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JOHN BELL HOOD: A BID FOR FAME

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fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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JOHN BELL HOOD: A BID FOR FAME

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ABSTRACT

John Bell Hood was appointed to the United States Military Academy from Kentucky and graduated 44th in a class of 52 in July 1853. The next eight years were spent in infantry duties in California and cavalry service in Texas. With the outbreak of the Civil War Hood resigned his commission and entered the Confederate Army as a resident of Texas.

Originally appointed a first lieutenant he served on the Virginia peninsula in 1861 and received rapid promotion to major from Brigadier General John Magruder. By September 30, 1861, he was the Colonel of the Fourth Texas Regiment under Brigadier Louis T. Wigfall. When the latter resigned, Hood, who was engaged to Wigfall's daughter, was promoted in March 1862 to brigade command, over more experienced officers.

During the Peninsular Campaign, Hood actively sought opportunities for combat and established a reputation as an offensively-minded, daring combat leader. He received favorable mentions in official reports, especially at Gaines' Mill, though taking heavy casualties. At Second Manassas,

it became necessary for the Corps commander, Longstreet, to caution him against overrapid advancement. His first clash with a fellow officer (Evans) also occurred at this time, resulting in Hood's arrest. He was released by General Robert E. Lee just prior to Antietam, and the matter dropped. As the result of his efforts he was promoted to major general.

He received a wound in the left arm at Gettysburg after protesting the orders which he received to advance on Little Round Top. Upon recovery he went west with Longstreet, but lost his right leg from a wound at Chickamauga. During his convalescence, he was introduced to Richmond society, and became well acquainted with Jefferson Davis, an enemy of Wigfall. He broke his engagement to Louise Wigfall, and transferred his affections to socialite Sally Preston.

Despite his incapacitating wounds, which necessitated his being strapped to a horse in order to ride, Hood was promoted to lieutenant general and sent as a Corps commander to the Army of Tennessee, apparently with a prior understanding with President Davis by which Hood would urge Johnston to the offensive.

During his service under Johnston, Hood systematically undermined the latter's already tenuous relationship with Richmond. He was named a full general and replaced Johnston as commander of the Army of Tennessee July 18, 1864.

Assessment of his subsequent performance as a commander is buried in a mountain of postwar charges and

recriminations. Sustaining a series of defeats, he constantly fought with his subordinate commanders and disparaged his troops. In late 1864 he invaded Tennessee, an operation which culminated in the total destruction of his army at Nashville in December 1864. He was subsequently relieved of command at his own request.

Hood's career is characterized by ambition, bravery, and the use of influential friends to gain positions of high responsibility. While his tactical conceptions were sound, they failed at higher levels of command because of his inability to work with subordinates. On various occasions he circumvented or ignored his own superiors. His style of command was modeled after that of Lee but was unsuitable to the Army of Tennessee, and he demonstrated a lack of managerial and logistical understanding. These factors, with his early successes which carried him to a level beyond his ability, account for his defeat with the Army of Tennessee.

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INTRODUCTION

Following his entrance into Confederate service in April 1861 as a Lieutenant of Cavalry, John Bell Hood attained the rank of brigadier general by March of the following year. Seven months later, he was promoted to major general and in September 1863, to lieutenant general. During this meteoric rise, he attained fame as a skillful, offensively-minded leader of great promise, and came to be considered one of the Confederacy's best young general officers. In July 1864 he received a temporary promotion to general (one of only eight Confederate officers to hold that rank) and was assigned to command the Army of Tennessee, relieving General Joseph E. Johnston before Atlanta. After the fall of that city, Hood undertook offensive operations into Tennessee which culminated in the total defeat and disintegration of his army at Nashville, Tennessee. He subsequently resigned his command and reverted to his permanent grade of lieutenant general.

The reasons underlying General Hood's lack of success with the Army of Tennessee still remain historically unclear, and are complicated by bitter postwar recriminations and exchanges. The hypothesis developed in this study is that Hood's defeats are best explained by his lack of the administrative ability needed for independent command. Evaluation of this hypothesis is developed through an analysis of Hood's

understanding of superior and subordinate relationships and his ability to successfully coordinate the varied functions necessary for operation of an army in the field. Certain facets of Hood's personality are presented as they relate to his rise to high command. These include the use of both political and social leverage, a characteristic not limited to Hood.

Primary sources used were the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, Hood's postwar autobiography, and works by his contemporaries. A limiting factor was the inaccessibility at the Command and General Staff College of other important primary sources such as collections of papers and letters, including Hood's (in the National Archives). Secondary sources have been used in such cases.

CHAPTER I

INDIANS AND YANKEES ARE NOT THE SAME

John Bell Hood was born June 1, 1831 at the Hood family home near Mount Sterling, Kentucky, the son of well-to-do parents, John W. and Theodocia French Hood. His father, a prominent physician, strongly encouraged John to enter medicine as well, even offering him the opportunity of taking his medical studies in Europe.¹ Young Hood chose, however, to follow a military career. A maternal uncle, Judge Richard French, who was then a Congressman from Kentucky, appointed him to the United States Military Academy, and Hood reported to West Point July 1, 1849.²

His record at the Academy was not commensurate with his later rise to fame as a Confederate officer. In his first year he stood 52d. He subsequently ranked 39th of 63, 41st of 57, and graduated 44th of 52, July 1853.³ His best subjects, in general, were mathematics and infantry tactics.

¹John Bell Hood, Advance and Retreat (New Orleans: published for the Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, G. T. Beauregard, 1880), p. 5.

²Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, 1789-1903 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), p. 540.

³Richard O'Connor, Cavalier General (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949), pp. 19-20.

The 1853 Academy graduating class contained a number of cadets who would obtain the rank of General Officer during the Civil War. The top student in the class was James B. McPherson, later Major General, USA, who would be killed by Hood's troops near Atlanta.⁴ Major General John M. Schofield was also a classmate of Hood's, as was Major General Philip H. Sheridan.

Cadet Hood chose Infantry as the branch in which he was to be commissioned. As was customary, he was given a brevet or temporary promotion to second lieutenant, and assigned to the 4th Infantry Regiment, July 1, 1853.⁵ After a brief period of garrison service at Fort Columbus, New York, he joined his regiment at Benicia Barracks, California in November 1853.⁶ Shortly after arrival, he reported to Fort Jones, in Scott's Valley, between the Salmon and Siskiyou Mountains. The Post, established October 16, 1852, protected the gold mining district from Indian depredations.⁷ In the fall of 1854, Hood commanded an escort of Dragoons accompanying First Lieutenant Robert S. Williamson's

⁴George W. Collum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy, II (New York: D. van Nostrand, 1868), pp. 333-366.

⁵Heitman, Register and Dictionary, p. 540.

⁶Hood, p. 6.

⁷J. S. Whiting and Richard J. Whiting, Forts of the State of California (Longview, Washington: (n.n.) 1960), p. 38.

topographical party, surveying in the direction of the Great Salt Lake to determine the practicality of a railroad connecting the Sacramento Valley with the Columbia River.⁸

On March 3, 1855, he was promoted to the permanent grade of second lieutenant and assigned to the newly organized Second Cavalry Regiment, forming at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.⁹ Two new cavalry regiments had just been established by then Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, and their officers were selected with care.¹⁰ The Second Regiment's Colonel was Albert Sidney Johnston, with Robert E. Lee as Lieutenant Colonel and William J. Hardee, George H. Thomas, and Earl van Dorn as Majors.¹¹ In November, the regiment departed for Texas. After a short period of service at newly established Camp Cooper, Texas, on a Comanche Indian reservation along the Red River Trail, Hood moved to Fort Mason, situated on the upper San Antonio-El Paso road and established July 6, 1851, to protect German settlements in the area.¹²

It was while assigned to Fort Mason that Hood experienced his first significant combat while in command. On

⁸O'Connor, p. 25.

⁹Heitman, Register and Dictionary, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰The existing cavalry regiments were actually dragoons-mounted infantry equipped for dismounted combat.

¹¹Heitman, Register and Dictionary, p. 71.

¹²Robert W. Frazer, Fortes of the West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 155.

July 5, 1857, with twenty-five men of Company G, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, Hood set out on a scouting mission to explore an active Indian trail west of Fort Mason in Sutton County, reported a few days before by Lieutenant John T. Schaaf.¹³ Some ten days out from Fort Mason, the party crossed a recent Indian trail heading southward over which fifteen to twenty ponies had passed three days before. They turned southward in pursuit despite a shortage of water, and four days later, July 20, near the head of Devil's River found indications that a second party of Indians had joined the first. Although outnumbered by an estimated two to one, and with eight men already lost due to exhaustion of their mounts, Hood pressed on and that afternoon sighted a group of Indians encamped on a ridge about two miles away and waving a large white flag. Hood learned at Fort Mason that a party of peaceful Tonkaway Indians was in the vicinity and would be showing a white flag, and approached them cautiously.¹⁴ The four or five Indians clustered around the white flag suddenly threw it to the ground and commenced firing; at the same time, some thirty Comanche and Lipan warriors that had been in hiding charged the cavalry party, setting a heap of dry grass on fire to disrupt the horses. Mounted Indians armed

¹³Harold B. Simpson, "Fort Mason," Frontier Forts of Texas (Waco, Texas: Texian Press, 1966), p. 136.

¹⁴Simpson, "Fort Mason," p. 138.

with lances rushed Hood's force, while the Indians on foot were armed with rifles or bows. Two warriors attempted to seize the reins of Hood's horse, but were felled by his shotgun. After a period of intense hand-to-hand combat, the troopers were ordered to fall back to reload, and Hood received an arrow through his left hand, pinning it to the bridle. Breaking the shaft, he pulled the remainder of the arrow through his hand and continued to fight. With nightfall imminent, the Indians soon broke off the engagement. Hood bivouacked near Devil's River, and sent a messenger to Camp Hudson for assistance and medical aid. Federal casualties totalled 7, while the Indians lost 22 killed and wounded.¹⁵

A relief column from the 8th Infantry regiment under Lieutenant Theodore Fink arrived the following day and Hood proceeded to Fort Clark where he remained a few days to write his official report. He arrived back at Fort Mason July 27.¹⁶

Although Hood exceeded his authority by engaging a significantly superior force on terrain of the enemy's choosing, Brevet Major General David E. Twiggs, commanding the Department of Texas, and Commander-in-Chief General Winfield Scott commended him for gallantry.¹⁷

¹⁵ Eben Swift, "Services of Graduates of West Point in Indian Wars," Centennial of the United States Military Academy (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905), p. 551.

¹⁶ Simpson, "Fort Mason," p. 140.

¹⁷ The text of General Twiggs' report is given in Figure 2.

Hood's subsequent service in Texas appears to have been fairly uneventful. On May 1, 1858, he returned to Camp Cooper with 20 men to protect public stores warehoused there.¹⁸ After his promotion to first lieutenant on August 18, 1858, and assignment to Company K, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, he next went to Camp Colorado in central Texas, 6 miles north of the Colorado River.¹⁹ He later re-established Camp Wood, on the Nueces River, and remained there until November 1860, when he applied for and was granted a 6 months leave of absence. Near the end of that time he was ordered to assume the post of Chief of Cavalry at West Point, but went to Washington to request relief from the order personally from Colonel Samuel Cooper, the Adjutant General (and later Adjutant General of the Confederate Army and its senior officer), much to the latter's surprise.²⁰ Hood wrote that his reason for declining was the likelihood of imminent war between the States and his wish to be able to act with "entire freedom;" he resigned from the United States Army on April 16, 1861.²¹

During his eight years with the United States Army, Hood displayed a degree of impetuosity and eagerness for

¹⁸U.S. War Department, Report of the Secretary of War (Washington, D.C.: 1858).

¹⁹Heitman, Register and Dictionary, p. 540.

²⁰Hood, p. 15.

²¹U.S. War Department, Adjutant General's Office, General Orders No. 24, May 22, 1861.

combat which marked his later service as a Confederate commander. These characteristics would see his career culminate in the defeat and disintegration of an entire army under his command at the battles of Franklin and Nashville in 1864.

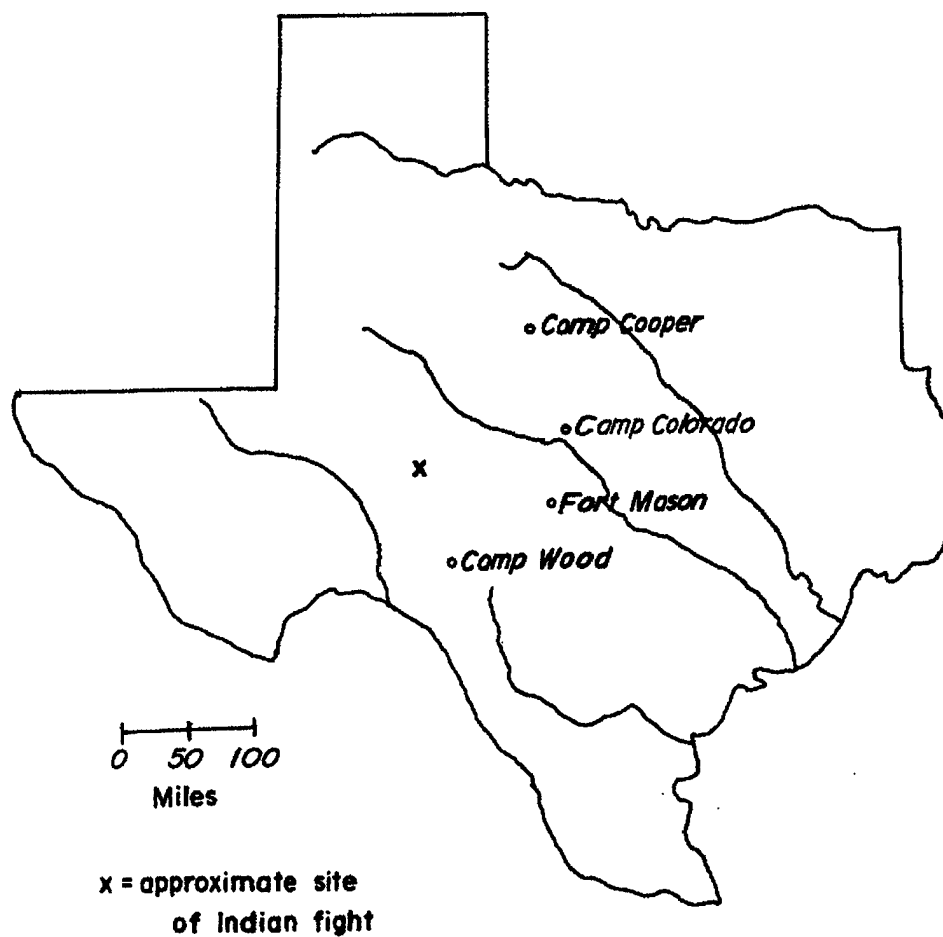


Figure 1. Locations of Lt. Hood's Texas Service.
(Adapted from Robert W. Frazer, Forts of the West (University Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1965), p. 141.)

"HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS. }
 "SAN ANTONIO, *August 5th, 1857.* }

"SIR:—Lieutenant Hood's report was transmitted last mail; from subsequent information, not official, I think Lieutenant Hood's estimate of the Indian party was much too small. The same party, it appears, attacked the California mail guard five days after, and near the place where Lieutenant Hood had the fight, and they estimated the Indians to be over one hundred. These affairs were in the vicinity of Camp Hudson where Lieutenant Fink of the Eighth Infantry is stationed with a Company of Infantry. If this company had have been furnished with some fifteen or twenty horses, the second attack would not probably have been made. Lieutenant Hood's affair was a most gallant one, and much credit is due to both the officer and men.

"I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"(Signed)

D. E. TWIGGS,

"Brevet Major General, U. S. A., Commanding Department.

"To Lieutenant Colonel L. THOMAS,

"Assistant Adjutant General,

"Headquarters of the Army, West Point, New York."

Figure 2. General Twiggs' Commendation, August 5, 1857.
 (Hood, p. 14)

CHAPTER II

A POLITICKING GENERAL GOES TO RICHMOND

After his resignation from the U.S. Army, Hood returned to Kentucky to assess the probability of his native state seceding and joining the Confederacy. In mid-1861, secession was a highly controversial subject in Louisville and Frankfort. The future course of Kentucky was still uncertain; and, in fact, during much of the war it was represented in both Richmond and Washington.

Distressed by the failure of Kentucky to take decisive action, Hood sought Confederate service as an adopted resident of Texas. Hood claimed the decision to consider himself henceforth a Texan was made "just prior to the war," despite the fact that his trip to Kentucky included visits to Governor Beriah Magoffin and the recently defeated Presidential candidate, John C. Breckenridge.¹ These visits were probably attempts to obtain the Colonelcy of a Kentucky Confederate Regiment.

In mid-April, Hood went to Montgomery, Alabama, and offered his services to the Provisional Confederate Government. Although the exact date of his departure from Kentucky is not known, it must have been between April 15

¹Hood selected Texas because he spent most of his Army service there and liked the state (Hood, p. 16).

and 20, 1851, as evidenced by Hood's statement "the latter part of April" and a letter to Confederate Secretary of War Leroy P. Walker from Hood's cousin W. N. Hood dated 29 April 1861 (Figure 3). Hood received a first lieutenant's commission dated April 20, with a date of rank of 16 March, the same grade he had held in the Federal Army, and orders to report to Colonel Robert E. Lee in Richmond, Virginia.

He arrived there May 5, left his luggage at the Ballard House (a popular Richmond hotel at Franklin and 14th Streets, near the State Capital), and reported to Lee's office in the nearby Mechanics Institute. The two officers had served together in the Second Cavalry Regiment, and after greeting Hood cordially Lee, now a major general, ordered him to report immediately to Colonel John Magruder at Yorktown. Hood did so that same night, and Magruder placed him in command of the several Cavalry companies in his regiment of Virginia Volunteers. As the commanding officers of these companies, all captains, outranked Hood, Magruder on his own order promoted him to captain, and when a quarrel over relative date of rank arose, to major.

Hood's cavalry presumably provided intelligence for Magruder's repulse of Federal troops at Big Bethel on June 10, 1861, but there appears to be no evidence that he himself participated. Only some 300 Confederates of 1,400 present in the area took part in the twenty-minute engagement,

Deer Creek Near
Greenville Miss
Hon L P Walker April 29/61
Dear Sir

I send to
your care a letter addressed
to my Cousin Lieut J B Hood
formerly of the M. C. A. I
have just received intell-
-igence that he has resigned
and gone to Montgomery
You will please forward
it to him, and let me
know where I can com-
municate with him.

