

The French generals of the Confederacy



PREAMBLE:

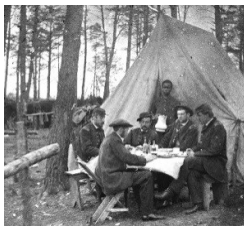
The Civil War, known in the South as "the war between the States", saw the clash of composite armies. In each camp, units of "foreign" origins were found:



In the Union Army:

o 1.7 million soldiers (out of the 2.2 million who served in the Yankees) were American "natives", even though many of them were immigrant sons. Foreigners were very numerous: 216,000 "Germans", 200,000 Irish, 90,000 Dutch, 40,000 Francophones (Quebecers and a handful of French), 20,000 Scandinavians and a few thousand Italians, Poles and Mexicans.

o The 210 00 African Americans served under a segregationist regime, supervised by white officers and never engaged in white troops.



The armies of the Union lost 640 000 men (250 000 deaths from illness or from injuries, 110 000 killed and 280 000 wounded).

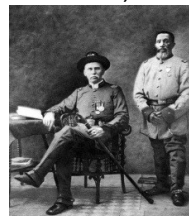


In the South, about 1.5 million men were enlisted, and 260,000 dead.

o The Confederate army has a more homogeneous composition;

o 9/10 ° of the soldiers were born in America and are of British origin, apart from Cajuns and Native Americans. Foreigners are mainly Irish or English, but French units were formed (The Louisiana Tigers);

o The contribution of 70000 black brave men to Southern armies should not be neglected. Free blacks engaged, as well as slaves who gained their freedom. They were integrated into the ranks of units among their comrades of all origins, even as officers, with the exception of a few units formed at the end of the conflict.



- Of the 54,000 French citizens identified in 1860, 26,000 combatants have been identified, of whom 30% in the armies of the Union and 70% in the armies of the Confederation.

It is in this context that we will study the epic of the 8 French generals of the Confederate army.

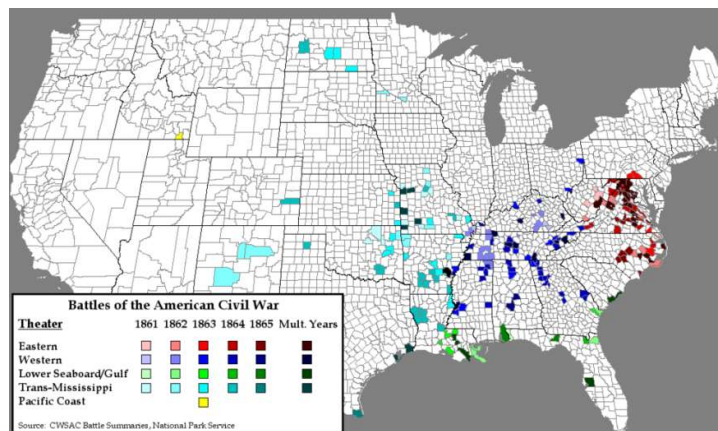
How can we not speak of an epic, for these brave men, to say the least, committed themselves to the cause of the liberty of the States, without personal ambition, and consented to the supreme sacrifice, far from their homeland of origin, or of birth, who still ignores them today, and to whom I wish to contribute tonight to pay homage due to these soldiers, to these combatants, to these brave men, who made honor to France and to the South as soldiers and as Catholics.

Indeed, one of the forgotten causes of the war was the hatred by the North of Catholicism, widespread (still currently in the South). Let's not forget that there were Irish Catholic slaves in the North.

Lyman Beecher, renowned in the North for the Evangelist Church, had created a seminary in Cincinnati to save the West from Catholicism. He wrote in 1835; "Catholics want to ignite and divide the nation and throw down our free institutions."

In 1853, one of the Republic's ruling parties, Know Nothing, focused on the dangers, not of slavery, but of Irish Catholic immigration, and his columnist, William Browlow, wrote: "We will not have peace in this country until the Catholics have been exterminated. " At its foundation, the Republican party mingled anti-slavery and anti-Catholicism, arguing shamelessly that enslavement to the pope entailed acceptance of the enslavement of men.

I want to start with the most unknown ones, and I will finish by mentioning the most famous ones, including Prince Camille **de Polignac** and my cousin Pierre Gustave **Toutant de Beauregard**.



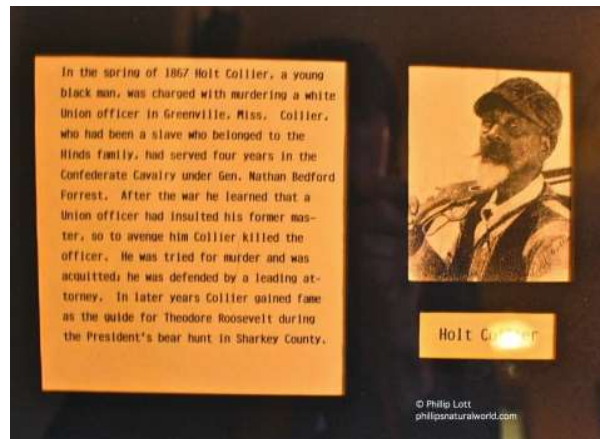
Sample :



Holt Collier was born a slave on a Mississippi plantation in 1846. For most of his time as a slave, he was a hunter, supplying meat for his masters. When the American Civil War broke out in 1861 Collier, believe it or not, wanted to list in the Confederate Army. However, his master said that he

was too young to fight being 15 years old. Collier stowed away on a river boat along with the master's son, Tom, and headed for Memphis. At first Collier served under General Albert Sydney Johnston, and Collier was supposedly there when he was killed at the Battle of Shiloh. Afterwards, he joined Company I of the 9th Texas Cavalry. . He served in Company I through the rest of the war and fought in Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee.

