


CLEBURNE

The Stonewall Jackson Of The West

By Anthony Rushing



Patrick Ronayne Cleburne. The name alone left an everlasting impression on those who came into contact with him. To his enemies, he was "Cleburne the Terrible." Just to see his distinctive battle flags, with their blue field, full moon and inverted cannon, instilled fear and worry into the heart of many Union commanders. The effect on the Union enlisted man was much the same, if not intensified by their face to face contact with Cleburne's troops.

To his own men he was known as "Old Pat," "Pat Cleburne" or just "Cleburne." The respect and devotion of his men were matched only by those men who served under the legendary Stonewall Jackson in Virginia. In many ways the two generals were quite similar. Jackson and Cleburne were deeply religious and strong in their morals and Christian values. Both had the devotion and control of their men that made many fellow officers on both sides envious of their accomplishments on the field.

One major difference between Jackson and Cleburne was the latter's intimacy and Irish humor with

all who knew him. Cleburne was forever involved with the numerous practical jokes which were common in an army. He was also fond of the company of pretty young ladies and always played the part of a gentleman. Like General Jackson, Cleburne denied himself the use of alcohol or other stimulants, knowing well their effect on his system. Perhaps the saddest resemblance of all was that both were to become battlefield casualties in the prime of their military prowess.

The fame which is associated with the name Cleburne had its beginning long before Patrick was born. Some of Patrick's ancestors are names common to the early history of Western Europe. One such ancestor was Gospatrick who was descended from Saxon King Ethelred II and King Malcom II of Scotland. Gospatrick's own father was Maldred, the brother of Gracious Duncan who was murdered by Macbeth. The story is now a Shakespearean classic familiar to all students.

The Cleburne family appears to have originated in Westmoreland County, England sometime before

Confederate Veteran.

the twelfth century. The parish church of Cliburn, which is still standing, dates to the twelfth century. One of the windows contains the Cleburne coat of arms and family motto, "Forward, Clibbur Ne Sceame," which means, "Forward, the Cleburne's do not know otherwise." Cliburn Hall, which stands across from the church, was built in the fourteenth century by Robert de Cliburn, the knight of the shire of Westmoreland. It was not until the English reconquest of Ireland in the 17th Century that the Clan of Cleburne settled in that country.

On March 16, 1828, a son was born to Joseph and Anne Ronayne Cleburne in County Cork, Ireland and he was named Patrick Ronayne. After his childhood, young Cleburne began to consider his future vocation and decided to follow in his father's footsteps as a physician. At the age of eighteen, Patrick applied for admission to the medical school in Dublin, but failed the entrance exam. Feeling that he had disgraced his family, Patrick enlisted in the Queen's Army with the 41st Regiment of Foote which was soon to embark for India. Patrick planned to disappear from sight saving his family from any disgrace or shame; however, the regiment did not leave for India, but remained in Ireland. It was not until a good while later, however, that a kinsman made known Patrick's whereabouts to his family. During the next two years Patrick applied himself diligently to his training and soon became a model soldier. This military experience would provide the ground work which would develop Patrick into the military tactician of the War Between the States. Soon after a promotion to corporal, Patrick purchased his discharge to accompany part of his family to the promising shores of America. On Christmas Day,

1849, Patrick, his older sister Anne, older brother Robert and younger brother Joseph landed at New Orleans harbor. They embarked up the Mississippi River and settled in Cincinnati.

In 1850 Dr. Hector Grant and Dr. Charles Nash, two Helena, Arkansas physicians, purchased a pharmacy and through recommendations hired Cleburne to run the business. Patrick had now began



his life as an Arkansawyer and Southerner. After successfully running the pharmacy for a number of years, Cleburne began to study law. He was admitted to the bar in 1856 and began practicing law as a member of the law firm of Alexander, Scaife, Mangum and Cleburne. During these years Patrick became involved with the community and joined several organizations, including the Masons,

the local debating team, and St. Johns Episcopal Church. Still a bachelor, Cleburne was to be found at most all dances and parties and forever in company with a member of the fairer sex.

As the troubles between North and South increased, Patrick involved himself more and more with politics. Supporting his friend Thomas Hindman, who later became a Confederate general, Cleburne was in the midst of the political furor so prevalent of the times. Due to his involvement, he was almost killed by an assassin during a stroll down the street with Hindman. When the secession crisis erupted after the election of Lincoln, Cleburne had already cast his lot. In a letter to his brother Robert, Patrick made his stand on the matter saying, "I am with the South in life or death, victory or defeat. I have never owned a negro and care nothing for them, but these people have been my friends and have stood by me on all occasions."

