



John F. Brigham



C.S.A.

Corp./1 Lt, Co. F, E , 14th Tennessee Infantry, May 18, 1861 – June 1, 1865



John F. Brigham (b. ~1843 Stewart Co. TN – d. June 1, 1865 Johnson's Island Prison OH) was the son of James M. Brigham (b. June 26, 1813? TN) and Ann James (b. ~1816 TN) who were married in Stewart Co. TN on May 13, 1838. John's father James M. Brigham apparently died sometime after 1857 when his will was filed in Stewart Co. TN and before the 1860 census was taken. In that census his mother Ann Brigham is

listed as head of household while John F. (17 yrs), Thomas (16 yrs), Missouri (13 yrs), George (11 yrs), and Mosely (9 yrs) are the recorded children. John F. Brigham's deceased father, James M. Brigham was apparently the younger brother of Luna Louisa Brigham Byrd (b. 1797; Sullivan Co., TN. - d. Dec. 5, 1875; Stewart Co. TN), making John F. Brigham her nephew and therefore first cousin to her sons George Wesley Byrd and Robert Payne Byrd. John F. Brigham was also the nephew of Albert C. Brigham, Sr. (b. Feb. 10, 1800; prob. in Sullivan Co. TN - d. Nov. 30, 1875, Stewart Co. TN) and the first cousin of James H. Brigham, Marion M. Brigham, and Albert C. Brigham, Jr. there along the Tennessee River in District 8 of Stewart County.

John F. Brigham was enlisted May 18, 1861 at Fort Donelson, Stewart Co. TN by CSA General D.S. Donelson. John was enlisted as a 1st Corporal in Co. F, 14th Tennessee Infantry and was 18 years old at that time. The compiled service record (CSR) documents for 1st Corp. Brigham list him as being present Jan. – Feb. 1862, thus indicating his introduction to military life took place at Camp Duncan near Clarksville, Montgomery Co. TN between June 6 through July 12, 1861. The 14th Tennessee Infantry was then sent to Virginia where Corp. Brigham and his 14th Tennessee comrades were organized into Brig. General S.R. Anderson's Brigade along with the 1st Tennessee and 7th Tennessee regiments of infantry. This brigade was then sent to NW Virginia and endured many hardships as part of General Robert E. Lee's Cheat Mountain, Middle Mountain, and Greenbriar campaigns before they went into Winter quarters at Huntersville, VA on Nov. 7, 1861. On Dec. 27, 1861 1st Corp. Brigham and his brigade arrived at Winchester, VA before being assigned to General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's department on Jan. 1, 1862. The 14th Tennessee Infantry then took part in actions and marches to/from Hancock MD, Romney VA, Fredericksburg VA, and Aquia Creek VA before being sent to Yorktown VA as part of General Joseph E. Johnston's command there. Although not confirmed by his CSR, it appears that 1st Corp. John F. Brigham participated in the Peninsula Campaign and likely fought against Union General McClellan's army at the Battle of Seven Pines, VA (May 31 – June 1, 1862) as part of CSA Brig. General Robert Hatton's brigade. General Hatton was killed in this battle and General James J. Archer took command of the brigade containing 1st Corp. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry on June 3, 1862.

As part of Archer's Brigade, 1st Corp. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry were almost continuously active defending Richmond VA during the famous Seven Days Battles. At Gaines' Mill VA the 14th Tennessee Infantry Adjutant R.C. Bell was mortally wounded on June 27, 1862. After the Seven Days, 1st Corp. John F. Brigham and his 14th Tennessee mates were attached to General A.P. Hill's Division and once again placed in Stonewall Jackson's command, this time positioned at Gordonsville VA. From there, the 14th Tennessee Infantry marched to and fought in the battle of Cedar Mountain VA on Aug. 20, 1862; the 14th Tennessee Lt. Col., G.A. Harrell, was mortally wounded at that time. 1st Corp. John F. Brigham and his regiment were also engaged at 2nd Manassas VA (Aug. 27-31, 1862); this time the Colonel of the 14th Tennessee Infantry, William A. Forbes, was mortally wounded on Aug. 31. According to his CSR, John F. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry also took part at the Battle of Harper's Ferry, VA (Sept. 14 – 15, 1862) where ~12,000 Federal soldiers in the garrison there were captured by the

strategy and tactics of Stonewall Jackson. As part of A.P. Hill's "Lightning Brigade", the 14th Tennessee Infantry force-marched to Sharpsburg MD and helped save the beleaguered Army of Northern Virginia and General Robert E. Lee on Sept. 17, 1862. The new Colonel of the 14th Tennessee Infantry was seriously wounded at this time. On Sept. 21, 1862 1st Corp. Brigham and his comrades helped fight a desperate rear-guard defense of General Lee's retreating Army of Northern Virginia at Shepherdstown, VA on Sept. 21, 1862; afterwards they returned to Winchester, VA to rest and recover from their almost superhuman exertions.

