

THE FILSON CLUB HISTORY QUARTERLY

Vol. 29

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, OCTOBER, 1955

No. 4

ZOLLIFFER AND THE BATTLE OF MILL SPRINGS*

BY R. GERALD MCMURTRY

Lincoln Memorial Institute, Harrogate, Tennessee

"Does Liberty still thrive in the mountains of Tennessee?" That was the question President-elect Abraham Lincoln asked peace delegate Felix Kirk Zollicoffer one day in Washington.¹

We do not know Zollicoffer's reply. It was not a difficult question except that the two men had entirely different concepts of the meaning of the word "liberty." Events would in time reveal the loyalty of the people of the Southern mountains for the Union according to Lincoln's definition of the term.

Zollicoffer was of Swiss extraction and by trade a printer and newspaper publisher. A native of Tennessee, born May 19, 1812, he had seen service in the Seminole War; which, undoubtedly, built more political reputations than military strategists. He was a Whig politician which would have provided him something in common with Abe Lincoln had their paths crossed in the 1840's rather than 1860's. After holding numerous state offices he was elected to Congress in 1853 and served continuously for three terms. He retired from public life in 1859 but was chosen as a delegate to the peace conference of 1861.² He was a man of noble bearing with piercing eyes, and he wore a neatly trimmed mustache and chin whiskers.

In February, 1861, Zollicoffer was exchanging pleasantries with Lincoln. In July of the same year he entered the Confederate service with the rank of brigadier-general.³ Time would prove that he was

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This address was first delivered before The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky, on December 6, 1954. Later it was delivered before The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on April 13, 1955; The Civil War Round Table of Chicago, Illinois, on April 14, 1955; and The Abraham Lincoln-Civil War Round Table of Detroit, Michigan, on April 15, 1955.

not a man of large military ability; although, he appears to have had considerable capacity as an organizer. His attack on Camp Wildcat on October 21, 1861, was his first obvious blunder; however, he referred to the action as reconnaissance.⁴

Lincoln never doubted the loyalty of the East Tennesseans, even though Jefferson Davis sent Zollicoffer to Knoxville to quell the pro-union martial spirit whipped up by Andrew Johnson, Horace Maynard, and "Parson" Brownlow.⁵

The general's first task was to strategically distribute 10,000 green troops at mountain gaps and river bridges to wall off the pro-union Tennesseans from outside help. With Cumberland Gap in his control, Zollicoffer's troops were soon spilling over into Kentucky brushing up against home guards who were trying unsuccessfully to preserve the Commonwealth's neutrality and eager to "whup both sides."⁶

Soon this general from Nashville had troops in the Log Mountains in what is now Bell County, Kentucky, at Cumberland Ford and was reaching out toward Barbourville and the Goose Creek Saltworks near Manchester.⁷ Naturally, Zollicoffer's activities along the Old Wilderness Road were bitterly resented by the Union forces at Camp Dick Robinson near Danville.⁸ The brigade there got a new commander on September 10, 1861—Brigadier-General George H. Thomas, who later proved to be one of the truly great Union generals of the war.⁹

Thomas sent strong advance units of the Union Army to check the invading Confederates along the Wilderness Road, and a skirmish occurred at Camp Wildcat near Livingston, Kentucky, where the mountain trail forked in the Rockcastle hills, 13 miles beyond where the Mount Vernon road crossed the Rockcastle River.¹⁰ On October 21, Zollicoffer under concealment of a dense forest reached the intrenched Union camp, a natural fortification that was almost inaccessible.¹¹ You admire his bravery! With a portion of his command he reconnoitered in force under heavy fire for several hours, from heights on the right, left, and in front.¹² His men fought well, approaching with their hats on their fixed bayonets to within about 50 yards of Union muskets with shouts and cheers. Apparently the Confederates used some commando tactics declaring themselves "Friends," "Union Men," and shouting "All right!" and at the next moment leveling their guns and firing. However, one Confederate officer's report indicates that these men were lost and confused and apparently believed at first the Union force to be Confederate.¹³ After a loss of about 11 killed and 42 wounded, Zollicoffer became satisfied that he could not storm the fortification except by immense exposure to a galling and deadly fire. The Seventeenth Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers bore the brunt of the

battle. The firing continued through the night, and about 2 o'clock in the morning the Confederates were in retreat.¹⁴

The Union forces lost about 6 killed and 23 wounded, and the Confederates captured 21 prisoners and about 100 guns and 4 horses. Approximately 600 men out of a force of 5,000 bore the brunt of the attack. Zollicoffer's forces were equally as large, and if the terrain had been more favorable, a real battle might have occurred at Wildcat.

General Thomas did not personally observe the skirmish at the mountain stronghold. Brigadier-General Albin Schoepf and Acting Brigadier-General S. P. Carter were in command of the Union forces, and the Kentuckians under Colonel Theophilus T. Garrard did most of the fighting.¹⁵ One authority has pointed out that later Zollicoffer drove Schoepf out of the Rockcastle hills in "a panic retreat that came to be known as 'the Wild Cat Stampede' and his tarnished prestige was in some measure restored." However, this was of little significance to the overall military picture. General Thomas' report of the action to Brigadier-General W. T. Sherman, Commander of the Department of the Cumberland, contains an interesting statement: "I find a rumor in the papers that General Lee will supersede Zollicoffer. If he does, I should wish to be prepared for him fully."¹⁶ Evidently, Thomas did not underestimate the abilities of Lee; but, in the light of subsequent events, it is difficult to picture Lee fighting a bush-whacking war in the Kentucky mountains.

