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The Botetourt Dragoons in War and Peace

An Honors Thesis Submitted to the History Faculty in
Candidacy for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in History

Department of History

by

Michael G. Henkle

Richmond, Virginia
May 2000

Preface

This thesis studies a Confederate cavalry company from the immediate prewar years through the war, ending with the death of one of its last members. Most soldiers were residents of Botetourt County, Virginia. The study focuses upon both the men themselves and the battles in which they fought. Letters, diaries, and postwar accounts reveal their thoughts. After the war, many took an active role in both veterans' affairs and their community by joining veteran camps and participating in politics. Near the end, many received pensions or stayed in old soldiers' homes.

I owe a great debt to the staffs of several libraries, without whom producing this paper would have been impossible. Among them are the Library of Virginia, the Virginia Historical Society, the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia, the Leyburn Library at Washington and Lee University, and the Virginia Room at the Roanoke City Public Library. Some of these librarians went above and beyond the call of duty in assisting me. The University of Richmond contributed through awarding me an undergraduate research grant, which helped with travel and photocopying expenses. In addition, a special thank you is owed to the Botetourt County Museum and Clerk's Office, along with George E. Honts, III, Emily Honts, and Dorothy Kessler. Their kindness in donating their time and efforts was invaluable in allowing me to write this thesis. Finally, I owe a great debt to Professors John L. Gordon, Jr. and Robert C. Kenzer for directing my thesis and providing much helpful criticism. I dedicate this paper to the memory of the men of the Botetourt Dragoons and, more particularly, my great-great grandfather John M. Henkle.

A study of Civil War historiography clearly reveals an advancing trend towards focusing upon smaller samples. Beginning with Bell Wiley's landmark study, *The Life of Johnny Reb* (1943), and including Reid Michell's *Civil War Soldiers* (1988), most scholars focused their attention upon large groups of Confederate soldiers. In many of those cases, the infantry received the greatest attention, since most Confederate soldiers served in that branch. More recently, a variety of works have appeared which focus upon specific armies, such as J. Tracy Power's study of the Army of Northern Virginia, *Lee's Miserables* (1998). Histories of individual regiments have grown increasingly common in recent years.

This study of the Botetourt Dragoons follows in the footsteps of the regimental histories, as well as a variety of master's theses on individual companies, such as "Old Flu's Artillerymen in War and Peacetime" (1996) by Matthew Glenn Hall. Even such works as Hall's have often ignored the cavalry branch of the Confederate armed services. "The Botetourt Dragoons in War and Peace" aims to remedy that situation by treating the background and role of a specific Virginia cavalry company in the war. My selection of this unit was strongly influenced by two factors: one, the availability of primary source material, aside from census and muster roll records; and, two, the fact that my great-great grandfather, John Moler Henkle, served as a private in the Dragoons. Researching this paper has been greatly aided by the fact that this company produced a surprisingly rich collection of letters, diaries, and postwar accounts with which to supplement the other, less personal source material.

Botetourt County, Virginia, located just north of Roanoke, retains a strong rural character despite the encroaching tendrils of suburban development. Fincastle, the county seat, has many prime examples of eighteenth and nineteenth century architecture, which provide some sense to the visitor of life during that period. In the nineteenth century, agriculture dominated the economy, although iron mines and agricultural support services, such as blacksmith shops, wagon-making, and milling, also played a significant role. The area seems to have been a way station for people moving across the mountains into the Western states, and some families took advantage of the location by establishing boarding houses. Similar to most rural communities, Botetourt families were often closely interrelated. An examination of its military units reveals many siblings and cousins who fought in the same companies, sometimes wounded or killed side by side.

Like many antebellum Southern communities, Botetourt County had several local militia units intended for use during emergencies. Among the most prominent were the Fincastle Rifles and the Botetourt Dragoons. The European term dragoon refers to a soldier in a heavily armed, mounted unit.

Although the record does not provide the precise date of their formation, the Rifles clearly played a role in executing some of John Brown's followers after their failed rebellion in 1859. Among their number was at least one of the future Dragoons, Charles T. Price, whose postwar account provides details on the Rifles' service as guards during the executions.¹ Obviously, he saw this event as a significant one, and it seems likely that other future Dragoons shared this opinion. The Dragoons were apparently organized soon

after this time since their first known recruits joined in 1859. In its early years, the unit functioned primarily as a social outlet for its members and, according to Rufus H. Peck's postwar account of his experiences as a Dragoon, met infrequently on Saturdays for drills, parades, and occasional maneuvers that took it to such surrounding towns as Salem and Buchanan.

In 1860, the County Court authorized both the Dragoons and Rifles to use the Grand Jury room in the courthouse for squad drill purposes, with the stipulation that such privilege would cease if damage to the building resulted.² The fact that damage seemed possible to the Court may be indicative of the somewhat rowdy nature of these events. Price noted that these drills were held in the evenings, probably so that the men, who were nearly all farmers, could get their work done during the day.

Although Peck's postwar account fails to enumerate the enlisted men of the early militia unit, he does provide a list of officers, all of whom served with the unit in the war: Captain Andrew L. Pitzer, First Lieutenant William A. Glasgow, Second Lieutenant William J. Price, First Sergeant Edward Brugh, Second Sergeant William H. Garrett, and Third Sergeant Thomas McClure. William A. McCue served as first corporal, Robert Rieley as second, and George H. Peck as third.³ Although one of these men was a lawyer and another a school teacher, most worked as farmers. These early officers came from relatively privileged backgrounds, and their families likely owned slaves, based upon their personal property appraisals.⁴

When war came in April of 1861, the Dragoons' life of relative military ease ended, although wartime life did not completely fail to provide amusements. The company was ordered to Lynchburg, where it formed part of the 30th Virginia Volunteers

unit, eventually reorganized in May 1862 as the 2nd Virginia Cavalry, of which the Dragoons were designated Company C. Like the old militia, these units elected their own officers, a practice which had decidedly mixed results.

Overall, the Dragoons formed a rather elite group. Unlike the infantry, cavalymen provided their own horses and equipment. Each man had to sign a bond promising to return or pay for his revolver and sabre, valued at sixty-six dollars.⁵ Obviously, the average man could not afford such expensive cavalry accouterments, not to mention a good horse. As a consequence, many of these men came from relatively wealthy slaveholding families, especially those who became officers.

However, money or slaveholding alone fail to explain the motivations of these men and their ability to rise through the ranks. Education also played a major role in promotion. Most officers attended colleges, such as Washington College, the College of William and Mary, the University of Virginia, Virginia Military Institute, and the University of Pennsylvania. A VMI degree seemed an especially valuable asset given the Breckinridges' success.

Despite the expense, numerous middle class or even poor men also joined the Dragoons. George W. and James W. Denton, the sons of a carpenter, David Denton, who, in 1860, owned only \$700 in real estate and \$564 in personal property, are prime examples of the middle class element. Similarly, Achilles Mooreman Hayth, the 27-year-old unemployed son of a boarding house operator, lived on his own and had only \$265 of personal property in 1860. Yet he and his two brothers, Edward Pendleton and George Hammone Hayth, joined the Confederate effort just like the Denton boys. Hershey Eldridge Carper worked as a saddler in 1860 and had personal property worth only \$75.

Ephraim L. Carroll was even poorer than either the Dentons or the Hayths. In 1860, at age twenty, he had no property, lived with John Davis, a tenant with a personal estate of \$1,615, and worked as a laborer.

How did such men afford to equip themselves? Unfortunately, the record fails to reveal the answer, but it seems likely that the more propertied Dragoons helped to cover the cost of the horses, sabres, pistols, and so forth for these men. Lucy Breckinridge, a Botetourt resident and the sister of the Breckinridge Dragoons, lent credence to this when she noted that Beverly Whittle, a Dragoon, sent his younger brother, Stafford, to borrow a horse from the Breckinridge estate.⁶ If the relatively wealthy Whittles supplied their son through the Breckinridges' generosity, it seems likely that others did also. In addition, it became common for the men to equip themselves from captured Union horses and goods.

Of those whose writings survive, few Dragoons regarded secession as a positive move. In fact, Peachy Gilmer Breckinridge, as a candidate for the Virginia state secession convention, stated that war to preserve slavery would be ludicrous, primarily because its monetary cost would exceed the cost of abolishing the institution. He stridently opposed secession, writing:

I intend to battle for the Union as long as we continue in it. He who raises his hand against the Constitution of the United States, which he is sworn to defend, will not be a reliable man even in a slave confederacy—Away with your palmetto flags! Let the banner under which Washington fought, wave over every blow that I strike in battle; and if I die the death of a soldier, let me be wrapped in the Star Spangled Banner.⁷

As things turned out, Gilmer Breckinridge did indeed fall in battle, but he lost his life in support of the “slave confederacy” which he had opposed before the war. His reasons for this action are lost, but he, like many of his comrades, probably just followed his state's lead. Gilmer supported his state by raising and financing Company K of the

28th Virginia Infantry, which his younger brother, John H., also joined. Surely he did this with his father's assistance, since Gilmer, an attorney in 1860, had only recently left school, owned \$3,050 in personal property, and boarded with his new wife's uncle, Jordan Anthony. Educated at the University of Virginia, William and Mary, and Virginia Military Institute, Gilmer began practicing law after participating in the year-long Pacific Railroad Exploring Expedition, during which he traveled to Oklahoma, New Mexico, and other points West.⁸ Although the record fails to reveal more details, this expedition probably explored a Southern route for a railroad to the Pacific.

When he failed to win re-election as captain of his infantry company in April 1862, Gilmer enlisted in the 3rd Virginia State Line Cavalry and was promoted major in 1863. Just over a month later, he transferred to the 2nd Virginia State Line Cavalry, from which he resigned in May 1863. Prior to resigning, on 21 April 1863, he joined the Dragoons at Culpeper, where his younger brothers Cary and James were officers, first as a private and then as a color sergeant. The reasons for his failure to win re-election and subsequent shuttling between regiments remain obscure, but it seems likely that his particularly strong prewar pro-Union stance played some role. Despite this, Gilmer ultimately rose through the ranks of Company C and served as acting captain, though of Company B, on 24 May 1864 when he was killed in action at Kennon's Landing.⁹

On 4 September 1860, a group of prominent Botetourt residents, including several future Dragoons or their families, sent a signed petition to their congressman, William B. Preston, requesting his help in calming the populace and preserving the Union, which they claimed had "been purchased by the blood and treasure of our ancestors and should be cherished by us."¹⁰ They appealed to him to help stop the sectional fanaticism and

lead them on a path based upon wisdom and patriotism. Among the signatories were Dr. Samuel H. Meredith, the future surgeon of Company C; Captain Andrew L. Pitzer; Albert B. Pitzer, later first sergeant; Isaac Henkle, the father of John M. Henkle; James M. Figgat, father of future Captain James H. H. Figgat; and Thomas G. Godwin, the father of James T. and Dr. Isaac R. Godwin.¹¹ Notably absent from the petition is the Breckinridge name. Perhaps many of that family did not share Gilmer's pro-Union stance. His sister, Lucy, however, seems to have, like her brother, held a poor opinion of slavery. In her diary on 31 August 1862, she noted that "slavery is a troublesome institution and I wish for the sake of the *masters* that it could be abolished in Virginia."¹²

Beverly Kennon Whittle, a Dragoon who joined the war effort in 1863 as a private, and his family left a collection of valuable letters and diaries. In 1860, his father, William Conway Whittle, a commodore in the United States Navy who lived at "The Anchorage" in Botetourt, owned \$5,000 in real estate and \$9,225 in personal property, likely much of it in slaves. His ten person household consisted mostly of his children. While Whittle's property does not approach the upper end of the Dragoon wealth scale, it does clearly put him over many others.

W. C. Whittle's lengthy journals, in which he copied down all of the important letters he sent and received, along with many of his private thoughts, clearly depict a somewhat ambivalent stance on secession. He wrote that the South had been slapped in the face by the Union, yet noted a clear sense of trepidation about the future. Whittle also reveals a somewhat indecisive position on slavery when he stated that, although it may have served its purpose in Virginia and was no longer needed, the Cotton States still seemed to require the institution. Like so many other Virginia men, loyalty to his state,

rather than slavery, seems to have been the deciding factor for Whittle. He justifies his switch in loyalties from Federal to Confederate by emphasizing that his natural allegiance was to Virginia, which implied loyalty to the United States, but only so long as Virginia remained part of that nation.¹³

Despite his concerns, W. C. Whittle and his eldest son of the same name both honorably served in the Confederate Navy. After resigning from the United States Navy 1 April 1861, he enlisted in the Confederate Navy on 11 June 1861. He attained the rank of captain, and his son reached that of first lieutenant. Lieutenant W. C. Whittle, the younger, was also captured and made a prisoner of war during the conflict.¹⁴

Beverly Whittle's pre-war letters indicate that he attended school with the next to youngest Breckinridge boy, John Harmer, a private in the 28th Virginia Infantry who was killed at Seven Pines. The letters make it obvious that, despite some difference in age, they were close friends. Perhaps their friendship developed through Jennie Whittle, who served as Lucy Breckinridge's tutor. Beverly apparently remained in school until enlisting on 9 September 1863, only two days short of his 18th birthday.¹⁵ John entered the army before his friend, but Beverly clearly revealed his thirst for the fight when on 21 April 1861 he wrote, "how I long to be grown—so I could spill some blood out of those Yankee villains that are trying to impose on us."¹⁶ Apparently he voluntarily waited until he was older to enlist, despite much pressure to the contrary. Perhaps John's death at Seven Pines intensified his enthusiasm and inspired Beverly during the hard years he fought until the surrender. The evidence fails to reveal if the senior Whittle ultimately shared his son's ardor.

The Breckinridge-Whittle friendship does not seem to have been limited to the younger generation. W. C. Whittle's letters suggest his friendship with Captain Cary Breckinridge, who received his rank designation from pre-war militia service.¹⁷ No concrete proof exists that they shared similar opinions on secession, but it seems quite likely from their close relationship and that of their sons. Regardless of their reasons, the Whittle family clearly made a considerable contribution to Virginia and the Confederacy on both land and sea.

The Breckinridge family, by far the wealthiest in the county, provided three sons to the Dragoons and another to the infantry, three of them officers. The fifth son also joined the Confederate service late in the war. Headed by Emma Walker Gilmer and Captain Cary Breckinridge, this family had been and continued to be very prominent in Virginia affairs. They represent the epitome of the popular view of the wealthy, well-connected Southern slaveholder. The vice president under James Buchanan, Confederate general, Secretary of War, and past presidential contender, John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, was their cousin. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Patrick Henry, James Monroe, and other luminaries had visited their plantation at Grove Hill, where, in 1860, Captain Cary owned several thousand acres and 149 slaves, the most of any county resident.¹⁸ The total value of all this real and personal property amounted to over \$200,000, far exceeding that of any other Dragoon family.

