



## *The legion that never set foot in the desert*

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*Adapted into English by Gerald Hawkins*

### **Origin, objectives and formation**

What a singular unit this brigade was, whose name and members were completely foreign to its denomination. Indeed, destined to invade Arizona and New Mexico a second time, it never took that direction. As for its men, all came from Texas except for a few companies raised in New Mexico, which had followed Sibley in his retreat. All do not agree with this statement. On February 24, 1864, the former publisher of the *Mesilla Times* wrote in a Galveston newspaper: “probably not less than 500 Arizonans had joined the Rebel Army but had been scattered through various commands.” In Murray’s opinion, “strenuous efforts should have been made to have all the men from Arizona united in the same command.” This assertion is probably not false, but it is certainly exaggerated since very few white American males of Southern origin resided in the neo-Mexican Territory at that time.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the regiments of the Arizona Brigade never served together under the same command. Whatever, its men marked the military history of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi with such an ambiguous footprint that historian Robert Perkins calls them “*Heroes and*

<sup>1</sup> Finch L.B., *Confederate Pathway to the Pacific*, Tucson, 1996, pp. 205, 277, note 8.

*Renegades.*” The story of the Arizona Brigade begins in July 1862, after the rout of the Rebel forces in New Mexico. Below is a brief account of its adventures.

On March 5, 1861, Texas joined the Confederacy, and its new governor, Edward Clark, approved the creation of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas Mounted Rifles. The men were all volunteers enrolled for one year. At the beginning, these two regiments belonged to the Texas militia, but they were quickly incorporated in the Confederate regular army. Colonel Henry McCulloch became the commander of the first regiment and Colonel John S. “R.I.P.” Ford of the second. The first regiment was to defend the western border of Texas while the second was spread in forts built on the banks of the lower Rio Grande. Meanwhile, dissident Texas attracted followers in Arizona where many miners originated from Southern States. While Texas mobilized its forces, this area of the Southwest became increasingly unsafe. Two thousand Federal soldiers were concentrating in Fort Fillmore, Fort Craig and Fort Union (New Mexico). Since January 29, Major General Earl Van Dorn commanded the Trans-Mississippi District or Department nr 2 (created on January 10, 1862).

Fearing an attack on his rear, Van Dorn ordered Baylor to re-occupy Fort Bliss with six companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas Mounted Rifles and a field artillery battery. The other companies of the regiment remained on the Rio Grande under the command of Colonel “R.I.P.” Ford. Towards mid-June 1861, Baylor made a move towards Fort Bliss. En route, he detached part of his forces to occupy forts Davis and Quitman, which were empty since the departure of the Federal garrisons. He was left with only 200 cavalymen when, at the end of June, he entered Franklin (El Paso), near the Mexican border. Between July 1 and 24, 1861, he re-occupied Fort Bliss and settled in Mesilla without opposition. To the 200 men of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Mounted Rifles battalion were added three companies recently organized in the area: the Arizona Rangers of Captain Sherod Hunter, the Arizona Guards of Captain Tom Mastin and the San Elizario Spies of Captain Bethel Coopwood. On July 25, Baylor marched on Fort Fillmore.<sup>2</sup>

Without hope for reinforcements, Isaac Lynde, the Federal major in command, ordered the fort evacuated and then set out to Fort Stanton by the quickest route: the desert of Jornada del Muerte. Within less than twenty-four hours, the Federal troops became zombies who collapsed on the side of the track. Starving, thirsty and baked by the scorching sun, they laid down their weapons without a fight. The spoils were a boon to the poorly equipped Texans: three small howitzers, weapons, ammunition and equipment sufficient to equip 500 men. On August 1, 1861, Baylor took residence in Mesilla, proclaiming the creation of the Confederate Territory of Arizona and himself as its governor. This new administrative entity included the south of the current States of Arizona and New Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Ambitious and intriguing, Baylor waited for reinforcements to seize the remainder of New Mexico and penetrate into California. These finally arrived in the form of three cavalry regiments under the command of Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley. This

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<sup>2</sup> Hall M.H., *New Mexico Campaign*, Austin, 1960, pp. 23-26; Hall M.H., *The Confederate Army of New Mexico*, Austin, 1978, pp. 345-46 OR Series I, vol. I: p.577.

<sup>3</sup> OR S. I, vol. IV: pp. 4-5, 17-23; Thompson J.D., *Colonel John Robert Baylor: Texas Indian Fighter and Confederate Soldier*, Hillsboro, 1971, pp. 23-26 ; Dunn R.S., *The Knight of the Golden Circle in Texas 1860-61*, in “Southwestern Historical Quarterly”, vol. LXX: pp. 569-70; Hall, *Army of New Mexico*, pp. 297, 300, 336-7, 354, 374 ; Finch L.B., *Sherod Hunter and the Confederates in Arizona*, in “Journal of Arizona”, vol. X, Autumn 1969, pp. 146-47; Anderson H.T., *With the Confederates in New Mexico during the Civil War: Memoirs of Hank Smith*, in “Panhhandle Plains Historical Review”, vol. II-1929, pp. 71-77; D’Hamel E.B., *Adventure of a Tenderfoot: History of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regt. Mounted Rifles and Co. G, 33d Regt. and Capt. Coopwood’s Spy Co. and 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas in Texas and New Mexico*, Waco, 1914, pp. 10-11.

enraged Baylor because, according to rank, it was now Sibley who took the decisions. In spite of a great victory at Valverde (February 1862) and an unopposed advance, the Texan brigade lost the day at Glorieta Pass (March 1862) when a certain major Chivington, making headway on a trail unknown to the Rebels, destroyed their main supply train at the entrance of Apache Pass and, ipso facto, their only means of holding the Territory. The Texans now had to face a harsh reality: if they did not retreat, the lack of food would expose them to a certain death. Indeed, most of the peons had abandoned their fields or taken refuge in areas controlled by the enemy, the land was bone-dry and Sibley had already plundered its existing resources. The last Rebels evacuated Mesilla and New Mexico in July 1862. Omitting the rhetoric that had justified his campaign, Sibley explained the reasons for his failure to President Davis in a laconic way: “*Except for its political and geographical position, Arizona and New Mexico were not worth a quarter of the blood and treasure expended in its conquest.*”<sup>4</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Baylor did not share this point of view. Sibley had deprived him of any initiative as well as the notoriety that he could have gained while demonstrating his competence in leading operations in a better way than his superior. Sibley, a notorious drunkard, no doubt made tactical and logistic mistakes despite the talent of his colonels.<sup>5</sup> Baylor was not the only one to point this out. During his short term as “governor” of Arizona, he had gained the confidence and complicity of some local personalities who had friends in Congress, and he intended to exploit them.<sup>6</sup> This he managed so well that, on April 14, 1862, even before Sibley evacuated New Mexico, Baylor received orders from George W. Randolph, the Confederate Secretary of War, instructing him as follows: “*You are authorized to enlist volunteers in Arizona Territory and to muster them into service, singly or by companies, for three years or the war, to be organized as soon as a sufficient number of companies are mustered into a regiment, electing field officers. You will continue to organize regiments under this authority until a brigade has been raised for the defense of the Territory.*”<sup>7</sup>

