

would give up Atlanta without a serious fight and replaced "Little Joe" in July before Atlanta with the aggressive John Bell Hood with terrible consequences as Hood promptly lost three battles around Atlanta with losses far exceeding those experienced by Johnston during the entire summer. He eventually lost the city itself then suffered even greater defeats and casualties on his invasion of Tennessee later that year.

Late in the war in 1865, after General Lee became General-In-Chief of the Confederate forces, Lee appointed Johnston to command the forces opposing General Sherman in his march and burning through the Carolinas. He commanded at the Battle of Bentonville, N.C. but wisely surrendered to Sherman near Greensboro on April 26, 1865, almost three weeks after Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House.

Johnston became ill and died in Washington on March 21, 1891 after marching and standing in the cold without a hat at his antagonist Sherman's funeral in St. Louis and is buried in Baltimore, Maryland. While Lee has numerous statues and memorials in his honor, the only statue honoring Johnston is in Dalton, Georgia.

There have been many, many books written of the life and career of the revered Robert E. Lee of Virginia, including those by the renowned biographer Douglas Southall Freeman. In short, Lee was from a prominent, old Virginia family with his father being "Light Horse Harry" Lee of Revolutionary War fame. The once wealthy family came upon hard times when Robert was young due to Harry's bad investments in speculative land deals and the family estate was lost. Young Robert was appointed to West Point and there established an unequaled record, graduating in the class of 1829. He was assigned to the engineering branch of the army and was engaged in the building and strengthening of many of the nation's forts and other defenses, including Fort Pulaski near Savannah. He served as General Winfield Scott's engineer during the Mexican War and, on several occasions, went far beyond the line of duty in risking his personal safety. Scott became a staunch supporter of Lee and in fact with Lincoln's approval, offered him the command of the Union Army in April, 1861. Lee, with a heavy heart, respectfully refused the offer, choosing to be loyal to his native Virginia. General Scott, a Virginia native who remained loyal to the Union, was in command of all United States forces at the beginning of the war but soon had to resign due to his age and bad health.

Lee had married the only daughter of George Washington Custis, a grandson of Martha Washington by her first marriage. Custis was a very wealthy planter, owning over 300 slaves and the beautiful estate of Arlington on the Virginia bank of the Potomac across from Washington and which today is a National Cemetery, plus other valuable plantations in Virginia including White House on the Pamunkey River where his grand son "Rooney" would live. This house was destroyed during the war but was rebuilt after the war ended. Lee's wife and children inherited all of the Custis estate on the death of Custis. Some sources state that Lee had determined to free all 300 slaves once he was in charge of Arlington and other of the Custis plantations. "Marse Robert" took two of the Custis slaves along with him early in the war, Meridith as a cook and Perry as a groom and washerman. Lee, however, preferred white orderlies and later in the war Meridith and Perry were replaced by white soldiers (we know that Perry was with the general during the winter of 1863-64 when Lee was camped near Orange Court House). Even after the war's end, Lee encouraged his sons to employ whites, especially the returning soldiers, on their farms instead of the freedmen.

At the beginning of the war, Lee, who had been serving out West as Lt. Colonel of the 2nd Cavalry, was commissioned Brigadier General to rank from May 14, 1861 (Johnston's rank was from July 4, so Lee outranked him by about 50 days). Lee, like Johnston, was 54 years old at the start of the war, quite an advanced age for a man who would have to endure four years of arduous field duty in a hard fought war. In fact, Lee suffered from a variety of health problems during the war including a possible heart attack. He served in western Virginia without much success and without establishing much of a good military reputation as he was noted for being very cautious. He then served for awhile studying and strengthening the coastal defenses of the South, including spending some time in Savannah. As his next assignment he was appointed to be the military advisor to President Davis and at this time he was made a full general.

Lee, unlike Johnston, was always a favorite of the Confederate President and he likewise respected the President. At least Lee respected Davis as Commander-In-Chief and as his commander.

Davis appointed Lee to the command of The Army of Northern Virginia when Johnston was wounded at Seven Pines on May 31, 1862. He served for the remainder of the war as commander of this army until its surrender to General Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. He was the respected leader of Company B of Cobb's Legion!

After the war was over, Lee did everything possible to keep a low profile and not to cause any controversy. He became President of Washington College, later Washington and Lee, at Lexington, Virginia. He died in his home there on October 12, 1870, less than six years after the end of the war. He is buried in the Lee Chapel at Washington and Lee. His favorite war-horse and companion, Traveller, is buried outside the chapel.

