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# A Look into Union and Confederate Cavalry: A comparative study of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade

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A Look into Union and Confederate Cavalry:  
A Comparative Study of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade

by  
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Thesis

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## Abstract

This comparative study explores the use of cavalry by the Union armed forces and Confederate armed forces during the American Civil War. This study examines the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade of dismounted cavalry. The examination took a look at factors including weapons and equipment, leadership, tactics and strategy, casualties, and campaign performances. This study argues that, the Michigan Cavalry Brigade was able to demonstrate the Union's superiority over the Confederacy when compared to Ector's Brigade. Results of the comparative study showed that the Michigan Cavalry Brigade was able to display the Union's dominance by acquiring small arms that enabled a greater rate of fire. They were used strategically as the cavalry standard called for and demonstrated a more successful campaign experience.

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## **Introduction**

Cavalry has been an important part of warfare in many wars. In the American Civil War, cavalry strategy and tactics were cultivated and improved upon by both sides. The Union and Confederate armies developed their cavalry units differently. During the call to arms, the two sides enlisted volunteers to create state cavalry units to provide their own horses and equipment. Once the unit received training, there was a process put in place for the units to receive standard equipment. The units from the South and North had different standard equipment based on what was available to them. To understand the difference between the use of cavalry by the Union and Confederacy, an examination of their cavalry tactics and performance will be performed. There are two units that come to mind for such an examination: the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade, a Texas cavalry brigade. The choice of these two units are important since they were recruited from a single state and fought in two different theaters of war. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade fought in the Eastern Theater and Ector's Brigade fought mostly in the Western Theater of war.

The Michigan Cavalry Brigade was established as a brigade in the Cavalry Corps, under Major General Alfred Pleasonton. The Cavalry Corps was assigned to the Army of the Potomac in preparation for the Gettysburg Campaign in 1863. This brigade consisted of mostly Michigan units, leading to the creation of its name. The brigade continued its service through the Appomattox Campaign in 1865 and the surrender of the Confederate forces under General Robert E. Lee. This unit never directly met Ector's Brigade in combat.

Ector's Brigade came together as a part of General Braxton Bragg's reformed Army of Tennessee before the Battle of Richmond in 1862. Mathew Ector, whom the brigade was named after, did not take command of the brigade until October 1862. The brigade was

originally made up of all Texas cavalry units. The brigade would become dismounted on orders of General Beauregard to have their horses used for artillery batteries and supply wagons. Later, the brigade would have units from North Carolina assigned to it to reinforce its strength. Service for this brigade continued until its eventual surrender in 1865 at the Battle of Spanish Fort. With that short look into the brigades, it is also important to look into the structure of this thesis.

There are three chapters in this thesis that complete the evaluation of cavalry during the Civil War. The first chapter is named “Weaponry, Training, and Tactics.” This chapter discusses how the Michigan Cavalry Brigade was armed and how important it was that they acquired Spencer Repeating Rifles for some of its units. Additionally, takes a look at Ector’s Brigade and how their equipment changed over the war. This chapter looks into how each regiment was trained and how it became included into either the Michigan Cavalry or Ector’s Brigade. The last important element of this chapter is looking into how the Michigan Cavalry Brigade changed the tactics on using cavalry in the Union Army. This includes the evolution of tactics used from the Gettysburg Campaign to the Appomattox Court House. This is compared to how Ector’s Brigade was used and the process in which they became a dismounted cavalry unit for most of their active service. The next chapter goes into the business of telling the brigades active service.

The second chapter is called “Campaign Performance.” This chapter focuses on the performance of the brigades in handpicked campaigns. These campaigns were chosen based on their importance to the service of that brigade and the quality of sources available for research. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade is reviewed based on its participation in the Gettysburg Campaign in 1863, the Overland Campaign [Battle of Yellow Tavern] in 1864,

and the Appomattox Court House Campaign in 1865. Ector's Brigade is evaluated by its performance in the Chickamauga Campaign in 1863, the Atlanta and Nashville Campaigns of 1864, and the Mobile Campaign that led to its surrender at Spanish Fort in May 1865. The last chapter takes the information from the previous two chapters to give a final assessment of Ector's and the Michigan Cavalry Brigade.

The final chapter, "Evaluation of Forces 1863-1865," combines the information from the previous two chapters with information about standard uses of cavalry during the war. To develop a "standard" use of cavalry, there are two books used in tandem. These books are *Civil War Command and Strategy* by Archer Jones and *The 1862 US Cavalry Tactics* by Philip Saint George Cooke. Organizing a standard allows for a detailed comparison of the two brigades and attempts to eliminate any biases that may be involved. This look into the cavalry leads to a bigger picture as well.

Though this thesis focuses in on the use of cavalry, the assessment expresses how the state of cavalry units from 1863 to 1865 reflects the state of the Union and Confederate Armies at this time. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade at its organization acquired some of the best equipment of the time and could be seen as a crowning glory of Union industry. Ector's Brigade became dismounted cavalry due to lack of horses. This would reflect the supply problems the Confederates had throughout the war. These differences are important to keep in mind while reviewing the two brigades. Comprehending how the brigades came to be is the first step to this analysis.

## Chapter 1: Weaponry, Training, and Tactics

The creation of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade is key to beginning the evaluation of the two units. The recruitment process and arming of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade are important factors in understanding the differences in Union and Confederate cavalry units. Additionally, these factors can help show the difference in lifestyles in Texas and Michigan at this time. Training each regiment varied between the Michigan Cavalry or Ector's Brigade. This difference is seen through the journey the men took leading up to joining their respective brigade. Analyzing these experiences show the early development of tactics used by the Michigan Cavalry and Ector's Brigade. Each brigade consists of several core regiments and other regiments that came and went as the war went on.

The core regiments of the Michigan Cavalry brigade were the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Michigan Cavalry Regiments. The First Michigan Cavalry and Battery "M" of the Second U.S. Artillery joined the brigade early on into the Gettysburg Campaign.<sup>1</sup> The First Vermont Cavalry fought with the brigade from time to time but was not a permanent member. Ector's Brigade had three original regiments: The Tenth, Eleventh, and Thirty-Second Texas Cavalry. After the Fourteenth Texas Cavalry was added to the brigade, Matthew Ector, whom the brigade was officially named after, took command. In 1863, the Ninth Texas Infantry and Douglas' Battery joined the brigade as the Eleventh Texas Cavalry was moved to another brigade. At various times the Twenty-Ninth and Thirty-Ninth North

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<sup>1</sup> Mark S Stowe, *Company B 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry*, (Charleston: CreateSpace Publishing, 2012): 31.

Carolina Infantry fought with Ector's brigade.<sup>2</sup> With naming the regiments belonging to each of the brigades, the recruitment and arming process must be analyzed.

The Fifth Michigan Cavalry was the first core regiment of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade to be mustered into service. Lt. Colonel Joseph Copeland of the First Michigan Cavalry was given the authority to raise the unit. They were required to meet in Detroit and mustered into service on August 30, 1862.<sup>3</sup> They stayed in Detroit through September preparing to be sent to Washington, D.C. Joseph Jessup of H company recalls the receipt of their equipment: "Mr. Baur got our uniforms in part we would look a little more soldier like then we looked before. We have got our caps, jackets, and pantaloons."<sup>4</sup> They were ordered to leave Detroit in December to relocate to Washington.

In Washington, D.C., the Fifth and Sixth regiments trained together. In January, the training became more earnest as the regiments became equipped. During this time, the Fifth received Spencer Repeating Rifles, newly designed to increase the amount of fire that can be provided by an individual regiment.<sup>5</sup> Once armed and put in Copeland's brigade, they moved to Fairfax Courthouse to set up a base of operations. They continued to operate out of this location until late June. The Sixth Michigan Cavalry's story is closely tied to the Fifth Michigan.

In July 1862, Francis Kellogg helped recruit for the Sixth Michigan Cavalry. He had helped with the organization of the Second and Third Michigan Cavalry regiments as well. A

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<sup>2</sup> Billy Kurtz West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," (M.A. thesis, Texas Technical University, 1987): 11.

<sup>3</sup> John C. Rigdon, *Historical Sketch and Roster of the Michigan 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment*, (Cartersville, GA: Eastern Digital Resources, 2015): 15.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Jessup to Brother, September 16, 1862, Joseph Jessup Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (BHLUM).

<sup>5</sup> Edward G. Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines: The Michigan Cavalry Brigade, 1861-1865*. (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1997): 106.

rendezvous date was set for September 13 in Grand Rapids for the volunteers.<sup>6</sup> Even with this date set, things did not go smoothly. William Baird, corporal of the Sixth Michigan Cavalry, told tales of sickness in a letter to his brother. He stated that seven volunteers, including his brother Fred, had fallen ill. Additionally, Baird noted that the paymaster had been delayed by the weather, according to his letter of September 30.<sup>7</sup> It was not until December of 1862 that the regiment left Michigan for Washington, D.C. The Sixth Michigan Cavalry left Michigan under the command of Colonel George Grey.

Once arriving in the capital, they went on garrison duty. With the dull duties of being stationed in the city, the first round of desertions began within the regiment. This lack of activity would change once the Sixth became assigned to several scouting missions starting in February 1863. Prior to the scouting missions, the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Michigan Cavalry regiments grouped together in a brigade commanded by Brigadier General (B.G.) Joseph Copeland. The brigade under B.G. Copeland was the first to be equipped with the new Spencer Repeating Rifles. They set up camp at Fairfax Courthouse on March 11. They would remain at this camp until the army was ordered to move north.<sup>8</sup>

The Honorable F. W. Kellogg had a hand in organizing the Seventh Michigan Cavalry, as he had helped with recruiting men for the Sixth. The nucleus of this unit came from men that were unable to enlist in the Sixth Cavalry regiment. The regiment was officially mustered into service on October 13, 1862. Shortly after, Colonel William Mann

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<sup>6</sup> Stowe, *Company B 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry*, 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> William Baird to Teo Baird, September 30, 1862, Baird Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (BHLUM).

