

CONFEDERATE INDIAN TERRITORY CONDITIONS IN 1865

*By Allan C. Ashcraft**

For four years the Indian Territory experienced the horrors of the American Civil War. Tribes split into Confederate and Union factions, massacres occurred, civilian refugees were decimated, Indian soldiers on both sides fought and died, bushwhackers multiplied basic hardships of the conflict, and the Indian country and the people suffered bitter devastation. By April of 1865, the end was at hand. Lee surrendered to Grant on April 9. Less than three weeks later Joseph Johnston surrendered to Sherman in North Carolina. In rapid order the remaining armies of the South were compelled to follow this course. Finally, on May 26, the Army of the Trans-Mississippi West (including Confederate Indian commands) officially gave up the fight.¹

What were military conditions in the Confederate portion of Indian territory as the end drew near? Probably the best answer to this can be found in Inspector General reports for the spring of 1865. On April 19, a young officer completed an inspection report on key military installations. Apparently, his inspection tour took several weeks to perform. While Lee had surrendered ten days previously, it is doubted that news of this event had yet circulated in the remote Southwest. And even if word of the surrender had reached Indian territory, the actual inspection reported on had been completed before the arrival of this intelligence.

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¹ The Confederate Indian commands in the Territory surrendered in June, 1865. Brig. Gen. Stand Watie of the Cherokee Nation was the last general officer of the Confederate Army to surrender (June 23, 1865, at Doaksville, Choctaw Nation).

Office Inspr Genl Dist Ind Terry
Fort Towson C.N. April 19th 1865

Colonel

I have the honor to submit the following report of Posts Ft. Arbuckle, Boggy Depot, Ft Washita & Warren Texas.²

There has been no tabular report made of the troops at these Posts (for the reason: that, no troops report direct to either Boggy Depot or Warren; And though five companies [of] Checofes (Chickasaw) Batt(a)l[ion]n have been ordered to report to Ft Washita, only a small portion of Co. "A" (20 enlisted men) have yet reported to Ft Arbuckle, and 22 enlisted men to Ft Washita.

There being no Field or Battln Adj[utan]t present at inspection at Ft Arbuckle to properly account for the absentees, the Indian commands having been allowed winter at home, they do not probably realize that they are absent without leave, though such is the case with most of the troops of the above mentioned Battln.

The members of Cos. "A" & "C" I deem proper to account for in this report.

Post Ft Arbuckle
March 31st 1865

Col. R. W. Lee Post³

Com[man]d[an]t absent with
leave by Order Brig Genl
Cooper from 21st Mar 1865⁴

Capt W. Martin Co. "A" 1st Chickasaw Battln, temporarily in command of Post, is an active energetic officer, and seems disposed to do his duty, but lacks information.

² Warren, Texas, was located on the Fannin-Grayson County line just over the Texas line. It was about 50 miles due south of Boggy Depot and about 15 miles northwest of Bonham. *The Official Atlas of the Civil War* (New York: Thomas Yoseoff, 1868), plate 169.

³ Roswell W. Lee had served as commander of Lee's Light Artillery, Cooper's Brigade, in 1863. By early 1864, he was Assistant Inspector General of the Indian Division. (Roswell W. Lee served as Assistant Adj. Gen. in Col. Cooper's Indian Regt. in 1861.—Ed.)

⁴ Douglas H. Cooper had been United States agent to the Choctaw Nation in the 1850's. With the coming of the Civil War, he had commanded the First Choctaw-Chickasaw Mounted Rifles and then Cooper's Brigade.

Grounds and streets about the Post very neat. Occupied quarters very neat but unoccupied rooms & houses, torn to pieces & in a State of ruin. Said to have been done of Col. Bourlands' Comd who were formerly on duty at this Post.²

Sen[ior] 2nd Lt D. P. Hopkins, Co. "F" 33rd Regt. Tex. Cavy, reporting to Col Lee by Order of Maj. Genl Maxey as Drill M[as]t[er], for first Chickasaw Battln.* (Spec. Ord. No. 284), dated Decr 12th 1864. Placed on duty A[ssistant] Adj[utan]t for the Post by Order Col R. W. Lee Jan'y 22nd 1865, is an active energetic & efficient Officer, no books, papers, files well arranged.

