

ALABAMA UNITS

Not all of the Alabama men who rode with Forrest were in Alabama regiments. Many units, especially in the early months of the war, had companies assigned to them from several states. For example, Forrest's original regiment was designated a Tennessee unit but had several Alabama companies serving in it. As the war continued, there was a trend to have regiments composed entirely of men from the same state, but even at the end of the war, battalions from different states were often consolidated into a single regiment. This mixing of men from different states was especially prevalent when a unit was raised near a state line. In North Alabama, for example, many of the families had ties in Tennessee, and many Alabama men joined Tennessee regiments to serve with cousins. The Fourth Tennessee Cavalry had many men from North Alabama counties.

It may strike some as surprising that so many Alabama regiments served under Forrest only briefly and at the end of the conflict. It should be remembered that Philip D. Roddey was the shield of the south bank of the Tennessee River and, therefore, the guard of North Mississippi. Thus, Roddey was aiding Forrest even though he was not usually under the command of Forrest. When the course of action swung in the right direction, Roddey was quick to turn over command of various units to Forrest.

Roddey is a neglected character in the annals of the Civil War. His service was not dramatic, but it was valuable to the Confederate cause. Most of the men who served under Roddey experienced a dangerous but essentially boring war, and their only moments of glory came when circumstances demanded that they ride with Forrest.

Fourth Alabama Cavalry Col. Alfred Alexander Russell

In December 1862 at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, four Alabama companies

were detached from the Third Tennessee, also known as “Forrest’s Old Regiment,” and consolidated with the Fourth and Fifteenth Alabama Battalions to create the Fourth Alabama Cavalry Regiment. It should be noted that any reference to “Russell’s Regiment” needs to be handled carefully, since the Twentieth Tennessee was commanded by another Russell, Col. R. M. Russell.

Almost immediately after being organized, the Fourth went with Forrest on the West Tennessee Raid of December 1862, where they saw considerable action, especially at Lexington, Trenton, and Parkers Cross Roads. During the winter and spring of 1862-63, the regiment was with Forrest as he operated from his base at Columbia, often scouting toward Versailles, Murfreesboro, and Shelbyville.

The Fourth fought at Chickamauga and then served under Wheeler in Middle Tennessee and with Longstreet in East Tennessee. The regiment returned to the main army in time for the Atlanta Campaign. In September 1864, McDonald’s Battalion was added to the depleted ranks. The men were no strangers, since McDonald had been with the part of the Fourth that had served with Forrest in early 1862. The enlarged command was sent to North Alabama, the home territory of most of its men, and they fought with Roddey.

In January 1865, the Fourth and Seventh Alabama were consolidated, then reassigned to Forrest in March for the final campaign.

Colonel Russell was often called on to exercise temporary command of a brigade. He was wounded twice, and during his absences, the Fourth was commanded by Lt. Col. Joseph M. Hambrick.

Capt. Frank Gurley was one of the best-known members of the Fourth. On August 5, 1862, he was on detached duty, recruiting men for his regiment in his home county, which was then behind U.S. lines. Learning that U.S. troops were heading in his direction, Gurley and a few men ambushed a brigade of infantry led by Gen. Robert L. McCook. The general had dysentery and was riding in a small wagon. McCook was in advance of the main body of his men by some five hundred yards and was looking for a place to bivouac his command when Gurley and his men charged the advance party. In the rush to regain the main body of his command, McCook was mortally wounded, and twenty others were killed.

The politically influential McCook family pursued the issue of his death, claiming it was a case of murder. Gurley was arrested on a charge of murder following the war but was released on orders of Pres. Andrew Johnson.

