street was filled from one end to the other with mounted troopers. They were identified by the Yankee soldier as men of the 3rd Kentucky Regiment of Buford's Brigade of Forrest's command. He also related that the Confederates in Feliciana said that the balance of Buford's command was at Dresden. All told, it was estimated that some 150 to 400 of Buford's cavalymen were in the area.¹³⁷

At the same time, it was also reported that Confederate cavalry units were in Clinton and Hickman on the 25th. Both units were said to be companies. Capt. Horn was said to be the officer in charge of the unit at Clinton (the report noted, in effect, that this was a return visit since this same officer had been there during the "late attack on Paducah"). The unit at Hickman was identified only as a company of Kentucky cavalry. They were reported to have spent the night there.¹³⁸

Not until June of 1864 did it appear as though Federal authorities were beginning to recover from the shock of Forrest's invasion, the prolonged stay of his troops, and consequences of both. No doubt there was a shortage of Federal cavalry which, if it had been available, would have given the necessary mobility to cope more effectively with the guerrilla and regular Confederate cavalry activities in the Purchase. But, there were other measures which could be taken to hamper partisan activity in the area. Gen. Washburne, commanding the District of West Tennessee, which included that part of Kentucky west of the Cumberland River, in June directed that "the people of that disloyal region, Western Kentucky, will not be allowed to sell their cotton and tobacco, or purchase supplies, until they show some friendship for the U. S. Government, by driving out the guerrillas and irregular bands of Confederate soldiers who pay them frequent visits."¹³⁹

Not only in the Purchase, but throughout the entire State of Kentucky, the guerrilla menace had reached a crisis stage. Harsh, but necessary measures were being taken. Further east, Gen. Sherman had issued orders, by letter dated 21 June, to Gen. Burbridge, to instruct his subordinate commanders that henceforth "guerrillas are not soldiers, but wild beasts, unknown to the usages of war." All people, male and female, who had harbored or encouraged

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51, 53-54.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹³⁹Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky, op. cit.*, I, 134.

guerrillas were to be arrested, and collected in Louisville. Sherman promised to have them shipped "down the Mississippi, through their guerrilla gauntlet" (implying that river travel had its hazards) and thence overseas to a "land where they may take their Negroes and make a colony, with laws and a future of their own." (He seems to have made good his threat, at least to some extent. There is evidence to the effect that on 18 July, some twenty-four women and children were placed in military prison in Louisville, and subsequently transported out of the country.)¹⁴⁰

Such stern counter-measures were quite necessary, from the standpoint of military considerations, to impede and obstruct partisan activity. However, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. In this instance (or in any other where it is necessary to act against natives in order to strike at the guerrillas who move among them), the damaging reaction was that produced among the civilians of the state. Public opinion in the state was turning against the Washington administration.

Another activity of the Federal military in Kentucky which resulted in a backlash against the government was the recruiting of slaves for the Union Army. At least, there was an intense reaction in the slave-holding areas of the state. An incident which illustrated official policy in the state occurred on 7 June. Col. Cunningham, the officer-in-charge of Negro troops at Paducah, made a raid into Union County just east of the Purchase and impressed a steamboat load of slaves into Federal service. On the boat were 158 able-bodied Negroes being transported by their owners to some insufficiently identified point where the Yankees could not get to them. This was only one of many instances of Yankee officers forcibly seizing slaves for impressment into the

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 135, 136; *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 2, 131-32, 135-36, 240-41. Sherman was extremely irritated by the state of affairs in Kentucky. Particularly vexing to him was the reaction aroused by the Federal authorities' efforts to suppress pro-Southern sentiment in the state. In a letter to Gen. Leslie Combs, he said: "It does appear that in Kentucky you are such a bundle of inexplicable family and State factions, that the veriest murderer, and horse-thief, and dirty dog, if arrested can forthwith produce credentials of respectability that I could not establish or you either." *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 2, 241. In another letter, this one to James Guthrie in Louisville, he said: ". . . (T)hey wanted war, and I say let us give them all they want; not a word of argument, not a sign of letup, no cave in till we are whipped or they are. Those side issues of niggers, State rights, conciliation, outrages, cruelty, barbarity, bankruptcy, subjugation, &c., are all idle and nonsensical. The only principle in this war is, which party can whip." *Ibid.*, p. 248.

army. The General Assembly of the state continually protested. Many prominent Kentuckians, including some who were Federal Army officers, made public outcries against this policy, and found themselves in serious difficulties with the Union authorities.¹⁴¹ But the official policy of the U. S. Government continued.

The 5th of July saw the writ of *habeas corpus* suspended in Kentucky, and martial law proclaimed. Washington was becoming understandably concerned at the ever increasing tempo of Confederate and guerrilla raids in the state.¹⁴²

Back in the Purchase, midway in the month of July, guerrillas and a mixed force of Union cavalry and infantry clashed "a mile beyond Clinton" (apparently south). Here, the Federals employed a successful ambush. Infantry followed at a distance behind cavalry. When the cavalry made contact with the Rebels, they retired according to a pre-arranged plan. The infantry took concealed positions along the side of the road, permitted their cavalry to pass through, and then opened fire on the pursuing Rebs. Four Union soldiers were wounded. The Rebel cavalry (they could have been regular troops) under Outlaw and Kesterson had casualties of, according to Union reports, three killed and five wounded. The "notorious Jim Kesterson" was captured, seriously wounded.¹⁴³

On the 17th, a patrol boarded a steamer at Columbus and disembarked thirteen miles below Hickman in the Madrid Bend area. They were after the "rebel Captain Campbell." They just missed him at the house of his brother, but captured some small arms. They then went to "Mr. Fleetwood's" where they missed Campbell by only ten minutes, but got his "uniform jacket, hat,

¹⁴¹Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky, op. cit.*, I, 134, 137; Federal Writers' Project, *Military History of Kentucky, op. cit.*, pp. 197, 198-99, 204-06, 208, 209; Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict, op. cit.*, p. 128. One Kentucky officer in the Federal service, well known and possessing a fine combat record, who was accused of disloyalty for criticizing the Union's Negro policies, was Col. Frank Wolford. He was commanding officer of the First Kentucky Cavalry Regiment, until a most defiant speech he delivered on 10 March 1864, condemning the Lincoln Administration. See Collins at I, 132, 134, 135; *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXII, Pt. 3, 88. Other well known, loyal Kentuckians arrested by Federal authorities were Lieutenant Governor Jacob and General John B. Huston. See *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 3, 724-25, 726, 739, 749, 760-61.

