







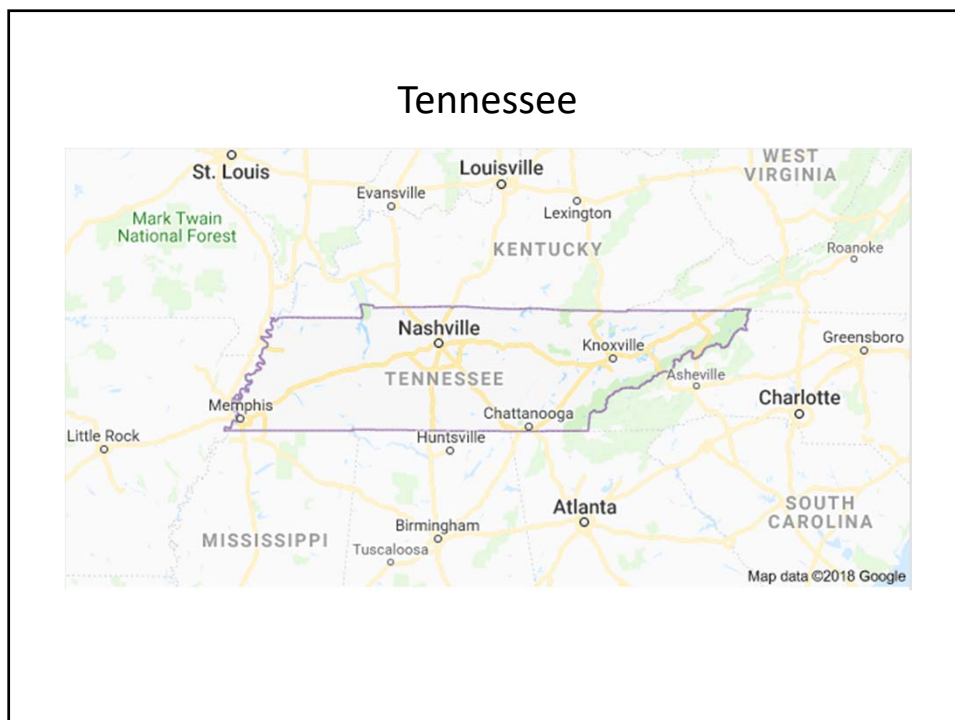


The Tennessee Campaign:  
Stones River to Chattanooga  
December 1862 to November 1863

Part III: The Battle of Chickamauga

Presented by Howard Leemon

The Battle of Chickamauga  	
<b>Belligerents</b>	
 United States (Union)	 Confederate States (Confederacy)
<b>Commanders and leaders</b>	
MG William Rosecrans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MG George H Thomas, XIV Corps</li> <li>MG Alexander McCook, XX Corps</li> <li>MG Thomas L Crittenden, XXI Corps</li> <li>MG Gordon Granger, Reserve Corps</li> <li>BG Robert Mitchell, Cavalry Corps</li> </ul>	General Braxton Bragg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LTG Leonidas Polk (Day 2, Right Wing)</li> <li>LTG Daniel Harvey Hill, Hill's Corps</li> <li>MG Simon Buckner, Buckner's Corps</li> <li>MG William Walker, Reserve Corps</li> <li>LTG James Longstreet (Day 2, Left Wing)</li> <li>BG Joseph Wheeler, Wheeler's Cavalry Corps</li> <li>BG N. Bedford Forrest, Forrest's Cavalry Corps</li> </ul>
<b>Units involved</b>	
Army of the Cumberland, 60,000 effectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infantry Divisions: Baird, Negley, Brannan, Reynolds, Davis, Johnson, Sheridan, Wood, Palmer, Van Cleve, Steedman</li> <li>Cavalry Divisions: McCook, Crook</li> </ul>	Army of Tennessee, 65,000 effectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infantry Divisions: Cheatham, Hindman, Cleburne, Breckenridge, Preston, Stewart, Gist, Liddell, Johnson, Hood (Law)</li> <li>Cavalry Divisions: Armstrong, Pegram, Wharton, Martin</li> </ul>
<b>Casualties and losses</b>	
1,657 KIA: 9,756 WIA: 4,757 CIA/MIA 16,170 casualties (27% of total)	2,312 KIA: 14,674 WIA: 1,468 CIA/MIA 18,454 casualties (28% of total)



## The Tennessee Campaign so far (1)

- MG William Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland had narrowly defeated Gen. Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee at Murfreesboro in January 1863
- June/July, Rosecrans had driven Bragg out of Middle Tennessee, across the Tennessee River and back to Chattanooga through a combination of deception and brilliant flanking manoeuvres
- He had then paused to rebuild his supplies
- 3 September, MG Ambrose Burnside had entered Knoxville, cutting the direct rail link from Chattanooga to Richmond
- By 9 September, Rosecrans' army had crossed the Tennessee River unopposed and Bragg had vacated Chattanooga without a fight
- Since October 1862, Bragg's army been in retreat all the way from Kentucky
- His army was demoralised, and his subordinates were disillusioned

## The Tennessee Campaign so far (2)

- Rosecrans, on the other hand, was ecstatic
- But his three Corps were widely separated and vulnerable to being picked off one by one if Bragg was able to concentrate his forces
- And the supply line from Stevenson and Bridgeport was fragile
- MG George Thomas advised consolidating the army before pursuing Bragg
- Rosecrans dismissed Thomas's advice out of hand
- He believed that he still had Bragg on the run and wanted to press home the advantage and finally destroy Bragg's army
- With that completed, he could press on into Georgia and drive the rebels to the sea

## Army of the Cumberland (1)

MG William Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland had 60,000 effectives present

- ❖ 4 Infantry Corps, 12 divisions, 32 brigades, 141 regiments
- ❖ 32 artillery batteries, 207 guns
- ❖ 1 Cavalry Corps, 2 divisions, 5 brigades, 17 regiments
- **XIV Corps** under MG George Thomas
  - ❖ BG Absolom Baird - Scribner, Starkweather (**w**), J King
  - ❖ BG James Negley – J Beatty, Stanley (**w**), Sirwell
  - ❖ BG John Brannan - Connell, Croxton (**w**), Van Derveer
  - ❖ MG Joseph Reynolds – Wilder (*detached*), E King (**k**), Turchin
- **XX Corps** under MG Alexander McCook
  - ❖ BG Jefferson Davis – Post, Carlin, Heg (**mw**)
  - ❖ BG Richard Johnson - Willich, Dodge, Baldwin (**k**)
  - ❖ MG Philip Sheridan – Lytle (**k**), Laiboldt, Bradley (**w**)

## Army of the Cumberland (2)

- **XXI Corps** under MG Thomas Crittenden
  - ❖ BG Thomas Wood - Buell, Harker (*2nd Brigade at Chattanooga*)
  - ❖ MG John Palmer - Cruft, Hazen, Grose
  - ❖ BG Horatio Van Cleve – S Beatty, Dick, Barnes
- **Reserve Corps** under MG Gordon Granger
  - ❖ BG James Steedman – Whitaker, Mitchell
  - ❖ + 1 Brigade under Col Daniel McCook (*1st brigade at Bridgeport*)
- **The Cavalry Corps** under BG Robert Mitchell
  - ❖ Col Edward McCook – Campbell, Ray, Watkins
  - ❖ BG George Crook - Minty, Long

## William Rosecrans

- Born 1819 in Ohio
- 5<sup>th</sup> in his class at West Point
- Successful engineer and inventor
- Highly intelligent and a good planner
- Personally brave and highly energetic
- Well liked by subordinates and soldiers
- A strong tendency to micromanagement
- Enjoyed arguing on philosophical and religious matters, particularly late into the night on campaign when he should have been sleeping
- Enjoyed arguing with his superiors in Washington
- 'Short of temper and long of tongue'
- Successful against Lee in West Virginia, although McClellan took the credit
- Had won the battles of Iuka and Corinth in Mississippi but had been criticised for lacklustre pursuit



## George Henry Thomas

- Born 1816 in Virginia of a slave-owning family
- A "traitor" in the South, suspect in the North
- Methodical, unflappable battlefield commander
- Won the first major Union victory at Mill Springs
- His loyalty to Buell saw him passed over for promotion
- Soon to enhance his reputation



## Alexander McDowell McCook

- Born 1831 in Ohio
- Career soldier
- At Perryville his corps suffered heavy casualties
- It was driven back a mile
- This was to become a bit of a habit



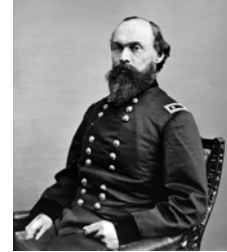
## Thomas Leonidas Crittenden

- Born 1819 in Kentucky
- A lawyer and had served in the Kentucky militia
- His father had been Governor and a US senator
- His brother joined the Confederate army