Collier served as tracker and guide for Teddy Roosevelt on many hunts. He died in 1936 in Greenville, Mississippi. The Holt Collier National Wildlife Refuge is named after him.



XAVIER DEBRAY

« The « Murat » of the Confederacy »



Born in 1818 in Sélestat, this Alsatian follows the formation of the Ecole Spéciale Militaire of Saint-Cyr.

He emigrated in 1848, after the revolution against King Louis-Philippe, and moved to TEXAS, San Antonio, where he published a newspaper in Spanish.

At the declaration of war of Abraham Lincoln, Xavier DEBRAY becomes aide-de-camp of the Governor of TEXAS.

In the summer of 1861, General Van Dorn, commander of the Texas District for the Confederation, asked the governor of the state to wash six cavalry companies for the duration of the war, and to regroup them in Galveston.

The governor's response was immediate, and in a short time, it was not six, but seven units that were made up as follows:

- Company A (Harris County) - Captain Riordan
- Company B (Caldwell County) - Captain Myer
- Company C (Harris and Caldwell Counties) - Captain McGreal
- Company D (Galveston and Leon counties) - Captain McMahan
- Company E (Montgomery and Washington counties) - Captain Owen
- Company F (Galveston and Liberty counties) - Captain Ménard
- Company G (Fort Bend County) - Capitaine Atchinson

It should be noted that among the seven units commanders are two Scots and one French.

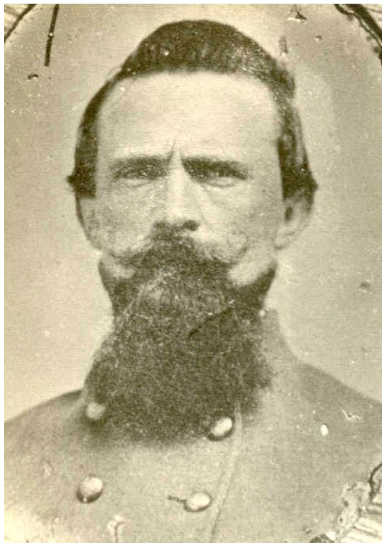
Company G brings together men hired for a year.

The seven companies are grouped into a battalion under the command of Major Samuel Boyer Davis (of Franco-Irish origin, former aide-de-camp to General Van Dorn).

On August 10, Debray was appointed major (commanding officer) of the 2nd Texas Infantry Regiment, where he leads training and instruction. In December 1861, Debray was appointed lieutenant-colonel and took command of the Texas Cavalry Battalion from Samuel Boyer, who became the 26th Texas Cavalry Regiment. He was elected colonel and became corps commander on March 17, 1862, while Captain Ménard was promoted to the rank of major (commander) and Captain Myer became second in Debray with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

This regiment is garrisoned in Texas and is little engaged, but Debray takes advantage of this time to strengthen the discipline and force the training of its riders. The regiment received three companies as reinforcements:

- Company H (counties of Montgomery and Grimes) - Captain Duprée
- Company I (Montgomery and Grimes counties) - Captain Whitehead
- Company K (Harris County) - Captain Hare



Captain Franklin Goldstein Duprée (his real name is "du Pré") comes from a French family of Protestant origin, established in Georgia since the 16th century. The family continues to speak French. Franklin was born in 1826 in Georgia. In 1840, his parents (his father was a veteran of the war against the Seminoles in Florida) settled in Texas, where they acquired a plantation west of Montgomery. During the war, he fought under the orders of Debray and Kirby Smith, who did not lay down arms until July 7, 1865 in Houston.

The regiment is then reorganized. Captain Atchinson, who has reached the end of his contract, is replaced by Captain Rountree. Squadrons (companies of cavalry) are reduced from 100 to 80 riders, on the orders of the Ministry of War. In order to overcome this potential deficiency, Debray uses a subterfuge and withdraws Rountree's company from the regiment, constituting a unit of "scout volunteers".

Following the fall of New Orleans, the regiment (as well as Brown's cavalry) was ordered to head to Arizona and New Mexico to lend a helping hand to General Sibley. This objective requires a walk of almost 1000 miles (1600 kilometers!) Through desert and arid regions. The regiment was on its way when Colonel Debray was informed of the retreat to San Antonio de Sibley, short of ammunition and overwhelmed by enemy numerical superiority. Consequently the regiment received a control and directed towards San Bernard River, at the edge of which a camp was established towards Needville.

In order not to let his men languish there, Debray intensified training, both in combat on horseback and on foot. He also organized parades and "cavalcades", which earned this unit the nickname "the menagerie", which he would have left. These demonstrations made a strong impression on Texans, who did not hesitate, Blacks or Whites, to enlist under the banner of the regiment.

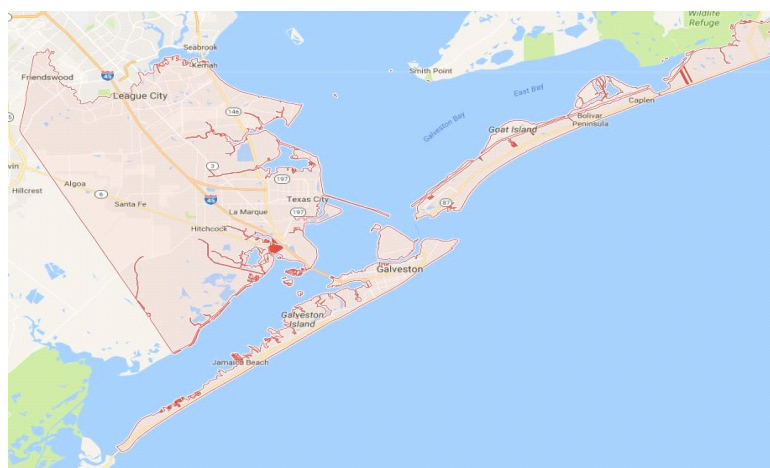
Despite many reservations, the government decided to send the troops stationed in Texas to Arkansas, with the exception of two infantry regiments. Richmond therefore did not realize the importance of protecting the Rio Grande border (with Mexico), which is the Confederation's only land supply route. General Hébert, in charge of the Texas district, orders in desperation the disarmament of the artillery positioned in the forts protecting Galveston Bay and the sending of the cannons to Virginia Point, in order to strengthen the defenses of the peninsula located southwest of Galveston Bay, between La Marque and Galveston.