¹⁴²Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky, op. cit.*, I, 135.

¹⁴³*O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, 354-55. Kesterson was executed a short time later. He was condemned to death without having been given the benefit of a trial. *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 2, 261.

and feathers" and fifty dollars Confederate money found in the jacket. Thereafter, still in hot pursuit of the captain, they captured two of his men who said that he had gone to Hickman to meet Col. Outlaw who was there for the purpose of collecting conscripts and deserters.¹⁴⁴ (Apparently, the Clinton affair had not had too much of a deterrent effect on Col. Outlaw.)

The 19th of July saw the assumption of command at Paducah by Gen. E. A. Paine. He thereafter initiated what has been termed "fifty-one days' reign of violence, terror, rapine, extortion, oppression, bribery and military murders." Ostensibly for the benefit of Union soldiers' families living in West Kentucky, Paine on 1 August levied a tax of \$100,000 upon inhabitants of the area. The incidence of the tax was to be upon known or suspected Confederate sympathizers. Paine also exiled to Canada twenty-three prominent citizens of Paducah, sending them under guard of colored troops to Cairo. Their property, and that of others who had fled to avoid a similar fate, was seized. These and other actions of Paine were eventually reduced to charges against him and investigated at the request of Gov. Bramlette. The investigation revealed even more than that with which he had been charged. However, before he was tried (following additional investigation), Joseph Holt, the Judge Advocate General of the United States, quashed most of the charges against Paine. (It is said that the charges stricken were the worst and the most easily proved.) His acquittal was thus obtained in a manner and under circumstances not calculated to appease those area citizens who felt that they had been criminally wronged by the man.¹⁴⁵

Paine's last tour of duty in Kentucky could only have had very deep and long lasting consequences regarding the people of the Purchase. The grossly unwarranted acts of his military establishment would leave scars slow to heal. In many instances, his actions were directed at the loyal as well as the disloyal.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, 360. According to the Index of this volume, the Rebel Captain was Henry Campbell.

¹⁴⁵Federal Writers' Project, *Military History of Kentucky*, op. cit., pp. 211-12; John E. L. Robertson, unpublished Master's Thesis: *West to the Iron Banks*, op. cit., p. 248. See also O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 2, 260-61, 342; Ser. 3, IV, 688-90.

¹⁴⁶John E. L. Robertson, unpublished Master's Thesis: *West to the Iron Banks*, op. cit., pp. 239-43. Gen. Paine's tour of duty (November, 1862, to May, 1864) in Middle Tennessee was marked by oppressive measures, and numerous executions by firing squad. See article, *The Reign of Terror in Tennessee*, in *The Southern Bivouac*, I, (April, 1886), 665-70.

The list of his oppressive measures affecting property and person is long and varied. Surcharges were made regarding postal privileges. Fees were assessed against the passing of bank checks. Taxes were levied against sales of cotton and tobacco. Bribery became necessary in order to secure permits to trade. There were many other such instances of extortions from individual citizens and commercial enterprises. But some of the actions for which Paine was responsible were more directly suited to his means than was financial retribution. There were executions by firing squad, and otherwise. Estimates of the number of military ordered deaths in the area of his command ranged up to forty-three. Mayfield alone was said to have been the scene of the execution of at least seven men, by order of Col. Walters W. McChesney of the 134th Illinois.¹⁴⁷

Paine's oppressive measures had some effect in holding down partisan activity, but not as much as might have been desired, if we can judge from the reported contacts with irregulars during the period. In mid August, a relatively large band of guerrillas was encountered in the south part of Graves County. A detachment of the 3rd Illinois Cavalry on a scout from Mayfield found two Rebel pickets at a bridge one mile north of Feliciana (from the frequency of encounters with Rebels at this place, we can presume that it must have been popular with them, as well as receptive to them). No additional Rebels were found in Feliciana, but information was received that a party of them was on or near the Mayfield and Dukedom Road. Riding rapidly, the Yankee advance guard came upon six or eight Rebels at Bethel Church (it was a Sunday, and the Rebs were apparently seeking divine guidance). In the confusion ensuing from the interruption of services by the irreverent Yanks, the guerrillas "made bush" and escaped. Five horses were taken without riders. The main body of blue cavalry pushed "rapidly" after the main body of Rebs on the Dukedom and Mayfield Road. Contact with the guerrilla band (purportedly under one Garland) was made. According to the Federal reports, a body of some sixty men was dispersed, with casualties to the latter of two wounded men and one dead horse. It was reported that the Rebels had just robbed a Union man "by the name of Caraway," a native of Viola and on his way to Weakley County, Tennessee,

¹⁴⁷John E. L. Robertson, unpublished Master's Thesis: *West to the Iron Banks, op. cit.*, pp. 239-42; Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky, op. cit.*, I, 140. See also O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 2, 260-61.

of two hundred and fifty dollars. These more secular Rebels were said to have been playing cards, with the loser to kill "the old man."¹⁴⁸

Within the next three weeks, there were two more encounters with small groups of guerrillas in or near the southern part of the Purchase. On 18 August, a detachment of fifty men from the 7th Tennessee Cavalry, on patrol from Columbus (and ordered "in the direction of Hickman") captured "2 men of the rebel Major Tate's command." They also picked up two civilians who were carrying large amounts of money, including gold, and who did not have proper papers. On 2 September, another detachment from the 7th Tennessee, also on patrol from Columbus, was involved in encounters with Rebels near Union City, just below the Kentucky line. In all, eight of the enemy were reported killed, and twelve captured. The enemy commanders mentioned were Colonel Dawson and Captains Churchill and Campbell. The men of the latter fired once on the Union troops from ambush.¹⁴⁹

