

The Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Olustee, Florida, 20 February 1864



Michael G. Anderson



**Combat Studies Institute Press
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Publisher's Note on the use of Civil War Terms

The Army University Press supports the professional military education of Soldiers and leader development. Books are published by our press that describe the historical facts pertaining to the American Civil War and acknowledge that the legacy of that war is still at the forefront of our national conversation. We intend to describe the political and social situation of the Civil War in a neutral manner. For example, the traditional terms to describe the opposing sides, North and South, are only used for grammatical variety, as they ascribe generalities that certainly did not apply to the totality of the "North" or the "South." Many local citizens who resided in states that openly rebelled against the United States government were not in favor of secession, nor did they believe that preserving slavery warranted such a violent act.

Similarly, citizens in states who remained loyal to the United States did not all feel a strong commitment towards dissolving the institution of slavery, nor did they believe Lincoln's views represented their own. Thus, while the historiography has traditionally referred to the "Union" in the American Civil War as "the northern states loyal to the United States government," the fact is that the term "Union" always referred to all the states together, which clearly was not the situation at all. In light of this, the reader will discover that the word "Union" will be largely replaced by the more historically accurate "Federal Government" or "US Government." "Union forces" or "Union army" will largely be replaced by the terms "US Army," "Federals," or "Federal Army."

The Reconstruction policy between the Federal Government and the former rebellious states saw an increased effort to control the narrative of how and why the war was fought, which led to an enduring perpetuation of Lost Cause rhetoric. The Lost Cause promotes an interpretation of the Civil War era that legitimates and excuses the secessionist agenda. This narrative has been wholly rejected by academic scholars who rely upon rigorous research and an honest interpretation of primary source materials. To rely upon bad faith interpretations of history like the Lost Cause in this day and age would be insufficient, inaccurate, and an acknowledgment that the Confederate States of America was a legitimate nation. The fact is that Abraham Lincoln and the US Congress were very careful not to recognize the government of the states in rebellion as a legitimate government. Nonetheless, those states that formed a political and social alliance, even though not recognized by the Lincoln government, called themselves the "Confederacy" or the "Confederate States of America." In our works,

the Army University Press acknowledges that political alliance, albeit an alliance in rebellion, by allowing the use of the terms “Confederate,” “Confederacy,” “Confederate Army,” for ease of reference and flow of the narrative, in addition to the variations of the term “rebel.”

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Introduction

The staff ride has a strong base in history as a tool for the education of the military professional. In 1906, the staff ride entered US military professional training through the efforts of Capt. Arthur L. Wagner and Maj. Eben Swift while at the General Service and Staff School, a precursor to the Command and General Staff College (CGSC). The fundamentals of the staff ride in US military education have expanded upon the original concept, adding additional aspects to it, maximizing its educational value to the military professional. To fully benefit from the instructional attributes of a battle or campaign study on the actual terrain of its execution involves three phases: detailed preliminary study, a thorough visit to the actual locations of the campaign or battle (the field phase), and a final reflective portion set aside to combine the classroom learning with the field observations into a fuller understanding of the insights gained by the entire experience (the integration phase). Details on the conduct of staff ride are found in *The Staff Ride: Fundamentals, Experiences, and Techniques* by Peter G. Knight and William G. Robertson.¹ This is available through the Center for Military History Website: <https://history.army.mil/catalog/pubs/70/70-21.html>.

Staff rides are an integral part of the modern US Army's professional educational curriculum across its military institutions, from the CGSC, the Army War College, and institutions throughout the Army school system. The staff ride is a primary means for continuing professional education and development, both in the schoolhouse and in line units, for both officers and noncommissioned officers; all Army leaders can benefit. At times, especially in line units, resources are constrained to properly prepare and conduct a staff ride. This is where the role of the staff ride handbook applies. The handbook's design is to provide background, a list of sites, or "stands," to visit in the course of the field study, resources for guiding discussion, and suggestions for actual conduct the staff ride.

The Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Olustee, Florida, 20 February 1864 is one in a growing series from the Combat Studies Institute (CSI) as part of Army University Press intended to support execution of staff rides throughout the US military. This work on the Battle of Olustee borrowed liberally from all its predecessors, particularly in the organizational outline of the handbook and Part I, background to the armies. The author is appreciative and indebted to the excellent efforts of previous Staff Ride Handbook authors.²

Although there is a considerable connection among all staff ride handbooks, the *Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Olustee, Florida, 20 February 1864*, has some significant differences from others. One of the aspects that sets the Olustee battle apart from other staff rides is the near exact parity of forces and equally favorable ground for both combatants, resulting in a battle that depended even more so than normally on the skills and application of leadership and resource management, namely logistics and physical endurance. This battle was a struggle between two forces led by leaders inexperienced at such high levels of command with many units that had never served either together or in the case of some regiments ever before in battle.

It was a multi-brigade meeting engagement providing a clear, systematic tactical-level battle for analysis, though by necessity, the tactical nature limits much of the operational analysis found in some other staff rides. Though there exist significant operational-level topics to be discussed in the events leading to the tactical action, it is essentially a study of brigade- and regimental-level leadership and tactics.

Of importance to this study, a significant part of the US Army at Olustee was African-American infantry regiments led by white officers with African-American noncommissioned officers (NCOs). These formations first saw combat in 1863; in fact, one of the first African-American regiments to face combat also fought at Olustee, the famous 54th Massachusetts Volunteers (Colored). Former slaves, freedmen, and even runaway slaves comprised these units, and they formed from all over the United States and rebellious states. Previous, battle-experienced white officers and white NCOs seeking a commission volunteered to lead these units for varied reasons. The extensive use of these United States Colored Troops (USCT) and state African-American volunteer units in Florida makes that theater an ideal one to examine the factors contributing to their performance. Roughly 20 percent of all USCT regiments within the US Army saw service in the state of Florida. At Olustee, three of the eight US Army infantry regiments were African-American infantry units, a high percentage for any battle during the war at over a third of the infantry combat force. The involvement of these African-American regiments within this study sets the service of the Florida regiments somewhat apart from the average experiences of USCT units. Typically, in other theaters they were only a small percentage of the overall forces involved, whereas in Florida USCT regiments comprised larger percentage of US Army forces.

A staff ride for the Battle of Olustee is a highly relevant, tactical-level staff ride of an often-overlooked battle, providing an analysis of leader-

ship and resource management, and thus it is a departure from some of the more popular staff ride studies. In addition, this battle was a tactical defeat for the US force. To study a defeat instead of focusing on a success provides an important vehicle for both immediate edification but also a lesson in the art of learning. These factors create unique challenges and opportunities. Of course, the needs and intentions of the staff ride leader will shape the goals of this staff ride.

This handbook is structured for a single-day ride with 9 stands. Staff ride leaders may have to modify the stands to fit their schedules, and routes they travel, but they should always attempt to keep a sense of connection between stands so that students do not lose the larger context of the Florida Expedition of 1864.

In addition, staff ride leaders must give the students a chance to conduct research and prepare before actually visiting the campaign locations. The extent of student preparation will depend on available time. At one end of the spectrum, students might have ample time to explore the secondary sources and even access certain available primary sources, such as the passages regarding the battle in *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*.³ On the other hand, if students have less time to devote to research, an excellent secondary source is William H. Nulty's *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee*, providing an excellent and readable account of the entire campaign of 1864 in Florida and the background of the expedition.⁴ The *Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Olustee* provides a systematic approach to the analysis of this often forgotten battle outside of the state of Florida.

Part I describes the organization of the United States Army and that of the Secessionist forces, detailing their weapons, tactics, logistics, engineer, communications, and medical support.

Part II consists of a campaign overview, which establishes the context for the individual actions studied in the field. This part can be used as a base for the preliminary study of the students. Students can supplement the campaign overview with other secondary and primary sources as time permits.

Part III consists of a suggested itinerary of sites to visit in order to obtain a concrete view of the campaign in its critical moments. For each stand, there is a set of travel directions, an orientation to the battle site, a discussion of the action that occurred there, vignettes by participants in the campaign, and suggested analysis questions and topics for discussion.

Part IV discusses the final phase of the staff ride, the integration phase. In this phase, students integrate the classroom portion of the staff

ride with the field phase and seek to provide relevant lessons for the modern military professional.

Part V provides practical information on conducting a staff ride in the Lake City and Jacksonville Battlefield area, including sources of assistance and logistical considerations.

Appendix A outlines the order of battle for the forces involved on the day of battle. *Appendix B* provides biographical sketches of key participants, *appendix C* has tactical sketches of the battlefield, and *appendix D* provides historical maps of the area. A bibliography suggests additional sources for preliminary study.

The Battle of Olustee in the Florida Expedition of 1864 campaign is a powerful example of the effects of leadership on tactics and operations, and the price paid by the common soldier. The lessons and insights gained from this complex struggle encompass much of the vast panoply of warfare and can provide an unmatched tool for the education of the modern military professional.

Endnotes

1. Peter G. Knight and William G. Robertson, *The Staff Ride: Fundamentals, Experiences, and Techniques* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 2020).

2. Dr. Curtis S. King, Dr. William Glenn Robertson, Lt. Col. Steven E. Clay (US Army, Retired), *Overland Campaign, Virginia, 4 May to 15 June 1864: A Study in Operational-Level Command* (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat studies Institute Press, 2009).

3. *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Vol. 53. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901) Hereafter cited as *ORA*.

4. William H. Nulty, *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1990).

Part I

The Combatants

Civil War Armies¹

The US Army in 1861

The Regular Army of the United States in 1861 was a relatively-small force, mainly oriented for frontier service, with approximately 16,000 soldiers scattered across 79 different posts.² The Army's professional force spread out through numerous small posts divided into a series of departments based on geography, with the departmental commanders answering directly to the Army's general-in-chief, the president's top appointed officer. This organization remained fluid, and regularly altered.³ During the war, both the US Army and the secessionist forces used geographically-based, garrison-like departmental commands in this manner. Aside from the geography-based command structure, there were field commands. These army commands, such as the Army of the Potomac, in many ways superseded the garrison-style command of the departments, and had the fluidity to operate across departments.

The Regulars, those who were in service during peacetime prior to the war, remained together forming a core of the expanding wartime US Army. Over the course of the war, this base force naturally faced battlefield attrition along with disease and desertion. Before the final year of the war the Regular force was significantly depleted, no longer serving as the main battlefield force for the US Army, replaced by the prolifically recruited state-based volunteer regiments, and then later under the shadow of growing casualty lists, volunteers became replaced more often with conscripted draftees. Both armies' maneuver forces followed the current structure of militaries of the day modeling partly on Napoleonic formations.

The US Army's newly created volunteer infantry regiments had a base staffing of 866 to 1,046, varying on approved numbers for the rank-and-file enlisted. The secessionist states were more deliberate with a strict 10-company infantry regiment of 1,045 soldiers. These official numbers rarely matched the actual numbers in the unit due to the nature of war with previous casualties, desertion, sickness, and soldiers on approved absences. Infantry regiments on both sides rarely had more than 200-400 soldiers once wartime attrition occurred.⁴

Filling these formations through recruiting, and later draft boards, largely rested with the states. This recruiting methodology resulted in state

governors promoting creation of new state volunteer regiments, to the detriment of other recruiting goals for the Regular Army and for filling losses in already created volunteer units. Secessionist policy revolved around sending recruits from the same locale to replenish the ranks of depleted standing regiments; however, the policy of US forces simply supported creating new regiments at the expense of battle-effected US Army units in severe need of replacements, resulting over time in many US Army units losing combat effectiveness. Only on paper did many of these units exist as full companies, regiments, or brigades. This same occurrence plagued the secessionist field forces during the final stages of the war as well, when they simply lacked the personnel or ability to send replacements to the depleted units at the front.

Another aspect of the recruiting method that the Florida Expedition of 1864 illuminated was that some of these regiments, both US and separatist, lacked veterans, either through the creation of new regiments wholesale or through the steady influx of replacements into an originally whole veteran organization. They lost soldiers faster than they could recruit replacements because states were constantly using new recruits to form new regiments. This was particularly the case for the US Army regiments. However, the US forces were not the only units not yet bloodied in battle. The secessionist forces at Olustee also had raw regiments and soldiers, discussed further later.

For the artillery, which would play a nominal role in Olustee, the battery remained the most common unit seen on the battlefield with few exceptions of larger groupings in specific engagements. The volunteer artillery formations quickly outnumbered the few Regular Army artillery formations existing pre-war. The common US Army artillery battery had 6 field pieces, with 80 to 156 soldiers assigned, though like the infantry, hardly ever all present for any particular engagement. In comparison, the less resourced secessionist batteries routinely had only four guns and barely reached their paper strength of eighty artillerymen. A battery of 12-pound Napoleons-type pieces included up to 130 horses for transportation. Some of the artillery formations in the US Army were “horse” or flying artillery, which meant even the artillerymen were mounted to provide more rapid artillery support to fast-advancing, long-range movements (conventional artillery units had horses to move the guns, but the artillerymen walked).⁵ This necessarily increased the number of horses assigned to an artillery unit.

The cavalry forces of both armies evolved over the course of the war. They learned that Napoleonic-style cavalry charges failed against the in-

creased range of rifled infantry weapons, and quickly abandoned this tactic. Cavalry retained the key role of reconnaissance, and also began to focus more on raids. Cavalry units were typically smaller in number than their infantry equivalent, for example, secessionist cavalry companies were usually 76-men strong, compared to infantry companies of around 100 soldiers each. The mobility coupled with the firepower now associated with cavalry forces allowed many leaders to exploit their ability to conduct large-scale raids. In actuality these raids often failed to decisively defeat then opposing enemy cavalry or cause enough damage to enemy infrastructure to make a significant difference for a campaign. However, the mobility and the allure of deep, penetrating raids resonated with many leaders on both sides of the conflict.⁶

United States Army in the Florida Expedition of 1864

The Florida Expedition of 1864 fell under Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore who commanded the Department of the South in the US Army, including Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour's District of Florida. Seymour's Florida expedition had three infantry brigades with a cavalry brigade in support, and although numerically this made a division-sized force, they were ad hoc brigades not typically found under the same division commander, but rather gathered from multiple commands and coalesced under Seymour specifically for the expedition.⁷ Brigade maneuvering alone challenged many field commanders, and Olustee was no exception. The brigade commanders often fell prey to the pressure and temptation of directly leading the immediate regiment to their front, as opposed to dispassionately maintaining broad situational awareness across their multiple regimental movements of the entire brigade.

For both armies, the brigade typically controlled three to five regiments and a division controlling two or more brigades. The US Army brigades in Florida were on the lower side of this, with only two to three regiments per brigade, and the overall force equaled roughly a division. For brigade command, the US Army typically had a colonel, with a brigadier general commanding a division. In Florida, they struggled to find enough ranking officers, with telling results.

Knowing the US Army manpower shortage, Gillmore hedged his bets by requesting new African-American infantry regiments. The US Army rapidly recruited and built the USCT regiments after President Abraham Lincoln officially authorized their raising in the Emancipation Proclamation on 1 January 1863. Gillmore's intentions was to relieve veteran units currently employed in garrison and siege duties with the African-Ameri-

can regiments, allowing the white veteran units to join his mobile expedition to Florida. If he could get more fresh troops, those untested in battle to staff the parapets and guard the bases it could free the more experienced and tested troops to move through Florida. Based on the competing needs of other department's operations, the general-in-chief denied the request.⁸ Gillmore was left to undertake the expedition with the troops he had, resulting in a portion of his troops being untried, seeing their first bloodshed in Florida. The 7th New Hampshire was a mixed unit, composed of mostly untested replacements with few veterans, while the 8th USCT was, as a unit, completely untested with only its white leadership having previous battlefield experience. One of the other African-American units, the 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored), had only seen garrison and siege duty, no major actions of the level of Olustee. The only Regular Army force at Olustee was some of the artillery batteries, none of the infantry or cavalry units were from the pre-war Regular Army, but were all volunteers or USCT regiments. With his composite "division", Seymour's forces, totaled 5,500 soldiers, and 16 artillery pieces making up the US forces for the Florida Expedition.⁹

The Secessionists Forces of Middle Florida

As the US offensive operations became clearer, Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan received much needed reinforcements from South Carolina and Georgia from Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard. In the separatist states, the Department of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, which included the District of East Florida under Finegan was commanded by Beauregard. These reinforcements included five Georgia infantry regiments under Brig. Gen. Alfred Colquitt and three additional Georgia infantry regiments under Col. George Harrison, which came as far as the rail lines carried them, and then completed their move on foot.

When both Colquitt's brigade and that of Harrison arrived to support Finegan in northern Florida, Finegan reshuffled the forces to create two infantry brigades and the one cavalry brigade under Col. Caraway Smith, comprised of Florida cavalry and one Georgia cavalry battalion. Finegan incorporated the few Florida infantry battalions he had available into the Georgia infantry brigades. As compared to the US Army regiments, the only regiment untested prior to Olustee among the out-of-state Georgia reinforcement was the 64th Georgia Volunteers; however, all of the Florida units had varied combat experiences, mostly skirmishes and small-scale battles, none to the same intensity as Olustee. Finegan's cumulative forces amounted to 5,200 soldiers and 12 guns.¹⁰

United States Colored Troops

The history of African-American troops in the US Army during the Civil War encompassed a series of congressional acts, military orders, and presidential proclamations. In immediate response to Lincoln's call for volunteers in spring 1861 hundreds of free African-Americans across the northern states attempted to volunteer, however, the US War Department declined, leaving it to only white Americans to volunteer.¹¹ Political and social pressure, along with battlefield attrition contributed to the US Government's reassessment of its exclusion policy, slowly starting to address freedom of specified slaves in late 1861 and the beginning of African-American military service in mid-1862.

Congress passed a series of Confiscation Acts during the first years of the conflict that initially addressed US policy for slaves in occupied secessionist states and runaway slaves who reached US Army lines. The First Confiscation Act in August 1861 simply declared anyone who allowed their slaves to support secessionist activities forfeited their claim to their slaves, not necessarily outright freeing them, but more placing them in a legal limbo. This act largely intended to deny secessionist access to slave labor to support their war efforts without risking losing those slaves once US Army forces occupied their area. The Second Confiscation Act in July 1862 went even a step further and was the first to address African-Americans supporting the US war effort. This act legally freed secessionist slaves who reached US lines or those which US forces liberated when coming through or occupying secessionist territory, and authorized the President to employ as many African-Americans as he deemed necessary to support the war in whatever way he felt appropriate. On the same day, 17 July, the Militia Act further allowed for the enlistment of African-Americans in the service of the United States.¹² This initially resulted in using former slaves and volunteer free African-Americans to serve in labor battalions for constructing US fortifications, camps, and other supporting efforts. This initial use led to continued strife during the early years of the war, while white US Army regiments received ten dollars a month for their service, the African-American troops received seven dollars.¹³ Purportedly based on the USCT regiments not used in battle as the white regiments were, therefore receiving labor battalion pay, not combat unit pay, the discrepancy remained even when the African-American units began seeing combat.¹⁴ In the 8th USCT less than half accepted the seven dollars pay after their first battle at Olustee.¹⁵

Modest US successes in late 1862 across the west and south, and at the battle of Antietam, led to Lincoln's administering the Emancipation Proclamation on 1 January 1863. While the proclamation politically and legally

did little to address the termination of slavery in the northern Border States and most of the occupied territories held by the US Army, it importantly opened the way for official recognition for raising African-American full-fledged regiments.¹⁶ Some African-American regiments had already been raised in 1862 by US leaders in specific departments, namely those in command in the south and west, incurring controversy, the official raising of these units began with approved War Department orders issued in March 1863. The War Department initiated the creation of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) organization in a haphazard manner. Although they followed the template of regiments formed of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, with many raised federally by commanders in the field from runaway slaves or recruited freedmen, other were raised by governors of the various states, in like manner to how the traditional US Army regiments were raised. Attempts to coordinate the naming conventions of these units caused significant confusion. Many were named after the southern states they were associated with or were physically formed in, such as the 1st South Carolina, or the Native Guards from Louisiana. In other cases, regiments raised in Tennessee took the designation of 1st and 2nd United States Colored Infantry even though a regiment of the same nomenclature was already raised in Washington D.C., these inconsistencies have made the precise number of USCT regiments difficult to determine.¹⁷

During the war, at various times, the War Department attempted to organize the USCTs by converting and renaming the federally raised regiments into a USCT regimental system from their southern origin state nomenclatures, such as the 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored) that participated in the Florida Expedition of 1864, to the 35th USCT. This regiment's conversion occurred during the Florida expedition, but after Olustee. However, northern state-recruited units, such as the 54th Massachusetts that also participated in the Florida Expedition of 1864 retained their state designations, as they were originally state raised not federally raised. Initially, these state volunteer regiments and those raised under the purview of a US Army field commander had no formal structure, but during the conflict the War Department required state volunteer and field raised regiments to match the federally raised regiments from the north themselves matching the traditional US Army regimental structure.¹⁸

The Leaders

When hostilities started in April 1861, the US government and the newly seceding states faced the rapid demand to field larger formations. In the case of the US Army, these formations far exceeded the size of the standing, peacetime Army, and in the case of the seceding states, it was an

army created from the bottom up. With the passions of the times, many leaders departed the US Army for the secessionist military, 270 of 1,108 Regular officers resigned and headed to the seceding states. In contrast, only 26 of 15,135 enlisted men left the Army to join the state secessions.¹⁹ Nearly 25 percent of the serving West Point officers resigned to serve the seceding states in 1861. Thirty percent of West Point officers from the 1830-1861 classes fought for the separatist forces. Of the academy cadets in 1861, 37 percent withdrew to serve in the seceding states.²⁰ Both sides ultimately relied on volunteers to lead the exponentially expanding armies.

Aside from the national military academies, several states had their own military school system that fed into their officer corps. These were more common in the seceding states, for example, Virginia Military Institute, South Carolina's The Citadel, and the Georgia Military Institute (secessionist brigade commander at Olustee Col. George Harrison attended). There were also state military schools that fed the US Army, such as Norwich University in Vermont (US forces field commander at Olustee Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour attended prior to his accession to West Point).

Many of the leaders from both sides had military education, largely from the United States Military Academy, at West Point, but other institutions as well. In addition, many of the ranking officers on both sides had actual wartime experience in the Mexican-American War, and scattered campaigns on the frontier, but for large part this was in positions no higher than company-level.²¹ Actual battlefield experience, and in many cases institutional learning, failed to transfer to the higher levels of command these leaders held in the war. It took the blood and hard lessons of the early campaigns to build the skills of both sides' leadership. In both organization, the centralized government appointed general officers, while lower ranking officers and volunteer formations' leadership largely came through appointments by respective state governors. At the beginning of the war, company-level officers were elected by the rank-and-file.²²

Leadership of the USCT, which made up three of Seymour's eight infantry regiments, was different. War Department policy dictated only white men could hold commissions, leaving few, limited exceptions for African-American officers. These exceptions, those commissions that were not later rescinded from the African-Americans, were at company-level or lower positions, and as chaplains, medical officers, or local recruiters. The restriction clearly meant to preclude African-American officers commanding—ordering—white soldiers. However, African-Americans served at all levels up to regimental as noncommissioned officers.²³

USCT officers were not regionally assigned as was common with most other regiments, but were selected from across the country at the national level. These officers had a high turnover rate, averaging around 80 percent during the course of the war.²⁴ The officers were all volunteers for service in the USCT regiments. All had to pass a centralized board. Board topics included tactics, army regulations, limited math, history, and geography. A result of these boards included a more educated USCT officer corps; however, minimal preparation for the board selection process existed. Some states created a few actual preparatory schools for aspiring applicants. Pennsylvania had the Pennsylvania Free Military School for Applicants for Commands of Colored Troops, commonly held up as a successful model.²⁵ Oliver Norton served as an USCT officer in the 8th USCT, a participant at Olustee, and recounted his test lasting for forty-five minutes, although noted most lasted no more than fifteen minutes.²⁶ Norton noted he knew of a lieutenant colonel who failed the board, which added to the rate of 40 percent of applicants failing the board for various reasons, and on average a fourth of all applicants actually receiving a commission in a USCT.

Enlisted soldiers from white regiments who received commissions from the board filled the leadership billets of company grade officers. White company grade officers who passed the boards and accepted commissions in the USCTs immediately received promotions to serve as field grades. Over 40 percent of these white officers had participated in two or more battles, 20 percent had fought in five battles. The purpose of this was to provide the USCT units with instant, combat leadership experience, which the War Department found critical to lead African-American troops.²⁷

Providing this instant staffing of battle-experienced white officers to man the USCTs, however logical, did so by placing these veterans at levels of responsibility and experience at an inappropriate competency level. Battlefield experience and competency required of a non-commissioned officer to hold the line in a white regiment was not the same as the management of administrative affairs for the unit, the broader supervision of training, and the competency to maneuver companies in combat. Likewise, the demonstrated knowledge and ability to manage and lead a white company was vastly different from that of controlling and commanding a battalion or a regiment.

Leadership in the Florida Expedition of 1864

In regards to the Florida Expedition of 1864, the four main leaders shaping the US Army's actions and efforts at Olustee were Brigadier General Seymour and his three brigade commanders: Colonels Joseph Hawley,

William Barton and James Montgomery. The fourth brigade commander, Col. Guy Henry, commanded the US cavalry, playing a minor role in the battle, although a larger role in the campaign's initial moves. Seymour operated for the first time in an independent command, with his superior in South Carolina. At the brigade-level, both armies only had one brigade led by an experienced brigade commander, regimental commanders led all the other brigades, whose staff or company-grade officers in turn commanded their regiments.

Colonel Hawley commanded Seymour's lead brigade during the Florida Expedition. Three infantry regiments and supported by an artillery battery formed Hawley's brigade. Hawley's own regiment, the 7th Connecticut, was being commanded by Captain Benjamin F. Skinner while Hawley served as brigade commander. Following Hawley's brigade was Colonel Barton's New York brigade. Three New York infantry regiments without any artillery attachments formed Barton's brigade and all were veteran units. The most seasoned of Seymour's brigade commanders, and only true experienced brigade commander, was Colonel Montgomery. Montgomery, the oldest of the US Army commanders and with his anti-slavery background in "Bleeding Kansas", was given command of Seymour's reserve brigade, comprised of two of the African-American regiments. Colonel Guy Henry was the fourth brigade commander, whose mounted brigade served as the supporting brigade, made up of one cavalry battalion, one mounted infantry regiment, and one battery of attached horse artillery.

Three officers had received formal, military education in the US Army leadership for the Florida Expedition of 1864. The architect of the expedition, Quincy Gillmore, was a United States Military Academy, West Point, graduate, first in his class of 1849. Similarly, his battlefield commander, Truman Seymour, attended Norwich University, the Vermont state-military academy, for two years before going on to graduate West Point, graduating nineteenth in his class of 1846. Also, Lt. Col. William Reed of the 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored), as a son of an African slave mother and a Danish father in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, not only attended a foreign military academy, the *Militärakademie Rendsburg* in Schleswig-Holstein (then a part of Denmark), but after graduating, he served in the Danish army during the First Prussian-Danish War. After immigrating to the US in 1853, he became a rarity during the American Civil War as a biracial officer in a USCT regiment.

The separatist forces in Florida facing the US Army expedition were more a single, grouped mass, but could be broken down into two brigades on paper. The secessionists usually had a brigadier general commanding a

brigade, and a major general commanded a division. In the Florida campaign, they struggled to match typical ranks with battlefield formations. Finegan organized his forces into two brigades, in actuality his forces independently deployed regiments and at times even battalion formations.

Finegan himself was the least experienced of the secessionist leaders at Olustee though he was the overall commander. The two reinforcement brigade commanders from Georgia, Brig. Gen. Alfred Colquitt and Col. George Harrison both had more battlefield experience. Even the Florida cavalry commander, Caraway Smith, had more field experience, though smaller scale than the Georgia commanders, than did Finegan. Finegan largely owed his generalship and command to state connections from pre-war business interests. Wisely, Finegan essentially bestowed battlefield command to Colquitt for the duration of Olustee and only managed the forward flow of reinforcements up to the front for Colquitt to employ between himself and Harrison's brigade's portion of the line. Harrison had the dual distinction of being the youngest secessionist commander at Olustee and the only one who had military education from his schooling at the Georgia Military Institute.

Weapons

The Springfield served as the most prolific infantry weapon of the war by both sides. The .58 caliber rifled musket came in three models, 1855, 1861, and 1863, with the 1861 model the most common during the war. First used by the Army in 1855, the Springfield was similar in appearance and operation as the previous smoothbore muskets being a single shot, muzzleloader. The 1861 model was 56 inches long, with a 40-inch barrel, weighing slightly over 9 pounds with the 21-inch socket bayonet attached. The increased range and accuracy due to the rifling of the new Springfield's bore provided the important difference in the models, giving effective range up to 500 yards, coinciding with its rear sight. The Springfield also had enough power to damage at 1,000 yards if a lucky strike hit the target. This rifling system was that of French Army officer Claude Minie, firing a round, nonexpanding ball a hollow, cylindrical cone projectile that expanded and twisted along the rifling upon percussion ignition.²⁸ Even with this improvement in range, accuracy, and ballistics, obscurity still occurred from the black-powder weapon when fired repeatedly or in dense, large groups.

Typical sustained rate of fire for a well-trained infantryman was three rounds per minute, possibly four times per minute with substantial drilling. Under stress and duress in battle, it remained more likely a slower rate

of two to three rounds a minutes. The loading and firing of the rifle-musket was a five-step process. The soldier opened a paper cartridge, poured powder and bullet down the barrel, fully seating bullet down barrel with a ramrod, cocking hammer and setting percussion cap to ignite the charge, with final trigger pull releasing cocked hammer to create the spark, igniting the gunpowder, exploding in the barrel, expanding and projecting the bullet down the rifled barrel.

Although the Springfield models remained the most common, there was no definitive armament for the armies during the war, resulting in over 100 various types, makes, and models of infantry arms. These included domestic and even international models, the most common international model being the 436,000 US Army purchased British .577 caliber Enfield rifles, Model 1853 pattern weapons during the war. Though the separatist forces did import some weapons, including Enfields, the US Navy blockade significantly hampered these attempts. By 1863, indications pointed to separatist government purchase of only 70,980 traditional Enfields and 9,715 short, carbine-type, Enfields. A further 23,000 additional remained waiting for successful blockade running.²⁹

Aside from rifled, muzzle-loading muskets, some infantry had breech-loading or repeating rifles, often purchased individually or outfitted by the state for specific volunteer regiments. Of these, the two most common were the breech-loading, single shot Sharps and the repeating Spencer rifle. Though some infantry regiments armed themselves with these relatively more advanced small arms, mostly the cavalry utilized these types of rifles.

The common US cavalry weapon was the .52 caliber Sharps, which came in two forms of an 1859 model. The rifle was 47 1/8 inch, weighing 8 3/4 pounds, and the carbine model was 8 inches shorter and a pound less in weight. The common repeater was also a .52 caliber weapon, with both a rifle and carbine model. The seven-shot Spencer rifle was 47 inches long, weighing 10 pounds, while the carbine model preferred by mounted units was 8 inches shorter, weighing 1 3/4 pounds less. The rifle fired rimmed, self-contained cartridges, more resembling modern bullets, loaded through the butt-stock and feed into the chamber by the trigger guard action.

Over the course of the war, the cavalry arms of both armies moved further away from the limited armament of sabers and pistols to adopt more firepower intensive weaponry. This coincided with the change in the utilization of cavalry and a more decisive and intense combat with the enemy. The preferred weapons were the smaller carbines, shortening the

length of typical rifles for easier handling on horseback and breech-loading mechanisms to ease the difficulty of attempting to muzzle-loading efforts while on horseback and on the move. The emerging technological market for these weapons systems resulted in multiple models of various calibers ranging from .52 caliber, to .56 caliber and many in between. The most common was the Hall, a .52 caliber single shot, breech-loading carbine. With continued advancement during the war, the efforts moved from single shot, breechloaders to repeating carbines, of which the Spencer at .52 caliber with its seven shots was the favored one.³⁰

The US forces largely benefited from this improved technology due to the industrial limitation of the south as well as the Federal imposed blockade. This resulted in the secessionist cavalry relying more on tradition fire-power for its mounted forces such as shotguns, multiple pistols, and still using muzzleloaders, or captured US arms, but the inability to continue to logistically support these captured weapons with the correct cartridges and repair parts offset this occurrence.

Both sides employed various artillery pieces. With an effective range of approximately 1,523 yards, the 6-pounder artillery piece was the most prolific during the war. As the war progressed, the armies replaced the older field piece that had seen service in the Mexican-American War with a newer model, a 12-pounder called the “Napoleon”, with an effective range exceeding the 6-pounder by approximately 100 yards at 1,619 yards. This new model served dual roles, firing canister and shell fire like a howitzer while also able to fire solid shot like a typical gun system. The Napoleon was a muzzleloader, typical of the period artillery pieces, and normally serviced by nine artillerymen, able to fire a sustained rate of two shots per minute.

The artillery of the day was composed of four types: solid shot, shell, canister, and shrapnel. Batteries used solid shot mostly for fortification destruction, a projectile battering ram effect. Shells were similar in design as solid shot only they exploded based off a timed fuse. This had a limited effect on surroundings from fragmentation, but served a large psychological effect on the target. Shrapnel shells were similar to shells in that they were a projectile timed to explode, however, the shrapnel shells were hollowed and filled with balls of lead or iron to add to the casing’s fragmentation. This was most effective against advancing infantry in the open. Canister was an even more effective round against infantry forces than shrapnel but at a much closer range, typically 400 yards, or closer. In similar concept to shrapnel, canister was a tin can filled with assorted, damaging items. However, unlike the shrapnel shell, the explosive charge on ignition shattered the tin can and resulted in a shotgun-like effect right out of the bar-

rel, as compared to the shrapnel round, which traveled and then based on fuse exploded into fragmentation.³¹ The secessionists tended to keep their batteries decentralized, usually attached to the infantry brigades, while the US Army organized their artillery into independent groups, however, at times, such as Olustee, the US force also decentralized their batteries for direct support to specific infantry brigades.

Weapons in the Florida Expedition of 1864

The Florida Expedition of 1864 reflected the variety of weapons available to both armies during the war; however, without doubt the infantry dominated the battlefield while the cavalry only minimally influenced the opening stages of the battle. As for rifles, both armies relied heavily on the Springfield and Enfield models, which were the most common weapons used by both.

As for infantry small arms, the state volunteers of the 7th Connecticut Infantry Regiment, a key US Army regiment at Olustee, possessed Spencer repeating rifles, which had significant impact on the unfolding battle.³² Overall, the variety of small arms weapons and calibers of ammunition required on the battlefield by each army presented sustainment challenges that ranged from production and procurement to supplying soldiers in the field. Ammunition resupply would be a determining factor in the Battle of Olustee. Specifically, the timely resupply of ammunition, both the resupply of the correct or incorrect ammunition-type directly affected critical points of the battle.

While the artillery was decently represented in both armies, it played a minor role in the actual fighting. Although as a focal point, they maintained their importance on the field as infantry objectives and targets. The US forces at Olustee started the battle with four batteries of artillery. Of these two were six-gun batteries, with another battery of the four-guns. The secessionist forces defending Florida had artillery reserves that totaled three artillery batteries. Two batteries were four-gun structured batteries. In the case of the march toward Lake City, the US forces at Olustee had their batteries similarly task organized to support brigades. This was contrary to normal US Army artillery procedures.

Tactical Doctrine in 1861

Tactical doctrine continually evolved during the course of the war as technology and extensive scale of the armies forced alterations to the previously accepted Napoleonic doctrine. Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, then a 1st Lieutenant, wrote the primer on military theory prior to the Civil War

titled, *Elements of Military Art and Science* published in 1846.³³ The period's accepted infantry doctrine, rooted in Napoleonic formations, had two US Army sources: General Winfield Scott's work, *Infantry Tactics*, published in 1835, and its follow on addition of *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* by Major William J. Hardee, published in 1855. Both emphasized Napoleonic formations of massed, linear-based formations of up to three ranks. The only notable difference between the two foundational works was the speed adjustment, from General Scott's "quick time" of 110 steps, covering approximately 86 yards per minute, to Major Hardee's "double-quick time" of 165 steps, covering approximately 151 yards per minute, drilling the infantry to close the distance to the enemy faster. As the latest tactical manual, then-Major Hardee's *Tactics* remained the standard doctrine used by both sides during the war, with experience-based adjustments made to it by seasoned commanders.³⁴

The addition by Hardee of speeding the advance to account for the increased lethality of armament technology, failed to shift the balance from the defense back to the Napoleonic emphasis on the attack. Leaders had to adjust tactics through trial and error, costly lessons in experience, and learning curves for adaptability to specific circumstances based on weather and terrain that previously rigid doctrine did not need to take into effect to be successful. Some of these included opening up the massed formations, resulting in loss of command and control due to the communication abilities of the period. In addition, tactics included using mass forces to overwhelm through numbers the defense, though numerical superiority was typically a prerequisite for this to be successful. Sometimes, the large formations attempted mass charges over short distances without halting to fire, though this was rare.

As for rates of fire, the lower level tactical commanders typically controlled and coordinated initial fires, with first volleys being potentially devastating. After the first volley, the rate of advance, the pressure of exchanging fires typically resulted in the disciplined volley fire fading into individual infantrymen firing as able based on their ability to reload. At times soldiers working in tandem based on frontage requirements of one loading while the other fired and passing weapons back and forth. This tactic was predominate in fixed fortifications in the defense, and not as common in open field fighting. Due to the terrain and lack of fortification, the most common engagement at Olustee was a firefight, explained in more detail below.

