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LONE STAR PRIDE: THE GOOD-DOUGLAS TEXAS BATTERY, CSA 1861-1865

By Andrew F. Lang

Although Texas was removed from most of the fighting in the Civil War, soldiers from the Lone Star State witnessed and participated in many key battles. Some 25,000 men from Texas voluntarily signed up for Confederate duty during 1861. The majority of them remained in the Trans-Mississippi Theater of the war, but some crossed the Mississippi River and participated in some of the fiercest fighting ever to occur on American soil. Most of those who traveled east of the river had never left their hometowns, much less their home-state, and went to what seemed like another world. One small group of these Texan Confederates formed a prominent artillery battery known as the Good-Douglas Texas Battery (re-named Douglas' Texas Battery in 1862). Formed by John J. Good of Dallas and James P. Douglas of Tyler, the battery gained notoriety at Pea Ridge and then fought gallantly at Richmond, Kentucky, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Nashville, winning glory as the only artillery battery from Texas to fight east of the Mississippi River.¹

Good and Douglas, the two men who formed the battery, were not native Texans. Rather, they came from average middle-class families from Mississippi and South Carolina respectively. Good prized the "displays and pomps of a soldier's life," and on March 12, 1859, organized a group of thirty-five resident Dallas men in his own private battery in the Texas militia. The fact that the battery consisted of very prominent individuals in Dallas make it safe to assume that the battery was more of a "social club" than an active military unit. In state service the unit was called the Dallas Light Artillery Battery.²

Seeing the "demand that would be made upon the Southern people in the approaching conflict," John Good accepted a Captain's commission from Texas governor Edward Clark on April 20, 1861, and was ordered to San Antonio for state military service. When he returned to Dallas from his service in late spring, a second commission was awaiting Good, only this time it was from the Confederate government in Montgomery, Alabama, ordering him to raise a company for Confederate artillery duty. Good immediately began recruiting his battery that would serve as the first Confederate command to be formed from Dallas County. The battery was to consist of six artillery pieces including two howitzers, horses, caissons, and appropriate amounts of ammunition. As a part of the commission that Good received from the Confederate government, a second fifty-man unit was to be raised in Tyler, Texas, under the command of James P. Douglas, who, like Good, had led a small local battery before the war began.³

The Good-Douglas Battery thus originated in a manner typical of batteries in the Civil War. The men who organized the batteries had little military experience; the men they commanded had even less. Those commanding the batteries were usually the ones who formed the unit and were voted to lead by their

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comrades. In addition, those who led the battery knew very little about military drill. For example, John Good, when he formed the Dallas Light Artillery Battery in 1859, trained and drilled his men from an artillery manual.⁴

These two artillery companies were then ordered to combine into one force during the early part of the summer of 1861 in Colonel Elkanah Greer's Third Texas Cavalry, a unit serving under General Ben McCulloch. Greer was responsible for seeing that the Good-Douglas Battery, plus ten cavalry companies formed from all over the state, would rendezvous in Dallas in the summer of 1861 and then march north to join McCulloch's Army of the West in Arkansas.⁵

Just before James Douglas's company met with the rest of Greer's men in Dallas, the men in the battery received a fond farewell from the residents of Tyler. Standing on the courthouse lawn on June 10, the ladies of the town presented the battery with a flag that most of the townspeople had pitched in to create. After saying their good-byes, Douglas's men left for Dallas on June 14.⁶ Meanwhile, in Dallas, Col. Greer was preparing for the departure of his entire unit, the Third Texas Cavalry, the outfit that the Good-Douglas Battery would serve in throughout the first year of the war. When Douglas's men arrived in Dallas, they found a town bustling with the excitement of war. The two artillery units finally had the chance to come together, and the 100-man Good-Douglas Texas Battery was now formed. Camping at John Good's residence one mile outside of Dallas, the unit soon received orders to move to Arkansas with Col. Greer and the rest of the cavalry unit. Therefore, on June 13, 1861 when the first list of officers of the battery was complete it read as follows: Captain John J. Good, Lieutenant James P. Douglas, and Second Lieutenants Alfred Davis, James Boren, and William Harriss.⁷

The demographic aspect of the battery was what could be expected of the Civil War generation. The average age of the original volunteers was twenty-six, which was three years older than the average age of their comrades in the Third Texas Cavalry. Naturally, the vast majority of the volunteers claimed southern states as their birthplace, however, seven members, before moving to Texas, were born in northern states. One individual, Peter Spanberg, was born in Norway and moved to Texas in the decade prior to the Civil War. They pursued a wide-variety of occupations including lawyer, the editor of the *Tyler Reporter*, printer, student, farmer, and merchant. Furthermore, the men came from all realms of the economic spectrum: twenty-four percent were in the lowest class (real and personal property valued at less than \$500); sixty-four percent were included in the middle class (real and personal property between \$500 and \$19,999); and twelve percent were in the wealthy class (real and personal property wealth over \$20,000).⁸