After the secession of the first seven Confederate states, Patrick Cleburne was one of the first privates to enlist in the company known as the Yell Rifles, named after Mexican War hero Archibald Yell. At company elections, Cleburne was overwhelmingly elected Captain even though Arkansas had yet to secede.

When the rumor spread that the arsenal in Little Rock was to be reinforced by Federal troops, Cleburne's company, along with another unit from Helena, marched to the Capitol at once.

The volunteers, along with Governor Henry Rector, received the surrender of the arsenal on February 8, 1861. Soon afterwards, nine companies of volunteers were mustered into state service as the 1st Arkansas Volunteers. On May 30, 1861, the group was officially mustered into Confederate service and designated as the 15th Arkansas Infantry. Captain Cleburne was again unanimously

elected Colonel of the regiment. The troops were assigned to General William Hardee's command.

The regiment was sent to Pittman's Ferry, in northeast Arkansas, where it drilled under the exacting eye of Colonel Cleburne. On September 19, 1861 Cleburne and the 15th Arkansas were ordered out of camp to repair the Point Pleasant Plank Road which was to be used to link Hardee's force with General Leonidus Polk's troops that were stationed at Columbus, Kentucky. Acting as the vanguard of Hardee's force, Cleburne and his group made their way into Kentucky. Arriving at Thompkinsville, Cleburne found the town almost deserted and the inhabitants very frightened by rumors of murder and plundering by the Confederates. One elderly woman met Cleburne in the road and with an opened Bible stating that she was not afraid to die. It took several moments for the gen-

tlemanly Cleburne to convince her she was in no danger. During this march the only casualties were to be among the Texas Rangers who were fired on mistakenly by their own men.

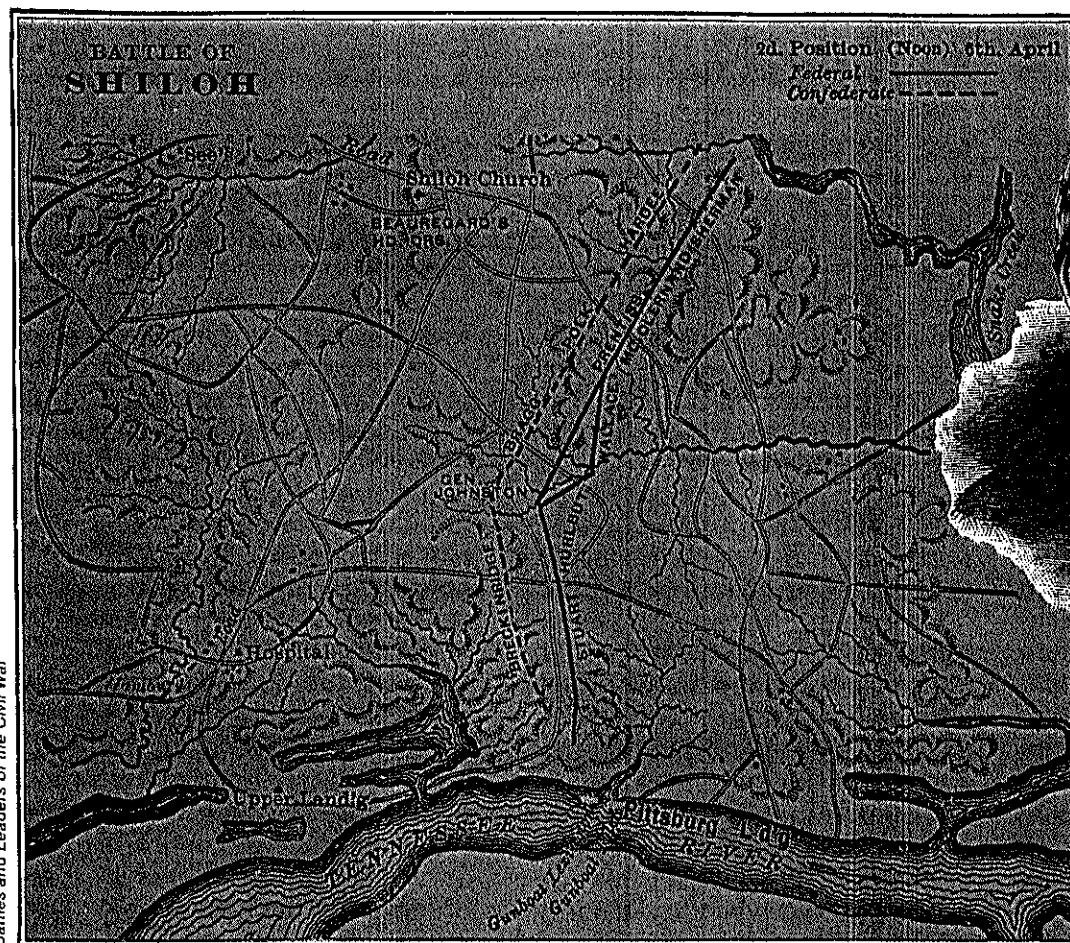
Cleburne was appointed Brigadier General in early 1862. His brigade consisted of the 15th Arkansas, 6th Mississippi, 5th (35th), 23rd and 24th Tennessee, Shoup's Artillery Battalion and Watson's Battery. His star began to rise as his troop distinguished themselves in the Army of the West.