Both sides claimed a victory at Seven Pines; however, it was pretty much a standoff as, on the second day, the Federals re-took most of the ground taken by Hill on the first. The Confederate attack was badly bungled as there was no concentrated attack and troops were fed in piecemeal. Southern losses were extremely heavy with about 6,000 casualties while Federal (killed, wounded and missing in action) casualties were approximately 5,000. Richmond was filled with the wounded and the population felt sure that the city would fall to the enemy. Even the government was packing up to leave for safer territory.

The Legion was marched toward Seven Pines and, on June 2, was at Mrs. Christian's farm about halfway between the Mechanicsville Road and New Bridge near the Chickahominy and several miles from the battlefield. The fighting was over by then and they missed getting into the battle. This is very confusing, as we know that Pvt. John Eason of Company B was killed at Seven Pines on May 30 or 31st. Why a member of the company was there while the rest of Cobb's troops were some distance from the battlefield is a mystery. Howell Cobb believed that President Davis and Generals Lee and Johnston wanted to get rid of "Prince John" Magruder and purposely held his troops out of the action to make him look as bad as possible.(32) They spent the next 11 days entrenching in this area. Headquarters was moved to the Thorne house and, on June 11, General Lee wrote Howell Cobb to extend his line to York River Road (railroad?), thus, the next day, June 12, he moved two miles further east to Burnt Tavern on the Nine Mile Road and a short distance below the Chickahominy.

On June 16, Jim wrote his mother that "Yankees were up in a balloon ever day." On the 18th he wrote, "getting huckleberry and Irish potatoes pretty often walked -- miles to the river and had a good bath."(33)

The Legion maintained this position at Thorne's and, on the 22nd, McLaws' troops, which of course included the Legion and Company B, The Bowdon Volunteers, occupied a line from Nine Mile Road to the railroad. The next day on June 22, Cobb's Brigade of McLaws' Division was near Fair Oak Station on the left (north) of the railroad. They were positioned to block an expected attack by McClellan south of the river or to go to the aid of their comrades if an attack occurred north of that stream.

McClellan's plan was to attack Richmond from the east and he actually advanced on the 25th of June but, typical of the cautious "Little Mac", called a halt after a limited assault. This was the beginning of the Seven Days' Battles.

In the meantime, General Lee had decided to bring "Stonewall" Jackson and his battle hardened veterans, by rapid marches which Jackson and his troops were famous for, from the Valley to attack the Federals north of the river in conjunction with other troops from around Richmond. This battle began at Mechanicsville on June 26 and was one of the most furiously fought of the war. Jackson, uncharacteristically, did not arrive on time but the Federals were eventually defeated and caused to withdraw to the south side of the river on the third day of the Seven Days' Campaign.

Hood's Texas Brigade, which included the 18th Georgia Infantry Regiment (much admired and nicknamed by the Texans the 3rd Texas) led by the daring Georgian, Colonel William T. Wofford of Cassville, as Hood had been promoted to divisional command, had a major part in defeating the Yankees in this hard-won victory. Company B will hear much more of Colonel Wofford.

On the 27th, McClellan, after being whipped north of the Chickahominy, decided to give up on his attempt to take Richmond and to change his base to a safe location on the James River at Harrison's Landing. Here, he could be supplied by the navy as well as be protected by their gunboats. Now the chase was on and Lee was desperate to overtake the retreating Yankees and deal them a final blow.

At this time, Tom Cobb was with his Cobb's Legion Cavalry and General Stuart and the bulk of the Rebel Cavalry north of Chickahominy, trying to prevent the Federal escape.

In May, the Legion had been reorganized and Captain/Doctor Gazaway B. Knight of the Panola Guards, Company E, was appointed lieutenant colonel of the Legion and Jeff Lamar remained as its major; therefore, Lt. Col. Knight was in command of the infantry during the Seven Days' Battle as Cobb was off with his cavalry somewhere out of sight of the action.

Magruder's men, including the Legion and Company B, had been given a tremendous responsibility of holding the much superior in number National forces in check on the south side while the battles were raging on the opposite side of the river. They were now expected to join the chase to bag the hare.