The time that Col. Greer allotted in Dallas was mostly spent waiting for the arrival of the cavalry unit's materials and ammunition from the recently captured Federal garrison in San Antonio. With these materials, Greer was especially anxious to receive the cannon for the artillery unit that the Confederate government ordered to serve. Finally, toward the middle of July,

three freight wagons from San Antonio arrived with the unit's supplies. The materials included tents, camping gear, nearly 2,000 pistols, and other assorted arms. As Greer expected, the prize of the delivery included four six-pound cannons designated solely for Good's battery. The time had now come for the battery to march north into the war.⁹

At the time the Good-Douglas battery was preparing to leave with ten companies of Col. Greer's Third Texas Cavalry, news came from Missouri that described build-ups by Union and Confederate forces. Thus, General McCulloch began requesting that Greer move quickly to the north.¹⁰ When the men marched north from Texas, their first destination was Fort Smith, Arkansas, where the unit would attach to McCulloch's army to engage in operations. Just after leaving Dallas, James Douglas wrote his girlfriend back in Tyler that, "I am under the opinion we will all be at home by the first of November."¹¹ Like most optimists of the time, Douglas was expressing the same sentiment that many others in both North and South were feeling regarding their beliefs of a very short conflict.

As the battery marched out of Texas, the first obstacle of the war came not on the battlefield, but rather in a river. As Greer's unit was crossing the Red River into the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), the river began to rise, and Good nearly lost a significant portion of his equipment. He was extremely proud, however, of the courage his men showed during the incident and wrote home stating, "Lincoln's forces may kill, but [he] can never conquer such boys."¹² Good himself greatly disliked Abraham Lincoln and the Union "cause" and, moreover, had always been against highly centralized powerful governments. As far as he was concerned, this was the type of democracy that Lincoln was promoting. Even in the days before the war when Good practiced law, he had been as one man described him, "a faithful sentinel on the watchtower of public liberty."¹³ The situation that the country was in at the time allowed Good the opportunity to fight for his beliefs on the battlefield rather than the courtroom, for a cause he was certain to be just. On the route to Fort Smith, Arkansas, Good remained positive and told his wife that when times were tough and when it crossed his mind that he might not ever return home, "when the character of service and glorious cause are considered, the recompense is ample."¹⁴ James Douglas, not knowingly, finished his captain's sentiment when he stated that the hardships of war were worth the effort so his loved ones "might enjoy the sweets of freedom." It seems quite evident from this statement that the men in the battery were more than willing to fight and die for a cause in which they so deeply believed.¹⁵

As the battery, along with Greer's cavalry, continued to move north, anxious feelings began to creep into the men's minds. Indeed, like many soldiers of the time, the men of Good's battery were worried that the war would be over by the time they reached a battle. Good himself therefore, was eagerly preparing to come into contact with the "abolitionists," his term for the Northern army.¹⁶ During the march to Fort Smith, half of the Good-Douglas battery reinforced Greer's advance guard, while the other part remained with the rest of the Third Texas, and by the first of August, Greer's Cavalry reached their des-

mination at Fort Smith. Immediately upon their arrival, Greer's men received a level of hospitality that thoroughly amazed them. The women in the town had formed a "Ladies Association" for the purpose of aiding the sick and injured from the journey as well as providing warm food and a comfortable place to sleep. Good's men considered this their finest treatment since leaving home, and Good himself had the ladies sew stripes to his pants and mend two of his shirts. The Southern cause, he believed, benefited greatly by having women of this nature on its side.¹⁷

For the Third Texas Cavalry, the stay in Fort Smith was short, as McCulloch summoned them for a quick advance into Missouri to join with his army. The Good-Douglas battery, however, had orders to remain behind in Fort Smith because of inadequate transportation. Greer's fast-paced and forced marches into Arkansas had taken a toll on the battery's horses, rendering them useless. During some parts of the march, Good and his men had the responsibility of moving the cannon and caissons themselves rather than relying on horsepower. Moreover, the rough terrain through the Indian Territory damaged a portion of the battery's equipment, creating a need for repairs. Colonel Greer assigned Captain Good the command of the remainder of the Third Texas left at Fort Smith.¹⁸ Greer then departed, continued north to meet McCulloch, and on August 13, 1861, Good and his men received word of the Confederate victory at the battle of Wilson's Creek three days earlier. Upon hearing the joyous news of the triumph, Good ordered a cannon salute in honor of General McCulloch. McCulloch had won a victory at Wilson's Creek, but his failure to pursue the Federal forces and ultimately defeat them led to a five-month campaign dodging various Union detachments.¹⁹