Armed with support from Congress and this unambiguous order, Baylor set out to organize his Arizona Brigade by deliberately sabotaging the Rebel forces still in New Mexico. As the enlistment period of the troopers of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas Mounted Rifles expired in Mesilla, he advised the men not to re-enlist but instead to proceed to Texas where they could sign up in his future brigade.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after his arrival in San Antonio, in July 1862, Baylor established his general headquarters in Eagle Lake (a village located between San Antonio and Houston) where he started to organize his new unit. He intended to raise five battalions of Mounted Rifles of 500 men each. Thanks to his reputation, recruitment progressed rather quickly and, in December 1862, Baylor could boast the enrollment of 1,500 men. However, their armament and equipment did not follow. Barely 300 of his cavalymen were armed or rather poorly armed because their rifles, carbines and revolvers were of different types and caliber. However, in the mounted units of the West, the shotgun remained a man’s best friend. In close combat, its effectiveness at short range, its ease of handling on horseback and its two shots had

<sup>4</sup> Sibley to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, May 4th, 1862, in Horn & Wallace, *Confederate Victories in the Southwest: Prelude to Defeat*, Albuquerque, 1961, pp. 156-57.

<sup>5</sup> Thompson J.D., *Confederate General of the West; Henry H. Hopkins Sibley*, Texas A&M University Press, 1996, pp. 245-307.

<sup>6</sup> Finch L.B. *Arizona in Exile: Confederate Schemes to Recapture the Far Southwest*, in “Journal of Arizona Territory”, spring 1992, pp. 57-84.

<sup>7</sup> Randolph à Baylor, 14 April 1862, in Horn & Wallace: *Confederate Victories in the Southwest*, p. 200.

<sup>8</sup> Thompson J.D., *From Desert to Bayou: The Civil War Journal and Sketches of Morgan Wolfe Merrick*, El Paso 1991; Frazier D.S., *Blood and Treasure*, Texas A&M University Press, 1995, p. 197-98.

shown its superiority on the muzzle loading rifle of the era.<sup>9</sup> At the time of their charge at Valverde, in February 1862, the Texans literally mowed down the Federals with volleys of their double barrel shotguns. *“The double-barrel shotguns were not considered as army guns but the truth is, just place plenty of courage behind a double-barrel shotgun and it will whip any one on earth”*, wrote a Texan.<sup>10</sup>

A dramatic reversal then suddenly occurred: President Davis stripped Baylor of all his civil and military powers. Baylor was now paying for his mistakes. His talent as an Indian fighter had no doubt preceded him before the war, and in Mesilla he had killed the editor of the *“Mesilla Times”*, who had written about him in harsh terms.<sup>11</sup> But there was something far more serious. In March 1862, he had ordered the commanders of his companies to gather the largest possible number of Apache chiefs at peace talks. After intoxicating them with liquor, the soldiers were to massacre all the Indians and sell their wives and children as slaves to defray the cost of the operation. Refusing to obey such an order, one of Baylor’s officers transmitted the memo to Richmond, and hence his dismissal by the Confederate President. After the war, the admirers of Jefferson Davis did not miss the opportunity to praise his human morality and qualities in this affair. However, they omitted to mention that, on March 25, 1865, he promoted John R. Baylor to a higher rank, granted him full powers in the Southwest and adhered to his plan of inciting the Comanche, Kiowa, Arapahos and Cheyenne to attack northern emigrant convoys.<sup>12</sup> The reversal of Davis’ attitude shocked many people in Richmond. John B. Jones, the well-known clerk at the Confederate War Department reported in his diary: *“Colonel Baylor, whom the President designated the other day as the proper man to raise troops in New Mexico, Arizona, Lower California and in Mexico, is the same man who invited the Indians to a council in 1861, to receive presents, whiskey, etc., and then ordered them, men, women, and children, to be slaughtered. Even Mr. Randolph [Secretary of War in 1861] was revolted at such conduct. But now the government must employ him.”*<sup>13</sup>

In spite of the discharge of its leader, the Arizona Brigade was being organized at a briskly pace. In spring 1863, it had become operational and its quartermaster was busy collecting food and equipment to re-conquer Arizona. On February 21, 1863, Major General John B. Magruder ordered the reorganization of the five new battalions into four regiments of cavalry as follows:<sup>14</sup>

SPECIAL ORDERS No. 81.  
HDQRS, DIST. OF TEX., N. MEX., AND ARIZ.,  
Houston, Tex., February 21, 1863.

Several changes having been made in the details of the organization of the Arizona Brigade, as announced in Special Orders, No. 74 (February 14), paragraph XII, the following is published as the final organization:

<sup>9</sup> Greer J.K. (edit.), *Buck Barry, Texas Ranger and Frontiersman*, Waco, 1978, pp. 128-29.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson J.D., *Civil War in the Southwest*, Texas A&M University Press, 2001, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Hall M.H., *The Mesilla Times: A Journal of Confederate Arizona*, in “Arizona and the West”, vol. V-4-1963, pp. 349-50.

<sup>12</sup> Thompson, *Sibley*, p. 335; Frazier, *Blood and Treasure*, p. 297; Faulk O.B., *John R. Baylor: Confederate Governor of Arizona*, Tucson, 1966, pp. 13-15; O.R. Series 4, vol. III: pp. 960-62, 1168-69.

<sup>13</sup> Jones J.B., *A Rebel War Clerck’s Diary*, edit. E.S. Miers in one volume, New York, 1958, pp. 474, 476.

<sup>14</sup> Finch, *Arizona*, p. 62.

**First Regiment** from the Arizona Brigade is to be composed of what is known as Hardeman's battalion of six companies, and Captains Wood, Moody, McKee, and Quinn's companies, with the following field and staff, respectively:

William P. Hardeman, colonel;  
Peter Hardeman, lieutenant colonel;  
Michael Looscan, major;  
Silas Hare, captain and assistant quartermaster;  
James Magoffin, captain and assistant commissary of subsistence;  
D. Waverly Lewis, lieutenant and adjutant;  
Hamilton Bradford, surgeon.

**Second Regiment** from the Arizona Brigade is to be composed of what is known as G. W. Baylor's battalion, two companies of Mullen's battalion, and Captains Anderson and Caffey's companies, with the following field and staff, respectively:

George Wythe Baylor, colonel;  
John W. Mullen, lieutenant colonel;  
Sherod Hunter, major;  
Francis J. Mullen, captain and assistant quartermaster;  
William H. Lloyd, captain and assistant commissary of subsistence;  
Thomas E. Hogg, lieutenant and adjutant;  
William Madison, surgeon.