## Gordon Granger

- Born 1821 in New York state
- Career soldier
- Fought in the Mexican-American war
- Blunt and outspoken
- Not popular with other commanders
- Soon to be very popular, with Thomas in particular



## Army of Tennessee – 9 September (1)

- Bragg now had 4 infantry Corps instead of the 2 previously
- Reinforcements had been brought up from Mississippi and from Knoxville
- The command structure was becoming increasingly unwieldy, particularly because of the personalities involved
  - LTG Polk remained in charge of his Corps
  - LTG Hardee had left in disgust, his Corps was now led by LTG DH Hill, who had been moved from Virginia because he could not get along with Lee
  - MG Simon Buckner had brought his Corps from Knoxville after having his Department absorbed into Bragg's
  - A Reserve Corps had been created, commanded by MG William Walker
  - Wheeler and Forrest still had their separate cavalry corps
  - Walker was the only corps commander who didn't have any animosity towards Bragg – so far



### Army of Tennessee - 9 September (2)

- Polk's Corps under LTG Leonidas Polk comprised:
  - ✧ MG Benjamin Cheatham – Jackson, Maney, Smith (**k**), Strahl, Wright
  - ✧ MG Thomas Hindman – Anderson, Deas, Manigault
- Hill's Corps under LTG Daniel Harvey Hill comprised:
  - ✧ MG Patrick Cleburne – Deshler (**k**), L Polk, Wood
  - ✧ MG John Breckenridge – Adams (**w**), Helm (**k**), Stovall
- Buckner's Corps under MG Simon Buckner comprised:
  - ✧ BG William Preston – Gracie, Kelly, Trigg
  - ✧ MG Alexander Stewart – Bate, Brown, Clayton
- Reserve Corps under MG William Walker comprised:
  - ✧ BG States Rights Gist – Colquitt (**mw**), Ector, Wilson
  - ✧ BG St John R Liddell - Govan, Walthall

### Army of Tennessee - 9 September (3)

- Forrest's Cavalry Corps under BG Nathan Bedford Forrest comprised:
  - ✧ BG Frank Armstrong – Wheeler, Dibrell
  - ✧ BG John Pegram - Davidson, Scott
- Wheeler's Cavalry Corps under MG Joseph Wheeler
  - ✧ BG John Wharton – Crew, Harrison
  - ✧ BG William Martin – Morgan, Russell

## Braxton Bragg

- Born 1817 in North Carolina
- Graduated 5<sup>th</sup> in class from West Point
- Experienced soldier
- Highly intelligent
- Personally brave
- Strict disciplinarian
- Irascible temperament
- Unable to relate well with subordinates or soldiers
- Unable to communicate his plans effectively



## Leonidas Polk

- Born 1806 in North Carolina
- Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana
- A graduate of West Point
- Impressive academic record
- Little military experience
- Farmer and slave owner in Tennessee
- Popular with soldiers
- Politically important

*“Besides being a basically incompetent general,  
Polk had the added fault of hating to take orders.”*



## Simon Bolivar Buckner

- Born in 1823 in Kentucky
- West Point graduate
- Friends with Grant
- Helped Grant financially when he was destitute
- Initially supported Kentucky neutrality
- “Unconditionally surrendered” Fort Donelson to Grant
- In 1863, he was given the Department of East Tennessee
- The department was now dissolved and his army downgraded to a Corps
- As with most Kentuckians, he despised Bragg, and now had another reason to do so
- In 1865, he was the last Confederate general to surrender
- So he was the first and last Confederate general to surrender

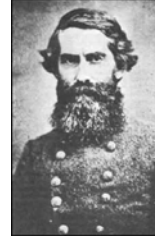


## Daniel Harvey Hill

- Born in 1821 in South Carolina
- West Point graduate
- Distinguished service in the Mexican American war
- Resigned and taught mathematics
- Divisional commander in the Army of Northern Virginia
- Aggressive leader, strict disciplinarian
- His troops defended the infamous “sunken lane” at Antietam
- Argumentative and sarcastic – Bragg referred to him as “querulous”
- Friends with Longstreet and brother-in-law to Stonewall Jackson
- Fell out with Lee and was reassigned
- Had served under Bragg in Mexico and was initially pleased to work with him again
- That feeling did not last long



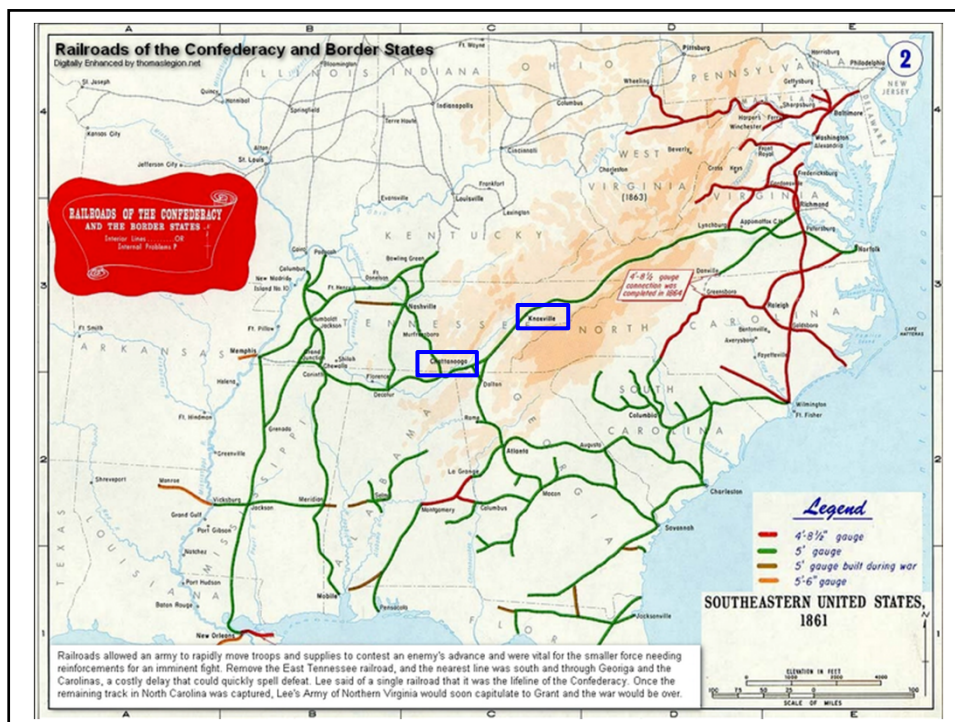
## William Henry Talbot Walker



- Born in 1816 in Georgia
- West Point graduate
- Professional soldier
- Considered to be a highly competent commander
- Joe Johnston's view was that he was "the only officer in his command competent to lead a division"
- Nicknamed "shot pouch" due to his multiple woundings

## More reinforcements

- After major defeats at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, etc. the Confederate Government in Richmond could not face another major loss in Tennessee or Georgia
- The solution was to send yet more reinforcements, this time from the Army of Northern Virginia
- Lee's objections to weakening his army were overruled
- The huge losses of men at Gettysburg had lessened his authority
- LTG James Longstreet would take 2 Divisions south (12,000 men)
- His other Division was Pickett's and it wasn't going anywhere for a while
- The troops started moving on 8 September
- With the loss of Knoxville, the advantage of interior lines had been lost
- The troops had to travel a roundabout route of 1000 miles
- Only 7,500 arrived in time to play any part in the battle



## Army of Tennessee 19 September

- With the reinforcements from the Army of Northern Virginia, Gen. Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee probably fielded 65,000 effectives
  - ❖ 5 Infantry Corps, 11 divisions, 33 brigades, 158 regiments
  - ❖ 35 artillery batteries, 148 guns
  - ❖ 2 Cavalry Corps, 4 divisions, 8 brigades, 41 regiments
- Polk's Corps under LTG Leonidas Polk
- Hill's Corps under LTG Daniel Harvey Hill
- Buckner's Corps under MG Simon Buckner
- Reserve Corps under MG William Walker
- Longstreet's Corps under the command of MG John Hood (**w**)
  - ❖ BG Bushrod Johnson – Fulton, Gregg (**w**), McNair(**w**)
  - ❖ Hood's Division under BG Evander Law – Benning, Sheffield (**w**), Robertson
- Forrest's Cavalry Corps under BG Nathan Bedford Forrest
- Wheeler's Cavalry Corps under MG Joseph Wheeler

## James Longstreet

- Born in 1821 in South Carolina
- Grew up in Georgia
- Graduated 54<sup>th</sup> out of 56 at West Point
- Friends with Rosecrans, Thomas, Grant
- Grant married Longstreet's distant cousin
- Deputy to Lee in the Army of Northern Virginia
- Favoured the use of "defensive tactics within a strategic offensive"
- Understood that new weapons had made "exposed offense" obsolete
- Capable of delivering smashing attacks, but only after careful reconnaissance and preparation
- He disagreed with Lee's tactics at Gettysburg and had been slow to implement the orders
- Strongly criticised by "Lost Cause" supporters after the war ended



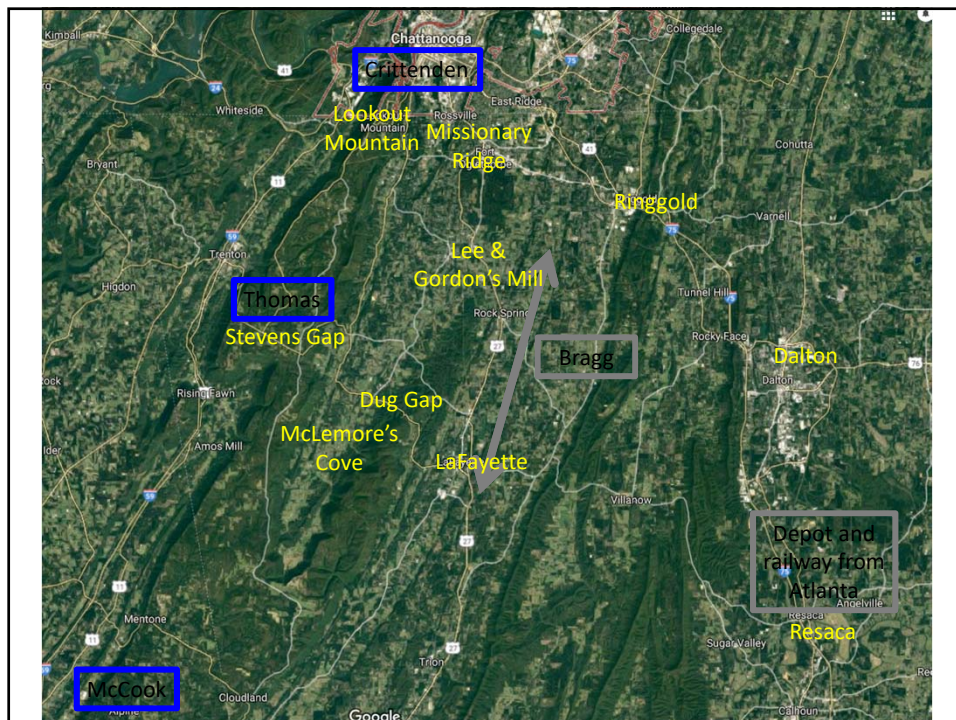
## John Bell Hood

- Born 1831 in Kentucky
- Moved to Texas
- Brave and aggressive brigade commander
- Hot-headed and reckless
- Lost the use of his left arm at Gettysburg
- Would lose his right leg at Chickamauga



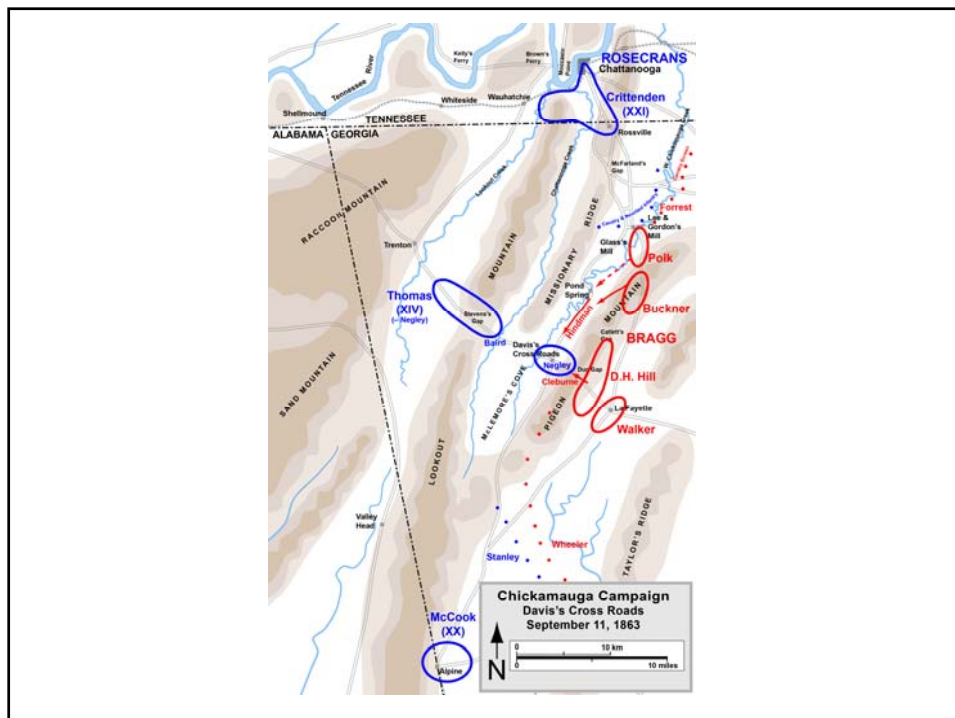
## Rosecrans' strategy

- With Bragg on the run, his three Corps would attack from 3 different directions
- Crittenden would go for Ringgold in the north from Chattanooga
- Thomas would go for LaFayette in the centre through McLemore's Cove
- McCook would go for Alpine to the south, either attacking Bragg from the south or possibly heading to Resaca
- Bragg would be surrounded and the supply line to Atlanta would be cut
- Thomas was not convinced and moved his divisions cautiously
- 10 September, Negley's Division (4,600 troops) moved from Stevens Gap across McLemore's Cove to Dug Gap
- Baird would be following 12 hours behind



## Bragg's failed traps

- Bragg saw McLemore's Cove as the perfect location for a trap
- He ordered Hill to send Cleburne's division from the east through Dug Gap and Hindman's division and Buckner's corps to attack from the north
- All three were new to Bragg's army and had not worked together before
- They dithered, made excuses, held councils of war, sought clarification
- By the time they converged on 11 Sept, Negley was gone
- Rosecrans now realised that Bragg was not retreating and ordered Crittenden's XXI Corps to concentrate to Lee & Gordon's Mill
- While Crittenden was on the move, Bragg thought there was an other opportunity for a trap and ordered Polk to attack
- The opportunity didn't exist and Polk twice declined to attack
- Bragg was furious with Hill, Buckner, Hindman and Polk





### Both armies regroup (1)

- Bragg became very worried when he realised that McCook was to the south of him and was still worried about Thomas attacking LaFayette
- At the same time, Rosecrans realised his forces were too widely dispersed and sent orders to McCook to move north to join Thomas at Stevens' Gap
- Thomas would then sidle north to join Crittenden
- The messenger took a full day to get to McCook
- Not knowing the roads, McCook retreated the way he came and it took 3 days of hard marching before he joined Thomas and Thomas could start to move north
- Rosecrans knew during all this time that he was at high risk of being cut off from Chattanooga
- It would have been a few nervous days for him

### Both armies regroup (2)

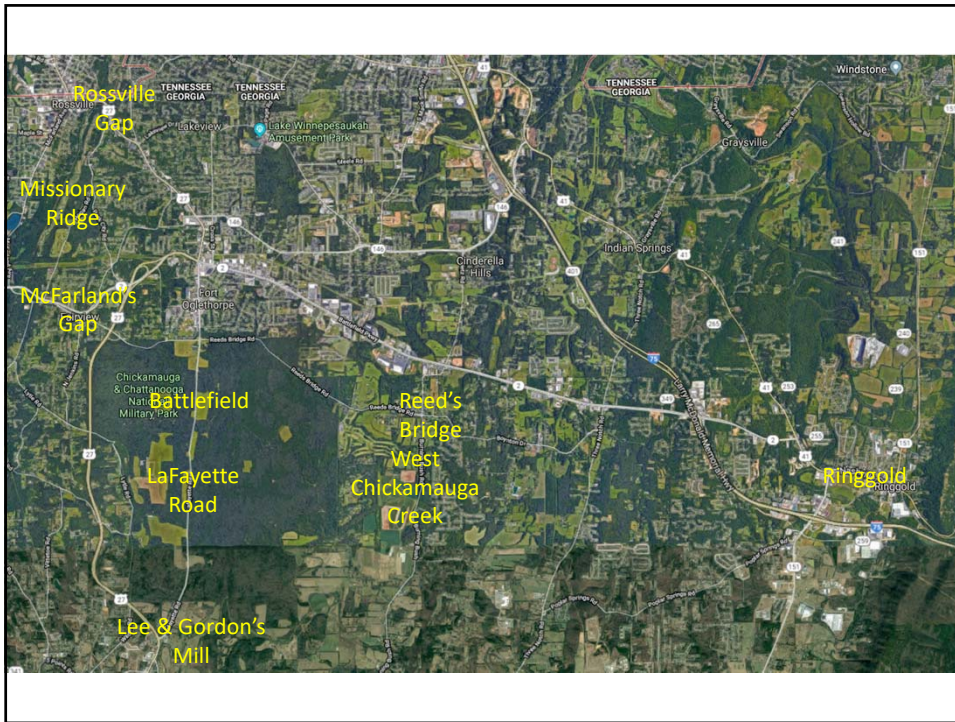
- Cutting Rosecrans off from Chattanooga was what Bragg had in mind
- But he still hadn't given up on wanting to use McLemore's Cove
- A successful flanking attack from the north could possibly achieve both goals
- But it would require both armies to follow his plan!
- With troops from Virginia starting to arrive, Bragg delayed his planned attack on 17 Sept for a day, to allow time for Longstreet to arrive
- But he would attack on 18 Sept whether Longstreet had arrived or not