Men such as those captured by the patrols from Columbus helped to keep filled the Federal prison facilities in the area. A report dated 24 September described the military prison at Columbus and its condition. The report was submitted by Surgeon T. M. Getty, Acting Medical Inspector of Prisoners of War. The Columbus prison commandant at the time was Capt. F. H. Chapman, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery. The officer-in-charge was Capt. F. J. Shaw, 4th U. S. Colored Artillery. The prison itself was described as a wooden enclosure, one hundred and twenty-five feet by ninety feet, and eighteen feet high. It was located on the site of a burned Rebel prison, and had been occupied two and a half years. The average number of prisoners was said to be seventy-one. Half were "bushwhackers" awaiting trial and the other half were Federal soldiers incarcerated for various reasons. The average number of sick were six or eight.¹⁵⁰

October witnessed Forrest's last invasion of Kentucky. His raiding cavalymen rode across the state line into the Purchase, the third time in 1864, and the fourth of the war.

Forrest had been well occupied since the March and April raids of his forces into the Purchase. On 9 June, he had fought the battle of Brices Cross Roads, and on 14 July, the battle of Harris-

¹⁴⁸O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, 463.

¹⁴⁹O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 2, 268.

¹⁵⁰O.R., Ser. 2, VII, 884-85.

burg.¹⁵¹ From 21 September through 8 October, he was leading a campaign into Middle Tennessee. With less than 5,000 men, he had taken a wagon train and two batteries of artillery through a section held by at least 35,000 Federals. Throughout the campaign he had the navigable Tennessee River (which he crossed going, and recrossed coming back) and its enemy gunboats to his rear. He captured and drove before him the smaller Federal commands and skillfully avoided the larger ones.¹⁵² He inflicted heavy casualties, according to his own figures, some 3,360 (including 1,000 prisoners taken) being, in his words, "an average of one to each man I had in the engagements." In the campaign, he lost 47 killed, and 293 wounded,¹⁵³ but gained 1,000 men added to his immediate command as well as some 600 to 800 stragglers from Wheeler's forces. As had been said, "(H)e had done most of this not with fighting but with successful strategy. It was this one thing, above all others, that made his men cheerful and self-confident when the veterans of other Confederate armies were growing fatalistic."¹⁵⁴

The first intimation of Forrest's actual return to the Kentucky Purchase were reports on 26 October of his cavalry being at Clinton. They were men of Buford's command, perhaps a hundred in number.¹⁵⁵ These were Kentucky troops. They had been sent in the general direction of Paducah to guard the Confederate flank while the main body pressed toward Ft. Heiman.¹⁵⁶ The Johnsonville Raid had begun.

Forrest's purpose was two-fold. First, he intended to disrupt, as far as possible, navigation of the Tennessee River; and second, he wanted to destroy the large quantity of U. S. Army supplies known to be stockpiled and housed at Johnsonville, up the river

¹⁵¹The Confederate forces at Harrisburg were under the command of Gen. Stephen D. Lee. Forrest was painfully wounded, and his troops suffered terrible losses. It was said that the tone of his command was never again quite the same. He was extremely bitter over the many empty saddles, and felt that his men had been grossly mishandled. Andrew Lytle, *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company*, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-16.

¹⁵²Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

¹⁵³John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

¹⁵⁴Andrew Lytle, *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company*, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

¹⁵⁵O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 3, 458-59.

¹⁵⁶O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, 869.

from Ft. Heiman.¹⁵⁷ Insofar as the boat traffic was concerned, the Tennessee River constituted one of the chief arteries of supply for Sherman who was then marching through Georgia. Johnsonville was the place where the supplies were transferred from boats to trains, and thence they went to Sherman via Nashville and Chattanooga. It is said that "fodder and gear for man and beast were piled mountain high" at Johnsonville.¹⁵⁸

Forrest's main body marched north by east from Jackson, Tennessee, toward the Kentucky line and then to Ft. Heiman. Buford led the way while sending screening forces into the interior of the Kentucky Purchase. The Federals were taken by surprise—they were initially unaware of Forrest's occupation of abandoned Ft. Heiman.¹⁵⁹ No doubt, to them Forrest's movements must have indicated another raid into the heart of the Kentucky Purchase.

Ft. Heiman had been conceived by Confederates, abandoned by them, adopted by Yankees, and then deserted by them. It thus came into the hands of its original owners when Forrest reoccupied it. Under his command, it would achieve the original purpose for which it was designed—victory over the blue legions. But the blue legions which its ramparts helped defeat were waterborne. And when its last gray tenants departed—land lubbing horse soldiers though they were—they, too, became waterborne. There was little about Forrest's Ft. Heiman adventure that was completely orthodox.

Friday the 28th of October found Buford's cavalymen dismounting to become temporary infantrymen. They left their horses to graze while they filed into the trenchlines of the fort, and brought their two 20-pounder Parrott guns to bear on the waters below. They meant to take on the Yankee river fleet. Other artillery and troops were emplaced a few hundred yards to the north. Five miles above, at Paris landing, more troops and artillery were positioned. The balance of Forrest's small army arrived the next day—as did the first unwitting Union victim.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, op. cit., p. 127.

¹⁵⁸Charles Moss, *Forgotten Fort Heiman, 'Land of Late Victory'*, op. cit., p. 5. Official Confederate descriptions of Federal supplies based at Johnsonville can be found in O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, at 869, 870-71, 875.

¹⁵⁹Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, op. cit., p. 128.