Galveston (The Queen City of the Gulf), located on the Texas coast, allows the Confederation to export cotton to Mexico. The Union Navy blocked this port, which it captured in May 1862 and which it is imperative to take back for obvious strategic and economic reasons.



In October 1862, Union forces seized Galveston, whose small garrison had to retreat to Virginia Point, the population, whatever its origin, fled totally to Houston and inside the state, the reputation of the Yankees "liberators" is synonymous with terror ...

Communication with Galveston Island is however maintained thanks to the railway bridge connecting the island to the mainland. The Confederates have in fact managed to hold a redoubt erected on the island, at the mouth of the bridge. The Debray Regiment, stationed at Virginia Point, is actively involved in defending the bridge and its relentless cavalry patrols prevent the Yankees from attempting to capture Virginia Point, which would be catastrophic.



While General Hébert is sent to Louisiana, General Magruder takes command of Texas, crowned with his victories during the Peninsula campaign in Virginia, where he notably had under his command the first battalion of Louisiana Zouaves from Lieutenant-Colonel de Coppens, whose bravery and efficiency he could appreciate.

Determined to take over Galveston, Magruder had two wooden steamships, each armed with a cannon and surrounded by cotton balls for protection (cottonclads), sent to Galveston Bay. The ships

are manned by volunteers from General Green's brigade as well as artillerymen, all of whom have been converted for the occasion to Marines led by General Tom Green. A third skiff was sent in for reinforcement and the small naval unit was placed under the orders of Captain Léon Smith, seconded by Warrant Officer Franklin, from the Debray Regiment.

Meanwhile, Magruder organizes his troops at Virginia Point.

It has a thousand men and fifteen pieces of artillery from the Cook regiment. The main body of troops is made up of Debray's men.

Once all the arrangements made, both on land and at sea, the infantry column, carrying ladders and tearing the artillery pieces, silently crossed the night from December 31 to January 1 the 10 kilometers that separate Virginia Galveston point, managing to cross the railway bridge under the moonlight without being spotted.

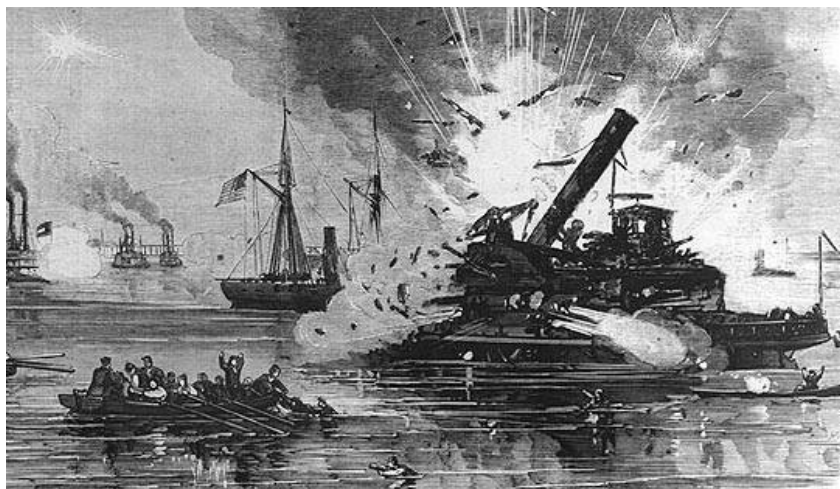
The Battle of Galveston is both a naval and a land battle.

On land, General Magruder's Confederate troops storm the fortifications of the citadel commanded by Colonel Joseph Cook. He launched his infantry and his cavalry, commanded by General William Scurry, under whose orders Debray served.

The Union fleet subjected the Confederates to intense bombardment, causing appalling losses in the ranks of the brave southern artillerymen, who had to retreat in an attempt to shelter their parts from hellish deluge.

Southern troops are taken aback and ready to fold, but not their general, whose objective was to concentrate enemy fire on the ground while attacking by sea.