Artillery doctrinal reference also evolved over the course the war, largely due to both changing technology and battlefield experience. Be-

fore the war, Major Alfred Mordecai's *Artillery for the United States Land Service*, published in 1849, served as the instruction for the peacetime Army's artillerists. Though they lacked many guns to rehearse it on, this publication served as the guidelines for their training and familiarization with employment and standards. In 1861 the American artillery employed the revised instructions found in that year's published *Instructions for Field Artillery*.³⁵

Cavalry tactics changed significantly during the course of the war. The old Napoleonic cavalry charge (with sabers or even pistols) was largely ineffective against the longer range of the infantry's rifle-musket. For much of the rest of the war, cavalry focused on traditional reconnaissance and security missions. The cavalry began to use its horse-based mobility as a simple means to get soldiers to the fight quicker, dismounting once there, and fighting as infantry. The technological advancements in weaponry with breech-loaders and repeating rifles allowed the smaller, lighter cavalry to have a larger impact in sustained firefights with infantrymen compared to engagements of the past.³⁶

Tactics in the Florida Expedition of 1864

This enamoring of raids found its truest form in the Florida Expedition of 1864, culminating in the unplanned, pitched battle at Olustee. The US Army concept of operation in the 1864 campaign was to conduct multiple long-distance raids from US-aligned enclaves in Florida into secessionist Florida. This campaign culminated when Seymour's multi-brigade raid to destroy the railway line at Lake City collided with the secessionist forces arrayed to intercept this force just east of Olustee. Leading to the large-scale infantry struggle at Olustee, mounted cavalry raids by Henry's mounted brigade typified the Florida campaign of 1864, and was marked by skirmishes with defending scattered infantry militia and the secessionist Florida cavalry brigade under Caraway Smith. Henry's cavalry had a large measure of initial success with his mixed cavalry and mounted infantry force in these long-distance raids reaching out from the eastern coast areas held by the US Army into the secessionist interior and back to the safety of the coastal areas. However, both cavalries failed to fill their traditional role of reconnaissance as the eyes and ears of the slow-moving infantry main body, leaving the larger command devoid of timely situational awareness. The lack of timely information on the opponent's movements, size, and location led both commanders to deploy their forces piecemeal in developing escalation at Olustee. Essentially a large-scale firefight in mostly open terrain without fortifications, the battle at Olustee lacked distinct tactical maneuver once initiated. Once the engagement was met, the cavalry forces of both sides fell

to a non-influential role. Additionally, Smith's cavalry performed controversially in its role of pursuit at the conclusion of the battle.

Logistics

Logistical support followed four basic techniques (supply column, railroad, waterborne, and foraging) within two different methods (inland or sea transport). The apparatus to oversee the logistical support to the armies consisted of a three-part system: brigade-level and above staff quartermasters; intermediate, forward established supply depots; and capital-based departmental headquarters staff.³⁷ Vast networks of civilian contractors and private suppliers interconnected each of these levels of logistical support to the armies.³⁸ With the rapidly expanding armies, coupled with the secessionist officer resignations, both armies' quartermaster departments entered a crisis early in the war.

Already a small department with only thirty-five officers, as more states passed secessionist legislation, the United States Army Quartermaster Department lost a quarter of its officers, including its serving Quartermaster General, then-Brig. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston and then-Capt. Abraham C. Myers later Quartermaster General of the Confederacy.³⁹

The expending army led to scattered postings and assignments of officers ill suited, unprepared, or abusive of their positions within the logistics enterprise. Inexperienced officers, too few professional quartermasters or logisticians immediately available, led to extensive corruption between the War Department, the field quartermasters, and the diverse conglomerate of civilian profiteers.⁴⁰ Early attempts to rein in this corruption through thorough investigations, while unable to eradicate the criminality, led to establishing a professionalized logistical corps, setting a standard, streamlining logistical support.⁴¹ The exponentially increasing supply budget unintentionally incentivized corruption and enabled inadvertent inefficiency with the unprecedented eighteen times increase from 1860 to the 1861 budget, and continuing to increase for the next four years.⁴² One of the lasting laws passed supporting this effort to clean up the acquisitions and supply procedures of the US Army was the False Claims Act of 1863, a law enforcing reduction of fraud, waste, and abuse through the guaranteed protection to whistle-blowers, often referred to as "Lincoln's Law."⁴³

The most common technique of logistical support for both armies was the supply column, typified by wagon trains. Not only was this a major supply procedure within the overland method, but it was also an integral process of all the other techniques and methods. The ubiquitous wagon trains not only served in their own right as a process across great distances,

but they also served as the main technique connecting the supplies brought in by rail or ship, filling that final gap between procurement, transportation, and final delivery to consumer.

The standard model army wagon was the Conestoga, with interchangeable parts, pulled by four to six draft animals, typically able to move 2,800 pounds but up to 3,700 pounds with their own 270 pounds of feed. In support of the ever-growing armies, these wagon trains stretched for miles behind the moving armies.⁴⁴ Exemplifying the evolving formalization of movement, the haphazard, uncoordinated loading of wagons became governed by standard regulations on what wagons transported and what individuals were responsible to transport, and where in the wagon train specific items traveled.⁴⁵ The impact of weather on the 19th Century road system remained the largest mitigating factor for the supply column technique. Other variables including the amount of forage required to feed the load bearing animals reduced resupply cargo amounts and the varying degree of civilian teamsters' willingness of risk enemy contact in delivering their goods; however, inclement weather, both extremes of heat and precipitation most starkly affected the efficacy of the wagon train supply column method.

When the war began, the US retained 20,000 miles of railroad, largely interlinked with supporting infrastructure in comparison to the secessionist states' 9,000 miles, mostly disconnected and incomplete. The secessionist industry base lacked expansion or reliable maintenance ability for its already limited infrastructure.⁴⁶ The US Government instituted the United States Military Rail Roads (USMRR) to manage its railroad network, though not directly under the Quartermaster Department, the USMRR was much like the Subsistence Department that provided soldiers' rations, though laying outside the Quartermaster Department, shared the typical experiences of the larger Quartermaster Department.⁴⁷ The US Government subdivided the railroads, so critical to overland movement of troops and supplies, into two parts: those railroads in the northern states and those taken back by the US Army in the secessionist states. The civilian ownership largely managed and maintained their own lines in support to the US Government, with the government reimbursing, financing, or contracting for the use and maintenance of these lines. The USMRR managed and operated those lines taken in the secessionist areas, while the Quartermaster Department was responsible for procurement and construction or reconstruction of the southern lines.⁴⁸ Identifying the critical expertise of civilian railroad managers, the USMRR in many cases placed civilian personnel in key positions to ensure the smooth and efficient operations of seized

secessionist rail lines, while even many of the uniformed officers of the USMRR were in fact, simply civilian railroad men put in uniform.⁴⁹ Brig. Gen. Hermann Haupt, railroad administrator for the US Army in the Eastern Theater, established the US Army's tactical rail system with five principles. "1. No military officers were to interfere in the running of trains. 2. Supplies would be sent forward only as needed. 3. Trains reaching the front were to be unloaded immediately by anyone available. Officers who refused to cooperate faced dismissal. 4. Where telegraph communications were unavailable, trains would run according to a rigid schedule. All trains departed on schedule, fully loaded or not. Extra trains would pick up the slack. 5. On lines where the absence of sidings prevented opposing trains from passing each other, convoys of five or six trains would travel as a group. Each convoy delivered its cargo and returned to base before the next convoy started out."⁵⁰ The secessionist never created an organization similar to the USMRR and only in February 1865 did they begin to exert governmental control over commercial railroads, resulting in the majority of the railroad movement of secessionist troops and supplies done so only with mutual agreement and coordination between secessionist government authorities and civilian railroad managers.⁵¹

Waterborne logistical support via sea transport quickly evolved to be a US dominated method. Forts Henry and Donelson's fall led to the closure of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, respectively, from secessionist access, followed by the US capture of New Orleans closing off the Mississippi River's outlet to the Gulf of Mexico in 1862. Finally, in July 1863, the capitulation of Vicksburg cut the secessionists completely off from western river traffic and critical supplies coming from Texas, the secessionist's primary source of beef.

As the conflict continued, the US Government's sea transportation fleet included 753 steamships, 1,100 sailing vessels, and over 800 barges, purchasing or commissioning the construction of an additional three hundred more vessels. For the river fleets, the US accumulated some 599 boats, 91 steamers, 352 barges of various sizes and the balance being diverse smaller boats.⁵² The US naval blockade controlling the coast, the secessionist's limitations from the lack of a navy, and the joint US Army-Navy operations within the east coast inlet waterways and along the western river ways, facilitated the US forces monopoly of waterborne logistics and transportation.

Foraging, also known as living off the land, was a method employed by both armies at various times during the war to different degrees depending on the theater, commander, and current national policy and interests, or out of necessity. By one calculation, each horse required fourteen pounds

of hay along with twelve pounds of various grains, while soldiers received regulation prescribed three pounds of bacon as their daily ration.⁵³ In many circumstances it was easier and more expeditious for these armies to obtain supplies directly from the surrounding countryside and populace, friendly or enemy. Although as the war continued, certain areas traversed multiple times by the armies became unable to support armies while simultaneously the field armies continued to grow in size making any land insufficient to support the masses without detaching and spreading out the forces to acquire more forage.

At different times, both the US Army and the secessionist forces restrained their troops from taking from the locals, and at other times enthusiastically encouraged it, variously for eliciting goodwill or as a means to punish. In some cases, they took only when they could pay for it or provide a receipt for future compensation, but more common it was taken as a matter of necessity and justified accordingly by the commanders and individuals.

Logistics in the Florida Expedition of 1864

Logistics played a critical factor in the Florida Expedition of 1864 in a variety of ways. It determined the pace and scope of the US raids into the interior, playing a crucial factor in the timing as Seymour pressed for the use of a locomotive to supply his advancing brigades. Secondly, in the Battle of Olustee the logistical resupply of ammunition played an indisputably critical factor for both US and secessionist soldiers.

US supplies came via the sea from the east coast friendly-held Florida ports of St. Augustine and Jacksonville. From there, the main method utilized the railroads to transport the supplies via locomotive to Seymour's forward brigades. The dearth of working locomotives frustrated Gillmore's original plans, and his struggle to provide and maintain a repeatedly promised locomotive to support Seymour's forces in the field led to the main divergence of intention between Gillmore at his headquarters in Hilton Head, South Carolina, and Seymour in the field in Florida.⁵⁴

Seymour relied heavily on resupply efforts coming from his depot in Jacksonville directly out to his raiding forces along the route to Lake City, via wagon and the unreliable locomotive support. However, there was an advance depot established in the vicinity of Barber's Plantation to support the movement towards Lake City, but would not be adequately utilized during the engagement. The US Army's approach to foraging was restricted to taking from secessionist Florida government stores, not from private citizens, in an attempt to gain local goodwill while damaging the separatist

government. This limited the efficacy of foraging for the US Army forces as the secessionist government stores were already sparse and nearly all supplies were private claimed ownership. The mismanagement of logistics affected Seymour's operations at Olustee.⁵⁵

The secessionist's logistical issues were seriously acute overall, and specifically in separatist Florida very poor. By this time in the war, the secessionist suffered as a whole logistically to support both its people and its armies. However, in the case of the Florida Expedition of 1864, the secessionist forces were working with certain advantages with a simpler theory of logistics even if it was hard to execute in practice due to the overall shortages. The primary advantages were from interior lines, friendly population, and access to railroads and familiarity with the area.

Engineers

The professional engineer officer corps typically broke up into two categories, the Corps of Topographical Engineers and the Corps of Engineers. Topographical engineers, also known as Geographers, were map-makers, explorers, and surveyors, as opposed to the more traditionally understood Corps of Engineers focused on construction and fortifications. In 1863, the Corps of Engineers absorbed the smaller topographical corps under one Chief Engineer. As with the rest of the officer branches, engineers by profession found themselves in a variety of other positions, including field command of combat troops and vice versa.⁵⁶ Fifteen engineer officers resigned their commissions to serve in the secessionist armies, to include Generals Robert E. Lee, Pierre G.T. Beauregard, and Joseph E. Johnston, while several prominent engineer officers in the US Army rose to prominence during the war, such as Major Generals Montgomery C. Meigs, George G. Meade, and Gouverneur Warren.⁵⁷

Engineer support in the war went beyond mapmaking and fortification construction, although these were critical and common functions undertaken by the engineers. Additionally, the engineers became mobility and counter-mobility managers, alternately creating or rebuilding roads, bridges, and key infrastructure, facilitating the movement of armies or the impediment of opponents. These were either temporary efforts, such as the pontoon bridges to expedite fording and crossing river ways, or lasting efforts, such as creating or restoring permanent bridges. As wars settled more sedentary battlefields such as sieges relying on extensive fortifications and more supporting structures, and in stark acknowledgement of the benefit in defensive works, engineers in expertise if not in actual construc-

tion became even more relied on while it became more rare to have battles fought in the open, linear manner.

Engineers in the Florida Expedition of 1864

Engineers on both sides of the conflict, largely trained by West Point as an engineering focused institution, happened to play only minor roles at Olustee due to the nature of the meeting engagement. The US Army engineers serving in Florida during 1864 found their most useful utility in maintaining the means of transportation, roads, waterways, and rail lines.

On the US side, the engineer's indirect role in the tactical battles was often less beneficial. The secessionists did not have the extensive resources of their US opponents, and usually being on the defense, they did not have to construct as many railroads and bridges. The separatists normally at a disadvantage in capabilities and resources in comparison to the industrial US forces, but held distinct advantage in familiarity with the battlefield terrain. Specifically, the secessionists fought on their own terrain where many officers knew the ground from childhood or as with the reinforcements from Georgia had native Florida units included in their brigades and in large part the cavalry was Floridian.

The secessionists in Florida utilized the engineer assets mainly to construct fixed fortifications near Olustee to blunt the US advance towards the rail line at Lake City, however, events would lead to Olustee fought further to the east on open ground with neither side employing field fortifications. The secessionists at this stage in the war had become effective through repetition at restoring broken rail lines after US raids, and it was the threat of tearing rail lines that drew the secessionist forces from their hastily prepared fortifications at Olustee Station out to the meeting engagement three miles east of the rail station.

Communication

The armies had three basic operational-level communication methods, including the telegraph, courier (verbal or written message), and signal flags, with the additional tactical-level communication method of auditory (voice or bugle). The telegraph served as a fast-communicative, long-distance, most technologically modern method in the Civil War. The US Army benefited more through pre-existing laid telegraph lines and larger industrial capacity to lay new telegraph lines during steady, prolonged advances as seen in the northern and western theaters, compared to more rural secessionist areas and their less developed capability to lay new wires when advancing outside their territory. Much like the railroad, for the US

war effort, the telegraph efforts were subdivided into two parts: United States Military Telegraph and the US Army Signal Corps. The US Military Telegraph, like the USMRR, consisted of a combined civil-military department that operated the preexisting telegraph lines throughout the northern states and served as the primary operational-strategic connection of the field commanders to the War Department and Administration. The Army Signal Corps operated the field, more tactical temporary telegraph lines, set up for internal communication and patched into the US Military Telegraph for transmitting messages higher. Both telegraph organizations suffered from the expense of lines and upkeep, 19th Century telegraph technology was not cheap. Additionally, the Army Signal Corps tactical teams risked capture, and attack as they set up and operated field telegraph lines, mostly from guerilla/partisan attacks but also cavalry raids.⁵⁸

As for courier-borne messages, both armies utilized this capability, with the US Army benefiting from essential control of the sea, able to deliver water-borne messages quickly while the secessionists benefited from more familiarity with overland routes as they mainly operated within their own territory for the majority of the war. As with all courier methods, they were only as good as the messengers themselves, typically an aide or part of the commander's staff. In this case, the use of couriers naturally hindered continued staff work through its loss of an aide or staffer to carry the message. Additionally, messages in this manner were at risk of interception, loss, or in the case of verbal delivery the memory and accurate recitation of the messenger with a time-consuming method of obtaining clarification or alternative suggestion. Even hand written notes shared many of the same issues, interception, misinterpretation, prolonged response.⁵⁹

The employment of signal flags for communication of ground actions led to important tactical decisions based on identified key terrain to seize and hold to exploit height and visibility to maximize the visually based communication method. Major Alfred J. Myer is attributed with bringing flag telegraphy to the US Army and in time adopted by the secessionist forces. Colloquially known as "wig wag", flag telegraphy essentially was communication through choreographed flag waving to spell messages, and color-coded flags of various sizes. These flag signals could be seen up to fifteen miles, with larger flags allegedly seen upwards to 25 miles away, though this is largely effected by weather and terrain elevation. A series of fixed flag sites, known as "lines", further extended range of flag signaling, allowing a message passed from one fixed flag-signaling site to the next down the line. Though this extended flag signaling it did not match the speed of communication of the telegraph. Along with terrain and weather affecting the flag

signaling efforts, enemy action also did. Flag signaling teams were constant prioritized targets for the opponent and with the limitations of terrain, the ideal sites for them known and desired by both sides.⁶⁰

The tactical-level communication based on auditory methods largely remained the same with slight variations and changes, notably to bugle calls, as those employed in Napoleonic, linear-style warfare. Verbal commands and calls from officers, sergeants, and among the soldiers were common, if not reliable within the cacophony of combat. Likewise, the common use of bugle or drum calls, while applied at lower more tactical levels faced limitations of distance and reliability based on battlefield realities of sound and terrain.

Communication in the Florida Expedition of 1864

Telegraphic communication was the standard for the US forces, almost exclusively between Brigadier General Seymour and his superior Major General Gillmore. However, telegraphic communications did not always mean instant, as in certain cases delays in responses to even telegraphic communiqués were timely and costly in Gillmore's management of Seymour's forward movement.

For the most part, US field commanders relied most heavily on couriers for tactical command. Seymour at times issued orders directly to regimental commanders, bypassing brigade commanders at the tactical-level normally in person. However, when communicating via couriers, he utilized the appropriate chain of command.

Finegan relied heavily on couriers at the tactical level, and his interior, defensive lines added to the ease of courier information management. His simplistic battlefield command, essential delegation to one brigade commander to manage the fight did minimize confusion over orders but it also limited timeliness and seizing of opportunity. Though telegraphic communication did exist for Finegan back to his higher command in western Florida, it was not as necessary in his defensive plan as were constant courier contact with his two generally collocated maneuver brigades.

The battlefield exemplified the difficulty of a command system, which relied on auditory-based commands, either from voice command or bugle, in a flat, wooded area non-conductive to flag signaling and without telegraph infrastructure. Communication constraints only exacerbated the level of experience of leaders at various levels and that of the soldiery involved in the fighting.

Intelligence

A milestone in the evolution of US military intelligence was the formation of the Bureau of Military Information (BMI) within the Army of the Potomac in 1863 under then-Col. George H. Sharpe. This staff element was the American origin of the all-source intelligence processing methodology and greatly aided a succession of commanders until the end of the war with timely and relevant varied sourced information processed into accurate and actionable intelligence. The main sources of information for the BMI to analyze and process included enemy-oriented sources involving de-briefing deserters and interrogating prisoners to build order of battle situational awareness. Additionally, non-combatant sources included exploitation of open source journalistic newspapers reporting to provide insights to movements, context to information, and possible confirmation of information from other sources and the de-briefing of enslaved populations and US-loyal citizens. Finally, the traditional information gleaned from cavalry actions and reconnaissance provided commanders a directly controlled arm of information collection.⁶¹

Not all armies had access to the BMI, and its methodology did not always fully transfer when, as the US Army in the Western Theater, others attempted to copy the system. However, the fundamentals of how it gathered information was uniform across the war, deserters and prisoners, newspapers, and cavalry reports. Both opponents also utilized spy rings, though these were more a strategic intelligence asset rather than an operational one. The main difference between the Army of the Potomac with the BMI and the other field armies was not the method of information gathering but the consolidation, synthesis, and provided analysis to the commander, in this, few other field commanders benefited.

Intelligence in the Florida Expedition of 1864

The primary source for intelligence during the Florida expedition was the cavalry, however, both cavalry forces were largely employed more in a raid or screening capacity, resulting in limited timely intelligence passed back to the commanders. The other typical intelligence means normal to the war were mostly limited or non-existent to this campaign. Desertions were minimal and prior to the major engagement at Olustee prisoners were largely unavailable by either side to exploit. Likewise, newspapers as an open source availability played little role due to the speed of operations and advances contrary to the more prolonged stabilization of lines such as those in the Virginia area of conflict that allowed for the development of source across line and access to journalist reporting on the opposing side.

One aspect that Seymour's forces did have access to was runaway or liberated slave population in northeast Florida as a source for relative information, however, this benefit faded as Seymour's forces advanced further away from the US-held enclaves on the northeast coast during its short duration but relative long distance raid deeper into hostile secessionist Florida. Additionally, Seymour in Florida along with Gillmore managing from South Carolina did not have the benefit of a consolidated, coordinated staff element, such as the BMI in the northern Eastern Theater, devoted to the all-source analysis of any information that it did obtain, from either cavalry, slaves, open source, or enemy de-briefs.

Medical Services

Disease, infection of wounds, battlefield deaths, and surgery formed the principle experiences and focus of medical personnel during the war. Disease was the most common killer, normal for the period, and most medical professionals stood helpless in the face of many infections that originated from grievous battlefield wounds, far outstripping actual battlefield deaths.⁶² Organizational status and progress through evolutionary improvement and painful on-the-job educational experience. Over the course of the war, the US Army saw approximately 500 volunteer surgeons, another 250 Regular Army surgeons, with nearly 6,000 regimental medical officers, and near equal number of civilian contract surgeons who served at some point over the course of the war. The civilian contract surgeons were medical professionals either unable to serve or managed to avoid uniformed service. They mostly served the Army for short periods during high demand times, such as after major campaigns, or in city general hospitals when military wounded were sent there.⁶³ The war laid bare the inadequacies of the previously used ad hoc system of nurses, attendants, and orderlies coming from available manpower of the regiments as an extra duty. This method fell to wayside as unsustainable and an unacceptable drain on fighting strength of units and armies in desperate need of every able-bodied combatant. The grim realities lead to more permanent roles for certain individuals in medical support occupations. Development of field hospitals, based on a use of tents, due to the increasingly large number of wounded from the massive engagements and even more importantly sprawling field encampments became a hallmark of change in the US Army medical department. Field hospitals provided flexibility and overflow capacity to the more limited base or general hospitals normally occupying buildings and located in major cities or in some cases, houses, barns, and other structures temporarily taken over by armies near camps or battlefields to serve in addition to tent field hospitals.

Transportation of the mass amounts of wounded associated with the larger scale of combat than previously seen in America led to innovations in movement of wounded from the battlefield in variations and evolutions of first two wheeled ambulances to more stable Rucker ambulances of two axles, four wheels. For longer duration trips after removal from the battlefield for extended care, trains and later ships were refitted specifically to transport wounded further into safe areas.⁶⁴

While much of the challenges and conditions faced by the US medical services applied to the secessionist efforts, there were some aspects unique to their circumstances. As with their army, the secessionist medical services started from scratch as opposed to growing from a nascent service as with the US Army. The Medical College of South Carolina in Charleston founded in 1824 was the south's first medical school. By 1861 there were 21 medical schools within the seceded state territories from which they could draw on aside from the initial medical professionals who withdrew from the US service. However, due to costs and realities of war, all but one of these schools were forced to close during the first years of the conflict, with the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond able to remain open. Length of instruction, faculty, and enrollment in these states leading to 1861 matched those of medical institutions for higher learning in the remaining loyal US states, even though students indicated their training at both northern and southern schools were at times lacking.⁶⁵

Initially, three surgeons and 21 assistant surgeons departed the US Army and formed the nucleus of the secessionist medical corps. The rapid growth, like the US Army but coupled with the lack of any initial base to draw on, led to hiring unqualified practitioners, many later needing to be removed by medical examining boards, and a high reliance on private and contract medical care that likewise faced a quality control issue for the secessionist forces.⁶⁶

The secessionist largely followed the procedures for hospitals, transportation, and management of the wounded and sick like the US Army, with the exception of the secessionist quickly losing waterway transportation as a means of movement and more limited railroad infrastructure. Two key states, Virginia and Georgia, did boast pre-war ratings as the sixth and seventh among the US for railroad mileage, although the war would take its toll, especially on Virginia's rails early and Georgia's later. However, transportation, such as railroads, were maximized, such as the sprawling 8,000 bed Chimborazo hospital complex in Richmond. The war-caused transportation breakdown across the secessionist territories as the war dragged on directly influenced transportation of not only wounded

and ill but also of medical supplies, resulting in field and some hospital accounting lack of supplies and instruments.⁶⁷ Likewise, the secessionist altered their manning policy for medical service support from using invalid or additional duty soldiers as supporting medical professionals to having fulltime medical attendants to help the doctors.⁶⁸

Medical Services in the Florida Expedition of 1864

For Olustee, the attachment of the medical ship *Cosmopolitan* and two other regular transport ships greatly aided in the care, treatment and transportation of US wounded to better more advanced care facilities after the Battle of Olustee, namely to facilities at Hilton Head and Beaufort, S.C. The Chief Surgeon Adolph Majer also instructed limited medical supplies be carried as the medical hospital ship *Cosmopolitan* would follow with fully stored medical supplies. He commented that the recovered wounded were largely of minor wounds and the current facilities at Jacksonville and Saint Augustine would suffice, and that there was no need to add field hospitals.⁶⁹

In the secessionist forces, a systemic problem was a lack of trained surgeons and medical supplies, this manifested in Florida. By the end of 1864, Florida had four major military hospitals, mostly oriented in the north and middle of the state, which would have supported Olustee casualties (in Quincy, Tallahassee, Madison, and Lake City).⁷⁰ At Olustee this inferiority of medical facilities and training for the secessionist was exemplified in an assistant inspector general, Henry Bryan, report made in Lake City nearly two months after the battle (10 April 1864). The report criticized the cleanliness and the level of care the still recovering wounded received, both secessionist and US, to include segregated African-American soldiers. The report details how the massive influx of wounded overwhelmed the city, resulting in a haphazard occupation of scattered buildings being impressed into service as hospitals. Diet, utensils, medicine, and instruments are sorely lacking in the report. It also goes on to highlight the troubling emergence of a growing small pox spread through poor isolation. The medical response after Olustee remained disorganized, poorly supported, and the logistically overwhelmed in secessionist Florida.⁷¹

Endnotes

For more expansive detailed analytical examination of the armies, their tactics, weapons, and doctrine, please see “Part I: *Civil War Armies*” in Dr. Curtis S. King, Dr. William Glenn Robertson, and Lt. Col. Steven E. Clay (US Army, Retired), *Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign, Virginia, 4 May to 15 June 1864: A Study in Operational-Level Command*, Second Edition, (Combat Studies Institute Press: Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2009), and also Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*, Second Edition, (Crowood Press: London, 2014), and Brent Nosworthy, *The Bloody Crucible of Courage: Fighting Methods and Combat Experience of the Civil War* (Carroll & Graf Publishers: New York, 2005).

1. Clayton R. Newell, *The Regular Army Before the Civil War, 1845-1860* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2014), 8, and 50-51.

2. Newell, 22.

3. Dr. Curtis S. King, Dr. William Glenn Robertson, and Lt. Col. Steven E. Clay (US Army, Retired), *Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign, Virginia, 4 May to 15 June 1864: A Study in Operational-Level Command*, Second Edition (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009), 4.

4. King, et al, *Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign*, 15-16. Horse artillery was present in limited number with the US Army forces at Olustee, see Annex A: Order of Battle.

5. David Frey, *Failure to Pursue: How the Escape of Defeated Forces Prolonged the Civil War* (Jefferson: MacFarland Press, 2016), 242-243.

6. Gillmore’s entire force included additional infantry regiments, including other African-American regiments; however, these were used in occupational security and stability operations and were not part of his offensive campaign and maneuver force, nor engaged in combat during the expedition or present at the culminating battle of Olustee. As such, these additional regiments and secessionist forces in Middle Florida with similar roles are not included in this study.

7. *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901, (Hereafter cited as ORA), Part 1, Vol. 35, 279.

8. ORA, Part 1, Vol. 35, 288.

9. ORA, Part 1, Vol. 35, 331.

10. William A. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword: The United States Colored Troops, 1862-1867* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 2011), 6.

11. Dobak, 8.

12. Keith P. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom: The Camp Life of Black Soldiers During the Civil War* (Kent, KS: Kent State Press, 2002), 52-53, 55.

13. William H. Nulty, *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990), 158.

14. Oliver Willcox Norton, *Army Letters 1861-1865* (Chicago: O.L. Deming, 1903), 214-215.

15. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword*, 9.
16. Dobak, 11.
17. Dobak, 11 and 13. See page 11 for detailed outlining of the USCT regimental composition.
18. King, et al, *Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign*, 2.
19. Stephen W. Sears, *Lincoln's Lieutenants: The High Command of the Army of the Potomac* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2017), 36.
20. Newell, *The Regular Army*, 21 and 48-50.
21. King, et al, *Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign*, 6.
22. John David Smith, "Let Us All Be Grateful that We Have Colored Troops that Will Fight," in *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era*, ed. John David Smith (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 36.
23. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 12.
Norton, *Army Letters*, 184 and Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 44-46.
24. Norton, *Army Letters 1861-1865*, 188 and 184.
25. Smith, "Let Us All Be Grateful," 37, 39 and Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle*, 21.
26. King, et al, *Staff Ride Handbook for the Overland Campaign*, 11-13.
27. King, et al, 11-13.
28. King, et al, 14.
29. King, et al, 15-16.
30. ORA, Part 1, Vol. 35, 307-308.
31. Newell, *The Regular Army*, 42-43.
32. Newell, 44. Hardee later resigned and joined the secessionist forces and served as a lieutenant general.
33. Newell, 43.
34. Frey, *Failure to Pursue*, 239 and 249.
For more detailed and expansive coverage of logistical structure and activities during the American Civil War, see Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1989), 333-452, and James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775-1953*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1997), 159-239.
35. Robert O'Harrow Jr., *The Quartermaster: Montgomery C. Meigs, Lincoln's General, Master Builder of the Union Army* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2016), 132-133.
36. Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 334.
37. Risch, 335, 340-341, and 345.
38. O'Harrow Jr., *The Quartermaster*, 128 and Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 386-387.
39. Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 38.

40. O'Harrow Jr., *The Quartermaster*, 131.
41. Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 420.
42. O'Harrow Jr., *The Quartermaster*, 167.
43. Christopher R. Gabel, *Railroad Generalship: Foundations of Civil War Strategy* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 1997), 22.
44. Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 382-384 and 395 and 397, 451.
45. Risch, 395-397.
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47. Gabel, 18.
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49. Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 415.
50. O'Harrow Jr., *The Quartermaster*, 157.
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57. Griffin, "Strategic-Operational Command and Control," 18-19.
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60. Gillett, 288.
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62. H.H. Cunningham, *Doctors in Gray: The Confederate Medical Service*, (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1970), 10-12, and 35.
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64. Cunningham, 120, 122, 51 and 161-162.
65. Cunningham, 71-75.
66. ORA, Part 1, Vol. 35, 301.
67. Cunningham, *Doctors in Gray*, 54 and 290.
68. Henry Bryan, "Report of Inspection of the General Hospital at Lake City, Fla," 10 April 1864.
69. ORA, Part 1, Vol. 35, 301

70. Cunningham, *Doctors in Gray*, 54 and 290.

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Part II

Campaign Overview

Strategic Setting

At the end of 1863, the strategic situation confronting US leaders in Washington and secessionist leaders in Richmond revolved around the aftermath of the Battle of Chattanooga. Major General Ulysses S. Grant's defeat of Gen. Braxton Bragg provided the US with opportunities in the west.¹ However, the emergency transfer of two US Army corps from Maj. Gen. George G. Meade's Army of the Potomac in the east brought an end to Meade's maneuvering against Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, thereby causing a cessation of major operations in northern Virginia. Minimal effort occurred in the east, culminating when Meade pressed forward as Lee slipped across the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers at Rappahannock Station in November of 1864. As 1864 began, the western theater was quiet as both armies struggled to recover from the carnage of Chattanooga. Operations in Virginia were at a lull as both armies had significant portions of their manpower reallocated to support their forces fighting in Chattanooga.² Despite the lull, lesser operations in the southern theater continued and saw much of the heavier fighting that typically occurred further north and west.

Major General Quincy A. Gillmore's Department of the South chronically suffered from neglect as the US leadership saw the broader southern theater as unimportant, Florida even less so, as the least populated secessionist state. The US War Department rarely focused on operations outside Virginia and Mississippi prior to mid-1864.³ The US Army consistently used the southern department as a source of reinforcements for the attrition battles further north, creating vast fluctuations in manpower availability to the department for any internal campaigns and long-term planning.⁴ In late 1863 into early 1864, Gillmore's department was largely tied up in South Carolina siege operations against Charleston, South Carolina. Additionally, multiple short term, limited goal expeditionary raids occurred up and down the coasts of Georgia and northeastern Florida, mainly intended to harass the secessionists, support the US Navy's coastal blockade, and provide access to African-American populations for recruitment to newly authorized African-American army regiments.⁵

For the secessionists of Gen. Pierre G. T. Beauregard's tristate Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, the situation was even more dismal. Even with Gillmore's neglect in comparison to the other fronts, Be-

auregard's department faced existential danger from the US. The secessionists fought against three lines of effort, the US naval blockade strangling them logistically, coastal raids and siege operations against a major separatist stronghold, the culturally and politically symbolic Charleston, and the growing large-scale ground threat from the combined US armies of the west after the battle of Chattanooga opened up Tennessee, threatening Georgia and then inevitably the coastal Carolinas.⁶ In this degree, Beauregard's approach to Florida was similar to that of the upper US leadership—largely seen as unimportant. However, it was an important enough source of critical commissary support to his and further northern secessionist armies in Virginia, and a reservoir of enslaved labor.⁷ While Beauregard's forces also served as a ready source of reinforcements for other Virginia and western secessionist armies, there were dual pressures to protect the aforementioned resources found in Florida in addition to the basic requirement to defend the seceded states within in his department from US occupation.

Campaign Opening Moves, Florida: The Battleground State

For the Florida Expedition, Major General Gillmore requested two things: reinforcements and more horses. He asked for the less demanded African-American regiments, called United States Army Colored Troops (USCT), with a clever plan to then swap out veteran white regiments conducting garrison duties with the USCT reinforcements allowing him to use the white regiments in the upcoming campaign in Florida. If he could get additional fresh, but untested, troops, fill the parapets and guard the bases, it could free the more experienced troops for Florida. Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, the general-in-chief's reply was, "As the wants of the Department of the Gulf are much more pressing than yours, a part of the colored regiments have been sent there."⁸ Halleck's message was clear: Gillmore must undertake the expedition with the troops he had, including the large portion of untried soldiers.

Gillmore additionally requested 1,500 horses and equipment to support his Florida expedition, allowing him to mount a larger part of his infantry and increase his speed and mobility across country, following his concept of the Florida Expedition being a large-scale raid, moving fast across a hardly contested peninsula seizing goods, recruiting slaves, and holding railroads for following foot infantry.⁹ Initially, Halleck confused by Gillmore's unclear and ill-communicated objectives for the expedition, indicated his disinclination to support any additional requests.

Gillmore replied by specifying four purposes to the expedition. First, he intended to open Florida commerce up to trade with the rest of the

Union. Second, to deny the other separatist states access to Florida's food supplies, mainly beef cattle from Florida was commonly shipped north to the other secessionist armies once the supplies from the western seceded states were cut off with the fall of Vicksburg and US control of the Mississippi River in July 1863. A part of this objective intended to disrupt the allegation that secessionists were tearing up Florida railroads to be re-laid in Georgia and the southwest to increase railroad mileage. Third, to provide another outlet for recruitment of additional African-American regiments from the Florida enslaved population. Lastly, the expedition intended to achieve enough Floridians taking the oath of allegiance to the United States "to inaugurate measures for the speedy restoration of Florida to her allegiance."¹⁰ With enough loyal, Union oath-taken Floridians, the state would be able to participate in the upcoming contested 1864 presidential election in the similar manner of the US-occupied Louisiana and Tennessee former secessionist states. The Lincoln Administration declared any state reaching ten percent of its 1860 eligible electorate that took an oath of allegiance to the United States formed a new state government recognized by Washington. Along with this oath came a pardon and amnesty. As for congressional representation, the US Congress reserved the right to reestablish senators and representatives of returning states.¹¹ Even so explained, Halleck's initial denial stood concerning Gillmore's additional support requests for his Florida expedition, though confirming permission for Gillmore to undertake his expedition with what he had as he saw fit.

The US Army conducted several successful forays along Florida's northeastern coast, with the large port city of Jacksonville changing hands a few times. Virtually all the US expeditions were short-term, with limited aims. Though largely successful against the limited secessionist forces in Florida opposing these incursions, they lacked long-term, significant gains due to the US leadership commonly cutting them short and redirecting the department's efforts and regiments elsewhere. The most lasting impact was the recruitment of African-Americans to bolster the ranks of the growing USCT forces, notably those of the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Infantry.¹² This provided Gillmore with a sense of superiority of arms over the secessionist forces he anticipated Seymour to face in the expedition of 1864.