On Nov. 22, 1862 now 1st Sgt. John F. Brigham, Co. F, 14th Tennessee Infantry marched with his comrades to Fredericksburg, VA. As part of Stonewall Jackson's defensive line along the southern part of the Confederate defensive line, Archer's Brigade – including 1st Sgt. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry – were deployed immediately next to a 600 yard-wide wetland that separated the brigades of Archer and Lane. Officers in both Archer's and Lane's brigades strongly objected to this gap in their lines, but were assured by General A.P. Hill that this "*trivial interval*" would be sealed by General Maxcy Gregg's South Carolina Brigade if needed. As described in Francis A. O'Reilly in his 2003 book *The Fredericksburg Campaign*, on Dec. 13, 1862 the Federal brigade of Col. William Sinclair, and commanded by General George Meade, found this dangerous gap in Stonewall Jackson's defensive line and surged through it, puzzled at the sudden lack of Confederate fire being directed at them. Although the Union breach in their lines was noticed, the men in Archer's Brigade wrongly assumed that Maxcy Gregg's brigade would take care of the situation. Soon, additional Union soldiers in Col. Albert Magilton's Brigade joined Sinclair's Brigade and moved unseen through the unguarded opening in A.P. Hill's defensive line. Fortunately, this Federal force was disorganized and lacked effective leadership due to Col. Sinclair being wounded, but they were still able to penetrate all the way to Maxcy Gregg's South Carolina brigade, whose members were resting with their muskets stacked. General Gregg initially restrained his men from firing at the Yankees, sure that these were fellow Confederates, and actually ordered his men to restack their weapons, perhaps due to his being deaf. As General Gregg knocked his men's rifles down and cursed them, a Federal volley shot him off his horse and several General Gregg's spinal cord in the process. After routing Gregg's South Carolinians, the victorious Yankees noticed Archer's Brigade below them, unsuspecting and with their left flank (adjacent to the wetlands gap) unguarded.

The 19th Georgia Infantry anchored the left end of General Archer's Brigade; immediately to their right was 1st Sgt. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry. Federal Adjutant Evan M. Woodward of the 2nd Pennsylvania Reserve Infantry funneled his men into the left rear of the 19th Georgia Infantry and directed repeated volleys into Archer's left flank. Having no idea that Gregg had been mortally wounded and his brigade routed by the Federal breakthrough, General Archer sent a courier to alert General Gregg and have Gregg's Brigade drive back the Union soldiers. The 19th Georgia Infantry was under attack from not only the 2nd Pennsylvania Reserves, but now the 11th, 7th, 5th, and 13th Pennsylvania Reserve Infantries – being suddenly outflanked by numerous Yankees, their response was to break and run, leaving 1st Sgt. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry completely vulnerable. Seeing the 19th Georgia Infantry break and run across

their rear, one of the Tennesseans cursed “*See those [expletive deleted] cowardly Georgians running!*”, but did not see the excited Pennsylvanians coming for them. As the Federals now shot directly into the backs of the engrossed 14th Tennessee soldiers who were still shooting toward the massed Yankees in their front, one Tennessean turned around and shouted “*Stop that shooting back there, you damned fools, or I’ll shoot hell out of a half dozen of you!*” He then was stunned to see large numbers of blue-coated soldiers step out of the woods and coming directly at him. Lt. Col. James W. Lockert of the 14th Tennessee Infantry tried to keep his men together as the rapidly moving Federals now hit the Tennesseans from all sides, but they too followed the Georgians and fled for their lives. Many of the 14th Tennessee, including 1st Sgt. John F. Brigham, were surrounded and captured by the exultant Federals. 1st Sgt. Brigham and his comrades were then herded to the rear of Federal lines as prisoners. Eventually General Archer and General Lane (along with the Confederate brigades of Hoke, Atkinson, Paxton, and Walker) were able to re-establish their lines and plug the Federal breakthrough after desperate, hand-to-hand combat using bayonets and clubbed muskets.