The member of the Fourth Alabama who would become most famous after the war was J. A. Wyeth. Not only did he become an internationally famous surgeon, but he wrote a bestselling biography of Forrest, *That Devil*

Forrest, which is still in print after more than a century. Wyeth was in the fighting at Shelbyville, Tennessee, on June 27, 1863, and he recalled:

I was on the skirmish line, and was about 300 yards to the front of the Confederate line of battle. As the Federal skirmishers advanced one of these came within about 100 yards of my position and before I had been ordered to retire, and after we had exchanged shots with our carbines, he put spurs to his horse and charged directly at me. I have an idea now that it was my diminutive size and boyish appearance (for I was then just 18 years old, and small of stature for that age) which suggested to his mind this sudden rush. I recall vividly the thoughts which flashed through my mind at that critical moment. In the first place, I was scared, for I have never been able to reach that sublime condition when the fear of physical disaster or of death was entirely absent. I think I succeeded in concealing this fear from my comrades, but it was with considerable effort, and was a deceit which human pride must justify, if such can find justification. Moreover, I believed for a few seconds that I had been shot, for when my antagonist fired at me something struck me in the left side, and I was sure the bullet had found its mark. It may be that this induced a condition of desperation which under ordinary conditions might not have been present, for as he came toward me at full speed, I held my horse as steadily as possible and tried to stop the daring trooper with my six-shooter. He was engaged in the same use of his pistol, and we were quickly close together. Not more than 30 feet separated us when, just as I was about to fire a fourth shot, he suddenly tightened the reins and turned his horse to one side, and at the same moment expertly threw his body down on the safe side of his horse and saddle for protection. As he scurried back toward his line of skirmishers, I could not resist the temptation to try again to hit him and was foolish enough to chase him until he was in close supporting distance of his comrades.

As good luck would have it, I escaped what might have been the logical and proper result of an injudicious effort, and must confess to a feeling of considerable pride at the yells of approval which welcomed the prodigal's return. Sam Russell, orderly sergeant of the company, had, with a squad, rallied to my aid. (Cunningham, *Confederate Veteran* 9:159)

Fifth Alabama Cavalry Col. Josiah Patterson

The Fifth was organized at Tuscumbia, Alabama, in December 1862 by consolidating four additional companies with the Twenty-second Alabama Cavalry Battalion, commanded by James M. Warren. Soon afterward, the regiment was ordered to Spring Hill, Tennessee, to join the cavalry

concentration there. In April 1863, they were engaged in skirmishes at Triune and Eagleville as they helped guard the left flank of Bragg's army. During this time, they were part of Forrest's overall command.

When the Army of Tennessee fell back to Chattanooga, the Fifth was assigned to Roddey to hold the south bank of the Tennessee River, from Guntersville to Florence, Alabama. In October 1863, the Fifth was part of an expedition sent to harass the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad in connection with Wheeler's Raid. The regiment continued to shuttle back and forth across North Alabama and southern Middle Tennessee for the rest of 1863 and much of 1864. The unit cooperated with the Army of Tennessee as it moved across North Alabama, before crossing the Tennessee River at Florence and moving toward Nashville. The Fifth then formed part of the garrison at Corinth, the Confederate supply base.

In 1865, the Fifth once more was associated with Forrest, for the Selma Campaign. The regiment held part of the line of fortifications at Selma, and Colonel Patterson was captured there. The colonel escaped shortly after and rejoined his men. Following the fall of Selma, the Fifth returned to North Alabama and surrendered at Decatur, Alabama, on May 19, 1865.

J. F. Woodward illustrates the reason why Forrest's command included men from various states. Woodward was born in Wayne County, Tennessee, but moved to Mississippi as a child. When his father died, his mother brought his family back to Tennessee. Woodward moved to Texas when he was older, looking for new opportunities. When the war began, he raised a company of infantry, the "Lone Star Rifles," and led them at Shiloh. Discharged following that battle, Woodward moved to Alabama and raised a cavalry command, which became Company B of the Fifth Alabama Cavalry. (Cunningham, *Confederate Veteran* 10:417)

E. S. P'Pool had a similar career as a Confederate soldier. He also illustrates why so many are listed as "Deserted" when actually they remained with the colors. In 1861, P'Pool was a medical student in Nashville. When sick men began to arrive there from the front, he worked in hospitals caring for them. As the U.S. Army moved into Nashville following Fort Donelson, he took a double-barreled shotgun and joined Starnes' Fourth Tennessee Cavalry. He fought in that unit under Forrest until the end of the pursuit of Abel Streight. At that point, P'Pool was ill with typhoid fever and was left with a family in Gandy's Cove, Morgan County, Alabama. When he recovered, he found he was cut off from the main Confederate army and joined the Fifth Alabama, serving until the end of the war.

