

THE DISPATCH

The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc.

Volume 69, No. 9

640th Meeting

November 2020



- Guest:
Tom Clavin
The Civil War
Careers of
Western Heroes
- Date:
**Wednesday,
November 10th**
- Place:
Zoom
- Time:
at 7:00 pm

*You must email
cwrtnyc1@gmail.com
or call 718-341-9811
by November 8th if
you plan to attend
the Zoom meeting.
An email link will
be sent to members
prior to the meeting.*

Tom Clavin

Please send your \$40 membership dues to:

**Connors and Sullivan, PLLC
Attn: CWRTNY Membership
7408 5th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11209**

SUGGESTIONS

The Dispatch welcomes articles, book reviews (non-fiction only) and suggestions. Just send them in to our mailing address.

Dues are due

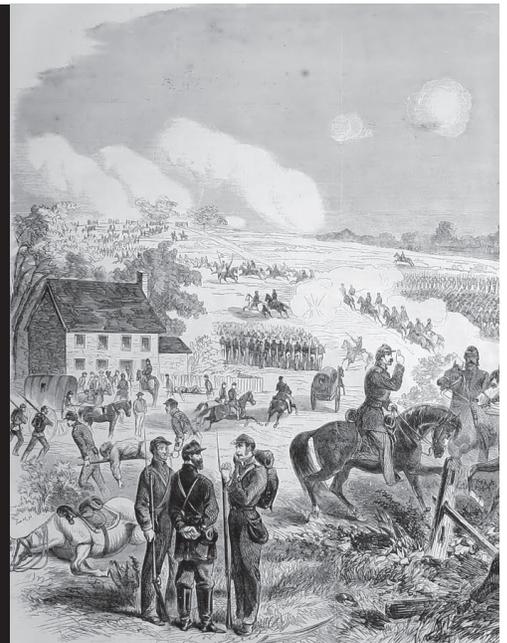
If you haven't already paid your dues, please send your checks in now. After October, the price rises to \$60. If we don't hear from you by January 1, we will be obliged to drop your name from our mailing lists. Sorry about that. We now have three yearly dues categories:

	Individual	Family	
Basic	\$40	\$80	
Silver	\$70	\$95	
Gold	\$120	\$170	
Out of Town	\$25	\$35	(75 miles or more)
Student	\$25		

New members please add \$10 initiation fee

You may choose any appropriate amount to send in, but it will be greatly appreciated if you are able to remit the amounts in the second or third categories.

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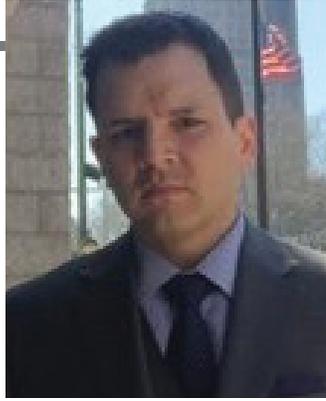


2020 • MEETING SCHEDULE • 2021

- **Tues** November 10th (Zoom) • **Tom Clavin**
The Civil War Careers of
Western Heroes
- **Tues** December 8th (Zoom) • **TBD**
- **Tues** January 12th (Zoom) • **TBD**

President's Message

Welcome everyone to November! As the leaves change and the colder weather sets in, we are again facing another wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Hopefully, everyone is staying safe and keeping warm. It is most fortunate that we have the ability to have our meetings online through Zoom. I am certainly looking forward to our next presentation by Tom Clavin on Tuesday, November 10th. He will be talking about a subject that is all too often neglected in contemporary studies of the Civil War, the Civil War Careers of Western Heroes



The Western theater of the US Civil War typically receives far less attention than the Eastern theater. This has much to do with the greater proximity of action in the east to the capitals of Washington and Richmond, and the other major population centers where far more journalists were available to report on the battles. However, some historians consider the Western theater as far more important to the overall Union victory than the East. While the Eastern theater essentially remained in stalemate until 1864, Union troops in the west, beginning in 1861, were able to steadily surround and drive back the Confederate troops, forcing them into eventual capitulation. This was done through a steady series of Union victories in major battles, interrupted by only a single defeat, which took place at Chickamauga.

