

## Twenty First Tennessee Cavalry

By John F. Walter Dec 1978

[image: photo with caption: LIEUTENANT-GENERAL JOSEPH WHEELER, C.S.A.]

### TWENTY-FIRST (CARTER'S) TENNESSEE CAVALRY

It appears that the regiment known by this designation was never officially numbered by the Confederate War Department. To these authorities, the regiment was known by three different names, Carter's Tennessee Cavalry, Carter's Tennessee Scouts, and Wheeler's Tennessee Scouts. In the field, however, the unit was usually referred to by the numeric designation captioned above. As was the case with many Tennessee mounted units, there was another regiment known as the Twenty-First Tennessee Cavalry – this one officially numbered. To distinguish the two units the name of their commanding officers were generally [sic] shown following the numeric designation.

To add to the confusion the Confederate War Department's practise [sic] of referring to the unit as Carter's Tennessee Cavalry frequently causes problems of identification between the regiment and the First (Carter's) Tennessee Cavalry. Two different regiments were therefore sometimes referred to as Carter's Tennessee Cavalry.

The task of organizing [sic] this unit began when Nathan W. Carter received permission to recruit a regiment, using his own company (which had originally been part of Douglass' Tennessee Cavalry Battalion prior to that unit's merger with the Eleventh Tennessee Cavalry Battalion in mid-1863) as the nucleus. The original authorization came from General Wheeler and was not approved by Confederate authorities until February 12, 1864. Meanwhile the job of recruiting and organizing the regiment had been carried on at Kittiskakia Springs, Alabama. The regiment, although it had already seen service in the field, was not officially mustered into Confederate service until September, 1864. It numbered slightly more than four hundred officers and enlisted men when mustered into service.

More detailed information has been found on a number of the regiment's companies. This material appears below.

"A" nicknamed Carter's Scouts; originally Carter's Company, Douglass' Tennessee Cavalry Battalion

"B" men from Rutherford County

"D" men from Rutherford County

"F" men from Marshall County

"G" formerly Company "G", Tennessee Battalion of Scouts, a unit which failed to complete its organization

"I" men from Rutherford County

Like almost all Civil War units the Twenty-First (Carter's) Tennessee Cavalry was frequently known by an alternate designation derived from the name of its commanding officer. Names of this type used by or for the regiment are shown below.

Nathan W. Carter's Cavalry  
Robert Withers' Cavalry  
Robert H. Dudley's Cavalry  
Thomas Hollowell's Cavalry  
James B. Ezell's Cavalry  
Newton J. Vaughn's Cavalry  
Lemuel Oliver's Cavalry  
J. B. Van Houten's Cavalry

[image: map of Twenty-First (Carter's) Tennessee Cavalry engagements]

The Twenty-First (Carter's) Tennessee Cavalry participated in a number of engagement [sic] during its career. These are identified below. Numbers after the events locate them on the map preceding this history.

Skirmish, Courtland, Ala. (1) July 25, 1864  
Operations against the Expedition from Decatur (2) to Courtland (1) and Moulton (3), Ala. July 25 – 28, 1864  
Skirmish, Big Name Creek (4) near Courtland (1), Ala. July 27, 1864  
Skirmish, Courtland, Ala. (1) July 28, 1864  
Wheeler's Raid in Northern Georgia and Tennessee Aug. 25 – Sept. 10, 1864  
Affair, Lawrenceburg, Tenn. (5) Aug. 30, 1864  
Pursuit of Wheeler's forces into Northern Alabama Sept. 21 – Oct. 8, 1864  
Action, Athens, Ala. (6) Sept. 23 – 24, 1864  
Skirmish, Richland Creek (7) near Pulaski (8), Tenn. Sept. 26, 1864  
Skirmishes, Pulaski, Tenn. (8) Sept. 26 – 27, 1864  
Skirmish, Huntsville, Ala. (9) [detachment] Oct. 1, 1864  
Skirmishes, Athens, Ala. (6) Oct. 1 – 2, 1864  
Skirmishes in front of Columbia, Tenn. (10) Nov. 24 – 27, 1864  
Skirmishes, Crossing of Duck River, Tenn. (11) Nov. 28, 1864  
Battle, Franklin, Tenn. (12) Nov. 30, 1864  
Demonsration [sic] on Murfreesborough [sic], Tenn. (13) Dec. 5 – 7, 1864  
Action, Wilkinson's Pike near Murfreesborough [sic], Tenn. (13) Dec. 7, 1864  
Scout towards Shelbyville (14) and Fayetteville (15), Tenn. Dec. 22, 1864 – Jan. 6, 1865  
Operations against Wilson's Raid from Chickasaw (16) to Selma, Ala. (17) and Macon, Ga. (18) March 22 – April 24, 1865  
Action, Ebeneze [sic] Church near Maplesville, Ala. (19) April 1, 1865  
Engagement, Selma, Ala. (17) April 2, 1865  
Evacuation, Tuscaloosa, Ala. (20) April 4, 1865

Evacuation, Montgomery, Ala. (21) April 12, 1865

Surrender, Citronelle, Ala. (22) May 4, 1865

In the early spring of [sic] 1865 the regiment was consolidated with three other Tennessee cavalry regiments to form a regimental sized unit. These regiments were the Fourteenth, Fifteenth [sic] and Twenty-Second Tennessee Cavalry [sic]. When the regiment finally laid down its arms in early May, 1865, it is probable that it contained fewer than one hundred officers and enlisted men.