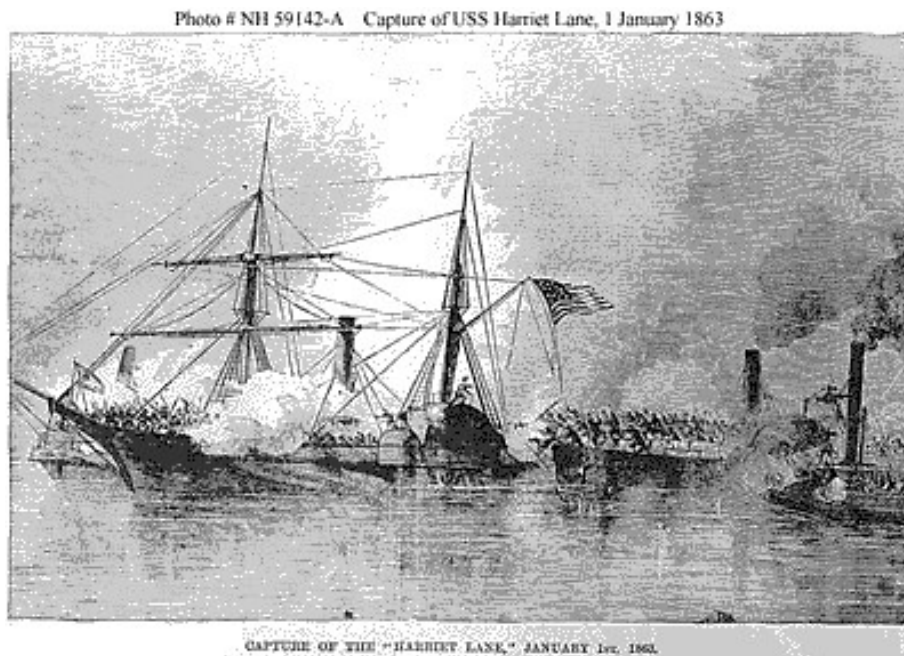
Courageously, the two Confederate steamers, the CSS Bayou and the CSS Neptune, entered the Yankee fleet which included six ships (the USS Clifton, Harriet Lane, Westfield, Owasco, Corypheus and Sachem).



At two against six, the fight is unequal and CS Neptune is immediately sent by the bottom.

Meanwhile, the USS Westfield runs aground on a sandbank. Commodore Renshaw, commander of the northern fleet decides to destroy his ship so that it does not fall into the hands of the enemy, but the operation is badly programmed and several Union men are killed by the explosion of the ship, including Renshaw himself.

USS Harriet Lane is captured on board, rifle and knife by the Green Marines, whose mad recklessness quickly forces the Feds to raise the white flag.



On land, southern troops face the 42nd Volunteer Regiment of Massachusetts, commanded by Colonel Isaac Burnell.

On January 1, 1863, Colonel Debray charged at the head of his regiment, under the murderous fire of the Yankees sheltered in their entrenchments. The Texan standard-bearer was killed, but Debray seized the precious emblem and reached the enemy lines with the few surviving horsemen.

That's when the USS Westfield exploded.

The Yankee soldiers, thinking that all is lost and that their fleet is destroyed, lay down their weapons and surrender in full.

Union forces lost 600 men (including 400 prisoners) in two hours, while the Confederation lost 50 men, mainly Debray horsemen.

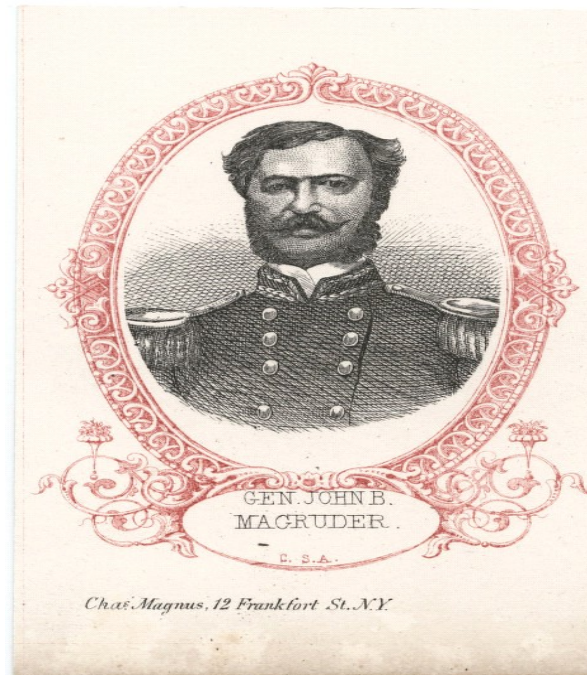


General Magruder will use the same ploy to seize Sabine Lake (Port Arthur), a hundred kilometers northeast of Galveston.

On May 30, 1863, Debray was proposed to the rank of Brigadier General by Major General Magruder himself, who wished to reward the extraordinary courage of this intrepid Frenchman and entrusted him with military command over southeast Texas.

General Debray writes: "General Magruder's success went far beyond the expectations of the public, and he was for a time the idol of the people of Texas. But states, and especially republics, are ungrateful. The brave, generous and warm General Magruder died (February 19, 1871) in Houston in misery and loneliness. "

Let us pay tribute here to this brave general, nicknamed "the Prince" because of his pronounced taste for brilliant uniforms, but who was a daring warlord.



Debray also reports a macabre fact occurred at Galveston, and which according to him perfectly illustrates the horrors of the civil war.

Engineer Major A.M. Lea, attached to General Magruder's staff, was ordered to take over Harriet Lane, the vessel captured by Green's soldiers. Climbing aboard the ship, stepping over the wounded and the dead, the major suddenly discovers among his bloodied bodies that his son, Lieutenant Lea, of the Union army, near death.

The major can only catch the last breath of his child.

The corps of Lieutenants Wainwright and Lea of the US Army will be buried with military honors in Galveston Cemetery, following a celebration according to the rite of the Episcopalian church, during which Major Lea will deliver his speech. in person the funeral oration of his son.

The Debray regiment is responsible for repossessing Galveston, and rehabilitating the fortifications with the help of freelancers regularly paid.

Colonel Debray then assumed command of Galveston Island while Lieutenant-Colonel Myers assumed command of the regiment.

On January 13, seven Yankee warships subjected the island and the town of Galveston to heavy bombardment lasting six hours without the Confederate troops, deprived of artillery, being able to retaliate. Thanks to Providence, there are no casualties among the garrison or the population and the damage is minimal.