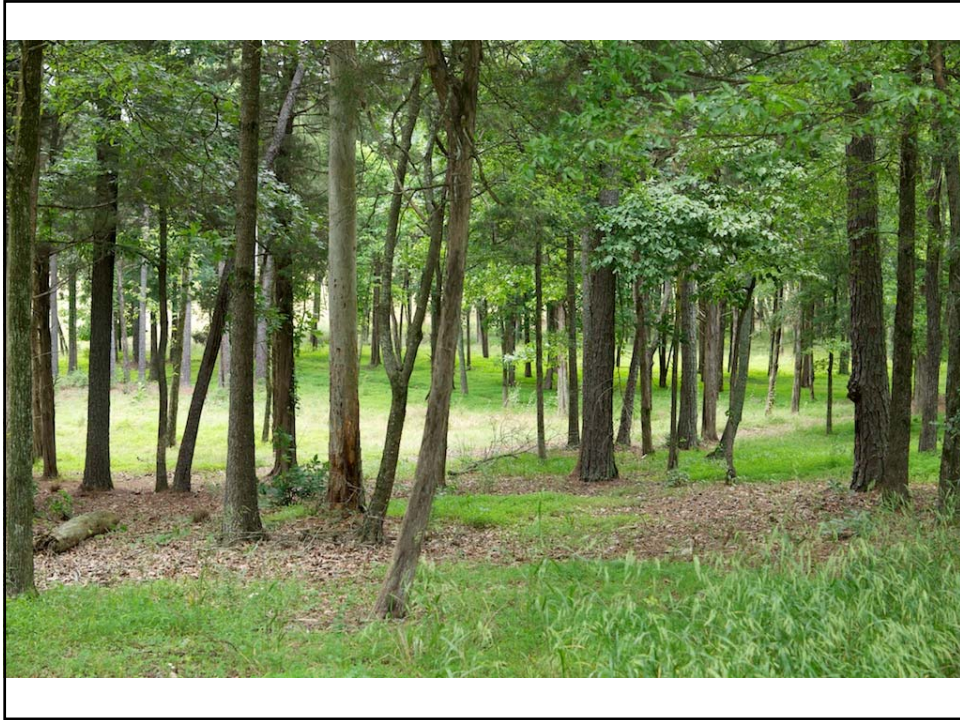
### Both armies regroup (3)

- On 17 and 18 Sept the Union forces were still highly vulnerable
- Thomas and McCook were on their way but had not yet arrived
- In order to protect the route to Chattanooga, Rosecrans had called up 3 divisions of Granger's Reserve Corps to defend the Rossville Gap
- Rosecrans directed his cavalry and Wilder to watch the bridges and fords to the north to resist any crossings but they were thinly stretched

### Terrain

- The winding West Chickamauga Creek separated the two armies
- There were bridges and fords that would facilitate crossings
- The ground between the creek and the LaFayette Road was gently rolling but heavily wooded with some open fields
- There was a small ridge to the west that would become very important
- Sections of the attack lines could be in fields and while other parts were in woods making coordination extremely difficult
- It was difficult for cavalry to manoeuvre, except to the north
- It was difficult for artillery because sight was limited, batteries were close to the action, vulnerable to counterattack and the horses were in danger
- No officer above brigadier could see all his command at once
- Even brigadiers could only see their commands and perhaps, their foes
- It was to be a "soldiers battle"



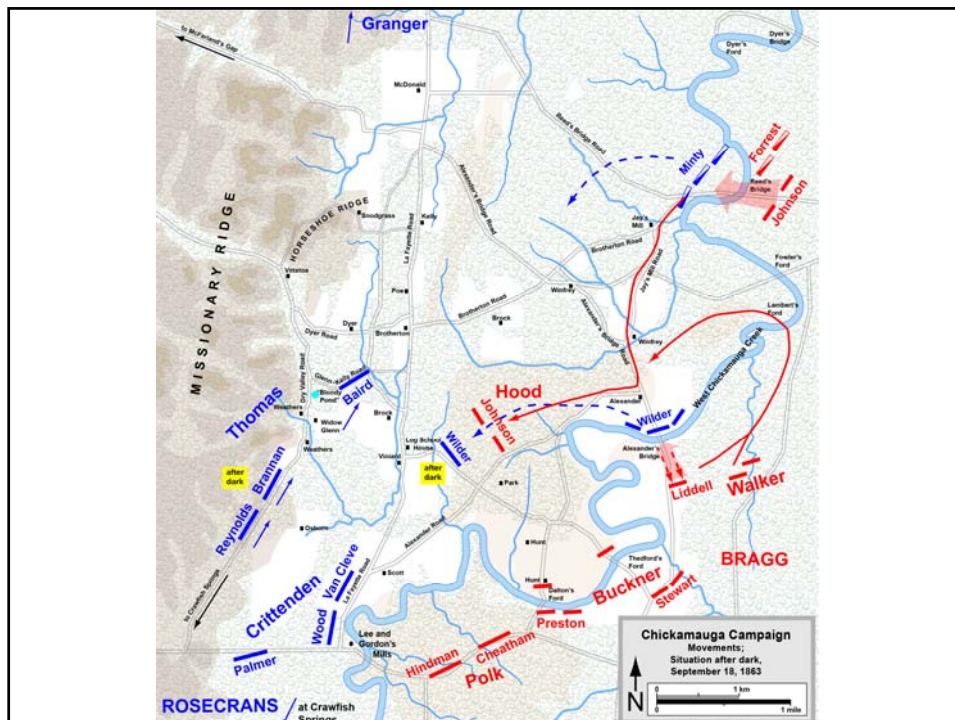


## 18 September (1)

- Bragg's plan was as follows:
- Starting early, and in succession,
  - Bushrod Johnson's Division (Longstreet) would cross at Reed's Bridge
  - Walker's Corps would cross at Alexander's Bridge
  - Stewart's Division (Buckner) would cross at Thedford's Ford
  - Preston's Division (Buckner) would cross at Dalton's Ford
- All would combine and fall on Rosecrans from the north
- Polk would hold Rosecrans in position at Lee & Gordon's Mill
- Hill would anchor the left (southern) flank
- Forrest's cavalry would protect the northern flank
- Wheeler's cavalry would protect the southern flank

## 18 September (2)

- ❖ Reed's Bridge
  - Johnson's Division started early from Ringgold but took the wrong road, before getting back on the right road
  - Col. Minty's Cavalry brigade, with support from 2 regiments from Wilder, delayed Johnson's crossing until nearly 4 pm
  - Hood arrived and directed Johnson to turn south to join up with Walker
- ❖ Alexander's Bridge
  - Wilder's remaining regiments prevented Walker's Corps from crossing
  - Late in the day Walker called off the attack and found an unprotected ford some distance away but it would take all night to get across
- ❖ At Dalton's & Thedford's Fords, Buckner had been ordered to wait for Walker, so he did just that
  - He sent one brigade across each ford and waited for the next morning
  - Minty and Wilder, and Buckner, had given Rosecrans a vital extra day