¹⁶⁰O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, 860; Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, op. cit., p. 128; Charles Moss, *Forgotten Fort Heiman, 'Land of Late Victory'*, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

Several empty steamers coming from Johnsonville were allowed to proceed. Then came the *Mazeppa*, a recently built transport out of Cincinnati. She was towing two barges and heavily laden with freight. When between the battery inside Ft. Heiman and that just north of the works, the prearranged order to fire was given. Every shot hit its mark. The crippled transport headed toward the opposite shore, and was there abandoned by her crew. No skiffs were available for a boarding party. An artilleryman, Capt. Frank P. Gracey, of Hopkinsville, (sans horse and uniform), swam to the east side of the river, and informally took possession of the steamer from the Union skipper who had remained aboard his ship. Gracey then took a boat from the transport and returned to the west side. Gen. Buford was taken to the transport, and received the formal surrender of its Captain. By means of lines, the steamer was pulled to the west side by the expectant Rebel raiders.¹⁶¹

The prize was rich. The *Mazeppa* contained flour, shoes, hardtack, axes, and other stores. It is said that at one point during the unloading operation, Gen. Buford got hold of a jug of good Yankee liquor. He mounted the hurricane deck, and in full view of the troops, proceeded to exercise the privilege of rank. His men called to him not to drink it all, but to save some. He wiped his lips, and shook his head. With a twinkle in his eye, he said: "Plenty of meat, boys, plenty of hardtack, shoes and clothes—all for the boys, but just enough whiskey for the General."¹⁶²

Before the cavalrymen had unloaded the *Mazeppa*, three gunboats arrived on the scene from Johnsonville. These were driven off after an exchange of cannon fire. The *Mazeppa* was eventually emptied and put to the torch.¹⁶³

Yankee communications must have been lacking in some respect, because the next day, 30 October, found more Union ships steaming into the trap. The first was the *Anna*, a transport. Her

¹⁶¹Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, op. cit., p. 128; Charles Moss, *Forgotten Fort Heiman, 'Land of Late Victory'*, op. cit., p. 6; John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, op. cit., p. 458; Andrew Lytle, *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company*, op. cit., p. 346.

¹⁶²Accounts of taking possession of the steamer vary in detail. What seems to be the majority version is recounted here. All agree that a single man, unclothed and armed only with a pistol, swam over—and that sometime during the course of events, the general got his hands on a jug and delivered his little address on the privileges of rank.

¹⁶³Charles Moss, *Forgotten Fort Heiman, 'Land of Late Victory'*, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

Sunday morning shipboard routine was violently interrupted by the unexpected slam of incoming projectiles from the hidden batteries on the shore. Although damaged, she managed to run the gauntlet, but not without, according to some sources, employing a ruse. A white flag went up, and the steamer headed for shore. The Rebel gunners prematurely left their pieces, and eagerly started down to meet the Yankee ship. It is said that Gen. Buford was among the delegation that went to meet the steamer. He had already reportedly thrown his tobacco out, in anticipation of a toddy, when the vessel suddenly surged away under the order for full steam ahead. It is said that "with a look of utter disappointment, he yelled out at the top of his voice, which was almost equal to a lion's, 'Shoot hell out of her.'" She was struck again, but she got away.¹⁶⁴

Next came a convoy, the gunboat, *Undine*, the transport, *Venus*, with two barges, and, bringing up the rear, the transport, *J. W. Cheeseman*. The cavalymen were more efficient as well as wary this time. The *Undine* was disabled, in the artillery duel that followed, and eventually run aground. The *Venus*, with a small detachment of Union infantry aboard was compelled to surrender. The *Cheeseman* was materially damaged, and abandoned. Another gunboat, the *No. 29*, approached during the melee, and lobbed shells at the Confederates, before retiring back towards Johnsonville. When the shooting finally ceased, the horse soldiers on Ft. Heiman had lying below them three helpless symbols of Yankee naval power. The Confederate casualties amounted to one man seriously wounded. The Union loss was eight killed, eleven wounded, and forty-three captured, including one officer and ten enlisted infantrymen.¹⁶⁵

Forrest then conceived the grand idea of converting his men into "horse marines." (A humorous idea, it seems in retrospect, although that stern, dedicated man surely did not wholly so intend.) The *Cheeseman*, critically damaged, was burned. The *Undine*, one of the largest vessels of her class on the Tennessee River, and mounting eight 24-pounder brass howitzers, and the *Venus*, were manned by the horse soldiers. "Forrest's fleet" then steamed down

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 7. Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, op. cit., p. 129.

¹⁶⁵Charles Moss, *Forgotten Fort Heiman, 'Land of Late Victory'*, op. cit., p. 7; John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, op. cit., p. 460; *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, 860, 867, 870, 873.

the river, abreast of a cavalry column moving on the bank toward Johnsonville. Forrest intended to launch a joint attack on the Union base and the flotilla anchored there.¹⁶⁶

Forrest's naval adventure was not marked by the success customarily attendant to his land operations. The river exploit saw the beginning of its end two days later, on 2 November, when Union gunboats, the *No. 32* and *No. 29*, forced the *Undine* aground. The would-be Southern marines on the *Undine* abandoned their naval duties and reverted to soldiering. The next day, the *Venus* was set upon by Yankee gunboats and deserted, but not until she was set on fire and destroyed. In the latter engagement, the Confederate land artillery inflicted some nineteen hits on the gunboat, *Key West*, from Johnsonville, and prevented five gunboats sent from Paducah from joining those out of Johnsonville.¹⁶⁷

By late on the afternoon of the 3d, Forrest with his vanquished sailors and the rest of his command were on the shore of the Tennessee River opposite Johnsonville, and ready to go into position for the last phase of his raid. On the other side, lined up at the river landing, were transports, gunboats, and barges. On the shore were large warehouses filled with valuable supplies, and several acres of dumps of army stores of every description. His artillery was emplaced under cover of darkness.

The cannonading began the next afternoon. The Union forts and gunboats on the opposite side replied. But the aim of Forrest's gunners was superior that day. Gunboats, transports, and barges were set afire and drifted loose against each other. Some were abandoned and fired by the Yankees themselves to prevent capture. By four P.M., every gunboat, transport, barge, and other means of floating conveyance along the Johnsonville river front was aflame.