To quote Steven E. Woodworth from his book *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, "The Virginia front was by far the more prestigious theater. ... Yet the war's outcome was decided not there but in the vast expanse that stretched west from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi and beyond. Here, in the West, the truly decisive battles were fought."

To that end, I look forward to seeing you all at our next Zoom meeting on Tuesday, November 10th with Tom Clavin on *The Civil War Careers of Western Heroes*. In the meantime, please stay safe, happy and healthy.

KRIS J. KASNICKI

Question of the month:

- (a.) Approximately how many prisoners were captured by the Federal forces during the course of the conflict?
- (b.) What is the comparable figure for the C.S.A.?

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Civil War Events During the Month of Nov/Dec 1862

November 1862

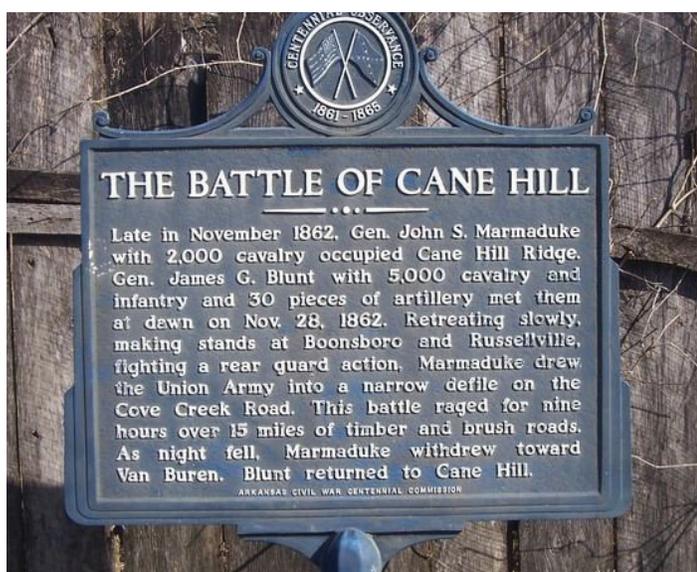
- November 5 Lincoln orders that Major General George McClellan be replaced with Ambrose Burnside as commander of the Army of the Potomac
- November 21 James A. Seddon replaces George W. Randolph as Confederate Secretary of War
- November 28 **Engagement at Cane Hill, Arkansas**

December 1862

- December 2 Skirmish at Leed's Ferry on Virginia's Rappahannock River
- December 5 Engagement at Coffeeville, Mississippi
- December 7 Engagement at Hartsville, Tennessee
- December 7 **Battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas**
- December 11 to 15
The Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia
- December 12 USS Cairo sunk on the Yazoo River, Mississippi

- December 18 Skirmish at Lexington, Tennessee
- December 20 Confederate cavalry led by General Earl Van Dorn raids Holly Springs, Mississippi
- December 22 Confederate cavalry under James Hunt Morgan crosses the Cumberland River to begin the Christmas Raid in Kentucky
- December 26 Confederate cavalry under JEB Stuart leaves winter encampment to raid the rear of the Army of the Potomac in Stafford County, Virginia
- December 26 to 29
Battle of Chickasaw Bayou, Mississippi
- December 27 Skirmish at Dumfries, Virginia
- December 31 Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest's clash at Parker's Cross Roads, Tennessee
- December 31 Battles of Stones River begins near Murfreesboro, Tennessee

From: *American Battlefield Trust*



Answer:

- (a) At least 215,000
- (b) 205,000

BATTLE OF PRAIRIE GROVE

The Battle of Prairie Grove was the last time two armies of almost equal strength faced each other for control of northwest Arkansas. When the Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi withdrew from the bloody ground on December 7, 1862, the Union forces claimed a strategic victory. It seemed clear that Missouri and northwest Arkansas would remain under Federal protection.

Brigadier General James G. Blunt's Union command remained in the Cane Hill (Washington County) area after the engagement there on November 28. This encouraged Major General Thomas C. Hindman to attack the Federal troops with his Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi at Fort Smith (Sebastian County) thirty miles away. The Southern army crossed the Arkansas River on December 3 and marched north into the rugged Boston Mountains. Learning of the Confederate threat, Blunt requested assistance from the two divisions of the Union Army of the Frontier under the command of Brigadier General Francis J. Herron camped near Springfield, Missouri, about 120 miles away. Immediately, Herron ordered a forced march in hopes of joining Blunt's command at Cane Hill before the Confederates could attack.