Respectfully Yours
W. N. Hood

Figure 3. W. N. Hood's letter of April 29, 1861 to
Leroy P. Walker, Secretary of War, Provisional
Confederate Government. (Original in Archives
of the United States.)

but it was sufficient to win promotion to Brigadier General for Magruder.²

Hood's cavalry command consisted of six companies, under Captains Goode, Phillips, Easlery, Douthatt, Adams, and Johnson.³ While patrolling near Bethel, Virginia with a small detachment July 12, 1861, he attacked and routed a Federal force, taking two officers and ten men of the Seventh Regiment of New York Volunteers prisoner.⁴ The Federal force is given in Union reports as 24 officers and men, while Confederate reports estimate them to have been as many as 200. The Confederate force is described in Union records as "a large body" while the Confederate records report it as 80 men. The Federals had been gathering wood some nine miles from their camp at Newport News, in disobedience to orders which restricted the distance from camp they were permitted to go. Their loss occasioned a sharp exchange between Major General Benjamin F. Butler and Colonel John E. Bendix, the Seventh Regiment Commander, while Hood's official report of the event states that the Federals were in ambush.⁵ If they were, in fact, collecting firewood, it seems likely that they were attacked by Hood while performing this chore. His

²The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1882), Section 2, p. 97. The Official Records are hereafter cited as OR, section and page number.

³OR 2:297.

⁴OR 2:298.

⁵OR 2:294 & 297.

subsequent description, written after the war, describes the Union force as a "battalion of infantry" which he overtook from the rear.⁶ The affair did, however, result in a congratulatory note through Magruder to Hood from General Lee (Figure 4).

Shortly thereafter, the several cavalry companies were reorganized into a regiment and placed under the command of Colonel Robert Johnson, with Hood appointed lieutenant colonel, his third promotion within two months. In July, he was called to Richmond, and as a Texas citizen directed to organize the Fourth Texas Infantry Regiment from detached companies in camp near the city. This carried with it on September 30, 1861, a full Colonelcy, securing for him what he presumably sought to no avail as a resident of Kentucky. The next several months were spent in drilling and organizing his regiment until ordered, following his promotion, to join the Texas Brigade under Brigadier General Louis T. Wigfall with Joseph E. Johnston's army at Dumfries, Virginia. While there in winter quarters both Hood and Colonel James J. Archer of the 5th Texas emphasized drill, guard mounting, and picket duty.⁷ Chaplain Nicholas A. Davis, whose diary

⁶Hood, p. 18.

⁷Donald E. Everett, Ed., Chaplain Davis and Hood's Texas Brigade (San Antonio: Principia Press of Trinity University, 1962), pp. 12-13.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE FORCES.
Richmond, Va., July 15, 1861.

Brig. Gen. J. B. MAGRUDER,
Commanding, Cc., Yorktown, Va.:

GENERAL: I have had the gratification of receiving your letter of the 13th instant, containing Major Hood's report of his brilliant skirmish with the enemy on the 12th instant, and of submitting it to the President. Will you express to Major Hood and the gallant men who were engaged in the affair the pleasure which their conduct has given both myself and the President.

Respectfully,

R. E. LEE,
General, Commanding.

Figure 4. Congratulatory letter from General Lee,
July 15, 1861. (OR 2:298)

provides an account of life in the Texas Brigade, shared quarters with Hood during this period.⁸

The Texas Brigade consisted of the 1st, 4th, and 5th Texas Regiments and the 18th Georgia Regiment. Hood's Fourth Texas Regiment consisted of nine companies and totaled approximately 1,000 officers and men at this time. A typical company from Waco, Texas had a roster strength of 101 men but of these only 61 were present for duty on December 31, 1861.⁹ Many were ill with various diseases, including mumps, measles, typhoid fever, diphtheria, typhus, and dysentery. Another ten were on detached service as teamsters and hospital attendants, leaving four officers, nine non-commissioned

⁸Everett, p. 12.

⁹Harold B. Simpson, Gaines Mill to Appomattox (Waco, Texas: Texian Press, 1963), p. 62.

officers, and 39 men actually present.¹⁰ Hood's second-in-command was Lieutenant Colonel John Marshall.¹¹

The winter passed otherwise uneventfully, until Wigfall resigned to serve in the Confederate Senate (he had previously been a member of the provisional Congress). Hood received another promotion, to brigadier general on March 3, 1862, this time over Colonel Archer of the Fifth Texas Regiment.

On March 27, 1862, Hood and the Texas Brigade were ordered to the Fredericksburg area to counter a suspected move in that direction by the Federal General Daniel E. Sickles. When Sickles subsequently withdrew northward, the Texas Brigade was assigned to Major General W. H. Whiting's Division on the Yorktown peninsula, arriving there around April 15, 1862.¹²

On May 3, after learning that McClellan had added siege batteries to his forces in preparation for an assault on the Confederate lines, General Joseph E. Johnston (who had assumed command of the Confederate Army of the Potomac, the later Army of Northern Virginia, on April 17) ordered a general withdrawal toward Richmond.¹³ The Confederate forces assembled around Williamsburg May 4, to march to Richmond. By May 6, reports of a Federal landing in force on the south

¹⁰Simpson, p. 55.

¹¹O'Connor, p. 50.

¹²Hood, p. 20.

¹³OR 12:275.

side of the York River began coming into Confederate headquarters.¹⁴

For the move to Richmond, the division of Brigadier General William H. C. Whiting, composed of the Texas Brigade, Hampton's South Carolina Legion, and Whiting's own brigade, a portion of the Army's reserve under Major General Gustavus W. Smith, had been detailed to serve as the rear guard.

The Texas Brigade was bivouacked 2 miles from the York River, and at this time had a total strength of 1922.¹⁵ On the evening of May 6, General Whiting informed Hood that a large body of Federal infantry was disembarking at Eltham's Landing, and instructed him to drive the enemy back if he attempted to advance beyond the cover of his gunboats. The following morning at daybreak the Texas Brigade and the South Carolina Legion began movement toward Eltham's Landing. Hood states that "pursuant to imperative orders, the men had not been allowed to march with loaded arms during the retreat."¹⁶ No such prohibition is found in the General Order of the Department of Northern Virginia which directed the movement, however, and no mention is made of it by then Colonel Wade Hampton, whose South Carolina Legion also participated in the Battle of Eltham's Landing.¹⁷ The order to advance on the morning of May 7 with arms not loaded was

¹⁴OR 12:276.

¹⁵OR 14:483 (1st Texas 477, 4th Texas 470, 5th Texas 341, 18th Georgia 634).

¹⁶Hood, p. 21.

¹⁷OR 14:489.

probably Hood's own, as he thought he would have time to locate the enemy before loading weapons so that they may be caught by surprise and not warned by a premature volley.¹⁸

At the head of the leading 4th Texas Regiment, Hood crossed a field $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the York River. According to his own description, he was suddenly confronted with a heavy Federal skirmish line which fired upon him, and when one Federal corporal deliberately drew down on Hood, Private John Deal (Co. A, 4th Texas) who had loaded his rifle in defiance of orders fired, killing the Federal skirmisher before he could fire. This spectacular event which has been related in a number of sources added significantly to Hood's reputation of fortune and gallantry,¹⁹ but the account of a contemporary witness is somewhat different. According to Chaplain Nicholas A. Davis, a Federal picket did sight Hood, and fired two shots at him, one missed entirely and one wounded a nearby Confederate Corporal. Private Deal "fired upon the pickets as they ran, and struck the only one in sight, killing him instantly,"²⁰ a description of the event considerably less romantic than Hood's own.

Thus, Hood rode with his troops unarmed into Federal pickets only a half-mile from known enemy landing sites, and

¹⁸OR 12:631.

¹⁹Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946) 1, p. 199; O'Connor, p. 58; Simpson, Gaines Mill to Appomattox, p. 62.

²⁰Everett, p. 59.

in his own description states that "the slope from the Cabin (on the crest of the hill leading down to the York River) to the York River was abrupt, and consequently, I did not discover the Federals until we were almost close enough to shake hands."²¹ Hood formed his brigade as they loaded their weapons and advanced toward the Federal troops. Supported by Hampton's Legion and Pender's 6th North Carolina Regiment, and later in the day by Anderson's Tennessee Brigade, the engagement lasted about five hours, after which the Confederate forces withdrew, their mission of delaying the Union landing accomplished (Figure 5). The Federal troops were from General W. B. Franklin's division, and the official return reported 13 officers and 145 men killed or wounded, with 28 missing or captured. The Confederate estimate of Federal losses was 300, a somewhat closer figure to the Federal report than usual.²² The Texas Brigade sustained 36 casualties, the South Carolina troops only 4, the 6th North Carolina 2, and the Tennessee Brigade "a few."²³

In a letter to General Lee the next day, General Johnston noted that Whiting, Hood, and Hampton "gave additional evidence of their high merit," and recommended promotions for Brigadier General Whiting (who had been commanding a division) and Colonel Hampton (commanding a brigade).²⁴ No comment on this recommendation was made in

²¹Hood, p. 21.

²²OR 12:631.

²³OR 12:627, 630, 633.

²⁴OR 14:500.

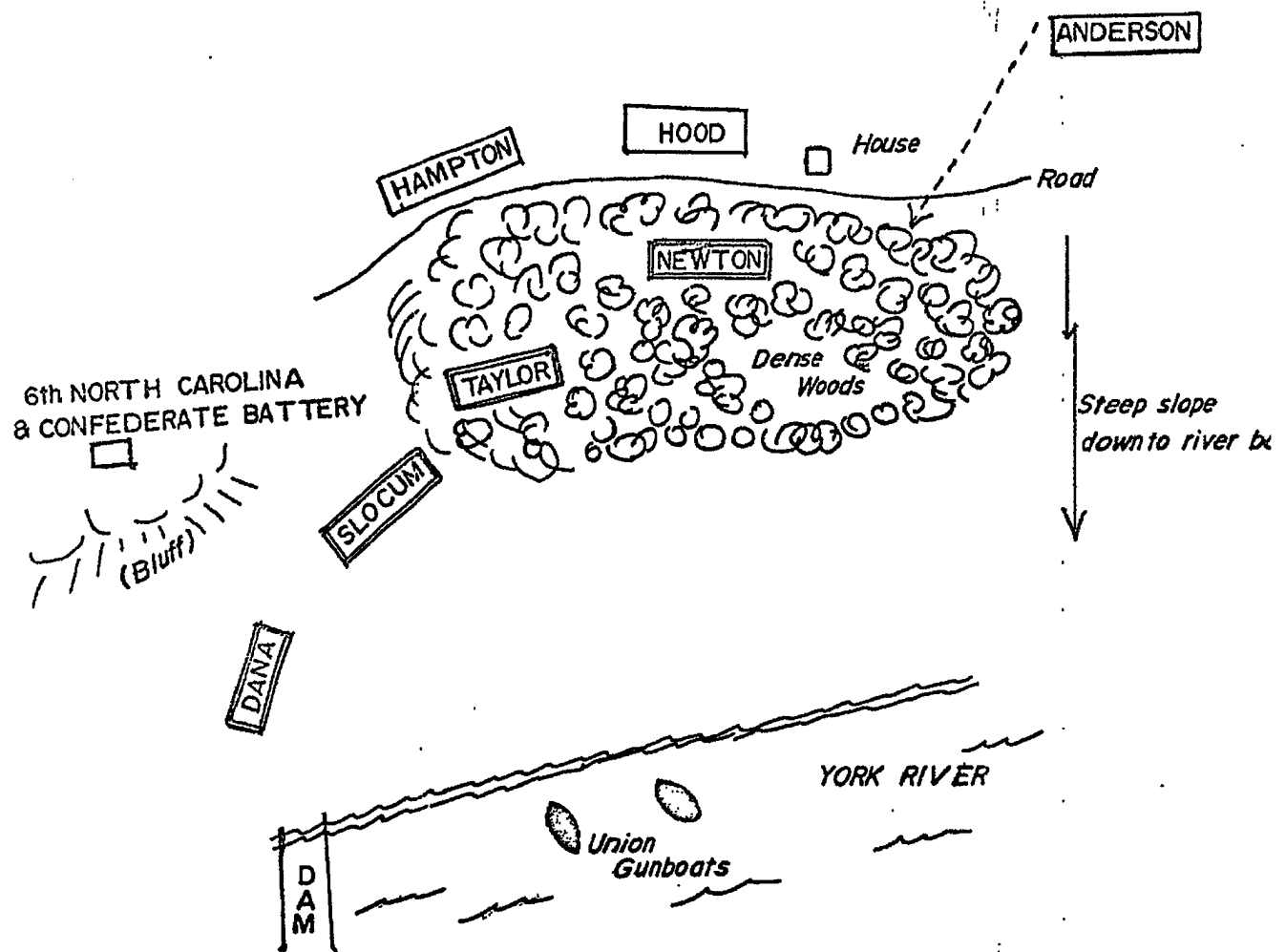


Figure 5. Battle of Eltham's Landing - Hood's
First as a General Officer (Reconstructed
from published official reports.)
(Not to Scale)

General Lee's reply, and Whiting would not win promotion until April 22, 1863, nearly a year later.²⁵ Hampton did receive his brigadier generalcy on May 23, 1862, however.²⁶ As for Hood, his "conspicuous gallantry"²⁷ was mentioned in Whiting's official report, while General Gustavus Smith stated that the Texans earned "the Largest Share of the honors of the day at Eltham"²⁸ with no specific mention of Hood other than as the brigade commander. Hood himself defined it as a "happy introduction to the enemy."²⁹ As in his Indian engagement in Texas, Hood moved forward with inadequate knowledge of the enemy forces confronting him, and again won the day and praise in official reports.

On May 8, the Confederate forces continued their withdrawal toward Richmond, and the Texas Brigade, again as the rearguard, crossed the Chickahominy River May 12, and camped three miles northeast of Richmond May 15. McClellan continued to move cautiously toward Richmond, and placed a portion of his forces (which totalled in all 107,088 officers and men) across the Chickahominy with the intent of linking up with McDowell and capturing Richmond.³⁰

²⁵OR 14:501.

²⁶Warner, p. 122.

²⁷OR 14:630.

²⁸OR 14:627.

²⁹Hood, p. 22.

³⁰Lincoln was pressing McClellan to take offensive action (Bruce Catton, The Army of the Potomac, Vol. 1, Mr. Lincoln's Army (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1962), p. 123; OR 14:184.

Johnston prepared a complicated offensive plan to defeat Keyes' IV Federal Corps before it could be reinforced. This envisioned a two-pronged attack, with Longstreet on the right and Gustavus W. Smith's wing (including Whiting's division with the Texas Brigade) on the left.³¹ The attack began at daylight May 31, but Longstreet's advance was severely hampered by terrain, confusion, and a stout Federal defense, and it was not until late afternoon that the left wing was ordered into action. Just prior to its contact with the enemy, Johnston changed the direction of advance of the Texas Brigade to enable better cooperation with Longstreet's forces.³² Shortly thereafter, Johnston was seriously wounded and, with approaching nightfall, the battle ended without the Texas Brigade taking a significant part in the battle of Seven Pines. As the ranking Major General, Gustavus W. Smith assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia, only to be replaced the following day by Robert E. Lee. On June 1, the Texas Brigade remained in position without enemy contact.³³ A defensive victory for McClellan, Seven Pines resulted in 6,134 Confederate losses and 5,031 Federal casualties, with no change in the two armies' positions.³⁴

Shortly thereafter, the Texas Brigade was augmented by eight small infantry companies from the South Carolina

³¹OR 12:933.

³²OR 12:934.

³³Hood, p. 33.

³⁴Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, p. 244.

Legion, and on June 11, together with Law's Brigade it joined Jackson in the Shenandoan Valley as part of a feint against Washington.³⁵ As its part in this ruse, the Brigade moved to Charlottesville and then to Staunton. Subsequently under Jackson's command, it returned to Ashland, north of Richmond, on June 25, and moved toward Cold Harbor the next day as the advance guard of Jackson's force.³⁶

Lee's plan of attack aimed at turning McClellan's right flank north of the Chickahominy, cutting his lines of supply and driving him back down the Peninsula. It came off considerably less well than had been intended, as the result of faulty coordination, delays, and piecemeal attacks. Following a day of inaccurately transmitted instructions and confusion, Lee detached Whiting's division to support Longstreet in an assault on the Federal Left. About 4:30 PM General Lee ordered Hood to break the enemy line with his forces.³⁷ He immediately moved to the task, formed his troops behind the leading Fourth Texas Regiment, and charged the Federal positions across an eight-hundred yard open field under heavy musketry and artillery fire. The Federal positions were successfully pierced with a final bayonet charge and their line completely broken with the support of Law's Brigade. The ensuing Confederate victory was complete as darkness fell, and on June 28 McClellan began his withdrawal down the peninsula.

³⁵ Simpson, p. 81.

³⁶ Hood, p. 25.

³⁷ Hood, p. 25.

Casualties in Hood's Brigade were 571, including all the field grade officers of the 4th Texas; the colonels of the 1st and 5th Texas were also severely wounded.³⁸ In his report of the event, Whiting called special attention to the fact that Hood and the 4th Texas were the first to break the enemy's line.³⁹ Jackson referred to their "matchless display of daring and valor."⁴⁰ Hood's casualties in the charge numbered over 1,000.⁴¹ The role of the Texas Brigade in achieving the Confederate victory at Gaines' Mill is unquestioned. It was achieved by an infantry charge across an open field under heavy small arms and artillery fire while sustaining severe casualties, a pattern that would be repeated. In the ensuing engagements of the Seven Days, the Texas Brigade took little part. Lee held it in reserve during the attacks on McClellan's positions at Malvern Hill and although Hood requested permission to attack on the flank even with his brigade reduced by at least 25 percent, it remained in this capacity.⁴²

As McClellan departed from the Peninsula, Jackson returned to the Valley, and by July 23, 1862, Whiting's Division had been transferred to Longstreet's command.⁴³ In a letter to Wigfall, General Lee noted that a total of 1,336 recruits were needed to fill the 1st, 4th, and 5th Texas

³⁸OR 13:569, 973.

³⁹OR 13:564.

⁴⁰OR 13:556.

⁴¹OR 13:556.

⁴²Hood, p. 31.

⁴³OR 14:652.