In the night following the bombing, the calm of the night was suddenly disturbed by a distant lightning accompanied by the sound of a tremendous detonation, without anyone being able to determine its origin. It was only several weeks later that we learned that the explosion was in fact that of the northern ship USS Hatteras, captured by Captain Semmes, pasha of the CSS Alabama, which will be sunk in front of Cherbourg on June 19, 1864, after to have sent two Union vessels in the bottom sea in two years, to have boarded 452 but also to have captured more than 2,000 sailors from the North.

Captain Semmes, born in September 1809, is a Catholic naval officer from Maryland. He was promoted to admiral and ended the war, as a brigadier general of the Confederate Marines alongside Major General Joseph Johnston, who laid down his arms on April 26, 1865.

The following nine months were spent calmly in Texas, and were used to reinforce Galveston's defenses in artillery.

In November 1863, the Unionists landed by surprise at the mouth of the Rio Grande, and marched towards Indianola, which was not defended. Magruder suspects the Yankees of wanting to advance along the coast under the protection of their naval artillery, thus taking the defenses of Galveston from behind. He therefore ordered the regular troops and the militia to concentrate on the Caney River in order to stop the Blues. Debray commanded on this occasion a brigade formed of the regiments of Gould and Terrell.

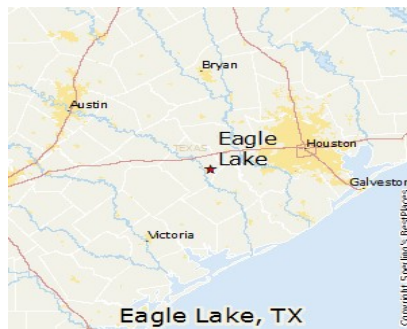
Six weeks passed while awaiting shock, but Yankee troops re-embarked without a blow. Magruder immediately understood that this was a diversion.

During this time, the general northerner Banks prepares, from New Orleans, where he gathered 40 000 men and a large fleet, an offensive in direction of Alexandria, on the Red River. His intention was to establish a logistics base there where he would be joined by 10,000 General Steele's men from Little Rock, with the aim of then invading Texas via its northeast border.

With clearly insufficient Confederate troops under General Taylor, McGruder was ordered to detach all of his cavalry from the northern part of the state. However, he ordered Debray to stay in Houston, which made the Frenchman react, who harassed his superior so much that his boss finally gave in to his impetuous subordinate.

On March 14, in the absence of a telegraph line, an express train was instructed to carry instructions for Lieutenant-Colonel Myers, then stationed at Eagle Lake, ordering him to join Houston with his regiment.

Once assembled and rehabilitated, the units set out for Alexandria on March 17, but their progress was slowed by the passage of several rivers where wagon trains had to take ferries. On March 31, General Taylor received an order to divert to Pleasant Hill, where the general had been forced to withdraw.



On April 1, the column safely crossed the Sabine River on a large ferry.

After having covered another twenty miles (32 kilometers), the unit, which then included 400 men, then stopped in the village of Manny, where a letter carrying instructions from General Taylor joined her, ordering regiments which had not yet crossed the Sabine River to progress on its west bank then to cross the river at Logansport. No information on the enemy, who seems to be absent from the area.

The progression resumes on April 2 towards Pleasant Hill. It was then that a major from General Taylor's staff, who came to meet Debray and joined his general, went up the column formed by the unity of the French. When he reached the colonel, he asked him, "Colonel, where are your men from? "They're all Texans," says Debray. "Texans?" "Astonished the major" I have never seen Texans progress like this, with such a pace, aligned with such rigor, and whose officers salute so! Whereupon the major galloped off and reported to General Taylor on the fine outfit of the Debray Texans, which Taylor will report in his memoirs.

Shortly before Manny, the regiment was ordered to send their riders to Fort Jesup to join Colonel Bagby's Texas regiment of cavalry as the wagons continued on their way to Pleasant Hill.

The regiment's marching orders have been so meticulously crafted that it is enough to supply the men with ammunition to get them ready for battle.

The campaign of the Red River will oppose for more than two months, from March 10 to May 22, 1864, 30,000 Yankees led by Nathaniel Banks to 6,000 Confederates commanded by Kirby Smith.

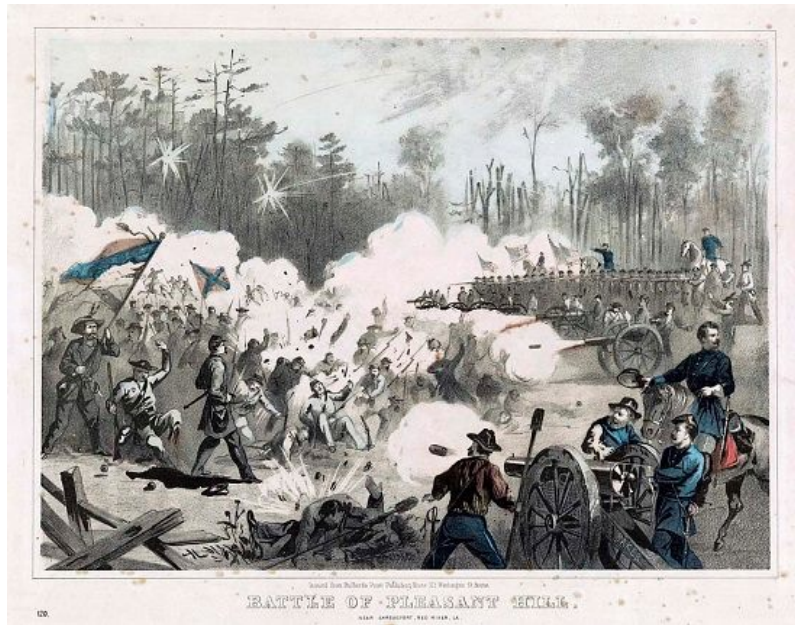
The Union army set four objectives at the start of the campaign:

- destroy the Confederate units commanded by Taylor;
- seize Shreveport, headquarters of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi department, control the Red River to the north and occupy eastern Texas;
- confiscate one hundred thousand bales of cotton stored in plantations bordering the Red River;
- set up Union-friendly authorities in the region.

