

Confederate Cavalry in Indian Territory

By: Leslie J. Rodman

In the summer of 1861, the Civil War exploded in the west at a place called Wilson's Creek, opening a vast right flank west of the Mississippi River and creating the need for a Confederate fighting force with which it could be defended. Faced with the dilemma of allocating the limited resources of the Confederacy in the spring of 1861, Jefferson Davis organized administrative and command functions into autonomous geographical departments. One such department was the Trans-Mississippi, which ultimately centralized control over all Confederate territory west of the Mississippi River.¹

By December 31, 1861 the Trans-Mississippi had mustered 41 individual cavalry units totaling 28,693 men into Confederate service. This included sixteen regiments, three battalions, and three independent companies totaling 17,338 men from Texas; five regiments and five battalions totaling 5,145 men from Arkansas; five regiments and two battalions and one independent company totaling 5,460 men from Indian Territory; and one regiment totaling (750) men from Louisiana.²

Overall, cavalry recruitment held numbers over the infantry in Texas and Arkansas, by approximately 2.4 to 1 and 1.2 to 1 respectively, while the infantry held numbers in Louisiana by a ratio of more than 30 to 1. No Confederate infantry units had been raised in Indian Territory. Department-wide, infantry units held a slim numerical advantage over the cavalry of 1.25 to 1.³

The Indian Territory as a Defensive Priority

Designing an overall strategy for defending the Confederacy posed many dilemmas for Jefferson Davis. First he had to secure a shoreline of more than 3,500 miles, containing 10 major ports, 180 bays, inlets, and numerous mouths of rivers, and all of this had to be done with no navy. The overland border to the north presented no fewer headaches, extending from the Eastern Shore along the Potomac River separating Maryland from Virginia, through Wheeling, West Virginia, and down the Ohio River south to the Kentucky line. As Davis saw it, the only good to come out of Kentucky and Missouri remaining loyal to the Union was that both served as buffers, as well as de facto northern borders to the Confederacy from West Virginia to the northwest corner of Arkansas, and required little defending. From there, the border extended westward 300 miles to Indian Territory, where it turned south 200 miles to Texas, itself with 1,200 miles of indefensible shoreline. Of all this territory, only the Potomac and Ohio Rivers constituted any sort of natural defensive barriers.⁴

West of Arkansas the Indian Territory extended westward into a vast wasteland regarded by most white men prior to the war as habitable only by Indians. But, after Wilson's Creek, the Confederate high command came to gain a new appreciation for the territory as an asset of considerable strategic and military value. It was a secure place to store military supplies, and its lead deposits held promise for badly needed ammunition for the Confederate armies. Its proximity to Texas provided a vital transportation link over which cavalry

horses could be housed and driven, and it could serve as a buffer between Texas and Unionist Kansas, serving as a staging area for future raids.⁵

The First Confederates Enter Indian Territory

The first Confederates to enter Indian Territory had come from Texas in February 1861, extending offers to the Five Civilized Tribes to join the Confederacy. Almost immediately the invitation was accepted by the Chickasaws and the Choctaws, who began raising troops.⁶ Buoyed by the response of the Chickasaws and Choctaws, the Texans soon found dealing with the Cherokees a completely different matter. After a short meeting in the Creek Nation, they journeyed to the Cherokee capitol at Tahlequah where they met with Principal Chief John Ross. Having received little encouragement from Ross the Confederates returned to the Creek Nation to attend an intertribal council of Cherokee's Seminoles, Creeks and Quapaws, called for purpose of discussing secession and alignment with the Confederacy.⁷

Wasting little time after the return of the delegation to Texas, the Confederates launched a coordinated strike into the Indian Territory. First, Texas Confederate cavalry stormed across the Red River and occupied several federal outposts in the southern part of the territory.⁸ Soon thereafter, Rebels in Arkansas began seizing federal arsenals, and closing the Arkansas River, thereby cutting off the supply line between Fort Smith and other federal outposts in the territory.