<sup>8</sup> James H. Kidd, *Personal Recollections of a Cavalryman*, (Grand Rapids: The Black Letter Press, 1969): 44-45.

was commissioned to take command of the unit.<sup>9</sup> Once Colonel Mann took over the regiment, he began to prepare the unit to move to Washington, D.C. Finally, in February, the Seventh Michigan arrived in Washington to be mustered in and finish receiving their equipment. The regiment was equipped with Burnside carbines, sabers, and Colt revolvers on March 25. The Burnside carbines had only half the effective firing range of the Spencer Rifles. The next day the Seventh was ordered to Fairfax Courthouse to begin operation with the final roster count at 783 men.<sup>10</sup>

They began to raid and scout the area around Fairfax with the Fifth and Sixth regiments. In a letter to home, William O'Brien took note of the number of his unit taken prisoner and the raiding of a rich Virginia household:

There has been four out of our company taken prisoner, fifteen out of Co. E. There was three men wounded yesterday one of them mortally... Colonel Perrin with about nine men came in sight of this house the main body of the forces tore off. The Colonel sent three men and a sergeant to see what was in the house. The boys were first, did not think of danger. The sergeant ordered one man to hold the horses while he and the other two men went in, but the sergeant was not at the door and a rebel presented a pistol and revolver to him and ordered him to surrender. The sergeant told him he was not doing that kind of business upon which shots were exchanged he fell wounded he fired three shots at him several other Rebs who were skedaddling on foot as they could to their horses, but not until they had fired some good many shots some

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<sup>9</sup> Asa B. Isham, *Seventh Michigan Cavalry of Custer's Wolverine Brigade*, (New York: Blue Acorn Press, 2000): 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> Isham, *Seventh Michigan Cavalry of Custer's Wolverine Brigade*, 14.

of which took effect killing four horses and wounding three men. The Rebs only lost one man killed.<sup>11</sup>

Engagements as stated in O'Brien's letter were typical of those experienced by the Seventh Michigan Cavalry in this portion of the war. Up until late June, the regiment was not engaged in any major battles. It was used to guard the railroad line of communications, scouting, and outpost duty. On June 30, the First Michigan Cavalry and Battery "M" of the Second U.S. Artillery joined the brigade. Both units brought more experience to the brigade than the other units connected with the brigade.

The two recently added units gave depth to the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. The First Michigan Cavalry regiment had been recruited in August 1861. It was led by Colonel Thornton F. Brodhead. Some of the men in this unit would later play a pivotal role in the formation of the Michigan Brigade.<sup>12</sup> By the end of September, with 862 men the First Cavalry regiment enlisted into service and was ordered to Washington to receive assignment. In Washington, they were armed with the Burnside carbines, sabers, and pistols. They would operate with the Army of the Potomac from this time until joining the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. They would participate in a variety of skirmishes and several important battles including Kernstown, Winchester, and Second Bull Run.<sup>13</sup> Battery "M" of the Second United States Artillery had seen some action attached to the Army of the Potomac. It was led by First Lieutenant Alexander Pennington, Jr. This unit replaced a volunteer battery that had been raised with the Fifth Michigan. The last unit was consistently attached to the Michigan

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<sup>11</sup> William H. O'Brien to Mother, May 11, 1863, O'Brien Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (BHLUM).

<sup>12</sup> Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines: The Michigan Cavalry Brigade, 1861-1865*, 14-15.

<sup>13</sup> Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines: The Michigan Cavalry Brigade, 1861-1865*, 101.

Cavalry Brigade. The First Vermont was strongly associated with the brigade and sometimes referred to as the Eighth Michigan.

The First Vermont was recruited due to the efforts of its Colonel Lemuel Platt. He received authorization to start gathering volunteers for the regiment in September 1861. His efforts were realized when on November 19, 1861, the First Vermont Cavalry was mustered in with 1,000 volunteers.<sup>14</sup> In December, they went to Annapolis to be outfitted.

Unfortunately, they did not receive their full allotment until the end of February. They were armed with sabers, savage pistols, and Sharps carbines.<sup>15</sup> Once armed, they were now ready to operate.

In April 1862, they were finally able to join the fight at Mount Jackson. They spent this time operating in the Shenandoah Valley with General Nathaniel Banks' army. After the defeat of General Banks, the restructuring of the Union forces led them to be lumped into the command of General John Hatch in the Army of Virginia. In July, General John Buford took command of the Second Corps' Cavalry. This put him in charge of the First Vermont, Fifth New York, First Michigan, and one squadron of the First [West] Virginia.<sup>16</sup> This started a long association of the First Vermont with the Michigan units. They fought side by side until the formation of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. After taking a look at the war in the east, it is time to look west. This is where Ector's Brigade was formed and operated.

Ector's Brigade was originally made up of dismounted cavalry from Texas. The first of these units to be recruited was the Tenth Texas Cavalry. Colonel Matthew Locke, former

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<sup>14</sup> Joseph D. Collea Jr, *The First Vermont Cavalry in the Civil War*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Publishing, 2010): 3-5

<sup>15</sup> Collea Jr, *The First Vermont Cavalry in the Civil War*, 21-23.

<sup>16</sup> Collea Jr, *The First Vermont Cavalry in the Civil War*, 87.

speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, led the organization of this regiment in August 1861.<sup>17</sup> It was not until February 1862, the regiment received orders to leave Texas. The unit marched to Little Rock, Arkansas, before needing to march up to Corinth, Mississippi. The regiment spent most of 1862 marching and was afflicted with a deadly disease.

Two men of the Tenth Texas describe the how badly the affliction hurt the unit. A. B. Watson writes, “the Regiment there is only 180 reported able for duty this morning. Many of us are sick.”<sup>18</sup> Only a couple weeks later, on June 11, J. Allen Templeton writes, “Our company has fared badly since we crossed the Miss River. There have been times when we could not raise more than ten men able for duty, all the rest sick. We have lost 20 men who have died from sickness.”<sup>19</sup> By the end of June, the regiment was able to recover. They then participated in the Battle of Richmond with the rest of McCray’s Brigade, which became Ector’s Brigade. The second regiment to be raised in Ector’s Brigade had seen more action before becoming an official member of the brigade.

William Cocke Young was a rich slave owner that had fought for annexation of Texas by the United States and in the Mexican War. Shortly after Texas voted for secession, Young received permission to raise a regiment in North Texas. This regiment’s task was to protect the northern frontier. In May 1861, Colonel Young’s regiment mustered in as the Third Regiment, Texas Cavalry. The unit protected Texas from wild Indians, Kansas Jayhawkers,

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<sup>17</sup> Chuck Carlock and V.M. Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, (Richland Hills, Texas: Smithfield Press, 2001): 2.

<sup>18</sup> A. B. Watson to Father, May 20, 1862, John Watson Family Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin (BCAHUT).

<sup>19</sup> John Allen Templeton to Father, June 11, 1862, John A Templeton Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin (BCAHUT).

and outlaws living in the Indian Territory. After only four months of service, the regiment was reorganized as Texas State Troops and, on October 2, 1861, was renamed the Eleventh Texas Cavalry Regiment.<sup>20</sup> Before joining Ector's Brigade, the Eleventh Texas Cavalry had participated in a few battles.

In December 1861, the regiment participated in its first battle fighting Union soldiers and pro-Union Indians. After the battle, the unit was transferred twice. First the unit was transferred to Greer's First Brigade after Colonel Young resigned due to ill health. Lieutenant Colonel James Diamond took over the regiment after Young's departure. Lt. Colonel Diamond led the Eleventh Texas in the Battle of Pea Ridge in March 1862. After the battle, the Confederate army restructured. While restructuring the army, the Eleventh Texas was forced to dismount and was assigned to the brigade commanded by Colonel T.H. McCray, which became Ector's Brigade.<sup>21</sup>

The last original member of Ector's Brigade was the Thirty-Second Texas Cavalry Regiment. Major R. P. Crump was the major benefactor to the Thirty-Second Texas Cavalry Regiment. While he was recruiting men, the original title was Crump's First Battalion of Texas Cavalry. It was mustered into service by Colonel William C. Young in November 1861. When the battalion was mustered, their equipment included short range shotguns and sabers. This limited range would cause issues in the battle to come. The battalion joined General Benjamin McCulloch's Army just in time to take a part in the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern in March 1862.

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<sup>20</sup> Allen G. Hatley, *Reluctant Rebels: The Eleventh Texas Cavalry Regiment*, (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill College Press, 2006): 3-8.

<sup>21</sup> David V. Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, (Longview, Texas: Ranger Publishing, 2004): 48-50.

Crump's battalion served as a scouting force for the army. It discovered Union cavalry to the east of the army and engaged the forces. Despite being severely outnumbered and forced to retreat, the battalion remained on the battlefield until ordered to become the rearguard.<sup>22</sup> After the battle, the battalion received companies from Locke's and Young's Dismounted Texas Cavalry and McCray's Arkansas Infantry to form a new regiment. The regiment received the designation of Thirty-Second Texas Cavalry after the appointment of Julius A. Andrews to Colonel in June 1862.<sup>23</sup>

Once Ector's Brigade was formed, the Fourteenth Texas Cavalry regiment was added to the brigade. Colonel Middleton Tate Johnson began to recruit the men that would make up the Fourteenth Texas Cavalry Regiment on October 18, 1861. He commanded the regiment as they were ordered to move to Corinth, Mississippi. This unit served in a brigade with the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventh Texas Cavalry before being assigned to what would become Ector's Brigade in June 1862.<sup>24</sup> There were letters by a member of the Fourteenth Texas Cavalry that reported the feelings on the war.