Attached to the Third Corps of the Army of Mississippi under General Hardee, Cleburne's brigade led the march of the army from Corinth towards Pittsburg Landing. His troops were to play a significant role in the Battle of Shiloh.

As a prelude to the general engagement at Shiloh, Cleburne's men repulsed a cavalry force on April 4 and then camped for the night. On Saturday, April 5, Cle-

burne reached the enemy's outposts and lines where he deployed his brigade to await the main body of the Southern Army. Heavy rains, however, delayed the march and it was not until after dark that the Confederate Army neared the area. This caused the battle to be delayed until the following morning, Sunday, April 6, 1862.

At dawn Hardee's skirmishers engaged a small party of Federal scouts and Cleburne's men began moving forward astride the Corinth Road. Between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. Cleburne's brigade neared the small church known as Shiloh and surprised the Union troops commanded by General William T. Sherman. Cleburne's brigade was deployed from left to right as follows: 24th Tennessee, 5th Tennessee, 6th Mississippi and 23rd Tennessee. The 15th Arkansas was sent forward as skirmishers and the newly attached 2nd Tennessee attacked the left



General William J. Hardee

flank. The 15th Arkansas engaged the enemy's skirmishers who fell back to their first line of battle. The men from Arkansas fell back on their reserves and soon the whole brigade came in sight of the enemy encampment where his first line of battle overlapped Cleburne's left flank by one half a brigade. The Federals had hastily thrown up crude breastworks of logs and bales of hay while awaiting the clash that was soon to materialize. As Cleburne's men plunged forward they encountered a marshy area which proved to be almost impassable. As a result, Cleburne's lines opened up in order to pass around this obstacle. The 5th Tennessee and the regiments to its left kept to the left while the 6th Mississippi and the 23rd Tennessee passed to the right. Cleburne, however, attempted to push through the middle where his mount struggled and threw him into the mire. In his report Cleburne stated that "with great difficulty I managed to get out."

As Cleburne emerged from the swamp, covered in mud, the battle was becoming quite heavy. Captain Trigg attempted to give some artillery support, but was forced to move to a better vantage point. It was the last service Cleburne would see from this battery during the battle. Upon reaching the Federal camps, the 6th Mississippi and 23rd Tennessee charged, but due to the tents, their lines became broken. A devastating fire quickly repulsed the Confederates.

The 23rd Tennessee regrouped one hundred yards to the rear while the 6th Mississippi made numerous assaults. The regiment lost three hundred officers and men of the aggregate four hundred twenty-five present.

Just as the 23rd Tennessee broke, Cleburne, along with the regiment's former commander, Colonel Mat Martin, arrived and succeeded in rallying the remain-

ing men. General Cleburne, being confident in Colonel Martin's ability, proceeded back to his left where his troops were driving the first lines of the enemy. The 2nd Tennessee came dashing up on the left and charged through a galling cross-fire while the 24th Tennessee "stood to," returning volley for volley earning Cleburne's trust and praise. Cleburne's old regiment, the 15th Arkansas, had just delivered a devastating volley at pistol range when the general arrived. A lull soon developed on the left and Cleburne excitedly galloped back to his right.

Approximately one half of the 23rd Tennessee and sixty of the 6th Mississippi had reformed and were ready to once again advance against the stubborn resistance on their front. They advanced with a volley and a yell and the Confederate tide could not be turned. General Cleburne was at the front leading his men! After this brief fight the senior officer of the 6th Mississippi marched the regiment to the rear due to its lack of organization since most of its officers were casualties. Cleburne would see no more of this decimated regiment during the battle.