Sixth Alabama Cavalry
Col. Charles Henry Colvin

The regiment was organized in the opening days of 1863 at Pine Level, Alabama, near Montgomery. It was part of Gen. James H. Clanton's brigade and contained many men who were viewed as being, at best, lukewarm Confederates, if indeed they were not secret Unionists.

The Sixth served near Pensacola, and then was sent to North Alabama, where it engaged in several small skirmishes. It was assigned to the brigade of Frank Armstrong during the Atlanta Campaign and later opposed Rousseau's Raid. The regiment moved to west Florida and then joined Forrest for the Selma Campaign.

It was suggested frequently during the war that the regiment be assigned to Forrest so that a combination of discipline and success in combat could stir its rather mild fervor, but this did not happen until the end of the war.

Seventh Alabama Cavalry
Col. Joseph Hodgson, Jr.

Colonel Hodgson came to Alabama from Kansas City just before the war began. He held commissions for brief periods in other regiments before resigning to become a privateer. He was captured in this naval venture and was a prisoner of war for a year. On his release, he helped form the Seventh Alabama in July 1863.

The regiment served in the vicinity of Mobile and Pensacola before reporting to Forrest at Corinth in September 1864. The Seventh participated in the Johnsonville Expedition and the Nashville Campaign. On the last day of the Battle of Nashville, the Seventh held back the U.S. cavalry at Brentwood and was then part of the rearguard for the duration of the retreat. Only sixty-four men reached Corinth. The cavalry fight at Brentwood was one of the most vicious engagements of the entire war. The Seventh Alabama, and its supporting regiments, knew that the escape of the Army of Tennessee depended on their holding their position. They were attacked by superior numbers carrying repeating rifles. Much of the fighting was in the dark and hand to hand. The Seventh held its position so stubbornly that the U.S. cavalry commander, Gen. James Wilson, called a halt for the night.

The regiment opposed Wilson during the final campaign of 1865 and fought at Selma. The Seventh surrendered at Gainesville.

Richard J. Andrews enlisted in the Seventh in the fall of 1863 and was discharged, over his vigorous objections, in the following year. He joined just prior to his seventieth birthday and was discharged shortly after his seventy-first. He lived to be ninety-four. (Cunningham, *Confederate Veteran* 16:514)

Baxter Smith (no relation to the Tennessee colonel of the same name) was the son of a wealthy Alabama planter. He was in school in Europe when the war began and remained in Germany until he completed his studies in 1863. He ran the blockade to return to Alabama and joined Quirk's Scouts of Morgan's command. This unit was not on the Ohio Raid. They made their way south, placing themselves under Forrest at Chickamauga. Following that, Smith became a member of the Seventh. Soon he was asked to join the staff of General Clanton.

During Rousseau's Raid, Smith was in the fighting at Ten Island Ford on the Coosa River. He joined in a counterattack against advancing U.S. troops and was shot. Soon after, his body servant, known only as Griffith, appeared on the scene and asked for the whereabouts of his master. Told that Smith was lying between the lines, probably dead, Griffith advanced under a heavy fire, found Smith, picked him up, and returned to Confederate lines. When asked why he did this, he replied that his mother had been Smith's "mammy," and he had promised his mother to take as good care of Smith as she had done. (Cunningham, *Confederate Veteran* 20:410)

The most famous company of the Seventh was the Cadet Company, which enlisted en masse from the University of Alabama. George Willoughby Halls was a member of this company and served Forrest as a scout and sharpshooter at Paris Landing and Johnsonville and during the Nashville Campaign. (Cunningham, *Confederate Veteran* 33:226)

Eighth Alabama Cavalry Col. Henry James Livingston

In January 1864, Colonel Livingston, then second in command of the Seventh Alabama Cavalry, asked for and received permission to form a regiment out of unattached companies. This regiment was assigned to the forces being raised by Gen. Leonidas Polk during the period when he held a separate command in Alabama.

The Eighth was part of Clanton's Brigade, seeing action in several minor engagements. They served briefly under Forrest at the end of the Selma Campaign. Although once at a strength of 600 men, only a handful were at Gainesville to surrender.