Being outnumbered and out gunned, the federal garrison at Fort Smith immediately abandoned its post and fled westward into the territory where it

joined with the federal garrisons from Forts Washita and Arbuckle at Fort Cobb, consolidating under the command of Colonel W.H. Emory.⁹ The next day the Federals began to withdraw from the territory in the direction of Fort Leavenworth Kansas. As the Confederates recognized the federal movement as a withdrawal, grey-clad cavalymen amid whoops and cheers began occupying the abandoned federal posts. The withdrawal was so abrupt and complete large caches of much needed supplies and equipment were abandoned to the grateful Texans. Three weeks after leaving Fort Cobb, and after enduring endless raids by advance elements of Texas cavalry, Emory and his exhausted troopers limped into Fort Leavenworth, less only two men who had deserted.¹⁰

Recognizing the window of opportunity presented by the federal withdrawal, Richmond immediately organized the Indian Territory into a military district, naming General Ben McCulloch of Texas its commander. At the time of its creation, McCulloch's command consisted of one regiment of cavalry each from Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas, coupled with authority to recruit three new Indian cavalry regiments from the territory.¹¹

Raising Indian Cavalry Regiments

However, before Indian regiments could be officially raised, the Indian Territory had to be incorporated into the Confederacy. To do this Davis decided to employ the same treaty process long used by the United States Government in dealing with the Indians in the west. To this task Davis appointed Albert Pike, a man highly regarded on the frontier as an explorer, orator, writer, journalist, and attorney, who was immediately dispatched to the territory. Upon arrival, Pike

was pleasantly surprised to find several prominent federal Indian agents who had long been working among the tribes, with southern sympathies, had remained behind after the federal withdrawal. Utilizing these resources, Pike built a successful record of negotiating treaties, and ultimately built an effective Confederate Indian cavalry.¹²

In November 1861, Ben McCulloch's military district was officially incorporated into the new Department of the Indian Territory under Pike's command. Drawing upon his respect among the tribes, Pike set about to sign as many treaties as possible.¹³ However, no matter how impressive his reputation in most quarters, Pike's stature did not impress Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross who consistently refused to sign a treaty with Pike. In fact, Ross openly rebuffed Pike, and reiterated his loyalty to the Union.

Although failing to win over the Chief, Pike's message did find the friendly ear of a Cherokee rebel named Stand Watie, the de facto leader of the mixed-blood faction, who immediately called for all Cherokees to take up arms and fight on the side of the Confederacy. Contemporaneous with his call to arms, Watie began to recruit Cherokees for Confederate service.

Although he wielded considerable influence among the Cherokees, Watie also faced considerable opposition in Evan Jones, a Baptist missionary and fervent abolitionist, who was the de facto leader of the numerically superior full-blood faction. Factionalism and conflict dating back to pre-removal days had long plagued the people of Indian Territory, and now, as with the remainder of the country, old wounds were being re-opened by the debate over Union and

slavery, and the peoples of the territory found themselves being pushed ever closer to choosing sides, and going to war. ¹⁴

The political climate in the territory was acerbated by the election of 1860 when Abraham Lincoln, an obscure politician from Illinois came to power, bringing with him an administration containing several prominent “Free Soilers” who openly advocated seizing and opening Indian lands to white settlement. Deepening the concerns of the peoples in the territory were Lincoln’s abolitionist views, which threatened the political and economic status of many mixed- blood tribal members who were slaveholders, and maintained strong political and economic ties to the South. .

Within these mixed-blood populations were some of the more prominent Indian families in the territory who had long lived within an economic system patterned upon the southern culture and slave labor. Over the years, the lives and culture of these Indian planters had conformed to the South’s river transport system, which had served as an important connection to the southern market economy. The economic ties of some families to the South were even stronger in those instances where old tribal annuity funds from land sales had been invested in the South.

In addition to being a wealthy mixed-blood Cherokee and a slaveholder, John Ross was also an astute politician, fully aware that the full-blood faction had long been the source of his power.¹⁵ However, notwithstanding this political acumen, he was also a pragmatist, and when the Confederates won a convincing

victory at Wilson's Creek in August 1861, the Chief saw what he believed to be the handwriting on the wall, and swapped sides.