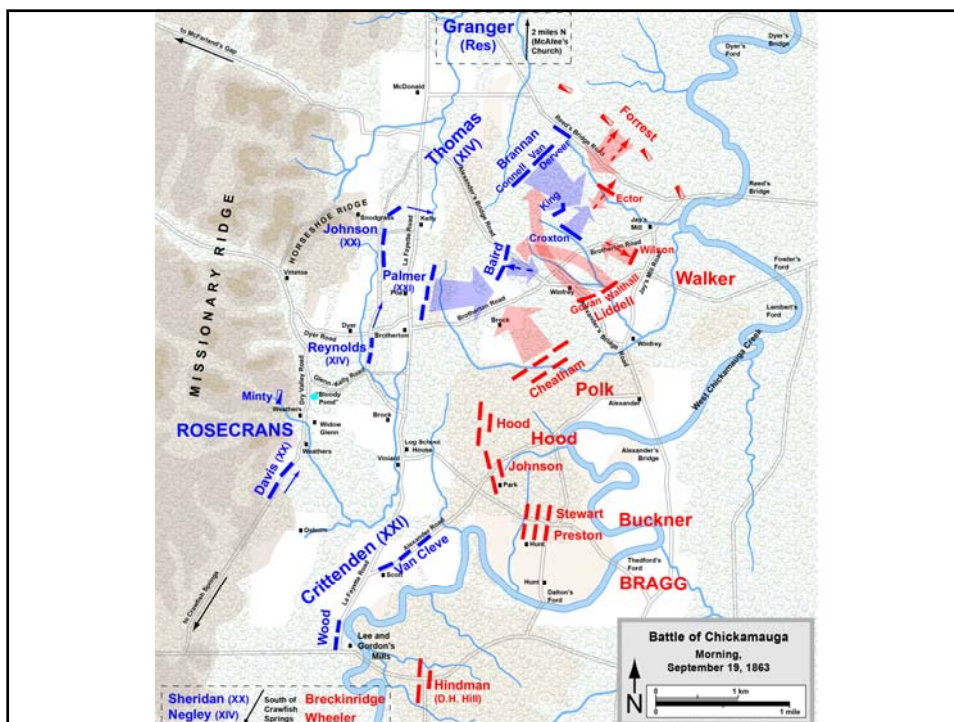


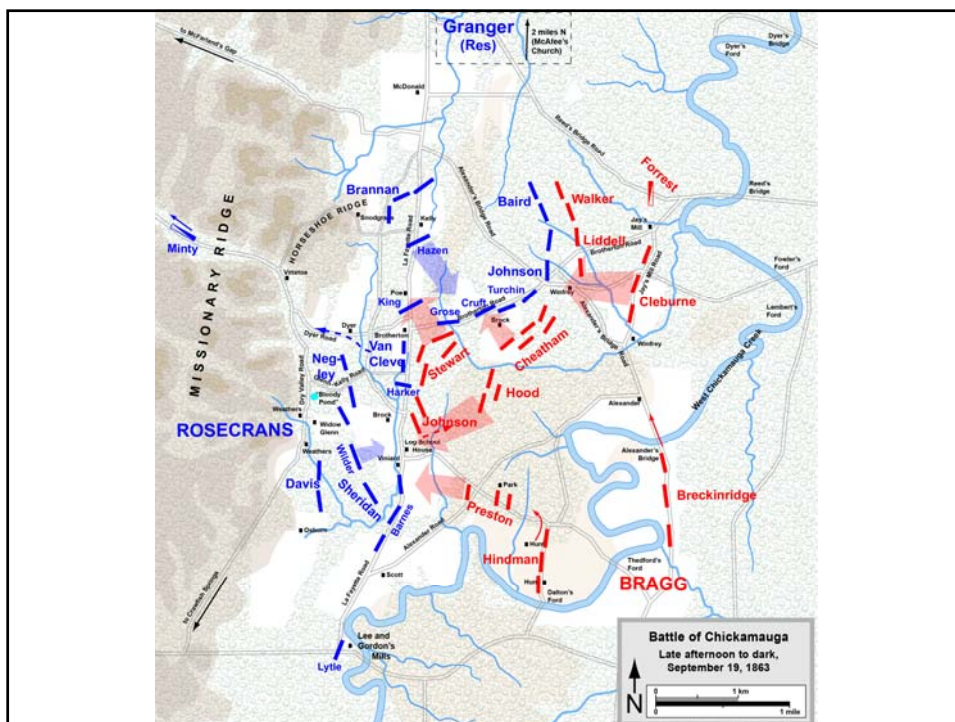
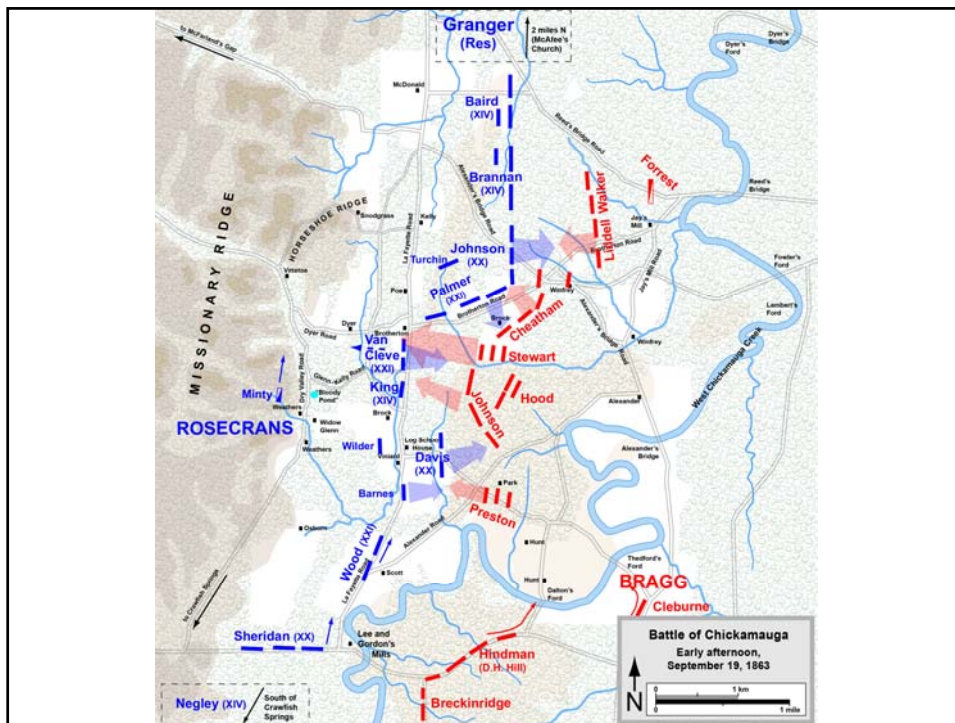
## Day 1: 19 September (1)

- Apart from the extra day, Minty's and Wilder's efforts had given Rosecrans two vital pieces of information
  - ✧ Bragg had troops much further north than expected
  - ✧ The rumours about reinforcements from Virginia were true
- Despite the delay Bragg was determined to continue with his plan
- What he didn't know was that the plan was out of date and he was no longer attacking Rosecrans' left flank
- Thomas had arrived during the night and had moved north with 2 divisions
- He was now well beyond Bragg's northern flank
- Thomas received an inaccurate report that there was an isolated infantry brigade on his side of the creek and he sent troops to destroy it
- His troops ran into Forrest's cavalry who called for infantry support and a full day's fighting began in earnest

## Day 1: 19 September (2)

- The fighting followed a similar pattern for each side
- A division or brigade would march north and turn to attack, mostly hitting the southern flank of their opponents who had just done the same
- As much of Rosecrans' army was still arriving from the south, troops were sent in when available, mixing up the commands
- Both sides made breakthroughs but were driven back by counterattacks
- As the troops moved northwards, the fighting moved southwards
- As dark fell, fighting broke out again to the north as Bragg tried to restart the flanking attack with an attack by Cleburne's division
- Again, Bragg had misjudged where the flank was
- Cleburne hit a very strong defensive line and little was achieved
- Once it was too dark to see which side they were shooting at, the fighting ceased
- Both sides had been badly mauled







### Night of 19-20 September (1)

- Nearly all of Rosecrans' troops had been engaged, except for Granger's Reserve Corps, while the Confederates still had some fresh troops
- Rosecrans called a council of war to discuss the options
- After so much recent success, retreat to Chattanooga was not an acceptable option
- In any case, troops on the move would be very vulnerable
- The decision was made to stay where they were and be ready to defend at dawn
- Based on past experience, there was a small hope that Bragg might even retreat again!

### Night of 19-20 September (2)

- The Confederate attacks had been disjointed and had not used their superior numbers to advantage
- Bragg decided on an immediate restructure into 2 wings under Polk and Longstreet, who hadn't arrived yet
- The Right Wing under Polk comprised:
  - Cheatham's Division
  - Hill's Corps (Cleburne, Breckenridge)
  - Walker's Reserve Corps (Gist, Liddell)
- The Left Wing under Longstreet comprised:
  - Hindman's Division (from Polk)
  - Buckner's Corps (Preston, Stewart)
  - Longstreet's Corps under Hood (Johnson, Law)