Regiments, indicating that the Texas Brigade probably had no more than 700 men at this time.⁴⁴ The brigade of Colonel Evander Law, consisting of the 4th Alabama, 2nd Mississippi, 11th Mississippi, and 6th North Carolina Regiments, replaced Hampton's Brigade in Whiting's Division when Hampton was placed under Stuart in the formation of a separate Cavalry command.⁴⁵ Whiting received thirty-days leave for disability in July, and Hood took command of the attenuated division under the general supervision of Brigadier General George N. Evans.⁴⁶ The division remained in camp near Richmond until August 13, when it removed to Hanover Junction.⁴⁷ During this time recruits and those returning from hospitals brought the Texas Brigade near its normal strength.⁴⁸

At Hanover Junction, Hood placed his command in readiness for field service. Now referred to in official correspondence as commanding a division, on August 14 he joined Longstreet on the Rapidan.⁴⁹ Subsequently Jackson crossed the Rapidan west of Pope, turning the Federal right flank and placing himself directly across the Union Line of communications. Longstreet's forces followed, and by August 26 Jackson was at Manassas Junction astride the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, while Longstreet was slightly

⁴⁴OR 14:655.

⁴⁵OR 14:648.

⁴⁶Hood, p. 31.

⁴⁷OR 14:675.

⁴⁸Everett, p. 106.

⁴⁹OR 18:930.

northwest of Pope. Perceiving the significant threat to his rear, Pope turned and advanced toward Bristol Station, just south of Manassas Junction. In the face of superior numbers, Jackson withdrew slightly to the west, and on August 28th Longstreet arrived at White Plains, Virginia, near Thoroughfare Gap through the Bull Run Mountains.⁵⁰ Together with the divisions of Brigadier General D. R. Jones and Brigadier General C. M. Wilcox, Hood started to force a passage through the gap; however, after a brief Federal attack on Jones' left, the Federal troops withdrew under cover of darkness. The following morning, Pope engaged Jackson at Manassas Junction, and at about 10:30 AM, Longstreet arrived at the field of battle. Lee placed Hood between Jackson and Longstreet, and instructed him to obey the orders of either of them or of the Army commander.⁵¹ Several Federal attacks were made unsuccessfully in the course of the day, but until late afternoon none were in Hood's direction. Just before sunset, Hood and Evans attempted to advance, but before they could do so found themselves attacked. Hood's two brigades turned back the Federal charge, but fighting continued until 9:00 PM.⁵² At about 2:00 AM, with the permission of Generals Lee and Longstreet, Hood withdrew to the position he had held at sunset.

⁵⁰OR 16:556.

⁵¹Hood, p. 34.

⁵²OR 16:557.

The next morning, August 30, the Federals again attempted a general advance, apparently still unaware that they were opposing any troops other than Jackson's. About 3:00 PM, just as Pope exposed his left flank in an attempt to turn the Confederate right, Longstreet threw his whole command, led by Hood's two brigades and followed closely by Evans, against the Federal center and left.⁵³ At the time the attack was launched, Hood was in Longstreet's headquarters, being cautioned not to push his division beyond the range of supporting forces.⁵⁴

Driving the Federals back in a well-coordinated attack, the Confederates pressed forward until 10:00 PM, when due to darkness and the uncertainty of the Bull Run fords, the pursuit was suspended.⁵⁵ During the night, Pope withdrew northeast to Centreville, and pursued by Jackson, fell back to Washington.

Once again, Hood's casualty rate was extremely high. The Texas Brigade lost 628 men, Law's Brigade 320.⁵⁶ Hood's were not the only high casualty rates however, as Evans' Brigade lost 603.⁵⁷ Longstreet, in his official report described Hood as making a "gallant attack" on the 29th, but noted only that the attack of the 30th was led by Hood's Brigades.⁵⁸ Similar comments were made in Lee's report.

⁵³OR 16:557.

⁵⁴Hood, p. 36.

⁵⁵OR 16:557.

⁵⁶OR 16:568.

⁵⁷OR 16:606.

⁵⁸OR 16:629.

Evans, commanding an independent brigade and with "supervision" over Hood confines himself to a description of events without resort to laudatory adjectives.⁵⁹

Hood performed at Second Manassas with his usual offensive drive and flair. Longstreet's need to warn Hood against overrapid advancement even as the attack began, when a subordinate commander normally would be with his troops, indicates the degree to which Hood's reputation had already developed.

In the aftermath of the battle, Hood's troops captured a number of Federal ambulances. General Evans, under whom Hood was placed, ordered him to turn them over to Evans' own brigade; Hood refused, and was promptly placed under military arrest by Longstreet and ordered to the rear of the army at Culpeper Court House.⁶⁰

As part of Lee's plan for the invasion of Maryland at a "propitious time"⁶¹ the Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac on September 1. Lee earlier countermanded Longstreet's order for Hood to remain at Culpeper Court House, so that he could remain with his division while under arrest. On September 11, Lee released Hill back to his division and sent for Hood on September 13. Tactful

⁵⁹OR 16:627.

⁶⁰Jackson placed A. P. Hill under arrest at the same time, depriving Lee of two of his generals, as arrested officers did not exercise command.

⁶¹OR 28:590.

as usual, Lee asked Hood to make a simple statement that he regretted the incident which had provoked his arrest; this Hood would not do despite repeated urging. According to Chaplain Davis, the men of Hood's command "made every demonstration which the discipline of the army would allow"⁶² and even sent Captain E. D. Cunningham to inform General Lee that the men were not willing to go into an engagement without him. The fact that the disputed vehicles were ambulances probably had much to do with the troops' attitude. At the same time, Lee learned of the famous "Lost Order," which fell into McClellan's hands. A number of Confederate General officers were casualties in the recently concluded battles, and as McClellan was even then maneuvering toward South Mountain, Lee suspended Hood's arrest until after the impending engagement.⁶³

Hood's division moved into position on September 14 to reinforce D. H. Hill at Boonsborough Gap as Lee prepared to hold his lines of communication open with Jackson, who invested Harpers Ferry September 13. Federal pressure on the right flank required commitment of Hood's command to repulse the advance threatening the flank the Confederate forces. A typical Hood maneuver, a bayonet charge with two brigades, secured the situation. Federal advances elsewhere, however, dictated a withdrawal to Sharpsburg late that night

⁶²Everett, p. 125.

⁶³OR 28:609.

and again Hood served as the rear guard. Continuing pressure by McClellan on the 15th and 16th resulted in constant skirmishing by Hood's forces, and that evening, in position near the Hagerstown Pike in front of the Dunkard Church, Hood requested relief so that his men might prepare their rations.⁶⁴ Jackson, to whom Lee had referred Hood, sent three brigades under Lawton to replace Hood's division, after exacting a promise to support those forces immediately if requested.

Early the next morning, a heavy Federal assault fell on Lawton, exacting heavy casualties, and Hood returned to his former position. Hood knew that General D. H. Hill would not be able to reinforce him, but still immediately ordered an assault against the Federal forces, which he estimated to consist of at least two corps.⁶⁵ In the ensuing attack, the 1st Texas Regiment alone lost over two-thirds of its men. When McLaws arrived with his division at 10:00 AM, Hood, out of ammunition, returned to his original position near the church. Evans is said to have asked Hood, "Where is your division?"; Hood replied, "Dead on the field . . ."⁶⁶

Hood remained in a defensive position the remainder of the 17th while General A. P. Hill conducted a counter-attack to anchor the Confederate right. On the night of the

⁶⁴Hood, p. 42.

⁶⁵OR 27:923.

⁶⁶O'Connor, p. 116.

18th, Lee's army withdrew back across the Potomac, unpursued by an equally battered enemy.

Hood reported the losses from his two brigades at Sharpsburg as 1,002, approximately 50 percent of his command.⁶⁷ Longstreet and Jackson in their official reports made little mention of Hood's attack, while Lee did not mention it at all. Longstreet stated that "Hood was not strong enough to resist the masses thrown against him."⁶⁸ Jackson, on September 27th, wrote to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, recommended Hood for promotion and described him as "one of the most promising officers of the Army."⁶⁹ Although endorsed by Lee, the recommendation was from Jackson, with whom Hood had no direct command relationship, rather than from Longstreet, to whose corps Hood was assigned. The matter of Hood's arrest was quietly dropped.

Lee's recommendation for Hood's promotion went to Secretary of War George W. Randolph on October 27, 1862, along with a number of similar recommendations. Whiting returned from his leave of absence in October. To resolve any difficulties that might arise if Whiting, still a brigadier and formerly senior to Hood, returned to his former brigade, Lee recommended his assignment elsewhere, stating that "on many accounts, I think it better that General Whiting's sphere of action should now be changed."⁷⁰ Whiting,

⁶⁷OR 27:925.

⁶⁸OR 27:840.

⁶⁹Hood, p. 45.

⁷⁰OR 28:680.

who would himself be court-martialed for intoxication and disobedience of orders, reported to Richmond and then to North Carolina.

Hood became a major general to rank from October 10, 1862, at the age of 31; only J. E. B. Stuart, at 29, achieved that rank at a younger age.

The Army of Northern Virginia, after crossing the Potomac near Shepherdstown (now West Virginia), encamped near Martinsburg on September 20th. A. P. Hill's Division repulsed Federal pursuit across the river, and unmolested, Lee moved further up the Valley the next week.

Hood's division located near Winchester, and busied itself with recruiting, refitting, and training for the next month. In the aftermath of the Maryland campaign, Lee set about reorganizing his forces, and on November 26, 1862, a directive from the Confederate government to reorganize the brigades by states set off a number of regimental moves. As a result, the Texas Brigade lost the South Carolina Legion and the 18th Georgia Regiment, and gained the 3rd Arkansas Regiment, commanded by Colonel Van H. Manning.⁷¹ From Law's Brigade, the Sixth North Carolina, and Ninth and Eleventh Mississippi Regiments were transferred elsewhere, and two further brigades (those of Henry L. Benning and George T. Anderson) were added to Hood's command.⁷² The 44th Alabama

⁷¹Simpson, p. 112.

⁷²Hood, p. 46.

Regiment was added to Law's Brigade, which now also included the 4th Alabama, 6th, 54th, and 57th North Carolina.⁷³

Benning had four Georgia Regiments (2nd, 15th, 17th, and 20th) while Anderson's Brigade consisted of five regiments from Georgia (1st, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th).⁷⁴

In November, an Inspector General visited Hood's command in camp near Culpeper Court House where they had relocated November 5. His report called attention to the fact that many men were badly clothed or barefooted; officers of the First Texas Regiment were accused specifically of "inexcusable neglect."⁷⁵ Lee commented that while there was much in Hood's management to commend, it was necessary to advise of deficiencies so that they may be corrected, a customarily diplomatic Lee admonition. On November 7, 1862, Lincoln replaced McClellan with General Ambrose E. Burnside, who moved toward the Rappahannock with his army of some 113,000 troops in mid-November. Lee crossed the Rapidan and was awaiting Burnside at Fredericksburg by the end of that month.

On December 11, 1862, Burnside began laying pontoons across the river, and the following day attacked the Confederate force, solidly emplaced on the heights behind Fredericksburg. An official return of December 10 gave

⁷³OR 31:1033.

⁷⁴OR 31:540.

⁷⁵O'Connor, p. 124.

the total strength present for duty of Hood's division as 7,969.⁷⁶ Hood occupied the approximate center of the Confederate line, in the vicinity of Deep Run and along Lansdowne Valley and Military Roads. The initial Federal thrust was against Jackson to the right of Hood, but a vigorous counter attack by Early repulsed the Federals and reoccupied the terrain which had been lost. The Federal forces in front of Hood, Howe's and Brooks' divisions, remained relatively inactive throughout the battle, except for a brief attack late on the 13th easily repulsed by Law. Longstreet repelled the Union attack on Marye's Heights, inflicting severe casualties, and on the 14th the battlefield remained quiet. On the 15th, Burnside withdrew back across the Rappahannock, having sustained 12,653 casualties.⁷⁷ Hood's losses for once were light, totalling 252 in the entire division; 218 of whom were in Law's Brigade, which had seen the only significant action.⁷⁸

Hood received orders from Longstreet that he and Pickett were to attack the Federal flank if the opportunity arose. Despite a suggestion by Pickett to do so early on the 13th, Hood displayed unusual caution and declined, because he felt that the main Federal attack had not yet come. Longstreet, in his report, was mildly critical stating that "General Hood did not feel authorized to make more than

⁷⁶OR 31:1057.

⁷⁷OR 31:142.

⁷⁸OR 31:623.

a partial advance. When he did move out, he drove the enemy back in handsome style."⁷⁹ After the war, Longstreet wrote that "as Hood was high in favor with the authorities, it did not seem prudent to push the matter."⁸⁰ Three months before Hood had not hesitated to accept a 50 percent casualty rate with a smaller force. His caution may have been due to the force being larger than any he had commanded up to that time, some 8,000 men. Hood makes no mention of the matter.

The Army of Northern Virginia then went into winter quarters along the Rappahannock, spending its time in drills, training, and giant snowball fights. The latter reached such proportions that it was thought necessary to issue an order prohibiting "general snowballing."⁸¹ On December 31, 1862, Hood reported 8,290 men present for duty in his division; at the end of January 1863, he had 7,307 present.⁸² On January 19, 1863, further reorganization of a number of brigades was ordered, and Law's Brigade lost the 6th, 54th, and 57th North Carolina Regiments. They were replaced by the 47th and 48th Alabama Regiments.⁸³

In February, Longstreet, at Lee's direction sent Pickett and Hood toward Richmond as the result of the transfer

⁷⁹OR 31:570.

⁸⁰James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox, quoted in O'Connor, p. 132.

⁸¹Simpson, p. 117.

⁸²OR 31:1082; 40:601.

⁸³OR 31:1099.

of Federal forces to Suffolk. No Federal threat developed, and Hood went back into camp just south of Richmond. It was at that time that Hood met Mrs. Mary Boykin Chestnut, diarist and observer of the Richmond social scene, and Sally Buchanan Preston, later to be the subject of Hood's affections.⁸⁴

On April 2, Longstreet, operating independently, took Pickett's and Hood's divisions to Petersburg and then to Suffolk, to conduct a foraging expedition. It was during this period that Hooker attacked Lee at Chancellorsville, and the urgent order to join Lee reached Longstreet at a time when his supply wagons were 30 miles below Suffolk, gathering supplies in North Carolina. On May 2, Longstreet ordered his forces North, and by May 5th, Hood's division was on its way to Petersburg.⁸⁵ By that time, the battle at Chancellorsville was over, and Longstreet rejoined Lee on the banks of the Rapidan.

Hood looked with disfavor on Longstreet's foraging expedition, stating that "(it was) a movement I never could satisfactorily account for, and which proved unfortunate, since it allowed General Hooker . . . to attack General Lee in the absence of one-half of his Army."⁸⁶ He also noted that "nothing was achieved against the enemy on the expedition to Suffolk,"⁸⁷ and for the first recorded time, began

⁸⁴Mary Boykin Chestnut, Diary from Dixie (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949), pp. 297-98.

⁸⁵Simpson, p. 122. ⁸⁶Hood, p. 51. ⁸⁷Hood, p. 52.

writing letters over the head of his immediate commanding officer. Carefully worded, so as not to offend Lee's strong sense of military etiquette, he wrote to Lee stating his deep distress over Jackson's death, and hoping for a return to Lee's command. Despite Hood's disapproval, however, Longstreet gathered large quantities of sorely needed food and grain, including, it was reported, from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 million pounds of bacon.⁸⁸

Lee, in a letter to President Davis on May 20, 1863, called Hood a capital officer, and noted he would make a good corps commander if necessary. Jackson's death led to still another reorganization of the Army of Northern Virginia, this time into three corps commanded by Longstreet, Ewell, and A. P. Hill. Hood remained under Longstreet, and on May 30 moved to Verdierville. At that time, his division reported only 7,030 effectives present for duty.⁸⁹

When Lee again chose to assume the offensive in the summer of 1863, Hood's Division crossed the Potomac on June 26. Fighting in the Gettysburg area began July 1, as Meade, now in command of the Army of the Potomac, had also moved northward, a fact not learned by Lee until June 28.⁹⁰ Longstreet's corps saw no action on the first day, as A. P. Hill and Ewell successfully gained possession of the town.

⁸⁸Simpson, pp. 123-124.

⁸⁹OR 40:845.

⁹⁰Simpson, p. 135.

Lee planned an attack against the Federal left for July 2, using the available fresh divisions under Longstreet, those of Hood and McLaws, plus Anderson's division from A. P. Hill's corps.

Longstreet, however, was reluctant to attack without Pickett's three Virginia brigades (then at Chambersburg, 20 miles away) and Law's Alabama Brigade of Hood's Division (at New Guilford), all experienced units. Lee finally agreed to allow Longstreet to wait for Law, but not Pickett.

The Alabama troops arrived about noon on July 2, and Hood's Division then moved along the assigned route of attack, the Emmitsburg Road. Hood was on the Confederate right, with McLaws in the center and Anderson on the left, as the corps came into position about 3:30 PM. During his reconnaissance, Hood learned that the high ground in front of him (Little Round Top) was strongly held by Federal troops, and the terrain was such that any attack risked severe enfilading fire. He sent a series of three messengers to Longstreet requesting permission to bypass the Federal strongpoint, and on each occasion received an identical answer, that "General Lee's orders are to attack up the Emmetsburg Road."⁹¹ Longstreet, who never referred Hood's protests to Lee, finally came to Hood in person, telling him once more "we must obey the orders of General Lee."⁹²

⁹¹Hood, p. 58.

⁹²Edwin B. Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p. 382.

The attack was then conducted as ordered, with Hood's Division in a double line by brigades. The front line consisted of the Texas and Alabama Brigades, with the two Georgia Brigades about 200 yards behind.⁹³ About twenty minutes after the assault commenced, Hood received a shrapnel fragment in the left arm which incapacitated him.⁹⁴ Law assumed command of the division.

At a field hospital, surgeons found Hood to have sustained an injury to both bone and nerve.⁹⁵ The remainder of July and August were spent in convalescence at Staunton and Charlottesville, at the summer home of Senator Wigfall, cared for by Wigfall's daughter, Louise. Longstreet visited him there, and after learning of the plan to detach Longstreet with part of his corps to reinforce General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee, Hood went to Richmond. The divisions selected were those of Hood and McLaws.

The origin of the concept of reinforcing Bragg with Longstreet is uncertain; Longstreet himself claimed credit for it after the war, and certainly pressed it enthusiastically, even going so far as to propose he take over the Army of Tennessee while Bragg assumed command of his corps in the Army of Northern Virginia.⁹⁶ Hood's Division passed through

⁹³Simpson, p. 138.

⁹⁴Hood, p. 59.