Although Good's battery was absent at Wilson's Creek, the training the battery received and the opportunity to rest was priceless, as the months ahead would require all the strength the men could muster. The days spent in camp at Fort Smith were rather typical for most artillery batteries throughout the war. James Douglas described such a day in one of his many wartime letters. Waking at daybreak and attending roll call shortly thereafter, members of the battery were assigned various tasks prior to breakfast such as feeding and watering the horses and preparing the cannon for drill service, which usually lasted several hours. The early afternoon consisted of a hearty lunch and an opportunity to write home or sleep. Drilling continued throughout the late afternoon and the early evening. Life in an artillery camp was "after all, not so miserable and not devoid of pleasure." Life of this nature would continue for several more months, while the battery waited eagerly for their time to enter the fray. During the stay in Fort Smith, however, Private Lewis J. Hawks died on August 15, 1861 as a result of an unknown disease. Hawks was the first member of the Good-Douglas Battery to die during the war.²⁰

By early November 1861, Union General John C. Frémont's incompetence in the Trans-Mississippi earned him removal by President Lincoln. This allowed McCulloch's men an easier state of mind as winter approached, and on December 6, the Army of the West took winter quarters near Bentonville, Arkansas.²¹ McCulloch would remain in this general vicinity in Arkansas and

southern Missouri until the spring campaigns commenced in 1862. This time was beneficial, however, as battery Private James Lunsford remembered the importance of rest the men had earned from the long marches throughout the previous summer months. He reminisced on the opportunity to live in warm quarters and eat warm food, which resulted in a pleasant lifestyle on the front. The battery members' wives helped the men as well, by coming together and making quilts and blankets for the soldiers during the cold winter months.²²

Throughout the winter, the Army of the West remained dormant, awaiting marching orders for the spring. Life in the camp was "monotonous and [dragged] on heavily," as Private Sam Thompson remembered in his journal. Men in the battery often played practical jokes on one another to pass the time. The battery lost its second member when young Robert Erwin contracted a cold and in short time developed pneumonia as a result of the harsh Arkansas winter. The disease could not be contained, and Erwin died just after the new year in January 1862.²³

General Ben McCulloch led the Texas troops, including Good's battery, into battle at Pea Ridge in the early dawn hours of March 7, 1862. After the long months of anticipation and enthusiasm about fighting, the green soldiers in the battery were suddenly, but naturally, overcome with nervous feelings of anxiety. Moreover, like many men in the Army of the West, they had had little sleep in the cold weather and only miniscule amounts of food to prepare for the action.²⁴ During the first part of the battle, the Good-Douglas Battery was assigned to McCulloch's division that directly attacked toward the right side of the Union lines commanded by General Samuel Curtis. The fighting in this area was south of the Elkhorn Tavern in an area known as Leetown.²⁵

Even though the "Smith County boys fought like Trojans," one member of the battery was killed on the final day of the battle. Twenty-year old Charles Erwin died manning his gun during the artillery exchanges on March 8. Charles was the brother of Robert Erwin who had died from pneumonia in January 1862, and the second of three brothers in the battery. The Good-Douglas unit to this point only had two deaths in the entire battery; however, they both came from the same Tyler family. Moreover, among the injured was fourteen-year old William Wilson who joined the battery as it marched through Fayetteville, Arkansas three days earlier. Wilson lost a leg on the final day of the combat.²⁶

As Good's men hurriedly retreated from the Pea Ridge battlefield they accidentally left behind a beautifully sewn silk battle flag presented by the ladies of Dallas. The flag was subsequently retrieved by a Federal battery from Missouri, claiming the prize in the name of the United States.²⁷ As the Good-Douglas Battery was one of the last Confederate units from the Army of the West to leave the field, John Good described for his wife what he saw: "It is a perfect miracle that any of us ever came out...the ground is literally ploughed up with cannon balls and shell...God forbid I shall ever again see such a sight." Good was greatly affected at the outcome of his first battle, after having the responsibility of the many lives under him. Concluding months of waiting for

the thrill of combat, Good summarized most of the battery's sentiment in terms of exhaustion, frustration, and anger at the aftermath. The hint of hatred was the overtone of a letter he sent his wife two weeks after the battle:

"I was once tender hearted, Sue, and expect to be so again when peace sheds her genial influence over the land, but on the field I had no more feeling for the dead [Yankees] than so many hogs. I did not budge from my course to avoid running them over them. Confound them. I wish they were all dead and hope to have the pleasure of assisting soon in executions again."²⁸

James Douglas echoed these emotions one-year later, offering his personal philosophy of war in general: "How wicked a creature is man. Did you ever think of it – that man is the only creature that attempts the destruction of his own race? The tiger will take the deer, the wolf will [slay] the sheep, the hawk may prey upon the dove, and the eagle upon the lark, but with their kindred they hold perpetual truce, and it is left for man alone of all animals to slay his brother."²⁹

Despite the change in the battery's sentiment and mind-set, they had performed admirably in the face of danger and the loss of life. For the majority of those in the Good-Douglas Battery, Pea Ridge represented the beginning of a long road ahead. The Civil War would endure for another two and a half years, and the men in the battery would have a front-row seat to witness the greatest amount of destruction in United States history.