**Third Regiment** of this brigade is to be composed of what is known as Madison's battalion, with Captains Faucett and Hendricks' companies, and such other companies as may hereafter be assigned to it, with the following field and staff, respectively:

Joseph Phillips, colonel;  
George T. Madison, lieutenant colonel;  
Alonzo Ridley, major;  
William D. Kirk, captain and assistant quartermaster;  
Robert G. Turner, captain and assistant commissary of subsistence;  
Thomas W. English, lieutenant and adjutant;  
William R. Robinson, surgeon;  
Andrew J. Hay, assistant surgeon.

**Fourth Regiment** of this brigade is to be formed in Arizona and New Mexico, with the following field officers:

Spruce M. Baird, colonel;  
Dan. Showalter, lieutenant colonel;  
Ed. Riordan, major.

The above is subject to the sanction of the President, to whom the officers will be recommended for commission.

By command of Maj. Gen. J. Bankhead Magruder.

When he inspected the brigade in January 1863, Adjutant General Henry L. Webb described it as "*the most disorderly, outrageous set of men I ever knew (...) officers have no control (...) the troops were guilty of all kinds of excesses. The planters and*

*inhabitants generally complain to me that they nearly strip them of everything they can lay hands on, and kill their beeves and hogs and steal their poultry.*"<sup>15</sup>

The breakthrough of a Federal army in western Louisiana put a question mark on this second attempt of invading Arizona and New Mexico. In November 1863, Major General Nathaniel Banks had replaced Butler at the head of the Department of the Gulf and his forces were to take part in the re-conquest of the entire Mississippi River. Since 15,000 Confederates occupied Port Hudson (below Vicksburg), Banks did not want to attack this fortress as long as he did not completely control the opposite bank of the river. To take it, on April 9, he concentrated the divisions of Grover, Emory and Weitzel's brigades (all of the XIX<sup>th</sup> Corps) at Brashear City (eastern Louisiana). These troops penetrated quickly and deeply in the Teche and Atchafalaya areas, however without managing to destroy the Rebel forces of Dick Taylor at the battles of Irish Bend and Strong Bisland (April 12-14, 1863). Shielded by the survivors of the Sibley brigade, now under the command of Colonel Thomas Green, Taylor fell back on New Iberia, Vermillionville and Opelousas. On May 7, Bank's forces occupied Alexandria (Louisiana) without meeting any opposition. Some two weeks later, on order of Major General Halleck who then supervised the entire Federal operations, Banks re-crossed the Mississippi River to attack Port Hudson.<sup>16</sup>

Considering the extent of the enemy's progress and having no reserves, the commander of the Texas District (major general John B. Magruder) cancelled the re-conquest of Arizona and sent the regiments of the Arizona Brigade to the most threatened areas. These regiments would never again serve under a single command within the framework of a combined operation. They would however keep their original name.<sup>17</sup>

## **Service records of the four regiments**

### *1<sup>st</sup> Texas Cavalry Regiment, Arizona Brigade*

Most official sources name William P. Hardeman, the former captain of company A of Colonel James Reily's 4<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry, as the first colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment.<sup>18</sup> Other sources - and not necessarily the least reliable - allocate this command initially to Peter Hardeman who, following a pulmonary problem handed it temporarily over to his brother William. Though many official reports are ambiguous on this matter, Nicholas Hardeman, a direct descendant of the family claims that Peter re-took the command of the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment in August 1863.<sup>19</sup> At the beginning, the regiment of both Hardemans served in the northern sub-district of Texas, commanded by Brigadier General H.E. McCulloch, and in Indian Territory, under the orders of Brigadier General Richard M. Gano.<sup>20</sup> In August 1863, the reputation of the unit was so disastrous that McCulloch ordered the disarmament of a whole company, which was

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<sup>15</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XV: pp. 955-56.

<sup>16</sup> Boatner M.M., *The Civil War Dictionary*, New York, 1969, pp. 684-85.

<sup>17</sup> Finch, *Arizona*, pp. 62-64.

<sup>18</sup> Simpson H.B., *Texas in the War*, pp. 30; Oates S.B., *Confederate Cavalry West of the River*, Austin, 1961, p. 172; US War Department, *List of Field Officers, Regiments and Battalions in the Confederate Army*, Washington DC, 189(?), pp. 71-78; Wooten G., *A Comprehensive History of Texas*, vol. II-5, Dallas, 1898, pp. 572-630.

<sup>19</sup> Hardeman N., *The Bloody Battle that almost Happened*, in "Civil War History", Kent State U. Press, vol. XXIII-3-1977, pp. 252-53.

<sup>20</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XXII-2: p. 977; Rochette P.A., *Bourland in North Texas and Indian Territory*, private publishing Broken Arrow (OK), vol. I, pp. 168, 183.

mined with desertion.<sup>21</sup> Approximately two months later, Peter Hardeman escaped from a skirmish that would certainly have found its place in the annals of the war in the Trans-Mississippi. He was then in Indian Territory and commanded a brigade belonging to the cavalry division of General Douglas H. Cooper when, on October 12, 1863, his scouts reported a Federal force camped not far from his quarters. Hardeman rallied his men at once and instructed Colonel Daniel McIntosh (a half-breed commanding the 1<sup>st</sup> CSA Creek regiment) to fall on the enemy during the night. In complete silence, the Rebels approached their foe within 300 yards and noticed that their fires were out and that there were no sentries posted. McIntosh ordered his bugler to sound the attack and, almost within seconds, cries rang out from the enemy bivouac. Their antagonists were in fact Quantrill's guerillas, totaling approximately 500 men. Dressed in Yankee uniforms that they had captured a few days earlier at Baxter Springs (Kansas), they had come to seek refuge in an area controlled by the Confederates and, feeling safe, had not seen the need to place sentries around their camp. Offended, Quantrill would later state that he had been the one to surprise Peter Hardeman and not the other way round! Taking into account the viciousness of the guerrillas and their armament (each had at least a rifle and two six-shooters), the fight would have been devastating. Quantrill and his band had in effect just joined the forces of General H.E. McCulloch to pursue Rebel deserters in the north of Texas.<sup>22</sup>

In February 1864, the 439 men of the regiment made a short halt in Columbia (Texas), the rail junction that would lead them to Arkansas, where a new Federal offensive was foreseen, on March 23, 1864.<sup>23</sup> This campaign would hit the regiment harshly during most of the engagements opposing the Federal army of Frederick Steele to that of Stirling Price in the course of the expedition of Camden (March-May 1864). The 1<sup>st</sup> regiment was especially active at Poison Springs (April 18, 1864), Massard's Prairie (July 27, 1864) and Cabin Creek (September 19, 1864) at the sides of the Choctaw Indians of Colonel Tandy Walker.<sup>24</sup> In the collective memory, Poison Springs is considered the most odious Confederate victory in that campaign. It was surnamed the "Fort Pillow of the West" because of the deliberate massacre of black soldiers who had surrendered.<sup>25</sup>