Washington strategists believe that the occupation of eastern Texas and control of the Red River will detach Texas from the rest of Confederation. The state is also an important source of supplies, weapons and food for Confederate troops.

For this expedition along the Red River, the Mississippi squadron will detach a considerable number of vessels, under the command of Rear Admiral David D. Porter: ten river battleships, 3 monitors, and a good number of support ships.

After crossing a dense forest, Texans can hear artillery and gunfire. Immediately the scouts are deployed. Debray is informed of the withdrawal of the Bagsby regiment, out of ammunition, but also that in front of them is an important Yankee force composed of mounted horsemen and infantrymen. Debray then gives the order to back up slowly, so as not to be isolated. The regiment is followed by suspicious Yankees, who do not know who they are dealing with. While retreating, the regiment held the Blues in check and managed to evacuate its five wounded who were evacuated to the ambulances that Debray positioned behind the combatants.



This delaying action will be the subject of a letter of congratulations on the part of Major-General Taylor, who had initially decided to put Debray to arrest, officers of his staff having complained of the slowness of the march of his unit to rally Pleasant Hill. Debray gets it right and insists that the March order did not reach him until March 14 and that his unit, slowed down by carts and water crossings, had traveled 250 miles (400 kilometers) in less than fourteen hours. The general then puts his hand on Debray's shoulder before saying to him in French: "I see that you are not a politician! " Everyone then knew that Taylor hated politicians.



The northern officers did not think that the Confederates would oppose them with serious resistance, except for the flotilla.

Banks' army follows Taylor and his cavalry under the dense cover of a pine forest away from the river. The approach to Pleasant Hill is particularly slow for the Northerners, due to the actions of the Confederate cavalry, which opportunely received the reinforcement of the Texan cavalry regiments of General Tom Green. Taylor can continue to back up safely to Shreveport. It was then that he was ordered to withdraw to Keachi, located more than 30 kilometers southwest of Shreveport, where the staff decided to fight. But the heroic action of his French subordinates will cause General Taylor to stay the execution of these orders.

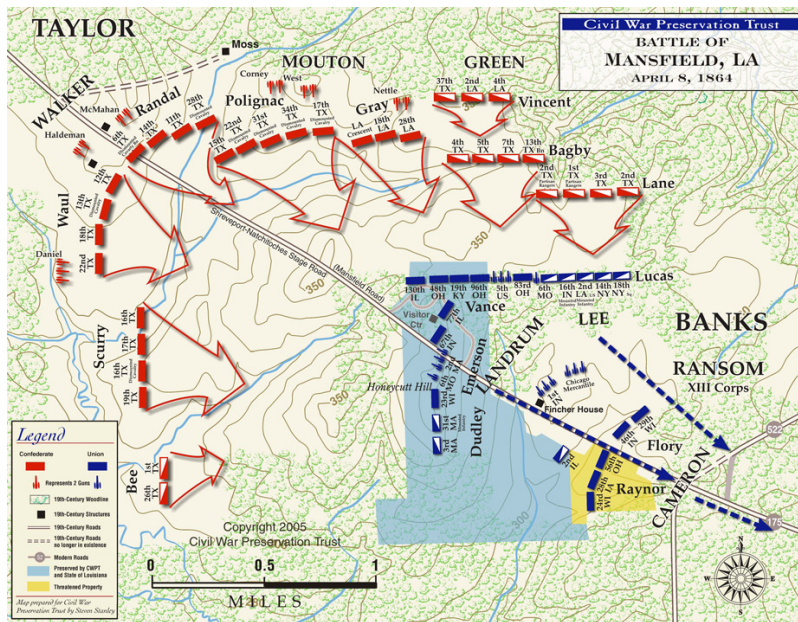
Indeed, Debray's 1 vs 5 riders manage to slow down and then stop the advance of the invading army.

On April 7, it was two Frenchmen, Debray (Cavalry) and Mouton (Infantry) who, with 5,000 men against 9,000 invaders, defeated Union troops, breaking in two lines of defense and even capturing crew trains.

A union reinforcement of 5,800 men is in turn routed. The Yankees lose 2,400 men against a thousand Confederates. "Debray leads a heroic charge at the head of his riders, breaking through the lines of the Union, in a burst worthy of the" furiafrancesese "will write the general of the southern cavalry Thomas Green.

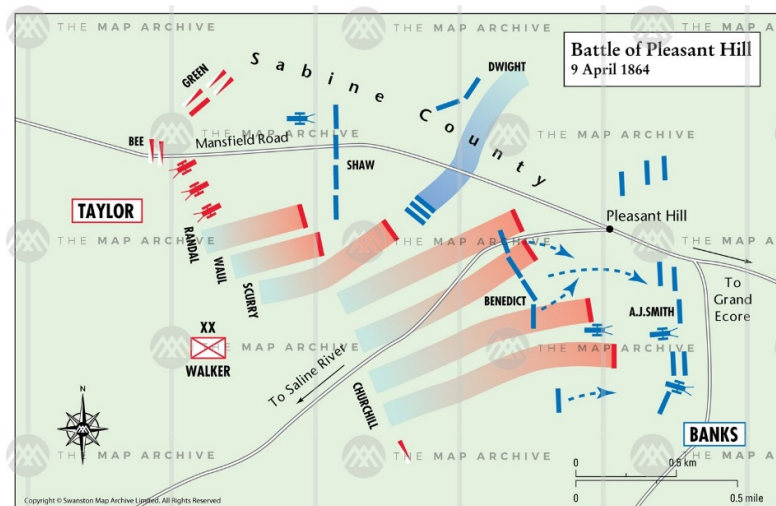


On April 8, General Taylor, certain that the enemy column, stretched over thirty kilometers, was no longer able to regroup in a coherent force, arranged his army to fight Pleasant Hill, thus disobeying formally to the instructions received and acting, as he said to Debray, "with a rope around the neck".