Fortunately for 1st Sgt. John F. Brigham and his 14th Tennessee Infantry comrades who were taken prisoner, the massive Federal Army of the Potomac under Major General Ambrose Burnside had other issues to deal with during and immediately following the bloody battle of Fredericksburg. 1st Sgt. Brigham’s CSR states that he was “*paroled by the Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac, on Dec. 14, 1862 near Falmouth, VA.*” The paroled soldiers of the 14th Tennessee Infantry then returned to their friends in Archer’s Brigade and went into Winter quarters at Gaine’s Station, VA until April 27, 1863 – surely this respite was greatly appreciated by 1st Sgt. Brigham and his Co. F mates!

John F. Brigham is listed as 1st Sgt. of Co. F, 14th Tennessee Infantry during Jan., Feb., March, and April of 1863. His CSR then records him as being present during May and June 1863 with the notation that he transferred to Co. E, 14th Tennessee Infantry on May 23, 1863 – he is recorded as a Private in Co. E, apparently demoted from his earlier ranks of 1st Corp. and 1st Sgt. that he held in Co. F. Perhaps now Pvt. Brigham’s demotion was due to events that happened during the 14th Tennessee Infantry actions at the great battle of Chancellorsville, VA (May 1-3, 1863) but this is pure speculation at this writing. Colonel McComb of the 14th Tennessee Infantry was seriously wounded at Chancellorsville on May 3. It is documented, however, that following the battle, Co. F of the 14th Tennessee was disbanded on May 23, 1863 and 32 men (including John F. Brigham) were transferred to Co. E of the same regiment. Perhaps there were no openings for a 1st Sgt. in Co. E, so now Pvt. Brigham accepted his demotion and continued to serve – but who knows?

Pvt. John F. Brigham, Co. E, 14th Tennessee Infantry is documented as being “*Absent. Sick*” between June 4 – June 30, 1863, but he is listed as present for July and August, 1863 – possibly he was present at the epic Battle of Gettysburg, PA (July 1 – 3, 1863) and also at Falling Waters, MD (July 14, 1863) and Gaines Crossroads, VA (July 24, 1863) – but this is only conjecture at this writing. Promotion to 2nd Sgt. of Co. E took place on Sept. 12, 1863 and now 2nd Sgt. Brigham was apparently present at the battle of

Bristoe Station, VA (Oct. 13, 1863) before returning to Orange Courthouse, VA through Nov. 26, 1863. 2nd Sgt. Brigham is documented as being present with the 14th Tennessee Infantry during Nov. and Dec. of 1863; he therefore likely took part in the battle of Mine Run, VA (Nov. 27) and helped build Winter quarters at Orange Courthouse, VA. The 14th Tennessee stayed there through Dec. 14, 1863 when they were marched to Staunton, Buffalo Gap, Mount Crawford, and Mount Jackson before returning to Staunton, VA – most definitely vigorous activity during Winter!!!

During Winter quarters in Harrisonburg, VA an interesting, patriotic, and touching event took place. 2nd Sgt. John F. Brigham and his fellow soldiers in the 14th Tennessee Infantry unanimously adopted a Resolution of Re-Enlistment on Jan. 23, 1864; this stated “...that we, the officers and men of the 14th Tennessee Regiment, do hereby re-enlist for the war, pledging our lives and sacred honor so long as one man is left to bear our colors, or fire a shot, they shall float defiantly in the face of an insolent foe.” and “...making this Regiment the first to re-enlist in the Army of Northern Virginia.”

A muster roll taken Mar. 31, 1864 near Orange Courthouse, VA describes 2nd Sgt. John F. Brigham, Co. E, 14th Tennessee Infantry as being “age 20 years” and “present for duty”. Another muster roll taken April 1, 1864 similarly describes 2nd Sgt. Brigham as being present for duty, then there is a gap in documentation for John F. Brigham until Sept. of 1864. It can be assumed that he took part in the horrific battles of The Wilderness (May 5-7, 1864), Spotsylvania (May 12, 1864), Cold Harbor (June 1, 1864), and the early Petersburg battles (June – Aug., 1864) because his CSR documents him as being 1st Sgt. John F. Brigham and being present Sept. – Oct. 1864.