The Breckinridges paid a heavy price for their decision to fight in support of Virginia. James suffered a wound to his arm at Fort Kennon, and Cary was wounded four times. All of the boys joined the army, and Captain Cary, who was sixty-six in 1861, served in the Fincastle Cavalry Company of the Home Guard.¹⁹ Only two of the

five Breckinridge boys survived the war; James died at Five Forks, Gilmer at Kennon's Landing, and John at Seven Pines. Lucy Breckinridge's diary reveals the anxious waiting for news to confirm or disprove rumors which circulated concerning her brothers' fate. Unfortunately, the family was only able to bury one of their lost sons, as the remains of the other two were not recovered during Captain Cary and Emma's lifetime.²⁰

Cary and James Breckinridge, like their brother Gilmer, attended VMI, but both of them graduated. They received a military education, perhaps better preparing them for a rapid rise through the ranks. James hardly excelled in his third year at the Institute, since he was listed at the bottom of his 21-member class, probably due to his 165 demerits. Attaining the rank of sergeant, he earned his highest marks in Latin and drawing, while receiving his lowest in chemistry and mathematics. Cary, on the other hand, performed relatively well in his first year. He ranked 35th in a class of 51 and had only 45 demerits, a considerably lower number than most of his classmates. Cary's best subjects included composition and geography, while he performed poorest in French.²¹ James and Cary both graduated from Virginia Military Institute, in 1858 and 1860, respectively. Cary's initially strong performance continued during his schooling, and he finished 18th out of a 41 member class. His brother, on the other hand, graduated last in his class of 19 cadets.²² James, like Gilmer, went on to attend the University of Virginia and received an LL.D by 1861.²³

In spite of James's less than exemplary performance at VMI, Thomas T. Munford, his future commander, praised him as "a splendid specimen of a cavalry officer: tall and graceful, with a form indicative of great strength; handsome, gentle, and modest; his voice always pleasant in conversation; a horseman by nature; and a master of

the pistol and sabre.”²⁴ In addition, Munford noted that James was never reckless, merely very courageous.²⁵ The latter characteristic may have changed after James’s new bride, Fanny Burwell, whom he married in the spring of 1862, died in August of the same year. The death of the woman whom he had deeply loved produced a change in James, and supposedly thereafter he took greater chances in battle.²⁶

Contemporaries regarded Cary as an exceptionally taciturn man. According to one story, he said only two words during the entire war, “Halt” to his men and “Ugh” when forced to cross the icy Rappahannock after being captured at Kelly’s Ford. When Virginia Calwell, whom he married after the war, admired his horse and commented how much she would like to own such an animal, Cary gruffly responded, “you can have it if you take me with it.” Apparently she accepted the offer. The Colonel was an extremely large fellow, who, according to Colonel Heros von Borcke, was the strongest man in the Confederate Army and once cut a man in two with his sabre at Second Manassas.²⁷

Cary enlisted 17 May 1861 at Fincastle as a second lieutenant, and James, after serving for a few months as aide-de-camp to General Philip St. George Cocke, joined 7 September 1861 with the rank of first sergeant.²⁸ James served as a substitute for Albert Baker Pitzer, who had been deemed unfit for service by Dr. Samuel H. Meredith, the assistant regimental surgeon. The doctor diagnosed him with chronic hemorrhoids, which made constant horseback riding impossible. Pitzer was subsequently detailed as sheriff of Botetourt County, a position that evidently involved less sitting.²⁹

The Breckinridge soldiers clearly do not represent the average members of the Dragoons, nor, for that matter, does Beverly K. Whittle. Most of the men were members of the antebellum middle class, although the lower classes certainly made a strong

contribution. In 1860, over one-third of Dragoons came from families with less than \$1,001 in personal property. (See Table 1.) While about one-fourth owned no land at all, nearly two-thirds held between \$1 and \$5,501 in real estate. (See Table 2.) Obviously, wealth brought privileges like a good education, which often led to a profession or an officer's rank in the Confederate army. Without a doubt, the Breckinridges' status, in addition to their performance on the field, contributed to their rise. Cary, the only one to fight and survive the whole war, attained the rank of colonel. Some accounts even assign him the rank of brigadier general, granted just at the end of the war, but no official record substantiates this. Gilmer and James both reached at least the rank of captain.

Other families also suffered the loss or wounding of loved ones in the company. The Robinsons, Shafers, Hayths, Pecks, Godwins, and others had at least one son or relative who was killed, wounded, or died in the struggle. These families are often overlooked, probably since they lacked the prestige and connections of the Breckinridges.

John Moler Henkle differed from many of his fellow Botetourt cavalymen in that he and his family were not natives of the county. They had come to the area from Jefferson County in what is today West Virginia, where he was born in 1844. As the only son in his family, the decision to enlist and leave home must have been difficult. Surely his help was needed on the approximately three-hundred-acre farm, known as Walnut Hill, where they resided. J. M. was not the only Henkle to contribute to the Confederacy, since his father, Isaac, joined the Fincastle Cavalry Company of the Home Guard.³⁰ A 48-year-old farmer in 1860, Isaac seemed relatively successful. He owned \$11,000 in real estate and \$7,000 in personal property. In addition, he possessed a slave family, consisting of four slaves, an adult male and an adult female, along with two

children.³¹ All the Henkle children over the age of seven had attended school within the year in 1860. J. M. first enlisted in the Fincastle Rifles, officially designated as Company D, 11th Virginia Infantry, on 11 July 1861, when he would have been only sixteen. Henkle joined the Dragoons almost a year later on 23 April 1862, apparently after the Rifles dropped him when they discovered that he was underage.³²

Joining the cavalry after serving in the infantry was probably not at all uncommon, since cavalymen were commonly perceived to have led easier lives riding horseback than infantrymen on foot. Largely for that reason, Irving Whitehead wrote, it was not at all unusual for a Virginia gentleman to resign a commission in the infantry in order to join the cavalry as a lowly private.³³ After a raid by General Wade Hampton's cavalry near the war's end, a First Corps staff officer lent credence to that perception by noting that the cavalry was now doing some hard fighting and was no longer an easy place.³⁴ Infantrymen held an especially negative opinion of the cavalry, whom they regarded as leading a life of mounted ease, filling their stomachs with stolen luxuries while the infantry lived off minimal rations.³⁵

These perceptions of relative comfort do not seem very accurate in the case of this company, especially since many of the Dragoons had no horses for significant periods of time, they participated in many engagements, suffered significant casualties, often went without decent food, and spent a great deal of time moving from point to point.

William Andrew McCue taught at the Fincastle Male Academy in 1860, while living with William Anderson Glasgow, another Dragoon. The latter, a wealthy attorney, served no more than a year in the company, after which he ultimately joined the Home Guard.³⁶ McCue's school was probably a popular place for the landed class to send their

sons, especially since he himself came from an upper class Augusta County family, whose patriarch John McCue resided at "Long Meadow" and held \$40,000 in real estate and \$21,800 in personal property. An 1859 graduate of Washington College, William apparently divided his time between Augusta and Botetourt in 1860, since the census lists him as residing in both locations. Teaching did not pay very well; he reported only \$273 in personal property. McCue enlisted 17 May 1861 as first corporal. He later received a promotion to sergeant of the Dragoons and next to captain in the 2nd Virginia State Line Cavalry. Ultimately, he reached the rank of major as part of General James Longstreet's staff.³⁷ McCue ended his service as a captain in the Fincastle Cavalry Company of the Home Guard.³⁸

Another Dragoon, James Henry Harrison Figgat, also came from a teaching background. When he enlisted he was a teacher at a classical academy in Powhatan County, apparently having started there recently since the 1860 census lists him both there and Fincastle. He attended Washington College from 1858-1859. The son of James M. Figgat, a 49-year-old coach maker, he lived with his parents and five siblings. The senior Figgat apparently succeeded in the coach making business, having \$5,000 in real estate and \$4,500 in personal property, perhaps including some slaves to help him in his shop. James M. Figgat served in the Fincastle Cavalry Company, along with men like Captain Cary Breckinridge and Isaac Henkle.³⁹

James H. H. Figgat enlisted 17 May 1861 as a private. He suffered two wounds, one at First Manassas and another at some unknown location while serving in the 12th Virginia Cavalry. Commended for gallantry at Poolesville, Maryland, on 29 August 1863 he was promoted first lieutenant of Company F in the 12th Virginia Cavalry.⁴⁰

Subsequently he received a promotion to captain of that unit. Although no official record assigns him that rank, the muster roll mentions that he commanded the company, and all postwar accounts refer to him as Captain Figgat.

Rufus Harrison Peck lived with his parents in 1860. His father, William Peck, a farmer, owned \$11,200 in real estate and \$6,830 in personal property, which included at least a few slaves according to his son's postwar account. A younger brother, William Addison Peck, followed him into the service on 11 March 1862. Rufus H. Peck served with the Dragoons from 1859, just after John Brown's execution, until Robert E. Lee's surrender on 9 April 1865. He officially enlisted 17 May 1861, like many of his comrades. Peck came through the war unscathed, although he did spend some time in prison after being captured at Kelly's Ford.⁴¹

Marcus Ammen, the son of textile mill owner Benjamin Ammen, was a decidedly unconventional Dragoon in both his interests and background. In 1850, Marcus, a merchant, lived with his father, a millwright who possessed \$6,082 in real estate. In 1851, Marcus's name appears as an irregular student with no class standing at Valley Union Seminary at Botetourt Springs.⁴² He also attended Hollins Institute and studied art in Philadelphia from 1851-1852. Ammen painted in Holly Springs, Mississippi from 1857-1858, and later taught art at Greenwood Female College in Memphis, Tennessee. Just before the war he worked as a painter in New Orleans and Galveston, Texas.⁴³

Benjamin Ammen's mill supplied blankets and other items to the Confederacy.⁴⁴ Like many Botetourt families, the Ammens contributed both in goods and in human capital to the Confederate war effort. Marcus enlisted on 17 May 1861. Wounded by four sabre cuts at Second Manassas, he spent a significant portion of the war detailed in

various assignments, such as topographical engineer for several generals. Later, Ammen made further use of his artistic talents by serving as a professor of drawing at a training school for the Confederate Navy.⁴⁵

William Brown Bowyer, a 26-year-old blacksmith, had only \$600 in personal property to support his small family. Apparently, he had married sometime around 1857, since he had a three-year-old son and a one-year-old daughter. George Stever Bowyer, his brother, also enlisted with the Dragoons. The brothers married sisters from the Clapsaddle family, and George also worked as a blacksmith. Although George was older, William enlisted first, in May 1861, while George waited a year. Both men served as regimental blacksmiths, a vital position in an army that moved by horse. William received accolades from his superiors as “a most efficient and faithful soldier, always at his post.”⁴⁶

Benjamin Franklin Brugh and his brother, Edward, also fought in the same unit. The sons of John Brugh, a wealthy 72-year-old farmer, who owned \$24,950 in real estate and \$24,036 in personal property, both men were in their early thirties. In addition, their mother owned a separate combined estate of over \$8,000, likely an inheritance of some sort. Benjamin, a farmer, married Estherline Reid McClure, had \$5,358 in real estate and \$3,620 in personal property, and was blessed with two young children. Edward, a few years younger, had yet to leave home but had amassed \$750 in personal property. Both enlisted on 17 May 1861, but Edward, a second sergeant, outranked his older brother, likely due to his pre-war militia service as first sergeant. Edward, who reached the rank of first lieutenant in the Dragoons, suffered a wound at Shepherdstown and another through the lung at Todd's Tavern.⁴⁷ Benjamin never rose above private while in the

cavalry. In 1862, he was discharged from the cavalry for being overage and, after 1863, joined the Home Guard as a first lieutenant in the Fincastle Company.⁴⁸

Richard Horseley Burks, unlike his fellow Dragoons, had previous military experience, having served in the Mexican War. Like the Breckinridges, he attended VMI. He spent two and one-half years there as part of the class of 1848, but did not graduate, probably due to the war's interruption. Afterwards, he traveled in California and even to the Sandwich Islands. In 1860, this 34-year-old farmer reported no real estate but a substantial personal estate of \$18,470. Perhaps his livelihood stemmed from the land owned by Susan H. Burks, his 64-year-old widowed mother, who possessed \$30,000 in land and \$15,050 in personal property. Richard's household also consisted of a wife and four young children. He enlisted in the Dragoons on 17 May 1861 as a first lieutenant. At some point, he was promoted to adjutant of the regiment. On 25 April 1862, his men declined to re-elect him, but two months later he received a promotion to lieutenant colonel of the 12th Virginia Cavalry, in which he served until his resignation on 2 March 1863. Thirty-six-years-old at this time, he soon joined the Home Guard and served as colonel of the regiment which bears his name.⁴⁹

Thomas G. Godwin's sons James T. and Isaac Robinson also joined the company. After attending Washington College from 1857-1858 and the University of Virginia in 1858, Isaac became a physician. Interestingly, Isaac's future comrades, William A. McCue and James H. H. Figgat, were both enrolled at Washington College during his time there. James and Isaac's father, a merchant, owned real estate of \$6,000 and personal property of \$30,000, probably much of it merchandise for his store. Thomas eventually joined the Botetourt Scouts and Couriers company in the Home Guard.⁵⁰

Isaac apparently traveled as a doctor since the census lists him as residing in Monroe County, today located in West Virginia, with personal property of \$315. Although Isaac enlisted in the Dragoons on 17 May 1861, James first joined the Fincastle Rifles of the 11th Virginia Infantry on 23 April 1861, listing his occupation as clerk. However, like J. M. Henkle, he transferred to the Dragoons in 1863. James was twice wounded, once at Spotsylvania Court House and again at Appomattox. In 1862, Isaac received an appointment as assistant surgeon for the regiment.⁵¹ At some point after returning from captivity after Gettysburg, Dr. Godwin began serving in a North Carolina unit, where he remained for the rest of the war.⁵²

Edwin B. Luster, a tinsmith, added to the diversity of trades in the Dragoons. Apparently such trades were not particularly lucrative, since he reported only \$100 in personal property with which to support his wife and three children. When he joined the Dragoons on 17 May 1861, he listed his occupation as teacher. Unfortunately, the record fails to reveal where he taught. At some point, Luster's superiors appointed him chief bugler, and he participated in a band at Leesburg. In 1862 he received his discharge, probably because he was over age 35.⁵³ Luster later served in the Fincastle Company of the Home Guard.⁵⁴

John Wallace McCreery, the son of William McCreery, an Irish immigrant, added yet another dimension to the company. William worked as a bank officer, holding \$1,800 in real estate and \$350 in personal property. Signifying the importance of education even to the middle class, William sent his two oldest boys, including John, to school. John received his education at the Fincastle Male Academy, most likely under the tutelage of William A. McCue.⁵⁵ Only fifteen in 1860, John waited until 15

September 1863 to enlist, the same month and year as Beverly Whittle.⁵⁶ His father also joined the Confederate service in the Fincastle Company of the Home Guard.⁵⁷

Dorman L. Pitzer came from a family that contributed many recruits for the Dragoons, including his younger brother Theodore F. Their father, Robert C., was a farmer who owned \$7,500 in real estate and \$4,022 in personal property. Indicative of their wealth and devotion to education, all of his eight children between the ages of eight and sixteen had attended school within the year. Dorman enlisted at Fincastle on 17 May 1861. His brother joined on 19 March 1862. The younger Pitzer suffered a wound at Aldie in 1863 and was later killed in an unspecified way by his horse just a few months before the war ended.⁵⁸

Charles Thomas Price also came from a family which contributed several sons to the Confederacy. His brothers William J. and George Simpson Price both joined the Dragoons. They were the sons of Eliza Price, evidently a widow, who worked as a hotel keeper and owned \$10,000 in real estate and \$3,500 in personal property. Each of the Price children owned at least \$5,000 in personal property. It seems likely that this formed part of their deceased father's estate, making him a wealthy man. Everyone between the ages of eleven and eighteen had attended school within the year. Charles, the youngest of the brothers, attended VMI for one year and five months as part of the class of 1864. When war came, he was detailed as drillmaster at Battery #9, Camp Lee in Richmond until May 1862. On 1 August 1862, Price enlisted at Fincastle as a private in the Dragoons. Later, Charles reached the rank of third corporal. Afterwards, he was captured in Pennsylvania, though he escaped, and later suffered a wound at Louisa Court House.⁵⁹

George, the middle brother, also attended VMI from 1859 to 1861 and served as a drillmaster for the first year of the war. He was stationed at Bowyer's Battery in Richmond, likely the same place as his brother, until he was transferred on 20 December 1862 to the Dragoons at Fredericksburg. On 24 February 1863, just over two months later, he lost his life in a charge at Hartwood Church.⁶⁰

In 1860 the remaining brother, William J., who resided in a different household from his mother and younger brothers, described himself as a "gentleman." Living with a physician's family, he owned \$3,000 in real estate and \$8,800 in personal estate. When he enlisted on 17 May 1861 as third sergeant at age 34, he termed his occupation as "speculator." Just what he was speculating in remains unknown; perhaps it was land or slaves, given the fact that he surely owned both. Price ultimately attained the rank of second lieutenant.⁶¹ At some point, he left the Dragoons and served as a captain in the Botetourt Scouts and Couriers company of the Home Guard.⁶²

William Alonzo Rinehart, one of the youngest men to enlist in the company, was the son of John Rinehart, a farmer who owned \$4,500 in real estate and \$1,610 in personal property. As a further sign of their wealth, they also had a fourteen-year-old free black girl living with them who probably worked as a servant. All of John's six children between the ages of seven and thirteen had attended school. "Lon," as the *Fincastle Herald* referred to Alonzo in the postwar years, enlisted in the Dragoons on 1 May 1862 at Fincastle, at the age of seventeen. Wounded at Boonsboro, Maryland and High Bridge, Rinehart's superiors lauded him as a "gallant fellow."⁶³

The Robinson family also made a significant contribution to the Confederate war effort by sending three sons into the company, only one of whom returned home. Like

the McCreerys, they were first generation native born Americans, since their widowed mother, Mary, was born in Ireland. She described herself as a farmer and reported \$21,160 in real estate and \$18,700 of personal property. All of her eight children under 21 had attended school.