On December 6, Confederate cavalry drove in Blunt's pickets on Reed's Mountain while the rest of Hindman's Southern forces arrived and camped near the home of John Morrow on Cove Creek Road. During the night, the Southern commanders learned that Herron's men in blue had arrived at Fayetteville (Washington County). They decided to march north past Blunt and intercept and attack the Union reinforcements somewhere between Fayetteville and Cane Hill. It would be at Prairie Grove (Washington County).

The battle began at dawn on December 7, with the defeat of Union cavalry by Confederate mounted soldiers a mile south of the Prairie Grove church. Federal troops retreated toward Fayetteville with the Southern cavalry in pursuit. The panicked Union soldiers stopped running when Herron shot a soldier from his horse. The Confederate cavalry skirmished with Herron's main army before falling back to the top of the Prairie Grove ridge, where the Confederate artillery and infantry were already in line of battle in the woods.

After crossing the Illinois River under artillery fire, Herron positioned his artillery and exchanged fire with the Confederate cannon. The superior range and number of Union cannon soon silenced the Southern guns, allowing the Union infantry to prepare to attack the ridge. Before the infantry advanced, the Union artillery pounded the Southern position on the ridge for about two hours.

The Twentieth Wisconsin and Nineteenth Iowa Infantry regiments crossed the open corn and wheat fields in the

valley before surging forward up the slope, capturing the Confederate cannon of Captain William Blocher's Arkansas Battery near the home of Archibald Borden. The Union soldiers continued their advance until suddenly the woods erupted with cannon and small-arms fire. The Confederates surrounded the Federal troops on three sides and quickly forced them to retreat to the Union cannon in the valley. A Southern counterattack went down the slope into the open valley, where it was met with case shot composed of small lead balls inside exploding projectiles. Herron's artillery also used canister shot, consisting of tin cylinders filled with iron balls packed in sawdust which, when fired, turned a cannon into a giant shotgun blast, leaving gaping holes in the Confederate ranks and forcing a retreat to the cover of the woods on the ridge.

Seeing Confederate movement on his flank, Herron decided to attack again. The Thirty-seventh Illinois and Twenty-sixth Indiana Infantry regiments went up the hill into the Borden apple orchard. Lieutenant Colonel John Charles Black of the Thirty-seventh Illinois led the way with his right arm in a sling because of a wound he had sustained at Pea Ridge (Benton County) nine months earlier. Outnumbered, the Federal soldiers fell back to a fence line in the valley, where they stopped another Confederate counterattack using Colt revolving rifles carried by the men of Companies A and K of the Thirty-seventh Illinois. Black sustained a serious wound to his left arm but remained with his command until it was out of danger. Black received the only Medal of Honor awarded for this battle.

With only two fresh infantry regiments left, Herron's command was in peril even as Confederate troops began massing to attack the Twentieth Iowa Infantry, which served as the Federal right flank. Before the attack, two cannon shots rang out from the northwest at about 2:30 p.m., signaling the arrival of Blunt's command; he quickly deployed and attacked the Confederate left flank. Blunt's division was at Cane Hill the morning of December 7 expecting to be attacked by the Confederates. Hindman left Colonel James Monroe's Arkansas cavalry on Reed's Mountain to skirmish with Blunt's Federal troops while the rest of the Confederate army marched past the Union position. The ruse worked, as Blunt's command remained in a defensive position at Cane Hill until it heard the roar of battle at Prairie Grove. Marching to the battlefield, the Union soldiers under Blunt arrived in time to save Herron's divisions.

The Confederates responded to the Union advance on their left flank by skirmishing in the woods with the Federal troops until Blunt gave the command to fall back to his cannon line in the valley. Believing this was an opportunity to win the day, Brigadier General Mosby M. Parsons, in command of the Confederate Missouri Infantry brigade, launched an attack across the William Morton hayfield at about 4:00 p.m. As the Southern soldiers advanced, a devastating fire from all forty-four cannon in the Union army tore into the Confederate

ranks, which fell back to the cover of the wooded ridge as darkness fell.

