



THE NAMING OF FORT CAMPBELL

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"What's in a name?" Shakespeare answered by noting "That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet."

NEWS ITEM: Military Police officers were returning to Fort Burnett this week after serving in Operation Sustain Liberty in Panama.

Approximately 140 soldiers from the 194th Military Police Co., a number of whom have residences in nearby Hopkinsville, have been in Panama since Feb. 15. The unit from Fort Burnett served in Panama with other Military Police units from various parts around the U. S.

Obviously, the huge military installation 15 miles to our south was never named Burnett--but it almost was. This paper is concerned with the beginning of the Fort, its controversial naming and a biographical sketch of the final two men whose names were considered.

As the Nazi war machines of Adolph Hitler began their infamous blitzkrieg across Poland in 1939 and as Japan solidified its conquest and occupation of Manchuria, then China, defense leaders of the United States began a serious review of our defense establishment with more than a casual interest. By early 1941 the War Department was working closely with defense production agencies for top billing in their efforts to build a formidable fighting machine. Planes, tanks, rifles were rolling off our nation's assembly lines for shipment to Britain and Russia, the free world's last hope now that practically all of Europe had fallen to the Nazis.

During this period, the steady expansion of our armed forces was limited by our capacity to train the necessary manpower and the success of this program depended in large part on our ability to adequately accomodate many thousands of newly inducted men.

In mid-summer of 1941 numerous business and civic organizations in Northcentral Tennessee and Southwestern Kentucky were active in their efforts to promote the building of an Army training camp in the vicinity of Clarksville and Hopkinsville. Citizens of Hopkinsville through the Chamber of Commerce were urgently suggesting that the 18,000 acre Federal Game Refuge located 20 miles northwest of the city--the area that was to become the Pennyrile Forest State Park--be converted to use as an Army training area. Little did the Chamber know of the scope of the facility envisioned by the War Department.

During this period, the War Department was actively considering two possible sites in which to locate such a training facility. One was the present location of Fort Campbell and the other was another potentially suitable area north of Paris, Tennessee and south of Murray, Kentucky.

Following months of speculation and rumors on the part of local citizens, an official announcement was made on July 16, to the vast relief and rejoicing of Clarksville and Hopkinsville leaders who had labored so long to secure the project. It was officially announced that the Army camp would be located in Christian and Trigg Counties, Kentucky, and Montgomery and Stewart Counties, Tennessee with the bulk of the camp to be located in Tennessee. Some of the best farmland in the two states would be encompassed in the new training facility. Within two weeks of the announcement of the selection, an eight man survey team commanded by Lt. Col. B.F. Vanderwort arrived from the Army Quartermaster Hdqrs. Since Clarksville was closer to the site, the survey team established its offices in that city utilizing available space in the old Darnell and Bellamy tobacco warehouse. A time schedule of three and a half months was given the team. Beginning with the point at the intersection of Ky. Hgwy. 117 and

U. S. 41-A the team gradually encompassed the entire projected area. With the preliminary survey underway, a land office was established and by the first week of September the land appraisal of the headquarters area was completed. The appraisal team worked closely behind the surveyors and by mid-December the land planning phase was practically completed. A copy of this detailed survey simply entitled "Kentucky-Tennessee Armored Division Camp-December 31, 1941" is included in the office-museum of our County Historian, William T. Turner. Congress even at this date had not appropriated funds for purchase of land or for construction and no authority had been given to any Army Department to advance plans of any sort. Thus, the completed survey was all-important. When the War Department announced in early January 1942 that final approval had been given to the project and that construction would begin as soon as possible, an air of jubilation prevailed in Clarksville and Hopkinsville.

By mid-January a survey of streets and blocks in the headquarters area was initiated and bids for construction mailed to major contractors. Plans at this time called for the construction of an armored camp capable of accomodating approximately 23,000 men or an Armored division of 14,000 men plus headquarters staff and various independent training units.