Isaac Allen Robinson, the oldest at 24, had attended the University of Virginia in 1858 and became a physician. By 1860, he owned \$375 in personal property. He and his younger brother, Joseph F., enlisted in the company as privates on 17 May 1861 at Fincastle. Both were captured on 17 July of the same year near Fairfax Court House, took the oath in order to gain their release, and were dismissed from Confederate service. Although Joseph did not re-enlist, Isaac was exchanged and returned to his company, and served for three more years. Perhaps Isaac's exchange was influenced by the South's need for his profession, whereas Joseph had no unique skill. According to several accounts, by 1864 Isaac died while still in the service. Joseph subsequently joined the Waskey's Mill company of the Home Guard at some point after 1863, possibly indicating that he objected to army service but not to defending his home. The youngest brother, John W., waited until 21 April 1862, when he was about eighteen, to enlist. He too was captured in Maryland on 8 July 1863, during the Gettysburg campaign, and ultimately was sent to Point Lookout Prison, where he died of chronic diarrhea just after Christmas 1863.⁶⁴

The Robinsons provide an interesting case since they seemed such ideal supporters of the Confederacy. Despite being large land and slave owners, all of them were captured, and two were reported as having taken "the oath." Just which oath they took remains unclear, since two existed: one of loyalty to the Union and the other a vow

to never again take up arms against the federal government. In either case, it must have been more difficult for Isaac, compared with an ordinary exchanged prisoner, to return to the army, but Joseph may have faced greater ostracism for not following his brother's lead. Despite their experience, John joined the Dragoons, perhaps under pressure to redeem the family name from the stain of his brothers' less than strong patriotism. That desire may be why he did not take the oath even though it was the easy way out of prison. Of course the record fails to reveal what these men thought, but it seems more than coincidental that all of them were captured. The Robinsons appear to have been the best, and nearly the only, example of lukewarm supporters of the Confederacy in this unit. Nonetheless, they provided three able-bodied men to the Dragoons, two of whom died in the service.

Kenton Ballard Stoner, like the Robinsons, came from a household headed by a widowed mother. His deceased father, Samuel Stoner, a wealthy merchant, had owned twenty slaves.⁶⁵ In 1860, however, the Stoners held only \$1,000 in real estate and \$5,600 in personal property. Their household consisted of Kenton, his mother, and two younger sisters. Although he claimed no occupation, Kenton likely continued his father's business as a merchant and possibly farmed on the side. As the sole breadwinner, it must have been hard for his family to cope with his enlistment in the Dragoons on 17 May 1861 at Fincastle as a private. Fortunately for them, he returned home safely. After serving almost four years in the Dragoons, he received a transfer to the Botetourt Artillery in exchange for Charles Augustus Snyder.⁶⁶

George Paul Zimmerman kept a livery stable in 1860 and owned personal property worth \$3,000, much of it likely consisting of horses and tack. Since he lived

with a hotelkeeper, Zimmerman probably cared for the guests' horses at his stable, thus deriving additional income. When he enlisted on 20 May 1861 at Fincastle, he identified himself as a "speculator," just like William J. Price. However, unlike Price, he had no land, probably owned no slaves in which to speculate, and had little money. So, either he acquired some in the year after the census enumerator visited or he was in partnership with some other party who had more wealth than him. Zimmerman, like many of his comrades, spent some time in a Union prison after being captured in Pennsylvania.⁶⁷ His father, George P. Zimmerman, Sr. also served the Confederacy through joining the Fincastle Company of the Home Guard.⁶⁸

A diverse group, the Dragoons included men from a wide variety of different backgrounds. Tailors, carpenters, farmers, blacksmiths, and mechanics made up their number. Despite the fact that many wealthy or upper middle class men served as officers and in the ranks, relatively poor men composed a significant percentage of the Dragoons' strength. Although little evidence exists to explain their specific motivations for fighting, most studies of Civil War soldiers reveal that the majority of soldiers saw themselves as fighting for their states and to defend their homes. The writings of Gilmer Breckinridge and W. C. Whittle support that interpretation. The interrelations between many of the men, natural for a small rural community, surely played a major role as well.

War was harsh for these men. Their letters reveal great distaste for military regulations, which compromised the independence to which so many were accustomed.

Benjamin Brugh's letter home expresses these feelings well. On 19 September 1861 he wrote from near Fairfax Court House of how "tired and sick" he was of the war and the "many rules and Military laws" which prevented he and his fellow soldiers from visiting friends and relations who lived but one day's travel away. He noted that guards were posted to prevent the men from leaving camp.⁶⁹ Benjamin's younger brother, Sergeant Edward Brugh, complained in a joint letter 5 August 1861 of how he could not write more than a few lines to his family before being ordered to do something else.⁷⁰ According to several studies of Civil War soldiers, the lack of contact with home and family represented a major problem for soldiers, most of whom came from small, rural communities and had never before been away from home.⁷¹ Despite such problems, less than a tenth of Dragoons deserted, even at the end when defeat seemed all but certain.

The slaveholders among them must have resented having to submit to an officer's authority, since they were accustomed to giving orders themselves. Many Civil War scholars have discussed this problem at length, since it made drilling the men into a cohesive, obedient military unit very difficult. A significant number of men saw military regulations, such as the requirement for a pass to leave camp, as degrading them to the status of slaves.⁷² Perhaps the Breckinridges' VMI training helped them to better handle this problem, especially since no letters refer to problems with accepting discipline after James succeeded Pitzer as captain.

The cavalry fought relatively few major battles, at least compared to the infantry. Much of its time was spent in long, often grueling reconnaissance rides through the countryside around enemy lines and on picket, observing the enemy's actions from across a river or some other obstacle. Peck recounted many all day and all night marches and

24-hour picket duty, during which sleep was prohibited under penalty of death.⁷³ However, skirmishes were frequent and quite violent. In many ways, the constant movement and sudden fights probably destabilized these cavalymen nearly as much as an extended battle did infantrymen.

Officers were frequently the glue which held units together. The practice of electing officers, never completely abandoned, helped to encourage closeness between them and their men. Apparently the Breckinridges and all other officers, below lieutenant colonel, were elected by their men for the duration of the war. In order to gain support for their leadership, officers had to exhibit great courage on the battlefield. The Breckinridge brothers were widely recognized for this by their men. Other factors besides courage also came into play. For example, officers had great difficulty being re-elected or promoted to higher ranks if they gained a reputation of being hard on the men or taking too many risks. The Breckinridges' rapid rise likely indicates that they possessed the right combination of courage and caution, coupled with concern for their men.

Before even meeting the enemy, the Dragoons suffered their first casualty on 17 May 1861, as they left Fincastle. Spotting a "frizzly hog," Charles Frazier made a commotion, spooked his horse, and was thrown, cutting his head in the process and requiring medical attention.

Well clad in gray uniforms, the Dragoons marched to Lynchburg with their own Corporal William A. McCue carrying a flag presented by the ladies of Botetourt County. Arriving in that town on 18 May, they were officially mustered into service by General Jubal A. Early as Company C on the 23rd at the fairgrounds, the same place where, nearly

four hard years later, the Dragoons would be disbanded. For one month, they remained in Lynchburg, guarding magazines and drilling, until ordered on to Manassas.⁷⁴

Initially, the company served at the Confederate advanced force's headquarters located at Fairfax Court House. At that point, they had 42 men present for duty and were well armed with 50 Colt revolvers, 55 sabres, and enough double-barreled shotguns and rifles for almost everyone.⁷⁵ While there, Pitzer's company entered enemy lines, coming within three miles of Alexandria, and the men were able to see the Capitol dome. Peck recorded that the men were awakened by the firing of "Long Tom," a large Union artillery piece. Describing the shell as "a gatepost flying through the air," he remarked to his comrades that he knew it had "blown Manassas Junction to kingdom come and she would need no more protection."⁷⁶

During this period, Lieutenant Edward P. Hayth mounted a swift little horse and, in a move celebrated by the *Fincastle Herald* after the war, captured a Yankee who had strayed from his lines. They killed a lieutenant and a private and also captured two Union soldiers, one of them surely Hayth's prisoner.⁷⁷ Supposedly, according to the paper, this was the first Union soldier captured on Virginia soil.

The initial taste of battle did not sit well with some. In many cases soldiers did not write in great detail about the battles, stating that their friends and relatives had already learned of the specifics through word of mouth and newspapers. That may have been the only reason, but it seems likely that many men remained in shock after witnessing some of these events. The combat experience tended to isolate them from civilians and tie soldiers more closely with their comrades.⁷⁸

Describing their first engagement at Manassas, Sergeant Edward Brugh wrote:

I seen the Elephant and [am] willing to return home without another fight as I hope that I may never experience another such a time hearing the cries of the wounded, and to see the dying and the dead strewn in every direction, horses shot down, it was most heart rendering to witness it.⁷⁹

Brugh also portrayed First Manassas, which took place on 21 July 1861, as “one of the grandest victories ever won in America.” With great pride, he continued the letter, telling his family of the many prisoners and large quantity of equipment captured. The sergeant expressed the belief that the war would soon be over and no more bloody victories would be necessary.⁸⁰ Unfortunately for hundreds of thousands, Brugh, along with many who shared that hope, was quite wrong.

According to Rufus H. Peck, Privates John T. Mays, John Calvin Garrett, Joseph F. Robinson, and William M. Mallow were captured while on picket before the battle began, and the horses of Lieutenants Edward P. Hayth and William W. “Buck” Walton were killed from under their riders.⁸¹ Mays, Garrett, and Robinson all had siblings who served in the Dragoons. Colonel Richard C. W. Radford of the Second Virginia Cavalry reported that James H. H. Figgat and William P. Marks both suffered wounds. Adjutant Richard H. Burks’ black servant, Charles, captured an armed enemy soldier.⁸²

In the same letter, Edward’s older brother, Benjamin, also exulted to his family about the great victory, but he wrote only in general terms of the battle’s human cost. He merely described it as “a time of mourning” for the lives lost “and of rejoicing for the lives and liberty and property and everything that is dear to the Southern Confederacy rested on this battle.”⁸³ Both men make it plain that defeat seemed likely, given the enemy’s vast numerical superiority, and claim that result was only averted by the arrival of reinforcements at just the right moment. Benjamin, however, attributed the victory

and his continued survival to God: “we have a higher power than man a watching over us and preserving our healths [sic] and controlling our battles.”⁸⁴

The cavalry and artillery played a significant role in the battle by pursuing the fleeing Union troops and inflicting further casualties upon them. Peck elaborated on the Brugh letter by adding that General Joseph E. Johnston ordered the regiment to shoot the enemy’s horses so that their artillery could be captured. They were quite successful in doing so. The results of this action are described later when Peck related that “the road was lined with dead horses for nearly a mile....”⁸⁵

Benjamin Brugh noted the great abundance of supplies, including vegetables and clothing, while expressing shock at the devastation of property around Manassas. These supplies came, not from the army, but from “pedlery wagons” which brought in vegetables, poultry, and butter every day. Of course the prices were very high for all this bounty, but Benjamin wrote that as long as the men could raise the money, they would buy.⁸⁶ Later in the war, James H. H. Figgat also described the high prices charged by sutlers for such goods as tobacco and expressed his gratitude to his family for providing him with a free supply.⁸⁷

Rufus H. Peck could usually be depended upon for a practical joke. On one stormy evening after First Manassas, when a group of men sat grumbling about the war around a campfire, Peck determined to have a little fun at the expense of Marcus Ammen and Albert B. Pitzer, the orderly sergeant. The sergeant had warned Ammen to tie his horse, “Roachback,” securely for the night. Peck untied the horse and led him to Pitzer’s tent on three occasions. Each time, the sleeping Ammen had to awake, go down to Pitzer’s tent, and bring the horse back, steadily increasing both his and Pitzer’s ire. Since

Marcus was not particularly fond of Pitzer, whom the men dubbed "Quickly" due to his constant urging for the troops to fall in rapidly, the experience angered him considerably and caused him to use some colorful language.⁸⁸

In December 1861, an unnamed trooper provided an update on the company and a detailed description of its rations, which consisted of bacon, beef, flour, meal, pepper, salt, vinegar, coffee, sugar, and occasionally sweet potatoes and molasses. Meals were served twice during the day, with lunch given about dark. On that particular evening, the fare consisted of beef, soup, and crackers. He also mentioned that each of their winter quarters' tents had a flue, allowing fires to be built inside. From this description, it seems that the Dragoons spent a comfortable winter in 1861.⁸⁹

Except for a few skirmishes, the rest of 1861 was largely quiet, although the company moved around, and the men stood picket. Peck's account reveals that the men, especially himself, spent their free time playing tricks and drinking. At Christmas that year, William S. Hines made eggnog and asked Peck to gather some cream for that purpose. While returning to camp, his horse stepped in a posthole and fell upon him. Fortunately, no injury resulted, except for bruises. During this time, Peck also hoarded whiskey from company rations, ostensibly for the sick or wounded boys who would need it later, but it seems certain that he and his friends partook of this supply as well. When his superiors noticed this infraction, he blamed it upon Colonel Thomas T. Munford's black servant, Billy, noting in his memoirs that the colonel would take care of the slave.⁹⁰ This likely resulted in a beating for Billy.

Another whiskey episode involved Peck betting another man \$100 that he could obtain a canteen of whiskey and another of buttermilk free from a local moonshiner.