Falling back to Camp Buckner at Cumberland Ford, Zollicoffer reached the conclusion that the mountain roads to Cumberland Gap would soon be almost impossible to travel and difficult to hold. He immediately resolved to strengthen the pass at Cumberland Gap and then meet the enemy at any route he might choose to launch an attack.

There were several main roads by which the Union forces could invade East Tennessee. One route was by way of Cumberland Gap where Zollicoffer for a time concentrated most of his force. The most westerly road was by way of Monticello in Kentucky leading off in the direction of Jamestown in Tennessee.¹⁷ With so many routes to patrol Zollicoffer had to eventually disperse his forces in many different areas to observe and scout the roads. During these fall and winter months he carried on an active correspondence with his superiors. Seldom did he refer to his enemy as Federal forces—rather, he called the Northern army "Lincolmites" or "Tories," and he did not often accord his foe the consideration of a capital "T." On the other hand, the Union officers whom Zollicoffer opposed referred to his army in their official reports as "a vandal horde of secession and treason" or as "those wicked and unnatural men who are seeking without cause to destroy the Union of our fathers." Colonel John M. Harlan in command of the 10th

Kentucky, a Union Force, was quite adept at hurling such invectives.¹⁸ Evidently, the war was too new for the belligerents to assume an objective view of the situation.

On November 15, General Don Carlos Buell assumed command of the Department of the Ohio, and one of his first orders directed General Thomas (named commander of the First Division on December 6, 1861) to concentrate his forces at Lebanon, Kentucky.¹⁹ This same month Buell reviewed Thomas' command at Lebanon, and advised him about the possibility of an attack on Zollicoffer who had entrenched his forces in a strong position in the bend of the Cumberland River opposite Mill Springs a few miles southwest of Somerset, Kentucky. The Confederate entrenchments were quite comfortable consisting of about 150 log and mud huts, some very well built with good chimneys and other conveniences. The camp, about a mile in circumference, was protected with heavy earth and timber breastworks. His overall position was that of an angle formed by the junction of Fishing Creek and the Cumberland River with his line of fortification extended to each stream.²⁰ This position was about 10 miles below the head of steamboat navigation of the Cumberland, and the Confederates received supplies from Nashville by way of the river.²¹ The entrenchments were comfortable, yet it was believed that a battery emplaced at "Point A" on Thomas' map could command both Mill Springs and Zollicoffer's position.

Zollicoffer described fully in official reports the difficulties he encountered in crossing the river opposite Mill Springs which was at flood tide. He had hoped to capture ferryboats along the Cumberland River between Burkesville and Mill Springs with his advance forces. The results were disappointing, and he had to build boats.²² His whole force at this time consisted of 7½ regiments, 18 cavalry companies, and 1 six pounder battery of 8 guns. In order to defend the south bank of the river Zollicoffer left 2 regiments, some cavalry, and 2 pieces of artillery for that purpose at Mill Springs. Breastworks were also constructed south of the river for the protection of his rear. However, an entrenchment with a river to one's rear has been a violation of military principal since the First Punic War.

Brigadier-General Schoepf's command, the 1st Brigade of Kentucky Volunteers, was not sufficiently strong to prevent the crossing of the Cumberland River. He had been ordered not only to resist Zollicoffer's crossing but to prevent him from collecting the means of crossing. Schoepf dispersed his forces with considerable attention to his position east and west with troops at Fishing Creek, which runs south into the Cumberland River 5 miles above Mill Springs, to prevent a flank movement.²³

All the while clashes occurred between the advance forces of both sides and several men were killed, wounded, and captured. The Federal side for example suffered the capture of Major F. W. Helveti of the 1st Kentucky Cavalry and Captain Prime of New York, an engineer officer of Buell's staff, along with an unidentified corporal who had been too venturesome in making observations. After a chase of more than a mile both officers were severely wounded and Zollicoffer knowing that Captain Prime was a member of Buell's staff considered him quite an important prisoner.

General Thomas, ordered by Buell to form a junction with Schoepf, left Lebanon with his command on or about January 7, 1862, marching his men over a good turnpike to Columbia, but beyond that point he encountered mud roads. It rained incessantly and required 8 to 10 days to advance 40 miles.²⁴ Thomas was advised by Buell to move against Zollicoffer's left and endeavor to cut him off from his bridge while Schoepf was to attack Zollicoffer's front. Such a blow was to be vigorous and decided. There was to be no delay after arrival. For many of the Volunteers this was to be their first campaign, and they were destined to hear for the first time shots fired in a brother's war.

On January 17 Thomas reached Logan's Cross Roads which was 10 miles north of Zollicoffer's brigade headquarters at Beech Grove located on the north side of the Cumberland River opposite Mill Springs and about the same distance west of Somerset. Shortly before Thomas was moving in the direction of the Confederate forces with no apparent plan of attack, Major General George B. Crittenden, a son of Senator John J. Crittenden and a brother of Thomas L. Crittenden, a Major General in the Union army, arrived at Zollicoffer's camp. He outranked Zollicoffer as division commander and assumed command on January 3.²⁵

Crittenden decided to take the initiative before Thomas could join Schoepf or bring up his regiments in the rear. Crittenden was not impressed with Zollicoffer's position, a position that should never have been established in the first place; and he did not want an enterprising enemy attack the Confederate camp. It was not tenable against a strong force and the means of crossing the troublesome Fishing Creek in its deep ravine 200 to 300 feet deep, swollen from recent rains, were so inadequate that a withdrawal would result in a great loss. He also believed that flooded Fishing Creek would prevent any of Schoepf's command from joining that of Thomas.