⁹⁵The exact location of Hood's arm injury is uncertain; its implications are discussed in Chapter IV.

⁹⁶Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), p. 245.

Richmond on September 14, and he rejoined it in Ringgold, Georgia, on the 18th.⁹⁷ In the meantime, Bragg evacuated his base at Chattanooga, seeking battle with Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland. After missing numerous favorable opportunities, the Army of the Tennessee took position along the east side of Chickamauga Creek and prepared to attack.

Shortly after his arrival, Hood received an order from Bragg to assume command of a column advancing on the Federals. He successfully seized Reid's bridge across the Chickamauga against light Federal resistance. The following day, Hood was also given the direction of two further divisions, those of Joseph B. Kershaw and Bushrod Johnson, and ordered to continue the advance, pressing the Federals back another mile on the 19th.⁹⁸ That night, Longstreet arrived and was placed in command of the entire left wing of the army, including his own I division from the Army of Northern Virginia, Buckner's Corps of three divisions, and Hindman's division.⁹⁹ Five of these divisions were under the direct control of Hood (Hood's, McLaw's, Stewart's, Johnson's, and Hindman's). McLaws (May 23, 1862), Stewart (June 6, 1862) and Hindman (April 14, 1862) all held commissions as major generals antedating Hood's.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Hood, p. 61.

⁹⁸Hood, p. 63.

⁹⁹O'Connor, p. 162.

¹⁰⁰Warner, pp. 204, 294, & 138.

Rosecrans moved an entire Federal division out of the center and left a tremendous gap. It was through this that Hood advanced with eight brigades formed in three lines, rolling up and routing the Federal right.¹⁰¹ About 2:30 PM on the 20th, a small Federal counter attack necessitated the rearrangement of the Confederate line, and as Hood was forward doing so, he received a minie ball in the upper third of his right leg.¹⁰² Shortly thereafter, his leg was amputated by the Chief Medical Officer of the Army of Tennessee, Doctor T. G. Richardson.¹⁰³

Longstreet, in his official report, mentioned only that "Hood's column broke the enemy's line,"¹⁰⁴ and Hood's injury. On September 24, he wrote Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, recommending Hood's promotion to lieutenant general (Figure 6). General Bragg endorsed the letter (Figure 7), as did Secretary of War Seddon who indicated his desire to "cordially concur in recommending his promotion, if only as an appropriate testimonial of the gratitude of the Confederacy." President Davis, on receiving the recommendation, noted that while Hood's services were "equal to any reward" "The recommendation to confer additional rank, as a testimonial, must have been hastily made," and referred the

¹⁰¹Horn, p. 265.

¹⁰³Hood, p. 65.

¹⁰²Hood, p. 64.

¹⁰⁴OR 51:288.

Ed. Johnston, Chalcabunga
Sept. 24 " 1863

General
I can heartily recommend Major Genl. J. B. Hood
for promotion to the rank of Lt. Genl. for distinguished
conduct and ability in the battle of the 20th Sept. Genl. Hood
showed his troops with the coolness and ability that was
rare, known by any person on any field, and had the
satisfaction of winning the battle to save one of his
divisions in my respectably
presence in my respectably

Yours most aff. servt.
(Signed) J. Longstreet
Lt. General Com

Ed. J. Cooper
Adj. Genl.

Figure 6. Longstreet's Letter, Written after Chalcabunga, Recommending Hood
for promotion to Lieutenant General (original in the Archives of the
United States).

4501
The. Wm. Grant
Sept. 24. 1863

J. Longfellow
St. Paul

Recommendation of Mr. Grant
J.B. Board for promotion
to the rank of Lt. Col.
for distinguished services
in the battle of
the 20th inst.

Cordially unite in
this first tribute
(Signed) J. Washington May
Genl

Genl
May of War

Mr. Genl. to the day of
War

By order
Signed Edw. Palmer
St. Paul & May

Oct 1. 63
Genl of War

Respectfully submitted to
Resident

I cannot too much
by express my appreciation
of the character and
services of this distinguished
Chief Officer and cordial
congratulations

This promotion is only as
an appreciation of
-and of the service of
the Confederacy

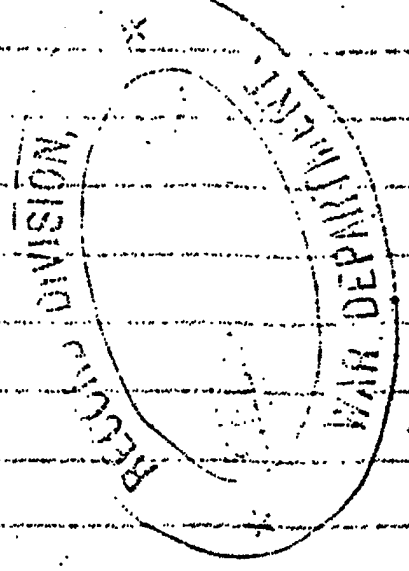
of 20th inst. of Genl
day of War

Genl of War
The service of Mr.
Genl Grant and his
character as a soldier &
Patriot are equal to any

meditation to confer
additional credit as
a testimonial cannot
have been hastily made
The law prevented the
condition on which it
may be appointed
after the 1st of
Oct 3 1863
Genl

Official:
John W. Rice
Maj. Genl.

Oct 29. 63
March 21. 1865.



matter to the appropriate process for the promotion of lieutenant generals. Hood quoted a letter from Seddon to Wigfall that he "felt the deepest interest for your friend, and I trust I may say mine, the Gallant Hood."¹⁰⁵

Upon rumors of a possible Federal raid to capture him, Hood moved to Atlanta and then to Richmond. He arrived in the capital near the end of November, and was at once lionized. Although probably engaged to Louise Wigfall, he began "paying attention" to Sally Buchanan Preston of Richmond as well. During this time, he became, in his own description, "well acquainted"¹⁰⁶ with Jefferson David, often accompanying him in rides around Richmond. Mary Boykin Chesnut noted that Mrs. Davis rated Fitzhugh Lee far above Hood as a commander.¹⁰⁷

Whether because he was cultivating Davis, Wigfall's enemy, or because of Sally Buck Preston's attractions, Hood no longer courted Louise Wigfall. Mrs. Chesnut called Hood "an awful flatterer; I mean, an awkward flatterer."¹⁰⁸

While spending Christmas Day, 1863, at the Prestons, he unsuccessfully proposed to Sally. Mrs. Chesnut reported the proposal, and Hood told her that he first broached the subject just before joining Bragg.¹⁰⁹ She also described a

¹⁰⁵Hood, p. 67.

¹⁰⁶Hood, p. 67.

¹⁰⁷Chesnut, p. 333.

¹⁰⁸Chesnut, p. 343.

¹⁰⁹Chesnut, pp. 341-342.

number of social gaffes which often made the uncultivated, ambitious Hood the butt of Richmond's social humor. He persisted in his courtship of Sally Preston, and on February 12, Mrs. Chesnut learned of their engagement.¹¹⁰ However, Hood was still looked down upon by the Richmond artistocracy. Mrs. Chesnut thought him ambitious, told him he was becoming a courtier, and reported complaints on the part of those over whose heads Hood had been promoted.

On January 29, Hood wrote General Cooper that he was ready for field duty (Figure 8). President Davis annotated the letter, "Prepare nomination for General Hood to be lieutenant general" (Figure 9), indicating whatever reservations Davis may have had earlier about "additional rank as a testimonial," were overcome. Hood claimed to have left Richmond about the first of February but Mrs. Chesnut reported him in Richmond for another two weeks.¹¹¹ The Senate confirmed his promotion on February 11, 1864, with a date of rank of September 20, 1863. Hood reported to General Joseph E. Johnston, by then commanding the Army of Tennessee, who assigned him as a corps commander.

In less than a year, Hood rose from first lieutenant to a brigadier general of Cavalry. Eight men attained the grade of full general in the Confederate Army, while 17 more

¹¹⁰Chesnut, p. 376.

¹¹¹Hood, p. 67.

Richmond
May 9th 1863

48

Genl
I have the honor to inform
you that so soon as I can get
the members of my Staff together,
I will have a small Carriage for
my own use, and send it by rail
to the Command to which I am to
be assigned, - I will be ready for
duty in the field.

It is important I should
have my Dr. Master, Commissary
& Adj't. & Insp. Genl.

I ask this upon the
ground, that they know my
wounds, & know, & my condition, & feel
and their services much more
than I should have done,
before I receive my wounds.

To
Genl S Cooper
Adj't & Insp Genl
Richmond
Va

Respectfully
Yr. Obedt Servt
W. H. Hood
Maj Genl

Figure 8. Hood's Letter Indicating His Readiness for
Duty after Convalescing From His Second Wound.

~~1863~~ H. 27
 Jan 29 1864

J. B. Hood
 Major Genl

States that as soon
 as he can collect the
 members of his Staff
 upon whose assistance
 his vehicle & send it
 to the command to
 which he is to be as-
 signed. States wh
 of the offrs of his
 Staff it is necessary
 for him to have
 proper nomination for
 Genl. Hood to be Lieut. Genl.

Respectfully
 J. B. Hood

Figure 9. Davis' Annotation on the Reverse of Hood's
 Letter of January 29, 1864 (which Hood misdates
 1863).

became lieutenant generals. Of these 25, one (Albert Sidney Johnson) entered Confederate service as a full general; one (Leonidas Polk) as a major general; and ten (Beauregard, Bragg, Cooper, Joseph E. Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Buckner, Ewell, Hardee, Longstreet, and Pemberton) were appointed as brigadier generals, the highest rank at first available in the Confederate Army. Rank held by this group in the U.S. Army, for those on active duty at the outbreak of war, ranged from brigadier general or equivalent (A. S. Johnston, Cooper, J. E. Johnston) through captain (Ewell). Seven entered Confederate service as colonels (Early, Hampton, A. P. Hill, D. H. Hill, Jackson, Stewart, and Taylor); of these, only A. P. Hill, a first lieutenant, was on active military service. Two entered as lieutenant colonels (Edmund Kirby Smith, Major, USA, and Forrest); two as majors (Anderson, Captain, USA; and Holmes, Major, USA; and one as a captain (Stephen Dill Lee, Lieutenant, USA).¹¹² Only Hood entered Confederate Service as a lieutenant; in addition, he was also the only one among this group to enter at his then-current U.S. Army rank. A total of 239 U.S. Army Officers resigned to serve in the Confederate armies.¹¹³ Most

¹¹²Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1959).

¹¹³Warner, p. xxiii

received Confederate rank of at least captain, and with few exceptions obtained the equivalent of at least one promotion. Hood's failure to benefit from what was, if not an official policy, a common practice, was probably due to his lack of political and social influence.

No special relationship existed between Hood and Magruder to explain Hood's rapid early promotion, except that both were graduates of West Point. Magruder, a Virginian, had been commissioned in 1830. Hood did not serve under Magruder, and there was no reason for Magruder to have any special knowledge of Hood's abilities. Hood's selection to be colonel of the newly formed 4th Texas Regiment, and his promotion to brigadier general over Colonel James Jay Archer of the 5th Texas Regiment (a captain and brevet major in the U.S. Army, with experience in the war with Mexico) can only be explained through Wigfall's influence. Hood implied he was selected because he was a Texan, and stated that his appointment as brigadier general was "greatly to my surprise."¹¹⁴ His combat experience to March 1862 was limited since he did not participate in First Manassas. While competent in carrying out his assignments, his performance was not spectacular. In actual combat, his command did not exceed two hundred men in any engagement prior to his promotion to general officer.

¹¹⁴Hood, p. 20.

Hood's career as a brigade commander displays a characteristic pattern. At Eltham's Landing, for the second recorded time in his career, he became unknowingly and unprepared on enemy forces without adequate intelligence, yet managed to complete the engagement successfully and earn meritorious mention in official reports. At Seven Pines, his command never actually engaged the enemy through no fault of Hood's. At Gaines' Mill, his charge of the enemy position carried the day at the cost of enormous casualties and contributed significantly to a Confederate victory. His willingness to attack even with inferior or depleted forces is shown by his request to attempt to turn the Federal flank at Malvern Hill.

Given his constant search for opportunities for combat, assignment of his command as the rearguard for the withdrawal up the Peninsula is not surprising, and was probably voluntary. His approach to combat as commander of the Texas Brigade was direct, unsophisticated and fortunately for him, successful.

His performance as a major general was not noteworthy. General Lee reprimanded him for the state of his command, and at Fredericksburg Hood displayed an unusual reluctance to attack. While with Longstreet on a forgoing expedition of which he disapproved, he began writing letters over the head of his superior. His participation at Gettysburg was limited to an argument with his immediate commander,

Longstreet, and twenty-minutes of combat. At Chickamauga, he attacked through a major gap in the Federal lines which he exploited only to receive his second wound prior to the battle's conclusion. In spite of his disagreement with Longstreet, however, the latter, perceiving external influences at work, recommended Hood for a promotion while being considerably more restrained in the official reports.

As a convalescent in Richmond (to which he came as the result of an unsubstantiated kidnap rumor), it is clear that he cultivated Davis to the extent of his abilities, frequently flattering him and even suggesting that Davis may himself want to take command in the field. It was at this time that he dropped his courtship of Louise Wigfall, the daughter of a bitter enemy of Davis who had greatly helped Hood earlier, in favor of one of the best known and most popular belles of Richmond. Hood's lieutenant generalcy was earned more in the drawing rooms and carriages of Richmond than on the battlefield. Despite a lack of social graces, and the use of flattery to an extent which drew comment in a society in which it was normally expected, perseverance was rewarded.

CHAPTER III

DISSENTION IN THE RANKS

After the Army of Tennessee's defeat at Missionary Ridge with a loss of nearly 6,700 men, Bragg retreated to Dalton, Georgia. The Confederate cabinet, split narrowly in favor of Bragg's retention in command, was rumored to have reversed its opinion and on November 28, 1863, Bragg resigned.¹ Lieutenant General William J. Hardee assumed temporary command, but declined permanent assignment to the position.

Davis then turned to Robert E. Lee for advice. Lee first recommended Beauregard, who was unsatisfactory to Davis, then declined when he himself was offered the command. Almost by default, it fell to Joseph E. Johnston. Davis concurred, though Secretary of War Seddon stated with "doubt and misgiving to the end."²

Johnston arrived at Dalton December 27, 1863, to take command of any army for the first time since being wounded before Richmond during the Peninsula Campaign. He was aware of the circumstances under which he gained the appointment, and members of the anti-Davis faction in Richmond, notably

¹J. B. Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary (New York: Old Hickory Bookshop, 1935), 11, p. 106.

²Horn, p. 308.

Louis T. Wigfall, spared no opportunity to remind him of them.³ Johnston was thus firmly placed in a position of opposition to the Confederate administration, a situation which he made no effort to alleviate and which was fueled by the bitter congressional debates following the army's defeat at Chattanooga.

At the time Johnston arrived, morale was low, discipline was lax, and some 34,000 men were absent.⁴ Optimistic reports by Hardee during his brief period of command led Richmond to believe that things were better than they were, and along with a concern about Johnston's defensive strategy, resulted in strong pressure to assume the offensive.

On January 2, Johnston wrote Davis that he had less than 36,000 effectives and requested reinforcements. Johnston felt that he could "see no other mode of taking the offensive here than to beat the enemy when he advances and then move forward."⁵ At the same time, Longstreet, still in Georgia, began to press for action. He first proposed invading Washington with troops mounted on mules, then suggested Lee join him for an invasion of Tennessee while Johnston's army shifted to Virginia.⁶ Without Johnston's knowledge, Davis

³Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Autumn of Glory (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 283.

⁴Connelly, p. 291.

⁵OR 58:510-511.

⁶OR 59:541, 654.

considered a plan to invade Tennessee with Johnston and Longstreet combined.

Hood arrived in February to assume command of Hindman's former corps. In subsequent months, Hood conducted an extensive correspondence with Davis, Seddon, and Bragg which he denied after the war. On February 13, he wrote that he had done "all in my power to induce General Johnston to accept the proposition you made to move forward,"⁷ and stated the army could not be in better condition for offensive operations. Whether Hood was sent to Johnston deliberately as an agent for Jefferson Davis remains unanswered. Hood denied it, and claimed he had written only two letters, one to Bragg and one to Davis. Documents in the National Archives prove otherwise.⁸ Hood carefully and determinedly cultivated Davis while convalescing in Richmond. Davis was distrustful of Johnston's defensive approach, and had misgivings about appointing him to the command. Neither the President nor the Secretary of War discouraged the improper correspondence Hood conducted with them. An understanding that Hood was to keep Davis informed directly of affairs in the Army of Tennessee would explain the handicapped Hood's assignment to a major field command. It appears certain that Hood went west as Davis' informant and as a spur to Johnston.

⁷Quoted in Connolly, p. 323.

⁸Connolly, pp. 322-323.

The position at Dalton was less than ideal, and after being out of contact with the Federal Army for at least a week, Johnston became aware of a significant flanking threat during May 7-12. Had Sherman attacked on the morning of the 13th, the entire Confederate Army could have been trapped. Johnston withdrew down the Western and Atlantic Railroad and hastily formed in battle positions west of Resaca, south of Dalton on the Oostanaula River. Hood's corps was on the right, and spent the 13th in light skirmishing. On the 14th, Sherman struck at Polk on the Confederate left, which weakened the opposite Federal flank. Late in the afternoon Hood pressed forward and made progress until nightfall. Johnston planned a resumption of the attack on Hood's front the following day but suspended it upon hearing of possible Federal crossings of the Oostanaula west of his position.⁹ After a day of conflicting reports in which Hood and Hooker clashed indecisively, Johnston finally received confirmed reports of the river crossings. That night, he again fell back toward Cassville, Georgia, and devised a plan for Hood's corps to attack the Federal left as they followed him.

By May 19, Johnston was in position at Cassville, with Hood in place to conduct the attack. When it did not commence by 10:30 AM Johnston found Hood ordering a retreat.

⁹Connelly, p. 342.

Hood claimed that a large Federal force had advanced toward his rear. Johnston hesitated to believe this could be so but about noon agreed that Hood had no choice but to withdraw and abandon the plan of attack.

The large Federal force turned out to be only a cavalry reconnaissance. The failure to carry out a plan which offered an excellent chance of success was Hood's. He sent no one to investigate the nature of the Federal force and did not inform his commander of the withdrawal until it was discovered by Johnston's Chief of Staff, sent to investigate why the attack was not underway. Johnston provided Hood no written orders, which Hood used as an excuse. Hood claimed that Johnston left him discretion to attack, and changed his entire plan of action without knowing the nature of the force reportedly moving into his rear.