Capt. Thos. Drennon, Bonded

Agt C S appointed by Genl Smith[†] to date from May 25th 1864, assigned to duty as A. Q. M. & A. C. S. by Order Maj Genl Maxey June 13th 1864. Is an active efficient officer as A.Q.M. Papers up for the present month and Quarter and in neat order. No funds on hand.

Extra duty men employed, 1 wagon Mtr, 1 forage Mtr. 9 teamsters, 4 mechanics.

In Charge of one carpenters Shop, one Blk. Smith Shop and a set of tools for each.

Has charge of all the houses at the Fort but no Govt Buildings. Govt-Transportation 6 mules 24 oxen, 7 wagons. Hired transportation 4 mule teams, 7 ox teams.

As. A. C. S. No funds on hand.

In charge of one house of four rooms used for Store house. Stores on hand. Beef furnished by contract as needed, so that none remains on hand at end of month. Flour 10,269 pounds, 124 pounds soap.

Dr. E. P. Harris, Contract Surg[eon] of the Post, intelligent & attentive to his duties. Papers in good order, medicines on hand sufficient, one case of surgical instrument, no Post hospital, no furniture, dressings,

² Bourland's Cavalry Regiment, also known as Bourland's Frontier Regiment, had originally been formed to defend the Texas frontier.

^{*} S. B. Maxey had resigned from the Texas Senate to form the Ninth Texas Infantry. In December, 1863, he was named Confederate commander of the Indian territory.

[†] Edmund Kirby Smith has served as commander of the Confederate Department of the Trans-Mississippi West since 1863.

or bedding. Post very healthy. Troops reporting to the Post. Five Cos of 1st Chickasaw Battln Lt. Col. Checoe Comdg all absent with exception of a portion of Co. "A".

Lt Col Checoe absent.

Capt W. Martin Co "A" Comdg. An active energetic officer disposed to do his duty but lacks information.

Sen. 2nd Lt. G. S. Morrison Co. "G"
Act Adjt. absent.

1st Lt. B. Kingsbury Co "C" Act. Absent with leave.

Dr. J. H. Moore Contract Sug absent.

Co. "A" 1st Chickasaw Battln. 3 officers present, 20 enlisted men present, 4 enlisted men absent with leave. 32 enlisted men absent without leave. 19 enlisted men on detached service. Total enlisted 75.

Post Boggy Depot C.N. April 4th 1865.

Lt. Col. T. D. Taliaferro,⁶ Battln 20th Tex. Dis. Cavy. Comdg Post, assigned to duty by Order Genl Steel Sept 1st 1863 is an energetic and efficient officer.⁷ Books and papers in good order. No troops reporting direct to the Post. A provost Guard being detailed daily from the 1st Cherokee Brigade. Post & Streets neat. No Post Adjutant.

2nd Lt T. W. Wade Co, "A" 20th Battln, Tex Dis[mounted] Cavy A. assigned to duty by Order Lt. Col. Taliaferro, approved by Order Maj Genl Maxey July 26th 1864. Is an active efficient Officer. Monthly & Quarterly papers up & in good order. No funds on hand. Govt transportation, 13 mules, 12 oxen, 15 Wagons, 1 ambulance. Hired transportation, 8 wagons, 32 oxen, 24 mules. Extra duty men 1 clerk, 8 mechanics, 1 forage Mtr, 9 teamsters, 2 herders, 1 courier, 9 laborers, Hired employed employees, 1 clerk, 3 mechanics, 1 white & 9 negro laborers eight of the negroes employed at the Salt works.

Clothing Camp & garrison equipage scarce.

⁶Lieut. Col. T. D. Taliaferro of the 20th Texas Cavalry, had commanded Fort Washita in 1863.

⁷William Steel[e] had commanded Indian territory in the latter part of 1863.