William W. Black sent many letters to his wife throughout 1862 while serving in the Fourteenth Texas. His letters are prime examples of the expectations Union and Confederate soldiers had for the war. In his letter from March 28, he wrote:

"I would like to see you and the children, I would give a great deal to see you, but do not wish to go home and leave again just now. Perhaps I can go home in four or five months if all things go on right. I shall always think of you and the children and pray

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<sup>22</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 8.

<sup>23</sup> Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 53-54.

<sup>24</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 9-11.

for you and love you.”<sup>25</sup> He will change his tone later in the war. In his letter from July, four months later, William writes “I would like to see you and the children very much... I live in hopes that living through the fighting I shall get to go home to you once more.”<sup>26</sup>

His hopes to live to see home seemed a far-off chance as the war continued. As Black’s regiment joined the brigade, so did the Texas Battery under Captain Douglas. In June 1861, John Jay Good and James P. Douglas received permission to recruit men for an artillery company to support a cavalry unit being raised in the area. Good enlisted fifty men from the Dallas area while Douglas recruited fifty men from the area surrounding Tyler, Texas. The two groups met together in Dallas in mid-June. Once they were together, elections took place, and Good became the elected captain and Douglas was elected his first lieutenant. During this time, a Federal garrison was captured at San Antonio. The equipment captured became ordered to Dallas, and on July 10, the Good-Douglas battery received six guns, mules, horses, wagon baggage, and everything else that was needed.<sup>27</sup> After receiving the equipment, the battery did a lot of marching but did not engage in any major battles for the remainder of 1861.

The Good-Douglas Battery received their baptism by fire at the Battle of Pea Ridge in March 1862. After the battle, the battery reorganized with the resignation of Captain Good and faced an uphill battle with sickness in the unit. On May 10, 1862, James Douglas was elected captain of the battery. A new order in the army had reduced the battery from six guns

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<sup>25</sup> William W. Black to Wife, March 28, 1862, William W Black Papers, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin (BCAHUT).

<sup>26</sup> Black to Wife, March 28, 1862, Black Papers, BCAHUT.

<sup>27</sup> James Lunsford, “Brief Sketch of Douglas’s First Texas Battery,” in *Douglas’s Texas Battery, CSA*, ed. Lucia Rutherford Douglas. (Tyler, Texas: Smith County Historical Society, 1966): 160-161.

to four guns. Sam Thompson recalls the sickness that the company battled during this time of change: “Sickness on the increase more than 23 of the company are almost sick and those present are poorly able for duty. It is thought half of the army is in the hospitals, and those present are largely unfit for duty.”<sup>28</sup> Captain Douglas himself would end up falling ill as well. He would not join the unit until June as the battery would be attached to the brigade that would become Ector’s Brigade. This was the last unit to be added to the brigade before Brigadier General Mathew Ector took command, though shortly after a unit of infantry was added to replace one of the other units.

The Ninth Texas Infantry Regiment was the first unit designated as infantry to join the brigade. It was recruited during September of 1861. The recruiting efforts were led by its colonel, Samuel Bell Maxey. Once his ten companies were raised, they were initially armed with double barrel shot guns, muskets, and rifles. The regiment was officially mustered into service in November 1861.<sup>29</sup> In March 1862, the regiment was assigned to a brigade in the Army of the Mississippi Valley commanded by General Albert Sidney Johnston.

In the Army of the Mississippi Valley, the Ninth Texas Infantry’s first fight became the Battle of Shiloh. John K. Street of the Ninth recalls the battle in his letters. He lists the casualties and weighs in on the performance of his unit:

We only had about 225 men that were in the fight. We had 14 killed, 42 wounded and 11 missing out of the Regt. To sum up all in a few words the battle was a hard

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<sup>28</sup> Sam Thompson, “Diary of Sam Thompson,” in *Douglas’s Texas Battery, CSA*, ed. Lucia Rutherford Douglas. (Tyler, Texas: Smith County Historical Society, 1966): 183.

<sup>29</sup> Stroud, *Ector’s Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 94-95.

fought one --- a bold stroke on our part to make the attack under all circumstances --- right under the enemies' gun boats and against such odds.<sup>30</sup>

The Ninth Texas participated in the battles of Perryville and Murfreesboro. In January 1863, the unit finally joined Ector's Brigade as the Eleventh Texas Cavalry regiment was remounted and assigned to a new command. Street had this to say about the occasion: "We moved over to Ector's Brigade today. For the first time since we left home we have been thrown with our own state troops, having since we left been under five different Brigadiers -- - this Gen Ector is the sixth."<sup>31</sup> After the joining of the Ninth Texas Infantry, there were no more units added from Texas. In the last two years of the war, the Twenty-Ninth and Thirty-Ninth North Carolina Infantry were added to the brigade because the units from Texas had trouble supplying replacements after the Union captured the Mississippi River Valley.

The Twenty-Ninth North Carolina Infantry was originally recruited in 1861 and sent to perform guard duty controlling the bridges from Bristol to Chattanooga. The Thirty-Ninth regiment was not recruited until 1862. It began as a battalion and was formed into a regiment in May. In September 1862, the Twenty-Ninth and Thirty-Ninth North Carolina troops were ordered to join the infantry brigade under Brigadier General Evander McNair. The brigade spent the year operating around the Cumberland Gap and was present for the Battle at Stones River. The two North Carolina regiments operated under Brigadier General McNair until being assigned to Ector's Brigade on May 5, 1864.<sup>32</sup> These were the final units to join the brigade before its final surrender at the Spanish Fort.

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<sup>30</sup> Julie Williams Coley, *J. K. Street Civil War Letters: 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Infantry from Paris, Lamar County, Texas*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009): 44.

<sup>31</sup> Coley, *J. K. Street Civil War Letters*, 114.

<sup>32</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 44.

Knowing the beginning of each brigade is important, but reviewing the overview picture of the Union and Confederacy will shine more light on the picture. The forces on both sides were mostly made up of volunteers with seasoned veterans being promoted to leadership positions. The officer advantage would seem to go to the Union. Out of the 1,105 regular army officers, 835 of the officers stayed in the services of the Union. With the large influx of volunteers, the army created a system to elect officers. Those typically elected were men with previous military experience or important men in the community, like politicians.<sup>33</sup> After finding leadership for the armies, both the Union and Confederacy started to produce and import small arms. The Union had an industrial base that could out produce and better supply the Northern forces. Not only could they better supply the army, but they could also feed their army. The Confederacy was having issues with providing supplies and food to its army. The South had focused production on cotton. This not only limited the number of factories for supply production but severely hampered food production, as it required the transition of crops in the fields. The last major consideration is the manpower of the North and South. The population of the Union ranged around twenty-two million which was over twice the size of the Confederacy's nine million. In addition to this only five and half million of the South's population could be recruited, as the remainder of the population was African American and not allowed to serve in the army.<sup>34</sup> This state of affairs can be shown through this analysis of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade.

The recruitment, training, weaponry, and tactics of the two brigades varied, as discussed above. The units of Ector's Brigade had been recruited by the end of 1861 and had

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<sup>33</sup> Archer Jones, *Civil War Command and Strategy: The Process of Victory and Defeat*, (New York: The Free Press, 1992): 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> Jones, *Civil War Command and Strategy*, 8-9.

seen action in some form during 1862, as the brigade was formed near the end of that year. On the other hand, the core units of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade were mostly recruited in 1862, and most did not see action into early 1863. The time of the recruitment did very little to affect the training of each unit. The units of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade received most of their training at Washington, D.C. Ector's Brigade received their training in Texas before being sent to the Army of the Mississippi. However, arming of the two brigades was very different. Several units of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade were armed with the Spencer rifles.

The rest of the men would be armed with the standard Burnside carbine. The Spencer rifle would allow for a higher volume of bullets in the air than the standard carbines and rifles that most units were equipped with. This meant the Michigan Cavalry regiments could face a force that outnumbered them to a stand-still given the right circumstances. The regiments of Ector's Brigade were armed differently. The initial cavalry regiments were mostly equipped with double-barreled shotguns and Colt revolvers to start the war. Once dismounted, the men became equipped with a variety of rifles. These rifles included the imported British Enfield and Austrian Lorenz rifles. Not only did the two brigades have different equipment, but they fought in two different theatres of war. The two different theatres of war allow for a deeper look into the overall picture of the Civil War and the part these two brigades played in it.

## **Chapter 2: Campaign Performance**

The next step in this evaluation of the two brigades is to analyze their performance out on campaign. To fully understand the difference in the campaigns, the theatres in which the two brigades fought in must be explored. In the Civil War, there were three separate theaters of war: the Eastern Theater, Western Theater, and Trans-Mississippi Theater. The Eastern Theater consisted of the two Virginias, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the coast of North Carolina. The public viewed this theater as having the highest priority with the Union and Confederate capitals being located in this corridor. The Western Theater consisted of everything south of Kentucky, Tennessee, and the interior of North Carolina. The importance of this theater was that it consisted of the heartland of the Confederacy and was focused on the control of the Mississippi River. The Trans-Mississippi Theater consisted of everything west of the Mississippi River. This was the largest theater of war and left with only minor campaigns and raiding parties. The two theaters under review is the Eastern Theater, location of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade, and the Western Theater, location of Ector's Brigade.