Cleburne again returned to his left at 2:00 p.m. Most of his brigade was to the left of the battle raging around the Horner's Nest. When Cleburne arrived, he found the 15th Arkansas and the 24th Tennessee halted under the brow of a hill. The 2nd Tennessee was so reduced in numbers from earlier fighting that it had to be sent to the rear to reform. It, too, failed to reattach itself with Cleburne.

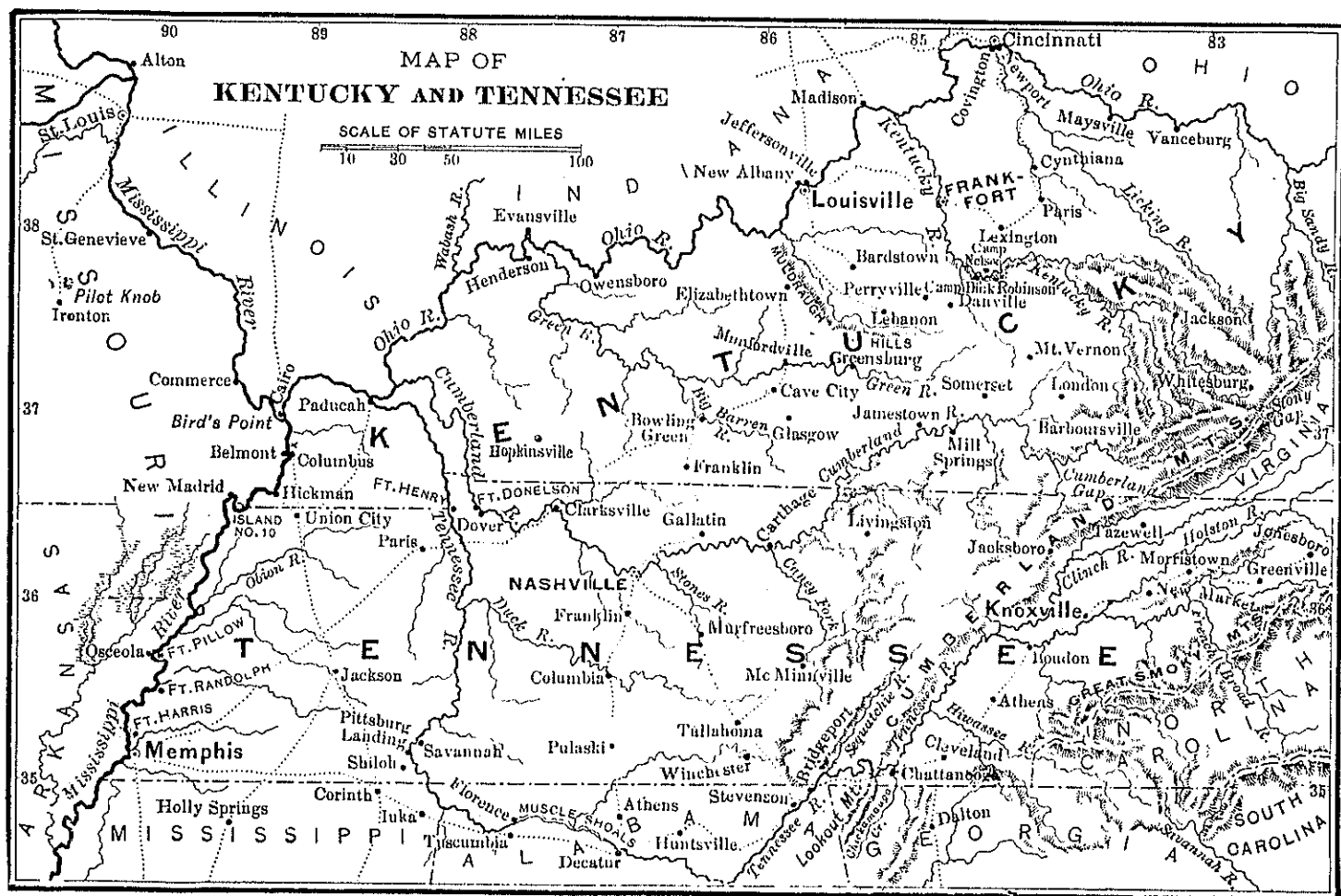
Cleburne ordered an advance, but was delayed by one of his own batteries firing across his line of intended advance. After retarding this fire, he pushed his men forward. The 23rd Tennessee now returned to the front after reforming and joined in the advance. The brigade moved one mile and engaged the enemy which were soon driven in retreat.

The men soon ran out of ammunition and Cleburne was forced to send a fatigue party to carry up ammunition for over a mile. After resupplying the men, they once again advanced until the enemy artillery, along with fire from the Union gunboats, forced them to halt. General Beauregard ordered Cleburne to hold his position which he did until dark. He then marched his men to the abandoned enemy camps for a much needed sleep. Sleep, however, was not to come. A night of continual rain and constant shelling from the gunboats kept the tired men from getting the needed sleep.

At dawn the brigade reformed and moved forward. After advancing for over a mile, the brigade came upon General Breckinridge's men in line of battle. To their front and left, as far as the eye could see, the enemy's lines stretched through the woods. General Breckenridge ordered Cleburne forward, but the Irishman sent word that he had no supports. He reported that he was flanked and would be destroyed. However, he was told that the order came directly from General Bragg. Cleburne ordered the advance without hesitation. As the men advanced through a thicket of young saplings, they received a devastating fire and were soon repulsed and routed. The 15th Arkansas were the only troops to rally around their general. They reformed and immediately charged the advancing enemy who fled in panic. Cleburne's brigade was now completely disorganized and scattered. He now attempted to rally stragglers into an organized force but the pursuit was halted.

General Cleburne remained personally on the field and with no assistance he destroyed as much property as possible. He administered to the wounded until after dark at which time General Hardee ordered him back to Corinth.

In two days of fighting, Cleburne



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lost over 1,000 of his 2,750 men as killed and wounded. This was Cleburne's first major battle and he and his troops showed great promise.

Afterwards, the Confederates retired to camp near Corinth. In May, Cleburne and his brigade fought a hotly contested engagement at Farmington, Mississippi beating back the Federals quite easily.

In July, the army marched to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The invasion of Kentucky was then put into motion and Cleburne's brigade moved to Kentucky via Knoxville and Cumberland Gap.

On August 30, 1862, near Richmond, Kentucky, Cleburne was ordered by Major General Kirby Smith to move his division and two batteries forward and attack the enemy to his front. One-half mile north of Kingston, the cavalry met the advanced guard of the enemy and then located the main line of battle six hundred yards behind

these skirmishers. General Cleburne reconnoitered the area and found the enemy lines at right angles to the Richmond Road. They occupied both sides of the pike and held a masked battery near the road. Cleburne placed the second brigade behind a hill and parallel to the enemy's lines. The first brigade, under the command of Colonel Preston Smith, was placed behind a second hill within supporting distance.

Cleburne ordered a battery to fire on a cavalry force which was soon replaced by a Union battery. The general then sent out skirmishers to the front and right flank leaving only a single company to hold the left side of the road. Martin's battery was then ordered up and began firing on the enemy. Ordered to avoid a general battle until supports arrived, the Confederates witnessed a slow and desultory artillery duel for two hours. Cleburne, believing that support was

near, ordered the 154th Tennessee forward on the right. The firing soon became heavy and Cleburne found it necessary to reinforce the right with the 13th and 15th Arkansas. The volleys increased, but Cleburne witnessed enemy strength building on his right. Colonel Smith was then ordered to advance to the support of the heavily engaged right and to attempt a flanking of the enemy. When he became convinced of the Federal's plan of attack, Cleburne ordered the 2nd brigade to attack the center and left which had been weakened to support the battle on Cleburne's right. He then proceeded to his left to take charge in that sector. He immediately found his good friend Colonel Polk being carried to the rear. While briefly chatting with the Colonel, Cleburne received a wound to the mouth which forced him to turn command over to Colonel Smith. General Kirby-Smith, however,

Confederate Veteran.

soon appeared and conducted the remainder of the battle.

The Confederates, with a force of five thousand, defeated a force of ten thousand Union soldiers along with capturing five thousand prisoners. The Confederate Congress tendered its thanks to General Kirby-Smith, General Cleburne and Colonel Smith for their gallant victory.

In just over a month Cleburne's wound had healed and he was once again directing his troops in battle at Perryville, Kentucky. Cleburne's division made the final assault and drove the enemy for over a mile and a half. Again, Cleburne was wounded while leading his men, but retained command until the end of the day.

In December, 1862, Cleburne and his troops were stationed at College Grove, Tennessee, twenty miles from Murfreesboro. Cleburne's brigade formed a part of the left wing of the army in General Hardee's Corps. On December 12, President Davis visited the newly organized Army of Tennessee. After numerous recommendations from General Bragg and General Hardee, Davis promoted Cleburne to Major General.

He was assigned to take command of General Buckner's division. This was a great honor for Cleburne since he superseded two brigadiers who were his seniors in appointment. The bravery and skill which Cleburne demonstrated on the battlefield was no doubt too much for President Davis to ignore.