Crittenden, after a council of war, ordered a movement to begin at midnight on the 18th. This was the darkest night and the coldest and most pitiless and persistent rain these raw soldiers had ever experienced.

It was also a stormy night and by daylight at approximately 6 o'clock A. M., after a march of 9 miles over muddy roads, the Confederates encountered Union pickets about 8 miles west of Somerset. This led to a determined stand on the part of the Union forces with a report going immediately to General Thomas of the surprise Confederate movement. This was to mark the beginning of a Sunday battle to be known by some in history as the "Battle of the Cumberland" or the "Battle of Somerset." The Confederates called it the "Battle of Fishing Creek" and the Union Forces called it the "Battle of Mill Springs." It might better be described as the "Engagement at Logan's Cross Roads on Fishing Creek near Mill Springs on the Cumberland River in Pulaski County, near Somerset, Kentucky."²⁶ The battle might also be called Crittenden's gross blunder.

Colonel Mahlan D. Manson of the 10th Indiana Infantry and commanding the 2nd Brigade was one of the first Union officers to receive the news by courier of the attack on the picket companies. He immediately caused the long roll to be beaten by his drummer, and his regiment was quickly formed to support the picket companies. Colonel Manson then rode three-quarters of a mile to the camp of the 4th Kentucky Regiment. He awakened Colonel Speed S. Fry and ordered him to form his regiment in hot haste and proceed toward the enemy.²⁷ Apparently it was Manson who turned the outpost line into the main line of resistance. This was about 6:30 A. M. Fry aroused his weary troops, who had made a muddy march the day before, into forming ranks rapidly with a double-quick march in the direction of the firing.

Fry moved so rapidly that upon coming in sight of the enemy he had no superior officer to place him in position for battle. However, he had been directed to take a position in the wood on the left of the 10th Indiana, which he carried out. But acting largely on his own initiative he took a position on elevated ground about one hour after the battle had started. His position was along a fence in the edge of a wood with his right resting near the Mill Springs Road. Fry's command numbered about 400 men. In the meantime the 2nd Minnesota and the 9th Ohio arrived (nine companies of each) and in good order were put into the fight under General Thomas' personal direction.²⁸ Thomas' delayed arrival on the battlefield has been attributed by some as due to slowness in getting into his new uniform.

Across an open field through which ran a ravine, Fry could see the enemy advancing from the shelter of a wood on the opposite side. Meanwhile, Zollicoffer had deployed his brigade and was forcing the Union troops backward. Fry was subjected to an unusually severe attack. The ravine in the open field gave the Confederates shelter before

delivering their concentrated fire. This distinct advantage enjoyed by the Confederates angered Fry, and he mounted the fence and in stentorian tones denounced them as dastards or something worse and defied them to stand up and fight like men.²⁹ Evidently this bold denouncement had the desired effect as there was a lull in the firing. Fry wanted a better view of the Confederate movement so he rode a short distance to the right. Due to the moisture laden atmosphere, the wood was full of smoke and visibility was difficult. Also the underbrush in parts of the field was so thick that a man was hardly visible a musket's length away. Satisfied with a better view of the situation, he started to return to his original position. On the way back he encountered a mounted officer who wore a waterproof coat without insignia. Approaching each other on horseback until their knees touched the stranger said to Fry: "We must not fire on our own men," and nodding in the direction of the left he said, "Those are our men."

Fry replied, "Of course not. I would not do so intentionally." All the while turning his horse to move in the direction of his command. Suddenly another mounted man (identified by some as Major Fogg and by others as Major Ewing) came riding from the wooded area and fired at Fry wounding his horse. Fry was now able to accurately size up the situation. He fired at the man who had accosted him and Fry's men observing the peculiar incident fired at the same time. The shots were fatal. The rider in the white waterproof coat fell dead pierced by two pistol shots and one minie ball. The body was then dragged out of the way of passing artillery and wagons and lay by the fence the face upturned to the sky and bespattered with mud from the feet of marching men and horses. The Confederates attempted to get the body but failed. Union forces finally bore off in a wagon the body—the body of General Felix Kirk Zollicoffer.³⁰ According to one surgeon who performed a rather cursory post-mortem, the minie ball pierced the left breast passing through the heart and coming out at the angle of the scapula left a hole large enough to place your fist. Neither pistol shot was the immediate cause of Zollicoffer's death.³¹

One account states that Corporal James Swan of Company H, 10th Indiana, killed Zollicoffer with an Enfield rifle. Swan was a dead shot and it was claimed that he fired the shot that pierced Zollicoffer's heart.³²

General Crittenden in his official report gave a different account of Zollicoffer's death. He stated that General Zollicoffer rode up to the 19th Tennessee commanded by Colonel D. H. Cummings, and ordered him to cease firing under the impression that he was firing on one of his own regiments. He then rode forward toward the Federal troops, as if to give orders, when he was killed just as he discovered his mistake.³³

A controversy ensued as to who killed Zollicoffer somewhat like the question as to who killed Tecumseh.³⁴ The incident, naturally enough, was not mentioned by Colonel Fry in his official report of the battle.³⁵ Incidentally, Fry's horse died.