When the smoke cleared at Wilson's Creek, the Confederates had their first victory in the West, and Pike was on a terror signing treaties among the Five Civilized Tribes. First, he signed with a Creek faction led by Principal Chief Motney Kinnard and Chilly McIntosh, as well as the Choctaws represented by Robert M. Jones, Sampson Folsom, Forbis LeFlore, George W. Harkins, and Allen Wright. Soon thereafter, Pike signed a treaty with Edmund Pickens, Holmes Colbert, James Gamble, Joel Kemp, and Christopher Columbus on behalf of the Chickasaws, and by late summer, he had also signed Chief John Jumper of the Seminoles.¹⁶

When all treaties were in place, the Choctaws and Chickasaws were united in the Confederacy, while the Creeks and Seminoles remained divided by factional conflicts similar to those dividing the Cherokees. One such conflict involved Opothleyaholo, the 80-year-old Chief of the Upper Creeks who had long been an enemy of the McIntosh Creek faction, and had rebuffed all of Pike's previous treaty overtures. As Pike's treaty count continued to mount, Opothleyaholo called a general council of all tribes in Indian Territory to meet at Antelope hills in western Oklahoma Territory, where he strongly urged the Indians to remain neutral and not become involved in this "white man's war."¹⁷

Not to be dissuaded by Opothleyaholo, Pike continued to sign treaties with the Caddos, Wichitas and several Comanche bands, bringing still more Indian factions into the Confederacy.¹⁸ Each of the treaties obligated the Confederate

States of America to assume a protectorate role over the Indian Territory, and annexed the tribal lands into the Confederacy. Richmond further agreed to guarantee the tribes title to their traditional lands in perpetuity, as well as assume all annuity payments owed by the United States Government. In turn, the tribes granted the Confederate Government the right to build military forts, roads, establish a postal system, as well as rights of way for telegraph lines and railroads.¹⁹ The treaties assigned troop quotas to each of the tribes, and the Confederates pledged to equip, arm, and pay all Indian troops. The treaties further provided that Indian troops would not be required to fight outside their traditional homelands without the consent of their respective tribal governments, as well as the reciprocal handling of fugitive slaves, and for the legalization of slavery in the territory.²⁰

Responding quickly to their treaty obligations, a regiment of mounted Rifles was raised from the Chickasaws and Choctaws, and placed under the command of Colonel Douglas Cooper, a longtime Choctaw agent. Soon thereafter a regiment was raised from the Creeks and Seminoles, and Colonel Dan McIntosh was placed in command, seconded by Lieutenant Colonel Chilly McIntosh, and Major John Jumper.

Soon after Pike signed a treaty with John Ross, a regiment of full-blood Cherokees was raised under the command of Colonel John Drew, Lt. Colonel William P. Ross Major, and Thomas Pegg.²¹ This regiment was soon followed by a regiment of mixed-bloods designated the 1st Cherokee Mounted Rifles which elected Stand Watie Colonel, and Elias C. Boudinot Major. While these

regiments exceeded troop strengths authorized under the treaties, Pike enthusiastically welcomed both Cherokee regiments which raised his total troop strength from the Five Civilized Tribes to more than 5,000 men. ²²

On January 10, 1862, the War Department placed the Trans-Mississippi Department, including the Indian regiments under the overall command of Major General Earl Van Dorn, a West Point graduate with an outstanding record in the Mexican War. Caring little about the Indian regiments, Van Dorn aggressively set about to re-organize his army, canceling all cavalry and infantry leaves, and beginning an all-out campaign to re-enlist all six and twelve-month volunteers for two additional years. In an effort to replenish depleted Confederate forces in Arkansas, Van Dorn ordered all battalion commanders to recruit their units to regimental size and authorized enrolling officers to raise additional mounted units. ²³

Confederate Indian Cavalry in Battle

The first engagement involving Indian troops was in August 1861 at Wilson's Creek, near Springfield, Missouri. Although only a limited number of Indian troops participated, they became well known by their screeching war whoop, when mixed with the rebel yell created an eerie sense of alarm and fright within the federal ranks. ²⁴ Aside from a relatively minor role at Wilson's Creek, the only other significant encounter involving Indian troops outside Indian Territory was at Pea Ridge in March 1862, which resulted in a disastrous Confederate defeat. In direct violation of Pike's treaties, Van Dorn ordered Indian troops into the Arkansas fight. While the Choctaws and Chickasaws

refused to go because they had not been paid for several months, some of the Cherokees followed Pike, and fought alongside several companies of Texas cavalry.²⁵

In battle, the Indians proved to have little military discipline, mostly attributed to Pike's decision to defer to native tradition and allow his Indian cavalry to go into battle with bows, arrows, and hatchets. While this served to break down regimental discipline, Pike's Indians were scarcely worse off in terms of military bearing, than were those Confederates which fought in traditional formation using the inferior firearms issued by their government. Notwithstanding military discipline and bearing, the Indian cavalry regiments at Pea Ridge proved most effective fighting from the branches of trees, not in formation.²⁶