Jefferson Falkner, Jr., whose father was the Eighth's lieutenant colonel, was a captain in the regiment. In 1901, Captain Falkner began collecting money to provide a home for Confederate veterans. He convinced the state of Alabama to become involved in the project, and a home was constructed at Mountain Creek, Alabama, not far north of Montgomery. Today, the remaining buildings and the cemetery are a state park.

Tenth Alabama Cavalry
Col. Richard Orrick Pickett

This unit was raised during the winter of 1863-64 when the major Confederate and U.S. armies were in the Chattanooga-Dalton area. The Tennessee River Valley could still provide some support for the Confederate cause, and this regiment's mission was to help protect the valley. Colonel Pickett was an experienced officer who had served in both infantry and cavalry commands. Most of this regiment's service was under Gen. P. D. Roddey, but it joined Forrest for the Middle Tennessee Raid of September 1864. The Tenth subsequently spent the rest of the war on outpost duty in North Alabama and North Mississippi.

Eleventh Alabama Cavalry
Col. Micajah D. Moreland

This regiment owes its origin to the merger of two other units. Colonel Moreland formed a cavalry battalion at Russellville, Alabama, in August 1863. That unit fought under Roddey but was sent to join Forrest for the Brices Cross Roads Campaign. It then rejoined Roddey, went to Wheeler, and fought at Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge.

In February 1864, the Fourth Alabama lost its commander, Col. Jeffrey Forrest, who was killed in action at Okolona, Mississippi. This regiment, known as "Forrest's Alabama Regiment," was then broken up and its companies assigned to regiments that matched the home states of the men in each company. The Alabama companies of this regiment were assigned to Moreland's Battalion, raising its strength to a regiment, and it was designated the Eleventh Alabama.

In September 1864, the Eleventh joined Forrest for the Middle Tennessee Raid and fought at Athens, Sulphur Creek Trestle, and Pulaski. The regiment suffered heavily on this expedition. Afterward, Moreland was assigned to

command Mississippi troops, and Lt. Col. John Robertson Bedford Bartwell took over command.

The Eleventh served in the Nashville Campaign and was then consolidated with other under-strength units in 1865. The regiment fought in the Selma Campaign and returned to North Alabama. Some of its men surrendered at Decatur, Alabama, and others at Iuka, Mississippi.

Forrest's Alabama Regiment

Col. Jeffrey Forrest

On June 1, 1863, several smaller commands, including Julian's Cavalry Battalion, were consolidated to form a regiment sometimes called the Fourth Alabama. Since Russell commanded an older organization with that same number, the confusion was lessened by referring to this unit as "Forrest's Alabama Regiment."

This regiment served under the command of Gen. P. D. Roddey. In the fall of 1863, Col. Jeffrey Forrest was wounded and was out of action for several months. When he returned to the field, General Forrest had been sent to Mississippi, and the regiment was sent to his command.

At Okolona, Mississippi, in February 1864, Colonel Forrest was killed in action. The regiment was broken up in July 1864 and the various companies reassigned to regiments from the states represented by the companies.

Julian's Alabama Battalion

Capt. W. R. Julian

This unit was recruited in late 1862 and early 1863 for service under Gen. P. D. Roddey and had not been assigned to a larger unit at the time of Streight's Raid. The unit accompanied Forrest in his pursuit of Streight and fought at Day's Gap. They were then assigned to return to Decatur, escorting prisoners.

In June 1863, Julian's Battalion became the core of a new regiment commanded by Col. Jeffrey Forrest. This regiment was called the Fourth Alabama (not to be confused with Russell's Fourth) or "Forrest's Alabama Regiment." The regiment was assigned to Roddey's command in North Alabama. When the regiment was broken up in 1864, Julian's Battalion resumed its original identity.

Julian's Battalion was with Roddey and Wheeler for the rest of the war, usually doing service in North Alabama.

ARKANSAS UNITS

The Arkansas numbering system for regiments is very confusing, with the same numerals being used for several regiments. In researching the records, one will find a First Arkansas in more than one military department and sometimes two regiments with the same number in the same department.

For the purposes of this book, it is fortunate that only a limited number of Arkansas units fought under Forrest. This simplifies the matter of keeping the units separated.