### Night of 19-20 September (3)

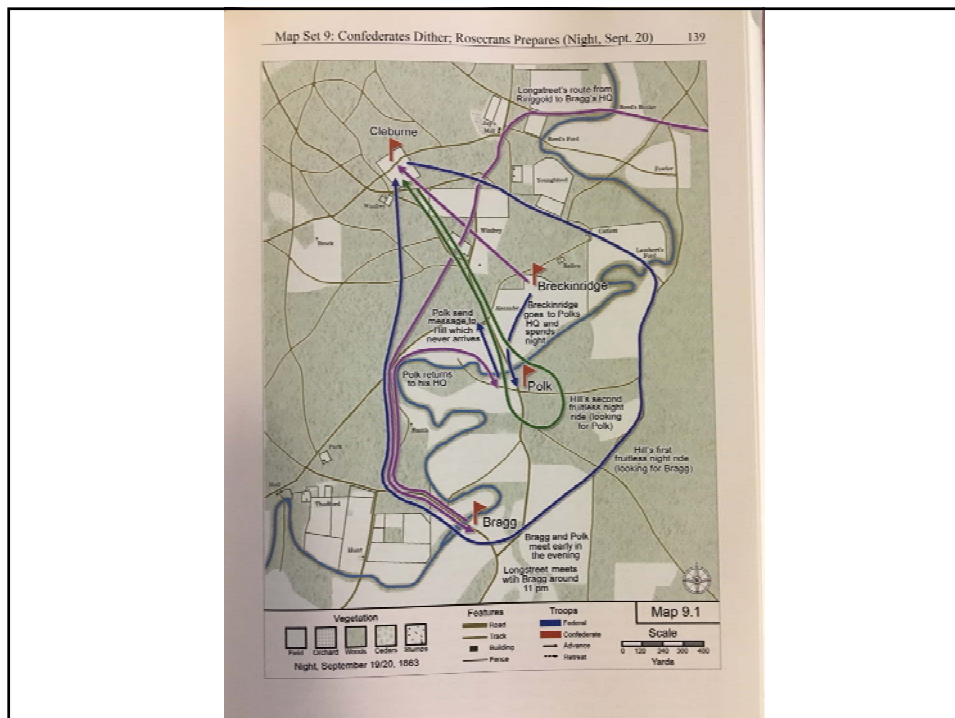
- Having to report to Polk was not going to make LTG Hill more cooperative
- And Bragg didn't bother informing Hill of the change
- Instead of meeting all the senior commanders together as Rosecrans had done, Bragg met with Polk at Bragg's HQ to give him his plan
  - Breckenridge's division (Hill's Corps) would start the attack at daybreak on (what he hoped was) Rosecrans' northern flank
  - The other divisions would attack from north to south *en echelon*
  - The goal was to overwhelm Thomas's command
  - Polk's wing would then support Longstreet's wing when it advanced with a flanking attack
- Bragg's was sticking with his plan to drive Rosecrans southwards

### Night of 19-20 September (4)

- Rather than finding Hill to speak to him directly, Polk returned to his camp and sent written orders to Cheatham, Walker and Hill by courier – and then went to bed
- The courier carrying Hill's orders could not find him
- When he returned to Polk's camp he wasn't allowed to wake anyone
- The courier didn't tell anyone that the orders had not been delivered
- Breckenridge had spent much of the evening with Polk but Polk had not told him of his role in starting the attack in the morning

## Night of 19-20 September (5)

- Around midnight, trying to find out what his orders were, Hill set out to find Bragg but lost his way, getting confused by the various fords
- After several hours he gave up and returned to his camp
- There he was told by a staff officer about his demotion but not what he was supposed to do the next day
- Around 3 am, he set out to find Polk but was equally unsuccessful so he gave up
- Meanwhile, Longstreet had arrived, found Bragg's HQ at 11 pm, woken him up and received his orders
- Importantly, his Left Wing was to attack only once the fighting was underway to the north



### Day 2: Dawn to 9 am (1)

- At daybreak nothing happened
- Polk send new orders directly to Breckenridge and Cleburne but not to Hill who was there when the orders were delivered!
- Still nothing happened
- Hill had complained that the troops needed to be realigned, the ground reconnoitred - and they were just receiving their breakfast rations
- Polk and Bragg were forced to wait until 9 am before Breckenridge was ready to begin his advance
- While Polk, Bragg and Hill argued, Longstreet took the time to do his own reconnaissance and make his plans for when it would be his time to move his troops
- He had plenty of time to organise a very strong attacking formation that would have overwhelmed almost any opposition, he later claimed
- However, his right overlapped with Polk's left

### Day 2: Dawn to 9 am (2)

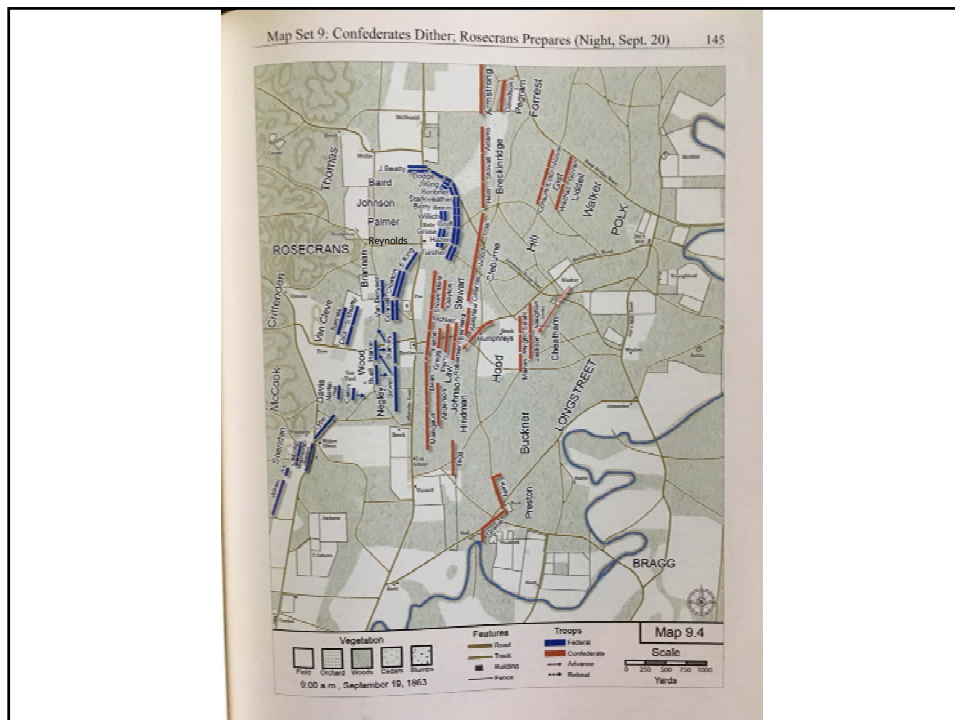
- During the night Thomas had moved his troops back to a more defensible position
- They now used these additional daylight hours well, chopping down trees to make very strong breastworks
- But the divisions were now seriously mixed up and the command structure was breaking down
- In practice, Rosecrans was constantly giving or sending orders directly to the divisional commanders bypassing the Corps commanders (except for Thomas)
- As they were expecting to be attacked at any moment there was no attempt made to reorganise the divisions, although many had been in motion overnight and in the morning

### Day 2: Dawn to 9 am (3)

- The order of the Union brigades early in the morning was as follows, starting from the north:
  - Thomas: Baird (XIV), Johnson (XX), Palmer (XXI), Reynolds (XIV)
  - McCook: Brannan (XIV), Negley (XIV)
  - Crittenden: Wood (XXI) and Van Cleve (XXI) formed a reserve behind the line
  - At this stage Davis (XX) and Sheridan (XX) were a little further south where they had been overnight and McCook was slow to move them into the line
  - Wilder's brigade anchored the southern flank
- Overnight, Thomas had requested Negley's division move up to extend his northern flank but it hadn't arrived yet

### Day 2: Dawn to 9 am (4)

- Thomas now demanded that Negley move "without delay"
- Negley's reserve brigade under John Beatty had already moved north
- As Negley pulled his remaining 2 divisions out of the line, Rosecrans arrived and ordered them back into the line until they had been replaced
- Seeing Wood's 2 brigades behind the line in reserve, Rosecrans ordered Wood to replace Negley
- He returned shortly afterwards to find that it still hadn't happened
- The widely-believed story was that Rosecrans publicly rebuked Wood, although Wood later said that the conversation was cordial
- It is generally agreed that Rosecrans was becoming increasingly rattled as he tried to satisfy Thomas's demand for more troops



## Day 2: 9 to early afternoon (1)

- When Beatty's brigade arrived it was put in place to extend Thomas's flank along LaFayette Road but this line needed a division to cover it and there was no time to build any breastworks
- When Breckenridge's division (Hill) attacked just before 10 am, Beatty's brigade was quickly overwhelmed
- Breckenridge re-aligned 2 brigades and sent them south on to Thomas's flank, while Helm's brigade attacked the line from the east
- Cleburne's division (Hill) advanced and attacked the heavily fortified part of the defensive line along with Stewart's division (Buckner, Left Wing)
- Under extreme pressure, Thomas made a desperate and, as it turned out, unnecessary call for Brannan to come north
- This would lead to the later disaster

### Day 2: 9 to early afternoon (2)

- Now 3 brigades from Negley, Brannan and Van Cleve arrived just in time to shatter Breckenridge's flanking attack
- Brigadiers Adams and Helm (Breckenridge) were wounded and Deshler (Cleburne) was killed
- Polk, Hill and Walker were bickering over how to support Breckenridge and Cleburne
- Finally Walker went in when it was too late to affect the outcome
- Cheatham was stuck behind Stewart and could not help
- Soon after noon Polk's attack had fought itself out at least for the time being
- The major flaw had been that Breckenridge and Cleburne had attacked in single lines without any reserves