This was a disastrous day for Zollicoffer because two of his staff officers, Lieutenants Henry Fogg and Evan Shields, were also mortally wounded.³⁶ Crittenden tried to rally the men, stunned by the general's death, by ordering forward General William H. Carroll's Brigade and giving orders for a general advance. Colonel D. H. Cummings of the 19th Tennessee Regiment was appointed to lead the 1st Brigade after Zollicoffer fell.³⁷

Meanwhile, Thomas re-grouped his forces in order to oppose Crittenden's advance. While some Federal batteries were overrun and had to be withdrawn to the rear, the Union forces pushed the Confederates back through open ground. Thomas' disposition of his troops began to tell even though there was little opportunity for the effective use of artillery, a superior arm enjoyed by the Union force.³⁸ After stout resistance Thomas succeeded in placing one of his regiments on the flank of the Confederate line, and when a charge was ordered the whole Confederate force was driven into confusion.

In driving the Confederates back there was a slight change in the direction of retreat with the Southern soldiers halting at a fence to make a stand. Apparently the bitterest hand to hand fighting revolved around the rail fences in the fields. When the 9th Ohio, made up largely of Germans, few of whom could speak English, under orders of Colonel McCook, heard a "Charge bayonet," which order was repeated by Lieutenant-Colonel Kise of the 10th Indiana, they moved forward with the force of an avalanche. The bayonet charge against the Confederate left caused them to give way in confusion, and they dissolved into a disorderly rout.³⁹ There was considerable hand to hand fighting throughout and at one time during the course of the battle the combatants were so close that Union forces were able to bayonet the Confederates through one of the rail fences. The Mississippians were said to have been armed with immense knives which were ineffective against bayonets.

Thomas accurately sensing the situation pushed forward in pursuit and scattered a remnant of Confederate cavalry attempting to make a stand. Then with the Confederate retreat degenerating into a panic the roads were strewn with pieces of artillery, hundreds of muskets, and haversacks filled with rations of corn pone and bacon. The engagement at Logan's field lasted about 3½ hours. According to Crittenden's report, the battle must have continued about an hour after Zollicoffer fell.⁴⁰

At first the Union soldiers, who had been on half rations for some days, were afraid to eat the corn pone and bacon. These were the early days of the war with current stories of "rebel atrocities," of poisoned wells and contaminated food. Soon hunger gave way to a tasting of the contents of the haversacks and the food was seized upon with avidity. This fortunate windfall for the Union soldiers had a correspondingly depressing effect on the Confederates, so much so that even Crittenden mentioned the loss of food in his report.⁴¹

Moving upon the retreating Confederates after a 10 mile pursuit, Union batteries, beginning about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, kept up a constant cannonade of Zollicoffer's entrenchments while other forces fired upon the ferry to prevent the crossing of the troops. The Union forces in the meantime received reinforcements and an assault was ordered for daybreak. At daybreak on the 20th Colonel Harlan of the 10th Kentucky and Colonel Steedman of the 14th Ohio arrived to take possession of the Confederate fortifications.⁴² A little steamer, "Noble Ellis," and several small barges, apparently still engaged in ferrying troops, were fired upon with the result that the Confederates abandoned them and set them on fire.⁴³

Upon reaching the Confederate entrenchments the Union forces found them abandoned; however, they had seen soldiers in and about them shortly before launching an attack. They were evidently decoys used for the purpose of confusing the Union troops. Crittenden's hasty and largely unorganized retreat in the dead of night was really a remarkable feat, yet his losses in guns and equipment were tremendous. In a bottom near the ferry crossing at White Oak Creek were found 11 pieces of artillery (including 8 six pounders and 2 parrott guns), with their caissons, battery-wagons, and forges hitched up to teams and ready to move, more than 150 wagons and over 1,000 horses and mules. Many of the horses were saddled and bridled. The rout was complete. The retreating force was successful in getting 2 pieces of artillery and upwards of 50 wagons across the river, but they too were abandoned. Two of the cannons captured by Union forces had been taken by the Confederates at Bull Run.⁴⁴ As the condition of the entrenchments indicated a panic Colonel Fry asked General Thomas why he did not send in a demand for surrender. Thomas replied: "Hang it, Fry, I never once thought of it."⁴⁵

With all the boats destroyed immediate pursuit was impossible and Crittenden's men were so dispersed that their capture in any sizable numbers was doubtful. However, means were improvised for the crossing of the 14th Ohio for reconnaissance and to secure abandoned property.⁴⁶

Thomas reported 39 killed (although other reports indicate 40) and 207 wounded with 15 captured—an aggregate of 262. Wounded Federal officers included Colonel R. L. McCook of the 9th Ohio, Commander of the 3rd Brigade and his aide, Lieutenant A. S. Burt, 18 U. S. Infantry, and Colonel Speed S. Fry, Commander of the 4th Regiment of Kentucky Volunteers.⁴⁷

Crittenden's report indicated a loss of 125 killed and 309 wounded with 99 missing—an aggregate of 533 men.⁴⁸ The only general to fall in this action was Zollicoffer. Another popular officer to lose his life was Lieutenant Bailie Peyton, Jr., commanding Company A of Battle's Tennessee regiment. He was killed in the heat of the action.⁴⁹

General Thomas' entire command at the time of the battle numbered about 4000 men, but the Federal forces actually engaged probably did not exceed 2500. Crittenden had available about 4000 effectives, all of which were not necessarily used. Crittenden's offensive action was dulled somewhat by the death of Zollicoffer which was a severe psychological blow for the Confederates.⁵⁰ Also his men were largely armed with flint-lock muskets which missed fire in the drenching rain and were practically useless. Certainly Thomas' low casualty list proves the ineffectiveness of Confederate fire power.⁵¹ Many of the Federal forces were armed with new Sharps' rifles.