The First Battle in Indian Territory

Although the war came to Virginia in July, first blood was not shed in Indian Territory until November 1861, when Rebels attempted to force Opothleyaholo, the 80 year old Chief of the Upper Creeks, and his people, into the Confederacy. Soon after John Ross signed his treaty with Pike, Opothleyaholo withdrew to a camp on the Deep Fork River and invited all Cherokee people opposing Ross' alignment with the Confederacy to join his ranks.²⁷ Within a few weeks, nearly 7,000 men, women, and children, mostly Creeks and Seminoles, had traveled to Opothleyaholo's camp, bringing with them every form of personal belonging imaginable, turning the camp into a mass of people intermingled with cattle, horses, chickens and wagons.²⁸

It being November and nearing the end of the foliage season, Opothleyaholo was confronted with the reality of either moving his livestock and people to find food, or face the likelihood of starvation. With options limited, and the chill of winter in the air the Creeks broke camp and began to move slowly northward, hoping to find better grasslands, as well as federal protection in Unionist in Kansas.²⁹

In a matter of only a few weeks, the population of Opothleyaholo's camp had grown exponentially. Now, as the disorganized mass of humanity began to move northward, the Confederates became concerned that should the Indians reach Kansas, they would unite with Union troops forming a much larger and more formidable fighting force. Pressured by this likelihood, Colonel Douglas Cooper, commander of the Confederate 1st Chickasaw Choctaw Mounted Rifles decided to take action.³⁰

Proclaiming the Indians cattle thieves and kidnappers, Cooper departed Fort Gibson on November 16 in hot pursuit of the refugees with 1,400 cavalry troopers.³¹ Slowed by thousands of civilians, bogged down with baggage, ox carts, wagons, and livestock, Opothleyaholo and his Indians were hardly a match for the swift moving cavalrymen. Upon learning the Confederates were in hot pursuit, Opothleyaholo moved his people to a defensible place of safety near Round Mountain and waited.³²

Late in the afternoon on November 19th, one of Cooper's lookouts spotted campfire smoke in the distance near the Red Fork of the Arkansas River.³³ Cooper immediately dispatched Lt. Colonel William Quayle and his 9th Texas

Cavalry to see if the campfires were Opothleyaholo's. Acting with reckless abandon, Quayle's cavalymen charged cheering wildly into the camp, only to find it deserted. Quayle immediately realized the deserted camp was only an outpost, and began a search for, and soon found Opothleyaholo's main camp.³⁴ Again the Texans stormed the camp, but this time Opothleyaholo was ready for them, executing a brilliant ambush as the Texans rode blindly into the camp. The Texans immediately broke ranks and ran for the underbrush amid a rain of gunfire, finding cover behind a nearby tree line. Sensing a rout in the making, Opothleyaholo's Creeks let out bone chilling war whoops and rushed from the trees, chasing the fleeing Texans deeper into the woods.

At the first sound of gunfire Cooper dispatched his 1st Chickasaw and Choctaw Mounted Rifles to support Quayle, but by this time darkness had set in, and as the Indian cavalymen charged into the camp, they as well rode into an ambush. After a short firefight the Indians realized they were both out-manned and outgunned, and disappeared into the darkness.³⁵ Realizing he would be unable to hold his position indefinitely against the better trained and supplied Confederates, Opothleyaholo ordered his Indians to create a diversion by starting a prairie fire beyond the Confederate right flank. When set, the fires created chaos within the Confederate ranks allowing Opothleyaholo and his warriors to completely disengage the skirmish and rejoin their women, children, and elderly who had resumed their trek to the northeast.³⁶

By December 9, Opothleyaholo had moved his camp to a natural fortification along Bird Creek known as Chusto Talasah, or Caving Banks, but

once again Cooper found, and attacked the camp, only to be defeated a second time. This time, however, the defeat had more sting to it, as a number of Drew's full-blood Cherokee cavalymen abandoned the cause and deserted.³⁷

Having suffered a second defeat at the hands of Opothleyaholo, Cooper withdrew to Fort Gibson to re-supply and reinforce, while Opothleyaholo searched for a more secure place to winter. Concerned that more of his Indian troops might follow the example of Drew's Cherokees and swap sides, Cooper requested to be reinforced by Confederate regulars.³⁸