There were many campaigns fought throughout the war in both theaters. The campaigns chosen for review were based off the formation of both brigades so to be able to compare progress side by side. Additionally, the campaigns were picked based on their importance to the respective brigade. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade's performance will be reviewed through the Gettysburg Campaign [1863], the Overland Campaign [1864], and the Appomattox Campaign [1865]. Ector's Brigade's performance will be reviewed through the Chickamauga Campaign [1863], the Atlanta and Nashville Campaigns [1864], and the Mobile Campaign [1865]. These campaigns will be analyzed through the participation of each brigade during the campaign and the overall effect on the Union and Confederate

Armies. Seen as one of the most important campaigns of the Civil War, the Gettysburg Campaign was the first major campaign in which the Michigan Cavalry Brigade participated.

The Gettysburg Campaign took place from early June to late July in 1863. In preparation for the campaign, there were some changes in leadership of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. On June 28, B.G. George Custer replaced B.G. Joseph Copeland as the brigade commander. The divisional leadership changed as well as Major General Hugh Kilpatrick took over command from Major General Julius Stahel.<sup>35</sup> Within two days, the Michigan Cavalry Brigade participated in its first major cavalry fight of the campaign. At the town of Hanover, Pennsylvania, the Michigan Cavalry Brigade fought General James Ewell Brown “Jeb” Stuart’s cavalry to help keep them from joining with the rest of Lee’s army. William C Barden told of the involvement of the Seventh Michigan Cavalry in this engagement. He wrote in his diary,

In this engagement, a portion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Michigan supported a battery and the balance of the regiment was employed as skirmishers where the first battalion, Companies A, G and H, made a charge and routing the enemy at this point, the first battle flag of the enemy was captured on northern soil.<sup>36</sup>

The Fifth Michigan and Company A of the Sixth missed most of the fight because they were ordered to scout south around the town of Westminster. Companies B and F led by Major Weber fought a holding action against the First Virginia Cavalry to allow the rest of the regiment to meet up with the remainder of the Seventh and First Michigan to fight at

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<sup>35</sup> Diary Entry, June 28, 1863, William C Barden Diary, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (BHLUM).

<sup>36</sup> Diary Entry, June 30, 1863, Barden Diary, BHLUM.

Hanover. The brigade succeeded in repulsing the Confederate force and moved on to Hunterstown for their next skirmish with the Confederates. This fight was rather brisk and led to the bigger conflict that took place over the whole of July 3.<sup>37</sup>

On this day, General Custer's Brigade was called up to screen the right flank of the Army of the Potomac. Here he would be faced by Stuart's cavalry division. B. G. Custer explains the position his brigade occupies upon reaching the field:

My line as it then existed, was shaped like the letter 'L.' The shorter branch, supported by one section of battery 'M' (Clark's), supported by four squadrons of the Sixth Michigan Cavalry, faced toward Gettysburg, covering the pike; the long branch, composed of the two remaining sections of battery "M," supported by a portion of the Sixth Michigan cavalry on the left, and first Michigan cavalry on the right with the Seventh Michigan Cavalry still further to the right in advance... The Fifth Michigan was dismounted and ordered to take position in front of my center and left.<sup>38</sup>

Both sides were skirmishing against one another with no major push until noon. A swarm of dismounted rebels charged towards the dismounted Fifth Michigan but was beaten back by accurate shots from Battery "M" and reinforcements by the First New Jersey Cavalry. The Union forces moved back towards more defensible positions as the rebels began to advance. At roughly 4:00 pm, the Seventh Michigan Regiment were chosen to charge with Colonel W. D. Mann and General Custer leading the regiment into battle. The Michigan forces were battered by the charge and it looked bad until the First Michigan

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<sup>37</sup> Mark S Stowe, *Company B 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry*, (Charleston: CreateSpace Publishing, 2012): 31-37.

<sup>38</sup> James H. Kidd, *Personal Recollections of a Cavalryman*, (Grand Rapids: The Black Letter Press, 1969): 79-80.

Cavalry charged the rebels to support the Seventh Michigan. Sergeant William Henry O'Brien recalls the charge,

The charge we made was against Fitzhugh Lee and my company took nearly half the men. We went in with 36 men, we made the charge with and when we came out we had but fifteen, some that was taken prisoner got away and returned to the company we had ten wounded and one killed.<sup>39</sup>

Even with great casualties, the Michigan units pushed back the rebels. After this day, General Lee began his retreat to Virginia to move into friendly territory. The Army of the Potomac pursued Lee all the way to Virginia and over the Rappahannock. The Michigan brigade fought in several minor battles and skirmishes throughout the pursuit. In once such battle, Colonel Russell Alger of the Fifth Michigan Cavalry was wounded in the thigh and forced to seek treatment and relinquished command of the unit.<sup>40</sup> This loss did not slow down the advancement of Custer's Brigade. He pushed his men hard and led to the last significant battle that the brigade took part in the Gettysburg Campaign. The Battle of Falling Waters took place on July 14, 1863. The Sixth Michigan took the greatest casualties as they were the first unit on the scene and ordered to give a saber charge. The gallant Major Weber led the charge and took the first line of entrenchments and was pushing onto the second line when forced to order a retreat. Unfortunately, Major Weber suffered a wound and did not live to see the end of the war. The First and Seventh Michigan arrived and supported the broken Sixth Michigan. The Seventh Michigan captured a 10-pound Parrot gun and the brigade

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<sup>39</sup> William Henry O'Brien to Sara O'Brien, July 6, 1863, O'Brien Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (BHLUM). And Diary Entry, July 3, 1863, Barden Diary, BHLUM.

<sup>40</sup> Allyne G. Litchfield to Wife, July 9, 1863, Litchfield-French Papers, William L Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

captured approximately 400 men before forcing the rebels out of position.<sup>41</sup> For the remainder of the year Custer's Brigade was ordered on scouting and picketing missions. Starting in May 1864, the brigade participated in the Overland Campaign.

The Overland Campaign took place in Virginia between May 4 and June 24, 1864. This campaign saw the Michigan Cavalry Brigade in a new form. The Seventh Michigan received new Spencer rifles to replace the previous old Burnside carbines. In addition to this change, the First Vermont left the brigade's line-up as the brigade moved to the First Division. The First Vermont remained in the Third Division, ignoring their complaints.<sup>42</sup> The men from Vermont considered themselves the "Eighth Michigan." With the changes set, the brigade set out crossing the Rapidan on May 4 and participated in several skirmishes. Early in the campaign, Custer and his Wolverines fight against the rebels at Todd's Tavern and Yellow Tavern.

On May 6, 1864, Custer's men ran into the Confederate General Thomas Rosser's men. This led to a sharp fight that in times felt like the tide was going back and forth as the Michigan men were originally outnumbered, but the movement of the Fifth and Seventh Michigan allowed leverage to halt Rosser's brigade. The valiant fighting of the Union cavalry was not enough to prevent a strategic disadvantage that ended with General Sheridan ordering a withdrawal.<sup>43</sup> General Stuart, with two brigades of cavalry and two batteries of artillery, attempted to put himself in between General Sheridan's Cavalry Corps and

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<sup>41</sup> William Henry O'Brien to Sara O'Brien, August 27th, 1863, O'Brien Family Papers, BHLUM. And Edward G. Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines: The Michigan Cavalry Brigade, 1861-1865*. (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1997): 165.

<sup>42</sup> Diary Entry, May 4, 1864, Barden Diary, (BHLUM). And Kidd, *Personal Recollections of a Cavalryman*, 154.

<sup>43</sup> Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines*, 206-207.

Richmond. This left him open to attack from Custer's Brigade. He had the Fifth and Sixth Michigan dismount and form line using their Spencer rifles. The First and Seventh Michigan was held back in reserve. As they began to push the enemy, the First Michigan charged a rebel battery and managed to capture a portion of it. Major Henry Granger of the Seventh Michigan led a charge as Stuart's men began to break and mortally wounded General Stuart. Unfortunately, Major Granger was killed in this engagement as well being struck by several bullets simultaneously.<sup>44</sup> After defeating the Rebel cavalry, the Union halted to care for the wounded and bury the dead. Custer's Brigade only fought in minor skirmishes until engaging in combat at the Battle of Cold Harbor at the end of the month.

May 30, 1864, began with the Michigan Cavalry Brigade's participation in the Battle of Cold Harbor. Custer had the First, Fifth, and Seventh forward with the Sixth held in reserve for the first two days of battle. They faced heavy infantry fire from behind breastworks. The Fifth Michigan, with help from the First and Second United States Cavalry, flanked the line. Next, Major Brewer led the First Michigan in a charge, and the rebel forces retreated before they reached the rebel position.<sup>45</sup> On June 1, the brigade was heavily engaged again. This time they were behind the breastworks recently captured and forced to hold the line against General Joseph Kershaw and General Robert Hoke's infantry. The VI Corps came in support of the cavalry division and relieved them from the front line. The Michigan Brigade camped next at Bottoms Bridge. Joseph Tuttle of the Fifth Michigan wrote to home telling of casualties his company endured: "They have seen some hard fighting since I left. The casualties so far in our company has been five men killed and four wounded there

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<sup>44</sup> Stowe, *Company B 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry*, 85-87. And Asa B. Isham, *Seventh Michigan Cavalry of Custer's Wolverine Brigade*, (New York: Blue Acorn Press, 2000): 44-46.

<sup>45</sup> Kidd, *Personal Recollections of a Cavalryman*, 193.

in fighting. All the time along the line our men are exhausted.”<sup>46</sup> The brigade participated in one last battle in this campaign at Trevilian Station. The Michigan Brigade distinguished themselves in the battle. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade’s final campaign took place between March 29 and April 9, 1865.

The Michigan Cavalry Brigade participated in the Appomattox Campaign that would be the end of fighting in the Eastern Theatre. On March 29, 1865, the Michigan Cavalry Brigade received their orders to be a part of Grant’s campaign. John Clark of the Seventh Michigan recalled receiving the orders and had this to say “March 29<sup>th</sup> about 11 O’clock we marched it the rest of the day and all night... worse time our regiment was relieved from as we had, but 3 captains in the regiment.”<sup>47</sup> Over the next couple of days, the Michigan Cavalry faced a Confederate force under General George Pickett that consisted of two infantry divisions and the cavalry corps under Major General Fitzhugh Lee. At this time General Custer was in command of the Third Cavalry Division and Colonel Stagg of the First Michigan was currently in command of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. Col. Stagg ordered his men to fight dismounted on the last day of March. The next day, April 1, they found Pickett had retreated to fortified positions. After a hard day of fighting, around four in the afternoon the dismounted Wolverines were ordered to charge. This led to the collapse of the rebel position and surrender of nearly 6,000 Confederate soldiers.<sup>48</sup> The Michigan Cavalry Brigade pursued Lee’s army and skirmished with the rebels for several days moving towards Appomattox Station. On April 6, the brigade reached Deatonville and was ordered to

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<sup>46</sup> Joseph J Tuttle to Sister, June 4, 1864, Joseph Tuttle Papers, William L Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (WCLUM).

<sup>47</sup> John A Clark to William W Whedon, April 16, 1865, Clark-Whedon Papers, William L Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (WCLUM).

<sup>48</sup> Stowe, *Company B 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry*, 113-114. And Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines*, 271-273.

demonstrate against the enemy's wagon train and mounted an attack on General Joseph Kershaw's division. This battle at Saylor's Creek led to the destruction of General Richard Ewell's Corps and the capture of six generals and about 6,000 men.<sup>49</sup> April 9 became the critical day of the campaign. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade fought dismounted to hold back a Confederate push. It was nine at night when the XXIV Corps arrived to relieve the dismounted Michiganders. The Michigan men formed with the rest of the Cavalry Corps to charge when horseman came forward from Lee's army with a flag of truce.<sup>50</sup> This began the proceedings for the surrender of General Lee's army and the closing of hostilities in the Eastern Theatre. This was the end of the service for the Michigan Cavalry Brigade.

Ector's Brigade had its own interesting term of service. The first major campaign that Ector's Brigade participated in was the Chickamauga Campaign from August to October in 1863. Ector's Brigade was operating in Jackson, Mississippi, with General Joseph Johnston's army before being transferred to General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee in late August. During this period of time, the Twenty-Ninth North Carolina Infantry had been assigned to Ector's Brigade. An important note is that the reinforcements out of Texas only numbered a company of eighty-six, mostly men forty to forty-six years old. On August 30, Ector's Brigade finally arrived outside of Chickamauga. Mitchell McCuiston of the Ninth Texas Infantry recalled when they arrived. He wrote in his diary, "5 days rations 20 rounds extra cartridges. Burning of extra shares going to leave of timber yet at dark we were ordered to leave. We hated it very much but couldn't be helped."<sup>51</sup> Several days after their arrival,

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<sup>49</sup> Diary Entry, April 6, 1865, Barden Diary, (BHLUM). And Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines*, 275-276.

<sup>50</sup> Diary Entry, April 9, 1865, Barden Diary, (BHLUM). And Isham, *Seventh Michigan Cavalry of Custer's Wolverine Brigade*, 83-84.

<sup>51</sup> Chuck Carlock and V.M. Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, (Richland Hills, Texas: Smithfield Press, 2001): 90-93. And Diary Entry, September 1, 1863, Mitchell Henderson McCuiston Dairy, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin (BCAHUT).

they would evacuate their positions around Chattanooga to head east into Georgia for the Battle of Chickamauga. General William Rosecrans and his Army of the Cumberland numbered about 70,000 troops. General Bragg's Army of Tennessee only numbered about 54,000 troops in return. Outnumbered, General Bragg wished to ambush the Union Army as it attempted to cross the mountains.<sup>52</sup> The Battle of Chickamauga started on September 19, 1863. The battle was fought over a mixture of dense woods and scattered fields leading to difficulty with generals being unable to see their units. In the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, Ector's Brigade charged two heavy batteries. During the charge, the Tenth and Fourteenth Texas Dismounted Cavalry consolidated as they charged and captured one of the batteries.<sup>53</sup> They would continue the battle the next day after suffering heavy losses.

Due to the heavy losses, Ector's Brigade played a supporting role in the fighting on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Bragg's army utilized a hole in the Union army to win the day. Ector's brigade suffered greatly as they lost a total of 436 men, which equaled sixty-three percent of its fighting strength. In addition to this devastation to the Brigade as a whole, the Tenth Texas Dismounted Cavalry lost all of its company commanders and a total of forty-four percent of its fighting strength. Ector's Brigade was ordered to join General Joseph Johnston's army in Mississippi on September 22.<sup>54</sup> Ector's Brigade spent their winter with the Army of Mississippi under Major General Samuel French's Division only to have French's Division ordered back to the Army of Tennessee for the Atlanta Campaign.

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<sup>52</sup> Billy Kurtz West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," (M.A. thesis, Texas Technical University, 1987): 33.

<sup>53</sup> Carlock and Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, 99-101.

<sup>54</sup> David V. Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, (Longview, Texas: Ranger Publishing, 2004): 141. And Carlock and Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, 109-110.

In preparation for the Atlanta Campaign on May 5, 1864, the Thirty-Ninth North Carolina Infantry received orders to join the ranks of Ector's Brigade. With this new assignment, they were the first to arrive at Resaca on May 13, and the rest of Ector's Brigade was delayed. Several days later, as Ector's Brigade was on their way to join the Thirty-Ninth North Carolina they engaged a group of federals outside of Rome, GA. Ector's Brigade supported by two cavalry units pushed back the Union forces. After the fighting, Ector's Brigade was ordered to Kingston, and on May 18, they fell in with General Johnston's army.<sup>55</sup>

In the month of May Ector's brigade fought in two more battles. The men led by General Ector arrived just in time to participate in the Battle of Cassville. This was a sharp two-day fight with Union artillery until General Johnston thought it best to withdraw. This led to the Battle of New Hope Church that took place between May 25 and 28. Captain James P. Douglas recalled the events of the battle:

We have got considerably the best of the Yankees this far, although we have retired. I have been engaged today. I was ordered to gain a position and silence a Yankee battery which was enfilading our lines, which I succeeded in doing, though considerably exposed to sharpshooters. He 'limbered to the rear' as soon as I opened on him... I have had four men wounded, but none seriously, except Nate Hall.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to the performance by the artillery, Ector's dismounted cavalry and infantry units repulsed a Union attack. They suffered minimal losses on the day and

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<sup>55</sup> Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 152-153. And West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 44-46.

<sup>56</sup> James P. Douglas to Sallie Susan White, May 26, 1864, in *Douglas's Texas Battery, CSA*, ed. Lucia Rutherford Douglas. (Tyler, Texas: Smith County Historical Society, 1966): 88-89.

celebrated the success. After this battle, Johnston's and Sherman's armies continued a campaign of maneuver for most of the month of June. It was not until General Johnston decided to settle on a defensive line along Kennesaw Mountain, they had their next major engagement. On June 27, General Sherman made a major push on Pigeon Hill that softened the lines with a strong cannonade, but he was unable to dislodge General Johnston's forces. It was not until July 2 that Sherman successfully flanked the Confederate defensive line and caused another withdrawal towards Atlanta.<sup>57</sup> Due to these consistent withdrawals, General Johnston became relieved of command, and the army was put into the hands of Lieutenant General John Bell Hood on July 18, 1864. The Confederate Army now prepared defensive works around the outside of Atlanta and fought two major battles. Captain Douglas had this to say:

We have made a stand around Atlanta and have fought two considerable battles, one on the 22<sup>nd</sup> the other on yesterday; on the 22<sup>nd</sup> we damaged the enemy badly capturing 2000 prisoners and 20 or 30 guns carrying their breastworks. We, however, brought off only 14 or 15 guns, 4 of which I brought off and am now using on the enemy having turned over my old ones. I have not heard the particulars of the battle of yesterday. It was fought on the left 4 or 5 miles of my position. I don't think much was gained on either side. The enemy have lost several generals. We have had General Walker and General Gist killed and others wounded. General Ector has lost a leg, but I hope he will recover.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Carlock and Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, 138-140, 151.

<sup>58</sup> James P. Douglas to Sallie Susan White, July 29, 1864, in *Douglas's Texas Battery, CSA*, ed. Douglas.

With General Ector removed from the battlefield due to wounds, Colonel William H. Young of the Ninth Texas Infantry became the new commander of Ector's Brigade. In August, the brigade spent most of the month in reserve. On September 1, the army under General Hood began its withdrawal from Atlanta. Ector's Brigade suffered 492 casualties during the campaign. At the beginning of the campaign, the brigade numbered about 1,250 men. This left the brigade with only about sixty percent fighting strength.<sup>59</sup>

The brigade did not have much rest before fighting in the opening battle of the Nashville Campaign at Allatoona Pass. Ector's Brigade marched with Lt. General Alexander Stewart's Corps to advance on the Allatoona Pass. The battle began early morning of October 5. French sent the Fourth Mississippi Infantry and one gun to capture the blockhouse guarding the crossing. The remainder of his artillery was then commanded to the hills southeast of Allatoona guarded by the Thirty-Ninth North Carolina and Thirty-Second Texas from Ector's Brigade under the command of Colonel Julius Andrews of the Thirty-Second. French's Division faced two Union brigades. Though French's Division outnumbered the enemy, most of the Union troops were armed with Henry repeating rifles to increase their firepower. After a demand for surrender was refused, Ector's Brigade assaulted in support of the Missouri Brigade on the Federal positions. The units from Ector's Brigade that participated in the assault was the Twenty-Ninth North Carolina infantry, Tenth Texas dismounted cavalry, Fourteenth Texas dismounted cavalry, and Ninth Texas infantry.<sup>60</sup> The Missourians took the first defensive line, and the Texans under Brigadier General Young took the second defensive line using rocks and rifle butts. They continued the charge to

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<sup>59</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 42, 52-53.

<sup>60</sup> John R. Lundberg, *The Finishing Stroke: Texans in the 1864 Tennessee Campaign*, (Abilene, Texas: McWhiney Foundation Press, 2002): 51-54.

capture the third line before they suffered fire from the last line of defense with withering fire from the fifteen-shot Henry rifles. It was noted the rate of fire by the infantry: “On average, one could fire a musket about three times a minute, the Henry repeating rifle could be fired fifteen times in eleven seconds. A Spencer repeating rifle fired about eight times in twenty seconds.”<sup>61</sup> After heavy fighting and French in position to take the Star Fort, he was forced to order a withdrawal. The Union forces threatened to surround him if he did not pull back. During the battle, Brigadier General Young was wounded and captured. This led to Colonel Julius Andrews of the Thirty-Second Texas assuming command of the brigade. Out of the approximately 451 men, from the combined forces of the Twenty-Ninth North Carolina, Ninth Texas, Tenth Texas, and Fourteenth Texas, 201 men were killed, wounded or missing. This is a causality rate of forty-five percent of those participated in battle.<sup>62</sup> For the rest of October, the men marched towards Alabama and only had one minor run in with Union forces.

The Army of Tennessee would march toward Nashville in November. Ector’s Brigade was detached to guard the pontoon train and therefore not present for the next major battle of Franklin on November 30. Though Ector’s Brigade was not in the battle, Captain Douglas and his battery were present. Capt. Douglas had this to say about the battle:

We advanced in magnificent style across the fields and attacked the enemy’s works driving them rapidly from one line of works where I placed my guns and opened fire. Our infantry swept gallantly on and in other places drove them from their main works, but the enemy rallied as darkness set in and kept up the fight until 11 O’clock,

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<sup>61</sup> Carlock and Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, 170-171.

<sup>62</sup> Carlock and Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, 178-179. And Lundberg, *The Finishing Stroke*, 59.

during which time they made their escape safely across the river. Our men fought with more desperate courage than I have ever known before... In our battalion, the only one engaged, we had 20 killed and wounded, three of the number killed. W. E. Howard, of my battery, was killed. Mitch Gray, Sam Thompson, and John Porter were wounded, but none of them at all dangerously so. I have seen many battles, but this one for the short time it lasted and the small ground it was fought upon (the line of conflict was about 500 yards in length), was the bloodiest I have ever seen. A large portion of the time our men occupied the ditch on one side of the parapet and the enemy that on the opposite side, and thus they fought until both ditches were full of dead. They absolutely conversed with each other as they fought, each side urging the other to yield. I have seen yesterday's Nashville paper and it speaks of the courage of our men as being unequalled during the war. They pay a complement to our battalion, saying our firing was superb.<sup>63</sup>

After being unable to pierce the Union lines, General Hood decided to follow their retreat to Nashville for one last chance to break the Union Army. Ector's brigade skirmished with some Union troops on December 4, 1864. During the skirmish, Colonel Julius Andrews was wounded and Colonel David Coleman of the Thirty-Ninth North Carolina was given command of the brigade. At this time Ector's Brigade could only muster a fighting force of 569 officers and men. Due to high casualties to officers, there was a change in command; Captain James Crawford commanded the Thirty-Ninth North Carolina, Major Ezekiel Hampton commanded the Twenty-Ninth North Carolina, Major William Estes directed the

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<sup>63</sup> James P. Douglas to Sallie Susan White, December 3, 1864, in *Douglas's Texas Battery, CSA*, ed Douglas, 149-150.

Thirty-Second Texas, and Captain Robert Harkey supervised the Fourteenth Texas. There were only two regimental commanders that had remained unharmed: Colonel C. Earp in charge of the Tenth Texas and Major James McReynolds in charge of the Ninth Texas Infantry.<sup>64</sup> The Army of Tennessee continued to march towards Nashville. This would bring battle on December 15 and 16.

On the morning of December 15, Ector's Brigade and Sears' Brigade were ordered to strengthen the left of the Confederate line. Mitchell McCuiston of the Ninth Texas infantry wrote in his dairy about the battle:

Brigade moved 3 miles to left on the Haskin Pike. Met the enemy on heavy force advancing. Cav near being cut off. There out the 10<sup>th</sup> Texas as skirmishers moved by the right flank... Regiment in position and has moved to support of a battery on a hill on our left. Enemy advanced and looks recovered in our front. Half mile distant... Cavalry charged us we set there up in ... flanked on the right... run for dear life about a mile and a half. Enemy pursuing and popping away in our rear. Look position on another hill... Enemy again advanced and charged the battery in heavy forces due peppered fire over position all the while... But being expected to hold the hill and General Cheatham's old corps coming up now position on our left. We held the hill until night. Just a stop to the days of fighting. I was hurt a little this evening and went to the rear.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Lundberg, *The Finishing Stroke*, 107-108. And Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 201.

<sup>65</sup> Diary Entry, December 15, 1864, Mitchell Henderson McCuiston Dairy, (BCAHUT).

After the fighting on the 15<sup>th</sup>, Ector's Brigade withdrew. The fighting on the 16<sup>th</sup> did not favor the Confederates any better. Ector's Brigade and Reynolds' Brigade held the left, but the center fell apart. As the center gave way, the remainder of General Hood's Army was forced to retreat. This ended the Nashville campaign and led to a headlong retreat. Union troops harassed the Confederate retreat until they finally arrived at Tupelo, Mississippi. By this time Ector's Brigade was down to 341 officers and men, sixty percent of their fighting force from the fight at Allatoona Pass.<sup>66</sup>

After the completion of the Nashville campaign the Army of Tennessee faced constant desertion. General Hood was relieved of command in place of Lieutenant General Richard Taylor. He ordered Ector's Brigade and the remainder of French's division to Mobile, Alabama on February 1, 1865. Shortly after their arrival, Colonel Julius Andrews regained command of Ector's brigade as he recovered from his wounds. There were no major engagements until near the end of March.<sup>67</sup> Ector's Brigade arrived at the Spanish Fort to defend the positions around Mobile on March 29. The brigade defended Redoubt No. Six with the North Carolinians on the right and the Texans on the left. The Union troops assaulted and were pushed back on April 2 and 5. It was on April 8, after a bombardment of fifty-three siege guns and thirty-seven field guns, the Union forces decided to charge again. This time they captured half of Ector's Brigade and caused the Spanish Fort to be abandoned on the next day.<sup>68</sup> What was left of Ector's Brigade fell back to Mobile to be ordered to pack up and retreat on April 11. Lt. General Taylor saw that his force was no longer in fighting

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<sup>66</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 66-68.

<sup>67</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 72. And Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 212-213.

<sup>68</sup> Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 216-219. And Carlock and Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, 228-229, 233.

form and received word of General Lee's and General Johnston's surrender. He was then convinced to meet with the Union General E.R.S. Canby on May 4, 1865 and surrender the remainder of his forces. They were part of the last Confederates east of the Mississippi to give up on the war. As Ector's Brigade stacked their arms and banners, two men, one from the Ninth Texas and one from the Fourteenth Texas, hid their colors and were not found as one last stand of pride to live with their final defeat.<sup>69</sup> This was the end to the story of Ector's Brigade.

The Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade both fought in major campaigns throughout 1863 to 1865. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade fought in the Eastern theatre and Ector's Brigade fought in the Western theatre. This means that they never fought each other directly, but they can be compared by their participation of major campaigns in their respective theatres. The main common theme in regards to the campaigns were Union victory. The Union forces have gained major victories through every campaign, but the Chickamauga campaign. A more detailed evaluation will need to be made between these two brigades.

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<sup>69</sup> Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 219.

### Chapter 3: Evaluation of Forces 1863-1865

The final step in this evaluation is to analyze the two brigades in detail. To complete the evaluation there needs to be a standard created for an accurate comparison. This chapter will use *Civil War Command and Strategy* by Archer Jones and *The 1862 US Cavalry Tactics* by Philip Saint George Cook to make the standards for the comparison. This comparison will take into consideration weapons and equipment, leadership, tactics and strategy, casualties, and campaign performances. This comparison will not only help understand the differences between the Union and Confederates at war but compare how prepared they were based on the help from citizens at home.

A set of standards will be created as a point of comparison between Ector's Brigade and the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. Additionally, this will give us insight into the ability of the Union and Confederacy to support their armed forces. Weapons and equipment is one of the major components to establishing an armed unit. The standard of the time was to provide training for cavalry in the use of sabers and a sidearm, typically a revolver.<sup>70</sup> Initially, volunteers that wished to join the cavalry were requested to bring their own mounts to ride. In addition, to bringing their own mounts, some initial units brought their own arms. Then they would be processed through a standardized process in which they were provided with the remainder of their equipment. After being equipped to fight, the units elected their own officers. This was typically done because the number of veterans that returned was not enough to fit all officer and non-commissioned positions. It was not uncommon for soldiers

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<sup>70</sup> Archer Jones, *Civil War Command and Strategy: The Process of Victory and Defeat*, (New York: The Free Press, 1992): 6.

to leave after their term was up and help the process of recruiting another unit by becoming an officer in that unit.