During this initial meeting and test of wills between General Robert E. Lee and General Ulysses S. Grant at the Wilderness, the 14th Tennessee Infantry was within the division of General Henry Heth, being part of General A.P. Hill’s Corps. Still part of Archer’s Tennessee Brigade, 1st Sgt. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry were attached to the Virginia brigade of General H.H. Walker; on May 5, 1864 they were part of General R.E. Lee’s extreme right flank, fighting for possession of the Orange Plank Road, northwest of the Widow Tapp farm. During the vicious fighting on May 5, as Walker’s Brigade withdrew from a massive assault by the Federal II Corps commanded by General Winfield Scott Hancock, advancing Texans in Longstreet’s Corps noticed a member of the 14th Tennessee Infantry in Walker’s Virginia Brigade and loudly called out “When the hell did you fellows get a transfer from Archer’s Tennessee Brigade?”

At Spotsylvania on May 12, the 14th Tennessee Infantry was part of Col. Robert M. Mayo’s brigade (General Henry H. Walker was wounded 2 days earlier), and was part of “Heth’s Salient” facing Union General Burnside’s IX Corps immediately north of Spotsylvania Courthouse. At about 2:00 pm the Federal brigades of Cols. Leasure, Christ, and Hartranft charged the Rebel earthworks. Simultaneously with a flank attack by the Confederate brigades of Cols. David A. Weisiger and Brig. General James H. Lane, Mayo’s Brigade rapid musket fire pinned the desperate Yankees as Pegram’s artillery battalion unleashed canister, shot, and shell upon the hapless Federals. The bloody carnage resulted in one Tennessean in Mayo’s Brigade asserting that if there

“...had been no Bloody Angle on our left, the angle held by Mayo would have been so regarded.”

At Cold Harbor on June 1, 1864, Walker's Brigade -- including the 14th Tennessee Infantry -- was now commanded by Brig. General Birkett D. Fry, still part of Heth's Division and Lt. General A.P. Hill's 3rd Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. During Union General U.S. Grant's initial attack that afternoon, Heth's Division was positioned near Hudley's Corner and directly faced the Federal divisions of Brig. Generals John Gibbon and Robert B. Potter. On this day the Union Army of the Potomac lost about 2,200 total casualties while total Confederate casualties were ~1,800 men. Located in the northern sector of the battlefield, Heth's Division bore the brunt of Union offensives on June 2-3, 1864 and lost 560 men on these two days -- approximately 85 of the casualties were from B.D. Fry's Brigade.

After his bloody repulse at Cold Harbor, VA (~12,700 men lost June 1-3), General U.S. Grant executed a brilliant feint and stole a march on General R.E. Lee and his exhausted Army of Northern Virginia; this was done by the Army of the Potomac crossing the James River and now threatening the critical city of Petersburg, VA. Once aware of Grant's approach towards Petersburg, General Lee scrambled forces to resist the initial Federal attacks until his ANV veterans could arrive on the scene. On June 18, 1864 Hill's Corps reached Petersburg and took their places in the earthworks already present and proceeded to enhance/build them up. Once in place between extensive earthworks -- presaging trench warfare in World War I -- the Confederate soldiers, including 1st Sgt. Brigham and his 14th Tennessee Infantry comrades settled in for a long siege by the tenacious U.S. Grant and his Federal legions.

His CSR documents for Sept. -- Oct. 1864 indicate that 1st Sgt. John F. Brigham, Co. E, 14th Tennessee Infantry was *“present for duty”*. During this time, the 14th Tennessee Infantry as part of Heth's Division was assigned to a newly consolidated brigade of Tennessee, Alabama, Maryland, and Virginia troops commanded by Col. William S. Christian. A.P. Hill sent Col. Christian's Brigade to prevent Union Brig. General Charles Griffin and his division from cutting the Weldon Railroad where it neared Globe Tavern. At about 3:00 pm on Thursday, Aug. 18 General Heth sent Brig. General Alfred H. Colquitt's Georgia brigade and Col. Christian's consolidated brigade forward toward not mere brigades, but 3 divisions of the Federal V corps commanded by Major General Gouverneur Warren, near the intersection of the Vaughan and Halifax roads. Heth withdrew his force after dark and returned to the Petersburg lines. The next day, Friday Aug. 19 saw A.P. Hill sending Heth and his brigade further south along the Halifax Road, this time augmented by Weisigers and Clingman's Brigades led by Maj. General William Mahone. The Confederates pummeled the Union V Corps forces until 8:30 that evening, capturing hundreds of Yankee prisoners, including one General.