Taking two identical Union canteens, he filled one with water and placed a thin layer of whiskey at the top, making it appear that the whole canteen contained alcohol. Then he went to the moonshiner, who filled the empty canteen with whiskey and told Peck that the charge was \$10. Peck responded that the alcohol was for his company and that they could not afford such a high price. When the man refused to budge on his price, Peck returned a canteen to him. However, Peck had switched canteens and kept the one filled with whiskey for himself. While the moonshiner poured the water-filled canteen back into his barrel, Peck asked for the donation of a canteen of buttermilk, which the man granted. Although he won the bet, Peck declined to collect his winnings and merely laughed about the episode with his comrades.⁹¹

Elements of the Dragoons fought at Dranesville on 20 December 1861, defending the fruits of a Confederate foraging expedition. Captain Andrew L. Pitzer commanded the detachment of fifty men which was attached to General J. E. B. Stuart. James H. H. Figgat's letter of 6 January 1862 reveals some of the battle's details. Pitzer ordered Figgat to scout around the town. Spying several enemy regiments, he reported back to Pitzer, who ordered him to inform General Stuart of what he had seen. After locating the general and delivering his message, Figgat stayed with Stuart and served as his messenger. As such, he observed much of the battle from a variety of perspectives. He described the enemy fire as being quite intense, every so often causing the crashing of limbs and even whole trees to the ground. During the withdrawal, Figgat observed the explosion of a cannon and killing of two horses.⁹² According to Stuart's report, the engagement ended well, thanks to Captain Pitzer's company, and all the wagons reached camp safely.⁹³

Despite his concern for portraying the battle to his family, Figgat used nearly as much space reminiscing about old times and how glad he was to get the sausage, new stirrups, and tobacco they had sent him, not to mention the gift box received from a Powhatan lady. Surely the latter came from someone he met while teaching in that county. Obviously packages and letters from home really brightened these men's lives.

Winter quarters ended on 8 March 1862, when the Dragoons were ordered to serve as rear guards for the withdrawal of the army southward to a new defensive line along the Rappahannock. As part of that task, they had to destroy usable supplies that could not be removed and transportation arteries, basically anything seen as likely to aid the enemy. Commissaries were burned at Manassas Junction and Haymarket. At Thoroughfare Gap the unit burned a mill containing 600,000 pounds of bacon, broke barrels of flour, and blew up a large stone bridge to prevent the Union army from using it to reach the Blue Ridge. In addition, packages addressed to other soldiers were broken open and the unusable contents destroyed when the company burned railroad depots at Manassas, Loudoun Station, and Front Royal. Peck and likely many others deeply disliked all this destruction, but they participated nonetheless.⁹⁴ Surely this action had an adverse effect on their morale.

Regimental and company elections were held near the end of April 1862. When Captain Andrew L. Pitzer failed to win re-election, the men chose James Breckinridge for that position. Pitzer later went on to be appointed a major after serving as an aide-de-camp to General Jubal A. Early. Cary Breckinridge received a promotion to major. Interestingly, he had risen faster through the ranks than his older brother, James. At this point, Thomas T. Munford became the colonel of the 2nd Virginia Cavalry, replacing

Richard W. C. Radford. All men who had not re-enlisted faced mandatory conscription for the remainder of the war.⁹⁵

In May 1862, the unit encountered the 5th Michigan Infantry at Gaines Crossroads in Rappahannock County. The Union soldiers, having taken cover behind a stone fence, surprised the unit. Peck recorded that six men were thrown from their horses and captured. In this skirmish Charles Christopher Cahoon, who rode just beside Peck, was wounded in the arm. In addition, the horses of both George P. Zimmerman and William T. Henderson fell upon them and caused the men injury. Peck's horse suffered a wound to the foot, and he had to acquire another. The Union troops forced the Confederates to retreat under the command of Major Cary Breckinridge.⁹⁶

A significant engagement also took place near Front Royal. Elements of the Maryland infantry, which had remained loyal to the Union, held the town. The First and Second Virginia Cavalry advanced across a wheat field upon the enemy's position. As they crossed the field, the Union infantry arose and fired upon the Confederates, killing or wounding many. The cavalry was ordered to charge with their sabres drawn, the first time they had used this tactic. This maneuver succeeded in forcing the enemy to withdraw to Winchester. There, Confederate forces managed to reach the protection of a stone wall, from which they laid down a murderous fire upon the enemy and forced its withdrawal into the town itself. In town, the cavalry charged, receiving heavy losses but also inflicting great damage upon the Union troops. The enemy constructed a barrier of burning wagons to cover their retreat, and the cavalry only managed to drive them back to Harper's Ferry.⁹⁷ Colonel Munford recounted that the cavalry captured a sufficient supply of carbines in this engagement to replace all their double-barreled shotguns.⁹⁸

The Dragoons took part in the victory at Second Manassas on 29-30 August 1862. Charles T. Price provides a personal account of their service. Price, Kenton B. Stoner, and others were on picket beyond Thoroughfare Gap along the Manassas railroad while the rest of the company went to Manassas itself. Just as their time on picket expired, the group heard that the enemy was coming towards them. Stoner planned an ambush of sorts for the Union troops, using about 200 infantrymen from a variety of units who were also there. Price's account clearly reveals that this effort focused more upon all the prisoners and booty they might capture than any strategic value their action might have. As it turned out, no Yankees came from that direction. With difficulty, the men managed to reach Manassas, having to ride through Northern skirmish lines. Once there they obtained all the goods they desired on a captured Union supply train. Taking turns plundering, Price and Stoner did well, with the former obtaining a good horse and pack saddle. Afterwards, their superiors ordered that all the cars, a two-mile-long line, be burned before the army moved.⁹⁹

As for the rest of the company, it participated in the actual battle, which, according to Colonel Munford's account, consisted of a charge, followed by a brutal sabre fight with the enemy. Ordered by the colonel to charge, the men drew sabres and galloped right through the first line of enemy cavalry into the second. Outnumbered by at least four-to-one and involved in hand-to-hand combat, the enemy drove them back, until two other cavalry regiments arrived and enabled the Confederates to force the Union's retreat. Major Cary Breckinridge, who received four sabre cuts, and First Lieutenant William W. Walton, who got three, were among the wounded. The Confederates captured 300 prisoners, many horses, arms, and other equipment.¹⁰⁰

On 2 September, the unit took part in an action against a renegade Confederate, Captain John H. Means, who had joined with a Federal unit and occupied Leesburg. Munford's men surprised Means and, after a significant fight, forced him out of the town past Waterford. Among those killed was Sergeant Charles C. Spears, described by his superiors as "full of dash."¹⁰¹ After this engagement, General Robert E. Lee ordered the advance into Maryland, and the Dragoons followed. They fought in engagements at Sugar Loaf Mountain and Crampton's Gap, but apparently not at Sharpsburg. Charles T. Price provides an account of that battle, but no other evidence exists to indicate the Dragoons' part in it. Perhaps Price participated during his service as a courier for General Stuart.

In holding off the Federal forces for three days at Sugar Loaf Mountain, Orderly Sergeant James Williamson Biggs suffered a grievous wound to his left arm and breast on 8 September. Charles T. Price noted that it would have killed him except for his razor, which deflected the bullet. At Crampton's Gap, Price observed the death of Samuel McClure on 14 September. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Richard H. Burks, the unit held off the Federal forces for several hours at the foot of the mountain. Price, McClure, and W. Hazlett Kyle stood together on the skirmish line, with McClure taking cover behind a hollow tree as he fired on the enemy. Price told him it afforded no protection, and, just as McClure responded that the enemy could not see him, a ball struck him in the left breast above his heart. Leaving his body behind, the company retreated toward Frederick, Maryland.¹⁰²

A select group from the Dragoons participated in the Chambersburg raid, and Major Cary Breckinridge accompanied General J. E. B. Stuart on his ride around General

George McClellan, which occurred at the same time. The raid into Pennsylvania of 9-12 October brought about 1,200 horses back for the army. Among those who went were Price, Thomas J. Carper, and Abe Moody. Although they skirmished with the enemy, no casualties resulted until they returned to Virginia. At that point, while dismounting, Henry J. "Jack" Humes shot himself in the foot, requiring amputation. Apparently he returned to service, since Humes subsequently deserted to the enemy less than a year later.¹⁰³

Peck experienced Confederate military justice in the form of a court martial for being absent without leave from September to October 1862. He accounted for his absence with certificates from his physician establishing his inability to ride horseback due to congestion of the liver. An order from General Lee required an examination by an army doctor in order to declare someone unable to serve. According to his account, Peck had such authorization, but he was charged with being absent without leave. Determined to exculpate himself, Peck submitted to a court martial, even though his commanding officer, Colonel Munford, had offered to stop the proceeding. The military held his court martial at Massaponax Church in Spotsylvania County. Since there were seventy-five others up for trial, Peck had to wait a month for his turn until December 1862. He called Captain James Breckinridge as a character witness and entered his physicians' certificates into evidence. The captain testified that Peck had served honorably.¹⁰⁴

On 13 December, the Dragoons fought the Federal forces at Fredericksburg. The regiment stayed mounted all day near Hamilton's Crossing, and although Union artillery on Stafford Heights was just a mile off, it did little damage. Price wrote that Colonel Munford told his men to sit up straight and not to dodge the shells, but Price avoided

them anyway. Apparently the cavalry's role was relatively minor in this battle, although they did serve as pickets beforehand. Price reported that nothing but a load of fresh fish was available for the men or horses to eat after the battle. These they rolled in leaves in order to cook them, and the men undoubtedly enjoyed their repast even without salt.¹⁰⁵

About a month later, after an expedition against General William Woods Averell in which Peck captured a man and gained the horse he rode for the rest of the war, the court martial acquitted Peck. Apparently discord existed within the company since Peck believed that some of his comrades were responsible for reporting him in the first place.¹⁰⁶ As a consequence of Peck's involvement in the court-martial and his previous sick leave, his account leaves out much that occurred in late 1862. The company entered winter quarters in mid-January near Hanover Court House, according to Cary Breckinridge. As in 1861, they had tents with fireplaces and even horse shelters. Cary noted that no chance for peace existed until the Union forces were destroyed.¹⁰⁷

The Dragoons' next engaged the enemy on 17 March 1863 at Kelly's Ford, the ideal point for Union forces to cross the Rappahannock to reach Culpeper Court House and Gordonsville. About 40 men, commanded by Captain James Breckinridge, participated in the battle. Each man had 40 rounds of ammunition. Rising at 4:00 a.m., they went to their positions, some of which were covered in snow and ice, preventing them from using many of the rifle pits. Although the Confederates stationed themselves behind breastworks and in a few rifle pits, the enemy under Averell held a superior position on the heights across the river. The Union forces directed artillery fire on the Confederates, but they did not seem to realize where the Southerners were when they decided to cross the river at the ford. The Confederates opened fire from behind their

breastworks, doing considerable damage and driving the enemy back. Averell's forces charged again but were forced to retreat a second time. On the third attempt, the original 40 men were reinforced by three other cavalry companies, and Captain James Breckinridge decided to order the men to hold their fire until the enemy reached the middle of the river. Unfortunately, the Union forces sent so many men into this last attack that the Confederates were overpowered and ordered to withdraw, despite having inflicted heavy losses. Some men, who did not hear the order, were captured. Others, placed far away from their horses, could not reach them in time to avoid capture. In Peck's case, he unknowingly cut across a patch of swampy ground, became mired, and was captured by four Yankee soldiers, who he describes as being "bestly drunk." Also among those captured was Fourth Corporal Matthew P. Linkenhoker.¹⁰⁸

Captain Breckinridge reported largely the same events, but with several significant differences. He wrote that he had only fifteen men in rifle pits holding off 5,000 Union cavalry for an hour and a half. They tried to take his position on four occasions, sometimes mounting the parapets with drawn sabres. Although reinforcements did arrive, he reported that they were of little help, since he could not convince them to cross the open ground, where they would be subject to enemy fire, to reach the Dragoons' position. The Captain ordered a retreat only when all ammunition had been exhausted, and he noted that he lost eight men taken prisoner.¹⁰⁹

The truth likely lies somewhere between these two accounts. Peck wrote his account about fifty years after the event. Clearly, Breckinridge's recollections were fresher, since he reported the battle within a few months of when it happened, making the events much more fresh in the latter's mind. On the other hand, the Captain had every

motive to make himself look good for his superiors, while Peck did not cast a particularly favorable light on any person in his version. Regardless, by holding up the enemy, the men who fought in that ditch at Kelly's Ford performed a valuable service for the Confederacy against great odds.

Other elements of the Dragoons surely took part in the cavalry charge at Kelly's Ford led by Major Cary Breckinridge. This must have been intended to stop the enemy forces from advancing any further after crossing the river. According to the Major's account, part of the Union cavalry had dismounted and situated itself behind a stone wall at one end of a field, while the rest of the Federals remained mounted along a strip of woods. The enemy possessed a battery and a line of sharpshooters, both well positioned. The 2nd regiment moved out across the field but encountered a ditch about two-thirds of the way across which broke the charge's force. Cary made it across without the rest of the regiment, but his horse was shot. When the enemy saw the state of things, it countercharged and captured the Major. Apparently he put up quite a fight, since witnesses recorded that they saw him surrounded and firing wildly left and right while upon his wounded horse, until he finally raised his hat to signify surrender and was led away by a Union soldier.¹¹⁰

Neither Cary Breckinridge nor Rufus Peck suffered greatly in prison. Peck, however, endured the indignity of physical abuse, in the form of two slaps with a gauntlet from Union General Alfred N. Duffie. Duffie was enraged by the small number of Confederates who had held up his forces and nearly caused his death. Peck claimed that Duffie, like many of his men, was drunk. Not only that, Peck believed that Duffie and many Union soldiers were French, possibly indicating that a significant number were

recent immigrants. Both Peck and Breckinridge were forced by their captors to wade the icy Rappahannock, a particularly unpleasant memory for Peck, who recalled the mushy ice water running down his collar.¹¹¹

Cary and Peck spent their confinement mostly at Old Capitol prison. Before arriving there, they stayed in a cell with several inches of water on the floor. Cary spent only twelve days at the prison, since John C. Breckinridge's sister, who lived in Alexandria, helped win him a quick exchange. During this short time he received "clothing, flowers, and every sort of delicacy."¹¹² Peck also enjoyed his time there, admitting it was more fun than he had had in the service. He saw congressmen and the President from the prison walls and also read a great deal and conversed with his fellow prisoners. Even without special connections, Peck received his exchange after sixteen days and journeyed down to City Point to be returned to the Confederate army.¹¹³

Although only part of the company took part in the Battle of Chancellorsville on 1-4 May 1863, received prominent mention in the account of Third Corporal Charles T. Price. John L. "Jack" Driscoll, Price, and John Quincey Adams Thrasher were present at the battle as special couriers for General Stuart. In the intense fighting, they took cover under some trees, but soon left that position since shells made limbs crash down all around them. Price also described thirty-foot-long sections of human entrails that lay spread along the length of a road.¹¹⁴

On 17 June 1863, a significant cavalry battle took place at Aldie in Loudoun County. In this engagement, Company C took a prominent part as fifteen of its men under Lieutenant William W. Walton skirmished with the enemy on horseback. Price wrote that the Union forces were so close that he could touch them with a fighting pole.

The Confederates inflicted severe losses on the Union troops, who assaulted their position on several occasions. Jacob D. Mullen, the son of a German immigrant miner, suffered a wound in this engagement. The horses of Alexander "Sandy" White and James H. Stevens were wounded.¹¹⁵

Colonel Munford reported that these men held their position "with a spirit worthy of the highest commendation." Captain James Breckinridge used the rest of the company as sharpshooters. The company ultimately retired as ordered, but the severely punished enemy failed to give chase.¹¹⁶

Lieutenant Edward Brugh revealed in a letter home that the Dragoons crossed the Potomac 27 June at a ford in Loudoun County. Brugh worried about the depth and width of the river at this point, since he could not swim. But his horse carried him through safely. Over the next few days, the Rebels captured many Union freight boats, full of grain, whiskey and other supplies. The whiskey caused some problems among the company, since many partook too heavily. On 28 June, marching near Washington, they captured several hundred prisoners, along with 200 wagons and over a thousand mules.¹¹⁷

By July 1863, the company had arrived in Pennsylvania with 64 men and occupied themselves in defeating the militia defending Carlisle. After joining Lee's army, many Dragoons were exhausted and fell asleep in a field. Peck himself slept through cannon fire and did not even awaken when his horse dragged him thirty yards in its search for grass. On 3 July, the company arose at daylight and went out without any breakfast, since no wagon trains had followed to supply them. As part of a detachment, Peck counted 100 Federal regimental flags and 70 pieces of artillery.¹¹⁸

General J. E. B. Stuart blamed Fitzhugh Lee for positioning his troops on low ground where the Union forces could easily see them, which led to an unexpected attack. On the extreme left of the line, the 2nd Virginia engaged Federal cavalry near Gettysburg just before noon behind a wooded ridge along the York road. Initially, the dismounted sharpshooters drove the Union forces back, killing and wounding many, but the Federals brought in mounted cavalry, which neither side had used in the battle so far, and forced the Confederates to retreat. More Rebel cavalry entered the battle and, according to Lieutenant Colonel James W. Watts of the 2nd Virginia, “were engaged in fierce hand-to-hand fighting, which for some time raged most furiously....”¹¹⁹

Captain James Breckinridge recorded that Company C lost one man wounded at Gettysburg, George Walker Gilmer, probably his cousin. Gilmer suffered a wound to his shoulder and left eye. Once notified of General Robert E. Lee’s intentions to withdraw, Stuart ordered General Fitzhugh Lee’s brigade, including the Dragoons, to protect the wagon trains near Cashtown. Munford’s regiment was the last to leave on 5 July and served as a rear guard for the retreating army. During the retreat, they skirmished with Union forces and lost their wagon train, along with ten men serving as guards, to the Federals.¹²⁰

Lieutenant Edward Brugh wrote on 15 July 1863 of how happy he was to return to Virginia. In the aforementioned capture of wagons, Brugh lost all his clothing, and much of the letter consists of his requests for replacements to be purchased from Benjamin Ammen. Apparently, the government did not supply the men adequately with good clothing at this point, but those with money could easily clothe themselves.¹²¹

Brugh added several men to the list of casualties at Gettysburg. Among those killed were Samuel R. Rieley, whose two brothers later deserted, and George Hammone "Flad" Hayth, the brother of Achilles M. Hayth and Lieutenant Edward P. Hayth. William A. Rinehart, George Gish, and Charles D. Spangler were wounded.¹²² Price noted that Dr. Isaac R. Godwin, whom he had earlier observed amputating arms and legs, was taken prisoner. On the retreat, they had to move fast, and the hungry men did not have time to finish cooking. George P. Zimmerman cursed the situation and wished they would all be captured so they could actually bake some bread. He soon got his wish when 200 Union troops attacked and captured the wagon train, allowing only Price to escape.¹²³ Peck reported only thirteen men of the original 64 in the Dragoons able to fight on 15 July.¹²⁴ Most of the casualties probably occurred on the retreat at Boonsboro and Funkstown, Maryland.

After a significant skirmish at Shepherdstown on 16 July 1863, the company lost two more men, Second Corporal Benjamin L. Peck, Rufus's cousin, and John L. Deisher. Both men died a month after the battle in the hospital at Winchester, Virginia. Five others were seriously wounded. Thus, upon returning to Virginia, the Dragoons had lost 58 men taken prisoner, killed, or wounded. Only six men of the 64 who went to Pennsylvania remained.¹²⁵

In September 1863, Beverly K. Whittle entered the army and provides much of the material on its activities, as well as his own concerns, after that date. His first letter home on the 12th of that month reveals conditions in Fredericksburg near where the company encamped. He wrote that "nearly every house is shot through & through by enemy shells...."¹²⁶ Since Northern troops were just across the Rappahannock from the

Confederate position, Whittle could regularly see them moving. The men's spirits had apparently recovered from the Gettysburg debacle, as he noticed less swearing among them than he had while in Buchanan, Botetourt County. Captain James Breckinridge renewed his acquaintance with the new recruit and invited Whittle to eat with him.¹²⁷

Whittle experienced his baptism under fire at a skirmish a few days before writing his letter on 24 September. He reported that the company lost many wounded and captured a significant number of prisoners. When first sent into battle, he experienced great excitement, but wrote that, once fighting began, he felt "as calm and collected as I ever did at home sitting down reading a book."¹²⁸ Such feelings were common for Civil War soldiers. Nervousness faded once the anticipated action began, and many, like Beverly Whittle, were surprised to find how easy it was to load and fire their weapons in the heat of battle.¹²⁹ Whittle closed by describing the ugly sound of passing shells, his exhaustion from constant marching both day and night, and his need for an overcoat, which he hoped to capture from a Yankee.¹³⁰ Numerous scholars have revealed that the Confederacy suffered from a lack of coats for much of the war. As with many other articles, soldiers had to supply themselves as best they could.

Whittle provides an account of the Dragoons' role at Raccoon Ford on 11 October 1863 in a letter to his father three days later. The battle did not begin very auspiciously, since he claimed General Fitzhugh Lee was drunk and foolishly ordered the unit into a charge in a formation that exposed them to the brunt of Federal fire. Whittle credited Captain James Breckinridge with saving the day by dismounting his men, probably to increase mobility and allow them to seek cover. The captain made extensive use of his sharpshooters and drove the enemy off, pursuing them for six miles until the Federals

were reinforced. The Dragoons waited for their own reinforcements and, when they arrived, succeeded in driving the enemy back to Brandy Station, where another fight occurred. Among the wounded was Major Cary Breckinridge who, though hit in the leg, did not allow it to stop him from fighting.¹³¹ Captain James Breckinridge also suffered a wound, a painful one to his face, and was sent home to recuperate. One other Dragoon was wounded, and one of the Stanleys was captured by the enemy.¹³² Whittle himself described how a minie ball hit him in the boot, taking a chunk out of it. He wrote that he would have preferred to have been hit in the leg instead, revealing how highly boots must have been prized.¹³³

At Brandy Station Whittle captured a Union soldier and took his sabre, Colt pistol, and carbine. When he and Captain James Breckinridge headed back to camp, they rode into enemy lines. Firing their pistols and slashing wildly with their sabres, they managed to escape safely, having emptied many enemy saddles. Whittle credited his horse, "Old Toka," with much of his success at this endeavor, since she reared, bit, and kicked her way through the enemy until finally galloping to safety.¹³⁴ Obviously, young Beverly was getting quite used to fighting. At their next engagement, he revealed how he coolly shot down a Yankee officer without remorse. After this period he described the company's activities around Manassas as "fighting, marching, and starving for a long time." Food was so scarce that Whittle "ate raw corn & roasted acorns & everything I could rake up to devour."¹³⁵

The Dragoons did not always lack sufficient supplies. In November the company received an issue of clothing. Apparently far more was issued than the individual men needed, so they sent the extra clothes home. Whittle had enough to send some home for

his family's use and even offered to procure more, since he had sufficient supplies already. Warning his family to save up for hard times in the future, he must have expected that such bounty might not always be so easy to find.¹³⁶

Not all Dragoons exhibited great bravery, since Whittle noted that many men tried to slip away when ordered to charge or fight on foot. These men were unsuccessful, largely since one of the majors kept a close eye on them. This man had no qualms about shooting or stabbing anyone who tried to desert.¹³⁷

Despite their problems, Whittle believed his comrades to be very religious men and his company the most religious in the command. He wrote that only four used profanity, and the rest carried their Bibles with them constantly. As for Whittle himself, his good performance earned him a position as temporary ordnance sergeant while the regular one was out sick.¹³⁸

Winter quarters were late in coming for the Dragoons in 1863-1864, owing to the increase in enemy activity. Whittle described the nights as "intensely cold" and complained of "laying out these cold nights like the cattle."¹³⁹ A few weeks after that letter was written, Munford disbanded the regiment until 1 January 1864, though it remained so until February.¹⁴⁰

Beverly Whittle lauded the regiment's morale and condition upon its return to service early in the new year.

Our men are reenlisting [sic] rapidly, & say that they will never give up until peace is declared & we are free from the danger of the Yankees. Our whole regiment is armed with guns & is as large as the brigade was before. We are now getting ¼ pound of meat & ¾ pound of flour per day, but I don't care for that or anything else, so that we can get our independence.¹⁴¹

Like Whittle, the cavalryman had to be devoted to his horse. His letters reveal his care for them, such as washing "Old Toka" in tobacco water to rid her of lice. He also frequently expressed a need for a new horse so that his could rest. His family did not always respond promptly to this desire. In a 4 March letter, Whittle complained of his current horse and chided his fairly wealthy family, with only one son in the army, for not supplying him with a better mount.¹⁴² Irving Whitehead noted that the men of the 2nd Virginia often had to supply themselves with horseshoes and nails by cutting the hooves off dead horses.¹⁴³ Apparently the whole regiment suffered from a shortage of good horses, since on 14 April Whittle wrote home to inform his family that all men whose horses were condemned by the Army will receive a furlough to get new ones. Since W. C. Whittle was bringing his son a new horse, Beverly asked that his father stay at home, both because Beverly would be home soon to collect the horse, and he feared that his father's great weight might break the horse down.¹⁴⁴

The next significant engagement took place in early May 1864 at Spotsylvania Court House where the cavalry held a fort at Todd's Tavern,. The Dragoons fortified their position with logs and managed to hold off several Yankee assaults without suffering many casualties. Revealing the softer side of the Confederate soldier, Peck expressed great sorrow for the boys in blue piled up in front of the Rebel fortification. Charles T. Price, John Newton "Newt" Shafer, and Peck stood side by side for three days of this battle. One day a bullet got through the fort and struck Shafer in the breast. Thinking him dead or wounded, Peck put his hand in Shafer's shirt to stop the bleeding. However, he found no blood. It turned out that Shafer was merely stunned and his Bible, carried against his chest, had stopped the bullet. While Peck helped him to the rear, yet

another bullet struck Shafer, this one in the arm. Soon afterwards, they were ordered to abandon their breastworks, which had caught fire. They left their dead behind and retreated to General Lunsford Lindsay Lomax's fortifications. From there the cavalry received an order to charge the enemy position. Leading his men, Lieutenant Edward Brugh was wounded through the lung by a Federal hiding behind a tree. Lieutenant Edward P. Hayth assumed Brugh's place. Soon after Brugh's wounding, the company fell back in the face of enemy attack.¹⁴⁵

The Dragoons next fought at Yellow Tavern, where General J. E. B. Stuart was mortally wounded. Enemy forces surprised the Dragoons on picket by "playing turtle." Wading through the river, with just their heads showing, Union forces came right up to the Confederate lines. Armed with Spencer rifles, the Union troops were able to keep their weapons underwater without adverse effects. By the time the Confederates realized that the troops were not turtles, the Federals had achieved their objective of forcing the Rebels to fall back to their regular line of battle. Once there, they turned and charged the Yankees, forcing them back into the water.¹⁴⁶ Another engagement, a minor one, occurred at Jack's Shop, where the enemy took George W. "Wash" Knode prisoner.¹⁴⁷

On 24 May 1864, a fight took place at Kennon's Landing on the James River, where black Federal troops had constructed a strong fort with a wide ditch across the front and abatis to prevent the approach of enemy forces. In addition, two gunboats sat out in the river to protect the fort. General Fitzhugh Lee selected, according to Charles T. Price, ten of the best men from each company in his brigade and equipped them with carbines, sabres, pistols, and 125 cartridges per man. After offering the Federal commander a chance to surrender and receiving the reply, "Present my compliments to

General Fitz Lee and tell him to go to hell,” Lee ordered a charge on the ramparts with cover fire provided by the sharpshooters.¹⁴⁸

The men of the 2nd Virginia made up the force which charged upon the fort. They ran into the water-filled moat where most were stopped, but a few under acting Captain Gilmer Breckinridge made it up to the parapet. There they were soon forced back, and Gilmer was killed.¹⁴⁹ In a letter dated 30 May, Whittle, who was not present at the battle, added to the list of wounded Alexander “Sandy” White; George W. Denton, shot through both legs; and W. Hazlett “Turkey Trot” Kyle struck in the hip. The horses of Captain James Breckinridge and Lieutenant Edward P. Hayth were both killed.¹⁵⁰ Price noted that he alone of the eight Dragoons who charged the fort escaped being killed wounded, or taken prisoner. Undoubtedly the enemy commander’s response to his surrender offer and the racial composition of the defenders influenced Lee’s risky decision, especially since Price wrote that the troopers had special orders to kill every man in the fort upon capturing it.¹⁵¹

On May 31, the Dragoons participated in a battle with Union General Ulysses S. Grant’s advance column at Cold Harbor. For the first time mentioned in any account, the company constructed its own earthworks for defense, working all night long in shifts, according to Rufus Peck. He recorded that the Yankees charged both night and day for two or three days against the well-entrenched Confederates and lost ten times the men the Rebels did, but they failed to take the fortifications. The cavalry did not occupy the hot seat in this battle, since it was stationed at either end of the line to deal with flanking attacks.

Peck wrote a disturbing account of his visit to the battlefield almost a year later.

It clearly shows the horrible losses suffered in the battle.

I passed over the ground, across which the Yankees had charged and I could hardly step without tramping on the bones still in the uniforms of the blue. They had buried some in very deep gullies, just piled them and cut brush and threw some dirt over them but the rains, had by this time, washed out the bones and the land was strewn with skulls for a half mile, or more. A lot of rushes grew down in the low lands below the end of the gulley [sic] and I saw a pile of something that looked like snow. I went down to see what it was and found it was skulls piled against the rushes. I found a dentist from Appomattox Co[unty] there getting teeth that were filled with gold. He had his haversack about half full.¹⁵²

The Dragoons spent much of the remainder of summer in pursuit of General Philip Sheridan's cavalry forces, occasionally engaging them. On 13 June Beverly Whittle wrote that "we have been marching and fighting continually" and boasted that "we have defeated Sheridan's cavalry in every fight." One of these battles occurred at Trevilian's Station on 11-12 June. According to Whittle, the 2nd Virginia made a flanking movement, followed by a cavalry charge, to defeat Union forces under General George Custer. They captured numerous Yankee horses and other equipment, and Whittle asserted they could have destroyed Custer's entire brigade if properly supported.¹⁵³ On 24 June another such battle occurred at Nance's Shop, near Charles City Court House, in which the Confederates drove the Union troops, consisting of marines and blacks, from their defensive works and forced the enemy to retreat to their gunboats.¹⁵⁴

After these successful battles, a series of engagements took place in the western part of the state. General Philip Sheridan went on his notorious rampage of destruction, during which he laid waste to much of the Shenandoah Valley. Battling the larger Union cavalry seems to have kept the unit busy and in constant motion for much of the summer,

not to mention the fall, since no letters or accounts seem to have been written during the summer. Only Peck's postwar memoir treats these months. Near Berryville, on 20 August 1864, Major Cary Breckinridge suffered a wound through his leg, and his horse was killed by the same ball. This and other casualties necessitated the reorganization of the regimental command structure, and Captain James Breckinridge was placed in command of the 2nd Virginia. Apparently one of his subordinates, possibly Lieutenant Edward P. Hayth, commanded the Dragoons.¹⁵⁵

Much of the remainder of 1864 was spent in the Valley region of Northern Virginia. Peck's account concentrates upon the Dragoons' subsistence efforts. Although facing severely cold and snowy weather, Peck reported that the men had tents and built large fires, the combination of which made them quite comfortable. Despite Sheridan's marauding and the lack of government supplies, they were able to find hogs, sheep, and honey with which to fill the void in their stomachs. Much of their time seems to have been spent in gathering foodstuffs. They even made use of the leftover fat, making it into tallow, which Peck wrote he would eat when there was nothing else. Among the men thus engaged were Beverly K. Whittle, George W. Nininger, Charles C. Cahoon, James A. Brownlee, Abe Moody, Thomas J. Carper, William B. Bowyer, Peter Noffsinger Burger, and Maurice Guggenheimer.¹⁵⁶

On 19 September a battle took place at Winchester. Whittle blamed the western cavalry regiments, probably composed of the state line cavalry, for the Confederate loss here. He wrote in his diary that this group broke and ran in the face of the enemy. Only the services of the 2nd Virginia in holding up the rear allowed the retreat to go smoothly. Whittle reported that both horses and men suffered greatly from fatigue.¹⁵⁷ Two days

later the regiment again faced an initial setback, this time in its effort to hold certain key fords along the river. Having withdrawn to a stronger position, the Confederates attacked and repulsed the Union forces. The next morning they awoke to find the Yankees had withdrawn.¹⁵⁸ During his march through the Valley on 6 October, Whittle noted that “the beautiful valley of Va. is one vast cloud of smoke & the very air is impregnated with the smell of burning property. I found a plank left by the Yankees on which was written ‘Remember Chambersburg.’”¹⁵⁹

Whittle reported on 28 September from near Waynesboro that the Dragoons participated in surprising two divisions of Yankee cavalry which were attempting to blow up the Rockfish Gap railroad tunnel through the mountains. They charged and drove the Federals ten miles. Whittle recounted that he killed two Yankees, captured one, and gained a new overcoat in the battle.¹⁶⁰ Later the brigade forced the Union army to abandon its positions in the vicinity of Staunton.¹⁶¹

The battle of Tom’s Brook took place on 8 October. Although Confederate forces initially drove the enemy back, the Union cavalry retreated only until it could join with the infantry and force a Southern retreat. Both sides suffered severe losses and gained little. Yelverton N. “Dick” Oliver, a new recruit, was killed, and two other men wounded. The next day an overwhelming combined Yankee force attacked, first flanking and then nearly surrounding the Confederates. The Rebels lost a considerable amount of war material, but managed to make a stand at Columbia Furnace. Only the Union cavalry attacked, and the Confederates were able to drive them back. Several men suffered wounds, including Beverly Whittle, who was shot through the left arm and breast. Although not a serious wound, he remained home until 28 November.¹⁶²

Upon returning to the army, Whittle provided an update on the Dragoons just before Christmas. He wrote that they had marched 67 miles in the last two days on only twelve ears of corn and eight pounds of hay. Since his return, he noted that he had been in the saddle constantly and that the men suffered greatly from cold and hunger. Despite all that, Whittle did capture two woolen blankets which allowed him to sleep warmly at night.¹⁶³

The new year did not open with great promise. In a 9 January 1865 letter to his father, Whittle wrote that feed was so scarce for the horses that their condition continually deteriorated, especially since they had to move constantly. The men also suffered from a variety of illnesses attributed to overexposure to the elements.¹⁶⁴ Evidently he was not exaggerating this problem since the next day he recorded in his diary that he was so sick that the doctor sent him to the Staunton Hospital, which he described as "the meanest place I ever saw," to keep him out of the weather.¹⁶⁵ Apparently his comrade John W. McCreery told W. C. Whittle about this illness and caused some worry for Beverly's father.¹⁶⁶ Having worn out several horses, Whittle purchased another from a man in his company. Clothing supplies were evidently not a problem at this time, since he also reported being recently supplied with shirts, shoes, a blanket, pants, and socks.¹⁶⁷

On 30 January, Whittle and a detachment from his regiment left on an expedition to capture deserters near Brown's Gap. At Free Union they split into two groups, one remaining there while the other went after a specific band of deserters. By the next day, they returned with fifteen deserters, several of whom the detail shot or hanged.¹⁶⁸ Promoted sergeant for the occasion, Whittle was ordered to execute three of them. He

reported that, despite such assignments, the men were in good spirits and preferred to fight the war out since peace attempts had failed.¹⁶⁹

Whitehead also noted this willingness to fight. He wrote that, even towards the war's end, the cavalymen preferred fighting to losing their liberty and property, which they believed would result from a Union victory. In addition, they were angered by the destruction wrought upon the countryside by Federal forces. Many men resented the freeing of slaves and confiscation of other property that accompanied the enemy army's presence, and they remarked that the South would lose its right to self-government if the Union won.¹⁷⁰

After a trip to Richmond, Beverly returned home in mid-February.¹⁷¹ His last letter, dated 4 March, was written from camp at Mechanicsville. In it he noted that the unit would soon be moving, probably down to the lines at Petersburg.¹⁷² About mid-March, most of those officers and men who had been on furlough returned to the regiment, and some new recruits accompanied them. Many men had no horses since, as Charles T. Price reported, an order had been issued not to allow anyone a furlough to procure replacement horses. These dismounted men were detailed to serve at the fortifications near Fort Harrison, part of the Richmond-Petersburg defensive line. On 30 March, the rest moved to Five Forks, where General George Pickett's forces were stationed. At this time, Cary Breckinridge received a promotion to colonel, while Colonel Munford attained the rank of brigadier general.¹⁷³

The battle of Five Forks took place on 1 April. Ordered to advance, the 2nd Virginia did so, dismounted, through a wooded area. Running into a column of Federal infantry, the men formed a skirmish line and fired upon them. The Union forces returned

their fire “at The rate of about one thousand shots to one and soon swept us out of the way.”¹⁷⁴ Captain James Breckinridge tried to hold the enemy off at a small stream near the edge of the woods. Firing his pistol at the Union forces only twenty paces away, he suffered a fatal wound from enemy fire.¹⁷⁵ Peck recalled that he had been sent to the rear for more ammunition, since the ordnance sergeant was not present, and had provided the rifle which Breckinridge carried. After the Captain’s death, Lieutenant Edward P. Hayth assumed command of Company C.¹⁷⁶

Cary Breckinridge recorded that a witness observed the Union celebration following the victory at this battle. He described it as “the greatest jubilation I’ve ever heard the men seemingly, many thousands of them hugged and cheered and the bands played the most stirring ans [anthems].”¹⁷⁷ Their rear harassed by a small force of Federal cavalry, the Confederates withdrew in the direction of Amelia Court House, where they expected to find supplies awaiting their arrival. A small skirmish took place at Namozine Creek, where the 2nd regiment distinguished itself by stopping the wild flight of the army from the Yankee attackers. Upon reaching Amelia, they found no rations and were ordered on to Amelia Springs, where yet another cavalry skirmish was in progress. The 2nd assisted the forces already there and held the road leading to Jetersville. Colonel Cary Breckinridge reported that, while there, he observed a small party, headed by his cousin, John C. Breckinridge, the Confederate Secretary of War, making its way across country towards the temporary capital at Danville.¹⁷⁸

Another engagement took place at High Bridge near Farmville. There, the 2nd fought dismounted but failed to prevent the capture of Confederate forces sent to destroy the bridge. Given the job of guarding the rear, the men waited in nervous anticipation for

some Federal action, but none came. Upon reaching Appomattox Court House, they realized that Union forces were trying to surround them and decided to head towards Lynchburg. During this movement, a small number of Federal cavalry attacked their rear, and one of Company C, James T. Godwin, was wounded in the foot. This represented one of the last engagements of the Army of Northern Virginia.¹⁷⁹ During these final movements, Peck recorded that none of his company drew rations but had to live off what they could beg from civilians, since there was little to steal from the stripped countryside.¹⁸⁰

Much of the 2nd moved on to Lynchburg after learning of General Robert E. Lee's surrender and disbanded at the same place they had been mustered into service almost four long years earlier. Quite a few of the dismounted men of the 2nd, probably including some Dragoons, were organized into a battalion and protected trains until most were captured or dispersed at Saylor's Creek.¹⁸¹ During the retreat, Peck wrote that the horses were so worn out that they could not pull the wagons, some loaded with military records, out of a large mud hole, so the men threw all the books and other records into the hole. When this failed to fill it, they shot some of the emaciated horses and threw the carcasses in, finally making it across.¹⁸² Perhaps this is the reason why almost none of the unit's official records survive for the period after February 1865.

Peck and James T. Godwin traveled back to Botetourt from Lynchburg together. After dropping Godwin off at his home, Peck returned to his own house. With him he had the same horse he had captured at Kelly's Ford and the gun he took from the provost guard, in order to get corn for the unit's horses, during the retreat. Peck told his mother that he did not feel that he had wasted four years fighting for his state, although he

expressed sorrow for the friends, relatives, and acquaintances who were killed or wounded in the 54 battles in which he took part.¹⁸³

The war's end left many in dramatically altered circumstances from those in which they began the conflict. Many families suffered the loss of sons in battle and had their ability to work limited by wounds. Although death struck only a little more than a tenth of the company, nearly one-third of the Dragoons were wounded, some of them multiple times like Colonel Cary Breckinridge. Over one-fifth spent time in Northern prisons, but less than one-tenth deserted their comrades. (See Table 3.) Perhaps that number is so low, not so much due to loyalty to the cause, but because these men, had they deserted, would have left their friends and relatives to continue the fight alone.¹⁸⁴ The experience of combat often altered veterans' pre-war moral and religious convictions, and, coupled with the alteration of life on the home front, prevented many former soldiers from truly returning to their previous lives.¹⁸⁵

Although the wealthy Dragoons remained financially fairly well off, the loss of their slave possessions greatly affected their wealth. By 1870, over one-third of Dragoons held no personal property, and just over half owned between \$1 and \$3,001. (See Table 4.) In terms of real estate, a third were landless, and nearly half held between \$1 and \$7,001 in real estate. (See Table 5.) These represent marked changes from the pre-war period. Although many remained wealthy, they never came close to

accumulating the significant estates of 1860. Postwar occupations included farmer, insurance agent, tinsmith, banker, lawyer, merchant, and contractor.

Some of the former Dragoons sought a new life in a more economically vibrant place than Botetourt County. Many left Botetourt, including William A. Rinehart and William A. McCue, who moved to Covington and Wytheville respectively. Others joined the rush into the new town of Buena Vista, like George P. Zimmerman and J. M. Henkle. Quite a few sought opportunity outside Virginia. For example, John Reid McClure moved to Iowa with his family after 1870, and his cousin, Thomas McClure, settled first in Kansas and later in Texas. Others who left the state in the postwar years included John W. McCreery, James A. Brownlee, William A. Peck, and James W. Denton.

Only one of the men is known to have had mental problems after the war. Benjamin Brugh suffered a grievous wound from which he never fully recovered. According to family notes attached to a transcribed letter of his, he was shot in the jaw bone and carried home, lice-ridden and delirious, on the back of his horse.¹⁸⁶ His wartime service record fails to reveal either that he was wounded or where it occurred, but it seems likely that he must have been wounded sometime after 1862, during his Home Guard service, since no record for him exists for that period.

Although Brugh managed to recover, his wound and war service apparently left a mark upon him, since he was never the same afterwards. By 1870, he owned \$4,000 in real estate and \$800 in personal property. In the 1880s, Benjamin suffered some financial reversals and lost his farm. His son, Olan, purchased land and provided for his mother, Estherline. In the last years of his life, Benjamin apparently became unmanageable for

his family and was confined to a mental hospital at Marion, Virginia, where he died in 1896 at age seventy-one.¹⁸⁷

Benjamin's brother Edward also returned to farming but met with greater success. Despite a significant wound to the lung at Todd's Tavern, which gave him trouble throughout his life, the younger Brugh married in 1866, fairly late in life, and raised a large family. According to his daughter, Edward was not expected to live after receiving such a serious wound, but thanks to his wife, Nannie, and a doctor's care, he recovered. His treatment included the pulling of a white silk handkerchief all the way through his wound and out his back in order to clean it.¹⁸⁸ Edward named one of his sons Munford after his old commander Thomas T. Munford. Like his brother, he sent all his children to school. In 1880, Brugh had apparently accumulated sufficient wealth to hire a female servant. He died at age 66 in 1895 from complications resulting from his wound.

Marcus Ammen continued to pursue his two avocations, teaching and painting, after the war. Even during the conflict he drew likenesses of his comrades, including Cary and James Breckinridge.¹⁸⁹ In 1868 he taught art at Wood College, Tennessee.¹⁹⁰ That year he married Alice Langdon at Lenoir, North Carolina. Two years later, listing his occupation as artist and teacher, Ammen still resided in Lenoir, Caldwell County, North Carolina with his wife and infant daughter. Since there were many teenagers living near the young couple, they probably resided on the campus of the school at which they taught. Alice shared Marcus's teaching vocation, as she was an instructor of music.

Soon after 1870, Marcus began teaching in the business school at Washington and Lee University and continued there until 1872.¹⁹¹ From then until 1884, Ammen worked as an art professor at a variety of Southern colleges. Apparently tiring of academic life,

he moved to Philadelphia and worked as an artist until 1895.¹⁹² His wife, Alice, had died by this time.

In May 1896, Ammen entered the Robert E. Lee Camp Old Soldiers' Home at Richmond, the first of his comrades to do so. Citing poor eyesight and an unsteady hand, he wrote that he could no longer support himself as an artist. His fellow Dragoons Cary Breckinridge and James T. Godwin certified his military service. After remaining there for four years, Ammen requested a discharge while on furlough, noting that his son in Philadelphia could now take care of him. This arrangement lasted until 1903, when he requested readmission into the home since his son could no longer care for him.¹⁹³

At this point, trouble developed between Ammen and the camp commandant, Charles W. Biggers. The commandant reported to the admissions board that Marcus, initially a good inmate, had started drinking heavily towards the end of his residence. Biggers testified that Ammen left his residence, the Union Cottage, in such filthy condition that it took two inmates three days to clean it. Ammen, learning of these charges, angrily wrote to the board and vehemently denied Biggers' accusations, describing himself as both a Mason and an honorable man. He closed the letter by requesting that his application for readmission be withdrawn.¹⁹⁴ Apparently, Ammen managed to sustain himself in some other way since he was still alive as late as 1905.¹⁹⁵

As they had with the "military laws" governing the army, many veterans experienced difficulty with the rather confining regulations at the institution, which was run with military-style discipline. Ammen's case exemplifies that issue. Veterans were denied the right to come and go as they pleased. Permission had to be obtained in order to work outside the camp.¹⁹⁶ Although supposed to provide a "comfortable, peaceful,

delightful, and orderly abiding place” for old veterans to relive their war experiences, the camp developed into a tourist attraction, complete with Stonewall Jackson’s stuffed horse, “Little Sorrel,” and the inmates were expected to play a certain role there as epitomes of the imaginary ideal Confederate soldier.¹⁹⁷ When they did not live up to these high standards, the camp administration became very displeased, as in the Biggers-Ammen dispute.

J. M. Henkle, another veteran who ended up at the home, married Margaret D. Shafer in 1866. Having left Botetourt, where his parents and sisters remained, he and his new bride initially lived in Lexington with her mother, Rebecca, in 1870. Their first two children had been born by this point. Working as a farmer and a merchant, he and his growing family moved to Staunton by 1880, where he kept a boarding house. In 1890, opportunity arose for the Henkles in the form of the rapidly expanding new iron boom town of Buena Vista. J. M. seized it firmly, joining the rush to the new land of opportunity in Virginia.¹⁹⁸

In 1892, Henkle became the second mayor of the recently incorporated city, serving in that position for at least eight years. Later he also served as a justice of the peace. Up for re-election in March 1894, Henkle bested his two challengers by only two votes per man, perhaps a testament to his controversial leadership style.¹⁹⁹ Henkle was a strict law and order mayor. The *Buena Vista Advocate* described Mayor Henkle’s administration in particularly clear terms, “Queen Victoria rules Brittania, President Cleveland rules the United States, and Mayor Henkle rules Buena Vista.”²⁰⁰ He enforced the letter of the law, both in the lives of the residents and his own. For example, when the law prescribed a fine for anyone whose horse ran at large on a Sunday, Mayor

Henkle's horse somehow escaped its owner. Upon its capture, Henkle fined himself \$1 and warned himself that the next time the fine would be \$5.²⁰¹ On another occasion in 1894, a moonshiner enlisted a farmer to sell his illegal apple whiskey alongside the farmer's apple cider. As business became more brisk, the moonshiner grew bolder in displaying his wares. A lawyer happened by, noticed the whiskey being sold on the public thoroughfare, and informed Mayor Henkle. The mayor arrived and immediately dumped all the illegal liquor in the street, sent the man to jail, and confiscated the profits he had made, leaving him only enough with which to purchase an egg sandwich.²⁰²

When Henkle first arrived in the city, he ran a livery stable from which he hired out horses. Later, he operated a fertilizer plant, the offensive smell of which drew residents' ire. Henkle introduced metal fencing and delivered ice to Buena Vista, and also owned a firewood business.²⁰³ In 1900 he worked as a lumber dealer and rented his home. By 1910 J. M. identified himself as a contractor, owned his home, and employed a black teamster who lived with the family. Apparently, Henkle also dabbled in real estate, since a 1902 letter discusses real estate deals he was arranging with John E. Fletcher while living in Lopton, located near Staunton.²⁰⁴ By 1920, having sold his large home in Buena Vista, he and his wife had moved to an apartment located above the dry goods store he operated in downtown Buena Vista.

Old age soon prevented Henkle from working, as he noted on his pension application in 1924. By that time he owned only \$1,000 in real estate, probably his store, and had no income. His physician cited numerous medical complaints and certified him as unable to work. Apparently his condition at this point was especially serious since the

clerk of court had to sign Henkle's name for him. His decline continued during the next few years.²⁰⁵

In March 1929, at age 84, Henkle applied for admission to the Old Soldiers Home, citing old age and infirmities as preventing him from practicing his usual occupation. His request was granted, and he entered the Home in May. His wife Margaret remained in Buena Vista with their family. Less than a year later, on 7 April 1930, Henkle passed away at the Home, probably after spending much of his time in the infirmary.²⁰⁶ Amazingly, his wife, Margaret, died in Buena Vista at roughly the same hour as her husband, just before the news, conveyed by telephone, could be relayed to her. The couple outlived two of their six children. After a double funeral service, they were both interred at Green Hill Cemetery in Buena Vista.²⁰⁷

Beverly K. Whittle was among the first to die after the war ended. In 1872, he attended the University of Virginia, apparently studying law.²⁰⁸ Soon afterward he began suffering from serious health problems. Unfortunately, the nature of these ailments is not revealed, but since Beverly was only in his twenties when they began, it seems plausible that they were war-related. Certified to practice law in Virginia by 1873, Whittle later entered into a partnership in a law firm with his younger brother Stafford in Pittsylvania County. In 1877, practicing mainly in Danville and Martinsville, Whittle expressed his concerns about Stafford overspending the firm's money and allowing too many discounts on legal work for family and friends. Revealing some of his other business concerns, he complained that the county practice was dying out and that lawyers of his time would soon have to work for either the whiskey or tobacco companies.²⁰⁹

These concerns were soon pushed aside since February 1877 brought a sharp decline in Whittle's health. At that time, he asked Stafford to come to Danville and take over his end of the practice so Beverly could go to Florida and attempt to recover his health. Lamenting his ill health, which prevented him from building up a profitable law practice, he described himself as "practically a skeleton" and wrote that without rest he would soon meet his end.²¹⁰ Apparently rest was not sufficient to cure Whittle, who died in October 1877 at age 32. In his obituary his family described how "the remarkable energy of his gifted mind seemed to triumph over the feebleness of his health, and made it hard for us to realize how soon our Father would call him home."²¹¹

Several veterans pursued their political aspirations through serving in public offices. Perhaps they felt called upon to reassert Democratic control over their states in the post-Reconstruction years. Colonel Cary Breckinridge, a Botetourt farmer and later superintendent of schools and Fincastle mayor, was the first to seek office, serving in the House of Delegates from 1869 to 1871. William A. Rinehart, a Covington banker, farmer and railroad contractor, was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates for Allegheny County from 1895 to 1896 and served in the state Senate sporadically between 1912 and 1919. Captain James H. H. Figgat, a Botetourt attorney, served in the House from 1885 to 1888. Kenton B. Stoner, a Fincastle merchant and later county treasurer, followed his comrades into the House between 1897 to 1900.²¹² John W. McCreery, an attorney in Raleigh County, West Virginia, served at least two terms as a state senator.²¹³ Surely these men exercised their political influence on behalf of their fellow ex-Confederates.

These veterans were quite proud of their wartime service, often identified themselves as former Confederate soldiers, and participated in a variety of activities as such. Like his fellow Dragoons in Botetourt, who formed the Peachy Gilmer Breckinridge Camp of Confederate Veterans, Henkle, along with his comrade George P. Zimmerman, joined and took an active role in the Blue Ridge Camp based in Buena Vista. Many of these camps formed part of a larger national organization, the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), established in 1889.

On New Year's Eve in 1909, the Blue Ridge Camp held a reception at J. M. Henkle's home. While feasting on a variety of foods, the old veterans reminisced about their war experiences, surely one of the most important events of their lives.²¹⁴ The Blue Ridge group also participated in 4th of July celebrations and the centennial of Robert E. Lee's birth. Most likely, all Confederate veteran camps held such gatherings.

Late in the nineteenth century, veterans grew alarmed at their thinning ranks and began joining veterans' camps in larger numbers. They wanted to ensure that the memory of their sacrifices lived on after their own deaths. During this time, veterans and other community organizations held fund raising drives to collect enough money to construct the ubiquitous Civil War monuments to the common soldier which today stand in nearly every Virginia courthouse square. They also brought their influence to bear upon state legislatures to provide pensions for the veterans.²¹⁵ The camps promoted reconciliation with the former enemy through such activities as the journey by 50,000 veterans from both sides to Gettysburg for the battle's fiftieth anniversary in 1913.²¹⁶

Many men also applied for the Cross of Honor decoration. The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), an organization of wives and female descendants of

Confederate soldiers, awarded these to any man who could prove that he served honorably during the war. At least seventeen former Dragoons applied for this decoration.²¹⁷ Period photographs reveal that they wore their crosses proudly. This decoration helped to satisfy the men's desire for recognition of their service, and it also helped veterans to identify one another at public gatherings.

Pensions, which Virginia first granted in 1888, offered many elderly veterans a steady, though small, source of income. Unlike Union veterans, the former Confederates received no help from the federal government. Subsequent acts in 1900, 1902, and 1924 broadened the pool of veterans eligible for state assistance. Veterans had to prove that they had no significant source of income, a disability which prevented work, and that they honorably served the Confederate States of America. Pensions allowed a modicum of independence for the old soldiers, since they could avoid imposing as much upon their children and other relatives.²¹⁸

Although from very diverse backgrounds, the Dragoons came together to form a cohesive unit. Clearly the men did not all come from wealthy families like the Breckinridges, but there were many extremely well off men in the company. The majority, however, came from the middle class. Many with relatively poor backgrounds also enlisted. Through studying their letters and other accounts, it appears that class had little to do with how they related to one another. Although some, like slaveowners, had a stronger motivation to fight than others, all likely enlisted primarily for the purpose of

defending their homes. The writings of men from slaveholding backgrounds such as Rufus H. Peck, William C. Whittle, Peachy Gilmer Breckinridge, and Beverly K. Whittle, coupled with the pre-war petition, reveal no pro-secession feeling nor interest in slavery, at least insofar as its preservation being a primary motivation for fighting, before the war. Many of these men seem to have only supported secession after Virginia voted to follow her fellow Southern states out of the Union in Fort Sumter's aftermath. In fact, the petition signatories and Gilmer Breckinridge were all staunch Unionists in 1860. Once these men decided to fight for their state, very few Dragoons deserted their comrades, even when defeat seemed certain at the end.

On the whole, the Botetourt Dragoons participated in some hard fighting and made a significant contribution to the Confederate cause. The cavalry, as a very mobile force, helped to keep the rest of the army apprised of enemy movements. Similarly, it could quickly respond to enemy attacks and guard the army's flanks. Since it was often positioned on the army's flanks, the unit suffered lower casualties in single engagements, but it lost many men, including killed, wounded, and captured, in guarding the army's rear and reconnoitering ahead of the main body. This company's experience proves that the cavalry was not the easy branch of service that many thought.

By the war's end, the unit was too closely knit for many to countenance the idea of deserting their comrades. Since the majority of these men undoubtedly considered their war experiences some of the most important in their lives, they retained close links with one another. They enjoyed meeting to reminisce about old times and formed a social club of sorts through the UCV, an organization which stretched across the country bonding the old veterans together based upon their common experiences. Even their

wives and daughters emphasized the Confederate experience through their own groups, like the UDC, which tried to honor both living and dead veterans. Men like James H. H. Figgat and Cary Breckinridge turned their wartime rank to political advantage, but even their noncommissioned comrades participated in political affairs as state senators, delegates, mayors, and a variety of other posts. Just as the Dragoons had joined up in 1861 to fight for Virginia, many of them continued to serve their states and communities in a multitude of ways.

Notes

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- ² Botetourt County Court Order Book 1857-1867, p. 232, Botetourt County Clerk's Office, Fincastle, VA.
- ³ Rufus H. Peck, *Reminiscences of a Confederate Soldier of Co. C, 2nd Va. Cavalry* (Fincastle, VA: p.p., 1913), 2.
- ⁴ Unless otherwise cited, this and all subsequent social, economic, and demographic information comes from the Federal Manuscript Census, Schedule I, 1850-1920.
- ⁵ Equipment Bonds, Botetourt County Clerk's Office, Fincastle, VA.
- ⁶ Mary Robertson, ed., *Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill: The Journal of a Virginia Girl 1862-1864* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1979), 168.
- ⁷ Malcolm W. Bryan, III, *The Breckinridges of Virginia and Their Kentucky Kin* (n.p., p.p., 1994), 48.
- ⁸ Robert J. Driver and Harold E. Howard, *2nd Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, 1995), 199.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Botetourt Petition, 4 September 1860, William B. Preston Papers; Virginia Historical Society.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Robertson, ed., 35-36.
- ¹³ Diary Collection, William Conway Whittle Family Papers, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.
- ¹⁴ Office of Naval Records, *Register of Officers of the Confederate States Navy 1861-65* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931).
- ¹⁵ Driver and Howard, 285.
- ¹⁶ B.K. Whittle to John H. Breckinridge, 21 April 1861, Preston-Breckinridge Papers 1860-1910, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.
- ¹⁷ Diary Collection, William Conway Whittle Family Papers.
- ¹⁸ Bryan, 46.
- ¹⁹ Jeffrey C. Weaver. *The Virginia Home Guards* (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, 1996) 35.
- ²⁰ Driver and Howard, 199. (A highway crew uncovered James's remains in 1954).
- ²¹ Virginia Military Institute, *Register of Officers and Cadets* (Richmond: McFarlane & Ferguson, Printers, 1857).
- ²² Virginia Military Institute, *Register of Former Cadets: Memorial Edition* (Lexington, VA.: Virginia Military Institute, 1957).

- ²³ Driver and Howard, 199.
- ²⁴ Bryan, 69.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 71.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 75-76.
- ²⁸ Driver and Howard, 199.
- ²⁹ Compiled Confederate Service Records, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.
- ³⁰ Weaver, 37.
- ³¹ Glen Henkle and Tommy Henrich, *Descendants of George Rudolphus Henckel*. (the authors, 1999).
- ³² Driver and Howard, 228.
- ³³ Irving P^y Whitehead, "The Second Virginia Cavalry in the War 1861-1865," Irving P. Whitehead Papers, University of Virginia.
- ³⁴ J. Tracy Power, *Lee's Miserables: Life in the Army of Northern Virginia from the Wilderness to Appomattox* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 78-79.
- ³⁵ Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943), 340.
- ³⁶ Weaver, 37.
- ³⁷ Driver and Howard, 246.
- ³⁸ Weaver, 39.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 36.
- ⁴⁰ Driver and Howard, 246.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 258.
- ⁴² Valley Union Seminary at Botetourt Springs, Roanoke County, Va., *Fifth Annual Catalog 1850-51* (Richmond, VA.: H.K. Ellyson's Power Press, 1851).
- ⁴³ Driver and Howard, 192.
- ⁴⁴ J. William Austin, III and Rebecca H.R. Austin, *Related Families of Botetourt County, Va.* (Roanoke, Va.: Commonwealth Press, 1977).
- ⁴⁵ Driver and Howard, 192.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 198.

- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 201.
- ⁴⁸ Weaver, 35.
- ⁴⁹ Driver and Howard, 201.
- ⁵⁰ Weaver, 37.
- ⁵¹ Driver and Howard, 222.
- ⁵² Mary E. Godwin. United Daughters of the Confederacy Applications, Botetourt County Clerk's Office.
- ⁵³ Driver and Howard, 242.
- ⁵⁴ Weaver, 38.
- ⁵⁵ George W. Atkinson and Alvaro F. Gibbons, *Prominent Men of West Virginia* (Wheeling, W. Va.: W.L. Collin, 1890), 384-385.
- ⁵⁶ Driver and Howard, 246.
- ⁵⁷ Weaver, 39.
- ⁵⁸ Driver and Howard, 261.
- ⁵⁹ Driver and Howard, 262.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 263.
- ⁶² Weaver, 40.
- ⁶³ Driver and Howard, 263.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 265.
- ⁶⁵ Richard R. Weber, *Stoner Brethren: A History of John Stoner and His Descendants* (n.p., p.p., 1993).
- ⁶⁶ Driver and Howard, 273.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 292.
- ⁶⁸ Weaver, 42.
- ⁶⁹ Benjamin F. Brugh to his brother and sister, 19 September 1861, transcript in the hands of George E. Honts, III, Fincastle, VA.
- ⁷⁰ Benjamin F. Brugh-Edward Brugh to their brother and sister, 5 August 1861, original in the hands of Botetourt County Clerk's Office, Fincastle, VA. (hereinafter cited as Brugh Joint Letter).
- ⁷¹ For further detail see Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Viking, 1988). and Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943).