### Day 2: 9 to early afternoon (3)

- But why had Stewart been attacking alongside Cleburne?
- Around 10 am Bragg abandoned his whole plan and sent an order for all of his commanders to attack as soon as they received the order
- Stewart had advanced immediately without notifying Longstreet and attacked Brannan's front but it was too strong and he had been forced back

### Day 2: 9 to early afternoon (4)

- Now Brannan received Thomas's order to move north, but was concerned about the gap that would be left and consulted Reynolds
- Reynolds believed he could cover the gap but recommended they seek confirmation from Rosecrans while Brannan stayed in the line
- When the messenger arrived, Rosecrans thought that Brannan must have already moved and the gap needed to be filled and that Wood should do it
- An order was sent directly to Wood, probably drafted by a senior aide-de-camp but not checked by Rosecrans or his chief of staff
- The order was "the general commanding directs that you close up on Reynolds as fast as possible, and support him"
- There was no context for the order and the terms "close up on" and "support" were mutually contradictory
- As Brannan was between him and Reynolds, Wood couldn't "close up"

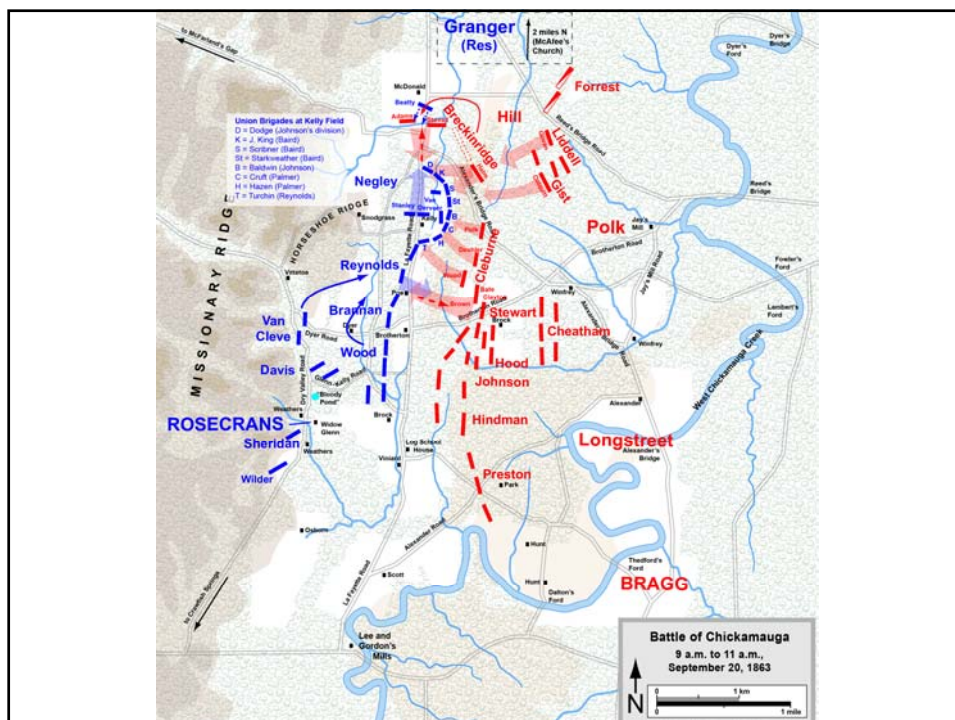
### Day 2: 9 to early afternoon (5)

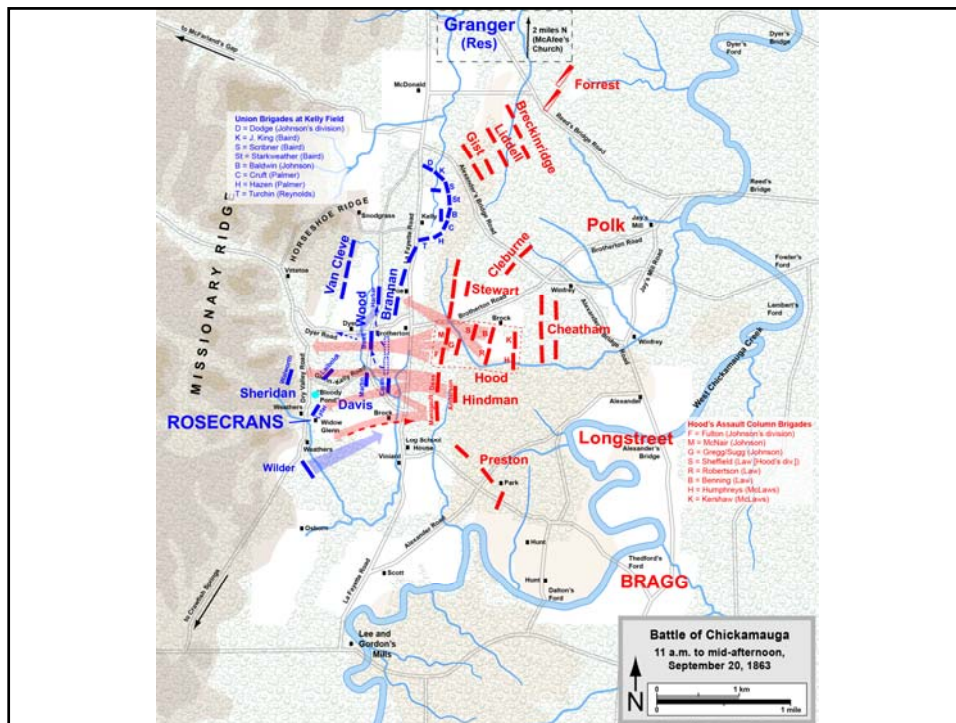
- Wood consulted with McCook who was nearby
- McCook confirmed that the order was peremptory but justified it on the grounds that Rosecrans must know more about the situation
- It was later claimed that Wood was unwilling to incur Rosecrans' wrath again by questioning the order (if the earlier incident was in fact true)
- Wood started to move his 2 brigades out of the line to go behind Brannan to "support" Reynolds



## Day 2: 9 to early afternoon (6)

- Longstreet had received Bragg's order but waited for the mess caused by Stewart's repulse to clear
- Johnson's division began the advance straight towards the gap created by Wood's departure
- Much of the southern part of the Union line fell back in disarray although some units showed considerable courage before being driven back
- Longstreet's success caused its own chaos amongst the Confederates
- McCook rushed Davis's and Sheridan's divisions in to fill the gap in a piecemeal fashion that ensured their destruction
- Only Wilder's brigade was able to hold its position and counterattack
- But against overwhelming odds, any further fighting would have lost one of the strongest brigades in the army so Wilder withdrew





## Day 2: Early afternoon (1)

- In the rout, McCook, Crittenden and Rosecrans all left the field
- In a decision that would have serious consequences for him, Rosecrans decided to go to Chattanooga to organise the defence
- He sent his chief of staff, James Garfield, to find Thomas and tell him to take charge of the remainder of the Union army
- Garfield's report stated that Thomas was "standing like a rock"
- From then on, Thomas became known as the "Rock of Chickamauga"
- Unlike their superiors, Sheridan, Davis and Van Cleve fell back but then started to round up stragglers
- Unable to go to Thomas's aid directly because of the Confederate breakthrough, Sheridan took his troops behind Missionary Ridge to Rossville, but he was too late to go to Thomas's aid when he got there
- Initially he was under suspicion, it was later judged that this was a reasonable decision on his part

### Day 2: Early afternoon (2)

- On the southern side of Horseshoe Ridge, also known as Snodgrass Ridge, Brannan, Wood and Negley had managed to organise a motley crew of Union troops into a makeshift defensive line
- Some of these troops had made their way back after the initial rout
- Others had retreated in order, even making strong counterattacks
- Negley chose this time to take most of the remainder of his troops away along with 20 guns and his ammunition trains without making any efforts to contact with Thomas who wasn't far away
- This action would cost him his command
- He did however agree to leave the 21 Ohio regiment behind with their five-shot Colt Revolving Rifles which made them a very formidable fighting unit

### Day 2: Early afternoon (3)

- The confederates made many strong attacks on the ridge but these were disjointed and were repulsed
- Hood had been seriously wounded (his right femur was shattered near the hip) as he was trying to organise his command that had been disorganised by their success
- Longstreet did not make any efforts to take charge until later
- It was reported that he was off having lunch
- Now Bushrod Johnson saw an opportunity to flank the Union line on the ridge on their right which was empty of defenders