On Aug. 25, 1864, Federal General Hancock moved two divisions towards Reams Station in another attempt to sever General R.E. Lee's lifeline, the Weldon Railroad. Both Henry Heth's Division and Confederate cavalry led by General Wade Hampton caught the Yankees in a pincher movement near the junction of the Halifax and Depot

roads, just south of Reams Station. 1st Sgt. Brigham and colleagues inflicted casualties of 117 killed, 439 wounded, and 2,046 missing/captured upon Hancock's two Union divisions, also capturing Hancock's adjutant/postwar biographer. Total Confederate losses at Reams Station were ~870 killed/wounded/missing. In addition, A.P. Hill's soldiers captured 12 stands of Federal colors, 9 cannons, and over 3,000 small arms.

During Sept. 30 – Oct. 1, 1864, Heth's Division including the 14th Tennessee Infantry, met forces from the Federal V and IX Corps at Peebles Farm, southwest of Petersburg near the junction of the Boydton Plank Road and Church Road. In this attempt to prevent extension of the Union line, Confederate losses were ~1,300 while Federal losses were ~2,898 killed/wounded/missing.

October 27 saw John F. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry (now part of Col. Mayo's Brigade) at Hatcher's Run where it crossed the Boydton Plank Road, and once again going against Federal General Hancock's II Corps. This time General Heth's Confederate division were joined by General William Mahone's Division and cavalry led by General W.H.F. Lee. Rebel forces surrounded Hancock's brigades so effectively that when General Hancock ordered his men to start digging breastworks, one confused yank asked "*General, which way will you have them face?*". II Corps losses were 1,058 killed/wounded/missing out of a total Federal loss of 1,758 men. Confederate casualties were more than 1,300. This battle of Hatcher's Run (also known as the battle of Burgess Mill or Boydton Plank Road) fought on Oct. 27, 1864 was the shaken Federal General Winfield Scott Hancock's last field operation, resulting in his taking a leave of absence of Thanksgiving Day, 1864.

John F. Brigham's CSR documents state that he was "*promoted to 1st Lt., Co. E, 14th Tennessee Infantry from Nov. 12, 1864*" – this possibly due to his actions at Globe Tavern, Reams Station, Peebles Farm, and Hatcher's Run or perhaps resulting from the constant attrition of men in the 14th Tennessee Infantry. The next notation in his CSR states that now 1st Lt. John F. Brigham is "*Absent. Sick at Div. Hospital since Dec. 30, 1864.*" Seemingly weakened by the constant fighting, poor diet, poor shelter, and poor clothing in the Petersburg trenches, 1st Lt. Brigham was granted a furlough and leave of absence between Jan. 4 through Feb. 11, 1865. During this time he contracted dysentery and was sent to Chimborazo Hospital and General Hospital No. 9 in Richmond, VA.

1st Lt. Brigham was apparently not present during the execution of a 14th Tennessee Infantry soldier on Jan. 3, 1865; the blindfolded soldier apparently lived for almost 10 minutes after being shot by the firing squad. Also during 1st Lt. Brigham's recuperation, former colonel of the 14th Tennessee Infantry, William McComb was promoted to Brigadier General, and was now in command of the so-called "Tennessee Brigade" of the Army of Northern Virginia – containing the 1st Tennessee, 7th Tennessee, 14th Tennessee, 17th Tennessee, 23rd Tennessee, 25th Tennessee, 44th Tennessee, 63rd Tennessee Infantries and also the 2nd Maryland Battalion. 1st Lt. John F. Brigham was absent during the Feb. 5, 1865 battle of Hatcher's Run; McComb's Brigade as part of Heth's Division fought the Federal II and V Corps near the junction of Squirrel Level and Vaughan Roads. As indicated in his CSR, 1st Lt. John F. Brigham, Co. E, 14th Tennessee

Infantry “*Returned to duty from sick leave*” on Feb. 12, 1865, this time as part of General William McComb’s Tennessee Brigade, Heth’s Division, A.P. Hill’s 3rd Corps, Army of Northern Virginia.