By this time, General Ben McCulloch, was the Confederate commander in Arkansas, but had temporarily been recalled to Richmond leaving Colonel James McIntosh in command. Anxious for action, and having little regard for Indian troops in general, McIntosh departed Fort Gibson on December 22 with a force of 1,380 Confederate cavalymen consisting of seven companies of the 11th Texas Cavalry, a battalion of the 3rd Texas Cavalry, Major John Whitfield's Texas Cavalry Battalion, a battalion of the 2nd Arkansas Mounted Rifles and Captain H.S. Bennett's Independent Company of Texas Cavalry.³⁹

On December 26 McIntosh found Opothleyaholo on the eastern edge of the Cherokee outlet at a place called Chustenalah, where he surrounded and attacked the unsuspecting Indians. As in times past, Opothleyaholo's warriors fought bravely, but this time the element of surprise as well as limited supplies and ammunition was too much to overcome. McIntosh's cavalry stormed through the camp, capturing most of the wagons, equipment, and livestock, scattering the

Indians into the heavily wooded hills. That night, a heavy snowstorm fell over the countryside adding further suffering of the fleeing Indians.⁴⁰

After the battle, McIntosh returned to Fort Smith leaving Cooper and Stand Watie to pursue the scattered refugees. In pursuit, Watie rode north in the direction of the Kansas border capturing stragglers as he went, while Cooper and his Indian troops rode northwest following fresh tracks in the snow. Combing the area as they went, Cooper's men searched small clumps of trees and bushes, capturing and killing any refugee Indians found hidden along the way.

In early January, what remained of Opothleyaholo's party arrived in Unionist Kansas where they were issued badly needed food and supplies. An official census reflected Opothlepaholo's party contained 5,600 Creeks, 1,000 Seminoles, 140 Chickasaws, 315 Quapaws, 197 Delawares and an additional 300 Indians of various tribes had survived the march.⁴¹

The Return of Union Forces to Indian Territory

On March 8, 1862, the Confederacy suffered a devastating defeat at Pea Ridge, marking a turning point of the Civil War in Indian Territory.⁴² This debacle not only stifled the Confederate momentum west of the Mississippi, it cost the Confederacy much of its artillery, supplies, and equipment. In addition to logistical losses, the defeat at Pea Ridge also triggered panic within the Confederate high command resulting in a shuffling of the departmental command staff. The most dramatic of these changes was the dismissal of Van Dorn, and the appointment of Major General Thomas G. Hindman, an ardent secessionist from Tennessee as the departmental commander.⁴³ As part of the restructuring,

Richmond re-deployed twenty-two thousand of Hindman's troops from Arkansas to Corinth to join a massing of troops near Shiloh Church, thus forcing Hindman to immediately impress a replacement army. ⁴⁴

This weakened condition of the Confederate forces was not lost on Union commanders who immediately formed an expeditionary force, named it the Indian Expedition, and began planning to re-take Indian Territory. This force was comprised of two brigades of cavalry from Wisconsin, Ohio, and Kansas as well as an artillery battery from Indiana, and two regiments of Indian troops from the remnants of Opothleyaholo's followers driven from the territory the previous winter. Once formed, the expedition was placed under the command of Colonel William Weer of the 10th Kansas Infantry. ⁴⁵

The Indian Expedition re-entered Indian Territory on June 1, 1862. After departing the Union supply depot at Baxter Springs Kansas, the blue column followed the Grand River Valley south, penetrating deep into the heart of the Cherokee Nation. With the 1st Indian Regiment on point, the federals continued south from Grand Saline until reaching the vicinity of a known Confederate camp near Locust Grove.

In the morning darkness of July 3, the Indian troops stormed the camp of Colonel J.J. Clarkson, who had recently been placed in command of all Confederate forces in the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole Nations. Capitalizing upon the element of surprise, the Creeks of the 1st Indian Home Guard scattered the surprised Confederates into the woods, where heavy fighting raged along the ridge running south and west of the camp for most of the day. ⁴⁶