Nightfall ended the savage fighting, but neither side gained an advantage. The opponents called for a truce to care for the wounded and gather the dead. During the night, the Confederates wrapped blankets around the wheels of their cannon to muffle the sound and quietly withdrew from the ridge because of a lack of ammunition and food. Federal troops slept on the battlefield with few tents or blankets and without campfires even though temperatures were near freezing.

Hindman's command had about 204 men killed, 872 wounded, and 407 missing with several of the missing being deserters. The Federal Army of the Frontier had 175 killed, 808 wounded, and 250 missing. The Confederate

Army of the Trans-Mississippi consisted of about 12,000 troops from Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, and the Cherokee and Creek nations, with about twenty-two cannon. The Union Army of the Frontier had about 10,000 soldiers from Arkansas, Missouri, the Cherokee and Creek nations, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, and Wisconsin, with about forty-four cannon.

The battle was a tactical draw, with the casualties about the same in each army. But the Southern retreat during the night gave the Union a strategic victory, as a full-scale Confederate army would never return to northwest Arkansas, and Missouri remained firmly under Union control. This savage battle was probably the bloodiest day in Arkansas history.

From: *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas*

Come Up from the Fields, Father

By Walt Whitman

Come up from the fields, father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door, mother, here's
a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves
fluttering in the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and
grapes on the trellis'd vines,
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)

Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent
after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful,
and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,

But now from the fields come, father, come
at the daughter's call,

And come to the entry, mother, to the front door come right
away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous,
her steps trembling,

She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor
adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,

O this is not our son's writing, yet his name
is sign'd,

O a strange hand writes for our dear son,
O stricken mother's soul!

All swims before her eyes, flashes with black,
she catches the main words only,
Sentences broken, *gunshot wound in the breast,*
cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital,

At present low, but will soon be better.
Ah, now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all
its cities and farms,
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head,
very faint,

By the jamb of a door leans.
Grieve not so, dear mother (the just-grown
daughter speaks through her sobs,
The little sisters huddle around speechless and
dismay'd),
See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will
soon be better.

Alas, poor boy, he will never be better (nor maybe
needs to be better, that brave and simple soul),
While they stand at home at the door he is
dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night
fitfully sleeping, often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with
one deep longing,
O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent
from life escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead
son.

From: *Shotgun's Home of the American Civil War*

Book Review by John Allen

The Civil War Veteran: A Historical Reader

Edited by Larry M. Logue and Michael Barton

In 2006, I finally learned of a Union veteran in my family tree- James Anthony Costar, my great-great grandfather. Costar enlisted on April 5, 1864 in the 10th New York Volunteers at the age of 41, at which time he was married and had five children. Within a month he was “trained” and transported to northern Virginia, where he lost his right eye in his first and only battle, The Wilderness on May 6, 1864. *The Civil War Veteran: A Historical Reader* is an immeasurable help to our understanding of the experiences faced by Costar, and other Civil War veterans.

The Civil War Veteran: A Historical Reader, is a collection of essays, edited by Larry M. Logue and Michael Barton, about the post-war experiences of veterans both North and South, although discussion of Federal Government policies is, understandably, limited to its effect on Union veterans. There are also several essays discussing the issues faced by returning African - American veterans, whether enlisted as freemen or ex-slaves.

Part I, “Transition to Peace”, is a series of four essays that discuss demobilization of the armies on both sides. If you have read “Out Of The Storm” by Noah Andre Trudeau, you will be familiar with much of this material, but these experiences are amazing just the same.