Besides the property already mentioned abandoned by the Confederates, a large amount of ammunition in unopened boxes, commissary stores, hospital stores, blankets, tents, entrenching tools, camp and garrison equipage, muskets (mostly flint-lock), subsistence stores in amounts sufficient to serve the Federal force three days, and five stands of colors were seized in "Camp Zollicoffer." The soldiers found officers' trunks along the river bank, letters, pictures, watches, belts, pistols, swords, and clothing.⁵²

The Confederate commander reported that of one Confederate battalion all deserted except 25.⁵³ Then, too, the Confederate sick-list while on retreat, in the direction of Monticello, Kentucky, grew to great proportions due to lack of food and fatigue, with the result that this army was no longer an effective fighting force. All the while the Southern newspapers professed to doubt the news of the affair. Even more surprising, Northern newspapers professed to believe this battle would inaugurate the close of the rebellion, or to use their words it was "the beginning of the end."⁵⁴ The battle of Mill Springs made good reading, of which the North had not had too much.

Retreating from Mill Springs by way of Monticello, Crittenden established Division Headquarters at Gainesborough (Jackson County), Tennessee, and then moved on to Camp Fogg (Smith County), Tennessee, where on February 13, 1862, he notified his assistant Adjutant

General that his division was "refurnished and drilling" ready for any service to which it might be assigned.⁵⁵

General Crittenden stated that the loss of Zollicoffer was a severe blow to the Confederate cause, the army, and himself. "I found him wise in counsel and heroic in action." An eyewitness of the battle said that both armies were courageous up until the death of Zollicoffer and that no decided gain had been made by either side. The witness continued, "If Thomas had been killed instead of Zollicoffer, the opposite outcome of the battle would have been true."⁵⁶

The wildest excitement resulted from the Confederate defeat. The battle having been fought just over the boundary line, and one hundred miles from Knoxville, created great alarm in that city. They expected the Federal army would enter within a few days. Nashville underwent great consternation and grief. Zollicoffer, their first citizen and protector was dead.⁵⁷ Young Bailie Peyton, the son of Hon. Bailie Peyton, had likewise lost his life. In many homes in Nashville and surrounding environs, there was weeping and lamentations over the loss of Tennessee's noble sons. No Southern city had ever sent forth braver sons than those who followed Zollicoffer—and they went with such exultant confidence and manly spirit to the fatal field of Fishing Creek.⁵⁸

Of what significance was this little battle? It was the first real victory for the national cause since the Union disaster at Bull Run six months before.⁵⁹ It created the first break in the Confederate line in Kentucky. A road was opened for a Federal advance into East Tennessee. But the scarcity of provisions, the unfavorable condition of the roads, the difficulty of crossing the river made progress in that direction impracticable. Eventually the whole plan of Union strategy was abandoned. Carter was ordered with his brigade against Cumberland Gap and Thomas was ordered to rejoin Buell's main column. So the east Tennessee expedition, which had been devised by General William Nelson, approved by General George B. McClellan and put into motion by General George H. Thomas, was scrapped.⁶⁰

Once the full significance of the loss of the Battle of Mill Springs was fully understood by Southern leaders, Crittenden was severely censured and among other charges was that of intemperance. He was virtually kept under arrest for a full year.⁶¹ He then resigned his command but continued to serve the Confederate cause as a volunteer. His rank was that of Colonel for the rest of the war which was just as good as General in Kentucky. General Crittenden never quite caught the fancy of the public although he conducted himself well during the battle and was one of the last to leave the field in retreat. Likely, newspaper editors were intrigued with the Nashville general's Swiss name. The Battle at Mill Springs was "Zolly's fight" with some newspaper

accounts not even mentioning the name of the division commander who outranked the hero. And in Federal camps the soldiers sang:

Zollicoffer's dead
The last words he said,
'Here's another wildcat a coming.'
and
Up jumped Colonel Fry,
He hit him in the eye,
and sent him to the happy land of canaan.⁶²

The body of the 50-year-old general was laid out on a board in a tent at Somerset and his remains became an object of curiosity to the raw civilian soldiers who had never had a close-up look at a general, Union or Confederate. So the soldiers stripped the corpse of its clothing. One soldier wrote home that he had gotten a piece of Zollicoffer's vest with a bullet hole in it.⁶³ After the cloth souvenirs were exhausted, soldiers then obtained locks of hair. A newspaper correspondent viewed the remains and wrote that "He was a pretty fine looking man—about five feet ten inches high, long face, fair skin, high forehead, large Roman nose, blue eyes, small mouth and good teeth." He also reported that there was no hair upon the face. Colonel Connell who identified the body for Thomas stated that "Zollicoffer's face bore no expression such as is usually found on those who fall in battle—no malace, no reckless hate, not even a shadow of physical pain. It was calm, placid, noble. But I never looked on a countenance so marked with sadness. A deep dejection had settled on it."⁶⁴

Arrangements were eventually made to send the embalmed remains to Nashville by way of Lebanon and Louisville to be escorted by a captured Confederate surgeon, D. B. Cliff, who was to effect his exchange by the release of a Union prisoner.⁶⁵ Zollicoffer's fine horse, with a hole in its ear received when the general fell, was also sent to Nashville.

In late January and early February last honors were paid by the citizens of Nashville.⁶⁶ Zollicoffer's body lay in state in the capital building where large numbers of people passed by his bier. Episcopalian funeral services were conducted on February 2 by Bishop Otey and he was buried in the Old City Cemetery.⁶⁷

No Southern city had ever sent forth braver sons than those who followed Zollicoffer—and they went with such exultant confidence and manly spirit to the fatal field of Fishing Creek.⁶⁸

THE UNION ARMY

Brig. Gen. George H. Thomas

SECOND BRIGADE—Col. Mahlon D. Manson

10th Ind. Lieut.-Col. William C. Kise

4th Ky. Col. Speed S. Fry (W)

10th Ky. Col. John M. Harlan } Engaged only in pursuit of
14th Ohio Col. James B. Steedman } the Confederates

Second Brigade Loss K. 19, W. 127=146

THIRD BRIGADE—Col. Robert L. McCook (W)

2nd Minn. Col. Horatio P. Van Cleve

9th Ohio Maj. Gustave Kammerling

Third Brigade Loss K. 18, W. 61=79

TWELFTH BRIGADE—Acting Brig. Gen. Samuel P. Carter

12th Ky. Col. William A. Haskins

1st Tenn. Col. Robert K. Byrd

2nd Tenn. Col. J. P. T. Carter

1st Ky. Cavalry Col. Frank Walford

Brigade Loss K. 3, W. 19, M. 15=37

ARTILLERY

Battery B 1st Ohio—Capt. William E. Standart

Battery C 1st Ohio—Capt. Dennis Kenny, Jr.

9th Ohio Battery —Capt. Henry S. Wetmore

CAMP GUARD

D, F, and K Michigan Engineers and Mechanics—Lieut.-Col. K. A. Hunton

A 38th Ohio—Capt. Charles Greenwood

NOTE

Brig.-Gen. A. Schoepf joined Thomas on the evening of the battle after the fighting ceased with the 17th, 31st, and 38th Ohio.

THE CONFEDERATE ARMY

Maj. General George B. Crittenden

FIRST BRIGADE—Brig.-Gen. F. K. Zollicoffer (K)

Col. D. H. Cummings

15th Miss. Lieut.-Col. E. C. Walthall

19th Tenn. Col. D. H. Cummings

Lieut.-Col. Francis M. Walker

20th Tenn. Col. Joel A. Battle

25th Tenn. Col. S. S. Stanton (W)

Tenn. Battery Capt. A. M. Rutledge

Independent Co. Tenn. Cavalry—Capt. W. S. Bledsoe

Capt. T. C. Sanders

First Brigade Loss K. 98, W. 265, M. 66=429

SECOND BRIGADE—Gen. Wm. H. Carroll

16th Ala.	Col. Wm. B. Wood
17th Tenn.	Lieut.-Col. T. C. H. Miller
28th Tenn.	Col. J. P. Murray
29th Tenn.	Col. Saml. Powell (W)
	Major Horace Rice

Tenn. Battery (2 guns)—Capt. Hugh L. W. McClung

4th Battalion Tenn. Cavalry—Lieut.-Col. B. M. Branner

Brigade Loss K. 28, W. 46, M. 29=103

RESERVE

5 Battalion Tenn. Cavalry—Lieut.-Col. George R. McClellan.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Robert L. Kincaid: *The Lincoln Heritage in the Cumberlands*. Institute Press, Los Angeles, 1951, p. 6.

² Wilson & Fiske: *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*. Vol. VI, p. 662.

³ "Gen. Felix K. Zollicoffer was placed in command July 26, '61, of the district of East Tennessee with special instructions to watch the loyal people and repel any invasion of East Tennessee by the Union forces, then on the borders of the state about Cumberland Gap and westward along the mountains." Alexander, Eckel: *History of the Fourth Tennessee Cavalry*. Privately printed, 1929, p. 12.

⁴ *Official Records: The War of The Rebellion*. Washington, 1882, Series 1, Vol. IV, p. 210.

⁵ Thomas William Humes: *The Loyal Mountaineers of Tennessee*. Knoxville, Ogden Brothers & Co., 1888, p. 122.

⁶ Oliver P. Temple: *East Tennessee and The Civil War*. The Robert Clarke Company, Cincinnati, 1899. See Chapter XVII, "Burning The Bridges," pp. 366-387.

⁷ "The rebels have taken Manchester, pulled down the flag, tore it up, and placed theirs on the same pole. The messenger says they turned back from Manchester, taking from one of the furnaces fifty wagon loads of salt." Letter of Col. T. T. Garrard at Camp Wildcat to General George H. Thomas at Camp Dick Robinson, September 30, 1861. *Official Records: Series 1, Vol. IV*, p. 282.

⁸ *Battles and Leaders of The Civil War*, Edited by R. U. Johnson and C. C. Buell. The Century Co., New York, 1884 & 1887. "Holding Kentucky For The Union" by R. M. Kelly, Colonel U. S. V., Vol. 1, part II, pp. 382-383.

⁹ Special Order, No. 3. Hdqrs. Dept. of the Cumberland, Louisville, Kentucky, September 10, 1861. *Official Records: Series 1, Vol. IV*, p. 257.

¹⁰ Richard H. Collins: *History of Kentucky*. John P. Morton & Co., Louisville, 1924. Vol. II, "Rockcastle County," p. 692.

¹¹ Thomas B. Van Horne: *History of the Army of The Cumberland, Its Organization, Campaigns, and Battles*. Robert Clarke & Co., 1875, Vol. 1, p. 39.

¹² William E. Barton: *President Lincoln*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1933. Chapter XXIX, "Wildcat Mountain and Mill Springs," Vol. 1, pp. 357-361.