The US Army's Florida Expedition began on 4 February 1864. Gillmore, the department commander, gave field command to Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, who commenced his amphibious movement from Hilton Head, South Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. As soon as the US forces settled in with minimal contest at Jacksonville, Seymour began pushing his mounted brigade under Col. Guy Henry, the force of cavalry, mounted

infantry, and attached “foot cavalry”—fast marching infantry. Occupational duties and securing of his lines of communication consumed nearly half of his force, leaving only three infantry brigades and his cavalry brigade available for sustained offensive actions, cutting his original forces of 7,000 soldiers to 5,500 available for the campaign. Notably, the 2nd South Carolina Infantry, an African-American regiment largely made up of Floridians recruited during an earlier expedition, was left to secure Jacksonville even though they had far better knowledge of the area than the other regiments Seymour would take with him to the Florida interior.¹³ The cavalry brigade saw the majority of the command’s action as they ranged far from the main force, pushing the limits of the US Army’s operational reach. Gillmore began pressing the War Department, particularly to secure locomotive support for the expedition along the railroad into the Florida interior. The important line ran through Baldwin, Olustee, and Lake City, all of which had rail stations and resided at intersections with wagon trails, Baldwin being the only one serving as a railroad hub.

Henry’s Raids

On the night of the 8 February, the mounted force under Henry pushed out of Jacksonville on the Florida Expedition’s inaugural raid. The force’s composition included the 40th Massachusetts Infantry (mounted), the Independent Battalion Massachusetts Cavalry, with support from Elder’s Horse Battery of artillery. They surprised the nearest secessionist forces at Camp Finegan, quickly scattering them. They succeeded in taking over a hundred prisoners and capturing eight artillery pieces without loss.¹⁴

Colonel Henry’s force pressed further, raiding the railroad junction at Baldwin, twenty miles west of Jacksonville, continuing its deep raid. In the cavalry’s wake, another African-American regiment was consumed as the 3rd USCT assumed security and stability duties at Baldwin.¹⁵ Only a few days later, Colonel Henry’s mounted force was ambushed at Barber’s Plantation by secessionist defenders, fighting through them pushing to Sanderson where the US Army advance stalled when faced by a small secessionist infantry force before it melted into the woods. Simultaneously, riverboat raids launched out of the US enclave at Fernandina, just north of Jacksonville, captured numerous prisoners, recruited Africans to man future USCT regiments, and seized over one million dollars of goods, while pressing as far as 50 miles inland.¹⁶ When the US Army mounted brigade attacked Sanderson, they faced the first significant resistance by secessionist forces, although this force broke and retreated after sustained pressure from the mounted US force.

This first resistance at Barber's Plantation turned Seymour cautious, and he wrote to Gillmore about the hardened resolve of Florida to remain in the confederacy. However, he noted the successes the expedition thus far, urging caution with a withdrawal to a Jacksonville-Palatka-Fernandina defensive line of the coast to hold what they had already taken. Gillmore replied, directing him to concentrate his forces around Sanderson and not risk defeat while pursuing the retreating, scattered secessionist defenders to Lake City where reports suggested a gathering force.¹⁷

The secessionist reinforcements concentrating on Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan's location near Lake City looked to make a stand. On 12 February, Gillmore ordered Seymour to concentrate his forces at Baldwin, a small adjustment from his previous order to hold Sanderson. This directive came from reports of a mounted secessionist force potentially threatening Seymour's right (north) flank. He further instructed Seymour to deploy scouts to his front and right flank. He ended his communiqué with a terse but telling line, "The locomotive has not arrived yet."¹⁸ A day later Seymour responded to Gillmore writing, "I have no apprehension of the force you mention." He further went to say a retreat to Baldwin would "make it impossible for us to advance again." He finished with a request stating, "All goes well here, and there are several operations of importance that can be effected, upon which I should like to consult you."¹⁹ The following day, Seymour sent Henry's 40th Massachusetts Cavalry on a raid south to Gainesville, where they remained distributing the separatist government food stores to the locals while not taking or destroying any private property. Two days later, secessionist Florida cavalry drove them off. Henry's hard-pressed mounted force continually and aggressively prosecuted deep raids into separatist Florida. On the 18 February, elements of Henry's brigade, the dismounted attached infantry (foot cavalry) marched such great distances supporting the mounted portions of Henry's command that their feet bled, and they demanded to go no further.²⁰ This was the first example of exhaustion plaguing the combat effectiveness of the US forces.

Seymour sent Gillmore another communication of intention on 17 February. Seymour not only ignored Gillmore's standing order to consolidate at Baldwin, but Seymour communicated his intention to advance beyond even Sanderson. In his communication, he acknowledged the frailty of his logistical situation due to the absence of the locomotives, these delays forcing him to remain where he was able to feed his men and his difficulty accumulating enough supply stores to move towards Lake City. "I propose to go without supplies... with the object of destroying the railroad near the Suwannee that there will be no hander of

carrying away any portion... All troops are therefore being moved up to Barber's."²¹ Although clearly ordered to reconsolidate and pull back to Baldwin and advance no further, Seymour believed he faced an opportunity and requested Gillmore to come to confer. Gillmore did not go south to Florida, and in absence of any further communication, Seymour ignored his direction to withdraw to Baldwin, instead pursuing a perceived opportunity to complete one of the expedition's stated goals: the denial of railroads being broken up in north Florida for shipment northwest to connect Georgia to separatist western Florida.

With this advance west from Barber's Plantation to destroy the railroad across the Suwannee, Seymour ventured towards the concentrated secessionist forces at Lake City. Since the landings on 8 February, Finegan accumulated all the secessionist forces he could to block the westward advance of the US Army expedition. By the morning of 20 February, when Seymour's command left Barber's Plantation for Lake City, Finegan received his final reinforcements in the form of Brig. Gen. Alfred Colquitt's brigade from Georgia. The immediate demand to defend a final supply reservoir Florida had become for the secessionist forces as a whole a deciding factor in Beauregard balancing broader risk with his prompt supplying of critical reinforcements to Finegan. The loss of the Mississippi River denied the eastern half of the secessionist access to Texas cattle, with Virginia largely denuded of resources after years of foraging; Florida remained a primary supplier of food for the secessionist armies across the theaters east of the Mississippi.

Major General Seymour later recalled that with the best information he had on hand he expected that the secessionist forces he faced around Lake City were between 4,000 to 5,000 men. With his own force roughly 5,500 strong, Seymour admitted he advanced against orders, with limited supplies, and far from reinforcement, against a nearly— if not exactly— sized enemy force, who were on the defense, automatically giving the secessionist an advantage over the attacking US Army forces.

The Day of Battle

The night prior to the battle, neither army sought to update its situational awareness. Neither army sent out patrols for reconnaissance or solicited any information from locals. Finegan remained committed to his plan to build field fortifications near Olustee Station, 13 miles east of Lake City. He displayed no intention to advance, but rather preferred to allow the US forces to be drawn into an attack on his prepared defensive works. Meanwhile, Seymour felt no apprehension for his advance and planned

to move his forces to Lake City where he expected to meet secessionist resistance. Seymour intention was to seize and destroy the railroad bridge over the Suwannee River.²²

There were two avenues of approach the US Army's advance took. These were the dirt road paralleling the more cleared railroad track and the track itself. Smaller sandy dirty trails also converged on the trail junction at Olustee. On the morning of 20 February, Seymour's command commenced its march towards Lake City at 0600. He divided the US forces into three groups for the march. The advance guard was Colonel Henry's mounted brigade and four cannons of Battery B, 1st US Artillery, horse artillery. Following the advance guard was the main body, made up of Col. Joseph Hawley's brigade with six guns from Battery E, 3rd US Artillery, and then Col. William Barton's New York brigade with attached artillery support from six guns of Battery M, 1st US Artillery and Battery C, Rhode Island Heavy Artillery. Accompanying the main body traveled the medical and supply trains and Seymour. Last in the movement was the rear guard, the reserve brigade of Col. James Montgomery composed of the African-American regiments.²³

The US force chose speed over security based on previous actions since the expedition's landing, when most difficulty with the secessionist was keeping them from escaping. Thus far the US Army had faced minimal resistance with Henry's cavalry raids conducted with near impunity, experiencing only significant resistance around Barber's Plantation and even then the secessionist had in the end abandoned the field to the US cavalry force. This presented Seymour and his commanders with a misplaced sense of confidence in a perceived weak will and poor battlefield performance of their opponent before they faced Finegan's organized and Georgia reinforced force at Olustee. This overconfidence resulted in a less disciplined approach march and a confused initial engagement, lacking sound tactical employment and understanding. The cavalry consistently outpaced its supporting infantry, and the cannons were unprepared for quick action.²⁴ The US mounted force encountered scattered resistance after only an hour departure from Barber's Ford site (the forward most US Army camp), facing only some dismounted and mounted secessionist who fired a few shots and then retired, drawing the US cavalry forward. Separatist Col. Caraway Smith, commanding Finegan's cavalry brigade, advanced around 1000 to ascertain the distance of the US advance. A combined force of elements of Colquitt and Col. George Harrison's infantry regiments supporting, moved forward under the command of Colquitt. They moved forward near noon to support the secessionist cavalry having made contact with the US mounted force.

Finegan's concept was to use the cavalry and these two advance infantry regiments to skirmish and draw the US forces back to the secessionist main lines at the constructed breastworks outside Olustee Station—to become Camp Beauregard.²⁵ However, US cavalry commander Colonel Henry stopped his pursuit until the lead infantry under Hawley caught up.²⁶

Between 1400 and 1500, nearly fifteen miles into the march, the lead elements of Hawley's brigade, the 7th Connecticut having passed through Sanderson, linked up with Henry's mounted force. Following the 7th Connecticut one and a half miles behind was the 7th New Hampshire in the center and 8th USCT was the trail element. The brigade's supporting artillery traveled in the center with the New Hampshire infantry. Seymour ordered Hawley to deploy the Connecticut infantry as skirmishers, at first only a few companies, but he quickly ordered forward the entire regiment, though this regiment was understrength from leave and expired enlistments, consolidated into four companies from original ten.

Of Hawley's three infantry regiments, only the Connecticut regiment was full of veterans, however, due to a leave rotation was not fully manned. The New Hampshire regiment was a veteran organization but had just received a large influx of untested troops to replace the expiration of many veteran enlistments. The 8th USCT was led by experienced white officers, but its rank and file African-American troops were entirely untested in battle.²⁷

The 7th Connecticut moved forward as skirmishers, concentrating on the north side of the railway line and dirt road. The secessionists fell back into new lines that Colquitt's infantry regiments and Harrison's brigade formed. At this time, Capt. Benjamin Skinner served as acting commander of the Connecticut regiment since Colonel Hawley, the normal regimental commander, was acting brigade commander. Skinner had been on the sick list that morning, but to be with his men he accompanied them to the field and performed so admirably that he was mentioned favorably for his actions in the official reports of the battle.²⁸ Skinner responded to the concentrating fire by bringing up Elder's Horse Battery. The skirmishers laid down, allowing the battery to fire a round overhead, then stood up and advanced a short distance and then laid down again to allow for a second artillery round fired overhead.²⁹ Once the battery fired the second round, it received a reply by a barrage of three to four enemy

guns. The initial artillery exchange denoted how the fight was fast becoming hotter than initially thought by both sides.

Seymour ordered Captain Skinner to advance his entire regiment together to capture the enemy's artillery, if possible. Skinner deployed his regiment to the right of the road, stacking his reserve companies to his right flank to avoid a flanking movement by the arrayed secessionist forces.³⁰ Skinner's regiment advanced 200 to 300 yards to take the enemy artillery, suddenly finding itself facing the secessionist's first organized line of resistance. When the US elements engaged the secessionists around 1400 they had not eaten or rested in seven hours, having marched nearly 16 miles over loose sand for the units walking the railroad and its parallel dirt road or through boggy turf and knee-deep water for the units that flanked the road.³¹

On the separatist side, around noon Finegan's plans began to change. He ordered Colquitt to move forward portions of his brigade and parts of Harrison's brigade forward to stop reported US destruction of the railroad. Finegan later claimed the apparent lack of aggression of the US Army, likely Henry's mounted force's halt for the infantry to catch up, inspired him to send forward Colquitt to press the issue. Advancing forward under orders from Finegan, Colquitt took field command while Finegan remained with the reserve forces at the defensive works outside Lake City. Colquitt advanced to the most forward secessionist position, preparing the line for the approaching US skirmishing infantry from Skinner's Connecticut regiment.

Colquitt arranged the defense centered on the railroad and dirt road, pushing out units to both sides, while keeping the majority of the artillery stationed on the road. The field, with its scattered pines and no underbrush, fast became the battleground neither general expected³² Neither side having time to prepare defensive positions on the impromptu battlefield both would fight from formations or from behind the limited trees.

Soon after the deployment of Colquitt, Finegan worried the advance force he sent forward to prod a seemingly cautious US formation may become tangled with too great a force to withdraw back to the defensive works. Finegan made the decision to send forward Colonel Harrison with virtually the rest of the secessionist forces starting around 1530. The piecemeal employment, thereby decided the fight would take place at Ocean Pond outside of Olustee on open ground and not at Camp Beauregard with the prepared defensive positions.³³ Likewise, as the secessionist general sent his regiments forward haphazardly, the US commander employed

his brigades forward individually, neither side concentrating their forces for decisive maneuver, drawing the engagement out from the first shots around 1400 until the close of the battle around 1800.

For a short time, Skinner's 7th Connecticut faced the concentrated power of the secessionist line, and did so in scattered skirmishing formation until Skinner pulled his reserve companies forward. The rapid fire of the Connecticut soldiers' Spencer repeating rifles played havoc on the 64th Georgia as the Union forces advanced, pushing the separatist line back a couple of hundred yards before they regrouped and began a seesaw, forcing the Connecticut soldiers back.

Once Seymour realized his advancing skirmish towards Lake City had become a meeting engagement just east of Olustee Station, he pushed the artillery forward in the center to strike the secessionist lines while an infantry regiment anchored the artillery's flank, protecting it from enemy attack. With one brigade tied to anchoring the supporting artillery, Seymour intended to swing his second brigade around the US right, to flank the separatist lines.³⁴

Hawley's brigade made the first attempt. As Hawley's initial regiment, the 7th Connecticut retreated on the north side of the road, he ordered the 7th New Hampshire Infantry Regiment forward in their place. The New Hampshire soldiers intended to anchor the north flank of the US artillery on the road, with the untried 8th USCT directly protecting the artillery along the railroad. For Seymour's tactic to work, these two infantry regiments had to hold the artillery's line while Barton's advancing New Yorkers became the maneuver brigade, flanking the secessionist line pinned by the US artillery.

Artillery played a critical role in battles of the period, however, at Olustee the influence and effect of the artillery on the battle was minimal, beginning with Seymour's artillery out front too far too early. The artillery pushed out, and the two infantry regiments failed to anchor on the cannons flank effectively. By the time the US artillery concentrated, it was said to be "within one hundred yards of the enemy front" by a *New York Times* reporter witnessing the battle.³⁵ Though perhaps the close distance was an exaggeration, the artillery's advanced exposure was true.

The secessionist volleys targeted the US artillery immediately with a devastating fire. Within the first 20 minutes, 40 of the 50 US Army artillery draft horses fell; 45 of the 85 artillerymen killed, or wounded.³⁶ The artillery never recovered from the initial blow, and struggled the entire fight to support the US infantry. Their exposure and heavy losses neutralized them

for the remainder of battle.³⁷ Artillery, though the ground was open and flat, the skies clear, and the opposing forces both out in the open did not play a critical role. During the developing engagement, the artillerymen failed to properly employ their guns, and the continuous infantry musketry throughout the four-hour long engagement kept them from ever having the lull to properly set up their field pieces.

The first US disaster of the day was the rout of the 7th New Hampshire Regiment. While the New Hampshire soldiers advanced along the northern route, they encountered the retreating 7th Connecticut, and instantly came under heavy enemy fire. The confusion of passing the lines of the Connecticut troops and the intensifying secessionist fire as the Georgians advanced to meet the 7th New Hampshire became too much for the New Hampshire unit and their lines broke.³⁸

Though the 7th New Hampshire had seen many battles previously, the ranks were only half filled with veterans, the rest untried soldiers.³⁹ They reorganized themselves towards the rear of the lines, and for the remainder of the battle formed a battle line and waited.⁴⁰ Hawley located the reconstituted 7th Connecticut resupplying their exhausted ammunition and moved the Connecticut formation to the south of Colonel Barton's fast approaching New York brigade as it marched to the north of the road, filling the gap created by the broken New Hampshire unit.⁴¹ The only remaining regiment of Hawley's brigade still engaged was the untested 8th USCT moving to the edge of the road near the exposed artillery.

Unlike the untried 64th Georgia, with a veteran unit beside it to bolster it against the 7th Connecticut's furious onslaught, the isolated 8th USCT bore the full brunt of the enemy fire while Barton's New Yorkers moved forward. One of the critical factors in the initial performance of a unit in the face of its first fight is the influence and actions of its leaders. Colonel Hawley was the regimental commander of the 7th Connecticut regiment but acted as the brigade commander. Instead of accompanying the untested unit, Hawley followed the 7th New Hampshire to the north side of the road, where Hawley's own 7th Connecticut was retreating while under fire. After the New Hampshire formation broke and both the New Hampshire and Connecticut regiments were re-forming to the rear as Barton's brigade advanced, Hawley remained with them, mostly with the reconstituting 7th Connecticut. While Hawley looked after these two regiments, his untried 8th USCT received its first baptism of fire. There is no evidence of racial prejudice, although he did look to his brigade's two white regiments and did not go to the front with his one African-American regiment, of note one of those two regiments was in fact Hawley's own.

The 8th USCT was ordered to a run, a “double-quick” half of a mile to the front. As they arrived and attempted to deploy from line of march to battle line they did so under concentrated enemy fire as they were the only US infantry regiment on the field. Half of the regiment did not even have their first round loaded before they came under fire. They still wore their knapsacks, not having time to discard them along the approach march, and their sergeants wore their scarlet sashes, making them, along with the always-conspicuous officers, perfect targets for enemy sharpshooters.⁴² Hearing the sound of the guns, they thought they were from Henry’s cavalry skirmishing with enemy pickets. They knew they were moving up to the fight and to prove themselves, but they did not understand the full situation and arrived under fire, and unprepared

The regiment began to take fire coming from its south flank, which was completely uncovered. Lieutenant Oliver Norton, of the 8th USCT, wrote his regiment was “drilled too much for dress parade and too little for the field... They can march well, but they cannot shoot rapidly or with effect, some of them can, but the greater part cannot.”⁴³ The musket fire was short range and intense. Struggling to get into the fight, Col. Charles W. Fribley, commanding the regiment, gave the order to retire, firing as they moved back to find support. Shortly, enemy fire struck Fribley, killing him where he stood. His death was soon followed by the severe wounding of his second-in-command, Major Burritt. Seymour’s after-action report attributed the breaking of the 8th USCT to the loss of their fearless leader and not to any lack of skill or devotion. With both the commander and the executive officer killed, command of the regiment fell to Capt. Romanzo Bailey and the regiment began to break.⁴⁴

The 8th USCT stood under withering fire, in confusion, struggling to fight for an hour and a half. The 8th USCT attempted to rally on the artillery but by then command had fallen to Captain Bailey and he noticed that they were nearly exhausted of ammunition. For the third time the regimental commander, this time now only a company commander, ordered a final retreat.⁴⁵ As the regiment fell back it became intermingled with the US artillery on the road, secessionist to the front and to the south flanking them and a road crowded with westward advancing follow-on Union infantry. The 8th USCT had extremely limited maneuverability as they fell back, only increasing their suffering. This congestion and fierce musketry and booming artillery naturally only added to the tendency of flight for those in their first battle.

As Hawley’s brigade was breaking up, Barton’s New York brigade arrived, swinging to the north side of the road to fill the New Hampshire’s

regiment's gap. The fighting had not exceeded twenty minutes before Colonel Barton received the orders to move forward, but due to the crowded roads and the distance of the approach march, it would take time before the New Yorkers were in line of battle, during which time Hawley's brigade reeled and fell back.⁴⁶ While the 8th USCT weathered its storm on the southern flank of the US line, the New Yorkers began the fight over the cultivated, open field on the northern flank. Barton's brigade came to reinforce the Union line. The seesaw battle was hard fought, each side struggling to advance and alternately being pressed back.

On the other side of the field as the second US Army brigade became engaged, Colquitt sent back for more reinforcements and resupply of ammunition.⁴⁷ Finegan dispatched Colonel Harrison with the rest of his brigade, bringing Colquitt the 23rd Georgia, the 1st Georgia Regulars, the rest of the 32nd Georgia, and 6th Florida Battalion with a light artillery battery. Colquitt immediately fed these reinforcements directly into his fighting line. The 6th Florida Battalion was sent to the extreme southern flank, enfilading the 8th USCT, firing into their exposed flank, playing a significant part in the USCT regiment's dissolution and capturing the guns and national colors. Meanwhile, the 23rd Georgia went to the north flank, buttressing the weary 64th Georgia infantrymen. Harrison's arrival with the Georgian infantry and the replacement artillery moved forward to the line, joining the others while the artillery simply did a battle handoff where the new artillery replaced the exhausted and out of ammunition artillery in the center of their line.⁴⁸ For the secessionist forces, a supply crisis arose. They were running out ammunition just as the Barton's brigade stubbornly engaged the north flank even as the 8th USCT collapsed on the southern flank. Colquitt ordered a halt to the advance while the recently arrived units maintained a constant fire to keep the US Army's attempts to advance in check, but the regiments from earlier in the day remained, bayonets fixed, not firing a shot, holding their ground waiting for ammunition.⁴⁹

Colquitt gave Harrison command of the northern portion of the battle line and when Harrison arrived there found what Colquitt already knew—a dangerous lack of ammunition. Harrison passed his resupply concerns to Colquitt who assured him ammunition was coming. The regiments on the southern flank stood for 15 to 20 minutes without a round, holding their ground as the US forces in front of them reformed. Recognizing the extreme danger facing his portion of the line, Harrison took logistical matters into his own hands. He dismounted, provided his horse to a staff officer, sending him with the rest of the staff on horseback to make runs back and forth to the rear, bringing what ammunition they could carry from the logistic train a half

mile back at the Olustee Station. In several trips they succeeded in bringing up enough ammunition to reopen their concentrated volleys on Barton's New Yorkers as they advanced across the farmer's field.⁵⁰

Culmination of the Fight

When Barton's New Yorkers entered the battle, the lines steadied for a brief moment. The secessionists shifted reinforcements, struggling with ammunition shortages. Meanwhile, the US struggled to deploy the infantry from order of march formation into battle lines. While this occurred, Hawley's brigade fell back as Barton's was entering the fray, Col. James Montgomery's reserve brigade still delayed down the congested road.

At this point, with the additional reinforcements, the secessionist lines enveloped both flanks of the US position. The New Yorkers and opposing Georgian and Florida troops faced each other and embraced in a sustained exchange of fierce firing, only punctuated by demands for ammunition resupply. Barton's regiments' losses were heavy as they largely fought in and around the cultivated field, the most open space on an already open battlefield. As they approached the battle, the New Yorkers understood the importance their resilience would be. Seymour was blunt to Barton of the New Yorkers' mission, and Barton in turn emphatically impressed it upon his regiments. The New Yorkers engaged in the heaviest fighting of the battle, and for four hours took all that the separatists had, doing so in the most exposed position on the field

The New Yorkers continued to maintain their fire as they moved back, running low on their ammunition just as the separatists received more soldiers and fresh cartridges. While the New Yorkers under Barton struggled to hold the field, slowly pressed back, Montgomery's reserve brigade arrived on the scene, meeting the retreating New Yorkers. Montgomery's arrival brought forward the last US infantry brigade.

The 54th Massachusetts of Montgomery's Brigade had departed the US camp at 0830, though the advance guard of cavalry had left at around 0600. It took over two hours for the other brigades of the US Army column to leave the encampment before the 54th Massachusetts, the lead element of Montgomery's brigade departed. When the battle commenced, the 54th Massachusetts was towards the rear, securing the wagon train. With the fighting intensifying, Seymour ordered the 54th Massachusetts forward at a run, the "double quick," for two miles to the sound of the guns. Following behind the 54th Massachusetts was the 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored), who received similar orders and ran at a trot with all their gear and weapons for three miles straight into battle, tossing aside knapsacks,

blankets and haversacks moving through the loose sand trails off the side of the congested road.⁵¹

The employment of the reserve brigade by Seymour occurred at 1600, two hours into the fight, roughly halfway through. He still attempted to execute his initial plan, this time anchoring the two African-American regiments around the 7th Connecticut as the center with the remaining artillery along the road. Meanwhile, Colonel Henry's mounted force demonstrated against the flanks engaging occasionally with the separatist cavalry under Caraway Smith.⁵²

The 54th Massachusetts formed in what was the center of the US lines between the railroad and the dirt road that paralleled it. Montgomery's brigade advanced among the shattered remnants of the Hawley's New Hampshire and 8th USCT regiments and broken US Army artillery. To the Massachusetts's soldiers' north was the stubbornly fighting but pressured New York brigade, retreating from the cultivated field. They were being replaced by the 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored) regiment. Seymour's final infantry brigade separated around the line formed by the 7th Connecticut, who now offset from the road to the south a few hundred yards had become the US center, the only US regiment formed in any sort of a battle line. The Connecticut soldiers, resupplied since their expenditure of ammunition from the first meeting engagement, set their repeating rifles sites at 600 yards and continued to lash out at the enemy lines from the rifles' increased range.⁵³

Colonel Edward N. Hallowell directed the Massachusetts's regiment during the fight from a shattered tree stump directly behind his men's line of battle. He adjusted his companies to pull back on the extreme south flank to account for the extended enemy lines flanking his regiment. The Massachusetts veterans reported seeing many sharpshooters in the trees on the secessionist side, some claim this accounted for the inordinate amount of officers and sergeants killed in the fight, especially on the southern flank, held mainly by African-American regiments, the 8th USCT and then the 54th Massachusetts infantry.⁵⁴

The 54th Massachusetts moved through swampy ground, pushing forward, while firing. As they grew low on ammunition, Colonel Montgomery ordered the 54th Massachusetts to retreat. The regiment put in a request for ammunition but received a delivery of the wrong caliber of ammunition for their weapons. Their attempts at a resupply failing, they had no choice but to continue the retreat. They stopped, in good order firing every 20 to 30 yards as they retreated, keeping the secessionist at bay.

To the north of both the 54th Massachusetts and the at an oblique angle to the 7th Connecticut line, the 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored) advanced taking the place of the New Yorkers falling back without ammunition near the farmer's field. The New Yorkers were moving to the rear consecutively by battalions, one covering the other as it moved back until it reached the remainder of the Connecticut regiment's lines. Once aligned with the Connecticut formation, the New Yorkers began to reorganize while Montgomery's brigade took the brunt of the enemy fire. From that point, Barton's regiments, along with the Connecticut infantry, prepared to work with the Henry's cavalry to cover the inevitable US retreat as Seymour became highly concerned that continual attempts by the ever-expanding secessionist lines would completely flank his forces.⁵⁵

The final push came with the arrival of the additional ammunition and the final reserves led personally by Finegan. Maj. Augustus Bonaud's Battalion, the 27th Georgia and the 1st Florida Battalion were placed in the center of the lines to keep up a fire as the ammunition was distributed. Once completed, Colquitt ordered a general advance across the entire front, using his extended line with orders to Harrison to simultaneously pressure both flanks of the US forces. The US lines at this point made up of the 1st North Carolina to the north, the 7th Connecticut in the center with some of Barton's men intermingled, and the 54th Massachusetts to the south.⁵⁶ Colquitt's men pressed forward with renewed spirit as well as refilled cartridge boxes, against a physically exhausted and low on ammunition US force.

With the secessionist advance, Seymour ordered a full retreat back towards the previous night's camp. A lackluster pursuit by the separatist forces allowed for a more orderly withdrawal than might have been expected for the defeated US forces. Darkness fell around 1800 to 1900 when the fighting slowly ceased. The 7th Connecticut deployed again as rear a guard with Barton's remaining regiments and Colonel Henry's mounted brigade to keep the enemy away from the slow moving wounded.

The Pursuit and Withdrawal

The secessionists moved a couple of miles from the battlefield before ending the entire pursuit. Finegan arrived at the battlefield with the final reinforcements towards the twilight of the battle, as darkness fell ordering Colquitt to take command of the pursuit. However, Finegan withdrew his order at Colquitt's recommendation due to the fatigue of the soldiers from the long battle, the lack of food, and general disadvantages of following the US forces in the dark. From Caraway Smith, the cavalry commander,

Finegan received what later was determined to be unfounded rumors of a suspected prepared US ambush, and Smith claimed some of the separatist's infantry may be firing at their own cavalry in the darkness. Finegan ordered Smith to continue to prod with his cavalry through the night but Smith did nothing.⁵⁷ The secessionist pursued only six miles from the site of the fight in four days, by which time the beaten US force already reached Jacksonville a day prior.

As the secessionist advanced, they reported taking ammunition from the US dead and wounded on the field and capturing over 130,000 rounds of ammunition that had been sitting at Barber's Station, the previous US camp. The US Army had tried to destroy the stockpile when they passed through Barber's during their retreat, but the secessionist managed to recover most of it. They also captured five US artillery pieces, 1,600 muskets, and an unusually high number of wounded and prisoners, nearly a thousand total.⁵⁸ In an examination of the official reports of the commanders, at least one regiment in each US Army brigades and, in fact the New York brigade as a whole, retreated in light of ammunition issues. The 7th Connecticut retreated after their initial push as their Spencer repeating rifles ran low. Barton's New Yorkers withdrew for lack of munitions after nearly the entire four hours in contact. The 54th Massachusetts fell back after delivery of the wrong type of ammunition resupply. Only the Connecticut force received a resupply and returned to the line, serving as the rear guard in the retreat with the mounted force under Henry. This in light of the fact the secessionists found nearly 200,000 rounds of ammunition cached at Barber's Ford.

The US management of logistics is in sharp contrast to that of the secessionist. Though it was easier for them to provide for logistics, the fact remains they planned accordingly and acted decisively to address the expenditures. The secessionist forces at a critical moment when Hawley's brigade was breaking and Barton's New Yorkers were coming on line had to postpone the rate of fire and advance due to low ammunition. In fact, portions of the secessionist line had no ammunition and for nearly half an hour simply stood their ground in the face of the US forces until reinforcement arrived to add fire to the line.

Henry's mounted force and the skirmishers of the 7th Connecticut covered the US retreat struggling down the road. Hawley wrote that his prized regiment, the 7th Connecticut marched 36 miles in one day and fought continuously for three hours in heavy engagement.⁵⁹ It was between 0200 and first light on the 21 February, before the entire US force reached the

rally point at Barber's. They reconsolidated, took note of their losses, and continued the movement back to the US enclave at Jacksonville.

Various accounts agree on the carnage and suffering of the US walking wounded during the retreat. Some of Henry's cavalry dismounted and placed wounded on their horses for movement after all the wagons were filled, but even so many were left on the field and alongside the road for the secessionist to capture.⁶⁰ The temperature reached freezing, nearly an inch thick on the ponds and swamplands, adding misery to the withdrawal.⁶¹ When the US forces reached Barber's Station they attached mules to railway cars and filled the cars with wounded for the journey back to Jacksonville.

The reports and fears of a secessionist pursuit drove Seymour to drive his beaten army back to the safety of the defenses of Jacksonville. It had been a "devilish hard rub," and the expedition was over. The mule-pulled cars gathered at Baldwin Station where a locomotive finally arrived, long overdue, and the men hooked up the cars. Several miles from the station, the locomotive broke down and the weary 54th Massachusetts soldiers and members of the rear guard 7th Connecticut hauled the cars by manual labor until another set of draft animals arrived. They pulled the cars for three miles before additional draft horses arrived and finished hauling the wounded to Jacksonville.

The Aftermath

The casualties were severe on both sides. Though the raw numbers pale in comparison to the numbers in many of the more well-known battles in the other theaters of the war, by proportion to the number of contestants, the Battle of Olustee was a bloodbath on a scale as large as many of the bigger battles. For the US Army forces under Brigadier General Seymour, the losses were costly, crushing any further desires of a "liberated" Florida or a renewed Florida Expedition.

Seymour lamented the exceeding loss of officers in the battle. In his report he specifically names, Colonel Fribley, commander of the 8th USCT, Lieutenant Colonel Reed, mortally wounded, commander of the 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored), Reed's executive officer Major Bogle severely wounded, and Colonels Henry Moore and Simeon Sammon both regimental commanders and wounded from Barton's New York brigade. Total losses were 55 officers and 1,806 soldiers, killed, wounded or missing.⁶²

Secessionist losses reported initially after the battle by Brigadier General Finegan were 53 killed, 841 wounded, mostly only slightly.⁶³ The US

expedition's chief surgeon, Maj. Adolph Majer, commented that the recovered wounded were largely minor wounds and the facilities at Jacksonville and Saint Augustine sufficed, there being no need to add field hospitals. Surgeon Majer's report indicated the majority of wounded of the US Army were slight and five hundred at least would be back to duty in less than a month. Few injuries required surgery and most were to lower extremities. Upon reaching the coast, the US Army transferred the most serious cases to the hospital ship *Cosmopolitan*. His report included a comment on an attempt to persuade the secessionist to allow a flag of truce to gather US wounded from the field, claiming the secessionists denied such a request. Later attempts to recover articles and bodies after the battle for burial by families in the north also were denied by the separatists, even after the lines in Florida were settled for the duration of the war.⁶⁴

The Battle of Olustee shared many tactical characteristics found in other Civil War battles. The assaults by both the US Army and the secessionist forces were piecemeal, frontal, and largely uncoordinated, and failed to provide a decisive defeat, or rout. This resulted in a bloody struggle between two equal forces on equally favorable ground slugging it out until one side decided it had suffered enough and withdrew. The result of these two stubborn and determined opposing forces fighting in the conditions of 1864 is what led to the high percentage of casualties both sides experienced. Every secessionist soldier lost was one they could ill-afford to replace, and in this manner, Olustee impacted the secessionist's southern department in its manpower attrition relatively more than the US losses did.

Gillmore's first state objective for the Florida Expedition of 1864 concerned opening the state's commerce up to trade with the northern states. In this regard, the re-occupation of the large Jacksonville port benefited this, however, the inability to project US control into the interior of the state still minimized the degree of trade. The US continued to only hold the coastlines and ports of Florida, struggling to maintain any large areas of the state's interior. For Gillmore's second objective of cutting off the rest of the secessionist forces from Florida's source of food supply and railroads, the Olustee defeat kept US forces from reaching the Lake City rail line, failing to deny secessionist access to Florida commissary supplies and railroad. As for Gillmore's intention to open up Florida African-American populations as a source for additional regiments, the expedition mildly succeeded as some numbers of Floridian African-American, though limited and less than anticipated, came over to, and supported, the US forces, mainly in northeast Florida. The final objective given for the

Florida expedition involved the expediting return of Florida to the Union, tied to the desire to achieve this in time to effect the presidential election of 1864.

The Presidential election of 1864 ended in the re-election victory of Abraham Lincoln over the Democratic candidate Gen. George B. McClellan by 400,000 popular votes and Lincoln's electoral vote sweep 212 to 21, from all but Kentucky, Delaware, and New Jersey. Colorado and Nevada were newly admitted states, and occupied, previously secessionist states of Louisiana and Tennessee held elections.⁶⁵ Notably, Florida failed to obtain the required Unionist population for consideration of electoral representation. In this manner, The Florida Expedition of 1864 failed in its main political aim. Florida fully re-admitted to the Union on 25 June 1868, among the first batch of states early in post-war Reconstruction.⁶⁶ In a "bold experiment in democracy," soldiers voted via absentee ballot in the election in all but three states that blocked this right, one of which being New Jersey that Lincoln lost. Of the soldier ballots recorded in twelve of these states, Lincoln received 119,754 to McClellan's 34,291, the absentee soldier vote in the other seven states authorizing such votes was likely similar.⁶⁷

Seen as a largely sideshow theater of the war to begin with, Florida essentially returned to an under-resourced and limited attention area of operations for the remainder of the war, settling into a stalemate after Olustee. Georgia reinforcements went back up and faced Sherman's offensive through Georgia and the Carolinas, his Atlanta and Bentonville Campaigns becoming the last major southern theater offensives of the war in conjunction with newly promoted and appointed Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Overland and Appomattox Campaigns in Virginia.⁶⁸

While Florida remained a drain on limited secessionist manpower as the residual US presence required appropriately-proportioned defensive-considerations, the only remaining Florida operation undertaken was the combined US Army and US Navy Saint Marks Expedition into the Florida Panhandle in March 1865. The Saint Marks Expedition mainly served as a diversion to support the larger US Army move on secessionist-held Mobile, Alabama.⁶⁹ This effort supported the increasing strangulation of the secessionist blockade running efforts along the Gulf Coast, the only portion of the coast still supporting separatist's ports after the fall of North Carolina's Fort Fisher in January 1865.⁷⁰

Endnotes

1. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 680-681.
2. David Frey, *Failure to Pursue: How the Escape of Defeated Forces Prolonged the Civil War* (MacFarland Press: Jefferson, 2016), 296-297.
3. This slightly changed with the coordinated southeastern campaigns of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman in late 1864 across Georgia and the Carolinas although even it was conducted in tandem with major Virginia operations.
4. William A. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword: The United States Colored Troops, 1862-1867* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 2011), 36.
5. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword*, 35, 40-49, and 61.
6. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 744. Major General William T. Sherman's combined army that would move south in mid-1864 included the Army of the Cumberland, the Army of the Tennessee, and the Army of the Ohio.
7. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword*, 65.
8. *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Part 1, Volume 35 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), 279.
9. *ORA*, Pt. 1, Vol. 35, 279.
10. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 279.
11. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 699.
12. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword*, 41-43.
13. Dobak, 64 and 69. The occupational security and stability duties consumed several infantry regiments, including most of the African-American regiments such as the 2nd South Carolina, 3rd South Carolina, 55th Massachusetts, and 3rd USCT.
14. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 281.
15. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword*, 63.
16. William Watson Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), 278-280
17. *ORA*, Part 1, Vol. 35, 282.
18. *ORA*, Part 1, Vol. 35, 283-284.
19. *ORA*, Part 1, Vol. 35, 283-284.
20. William H. Nulty, *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990), 111.
21. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 283-284.
22. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 123.
23. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 288.
24. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 124-125.
25. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 331.
26. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 126-129.