Drew's Cherokees held up well during the initial assault, but soon broke down and fled under a barrage of federal artillery. As the artillery fire intensified, the Indians fled to the south, opening the way for a federal advance into Tahlequah and Fort Gibson.⁴⁷ As the Rebels scattered, Weer divided his force, sending one column in the direction of Fort Gibson while surrounding the Cherokee capitol at Tahlequah with the other.⁴⁸ As the federal column approached Tahlequah it was met by Drew's Cherokees who had earlier withdrawn from Clarkson's camp and taken up defensive positions around the Cherokee capital. To the dismay of those entrenched near Tahlequah, many of Drew's Cherokees began deserting in-masse in the face of the federal advance, seeking refuge within the federal lines. This marked the third time (the others being Pea Ridge and Chusto Talasah) that Drew's Cherokees had deserted in the face of the enemy.⁴⁹ On July 12, Tahlequah fell without a single shot being fired, and Chief John Ross, as well as his family, official papers, and treasury of the Cherokee Nation were taken into protective custody.⁵⁰

At this stage, it appeared the Federals had built sufficient momentum to drive the Confederates across the Red River, and out of Indian Territory. But after the fall of Tahlequah several senior officers on Weer's staff began to openly argue for discontinuing the campaign due to the difficulty maintaining open supply lines back to Kansas. Soon the debate turned into an insurrection led by Colonel Frederick Saloman, commander of the Wisconsin Volunteers, and ultimately resulted in Weer's arrest on charges of disloyalty and insanity.⁵¹ As a

result, the campaign lost its momentum, and the expeditionary force returned to Kansas.⁵²

The Indian Expedition began to withdraw to the north along its original route of march amid intensive hit and run guerilla attacks by Watie's Cherokees, as Confederate Indian troops began to re-occupy Fort Gibson, Tahlequah, and other strategic key points previously surrendered. Watie's raids not only played havoc with the federal withdrawal, they soon expanded, striking terror in the border settlements of Kansas and Missouri, extending as far into Kansas as Fort Scott, and into Missouri as far as Neosho.⁵³

The abandonment of the Indian Expedition temporarily ended the federal presence in Indian Territory. However, in October 1862 a more-determined and better-organized military force returned and drove the Confederates out of all Indian Territory north of the Arkansas River.⁵⁴

Throughout the remainder of 1862, a series of federal sorties into the Cherokee Nation began to weaken Watie's grip, causing thousands of Ross' full bloods previously loyal to the Confederacy to flee the territory, only to be re-organized and return as an Indian Home Guard under federal command. This force was comprised of three Indian regiments, a battalion of Kansas cavalry, and a battery of artillery, commanded by Colonel William A. Phillips.⁵⁵

Soon, what remained of the old alliance between the Cherokees and the Confederacy faded, slavery was abolished, and the Confederate tribal government was replaced by a caretaker government loyal to the Union. A Union victory at Honey Springs on July 17, and the fall of Fort Smith on August

30, 1863 marked the end of the Civil War Indian Territory. Although the war was over, Indian raids on federal supply depots continued until Watie's surrender at Fort Towson on June 23, 1865.⁵⁶

Guerilla Activity in the Last Two Years of the War

From the fall of Fort Smith in September 1863 until the final surrender in mid-summer 1865, the Civil War in Indian Territory was nothing short of barbarism. During this period, three very violent groups of guerillas operated with impunity within the territory.

The first of these groups were the guerillas led by Colonel William Quantrill, best known for their dreadful reputation along the Kansas Missouri border, and the sacking of Lawrence, Kansas in August 1863. The fear of these guerillas was well justified as they showed no mercy or discrimination, attacking both Union and Confederate communities in Kansas and Missouri, as well as Indian communities in Indian Territory with a satanic rage.⁵⁷

The second of these groups were free companies of local renegade Indians outcast from the Five Civilized Tribes. Like Quantrill, these bands of outlaws were especially active during the last two years of the war, plundering and burning white as well as Indian communities affiliated with both sides of the conflict.⁵⁸

The third of these groups were the Cherokees in Stand Watie's regiment who stood in stark contrast to the previous two, only raiding and burning farms and communities being used by the Union Army. Among Watie's favorite targets

was the Union supply line, which ran between Fort Scott, Kansas and Fort Gibson, rich with food and other supplies. Like the Robin Hood of Indian Territory, Watie and his men distributed much of the booty seized in raids among the Confederate Cherokee camps scattered along the Red River, as well as the Choctaws living in North Texas.⁵⁹

