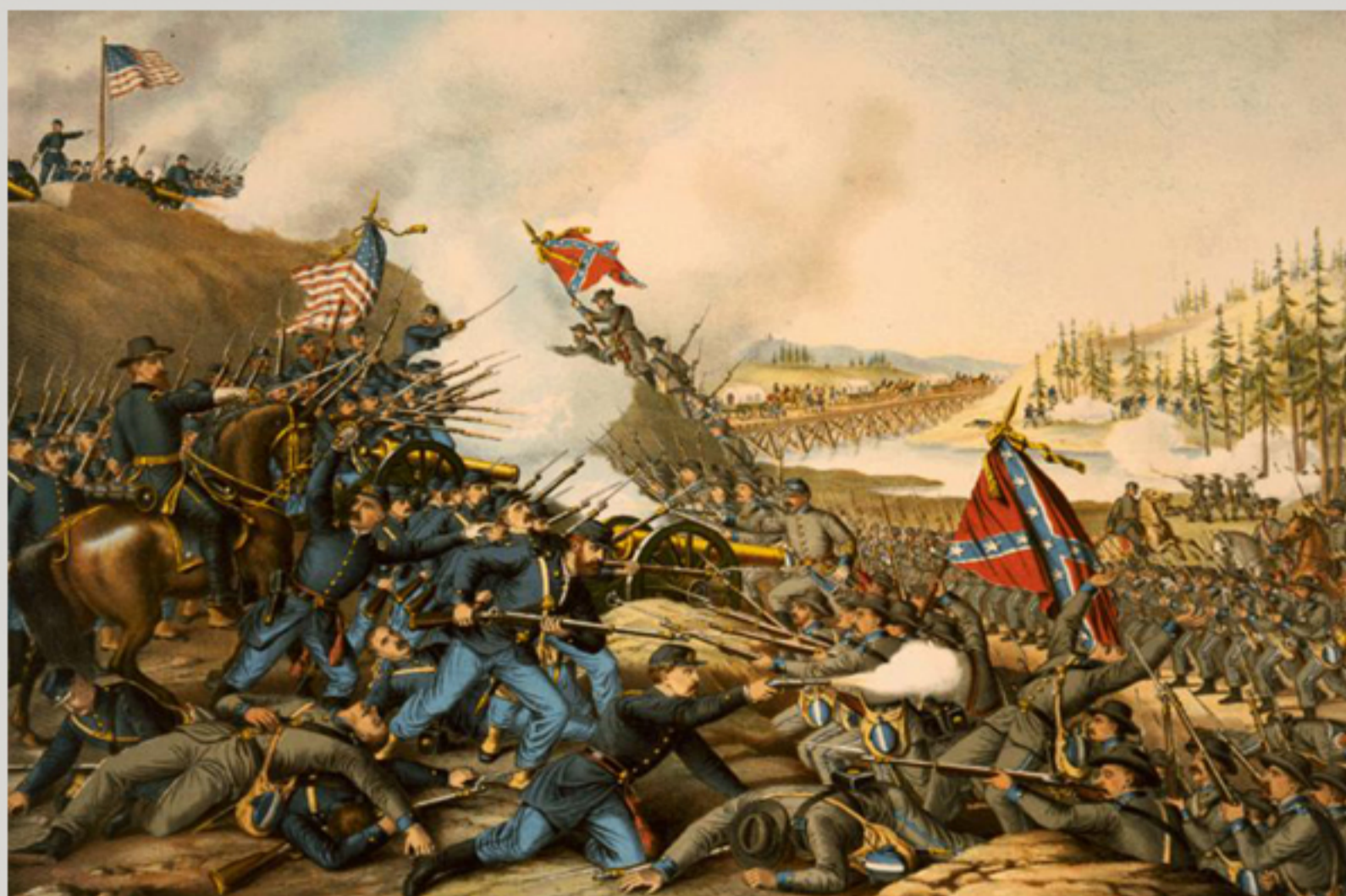


# The Battle of Franklin, 1864



Following his defeat in the Atlanta Campaign, Hood had hoped to lure Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman into battle by disrupting his railroad supply line from Chattanooga to Atlanta. After a brief period in which he pursued Hood, Sherman decided instead to cut his main army off from these lines and "live off the land" in his famed March to the Sea from Atlanta to Savannah. By doing so, he would avoid having to defend hundreds of miles of supply lines against constant raids, through which he predicted he would lose "a thousand men monthly and gain no result" against Hood's army.

Sherman's march left the aggressive General Hood unoccupied, and his Army of Tennessee could choose several options in attacking Sherman or falling upon his rear lines. The task of defending Tennessee and the rearguard against Hood fell to Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, commander of the Army of the Cumberland. The principal forces available in Middle Tennessee were IV Corps of the Army of the Cumberland, commanded by Maj. Gen. David S. Stanley, and XXIII Corps of the Army of the Ohio, commanded by Maj. Gen. John Schofield, with a total strength of about 30,000. Another 30,000 troops under Thomas's command were in or moving toward Nashville.

Rather than trying to chase Sherman in Georgia, Hood decided that he would attempt a major offensive northward, even though his invading force of 39,000 would be outnumbered by the 60,000 Union troops in Tennessee. He would move north into Tennessee, defeat portions of Thomas's army in detail before they could concentrate, seize the important manufacturing and supply center of Nashville, and continue north into Kentucky, possibly as far as the Ohio River. Hood even expected to pick up 20,000 recruits from Tennessee and Kentucky in his path of victory and then join up with Robert E. Lee's army in Virginia, a plan that historian James M. McPherson describes as "scripted in never-never land." Hood spent the first three weeks of November quietly supplying the Army of Tennessee in northern Alabama in preparation for his offensive.

The **Battle of Franklin** was fought on November 30, 1864, at Franklin, Tennessee, as part of the Franklin-Nashville Campaign of the American Civil War. It was one of the worst disasters of the war for the Confederate States Army. Confederate Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee conducted numerous frontal assaults against fortified positions occupied by the Union forces under Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield and was unable to break through or to prevent Schofield from a planned, orderly withdrawal to Nashville.

The Confederate assault with eighteen brigades of almost 20,000 men, sometimes called the "Pickett's Charge of the West", resulted in devastating losses to the men and the leadership of the Army of Tennessee—fourteen Confederate generals (six killed or mortally wounded, seven wounded, and one captured) and 55 regimental commanders were casualties. After its defeat against Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas in the subsequent Battle of Nashville, the Army of Tennessee retreated with barely half the men with which it had begun the short offensive, and was effectively destroyed as a fighting force for the remainder of the war.

The 1864 Battle of Franklin was the second military action in the vicinity. The Battle of Franklin (1863) was a minor action associated with a reconnaissance in force by Confederate cavalry leader Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn on April 10.