The events that led to this sinister affair go back to March 1864. Coming from Little Rock (Arkansas), the Federal army of Frederick Steele resolutely marched on Shreveport (Louisiana) to join up with the forces of Banks, which were following the Red River in the same direction. Towards mid-April, emaciated by a scorched earth policy and a poor logistic supply system, Steele's troops were quickly reduced to campaigning on ever dwindling rations. Steele then decided to make a halt at Camden and build an intermediate food depot between Little Rock and his progression in Arkansas. On April 17, he sent in the hinterland a convoy of 198 covered wagons escorted by 1,000 men, including 500 of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry, to requisition provisions that his army was badly lacking. The men combed the entire area, often behaving as mere plunderers. This is corroborated by Colonel Charles DeMorse (29<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry) who, after the battle, declared that his men discovered not only food in

<sup>21</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XV: pp. 960, 989-90; XXVI-2: p. 73; LIII, p. 891; Rochette, *Bourland in North Texas*, p. 165.

<sup>22</sup> Hardeman, *The Bloody Battle that almost Happened*, pp. 254-58.

<sup>23</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XXXIV-2: p. 1010.

<sup>24</sup> Simpson H.B., *Texas in the War*, pp. 30, 93.

<sup>25</sup> At the time of this operation, the northern public opinion accused General Forrest of having deliberately let his men massacre the black soldiers who had raised a white surrender flag. In his article "A Fresh Examination off the Obviousness", in *Civil War History* (vol. 4-1-1958), historian Albert Castel concludes that there was indeed a massacre of black soldiers.

the enemy wagons, but also clothing and other valuable articles.

On April 18, the Federal column was progressing normally when the forces of Brigadier General Samuel B. Maxey (at the time chief of the Indian Territory District), three times stronger than their foe, opened up a dreadful crossfire. Surprised by this sudden avalanche, the Federals hardly resisted, leaving more than 600 dead on the ground, mainly Blacks who had laid down their weapons. The report of this mass murder did not emanate directly from the Federals but from General Kirby Smith in a letter to his wife. As at Fort Pillow (Tennessee), there remained only two Blacks alive among the 200 captured soldiers. The authorities and the northern press qualified the battle as a needless massacre, accusing the Choctaws of Tandy Walker of having scalped their victims.<sup>26</sup> Half of the Federal “plunderers” being Blacks, the Rebels had certainly been fuming at these former slaves who had dared “strip the race of their former masters”. This however was a usual occurrence during most of the colonial wars in Africa, Asia and South America.

Detachments of Hardeman’s regiment clashed repeatedly with Federal troops in the vicinity of Fort Smith (border of Arkansas and Indian Territory). Between May and September 1864, William P. Hardeman took command of Tom Green’s cavalry brigade (Green was killed in April 1864) and his brother Peter remained alone at the head of the regiments.<sup>27</sup> Major Edward Riordan, who had meanwhile replaced Major Looscan (transferred to another unit), was promoted lieutenant colonel and Alexander P. Terrell major.<sup>28</sup> The last mention of the regiment is dated April 28, 1865, when the men were dismounted and assigned to the infantry division of General S.B. Maxey in Texas.<sup>29</sup>

### *2<sup>nd</sup> Texas Cavalry Regiment, Arizona Brigade*

**I**ts colonel, George W. Baylor, was a splitting image of his elder brother John. However, his good manners and fine education could not always conceal his violent temper and the trigger happy character that he really was.<sup>30</sup>

Almost until the end of the war, the 2<sup>nd</sup> regiment remained with General John P. Major’s brigade (division of cavalry of General Tom Green). With the exception of a short assignment to the defenses of Galveston (Texas), from December 1863 to February 1864, this regiment fought primarily in Louisiana and took part in the battles of Brashear City (June 23, 1863), Cox’s Plantation (July 12-13, 1863), Mansfield (April 8, 1864) and Pleasant Hill (April 9, 1864). Among these operations should be mentioned the daring raid of Major Sherod Hunter with a strong detachment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> regiment, on June 23, 1863, on the Federal depot established at Brashear City (Louisiana). Sherod Hunter was the former captain of the Arizona Rangers who occupied Tucson until the arrival of the “California Column” of James H. Carleton, in April 1862.

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<sup>26</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XXXIV-2: pp. 846-48 ; Baker W.D., *The Battle of Poison Springs* in “The Camden Expedition of 1864”, [www.arkansaspreservation.org](http://www.arkansaspreservation.org); Abel A.H., *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, vol. II, Cleveland, 1919, pp. 326-27; Vaughn J.C., *Sam Bell Maxey and the Confederate Indians*, pp. 56-60, 62, 65; Fisher M., *Remember Poison Spring*, in “Missouri Historical Review”, vol. XXIX-3-1980, pp. 323-342; Richards I.D., *The Battle of Poison Springs*, in “Arkansas Historical Quarterly”, vol. XVIII-4-1959, pp. 338-349.

<sup>27</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XXVI-2: p. 565; XLI-3: p. 969.

<sup>28</sup> Simpson H.B., *Texas in the War 1861-1865*, Hillsboro, 1965, pp. 30, 80-81, 120-21, 124; Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 174-78, 239.

<sup>29</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XLVIII-2: pp. 1266, 1281, 1291.

<sup>30</sup> Waller J.L., *Colonel George Wythe Baylor*, in “Southwestern Social Science Quarterly”, vol. XXIV-March 1943, pp. 23-35.



The Union army had created in Brashear City an immense food and military supply depot to provide for the needs of its troops operating in western Louisiana. Poorly armed, short of ammunition and underfed, the Rebels coveted its contents. One of them recalled he was “*getting very hungry. The Federals had an immense supply depot on their side of Bayou Atchafalaya (sic) (...) We actually and absolutely needed those supplies.*”<sup>31</sup> General Dick Taylor ordered the capture of this post at all costs because the survival of his army depended on it. The depot was built on the western shore of Berwick Bay (a broad branch of the Atchafalaya River that winds up in the Gulf of Mexico). The Federals felt particularly comfortable there because the tropical forest full of bayous, marshes, mosquitoes, reptiles and crocodiles protected their rear. Taylor ordered Major Hunter to attack the place from this inhospitable ground.

During the night of June 22, 1863, Hunter and his Mosquito Fleet of 250 dismounted riders began their operation. The group included three companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas Cavalry, a unit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Louisiana Cavalry and volunteers taken from other Texan units. To move rapidly in the “green hell” separating them from their objective, Hunter and his men embarked on everything that floated: boats, canoes, rafts, barrels etc. Plagued by mosquitoes, they silently descended the Bayou Teche until the Atchafalaya River, paddling 10 miles without a rest. On June 23, they set foot on a muddy land covered by a dense palm plantation. In single file, they progressed for 3.5 miles, finally arriving in the outskirts of Brashear City. There, they were petrified by what they saw: white tents aligned on an area of about 8,000 sq.ft. and two powerful artillery redoubts. Hunter rallied his men at once: “*We may all be shot. Not one of us may get back to the brigade, but, gentlemen, we’d better just fall down in our tracks than go back disgraced, and have old Tom Green tell us so!*” A witness mentions that Hunter accompanied his speech with a considerable amount of swearwords. His men dispersed at once and quietly progressed in the direction of the enemy camp. During the same night, 500 other Confederates had slipped into the woods bordering the western shore of Berwick, just opposite Brashear City. Since the undergrowth in this area was too thick for horses, muscles and naked hands hauled to the shore an artillery battery comprising two 12-pounders howitzers and two 6-pounders.<sup>32</sup>

Once the guns in place, they immediately opened fire. Expecting a frontal attack, the Yankee garrison ran towards the shore to man the positions assigned to them by their officers. Almost simultaneously, Hunter and his Mosquito Fleet attacked with fixed bayonets and a startling Rebel yell. Paralyzed by the audacity of this unexpected attack, the Federal ranks soon dissolved without resistance. Likewise, the two artillery strongholds were swiftly overwhelmed by the assault wave. The affair had proceeded so quickly that the losses of the commando amounted to only three killed and eighteen wounded. The Rebels’ efforts were rewarded. With his 250 men, Hunter had captured 1,300 enemy soldiers, 11 heavy guns, 2,000 Enfield and Burnside rifles, tons of food, ammunition and various military supplies, 2,000 Blacks and between 200 and 300 tents and wagons. The Federal government evaluated at more than 2,000,000 \$ its losses in this attack. As for Hunter’s party and Dick Taylor’s army, their feat of arms had boosted their morale for months to come and in particular for the Red River campaign of 1864.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Noel T., *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi*, Shreveport, 1865, p. 53-54; Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 184-87.; O.R. Series I, vol. XXVI-1: p. 223.

<sup>32</sup> Finch, *Confederate Pathway to the Pacific*, p. 187; Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>33</sup> Taylor R., *Destruction and Reconstruction*, New York, 1879, pp. 140-41; Irwin R.B., *History of the 19<sup>th</sup> Army Corps*, New York, 1892, p. 241 in Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 180-91; O.R. Series I, vol. XXVI-1: pp. 210, 216-26, 914.

### *3<sup>rd</sup> Texas Cavalry Regiment, Arizona Brigade*

Largely composed of companies recruited in New Mexico, which had fled to Texas with Sibley, this regiment contained the best and the worst of the Territory. Lieutenant colonel George T. Madison was the prototype of the ruffian of the West. Former desperado in New Mexico, he had commanded the “Brigands”, also called “the players of Santa Fe”, a company of local scouts incorporated in the forces of John R. Baylor at Mesilla. An officer of Sibley said of them that they formed “*one of the most marvelous commands ever got together (...) made up of experienced and desperate men (...) to whom six-shooters, bowie-knives and personal encounters were every day occurrences. (...) There was probably not a man (...) who had not killed half a dozen men or more, the record of whose death was simply a notch on the handle of the knife or the butt of the pistol with whose assistance the deed had been accomplished*”.<sup>34</sup> In August 1862, Madison and his men were not yet in Texas, despite the presence of the Federal “California Column” in New Mexico. They first went to Colorado to make some pocket money. The gang, estimated at 35 men by the local authorities, seized and robbed the stagecoach at Strong Garland. It then surfaced in Texas at the time when the Arizona Brigade was being organized.<sup>35</sup> Typically, the first leader of the “Brigands”, John G. Philips, lost his life following a poker game that ended in a shootout in a street of San Antonio. Philips had the reputation of a card cheater and a notorious gangster.<sup>36</sup> Most of the men found their way in company E of Captain Hall.<sup>37</sup> As for Major Alonzo Ridley (who replaced Madison as lieutenant colonel), he belonged to the category of the “spangled hooligans”. In 1861, he was the sheriff of Los Angeles, California and, as such, used his authority to abuse the confidence of the local authorities to extort funds, 80 revolvers, 80 rifles, 80 sabers and sufficient horses to equip a company of local militia: the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles. What ever happened to the funds is unknown, but they disappeared with Ridley and the men who accompanied Albert S. Johnston to Texas.<sup>38</sup>

Beginning of March 1863, measles decimated the regiment while it was being trained near Houston, not far from the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment.<sup>39</sup> A few months later, the 3<sup>rd</sup> regiment was incorporated in the cavalry brigade of General James P. Major (division of Major General Tom Green).<sup>40</sup> It distinguished itself at Donaldsonville, Cox’s Plantation, Stirling’s Plantation, Bourbeau Bayou, Wilson’s Farm, Mansfield and Pleasant Hill. Since both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> regiments belonged to Major’s brigade, one can briefly describe the adventures that they often shared.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 164-65, 174; Thompson J.D. (edit.), *Civil War in the Southwest: Recollections of the Sibley Brigade*, Texas A&M University, 2001, p. 150, note 28.

<sup>35</sup> Conner D. (edited by Berthrong D.J. & Davenport O.), *A Confederate in the Colorado Gold Fields*, Norman, 1970, pp. 144-45, 150, 163.

<sup>36</sup> Hall, *Confederate Army of New Mexico*, pp. 373-74; Williams R.H., *With the Border Ruffians*, Toronto, 1907, p. 262.

<sup>37</sup> Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, p. 174, note 16.

<sup>38</sup> Scammel J.M., *Military Units in Southern California, 1853-1862*, in “California Historical Quarterly”, vol. XXIX-2-1950, pp. 229-249.

<sup>39</sup> Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, p. 178.

<sup>40</sup> Simpson H.B., *Texas in the War*, pp. 30-31; Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 165, 174.

<sup>41</sup> Except Where specifically mentioned, the five above stories are extracted from “*Heroes and Renegades*” of R. Perkins, [www.members.tripod.com/~azrebel](http://www.members.tripod.com/~azrebel).

***Donaldsonville (28 June, 1863)***

The cavalry of General Major took part in the assault on Fort Butler, a Federal post established on the junction of LaFourche Bayou and the Mississippi River. Begun during the night, the attack ended up in confusion during which both parties threw at each other bricks taken from the parapets of the fort. Salvos fired by the Federal gunboats finally push back the Rebels.

***Cox's Plantation (12-13 July, 1863)***

Coming from Donaldsonville, a Federal force of approximately 6,000 men (Generals G. Weitzel's and C. Grover's brigades) was progressing towards the south, along LaFourche Bayou, when it was ambushed by the cavalymen of Generals Tom Green and James P. Major. Seriously mauled, the Federals fell back to their starting point.