General Green's cavalry is "disassembled" and engaged as an infantry force, while Debray's cavalry is held in reserve.

The 13th US cavalry corps (northerner) was quickly routed, but the 19th corps, composed of fresh troops, opposed fierce resistance. Debray is ordered to engage his unit, which launches into terrible and bloody combat, where it jostles the Yankee troops. The confrontation lasts until the night. The enemy fled in complete confusion. Despite heavy casualties, including Lt. Willis of F Company, the Debray Texans took 2,500 prisoners, captured 20 cannons and 250 wagons, thousands of weapons and several flags. Green's horsemen begin the chase, capturing many laggards, but a sustained rank fire prevents the Confederates from crossing a river, and the chase stops. The march resumed in the early hours of April 9 and the Texans advanced unopposed to the foothills of Pleasant Hill, where the federal army was positioned in battle order.



The Confederate infantry, which includes divisions from Missouri and Arkansas, is exhausted after a walk of over 70 kilometers from Keachi.

You have to imagine these men who are being asked for the maximum, who progress towards death, sometimes barefoot and in rags, carrying weapons, bag, blanket, ammunition, supplies, and who advance without complaining, in the rain or the sun, in cold or heat, but with a deep faith in their cause that transcends them. All, Texans, Irish, French, Creoles, English, Germans, Blacks and Yellows, Indians and Whites, Catholics, Jews, Protestants or atheists, all walk clenching their teeth and sometimes to the sound of fifes and drums, singing "Dixie" or "The Bonnie Blue Flag". The famous harangue circulates among the Texans: "Remember the Alamo! " So we believe in it, we move forward, even if we are hot, even if we are sick, even we are exhausted. We walk for the Cause, for our own people, for our friends, we walk and we advance without truce or rest to go "kill the Yankee soldier", against the invader, the prevaricator, "Billie Yank ", the massacreur, the genocidaire, the criminal, who wants to destroy our property, kill our children and steal our soul. And one is ready to suffer, to die if God so decided. And we are proud to be a "rebel".

The fight begins around four in the morning.

The Confederate right, led by a guide who goes astray, is repulsed with terrible losses, while the left carries the defenses of the Blues. General Green, ill-informed, thinks that his men are all in rout, and orders the cavalymen of Debray and Bushel, hitherto kept in reserve, to charge in the direction of Pleasant Hill. The charge, carried out according to the most beautiful traditions of the cavalry, comes to break on the northern lines, firmly installed in a pine forest, just behind a ravine masked by the relief and the vegetation. It's carnage. The riders and their mounts collapse on top of each other and are finished once on the ground, if they are not crushed by their own comrades. Captain Peck of F Company is killed; Major Menard and Captain Hare of Company K were seriously injured, as was Captain Fulton of Company G, whose horse was killed under him.

Colonel Debray, whose horse was struck down by a bullet and collapsed near enemy lines, his right leg wedged under the poor animal's body. In his efforts to finally free himself, the colonel lost his boot, which remained crushed under the horse.

General Taylor, seeing his hobbled subordinate return, exclaims: "Well, colonel! Are you hurt ? " "No general! "Answers Debray" I'm only slightly crippled, as you can see. In fact, it's the loss of my boot that makes me lame. " "To hell with your boot!" "Exclaims the general" You have won your spurs today!"

Once regrouped behind the friendly lines, the Debray regiment was ordered to leave their mounts and go to reinforce Walker's Texas infantry division, engaged in a deadly combat in the woods on the left wing of the front. The ongoing clash spilled blood on either side, and remained undecided, with neither side taking advantage. By nightfall, the lines had not moved. But General Taylor, not wishing to persevere in having his men killed in vain, ordered them to retreat behind a small river seven kilometers behind, so as to install a favorable defensive position there. The Debray and Bushel regiments are however left on the cover and are charged with observing enemy movements, then retreating as discreetly as possible if the latter decides to advance. Debray sends a reconnaissance patrol. His men glide silently through the vegetation to find that the enemy has set off. Debray seizes the town of Pleasant Hill, which the enemy has decamped, leaving behind the dead and wounded, immediately taken care of by the Confederate health services.

Debray immediately launches some of his riders in pursuit of the Blues, while the other half of his men escort artillery to Blair's Landing, on the Red River to take part in the Yankee boats.

It was during this action that Major General Tom Green was fatally injured by a marine shell that beheaded him. His disappearance, like that of Stonewall Jackson after his victory at Chancellorsville on May 10, 1863, is considered an irreparable loss for Confederation, according to General Taylor and Colonel Debray.

General Taylor tries in vain to regroup his troops to annihilate Unionist Bank. He must give up his project because the weakness of his staff prevents him from carrying out operations on a large scale. Despite this, the battle was a strategic success for the Confederation, as the Union army retreated.

Kirby Smith rewards Xavier Debray for his exemplary conduct by appointing him brigadier-general, as a result of which Lieutenant-Colonel Myers becomes colonel, while Major Ménard is promoted to lieutenant-colonel.