### Day 2: Early afternoon (4)

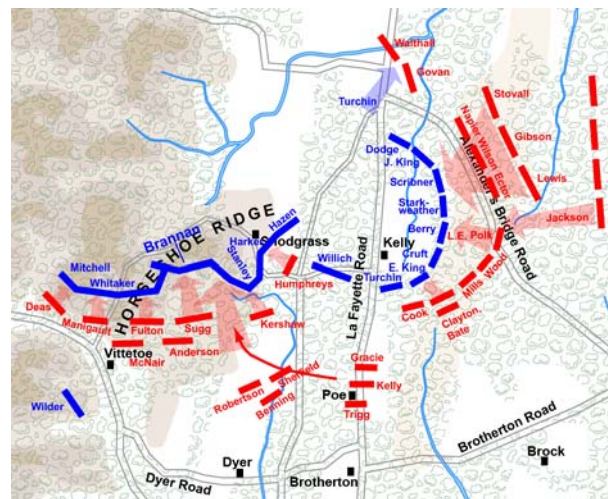
- All morning Gordon Granger had been listening to the noise of battle
- His orders were to hold the Rossville Gap but be ready to support Thomas or McCook if required
- Finally, he had had enough of waiting
- Aware of the consequences of defying orders, he started south with his 3 brigades
- They came under fire from Forrest's cavalry artillery so he sent Col. McCook to deal with them and continued on with Steedman's 2 brigades
- When Thomas saw dust indicating troops coming from the north, he was too nervous to be able to hold his field glasses
- If they were Confederates, the Union army was lost
- It is unlikely that Granger had ever been made so welcome

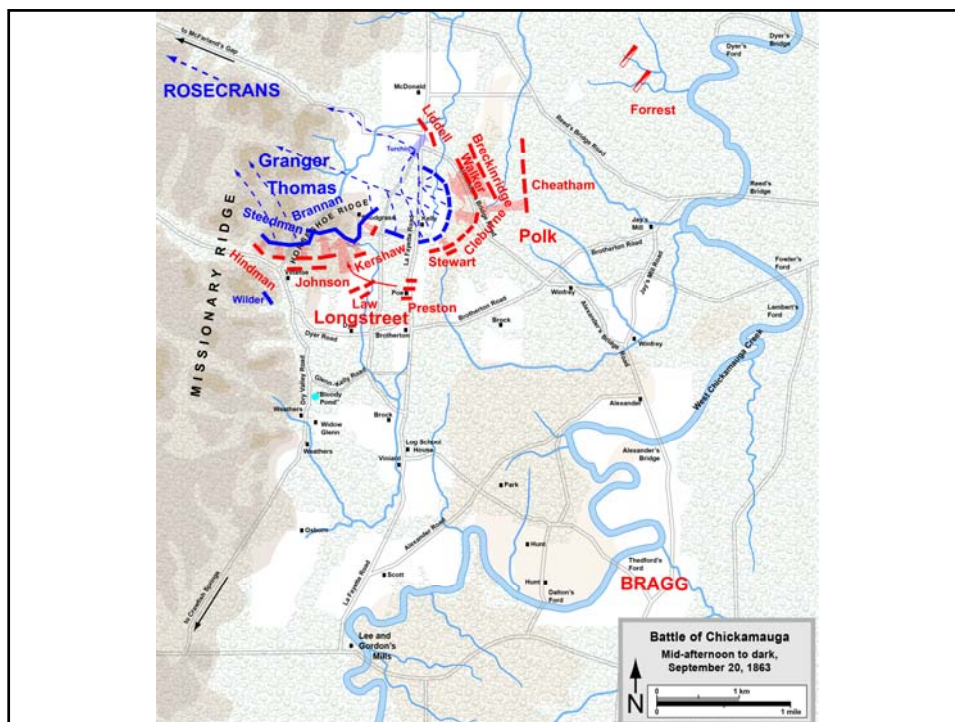
### Day 2: Early afternoon (5)

- Steedman led his 2 brigades straight in at a run, pausing only to tell Thomas's staff to make sure they spelt his name correctly in the obituaries
- His men, who had very little fighting experience, hit Johnson's troops just as they were coming up the ridge and drove them back
- Their losses were heavy but they had stabilised the defensive line
- Apart from fresh troops, Granger had brought 95,000 rounds of ammunition

## Day 2: Late afternoon to dark

- Polk's Wing renewed its attack from the east
- Longstreet had returned from his lunch and started directing the attacks from the south
- With his plan of driving the Union forces south towards McLemore's Cove having fallen apart, Bragg seemed uninterested
- Longstreet reported that Bragg "thought ... the battle was lost"
- Reynolds now started to panic and started suggesting that they surrender
- His fellow commanders calmed him down
- Late in the afternoon, Rosecrans sent his orders for Thomas to withdraw
- This was extremely difficult to carry out while under fierce attack but they managed it in reasonably good order as the darkness set in
- 3 regiments, including the 21 Ohio, who had been more or less forgotten in the chaos, fought on until they were surrounded and ran out of ammunition and had to surrender





## The Union retreat: 20 to 22 Sept

- Thomas ordered the Union forces to retreat through McFarland's Gap during the night
- They reformed loosely around Rossville, where Sheridan, Negley and Davis had set up a defensive line
- By the morning, the army was in reasonably good shape and in a strong defensive position with many formations intact
- Wilder and the cavalry protected the trains as they moved back towards Chattanooga
- This was only intended as a temporary measure and Rosecrans ordered the army back to Chattanooga
- By the end of the second day (22 Sept), the Union army was safely back in Chattanooga behind the defensive perimeter built by the Confederates when they had occupied Chattanooga
- But the high ground was taken by Bragg's troops and the Army of the Cumberland was under siege

## The Confederate response





- Surprisingly, until the next morning, the Confederates weren't aware that they had been victorious
- Longstreet was fully expecting the fighting to begin again at dawn
- When it was realised that Thomas was in full retreat, Bragg could not be persuaded to move
- Considering the massive casualties on their side including among the brigade and regimental commanders and the artillery horses and the shortage of vehicles, the troops from Virginia hadn't brought any, this is perhaps understandable
- As well there were wounded of both sides and huge quantities of materiel left behind by the Union forces to be recovered
- Nevertheless, his subordinates argued strongly for him to press home the advantage his troops had won by hard fighting and he failed to do so

## The aftermath (1)

- Among the Union forces, McCook and Crittenden were quickly removed from command
- Some weeks later Rosecrans was removed as well
- Thomas was promoted to replace him
- The XX and XXI Corps were merged into a new IV Corps under Gordon Granger
- But there were serious questions about how long they could hold on under siege
- In a remarkable achievement 20,000 Union troops were sent from Virginia to Bridgeport in 8 days
- And to cap it all off, Grant was promoted to head up a new Military Division of the Mississippi and his first task was to save the Army of the Cumberland

## The aftermath (2)

- Bragg focused his energies on his real enemies - the ones inside his army
- Hindman and Polk were dismissed
- 12 of his senior commanders, including Longstreet, Hill and Buckner, signed a petition to President Davis to have Bragg removed
- Davis visited to investigate but ended up supporting Bragg yet again
- Hill and Buckner were removed and the divisions were restructured to remove or disrupt troublesome elements
- Longstreet remained and Hardee was brought back
- In the aftermath of a massive victory, morale dropped again and desertions increased

The Battle of Chickamauga  	
Belligerents	
 United States (Union)	 Confederate States (Confederacy)
Commanders and leaders	
MG William Rosecrans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MG George H Thomas, XIV Corps</li> <li>• MG Alexander McCook, XX Corps</li> <li>• MG Thomas L Crittenden, XXI Corps</li> <li>• MG Gordon Granger, Reserve Corps</li> <li>• BG Robert Mitchell, Cavalry Corps</li> </ul>	General Braxton Bragg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LTG Leonidas Polk (Day 2, Right Wing)</li> <li>• LTG Daniel Harvey Hill, Hill's Corps</li> <li>• MG Simon Buckner, Buckner's Corps</li> <li>• MG William Walker, Reserve Corps</li> <li>• LTG James Longstreet (Day 2, Left Wing)</li> <li>• BG Joseph Wheeler, Wheeler's Cavalry Corps</li> <li>• BG N. Bedford Forrest, Forrest's Cavalry Corps</li> </ul>
Units involved	
Army of the Cumberland, 60,000 effectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infantry Divisions: Baird, Negley, Brannan, Reynolds, Davis, Johnson, Sheridan, Wood, Palmer, Van Cleve, Steedman</li> <li>• Cavalry Divisions: McCook, Crook</li> </ul>	Army of Tennessee, 65,000 effectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infantry Divisions: Cheatham, Hindman, Cleburne, Breckenridge, Preston, Stewart, Gist, Liddell, Johnson, Hood (Law)</li> <li>• Cavalry Divisions: Armstrong, Pegram, Wharton, Martin</li> </ul>
Casualties and losses	
1,657 KIA: 9,756 WIA: 4,757 CIA/MIA 16,170 casualties (27% of total)	2,312 KIA: 14,674 WIA: 1,468 CIA/MIA 18,454 casualties (28% of total)



To be continued ...

## References

1. Wikipedia: The Battle of Chickamauga
2. Shelby Foote: The Civil War – A Narrative
3. National Park Civil War Series: The Battle of Chickamauga
4. David Powell & David Friederichs: The Maps of Chickamauga
5. James McPherson: Battle Cry of Freedom