***Bourbeau Bayou (3 November, 1863)***

Three Texas regiments belonging to the division of Major General John G. Walker, supported by the cavalry brigades of Green and Major, unexpectedly fell on the troops of Major General William B. Franklin and captured 600 men and a field gun. After the Bourbeau Bayou affair, the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> regiments were excited since they were due back in Texas. A Yankee army had seized Brownsville and reinforcements were necessary. In January 1864, the two regiments were on their way to Houston where a train took them to Galveston. There the 2<sup>nd</sup> regiment rested during a few weeks under the command of Major Hunter. Colonel G.W. Baylor and Lieutenant colonel J.W. Mullen also decided to grant themselves some leave. Their hope of returning to Texas turned out to be a mirage. The new offensive launched by Banks in Louisiana recalled them at once to the unhealthy bayous of Louisiana.<sup>42</sup>

***Wilson's Farm (7 April, 1864)***

At the time of the second Red River campaign (1864), Brigadier General Albert L. Lee commanded the forefront of General Banks. It consisted of a division of cavalry including some new regiments of mounted infantry. Having never been confronted with Texan cavalry, Lee's riders expected that the four assembled regiments of Major's brigade who were barring the road would flee without firing a shot. Unexpectedly, they were carried away by the violent charge of their adversaries. The confusion was complete, followed by a particularly bloody hand to hand fighting during which the Texans ran through the ranks of their foe and threatened their baggage train. Albert Lee managed to save the day thanks to the strong numerical superiority of his troops. Completely stunned by the audacity and the strength of his attackers, he called for immediate reinforcements. Their arrival would start the battle of Mansfield (or Sabine Cross Roads).

***Mansfield (8 April, 1864)***

Reinforced by the 4<sup>th</sup> infantry division of William J. Landrum (XIII<sup>th</sup> Corps), Albert Lee and his cavalry continued their advance on Mansfield. Realizing that a long baggage train was located between Banks' front and his own army, General Dick Taylor decided to attack Lee and Landrum at once, succeeding a traditional but very difficult flanking maneuver. Major's brigade, including the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> regiments of the Arizona brigade, was holding the extreme left of the Confederate line. Fighting dismounted,

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<sup>42</sup> O.R., vol. XXVI-2: p. 509; Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, p. 197.

Major and his men moved around the right flank of the Yankee line to attack its rear. At the same time, other Rebel units had flanked the enemy's left wing. Encircled by this pincer movement, the Federal line broke up. In the ensuing confusion, the 130<sup>th</sup> Illinois and 48<sup>th</sup> Ohio did not realize what was going on and resisted until Major's brigade forced them to surrender. The Rebels pursued the fleeing men of the two Union divisions for a couple of miles. The opportune arrival of Brigadier General William H. Emory's infantry division prevented their total destruction.

### ***4<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry Regiment, Arizona Brigade***

The 4<sup>th</sup> regiment was made up of colorful characters, a mixture of villains and heroes. Spruce McCoy Baird was the former prosecutor general of the New Mexico Territory. Tough secessionist, he had assisted Sibley during his campaign and taken refuge in Texas after the evacuation of the Territory. Refusing defeat, Baird used all means at his disposal, including the press, to reorganize the invasion of Arizona by recruiting a new cavalry regiment, independently of John R. Baylor efforts to do the same thing.<sup>43</sup> His relationship with the latter being excellent, Baird decided to send his recruits to Eagle Lake (Texas) where Baylor was recruiting for his Arizona Brigade.<sup>44</sup>

At the time of the reorganization of the five battalions of this brigade into four regiments, Baird took command of the 4<sup>th</sup> since he was its promoter. His lieutenant colonel, Daniel Showalter, was a corrupt, alcoholic and irate California politician. On May 25, 1861, during an ignominious duel (he knew that his adversary was not familiar with the handling of firearms), he killed Charles W. Piercy, a member of the Parliament of his State. The first shot having missed both contestants, the honor was saved and the affair could have been closed. Evil minded, Showalter nevertheless urged the reloading of the weapons and this time he shot the man dead. Suspected of subversive secessionist activities, the Federal army arrested him in November 1861 while he was trying to flee to New Mexico with 18 armed men.<sup>45</sup> After five months imprisonment, he swore the ritual oath of allegiance to the Union in order to be released. Without scruples, he disappeared and fled to Chihuahua (Mexico) at the head of a party of 50 to 60 Californians and joined Baird in Texas, just in time to be promoted lieutenant colonel of his regiment.<sup>46</sup> As the recruitment dragged on, Baird moved his headquarters to the Pecos River (Texas). In this area lived a very marginal population: Confederate deserters, men who refused to fight in the East, disillusioned gold diggers, American and Mexican outlaws and ruffians of all types. These men enlisted in Baird's unit either to escape from justice, for the adventure or simply to be fed and clothed without being forced to play heroes. The quality and discipline of this regiment obviously left a lot to be desired.<sup>47</sup>

The regiment only became operational at the beginning of the second half of 1863 because of the difficulties Colonel Baird encountered in completing his recruitment. For example, on March 6, 1863, writing from his quarters east of Houston, Private William Carothers explained to his wife that he hoped to leave soon for Arizona, but that his regiment was still incomplete, comprising only eight companies. His letter expressed his

<sup>43</sup> Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, p. 170-71.

<sup>44</sup> Finch, *Arizona*, pp. 59-62; Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 156, 170, 203, 207, 209, 219-21.

<sup>45</sup> Virden B., *The Affair at Minter's Ranch*, in « San Diego Historical Society Quarterly », Vol. VII-2-1961.

<sup>46</sup> Cooney P.J., *Southern California in Civil War Days* in "Historical Society of Southern California", vol. XIII-1924, pp. 60-61; Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 99-100, 147-48, 204-4, 207-8, 220, 224, 227, 276.

<sup>47</sup> Finch, *Arizona*, p. 65.

disillusionment regarding the ideals that had pushed him to enlist: “*the men are poorly fed and the officers spend most of their time playing cards and betting on horse-races.*”<sup>48</sup>

It is quite possible that the unreliable nature of this regiment encouraged the Trans-Mississippi HQ not to assign it to a first line brigade but rather to use it as a substitute or a reserve unit. The authorities quickly divided the regiment into two battalions: the first, under the command of Colonel Baird and the second under Lieutenant Colonel Showalter. Though both were assigned to the Northern Sub-District off Texas, the two battalions had different adventures. They would only form again one regiment during the re-conquest of Brownsville (Texas), in July 1864, as will be seen further.