When actual construction of the camp became imminent, specially trained land negotiators were authorized to accept options on farms within the area. By the time land procurement was phased out early in 1942, 1,105 separate tracts of land had been procured for a total area of 101,755 acres. Even before construction actually began many of the landowners were concerned over the appraisal placed on their farms. Most felt that the appraisals were fair and accurate but did not think them adequate when compared with prices they would have to pay when they attempted to purchase new farms in

other areas. Word of this discontent was sent to Washington by a delegation of area farm leaders. Their effort resulted in the War Department conducting a brief study of the situation although it is doubtful that appraisals were increased. In the final analysis, 756 tracts of land totaling 67,000 acres were secured through direct purchase and 376 tracts having 34,000 acres were procured through condemnation proceedings. An average price of \$39.94 per acre was paid for the 101,000 acres.

The roads were laid out but were not paved. If the weather was wet they were mud. If it was dry, they were dust. Colonel Guy W. Chipman and a cadre of some 200 commissioned and non-commissioned officers arrived from Fort Knox on July 15. Col. Chipman, a native of Falmouth, Kentucky, and a 1910 Academy graduate had had wide experience, for the time, in armored divisions and was an officer in the first such unit organized, the Seventh Armored Division. 320 recruits from Arkansas were the first to arrive at the post--no uniforms, no buildings, little with which to train. The recruits were put to work with hammers and saws in helping alongside civilian construction workers to construct the barracks and mess halls. It was a beginning. Then with ever-increasing tempo, the barracks, headquarters, mess halls, recreational facilities, etc. seemed to literally spring from the red clay of the Kentucky-Tennessee hills. By the end of World War II, hundreds of thousands of raw recruits had been processed and trained at the facility including the 8th, 12th, 14th, 20th, and 26th Armored Divisions. At the same time, the post served as headquarters for the XXII Corps and the IV Armored Corps.

By March 1st the huge training installation was an accomplished fact and a permanent name was being sought. Kentucky's 1st District Congressman Noble Gregory advanced the name of Colonel Henry Burnett and Tennessee's 6th District Congressman Percy Priest countered with General William Campbell. A determined campaign was staged by Representative Gregory in favor of naming the camp after Burnett, a native of Cadiz, Kentucky. Gregory, but one step from the chairmanship of the all-important House Ways and Means Committee, was a Congressman to be reckoned with by the War Department. On the other hand, Tennessee's Congressman Percy Priest was quick to point out that more than two-thirds of the sprawling post was located in Tennessee. While at this time "political correctness" had not reared its ugly head, Priest noted that his man was a "Union" man and Burnett was a Confederate. After agonizing for weeks amid charges and counter charges, the War Department came down on the side of Congressman Priest and the name--Camp Campbell. Thus ended a lively scrap over the selection of a name--a scrap which as one editor put it..."Summed up some of that deep-seated feeling which some Southerners still have about the War Between the States." Certainly a distinct North-South flavor had been injected into the controversy.

Who were these two men over which the fight centered? A brief sketch of the lives of each would seem in order. First, the Kentuckian:

Few men worked harder in the secession crisis of 1860-61 for a Confederate Kentucky than did 1st Dist. Congressman Henry Cornelius Burnett of Cadiz. From the beginning he was a staunch champion of southern rights. Burnett was born in Essex County, Virginia on October 5, 1825. Brought to Western Kentucky as a child, he was educated in the public schools of Trigg County and afterwards attended an Academy in Hopkinsville. In 1847 he was admitted to the bar and later served as Circuit Court Clerk in the early 1850s.

First District voters sent the young Burnett to Congress in 1855 succeeding Linn Boyd, Paducah, who had served as Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1851-55.

In the critical presidential election of 1860, Congressman Burnett, a fierce proslavery Democrat supported Southern Democratic candidate and later Confederate General, John C. Breckinridge of Lexington, Kentucky. However, with Republican Abraham Lincoln's victory, South Carolina seceded in December 1860. Many Kentuckians believed the Union could still be saved. Burnett was skeptical, noting in January 1861 that "the Republicans have rejected with scorn and ridicule every proposition submitted to them by Senate and House Committees." The Unionist dominated Kentucky Legislature declined in January to call a State Convention to denounce federal forces being proposed against the Southern States. Instead the Legislature voted to send delegates to Washington to a "Peace Conference" called by the Virginia General Assembly. Burnett, either believing that reconciliation might still be possible or, more likely, making a gesture of unity, joined other Kentucky Congressmen in endorsing the "Peace Conference." The Virginia-sponsored conference was a disappointing failure.

By the end of February 1861, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas had seceded and, with South Carolina, had formed the Confederate States of America.