In the spring of 1864, the Confederate War Department made another attempt to reorganize its Indian cavalry regiments. This time it formed the First Indian Cavalry Brigade from remnants of the 1st and 2nd Cherokee regiments, the Cherokee Battalion, the 1st and 2nd Creek regiments, the Creek Squadron, the Osage Battalion, and the Seminole Battalion. Stand Watie was placed in command, and promoted to Brigadier General, the only Indian to achieve this rank in either army. At the same time, the Second Indian Cavalry Brigade was formed from remnants of the Choctaw and Chickasaw companies, as well as the Caddo Battalion, and placed under the command of Colonel Tandy Walker. Once formed, Tandy was sent to guard the Canadian River frontier. Ultimately, economic distress brought on by the war in the territory allowed most of the men from both brigades to be furloughed in order to return home to plough fields and produce food for their starving families.⁶⁰

Watie's Cherokees continued to be active as guerillas until the end of the war. From his base south of the Canadian River, hit squads roamed into Union occupied territory harassing and raiding federal troops and installations. At one point, raids against Union horse and mule herds became so intense that most Union cavalymen in the territory were reduced to foot soldiers. In addition,

Cherokee raiders regularly tormented the Union garrison at Fort Gibson, and at times successfully cut the post's lifeline between Fort Gibson and Fort Scott exposing those inside the fort to the threat of starvation.⁶¹

The spring of 1865 General Robert E. Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, to be followed in succession by Joseph E. Johnston, the Army of Tennessee at Bennett's Farm in North Carolina, Richard Taylor at Citronelle, Alabama, Nathan Bedford Forrest at Gainesville, Alabama, and E. Kirby Smith surrendered all Confederate troops west of the Mississippi. In like manner Colonel J.Q. Chenoweth commander of the Department of Western Kentucky, Major General Sam Jones Department of Florida, and Brigadier General M. Jeff Thompson, leader of the rebel veterans in Missouri all surrendered.

About a month after Thompson's surrender in Missouri, Brigadier General Stand Watie, nearly sixty years old, surrendered his Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, and Osage guerillas, at Doaksville, the Choctaw capital near Fort Towson in Indian Territory. While these events signaled the end of the Civil War for the peoples of the Indian Territory, the travails of the white man's reconstruction were only beginning.⁶²

Confederate Indian Cavalry Units

Unit	Date Organized	Place of Organization	Manpower	Officers	Engagements
1 st Battalion Cherokee Cavalry (Meyer's Battalion)				Maj. Benjamin W. Meyer	
1 st Battalion Cherokee Cavalry (Bryan's Battalion)	Summer 1862			Maj. J.M. Bryan	Served in the Department of the Indian Territory. Fought at Newtonia and old Fort Wayne. The Unit skirmished and scouted in the Indian Territory. The unit surrendered at Doaksville June 23, 1865
1 st Regiment Cherokee Mounted Rifles	July 1861	Old Fort Wayne, Delaware District Cherokee Nation		1 st Colonel Stand Watie (Later Brig. General) Lt. Col, James M. Bell (Later Colonel); Maj. E.C. Boudinot; Maj. E.J. Howland; Lt. Col. Robert C. Parks; Lt. Col. Thomas F. Taylor; Maj. Joseph F. Thompson (Later Lt. Col.); Lt. Col N. Clem Vann	Served in the Department of the Indian Territory. Assigned to D.H. Cooper and Stand Watie's Brigade in Trans-Mississippi Department. Unit fought at Elkhorn Tavern, Old Fort Wayne, Prairie Grove, Elk Creek, and Mazzard Prairie. About 200 officers and men saw action at Cabin Creek in September 1864, then surrendered June 23, 1865.
2 nd Regiment Cherokee Mounted Rifles	September 1861	Fort Gibson, Cherokee Nation	150 Officers and men	1 st Colonel William P. Adair; Lt. Col James M. Bell (Later transferred to 1 st Regiment); Lt. Col. O.H.P. Brewer; Maj. Porter Hammock; Maj. J.R. Harden; Maj. John Vann	Assigned to D.H. Cooper and Watie's Brigade Trans-Mississippi Department. Skirmished and raided federals in Indian Territory and along the border. September 1864 took 150 men into battle at Cabin Creek, later surrendered at Doaksville June 23, 1865.
2 nd Regiment Cherokee Mounted Rifles a/k/a Drew's Regiment, 1 st	June 1861		1,000 Officers and men	1 st Colonel John Drew; Maj. Thomas Pegg;	Unit fought at Elkhorn Tavern, then skirmished