Hood's reluctance to attack is difficult to explain away. It was not his first combat since returning to field command, as he was heavily engaged at Resaca. However, he made a point of spending long hours each day strapped to his horse, a regimen which must have been fatiguing. In addition, while at Resaca, Hood had been baptized by Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk, the former Anglican Bishop of Louisiana, an example followed a few days later by Johnston. Hood devoted an entire chapter to operations at Resaca and Cassville, and justified his actions by the claim that a Federal force, the size of which is never mentioned, was

indeed flanking him, and that his orders were discretionary.¹⁰ Johnston firmly stated that Hood acted in contravention of his orders, and claimed the report of Federal forces in Hood's rear to have been "manifestly untrue."¹¹ Johnston fell back to a ridge south of Cassville, and another curious event, involving Johnston, Polk and Hood occurred.

The events which actually transpired on the night of May 19, 1864, are lost in a welter of charges and counter-charges. According to Johnston, when he arrived at his tent soon after dark he found an invitation to meet his corps commanders at Polk's tent.¹² When he arrived Polk and Hood were present but not Hardee. Johnston gave conflicting post-war accounts, and related on one occasion that Colonel W. D. Gale, Polk's son-in-law met him in the road and invited him to Polk's quarters. Another time he claimed to have met Hood and Polk on the road and to have gone to Hood's headquarters for dinner.¹³ Hood does not describe how or where the meeting occurred. He admitted that he and Polk consulted before the meeting and agreed to advise Johnston that unless he intended to fight a pitched battle, the army's position should be changed to one better suited to defense.¹⁴

¹⁰Hood, Chap. V, pp. 89-105.

¹¹Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1874), p. 321.

¹²Johnston, p. 323.

¹³Connolly, p. 349.

¹⁴Hood, p. 106.

Brigadier General F. A. Shoupe, Johnston's Chief of Artillery, inspected the positions, and told Johnston the same day that a portion of the Confederate line was exposed to enfilading artillery fire. Hood claimed this was as much as a quarter mile of the line, and cited an 1874 letter from Shoupe as supporting evidence.¹⁵ Johnston stated he was told that the portion in question was only 150-200 yards, and the Federal Artillery in question was more than a mile away.¹⁶

According to Johnston, that evening Hood and Polk argued that their defensive position was untenable and that the Army should immediately retreat further across the Etowah River. After an hour, Johnston reluctantly yielded.¹⁷ Hood responded to Johnston's charge of counseling retreat that the proposal to change positions was entirely dependent on whether Johnston intended to force a battle or not.¹⁸ Captain Morris, Polk's Chief Engineer, is said to have told Johnston of the untenability of the Confederate position prior to the meeting but Morris' own postwar account is so full of contradictions as to be worthless.¹⁹ According to Morris, Johnston was determined to retreat despite Hood and Polk urging the offensive. After Johnston either convinced or was convinced by the two lieutenant generals to withdraw,

¹⁵Hood, pp. 105-106.

¹⁶Johnston, p. 323.

¹⁷Johnston, p. 324.

¹⁸Hood, pp. 107-109.

¹⁹Hood, pp. 110-116.

the other corps commander, Lieutenant General Hardee, arrived and protested strongly on learning of the decision. Hardee's postwar recollection of the event was that Hood strongly insisted the position could not be held.²⁰ Hood made no mention of Hardee's arrival. The following day, the Army of Tennessee crossed the Etowah, abandoning Cassville and the important Etowah Iron Works as well as any chance of recapturing the valuable industrial complex at Rome.

In either case, Johnston acted hastily, without conferring with Hardee, his second-in-command. Hood and Polk formulated their arguments beforehand and arranged to meet with Johnston when Hardee, a former Commandant of the Military Academy and an experienced soldier twice brevetted for gallantry in Mexico as well as an old friend of Johnston, was not present. If Hood did counsel withdrawal, his motivation may have been an understanding with Davis that if Johnston continued to withdraw command of the Army would be his. This would also explain his eagerness to see a Federal force threatening to flank his line that morning.

After crossing the Etowah, Johnston took up new positions and learned on May 23 that Sherman was again moving to flank him to the west. Johnston deployed on a wide front near Dallas, Georgia, with Hardee on the left,

²⁰Connelly, p. 352.

Polk in the center, and Hood on the right. On May 25, a reconnaissance party of Hood's ran into Hooker's entire Federal Corps which promptly assaulted Hood's position during a severe rainstorm.²¹ Stewart's division bore the brunt of the attack and managed to repulse the attack by massed artillery. That night, Sherman shifted to the northeast, and threatened the Confederate right, which was bolstered by shifting Polk's corps to the right of Hood. On May 26, only light skirmishing occurred, but on the 27th the Federal IV corps tried once more to turn the Confederate flank. Cleburne's division repulsed this attempt. On the morning of May 28, Johnston tried an injudicious counter attack against the Federal right, which met with severe losses. That afternoon, Johnston met with his three corps commanders, and Hood proposed a plan by which he would move to the extreme Confederate right and attack the next morning to roll up the Federal left.²² Hood was to launch the attack at daylight. At 10:00 AM the next day a messenger from Hood reported to Johnston and Hardee that the Federal left was protected by a entrenched division. Hood, deeming it "unexpedient to attack,"²³ asked for further instructions. Again Johnston, believing that the opportunity for surprise

²¹Connelly, p. 355.

²²Hood, p. 121; Johnston, p. 333.

²³Johnston, p. 334.

was lost and that the Confederate position was known to the enemy, called off an attack because of Hood.

As the Federal left continued to slide eastward, Johnston's position became untenable. He moved in front of Kennesaw Mountain, and arrived on June 17 in what he thought to be a satisfactory position. On June 14, he lost one of his commanders, Polk, to a Federal artillery shell while reconnoitering positions. Once again, Sherman shifted his approach, this time to the west, and Johnston responded on June 21. On June 23, Hooker moved against Hood; after repulsing his initial approach, Hood counterattacked unsuccessfully despite orders from Johnston not to do so and sustained a thousand casualties. Johnston commented that he was not certain whether the Confederate attack was "by the decision of the commander or at the discretion of the troops themselves."²⁴ Hood neglected to mention the affair. On June 24, Hardee beat back a Federal attack. Three days later Sherman launched an assault with three Federal corps against Hardee's position in the center. The attempt was suicidal, resulting in about four thousand Federal casualties against 500-600 in well-entrenched Confederate positions.

On July 2, Sherman continued to move around the Confederate left flank. Johnston withdrew into strongly fortified positions on the north bank of the Chattahoochee River. His actual intentions at this time are uncertain.

²⁴ Johnston, p. 340.

During May and June he first implied that he intended to defeat Sherman before reaching the Etowah, and then north of the Chattahoochee.²⁵ Later, Johnston argued that he never intended to fight north of the Chattahoochee, and when Wigfall visited him on June 28, Johnston told him that he planned to fight on the south side of Peachtree Creek. He probably had no overall strategic plan and decided to ignore increasing discontent over his retreat through Georgia. Johnston continued to insist that he needed reinforcements and claimed that Sherman outnumbered him two to one which the Confederate government chose not to believe. On July 13, Bragg visited Johnston "unofficially," and gave no hint of official dissatisfaction with Johnston's activities.²⁶

The following day, Bragg met with Hood, who conveniently provided him with a written statement of his views concerning the failure to strike the enemy a decisive blow, and urging assumption of the offensive. Johnston's aide, Lieutenant Richard Manning, later reported a conversation with Sally Buck Preston who told him in mid-July that she had been expecting Hood's promotion for two weeks. On the 15th, Bragg telegraphed Davis a total condemnation of Johnston's policies.

On July 17, Johnston received a telegram from Adjutant General Samuel Cooper, relieving him of command for

²⁵Connelly, p. 361.

²⁶Johnston, p. 348.

failing to "arrest the progress of the enemy to the vicinity of Atlanta," and expressing "no confidence that you can defeat or repel him."²⁷ The same telegram contained the notification of Hood's promotion to temporary full general and directed Johnston to turn command over to Hood.

The alternatives to Hood were few. Lee declined the command. Kirby Smith commanded the Trans-Mississippi Department. Davis vetoed Beauregard when he appointed Johnston and had relieved Bragg. Of the Army's corps commanders, Hardee had once declined and Stewart, Polk's replacement, was even newer to corps command than Hood. Lee held reservations about Hood, and telegraphed July 12 to Davis, five days before Johnston's removal, and even before Bragg's visit, that "It is a bad time to relieve the Commander of an Army situated as that of Tenne. We may lose Atlanta and the Army too. Hood is a bold fighter. I am doubtful as to other qualities necessary."²⁸ That night, a letter from Lee to Davis amplified his feelings: "Hood is a good fighter, very industrious on the battlefield, careless off and I have had no opportunity of judging of his action, where the whole responsibility rested upon him. I have a high opinion of his gallantry,

²⁷ Johnston, p. 349.

²⁸ Lee to Davis, July 12, 1864, in Lee's Dispatches, Douglas Southall Freeman, ed., New Edition (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1957), p. 282.

earnestness and zeal. General Hardee has more experience in managing an army."²⁹ Hardee was never offered the command, either because he previously refused it or because Davis was determined to appoint Hood, who assumed command of the Army of Tennessee as a full general July 18, 1864.

Hood's whole performance during the four months he served under Johnston is at best curious. On occasions his behaviour was virtually calculated to embarrass Johnston and put him in a bad light. Postwar accounts of his disagreements with Johnston are filled with contradictions and acrimony from both sides. Johnston seemingly felt Hood was placed under his command with the intent to discredit him, but continued to place Hood in key positions for his intended offensive operations. During this period, Hood was capable of performing his duties, and his physical handicap was never mentioned by Johnston. Polk's death removed the only other possible claimant within the Army itself, and Hood allied himself with Polk, or vice versa, almost from his arrival.

One of the principal postwar points of contention between Hood and Johnston was the exact number and the morale of troops in the Army of Tennessee at the time of change of command. Johnston claimed the effective strength of the Army at Dalton to have been 40,484 infantry and artillery, a plus 2,390 cavalry, based on a report of Major Kinloch Falconer,

²⁹Lee to Davis, July 12, 1864, Lee's Dispatches, pp. 283-284.

Assistant Adjutant General.³⁰ Hood stated that the effective force at Dalton was 75,000 men, 22,500 of whom were lost or taken prisoner in fighting prior to change of command.³¹ Part of the problem arises in the Confederate system of reporting forces in three categories, effective, present for duty, and aggregate present. Official army returns for the dates of April 30, June 10, June 30, July 10, and July 31, are shown in Table 1. The definition of each category varied among various Confederate commands; "effectives" in some cases meant only enlisted men while in others it also included non-commissioned officers. Enlisted men, all non-commissioned officers, and all officers could be listed under "present for duty." "Aggregate present" included clerks, prisoners, those away on special details, and those sick in hospitals. Johnston's aide, Colonel B. S. Ewell, stated that it was possible to list 30,000 men as effective but if needed, to have 60,000 available to fight.³²

Dr. A. J. Foard, Medical Director of the Army of Tennessee, reported a total of 3,384 casualties from May 7 to May 20, from Dalton to the Etowah River, and another 5,389 in the engagements near New Hope Church through July 9.³³ On July 1, Johnston's hospitals listed 11,437 patients held due to non-battle associated illness.³⁴

³⁰ Johnston, p. 354.

³¹ Hood, pp. 76-77.

³² Connelly, p. 385.

³³ OR 74: 686-687.

³⁴ Connelly, p. 388.

TABLE 1. Official Returns, Army of Tennessee, 30 April - 31 July 1864

	Present for Duty		Effective Total Present	Aggregate Present	Aggregate Present and Absent
	Officers	Men			
30 April 1864	4,589	49,911	43,887	63,777	96,863
10 June 1864*	6,538	63,408	60,564	82,413	138,020
30 June 1864	6,066	56,681	54,085	77,441	137,992
10 July 1864	5,931	53,265	50,932	73,013	134,254
31 July 1864	4,976	46,817	44,495	64,762	135,745

Note: (From OR 74:675-680)

*After the Army had been joined by Polk's Corps.

This figure, when added to the 8,773 casualties reported by Dr. Foard and the 50,932 effective total present reported on 10 July, gives a strength at Dalton of 71,142, approximately that which Hood claimed, but from 6,000 to 11,000 less than reported aggregate figures for the preceeding month.

The number of casualties sustained by Johnston during his withdrawal became a particularly sensitive point in the postwar debate. Hood claimed 22,500, a figure not far from the total sick and casualties of 20,210. Johnston included a postwar report of his Medical Director showing 8,841 casualties from May 7 to July 31, not significantly different from the 8,773 shown in the official return.³⁵ While Hood's complex calculations are not convincing, as it was to his advantage to demonstrate the strength of the Army and exaggerate Johnston's failure to attack, Johnston's reports are also suspect since numerical inferiority provided a convenient explanation for remaining on defense.

Following Hood's elevation to command, he came to Johnston's quarters early on the 18th, and expressed his surprise at his appointment. Both generals agree that Hood requested that Johnston continue to issue orders that day. Hood then pressed Johnston to disregard the order and remain in command. When Johnston declined to do so on the grounds of obvious impropriety, Hood, together with the other Corps

³⁵ Johnston, p. 577.

commanders, Stewart and Hardee, telegraphed President Davis and requested the order be suspended. Davis' reply was that "the order has been executed and I cannot suspend it without making the case worse than it was before the order was issued."³⁶ Hood again requested Johnston to disregard the order, and when he would not, urged him to remain and give him the "benefit of his counsel."³⁷ Hood claimed that finally Johnston promised to return after riding into Atlanta, but did not do so. Johnston makes no mention of any such promise, but reported that he spent the day discussing his plans for the defense of Atlanta with Hood.

Hood's actions have been described as an indication that he was not actively conspiring for Johnston's position.³⁸ Others feel that Hood's actions were probably genuine, but that he was overwhelmed at the prospect of assuming command while facing a Federal Army known to be larger.³⁹ An alternative explanation is possible. Hood certainly knew that Johnston could not disregard the Presidential order for the change of command, no matter how earnestly he was entreated to do so and could have easily anticipated, or expected, Davis' reply to the telegram from the three corps commanders. As to whether Hood urged Johnston to stay with him in an advisory capacity, the evidence comes from Hood himself.

³⁶Quoted in Hood, p. 127.

³⁷Hood, p. 128.

³⁸O'Connor, pp. 201-202.

³⁹Connelly, p. 422; Horn, p. 347.

Hood's actions could equally be those of an individual confident of their outcome and establishing his own nobility of character, an interpretation more in keeping with his undermining of Johnston in letters to Richmond.

Johnston made a brief, emotional speech to the Army upon his departure, and the affection of the troops for him was clearly demonstrated.⁴⁰ Hood felt that the army was demoralized by the continuous retreat from Dalton. Hardee and Stewart disagreed with Hood, and thought that the Army's morale was as high as ever, a statement which Hood dismissed as erroneous.⁴¹ The week after Hood's assumption of command, Chief of Staff Brigadier General William W. Mackall resigned. In August Hardee requested a transfer and later termed Hood incompetent to command.⁴²

Hood immediately began making plans to attack. The Federal Army was then (July 19, 1864) crossing Peachtree Creek north of Atlanta, and as a result the Federal columns were fairly widely separated. Thomas' Army of the Cumberland on the west was spread out across a six-mile front and separated from Schofield's Army of the Ohio by a distance of two miles. To the east of Schofield, McPherson's Army of the Tennessee was advancing on Decatur, Georgia. That night, Hood called his corps commanders, Hardee, Stewart, and Cheatham

⁴⁰ Connolly, p. 423.

⁴¹ Hood, p. 135.

⁴² O'Connell, p. 203.

(now commanding Hood's former corps) together, and issued precise orders for an attack on Thomas. Hardee and Stewart were to conduct the attack while Cheatham, with the assistance of General G. W. Smith's Georgia State troops, prevented reinforcements from reaching Thomas. To insure that the battle plan was well understood in his first independent operation, Hood met again the following morning with his corps commanders which delayed the attack until 1:00 PM and allowed Thomas to virtually complete his river crossing. A second complication developed when it was learned that McPherson's 25,000 troops were advancing faster than expected. This necessitated a rightward shift of the Confederate forces, and delayed the attack a further three hours. Hood is said to have retired to Atlanta about noon rather than remain on the field.⁴³

The attack finally got underway about 4:00 PM and gained initial success until Thomas made contact with Schofield and closed the gap between the two Federal forces. In his report, Hood placed specific blame for the failure on Hardee, stating that he "failed to push the attack, as ordered."⁴⁴ Hardee was placed opposite the strongest Federal position, and Sherman later described his attack as a "furious sally."⁴⁵ Before he could reorganize for a second

⁴³Connelly, p. 441.

⁴⁴OR 74:631.

⁴⁵Quoted in Horn, p. 353.

attack, darkness fell, and Hardee's strongest division, that of Cleburne, never got into action. Though Hood ordered Cleburne to reinforce Cheatham and Wheeler (commanding the Confederate cavalry) on the right flank, he was not able to do so until about 7:00 PM, when nightfall was imminent.

By the next morning, July 21, the threat posed by McPherson to the east was serious. As a counter, Hood devised a plan to allow Stewart, Cheatham, and the Georgia State troops to hold a defensive line while Hardee moved rapidly east to strike McPherson on the flank and rear. It called for a night march of some 18 miles by Hardee, followed by a morning attack.

Due to Cleburne's difficulty in disengaging, movement which was to have begun at 7:30 PM did not start until 1:00 AM on July 22. The attack got underway about 1:00 PM, and again experienced initial success, pushing McPherson's left back. Cheatham, who was to coordinate his approach with Hardee's attack, did not receive the order to advance until two hours after the attack began. As a result, by the time Cheatham was in position, the attack had been repulsed with a loss of 3,300 of Hardee's troops.

Again, Hood blamed Hardee for failing to move around the enemy flank far enough. Hardee charged that Hood changed his original plan to strike McPherson in the rear, and directed him to attack on the flank instead.⁴⁶ Cheatham

⁴⁶OR 74:699.

remembered a third decision, to give Hardee discretion in advancing.⁴⁷

As a result of his unsuccessful attacks, no casualty estimates for which are reported, Hood withdrew into the defenses on the eastern perimeter of Atlanta. Losses of general officers compounded his problems; W. H. T. Walker was killed and his division was without a commander, while Brigadier Generals Gist and J. A. Smith were wounded. With the arrival of Lieutenant General Stephen Dill Lee, Cheatham returned to command of his division, leading to still another arrangement of corps commanders. Bragg visited Atlanta July 25, and Hardee renewed his request for a transfer.⁴⁸

Sherman continued to slide to the left, and gradually encircled Atlanta. Hood planned another flank attack, using the corps commanded by S. D. Lee who was even younger than Hood. Lee's largest responsibility to that time had been a departmental cavalry command. By the time Lee arrived at the designated point of attack, Federal forces were already in position and despite help from Stewart, he could not dislodge them.