By April 27, 1862, the battery was officially stationed at Corinth, Mississippi, under the command of General Joseph Hogg's Texas Brigade. The men had apparently recovered from the emotional hangover from the fighting at Pea Ridge and were once again looking forward to a fight, one that most thought would take place any day at Corinth. Good was very keen to the prospect of a fight, writing his wife, "my life is a sacrifice for the good of the country." Although the men of Good's battery looked forward to another battle, the reality was that Confederate commanders were determined to put the battery in reserve and use it only in a dire situation.³⁰ While the army remained idle, the men kept a watchful eye on the developing situation in the eastern theater. Sam Thompson recalled that the fate of "our cause may be determined this spring." Compounded with events in the east, the Confederates learned of the grim news of the loss of New Orleans. The Texans were especially downcast because correspondence with home would obviously be challenged, by having the largest southern city now under Union control and the entire Mississippi River threatened with closure.³¹

While in Corinth, many men in the Confederate Army were stricken with illness. Soldiers suffered especially from typhoid and dysentery due to the squalid water supply. Many members of the battery suffered alongside others in the army, including Privates J.W. Webb and J.F. Kinnard. Both men would be discharged from the army by June, however, Kinnard never fully recovered from his diseases and died the following winter. John Good was also among the sick, having developed a pulmonary disease that eventually led to his death later in life. Within the camp, two brigade surgeons advised Good that staying

in the field would be detrimental to his health.³³ Consequently, John J. Good submitted his resignation papers to the Confederate government on May 10, 1862, the same day the battery was due to reorganize its command structure.

There were mixed feelings about Good's departure, however. Surprisingly, James Douglas had never been fond of Good, and might have taken joy in his leaving the battery. Douglas apparently felt that there was a rivalry between the two leaders and almost resigned his position in December 1861, partly due to the "uninteresting" style of Good's command. Moreover, Douglas confided that Good "has not acted toward me as a brother officer should." Perhaps Douglas's attitude stemmed from the fact that Good was elected to the captain's position at the beginning of the war, because it can be argued that Douglas did almost as much as Good in seeing that the battery was formed.³³

John Good's acquaintances in the Texas state government, however, viewed his resignation in a different manner. Some wrote to Jefferson Davis immediately after Good's departure imploring the Confederate president to promote Good as Brigadier General in the Provisional Army of the Confederacy. They wrote that Good was "among the first to declare for Southern Independence, and also one of the first to buckle on his armor and take the field in defense of our rights." It is unclear whether or not Davis did offer Good the position, but it is known that Good was not able to escape the war completely, as he accepted a position as "Judge in the Military Court attached to Lieut Genl J.C. Pemberton's Corps," in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia.³⁴

In any case, when the battery re-enlisted for service in the Confederate army for two more years and reorganized its command structure, James P. Douglas was unanimously elected Captain, James Boren First Lieutenant, John Bingham Second Lieutenant, and Ben Hardin Third Lieutenant. For the remainder of the war, the battery would be called Douglas' Texas Battery and was reduced to a four-gun unit from its previous six-gun command, boasting two six-pound smoothbores and two twelve-pound howitzers. After the reorganization of the battery, it became attached to the Army of the Mississippi.³⁵ The army moved to Tupelo, Mississippi, on May 25, and in June Braxton Bragg assumed command. Bragg then began developing plans to combine his army with Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith's Army of East Tennessee in mid-July, for a probable invasion of Kentucky. Bragg left about half of his force in Mississippi under Van Dorn's command, while taking the other sizable portion to Tennessee and ultimately Kentucky. Douglas' Texas Battery was taken with Bragg, moving the Dallas and Smith County boys farther to the east and from home.³⁶

Once the command of Braxton Bragg and Edmund Kirby Smith united as one army, the Army of Kentucky, Douglas' Texas Battery was assigned to Major General John McCown's division, ultimately under Smith's command. By mid-August, this newly formed Confederate army was prepared for the invasion of Kentucky. Prior to the invasion, Bragg told his soldiers, "It is for you to decide whether our brothers and sisters of Tennessee and Kentucky shall remain bond-

men and bondwomen of the Abolition tyrant or be restored to the freedom inherited from their fathers."³⁷ James Douglas could directly relate to the "fathers" Bragg spoke of, as Douglas' grandfather had fought in the American Revolution in George Washington's army for the duration of the war.³⁸

As the end of August came, Smith's army began the march into the Bluegrass State, with Douglas' Battery now under the command of Patrick Cleburne's division. The army encountered an inexperienced Union force under the leadership of General William Nelson at Richmond, Kentucky, near the geographic location of Big Hill. A few days prior to the encounter with northern troops, the battery, marching with the infantry, had difficulty in keeping pace because of the arduous marches from Tennessee into Kentucky. As a result, Douglas allowed his men the luxury of riding aboard the gun carriages and caissons. In response, General Preston Smith ordered Douglas' immediate arrest for violating command rules. The arrest was overturned by Kirby Smith, who did not want the battery to commence the upcoming battle without their captain.³⁹

On August 29, Smith launched his attack against William Nelson's green troops. Patrick Cleburne's division, of which Douglas' Battery was assigned, advanced toward Richmond, Kentucky, and by the end of the day positioned his batteries, along with Douglas' unit, with a company of sharpshooters. At dawn on the 30th, Cleburne resumed the advance on the Federal troops, ordering the Second Brigade and Douglas' Texas Battery to the front to lead the movement. Approaching the small town of Kingston, Cleburne spotted the Federals along the left and right sides of the Richmond Road 500-600 yards ahead. The Union batteries were in the front, thereby allowing Cleburne to place Douglas' Texas Battery in the center of the Confederate line on a hill overlooking the Federal opponent.⁴⁰ Cleburne ordered Douglas' section to open fire at 8:00 a.m., beginning an artillery exchange that would last nearly two hours before reinforcements arrived. As the battery settled on the high ground overlooking the Richmond Road, the two twelve-pound howitzers commanded by Lt. Boren's section and the two six-pound guns under Lt. Bingham provided Cleburne with the support he needed in advancing his line.⁴¹

The Union battery opposing Douglas' unit contained twelve guns, offering a challenge to the Texans, "creating music [from] the two batteries [that] rose to the grandeur of the battle." Combining the advantage of the superior Union numbers, the Douglas Texas Battery quickly realized how accurate the opposing unit was, even at a distance of 500 yards. The men remained calm, however, in the opening moments of the battle because, this being their second significant engagement, they "knew how to behave in an artillery duel."⁴² The battery's efforts in the battle offered Kirby Smith the opportunity to seize the Federal garrison in Richmond as well as gain a Confederate foothold in Kentucky as the fall months approached.⁴³

As Bragg's army moved through Kentucky en route to Lexington, Douglas' Texas Battery was engaged at the skirmish of Kentucky River on September 1. Douglas' unit then withdrew with Bragg's army to eastern Tennessee where it remained throughout the fall.⁴⁴ By late 1862 Bragg and

Smith had withdrawn all of their forces from Kentucky and spent the remainder of the winter in east Tennessee. As the cold Tennessee winter progressed, Douglas was pleased with the response expressed by the Tennesseans' outpouring of patriotism. When Union troops had previously marched through Tennessee, Douglas noted how the Tennesseans despised the "meanness and tyranny" of the "savage foe." Douglas was convinced that "[the Yankees] are getting sick of the business and I think if other causes do not produce peace soon, that they will agree to let us go our way in peace."⁴⁵

On December 26 Union General William Rosecrans led his Army of the Cumberland from Nashville to intercept Bragg's force, and a week later both armies were engaged in the Battle of Murfreesboro, one of the more destructive battles of the war. Attached to Ector's Brigade, Douglas' Texas Battery moved into position, and on Bragg's orders began the rebel charge at dawn on a cold, drizzly December 31. The battery had been located at the rear of McCown's Division two days prior, before being ordered to the front to be apart of the charge. Douglas was then ordered on the left flank of the Confederate assault. The Rebels, in the early morning hours, achieved surprise, capturing a Federal artillery battery. To take advantage of the advancing Confederate attack, Douglas rode ahead to establish a suitable point for which the battery could continue to support the infantry and cavalry. He discovered a pocket of Federal resistance nearly 150 yards in front and ordered his battery into position. When the Texans were "front into line," Douglas realized "that the enemy did not know whether I was friend or foe. I gave the command ... thus bringing my guns into position not bearing exactly on the enemy. During this time the enemy had unfolded and waived conspicuously the Stars and Stripes." Understanding the confusion within the Federal ranks, Douglas ordered rounds of canister shot in their direction, causing a disorderly retreat.⁴⁶

Douglas' Texas Battery did not experience the amount of action at the Battle of Murfreesboro that they had achieved at previous battles; however, they did play a role in capturing several Union artillery units. Furthermore, James Douglas honored Private W.L. Waites for his performance in the battle. Of Waites Douglas wrote, "I certify that [Waites] has been duly elected by the company as the one entitled to the Badge of Honor for conduct on the field at the Battle of Murfreesboro." Once again, the battery avoided serious casualties, with the majority coming from injured and killed horses. Following the costly Confederate loss, the battery accompanied Bragg's retreat through southern Tennessee and camped along the Duck River in the bitter cold winter. By February, sitting in camp in Shelbyville, Tennessee, James Douglas predicted that the upcoming spring and summer campaigns would show the Union that the war was not worth fighting anymore. Douglas wrote however, that if the Yankees did want a fight, then "our veteran army is prepared."⁴⁷

During a relatively uneventful first half of 1863 for the Army of Tennessee, Douglas's Battery was assigned to D.H. Hill's Corps in Cleburne's Division. On the afternoon of September 19, however, the Battle of Chickamauga began. Bragg ordered his divisions to advance on William

Rosecrans' line and placed Douglas's unit on the Confederate right flank, more specifically on the left of Cleburne's Division near the Lafayette and McLemore's Valley roads. The Texas Battery's efforts on the first day of the battle did not truly begin until 6:00 as night settled, making it difficult to see. Nevertheless Douglas' Battery, accompanied by Semple's Alabama Battery, also a part of Cleburne's Division, managed to push the Federals back nearly one mile. The Texans "gained a position in eighty yards of the [fence] and opened with two pieces. I took 'Sallie' alone and by main strength mounted her within the fort." (Douglas had named one of the guns in his unit after his sweetheart Sallie White in Tyler. The fort that Douglas speaks of was not necessarily a fort, but rather a natural defensive structure that supported the Confederates.) Douglas bragged, "I fired the last gun. 'Sallie's' voice spoke out in tones of gladness amidst the deafening cheers of 60 thousand, and the day...was ours." Realistically however, the artillery fire from Douglas' and Semple's Battery were ineffective due to the lack of vision on the field. Most of the Confederate battery's shots went over the heads of the Union soldiers causing little damage.⁴⁸

As both sides recovered from the first day of Battle at Chickamauga, Douglas' Battery began in the same position where they had ended the previous day. At 9:30 a.m. on September 20, the Texas Battery was assigned to Deshler's Brigade. As Douglas was advancing with the brigade, the battery had difficulty maneuvering through fallen timber. Douglas rode ahead of the stalled battery and found a clearing for the men to pass through. When he moved into an open field, two Federal batteries opened fire, causing Douglas to move to the backside of the hill for cover. After steadying his unit, and with the assistance of Wood's and Polk's Corps and Semple's Battery, the Texans fired point-blank shots in the Federal's direction. The Douglas Battery, even though in an open field, had the advantage of strategically placed trees to hinder the Union efforts. The Douglas Battery fired at only a distance of sixty to eighty yards for fifteen minutes, and the Federals "were soon routed and fled the field." The disorganized Union retreat allowed Cleburne to order Douglas' Battery along the Chattanooga Road to pursue the Union soldiers, but was halted when it once again became too difficult to see when dusk settled.⁴⁹

As the Battle of Chickamauga ended, Douglas hailed his troops for their gallant efforts stating, "my officers and men acted with their usual coolness." Moreover, the men of Douglas' Texas Battery considered themselves fortunate to be a part of one of the great battles in the Western theater. Douglas himself acknowledged, "the Confederacy should celebrate the 20th of September as a great event in our history."⁵⁰

It was reported in mid-November that the Union Army was rebuilding and recovering from the defeat at Chickamauga and receiving new men, including units from Ulysses S. Grant's Army that had arrived from Vicksburg. The Federal Army had nearly 90,000 men within the ranks. Unfortunately for the Confederates, Bragg was significantly outnumbered, having only 30,000 men by the last week in November. What ensued was another clash between the northern and southern armies at Chattanooga, Tennessee, in late November.

During the three-day battle that followed, Douglas' Texas Battery was not engaged for any significant juncture until the final day on November 25.⁵¹ On that day efforts by the combined artillery units on the Confederate right at Missionary Ridge resulted in a disorganized Union retreat. The men in Douglas' Texas Battery were convinced that their efforts on the final day of battle earned the outnumbered Confederates a victory. When word arrived at the failures elsewhere in the battle, Private James Lunsford wrote. "... the part of the line held by General Cleburne, with whose command or battery was then in co-operation, repulsed all assaults, and we knew nothing of the repulse of our center and left wing, until late that afternoon, when orders came for us to retire." The Confederate right was the only line not to break against the Union charges, and Douglas' Texans played a significant role in this small victory. Even though his unit held the ground, Douglas correctly acknowledged, "this availed us nothing as our center gave way, and the entire army had to retire."⁵²

In 1864 Douglas' Texas Battery was engaged in its most active participation of the Civil War. The battery fought in sixteen skirmishes and battles, most of which took place in the Atlanta Campaign, and ended the year engaged in John Bell Hood's failed invasion of Tennessee. Prior to this point, however, Douglas' Battery had distinguished itself as a significant part of the Army of Tennessee, being the only artillery unit from Texas to serve within the army. The battery and its members were very popular there, and as the new year was underway the unit set a precedent soon to be followed by a high percentage of other units in the Confederate army.

On January 18, 1864, the men in Douglas' Texas Battery unanimously agreed to re-enlist "for twenty-five years or the duration of the war." The men in the battery always thought of their cause as just, and their re-enlistment was a testament to this belief. Many years later Private Edward Smith remembered, "as to the priority of volunteer reenlistments at that critical juncture in Confederate history, the honor ... belongs to Douglas' Texas Battery." Even the Confederate Congress officially recognized the battery for their efforts, and passed a joint resolution of thanks to the unit for the "patriotic resolutions adopted by them."⁵³ Private James Lunsford recalled that the men made the decision to re-enlist "for the war" for two reasons. First, the men realized that the Confederate government was on the verge of passing more conscription laws that would make military service mandatory. The men thought that since they had been in the military almost three years, then re-enlistment seemed logical. Second, and more simply, the men felt that they had a patriotic duty to serve their country for an indefinite amount of time. The example that Douglas' Texas Battery set caused more units throughout the Army of Tennessee to re-enlist for the war as well.⁵⁴

By May 1864 the Army of Tennessee began the Atlanta Campaign, and the members of Douglas' Texas Battery remained positive about what the future would hold. Throughout the campaign, however, Douglas was trying not to recognize that the Confederate effort as a whole was beginning to waver." Following the Battle of Resaca, Douglas' Battery participated in the battles of Peachtree Creek, Ezra Church, and Atlanta, under the leadership of

John Bell Hood, the new commander of the Army of Tennessee. The Texas Battery was not engaged until nearly 4:00 in the afternoon at Atlanta, when they, along with Dent's Florida Battery, attacked simultaneously with Thomas Hindman's Brigade. The Confederate artillery was not as damaging as was expected, mainly due to the impregnable Union entrenchments. The battle was a success for Douglas' Texas Battery, however, as it captured a new set of four, twelve-pound Napoleon guns from the Federals. Lieutenant John H. Bingham remembered that even though "upon falling back, Douglas hung those captured guns on behind his caissons, as they were new, and his about worn out." Douglas also wrote of this unexpected acquisition, "I have much the finest battery I have ever had and perhaps the finest in our army." At the same time the Confederates were pushed out of Atlanta, the presidential elections in the United States were upcoming, and James Douglas now focused on this as a decisive factor for the nation. He wrote, "I think the nomination of McClellan and Pendleton will secure the defeat of Lincoln and possibly close the war. The prospect of defeat seems good."⁵⁶

As the fall season approached, General John Bell Hood led the Army of Tennessee out of Georgia through Alabama and into Tennessee. In November the battery participated in the deadly Battle of Franklin, and Douglas described the aftermath: "I have seen many battles, but this one... was the bloodiest I have seen." The battery suffered one man killed and nearly ten injured in the close-range combat at Franklin.⁵⁷

For the next month General Hood prepared his army for the remainder of the campaign, and a fight near Nashville seemed possible. Douglas, however, did not think it would be practical to take the city by an all-out assault. Nevertheless, on December 15-16, the battle in and around Nashville took place, rendering costly casualties in the army. The Douglas Battery was not significantly engaged in the actual fighting, but was rather given the duty of covering Hood's retreat on December 17. Douglas' Battery failed at protecting the retreating Confederates and was forced to abandon its guns and hurriedly join the retreat. The devastating effect on the battery's morale after the defeat at Nashville cannot be underestimated. The men lost all of their guns and were quite bitter after the defeat. Captain Douglas said, "Our fight at Nashville was so humiliating a defeat that I [choose to] not dwell upon it."⁵⁸

Although many men recognized that the end was near, the members of Douglas' Texas Battery were determined to "stand by our colors to the last." Stand by them they did, when they were transferred to Mobile, Alabama, to operate the siege guns at Fort Sidney Johnston. This was the men's last post, and they would not be engaged in any more serious combat operations for the remainder of the war. The men received word of Robert E. Lee's surrender in April and ultimately Joseph E. Johnston's surrender in May and were thus ordered to Gainesville, Alabama, for their parole. James Douglas did not accompany his men to Alabama, as he was in Texas on furlough. Nevertheless, he was on his way back to the war when he heard of the Confederate surrender. Captain Douglas simply turned around and went back to Texas permanently.⁵⁹

The majority of men in the battery, now led by Lt. Marcus Fleishel in Douglas' place, were present at the parole on May 12, 1865. Each man agreed that, by this "PAROLE OF HONOR ... I will not hereafter serve in the Armies of the Confederate States or, in any military capacity whatever, against the United States of America, or render aid to the enemies of the latter..." As the men agreed to this, they reflected on the last four years of war, from the formation in Dallas through the decisive battles in the Western theater. The men from Dallas and Tyler, although their cause was lost, had reason to be proud of their accomplishments. They were the only Confederate artillery unit from the state of Texas to serve east of the Mississippi River and were the first Confederate unit to re-enlist for the entire war. These men from Texas were serious about the job that they had held for nearly a half decade and were proud to serve in the Confederate Army. The majority of the men who joined the battery in 1861 participated in the parole in 1865, and after it was over, the battery ceased to exist. As the sun set on the American Civil War, the men of Douglas' Texas Battery looked at the destruction of a shattered country and turned toward Texas, hoping for a better future.⁶⁰

NOTES

¹Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York, 2003), pp. 246-247. Robert Glover, "The Douglas Texas Battery," *Chronicles of Smith County, Texas* 1 (Fall, 1962), p. 14.

²*Biographical Encyclopedia of Texas* (New York, 1880), p. 117; John J. Good, *Cannon Smoke: The Letters of Captain John J. Good, Good-Douglas Battery, CSA*, ed. Lester N. Fitzhugh (Hillsboro, 1971), pp. v-vi.

³*Biographical Encyclopedia of Texas*, pp. 117-118; *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C., 1880-1901), Series 1, Volume 1, p. 635. All O.R. citations refer to Series 1 unless noted.