General R.E. Lee’s desperate attempt to break out of U.S. Grant’s ever-tightening siege of Petersburg occurred on Mar. 25, 1865 at Fort Stedman. It is likely that 1st Lt. Brigham helped lead the 14th Tennessee Infantry as part of Heth’s Division which supported the Confederate attack on Fort Stedman led by General John B. Gordon. Lee committed almost half of the Army of Northern Virginia in this attack to break Grant’s stranglehold but the Rebel force was repulsed by a Federal IX Corps counterattack led by General Parke. General Gordon’s losses were huge – somewhere between 2,700-4,000 killed/wounded/missing while Federal IX Corps losses were ~1,000 total.

As McComb’s Tennessee Brigade, including 1st Lt. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry, returned to their trenches near the junction of Boydton Plank and Church roads after the Fort Stedman repulse during the early afternoon of March 25, they discovered that their picket line was under attack by the Union XI Corps in the area of Jones Farm. The Federal brigades of Damon, Keifer, Warner, and Hyde surged forward and took possession of the Confederate rifle pits in this sector, capturing Rebel skirmishers and threatening to break through Heth’s undermanned earthworks. McComb’s Brigade joined in the Confederate counterattack along with the brigades of McGowan, Lane, and Thomas to drive back the Yankee hordes to their reserve line. After some two hours of fighting, 1st Lt. Brigham and comrades retired to their trenches without retaking the lost rifle pits.

On March 30, 1865, General R.E. Lee moved forces from the Petersburg trenches to counter the Federal buildup by Union General Phil Sheridan in the area of Five Forks. This resulted in Heth’s Division being further stretched to cover the loss of manpower in the Confederate trenches. General A.P. Hill inspected his 3rd Corps lines between Fort Gregg and Burgess Mill on April 1 – his seven brigades totaled somewhere near 8,300 soldiers: roughly 1,380 men per mile (less than one soldier per yard). During the night of April 1-2, Federal General Wright deployed his aggressive VI Corps brigades of Hamblin (2nd CT Heavy Artillery, 65th NY, 121st NY, 95th PA infantries), Penrose (40th NJ, 4th NJ, 10th NJ, 15th NJ infantries), Edwards (37th MA, 5th WI, 119th PA, 2nd RI, 82nd PA infantries), Warner (102nd PA, 139th PA, 93rd PA, 98th PA infantries), Hyde (49th NY, 77th NY, 1st ME, 61st PA, 43rd NY, 122nd NY infantries), Tracy (5th VT, 2nd VT, 6th VT, 4th VT, 3rd VT, 1st VT Heavy Artillery infantries), Keifer (126th OH, 6th MD, 110th OH, 9th NY Heavy Artillery, 67th PA, 138th PA, 122nd OH infantries), and Truex (106th NY, 10th VT, 14th NJ, 151st NY, 87th PA infantries) – a total of some 14,000 men – to attack Heth’s depleted Confederate line at 4:00 am on April 2, 1865, as ordered by Gens. U.S. Grant and Meade. Between 10:00 pm and 1:00 am the night of April 1-2, 1865, some 150 Union cannons bombarded the Rebel lines to further soften up the tattered defenders.

At about 4:40 am on April 2, the actual VI Corps assault was underway with the brigades of Tracy, Hyde, and Warner initially breaking through Heth’s lines where General Lane’s North Carolina brigade was positioned. Next the Federal brigades of

Edwards, Penrose, and Hamblin breached Heth's earthworks, in support of the initial Yankee brigades. This was soon followed by Truex's and Keifer's VI Corps brigades penetrating Heth's lines where Erson's North Carolina brigade was stationed along the Duncan road and west of Arthur's Swamp. 1st Lt. John F. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry, as part of McComb's Brigade, were positioned some distance southwest from where Hyde's Brigade first struck Heth's defensive line; they therefore heard the intense fighting to their northeast and left, having some time to steel themselves for the Federal onslaught coming their way.

Around 6:30 am, the now combined Federal VI Corps brigades of Edwards, Penrose, Warner, Hyde, Tracy, Keifer, and Truex having overwhelmed and swept aside the North Carolina brigades of Erson, Lane, and Thomas within Heth's earthworks now charged southwest directly toward Brig. General Wm. McComb's Tennessee/Maryland brigade – including 1st Lt. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry. McComb has approximately 500-600 men to face the onrushing 7 Yankee brigades charging directly towards his greatly outnumbered defenders. McComb's Brigade defended what was now General Heth's left flank, being southwest of, and next to the Federal VI Corps point of breakthrough.