The gunners then turned their pieces toward the shore. Flames soon engulfed buildings and supply dumps. All the while, sharpshooters were doing their work as the confused Union soldiers were fleeing from the burning steamers and the shoreline. By nightfall the Johnsonville wharf was a roaring holocaust. The shore for a mile up and down the river was a solid sheet of orange flame. The sound of secondary explosions was constant. The blended aromas

¹⁶⁶John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 460-61.

¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 462-63.

of roasting pork, burning sugar and alcohol, and scorching coffee permeated the autumn air of the countryside.¹⁶⁸

By the end of the day, Forrest was in high spirits. (He himself had even taken a turn as the gunner of one of the pieces.) He well deserved any satisfaction he felt. At the small cost of two men killed and nine wounded, he had taken or destroyed, during his operations from Ft. Heiman to Johnsonville, by his own estimation \$6,700,000 worth of U. S. property (the Federals admitted a figure of \$2,200,000). He had captured or destroyed four gunboats, fourteen transports, twenty barges, and twenty-six pieces of artillery. He had one hundred and fifty Federal prisoners in tow.¹⁶⁹

During the initial phases of his operation, the Federals had been completely puzzled as to his intentions or whereabouts. Reports estimated his force as high as 26,000 men. One dispatch mentioned that he had been reported in disguise at various places in the north, even as far up as Canada. However, Sherman, by 5 November, had finally located him. He wrote, "That devil Forrest was down about Johnsonville and was making havoc among the gunboats and transports."¹⁷⁰

By the flickering glare of burning Johnsonville, Forrest's command assembled, and prepared to march to Corinth. They rode away from what was perhaps, for them, a high tide of the war. One man's military genius had accomplished so much at such a small cost in this operation. Everything else would be a postlude—the Southern defeat at the critical battle of Nashville, the bitterness of retreat, and thereafter participation in a rapidly deteriorating war effort. The confederate nation and its armies would be disintegrating before the on-slaught of a grim, determined, and harshly efficient enemy—overwhelming in numbers, and arrogant with the assurance of being supplied and equipped by a seemingly bottomless well of industrial might.

While Forrest's main body proceeded to Mississippi, and thereafter to join Hood in his Nashville campaign, most of the Ken-

¹⁶⁸For full accounts of the Johnsonville action, see: Charles Moss, *Forgotten Fort Heiman, 'Land of Late Victory'*, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9; John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest, op. cit.*, pp. 463-64. Relative to the entire operation, see *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, 858-75. See also article entitled *Hood's Tennessee Campaign*, in *The Southern Bivouac*, III (February, 1885), 247-50.

¹⁶⁹*O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 1, 862, 871; John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest, op. cit.*, p. 465.

¹⁷⁰*O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 3, 659.

tuckians were permitted to ride north to their homes to visit for a few days.¹⁷¹

These furloughed troops found that Federal authorities had taken additional stringent steps to discourage guerrilla activity, and to make Kentucky less attractive as a source of provisions and active sympathy for Confederate visitors.

An order had been issued on 26 October directing that guerrillas when captured were not to be entitled to the treatment prescribed for regular soldiers—but by the laws of war they were to be considered as having “forfeited their lives.” Thereafter, no guerrillas were to “be received as prisoners, and any officer who may capture such and extend to them the courtesies due prisoners of war, will be held accountable for disobedience of orders.”¹⁷²

On 28 October, ostensibly to keep pork out of the hands of Confederate raiders, Gen. Burbridge issued his famous hog order. Kentucky families were to retain only enough meat to carry them through the winter. Farmers were informed that the U. S. Government desired the “surplus” hogs in the state, and would pay a fair market value for them. The order went on to say that it was hoped that farmers would “willingly” sell those hogs in excess of their personal needs. However, pressure was brought to bear, and farmers were forced to accept prices which were extremely low in a relative sense. (The government offering price was some \$1 to \$2 per hundredweight below the current market prices.)¹⁷³

From the standpoint of being a method of discouraging the frequent Confederate raids into Kentucky for provisions, the overall purpose of the “hog order” was not unreasonable. But apparently, there were people connected with its inception and execution whose motives were not wholly incorrupt. It was said that connivance between some military authorities and civilian speculators resulted in great profits to each. Before Burbridge was compelled by President Lincoln on 27 November to rescind the order, Kentucky farmers sustained an estimated loss of \$300,000.¹⁷⁴

Turning back to matters purely military, following Forrest's Johnsonville Raid, certain drastic changes were effected relative to him and his command. He was elevated to the command of all

¹⁷¹Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

¹⁷²O.R., Ser. 1, XXXIX, Pt. 3, 457; Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, *op. cit.*, I, 144.

¹⁷³Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, *op. cit.*, I, 218-19.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 219; Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict*, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

cavalry under Hood. (There will always be serious conjecture as to what would have been the result if Forrest's genius had been recognized, or at least not obstructed, earlier in the war—and he had been given command of forces commensurate in size with his proven ability.¹⁷⁵) Gen. Lyon was detached and assigned to the command of a department created in Kentucky.

In early December, Gen. Lyon initiated a campaign of conscription and destruction in Kentucky east of the Cumberland River. He had a regiment of cavalry and a small battery of artillery. On 9 December, he captured several steamers on the Cumberland River near Canton. Part of his force was left in control of the river, and the balance was used for recruiting and other purposes in the west and west central part of the state. While gathering men, horses, mules, and supplies for the Confederate Army, Gen. Lyon personally led his notorious courthouse burning raid. He was responsible for the destruction of the courthouses of Christian, Taylor, Cumberland, Caldwell, Hopkins, Trigg, and Ohio Counties. Those destroyed were used to house Federal troops, or were employed in some other way in the military control of the particular counties. (Apparently, and as might be expected, county courthouses were integral, if not key, elements of the military occupation structure.) After leaving Kentucky, Lyon entered Tennessee and marched southward. His small force slowly disintegrated, as a result of constant Federal attacks, and desertions. Near the Alabama-Tennessee line in early January, 1865, what was left of his command was surprised by an overwhelming Federal force. Gen. Lyon's quarters were surrounded, and a young Federal officer thought he had the wily rascal captured. (Really, the term "rascal" is more Yankee than fair, for Lyon was an excellent officer, being a West Point graduate and having spent a relatively short, but successful period as a regular U. S. Army officer.) He shot his way out of this situation, and with what remained of his command made his way south.¹⁷⁶

While Lyon was creating the need for new courthouse con-

¹⁷⁵John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, *op. cit.*, p. 471; Andrew Lytle, *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company*, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-57.