As it so often happened to the Southern armies, it "could have been" but it did not happen. Again, miscommunications and failure to understand their commander's orders and just plain out not doing the job expected of some of the generals resulted in the Yankees making a successful retreat. It seems that almost everyone, especially Jackson and Magruder, were slow.

On June 27th, the Legion was at Fair Oaks Station on the left of the railroad station in a camp called Camp Comfort. June 28 was a day of leisure and rest.

"Prince John" remained awake, along with his staff, the night of the 28th preparing for the next day's action while the Legion slept in the trenches. At 3:30 AM on the morning of the 29th, he began his march on the axis of the York River Railroad down the Nine Mile and Williamsburg Roads to near Savage Station. He knew that his would be the first Confederate troops to strike the retreating Yankees and that he was dependent on Jackson's crossing the river at Grapevine Bridge and supporting his left and for General Huger to support his right. He proceeded cautiously and stopped on reaching the battlefield of Seven Pines. Jackson was not where he was supposed to be and Magruder became convinced that he would be the one being attacked instead of his being the attacker. He let precious hours slip away but finally, at Lee's urging, he ordered an assault but committed only a small part of his available forces. The advance fizzled out as thunderstorms and darkness ended this action at Savage Station. The Legion reported no casualties; therefore, they evidently were not engaged as Magruder reported 354 casualties in his division. Jackson did not get across the Chickahominy until the morning of the 30th; thus, the opportunity was lost.

General Lee was very critical of Magruder and urged him to "press the rear of the enemy rapidly and steadily."(34) Remember this order.

Again on the 30th, Magruder hesitated and missed the battle of Frazier's Farm or White Oak Swamp because a guide sent to lead him took the wrong road because of similar names of the roads. It was reported that "Prince John" was "sick" again as he was during most of this campaign. In addition to his heavy drinking, his doctor had placed him on morphine to ease the pain. This resulted in a lot of marching and counter marching. On the 30th, Gen. Lee moved Magruder's troops from the left to the right of the army resulting in a hard march of the remainder of the day and night and most of July 1 with very little time for a break even to eat. They arrived near Malvern hill at Crew's Farm around 4 PM. On the night of June 30th, McClellan had taken up a strong defensive position on Malvern Hill which was approximately seven miles

from his base at Harrison's Landing on the James where his huge wagon train had now reached and was protected by the Union Navy's gun boats. Malvern Hill was a plateau about one mile wide and it possessed all the natural strength to be well defended. It overlooked open fields to the north and any army attacking it would have to deploy in these open fields as there was nothing behind the fields except swamps and it was in range of some of the big navy guns on the James. McClellan concentrated his army on the hill and eagerly awaited the Rebel attack.

The Legion was now nearing Malvern Hill after having marched about 12 miles to Timberlake and Crew's stores on the Darbytown Road. At about 4 PM, they took a position south of Wenton Run where they were assigned to guard and protect the artillery in that sector of the field.

The attack on July 1 was a disaster. Lee's frontal attack, like his July 3, 1863 "Pickett's Charge" at Gettysburg, was one of the biggest mistakes that he made during the time he was in command of the Army of Northern Virginia. The Yankees had every advantage and it was made even more advantageous by the succession of charges made by the Rebels instead of one grand assault. This allowed the Yankees to inflict tremendous casualties on the attacking men of Lee's Army. The Confederates lost over 5,000 men compared to fewer than 3,000 for the Federals. It is doubtful if Lee wanted to attack here and he is reported to have asked Magruder why he attacked and Prince John is reported to have replied, "Because you told me to." Lee was not present when Magruder began the assault but was off looking for a way to cut the Union Army off from their safe haven on the James. This incident probably sealed Magruder's fate with the Army of Northern Virginia and after this Lee would have nothing else of him. We do know that Lee was disappointed that Magruder had not been more aggressive during the campaign and had encouraged him to be so. Because of Lee's previous order, Magruder probably felt that he was to attack at the earliest opportunity where and whenever that might be.

The Legion was not engaged in the infantry attack at Malvern Hill while the other units of the brigade were heavily involved suffering very heavy losses. Cobb's Legion was detached from the brigade and assigned to support Magruder's artillery, including the Troup Artillery, which was positioned in an open field slightly to the right (facing the Union line) of the Carter's Mill Road and about one half mile distance of the Federal artillery. These guns opened the action which preceded Magruder's ill-fated charges. This was a very dangerous position as it was in range of all the forty or more cannon, even the smooth bores, massed on Malvern Hill. Today their position is marked by the three cannon located in the open field. The exposed men withdrew to a wooded hollow on the opposite side of the road, which gave them protection from the Yankee fire after suffering at least two men being wounded. That night the Union Army withdrew to its safe Harrison's Landing base and thus ended the Seven Days' Battle.