Regiment Cherokee Cavalry, and Drew's Cherokee Mounted Rifles				Lt. Col. William P. Ross	throughout the Indian Territory. Disbanded August 1862 due to political differences among the men.
Frye's Battalion Cherokee Cavalry a/k/a Faye's-Scales Cherokee Cavalry Battalion	Summer 1864			Maj. Moses C. Frye; Maj. Joseph A. Scales	Unit served under General Stand Watie in the Trans-Mississippi Department. Skirmished throughout the Indian Territory and surrendered June 23, 1865.
1 st Battalion Chickasaw Cavalry	Fall 1862			Lt. Colonel Joseph D. Harris; Maj. Lemuel M. Reynolds;	Unit served in T. Walker's Brigade Trans-Mississippi Department and skirmished in Indian Territory and along the border. Unit surrendered about 75 officers and men on June 23, 1865
1 st Regiment Chickasaw Cavalry	Spring 1863			1 st Colonel William L. Hunter; Maj. Abram B. Hays; Lt. Col. Samuel L. Martin;	This unit was always undersized. It was attached to D.H. Cooper's Brigade with the Trans-Mississippi Department and participated in various conflicts in Indian Territory. The unit disbanded in late 1864.
Sheco's Battalion Chickasaw Cavalry				Lt. Col. Martin Sheco; Maj. Jonathan Nail	
1 st Battalion Choctaw Cavalry				Maj. J.W. Pierce	
1 st Regiment Choctaw Cavalry a/k/a 1 st Choctaw War Regiment a/k/a 2 nd Choctaw Regiment	Summer 1862		216 men	1 st Colonel Simpson N. Folsom; Lt. Col F. Battice	This unit was assigned to the Department of Indian Territory and skirmished and raided the federals throughout the territory and along the border. Had 4 killed and 4 wounded at Poison Spring and surrendered June 23, 1865.

1 st Regiment Choctaw Cavalry	Spring 1862	Where the City of Atoka now stands in the Choctaw Nation	31 Officers and 686 men	1 st Colonel Sampson Folsom; Lt. Col. David F. Hawkins	This unit fought at Newtonia sustaining 9 casualties, saw action at Old Fort Wayne. Unit was later assigned to T. Walker's Brigade Trans-Mississippi Department and skirmished in Indian Territory. Surrendered at Doaksville June 23, 1865.
3 rd Regiment Choctaw Cavalry	Fall 1863			1 st Colonel Jackson McCurtain; Maj. John Page; Lt. Col. Thomas Lewis	Assigned to T. Walker's Brigade Trans-Mississippi Department and skirmished with federals in Indian Territory and along the border. Regiment surrendered at Doaksville, June 23, 1865.
1 st Regiment Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles	July 1861	Scullyville, Choctaw Nation	27 Officers 707 men	1 st Colonel Douglas H. Cooper; Maj. Willis J. Jones; Maj. Mitchell LeFlore; Maj. Sampson Loering; Lt. Col. James Riley; Lt. Col. Tandy Walker (transferred to 2 nd Regiment Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles	This unit contained 6 companies of Choctaws, three of Chickasaws, and one of half-breeds. Suffered 12 casualties at Newtonia and then was assigned to D.H. Cooper's Brigade Trans-Mississippi Department. Skirmished with federals in Indian Territory and in April 1863 lost 3 men at Poison Spring. Surrendered June 23, 1865.
2 nd Regiment Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles				1 st Colonel Tandy Walker	
1 st Regiment Creek Cavalry				Colonel David N. McIntosh; Lt. Col. Samuel Chekote; Maj. Jacob Derrysaw; Maj. James McHenry; Lt. Col. William R. McIntosh	
2 nd Regiment Creek				1 st Colonel Chilly	

Cavalry				McIntosh; Maj. Timothy Barnett (Later promoted to Colonel); Lt. Col. Pink Hawkins	
1 st Battalion Seminole Cavalry	September 1861		380 men	Lt. Colonel John Jumper; Maj. George Cloud	Initially served in the Department of Indian Territory. Unit was later assigned to D. H. Cooper and Watie's Brigade Trans-Mississippi Department. Served as scouts and raided federals in Indian Territory and along the border. Took 130 men to Cabin Creek to fight in September 1864, but only a few surrendered June 23, 1865.
Osage Cavalry Battalion a/k/a Osage Battalion	Spring 1863			Maj. Broken Arm	Organized with 4 companies. Assigned to D. H. Cooper's Brigade Trans-Mississippi Department. Participated in various conflicts in Indian Territory. Surrendered June 23, 1865.

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