¹⁷⁶O.R., Ser. 1, XLV, Pt. 1, 791-806; Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict*, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-152; Federal Writers' Project, *Military History of Kentucky*, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-24. Extensive research conducted by W. A. Wentworth of the Kentucky Historical Society, relative to the Society's Highway Markers Program, is the final basis for the statement in the text concerning the courthouses actually burned.

struction in Kentucky, Hood's Nashville Campaign was taking place in Tennessee. It ended in disaster. (But Hood's cavalry under Forrest acquitted itself famously. Forrest and his cavalymen have been credited with being all that saved the Army of Tennessee from complete annihilation during the withdrawal from Nashville.)

1865

Probably the last time during the War Between the States that regular Confederate troops were seen by the people of the Kentucky Purchase was during January, 1865. Following the crossing of the Tennessee River on 27 December, and the ending of the rear guard phase of the retreat from the calamity at Nashville, Forrest's cavalymen went to Corinth, Mississippi. These men had been constantly fighting and marching from 12 through 27 December. There was a necessity for rest. The decision was made to furlough men for twenty days to give them an opportunity to return home, get a fresh supply of clothing, and fresh mounts, if possible.¹⁷⁷

The men from the Kentucky Brigade struck out for their homes in the Purchase and elsewhere in West Kentucky. Once they had ridden across the state line, they set up camps at various places. Part of the troops remained at these camps and used them as bases for small demonstrations against the Federal Army of occupation while other Confederate soldiers visited their families. The Yankees were thus held close to their forts while the vacationing Rebels took turns at seeing their home folks. This went on for some two weeks, and then at the appointed times, the several commands assembled at various designated points, Clinton (like Feliciana, as noted earlier, it was also a favorite rendezvous site for Rebel regulars and irregulars alike in the Purchase) and Dukedom, among other places.¹⁷⁸

This organized furloughing of Kentucky troops to points deep within enemy held territory produced only one discordant note. Col. Faulkner, the independent partisan turned regular, was killed—but not by Yankees. In an incident at Dresden, Tennessee, just south of Dukedom, he was shot by two men, identified as the McDougal brothers, who had recently joined his command. They had been operating with an independent company in Western Kentucky—and their actions on this occasion no doubt reflected their reluctance to submit completely to the ways of the regular

¹⁷⁷Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 139.

army. After some disagreement with the Colonel, they refused to give up their arms to him. Instead, they opened fire. "There seems to have been no effort on the part of Faulkner's men to protect him, owing to the alleged fact that the McDougal's had more friends in the regiment (the 12th) than had the Colonel. Colonel Faulkner was a courageous, dashing soldier, but for some reason did not seem to be popular with his men."¹⁷⁹ This regiment was guerrilla in its origin. Perhaps this incident points up an inherent characteristic, a lack of discipline of guerrilla units.

These furloughed-by-unit cavalymen rode out of the Purchase not to return again as soldiers of the Army of the Confederacy. Nor would natives ever again see bodies of Confederate regulars riding boldly through the country side of the Purchase, and upon the streets of its towns as they had done so frequently and so defiantly throughout the war. These horsemen of Forrest would return only as the pardoned soldiers of a defeated army. The bonny blue flag was in rapid descent. Except for a few scattered episodes, and the fact of being occupied by a hostile army, the war was over for the Purchase. But the guerrillas stayed on.

No adequate answer to the guerrilla problem was ever found. A partial solution was afforded by the act on 25 February, of Maj. Gen. John Palmer, successor to Burbridge, of offering amnesty to Confederate deserters in the state who would surrender.¹⁸⁰

In some ways, the Confederate sponsored partisan activities in Kentucky, if not elsewhere in the combat zone, must have assumed, in some aspects, the proportions of a Frankenstein monster. Either for lack of prior planning, or inability to control, partisan operations, from the standpoint of Richmond and its officers in the field, simply and completely got out of hand.

There are at least two items of evidence which point to this conclusion. On 22 February, Col. Robert J. Breckinridge of the Confederate Army was captured near Versailles in Woodford County. On his person was found an order from Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge, commanding all persons in Kentucky upon Confederate recruiting service to report immediately to the Colonel and obey his orders. Those failing or refusing would be at once reported to the military authorities in the state "as not recognized by the Confederate government, and not entitled, if captured, to be

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁸⁰O. R., Ser. 1, XLIX, Pt. 1, 770-71; John E. L. Robertson, unpublished Master's Thesis: *West to the Iron Banks*, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

treated as prisoners of war."¹⁸¹ (Richmond authorities were a bit slower than their opponents in the field, who had taken this view, at least in part, much earlier in the war.)

Another important bit of evidence indicating Confederate realization of the problem of lack of control is Gen. Forrest's scathing attack by letter of 18 March 1864, on official guerrilla policy. To the Secretary of War, John C. Breckinridge, he related in great detail the "evils" of the policy. He told how West Kentucky and Tennessee were filled with deserters and stragglers who had attached themselves to roving bands of guerrillas, plunderers, and jayhawkers "who are the natural offspring of authorities given to raise troops within the enemy's lines." He recounted how the military district embracing Southern Kentucky and a portion of West Tennessee had been formed for ("doubtless," he said) the purpose of raiding and organizing troops for the Confederate Army. First, Brig. Gen. Adam R. Johnson had been assigned to the command of it, and then, following Johnson's wounding and the scattering of his force, Brig. Gen. Lyon assumed command. He, too, ended up with only a "handfull" of men. Therefore, in Forrest's judgment, both had failed. Yet portions of their forces, and the system they had helped establish, remained. The district's "permanent occupation by any force raised within its limits was not expected or calculated upon." Although Forrest expressed regard for Johnson and Lyon ("they did all they could, no doubt"), he had utter contempt for the vast majority of the other officers commissioned to go into Kentucky to organize commands and raid. (He actually ventured the opinion that while ninety-nine failed, only one might succeed—he sarcastically called them "would-be colonels" and "would-be captains and lieutenants.") He felt that such officers were doing a disservice to their country and cause (those officers who had "created squads of men who are dodging from pillar to post, preying upon the people, robbing them of their horses, and other property") and were actually keeping good men out of the Confederate Army. He proposed the revoking of authorities to go behind enemy lines for the raising of troops, and, if necessary, bringing out by force those officers and men so involved and "whose presence in the country gives a pretext to Federal authority for oppressing the people."¹⁸²