On December 26, 1862, General Rosecrans began moving his troops towards the Confederates at Murfreesboro. As the movements began, three brigades of Cleburne's division were with him at College Grove, while the fourth was four miles away at Triune. Cleburne and his three brigades were ordered to fall back towards Murfreesboro leaving the fourth at Triune to slow the advance of the enemy. On December 28, Cleburne was in line of battle north of Mur-



General John C. Breckinridge

freesboro and east of Stone's River facing north. One thousand yards in front of Cleburne's command, General Breckenridge formed his line of battle. Early on December 29, Cleburne's fourth brigade, under General Woods, rejoined the division increasing it to full strength. Cleburne's division was idle until the night of December 30 when it crossed over the river and was placed on the left of the army to await battle. At 4:30 a.m., Cleburne had his men ready to move. Polk's brigade, with Calvert's battery, was to the right, Johnson's brigade with Darden's battery composed the center, and, Liddell's brigade, supported by the Warren Light Artillery, made up the left of the division. Woods brigade was held in reserve just behind Polk's.

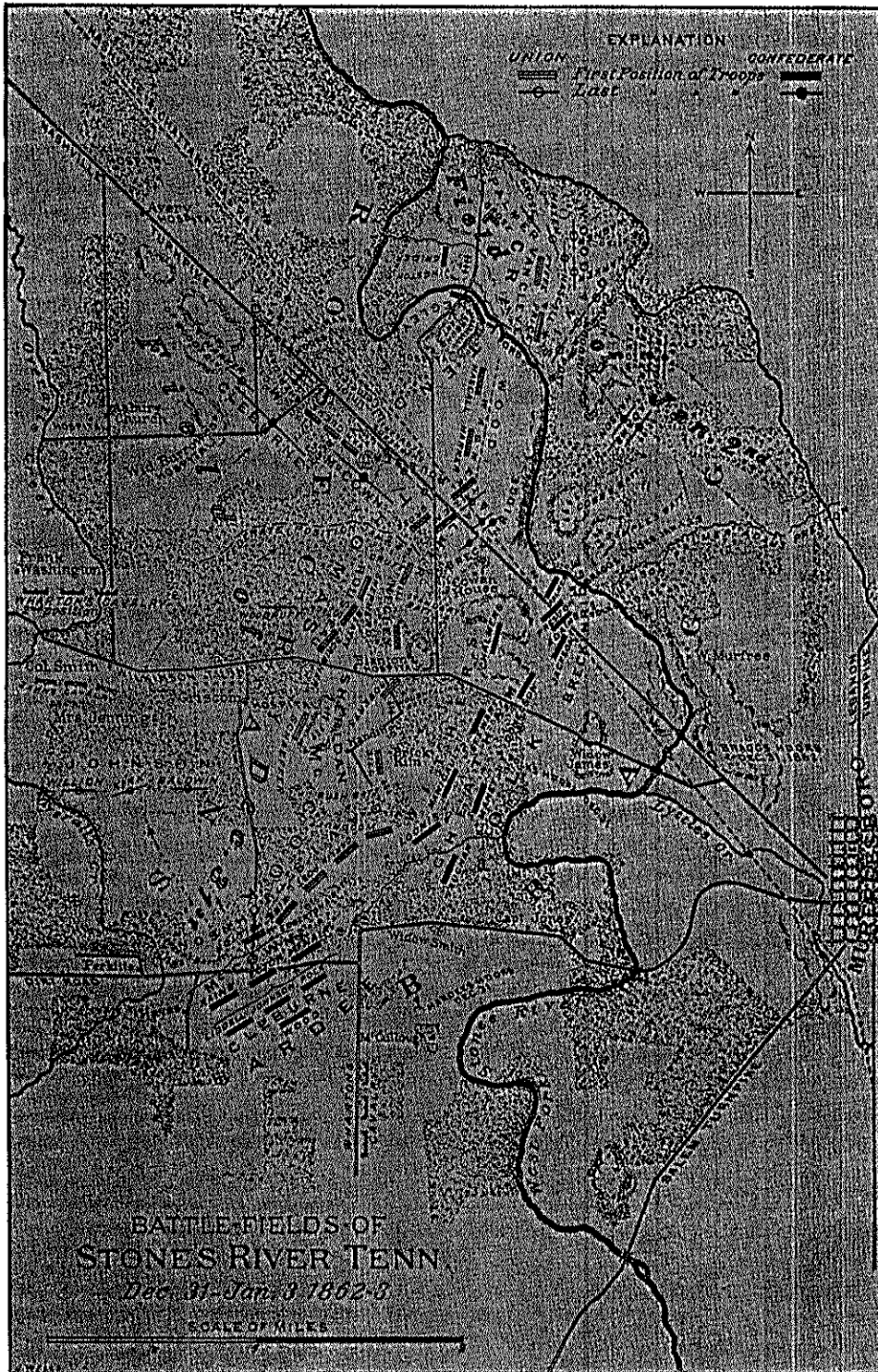
At dawn Rosecrans and Bragg both decided to attack with their left and drive back the opposition with their right. Luckily for the Confederates, Bragg moved first. Hardee's Corps was to make up the attacking left wing. Cleburne's division was facing west and began to swing to the right (north) as it advanced. General Cheatham's division, which was to Cleburne's right did not keep up and as a