The new general is given command of a brigade including his former regiment and those of Goold and Wood.

To build his staff, he chose his loyal chief warrant officer Harry Blagge as an aide-de-camp, and he drew on the support of his former regiment: young warrant officer R.M. Franklin became Blagge's second while Thos. R. Franklin becomes quartermaster of the brigade; Lieutenant Fayette Black is appointed commissioner of the brigade. Other officers thus follow their former corps commander, to whom great admiration and unfailing loyalty attach them.

The federal army is hiding under the protection of its ships at Grand Ecore, on the Red River, near Natchitoches.

Thanks to its incessant harassment, Debray's cavalry rescues this last city, which would certainly have suffered the fate reserved by the Yankees for so many other cities in the South that were ransacked, pillaged, burned and its population raped, summary executions or the deportation.

Debray positions his men on the heights of Monnett's Bluff, which overlook the Cane River, a tributary of the Red River, pending a likely attempt to forcefully cross the enemy. Steele's cavalry division and the Prince of Polignac's infantry division (which we will talk about again) arrived as reinforcements. The right of the position chosen by Debray consists of steep cliffs and the left of wooded hills, with impenetrable vegetation, inaccessible to the enemy unless you first cross a swampy area.

Debray is given by General Bee the left of the Confederate defense, while the center is held by General Major and the right by General Bagby.

In the early afternoon, the Blues make their appearance and put in battery their artillery, which opens fire in the direction of the southern positions, the guns of which immediately counter enemy pieces.

Very quickly, Debray's forehead was attacked by a Yankee force, which was able, thanks to a guide, to cross the swamps known to be impassable. Two assaults are repulsed before Debray receives the order to fall back to the center and to the right, whose defenders have abandoned the defenses for no apparent reason, except that the enemy forces have an overwhelming numerical superiority, impossible to thwart. Debray re-establishes the situation and the Yankees slip off towards Alexandria.

A strenuous night walk takes the men to McNutt's hill, 48 kilometers west of Alexandria. General Wharton then takes command of the cavalry corps, and orders the division of General Bee (Debray and Bagsby brigade) to advance on the Polk plantation, located 10 kilometers west of Alexandria, while the division of General Steel takes up a position in the north of the city, at Bayou Rapid, and that General Major settles in the south of the city, with his division and artillery, on the Red River, where he takes part in the fleet of the Union (armed ships and transport), which it must constantly harass.

Bloody skirmishes multiply between enemy troops, without either side bending the other. In the former Debray Regiment, Lieutenant Kerr was killed while Lieutenants King and Burts were very seriously injured (the first died in a few hours).

However, Banks' position in Alexandria is becoming worrying for the Union. The low water level of the Red River prevents the fleet from maneuvering, and its communication and supply lines are cut. If Admiral Porter had not intervened, Banks would have left by abandoning the federal fleet to their fate. He decided to build a dam that allowed ships to cross the rapids and cross Alexandria.

After having looted and burned the city (a habit of the Yankees), Banks advanced his troops along the Red River, under the protection of the boats.

On May 15, in Mansura Prairie, Southern General Wharton attempts with his meager forces to block the road to the federal army and forces the enemy to deploy. An artillery duel begins, involving fifty guns, the deafening crash of which will be reported by all witnesses. Debray walks "with the cannon" and places himself on the heights of Moreauville. The next day, the enemy appeared, and rushed to Moreauville, which was destroyed (wounded Confederate soldiers were summarily executed there, as were my health personnel).

Hounding the enemy, Debray reached the Notrhwood plantation, five kilometers from the Atachafayala river, on 17 May. He deploys his units with the intention of attacking the rear of the enemy, who turns around and in turn deploys considerable infantry and artillery force, to protect the advance of his wagon convoys, preventing Debray to act effectively, due to the weakness of his means.

The Red River campaign saw an army of 6,000 soldiers hold back and repel a 40,000-strong federal force in six weeks, saving Texas from invasion and devastation.

Debray's brigade was then responsible for securing the Alexandria and Nachitoches area, before finally returning to Texas in late November. The Gould regiment, seconded to another brigade, is replaced by that of MacNeal. The brigade is in Hempstead when he receives the news of the surrender of General Lee.

Most Texan soldiers, anxious for their families, then leave the army and join their homes, with the exception of the cavalymen of Debray and Wood, who join General Magruder in Houston.

In Houston, Debray's horsemen will save the city from looters by tirelessly patrolling the city.

The demobilization of the brigade takes place under the June sun.

The unit is gathered outside of Houston. Federal troops present arms.

The veterans of four years of conflict, tears in their eyes, listen for the last time to the harangue of their French general who has become "Texan by bloodshed", who thanks them, the voice charged with emotion, congratulates them, assures them of his affection, and declares to them that they have not deserved, that their honor is intact and that they have been worthy of their elders from Alamo, that their family disperses but that faith and fidelity will weld them forever.

Thus ended the career in the army of the Confederate States of America of the Alsatian Saint-Cyrien Xavier Debray, who moved to Austin where he resumed his translations in English, French and Spanish, for the Land Office from Texas. He died in January 1895 at the age of 76 and was buried in the state cemetery.

General Kirby Smith, who, along with Stuart, Forrest, Price and Hampton, was arguably one of the best cavalry generals in Confederation, said of Debray "this exceptional officer was the Murat of Confederation".

General Debray was one among 13 French generals who fought for the Confederacy, against tyranny. As a French Officer, and as a SCV member of the "Alamo City Guards", I feel very proud of such a man, who led brave Texan soldiers and was such a gallant officer. He was French and became a Texas Hero.