⁴Alwyn Barr, "Texas' Confederate Field Artillery," *Texas Military History* 1 (Aug., 1961), p. 6; Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. vii.

⁵*The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907.

⁶*The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907.

⁷*The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907; Marcus J. Wright, comp., and Harold B. Simpson, ed., *Texas In the War: 1861-1865* (Hillsboro, 1965), p. 39.

⁸Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Schedule 1, (Free Inhabitants) National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Charles F. Brooks, "The Social and Cultural Dynamics of Soldiering in Hood's Texas Brigade," *Journal of Southern History*, 67 (August, 2001), pp. 540-542.

⁹William Garrett Piston and Richard W. Hatcher, *Wilson's Creek: The Second Battle of the Civil War and the Men Who Fought It* (North Carolina, 2000), p. 122.

¹⁰Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. 17.

¹¹Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 2.

¹²Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. 20.

¹³William S. Speer ed., *The Encyclopedia of the New West* (Marshall, 1881), p. 137.

¹⁴Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. 44.

¹⁵Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 4.

¹⁶Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, pp. 33-34.

¹⁷Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, pp. 28-35.

¹⁸Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, pp. 27-30.

¹⁹Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, pp. 45-46, 71-72.

²⁰Alwyn Barr, "Texas' Confederate Field Artillery," pp. 7-8; Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Texas, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, (Microfilm M323, roll 243). (Hereafter the Compiled Service Records will be referred to as CSR).

²¹Hale, *The Third Texas Cavalry*, pp. 75-76.

²²*The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907; Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, pp. 76-77.

²³Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 179-181.

²⁴Hale, *The Third Texas Cavalry*, pp. 92-94.

²⁵Hale, *The Third Texas Cavalry*, p. 93; Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. 162.

²⁶Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 29; Sid S. Johnson, *Texans Who Wore the Gray* (Tyler, 1907) p. 150; Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. 165; Shea and Hess, *Pea Ridge*, pp. 232-233.

²⁷Shea and Hess, *Pea Ridge*, pp. 232-233.

²⁸Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, pp. 165-166, 169

²⁹Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 171, 65.

³⁰Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 187-191.

³¹Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 191-192.

³²James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, 1988) p. 416; CSR, (Microfilm M323, roll 243); Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. 191.

³³Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 22, 36-37.

³⁴Quote in NAMES to Jefferson Davis, July 4, 1862. Letter located in CSR, (Microfilm M323, roll 243, file for John J. Good); Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. 193.

³⁵Fitzhugh, *Cannon Smoke*, p. 193; *The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907; "Maj. James P. Douglas," *Confederate Veteran*, X (July 1902), p. 322.

³⁶McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, pp. 417, 515-516; *The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907.

³⁷McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, pp. 516-517.

³⁸Speer, *Encyclopedia of the New West*, p. 42.

³⁹Shelby Foote, *The Civil War—A Narrative: Fort Sumter to Perryville I* (New York, 1986), p. 651; Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 195-197.

⁴⁰*O.R.*, XVI, pt. 1, pp. 944-945.

⁴¹Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 45, 197.

⁴²Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 198.

⁴³Larry J. Daniel, *Cannoneers in Gray: The Field Artillery in the Army of Tennessee, 1861-1865* (Alabama, 1984), p. 49.

⁴⁴*The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907; Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 49-50; Foote, *The Civil War I*, p. 655.

⁴⁵Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 51-52; Daniel, *Cannoneers in Gray*, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁶Daniel, *Cannoneers in Gray*, p. 59; Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 57; First quote from CSR, (Microfilm M323, roll 243, file for W.L. Waites); Second quote from, *O.R.*, XX, pt. 1, pp. 925-926, 937.

⁴⁷Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 60-63.

⁴⁸*O.R.*, XXX, pt.1, p. 187; Daniel. *Cannoneers in Gray*, p. 97; Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 73.

⁴⁹*O.R.*, XXX, pt. 1, p. 190, pt.2, pp. 196-197.

⁵⁰Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 58, 72; *O.R.*, XXX, pt. 1, p. 159.

⁵¹Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 86.

⁵²*The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907; Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 77.

⁵³⁴⁴Maj. James P. Douglas," *Confederate Veteran*, X (July 1902). p. 322; Smith quote in "More About Re-Enlistments at Dalton," *Confederate Veteran*, X (July 1902), p. 399; Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 92; *O.R.*, XXXII, p. 754.

⁵⁴*The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907.

⁵⁵Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Cavalry*, p. 109.

⁵⁶Bingham quote from *Confederate Veteran*, V (August 1897), p. 420; Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 21-128.

⁵⁷Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, pp. 129-150.

⁵⁸*The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907; Ed W. Smith, "Douglas' Texas Battery at the Battle of Nashville," *Confederate Veteran*, XII (November 1904), pp. 531-532. James Harrison Wilson. "The Union Cavalry in the Hood Campaign," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, 1956) IV, p. 470.

⁵⁹Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 152.

⁶⁰Douglas, *Douglas's Texas Battery*, p. 222; *The Dallas Morning News*, August 4, 1907.