In August 1863, Brigadier General S.P. Bankhead (provisional commander of the Northern Sub-District of Texas) announced that Showalter’s men were without armament.<sup>49</sup> However, they apparently took part in many minor operations against the Comanche and Kiowa in northern Texas. On November 1, a report from Brigadier General H.E. McCulloch (the new commander of the Northern Sub-District) mentioned that desertions in Baird’s and Showalter’s battalions had reduced their forces by half.<sup>50</sup> On December 22-23, 1863, Showalter’s men belonged to the units urgently mobilized to repel the few hundred Comanche that had perpetrated their bloodiest raid in Cooke County (Texas).<sup>51</sup> However, on November 30, McCulloch had ordered Lieutenant Colonel Showalter, then in Indian Territory, to return his battalion to Bonham as fast as possible.<sup>52</sup> Serious events were developing in southwest Texas.

On November 2, 1863, General Nathaniel Banks disembarked his task force at Brazos Island and took possession of Brownsville, the key city for shipping Texan cotton to Europe via Mexico. However, the vast Federal project was not to invade Texas from this point, but from the east, by converging two strong armies: one under Banks along the Red River and the other under Frederick Steele, from Little Rock (Arkansas). Since these two campaigns had meanwhile failed, the Confederate Trans-Mississippi authorities decided re-conquer Brownsville without having to grab manpower from the armies of Louisiana and Arkansas. It is to Colonel John Salmon Ford - a senior Texas Ranger, veteran of the Indian and Mexican campaigns - that Magruder entrusted the task of creating a new mobile armed force with all the troops, regular or not, which were not required on the eastern front. Without asking questions, his sergeant recruiters accepted all those who volunteered: deserters, outlaws, Mexicans, men too young or too old for conscription, and petty thieves who belonged nowhere. At the same time, Ford requested that Magruder send him two battalions of the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment of the Arizona Brigade. On December 15, 1863, Magruder telegraphed to colonel Baird (then operating in Brazoria County, Texas) to gather all his forces, including the Showalter battalion, and move without delay to San Antonio.<sup>53</sup> Between January 6 and 22, 1864, McCulloch informed Magruder in San Antonio that Showalter and his battalion were approaching Austin and that Baird’s battalion had settled in the San Marcus of Guadalupe valley to reorganize and resupply.<sup>54</sup>

Leading a column of 2,000 cavalry, Ford left San Antonio beginning of March 1864. The two battalions of Colonel Baird would join him during his advance. On March 31,

<sup>48</sup> Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, p. 178.

<sup>49</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XXII-2: p. 977; Rochette, *Bourland in North Texas*, vol. I, p. 169.

<sup>50</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. LIII: p. 378; Rochette, *Bourland in North Texas*, vol. I, p. 183.

<sup>51</sup> Rochette, *Bourland in North Texas*, vol. I, p. 200.

<sup>52</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XXII-2: : pp. 1083-84.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, vol. XXVI-2: p. 509.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, vol.LIII: pp. 922-24, 953.

Ford confirmed that Lieutenant Colonel Showalter had just joined him with six companies, but where was Baird?<sup>55</sup> Upon his arrival at San Antonio, Baird had telegraphed Ford that he refused to obey his orders and instead claimed the command of his “Cavalry of the West”. At first, his demand sounded justified. Indeed, Ford never requested nor received an officer’s commission in the Confederate army. Being only a colonel in the Texas militia, he had no authority over a regular unit. On the other hand, Baird as an officer duly commissioned by Richmond, had the right to assert such a command. However, Ford’s nomination came from General Magruder, and his superior Edmund Kirby Smith had endorsed it. His request rejected, Baird resigned and the command of his regiment passed on automatically to Lieutenant Colonel Showalter.<sup>56</sup> Later, Baird tried to start a new campaign with the aid of some prominent citizens of Arizona and New Mexico, but nothing came out of that scheme.<sup>57</sup>

Now under the command of Showalter, the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment took an active part in some fighting that impeded Ford’s advance, in particular at Rancho Las Rinas (June 25) and Rancho del Carmen (July). On July 30, 1864, Ford and his troops retook Brownsville. During a brief clash with the troops of General Francis Herron, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Texas of Colonel Benavides seized part of their baggage train, but was forced to abandon the loot because of Showalter’s inaction. The latter, completely drunk, had pushed his men in a wrong direction. The enemy benefited from this lull in the Rebel attack to regroup at Brazos Santiago, not far from Brownsville.<sup>58</sup>

In September 1864, the Mexican bandit Cortina (who had joined up with Juarez) still occupied Matamoros. To evade the French Army besieging the town, his only area of retreat was the other bank of the Rio Grande, in fact Texas. Knowing that the Union government backed Juarez, Cortina requested the support of the Federal garrison at Brazos Island so that he could cross the river without being harassed by Ford. On September 6, during talks with the commander of Brazos Island, Cortina ordered fire to be opened on the positions held by Showalter at Palmito Ranch, on the other side of the Rio Grande. “R.I.P.” Ford commented the events: *“The Confederates behaved well. They silenced the artillery on several occasions, and were reported to have killed 40 Mexicans. In addition, Cortina had dispatched about 600 men with artillery up the Rio Grande. They had orders to cross into Texas and attack Brownsville, supposing I would send all my troops below to Palmito Ranch. We had timely information of this move. We did not budge from the city or from Fort Brown. It had been raining hard and the rise in the river kept the Mexicans from crossing into Confederate territory. Unfortunately, Colonel Showalter had recourse to the bottle. In the evening he retreated. His command moved to within eight miles of Fort Brown. He came to town in a maudlin condition, claimed to have lost from 15 to 150 men. According to his account large parties of Mexicans and Federals had driven him from his camp. A force of Federals was at that moment advancing by the Point Isabel road, and a heavy body of Mexicans had been sighted on the opposite bank of the Rio Grande. We anticipated Cortina and the Federals would be on us early the next day. Everything was done that night that could be to restore the morale of Showalter’s demoralized men.”*<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, vol. XXXIV-2: pp. 1033, 1069, 1081-82, 1106-1107; Oates S.B. (edit.), *R.I.P. Ford’s Texas*, Austin, 1963, pp. 342-52, 358-60, 362-63.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, vol. XXXIV-2: p. 947; Oates, *R.I.P. Ford’s Texas*, p. 346; Finch, *Arizona*, p. 67.

<sup>57</sup> Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 208-209.

<sup>58</sup> Oates, *R.I.P. Ford’s Texas*, pp. 365-66; O.R. Series I, vol. XXXIV-1: pp. 1054-55; XXXIV-4: pp. 685-86.

<sup>59</sup> Oates, *R.I.P. Ford’s Texas*, p. 371.