Tom Cobb returned to the infantry companies on July 7 and found a situation among the officers that was not good. Lieutenant Colonel Knight was not working out and Cobb accepted his "resignation". Knight claimed that he had a kidney infection and was unfit for duty. He was evidently a poor leader and had a fistfight with one of his subordinate officers. He returned to Madison and practiced medicine there and died there in 1902. He is buried in the Madison Cemetery. The popular Jeff Lamar was made lieutenant colonel and Captain Luther Glenn of Company C, who was married to Tom and Howell's sister, was promoted to major.

The Legion remained in the general area of Malvern Hill at Camp Hard Times for the remainder of July and into August.

During this time, Lee, who at this stage was not yet known for his daring, decided to split his army by sending Jackson and a major part of his other troops north to defeat General Pope who had succeeded McDowell and who was now in northern Virginia. Lee would leave only a small force to face McClellan should he venture out of his safe haven at Harrison's Landing. McLaws' Division, now a part of Longstreet's command, would be the major part of this small body of outnumbered Rebels left to hold "Little Mac" and the large Yankee Army. Lee and Longstreet left the area, accompanying the army north.

Once Washington learned that Lee was advancing north, President Lincoln insisted that McClellan abandon his base on the James and join General Pope in resisting General Lee's Army in northern Virginia. As soon as the Confederates were certain that "Little Mac" was indeed leaving his Harrison's Landing base, Lee called for the remaining Southern troops, including the Legion and Company B, to join him as rapidly as possible.

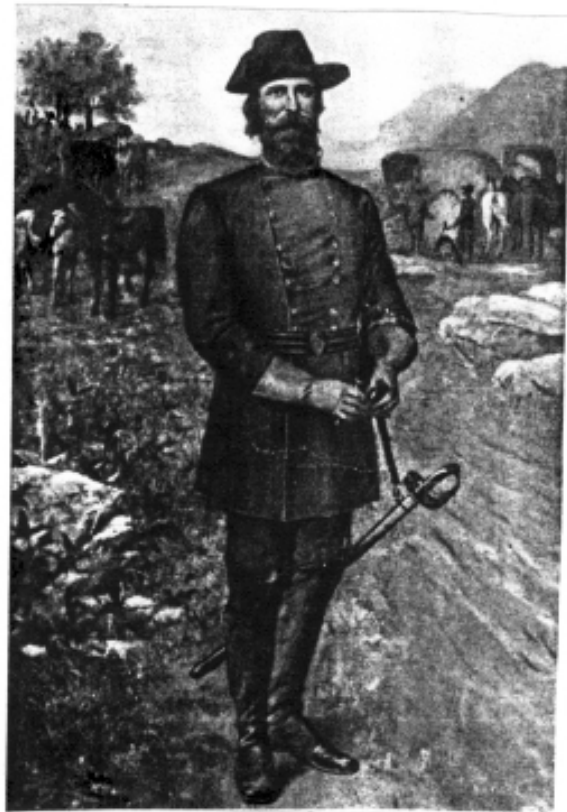
The Legion marched to Richmond and took the cars there and were at Hanover Junction approximately 30 miles north of the Confederate Capitol on August 23rd. The railroad was so crowded that it took them nine hours to cover the 30 miles. At Hanover Junction, brother-in-law "Colonel" (actually he was a civilian) John Lamar joined Howell Cobb as an aid and would ride along in a buggy along with Howell's son John, another aid. They were on a forced march of about 60 miles when the Second Battle of Bull Run or Manassas was fought and won on August 27-30. They passed through the battlefield and rejoined the rest of the victorious Rebel Army.

After the great Southern victory at Second Manassas, General Lee decided to take the war to the North. He would invade Maryland and live off the land in Yankee territory and recruit new men from an area he thought would be sympathetic to the Southern Cause. It was felt that the European powers would give great attention to this aggressive action and possibly recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation.

PS: The term, "**Seeing the Elephant**", is an expression used in all wars. It means that when you "have seen the elephant" you have experienced your first combat with your enemy.



R. E. Lee



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