The Arkansas troops with Forrest were well thought of in his command, but after Vicksburg was taken in July 1863, Arkansas men were prevented from coming east. The size of the Arkansas regiments declined steadily due to the inability to recruit.

Three regiments and a battery from Arkansas saw service with Forrest at one time or another.

Second Arkansas Cavalry Col. William Ferguson Slemons

The Second Arkansas was formed by the consolidation of the Second and Sixth Arkansas Battalions of Cavalry on May 15, 1862, at Corinth, Mississippi. When the Confederates evacuated that town, the Second formed part of the rearguard. They saw action at Booneville, Mississippi, while joined with the Second Alabama. Placed under the command of Gen. Frank Armstrong, the regiment moved into West Tennessee and fought at Middleburg and Britton's Lane. At the latter engagement, the unit took seventy casualties but assisted in capturing 300 prisoners and the U.S. supply train.

In the early months of 1863, the Second fought numerous engagements in Tennessee and Mississippi, helping to stop the initial drive toward Vicksburg.

These engagements included Iuka, Collierville, and Salem. When Van Dorn led Confederate cavalry to Spring Hill, Tennessee, the Second was part of the move. At some point in these moves, Colonel Slemons was arrested on a charge of being overly strict with his men and of seizing private property. No trial was ever held.

At Spring Hill, the Second came under the command of Forrest and fought under him at Thompson's Station, Franklin, the Tullahoma Campaign, and Chickamauga.

Following Chickamauga, the regiment came under Wheeler's command until April 1864, when it was transferred to the Trans-Mississippi. In that theatre, the Second fought at Poison Springs, Mark's Mill, and Jenkins Ferry and followed Sterling Price into Missouri. At Marais des Cygnes, Kansas, the regiment suffered heavily. Colonel Slemons and 100 men were captured. This loss led to the Second regiment being reorganized as a battalion. The unit surrendered with Gen. Edmund Kirby-Smith in May 1865.

Third Arkansas Cavalry

Col. Salon Borland

Samuel Girard Earle

D. B. Bizzel

This regiment was organized as a unit of state troops and mustered into Confederate service on July 24, 1861. It completed its organization at Corinth on May 26, 1862. Colonel Borland was discharged that day due to age and poor health.

Although a cavalry unit, the regiment was dismounted for service in the Corinth Campaign in the autumn of 1862. It was remounted in November of that same year. As cavalry, the unit was with Van Dorn at the capture of Grant's supply base at Holly Springs, Mississippi, in December 1862.

Moving to Spring Hill, Tennessee, in the spring of 1863, the Third came under the command of Forrest. They fought at Thompson's Station, Franklin, the Tullahoma Campaign, and Chickamauga.

Placed under Wheeler, the regiment served at Knoxville and fought in the Atlanta Campaign. They opposed Sherman on "the march to the sea" and fought in the Carolina Campaign. The Third surrendered at Durham Station on April 26, 1865.

When the fight at Thompson's Station, Tennessee, was about to begin,

Alice Thompson, age sixteen, decided that she should leave her home for a place of greater safety. The opening shots of the engagement convinced her to take refuge in the cellar of the Banks home. This house was soon surrounded by some of the heaviest of the fighting. The Third Arkansas made an attack on the Yankee line in a field just beyond the Banks house and were repulsed. As the regiment fell back past the Banks house, the color bearer was shot, and the flag fell to the ground. Alice rushed up from the cellar and began waving the flag, calling on the men to rally. Colonel Earle, who would be killed in action that day, saw what had happened and cried out, "Boys, a woman has our flag." The Third rallied, retrieved its flag, escorted Alice back to the cellar, and returned to the attack. (Cunningham, *Confederate Veteran* 8:263)

**Eleventh and Seventeenth Arkansas
Mounted Infantry, Consolidated**
Col. John Griffith

The Eleventh and Seventeenth were veteran infantry units that had seen combat at Wilson's Creek and Pea Ridge before coming east of the Mississippi River. By January 1863, the numbers of the two units had dwindled to the point that consolidation was advisable. In May, the consolidated regiment was mounted.

The men who did not have horses in May 1863 were assigned to the garrison of Port Hudson, Louisiana, and this detachment was captured at the end of the siege of that post. The captured officers spent the rest of the war as POWs, but the enlisted men were paroled.

The mounted portion of the regiment had been engaged in the pursuit of Grierson's Raiders and had harassed U.S. forces outside Port Hudson.

The regiment was assigned to the brigade of Gen. Wirt Adams in November 1863. In early 1864, they opposed Sherman's move on Meridian, Mississippi, while Forrest was engaged to the north, fighting at Okolona. Although part of Forrest's larger command, Adams' brigade served in western Mississippi, attempting to protect farms from U.S. foraging parties operating out of Vicksburg. The Eleventh/Seventeenth was ordered to Alabama in March 1865 to assist Forrest in his defense of that area against Gen. James Wilson. The regiment clashed with Claxton's column of Wilson's command. Paroles were issued to the regiment at Gainesville, Alabama, although most of the members of the unit took the Oath of Allegiance at Jackson, Mississippi.

On April 22, 1864, the Eleventh/Seventeenth fought its most unusual battle. The mounted men captured the gunboat *Petrel* at Yazoo City, Mississippi. The gunboat was moving toward Yazoo City in company with the gunboat *Prairie Bird* and thought the Confederate defenders had abandoned the place. Getting ahead of the accompanying U.S. cavalry forces, *Petrel* was fired on by a section of Parrott guns after having passed the guns' concealed position. Since all *Petrel's* guns were mounted in the bow, she could not return fire. One shot from the Parrott battery passed through the boat's magazine and another cut the steam pipe, stopping the engine. All the time, sharpshooters from the Eleventh/Seventeenth were picking off the crew.

As *Petrel* touched the riverbank, most of the crew and officers abandoned the vessel and ran downstream toward *Prairie Bird*. The commander, Thomas McElroy, stayed aboard with two other men and was captured when one company of the Arkansas regiment made a mounted charge up to the banks of the river.

The guns of *Petrel* were removed and sent to Mobile to become part of the defenses there. The Arkansas captors burned the hull of the boat.

Thrall's Battery/Jackson Light Artillery

Capt. George W. McCown

G. T. Hubbard

James C. Thrall

Organized in Arkansas in 1861, the battery served east of the Mississippi River for the entire war. McCown resigned in 1861. After being stationed in Kentucky, the battery fought first at Shiloh. Hubbard resigned that month, and the battery became part of the Grand Battery organized by Gen. Daniel Ruggles to bombard the Hornet's Nest position. Following the evacuation of Corinth, the battery remained with the command of Ruggles and saw duty in Mississippi, helping to repel raids on the food-producing area vital to the Confederacy.

One reason for this assignment may be the light weight of the battery's guns. Thrall's Battery had four six-pounder bronze guns. In 1864, when Forrest came to command the area, he always called for Morton's Battery to do the heavy work because, Forrest said, "the other little guns I have are of slight use." As part of the spoils captured from U.S. forces in Mississippi and Tennessee in the opening months of 1864, Forrest was able to rearm Thrall's Battery with appropriately heavy guns.

Following the Confederate defeat at Missionary Ridge, the battery was sent to Dalton, Georgia, but returned to Mississippi in early 1864. Under Forrest's command, the battery participated in the Okolona Campaign, the West Tennessee Raid, Brices Cross Roads, Harrisburg, and the Johnsonville Campaign. The battery was assigned to protect the Confederate supply base at Corinth during the Nashville Campaign. In 1865, the unit was assigned to the defenses of Mobile but was sent back to Forrest during the Selma Campaign. The battery surrendered at Meridian, Mississippi, on May 11, 1865.

At Johnsonville, Thrall's Battery distinguished itself by the steadiness and accuracy of its fire. Up to this time, the nickname of the battery had been "The Arkansas Rats." Forrest approached the battery as it was leaving Johnsonville and said he thought the men deserved a better name. From that time on he was going to call them "The Arkansas Braves." An enlisted man in the battery replied, "General, talkin' may be good but something to eat would be better. We've been livin' on wind for two days." Forrest turned to an aide and said, "Go to my headquarters wagon. You will find four boxes of hardtack and three hams. Bring them to Thrall's Battery and issue them to the men." (Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 464-65)