W. T. Cline Bonded Ajt C. S.

appointed by Genl Smith to date from the 5th day of April 1864, assigned to duty at Boggy Depot by (Par. II S. O. No. 155) Hd. Qrs. D[istrict] 1 July 15th 1864. Papers not up for the last month or Quarter. Amount of funds on hand, (\$25,700.86) Twenty five thousand Seven hundred & 86/100 dollars. Stores on hand—400 pounds bacon, 9478 pounds of beef, 1137 pounds meal, salt sufficient. Person's employed and hired, Extr duty men, 1 clerk, 1 butcher, 3 herders. Hired 1 clerk, 1 storekeeper. His means of getting Supplies are dubious, he states that he has applied to Captain Welch A.Q.M. for transportation but could not hear from him. And exhibited also copy of a letter addressed to Capt Hunter asking for supplies, to who he states he had received no reply. I would remark in conection that about the 10th day of April a train of wagons loaded with commissaries passed through Warren Texas which Capt Welch, assured me he was sending to Boggy Depot.

Store rooms neat & properly aired.

Post Fort Washita April 6th 1865

Lt Fuller Howells Battery Post Comdt absent.¹⁰

2nd Lt. B. J. Johnson, Co "C" Chickasaw

Battln temporarily in Command of the Post, is intelligent and desirous of doing his duty, but is unaccustomed to and almost entirely ignorant of the duties of a Post Comdt. Books & files in tolerable order.

Troops reporting to this Post are Co "C" Chickasaw Battln. 1 officer & 22 enlisted of which are present 2 officers & 2 privates absent with leave, & 22 enlisted men absent without leave. 1 Officer & 21 enlisted man det. Service, total enlisted 67. Post grounds and streets clean Co. quarters & guard house dirty. Four prisoners in stockade 2 white and 2 negroes, very lax in guard duty, two prisoners escaped on the night of April 5th.

Capt W. A. Welch A. Q. M. absent on duty at Warren Texas Books & papers mostly moved to that Post. the presence of a permanent Qr. Mtr. is much needed at Washita. Shops in the charge of Qr. Mr. are 1 Blk Smiths Shop, 1 Wood Shop and one harness Shop, no work going on in either. No forage supplied the Post.

¹⁰ Howell's Battery, commanded by Capt. Sylvanus Howell, was a part of Cooper's Brigade.

Capt. D. N. Allen, Bonded Agt,

Sub. Dept. appointed by Genl Smith to date from Jany 20th 1864, assigned to duty at this post by Order of Maj Genl Maxey Sept 14th 1864, is an active, energetic and efficient officer. All Quarterly and monthly papers up and in admirable order. Funds on hand (\$635.40) Six hundred Ninety five & 40/100 dollars Extra duty men employed, 1 clerk, 1 storekeeper, 1 purchasing agt, 1 courier, 1 herder, transportation one wagon, four mules, In charge of 2 private rooms, 1 officer, 1 store room all neat and well kept. Manufactured during the month 486 pounds soap, 50 pounds candles.

1st Lt. B. F. Atkinson, In charge of Ord. Dept. is an energetic and efficient officer. Papers are up for last Quarter and month, neat and well made. Amount of funds on hand (\$616. 48) Six hundred fifteen & 48/100 dollars. Extra duty men employed, 1 fore man; 14 mechanics, 1 purchasing agt. Hired 1 Blk Smith, 1 teamster. Has in charge on office, 1 cartridge shop, 1 magazine, all in good order, workmen busily engaged. Stores on hand. 152 round fixed arty ammunition \$1196 rounds fixed ammunition for small arms, 1665 pounds powder for small arms, 9138 caps, 91 Serv small arms.

Dr. Henry Pernot, Contract Surg. for Genl Hospital at Ft Washita is an intelligent Surg and very attentive to his duties. Hospital funds on hand (\$294) two hundred & ninety four dollars. 15 patients in Hospital, supplies of medicines, bandages, bed-clothes & furniture sufficient, attendants 1 Steward, 3 nurses, 2 cooks, 2 laundresses, 1 ward Mtr, 2 teamsters & 1 laborer. No diseases of a scorbutic or epidemic character. Every part of the hospital is well arranged and very neatly kept, and every effort seems to have been made which could render a Hospital comfortable.

Post Warren Texas April 11th 1865

Capt. W. H. Mitchell Supernumerary officer of Battln 20th Tex. Dis. Cavy. Comdg Post, assigned to duty by order Maj Genl Maxey (S. O. No 298) Dec 27th 1864. Is an energetic officer and disposed to do his duty. No books. Papers and files in good order. No troops report to this post but much needed for guard and to enforce submission & obedience amongst the workmen. No adj't.