The return of July 31, 1864, gave the effective total strength of 44,495, down 6,500 from what it had been three weeks before.⁴⁹ Less than 33,000 of these were infantry and artillery. Hardee telegraphed Davis on August 3 and again on

⁴⁷Quoted in Connelly, p. 446.

⁴⁸Connelly, p. 451.

⁴⁹OR 74:680.

the 6th, asking that he be assigned elsewhere, but was refused. Major General Samuel French, who assumed command of Stewart's corps when the latter was wounded, was replaced by Cheatham at Hood's direction and returned to his division. In addition, to placing a large part of the blame for the failure of his plans to succeed on Hardee, Hood began to intimate that the Army's pattern of withdrawing before the Federal forces resulted in a lack of offensive spirit and reluctance to attack entrenched positions or breastworks.⁵⁰

On August 5, Wheeler, with 4,000 cavalrymen, nearly half those available to Hood, attempted to destroy Sherman's rail lines of communication. Wheeler tore up the railroad and demonstrated against Dalton and Chattanooga, defeating Federal cavalry in the process, but then for an unknown reason turned toward Nashville. There, Federal cavalry forced him into North Alabama. Sherman had by this time moved to face northeast toward Atlanta, a move which Hardee charged Hood completely misinterpreted in his belief that Wheeler had been successful and that Sherman was withdrawing.⁵¹ Hood reported from July 30 to August 26 there was "nothing of any particular movement to mention," and later, "on the 30th it became known that the enemy was moving on Jonesborough with two corps."⁵² Hood could not have been completely unaware

⁵⁰Hood, pp. 184; 186.

⁵¹OR 74:701.

⁵²OR 74:632-633.

of the danger facing him from the south as he moved both Hardee's and Lee's corps in that direction. On the evening of August 30, Hood placed Hardee in command of his own and Lee's Corps, ordering him to attack the following morning. Once again, movement into position was slow, and the attack did not begin until around 2:00 PM, in an uncoordinated and unsuccessful fashion. After several hours, Lee reported that his troops were demoralized; at the same time, Hardee learned of an impending counterattack and went into defensive positions. That night, August 31, Hood ordered Lee back to Atlanta, leaving Hardee's single corps to face Sherman's six. Lee was to attack on the Federal flank if Hardee was successful and cover the evacuation of Atlanta if he were not.⁵³ Hardee charged that Lee was recalled because Hood still believed Sherman to be on the opposite side of Atlanta.⁵⁴

On the afternoon of September 1, Hood, feeling it necessary to concentrate his forces in the presence of overwhelming Federal superiority, ordered Stewart's corps to Lovejoy's Station, south of Atlanta. Lee followed, and that night Atlanta was abandoned. Hardee beat off a Federal attack, and on the morning of the 2nd joined the other Confederate Corps at Lovejoy's. Sherman then turned on September 6 and marched into Atlanta rather than pursue

⁵³OR 74:635.

⁵⁴OR 74: 701.

Hood's battered forces. Dr. Foard's report of losses from July 4 to September 1 was 12,546.⁵⁵

A valid assessment of Hood's performance as an army commander during the Atlanta campaign is buried beneath a mountain of charges, counter-charges, and conflicting statements. If Hood was convinced by July 20 of Hardee's incompetence or willingness to follow orders, then continually placing him in important positions upon which the attacks would depend was poor judgment especially when the experienced Stewart was still at hand. The selection of the relatively inexperienced Stephen Dill Lee, even younger than Hood, to conduct the major portion of one of his assaults indicated that the need for experience alone was not the sole reason for continued reliance on Hardee. Hood's tactical plans for assuming the offensive were all similar in nature and were basically sound, but all failed in execution. His inability to cope with older subordinates (Hardee was 49, Cheatham 44) was evident.

Hood's intention to pattern his command style after that of General Robert E. Lee, whom Hood genuinely admired, is evident in his issuing orders and retiring to the rear, leaving conduct of the battle in the hands of his subordinate commanders. Lacking the talents of a Jackson, a loss which Lee himself felt after Chancellorsville, Hood was preordained to failure.

⁵⁵Hood, p. 221.

The significance of the loss of Atlanta was immense. Tremendous amounts of stores were destroyed or abandoned; the loss of Atlanta's munitions and other manufacturing capabilities imposed a severe stress on the Confederacy's already overloaded facilities. Atlanta was a major transportation center, and its loss opened new routes for Federal moves into the heartland. In Washington, hundred-gun salutes greeted the news. Mary Boykin Chesnut wrote, "There is no hope, but we will try to have no fear."⁵⁶

Soon thereafter Sherman issued an unusual decree ordering the expulsion of all civilians from the city. On September 7, he sent a note to Hood which expressed his intention to transport those willing to go South to the town of Rough and Ready, and proposing a truce for the purpose.⁵⁷ Feeling that he had no alternative, Hood agreed in a note dated September 9, and wrote that "the unprecedented measure you propose, transcends in studied and ingenious cruelty, all acts ever before brought to my attention in the dark history of war."⁵⁸ An exchange of acid letters then followed, with Sherman replying that "I have today seen fifty houses that you have rendered uninhabitable because they stood in the way of your forts"⁵⁹ and lecturing Hood at length. The exchange went on until September 14, when Hood failed to

⁵⁶Chesnut, p. 434.

⁵⁷Quoted in Hood, p. 229.

⁵⁸Hood, p. 230.

⁵⁹Hood, pp. 231-232.

reply to Sherman's note of that date. In addition to transporting the refugees from Rough and Ready to the railroad at Lovejoy's, Hood was transferred the inmates of the nearby Confederate prisoner of war camp at Andersonville to Florida. On completion of this task, the Army of Tennessee's headquarters moved to Palmetto, 25 miles West of Atlanta.

As early as September 3, Hood telegraphed Bragg for reinforcements and curiously requested Hardee specifically to telegraph Davis "in consideration of the high regard President Davis entertained"⁶⁰ for Hardee. Davis replied "no other resource remains"⁶¹ On the 6th, Hood noted that the army could stand a period of rest. A telegram on the 8th requested Hardee's removal from command, followed by one on September 13 which stated that "our failure on the 31st of August, I am convinced, was greatly owing to him."⁶² The disaffected General French wrote Davis on September 14 that morale in the Army was low and requested official observers.

Davis responded by sounding out General Robert E. Lee regarding the assignment of Beauregard to the west, though it is doubtful that he ever actually intended for Beauregard to replace Hood. In the meantime, with two aides he went west to personally evaluate the situation. On reviewing the troops, Davis and Hood were greeted with scattered cries of

⁶⁰Hood, p. 245.

⁶¹Hood, p. 245.

⁶²Hood, 249.

"Give us back Johnston." Also visiting at that time were Georgia's Howell Cobb, and Governor Harris of Tennessee. Davis remained in Georgia for three days, conferring separately with the three corps commanders. Hardee insisted the Army wanted a change of commanders, and was adamant on the point that either he or Hood must go. Hood even went so far as to offer to resign or accept a demotion to serve "under a more competent leader than myself"⁶³ a characteristic which obviously Hood did not apply to Johnston or Hardee. Davis wrote Hood from Opelika, Alabama, on September 28, transferring Hardee to Charleston, South Carolina. In a second letter Davis established an ill-defined "Military Division of the West," embracing the areas of operation of both Hood and Lieutenant General Richard Taylor's Department of Alabama and Mississippi.⁶⁴

Beauregard, who had not actually had a major field command since 1862, was then in charge of coastal defense in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, while writing lengthy letters to Richmond on the strategic conduct of the war. In April of 1864, he took charge of the Petersburg defenses, as a subordinate to Lee and continued his letters to Richmond, all of which were ignored. As a result, he was probably anxious to assume the nebulous role to which Davis assigned him in the west.

⁶³Hood, p. 254.

⁶⁴Horn, p. 373.

The actual originator of the concept of Hood's subsequent move into Tennessee is uncertain. In his telegram of September 6, Hood alluded to a proposed move on Sherman's line of communications. Davis addressed Cheatham's corps on September 26, telling them to "Be of good cheer, for within a short while" their feet would be "pressing Tennessee soil."⁶⁵ The Augusta Constitutionalist of October 4, 1864, quoted Davis as saying, "we must march into Tennessee."⁶⁶ It appears, however, that the actual plan discussed at Palmetto by Hood and Davis was more related to the earlier intent to cut Sherman off from his logistical base, as Davis extracted an agreement from Hood to pursue Sherman toward the coast should he move in that direction.⁶⁷ Beauregard related that a possible Tennessee invasion was discussed with Davis when they met at Augusta. Davis claimed that only the move on Sherman's lines of communications was discussed and placed the responsibility for having devised invasion directly on Beauregard.⁶⁸

On October 1, Hood moved out of his camp at Palmetto and started across the Chattahoochee River. During October 2-6, his army destroyed the railroad tracks north of Alabama and captured the Federal garrisons at Big Shanty and Acworth; as Hood hoped, Sherman then moved out of Atlanta toward him.

⁶⁵ Thomas Robson Hay, Hood's Tennessee Campaign (New York: Walker Neale, 1929), p. 23.

⁶⁶ O'Connell, p. 223.

⁶⁷ Connolly, p. 478.

⁶⁸ Horn, p. 375.

The original plan discussed was for Hood to give battle along the railroad between Chattanooga and Atlanta if conditions were favorable, or at Gadsden, Alabama, if they were not. Hood moved to Cedartown, Georgia, instead, on the Alabama border. Hood's reason was that "the effect of our operations had so far surpassed my expectations that I was induced to somewhat change my original plan."⁶⁹ By October 9, he was at Cedartown, telegraphing Richmond of his change in plans, and mentioning the possibility of a "move to the Tennessee River."⁷⁰

Beauregard, in nominal command, caught up with Hood on October 9. Hood either deliberately misled Beauregard or he totally failed to understand, as Beauregard then went to Jacksonville to prepare a supply base for Hood's operations in the area. Hood did not mention Beauregard's visit. He struck again at the railroad and recaptured Dalton, hoping to be able to go into winter quarters there.

Once again, however, Hood changed his mind and withdrew into Alabama, planning to cross over into Tennessee. It was at this time he decided to move upon Thomas and Schofield, and capture Nashville;⁷¹ however, he was unaware of the Federal strength in that area until several weeks later. Beauregard went to Blue Pond, Alabama, where he expected to find Hood. Here he learned that Hood had gone west to

⁶⁹Hood, p. 258.

⁷⁰Hood, p. 259.

⁷¹Hood, p. 267.

Gadsden, where a perplexed Beauregard finally caught up to him on October 21. That night, he learned of Hood's intention to move into Tennessee and spent the night in discussion with him.

Beauregard later claimed that he approved the plan with some reluctance, having doubts about Hood's ability to manage the campaign, but it is questionable whether he could have been able to disapprove it.⁷² On October 19, Hood notified Richmond of his new intentions.⁷³ Beauregard gave his consent, and on October 22, the Army moved toward the Tennessee River, planning to cross at Gunter'sville.

The next day, however, another change in the plan took place, as Hood learned that General N. B. Forrest's cavalry which was replacing that of Wheeler, could not cross the swollen river to meet Hood on his present route of march. Hood at first elected to cross at Decatur, then Courtland, then Tuscumbia, nearly a hundred miles west of Gunter'sville. Beauregard only learned of the changes on October 26, and once more set out after Hood, catching up with him at Courtland. There, Hood told an amazed Beauregard that he lacked enough provisions and shoes to cross at Courtland and had to move to Tuscumbia, near the terminus of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, where he could be resupplied.⁷⁴ Hood finally arrived at Tuscumbia on October 31 and he

⁷²Horn, p. 379.

⁷³Hood, p. 268.

⁷⁴Horn, p. 380.

decided, without informing Beauregard, to await Forrest.

On the 13th of November, Hood suddenly crossed into Tennessee without bothering to even inform Beauregard, whom he was by now totally ignoring. Beauregard's Adjutant, Colonel Brent, who had been sent to request a conference with Hood, an action which Beauregard would not order Hood to take, found no Hood at Tuscumbia, and finally located him on the north bank of the river.

Hood's real intentions in moving northward are uncertain. He appears to have had no knowledge of any Federal forces in Tennessee, except for 15,000 troops under Schofield at Pulaski. His three corps, totalling 30,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry, advanced along separate routes in wet, freezing weather, slowly toward Columbia, Tennessee, though he claimed his intent was to cut the Federal troops off south of the Duck River by arriving at Columbia first.⁷⁵ Nothing in Hood's official correspondence indicated any evidence of the need for haste, however, and on November 25 Hood notified Beauregard that "the enemy have abandoned Pulaski and are moving toward Nashville."⁷⁶ Hood was within twelve miles of Columbia by November 25, but not until November 29 did he cross the Duck River and move northward, taking Cheatham's and Stewart's Corps, plus one of S. D. Lee's divisions. Rather than a move designed to entrap Schofield,

⁷⁵Hood, p. 282.

⁷⁶OR 93:1245.

Hood apparently intended to reach Nashville before the Federal troops could. Chaplain, later Bishop, Charles T. Quintard noted in his diary that Hood told him exactly that.⁷⁷ No specific orders were issued Stewart and Cheatham, and most of the artillery had been left with Lee. Hood's actions have been attributed to a well-conceived, organized plan to flank Schofield.⁷⁸ The absence of detailed orders and failure to take adequate artillery support compromise this view.⁷⁹ Hood claimed that his intention was to gain Schofield's rear and force him out of Columbia, and compared it to his missed opportunity at Gettysburg when he requested permission in vain to turn the Federal left at Round Top.⁸⁰

On the night of November 28, Forrest reconnoitered Spring Hill, eleven miles north of Columbia. As a result, Schofield began to move two divisions in that direction, and when Forrest attacked the following morning in force, the Confederate assault was repulsed.

About 5:00 PM Hood stopped in view of the road from Columbia to Spring Hill, and asked Cheatham, "General, do you see the enemy there, retreating rapidly to escape us?"; when Cheatham replied that he did, Hood told him specifically to "take possession of and hold that pike at or near Spring Hill."⁸¹ Cleburne, with his division went forward

⁷⁷Quoted in Connelly, p. 492.

⁷⁸Horn, p. 384; O'Connell, p. 229; Hay, p. 82.

⁷⁹Connelly, p. 492. ⁸⁰Hood, p. 283.

⁸¹Hood, p. 284.

to lead the advance. He was to be followed by Bate's division and then by Brown's.

Cheatham denied that such a conversation took place, stating that at 3:00 PM there was no Federal movement in sight along the road at or near Spring Hill.⁸² According to Cheatham, Hood ordered him to send Cleburne forward to make contact with Forrest's Cavalry, and once the enemy's position had been ascertained, to immediately attack.⁸³ Cheatham's claim that no moving Federal troops or wagons were visible is supported by the report of Brigadier General George D. Wagner, USA, who stated in his report that his command was the advance element of Schofield's command, and that he was in Spring Hill by "early in the afternoon."⁸⁴ In addition, at the point at which Hood crossed Rutherford's Creek, it is impossible to see the Columbia-Spring Hill pike.⁸⁵

Hood also claimed that Stewart's corps was "near at hand," and that he would be ordered to "double-quick his men to the front."⁸⁶ Stewart, however, was ordered to remain in battle positions south of Rutherford's Creek.⁸⁷ There is no evidence that Hood consulted Forrest to obtain any intelligence regarding the enemy situation, but instead ordered Cleburne to make contact with Forrest.

⁸²B. F. Cheatham, "The Lost Opportunity at Spring Hill - General Cheatham's Reply to General Hood," Southern Historical Society Papers, Vol. IX, Richmond, Virginia, 1881, p. 529.

⁸³Cheatham, p. 524.

⁸⁴OR 93:229.

⁸⁵Horn, p. 387.

⁸⁶Hood, p. 285.

⁸⁷Cheatham, p. 527.

About 4:15 PM, Cleburne's three brigades, with one of Forrest's, assaulted the Federal positions, which were prepared and supported with artillery rather than in motion.⁸⁸ The Federal line was approached obliquely, necessitating a change in Cleburne's direction of advance while receiving heavy artillery fire. As a result, his line became disarranged, making it necessary for him to reform. Cheatham described Cleburne as experiencing an "error of direction."⁸⁹

In the meantime, Hood ordered Bate's division to where he thought Cleburne's left should be; as Bate prepared to advance in that direction, the order was countermanded by Cheatham upon learning of Cleburne's change of direction, and the division sent to Cleburne's new position. General John C. Brown's division was also sent forward, on Cleburne's right.

Hood, unaware of the changes in direction, retired to a farm over a mile away to await events. Cheatham stated he continued to keep Hood informed of events.⁹⁰ Hood denied this, and "thought it probable that Cheatham had taken possession of Spring Hill without encountering material opposition."⁹¹ Cheatham continued his preparations for a full scale attack with his corps.

⁸⁸ Howell and Elizabeth Purdue, Pat Cleburne (Hillsboro, Texas; Hill Junior College Press, 1973), pp. 396-398.

⁸⁹Cheatham, p. 525.

⁹⁰Cheatham, p. 526.

⁹¹Hood, p. 285.

About 5:00 PM, Hood sent Governor Isham Harris of Tennessee, who was travelling with the Army, to see what was happening and whether Cheatham had been successful. Cheatham rode back to talk with Hood, who told him to his astonishment that Hood "had concluded to wait 'till morning,"⁹² directing Cheatham to be ready to attack at daylight. Hood related that he greeted Cheatham with the words, "General, why in the name of God have you not attacked the enemy and taken possession of that pike?"⁹³ Hood then attempted to get Stewart into position to attack and seize the road, but darkness supervened. Cheatham responded to Hood's account that the "dramatic scene with which he embellishes his narrative of the day's operations only occurred in the imagination of General Hood."⁹⁴ The Army was in bivouac by 11:00 PM.

That night the entire Federal force under Schofield marched up the unguarded pike to Spring Hill. Hood ordered no troops to take positions along the road, nor did he go to personally reconnoiter the area. About midnight, a private soldier reportedly told Hood of Federal movement along the road; this undocumented story appears to have its origin in Hood's own account of events. At that time, he sent a staff officer to Cheatham with orders to fire on any movement on the road. Major Bostick of Cheatham's staff rode up to the road, with General Bushrod Johnson, and found all quiet around 2:00 PM;

⁹²Cheatham, p. 526.

