

The Battle of Nashville, 1864



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The **Battle of Nashville** was a two-day battle in the Franklin-Nashville Campaign that represented the end of large-scale fighting in the Western Theater of the American Civil War. It was fought at Nashville, Tennessee, on December 15–16, 1864, between the Confederate Army of Tennessee under Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood and Federal forces under Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas. In one of the largest victories achieved by the Union Army during the war, Thomas attacked and routed Hood's army, largely destroying it as an effective fighting force.

Hood followed up his defeat in the Atlanta Campaign by moving northwest to disrupt the supply lines of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman from Chattanooga, hoping to challenge Sherman into a battle that could be fought to Hood's advantage. After a brief period of pursuit, Sherman decided to disengage and to conduct instead his March to the Sea, leaving the matter of Hood's army and the defense of Tennessee to Thomas. Hood devised a plan to march into Tennessee and defeat Thomas's force while it was geographically divided. He pursued Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield's army from Pulaski to Columbia and then attempted to intercept and destroy it at Spring Hill. Because of a series of Confederate command miscommunications in the Battle of Spring Hill (November 29, 1864), Schofield was able to withdraw from Columbia and slip past Hood's army at Spring Hill relatively unscathed.

Furious at his failure at Spring Hill, Hood pursued Schofield to the north and encountered the Federals at Franklin behind strong fortifications. In the Battle of Franklin on November 30, Hood ordered almost 20,000 of his men to assault the Federal works before Schofield could withdraw across the Harpeth River and escape to Nashville. The Union soldiers repulsed multiple assaults and inflicted over 6,000 casualties on the Confederates, which included a large number of key Confederate generals, doing heavy damage to the leadership of the Army of Tennessee.