

CHAPTER II

COBB'S GEORGIA LEGION

Tom, or Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb, or Thomas R. R., as he signed his name, was born on 10 April, 1823 and thus was 38 years of age when he decided that he should do as other prominent Georgia politicians, such as his older brother, Howell and Robert Toombs were doing, and form a regiment to lead in the Confederate service against the invading Yankees.

Tom had been occupied full-time helping form the Confederate Government and had been selected to write the Constitution for the new nation forming in Montgomery, Alabama. He was also a delegate to Congress in Richmond, Virginia up to the adjournment of the second session in May, 1861. He was reelected and was serving when the Legion reached Richmond in August and while they served on the peninsula in 1861-62.

Before the war, Tom was a prominent Georgia lawyer and state legislator. His home was in Athens and he was close to all the important decision-makers in the state such as Robert Toombs, his brother Howell Cobb and Francis Bartow. He was also related, either by blood or marriage, to other prominent Georgians such as his in-laws, the Lumpkin family of Athens.

He was known for his fiery temper and of being unyielding once he had made a decision. He had become wealthy as a leading lawyer and planter in Georgia and was a large slaveholder. He had no military training and had not served on any military committees of the newly formed Confederate Government. He was among the fiery first to urge the southern states to leave the union. What he did have was the means and influence to get Governor Brown's permission to form his own regiment. The prewar career of Tom Cobb is a story unto itself and we suggest reading, "*THOMAS R. R. COBB, THE MAKING OF A SOUTHERN NATIONALIST*" (see bibliography).

Instead of recruiting a regiment of infantry or cavalry, he decided to form a "Legion". Legions go back to the time of the Roman Republic and represent a light infantry force supported by its own cavalry and artillery. This type organization would operate independently on its own, supplying its own support. A number of other legions were formed early in the war, usually by well-known, influential politicians or planters such as Wade Hampton's Legion of South Carolina, Phillip's Legion of Georgia and Jeff Davis' Legion of Mississippi. These men were by nature authoritarian and their desire was to be able to control the entire three branches of their legions. This was impossible in a so-called "modern war" as there was no way one man could manage such diverse units. There would be small cavalry units and independent artillery batteries going off in all directions with no common plan. Because of this, General Lee decided very early in the war to break up the three branches of the legions and assign them individually to brigades.

As previously noted, in the Confederate Army a company was ideally composed of approximately 100 men. A regiment was ideally composed of 10 companies or about 1,000 men. A brigade was composed of three to five regiments, usually four, or from 3,000 to 5,000 men. Three to five brigades (most times, four) made up a division and three or four divisions formed a corps. Two or three corps (often more in the Union Army) formed an army. As an example, later in the war, the Bowdon Volunteers would become:

- 1- Company B of
- 2- Cobb's Legion of
- 3- Wofford's 1st Brigade of
- 4- McLaws' 1st Division of
- 5- Longstreet's First Corps of
- 6- Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

In the Confederate army a company was commanded by a captain; a regiment, by a colonel; a brigade, by a brigadier general; a division, by a major general; a corps, by a lieutenant general and an army, by a full

general such as our four star generals of today. In the Union Army, lieutenant general was the highest rank obtainable; thus, at Appomattox, Grant was a lieutenant general, the only one in the Union Army, while General Lee outranked him as a full general.

In June and July, 1861, Cobb began to recruit companies for his infantry and cavalry commands and started campaigning to have the Troup Artillery, a crack artillery unit from Athens and which was already in Virginia, included in his legion. His brother-in-law, Luther Glenn, and friend, Jeff Lamar, would be left to do most of the organizing as Tom would be back in Richmond politicking. He arrived there at the time of First Manassas and was selected to give the eulogy in Congress for Georgia's fallen hero, Francis Bartow, who was killed at First Manassas or Bull Run.(1) While in Richmond, he served in Congress but had time to establish a flying hospital for his legion consisting of two large tents and medical supplies. Dr. Samuel White of Milledgeville, Georgia was the selected surgeon.(2)

Since our interest is in the infantry, we will give only a brief history of the Troup Artillery and the cavalry arm of Cobb's Legion as follows:

THE TROUP ARTILLERY, called the "National Artillery" in pre-war days and which was re-named in 1861 in honor of former Georgia Governor Troup of Athens, and not for Troup County, was a volunteer company for several years before the war. At the beginning of the war it was a well-drilled team composed of 69 of Athens' finest young men. Two of James Barrow's Athens cousins were prominent members of the Troup Artillery. Twenty-two year old lawyer Milleton, "Big Bud", Pope Barrow, later a US senator from Georgia, served as a Lieutenant over one of the guns and 18 year old sophomore student at the University of Georgia, Sgt. Thomas Augustine, "Little Bud", Barrow who was a gunner of one of the crews. Their brother, 20 year old James who had resigned from West Point when the war broke out, helped drill the Troup Artillery in Savannah for a short while but soon left for Virginia to join Howell Cobb. James was disappointed in young brother Tom because of his bad habit of chewing tobacco. Pope and Tom served with the artillery until after Crampton's Gap when Pope left for Georgia with Howell Cobb to serve on the general's staff along with brother James. Tom transferred to the staff of Gen. Tom Cobb where he served until Tom's death after which he became adjutant of a cavalry battalion. These Barrow boys were from the very wealthy family of planter David Crenshaw Barrow, first cousin of Reverend James, who was a prominent plantation owner with 140 "blacks" on their home plantation in Oglethorpe County alone and an even greater number on his other holdings in South Georgia and Florida (they were never referred to as slaves by the Barrows). This was quite a contrast to Private James Barrow of Company B who was the son of a circuit-riding Baptist preacher.

After Fort Sumter, the unit was ordered to Pensacola, Florida but Governor Brown, not wanting them to leave Georgia, overruled the order from Richmond and sent them to Savannah. The Red Stripes reported in new green uniforms with the customary artillery red trim with their two pieces of artillery which was increased to three then to six after they were mustered into Confederate service.(3) They remained there until July 4 when they were ordered to Richmond and then to western Virginia, now West Virginia, to report to General Loring. They saw their first action in western Virginia, while serving under the one-armed Loring and Gen. Robert E. Lee, before being ordered to Yorktown to join Cobb's Legion. It was during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862 that General Lee dissolved the legions into their individual branches. The Troup Artillery fought through the war as part of the First Corps Artillery and fired hundreds of artillery shells at their Yankee opponents. Four sections of the Troup Artillery was heavily engaged on the Peninsula at Dam No. 1 on the defensive line of the Warwick River where now Captain James Barrow was seriously wounded in the thigh. They also took part in several actions during the Seven Day's Campaign around Richmond especially at Malvern Hill. At Crampton's Gap during the Maryland Campaign of 1862 they lost a gun which members of the Troup Artillery said they had to abandon due to a broken axle while the Yankees boasted that the gun was captured. The Troup Artillery had two smoothbore howitzers, a 12-pounder and a 6 pounder, in action at the South Mountain gap with Tom Barrow and Cobb's Legion and the remainder of Cobb's Brigade. Their two rifled guns had been man-handled up the steep and rocky face of nearby Elk Ridge and then along it's narrow crest to the very southern tip known as Maryland Heights from where they were shelling Harpers Ferry, Virginia below.