¹⁸¹O. R. Ser. 1, XLIX, Pt. 1, 764-770-71; Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky, op. cit.*, I, 155. See footnote 133 where circumstances of Breckinridge's mission are mentioned.

¹⁸²This letter and one of similar content, written the same day are

Forrest's letter is interesting in many respects. For one thing, it provided a very clear indication of the Confederate policy put into effect regarding partisan warfare. It also echoed the sentiments of most of Forrest's contemporaries who were professionals. Forrest himself was highly successful and competent without having been educated in the arts of war, yet he shared the prevailing views of the time relative to the honorable way to wage war. He was somewhat unorthodox in his tactics, and he gave no quarter and expected none, but he did subscribe to a certain code of military ethics which rejected some things as being unfair.

Turning back to our narrative of events in the Purchase, the coming of spring and its floods inspired the decision to build a levee to protect the town of Columbus from the river. Citizen labor was conscripted. As a very practical matter, the idea no doubt had great merit. But the rub came because Negro soldiers were detailed to oversee the work.¹⁸³

The people of Columbus, the rest of the Purchase, and much of the remainder of Kentucky, never quite accepted the Union policies regarding the Negro problem. In fact, the Legislature had rejected, on 17 February, the amendment to the U. S. Constitution freeing the slaves. And on 23 March, a circuit judge had declared unconstitutional the Act of Congress liberating the wives and children of slaves enlisted in the army.¹⁸⁴ The situation was one largely of dollars and cents. Slaves were property, and monetary consideration had been paid for them. Thus, whether an owner had only one or a dozen, financial considerations were apt to outweigh humanitarian tendencies, if any.

The guerrillas were still active. On 29 March, a "desperate fight" occurred some thirty miles from Paducah between a band of irregulars under a Capt. McDougall and Federals under a Captain Gregory. (The former was possibly one of the brothers who had joined in the homicide of Col. Faulkner.) Both officers were killed.¹⁸⁵

found at O.R., Ser. 1, XLIX, Pt. 2, 1124-25, and 1125-26. See also John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 514-16.

¹⁸³John E. L. Robertson, unpublished Master's Thesis: *West to the Iron Banks*, *op. cit.*, p. 248. For a detailed discussion of opinion, both in the Purchase and the rest of Kentucky, concerning the slave question, see also pages 249-53.

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*, p. 253.

¹⁸⁵Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, *op. cit.*, I, 158. See also Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict*, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

April brought news of Lee's surrender in Virginia, and its effect on an already dying Confederate cause. Capitulation became general. But there were the inevitable last gasps. On 29 April, a relatively hard fought skirmish occurred in Lyon County, just east of the Purchase. A body of Union Cavalry and infantry was sent from Princeton, with orders to intercept an estimated 140 men under one "Cypress (or Syper)" reported to be moving east and in the act of crossing the Cumberland River. The so-called guerrillas acted more like Confederate regulars. The U. S. force under a Capt. Overby, 17th Kentucky Cavalry, was roughly handled, losing five killed, two wounded, and five missing. Rebel casualties, if any, were not mentioned by the officer reporting the incident, Capt. Lugar, 153rd Indiana Volunteers, commanding the post at Princeton. Capt. Lugar stated that he could not pursue the guerrillas in view of the fact that his cavalry had "lost all their horses and arms, or nearly all."¹⁸⁶

(This was no doubt one of the last pitched engagements anywhere of the Union Army in the war, and in all probability, the last in Kentucky.)

Five days later, the 4th of May, Col. James Q. Chenoweth surrendered himself and the last of Adam Johnson's Partisan Rangers to Brig. Gen. Solomon Meredith at Paducah.¹⁸⁷

On 9 May, Forrest delivered his farewell to the troops of his command, which by act of fate and geography, contained most of the Confederate soldiers recruited from the Kentucky Purchase and the extreme western part of the state. Like Robert E. Lee, he praised his men for having so well served their cause—and like Lee, he admonished them to forget the war, to submit to the "powers that be," and to aid in restoring peace and establishing law and order throughout the land. He advised them to divest themselves of bitter feelings, and to meet their responsibilities like men. "You have been good soldiers; you can be good citizens. Obey the law, preserve your honor, and the government to which you have surrendered can afford to be and will be magnanimous."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶O.R., Ser. 1, XLIX, Pt. 1, 514. These could have been partisans from the command of Col. L. E. Syper, at one time under Brig. Gen. Adam Johnson, and subsequently under Gen. Lyon. See Adam R. Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-67. Syper operated in this general area.

¹⁸⁷O.R., Ser. 1, XLIX, Pt. 2, 691. Adam R. Johnson, *The Partisan Rangers*, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-96.

¹⁸⁸John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 542-43.

Soon thereafter, his Kentuckians were moving in squads of twenty-five to one hundred men through West Tennessee, crossing the state line, and returning to their families. Peace came to the Purchase, and with it her sons and husbands.