⁹³Hood, p. 286.

⁹⁴Cheatham, p. 530.

this was the only communication Cheatham received from Hood that night.⁹⁵

However, the officer sent by Hood (Major A. P. Mason, Hood's Assistant Adjutant General) on the following day told Governor Harris that he had fallen asleep and never delivered the order to Cheatham. Did Mason send it and forget? Or did Cheatham imagine that he received it? The entire event leads to a blind alley and has an air of unreality. Cheatham identified Mason by name as the individual who delivered the note from Hood.⁹⁶

The following morning, on learning that Schofield had escaped during the night, Hood raged publicly at his subordinates, especially Cheatham. Hood wrote that had he thought for one moment Cheatham would have failed to give battle, he would have led the troops into action himself, even though it would have given cause for a charge of "recklessness."⁹⁷ In addition, he reiterated his claim that the Army would not fight unless from the protection of breastworks, and on December 7 telegraphed Richmond withdrawing an earlier recommendation for Cheatham's promotion. The next day, he requested a "good lieutenant general" to command Cheatham's corps, then suddenly reversed himself, deciding that Cheatham's failure would be a lesson to him, and that he should be retained. On the 11th, Hood wrote,

⁹⁵Cheatham, p. 527.

⁹⁶Cheatham, p. 530.

⁹⁷Hood, p. 287.

"Major-General Cheatham has frankly confessed the great error of which he was guilty, and attaches much blame to himself;" as a result, Hood thought it "best he should retain for the present time the command he now holds."⁹⁸

Cheatham wrote that there was absolutely no foundation to Hood's entire account, and quoted a note which he received from Hood on December 13 stating that no blame attached to Cheatham for the failure at Spring Hill. He also described a postwar letter from Governor Harris, who related the Mason incident to Hood and was told that Hood held Cheatham blameless.⁹⁹

How Schofield was permitted to escape from Spring Hill is still unknown. Cheatham's and Hood's accounts differ to the extent that they seem to describe different events, and the same observation is true for the earlier failure that day to block the road southward or conduct an energetic assault against the Federal forces. In that case, the little external evidence available favors Cheatham's account.

At any rate, Hood determined to make one more effort to rout Schofield, this time at Franklin, and on the 30th of November, placed the Army in movement in that direction. By midafternoon they were in position on Winstead Hill, overlooking the formidable Franklin defenses. The town had been

⁹⁸Hood, p. 290.

⁹⁹Cheatham, pp. 532-533.

occupied by Federal forces since 1862, and it was surrounded by extensive earthworks and abatis.¹⁰⁰ By 3:00 PM, Cheatham's and Stewart's Corps were deployed; Lee's Corps, coming up behind, served as the reserve. Most of the Army's artillery was still with Lee. Cheatham sought out Hood, telling him, "I do not like the looks of this fight; the enemy has an excellent position and they are well fortified."¹⁰¹ Hood replied that he preferred to fight where the enemy only had hours to prepare rather than at Nashville where they had been strengthening their position for three years, ignoring the fact that the Federal works at Franklin had been in preparation for the same length of time. At the prospect of combat, Hood perceived the Army's morale to improve as if it were "a determination to retrieve, if possible, the fearful blunder of the previous afternoon and night."¹⁰² Cheatham's troops are said to have cheered at the sight of Franklin and the peaceful Harpeth River valley.¹⁰³

Forrest, commanding the Confederate cavalry, advised against a frontal assault, and offered to attempt to flank Schofield himself. Hood, however, felt any further flanking movement "inexpedient" and determined to attack "in front and without delay."¹⁰⁴ He was so eager that he would not even wait for Lee and his artillery, attacking with no

¹⁰⁰Connelly, p. 503.

¹⁰¹Quoted in Hay, p. 120.

¹⁰²Hood, p. 292.

¹⁰³Horn, p. 395. ¹⁰⁴OR 93:653.

artillery preparation and using only 19,000 infantrymen. Other Confederate commanders expressed similar reservations; O. F. Strahl, commanding a brigade in Brown's Division, Cheatham's Corps, told his troops, "Boys, this will be short but desperate."¹⁰⁵ Hood quotes a conversation with Cleburne, in which the latter expressed a high degree of optimism and hope.¹⁰⁶ This contrasts with a conversation reported by Brigadier General Govan, who described Cleburne as greatly depressed by the desperate nature of the assault although intending to follow the orders given him.¹⁰⁷ At 4:00 PM the order to advance was given, and 18 brigades of infantry moved forward.

One-half mile South of Franklin, two battle lines formed in full view of Federal troops, and then charged the Union positions. A Federal officer, observing the preparations, called it a "grand sight."¹⁰⁸ Because of the terrain, the divisions of Cleburne and Brown from Cheatham's Corps made the first contact. After overrunning an advanced Federal outpost, they came under severe artillery and small arms fire but managed to reach the Federal positions while taking numerous casualties. After a period of intense hand-to-hand fighting, the Confederate forces were beaten back to the outer ditch of the Federal entrenchments when Union reserves

¹⁰⁵O'Connell, p. 238.

¹⁰⁶Hood, pp. 293-294.

¹⁰⁷Purdue & Purdue, p. 420.

¹⁰⁸Horn, p. 400.

arrived, but continued to launch repeated costly attacks. Hood ordered Cheatham to drive the enemy from his position "at all hazards."¹⁰⁹ Cleburne's division became caught in a crossfire, and as he advanced on foot after losing two mounts to enemy fire, Cleburne himself was killed. General John Adams, leading his brigade, and like Cleburne of Irish birth, sustained a severe arm wound but refused to leave the field; he was killed as his horse leaped the palisades into the Federal trenches.

Brown's division initially penetrated so deeply into the Federal positions that Brigadier General G. W. Gordon was captured. Thrown back with the assistance of Federal reserves, they were boxed in on three sides and subjected to intense fire. Brigadier Generals Gist and Strahl were killed outright, while Brigadier General John Carter died on his own property in front of his family home, as Brown lost all four of his brigade commanders; Brown himself was wounded.

To the right of Cleburne and Brown, Loving and Walthall's divisions of Stewart's Corps advanced across a railroad cut under fire of a ten-gun Federal battery, then were met by small-arms fire from Casement's Division which was armed with the new repeating rifles. In Quarles' brigade of Walthall's Division, the highest ranking officer left able to command was a captain.¹¹⁰ Federal cavalry drove back

¹⁰⁹Hood, p. 293.

¹¹⁰OR 93:721.

Forrest, who attempted to move north of Franklin with Jackson's division.

The Confederate forces continued to assault the Federal positions, reforming each time. Hood remained at Winstead Hill, seemingly unaware of events on the battlefield; at 7:00 PM, the reserve division of General Edward Johnson arrived and was immediately ordered forward in the darkness. Hood sent no orders to Stewart or Cheatham to withdraw, and was even planning to continue the assault the next morning.¹¹¹ Finally, about 10:00 PM, after Johnston was repulsed, fighting began to slowly subside.

Six general officers were killed (Adams, Cleburne, Granbury, Gist, Carter, Stahl) and five wounded (Manigault, Scott, Cockrell, Quarles, Brown); one (Gordon) was captured. In addition, 23 colonels and 10 lieutenant colonels were casualties. Hood officially reported a total of 4,500 total losses but other estimates have ranged as high as 6,200.¹¹² Despite his earlier misgivings about the army's reluctance to attack entrenched positions, Hood wrote "Never did troops fight more gallantly."¹¹³ He also claimed that only nightfall prevented the insertion of Lee's Corps, saving Schofield's Army from destruction, a frank untruth. Around midnight,

¹¹¹Connelly, p. 506.

¹¹²OR 93:654, 685-686; Connelly, p. 506.

¹¹³OR 93:654.

Schofield withdrew from Franklin and continued his move to Nashville, having sustained a total loss of 2,326.¹¹⁴ Hood, at the conclusion of the battle, was left with an effective force of 23,053.¹¹⁵

Hood treated the battle as a victory, congratulating his troops on December 1 and depicting it as successful in his telegram to Richmond of December 3. The assault at Franklin has been compared with Pickett's charge at Gettysburg; however, Pickett was preceded by a two hour artillery preparation, charged across an open half-mile instead of two miles, attacked forces behind a stone wall rather than in entrenchments, conducted only a single assault, and sustained 1,350 casualties by comparison.¹¹⁶

As an explanation of Hood's suicidal attack on Franklin it has been proposed that Hood was attempting to discipline his army by irrationally ordering a frontal assault.¹¹⁷ His frustration and irritation at allowing the Federal troops to slip away at Spring Hill were evident. Hood's opinion was that "the best move in my career as a soldier, I was thus destined to behold come to naught."¹¹⁸ His attack has also been justified by the then desperate nature of the Confederacy, but this does not explain his

¹¹⁴OR 93:343.

¹¹⁵Hood, p. 299.

¹¹⁶Horn, p. 403.

¹¹⁷Connolly, p. 502.

¹¹⁸Hood, p. 290.

failure to wait for his reserve corps or to prepare for his assault by artillery fire.¹¹⁹ Had he been able to exploit the initial penetration by Cleburne's division, a different outcome may have resulted. In addition to not having a reserve available, Hood was in no position to directly influence the battle from his headquarters on Winstead Hill. The restoring of the Federal line by a reserve brigade at that time doomed any Confederate chances for success. Even if successful, the late hour at which the attack was launched left scant time for following up any successes before nightfall. Johnston's night attack only led to more casualties.

Following the battle at Franklin, Hood had three choices. He could assault the large Federal force at Nashville, which he felt unable to do; cross over into Kentucky, which was precluded by the lack of a supply base and reinforcements; or assume defensive positions around Nashville, await a Federal attack and hope to seize the initiative at that time. Withdrawal back to the Tennessee River was never considered; by his own statement, he "was still unwilling to abandon the ground as long as I saw the shadow of a probability of assistance from the Trans-Mississippi Department or of victory in battle" and felt that the "troops would . . . return better satisfied even after defeat . . . if they felt that a brave and vigorous effort had been made to save the country from disaster."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹Hay, p. 131.

¹²⁰Hood, p. 300.

During the first week of December, what remained of the Army of Tennessee moved into defensive positions around Nashville, one of the most strongly fortified cities in the country. Inexplicably, he detached 6,500 men, including most of his cavalry, to seize Murfreesboro, leaving him with only about 15,000 infantry. With this force, he spread across three of the seven approaches to Nashville, in such a fashion that his line was bent back at right angles. His left flank was exposed along the Hillsboro pike, with two small detachments located further to the west.

After an unsuccessful engagement with Federal troops at Murfreesboro, Bate's division returned to Nashville, but Hood ordered Forrest and the cavalry to remain behind and observe Federal activity in that area. In the meantime, Hood's troops prepared defensive positions, including five redoubts which were to protect the left flank. Although mild weather at first allowed good progress to be made, on December 8 a snow storm, followed by several days of sleet and rain, covered the entire area with ice. On December 13, the temperature reached a high of 13 degrees. Hood's supply trains found it impossible to operate in a sea of mud and ice.

General Thomas, in command of the Federal forces and pressed by Grant, Lincoln, and Stanton, finally yielded to insistent requests to attack the Confederate forces. He planned to do so as early as December 6 but was forestalled by the weather. The impatient Grant suspended Thomas from

command but restored him on learning of the proposed attack, telling him "delay no longer."¹²¹ In fact, Grant had already dispatched General John Logan to replace Thomas when he learned of the battle at Nashville. Hood, meanwhile, telegraphed Beauregard, inviting him to visit the Army of Tennessee and engaged in correspondence regarding the replacement of Cheatham. On December 14 Thomas called his corps commanders together and outlined a plan of attack, to be concentrated on the undefended Confederate left. Hood learned of this through his intelligence network in Nashville, but at dawn on December 15 a Federal division attacked the Confederate far right flank instead. After about four hours the entrenched Confederate forces repulsed the assault, but well to the Confederate left, Chalmers' small cavalry command supported only by a brigade of 700 men, was being overwhelmed by a massive Federal envelopment with 40,000 troops.¹²² The five redoubts designed to protect the Confederate left flank, incompletely constructed and poorly manned, soon came under a heavy attack. Stewart, holding the refused left flank, learned of the massive Federal forces advancing on him about 11:00 AM, and sent to Hood for reinforcements. Four twelve pound smooth bore Napoleons under the command of Captain Lumsden, with one hundred infantrymen

¹²¹Hay, p. 145.

¹²²Connelly, p. 509.

under Captain Foster, held on to their advanced position and delayed the Federal advances for nearly two hours, until swept away in an assault by sixteen regiments of Federal infantry and dismounted cavalry.¹²³

Despite what reinforcements Hood could muster, and a courageous defense by Walthall's and Loving's division against greatly superior numbers, the Confederate left collapsed about 4:30 PM. That night, Hood withdrew his remaining forces about two miles farther southeast, and transferred Cheatham's corps to the left. The position taken was roughly concave, and again angled on the left. By this time Hood had no more than 15,000 troops, and was operating with no cavalry. In addition, Federal cavalry seized one of the two Confederate lines of withdrawal to Franklin, a fact unknown to Hood when he ordered Cheatham to use that route, the Granny White Pike, should it be necessary.¹²⁴ This, together with the fact that he started his supply wagons back toward Franklin, indicated his concern over the possible outcome of a renewed Federal assault; but his situation was not completely hopeless if he wished to conduct a retrograde movement back to Franklin that night. Thomas was reluctant to believe Hood would be there in the morning, despite the assurances of Schofield, a West Point classmate of Hood's, that Hood would still be ready to fight.¹²⁵

¹²³Horn, p. 413.

¹²⁴OR 94:696.

¹²⁵Horn, p. 415.

Beginning about 10:00 AM on December 16, limited attacks were again made against Lee's corps, now on the Confederate right. These were successfully repulsed and the position reinforced with Cleburne's former division under General James A. Smith, withdrawn from the Confederate center. Further unsuccessful Federal assaults came at noon and at 3:00 PM. About 3:30 PM, Smith started back to his former position.

The Confederate left and center received heavy and incessant artillery shelling all day. While Smith was returning, the Federal XXIII and XVI corps fell on the center just as 10,000 Federal cavalry came into the Confederate rear from the south. Hood's line collapsed, most running for their lives in the face of overwhelming Federal superiority in numbers.

Cheatham's and Stewart's corps were completely routed; only Lee withdrew his command in any semblance of order. Fifty-four precious artillery pieces were lost, simply abandoned because there was no time to bring up horses to move them.¹²⁶ The remains of the Army of Tennessee streamed into Brentwood, south of Nashville; almost 5,000 surrendered on the field. Total Confederate losses were estimated at about 6,000.¹²⁷ Hood gave no figures in his reports. A private of Cheatham's corps described Hood, with

¹²⁶Hood, p. 303.

¹²⁷Horn, p. 417.

tears running down his cheeks, seeing his retreating army pass by as they sang a parody of the "Yellow Rose of Texas:"

So now I'm marching southward,
My heart is full of woe,
I'm going back to Georgia,
To See my Uncle Joe.
You may talk about your Beauregard
and sing of General Lee,
But the Gallant Hood of Texas
Played Hell in Tennessee.¹²⁸

At Brentwood, Hood restored a semblance of order. Clayton's division from Lee's corps and what was left of Chalmer's cavalry successfully defended the Confederate rear despite Lee himself being wounded. Hood even toyed with the thought of striking back at the Federal right, but soon abandoned the idea. By December 17, he was through Franklin and sent for Forrest to assist in covering the withdrawal; the next day he passed by Columbia. Made even more miserable by driving snow, the army began to cross the Tennessee River at Florence Christmas Day, 1864. All of the Confederate forces were across by December 29; probably half of them by this time were without shoes.¹²⁹

By January 10 Hood went into winter quarters at Tupelo, Mississippi. Beauregard requested Hood on January 1 to send a report of operations, stating he had heard nothing since December 15. On receiving no response, he left to

¹²⁸Norn, p. 418.

¹²⁹Horn, p. 421.

visit Hood personally, having already discussed replacing Hood with General Richard Taylor and obtaining permission to do so.¹³⁰ A brief note January 3 from Hood to Seddon informed him that the army was back across the Tennessee.¹³¹ The same day Hood wrote Beauregard it was "important you should visit this army,"¹³² and acknowledged Beauregard's telegram of January 1. Beauregard finally learned the truth in a repeat from General Taylor, dated January 9, who had visited Hood; Taylor said that the army "if moved in its present condition, it will prove utterly worthless."¹³³ On January 13, the day before Beauregard's arrival at Tupelo, Hood telegraphed to Seddon, "I respectfully request to be relieved from the command of this army."¹³⁴ On the 15th, Seddon authorized Beauregard to replace Hood with Taylor and ordered Hood to the War Department in Richmond. Once again, Hood offered to command a corps, division, or anything else, leaving the Army of Tennessee on January 23, 1865. Beauregard on January 13 had reported, based on Taylor's account, that the army numbered less than 15,000.¹³⁵ Figure 10 illustrates Beauregard's order of January 22, officially replacing Hood with Taylor and ordering Hood to Richmond.

Hood went to Richmond, and busied himself writing his official reports. Enroute, he stopped at Columbia, South Carolina, to see his fiancée, Sally Buchanan Preston,

¹³⁰OR 94:753.

¹³¹OR 94:757.

¹³²OR 94:758.

¹³³OR 94:772.

¹³⁴OR 94:781.

¹³⁵OR 94:780.

Confederate States
 Genl Geo Mil Dir of the West
 Jan 23rd 1865
 Special Order No 11
 No 11
 is relieved at his own request by the
 War Department from the command of
 the Army of Tennessee. He will report
 for orders to the War Dept at Rich-
 mond Va. -
 Wm Dickson R. Taylor
 Commanding Department of War
 Mr. G. A. Taylor, with assembly command
 of the Army of Tennessee, will follow
 orders. -
 (Signed) G. A. Taylor

Figure 10. Beauregard's Order of January 23, 1865,
Relieving Hood.

whose younger brother died at Nashville. For whatever reason, the engagement was broken; Mary Boykin Chesnut, in Columbia at the time, describes Hood as being depressed and preoccupied with his defeats.¹³⁶ In Richmond, Hood, now reverted to the rank of lieutenant general, met with Davis, who ordered him west to attempt to raise troops in the Trans-Mississippi Department. He was accompanied by the Wigfall family, with whom he had been reconciled. At Sumter, South Carolina, the party learned of General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, but continued westward to Natchez, Mississippi, hoping to join either Kirby Smith in Texas, or to seek sanctuary in Mexico with Emperor Maximillian. Finally, after the Wigfalls had gone onto Mexico, Hood heard of Smith's surrender and on May 31, 1865, surrendered himself to Major General John W. Davidson, USA, in Natchez. He was paroled and allowed to go to Texas by way of New Orleans.