27. Noah Andre Trudeau, *Like Men of War: Black Troops in the Civil War, 1862-1865* (Little, Brown and Company: New York, 1998), 142; Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 144.
28. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 306.
29. Letter from Private Milton Woodford to his wife, dated 23 February 1864, Bornet and Woodford. "A Connecticut Yankee Fights," 246.
30. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 307.
31. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 132-133.
32. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 288.
33. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 332.
34. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 288.
35. Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 140.
36. Hondon B. Hargrove, *Black Union Soldiers in the Civil War* (McFarland and Company: Jefferson, 1988) 165.
37. Davis, *The Civil War*, 290.
38. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 304 and 311.
39. Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 142.
40. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 304, 311.
41. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 304.
42. Sergeant Major Rufus S. Jones, letter to Editor, *The Christian Recorder*, dated 24 March 1864, published 16 April 1864.
43. Oliver Willcox Norton, *Army Letters 1861-1865* (O.L. Deming: Chicago, 1903), 202.
44. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 312.
45. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 312.
46. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 301-302.
47. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 343 and 332.
48. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 343-344.
49. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 344.
50. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 349-350.
51. Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 145.
52. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 289.
53. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 304 and 308.
54. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 164.
55. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 302 and 305.
56. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 344.
57. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 332 and 353.
58. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 333-334.
59. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 305.
60. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 174-175.
61. Daniel L. Schafer, *Thunder on the River: The Civil War in Northeast Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 187.
62. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 289.
63. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 333.
64. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 301.

65. J.G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1969), 476; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 805.
66. Randall and Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 619.
67. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 804.
68. Dobak, *Freedom by the Sword*, 70-71.
69. *ORA*, Series 1, Vol. 49, Pt. 1, 558-559.
70. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 820-821.

Part III

Suggested Stands and Vignettes

Introduction

The standard Olustee staff ride is composed of 8 suggested stands to support a comprehensive study and analysis of the Florida Expedition of 1864 and the Battle of Olustee. This version of the staff ride involves one vehicular movement to Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park (5890 Battlefield Trail Road Olustee, Florida 32087). The Olustee Staff Ride intends to be a single-day event. *Part III: Suggested Stands and Vignettes* presents three variations of the staff ride: the core staff ride (Stands 1-8) analyze equally US Army and secessionist decisions, and actions centralized at the state historic battlefield park property, alternately, the handbook provides two additional variations of the standard on site itinerary. For a more US Army-centric approach to the battlefield there are two additional stands outside of the historic battlefield park, traveling east to west (Stands 1a, 2a, and 2-8). For the US Army-centric staff ride variation Stand 1a: Campaign Overview (US Army Approach) is conducted further west between Jacksonville and the battlefield at the site of an important ford over the St. Mary River, in vicinity of a cavalry skirmish, and supply depot (Veterans Memorial Park, 6433 US-90, Glen St Mary, FL 32040). Continuing to follow the route taken by the US Army the next stand is at a historical marker noting the location of the US Army camp at Sanderson used as a supply depot for cavalry raids prior to the final march to Olustee (at or near 13966 US-90, Sanderson, FL 32087 / 30° 15.057' N, 82° 16.157' W), the historical marker is on US-90, on the right when traveling west. This site was also a secessionist camp prior to the US Army occupation of the site. These additional stands make this staff ride a 9-stand staff ride. For a more secessionist-centric approach there are two stands outside the historic battlefield park (Stands 1b, 2-7, and 8b), making this an eight-stand staff ride. Coming west to east, Stand 1b: Campaign Overview (Secessionist Approach) is conducted at the Olustee Beach / Camp Beauregard, where the secessionist built field fortifications and intended for the battle to take place prior to being drawn out to the Olustee pine barren (Olustee Beach, Pine St., Sanderson, FL 32087). The second stand is also outside the battlefield park: Stand 8b: Secessionist Pursuit, US Army Retreat, and Aftermath. This stand is conducted at the Sanderson camp historical marker (see Stand 2a: Henry's Mounted Raids for location details). The camp at Sanderson changed hands one more time to become a secessionist camp

depot for the remainder of the war. When following this staff ride itinerary, be sure to skip Stand 8 to avoid overlapping with the Stand 9b information.

While some additional stands from the army-centric variations overlap (Sanderson camp historical marker is used for both US Army as Stand 2a and secessionist-centric Stand 8b), separate suggested stand narratives are included below for the same stand to emphasize different analysis at the different points in the narrative based on the point of view of the staff ride's approach. Certainly, the maps, vignettes, and analysis of all stands add value and can be incorporated and mixed between the itineraries of these three suggested variations, each one offering variously focused approaches.

Stand 1: Campaign Overview (19 February 1864)

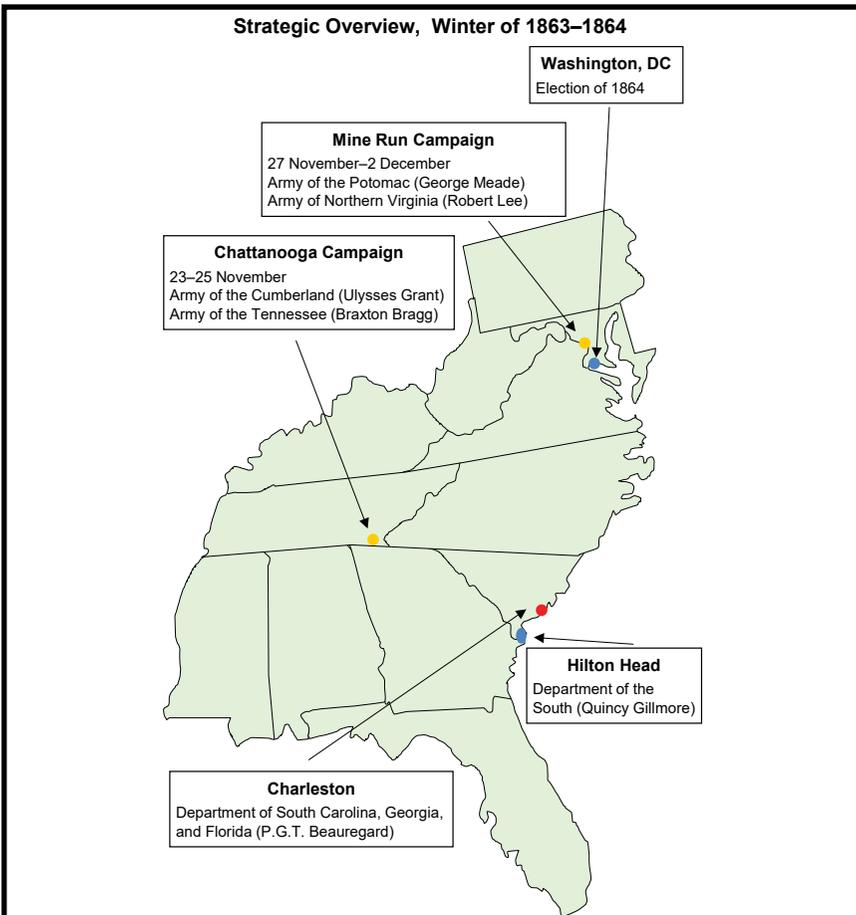


Figure 3.1. Strategic Overview. Graphics courtesy of Army University Press Staff.

Directions: The first stand is centered at the scattered picnic tables near the entrance of the main trailhead loop across the road from the Visitor’s Center and Olustee Battlefield Monument. There is parking along the front of the Visitor’s Center.

Orientation: To the east was the US Army camp along the northern Florida coast centered around the reoccurring occupation of Jacksonville. To the west, the direction of the US Army’s advance, was the secessionist forces, with the main body congregating around the Lake City railroad hub. Facing northwest there is a close representation of the open pine-barren terrain that characterized the area’s Florida landscape of the 1860s.

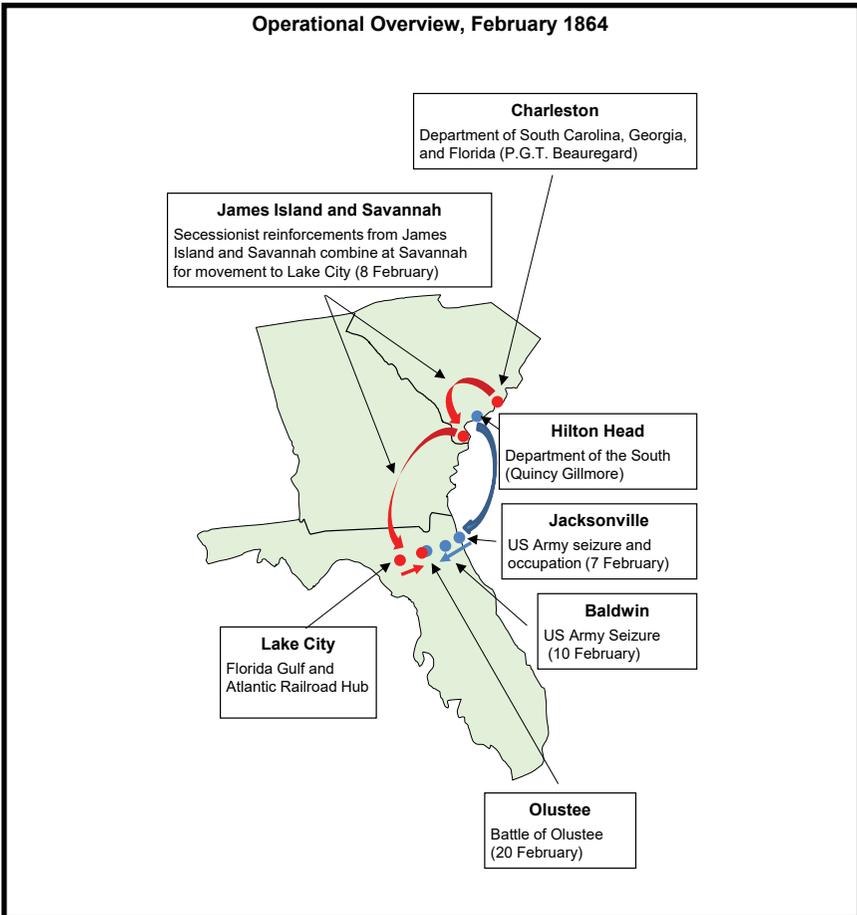


Figure 3.2. Operational Overview. Graphics courtesy of Army University Press Staff.

Scattered pine trees, clumps of bunched palmettos, scattered long grass, and compacted soil. To the south of this position lies the old dirt road (now US-90 used to drive into park), and the parallel Florida Atlantic and Gulf Railroad line. These were the two main high-speed avenues of approach to the site, all other movement conducted on smaller winding foot trails or through the brush. On 20 February 1864, participants commented it was a clear sky day, with a comfortably warm feeling; however temperatures dipped that evening, leading to a freeze, it can be assumed this change was felt as the day drew on.

Description: In late 1863-early 1864, the war's end was still in doubt. The strategic situation was certainly beginning to favor the US but the secessionists remained a potent fighting force. Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore, US Army Department of the South commander, proposed

four objectives for the Florida Expedition of 1864 meant to help cripple the secessionist, bolster the US war effort, and influence the election of 1864. Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour served as his battlefield commander in northeastern Florida.

When the expedition was undertaken, the US Army based operations from Jacksonville, a major port city in northeastern Florida with a long history of changing hands and allegiances during the war, retaken by Seymour's waterborne forces from Hilton Head on 7 February 1864. The Florida expedition intended to deny the secessionist access to the commissary goods they had been requisitioning from Florida to support the separatists states and armies to the north, mainly beef cattle. The secessionist struggled since the first few years of the war ravaged much of the agricultural lands in Virginia, and the loss of the Mississippi River control split the secessionists from their cattle lands to the west. The US Navy blockade also severely hindered the supply of the secessionist. The Florida expedition also targeted the Florida railroads. First for disruption of the transportation of before-mentioned commissary goods north as well as the rumored secessionist intentions to dismantle Florida railroads to move the rails north to better connect the railroads of northwest Florida with southern Georgia and Alabama.

With the forces he had on hand, Seymour began to conceive of a long-range raid, moving deep into secessionist Florida to seize a major rail hub to fulfill Gillmore's espoused broader expeditionary aims. This he planned to deny the railroad to the separatists, draw their forces to fight him in a defensive position, and destroy the secessionist army in Florida, securing the loyalty of the state. From a 14 February face-to-face meeting in Jacksonville with Seymour, Gillmore returned to his headquarters in Hilton Head, South Carolina, to monitor the static sieges of the rest of his command, leaving Seymour in charge. Seymour, with his forces based in Jacksonville, vacillated between bold raids into the countryside, mostly of mounted forces, and along the network of northeast Florida river ways, with a more hesitant, defensive mindset to hold what they already had. Tension developed between Gillmore and Seymour over the back and forth approaches to the execution of the Florida expedition, and Seymour's various reports, and ever changing emphasis of operations.

Through the logistical considerations expressed by Gillmore, it appeared this was going to be nothing more than a large-scale raid. He ordered Seymour have the soldiers carry six days rations, half of which would pre-baked; in addition, they would take with them only their haversacks, blankets and knapsacks and sixty round of ammunition per soldier.

The rest of the encampment of the regiments would follow, limiting the amount of wagons per regiment. Some have taken this to mean for the extent of the expedition the US forces were to travel light, and fast, however, this indicated Gillmore's instructions applied indefinitely, not only to the initial waterborne movement from South Carolina to occupy Jacksonville. In his order he states, "leaving the rest to follow," indicating to some that the rest of the expedition's baggage and wagon trains would follow. An assessment of the continued portage of the allocated transport ships of the expedition going back and forth from Jacksonville to Hilton Head between the 7 February seizure of Jacksonville and the 17 February departure, allowed the typical logistical support to accumulate to accompany the US Army movement.¹ However, the guidance remained limiting forage in an attempt to accrue good favor, only take from the secessionist government supplies, not from private citizens.

As in other theaters of conflict, the secessionists worked along interior lines as the defending force. In addition, they were fighting along railways in opposition to the US designs to capture or destroy those very railways. The secessionist forces had the relative luxury to choose where they would make their stands and in most cases, as with the defense of Olustee, chose rail hubs for the precise same reason that the US forces identified these hubs as legitimate objectives: because of their logistical utility. The result being the US forces advanced to secure better logistical hubs (either for destruction to deny them or to use them as with the locomotive both Gillmore and Seymour desired to support Florida operations), while the secessionists simply fought to railroad access. Additionally, by not taking from the locals, the US left materials and support for the secessionist government to requisition from its own people to support itself, by this time in the war the secessionist were struggling to survive.

Three key commanders formed the separatist leadership at the Battle of Olustee: Brigadier Generals Joseph Finegan and Alfred Colquitt with Colonel George Harrison. Finegan matched Seymour in overall command and responsibility for the secessionist forces. Finegan's state connections secured him his rank and position, keeping Finegan in his home state and in charge of the defense of the Florida interior. He had no prior military experience before the Civil War and in fact had not commanded in battle prior to the confrontation at Olustee.² Possibly as result of this, Colquitt commanded the secessionist movement and placement of units on the field of battle, comparable to Seymour's tactical management his brigades. After identifying the US incursion, Finegan received much of his needed reinforcements from South Carolina and Georgia from Gen. Pierre G.T.

Beauregard. These reinforcements included Colquitt and Harrison along with the crucial infantry support. Upon determination of the US Army march across Florida, Colquitt's brigade immediately set out by rail to reinforce Finegan's far-outnumbered Florida state force. However, the rail lines did not connect, indeed, one of the US goals was to destroy and deny the secessionist use of the rail lines in Florida to connect them to those of the upper south. Colquitt led his brigade on a forced march for thirty miles in 24 hours, arriving the night of 18 February, only to rest and refit for 24 hours on the 19 February and then be pushed into an intense infantry fight on the 20th. Even more astonishingly then the 30 miles in 24 hours was that he did it without losing one man as a straggler or to injury.³

Finegan divided his composite force into two infantry brigades and a separate cavalry brigade. The 1st Brigade was given to Colquitt and consisted of the 6th, the 19th, 23rd, 27th, and the 28th Georgia Infantry Regiments, along with the 6th Florida Infantry Battalion. He was also given an attached four-gun battery of the Chatham Artillery. Harrison's 2nd Brigade was composed of the 32nd and 64th Georgia Volunteers, the 1st Georgia Regulars, 1st Florida Battalion, and Bonaud's Battalion with Guerard's artillery attached. Colonel Harrison normally led the 32nd Georgia Volunteers, but at Olustee he served as a brigade commander. Harrison's military education at the Georgia Military Institute made him the only secessionist senior leadership at Olustee with a professional military education. However, Colquitt had invaluable experience from his service in the Mexican-American War even though lacking a military academic instruction. All the cavalry were consolidated under Col. Caraway Smith, approximately 600-strong and consisting of the 2nd, and 5th Florida Cavalry, and the 4th Georgia Cavalry. The 2nd Florida Cavalry normally served under Smith, who was now acting brigade commander.

The dearth of experienced brigade commanders effected both sides at Olustee. Though both forces had at least one experienced and assigned brigade commander, they had numerous regimental commanders taken from their commands and elevated to a position of more responsibility and importance. For some it was not a negative event, but for others the struggle to detach themselves from their regiments to serve the greater good as a brigade commander had broadly impactful results. There is a purpose behind having a brigade commander and a regimental commander. When the regimental commander is to be the acting brigade commander it is not just one but two chains of command disrupted, as a regimental commander is leading the brigade and a company or staff officer is leading the regiment. It simply added another layer of stress and confusion to the experience that

is the fog of war. This insufficient chain of command staffing would most tellingly reflect on the advancing forces of the US Army, not surprising due to the inherent variables that fall on an attacking force as opposed to a static defensive formation.

Vignettes

Excerpt from communiqué between General-in-Chief Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck to Major General Gillmore in response to Gillmore's request to mount an expedition into Florida and requesting more colored troops, 22 January 1864:

As the wants of the Gulf are much more pressing than yours, a part of the colored regiments have been sent there. In regard to your proposed operations in Florida, the Secretary replied that the matter had been left entirely to your judgment and discretion, with the means at your command. As the object of the expedition has not been explained, it is impossible to judge here of its advantages or practicability. If it is expected to give an outlet for cotton, or open a favorable field for the enlistment of colored troops, the advantages may be sufficient to justify the expense in money and troops. But simply as military operations I attach very little importance to such expeditions. If successful they merely absorb more troops in garrison to occupy places, but have little or no influence upon the progress of the war.⁴

Excerpt from Gillmore's reply to Halleck, 31 January 1864:

In reply to your letter of the 22nd instant I beg leave to state that the objects and advantages to be secured by the occupation of that portion of Florida within my reach...First. To procure an outlet for cotton, lumber, timber, turpentine and the other products of that State. Second. To cut off one of the enemy's sources of commissary supplies. He now draws largely upon the herds of Florida for his beef, and is making preparations to take up a portion of the Fernandina and Saint Mark's Railroad for the purpose of connecting the road from Jacksonville to Tallahassee with Thomasville, on the Savannah, Albany, and Gulf Railroad, and perhaps...on the Southwestern Railroad. Third. To obtain recruits for my colored regiments. Fourth. To inaugurate measures for the speedy restoration of Florida to her allegiance...I am expected to accomplish these objects with the means at my command.⁵

Excerpt from Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore orders to Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, 4 February 1864:

The men will carry six days' rations, three of which should be cooked. They will also carry knapsacks, haversacks, and blankets, and not less than 60 rounds of ammunition per man, leaving the rest to follow. The camp equipage will be left behind, packed up, in charge of 1 commissioned officer from each regiment and 2 enlisted men from each company. You will take two wagons for each foot regiment and one wagon for each mounted company, and six days' forage for animals, if possible. You will see that no females accompany your command, and will give strict orders that none shall follow except regularly appointed laundresses, who will be allowed to accompany the baggage of their respective commands. Only a small quantity of medical supplies need be taken. The medical director has been ordered to furnish ambulances, and the hospital steamer *Cosmopolitan*, with a full supply of medical stores, will, it is expected, follow the command in a few hours.⁶

Excerpt from communique from Brigadier General Seymour to Major General Gillmore, 17 February 1864:

The excessive and unexpected delays experienced with the locomotive, which will not be ready for two days yet, if at all, have compelled me to remain where my command could be fed; not enough supplies could be accumulated to permit me to execute my intentions of moving to Suwannee River. But now I propose to go without supplies, even if compelled to retrace my steps to procure them, and with the object of destroying the railroad near the Suwannee that there will be no danger of carrying away any portion of the track. All troops are therefore being moved up to Barber's, and probably by the time you receive this I shall be in motion in advance of that point. That a force may not be brought from Savannah, Ga., to interfere with my movements, it is desirable that a display be made in the Savannah River, and I therefore urge that upon the reception of this such naval forces, transports, sailing vessels, &co., as can be so devoted may rendezvous near Pulaski, and that the iron-clads in Wassaw push up with as much activity as they can exert. I look upon this as of great importance, and shall rely upon it as a demonstration in my favor."⁷

Excerpt from communique Major General Gillmore to Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, 18 February 1864:

I am just in receipt of your two letters of the 16th and one of the 17th, and am very much surprised at the tone of the latter and the character of your plans as therein stated. You say that by the time your letter of the 17th should reach these headquarters your forces would be in motion beyond Barber's, moving toward the Suwannee River, and that you shall rely on my making a display upon the Savannah River, with "naval forces, transports, sailing vessels," and with iron-clads up from Wassaw, & co., as a demonstration in your favor, which you look upon "as of great importance." All this is upon the presumption that the demonstration can and will be made ; although contingent not only upon my power and disposition to do so, but upon the consent of Admiral Dahlgren, with whom I cannot communicate in less than two days. You must have forgotten my last instructions, which were for the present to hold Baldwin and the Saint Mary's South Fork, as your outposts to the westward of Jacksonville, and to occupy Palatka, Magnolia, on the Saint John's. Your project distinctly and avowedly ignores these operations and substitutes a plan which not only involves your command in a distant movement, without provisions, far beyond a point from which you once withdrew on account of precisely the same necessity, but presupposes a simultaneous demonstration of "great importance" to you elsewhere, over which you have no control, and which requires the co-operation of the navy. It is impossible for me to determine what your views are with respect to Florida matters, and this is the reason why I have endeavored to make mine known to you so fully. As may be supposed, I am very much confused by these conflicting views, and am thrown into doubt as to whether my intentions with regard to Florida matters are fully understood by you. I will therefore reannounce them briefly: First, I desire to bring Florida into the Union under the President's proclamation of December 8, 1863; as accessory to the above, I desire, second, to revive the trade on the Saint John's River; third, to recruit my colored regiments and organize a regiment of Florida white troops; fourth, to cut off in part the enemy's supplies drawn from Florida. After you had withdrawn your advance, it was

arranged between us, at a personal interview, that the places to be permanently held for the present would be the south prong of the Saint Mary's, Baldwin, Jacksonville, Magnolia, and Palatka, and that Henry's mounted force should be kept moving as circumstances might justify or require. This is my plan of present operations. A raid to tear up the railroad west of Lake City will be of service, but I have no intention to occupy now that part of the State.⁸

Excerpt from Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard report, 25 March 1864.

General Finegan was advised of what was done, and instructed to do what he could with his means to hold the enemy at bay, and to prevent the capture of slaves ; and at the same time I reported to you this hostile movement and my intention to repel it, as far as practicable, with infantry to be withdrawn from Charleston and Savannah...This was done, indeed, to a hazardous degree; but, as I informed the honorable Secretary of War by telegraph the 9th ultimo, I regarded it as imperative to at – tempt to secure the subsistence resources of Florida. General Finegan was also apprised of these re-enforcements on February 11, and instructed to maneuver mean time to check or delay the enemy, but to avoid close quarters and unnecessary loss of men...The want of adequate rolling stock on the Georgia and Florida railroads, and the existence of the gap of some 20 miles between the two roads, subjected the concentration of my forces to a delay which deprived my efforts to that end of full effect.⁹

Analysis

- How could the relationship between Major General Gillmore and Brigadier General Seymour influence the expedition?
- What could be possible causes of friction among the both armies' senior leadership? How could these concerns be mitigated to have unity of effort and command?
- What factors influenced Gillmore's goals for the Florida Expedition of 1864?
- What risks did Gillmore accept with what forces, capabilities, and information he had available to him for his proposed expedition? How did he attempt to mitigate risk?

- How was the Florida Expedition of 1864 a risk or a gamble for the Gillmore's forces under Seymour?
- What factors contributed to General Beauregard's risk assessment for sending additional reinforcements to Finegan in Florida?

Stand 1a: Campaign Overview (US Army Approach)

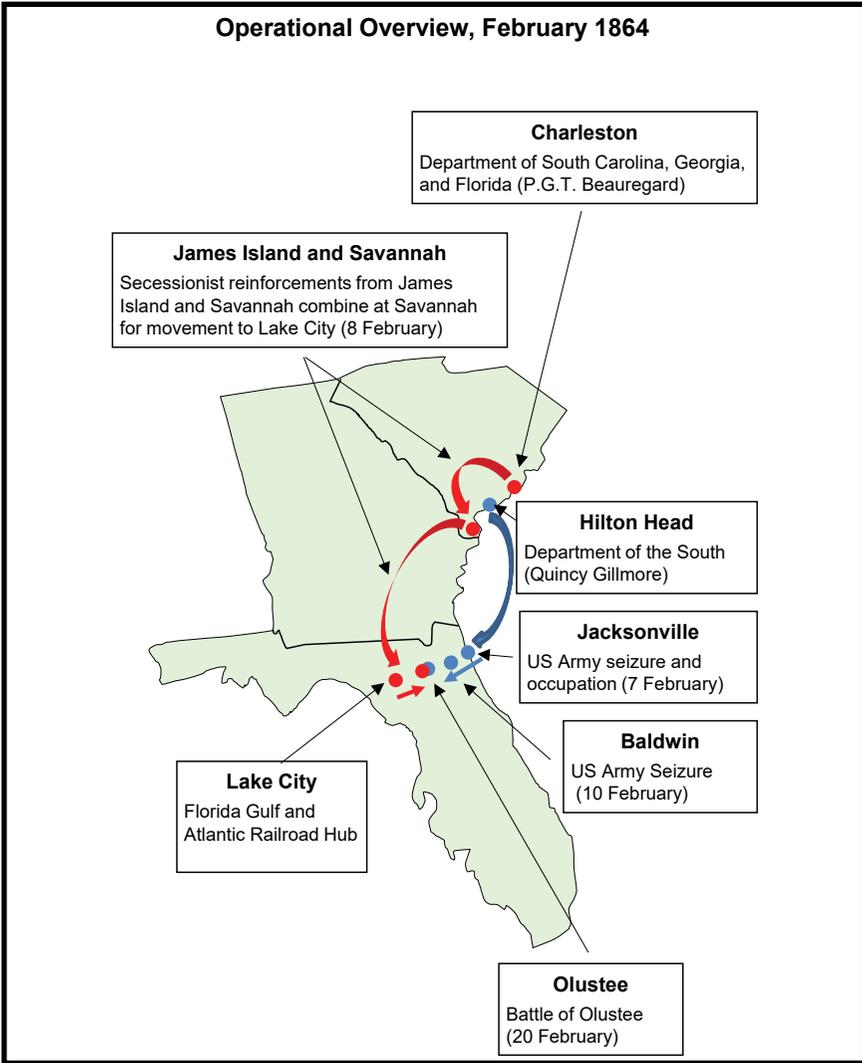


Figure 3.3. Operational Overview. Graphics courtesy of Army University Press Staff.

Directions: From Jacksonville, take I-10 West to US-301 North. Take exit onto US-90 West. Continue for 15 minutes on US-90. Conduct the stand at Veterans Memorial Park, 6433 US-90, Glen St Mary, FL 32040.

Orientation: The Veterans Memorial Park is just across where US-90 crosses the St. Mary's River, in this area, known as Barber's after a local wealthy plantation owner had a scattering of plantation houses and

was a main fordable area over the St. Mary River. In this area there was a cavalry skirmish during one of Col. Guy Henry's raids (10 February, next Stand 2a with more details) and was used as a supply depot by the US Army during their movement east from Jacksonville. With the river previously crossed behind you, the small boat launch area in front, facing generally northeast along this route the US forces traveled on 17-18 February. This wooded park area and waterway is reflective of what the area foliage typified the area and the various winding small waterways of northeast Florida, which both armies navigated, forded, and conducted small boat raids on during the war in Florida. Secessionist to delay, deter, and disrupt US operations and US Army raids to gather intelligence and free enslaved persons and recruit them to man new African-American regiments being raised. On 20 February 1864, participants commented it was a clear sky day, with a comfortably warm feeling; however temperatures dipped that evening, leading to a freeze, it can be assumed this change was felt as the day drew on.

Description: In late 1863-early 1864, the war's end was still in doubt. The strategic situation was certainly beginning to favor the US but the secessionists remained a potent fighting force. Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore, US Army Department of the South commander, proposed four objectives for the Florida Expedition of 1864 meant to help cripple the secessionist, bolster the US war effort, and influence the election of 1864. Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour served as his battlefield commander in northeastern Florida.

When the expedition was undertaken, the US Army based operations from Jacksonville, a major port city in northeastern Florida with a long history of changing hands and allegiances during the war, retaken by Seymour's waterborne forces from Hilton Head on 7 February 1864. The Florida expedition intended to deny the secessionist access to the commissary goods they had been requisitioning from Florida to support the separatist states and armies to the north, mainly beef cattle. The secessionist struggled since the first few years of the war ravaged much of the agricultural lands in Virginia, and the loss of the Mississippi River control split the secessionists from their cattle lands to the west. The US Navy blockade also severely hindered the supply of the secessionist. The Florida expedition also targeted the Florida railroads. First for disruption of the transportation of before-mentioned commissary goods north as well as the rumored secessionist intentions to dismantle Florida railroads to move the rails north to better connect the railroads of northwest Florida with southern Georgia and Alabama.

With the forces he had on hand, Seymour began to conceive of a long-range raid, moving deep into secessionist Florida to seize a major rail hub to fulfill Gillmore's espoused broader expeditionary aims. This he planned to deny the railroad to the separatists, draw their forces to fight him in a defensive position, and destroy the secessionist army in Florida, securing the loyalty of the state. From a 14 February face-to-face meeting in Jacksonville with his Seymour, Gillmore returned to his headquarters in Hilton Head, South Carolina, to monitor the static sieges of the rest of his command, leaving Seymour in charge. Seymour, with his forces based in Jacksonville, vacillated between bold raids into the countryside, mostly of mounted forces, and along the network of northeast Florida river ways, with a more hesitant, defensive mindset to hold what they already had. Tension developed between Gillmore and Seymour over the back and forth approaches to the execution of the Florida expedition, and Seymour's various reports, and ever changing emphasis of operations.

Through the logistical considerations expressed by Gillmore, it appeared this was going to be nothing more than a large-scale raid. He ordered Seymour have the soldiers carry six days rations, half of which would pre-baked; in addition, they would take with them only their haversacks, blankets and knapsacks and 60 rounds of ammunition per soldier. The rest of the encampment of the regiments would follow, limiting the amount of wagons per regiment. Some have taken this to mean for the extent of the expedition the US forces were to travel light, and fast, however, this indicated Gillmore's instructions applied indefinitely, not only to the initial waterborne movement from South Carolina to occupy Jacksonville. In his order he states, "leaving the rest to follow," indicating to some that the rest of the expedition's baggage and wagon trains would follow. An assessment of the continued portage of the allocated transport ships of the expedition going back and forth from Jacksonville to Hilton Head between the 7 February seizure of Jacksonville and the 17 February departure, allowed the typical logistical support to accumulate to accompany the US Army movement.¹⁰ However, the guidance remained limiting forage in an attempt to accrue good favor, only take from the secessionist government supplies, not from private citizens.

As in other theaters of conflict, the secessionists worked along interior lines as the defending force. In addition, they were fighting along railways in opposition to the US designs to capture or destroy those very railways. The secessionist forces had the relative luxury to choose where they would make their stands and in most cases, as with

the defense of Olustee, chose rail hubs for the precise same reason that the US forces identified these hubs as legitimate objectives: because of their logistical utility. The result being the US forces advanced to secure better logistical hubs (either for destruction to deny them or to use them as with the locomotive both Gillmore and Seymour desired to support Florida operations), while the secessionists simply fought to railroad access. Additionally, by not taking from the locals, the US left materials and support for the secessionist government to requisition from its own people to support itself, by this time in the war the secessionist was struggling to survive.

After identifying the US incursion, Florida secessionist-Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan received much needed reinforcements from South Carolina and Georgia from Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard. These reinforcements included Colquitt and Harrison along with the crucial infantry support. Upon determination of the US Army march across Florida, Colquitt's brigade immediately set out by rail to reinforce Finegan's far-outnumbered Florida state force. However, the rail lines did not connect, indeed, one of the US goals was to destroy and deny the secessionist use of the rail lines in Florida to connect them to those of the upper south. Colquitt led his brigade on a forced march for 30 miles in 24 hours, arriving the night of 18 February, only to rest and refit for 24 hours on 19 February, and then be pushed into an intense infantry fight on the 20th. Astonishingly, his unit endured the trek without losing a single straggler soldier or anyone to injury.¹¹

The dearth of experienced brigade commanders effected both sides at Olustee. Though both forces had at least one experienced and assigned brigade commander, they had numerous regimental commanders taken from their commands and elevated to a position of more responsibility and importance. For some it was not a negative event, but for others the struggle to detach themselves from their regiments to serve the greater good as a brigade commander had broadly impactful results. There is a purpose behind having a brigade commander and a regimental commander. When the regimental commander is to be the acting brigade commander it is not just one but two chains of command disrupted, as a regimental commander is leading the brigade and a company or staff officer is leading the regiment. It simply added another layer of stress and confusion to the experience that is the fog of war. This insufficient chain of command staffing would most tellingly reflect on the advancing forces of the US Army, not surprising due to the inherent variables that fall on an attacking force as opposed to a static defensive formation.