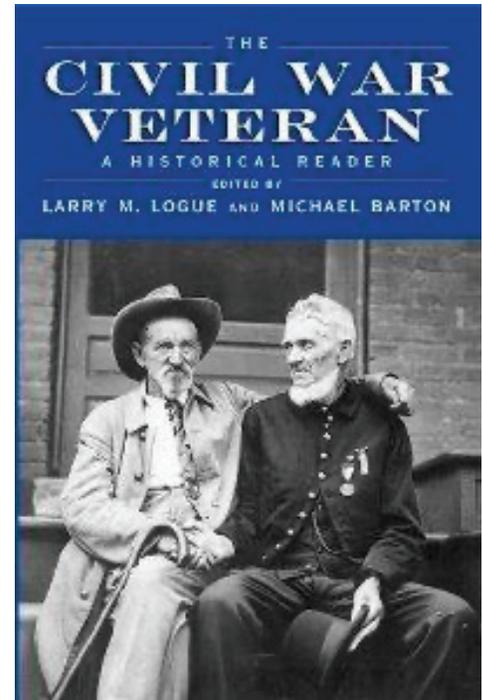
Part II, “Problems of Readjustment”, is dedicated to discussing the returning veterans and the problems they faced: drug and/or alcohol dependence, a desire to avoid “society” and terrifying flashbacks, all symptoms of what is now called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The eight articles in this section discuss these problems, which will open the eyes of any reader who was under the impression that these soldiers enlisted, fought the War, went home and lived out their lives in relative normalcy. Civil War veterans were human and faced the same issues veterans of all wars face. Drug addiction should come as no surprise, knowing that morphine was used to treat wounded soldiers and opium “balls” were typically given as a treatment for chronic diarrhea, a condition suffered by many troops. The adjustment to peacetime following a very violent period is also examined statistically and relates the mustering out of over a million men with the increase in both violent and nonviolent crimes seen in the late 1860s and the 1870s. Rather than disparaging these men, the book results in a more complete picture of human beings subjected to the stress of combat and dealing with horrific, vivid memories and/or debilitating wounds.

“Governments Provide Aid” comprises Part III, a series of six papers that discuss the structure and evolution of pension schemes for veterans, in which one sees the political use made of Union soldiers, sadly reminiscent of the similar use made of our veterans today. Pension law changed not just in monetary

value, but also in qualification requirements. Initially, evidence of war-related disability was required to obtain a pension but, under the Dependent Pensioner act of 1890, nearly all veterans, or their survivors, received a pension. Astonishingly, between 1880 and 1900 Civil War veterans’ pensions accounted for a quarter of all Government expenditures! In

many of these years it was the largest single budget item aside from retirement of the war debt. Also discussed in this part is the creation of residences for veteran soldiers. Illustrated are the issues that faced those charged with providing shelter for indigent veterans unable to care for themselves and, until 1884, unemployed and unemployable. In 1884 Congress opened these Homes to any honorably discharged veteran incapable of earning a living for whatever reason, even if not war-related (old age infirmities, for example). The prevailing use of domestic themes eventually led the Government to change the name of the National Asylum for Disabled Veteran Soldiers to the National Home due to the reluctance of ex-soldiers to take up residence in anything called an “asylum”. Such a word conjured visions of the poorhouse, almshouse or prison. One of the major proponents of publicizing the distinction between these facilities was none other than Benjamin Butler, who dedicated one National Home by saying “let no soldier coming here think that he is coming to an almshouse. He is coming to his home, earned, richly earned, by him; and it is his forever.”

The political power wielded by the veterans in both the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) is explored as well by eight papers in Part IV, “Veterans Fight Their Own Battles”. Most interesting to me is the discussion explaining the contrasting demographics in urban, suburban and rural posts, and how these determined the organization’s activities and policy platform. Veteran’s voting patterns and their influence on National policy is discussed and their impact on Veteran affairs and benefits are detailed. Heartbreaking details are provided discussing the post-war fights - often against both ex-Confederates as well as their previous comrades-in-arms - required of African American veterans for recognition of their contribution to the Union war effort.



In the final section entitled “Veterans’ Shape The Collective Memory” five articles show the extent to which veterans, both North and South, worked to shape their legacies. The results are largely the Civil War we read about today. Was the war fought to preserve State’s Rights, prolong slavery, free the slaves or save the Union? Should it be called the “War of Rebellion”, the “American Civil War”, the “War Between The States” or the “War For Southern Independence”? Was secession constitutionally legal or not? Why did the South

lose? If you have a single answer to these questions you haven’t read broadly enough! This book is a good one, but you shouldn’t expect to find Orders of Battle or discussions of strategy or tactics. You should expect to come away with a greater respect for those that fought the War, whatever it is called, the knowledge that these people underwent a terrifying experience, and many or most suffered the consequences for the rest of their lives.