¹³ Letter of Taz W. Newman, Colonel Commanding Seventeenth Regiment Tennessee Volunteers to F. K. Zollicoffer, near Rockcastle Heights, October 21, 1861. *Official Records: Series 1, Vol. IV*, pp. 213-214.

¹⁴ R. R. Hancock: *Hancock's Diary: Or A History of The Second Tennessee Confederate Cavalry* . . . etc. Brandon Printing Company, Nashville, 1887, p. 62.

¹⁵ "The Thirty-third Indiana Infantry, Under Colonel John Coburn and the First Kentucky Cavalry, under Colonel Frank Walford, did most of the fighting on the part of the enemy." *Ibid*, p. 62.

¹⁸ Letter of General George H. Thomas to General W. T. Sherman, October 22, 1861. *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. IV, p. 206.

¹⁹ "Zollicoffer . . . marched from Cumberland Gap through Jacksboro, Huntsville, and Jamestown, Tennessee, made his appearance with a strong force at Monticello, Kentucky, and threw forward a detachment to the Cumberland River." Thomas B. Van Horne: *"History of the Army of The Cumberland, Its Organization, Campaigns, and Battles,"* Vol. 1, p. 47.

²⁰ *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, p. 90.

²¹ By General Orders No. 97, War Department, issued November 9th, the Department of the Cumberland was discontinued, and the Department of Ohio constituted embracing the States of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky (east of the Cumberland River), and Tennessee, and Brigadier General D. C. Buell was assigned to its command. Thomas B. Van Horne: *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 46.

²² See map "Fortifications on The Cumberland." *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, p. 946.

²³ See map *Harper's Weekly*, February 8, 1862, p. 87.

²⁴ R. R. Hancock: *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²⁵ On December 9, 1861, R. R. Hancock recorded in his diary that "Zollicoffer had only four and a half regiments of infantry and six pieces of artillery on the north side of the river, while Schoepf had seven regiments of infantry and ten pieces of artillery at Somerset. And in place of being near Fishing Creek, seven miles from Somerset, he was encamped near the river sixteen miles from that place." *Ibid*, p. 94.

²⁶ There is considerable disagreement among authorities as to the date Thomas left Lebanon and the number of days required to reach Logan's Cross-roads. He marched by way of Campbellsville, Greensburg, Columbia, and Webb's (Logan's) Cross-roads.

²⁷ R. R. Hancock: *op. cit.*, p. 106.

²⁸ Currier & Ives, 152 Nassau Street, New York, published two lithographs (the scene is identical but in different colors) with identical titles, "Battle of Mill Springs, Ky., Jan. 19th, 1862." The sub-titles are different. One is "Terrific bayonet charge of the 9th Ohio Volunteers (Col. McCook) and total defeat of the Rebel Army under Gen'l Zollicoffer by the Gallant Soldiers of the West," and the other sub-title is "Total rout of the Rebel Army by the Gallant Soldiers of the West Under Gen'l's Thomas and Schoepf." In collection of Lincoln Memorial University at Harrogate, Tennessee. *Harper's Weekly*, February 8, 1862, has a double-page drawing of the battle with the title, "The Battle of Somerset, or Mill Springs, Kentucky, January 19, 1862." Charles Magnus, 12 Frankfort Street, New York, published a series of twelve lithographs on envelopes (3 1/8" x 5 1/2") depicting the Battle of Mill Springs, Kentucky. Number eleven depicts the fall of Zollicoffer. Collection of George N. Malpass, 5401 Ninth Street, North, St. Petersburg, Florida.

²⁹ *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, pp. 83-86.

³⁰ Joseph W. Bishop: *The Story of a Regiment Being a Narrative of the Service of the Second Regiment, Minnesota Veteran Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War of 1861-1865.* St. Paul, privately printed, 1890, p. 39.

³¹ *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Vol. 1, Part II, p. 388.

³² John G. Nicolay & John Hay: *Abraham Lincoln, A History*. The Century Co., New York, 1886 & 1890. Vol. 5, pp. 116-117.

³³ *The Crisis*, Columbus, Ohio, February 5, 1862, p. 16. A lithograph depicting the death of Zollicoffer is to be found in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol. 1, Part II, p. 546.

³⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, March 8, 1862, p. 151.

³⁵ Oliver P. Temple: *East Tennessee And The Civil War*, p. 447. *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, p. 107. Another version of the fall of Zollicoffer is as follows: "General Zollicoffer, having ordered the advance of his little command, rode forward with several of his staff officers through the forest to inspect the position of the enemy and passed into the Mill Springs road beyond the Federal line of battle. Discovering his mistake, he endeavored to retrace his route to his own command, but had proceeded only a few hundred yards when he found himself directly in front of the Fourth Kentucky Federal Regiment, under command of Colonel Speed S. Fry. The Federals, who were expecting the arrival of a new brigade commander, mistook General Zollicoffer for their new brigadier, his uniform being enveloped in an oilcloth overcoat, and he having come from the direction of Somerset, or Columbia. General Zollicoffer quickly discovered his mistake, and to put a bold front on the matter, rode up to Colonel Fry, and after the

usual salutations; started down the road, accompanied by his staff, in front of Colonel Fry's command, and about thirty feet in advance of it. He had not proceeded far when Major Henry Fogg (it was said by some persons who were engaged in this battle that it was Major Ewing, and not Major Fogg, who fired the shot) of his staff, drew his pistol and fired toward the Federal line. In a moment a volley from the Federal line was discharged, instantly killing General Zollicoffer and Lieutenant Evan Shields, and mortally wounding Major Fogg." Thomas A. Head: *Campaigns and Battles of the Sixteenth Regiment Tennessee Volunteers in the War Between the States*. Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House. Nashville, 1885, pp. 303-304.