The tactics and strategy of cavalry at the beginning of the war were different than previous wars. In the past, cavalry units were used as a force to flank and break the lined infantry. The Civil War focused on infantry fighting infantry in lines of two. The cavalry participated in reconnaissance and raiding missions. On the rare occasion that cavalry would run into infantry, they were trained to dismount and fight on foot, leaving one in four men to hold the horses for a quick escape.<sup>71</sup> When the cavalry was participating in raids, they were sent after logistical targets such as bridges, rail lines, and supply depots. With participation in these campaigns came the inevitability of casualties. The standard to look at here is the number of casualties that a victorious and defeated army were typically to have. Changes in the military world, such as less hand-to-hand combat and battles of extermination, led to low averages of casualties during battle. Typically, victors suffered approximately twelve and a half percent and the defeated suffered twenty-two percent.<sup>72</sup> Though battles did from time to time exceeded these casualty rates, it was not common. The last comparison comes from the army's successful performance in battles. In this portion of the comparison, there is no strict standard. The two brigades were compared by their direct participation in campaigns and whether they were successful or not. With the formula for evaluation set up, we must now start the evaluation of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade.

The Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade were both armed and trained differently. The units that made up the core of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade were enlisted in

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<sup>71</sup> Philip St. George Cooke, *The 1862 U.S. Cavalry Tactics*, (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2004): 163-165.

<sup>72</sup> Jones, *Civil War Command and Strategy*, 131.

1862. This was a year after the start of the war and allowed for a better system to be put in place for the entry of the volunteers into the Union service. Though some brought their own horses, they were able to be well supplied once they reached Washington, D.C., in winter of 1862-1863. Though the Seventh Michigan Cavalry was given the older Burnside carbine, the Fifth and Sixth Michigan Cavalry were equipped with the new Spencer rifles.<sup>73</sup> This means that not only was the Michigan men well equipped with some of the newest small arms, they were able to find plenty of horses in supply. Ector's Brigade had a more difficult experience.

The units of Ector's Brigade enlisted during 1861. Most joined after the outbreak of war in the fervor of the Confederate victory at Fort Sumter. With regulations for recruiting volunteer units not strictly in place yet, most of the men were required to supply their own horses and arms. One particular unit, Crump's First Battalion of Texas Cavalry, which later became the Thirty-Second Texas Cavalry, was armed with shotguns and sabers. The Ninth Texas Infantry, the first infantry unit to join the brigade, was known to be armed with a mixture of shotguns, muskets, and rifles initially.<sup>74</sup> It would not be until later that they would receive imported British Enfield and Austrian Lorenz rifles that became popular with infantry units. In addition to taking time to receive the proper or standard equipment, the units that were originally enlisted as cavalry were forced to dismount and fight on foot. In 1862, when the brigade was officially formed, the units on horseback were forced to dismount due to lack of horses. Their horses were taken from them and reallocated to artillery and supply trains.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Asa B. Isham, *Seventh Michigan Cavalry of Custer's Wolverine Brigade*, (New York: Blue Acorn Press, 2000): 14. And Edward G. Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines: The Michigan Cavalry Brigade, 1861-1865*. (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1997): 106.

<sup>74</sup> Billy Kurtz West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," (M.A. thesis, Texas Technical University, 1987): 8. And David V. Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, (Longview, Texas: Ranger Publishing, 2004): 94-95.

<sup>75</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 10.

This would be a show of lack of supply that would continue throughout the war for the Confederacy. Within the discussion of supply and equipment, the comparison of how units are told to use them come into play.

Leadership is very important to the success of a military operation. The leader directs the unit how to act and when to act. Some of this comes from experience. At the beginning of the war, approximately seventy-five percent of experienced officers joined the Union forces.<sup>76</sup> The recruitment of the Michigan Cavalry demonstrated the number of experienced officers enlisting in the Union forces. Lt. Colonel Joseph Copeland left the service of the First Michigan Cavalry to raise the Fifth Michigan Cavalry. The other two original units of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade were recruited by the Honorable Francis Kellogg, whom had a hand in raising the Second and Third Michigan Cavalry previously.<sup>77</sup> Though initial leadership was noted, those that commanded the brigade throughout are important to note as well. The most famous of the Michigan Cavalry Brigades leaders was its commander Brigadier General George A. Custer. Brigadier General Custer had gathered experience through the war as a part of the staff to General Pleasonton. Pleasonton had noticed Custer's aggressive nature and gave him command of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade during the reorganization of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac. Custer saw unlimited potential for his new command and gave early praise to First Lieutenant Pennington Jr. that would command the artillery battery attached to the brigade.<sup>78</sup> By the end of the war, the unit

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<sup>76</sup> Jones, *Civil War Command and Strategy*, 3-4.

<sup>77</sup> John C. Rigdon, *Historical Sketch and Roster of the Michigan 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment*, (Cartersville, GA: Eastern Digital Resources, 2015): 15. And Mark S Stowe, *Company B 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry*, (Charleston: CreateSpace Publishing, 2012): 1-2.

<sup>78</sup> Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines*, 128-130.

commanders and brigade commanders had changes by promotion and injury that were common. Ector's Brigade has a different story to tell in regards to its commanders.

The core units of Ector's Brigade were recruited during 1861, which means they did not have the benefit of commanders returning from the field to lead their troops. Though this was the case there were several important people that took up the call to lead the Texas Cavalry. Colonel Matthew Locke helped raise the Tenth Texas Cavalry. He had served in the Mexican War as a bodyguard for Jefferson Davis. Colonel William C. Young, who raised what would become the Eleventh Texas Cavalry, had experience fighting during the Mexican War. Colonel Middleton Johnson of the Fourteenth Texas Cavalry had gained experience fighting in the Mexican War as well.<sup>79</sup> All of the unit commanders were well-experienced men. This cannot be said for the brigade leadership.

Brigadier General Matthew Ector took command of the brigade during the reorganization of the Army of Tennessee in 1862. He had started, the war as a private in a Texas Cavalry unit and had no previous war experience. Though Brigadier General Ector did his best, he gave up his command after being wounded by an artillery shell in July 1864. Unlike the Michigan Cavalry Brigade, Ector's Brigade did have some officers that stayed with the unit throughout the war. This included Colonel Julius Andrews, who survived until captured during their final campaign for the Old Spanish Fort.<sup>80</sup> Next it is important to review the battles in which the two brigades participated in.

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<sup>79</sup> Chuck Carlock and V.M. Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, (Richland Hills, Texas: Smithfield Press, 2001): 2. And Allen G. Hatley, *Reluctant Rebels: The Eleventh Texas Cavalry Regiment*, (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill College Press, 2006): 3-8. And West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 9-11.

<sup>80</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 17, 52, 64.

To compare the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade in regard to tactics and strategy, it is important to note that Ector's units were dismounted. The Texans fought in many battles, and their participation tended to be suited for infantry units. As several infantry units had been assigned to the brigade from time to time, it was treated more so as an infantry brigade than "dismounted" cavalry brigade. They were rarely given guard or raiding orders and were typically forced to fight enemy infantry. At Atlanta, Allatoona Pass, and the Old Spanish Fort, they were fighting behind breastworks or ordered to charge and capture them.<sup>81</sup> This experience is very different than that of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade.

The Michigan Cavalry Brigade remained a mounted unit throughout the war and was traditionally used as such. The Michigan troopers served a mixture of purposes. During the Battles of Gettysburg and Yellow Tavern, they faced off against Stuart's Cavalry in some cavalry against cavalry fighting. Additionally, they were used as a raiding force against Confederate wagon trains during the Appomattox campaign and pursued the defeated Army of North Virginia after its defeat at Gettysburg. There was only a couple of occasions they were used against infantry, such as at the Battle of Cold Harbor; they were used not only as a flanking force but to fight behind breastworks with their deadly Spencer repeating rifles.<sup>82</sup> The Michigan Cavalry Brigade received the benefit of strategically being used as a standard cavalry unit and tactically having the benefit of fighting mounted or dismounted with the support of the quick-firing Spencer rifles. With battles comes the inevitable discussion of casualties.

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<sup>81</sup> Carlock and Owens, *History of the Tenth Texas Cavalry (Dismounted) Regiment 1861-1865*, 138-140, 151. And John R. Lundberg, *The Finishing Stroke: Texans in the 1864 Tennessee Campaign*, (Abilene, Texas: McWhiney Foundation Press, 2002): 51-54. And Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 216-219.

<sup>82</sup> James H. Kidd, *Personal Recollections of a Cavalryman*, (Grand Rapids: The Black Letter Press, 1969): 193.

The standard at the time was for victors to suffer approximately twelve and a half percent to the defeated army's twenty-two percent. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade seemed to fare not too bad based on these percentages. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade was the victor of most battles they participated in. Sergeant William O'Brien gives a story for a skirmish with Stuart's Cavalry during the Gettysburg Campaign: "We went in with thirty-six men, we made the charge with and when we came out we had but fifteen, some that was taken prisoner got away and returned to the company we had ten wounded and one killed."<sup>83</sup> If we were to take his report as a casualty percentage, that puts them at about thirty percent for this battle. This percentage is high when looking at the case at the Battle of Haw's Shop. At Haw's Shop, the brigade suffered a total of forty-one casualties that when placed against the brigade's strength, approximately 1,200 men at the time, it equals to approximately three percent casualties.<sup>84</sup> These are common casualty rates seen by the Michigan Cavalry Brigade.