result a gap opened between the divisions. It was filled by Woods' brigade.

As the troops moved forward, Cleburne was surprised to have his left and center fired upon by the enemy's skirmishers. He had thought McCown's division superseded him, but it evidently had become lost, leaving Cleburne's division in a front line position. Cleburne immediately threw out his skirmishers and pressed back the enemy to his main line which was three-fourths of a mile from the Confederate's camp. The enemy occupied a cedar break reinforced with natural limestone breastworks. After a desperate fight of twenty-five minutes, Cleburne's division succeeded in routing the enemy force. Even though the division had suffered heavy casualties, especially Cleburne's left, they were not without their rewards. Two stands of colors, six cannons, and numerous prisoners fell into the hands of Cleburne's men.

As the division pursued the enemy, it came upon another heavily defended line of infantry and artillery. The division, led personally by Cleburne, succeeded in driving the enemy force backwards and capturing a field piece and one thousand prisoners. Cleburne and his men continued to advance throughout the day and successfully drove four heavily defended lines back on the center of Rosecrans' army. Cleburne's ranks were thinned to the breaking point. When a fresh Union countercharge was made, it proved too much for the battle weary men of the division. The general could be seen at all sectors of his lines, urging his men to hold their ground, but to no avail.

Cleburne rallied his men near the high water mark of the day. He still held over three miles of conquered ground. Cleburne remained in this position until January 2, 1863. In the Battle of Murfreesboro, General Cleburne played a



large role in defeating Rosecrans's army and almost accomplished the defeat on the left wing single handedly. This was not done without loss. Cleburne suffered 2,081 casualties, out of 6,054 men.

In April, after wintering at Tullahoma, Hardee's Corps was advanced with Cleburne's division as the vanguard. On June 24, at Liberty Gap, Tennessee, the troops again

encountered their blue foe in battle. Being greatly outnumbered, Cleburne ordered his division to retreat back to Tullahoma. On June 30 the pressure applied by Rosecrans was too much and Bragg ordered a retreat from Tullahoma. Cleburne's division was ordered as rear guard of the army. On July 10, Cleburne made his headquarters at Tyner's Station,

nine miles east of Chattanooga.

Throughout the months of August and September the Union troops maneuvered for position while the Confederates kept a watchful eye. A few small clashes, including a larger fight at Dug Gap, led the way to the great fight on September 19-20 near Chickamauga Creek.

During the afternoon of the September 19th, Lieutenant General Polk ordered Cleburne to report with his division to the right wing. Cleburne's men forded Chickamauga Creek and headed northward to the battle. Some previously advanced regiments had fallen back to regroup and cheered as Cleburne and his men passed. They knew what the enemy was about to receive.

During a lull in the battle, a young corporal turned to General Nathan B. Forrest and asked if the battle was over. Pointing up the lane, Forrest replied, "Do you see that body of infantry marching this way in columns of fours? That is General Pat Cleburne's division and hell will break loose in Georgia in about fifteen minutes."

As the battle progressed, Cleburne and his mount raced from unit to unit in an excited frenzy. Soon Cleburne's men were filled with this same fever and successfully drove the enemy in utter defeat. General D.H. Hill stated that he had never seen troops behave more gallantly than Cleburne's division.

On the second day of the battle Cleburne's men were met by a stronger force and were repulsed, but not before Rosecrans had been forced to weaken his right by sending troops to ward off Cleburne's blow. As a result, General Longstreet and General Hood broke through the Union right and the day was won.

Following the Battle of Chickamauga, Cleburne's men encamped along the crest and base of Missionary Ridge while Bragg attempted to lay siege to Chat-

tanooqa. In late November the Union forces broke this siege. Led by U.S. Grant, the Yankees attacked the Confederates at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. With the Confederate defeat on Lookout Mountain, Cleburne was left with the responsibility of holding the line of retreat in order to let the ordinance wagons and artillery escape south. After a fierce battle at Tunnel Hill, Cleburne had again played a vital role in saving the army from total destruction.

