

15th Infantry Regiment **June-July 1863 and Middle Tennessee**

It was not until the last week of June that General William Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland departed its winter encampment near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and began an advance toward the key rail junction of Chattanooga. Standing in its way was the Cumberland Plateau, a series of steep ridges and rivers-and the Confederate Army of Tennessee under General Braxton Bragg.

The Army of the Cumberland's Regular Brigade played a key role in the opening moves of what came to be known as the Middle Tennessee Campaign, although the 15th Infantry did not. While the brigade's other Regular outfits (the 16th, 18th, and 19th U.S. Infantry Regiments) assisted in the seizure of Hoover's Gap on June 26, the 15th remained behind at Murfreesboro to guard the division baggage train.

The 15th Infantry experienced a number of command changes during the middle months of the year. The officer who had commanded the 15th Infantry's 1st Battalion the previous year at Shiloh and Stones River, [Maj. John H. King](#), had been promoted to the rank of brigadier general of volunteers during the spring of 1863 and now commanded the Regular Brigade. Command of the brigade's 15th Infantry contingent fell to [Capt. Henry Keteltas](#), an experienced campaigner from New York who had led the battalion's E Company the previous year.

Keteltas brought his 15th Infantrymen forward shortly after the fighting at Hoover's Gap died down, and the brigade then began a methodical advance over the Cumberland Plateau. They crossed the Elk River on July 4 and spent the rest of the month at Cowan Station on the Chattanooga & Nashville Railroad, assisting in repair of the roads and preparing for the next phase of the advance that would take them to Chattanooga.