Capt. W. A. Welch A. Q. M. duty bonded & assigned to duty as chief of supply train in addition to his duties as Post Qr. Mr. of Ft. Washita is a capable Officer. Montly

papers up, in good order Quarterly papers not up. Qr. Mr. funds on hand (\$15,000) fifteen thousand dollars. Pay funds on hand (\$5,000) five thousand dollars. Extra duty men 12 mechanics, 4 wagon Mtrs, 5 asst wagon mtrs, 3 couriers, 2 ferrymen, 42 teamsters. Govt transportation 7 mule & 30 ox wagons without teams. 4 mule & 10 ox teams running. Hired 61 teams Clothing, Camp & garison equipage scarce. Reports that he can have 60 Govt teams ready for use by May 1st 1865.

Capt. F. R. Young Bonded agent Q. M. Depot assigned to duty as Q. Mr. Warren by Ord Maj Genl Maxey Nov 13th 1864 is a zealous and efficient officer. Papers up and in good order. Amount of funds on hand (\$20,574) twenty thousand five hundred & seventy four dollars. Extra duty men 1 clerk, 1 wagon Mtr, 1 forage Mtr, 3 couriers, 7 mechanics, 3 teamsters, 4 laborers. Wagons hired for indigent Indian transportation 127. Stores on hand, 200 pounds leather, 1200 pounds iron, 300 pounds Steel.

Capt. J. H. Hunter Bonded agt Commissary Dept is an active and thoroughly qualified Commissary. But an investigation is in progress, which, until completed forbids a more favorable report. Papers not up for either last month or Quarter, owing probably, to his being sick. Amount of funds on hand 1000 pounds flour, no meal, no beef, no bacon. I am satisfied from the complaints of different commissaries of this Dist. and from having found this commissary poorly supplied at both the inspections of little over two months apart, that, it is not answering the purpose for which it was established. Some of the commissaries in this Dist receive their supplies direct from the Post in the Northern Sub. Dist. Texas.¹¹ Others sending for supplies to those Posts have them invoiced to the Commissary at Warren, and by him to the commy, sending after such supplies, which last go upon the papers of the Comy at Warren, though not unloaded there. In fact Subsistance is becoming so scarce and difficult to get it would not be allowed to remain at any convenient Supply Depot than just long enough to get the transportation for removing it to the troops, which at present renders Warn little more than an obstacle in the rout from the post of the Northern Sub Dist of Texas. to those of the Dist Indian territory. there are

¹¹ The Northern Sub-District of Texas was established as a military area on June 5, 1863.

many persons necessarily required to keep up a Post properly, viz: Clerks, couriers, herders, laborers & c. who, when a Post becomes useless or of little importance to the Govt while they consume a great deal which might go to the troops in the field. For the reasons stated I would respectfully suggest that some expense might be saved the Govt and very little inconvenience sustained by discontinuing the Post of Warren, and if it is probable that here after any large quantity of supplies will be on hand at one time, so that it becomes necessary to establish any other Depot for supplies than the Post at Present in this Dist. it could be established nearer the front So that the deviation en rout from the base of supplies in the N. Sub. Dist. Tex to the troops will not be so great. this would not materially interfere with Warren as a manufacturing Depot. There is a great deal of material on hand and near the Post of Coopering the Coopers shop with the other shops could be place in charge of an officer

I am Col Respty,
your Obdt Servt
Jas. Patterson ¹²
A. I. Genl.

Lt. Col. N. W. Battle ¹³
A. I. Genl
D. J. Terry

¹² Lieutenant James Patterson had served on the staff of General Maxey throughout early 1864. In September of that year, he was named chief drill master for the District of Indian Territory. Subsequently he joined the Inspector General's Office.

¹³ Nicholas William Battle had previously served as Executive Officer of the 30th Texas Cavalry (also known as 1st Texas Partisan Rangers). Later he commanded this unit. The entire report is taken from War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Chap. 11, Vol. 258, Military Departments, Letters Sent, I. G. O. District of Indian Territory, Apr. 1864-May 1865, pp. 210-16.—National Archives, Washington, D. C.