EPILOGUE

We have seen how the main torrent of war moved away from the Purchase following its abandonment by the Confederate Army. But the war continued, and even though its principal eruptions were elsewhere, the Purchase was a part of it. War has many faces. Its crucial battles are only parts of the composite whole. The reverberations and tremors of a war may take diverse forms and be felt over a vast area. Insofar as the people of the Purchase were concerned, the impact of the war from March, 1862, to its conclusion, came in three primary ways, to wit: 1) the major forays into the area of Nathan Bedford Forrest and his forces, 2) the activities in the area of the ever present bands of guerrillas and irregulars and small units of Confederate regular forces on independent missions, and 3) the Federal Army of occupation and its policies.

Considerable attention has been devoted to Forrest, his forces, and his raids for several reasons. His operations in the area were the most significant military activities to take place in the Purchase during the last three years of the war. The man himself is among that handful of leaders, Northern and Southern, whom history has and will continue to consider as the extraordinary personages of the war. Most of the Confederate soldiers from the Purchase served under Forrest during the latter part of the war when he made his most significant raids into the area. And last, but not least, his operations into or near the Purchase, particularly those in March and April of 1864, had an accelerating effect on the tempo of guerrilla and Confederate regular (small unit) activity in the area.

The irregular warfare and activity in the area, whether involving guerrilla bands or bona fide Confederate Army units, kept the caldron stirred constantly. It is worthy of very serious consideration for two reasons. First, that it constituted an impediment to the Union war effort cannot be denied (how much of a relative impediment might be debated) because it resulted in the destruction of U. S. property, casualties to army personnel, interference with supply routes and systems, and, to counter those effects, it resulted in U. S. troops being tied down in the Purchase when

they could have been used on the front; second, it (the irregular warfare problem) had a very direct effect on the formulation of certain policies of the Union Army in the area which led, to a great extent, to alienation of the civilian population.

The Union Army of occupation and its policies constituted the third major facet of the war seen after March, 1862, by natives of the Purchase. To the critic of U. S. Policy, three elements of it must be considered as significant—first, the harsh counter measures employed against guerrillas and the people among whom they moved all too freely; second, slave policies; and third, the wholesale use of Negro troops. As to the anti-guerrilla measures, the civilian populace was largely treated as hostile, its system of government was subjected to curtailment and interference (e.g., the declaration of martial law, military coercive measures relative to elections, etc.), and drastic trade restrictions were instituted on occasion (the most telling damage to the Union cause came on those occasions when such restrictions were motivated not by military reason, but for the desire of Federal authorities for unsanctioned personal gain or profit). Slave policies were dictated by Washington and enforced in the field by the Army. It does not matter how morally correct those slave policies might have been, especially when weighed by present day standards. Slaves were a dollars and cents proposition then, whether owned in Kentucky or one of the seceded states. Therefore, when we examine the Union posture in Kentucky, we must reach the incontestible conclusion that the government did not enhance its overall popularity in Kentucky, a loyal state, by treating it as a seceded state on slave matters. As to the large scale use of Negro troops, from the Federal standpoint it was both wise and practical since blue uniforms were thereby filled, and other troops were freed from occupation duties and made available for combat use—but, in areas such as the Purchase where the Negro (considered as an item of property if a slave) occupied a predetermined place in the social system, his use as a soldier in the army of occupation could do nothing but arouse the ire of the occupied.

Union policy in Kentucky was the chief direct cause of the backlash in public opinion which eventually resulted in the state politically realigning itself by the end of the war. (In the Purchase, of course, which leaned to the South from the beginning, attitudes were simply hardened.) Union policy was, in turn, itself a consequence, at least in part, of the guerrilla problem with which it had

to cope in the state. That is, many of the harsh measures imposed upon civilians were efforts to limit the activities of guerrillas.

The guerrilla situation in Kentucky and elsewhere was misunderstood and under-rated during the war, and later by the historians. At the time, most Confederate general officers who had occasion to comment on the matter did so in very uncomplimentary terms. In the East, Lee condemned it. In the West, Forrest damned it. There was little in their backgrounds to make them comparable, but both were masters of the art of war. The basic principles of war never change, but the ethics of it may. Lee and Forrest were practitioners, the former perhaps more so than the latter, of the concept of military chivalry then prevailing. That is, a war was to be fought in the open and by fully recognized combatants. Forrest's letter of 18 March 1865, in which he denounced Confederate partisan warfare policies, set out his views fully on the subject—he ended it by proposing to bring out by force those “whose presence in the country gives a pretext to Federal authority for oppressing the people.” Forrest could not see it, nor could many of the post war writers in their undimmed bitterness—but who can argue, from the cold perspective of history, that the turbulent conditions in Kentucky, created to a great extent as a result of guerrilla activity, did not benefit the Confederacy in the final analysis. (Did not the State of Kentucky, during the reconstruction period, become the standard bearer for the states of the old Confederacy?) This is not to say that what occurred in Kentucky was preplanned by some unrecognized genius in Richmond. Evidence seems to indicate the contrary. Nevertheless, some small lesson should be provided to the student of military history—whether he be more interested in fostering, or countering irregular warfare.

This critique of three years of war in the Kentucky Purchase can be ended with a final comment concerning Nathan Bedford Forrest. Perhaps it may seem as though he and his operations have been overemphasized. That is not the case. It is more accurate to say that he has been underemphasized in the more popular histories of the State. Perhaps that is because the area of Kentucky in which he was most active—the Purchase—is somewhat remote from those sections of the Commonwealth which have been more thoroughly treated by the historians from within their midst. (The remoteness is philosophic, in some particulars, as well as geographic.)

However, a brief in that respect is not consonant with the purposes of this paper. The treatment accorded in this work to Forrest and his operations are commensurate with his and their importance in the Purchase. For many reasons, he attained the status of a folk god in this area of Kentucky. Certainly, part of the explanation is that he was identifiable with the people who inhabited the Purchase at the time. Andrew Lytle contrasted him with the cotton planter aristocracy of the South—the Purchase was not particularly blessed with that element of Southern society—and called him the most typical strong man of the Agrarian South, with all the virtues and vices of the wilderness still a part of his character. Legally, the Jackson Purchase of Kentucky during the Civil War was a constituent part of the Union, but factually it was part and parcel of the Southern culture that produced Forrest.

Concluded