Ector's Brigade did not fare so well. Ector's Texans had several issues when it comes to comparing casualty rates. Ector's Brigade acting as an infantry unit tended to be more heavily engaged. In addition, they were on the losing side of quite a few battles. The highest casualty rate comes from the initial fight. From the start to the end of the Battle of Chickamauga, the Texans lost 492 men, equaling sixty-three percent of the brigade's fighting force. In the battles for Atlanta and Nashville, Ector's Brigade lost another approximately forty percent of its fighting strength.<sup>85</sup> That means the Texans were taking almost double the

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<sup>83</sup> William Henry O'Brien to Sara O'Brien, July 6, 1863, O'Brien Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (BHLUM).

<sup>84</sup> Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines*, 223-224.

<sup>85</sup> West, "Ector's Brigade in the Civil War," 42, 52-53, 66-68. And Lundberg, *The Finishing Stroke*, 59.

casualty rate as the average defeated force at the time. The Confederate forces did not just lose more men, but they had issues with completing their campaign objectives.

During the review of Ector's Brigade, we have taken a close look of their participation in four major campaigns, the Chickamauga Campaign, the Atlanta Campaign, Nashville Campaign, and the Mobile Campaign. The only campaign that was seen as a victory for the Confederate forces was the Chickamauga Campaign. Ector's Brigade was a part of the Army of Tennessee and helped force the Union forces under General Rosecrans to retreat. Unfortunately, this was not the case with the remainder of the Texans experience. During the Atlanta Campaign, they were under the command of General Johnston. They suffered several defeats and were forced to retreat. General Hood replaced the retreating General Johnston. General Hood would lead the Confederates to the disastrous Nashville Campaign in which his forces found themselves constantly being set back until it was forced to withdraw broken. Ector's Brigade kept up a semblance of strength during the Mobile Campaign until its eventual surrender at the Battle of the Old Spanish Fort.<sup>86</sup> The rebels that were a part of Ector's Brigade saw desperate fights and difficult situations.

The Michigan Cavalry Brigade had a less tragic experience. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade's performance was reviewed through the following three campaigns: the Gettysburg Campaign, the Overland Campaign, and the Appomattox Campaign. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade enjoyed victory in each of these campaigns. In the Gettysburg Campaign, General Robert E. Lee attempted to strike into the Union and defeat the Army of the Potomac. Unfortunately, General Lee was caught by General Meade at Gettysburg and was dealt a

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<sup>86</sup> Stroud, *Ector's Texas Brigade and the Army of Tennessee 1862-1865*, 165, 218-219.

stunning defeat. This ended any Confederate hope for another offensive in the North and forced the Army of Northern Virginia on the defensive. In the Overland Campaign, the Union forces were only able to obtain victory strategically. The Army of the Potomac suffered disproportionate losses but were able to move into position to besiege the city of Petersburg that would doom the Confederate capital. In the following Appomattox Campaign, the Union forces converged on the exhausted and outnumbered Army of Northern Virginia. The army under General Lee was able to put up a fight but eventually was forced to surrender to the Army of the Potomac on April 9, 1865.<sup>87</sup> This leaves the experience of success with the Michigan Cavalry Brigade, while the men of Ector's Brigade held a sense of despair.

The two brigades were compared to the created standard for participation of cavalry brigades in the Civil War. This comparison took into consideration weapons and equipment, leadership, tactics and strategy, casualties, and campaign performances. The basics for standard equipment included a saber, a revolver, and a mount. Though both sides initially required volunteers to provide mounts, the Michigan Cavalry Brigade were able to be continuously supplied. Ector's Brigade had a shortage of horses and were forced to dismount. In regards to small arms, initially the Michigan Cavalry Brigade had two units that used Burnside carbines and two units that had Spencer rifles. By the end of war, more units received these Spencer rifles. Ector's Brigade initially had a variety of weapons, such as shotguns, muskets, and rifles, until they were dismounted and given standardized rifles. In regards to the leadership of Ector's Brigade, it heavily benefitted from unit commanders that participated in the Mexican War. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade did not get the same initial

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<sup>87</sup> Longacre, *Custer and His Wolverines*, 277-278.

benefit, but being recruited in 1862, they did receive assistance from some officers that had participated in other units previously. The most decorated leader between the forces was Brigadier General Custer during his time as commander of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. The participation of the units differed as well.

The standard for cavalry was to strategically use the units for raids, reconnaissance, and avoiding fights with infantry. The Michigan Cavalry was used much to this design, and when in a firefight, the Spencer repeating rifle allowed more bullets to be fired than the rebel opposition. Ector's Brigade was not so lucky. Being dismounted, they were mostly treated as an infantry unit and received equipment to go along with it. In addition, this affected the casualties taken by the Texans. Being in the thick of it with other infantry and mostly being on the wrong side of the battle, they suffered heavy casualties that ranged from 40 to 63 percent. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade took relatively light casualties in comparison. The Michigan troopers mostly facing other cavalry and being victorious they suffered closer to three to fifteen percent of casualties. Lastly, in regards to overall campaign performance the Michigan Cavalry Brigade participated in actions that led to strategic or overall victory for the Union. The Texans were not so lucky. They were successful in the Chickamauga Campaign, but would suffer several series of defeats for the remainder of the active duty with the Confederate armed forces. The success of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade creates a good example for the superiority of the Northern States when compared to Ector's Brigade and eventual failure of the Southern States.

## **Conclusion**

In the American Civil War, cavalry was an important part of the warfare equation. The Union and Confederate armies had different ways to outfit and command their cavalry forces. These differences allow examination of the Union and Confederate states for variances in recruitment, performance, and ability to use their civilians to maintain their armed forces. There are two units that were chosen for examination. They are the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade, a Texas dismounted cavalry brigade. These two units are important for comparison as they were recruited from a single state and fought in two different theaters of war. This evaluation was broken down into three parts.

The first chapter discussed how each of the brigades were recruited, equipped and trained, and how they participated in the fighting prior to joining their respective brigade. This chapter displayed the pleasantries that the Michigan Cavalry Brigade enjoyed, such as several core units being armed with the Spencer repeating rifles. The firepower of the Spencer rifles was devastating and could not be matched by the standard carbine or rifle used by the Confederates. Ector's Brigade did not have that luxury. They were equipped with a variety of weapons initially and forced to dismount. This led to their participation as an infantry unit. In addition, there were differences in training and participation of each unit. The units of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade benefitted from being recruited in 1862. They benefitted from training together and performing missions around Washington, D.C., together before joining the brigade prior to the Gettysburg Campaign. The Texans units of Ector's Brigade faced various challenges as they were recruited in 1861. A majority had not fought initially together until right before their entry into the brigade. The unit that would become the Eleventh Texas Cavalry started their tenure fighting pro-Union Indians in north

Texas, while the others were sent to various locations for service. The one benefit they received prior to the initial engagements was that the commander of each unit was a veteran of the Mexican War.

The second chapter reviewed the performance of each brigade in a select few campaigns in which it had participated in. The analyzation of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade was based on its participation in the Gettysburg Campaign, the Overland Campaign, and the Appomattox Court House Campaign. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade provided insights from the men who fought and allowed for critical review of their strategic and tactical use. The Michigan Troopers for the most part followed typical cavalry performances by participating in raids, reconnaissance, and fights with other cavalry units. The benefit again of the Spencer repeating rifles allowed them to fight infantry with deadly fire as well. Ector's Brigade was evaluated by its performance in the Chickamauga Campaign, the Atlanta and Nashville Campaigns, and the Mobile Campaign that led to its surrender at Spanish Fort in May 1865. Ector's Texans did not see much success. They received heavy casualties during the Chickamauga Campaign and suffered a series of defeats throughout the remainder of their active service. Being dismounted they were treated as infantry and put into more dire situations. The remaining chapter compared the two brigades, Ector's Brigade and the Michigan Cavalry Brigade, using a standard for use of cavalry during the Civil War.

The final chapter developed a standard use of cavalry using *Civil War Command and Strategy* by Archer Jones and *The 1862 US Cavalry Tactics* by Philip Saint George Cooke. The standard included the consideration of weapons and equipment, leadership, tactics and strategy, battle losses, and campaign performances. The basics for a cavalry trooper at the time was a saber, a revolver, and a horse. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade surpassed these

equipment basics. Ector's Brigade fell short with the lack of supply of horses forcing them to dismount. In regard to leadership, it was common practice to initially elect officers in a new regiment, but few of the unit commanders remained, either being promoted or becoming a casualty. In regards to experience, all of the regimental commanders from Ector's Brigade served in the Mexican War. This was not the case for the Michigan Cavalry Brigade, though the Michigan Cavalry Brigade did have the most decorated officer, Brigadier General George Custer. The standard for strategy was to use cavalry for raids and reconnaissance. They tried to avoid facing infantry as they had an equipment disadvantage. The Michigan Troopers participated in raids and reconnaissance missions, but on occasion faced infantry with the help of their Spencer rifles. Ector's Brigade did not receive the same treatment. As the unit was dismounted, they were treated as infantry. The casualty stand was set based on the averages provided by Mr. Jones in his book *Civil War Command and Strategy*. Again, we see the Michigan Cavalry Brigade coming close to meeting the standard created. The Texans were not so lucky, as they consistently suffered heavier casualties than predicted. Then in campaign performance, we saw a nearly flawless record as the Michigan Cavalry Brigade participated in successful campaigns. Ector's Brigade, though initially successful, suffered a few defeats.

Though there was a focus on the use of cavalry, the assessment displays how the cavalry units symbolize the shape each state was in. In the bigger picture, it reflects on the condition of the Union and Confederate armies at this time. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade at its organization had acquired some of the best equipment available and could be seen as an example of the Union's industrial power. Ector's Brigade suffered from lack of supplies or poor equipment. This would reflect the supply problems the Southern States would continue

to face throughout the war. In the end, Union superiority was demonstrated through this examination of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and Ector's Brigade.

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