As detailed by author A. Wilson Greene in his excellent book *“Breaking the Backbone of the Rebellion. The Final Battles of the Petersburg Campaign”* (2000, Savas Publishing), the post-breakthrough combat involving 1st Lt. John F. Brigham and the 14th Tennessee Infantry within McComb's Brigade, started with General Heth deploying McComb's Tennessee/Maryland, Cooke's North Carolina, and Nelson's brigades straddling and northeast of Hatchers Run – a combined total of ~1,600 men.

Purcell's Virginia 4-gun battery at Fort Alexander was quickly overrun by Federals in Truex' and Keifer's brigades who then turned the cannons upon the Confederate brigades of McComb, Cooke, and Nelson. The victorious Yankees next charged southwest towards the Rebel 2-gun battery at Fort Davis and within General McComb's original zone of control. Tennessee and Maryland soldiers quickly formed a line of in support of the Fort Davis battery, delivery both musket and cannon fire against the bluecoats wading through the breast-deep swamp of Rocky Branch and heading directly for them. Excited Federals quickly swarmed over the fort's embankment, capturing the guns and forcing McComb's men back into a small clump of woods, where the Tennesseans and Marylanders poured an intense fire into the Yankees, delaying their onslaught.

Some 20 minutes after losing Fort Davis and the battery there, General McComb was ordered to retake the battery via courier sent to him by General Heth. McComb and a staff officer then persuaded the 2nd Maryland Battalion along with the 1st, 7th, and 14th Tennessee Infantries to assist brigade sharpshooters (led by Lt. Fergus S. Harris) in a successful 10 minute counterattack against the flood of bluecoats who rapidly retreated to Fort Alexander. Shrieking the Rebel Yell for their last time, the victorious Rebs, including 1st Lt. Brigham and his 14th Tennessee parads, then began working the

recaptured artillery at Fort Davis, but were soon silenced by effective Federal counter-battery artillery fire coming from Fort Alexander.

After the 2 cannons at Fort Davis were knocked out by Yankee artillery, Brig. General John R. Cooke joined the Marylanders and Tennesseans at Fort Davis, telling General McComb to withdraw as per orders from General Heth and before the swarming Federals cut off their safe retreat. Having more Federal prisoners than his own fighting men, General McComb then gave verbal paroles to his Yankee captives and began to rapidly retreat as 4th and 5th Vermont soldiers ran in to shoot and capture his overwhelmed men. As McComb's men withdrew, only the Mississippians of Nelson's Brigade stood between the fleeing Tennessee/Maryland soldiers and the Federal steamroller. Chaos ensued as it was now "every man for himself" as the Mississippians, Tennesseans, and Marylanders all ran for the waters of Hatcher's Run – panicked men swam or floated across on logs. Many were shot and captured while few successfully escaped their Yankee pursuers. At approximately 7:45 am it was all over for the overwhelmed Southern soldiers – all effective Confederate resistance near Hatcher's Run ceased to exist.

The Federal soldiers in Keifer's Brigade alone captured 10 cannon, "*large numbers of prisoners, 3 battle-flags and Major General Heth's division headquarters flag*" according to Col. Keifer. U.S. Grant later estimated that Wright's VI Corps captured ~3,000 Confederates near Hatcher's Run that morning of April 2, 1865. One of the captured Rebs was 1st Lt. John F. Brigham, Co. E, 14th Tennessee Infantry as documented by his CSR file. He was then transferred to the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, DC, appearing on a POW Register dated April 5, 1865. Documents indicate 1st Lt. Brigham was then sent to Johnson's Island POW Camp near Sandusky, Ohio on April 9, 1865 – the day that General Robert E. Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant and the victorious Army of the Potomac. 1st Lt. Brigham's CSR document his actual arrival at Johnson's Island on April 11, 1865.

1st Lt. John F. Brigham, Co. E, 14th Tennessee Infantry, his body apparently exhausted by the almost continuous demands of his service in the Army of Northern Virginia and during the siege of Petersburg, died at Johnson's Island POW Camp on June 1, 1865 of pneumonia. He was buried in grave #180 of the Johnson's Island Confederate Cemetery, which can still be seen today. Somewhat incongruously, a modern day visitor to his grave can see and hear the rollercoasters at Cedar Point Amusement Park in the distance, across the waters of Lake Erie.

by Kenneth E. Byrd, Indianapolis, IN January 16, 2012

- 5th cousin of 1st Lt. John F. Brigham

- great-great-great-great-nephew of James M. Brigham

- great-great-great-grandson of Luna Louisa Brigham Byrd