He chose to stay in the latter city, and with the aid of friends in Kentucky, went into business as a commission merchant. At first successful, in 1868, he married Anna Marie Hennen, and ultimately fathered 11 children. He was reconciled with Thomas and Sherman after the war, and remained on good terms with Longstreet and Beauregard, both of whom also lived in New Orleans. In 1874, Joseph E. Johnston published his Narrative of Military Operations, which stimulated Hood to produce a refutation of the charges

¹³⁶Chesnut, p. 474.

against him which it contained. At the same time, his inexperience in business led to his gradual failure in commerce; and Longstreet came to his aid by assisting him in getting an appointment as president of the Louisiana branch of an insurance company.

In 1879 New Orleans experienced a severe yellow fever epidemic; Hood's wife died August 24 and on August 30 Hood and his eldest child, Lydia, also succumbed. He is buried in Washington Street Cemetery in New Orleans. The following year, Beauregard published Hood's Advance and Retreat, a refutation of Johnston's charges, to assist in the support of his ten surviving children.

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS FOR HOOD'S RISE AND FALL

An assessment of Hood as a commanding officer is hampered by the conflicting sources. Accounts of events in official reports, diaries, postwar reminiscences, and similar documents differ to such an extent that they are totally unreconcilable. For example, Hood's and Cheatham's accounts of the actions at Spring Hill are so diverse that they seem to describe two separate and unrelated events. Therefore, the assessment of actual events must rest upon circumstantial evidence.

Hood's first significant action as a Confederate officer occurred in July 1861, near Bethel, Virginia in which he attacked what was probably a party of Federal troops gathering wood; yet, his official report of the event stated that the Federals were in ambush. At Eltham's Landing in May 1862, he stumbled onto the Federal forces which he was ordered to attack, and had to fight a five-hour defensive engagement until he could withdraw. He demonstrated the same failure to obtain tactical intelligence that he did during his frontier career. Hood's charge of Federal positions at Gaines' Mill, across an open field, was the turning point in a Confederate victory but obtained at the cost of a

large number of casualties. At Manassas, after repulsing a Federal attack, his brigade again successfully led the assault and sustained high losses. Sharpsburg saw still another costly attack against superior numbers, unsuccessful despite an earlier bayonet charge. At Fredericksburg, Hood displayed an atypical caution, and his division took but little part in the Federal defeat. Gettysburg resulted in Hood's first wound, sustained in the assault on a position which he had several times requested to bypass. His second wound was received in the course of routing the Federal right at Chickamauga.

The exact location of Hood's wound at Gettysburg is uncertain. It seems to have been sufficiently severe that it was at first thought the arm could not be saved, and a post-war account describes it as "shrivelled and nearly useless."¹ Mrs. Chesnut refers to Hood as being "disabled in one hand too."² Hood refers to the wound as being in his arm, and relates that when conveyed to the rear in an ambulance, he was unable to lie down because of pain.³

Prevailing medical practice at that time was to perform amputations for compound (i.e., open) fractures. As this was a low-velocity shrapnel wound, it seems likely

¹Charles B. Richardson, Southern Generals (New York: (n.n.) 1865), p. 387.

²Chesnut, p. 363.

³Hood, p. 60.

that the majority of the injury was due to actual tissue avulsion, without major bone injury. The atrophy, including that of the hand, which seems on the basis of contemporary descriptions to have been present would indicate the presence of major nerve injury with probable actual interruption of the nerve trunks and resultant disuse atrophy. Hood apparently kept the arm in a sling. Together, these seem to indicate a wound in the fleshy part of the forearm just below the elbow with significant tissue loss. If the elbow joint itself had been violated, most probably amputation would have been performed.

One of the frequent characteristics of this type of injury is chronic pain in the traumatized nerve endings, often of such severity as to require narcotics. Those which were available in the South were morphine and opium, virtually all of which in 1864-1865 had to be brought in by blockade runners.⁴ It seems probably that Hood would require such drugs intermittently for the arm wound alone.

More definite information on his leg wound at Chickamauga is available. According to Hood himself, the minie ball struck his right leg in the upper third.⁵ The amputation was performed just below the hip joint, very similar

⁴H. H. Cunningham, *Doctors in Gray* (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1970), p. 135.

⁵Hood, p. 64.

to the one undergone by Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell,⁶ leaving a stump of some $4\frac{1}{2}$ ".⁷ Of 77 operations of this type reported by Confederate surgeons, 37 died afterwards.⁸ The minie ball possessed extremely destructive qualities, being a low velocity missile rotating and turning in its course, and producing a bursting wound type of exit.⁹ It was the cause of most major battle wounds of the war.

Although Hood ordered several artificial limbs, which he received through the blockade, it appears that he never learned to use one. General Ewell, ten years older than Hood and whose amputation was similar, had no problem in learning to use one but for sometime was prevented from doing so by local wound problems.¹⁰ In fact, he was shot through his artificial leg at Gettysburg and made quite a joke of it.¹¹

To ride, Hood had to be assisted into the saddle by two aides, then strapped to the horse.¹² It seems clear that his physical handicaps were severe enough to significantly degrade his ability to command in the field. Mrs. Chesnut,

⁷O'Connor, p. 165.

⁸Cunningham, p. 223.

⁹Richard B. Stark and Janet C. Stark, "Surgical Care of the Confederate States Army," *Bull. N.Y. Acad. Med.* 34: 6, p. 401.

¹⁰Percy Gatling Hamlin, ed., The Making of a Soldier: Letters of General R. S. Ewell (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet and Shepperson, 1940), p. 118.

¹¹Percy Gatling Hamlin, Old Bald Head (Strasburg, Virginia: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1940), p. 146.

¹²Connelly, p. 433.

on learning he was leaving Richmond to be a corps commander under Johnson wrote, "all that ambition still! In spite of those terrible wounds!"¹³ Interestingly, in their postwar argument, Johnston makes no mention of Hood's physical disabilities. Hood declined, however, to seek an honorable yet less arduous position, stating that he proposed to see things fought out in the field.¹⁴

The severe physical handicaps imposed by his wounds, including the probable requirement for periodic use of opium or morphine, certainly contributed to his failure. It is perhaps to his credit that he never attempted to justify his failures on this basis, perhaps not associating any medication which he may have taken with a diminution in ability. Nevertheless, his injuries certainly took their toll of his faculties. Figure 11 shows two examples of his signature, one in 1861 and one in February 1864. The lower signature appears to show significant deterioration, especially for a 33-year old man. The possible need for the frequent use of pain-relieving narcotics has also been mentioned. His fundamental approach to command, however, does not seem to have changed in his post-injury period. Even while urging caution on Johnston, he conducted a counterattack in his usual style at Kenesaw Mountain. The evident frustration which Hood

¹³Chesnut, p. 367.

¹⁴Hay, p. 36.

J. E. Hood
Col. Commanding 4th Regt. Term 3rd

pounds corn, pounds oats,
~~four hundred~~ pounds of fodder, in full of the above Requisition.

J. E. Hood
Lieut

Figure 11. Examples of Hood's Signature in December 1861 (upper) and March 1864 (lower). (From originals in the National Archives)

felt when Schofield slipped away from him at Spring Mountain was probably compounded by his feeling of physical inadequacy. Nevertheless, Hood seems to have managed extremely well in the face of severe physical handicaps. As the entire basis for his subsequent defeats, however, his physical condition does not provide sufficient explanation.¹⁵

Several aspects seem to underly Hood's apparent failure in high command. First, he was unable to relate to either higher or lower commanders. This factor was notably evident after his promotion to major general. He repeatedly blamed his errors on subordinates, many of whom were older and more experienced than he. For instance, upon assuming

¹⁵Popular history has it that Hood was prone to gambling and overindulgence in alcohol; there is no evidence that the latter played any part in either his interpersonal problems or his defeats.

independent command, his attempts to assume the offensive were repeatedly thwarted by his inability to coordinate his forces. Hood continually blamed his subordinates for failure to execute his carefully conceived plans, not realizing that the efficient command system of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia which he was trying to copy did not exist in the Army of Tennessee. In each case he placed the blame on the next most senior officer in his command, at first Hardee until he was transferred, then Cheatham.

On various occasions he circumvented or ignored his own superiors. His performance with the Army of Tennessee under Johnston illustrates this characteristic. Whatever the true events that occurred at Cassville, it seems plain that Hood conspired, either independently or with assistance from Richmond, against his commanding officer, Johnston. Hood, who had attacked superior numbers without hesitation in the past, frequently counseled Johnston against the offensive, the exact opposite of what he had been sent west to do, and an action which renders Hood's motives suspect. It is even possible that Hood, knowing he would soon be the army's commander, was attempting to conserve manpower by encouraging Johnston's already strong tendency to defend. Moreover, following his losses at Franklin and Nashville, he misrepresented the situation to Richmond until virtually forced to the truth by Taylor's visit. Hood then requested relief from command.

Another shortcoming was that Hood did not understand logistics. The visit of an Inspector General during his command of the Texas Brigade resulted in an admonition from General Lee, and he could not see the value or necessity of Longstreet's foraging expedition of April 1863. Prior to the invasion of Tennessee, his army lacked logistical supplies. By the time of the retreat, fully half the Army of Tennessee lacked shoes. This failure was not uncommon among Confederate generals, but Hood may have been uncommonly deficient in this regard. Robert E. Lee's cryptic comments to Davis on learning of Hood's elevation to command of the Army of Tennessee, "Hood is a bold fighter. I am doubtful as to other qualities necessary," and "Hood is a good fighter, very industrious on the battlefield, careless off"¹⁶ document his logistical and managerial inadequacies.

By his own admission, Hood attempted to emulate Lee's detached style of command and continued to do so even after it should have been evident that the adoption of this approach was contributing to his problems. It may be argued that his adoption of Lee's style, leaving tactical matters to commanders on the field once the battle began, was in large part forced in Hood by his injuries. However, Hood's introduction to higher command came at a time when the

¹⁶Freeman, Lee's Dispatches, pp. 282-284.

command system at the Army of Northern Virginia was operating efficiently under Lee. Hood's admiration of Lee appears to have been genuine.

Hood's tactical plans were frequently quite sound, failing in execution rather than conception, at least up to his suicidal attack at Franklin. He was simply unwilling to admit that the failures of subordinate officers to execute his orders was in large part his own failure, and instead held them up as scapegoats, probably believing in their culpability himself.

Finally, Hood's personality characteristics both fostered his rapid rise and contributed to his defeats. His personal bravery appears unquestioned, and the significant physical handicaps imposed upon him result in a sympathetic perception of his abilities. Throughout his career, he manifested a high degree of impulsiveness in his willingness to attack which bordered on rashness. He also displayed a tendency to exaggerate or lie outright. An example may be seen in the account of his engagement with the Federal wood-chopping party. While such characteristics were not confined to Hood, he seems to have carried them further than most others.

Another aspect of his personality also presents itself in his manipulative attempts to gain advancement, especially in relation to the Wigfall's, Davis, and Richmond social life. Initially, Hood had little access to the

complex structure of interpersonal relationships which actually governed the Confederacy and many of its actions. A network of informal associations which existed prior to the war exerted a major influence on the shaping of Confederate strategy.¹⁷ Hood had developed few of these associations, having spent his U.S. Army service in the west. Therefore, he lacked family influence in the cultural centers of the South such as Atlanta, Charleston, and Richmond and was without significant political contacts in Washington.

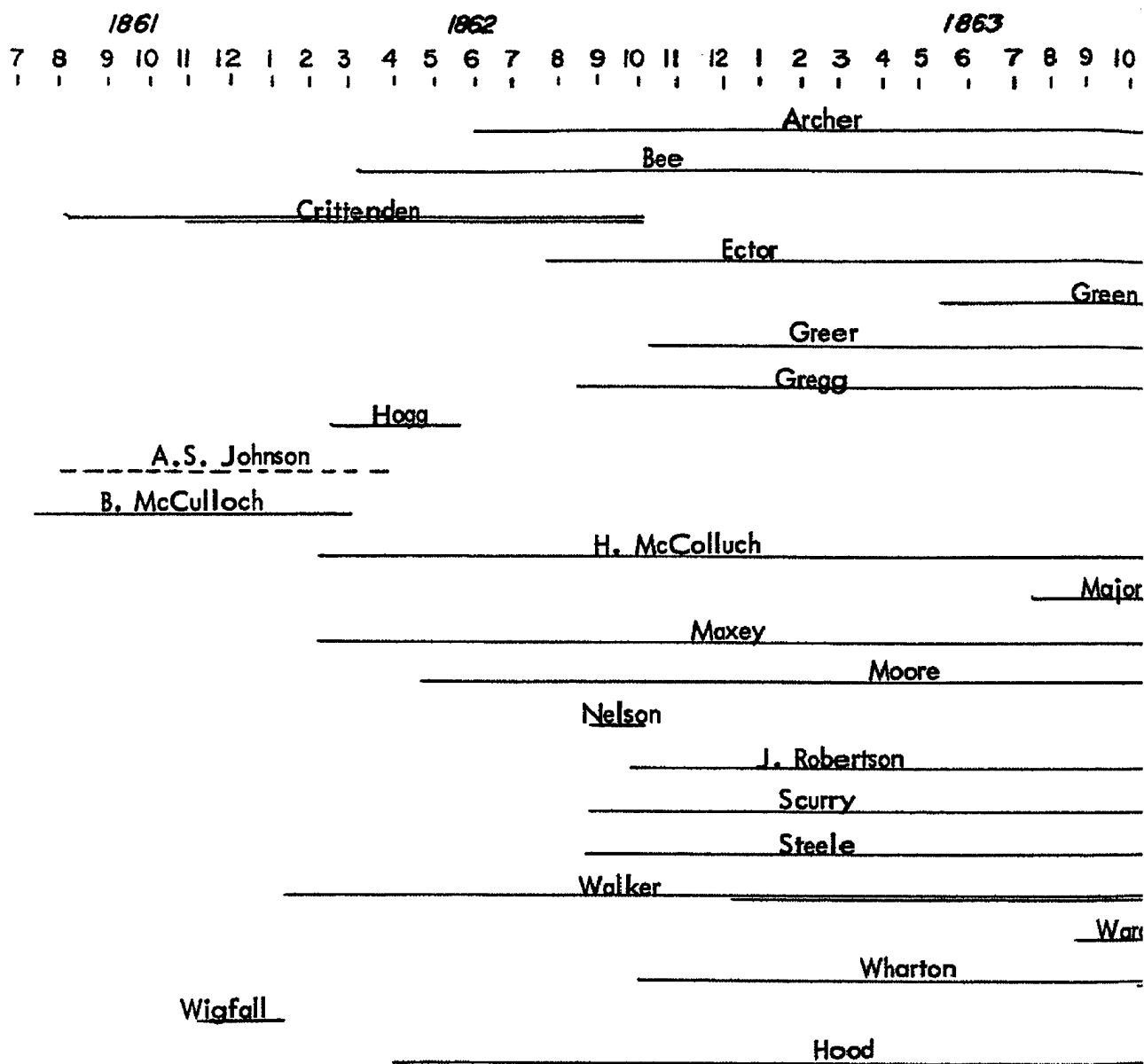
His lack of cultural finesse attracted the attention of Mary Boykin Chesnut, one of the arbiters of the Richmond social scene. In an attempt to compensate for this lack of contacts and social grace, Hood placed himself under the patronage of Senator Wigfall of Texas who had an extremely high number of potential relationships, both direct and indirect.¹⁸ Hood also became engaged to Wigfall's daughter. As soon as the opportunity presented itself he transferred, without any seeming compunction, his allegiance to Wigfall's obviously more influential enemy, President Jefferson Davis. At the end of the war, he found himself again in Wigfall's company.

An analysis of the circumstances under which Hood secured his initial appointment as a general officer may

¹⁷Thomas L. Connolly and Archer Jones, The Politics of Command (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973).

¹⁸Connolly and Jones, p. 203.

alter slightly the interpretation relative to his use of social influence to achieve promotion. There were 425 officers who held the rank of general officer in the Confederate Army; 146 of these, approximately one-third, were graduates of the United States Military Academy. Thirty-one of the generals claimed association with Texas or entered the Confederate Army from that state; only three: Albert Sydney Johnson; George Crittenden; and Hood; were West Point alumni. Figure 12 displays the chronological distribution of Texas generals from July 1861 to December 1863. At the end of 1861, there were only four: General A. S. Johnson; the recently promoted Major General Crittenden; and Brigadiers Ben McCollouch and Wigfall. By March-April 1862, Wigfall had resigned and McCollouch had been killed; at that time, six new brigadiers, including Hood, gained their appointments. Johnson lost his life soon thereafter, leaving Crittenden as the only Texan above the rank of brigadier, a situation which continued until Crittenden resigned following his disastrous defeat at Fishing Creek. It was at that time that Hood, the only available West Point graduate, was promoted to major general. He was the second youngest officer to hold that rank. Two Texas politicians held general officer rank in the Confederate Army, Joseph Hogg, a former state senator, who dies of dysentery in May 1862, and Wigfall, who commanded the Texas Brigade until his return to the Confederate Senate. It was under Wigfall that Hood initially



Legend: Brigadier General : _____
 Major General : _____
 General : - - - - -

Figure 12. General Officers of the Confederacy from Texas 1861-63.

served in the Texas Brigade and whom he succeeded as its commander, over the heads of more senior officers. Thus, the need for general officers from Hood's adopted state of Texas and his status as a West Point graduate appear to have contributed significantly to his rapid rise.¹⁹

Hood emerges as an unfortunate figure in the history of the Confederacy. His ambition seems to have exceeded his ability, and he was catapulted into positions of high command largely as the result of his successful manipulations, political promotions, and personal bravery. He witnessed the disintegration of his command and his career at a time when the Confederacy itself was in its final throes. His devotion to the cause of Confederate independence seems above reproach, yet he was never able to fulfill the expectations held of him. His failures were in the execution of his tactical plans rather than their conception. In the ultimate analysis, the basis of John Bell Hood's defeat lies paradoxically in his accidental successes as a junior officer, which, along with the previously noted factors, contributed to his meteoric rise from lieutenant to full general in three years.

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