⁷² Mitchell, 58.

⁷³ Peck, 8.

⁷⁴ Peck, 3.

⁷⁵ Driver and Howard, 10.

⁷⁶ Peck, 4.

⁷⁷ Driver and Howard, 10-11.

⁷⁸ Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 236.

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⁸⁵ Peck, 5.

⁸⁶ Brugh Joint Letter.

⁸⁷ J.H.H. Figgat to his father, 6 January 1862, transcript in the hands of Mrs. Harry W. Kessler, Jr., Fincastle, VA.

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⁸⁹ Driver and Howard, 31.

⁹⁰ Peck, 11.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² J.H.H. Figgat Letter, 6 January 1862.

⁹³ Driver and Howard, 31-32.

⁹⁴ Peck, 12.

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⁹⁶ Peck, 14.

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- ⁹⁸ Driver and Howard, 44.
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- ¹⁰¹ Driver and Howard, 58.
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- ¹¹⁰ Ibid., 75.
- ¹¹¹ Peck, 23.
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- ¹²² Ibid., 38.

- ¹²³ Price.
- ¹²⁴ Driver and Howard, 94.
- ¹²⁵ Peck, 38.
- ¹²⁶ B. K. Whittle to his father, 12 September 1863; 19 June 1869 diary entry, Diary Collection, William Conway Whittle Family Papers (hereinafter cited as B.K. Whittle to recipient, date of letter, and Whittle Diary).
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- ¹²⁸ B. K. Whittle to his family, 24 September 1863, Whittle Diary.
- ¹²⁹ Wiley, 29.
- ¹³⁰ B. K. Whittle to his family, 24 September 1863, Whittle Diary.
- ¹³¹ B. K. Whittle to his father, 14 October 1863, Whittle Diary.
- ¹³² B. K. Whittle to his family, 8 December 1863, Whittle Diary.
- ¹³³ B. K. Whittle to his father, 14 October 1863, Whittle Diary.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid.
- ¹³⁵ B. K. Whittle to his family, 26 October 1863, Whittle Diary.
- ¹³⁶ B. K. Whittle to his family, 4 November 1863, Beverly Kennon Whittle Papers, 1863-1879 (hereinafter cited as B. K. Whittle to recipient and the date).
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- ¹³⁸ B. K. Whittle to his family, 12 Nov. 1863, Whittle Diary.
- ¹³⁹ B. K. Whittle to his family, 8 December 1863, Whittle Diary.
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- ¹⁴¹ B. K. Whittle to his father, 15 February 1864.
- ¹⁴² B. K. Whittle to his family, 3 March 1864.
- ¹⁴³ Whitehead.
- ¹⁴⁴ B. K. Whittle to his sister and family, 14 April 1864.
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- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 47-48.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 48.

- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁹ Driver and Howard, 120-121.
- ¹⁵⁰ B. K. Whittle to his sister, 30 May 1864.
- ¹⁵¹ Driver and Howard, 121.
- ¹⁵² Peck, 51.
- ¹⁵³ B. K. Whittle to his father, 13 June 1864.
- ¹⁵⁴ B. K. Whittle to his sisters, 27 June 1864.
- ¹⁵⁵ Driver and Howard, 133.
- ¹⁵⁶ Peck, 62-63.
- ¹⁵⁷ Notebook entry, 19 September 1864; B. K. Whittle Notebook, 12 September 1864-18 February 1865, Beverly Kennon Whittle Papers, 1863-1879 (hereinafter cited as Notebook and date).
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- ¹⁷¹ Notebook, 15-18 February 1865.
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- ¹⁷⁴ Cary Breckinridge Manuscript "The Second Virginia Cavalry Regt. from Five Forks to Appomattox";

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- ¹⁷⁵ Ibid.
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- ¹⁷⁷ Cary Breckinridge Manuscript.
- ¹⁷⁸ Ibid.
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- ¹⁸⁰ Peck, 71.
- ¹⁸¹ Cary Breckinridge Manuscript.
- ¹⁸² Peck, 69.
- ¹⁸³ Ibid., 72-73.
- ¹⁸⁴ Mitchell, 172.
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- ¹⁸⁶ Benjamin F. Brugh to his brother and sister, 19 September 1861.
- ¹⁸⁷ George E. Honts, III to Glen Henkle, December 1999, original in the hands of the author.
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- ¹⁸⁹ Robertson, ed., 104.
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- ²⁰¹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰² *Ibid.*, 321.
- ²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 323-24.
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- ²⁰⁸ University of Virginia, *Students of the University of Virginia: A Semi-centennial Catalogue with Brief Biographical Sketches* (Baltimore: C. Harvey & Co., 1878).
- ²⁰⁹ B. K. Whittle to Stafford G. Whittle, 4-12 January 1877, Beverly Kennon Whittle Papers, University of Virginia.
- ²¹⁰ B. K. Whittle to Stafford G. Whittle, 22 February 1877.
- ²¹¹ B. K. Whittle obituary, Beverly Kennon Whittle Papers.
- ²¹² Robert Douthat Stoner, *A Seedbed of the Republic: A Study of the Pioneers in the Upper (Southern) Valley of Virginia* (Radford, VA.: Commonwealth Press, 1962).
- ²¹³ Atkinson and Gibbons, 384-385.
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- ²¹⁵ Larry M. Logue, *To Appomattox and Beyond: The Civil War Soldier in War and Peace* (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1996), 121-123.
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- ²¹⁸ Confederate Pension Records from all Acts, Library of Virginia.

Table 1.

Value of Personal Estate Held by Independent Dragoons or Their Families in 1860

Value in \$	Number	Percentage
0	6	5.9
1-500	18	17.8
501-1,001	15	14.9
1,002-5,053	21	20.8
5,054-10,000	16	15.8
10,001-20,000	14	13.9
20,001-40,000	9	8.9
40,001+	2	2.0
Total	101	

Note: Unless it could be established that the household in which a Dragoon resided was headed by a member of his family, I counted him as a boarder and only make reference here to the personal property listed as belonging specifically to him and not to the family with whom he lived. In the case of persons with two residences, I counted only the one in Botetourt County.

Source: 1860 Federal Manuscript Census for Botetourt County.

Table 2.

Value of Real Estate Owned by Independent Dragoons or Their Families in 1860

Value in \$	Number	Percentage
0	29	28.7
1-1,001	8	7.9
1,002-2,000	6	5.9
2,000-3,501	9	8.9
3,502-5,501	11	10.9
5,502-9,916	12	11.9
9,917-13,001	15	14.9
13,002-26,501	6	5.9
26,501-40,001	3	3.0
40,002+	2	2.0
Total	101	

Note: Unless it could be established that the household in which a Dragoon resided was headed by a member of his family, I counted him as a boarder and only make reference here to the real property listed as belonging specifically to him and not to the family with whom he lived. In the case of persons with two residences, I counted only the one in Botetourt County.

Source: 1860 Federal Manuscript Census for Botetourt County.

Table 3.
Casualties, Prisoners of War, and Desertions for the Entire War

Designations	Number	Percentage of Total
Killed	11	5.9
Died of Wounds	7	3.8
Died During the War	8	4.3
Wounded in Action	58	31.2
Captured	46	24.7
Deserted	13	7.0
Percentage Affected		76.9
Total Number in Co.	186	

Note: The Wounded in Action row includes all those who were, but some of them were wounded multiple times. Many Dragoons are therefore listed in multiple rows. The Died During the War row includes persons who died from disease, both in prison camps and elsewhere while in the Confederate army. Deserters are only those officially designated as such and do not include those who merely took the oath.

Source: Robert J. Driver, Jr. and H.E. Howard, *2nd Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1995).

Table 4.

Value of Personal Estate Held by Independent Dragoons or Their Families in 1870

Value in \$	Number	Percentage
0	26	36.0
1-401	18	25.0
402-1,001	15	20.8
1,002-3,001	8	11.1
3,002-7,001	4	5.6
7,002+	1	1.4
Total	72	

Note: Unless it could be established that the household in which a Dragoon resided was headed by a member of his family, I counted him as a boarder and only make reference here to the personal property listed as belonging specifically to him and not to the family with whom he lived.

Source: 1870 Federal Manuscript Census.

Table 5.

Value of Real Estate Owned by Independent Dragoons or Their Families in 1870

Value in \$	Number	Percentage
0	33	45.8
1-401	2	2.8
402-1,001	9	12.5
1,002-2,001	8	11.1
2,002-4,501	7	9.7
4,502-7,001	7	9.7
7,002-12,001	2	2.8
12,002-24,000	0	0.0
24,001-40,001	4	5.6
Total	72	

Note: Unless it could be established that the household in which a Dragoon resided was headed by a member of his family, I counted him as a boarder and only make reference here to the real property listed as belonging specifically to him and not to the family with whom he lived.

Source: 1870 Federal Manuscript Census.

Appendix A.

List of Men in the Botetourt Dragoons

James Alexander
Benjamin Kessler Ammen
Marcus Ammen
James Buchanan Bell
J. V. Bell
James Williamson Biggs
John Allen Biggs
Marshall Edward Bishop
Norval Wilson Bishop
W. W. Bishop
Richard K. Bondurant
George Stever Bowyer
William Brown Bowyer
Cary Breckinridge
James Breckinridge
Peachy Gilmer Breckinridge
J. T. Breneman
James A. Brownlee
Benjamin Franklin Brugh
Edward Brugh
Peter Noffsinger Burger
John Thomas Burks
Richard Horsely Burks
Charles Christopher Cahoon
George W. Campbell
George Benjamin Camper
Hershey Eldridge Carper
Thomas J. Carper
Ephraim L. Carroll
W. C. Childs
William F. H. Cook
D. H. Cooper
William D. Craddock
William J. Craddock
John L. Deisher
George W. Denton
James W. Denton
Miles P. Dollman
James W. Driscoll
John L. Driscoll

James Henry Harrison Figgat
John T. Fisher
Charles Frazier
John Calvin Garrett
William H. Garrett
John Gibson
Jabez O. Gilbert
George Walker Gilmer
Thomas Walker Gilmer
George Gish
Charles W. Givens
Woodson Callaway Givens
William Anderson Glasgow
Isaac Robinson Godwin
James T. Godwin
Oliver P. Gray
Samuel C. Griffin
Wingfield "Rough" Griffin
Maurice Guggenheimer
William Hall
Thomas Germaine Hardwick
William Moore Harvey
Achilles Mooreman Hayth
Edward Pendleton Hayth
George Hammone Hayth
John A. Hazlewood
William T. Henderson
John Moler Henkle
James C. Hines
Michael S. Hines
William S. Hines
B. S. Holtzman
Jacob H. Hoover
Isaac Taylor Houseman
James Franklin Huffman
Henry J. Humes
Edward C. Kale
George W. Knode
Edward C. Kyle
Rufus P. Kyle
W. Hazlett Kyle
David D. Lam
Moses Lam
Charles L. Lantz
William Henry Layman

J. D. Lightner
John Anderson Linkenhoker
Matthew P. Linkenhoker
John H. Lipscomb
Jacob Loop
Emanuel Lovely
Edwin B. Luster
William M. Mallow
William P. Marks
John T. Mays
Josephus Mays
Adam McChesney
William McChesney
Ballard S. McClougherty
John Reid McClure
Samuel McClure
Thomas McClure
William A. McClure
D. McCoy
James M. McCoy
John Wallace McCreery
William Andrew McCue
Samuel H. Meredith
John W. Mobly
Abraham Moody
Abram L. Moody
George W. Morrison
Jacob D. Mullen
George Washington Nininger
Martin Van Buren Obenchain
Yelverton N. "Dick" Oliver
Rufus H. Paxton
Henry Oscar Payne
Benjamin L. Peck
George H. Peck
Rufus Harrison Peck
William Addison Peck
Edward Johnson Peters
James W. Peters
William J. Peters
Lucian B. Pettigrew
Albert Baker Pitzer
Andrew Lewis Pitzer
Dorman L. Pitzer
Frederick T. Pitzer

George Madison Pitzer
John Allen Pitzer
John Bernard Pitzer
Michjah Pendleton Pitzer
Theodore F. Pitzer
Charles Thomas Price
George Simpson Price
William J. Price
William Rowland Rader
_____, Richardson
Lewis H. Riely
Robert Wilbur Riely
Samuel R. Riely
William Alonzo Rinehart
Isaac Allen Robinson
John W. Robinson
Joseph F. Robinson
John James Rock(e)
John M. Saunders
John H. Sears
George W. Shafer
John Newton Shafer
Joseph M. Shafer
Peter Shafer
James L. Shanks
A. Shumaker
William C. Slusser
Edward N. Snodgrass
Charles Augustus Snyder
Charles D. Spangler
Charles C. Spears
David R. Stanley
John M. W. Stanley
James H. Stevens
Tilghman A. Stevens
Kenton Ballard Stoner
Cephas Payne Switzer
John Quincey Adams Thrasher
Jacob Tross
John Vest
W. M. Walton
William W. Walton
W. S. Warren
Ferdinand Weddigan
Alexander "Sandy" White

Samuel White
John Whitesides
Beverly Kennon Whittle
William W. Williams
Philip F. Woods
Richard Oscar Woolfolk
John K. Young
John P. Young
Lewis Christopher Young
George Paul Zimmerman
William A. Zimmerman

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Court Order Book 1857-1867, p. 232

Equipment Bonds for Company C

Pension Files

United Daughters of the Confederacy Files

An interesting collection which contributes a great deal towards understanding the Botetourt men, both their wartime and postwar experiences. The Brugh letter provides details on 1st Manassas. Price's postwar account adds more detail on key engagements of the war.

George E Honts, III, Fincastle, VA.

Transcribed copy of Benjamin F. Brugh Letter, 19 September 1861

Includes an update on the unit, including Benjamin's complaints about camp life.

Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

Compiled Confederate Service Records

Confederate Pension Records from all Acts

R.E. Lee Camp Applications

United States Census Schedule I 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920.

An invaluable collection, without which this detailed undertaking would be impossible. It fills in the gaps left by the letters and postwar accounts and also allows the inclusion of men who left no other documents.

Mrs. Harry W. Kessler, Jr., Fincastle, VA.

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Discusses Figgat's service in both Co. C and, later, as an officer in the 12th Va. Cavalry. Several battles are described in detail.

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The Breckinridge papers contain letters between Gilmer and his wife, letters between Cary and Lucy, and ones from B.K. Whittle to John, who was in the army by then. Whitehead's account, while not focused on Co. C, adds more detail and dates to the accounts of Price and Peck. The B.K. Whittle items reveal information about him personally and the problems of military life. William C. Whittle's meticulously kept diaries allow the creation of a pretty accurate picture of his prewar life and, by extension, that of his family.

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The Henkle letter includes a discussion of land dealings and other details of Henkle's occupation. Munford's manuscript provides some of his thoughts, as their commanding officer, on the Breckinridge brothers' conduct. The Preston papers include a petition signed and presented to him by Botetourt residents, consisting of a plea for help from their congressman in calming the radical forces at work in 1860. Price's manuscript describes the Fincastle Rifles and their participation in executing some of John Brown's co-conspirators. The James Tucker papers consist of a letter from Breckinridge in which he outlines the 2nd Va. Cavalry's activities from late 1863 to Five Forks and a separate postwar account he wrote about the period from Five Forks to Appomattox.

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