On September 9, 1864, an odd battle took place during which Mexicans Juaristas backed by Union soldiers were opposed to Texans. The 371 Rebels engaged in this encounter severely defeated 600 Federals and 300 Mexicans supported by two guns. Of the 371 Confederates, 207 belonged to Showalter's regiment. The protection of Mexican troops by the Federal army infuriated the ambassador of France in Washington. Questioned on this affair, Ulysses Grant (then commander in chief of the Federal armies) commented with a joke that no doubt uncovered the pressure that the United States would soon exert on the French expeditionary forces in Mexico: "*If Cortina's men came into the United States, there was no law against it. The Imperialists had the same right*"!<sup>60</sup>

Showalter was court-martialed for his successive failures caused by his addiction to alcohol. In his defense, Ford simply wrote "*When not under the influence of liquor, he was as chivalrous a man as ever drew a sword*". He "omitted" to travel to San Antonio to testify at his trial. The military tribunal finally judged more convenient to exonerate Showalter of the charges retained against him.<sup>61</sup>

An archive microfilm containing the follow-up of the assignments of Showalter's unit, between June and December 1864, shows that, during this period, at least part of the regiment maintained its quarters at Camp Hood, close to Brownsville. However, on October 8, 1864, General H.E. McCulloch mentioned the presence of the Baird battalion in his Northern Sub-District of Texas.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps this was a detachment of Showalter's regiment sent to the Red River after Brownsville was recaptured. It was not unusual that, in their correspondence, Confederate soldiers referred to their regiment by the name under which it was raised, even if another colonel had meanwhile taken command. Moreover, it was not impossible that Brigadier General H.E. McCulloch was still unaware of Baird's resignation. In any case, the Special Order of January 9, 1865, requested the regiment (or what was left in Brownsville) to move to Nacogdoches (Texas) and remain at the disposal of Major General Wharton.<sup>63</sup> Following a new order or counter-order, impossible to tell, the regiment was sent to Houston on February 8, 1865.<sup>64</sup> What happened then to the unit? One can only guess. In his memoirs, Colonel "R.I.P." Ford wrote that in March 1865, Showalter's regiment had left his district.<sup>65</sup>

Some reports certify that during their presence in Cook County (Texas Northern Sub-District), part of Showalter's men behave practically as mutineers. Frustrated by the shortness of supplies and the absence of pay, they plundered the area and openly displayed acts of violence on the civil population. Their exactions were so excessive that other Texan units, including what remained of their own, hunted them down in the counties of northern Texas.<sup>66</sup>

Showalter's regiment inexplicably reappeared in Brownsville on May 19, 1865, or six days after the battle of Palmito Ranch, the last action of the war.<sup>67</sup> Its presence is

<sup>60</sup> Oates, *R.I.P. Ford's Texas*, pp. 371, 374-75; O.R. Series I, vol. XLI-1: pp. 742; XLVI-2, pp. 911-12, 916; XLVI-3: pp. 99-101, 103, 184, 931-32, 947; XLVIII-2: pp. 1253-54; Clendenen C.C., *Mexican Unionists: A Forgotten Incident of the War between States*, in "New Mexico Historical Quarterly", vol. XXXIX-1-1964, pp. 32-39.

<sup>61</sup> Finch, *Arizona*, p. 69; Oates, *R.I.P. Ford's Texas*, p. 366.

<sup>62</sup> Finch, *Arizona*, p. 69; Oates, *R.I.P. Ford's Texas*, p. 366.

<sup>63</sup> Rochette, *Bourland in North Texas*, vol. I, p. 273.

<sup>64</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XVIII-1: p. 1320.

<sup>65</sup> Documents relative to R.I.P. Ford belonging to the Memorial Nita Stewart Haley Library, Midland, Texas.

<sup>66</sup> Oates, *R.I.P. Ford's Texas*, p. 389.

<sup>67</sup> Sifakis S., *Compendium of the Confederate Armies - Texas - Facts on File*, New York, 1995, p. 52, in R. Perkins, "*Heroes and Renegades*", members.tripod.com/~azrebel/.

<sup>67</sup> For an excellent and never published study on this battle, see Phillip T. Tucker, *The Final Fury: Palmito Ranch, the Last Battle of the Civil War*, Mechanicsburg, 2001.

confirmed by a letter that Showalter published in the *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph* of May 13, arrogantly proclaiming that his men were ready to push back any new Yankee attack. It is not excluded, but not proven, that the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment was divided once again into two battalions operating in different sectors. Without confirming this assumption, a document consolidates it. Looking at the forces at his disposal in February 1865, Brigadier General James Slaughter, who commanded the Western Sub-District of Texas, mentioned in particular a quota of 291 men belonging to the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment. As it is recorded that on that date, the total strength of this unit was 520 men, where were the 229 others?<sup>68</sup> This question will probably never be answered. Anyway, the war was over and the majority of Trans-Mississippi soldiers did not wait for lengthy administrative formalities to return home.

## AFTERMATH

What happened to the most colorful characters of these four regiments? After the war, John R. Baylor resided during several years in San Antonio. He again got involved in politics and ran for governor of Texas. Beaten at the elections of 1872, he operated a ranch in Uvalde County (Texas). There, during an argument in the street, he coldly shot his antagonist. This born killer died peacefully in bed in 1891.

William P. Hardeman, Colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment, became a land surveyor in the State of Durango (Mexico) where a colony of old Confederates had settled. He returned to Texas to run some public office. He died in 1898.

Peter Hardeman, his brother and second colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> regiment, settled in the colony "Americana" founded by former Rebels close to Sao Paulo, in Brazil. He died there in 1882.

George W. Baylor, who commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> regiment, tried his hand at ranching after the war. He failed miserably because he was only good at handling a six-shooter. In 1879, he asked the chief of the Texas Rangers "if there were still Indians to scalp". He was hired as a lieutenant. Promoted captain later on, he would be the last Texas Ranger to fight hostile Apache.

Sherod Hunter, the popular major of the 2<sup>nd</sup> regiment, remained for a while in the Confederate colony of Cordoba, Mexico. He returned to his native State (Tennessee) in 1866. No one knows what became of him; he was then 30 years old.

Spruce McCoy Baird, the first colonel of the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment, immediately swore an oath of allegiance to the Union after the end of the hostilities, but did not recover his properties in New Mexico. He retired in Colorado with his family and devoted the rest of his life to ranching. He died there in 1872.

Daniel Showalter, the second colonel of the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment, joined the first group of Rebels who took refuge in Mexico in 1865. The same year, he opened a hotel in Mazatlan, Mexico. A few months later, while he was smashing furniture and bottles around him in a fit of drunkenness and rage, his barman shot him dead.<sup>69</sup>

*The illustration at the beginning of this article is a copy of the oil painting "Vengeance at Okolona" by American artist John Paul Strain. The CHAB is indebted to Mr. Strain for granting the association the kind permission to reproduce his artwork.*

<sup>68</sup> O.R. Series I, vol. XLVIII-1: p. 1407.

<sup>69</sup> Finch, *Confederate Pathway*, pp. 227-34, 238-43.