On the morning of September 26, Cleburne was ordered to hold the enemy in check once again. At Ringgold Gap, Georgia, Cleburne and his one division defeated five divisions of General Hooker thus saving the Confederate wagon trains from capture and destruction. As a result of his successes, Cleburne received a communication from Richmond, Virginia that read, "Resolved, That the thanks of Congress are due and are hereby tendered to Major General Patrick R. Cleburne and the officers and men under his command for the victory obtained by them over superior forces of the enemy at Ringgold, Georgia on November 27, 1863 by which the advance of the enemy was impeded, our wagon train and most of our artillery saved and a large number of the enemy killed and wounded."

While in winter camp at Dalton, Georgia, General Hardee asked Cleburne to be his best man and to accompany him to Mobile for his wedding. It was here that Cleburne met his sweetheart and soon to be fiancée, Miss Susan Tarleton. All of his leave time was spent in Mobile courting Miss Tarleton, however, duty called Cleburne back to Dalton. The two were to never see each other again.

In May the Atlanta campaign began. Cleburne and his division were involved in continual fighting until September. Cleburne and his men were among the troops who fought at the battles of Dug Gap, Resaca, New Hope Church, Ken-

nesaw Mountain, Atlanta, Jonesboro and Lovejoy Station. After the fall of Atlanta, the Army of Tennessee turned northward to Tennessee. On November 27, while addressing his troops, Cleburne looked towards the horizon and vowed that "he would never lay down his arms and that he would rather die than surrender." It would be his final address to his gallant band of men. During an earlier address, Cleburne made his most famous fatalistic speech by stating, "If this cause that is so dear to my heart is doomed to fail, I pray heaven let me fall with it, while my face is towards the foe and my arm battling for that which I know to be right."

Cleburne was to meet his destiny three days later on the fields at Franklin.

Arriving atop Winstead Hill at Franklin, Cleburne viewed the Federal works and knew the outcome when General Hood ordered his men to attack the center. He was ordered not to fire a gun until the first line of works had been taken and then go into the works with the enemy. Cleburne answered, "General I will take the works or fall in the attempt." As Cleburne gave the orders to his officers, long time friend General D.C. Govan saluted and as he turned to go said, "Well Cleburne, few of us will ever return to Arkansas to tell of this battle. Cleburne replied, "Well Govan, if we are to die let us die like men."

The order to move forward came and Cleburne obeyed. The brave men under Cleburne did not fire until they had dislodged the Yankees from their first line of works. General Govan was the last person to see Cleburne alive. He remembered seeing, "... Cleburne's horse shot from under him. An orderly immediately dismounted and turned his horse over to Cleburne. While in the act of mounting, this horse was also killed and Cleburne proceeded on foot, waving his hat with sword in hand

and disappeared into the smoke." Moments later Cleburne lay dead a bullet passing just below his heart. Cleburne's men, unaware of his fall, gained the ditches just below the main works awaiting his order to make another charge. One young soldier stated, "We waited and waited and some wondered why the order never came, but I knew why. Pat Cleburne was dead, for if he had been alive, he would have given that order."

After the battle, General Cleburne's body would be buried in the small cemetery at Ashwood near Columbia. In 1870 a movement began in Helena to have Cleburne's remains returned to Arkansas. On April 27, 1870 the body was removed and escorted by a number of Masons to the depot for the trip to Memphis. Cleburne's body arrived there the next day. All business ceased for the day to pay last respects to their commander and friend. Accompanied by sixteen pallbearers, the casket made its way through town. Behind the carriage was a long procession consisting of President Davis, former Tennessee Governor Isham Harris, Generals Chalmers, Cheatham, Fagan, Pillow and Bishop Quintard. Behind these men followed over one-hundred bare headed veterans. Flags were flown at half mast and all church bells tolled sadly for Cleburne. The casket was placed on a steamer at Memphis for the return home.

On the morning of April 29, the body was taken from the steamer and the cortege proceeded through the streets of Helena, Arkansas in much the same manner as in Memphis. The casket was taken to the gravesight high on a hill in the Confederate section of Magnolia Cemetery. Fifteen of Cleburne's Masonic brothers provided a graveside ceremony amidst the tearful onlookers. After the ceremony the band played the fitting song, "Home, Sweet Home." Finally, Pat Cleburne had returned home.