Battle of Cane Hill

The Engagement at Cane Hill on November 28, 1862, was the prelude to the *Battle of Prairie Grove* fought on December 7, 1862. Union brigadier general James G. Blunt, with 5,000 men and thirty cannon in the Kansas Division of the Army of the Frontier, surprised 2,000 Confederate cavalry and six cannon under Confederate brigadier general John S. Marmaduke while they were gathering winter supplies. The struggle lasted nine hours and covered about twelve miles over the wooded and rocky terrain between Cane Hill (Washington County) and the Cove Creek valley. While it was a Union victory, casualties were light on both sides. Blunt’s decision to remain at Cane Hill set in motion the entire Confederate force at Fort Smith (Sebastian County), leading to the Battle of Prairie Grove.

Major General Thomas C. Hindman, commander of the Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi, ordered Marmaduke to advance into the fertile agricultural region known as Cane Hill on November 9. The Southerners arrived without incident and scoured the communities of Boonsboro and Newburg along with the area’s gristmills for food. After five days, the Confederate cavalry returned to the Arkansas River Valley hauling a large supply of much-needed meat, grain, and forage.

Only a week passed before Hindman ordered Marmaduke’s cavalry north to the Cane Hill region for another load of food supplies. Blunt felt compelled to act when he discovered the Confederate cavalry at Cane Hill for the second time in a couple of weeks. On November 27, Thanksgiving Day, he left the Union camp at Flint Creek in Benton County with a force of 5,000 soldiers and thirty pieces of artillery and marched south, stopping for the night near Rheas Mills (Washington County). The Union march on Cane Hill continued early the next morning along a seldom-used road across steep terrain, which slowed their progress.

A Confederate patrol spotted Union cavalry near the community of Cincinnati, northwest of the Cane Hill ridge, on November 27 and reported its findings to Marmaduke. He decided to send the food supplies toward Fort Smith and await the arrival of the Union command. At about 10:00 the next morning, the fighting began in earnest when Colonel William F. Cloud, in command of Major James G. Fisk’s battalion of the Second Kansas Cavalry, and the two mountain howitzers of Lieutenant Elias S. Stover’s Second Kansas Battery engaged Confederate pickets near Boonsboro, a village on the north end of the Cane Hill ridge, and drove them back into the

settlement. Captain Joseph Bledsoe’s Missouri battery opened fire on the advancing Union troops from his position on the high ground in the Cane Hill cemetery. The Union troops returned fire and quickly moved the rifled guns of the Second Indiana Battery into position. An artillery duel lasted about an hour before the Confederates withdrew to a new position south of Boonsboro near the village of Newburg.

Marmaduke placed his command atop the high ground east of the community and awaited Blunt’s attack, which came at about 1:00 p.m. After a short engagement, the Confederates withdrew to Reed’s Mountain east of Newburg, with Union troops in full pursuit. Colonel Joseph Shelby’s Missouri cavalry brigade served as the Confederate rear guard. It contested every step up the slope of the mountain by the Union forces as each company fired, then fell back to a new position and reloaded. The relentless advance of the Second Kansas Cavalry, the Third Indian Home Guard, and the Eleventh Kansas Infantry against the Southern position forced the Confederates to withdraw farther east into the Cove Creek valley, then south along the stream. Lieutenant Colonel Lewis R. Jewell’s battalion of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry took over the Union chase, hounding the Southern troops down Cove Creek Road as the daylight faded.

The Federal momentum finally ended when Arkansas cavalrymen ambushed the Sixth Kansas Cavalry, leaving Jewell mortally wounded. Both sides accepted a truce to gather the wounded, effectively ending the engagement. The Confederates continued until reaching the south side of the Boston Mountains, where they camped on Lee’s Creek. Blunt and his command returned to Cane Hill, which he decided would serve well as his new headquarters. The campaign would continue with the Battle of Prairie Grove on December 7.

While the Union army had only two men killed and thirty-eight wounded, Jewell’s death on November 30 was a serious blow. One of his men, Wiley Britton, eulogized in 1882 that “no truer and braver soldier has...been sacrificed on the altar of liberty, nor has a purer patriot drawn his sword in defense of his country.” The exact Confederate casualties are not known, but they likely were about twice the Union loss. Blunt’s troops outnumbered and outgunned the Southern cavalry, but General Marmaduke’s soldiers saved the much-needed supply train. Blunt’s decision to remain at Cane Hill set in motion the next phase of the campaign when Hindman’s Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi headed north to attack the Federal Army of the Frontier.

From: *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas*