



Bullet'n Backstory

Joint Munitions Command

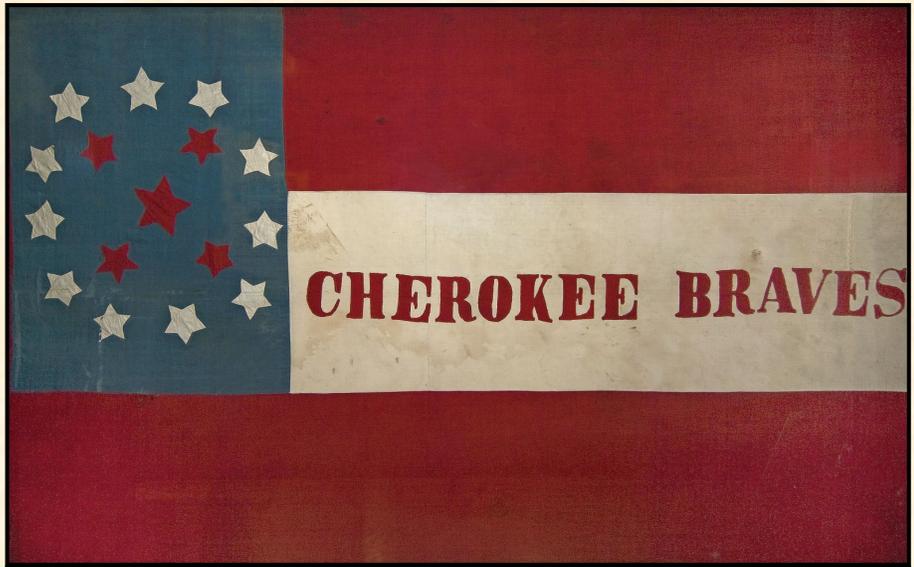
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Securing the Frontier: The Battle of Old Fort Wayne (October 22, 1862)

By the summer of 1862, Union forces had abandoned the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) to shore up defenses in Kansas and Missouri. Confederate leaders took advantage of this situation by sweeping through Indian Territory to recruit men for the war effort. Confederate forces assembled the new recruits in Fayetteville, Arkansas, in anticipation of raiding north. The mission to invade Kansas was given to Brig. Gen. Douglas Cooper. His 1st Indian Brigade consisted of Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Creek recruits, along with Texas cavalry and artillery.

Cooper first moved to occupy Old Fort Wayne, an abandoned Federal position near the border town of Maysville. Union forces at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, learning of the Confederate advance, were determined to prevent Cooper from continuing north. Union commanders believed Cooper to have 7,000 men, but also knew that these were mostly new, untrained recruits. Brig. Gen. James Blunt thus sought to counter the Confederate threat with the Army of the Frontier's 1st Division, which, while consisting of just 3,500 men (including Kansas, Indiana, and Cherokee men), was better trained and equipped than their Confederate opponents. Blunt's men left Pea Ridge and marched overnight to reach Bentonville, Arkansas, early October 21. There, Union forces rested until 5 p.m. and then did another night march of 25 miles, not stopping until 2 a.m. While the bulk of Blunt's men rested, he sent the 2nd Kansas Cavalry to engage the enemy at Maysville. There, the advance Union men encountered Confederate pickets, then chased them several miles into Indian Territory before finding the main Confederate force. Cooper's line was long and thin, and consisted of just 1,500 men and four artillery. While Blunt's howitzers exchanged barrages with Cooper's guns, the 2nd Kansas harried the Confederate flank. This delaying tactic allowed time for the main body of Union forces to arrive, at which point Blunt ordered a full attack. Within half an hour, the Confederate center collapsed and Cooper's men fled the field, leaving their artillery and supplies behind. Sensing total victory, the Union cavalry chased the fleeing Confederates for seven miles across the plains. Cooper's men did not stop until they reached Fort Gibson, seventy miles to the southwest. Cooper lost approximately 150 men, while Blunt lost just 14. The victory restored Native American faith in Union protection, thus improving Union recruitment efforts in Indian Territory. It also ensured the safety of Kansas until Quantrill's Raiders attacked the state in August 1863. ~ ~ Dr. Paul-Thomas Ferguson, JMC Archivist ~ ~



Flag carried by Brig. Gen. Stand Watie's 1st Cherokee Mounted Rifles near the end of the war. The white and red stars represent the eleven Confederate states and Five Civilized Tribes, respectively.

From the Archives

We are pleased to announce the installation of the historical exhibit, "Illinois in the War of 1812," which will remain on view in the JMC Display Room (6th Floor South, near Elevator 2) through the end of 2018.

The exhibit features several images and maps, along with information about efforts by British and American forces to recruit Native allies, and details of military operations in the territory before and during the conflict, including battles near Rock Island and elsewhere in the Upper Mississippi Valley.

Contact Historian Keri Pleasant (x20392) or Archivist Paul Ferguson (x20060) to arrange tours of the Display Room, Rock Island Arsenal, or Quarters One, or if you would like to schedule historical presentations for your organization.



Black Hawk

This Month in Military History

October 6, 1789: One day after an angry mob of Parisian women marched on the Palace of Versailles demanding redress of grievances, French King Louis XVI reluctantly returns to the Tuileries Palace in Paris. There, the royal family remains under house arrest until 1791, when they are caught trying to escape to Austria and formally arrested.

October 13, 1943: Following its surrender to the Allies in September, Italy officially declares war on its former ally, Germany.

October 20, 1097: European knights reach the outskirts of Antioch (in present-day Turkey) as part of the First Crusade. Following a seven-month siege, the Crusaders take the city and massacre all of its Muslim and Christian defenders.

October 27, 1702: As part of Queen Anne's War, British colonial troops from Carolina lay siege to the Castillo de San Marcos, a Spanish-held fort in St. Augustine, Florida. After 58 days, the British burn the city to the ground and return to Carolina.

Do you have historical items? If so, please contact the Archivist: Room 661
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