Vignettes

Excerpt from communique between President Abraham Lincoln to Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore, 13 January 1864:

I understand an effort is being made by some worthy gentlemen to reconstruct a loyal State government in Florida. Florida is in your department, and it is not unlikely that you may be there in person. I have given Mr. Hay a commission of major and sent him to you with some blank books and other blanks to aid in the reconstruction. He will explain as to the manner of using the blanks, and also my general views on the subject. It is desirable for all to co-operate; but if irreconcilable differences of opinion shall arise, you are master. I wish the thing done in the most speedy way possible, so that when done it will be within the range of the late proclamation on the subject. The detail labor, of course, will have to be done by others, but I shall be greatly obliged if you will give it such general supervision as you can find convenient with your more strictly military duties.¹²

Excerpt from communiqué between General-in-Chief Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck to Major General Gillmore in response to Gillmore's request to mount an expedition into Florida and requesting more colored troops, 22 January 1864:

As the wants of the Gulf are much more pressing than yours, a part of the colored regiments have been sent there. In regard to your proposed operations in Florida, the Secretary replied that the matter had been left entirely to your judgment and discretion, with the means at your command. As the object of the expedition has not been explained, it is impossible to judge here of its advantages or practicability. If it is expected to give an outlet for cotton, or open a favorable field for the enlistment of colored troops, the advantages may be sufficient to justify the expense in money and troops. But simply as military operations I attach very little importance to such expeditions. If successful they merely absorb more troops in garrison to occupy places, but have little or no influence upon the progress of the war.¹³

Excerpt from Gillmore's reply to Halleck, 31 January 1864:

In reply to your letter of the 22nd instant I beg leave to state that the objects and advantages to be secured by the occupation

of that portion of Florida within my reach...First. To procure an outlet for cotton, lumber, timber, turpentine and the other products of that State. Second. To cut off one of the enemy's sources of commissary supplies. He now draws largely upon the herds of Florida for his beef, and is making preparations to take up a portion of the Fernandina and Saint Mark's Railroad for the purpose of connecting the road from Jacksonville to Tallahassee with Thomasville, on the Savannah, Albany, and Gulf Railroad, and perhaps...on the Southwestern Railroad. Third. To obtain recruits for my colored regiments. Fourth. To inaugurate measures for the speedy restoration of Florida to her allegiance...I am expected to accomplish these objects with the means at my command.¹⁴

Excerpt from Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore orders to Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, 4 February 1864:

The men will carry six days' rations, three of which should be cooked. They will also carry knapsacks, haversacks, and blankets, and not less than 60 rounds of ammunition per man, leaving the rest to follow. The camp equipage will be left behind, packed up, in charge of 1 commissioned officer from each regiment and 2 enlisted men from each company. You will take two wagons for each foot regiment and one wagon for each mounted company, and six days' forage for animals, if possible. You will see that no females accompany your command, and will give strict orders that none shall follow except regularly appointed laundresses, who will be allowed to accompany the baggage of their respective commands. Only a small quantity of medical supplies need be taken. The medical director has been ordered to furnish ambulances, and the hospital steamer *Cosmopolitan*, with a full supply of medical stores, will, it is expected, follow the command in a few hours.¹⁵

Excerpt from communique from Brigadier General Seymour to Major General Gillmore, 17 February 1864:

The excessive and unexpected delays experienced with the locomotive, which will not be ready for two days yet, if at all, have compelled me to remain where my command could be fed; not enough supplies could be accumulated to permit me to execute my intentions of moving to Suwannee River. But

now I propose to go without supplies, even if compelled to retrace my steps to procure them, and with the object of destroying the railroad near the Suwannee that there will be no danger of carrying away any portion of the track. All troops are therefore being moved up to Barber's, and probably by the time you receive this I shall be in motion in advance of that point. That a force may not be brought from Savannah, Ga., to interfere with my movements, it is desirable that a display be made in the Savannah River, and I therefore urge that upon the reception of this such naval forces, transports, sailing vessels, &c. , as can be so devoted may rendezvous near Pulaski, and that the iron-clads in Wassaw push up with as much activity as they can exert. I look upon this as of great importance, and shall rely upon it as a demonstration in my favor."¹⁶

Excerpt from communique from Brigadier General Seymour to Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore, 17 February 1864:

I have sent for the Twenty-fourth Massachusetts entire to come to this point; the Tenth Connecticut (eight companies) to remain at Saint Augustine, two companies to go to Picolata. I shall not occupy Palatka or Magnolia at this moment; when I do portions of the Twenty-fourth Massachusetts will be sent from Jacksonville. The Fifty-fifth Massachusetts will remain here for the present or until the Twenty-fourth relieves it. The Second South Carolina and Third US Colored Troops are at Camp Shaw (late Finegan) for instruction and organization. The First North Carolina will be left at Baldwin, detaching three companies to Barber's. Colonel Barton will have the Forty-seventh, Forty-eighth, and One hundred and fifteenth ; Colonel Hawley will have the Seventh Connecticut, Seventh New Hampshire, and Eighth U. S. Colored Troops; Colonel Montgomery the Third United States and the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts ; Colonel Henry the cavalry and Elder's battery; Captain Hamilton the artillery. As soon as possible Metcalf's section will be sent back.¹⁷

Excerpt from communique Major General Gillmore to Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, 18 February 1864:

I am just in receipt of your two letters of the 16th and one of the 17th, and am very much surprised at the tone of the latter and the character of your plans as therein stated. You

say that by the time your letter of the 17th should reach these headquarters your forces would be in motion beyond Barber's, moving toward the Suwannee River, and that you shall rely on my making a display upon the Savannah River, with "naval forces, transports, sailing vessels," and with iron-clads up from Wassaw & Co., as a demonstration in your favor, which you look upon "as of great importance." All this is upon the presumption that the demonstration can and will be made; although contingent not only upon my power and disposition to do so, but upon the consent of Admiral Dahlgren, with whom I cannot communicate in less than two days. You must have forgotten my last instructions, which were for the present to hold Baldwin and the Saint Mary's South Fork, as your outposts to the westward of Jacksonville, and to occupy Palatka, Magnolia, on the Saint John's. Your project distinctly and avowedly ignores these operations and substitutes a plan which not only involves your command in a distant movement, without provisions, far beyond a point from which you once withdrew on account of precisely the same necessity, but presupposes a simultaneous demonstration of "great importance" to you elsewhere, over which you have no control, and which requires the co-operation of the navy. It is impossible for me to determine what your views are with respect to Florida matters, and this is the reason why I have endeavored to make mine known to you so fully. As may be supposed, I am very much confused by these conflicting views, and am thrown into doubt as to whether my intentions with regard to Florida matters are fully understood by you. I will therefore reannounce them briefly: First, I desire to bring Florida into the Union under the President's proclamation of December 8, 1863; as accessory to the above, I desire, second, to revive the trade on the Saint John's River; third, to recruit my colored regiments and organize a regiment of Florida white troops; fourth, to cut off in part the enemy's supplies drawn from Florida. After you had withdrawn your advance, it was arranged between us, at a personal interview, that the places to be permanently held for the present would be the south prong of the Saint Mary's, Baldwin, Jacksonville, Magnolia, and Palatka, and that Henry's mounted force should be kept moving as circumstances might justify or require. This is my plan of present operations. A raid to tear up the railroad west

of Lake City will be of service, but I have no intention to occupy now that part of the State.¹⁸

Analysis

- How could the relationship between Major General Gillmore and Brigadier General Seymour influence the expedition?
- What could be possible causes of friction among the both armies' senior leadership? How could these concerns be mitigated to have unity of effort and command?
- What factors influenced Gillmore's goals for the Florida Expedition of 1864?
- What risks did Gillmore accept with what forces, capabilities, and information he had available to him for his proposed expedition? How did he attempt to mitigate risk?
- How was the Florida Expedition of 1864 a risk or a gamble for the Gillmore's forces under Seymour?

Stand 1b: Campaign Overview (Secessionist Approach)

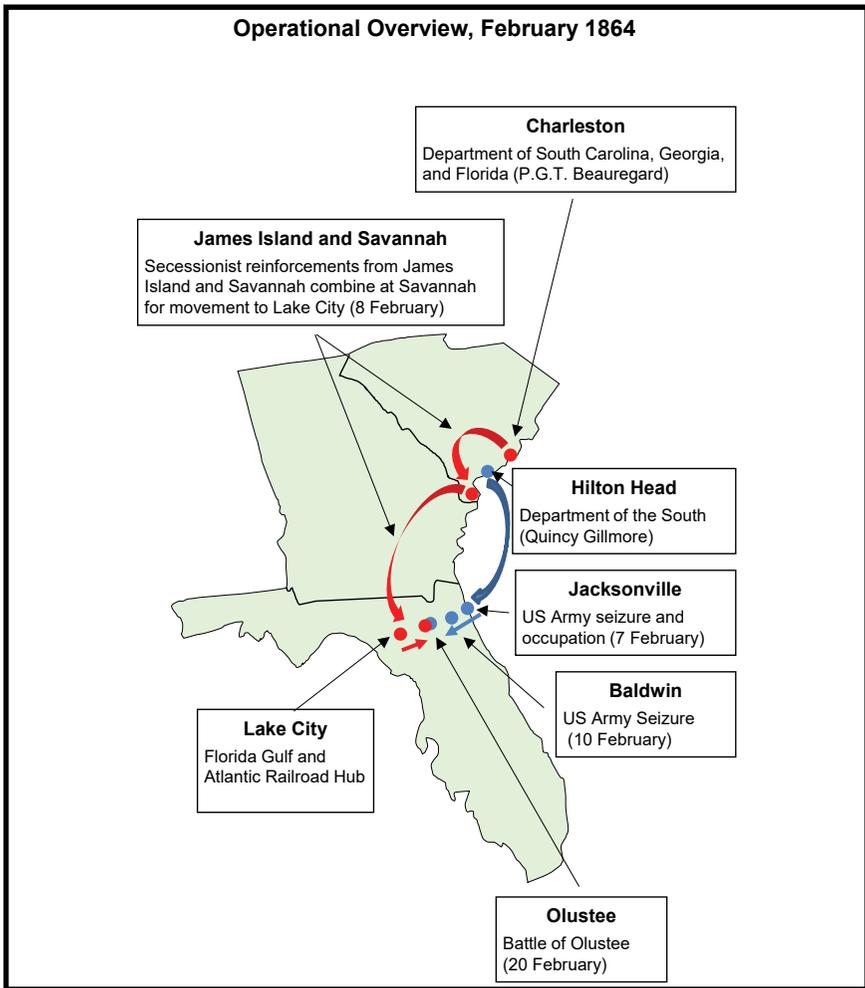


Figure 3.4. Operational Overview. Graphics courtesy of Army University Press Staff.

Directions: From Lake City take US-90 E/E Duval Street. east for approximately 13 miles until turning left on Pine Street. Follow Pine Street until it ends at the Olustee Beach parking lot. There are restrooms near the parking lot. Olustee Beach, Pine St., Sanderson, FL 32087.

Orientation: Modern-day Pine Street essentially ran the main pathway through the hastily laid out Camp Beauregard. Secessionist fieldworks faced east. The northernmost field works ended at the edge of the lake while the southernmost stretched over 600 feet on the other side of modern

US-90 and the railroad line. Some of the remaining fieldworks mounds remain near the current woodline. On 20 February 1864, participants commented it was a clear sky day, with a comfortably warm feeling; however, temperatures dipped that evening, leading to a freeze, it can be assumed this change was felt as the day drew on.

Description: In late 1863-early 1864, the war's end was still in doubt. The strategic situation was certainly beginning to favor the US but the secessionists remained a potent fighting force. Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore, US Army Department of the South commander, proposed four objectives for the Florida Expedition of 1864 meant to help cripple the secessionist, bolster the US war effort, and influence the election of 1864. Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour served as his battlefield commander in northeastern Florida.

When the expedition was undertaken, the US Army based operations from Jacksonville, a major port city in northeastern Florida with a long history of changing hands and allegiances during the war, retaken by Seymour's waterborne forces from Hilton Head on 7 February 1864. The Florida expedition intended to deny the secessionist access to the commissary goods they had been requisitioning from Florida to support the separatist states and armies to the north, mainly beef cattle. The secessionist struggled since the first few years of the war ravaged much of the agricultural lands in Virginia, and the loss of the Mississippi River control split the secessionists from their cattle lands to the west. The US Navy blockade also severely hindered the supply of the secessionist. The Florida expedition also targeted the Florida railroads. First for disruption of the transportation of before-mentioned commissary goods north as well as the rumored secessionist intentions to dismantle Florida railroads to move the rails north to better connect the railroads of northwest Florida with southern Georgia and Alabama. With the forces he had on hand, Seymour began to conceive of a long-range raid, moving deep into secessionist Florida to seize a major rail hub to fulfill Gillmore's espoused broader expeditionary aims. This he planned to deny the railroad to the separatists, draw their forces to fight him in a defensive position, and destroy the secessionist army in Florida, securing the loyalty of the state. Seymour, with his forces based in Jacksonville, vacillated between bold raids into the countryside, mostly of mounted forces, and along the network of northeast Florida river ways, with a more hesitant, defensive mindset to hold what they already had. Tension developed between Gillmore and Seymour over the back and forth approaches to the execution of the Florida expedition, and Seymour's various reports, and ever changing emphasis of operations.

Through the logistical considerations expressed by Gillmore, it appeared this was going to be nothing more than a large-scale raid. He ordered Seymour have the soldiers carry six days rations, half of which would pre-baked; in addition, they would take with them only their haversacks, blankets and knapsacks and sixty round of ammunition per soldier. The rest of the encampment of the regiments would follow, limiting the amount of wagons per regiment. Some have taken this to mean for the extent of the expedition the US forces were to travel light, and fast, however, this indicated Gillmore's instructions applied indefinitely, not only to the initial waterborne movement from South Carolina to occupy Jacksonville. In his order he states, "leaving the rest to follow," indicating to some that the rest of the expedition's baggage and wagon trains would follow. An assessment of the continued portage of the allocated transport ships of the expedition going back and forth from Jacksonville to Hilton Head between the 7 February seizure of Jacksonville and the 17 February departure, allowed the typical logistical support to accumulate to accompany the US Army movement.¹⁹ However, the guidance remained limiting forage in an attempt to accrue good favor, only take from the secessionist government supplies, not from private citizens.

As in other theaters of conflict, the secessionists worked along interior lines as the defending force. In addition, they were fighting along railways in opposition to the US designs to capture or destroy those very railways. The secessionist forces had the relative luxury to choose where they would make their stands and in most cases, as with the defense of Olustee, chose rail hubs for the precise same reason that the US forces identified these hubs as legitimate objectives: because of their logistical utility. The result being the US forces advanced to secure better logistical hubs (either for destruction to deny them or to use them as with the locomotive both Gillmore and Seymour desired to support Florida operations), while the secessionists simply fought to railroad access. Additionally, by not taking from the locals, the US left materials and support for the secessionist government to requisition from its own people to support itself, by this time in the war the secessionist was struggling to survive.

Three key commanders formed the separatist leadership at the Battle of Olustee: Brigadier Generals Joseph Finegan and Alfred Colquitt with Col. George Harrison. Finegan matched Seymour in overall command and responsibility for the secessionist forces. Finegan's state connections secured him his rank and position, keeping Finegan in his home state and in charge of the defense of the Florida interior. He had no prior military experience before the Civil War and in fact had not commanded in battle

prior to the confrontation at Olustee.²⁰ Possibly as result of this, Colquitt commanded the secessionist movement and placement of units on the field of battle, comparable to Seymour's tactical management his brigades.

After identifying the US incursion, Florida secessionist-Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan received much needed reinforcements from South Carolina and Georgia from Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard. These reinforcements included Colquitt and Harrison along with the crucial infantry support. Upon determination of the US Army march across Florida, Colquitt's brigade immediately set out by rail to reinforce Finegan's far-outnumbered Florida state force. However, the rail lines did not connect, indeed, one of the US goals was to destroy and deny the secessionist use of the rail lines in Florida to connect them to those of the upper south. Colquitt led his brigade on a forced march for 30 miles in 24 hours, arriving the night of 18 February, only to rest and refit for 24 hours on 19 February, and then be pushed into an intense infantry fight on the 20th. Astonishingly, his unit endured the trek without losing a single straggler soldier or anyone to injury.²¹

Finegan divided his composite force into two infantry brigades and a separate cavalry brigade. The 1st Brigade was given to Colquitt and consisted of the 6th, the 19th, 23rd, 27th, and the 28th Georgia Infantry Regiments, along with the 6th Florida Infantry Battalion. He was also given an attached four-gun battery of the Chatham Artillery. Harrison's 2nd Brigade was composed of the 32nd and 64th Georgia Volunteers, the 1st Georgia Regulars, 1st Florida Battalion, and Bonaud's Battalion with Guerard's artillery attached. Colonel Harrison normally led the 32nd Georgia Volunteers, but at Olustee he served as a brigade commander. Harrison's military education at the Georgia Military Institute made him the only secessionist senior leadership at Olustee with a professional military education. However, Colquitt had invaluable experience from his service in the Mexican-American War even though lacking a military academic instruction. All the cavalry were consolidated under Col. Caraway Smith, approximately 600-strong and consisting of the 2nd, and 5th Florida Cavalry, and the 4th Georgia Cavalry. The 2nd Florida Cavalry normally served under Smith, who was now acting brigade commander.

The dearth of experienced brigade commanders effected both sides at Olustee. Though both forces had at least one experienced and assigned brigade commander, they had numerous regimental commanders taken from their commands and elevated to a position of more responsibility and importance. For some it was not a negative event, but for others the struggle to detach themselves from their regiments to serve the greater good as a

brigade commander had broadly impactful results. There is a purpose behind having a brigade commander and a regimental commander. When the regimental commander is to be the acting brigade commander it is not just one but two chains of command disrupted, as a regimental commander is leading the brigade and a company or staff officer is leading the regiment. It simply added another layer of stress and confusion to the experience that is the fog of war. This insufficient chain of command staffing would most tellingly reflect on the advancing forces of the US Army, not surprising due to the inherent variables that fall on an attacking force as opposed to a static defensive formation.

Vignettes

Excerpt from report of Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan, 13 February 1864:

This expedition is really formidable, and, organized as it is with so large a force of cavalry or mounted infantry, threatens disastrous results, unless checked at once by a sufficient force. The enemy is fortifying Baldwin, and also, I understand, a position on the Little Saint Mary's. I should have more cavalry to prevent their superior mounted force from making raids into the rich counties of Alachua and Marion, and not only running off the negroes by the Saint John's River, but destroying the large amounts of sugar and syrup which has not yet been sent to market. The supply of beef from the peninsula will of course be suspended until the enemy is driven out.²²

Excerpt from Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard report, 25 March 1864:

General Finegan was advised of what was done, and instructed to do what he could with his means to hold the enemy at bay, and to prevent the capture of slaves ; and at the same time I reported to you this hostile movement and my intention to repel it, as far as practicable, with infantry to be withdrawn from Charleston and Savannah...This was done, indeed, to a hazardous degree; but, as I informed the honorable Secretary of War by telegraph the 9th ultimo, I regarded it as imperative to attempt to secure the subsistence resources of Florida. General Finegan was also apprised of these re-enforcements on February 11, and instructed to maneuver mean time to check or delay the enemy, but to avoid close quarters and unnecessary loss of men...The want of adequate rolling stock on the Georgia and Florida railroads, and the existence of the gap of some 20 miles between the two roads, subjected the concen-

tration of my forces to a delay which deprived my efforts to that end of full effect.²³

Excerpt from Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore orders to Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, 4 February 1864:

The men will carry six days' rations, three of which should be cooked. They will also carry knapsacks, haversacks, and blankets, and not less than 60 rounds of ammunition per man, leaving the rest to follow. The camp equipage will be left behind, packed up, in charge of 1 commissioned officer from each regiment and 2 enlisted men from each company. You will take two wagons for each foot regiment and one wagon for each mounted company, and six days' forage for animals, if possible. You will see that no females accompany your command, and will give strict orders that none shall follow except regularly appointed laundresses, who will be allowed to accompany the baggage of their respective commands. Only a small quantity of medical supplies need be taken. The medical director has been ordered to furnish ambulances, and the hospital steamer *Cosmopolitan*, with a full supply of medical stores, will, it is expected, follow the command in a few hours.²⁴

Excerpt from communique from Brigadier General Seymour to Major General Gillmore, 17 February 1864:

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that the iron-clads in Wassaw push up with as much activity as they can exert. I look upon this as of great importance, and shall rely upon it as a demonstration in my favor."²⁵

Excerpt from communique Major General Gillmore to Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, 18 February 1864:

I am just in receipt of your two letters of the 16th and one of the 17th, and am very much surprised at the tone of the latter and the character of your plans as therein stated. You say that by the time your letter of the 17th should reach these headquarters your forces would be in motion beyond Barber's, moving toward the Suwannee River, and that you shall rely on my making a display upon the Savannah River, with "naval forces, transports, sailing vessels," and with iron-clads up from Wassaw & Co., as a demonstration in your favor, which you look upon "as of great importance." All this is upon the presumption that the demonstration can and will be made; although contingent not only upon my power and disposition to do so, but upon the consent of Admiral Dahlgren, with whom I cannot communicate in less than two days. You must have forgotten my last instructions, which were for the present to hold Baldwin and the Saint Mary's South Fork, as your outposts to the westward of Jacksonville, and to occupy Palatka, Magnolia, on the Saint John's. Your project distinctly and avowedly ignores these operations and substitutes a plan which not only involves your command in a distant movement, without provisions, far beyond a point from which you once withdrew on account of precisely the same necessity, but presupposes a simultaneous demonstration of "great importance" to you elsewhere, over which you have no control, and which requires the co-operation of the navy. It is impossible for me to determine what your views are with respect to Florida matters, and this is the reason why I have endeavored to make mine known to you so fully.... As may be supposed, I am very much confused by these conflicting views, and am thrown into doubt as to whether my intentions with regard to Florida matters are fully understood by you. I will therefore reannounce them briefly: First, I desire to bring Florida into the Union under the President's proclamation of December 8, 1863; as accessory to the above, I desire, second, to revive the trade on the Saint John's River; third, to recruit my

colored regiments and organize a regiment of Florida white troops; fourth, to cut off in part the enemy's supplies drawn from Florida. After you had withdrawn your advance, it was arranged between us, at a personal interview, that the places to be permanently held for the present would be the south prong of the Saint Mary's, Baldwin, Jacksonville, Magnolia, and Palatka, and that Henry's mounted force should be kept moving as circumstances might justify or require. This is my plan of present operations. A raid to tear up the railroad west of Lake City will be of service, but I have no intention to occupy now that part of the State.²⁶

Analysis

- What factors contributed to General Beauregard's risk assessment for sending additional reinforcements to Finegan in Florida?
- What could be possible causes of friction among the both armies' senior leadership? How could these concerns be mitigated to have unity of effort and command?
- What factors influenced Gillmore's goals for the Florida Expedition of 1864?
- How was the Florida Expedition of 1864 a risk or a gamble for the Gillmore's forces under Seymour?
- How did Finegan's plan include characteristics of the defense?

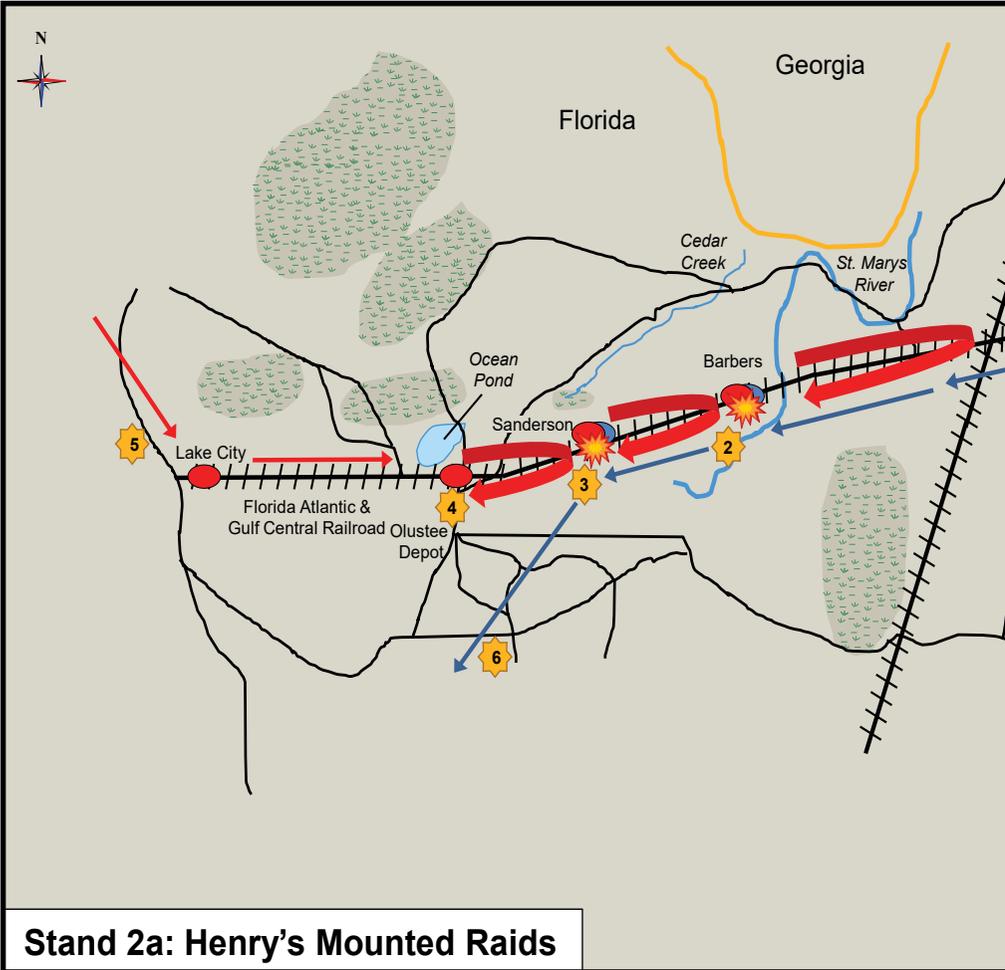
Stand 2a: Henry's Mounted Raids (8–18 February)

Directions: Continue west on US-90 for 7.6 miles. The historical marker should be on the right side of US-90 when traveling east at or near 13966 US-90, Sanderson, FL 32087 / 30° 15.057' N, 82° 16.157' W.

Orientation: The historical marker stands in the vicinity of the original boundaries of the small 1864 town of Sanderson. This site was first a secessionist depot prior to Colonel Henry's mounted raid (10 February) drove them back west. Facing west along US-90 continues the US Army's approach along the road. From this camp, the Olustee battlefield is off this route slightly over 8 miles. The Barbers ford site and additional US Army depot is back along the same route 7.6 miles. The Olustee Railroad depot is ten miles further down the route with the US Army's main objective of Lake City roughly 23 miles further down this route. When Henry's raiders passed through here it was evening. Both armies in turns used Sanderson as a camp and depot due to its location along the main road east-west across north Florida connecting to Jacksonville.

Description: The nature and military goals of the Florida Expedition of 1864 led Gillmore to seek additional horses to mount more of his infantry, increasing the range and speed of the large-scale raid that the expedition intended. His request subsequently denied, Seymour did mount some infantry on horses to improve his speed and range of a lead force, these from Col. Guy Henry's 40th Massachusetts Volunteers as a mounted infantry regiment with attached "B" Battery of 1st Horse Artillery under Capt. Samuel S. Elder. The Independent Battalion of Massachusetts Cavalry of Maj. Atherton H. Stevens Jr. rounded out Henry's mounted infantry/cavalry brigade of the US Army forces.

The US Army's information concerning the forces to their front during their westward advance was spotty at best, the cavalry forces and mounted infantrymen of Henry's brigade encountering scattered, uncoordinated resistance in a series of mounted raids conducted while Seymour's main body gathered in Jacksonville. Over several days, Henry's forces ranged in back and forth raids on Baldwin, a town of 15 buildings largely oriented around a railroad station, including a hotel on 9 February, seizing a many prisoners and some cannon without resistance. Pushing through the town after capturing those secessionist forces that did not flee, a detachment crossing the St. Mary's River encountered a secessionist force near Barber's Plantation, reported to be 150 strong including secessionist infantry. After short but fierce fighting, the cavalry force pushed through, broke the secessionist's resistance, and forced a crossing of the river but at high cost

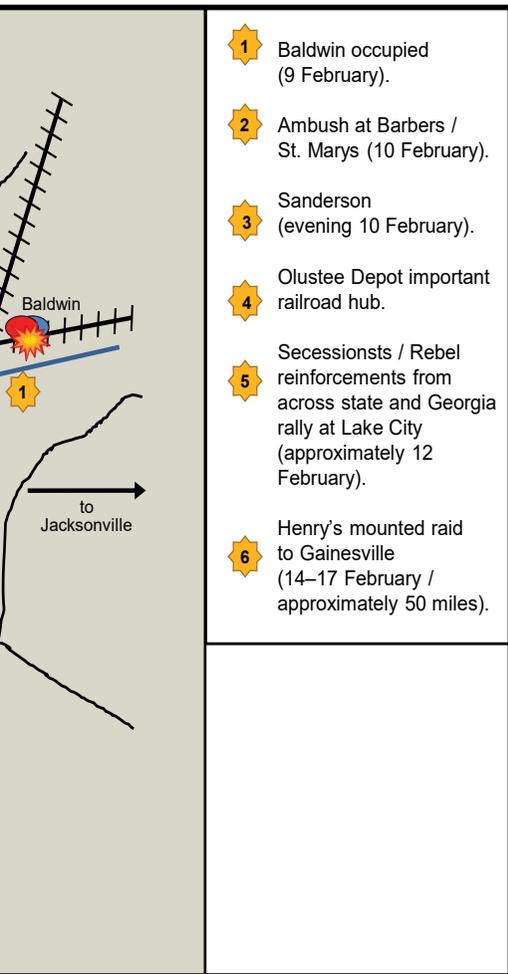


Stand 2a: Henry's Mounted Raids

Figure 3.5. Henry's Mounted Raids. Graphics courtesy of Army University Press Staff.

of 25 US Army casualties at unknown but slight loss to the disappearing secessionists. Along the raiders march evidence of secessionist destroyed supplies, food stores, military wares, and cotton contributed to the losses secessionist-Florida incurred as Henry's troopers also seized military and secessionist-government stores left behind.

Pressing on through the night of 9-10 February, the mounted force came into Sanderson, capturing more stores and finding evidence of more self-destruction by the secessionist to delay US Army advance. Seymour's force slowly followed each of these stops, taking Barbers, and then moving to Sanderson while Henry's troopers ranged further out. The slowly intensifying resistance, first none at Baldwin, then a bloodying at the St. Mary's



River, drew Seymour into his caution. Part of Henry's force moved towards the expedition's intended objective of Lake City only grew more resistance. Another detachment of troopers moved southwest further into the interior of the state to Gainesville on 14 February, where for nearly two and a half days held off two secessionist cavalry companies' attacks, destroyed secessionist stores, passed out secessionist-government goods to dispossessed locals before returning. Though boasting, the slow accumulation of intensifying resistance delaying the US Army advance created hesitation in Seymour who halted his advance and began his back and forth equivocation with Gillmore over the locomotive, the degree of secessionist commitment, and logistics, leading up to his 17 February decision to begin his large-scale advance towards Lake City.

Vignettes

Excerpt from communique from Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore to General-in-Chief Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, 9 February 1864:

The advance, under Col. Guy V. Henry, comprising the Fortieth Massachusetts Infantry, the Independent Battalion Massachusetts Cavalry, under Major Stevens, and Elder's horse battery (B, First Artillery), pushed forward into the interior on the night of the 8th; passed by the enemy, drawn up in line of battle at Camp Finegan, 7 miles from Jacksonville; surprised and captured a battery, 3 miles in rear of the camp, about midnight, and reached this place about sunrise this morning. At our approach the "enemy abandoned and sunk the steamer Saint Mary's and burned 270 bales of cotton a few miles above Jacksonville. We have taken, without loss of a man, over 100 prisoners, 8 pieces of excellent

field artillery, in serviceable condition and well supplied with ammunition, and other valuable property to a large amount.²⁷

Excerpt from communique from Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour to Maj. Gen. Quincy Gillmore, 11 February 1864:

Colonel Henry was at Sanderson at 6 o'clock last night. He was opposed at Saint Mary's South Fork by about 150 men (infantry), and had some 25 killed and wounded, inflicting but slight loss upon the enemy, who disappeared in the woods unmolested. He is pushing on toward Lake City this morning as far as he can with safety. The One hundred and fifteenth is at Saint Mary's South Fork, and the Forty-seventh, Forty-eighth New York, Seventh New Hampshire, and two guns are en route from here. We shall be at Sanderson to-night. The stores at Sanderson were destroyed by the enemy. I am convinced that a movement upon Lake City is not, in the present condition of transportation, admissible, and indeed that what has been said of the desire of Florida to come back now is a delusion. The backbone of rebeldom is not here, and Florida will not cast its lot until more important successes elsewhere are assured.²⁸

Brigadier Truman Seymour to Brig. Gen. J.W. Turner, Gillmore's chief of staff, 17 February 1864:

I have to report that on the 13th instant a command of Fortieth Massachusetts Volunteers.... Left Sanderson for Gainesville, Fla., which point was reached on the morning of the 14th. Immense stores of cotton, of turpentine and rosin, sugar, tobacco and supplies of all kinds, were captured. In accordance with instructions...no private property was destroyed or molested. The public subsistence stores were distributed among the inhabitant, who were suffering for or want of them. Probably \$1,000,000 worth of property fell into our hands, but it could not be removed and it was not considered advisable to destroy it. On the evening of the 14th, being posted behind bales of cotton, in a favorable position, was attacked by two companies of cavalry under Captain Dickinson, who were repulsed with loss of several men and of the majority of their horses. Gainesville was held by this small force for fifty-six hours, and Captain Marshall, having accomplished his mission', returned to this place this morning, the 17th.²⁹

Correspondence of an unidentified civilian newspaper reporter, *New York Herald*, embedded with Col. Guy Henry, commander US Army Cavalry Brigade, describing their February 10th and 11th march west from Barber's Plantation towards Lake City:

The roads were perhaps a little more open and we passed several beautiful and extensive savannahs covered with saffron colored grass and mottled with little oasis of green hammocks ...on which grazed droves of wild cattle and hogs.

February 14th 1864 correspondence of a Mr. Whittemore, *New York Times* reporter, embedded with Col. Guy Henry, commanding US Army Cavalry Brigade, describing the country between Barber's Plantation and Lake City:

The country through which we passed is low, level, and marshy. The road on each side is flanked with pine forests, but by no means dense... The eye is wearied with viewing nothing but pine trees.

Analysis

- How does the success of Henry's raids influence Seymour's vacillating position on progressing the campaign?
- How did, or did not, Henry's mounted force fulfill the roles typical of cavalry or mounted formations?
- What were some of the indicators of the enemy that Henry's raids exhibited that influenced US Army assumptions? How could they have been mistaken?
- How did Seymour's use of Henry's cavalry demonstrate the fundamentals of reconnaissance?

Stand 2: The Developing Skirmish (reported at 1400, 20 February 1864)

Directions: From Stand One (vicinity of park welcome center for staff rides arriving from Stand 1a or Stand 2b) walk southwest towards the Cemetery along US-90 and the railroad. Follow the park boundary fence east from the entrance of the park and the cemetery gate is facing inside the park. Once in the cemetery, a tall cross stands in the center commemorating the US Army soldiers buried there after the battle and is the site of Stand Two.

Orientation: The US infantry skirmishers from Captain Skinner's 7th Connecticut Regiment arrayed roughly north to south across the advancing front with the railroad in their center (railroad and parallel modern US-90). Facing due west were thin secessionist lines awaiting further reinforcements arrayed in battle line roughly northwest to southeast interrupting the US advance towards Lake City. The ground of the pine barren was open, with scattered trees and limited underbrush, giving fair fields of observation for the footsore and weary US infantry. The sun was high with the early afternoon, initial contact reported at 1400. A reporter accompanying the US Army forces in Florida remarked on 20 February 1864 what a warm day with clear skies. He said the terrain near Olustee was free of underbrush, level with an open, park-like pine forest.³⁰ Only the scattered pines interrupted visibility. The chilled weather was from the end of the Florida winter season characterized by a lack of precipitation.

Description: Early on the morning of 20 February, Seymour began the final push of his forces from Barbers towards Lake City. The first ones that left were the mounted force under Colonel Henry. As the sun rose higher, the rest of Seymour's forces began to get into the order of movement and wind their way out of the previous night's campsite and move towards the secessionist territory. Hawley's brigade followed behind the mounted force with Barton's New Yorkers in the middle while Montgomery's reserve brigade held the rear with the baggage train having grown to approximately two miles in length between Montgomery's brigade and the New Yorkers. Approximately, the first troops departed around 0600 and it was not for two more hours later at 0800 that Montgomery's brigade even started to move from the bivouac site.

The 7th Connecticut was the most experienced and reliable of the infantry regiments and would be called upon to perform at its best at Olustee. The other two infantry regiments of Hawley's brigade were the 7th New Hampshire and the 8th United States Colored Troops (USCT). The

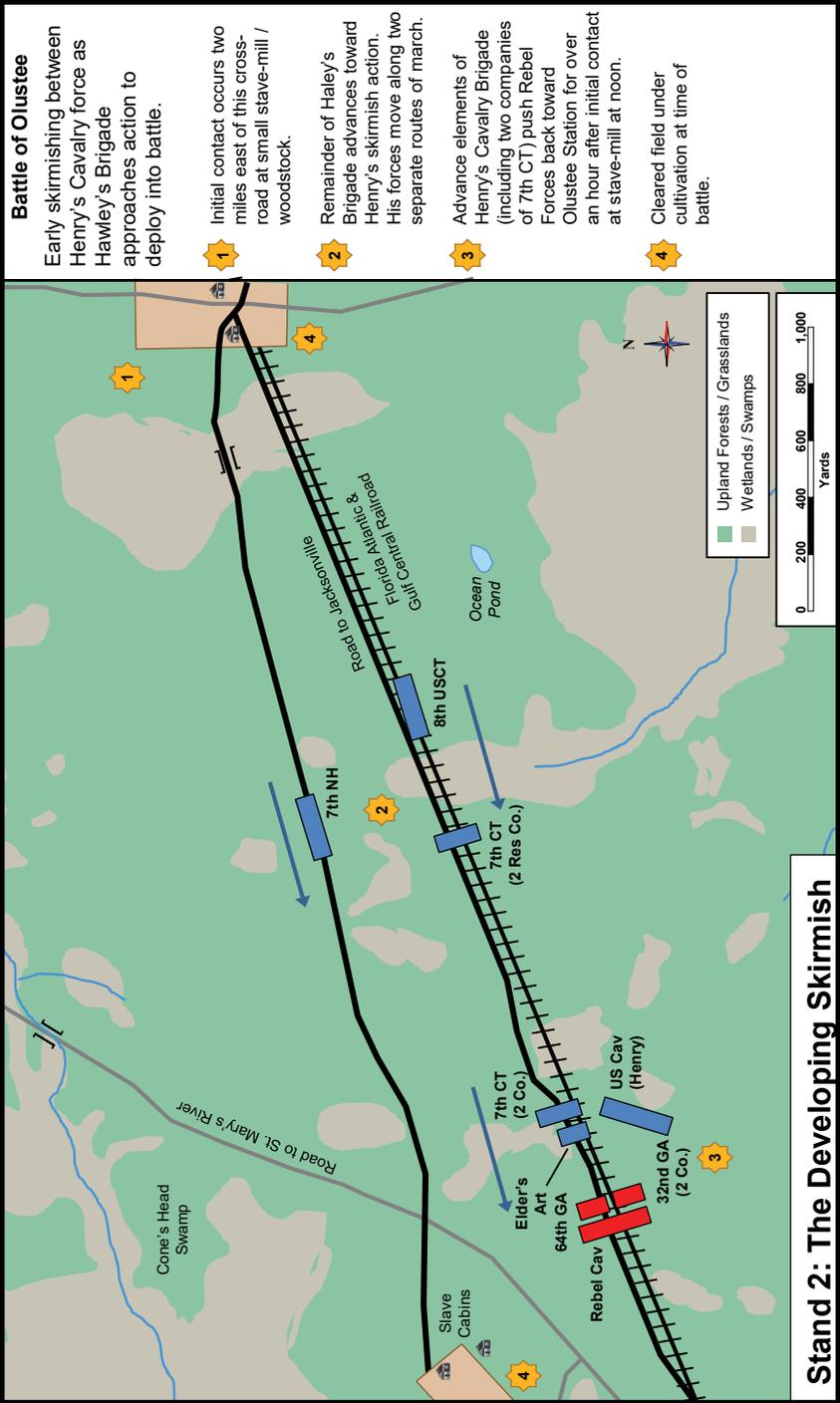


Figure 3.6. The Developing Skirmish. Map courtesy of Christopher Lydick.

New Hampshire regiment was under Col. Joseph C. Abbott, and though a veteran regiment was understaffed like the 7th Connecticut due to leave and full of untested replacements. Likewise, the third infantry regiment under Hawley was the untested 8th USCT under command of Col. Charles W. Fribley. The 3rd Artillery Regiment's "E" Battery under command of Capt. John Hamilton rounded out Hawley's brigade.

As the US forces advanced, Henry's mounted infantry and cavalry troopers faced sporadic fighting from scattered skirmishers. This intensity was no more than they had faced from their previous movements inland from the US-enclaves along the coast. The secessionist cavalry and scattered infantrymen fired a few rounds and then broke apart, retreating, reforming and firing a few more rounds further along the route. They consistently maintained limited contact with the US forces and drew them more towards Olustee, where the secessionist under Finegan intended to lead the US forces to attack a few miles east of Lake City. Here, the secessionist planned to fight a defensive battle from their prepared works, which were still under construction. Fear of the advancing US forces destroying the railroad, Finegan began sending forward infantry units and finally moved Colquitt forward to establish a strong line of defense. In this moment, the secessionists abandoned the original plan to fight a defensive battle at the ramparts of Olustee but instead to meet the advancing US forces in the open a few miles east of Olustee in a developing engagement.

As the consistent skirmishing continued, Seymour ordered up the entire 7th Connecticut infantrymen as dismounted skirmishers to bolster Henry's mounted troops. Leading to the field, Captain Skinner recalled they "marched without rest and over bad ground; many swamps, ditches, pickets, and fences intervened to obstruct."³¹ When Skinner approached the railroad and dirt road intersection, he found the mounted troops laagered and seemingly waiting for the infantry to arrive before they pushed any further up the road. Once arrived, the infantrymen passed and advanced. US horse-drawn artillery fired a round, receiving a salvo in reply from multiple secessionist artillery pieces. In response, the 7th Connecticut advanced more determinedly to seize the opposing artillery at approximately 1400. As the US infantry moved forward, they soon faced no longer an enemy skirmish line but a determined and well-formed battle line of secessionist infantry flanked by cavalry.

Private Milton, a skirmisher in the lead Connecticut company, recounted in a letter home, "As soon as we were deployed, were ordered to advance, keep cool, take good aim and not waste our ammunition."³² As skirmishers, they were formed into a line, soldiers spaced five yards

apart, spreading out over half a mile with a reserve company directly to their rear about a hundred yards. The separatists retreated, always keeping within sight. The Connecticut skirmishers exchanged fire, advancing a few miles.³³

From the secessionist side, at 1400 Colquitt arrived forward and found the secessionist cavalry retreating and the enemy infantry advancing quickly. Colquitt immediately deployed his infantry regiments to form the first secessionist main line of resistance, the line Skinner initially saw after passing the US mounted force in laager. Colquitt sent forward the 19th Georgia to the south side of the road and the 28th Georgia on the north side of the road. Along with the 28th on the north side were the untested in battle 64th Georgia and the portions of the 32nd Georgia, each of which Finegan sent earlier to reinforce Smith's cavalry and now were absorbed into Colquitt's command. The 6th Georgia was pushed even further to the north, to offset the US Army's apparent attempts to flank the secessionist line, which in fact was Skinner's deployment of his reserve companies to stop what they thought was an apparent enemy flanking attempt. The available separatist artillery held the road, and their lines finalized for the time being with Colquitt's orders for Smith's cavalry to secure the two flanks.³⁴ Smith sent the 2nd Florida Cavalry to cover the southern flank while the 4th Georgia Cavalry took the north side.³⁵

Private Woodford wrote, "a rattle of riflery is seldom heard from so few men," commenting on the intensity from their repeating rifles... Each man of us had a tree to cover him, and every one took good aim... the rest of the regiment came up... they scattered, every man taking a tree and fighting on his own hook, just like skirmishers."³⁶ Olustee was the 64th Georgia's first combat; however, the hardcore experienced 28th Georgia veterans buttressed the 64th Georgia whose demonstrated calmness under the skirmisher's repeating rifles' withering fire steadied the raw soldiers.³⁷

The secessionist struck the Connecticut soldiers with "well-directed volleys of musketry" in Skinner's post-battle assessment. From the rapid expenditure of ammunition in the repeating rifles during their skirmishing and initial push forward, the 7th Connecticut soon found themselves running low on ammunition and being pressured by a resurgent, advancing enemy line. The US Army skirmishers began to retreat. The 7th Connecticut had pushed themselves so deep into the enveloping secessionist lines as to form a semi-circle resulting in fire from three sides. The footsore, under-strength regiment conducted a fighting withdrawal, firing as they retreated.³⁸

Vignettes

Excerpt from secessionist veteran William F. Penniman's 1901 *Personal Reminiscences of the 4th Georgia Cavalry Regiment* describing conditions during the Battle of Olustee:

The battlefield was a plain open pine barren, no earthworks or any protective spots, the land as level as a billiard table. Our whole regiment, in fact the 2nd Florida also, moved like clockwork, falling back in echelon movement, tolling the Yankees directly back to where Colquitt's Brigade lay in the wiregrass, until when within a few hundred yards of them, we at the trot quickly moved by the flank, leaving the two armies opposite each other.

Excerpt from the official report of Brig. Gen. Alfred Colquitt, commander of the secessionist's First Brigade, 26 February 1864:

About 2 miles from Olustee Station I found the enemy advancing rapidly and our cavalry retiring before them. I threw forward a party of skirmishers and hastily formed line of battle under a brisk fire from the enemy's advance. The Nineteenth Georgia was placed on the right and the Twenty-eight Georgia on the left, with a section of Captain Gamble's artillery in the center. The Sixty-fourth Georgia and the two companies of the Thirty-second Georgia were formed on the left of the Twenty-eight, and the Sixth Georgia Regiment was sent still farther to the left to prevent a flank movement of the enemy in that direction. Instructions were sent to Colonel Smith, commanding cavalry, to place his regiments on the extreme flanks and to guard against any movement of the enemy from either side.

The line infantry was then ordered to advance, which was gallantly done, the enemy contesting the ground and giving way slowly. Perceiving that the enemy were in strong force, I sent back for re-enforcements and a fresh supply of ammunition.³⁹

Excerpt from the official report of Capt. Benjamin Skinner, acting commander of the 7th Connecticut Infantry serving as skirmishers of the US Army main body, 25 February 1864:

Our advance soon came up with the enemy's advance guard and exchanged a few shots with them, when they retreated, firing occasionally as they went. We followed them in this

way about 3 miles, when after firing a few shots from our advance battery, Captain Elder's, the enemy replied with a battery of three or four guns, when I was directed by General Seymour to go forward with the rest of my command and, if possible, secure the enemy's battery...After moving up 200 or 300 yards I found the enemy drawn up in line to receive us and in position to support their battery...Here I discovered that the enemy were intrenched [sic] and delivered well-directed volleys of musketry. I found also that my ammunition was very nearly expended...there was no support in sight, I had already pushed so far in the enemy's center that my line formed a semicircle, and that I was receiving the enemy's fire from three sides. At this juncture I determined to withdraw and save my command...Those who had ammunition fired as they withdrew and divided to the right and left in order to unmask the Seventh Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers, who approached.⁴⁰

Analysis

- How did the initial contact exemplify aspects of today's meeting engagements or a movement to contact?
- As many Civil War commanders were familiar with Antoine-Henri Jomini, which principles of war did the opposing forces exhibit at the onset of hostilities at Olustee?
- What action of Colquitt's shaped the developing battle?
- Evaluate Captain Skinner's actions as a skirmishing force. What risks did he accept?
- What leadership factors for both forces most affected the opening engagement?

Stand 3: Deployment of Hawley's Brigade (approximate 1400-1430, 20 February 1864)

Directions: From Stand Two walk northeast back to the main trailhead entrance near Stand One site. Enter trailhead and follow path until arrival at the main open Reenactment field (the old farmer's field), to the north of the trail.

Orientation: Hawley's brigade was the first US brigade to move into the Olustee battle with his 7th Connecticut Regiment already having been engaged serving as the expedition's skirmishers. Starting with the open field to the rear, ahead and to the east is the main avenue of approach following the parallel road and railroad tracks. From this direction and spread along this approach were Hawley's advance brigade's remaining two infantry regiments moving to support the northern flank of the engaged US Army artillery. To the north (the US right), the 7th New Hampshire Regiment moved forward towards the Connecticut skirmishers. To the south of the US center (along the US left), along the railroad and dirt road paths moved the 8th USCT into a thickly wooded area, just below the open cultivated fields slight more to the north, on the right of the US line.

Directly to the west and in front of the spreading US infantry regiments was the rapidly growing secessionist lines, a mixture of Georgian and Florida infantry units of varying degrees of experience being fed into the line just as they arrived from Lake City. Seymour observed the Olustee battleground was, "favorable for the movement of troops," and that the ground "was firm and even...covered with pine timber was devoid of underbrush."⁴¹ A secessionist participant echoed these observations. Secessionist Lieut. M.B. Grant, an engineer officer, wrote that the battle took place "upon ground which furnished a fair field to both parties, and no advantage to either."⁴²

The lack of underbrush minimized concealment for the infantry and provided little cover by scattered pine timber. The scattered pines trees limited observation and fields of fire—the land was flat. The overall field was largely flat and even, however, it was dotted with small swamps and scattered ponds.⁴³ The swamp aspects of the terrain slowed down and limited some maneuverability on the field, mainly that of the advancing US forces. Hawley's brigade immediately came to the support of its skirmishers shortly after the main engagement began at 1400.

Description: The initial trend for the US deployment by Seymour was a traditional linear warfare technique. This tactics of placing the artillery

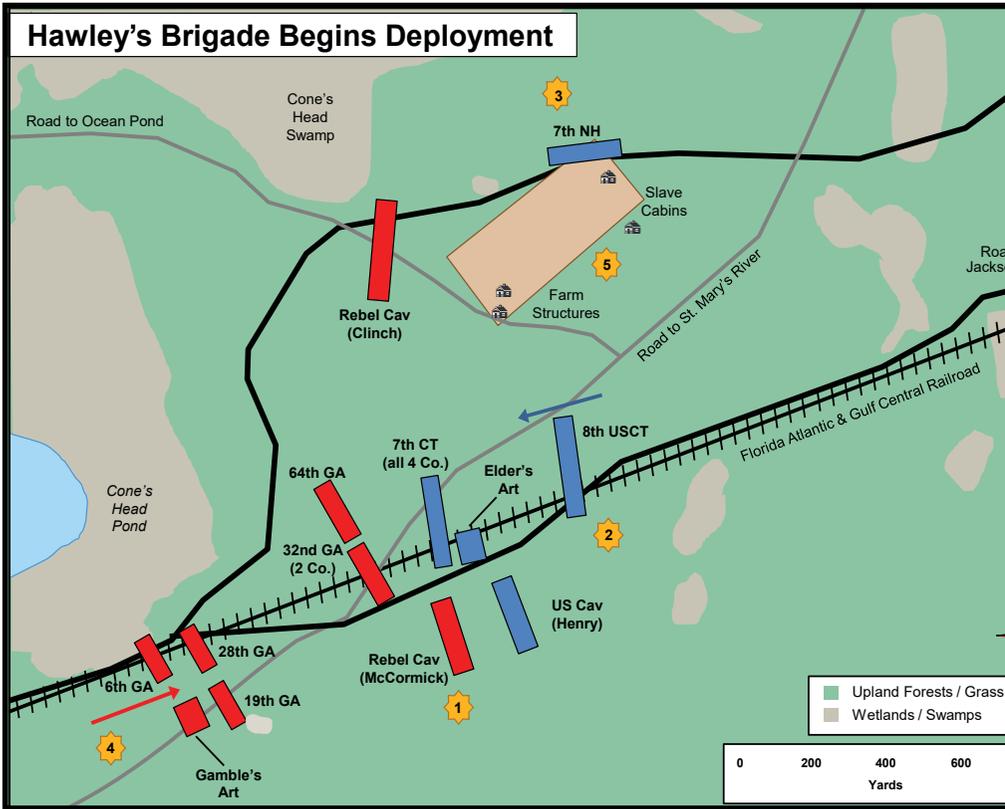


Figure 3.7. Hawley's Brigade begins deployment. Map courtesy of Christopher Lydick.

in the center advanced from the infantry, flanked on either side by an infantry regiment for its defense, and accompanied by another brigade's movement to flank the enemy lines, was a concept Seymour employed at Olustee. It was this tactical concept Seymour fully embraced, attempting to fulfill throughout the duration of the developing Olustee engagement. With each deployment of his successive brigades, Seymour attempted to complete this tactic in the face of growing secessionist numbers and extending, enveloping lines.

Quickly into the firefight, Hawley's 7th Connecticut Infantry Regiment found itself running low on ammunition, extremely overextended and vastly outnumbered. They waged a fighting retreat as they fell back to the approaching main body of the friendly forces.

As the 7th Connecticut withdrew, the rest of Hawley's brigade deployed forward in preferred technique of anchoring the artillery with two infantry regiments, allowing follow on maneuvering infantry units to flank

Battle of Olustee

Henry's brigade is halted. Hawley's brigade deploys north and south, as Colquitt's brigade arrives at theater.

- 1 US advance (led by Rebel feigned retreats) comes to a standstill as additional elements of Hawley's brigade come into theater piecemeal, causing Rebel forces to shift from feigned retreat to line of battle.
- 2 All four companies of 7th CT reunite. 8th USCT advances to the front and prepares to deploy with the remainder of the south portion of Hawley's brigade.
- 3 7th NH attempts to deploy, but is disorganized. Their unserviceable Springfield muskets add to the confusion. Great disorder on the north flank of Hawley's developing line.
- 4 Colquitt's brigade marching east from Olustee Station to reinforce Rebel forces confronted with larger and larger US forces due to piecemeal deployment of Hawley's brigade in their front.
- 5 Cleared field under cultivation at time of battle.

a fixed enemy. In this case, the 7th New Hampshire moved to the north (right flank) of the artillery centered on the road while the 8th USCT anchored the southern flank near the railroad itself.

While the New Hampshire infantry advanced, they conducted an uncoordinated passage of lines under fire with the retreating Connecticut forces seeking ammunition resupply and regrouping to the rear. Through conflicting orders from the brigade commander and the regimental commander, Col. Joseph C. Abbott, the New Hampshire regimental commander deployed from column of march into battle lines pivoting the movement off the wrong company. Hawley ordered to pivot from the eighth company into line of battle, but Abbott ordered it done off the first company.⁴⁴ Hawley, accompanying Abbott, immediately corrected him. Abbott ordered a halt and a facing movement trying to get the regiment deployed as Hawley ordered.⁴⁵ Under intense fire, with confusion and misdirection from multiple orders the 7th New Hampshire, a mix of veteran and brand-new soldiers, broke ranks and fell back in disorder. One company stood its ground for a time but without support and becoming the sole focus of the enemy lines this company broke as well, with officers pursuing the retreating soldiers,

attempting to rally them. A gap opened on the US Army's right flank. The retreating Connecticut forces divided and went right and left around the forming New Hampshire soldiers.⁴⁶ The New Hampshire regimental losses included eight killed, wounded, or missing officers and two hundred killed, wounded, or missing soldiers, a total of 208 casualties.⁴⁷

On the left flank, the 8th USCT moved into battle at a quick step. This was the unit's first combat. Their rapid movement to the front resulted in them facing the enemy's fire with many holding unloaded weapons. Due to training restraints, many soldiers had not even fired a weapon or even trained to load one yet as garrison and manual labor was the most common use of the African-American units. The 8th USCT advanced too far and were exposed to the enemy before they had come into line of battle, maneuvering from the march column into battle lines while under focused fire. The secessionist forces continued to feed reinforcements into their lines as the US Army's New York brigade advanced forward to serve as the maneuver unit to Hawley's base of fire anchored on the artillery.

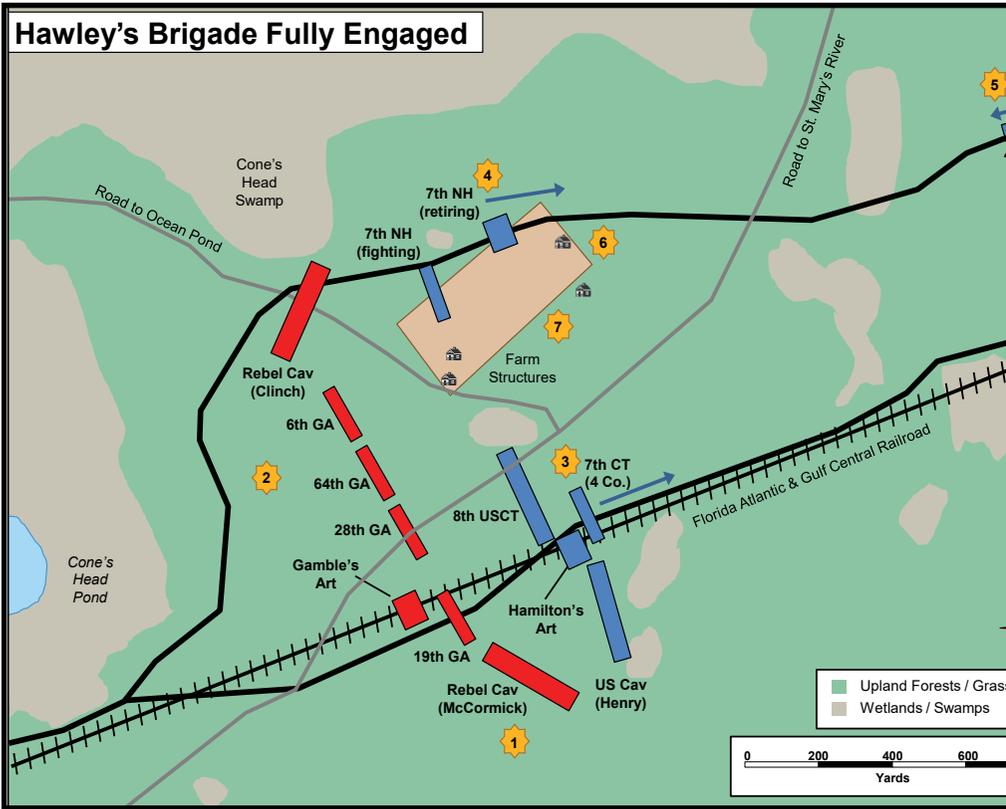


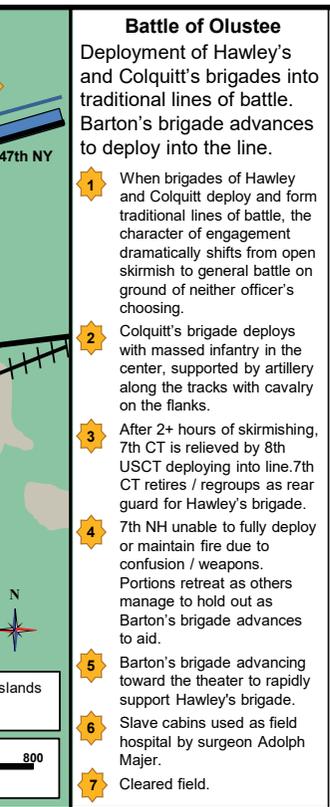
Figure 3.8. Hawley's Brigade fully engaged. Map courtesy of Christopher Lydick.

From the outset, both forces' artillery struggled. Seymour's official report of the battle regarding the artillery included a telling, though characteristically terse line, "Exposed greatly to sharpshooters this force suffered correspondingly."⁴⁸ A secessionist engineer accompanying Finegan's forces observed of the artillery fire of both sides, "judging from the marks upon the trees, [artillery fire] was entirely too high, and did comparatively little damage."⁴⁹ The effectiveness of artillery during the battle was poor and largely failed to influence the conduct of the battle.

Vignettes

Excerpt from official report of Col. Joseph Hawley, acting commander US advance brigade, 27 February 1864:

Taking the Seventh New Hampshire, and leaving the Eight to go in on the left of a pond or swamp, near which was a portion of our artillery, we hurried on...



We met the skirmishers of the Seventh Connecticut falling back, firing, before the enemy... I distinctly ordered the Seventh New Hampshire to deploy on the eight company, which would have brought the left of the line near the pond. Somebody must have misunderstood the order, for a portion of the regiment was going wrong, when myself and staff and Colonel Abbott repeated it vigorously, but vainly. All semblance of organization was lost in a few moments, save with about one company, which faced the enemy and opened fire. The remainder constantly drifted back, suffering from the fire which a few moments' decision and energy would have checked, if not suppressed. Most of the officers went back with their men, trying to rally them. The brave color-bearer Sergt. Thomas H. Simington, Company B, obeyed every word or signal, and sometimes faced the enemy alone. Though wounded, he carried the colors to the end of the battle.⁵⁰

Excerpt from the officer report of Col. Joseph Abbott, commander 7th New Hampshire Volunteers, 27 February 1864:

My regiment was moving by the left flank and remained in that order until we were under the fire of the enemy. The regiment was then brought by company into line and closed in mass. The order was then given by myself to deploy upon the first company and the deployment commenced. At this moment I was informed by yourself [Col. Hawley] that the deployment was not as you intended, and I at once commanded, 'Halt; front!' but the fire of the enemy had now become very severe, and in the attempt to bring the regiment again into column confusion ensued, followed by faltering on the part of some of the men, and finally in almost a complete break. About 100 of the regiment remained upon the ground occupied by the column and the remainder fell back a short distance.⁵¹

Analysis

- What factors may have attributed to the miscommunication between the brigade commander and the regimental commander? How could they have been mitigated?

- What factors contributed to the collapse of the 7th New Hampshire Volunteers? How could they have been mitigated?
- How could the rearward passage lines while under fire of the 7th Connecticut with the 7th New Hampshire been better conducted?
- What factors influenced the minimized role of the cannons but high casualties to the artillery?
- How did the north Florida terrain affect the employment of the artillery?
- How could the forces have adapted during the initial infantry engagement to better employ their respective artillery?

Stand 4: Collapse of the 8th USCT (approximate 1400-1600, 20 February 1864)

Directions: To Stand Four, walk southeast back down the main trail head the direction previously walked approximately 200 yards until arrive at the trail juncture with the Service Road.

Orientation: To the north of this intersection is the right of the 8th USCT, where the New Hampshire infantry struggled in the more open pine barren grounds near the cleared cultivated farmers field. Orienting to the south towards the front of the park entrance is the left of the 8th USCT, where the consolidated US artillery battery set up along the railroad and main approach route. The African-American troops anchored the southern, or left, flank of the US line as Seymour moved to bring up Barton's experienced brigade of New Yorkers to swing north, around the 7th New Hampshire Regiment into the open farmer's field, to strike the secessionists left.

This occurred shortly after the skirmishers made first contact, in less than half an hour, between 1430-1500 Hawley's brigade was forming and Barton's New Yorkers were swinging from line of march towards the open farmer's field.

Description: In the words of the regimental surgeon, the 8th USCT "commenced dropping like leaves in autumn"⁵² Lieutenant Oliver W. Norton of the 8th USCT recorded that the soldiers stood and took the beating, they seemed scared, "stunned, bewildered...curled to the ground."⁵³

In an attempt to execute Seymour's intent to anchor the US artillery with two infantry regiments and then use the following New York brigade as a maneuver unit to flank the secessionist lines, the 8th USCT took to the south, or left, of the US lines which were centered on the road that had the advance artillery on it.

While the 7th New Hampshire and the 7th Connecticut struggled through their passage of lines on the northern, or right side, of the US line, the 8th USCT moved into position. The brigade commander, Hawley, accompanied the 7th New Hampshire into line as they replaced Hawley's normal command, the 7th Connecticut. As they moved into position at the double-quick they were struck by intensive and concentrated small-arms fire from the enemy formation across the wooded field. The 8th USCT had moved so quickly to the sound of the guns that they were under enemy fire before they successfully transitioned from column of four into column of twos—their battle line. In addition, either from their lack of training, heat of the moment or from their lack of situational awareness, many of the 8th USCT entered

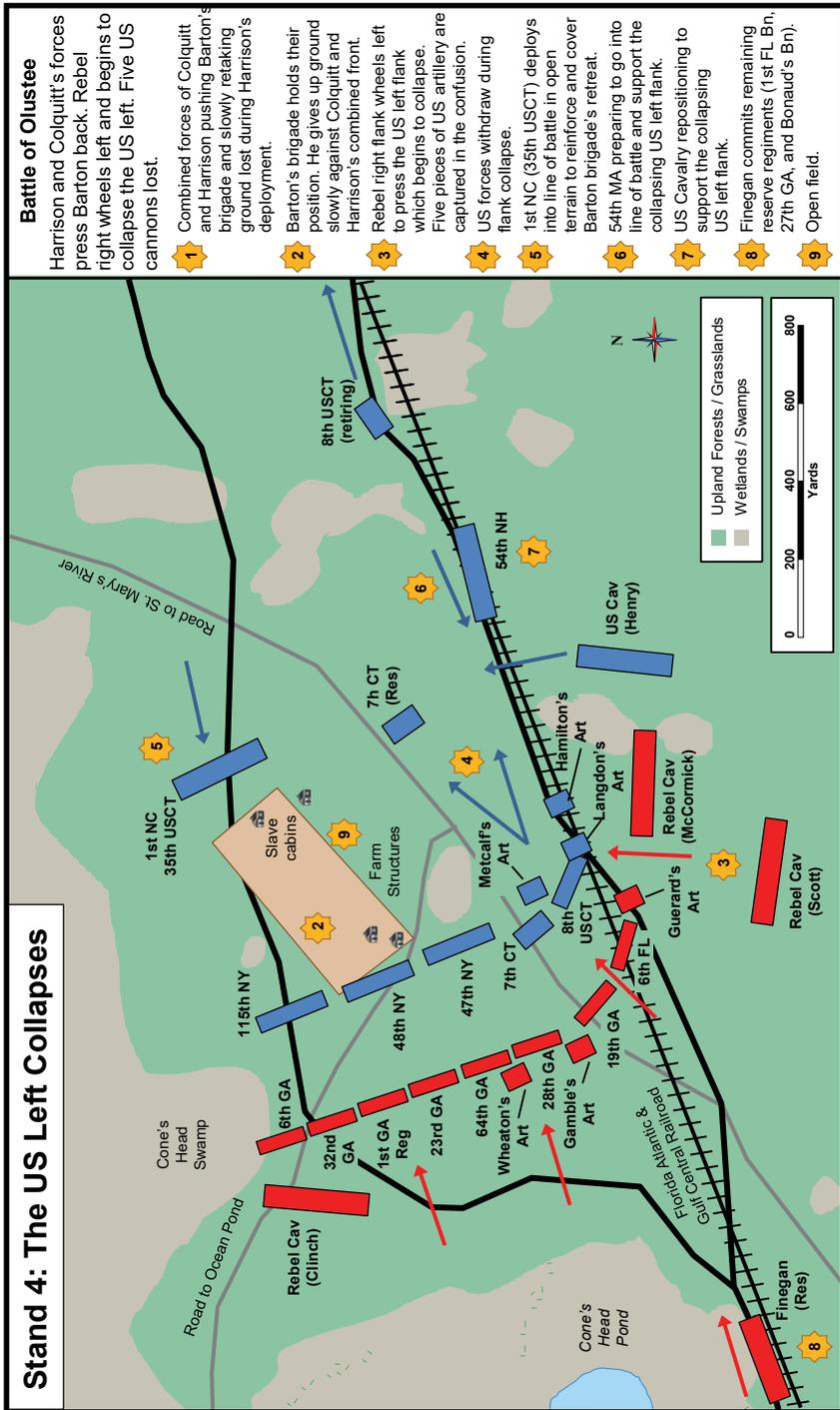


Figure 3.9. The US left collapses. Map courtesy of Christopher Lydick.

combat with unloaded weapons. The enemy fire quickly targeted the non-commissioned officers and officers as they attempted to rally the men. The command and control of the regiment suffered greatly. First, secessionist fire struck down the regimental commander, followed by the wounding and removal from the field of the major who took command after him.

While the 8th USCT stood their ground, knowing as an African-American regiment their conduct was highly scrutinized, the secessionists continued to conduct their standard tactic, extending their lines with each additional arrival of reinforcements. This resulted in a flanking envelopment and soon the 8th USCT received murderous fire from the front and its far flank.

As the regiment drifted back, the artillerymen begged for the infantry not to leave them unprotected as the secessionist continued their intense pressure. The 8th USCT attempted to rally around the guns but the firing was too intense and the casualties continued to increase. The 8th USCT broke and retreated. The officers and remaining sergeants attempted to rally the retreating African-American troops around the artillery, notably Hamilton's battery, as their mission was to anchor and defend the flank of the US artillery. The fire was heavy and the artillerymen, already having been under continuous fire since the opening shots, pleaded with the retreating infantry to remain with them. As the African-American troops streamed past the artillery towards the road and safety, Lieut. Elijah Lewis was stopped by an artilleryman who cried, "Don't leave the battery; bring your flag and rally the men around it." Lewis, who at the time was carrying the national flag he had taken from a dead color bearer, moved towards the cannons. Norton stopped him and said, "Don't carry that flag; give it to one of the men, and help form some kind of a line."⁵⁴

Captain Bailey and his lieutenants managed to keep some of the soldiers with the guns for a time. It was during this chaotic period of retreat, the devolving command of the regiment, and harsh musketry and artillery barrages that the 8th USCT lost their national flag, leaving it beside the artillery's guns. The "color company," commonly understood as today's headquarters company, composed the command team and held responsibility for the colors to signify to the regiment where to rally. The 8th USCT's color company suffered 30 of 43 men in the company killed, wounded or missing, losing five color bearers and three sergeants while passing the flag around.⁵⁵

The 8th USCT ceased any further participation in the battle. In the ninety minutes of combat their losses amounted to ten killed, wounded

and missing officers out of a pre-battle total of twenty-one. Of the enlisted, to include sergeants, 333 killed, wounded, or missing out of 544, leaving total casualties at 343 of 565 soldiers of the regiment, among the highest percentage for any one regiment during the war.⁵⁶

Later claims asserted the 8th USCT soldiers simply did not know how to use their weapons properly and those who did possessed too little training to effectively do it while under fire. The 8th USCT knew each time a colored regiment went into a fight more than their individual reputation was at stake, but rather the broader question of the African-American's ability and willingness to fight was on the line. Because of this belief, the officers of the 8th USCT give credit to the defiant stand of the regiment even as it was combat ineffective, it still held its ground, taking the beating for as long as it could, until it lost its leadership.

Vignettes

Excerpt of a letter dated 1 March 1864 written by Lieut. Oliver Willcox Norton, Company K, 8th USCT:

The country is covered with scattered pines, most of them blazed for turpentine. The ground between the trees is covered with a dense growth of coarse grass and palmetto shrubs. At intervals there are swamps, not deep, but broad and wet.

Excerpt from the official report of Capt. Romanzo C. Bailey, acting commander of 8th USCT, 24 February 1864:

[W]e had been advancing until within about 1,000 yards of the enemy, Colonel Fribley received orders to 'put his regiment in,' when we were ordered to change direction to the left, moving now in double-quick time by the right flank on a line nearly parallel with the railroad and about 300 yards to its right. We were soon under fire of the enemy, when our line of battle was formed under a terrific fire of musketry at short range, we apparently being opposed by the entire left wing of the enemy who very soon poured in a deadly fire on our left flank, which was unprotected wholly. Colonel Fribley now ordered the regiment to fall back slowly, which we did, firing as we retired, being unable to withstand so disastrous a fire. The order had just reached me on the extreme right when the colonel fell mortally wounded. The command now devolved on Major Burritt, who soon received two wounds and retired from the field, the regiment at this time engaging the enemy with steadiness, and holding the ground for some time near Hamilton's battery, which

we were trying to save. We here lost 3 color-sergeants and 5 of the color guard while attempting to save one gun, but we were driven back, leaving the gun and, as I afterward learned, the color beside it during the excitement.

I now learned that I was in command of the regiment, and seeing that a regiment at least of the enemy was moving down the railroad to again attack our left, and knowing that our ammunition was exhausted, I took the responsibility to withdraw the regiment from the field.⁵⁷

Excerpt from personal letters of Lieut. Oliver Norton of the 8th USCT:

No new regiment ever went into their first fight in more unfavorable circumstances...We had very little practice in firing... though they could stand and be killed, they could not kill a concealed enemy fast enough to satisfy my feelings...Colonel Fribley had applied time and time again for permission to practice...target firing and been always refused.⁵⁸

Analysis

- What contributed to the collapse of the 8th USCT? What measures could have mitigated the collapse and rout?
- How much of the failure of the 8th USCT lay with the regiment's preparation and employment, the brigade's holistic actions, or specific enemy action regardless of the 8th USCT's particular circumstances?
- What could Hawley have done or ordered that may have mitigated the defeat of his brigade?
- Why did the loss of senior leadership decisively play in the collapse of the 8th USCT?

Stand 5: Deployment of the New York Brigade (approximate 1420-1500, 20 February 1864)

Directions: To Stand Five retrace path back up main trailhead loop northeast to return back to the open Reenactor's Field. Move to the north most edge of the cleared open field. This open field would have been approximately three times this size during the time of the battle and open, flat and cultivated by the nearby farm.

Orientation: From the east emerging from the scattered pines would be the approaching New York brigade under Colonel Barton, all three of his regiments moving up through a disintegrating 7th New Hampshire Regiment. The New Yorkers entered an open farmer's field on the far north of the battlefield on the US right flank. Directly ahead and to their left was a thickening secessionist force, with some moving across the New Yorker's front to the right, extending the enemy line. To the New Yorker's left, southern flank, was the forward pushed and exposed US artillery and battered 8th USCT. Colquitt was located directly behind and centered on the secessionist lines until Colonel Harrison's arrival at which time they split the ever-extending secessionist line between them. Finegan remained further behind at Lake City. A significant portion of the fight on the northern side of the battlefield took place in an open, cultivated farmer's field. Barton's report claimed his brigade moved forward into the fight within twenty minutes of it beginning, indicating sometimes around 1420 in the afternoon.

Description: The New York brigade under Barton was the second US Army brigade to enter the battle. Much like the 8th USCT troops, Barton's infantry began to take fire from the opposing main line directly to the west as well as from its northern, exposed flank. One separatist participant commented that they used the trees for cover more effectively than the US infantry, which accounted for their high number of wounded in the arms and hands but less killed compared to the US forces.⁵⁹

The New York brigade's infantry regiments were the 115th New York under Col. Simeon Sammon, the 47th New York under Col. Henry Moore, and the 48th New York under Maj. William B. Coan, who commanded the 48th New York in place of Barton who served as the brigade commander – all were veteran outfits. The brigade moved to the extreme right of the US lines to flank the far left flank of the secessionist, while Hawley's retreating brigade had been meant to anchor the artillery. Barton's regiments took the north side of the road, moving through and around the open farmer's field. The regiments arrayed with the 47th New York Infantry Regiment

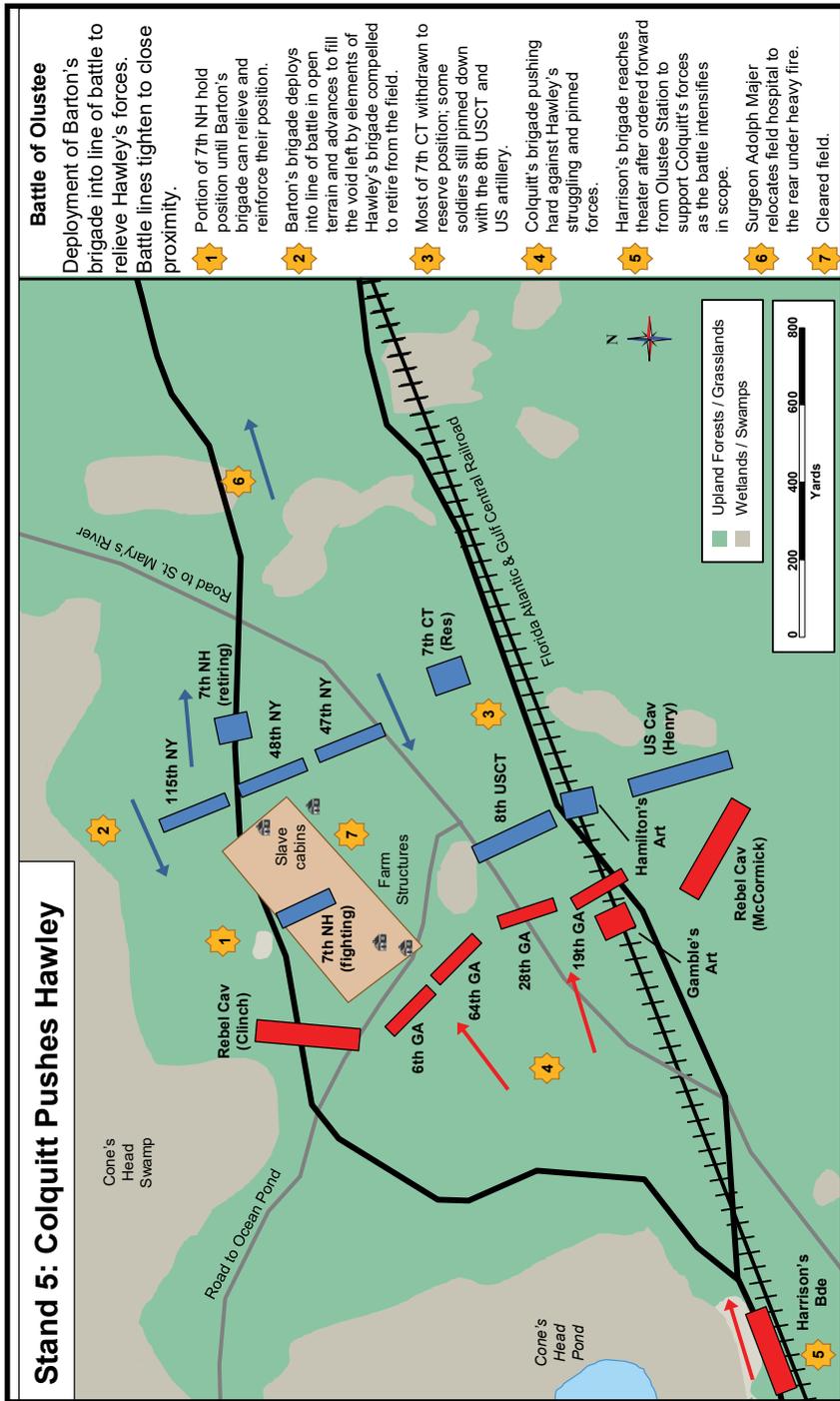


Figure 3.10. Colquitt pushes Hawley. Map courtesy of Christopher Lydick.

taking the southern flank of the brigade nearer to the road with the 48th New York taking the center of the line, and the 115th New York along the most northern flank of the line. As the Barton's soldiers advanced through the collapsing New Hampshire infantry, they became the only infantry on the US north (right flank), entering an open field and taking the full brunt of the enemy fire.⁶⁰

As more enemy forces arrived on the field, the secessionist executed a standard deployment of forces, continuing to extend their lines and outflanked the New Yorkers. For much of the fight Barton's soldiers took concentrated fire from the front and their open right flank. The New York brigade stood their ground the longest of any of the US regiments at Olustee and in some of the fiercest fighting on the battlefield, actually inflicting significant damage to the enemy. Finally, the New Yorkers retreated due to their sustained losses and lack of ammunition. Barton's New Yorkers suffered accordingly for their stand, costing seventeen officers killed, wounded, or missing and 794 enlisted killed, wounded or missing for a total casualty loss of 811 soldiers. This was the numerically most of any brigade at the fight, US or secessionist, and it made up for more than half the total losses of Seymour's command at Olustee.⁶¹

Vignettes

Excerpt from the official report of Col. William B. Barton, acting commander of the New York Brigade, 27 February 1864:

[T]he firing had continued not to exceed twenty minutes when I was ordered to move forward. This I did in line of battle, taking a position on the right of the line (just vacated by the retreat of two regiments of another brigade), and at once became hotly engaged. The enemy's fire was both musketry and artillery, and was extremely intense and galling.

His fire was rapid, accurate, and well sustained, and for a long time sorely pressed, but the indomitable and unflinching courage of my men and officers at length prevailed and after nearly four hours of the hardest fighting, the enemy's left was forced back, and he was content to permit us to retire; which we did, by direction of the commanding general, between 6 and 7 o'clock, in admirable order, notwithstanding our heavy losses, and with not a single round of ammunition remaining.

The fire during a great portion of the time we were engaged was both direct on our front and oblique on our flanks. The enemy formed three distinct lines of battles against us, con-

stantly bringing up fresh troops, and finally attacking in close column. All their efforts against us were, however, frustrated, and in their last attempt their loss must have been immense.

The conduct of my command cannot be too highly spoken of. They knew, for I had been so informed by the commanding general, that everything depended on their good behavior, and for four hours, without shelter, did they stand in line of battle, receiving from an enemy...all he had to give in the way of punishment.”⁶²

Analysis

- What factors influenced the actions of the New York Brigade’s maneuver and resiliency in their stand?
- Seeing the terrain, considering what Barton knew at the time and the pressures, what may have Barton have done differently with his brigade?
- At this point, assessing Seymour’s plan and its reality of piecemeal brigade deployment, accounting for terrain, opposing and friendly forces and capabilities, with a second brigade at risk of collapse, how should Seymour weigh his next move?
- How did the combatants at Olustee apply the principles of Unified Land Operations?

Stand 6: Secessionist Maneuver (reported 1530, 20 February 1864)

Directions: To Stand Six return to the main trailhead loop and follow small trail off main loop immediately south of the Reenactor's Field, moving southwest down small trail that cuts through the main trail loop for approximately 100 yards.

Orientation: Facing eastward from this point orients from view of the secessionist lines towards the approaching US forces. From the center of these lines Colquitt coordinated the piecemeal arrival of reinforcements into line directly into a main battle line as soon as they arrived to bolster weakened points in the center from US heavy firing. From this point, secessionist forces moved mostly to the left, to the north, to outflank the US Army forces moving towards the open field, while other reinforcements plugged gaps. Few forces shifted to the right, to the south, since most US Army forces were drifting to the north of the railroad lines.

Description: It was no secret to both sides as the afternoon continued that the US forces were approaching from and tied themselves to the single road network with their artillery and the parallel rail tracks. With the infantry fanning out from the focal point of the artillery, both sides raced to maneuver forces to the flanks of their opponent, resulting in the secessionists winning the foot race. First cracking the 8th USCT on the southern end of the battlefield and seriously crippling US artillery, shortly thereafter on the northern end of the line decisively engaging the New York Brigade, thereby stunting the US attempt to strike their left flank to the north of the main battle line. Both Finegan moving up to Olustee Station and Seymour behind his main lines at Olustee fed their forces in piecemeal to the fight. Seymour one brigade at a time, and Finegan mixes of regiments and even battalions sent forward, slowly accumulating into both his brigades committed. The secessionist strove to extend the battle lines until they could engage the US forces with frontal and flanking fires, a tactic commonly relied on during the war.

During the initial movements of the battle Colquitt commanded and controlled the secessionist lines and maintained control of the line for most of the fight. Finegan, the overall commander, remained at Olustee Station and managed the flow forward of reinforcements until late in the afternoon before coming forward to take command during the abortive pursuit. It was with the arrival of Colonel Harrison that Colquitt had some respite from tactical battlefield command of the entire force, at which time Colquitt and Harrison divided control of the line in half. Colquitt main-

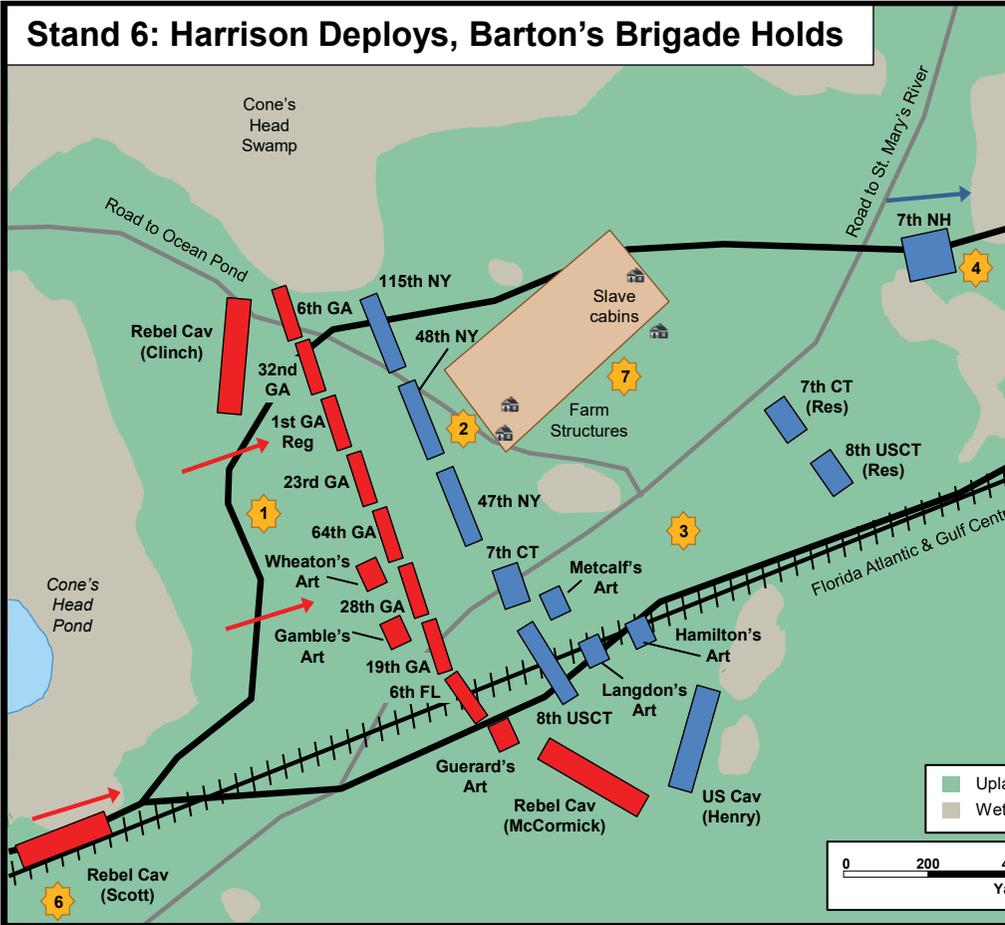
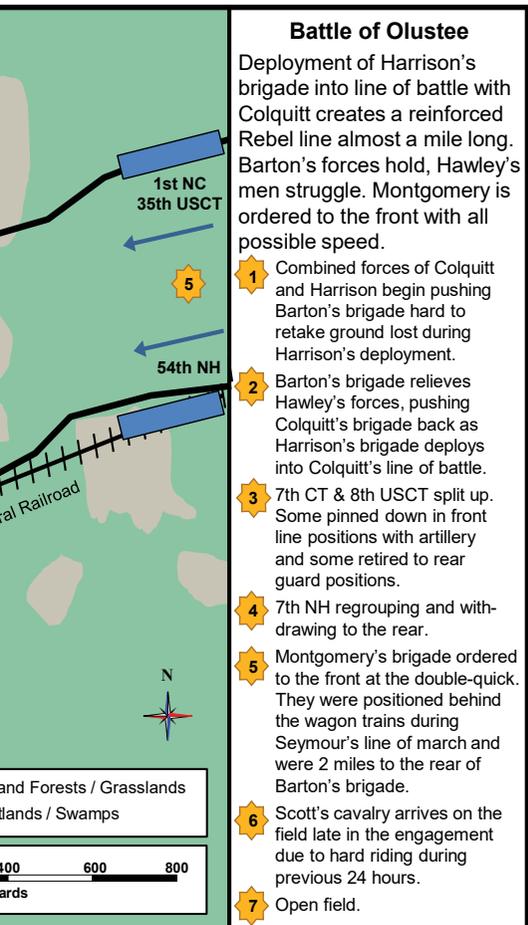


Figure 3.11. Harrison deploys, Barton's Brigade holds. Map courtesy of Christopher Lydick.

tained command and control of the southern, or right, flank of the lines while Harrison took the north, or left, flank.

While Colquitt commanded the lines, he deployed the forces in an effort to bolster low ammunition units and to extend the lines to enfilade the US forces. Identification of critical resupply issues and opportunist deployments to flank US units played havoc with the US advances and subsequent brigade deployments. The replacement of units running low on ammunition until they could coordinate for a resupply allowed the secessionists to maintain an intense fire on the revolving US Army infantry regiments as they engaged in the fight. Every US regiment commented on the intense and heavy fire they received. Likewise, the ever extending of the enemy lines both to the north and the south continually stretched



the advancing US forces and every US Army regiment on either flank from all the successive brigades commented on the danger to their flanks.

Vignettes

Excerpt from the official report of Brig. Gen. Alfred Colquitt, commanding secessionist First Brigade, 26 February 1864:

The line infantry was then ordered to advance, which was gallantly done, the enemy contesting the ground and giving way slowly. Perceiving that the enemy were in strong force, I sent back for re-enforcements and a fresh supply of ammunition. The Sixth Florida Battalion and Twenty-third Georgia Regiment soon arrived for my support. The Sixth Florida Battalion was formed on the right of the Nineteenth Georgia and in such position as to come in on the left flank of the enemy. The Twenty-third Georgia was put on the left of the Sixty-fourth Georgia.

Colonel Harrison, coming up with the Thirty-second and First Georgia Regulars took position on the left; between the Twenty-third and Sixth Georgia Regiments, and was instructed to assume the general direction of the left of the line.

The section of Gamble's artillery in the center having been disabled by the loss of horses and injury to limber, Captain Wheaton, who had early arrived upon the field with the Chatham Artillery and had taken position on the right, was ordered to the center to relieve Captain Gamble. This battery moved forward and took position under a heavy fire, and continued to advance with the line of infantry until the close of the action...After our line had advanced about one-quarter of

a mile the engagement became general and the ground was stubbornly contested.⁶³

Excerpt from Lieut. M.B. Grant, secessionist engineer official report, 27 April 1864:

There was no preconceived plan of battle or combined movement of our troops after Colquitt put them in position on the field.⁶⁴

Analysis

- As a defensive force in a meeting engagement, did the secessionist successfully balance maintaining the initiative while also remaining adequately reactive to the US Army's maneuver?
- What critical decisions did Colquitt make up to this point in the fight?
- What factors led to Colquitt's critical decision points once the fighting intensified?
- How did the secessionist forces employ their one untried unit, the 64th Georgia in comparison to the US Army's 7th New Hampshire and 8th USCT?

Stand 7: Deployment of the Reserve Brigade (reported at 1600, 20 February 1864)

Directions: To Stand Seven continue southwest approximately 50 yards until reaching intersection of small trail with the main trail loop. Follow main trail south directly back to the Visitor's Center. The Stand is on the southeast, backside, of the center, all the way south to the trees near the park border with Highway 90.

Orientation: Seymour's final brigade employed at Olustee was Colonel Montgomery's brigade—the "Colored Brigade," his reserve brigade. The 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored) moved westward, on the right, more northern edge of the road, while the veteran 54th Massachusetts Volunteers paralleled the railroad tracks, closer to the southern side of the US Army's axis. Having been behind the expedition's supply wagon train, both regiments had to reform around the wagon train and then proceed forward towards the fight for two miles. The 1st North Carolina was sent to the support of the New York Brigade on the north side (right flank) of the US artillery centered on the road, while the 54th Massachusetts went to the south side (left flank) to cover the ground formerly held by the 8th USCT directly alongside the railroad and the artillery. Members of the 54th Massachusetts recalled they advanced during the battle "some 200 yards through a swamp," which accordingly slowed them down, fatigued them, and broke up some degree of their order.⁶⁵ The reserve brigade deployed at 1600 and then moving at a brisk trot two miles behind with the wagon train laagered between them neared the battlefield likely around 1630.

Description: The two infantry regiments with two attached artillery batteries formed Seymour's reserve brigade under Montgomery. The 1st North Carolina Colored Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. William N. Reed, later that month was re-flagged the 35th USCT and at Olustee was untried by fire, having served previously in labor and garrison guard duties during siege operations in South Carolina. The Florida campaign was their first field operation. Colonel Edward N. Hallowell commanded the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, which had seen significant combat in the south, but as a result had many replacements. Capt. Looms L. Langdon commanded the attached "M" Battery of the 1st Artillery Regiment, and Lieut. Henry H. Metcalf commanded the detachment of "C" Battery of the Heavy Artillery of Rhode Island. With the deployment of his third and final infantry brigade, Seymour still attempted his original plan to secure either flank of an artillery unit with infantry regiments, allowing for a third maneuver unit to flank the enemy. The New York brigade began to fall

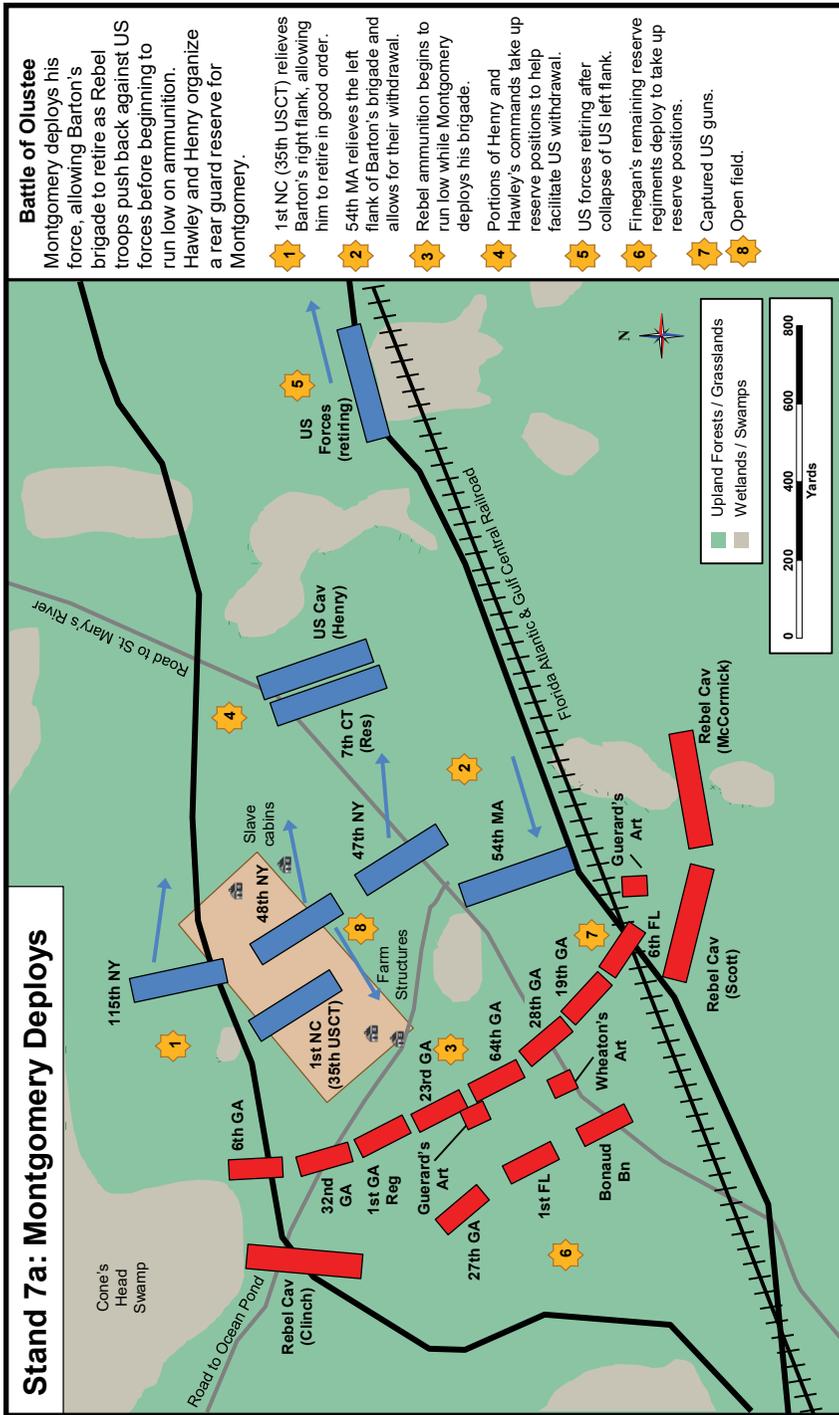


Figure 3.12. Montgomery Deploys. Map courtesy of Christopher Lydick.

back for lack of ammunition and due to intensity of enemy fire just as the 1st North Carolina moved up to support.

The 54th Massachusetts filled the hole left by the broken 8th USCT. The 54th Massachusetts deployed under fire, struggling to steady its lines and contain the enemy's attempts to extend their lines and envelop the entire line, capitalizing on the retreat of the 8th USCT. The Massachusetts infantry moved to the front for over a mile at the double-time, a jog in full gear with shouldered arms, through swamps and directly into the fire of the enemy as they secured a flank that had been forced open by the breaking of the 8th USCT. Hallowell received a courier message from one of Seymour's aides, "For God's sake, Colonel, double-quick or the day is lost!"⁶⁶ With esprit, they faced the enemy and matched the secessionist's intense and sustained fire. Calling out as they advanced, "Three cheers for Massachusetts and seven dollars a month!," the 54th Massachusetts exemplified their strong *élan* even in fighting for seven dollars a month pay when white infantry regiments received ten dollars a month.⁶⁷ This advance occurred under fierce volleys from the now re-inforced, resupplied, advancing secessionists. There were times that the 54th's officers and NCOs had to restrain their soldiers from advancing out of courage and to maintain a disciplined line of battle, anchored on the much abused US artillery that was over-extend for the duration of the battle.

The 1st North Carolina came up in time to cover the New Yorker's retreat, itself taking heavy casualties, especially among its leadership with both the regimental commander, Reed, and the second-in-command Major Bogle becoming casualties. As they absorbed the blows, the 54th Massachusetts held its ground, exchanging fire with the secessionist, but struggled as the only regiment to hold the entire left flank as more enemy units extended the line around its flank.

The departure of the New Yorkers, giving the open farmer's field to the enemy opened the 1st North Carolina's flank to enemy fire, and they were forced to defend the extreme right flank of the US position from encirclement. The fire began to slacken as both sides began to run low on ammunition and the critical moment of logistical planning emerged as the furiously firing infantry of both sides needed ammunition resupply.

As the afternoon wore on, the US lines were struggling to maintain order under punishing fire. The infantry rate of fire was taking its toll on the discipline and the ammunition supplies of both sides. Hawley's advanced

force, the 7th Connecticut Infantry retreated due to lack of ammunition, followed by the New York brigade retreating under pressure and depleting their ammunition, while the secessionist continually sent back for more ammunition. Before Montgomery's brigade stabilized the situation, more enemy units arrived on the battlefield replacing the regiments out of ammunition, allowing units with exhausted ammunition to bide their time for the resupply while the secessionist line as a whole maintained a steady rate of fire. The US forces had no respite as the secessionist rotated forces, waiting on resupply while the reinforcements picked up the slackened fire. As secessionist units ran out of ammunition, they retreated just as replacements came up to take their place. When the 54th Massachusetts ran low on ammunition, they received the wrong caliber ammunition in their resupply and were forced to retreat.

Harrison recalled along his portion of the secessionist line, "It was whispered down the line...that our ammunition was failing and no ordnance train in sight." However, a final resupply of ammunition arrived along with more reinforcements, giving an overwhelming fire superiority, allowing them to threaten a full envelopment of the US line. At this point Seymour issued the orders for a full withdrawal back east from the field.

Vignettes

Excerpt from the official report of Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, commander US forces at Olustee, 25 March 1864:

Barton's brigade, close at hand, was now formed on the ground occupied by the Seventh New Hampshire, and the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts had replaced the Eight US Colored Troops and a rapid fire was opened, the influence of which was soon visible. The left of the enemy's line was forced backward, and in the hope of still effecting my original intention, the First North Carolina was brought up to the right of Barton's brigade by Lieutenant-Colonel Reed in the most brilliant manner. The entire force was hotly engaged save the cavalry...Lieutenant-Colonel Reed was mortally wounded while managing his regiment with conspicuous skill, and his major (Bogle) was severely hurt.

The colored troops behaved creditably—the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts and the First North Carolina like veterans. It was not in their conduct that can be found the chief cause of failure.⁶⁸

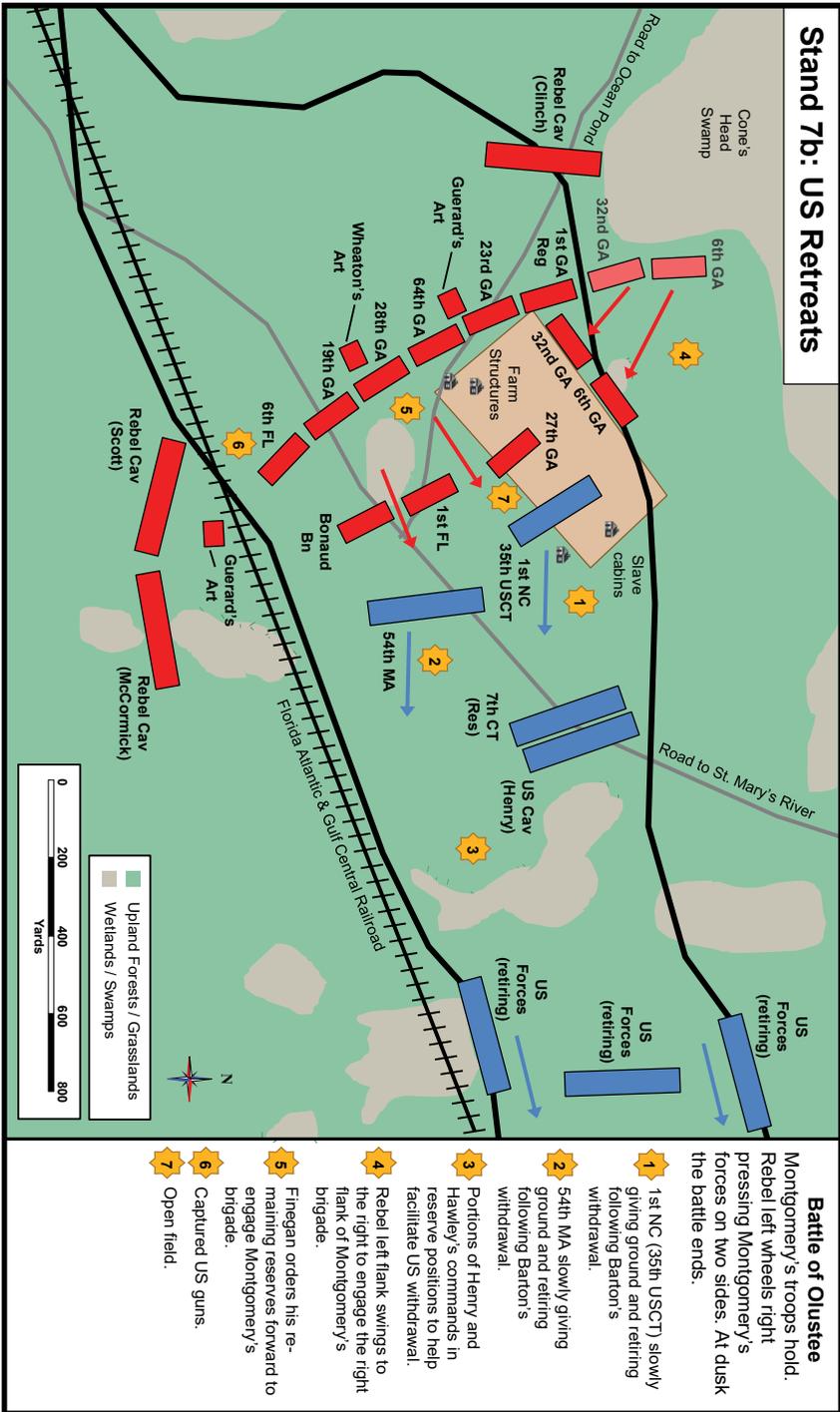


Figure 3.13. US Retreats. Map courtesy of Christopher Lydick.

Excerpt from the official report of Col. Edward Hallowell, commander 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, 1 March 1864:

It marched in charge of wagon train to Olustee at which place the train was stopped and the regiment moved forward at the double-quick about 2 miles, where it was formed in line between the railroad and dirt road, under a sharp fire from the enemy. In this formation it advanced some 200 yards through a swamp, driving the enemy from some guns and checking the advance of a column of the enemy's infantry. After firing about 20,000 cartridges, the men of the regiment were ordered to retreat...A new line was formed on the right of the dirt road where the regiment stayed till after dark, when it as ordered, through Colonel Barton, to march back.⁶⁹

Excerpt from the official report of Brig. Gen. Alfred Colquitt, commander secessionist First Brigade, 26 February 1864:

After our line had advanced about one-quarter of a mile the engagement became general and the ground was stubbornly contested. With two batteries of artillery immediately in our front and a long line of infantry strongly supported, the enemy stood their ground for some time until the Sixth Florida Battalion, on the right flank and all the troops in front pressing steadily forward, compelled them to fall back and leave five pieces of artillery in our possession. At this time, our ammunition beginning to fail, I ordered the commanding officers to halt their regiments and hold their respective positions until a fresh supply could be brought from the ordnance wagons, which, after much delay, had arrived upon the field.

Major Bonaud's battalion came upon the field, followed soon after by the Twenty-seventh Georgia Regiment and the First Florida Battalion. These troops were put in position near the center of the line and a little in advance, to hold the enemy in check until the other commands could be supplied with cartridges. As soon as this was accomplished I ordered a general advance.⁷⁰

Excerpt from the official report of Col. George Harrison, commander secessionist Second Brigade, 22 February 1864:

In about this position the field was hotly contested by both parties for about an hour, when the enemy gave way slowly before the close pressure of our gallant men...but soon a new

line of the enemy appeared and our advance was checked. His resistance now seemed more stubborn than before for more than twenty minutes when the enemy sullenly gave back a little...It was whispered down the line...that our ammunition was failing and no ordnance train in sight. This I immediately reported to General Colquitt, who urged that we hold our ground, stating that ammunition would certainly reach us directly. This...was heroically complied with by my command, many of them for fifteen or twenty minutes standing their ground without a round of ammunition. Seeing the critical position of affairs, I dismounted myself, placed one of my staff whose horse had been disabled upon mine, who, together with the remainder of my staff and couriers, was employed in conveying ammunition from a train of cars some half mile or more distant...By several trips they succeeded in supplying sufficient ammunition to our line to enable the reopening of a rapid and effective fire, before which the enemy had commenced to retire slowly, still keeping up their fire upon us...

Under instructions from General Colquitt I now threw forward the Sixth and Thirty-second Georgia Regiments...to flank the enemy upon their right, which movement succeeded admirable, for soon their right was exposed to a cross-fire, which told upon their ranks with fine effect. A general advance of our line now drove the enemy, who retreated, at first sullenly, but now precipitately, before our victorious arms for some miles.⁷¹

Analysis

- How did Seymour's employment of his reserve brigade embody the principles of a reserve?
- What factors explain the performance of Montgomery's African-American regiments in comparison with the 8th USCT's performance?
- What factors led to Seymour's decisions to disengage his forces?
- Compare and contrast secessionist ammunition management with that of the US Army.
- Evaluate the secessionist tactics. Were Colquitt's employment of his units sound or just lucky in their results against this particular opponent?

- What risks did Colquitt face in the switch to the offensive? How did he balance or mitigate these?
- How did the combatants at Olostee apply, or attempt to apply, tenets such as simultaneity, synchronization, and flexibility?

Stand 8: Secessionist Pursuit, US Retreat, and Aftermath (reported at 1800, 20 February–0200, 21 February 1864)

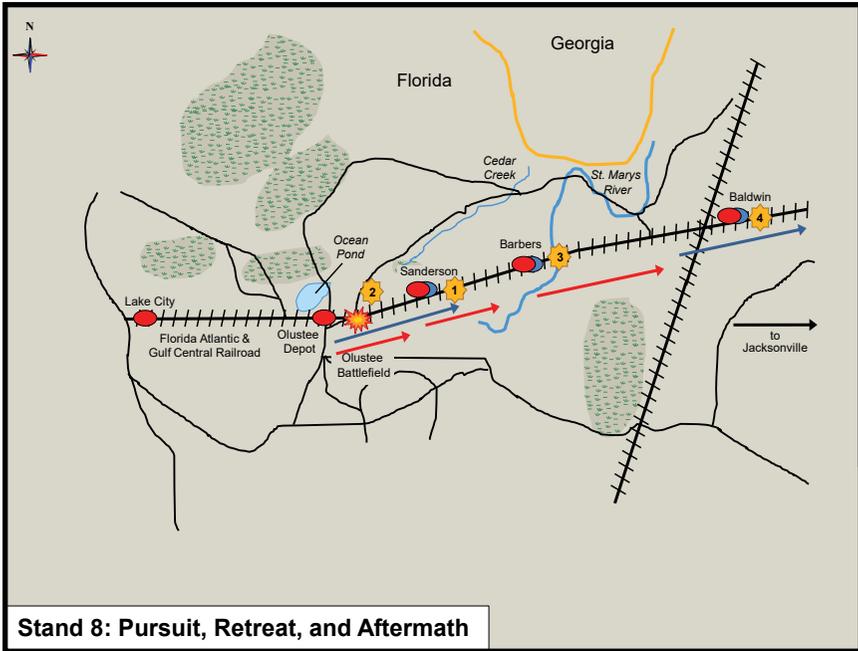


Figure 3.14. Pursuit, Retreat, and Aftermath. Graphics courtesy of Army University Press Staff.

Directions: To Stand Eight, walk directly north approximately 75 yards to the Olustee Battlefield Monument formation near the Visitor’s Center.

Orientation: The Olustee Battlefield Monument marks a good spot to turn and facing northeast down US-90, orients well the direction of the US Army retreat and the stuttering secessionist pursuit.

Description: As the full US retreat commenced, secessionist command and control broke down in confusion and attempts to pursue. Orders issued by Finegan, who now arrived at the battlefield, clashed with orders issued by Colquitt, who had controlled the tactical battle for most of the day. Finegan acquiesced to Colquitt’s experience, rescinding his commands to pursue the US forces in light of his soldiers’ fatigue, lack of food and water, and the growing darkness.

The cavalry under Colonel Smith still received multiple orders from Finegan to maintain contact and pressure on the retreating US soldiers,

however, these orders in confusion with Colquitt's orders for the general pursuit to end, meant that even the cavalry failed to pursue and harass the retreating US Army. The 5th Florida Cavalry arrived on the field late and in disrepair from their long march, man and beast too weary to make any major contribution to the fight. Once the meeting engagement turned into a general fight, neither side utilized its cavalry, instead relegating them to sparring on the extreme flanks. Seymour did employ Henry's mounted forces to screen the retreat. Smith defended his actions by highlighting the general confusion of the pursuit, reports later proved false of the US forces setting up ambushes, other instances of rumored friendly fire between the secessionist infantry and the Smith's mounted soldiers and the general difficulty of operating at night after a near full day of fighting.

On the US side, they saw their retreat as organized. They suffered from unfounded reports of pursuing secessionists, spurring Seymour to push his forces back to the safety of Jacksonville, stopping only to gather supplies and destroy what they could not take with them. In the end, the pursuit reached where the US stopped on the first night of their retreat, by which time the US forces had reached the safety of Jacksonville.

Even though it was a clear defeat and terminated the ambitious Florida Expedition of 1864, the expedition had not been a total disaster for the US, even if its defining battle was a defeat. The expedition destroyed various supplies through upper-central Florida in excess of one million dollars, disrupted normal shipments of goods to the secessionist armies to the north, recruited over a hundred slaves both damaging secessionist-Florida economy and adding to the US Army's African-American regimental manpower, captured a couple of hundred prisoners, inspired even more to defect, and seized eight cannons. However, they did fail to restore Florida in time to count towards the election of 1864, and suffered significant casualties and five cannons lost at Olustee. Although Barton's New Yorkers suffered the worse brigade casualties and his own 47th New York Infantry Regiment suffered the highest officially reported raw casualties at 313, one analysis claims the 8th USCT loss was the third worse regimental proportional loss suffered in the war during one engagement with 310 total casualties.⁷² Total US Army losses initially reported by Seymour were 55 officers and 1,806 soldiers, killed, wounded or missing.⁷³ Secessionist losses reported initially after the battle by Brigadier General Finegan were 53 killed, 841 wounded, mostly only slightly.⁷⁴

In the end, the secessionists held Florida, containing the US forces to its enclaves along the coastlines. By May of 1864, two-thirds of the soldiers from both sides who had been sent to Florida had been removed

to other theaters, and Florida had returned to a sideshow theater until the conclusion of the war.

Vignettes

Excerpt from the official report of Capt. Benjamin Skinner, acting commander 7th Connecticut Infantry, 25 February 1864:

Soon after this the engagement closed though we took position in line two or three times. I was directed by Colonel Hawley to report to Colonel Barton, of the Forty-eight Regiment New York Volunteers, which I accordingly did, and by his direction deployed 125 of my men as rear guard for the army (which had now left the field), making a line of nearly half a mile in length, a body of our cavalry being behind me. I occupied this relative position and marched in this manner until I reached Barber's Ford, for a distance of about 18 miles from the battle-field, when I marched my command onto the same ground that it had occupied before leaving Barber's Ford the morning before, my men having marched a distance of 36 miles, 18 of which was marched without rest and over bad ground, many swamps, ditches, pickets, and fences intervened to obstruct my march.⁷⁵

Excerpt from the official report of Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan, commanding secessionist forces at Olustee, 26 February 1864:

They contest the ground stubbornly, and the battle lasted for four and a half hours. At the end of this time, the enemy's lines having been broken and reformed several times, and two fine, Napoleon and three 10-pounder Parrott guns and one set of colors captured from them, they gave way entirely, and were closely pressed for 3 miles until night-fall. I directed Brigadier-General Colquitt to continue the pursuit, intending to occupy Sanderson that night; but in deference to his suggestion of the fatigue of the troops, the absence of rations, and the disadvantages of pursuit in the dark, and in consequence of a report from an advanced cavalry picket that the enemy had halted for the night and taken a position (which was subsequently ascertained to be incorrect), I withdrew the order. During the continuance of the battle, also after the enemy had given way, I sent repeated orders to Colonel Smith, commanding cavalry, to press the enemy on his flanks and to continue in the pursuit. But through some misapprehension

these orders failed to be executed by him, and only two small companies on the left, and these but for a short distance, followed the enemy.

The enemy retreated that night, hastily and in some confusion, to Sanderson, leaving a large number of their killed and wounded in our possession on the field. Their loss in killed, both officers and men, was large.

The victory was complete and the enemy retired in rapid retreat, evacuating in quick succession Barber's and Baldwin, and falling back on Jacksonville. The enemy's forces were under command of Brig. Gen. T. Seymour, who was present on the field.⁷⁶

Excerpt from the official report of Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, commanding US forces at Olustee, 25 March 1864:

[T]he troops were withdrawn in perfect order from Sanderson and then to Saint Mary's, Colonel Henry's cavalry, supported by the Seventh Connecticut, serving as rear guard. From loss of horse alone, I was compelled to leave six guns on the field, and a small portion of the badly wounded were left in the power of the enemy from the insufficient means to remove them.

The losses had been heavy, particularly among superior officers... A losing battle received little praise, but officers and men, nevertheless, often display soldierly qualities far beyond those that are brought out by success. The conduct of Colonel Barton's brigades was glorious, and I cannot too highly comment the pertinacity with which it held to its work... The colored troops behaved creditably—the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts and the First North Carolina like veterans. It was not in their conduct that can be found the chief cause of failure, but in the unanticipated yielding of a white regiment from which there was every reason to expect noble service, and at a moment when everything depended upon its firmness.⁷⁷

Analysis

- What type of engagement characteristics does Olustee manifest—a meeting engagement, movement to contact, a spoiling attack, or something else?

- Why did both armies suffer proportionally high percentage of casualties?
- Were the explanations for the lackluster secessionist pursuit valid? What could have made the pursuit more successful?
- How did the competency of the leadership at various levels influence the battle?
- How successful was the US Army in achieving the expedition's goals even though defeated at Olustee?
- What impacts did the Florida Expedition of 1864 have on the war in general?

Stand 8b: Secessionist Pursuit, US Retreat, and Aftermath

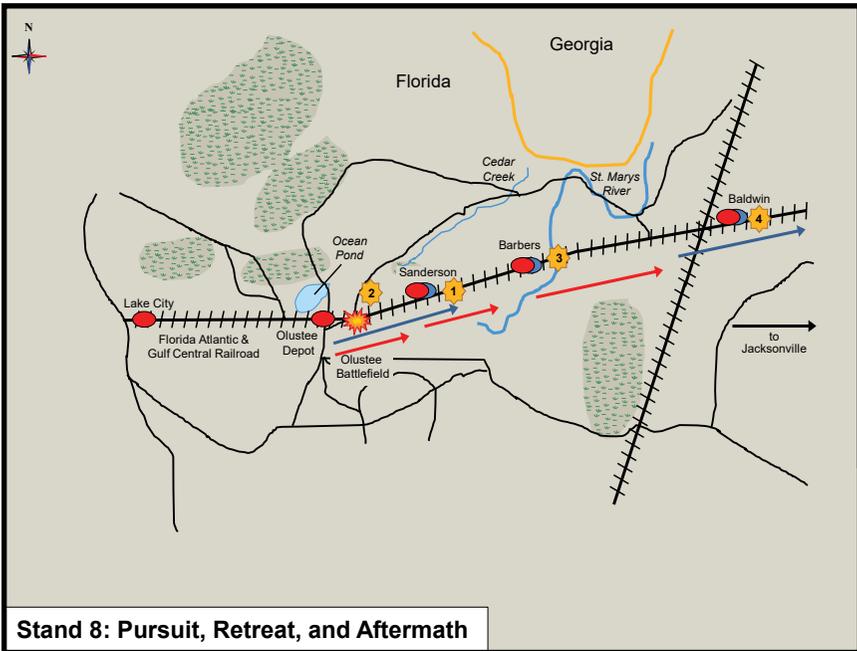


Figure 3.15. Pursuit, Retreat, and Aftermath. Graphics courtesy of Army University Press Staff.

Directions: Depart the historic battlefield park, traveling east on US-90. At or near 13966 US-90, Sanderson. FL 32087 / 30° 15.057' N, 82° 16.157' W), the historical marker is on US-90, on the left when traveling east.

Orientation: 8 miles to west is the Olustee battlefield, beyond that west another 16 miles is Lake City, the main railroad hub targeted by the US expedition and prized for transportation by the Florida secessionist. A further 39 miles east down US-90, the old north Florida roadway is Jacksonville, the main port and concentration of US forces in northern Florida. Sanderson, much like Jacksonville, changed hands multiple times during the course of the war. First, a secessionist camp and depot, then taken by Henry's mounted force (see Stand 2a: Henry's Mounted Raids for more commentary), then retaken after Olustee by Finegan's forces, who held it for the remainder of the war as a supply depot and camp for the forces that kept the US Army enclave at Jacksonville isolated. Overnight on 21 February 1864, the ground hardened and froze from the drop in weather.

Description: As the full US retreat commenced, secessionist command and control broke down in confusion and attempts to pursue. Orders issued by Finegan, who now arrived at the battlefield, clashed with orders issued by Colquitt, who had controlled the tactical battle for most of the day. Finegan acquiesced to Colquitt's experience, rescinding his commands to pursue the US forces in light of his soldiers' fatigue, lack of food and water, and the growing darkness.

The cavalry under Colonel Smith still received multiple orders from Finegan to maintain contact and pressure on the retreating US soldiers, however, these orders in confusion with Colquitt's orders for the general pursuit to end, meant that even the cavalry failed to pursue and harass the retreating US Army. The 5th Florida Cavalry arrived on the field late and in disrepair from their long march, man and beast too weary to make any major contribution to the fight. Once the meeting engagement turned into a general fight, neither side utilized its cavalry, instead relegating them to sparring on the extreme flanks. Seymour did employ Henry's mounted forces to screen the retreat. Smith defended his actions by highlighting the general confusion of the pursuit, reports later proved false of the US forces setting up ambushes, other instances of rumored friendly fire between the secessionist infantry and the Smith's mounted soldiers and the general difficulty of operating at night after a near full day of fighting.

On the US side, they saw their retreat as organized. They suffered from unfounded reports of pursuing secessionists, spurring Seymour to push his forces back to the safety of Jacksonville, stopping only to gather supplies and destroy what they could not take with them. In the end, the pursuit reached where the US stopped on the first night of their retreat, by which time the US forces had reached the safety of Jacksonville.

Even though it was a clear defeat and terminated the ambitious Florida Expedition of 1864, the expedition had not been a total disaster for the US, even if its defining battle was a defeat. The expedition destroyed various supplies through upper-central Florida in excess of one million dollars, disrupted normal shipments of goods to the secessionist armies to the north, recruited over a hundred slaves both damaging secessionist-Florida economy and adding to the US Army's African-American regimental manpower, captured a couple of hundred prisoners, inspired even more to defect, and seized eight cannons. However, they did fail to restore Florida in time to count towards the election of 1864, and suffered nearly significant casualties and five cannons lost at Olustee. Although Barton's New Yorkers suffered the worse brigade casualties and his own 47th New York Infantry Regiment suffered the highest officially reported raw casualties

at 313, one analysis claims the 8th USCT loss was the third worse regimental proportional loss suffered in the war during one engagement with 310 total casualties.⁷⁸ Total US Army losses initially reported by Seymour were fifty-five officers and 1,806 soldiers, killed, wounded or missing.⁷⁹ Secessionist losses reported initially after the battle by Brigadier General Finegan were 53 killed, 841 wounded, mostly only slightly.⁸⁰

At the close of the expedition, the secessionists held Middle Florida, containing the US forces to its enclaves along the coastlines. By May of 1864, two-thirds of the soldiers from both sides who had been sent to Florida had been removed to other theaters, and Florida had returned to a sideshow theater until the conclusion of the war.

Vignettes

Excerpt from the official report of Capt. Benjamin Skinner, acting commander 7th Connecticut Infantry, 25 February 1864:

Soon after this the engagement closed though we took position in line two or three times. I was directed by Colonel Hawley to report to Colonel Barton, of the Forty-eight Regiment New York Volunteers, which I accordingly did, and by his direction deployed 125 of my men as rear guard for the army (which had now left the field), making a line of nearly half a mile in length, a body of our cavalry being behind me. I occupied this relative position and marched in this manner until I reached Barber's Ford, for a distance of about 18 miles from the battle-field, when I marched my command onto the same ground that it had occupied before leaving Barber's Ford the morning before, my men having marched a distance of 36 miles, 18 of which was marched without rest and over bad ground, many swamps, ditches, pickets, and fences intervened to obstruct my march.⁸¹

Excerpt from the official report of Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan, commanding secessionist forces at Olustee, 26 February 1864:

They contest the ground stubbornly, and the battle lasted for four and a half hours. At the end of this time, the enemy's lines having been broken and reformed several times, and two fine, Napoleon and three 10-pounder Parrott guns and one set of colors captured from them, they gave way entirely, and were closely pressed for 3 miles until night-fall. I directed Brigadier-General Colquitt to continue the pursuit, intending to occupy Sanderson that night; but in deference to his sug-

gestion of the fatigue of the troops, the absence of rations, and the disadvantages of pursuit in the dark, and in consequence of a report from an advanced cavalry picket that the enemy had halted for the night and taken a position (which was subsequently ascertained to be incorrect), I withdrew the order. During the continuance of the battle, also after the enemy had given way, I sent repeated orders to Colonel Smith, commanding cavalry, to press the enemy on his flanks and to continue in the pursuit. But through some misapprehension these orders failed to be executed by him, and only two small companies on the left, and these but for a short distance, followed the enemy.

The enemy retreated that night, hastily and in some confusion, to Sanderson, leaving a large number of their killed and wounded in our possession on the field. Their loss in killed, both officers and men, was large.

The victory was complete and the enemy retired in rapid retreat, evacuating in quick succession Barber's and Baldwin, and falling back on Jacksonville. The enemy's forces were under command of Brig. Gen. T. Seymour, who was present on the field.⁸²

Excerpt from Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard's report, 25 March 1864:

Everything indicates that the rout of the enemy at Ocean Pond, or Olustee, was complete; nevertheless, the fruits of the victory were comparatively insignificant, and mainly because of the inefficiency of the officer commanding the cavalry at the time, in consequence of whose lack of energy and capacity for the service no serious attempt was made to pursue with his command, while the exhaustion of the infantry, so gallantly and effectively handled and engaged, and our want of subsistence supplies and ammunition, made an immediate pursuit by them impracticable."⁸³

Excerpt from the official report of Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, commanding US forces at Olustee, 25 March 1864:

The troops were withdrawn in perfect order from Sanderson and then to Saint Mary's, Colonel Henry's cavalry, supported by the Seventh Connecticut, serving as rear guard. From loss of horse alone, I was compelled to leave six guns on the field, and a small portion of the badly wounded were left

in the power of the enemy from the insufficient means to remove them.

The losses had been heavy, particularly among superior officers... A losing battle received little praise, but officers and men, nevertheless, often display soldierly qualities far beyond those that are brought out by success. The conduct of Colonel Barton's brigades was glorious, and I cannot too highly comment the pertinacity with which it held to its work... The colored troops behaved creditably—the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts and the First North Carolina like veterans. It was not in their conduct that can be found the chief cause of failure, but in the unanticipated yielding of a white regiment from which there was every reason to expect noble service, and at a moment when everything depended upon its firmness.⁸⁴

Analysis

- Were the explanations for the lackluster secessionist pursuit valid? What could have made the pursuit more successful?
- What may have contributed to the difference in risk assessment between Smith, Colquitt, and Finegan for the pursuit?
- How did the competency of the leadership at various levels influence the battle?
- How successful was the US Army in achieving the expedition's goals even though defeated at Olustee?
- How should the secessionist characterize their results: tactically, operationally, and strategically?
- What impacts did the Florida Expedition of 1864 have on the war in general?

Endnotes

1. Christopher Lydick, interview by author, phone conversation, 30 July 2021.
2. William H. Nulty, *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee* (The University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, 1990), 19.
3. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 121-122.
4. *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901, (Hereafter cited as *ORA*), Volume 35, Part 1, 279.
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6. *ORA*, Volume 35, Part 1, 280.
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8. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 285-286.
9. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 322.
10. Christopher Lydick, interview by author, phone conversation, 30 July 2021.
11. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 121-122.
12. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 278.
13. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 279.
14. *ORA*, Volume 35, Part 1, 279.
15. *ORA*, Volume 35, Part 1, 280.
16. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 284.
17. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 284-285.
18. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 285-286.
19. Christopher Lydick, interview by author, phone conversation, 30 July 2021.
20. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 19.
21. Nulty, 121-122.
22. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 324-325.
23. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 322.
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25. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 284.
26. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 285-286.
27. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 281.
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31. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 309.
32. Letter from Private Milton Woodford to his wife, dated 23 February 1864, reproduced in Vaughn D. Bornet and Milton M. Woodford. "A Connecticut Yankee Fights at Olustee: Letters from the Front," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Volume 27, Number 3 (January 1949), 246.

33. Letter from Private Milton Woodford to his wife, dated 23 February 1864, Bornet and Woodford. "A Connecticut Yankee Fights," 246.

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35. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 352.

36. Letter from Private Milton Woodford to his wife, dated 23 February 1864, Bornet and Woodford. "A Connecticut Yankee Fights," 246 and Letter from Private Milton Woodford to Brother Johnson dated 27 February 1864, Bornet and Woodford. "A Connecticut Yankee Fights," 256.

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38. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 308.

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41. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 288.

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43. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 303.

44. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 304.

45. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 311.

46. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 308.

47. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 298.

48. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 290.

49. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 343.

50. *ORA*, Vol. 35, Pt. 1, 303-304.

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72. Hondon B. Hargrove, *Black Union Soldiers in the Civil War* (McFarland and Company: Jefferson, 1988), 166.
73. *ORA*, Part 1, Volume 35, 289.
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Part IV

Integration

Introduction

As this handbook has previously emphasized, a staff ride consists of three phases. The first phase is the “Preliminary Study Phase.” Completing this phase before the visit to the battlefield prepares the students for the visit. The second phase is the “Field Study Phase.” This phase conducted on the battlefield and enables students to understand historical events through analysis of the actual terrain. The final phase of a staff ride is the “Integration Phase.” No staff ride is complete without an integration phase, because it is critical for the students to understand what happened, why it happened, and, most importantly, what can be learned from the study of the battle or campaign.

There are several factors that the staff ride leader should consider when planning for, and conducting, the integration phase. First, the leader must work with the organization that is participating in the ride and select a time and location for the integration session. Occasionally, units may have to depart shortly after the last stand of the field phase, and the staff ride leader must conduct the integration phase on the battlefield immediately after completing the field study phase. However, when possible, students should have some time for personal reflection and thought before the integration phase. Thus, the integration phase is best if conducted the day after the field study phase ends. Even if you cannot wait an extra day, it is best to do the integration session at a location different from the last stand, a place comfortable and dry that will encourage open discussion from all the participants.

The staff ride leader should organize the integration phase based on the unit, time available, and intended training objectives. The leader can conduct the integration phase in a format similar to an after action review (AAR), or may simply lead a discussion with participants on what they learned. You can have specific students brief particular items, or just have an open discussion with minimal structure. It is important to keep in mind that the integration phase is *not* an AAR of the ride itself (i.e., ways to improve the ride). While it is useful to seek constructive criticism in order to continue to improve the ride, this should be done at another time or perhaps with written AAR comments. Instead, the integration phase is for the students of the campaign to integrate their preliminary study with the fieldwork to gain insights that are relevant to their current duties and

enhance their professional development. Whatever method the staff ride leader chooses to employ, the most important thing to remember is that the participants should do the majority of the talking.

One method that often produces a fruitful integration phase is to conduct the session in three parts based on three broad questions. Sometimes, the leader need only present the general question and let others carry the conversation, or the leader may have to ask more follow-up questions to prod the discussion. Each of the three questions is discussed below.

What aspects of the campaign had you developed in the preliminary study phase that changed or were strongly reinforced because of your study of the ground?

This is a crucial question because seeing the terrain is central to a staff ride, otherwise the campaign could simply be studied in the classroom. Of course, students may develop a wide range of answers based on personal study and observations in the field. Some of the more popular aspects of the discussion of terrain for the Battle of Olustee include the utilization and placement of artillery and the resulting lack of effectiveness, the role of maneuver in open terrain of close-ranked infantry and the lackluster pursuit and utilization of mounted forces in the battle. The staff ride leader can ask a related question, which may also generate good discussion: *Did seeing the terrain alter your opinion of any of the leaders and their decisions?*

What aspects of warfare have changed and what aspects have remained the same since the Olustee battle?

The answers to the “changed” aspects will probably seem more obvious to the modern military professional and often related to technology. This may include changes in weapons, communications, and numerous other pieces of equipment. The aspects that have “remained the same” may not seem as numerous at first, but the students will often build on some initial answers and find many good items. The role of key personalities; the importance of intelligence; the need for strong, positive leadership and an ability to motivate soldiers; the importance of maneuverability; warrior ethos; element of surprise; courage; and fear are just some of the items of warfare that seem to have changed little since 1864. Depending on the group, you may want to ask a few more focused questions. For example, if you have an infantry unit, you can ask the following: *What aspects of a movement to contact have changed and what aspects have remained the same? What insights can the modern military professional gain from the Olustee Battle that remain relevant today?*

Clearly, the participants can take this discussion into a vast number of arenas. Once again, the type of unit participating in the staff ride might help to guide the discussion. For example, a military intelligence unit might focus the commander's situational awareness, intelligence gathering, and the importance of reconnaissance.

These concepts are suggestions; the staff ride leader may use some of them, use another framework, or simply let the students take the discussion in whatever direction they want.

The suggested integration phase questions are to aid in sparking discussion, not to provide hard and fast "rules" of warfare. Note that the handbook provides examples of possible answers to the questions, but it does not attempt to provide a list of "right" answers. The staff ride leader should take time before the session to write down his or her own answers to these questions to have some potential ideas to generate student discussion. At the same time, the staff ride leader should strive for the participants to develop their own answers, and thus be prepared to let the discussion roam many different paths.

Part V

Support

1. Information and assistance

a. The Staff Ride Team, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, can provide advice and assistance on every aspect of the staff ride. The Staff Ride Team may also provide facilitators to lead an Olustee Battle Staff Ride. Visit the Combat Studies Institute website for information on obtaining staff ride assistance and/or leadership. Staff Ride Team support includes background information, detailed knowledge of the battle and battlefield, and familiarity with the Olustee battlefield area.

Address: Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride Team

ATTN: ATZL-CSH

290 Stimson Ave.

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027

Telephone: Commercial: (913) 684-2131

Website: <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Staff-Ride-Team-Offerings/>

Email: usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.armyu-aup-srt@mail.mil

b. The Olustee Battle Staff Ride takes place on a Florida Historic State Park. It is important to contact the staff of the park and let them know you are conducting a staff ride. Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park does have a visitor's center on the premises.

Address: Olustee Battlefield Visitor Center

5890 Battlefield Trail Road

Olustee, Florida 32087

Telephone: Olustee Battlefield Visitor Center

(386) 758-0400

Website: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/olusteebattlefield/>

2. Logistics

a. Meals. There are many restaurants in Jacksonville and Lake City area that are convenient to hotel locations, if lodging is a consideration, and should take care of breakfast and dinner. Lunch can either be a box lunch carried on the vehicles or you can eat at nearby restaurants, although options can be limited along portions of I-10 and US 90 between Jacksonville and Lake City. Dependent on longevity of time on site, there are picnic areas at the primary staff ride location, the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park.

b. Lodging. Groups can find many hotels in the Jacksonville or Lake City area if travel time requires they remain overnight. If the group wants to cut down on lodging costs, there are many military bases in Florida, but most are not as conveniently located as the hotels.

c. Travel. If the group is flying to the area, the Jacksonville airport is the most convenient to use. Once on the ground, larger groups will need to contract for a bus—make sure it has a microphone and public address system as well as a restroom. Smaller groups (less than 20) might find it easier for parking and maneuvering to use rental vans.

3. Other considerations

a. A reconnaissance of the stands and route just prior to execution of the ride is imperative for a successful staff ride.

b. Ensure that every member of the group has water. Additionally, Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park has public restrooms. Plan for adequate use of these facilities.

c. Ensure that your group has proper clothing for inclement weather. Thunderstorms can occur in any season. Significant walking is required at the Olustee Battlefield State Historic Park. Comfortable boots or hiking shoes are recommended. We recommend that you do not wear sandals or running shoes.

d. Mosquitoes, ants, chiggers, ticks, and other insects are prevalent from March to October, so insect repellent is advised. Poison ivy is also present in some of the more remote areas off the preserved site.

e. Road traffic and construction in Jacksonville and immediate suburbs can be heavy along normal urban schedules, once outside of the city center further west on I-10 to US 90 traffic lightens during approach to Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park.

Appendix A

Order of Battle (Olustee, 20 February 1864)

1. US Army Forces

Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour, Commanding

Col. Joseph Hawley, the lead brigade, commanding

Capt. Benjamin F. Skinner, 7th Connecticut Infantry Regiment

Col. Joseph C. Abbott, 7th New Hampshire Infantry Regiment

Col. Charles W. Fribley, 8th United States Colored Troops

Capt. John Hamilton, "E" Battery, 3rd US Artillery

Col. William Barton, New York brigade, commanding

Col. Simeon Sammon, 115th New York Infantry Regiment

Col. Henry Moore, 47th New York Infantry Regiment

Maj. William B. Coan, 48th New York Infantry Regiment

Col. James Montgomery, the reserve, trail brigade, commanding

Col. Edward N. Hallowell, 54th Massachusetts Volunteers
(Colored)

Lt. Col. William N. Reed, 1st North Carolina Volunteers (Colored)

Capt. Loomis L. Langdon, "M" Battery, 1st US Artillery

Lieut. Henry H. Metcalf, "C" Battery, Rhode Island Artillery

Col. Guy Henry, Mounted Brigade, commanding

Maj. Atherton H. Stevens Jr., Independent Battalion Massachusetts Cavalry

Col. Guy Henry, 40th Massachusetts Volunteers (retained command)

Capt. Samuel S. Elders, "B" Horse Battery, 1st US Artillery

2. Secessionist Forces

Brig. Gen. Joseph Finegan, Commanding

Brig. Gen. Alfred Colquitt, 1st Brigade, commanding

Col. John Lofton, 6th Georgia

Col. James Neal, 19th Georgia

Lt. Col. James Huggins, 23rd Georgia

Col. Charles Zachry, 27th Georgia

Capt. William Crawford, 28th Georgia

Major Pickens Bird, 6th Florida Battalion

Capt. Robert Gamble, 1st Florida Artillery

Capt. John Wheaton, Chatham's Battery

Col. George Harrison, 2d Brigade, commanding

Col. John Evans, 64th Georgia Volunteers

Major Washington Holland, 32d Georgia Volunteers

Capt. Henry Cannon, 1st Georgia

Major Augustus Bonaud, Bonaud's Battalion

Lieutenant Col. Charles Hopkins, 1st Florida Battalion

Capt. John Guerard, Guerard's Battery

Col. Caraway Smith, Mounted Brigade, commanding

Lieutenant Col. Abner McCormick, 2d Florida Cavalry

Col. Duncan Clinch, 4th Georgia Cavalry

Major George Scott, 5th Florida Cavalry

Appendix B

Biographies of Primary Participants

Brigadier General Truman Seymour. Brigadier General Truman Seymour was born in 1824 in Vermont, making him no older than forty years in 1864 at the time of the battle. Having a deceptively youthful appearance, Seymour was known for his aggression and his rashness. He attended Norwich University for two years before enrolling in United States Military Academy at West Point. He was a graduate of West Point, class of 1846, commissioned and trained as an artillery officer, having service in both the Mexican-American War as well as the Third Seminole War in Florida. This provided Seymour with a conventional war experience in Mexico as an artilleryman as well as skills as an artilleryman in an unconventional war in the Third Seminole War. In addition to being a two-time war veteran, this gave him a taste of combat in the hot, humid and unforgiving Floridian environment. Service in the Third Seminole War, waged in the 1850s, provided Seymour with the most recent “official” wartime service possible prior to hostilities. Only the small-scale “Indian wars” of the western expansion and the “Bloody Kansas” vigilantism along the border-states was more recent applications of organized violence.

When the American Civil War broke out, then-Captain Seymour was serving at Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina for the initial bombardment of the war. After service there, Seymour would attain his rank through brevets for gallant distinction in the Seven Day’s Battle and the Second Battle of Manassas as well as at the Battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam), thereby developing his military reputation and each time progressively giving him larger commands, but as of yet no command autonomy.

In addition, Seymour was no stranger to using the African-American recruited troops in full-scale battle as some other US Army commanders were. It was Seymour who, under command of Major General Quincy A. Gillmore, led the unsuccessful initial attack on Fort Wagner, James Island, SC. In July, 1863 at the Battle of Fort Wagner when Seymour used the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (Colored) his command suffered 1,515 casualties of a force of 5,264.¹ This was a sharp casualty percentage as a result of a frontal assault across open ground on fortified positions.

Of those 1,515 casualties was Seymour himself, having been wounded in leading the ground forces under Gillmore on the assault of Fort Wagner. This wound kept Seymour from field duty from July 1863 until January

1864, returning from clearly a serious wound, just in time to take the field command for the Florida Expedition, launched in February 1864.²

After the defeat at Olustee, Seymour was removed from command of the Florida District and transferred north to serve in the Army of the Potomac. He would serve with distinction in the Wilderness, be captured and exchanged and further serve in the Battles of Petersburg and be present at the Appomattox Court House for the surrender of General Robert E. Lee. Before the end of the war he would achieve the brevetted rank of major general.

Following the end of the Civil War, Seymour continued to serve in the peacetime army, commanding forts in Florida, Massachusetts and Maine. Upon retirement he lived in Europe and painted. He died in Florence, Italy and was buried there in 1891.

Colonel Joseph Hawley. Colonel Joseph Hawley commanded what would be Seymour's lead brigade on the afternoon of the battle. Born in Stewarville, North Carolina in 1826, Hawley had graduated from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York in 1847. Hawley was an educated lawyer, passing the Bar in 1850. He lived in Hartford, Connecticut practicing law.³

He had no prior military experience before the outbreak of the American Civil War. He volunteered in the US Army and was given a captaincy with no formal military education or training. He served as a captain in the 1st Connecticut Infantry at the First Battle of Bull Run and would gain recognition, promotion and transfer to the newly formed 7th Connecticut Infantry where he rose to command that regiment. He was in command of this regiment when the Florida Expedition was launched, however, from among the regiments in the brigade he was selected to serve as the brigade commander. His brigade, the advance brigade of the Union forces in Florida, was the 7th Connecticut Infantry Regiment, the 7th New Hampshire Infantry and the 8th United States Colored Troops (USCT).

Following the Battle of Olustee, Colonel Hawley and his command transferred north and served in Gen. Alfred Terry's Division in the X Corps. He further served with distinction during the Siege of Petersburg and went on to take command of the division and served as General Terry's Chief of Staff.

Following the end of the war, Hawley would serve as General Terry's Chief of Staff in the Department of Virginia, leaving the army in 1866 as a brevetted Major General. Following his military service, Hawley served as Connecticut state governor from 1866-1867. He served two terms as the

US Representative to Congress and four terms as a US Senator. He died weeks after stepping down from his senate seat in Washington in 1905.

Colonel William Barton. Colonel William Barton, born in 1836, was the son of a clergyman and hailed from New Jersey. He was a graduate of Princeton College. He had no prior military education or service before the American Civil War. He volunteered and was granted a captaincy when he joined. He rose to command the 48th New York Infantry Regiment and was with them at the failed attack on Fort Wagner, where Seymour received his wound. The 48th New York, along with the 47th New York and the 115th New York made up the New York Brigade within Seymour's Florida Expedition, and of those regimental commanders, Barton would be selected to lead the brigade to Olustee. The New York Brigade was the most experienced brigade of Seymour's entire force, as all three regiments were long-time veterans of the war and thus reliably held the center of Seymour's order of movement.

Colonel Barton's brigade would have good standing in the Battle of Olustee and he would lead a promising and successful further career as a brigade commander in the war, showing his leadership at Olustee was not a fluke. Barton's actions as a brigade commander were effective and what was needed.

Following his exemplary performance as brigade commander at Olustee, Barton continued to lead the New York Brigade as it was transferred north to join the Army of the Potomac. He saw further service in the Wilderness and again in the following Siege of Petersburg. Outside of Richmond, he was wounded through the lungs which spurred debilitating complications that eventually resulted in a discharge from service. He never fully recovered.

Following the war, Barton became involved in private business. Once those ventures failed he involved himself in the theatre business. he managed theatres on both the East and West coasts in what became a successful post-war career. He died in June 1891 from lung complications.

Colonel James Montgomery. Colonel James Montgomery was a fiery abolitionist, born 22 December 1814 in Ohio. His family was always one on the edge of the American frontier and he would later move to Missouri and then to Kansas. He was educated, served as a teacher and then a preacher. He was related to a War of 1812 general who fell at the Battle of Quebec, however, he had no formal military education or training. Though Montgomery did not have formal military training prior to the American

Civil War he did have experience as an ardent abolitionist participating in the “Bleeding Kansas” vigilantism leading to the Civil War.⁴

The oldest of the US Army commanders, it is no wonder that with his anti-slavery background in “Bleeding Kansas” that Montgomery was given command of Seymour’s reserve brigade, comprised of two African-American regiments. This brigade was made up of the 1st North Carolina Infantry (Colored) and the famed 54th Massachusetts Volunteers (Colored). The Florida campaign would be their first field operation. Of Seymour’s brigade commanders, Montgomery was the only one who was an experienced brigade-level officer.

After the Battle of Olustee, Montgomery left the army in September of 1864 and returned to Kansas. There he finished out the war serving in the 6th Kansas State Militia and participating in the defense of Kansas from secessionist raids.

Following the end of the war, Montgomery returned to his farming in Kansas and did so until his death in the end of 1871.

Colonel Guy Henry. Colonel Guy Henry was the fourth brigade commander for the US Army expedition, commander of the mounted brigade, but even he was officially the commander of one of the brigade’s mounted infantry regiments and only led the brigade in lieu of a true brigade commander. Guy Henry was born in Fort Smith, Indian Territory (modern-day Arkansas) on March 9, 1839. He attended The United States Military Academy at West Point, graduating in the spring of 1861. He served at the First Battle of Bull Run and in the fighting around Charleston before serving as the commander of the mounted brigade during the Florida Expedition of 1864.

Following the Battle of Olustee, Henry continued to serve, transferring with his command north to the Army of the Potomac. Henry and his mounted infantrymen from Massachusetts went on to see action at the Battle of Cold Harbor. For his actions in this battle Henry was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1893. After Cold Harbor, Henry saw further action in the Siege of Petersburg.

After the Civil War ended Henry remained in the army and served with distinction in the Western Plains Indian Wars. He obtained his brevet for gallantry to brigadier general from his actions in the Battle of Rosebud in Montana. Later he would lead a provincial division in the invasion of Puerto Rico in the Spanish-American War and would serve as the first governor of the province in 1898. He would die a year later in New York from pneumonia and is interned in Arlington Cemetery.

Brigadier General Joseph Finegan. Brigadier General Joseph Finegan was born in Ireland in 1814 and when he came to the United States his family worked in agriculture in Florida.⁵ A well-connected businessman who specialized in railroad construction and operations was a partner of the pre-secession Senator David C. Yulee, who would later own the railroad that Finegan helped build and would later defend from US military destruction. Finegan's state connections secured him his rank and position, keeping Finegan in his home state and in charge of the defense of the Florida interior. He had no prior military experience before the American Civil War and in fact had not commanded in battle prior to the confrontation at Olustee.⁶ For this reason there were held various misgivings both state and in the larger confederacy as to Finegan's capabilities but events would transpire at a rate that thrust Finegan against Seymour regardless of Secessionist misgivings of his command abilities.

Following his victory at Olustee, Finegan's lackluster pursuit of the retreating Union forces to Jacksonville led to his removal as commander of Middle and East Florida. In May of 1864 he along with a brigade of soldiers was transferred north to serve with General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. With Lee's army, Finegan saw further action in the Battle of Cold Harbor. Following Cold Harbor, in March of 1865 Finegan was again transferred, this time south back to Florida where he ended his final military service with the surrender.

Following the end of the war, Finegan struggled to regain his property that had been taken by the Freedman's Bureau, he lived for a time in Savannah, Georgia, but returned to Florida, served as a state senator. He died in Florida in 1885.

Brigadier General Alfred Colquitt. Brigadier General Alfred Colquitt was born in 1824 in Monroe, Georgia. Twenty years later he graduated from Princeton College in 1844 and had studied law, passing the Bar in 1846. His plans for private practice in law were interrupted, however, by his service in the Mexican-American War, that seminal military experience and christening in battle of so many American Civil War participants. During the war against Mexico, Colquitt served as a major, largely on a staff. After the war, Colquitt led a public service life, first in congress and then in state government.⁷

Colquitt's American Civil War service prior to the Battle of Olustee was mainly with secessionist Major General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's corps and Colquitt rose to brigade commander under the famous secessionist general. His brigade would participate in virtually every major

battle with Jackson's corps. After Jackson's death at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Colquitt and his brigade were transferred to the southern theater and were serving with General Pierre G.T. Beauregard when the US Army expedition to Florida was realized.

Colquitt's command of the secessionists at Olustee would earn him the moniker by some as the "hero of Olustee". His role would be instrumental in the secessionist actions. Sent forward to develop the battle for Finegan, Colquitt would be given complete command of the secessionist front as Finegan committed more and more of his regiments to the growing fight. Though Colquitt was not an experienced multi-brigade commander, he was an experienced commander, as demonstrated at Olustee.

After the Battle of Olustee, Colquitt, along with his command, was again transferred north to serve with the Army of Northern Virginia. He served in the Siege of Petersburg and transferred out of the Army of Northern Virginia to serve in the Carolinas, rising to the rank of major general until the capitulation.

After the war, Colquitt returned to fight Reconstruction in his home state of Georgia. He served as state governor from 1876-1882. In 1883 he ran for one of the US Senate seats for Georgia and won. He remained one of the Georgia senators until 1894 when he died.

Colonel George P. Harrison, Jr. Colonel George P. Harrison, Jr. was born near Savannah, Georgia on 19 March 1841. He received his education from the Effingham Academy and then the Georgia Military Institute, located in Marietta, Georgia. When the war broke out Harrison gained his commission as a second lieutenant and served in the 1st Georgia Regulars. From there he quickly gained experience and moved up through the ranks.⁸

Colonel Harrison's military education at the Georgia Military Institute made him the only secessionist senior leadership at Olustee with a professional military education. However, Colquitt had invaluable experience from his service in the Mexican-American War even though lacked a military academic instruction. Having been born in 1841, Harrison was also the youngest of the secessionist major leaders.

After Olustee, Harrison maintained a brigade command and returned north from Florida. He served as a part of Major General Lafayette McLaw's Division in the Carolinas, notably at the Battle of Bentonville and was present at the capitulation at the Bennett House.

After the end of the war, Harrison moved to Alabama, studied law and passed the state Bar and practiced law until he ran for office. He served in

the state senate from 1878-1884. Following that he served two terms in the US Senate representing Alabama until 1897. After the end of his political career he returned to practicing law and civilian business before his death in July 1922.

Colonel Caraway Smith. Colonel Caraway Smith commanded the secessionist cavalry brigade, himself a regimental Florida cavalry commander. Prior to Olustee, Smith's command, the 2d Florida Cavalry, saw little action more than skirmishes with small US Army raiding parties. The Battle of Olustee was the largest and most significant conflict Smith would participate in. Following Olustee, Smith and his 2d Florida Cavalry were one of the few units to remain in Florida, the rest being transferred north to serve with General Lee's army. This may or may not have been a result of the criticism leveled on him and his cavalry command for their lackluster pursuit of the defeated US Army forces following Olustee. Regardless, Smith and his command would participate again for only the second time largely as a whole unit in the Battle of Natural Bridge near the Florida capitol of Tallahassee. In this battle the secessionists repulsed an US Army raid meant to capture the secessionist state capitol.

He did not live long past the end of the war, dying in 1868 in Florida.

Endnotes

1. Daniel L. Schafer, *Thunder on the River: The Civil War in Northeast Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 178. and Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 118.
2. Schafer, *Thunder on the River*, 178.
3. "Hawley, Joseph Roswell, (1826-1905)," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov> (accessed January 12, 2012).
4. William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago, IL: A.T. Andreas, 1883).
5. Schafer, *Thunder on the River*, 102.
6. Nulty, *Confederate Florida*, 19.
7. "Colquitt, Alfred Holt, (1824-1895)," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-Present*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov> (accessed 12 January 2012).
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