⁸⁴ *The Crisis*, February 12, 1862, p. 20.

⁸⁵ *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, pp. 87-88.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 109.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 107.

⁸⁸ *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol. 1, part II, p. 389.

⁸⁹ Thomas B. Van Horne: *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 56. For a condensed plan of the Battle of Mill Springs see *Harper's Weekly*, March 8, 1862, pp. 150-151.

⁹⁰ "For an hour now the Fifteenth Mississippi, under Lieutenant-Colonel Walthall, and the Twentieth Tennessee, under Col. Joel A. Battle, of my center and right, had been struggling with the superior force of the enemy." *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, p. 107.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 109.

⁹² *Ibid*, pp. 88-90.

⁹³ W. J. McMurray: *History of the Twentieth Volunteer Infantry, C. S. A.*, privately printed, Nashville, 1904, p. 202.

⁹⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, March 8, 1862, p. 151.

⁹⁵ *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol. 1, part II, p. 391.

⁹⁶ "Schœpf's brigade was sent on the 21st across the river to pursue the enemy, but there was no enemy to pursue and he returned." J. W. Bishop: *The Story of a Regiment*, p. 46.

⁹⁷ W. J. McMurray: *op. cit.*, p. 203.

⁹⁸ "It is a singular fact that Zollicoffer's entire command, except one Mississippi and one Alabama regiment, was composed of Tennessee troops, most of them being from middle Tennessee, from the wealthy country around Nashville; while fully one-half of Thomas' men were Kentuckians and East Tennesseans—the First Tennessee (Col. Byrd), and the Second Tennessee (Col. J. P. T. Carter), being in the engagement." Oliver P. Temple: *East Tennessee and The Civil War*, p. 447.

⁹⁹ "One lieutenant, as the firing ceased and the smoke lifted, stood a few feet in front of company 'I' of the 2nd (Minnesota) and calmly faced his fate. His men has disappeared and he was called on to surrender. He made no reply but raising his revolver fired into our ranks with deliberate aim shooting Lieut. Stout through the body. Further parley was useless, and he was shot dead where he stood. He was young Bailie Peyton, the son of a noble sire, whose sword, presented by the citizens of New Orleans for his gallant service in the Mexican War, was here found on the dead body of his son. We met his father later at his home near Gallatin, Tennessee. He was one of the foremost Union men of his state and it was an inexpressible grief to him that his only son should have enlisted in the Rebel cause. He said that his only comfort was, in the reflection that he did not die as a coward." J. W. Bishop: *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁰⁰ "The fall of our gallant leader was a desperate blow to the followers. And unfortunately, General Crittenden had been with the command only sixteen days and General Carroll only four previous to this unfortunate event." R. R. Hancock: *op. cit.*, p. 126.

¹⁰¹ Thomas A. Head: *op. cit.*, p. 311.

¹⁰² *Harper's Weekly*, March 8, 1862, p. 151; *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, pp. 89, 110; "The dead of both armies were buried on the 20th and 21st, and the wounded were cared for as well as the circumstances permitted." J. W. Bishop: *op. cit.*, p. 46; "General Zollicoffer's remains were kindly treated by General Thomas." W. J. McMurray: *op. cit.*, p. 203.

¹⁰³ *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, p. 110.

¹⁰⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, February 8, 1862, p. 82, and February 22, 1862, p. 114.

¹⁰⁵ *Official Records*: Series 1, Vol. VII, p. 110.

¹⁰⁶ Oliver P. Temple: *op. cit.*, pp. 447-448.

" Henry Flash, the gifted Southerner, wrote a poem to commemorate the death of Zollicoffer.

" Thomas A. Head: *op. cit.*, p. 306.

" The Battle of Belmont, Missouri, fought November 7, 1861, was notable because the Union lost 485 men and the Confederates lost 642. It was not a great battle, but in that day any battle which showed a smaller loss on the Union than on the Confederate side had in it an element of cheer. William E. Barton: *President Lincoln*, Vol. I, p. 363.

" *Battles and Leaders of The Civil War*, Vol. I, part II, p. 392.

" General Crittenden demanded a court of inquiry, and it was ordered. R. R. Hancock: *op. cit.*, p. 131.

" William E. Barton: *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 360-361.

" *The Crisis*, February 5, 1862.

" Thomas A. Head: *op. cit.*, p. 304.

" R. R. Hancock: *op. cit.*, p. 125.

" Zollicoffer's wife died in 1857.

" *The Crisis*, February 26, 1862, p. 40.

" Additional sources of information concerning Zollicoffer, Crittenden, Thomas, and Mill Springs can be found in the following publications:

Cist, Henry M.: *The Army of the Cumberland*. (In the series campaigns of the Civil War) Charles Scribner's Sons. 1882.

Cleaves, Freeman: *Rock of Chickamauga—The Life of General George H. Thomas*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1948.

Horn, Stanley F.: *The Army of Tennessee—A Military History*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1941.

O'Connor, Richard: *Thomas: Rock of Chickamauga*. Prentice-Hall, Inc. New York.

Williams, Kenneth P.: *Lincoln finds a General—A Military Study of the Civil War*. Volume 3. The Macmillan Company. 1952.

Tarrant, E.: *The Wild Riders of the First Kentucky Cavalry*. A History of The Regiment in the Great War of Rebellion, 1861-1865. (Privately Published) 1894.