In Congress, the Republicans began preparing the nation for war but Burnett and most of the still-loyal upper South lawmakers opposed them and desperately tried to stop military legislation. To supplement the small regular army, Republicans drew up legislation authorizing President Lincoln to call out state militias in case of rebellion against federal authority. In a passionate speech on the House floor, Burnett characterized the

measure as "tantamount to War." The militia bill was argued to death and did not pass at this session. Burnett's pro-Southern views certainly did not escape notice in the Northern press.

In Frankfort, the Legislature again called for delegates to a convention of border states to meet in late May. The secessionists calling themselves the Southern Rights Party elected Burnett as their candidate from the First District. On April 12 the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter and the Civil War began. The proposed border states convention was held but accomplished nothing. Meanwhile, the Kentucky Legislature passed resolutions establishing the state's neutrality. To meet the national crisis, President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers and called for an emergency session of Congress to meet on July 4. In Kentucky, special elections for the session were set for June 20. This was a Federal election but secessionists viewed it as a test of strength. They fielded candidates in each of the state's ten congressional districts. Burnett was nominated by the Southern Rights party at convention held in Mayfield. It was at this convention that the possibility of Western Kentucky separating from the rest of the state and forming some sort of an alliance with Tennessee was discussed. Every other secessionist candidate in the state was soundly defeated.

Taking his seat in Congress on July 4, Burnett found himself surrounded by uncompromising Union men who were determined to get on with the War. The session adjourned in early August and Burnett left Washington for Cadiz. At home he found the prospect of Kentucky seceding growing ever more dim. The

Unionists had won an overwhelming majority in the new Kentucky Legislature. While Trigg County and most of the 1st District counties voted secessionist they were well in the minority in the Legislature.

Congressman Burnett continued to drum up support for the Southern cause. On August 29, Burnett gave a rousing pro-Southern speech at Tandy's Grove in southern Christian County. It was noted by a local newspaper that as he orated, Confederate flags fluttered in the late summer breeze over newly formed military companies such as the "Dixie Blues" and the "Pembroke Tigers." He had established a recruiting/training camp just over the state line in Montgomery Co.--named appropriately Camp Burnett.

Kentucky's neutrality collapsed as Confederates seized Hickman and Columbus and the Union forces occupied Paducah. Soon afterwards both armies moved into the state in force. With neutrality ended, Kentuckians went off to fight in both armies. In the fall of 1861, Burnett raised a regiment of Confederate infantry in Western Kentucky which was mustered into service at Hopkinsville as the Eighth Kentucky. He was elected as its Colonel--but he never took command. Die-Hard secessionists were determined to form a pro-Confederate government for the state and Burnett decided to help.

On October 29-31 he was chairman of a gathering at Russellville attended by sixty secessionists from thirty-two counties. The meeting condemned the Unionist Legislature as being unrepresentative of the people and called for a sovereignty convention to meet in Russellville on November 18. On the appointed day, around two hundred secessionists from sixty-eight counties showed up. Burnett was president of the Convention which drafted a declaration of independence from the Union and established a provisional Confederate government. Rebel-occupied Bowling Green was designated as its capital.

In addition, the Convention sent Burnett and former Congressman William E. Simms of Lexington to Richmond, Virginia as Commissioners to the Confederate Congress. Their mission was to get Kentucky admitted to the Confederacy and they were successful. On December 10th Kentucky became the 13th Confederate state. All of this meant little for the majority of Kentuckians statewide were loyal Unionists.

The Federal Congress reconvened in early December with Burnett conspicuously absent. Many congressmen knew of his part in the Russellville Convention and on the second day of the session Congressman Dunn, an Indiana Republican, offered a resolution to expel him. It passed easily.

After Kentucky became a Confederate state, Burnett went to Tennessee and joined the southern army at Fort Donaldson on the Cumberland River just south of Trigg County. Donaldson fell on February 16 to a combined Union Army-Navy force led by a then unknown leader, Ulysses S. Grant. The 8th Kentucky was captured along with most of the Confederate garrison. Burnett managed to escape with General John B. Floyd, an old Washington acquaintance. Burnett's military service ended at Fort Donaldson but ten days later he took his seat along with Simms in the Confederate Senate in Richmond. He would remain there for the rest of the War. After the War, Burnett went to Washington and sought out President Andrew Johnson, an old friend from Congress. He was told in no uncertain terms, to go home. On his return to Kentucky, he was arrested in Louisville and charged with treason by the Federal authorities. Released on bond, he never stood trial.

Burnett resumed his law practice in Cadiz. Unfortunately, his career was cut short with the outbreak of cholera in the area in 1866. The ex-Congressman died of the dreaded disease at the age of 40. He is buried in the old East Side Cemetery in Cadiz.

So, the War Department came down with the decision that the new training post should be named after General Campbell. Why should he have been so honored?

William Bowen Campbell, son of David and Catherine (Bowen) Campbell was born February 1, 1807 on Mansher's Creek, Sumner Co., Tennessee within twelve miles of present day Nashville. His grandparents were part of the early Scotch-Irish migration to America and he was extremely proud of the fact that eight of his kin had fought at King's Mountain during the American Revolution.

After completing his education in Winchester, Virginia, young Campbell was admitted to the Tennessee bar in 1829. After practicing law for several years in Carthage, Tennessee, he was appointed Attorney General of his circuit and this was followed in 1835 by a seat in the State House of Representatives.

During this period, the Creek and Seminole Indians were becoming increasingly restless and resentful of white settlements in what they considered their homeland. In 1836, many white settlers along the frontiers of Georgia, Florida and Alabama were ruthlessly burned out and murdered. At the height of those savage attacks the Federal Government called on Tennessee to furnish a regiment of volunteers. Campbell resigned his seat in the Legislature and was among the first to offer his services. He was unanimously elected Captain of his local company and proceeded to lead his volunteers into the swamps of Georgia and Northern Florida. For the next seven months, young Campbell and his men were to experience the wrath of the Creeks and Seminoles under the worst possible terrain and battle conditions. By 1837, Campbell had become a popular hero in Tennessee and, bowing to public demand, he became a candidate for Congress running against General William Trousdale, his regimental commander during the Seminole Wars. He was elected to Congress by a large majority and was re-elected in 1839. At the close of his second term Campbell

returned to private life and resumed his law practice. The tranquility of life in Carthage was broken when but a few years later the Mexican War flared. Answering a call for 2,400 volunteers, the First Regiment of Tennessee volunteers was organized in May 1846. Incidentally, over 30,000 volunteers answered the call for the 2,400--and this is the origin of the motto "the Volunteer State." Campbell, well remembered for his leadership in the Indian Wars, was elected Colonel of the Tennessee regiment and soon led this unit into the heart of Mexico. Campbell's Tennessee Regiment and Colonel Jefferson Davis' Mississippi Rifle Regiment constituted the bulk of General Zachary Taylor's Army as they advanced on the well defended city of Monterey. The Mexican Army had fortified the city with over 40 strategically placed artillery pieces and their army numbered over 10,000 men. Against this force, Taylor could muster but 5,000 ill equipped and poorly trained volunteers. The bloody assault on Monterey by the First Tennessee and the Mississippi Rifles would go down in Tennessee's history as a feat of unequalled heroism. In the charge, Colonel Campbell's command to his troops "Boys, follow me" would become a political campaign slogan a few years later.

Colonel Campbell returned from Mexico in 1847 a popular hero. He was elected a Judge of the Circuit Court and held this position for several years. In 1851 he was nominated to run for Governor, again, against his former superior Governor William Trousdale, probably the most influential man in Tennessee's Democratic Party. The battle cry, "Boys, follow me" became the slogan of the Whig Party and carried Campbell and the Whigs to victory and to the Governor's office. When his term as Governor ended in 1858, Governor Campbell declined to run for a second term choosing instead to retire to private life. Peace would not be sustained and the

forces were at work to bring Tennessee and the South into violent confrontation with the North.

Campbell had by now established an enviable reputation and his influence was urgently sought for the Southern cause. Campbell had no hope that peace could be maintained but his loyalty as he put it "...I shall stand by Tennessee and the Union." With the fall of Fort Sumter, the Confederacy offered him the command of all troops raised or to be raised in Tennessee. He refused this commission.

In July 1862 Governor Campbell accepted a commission as a Brigadier General in the Union Army on the condition that he would not be assigned to duty in the field. He had hoped, apparently, that he could use this office as a place of mediation between the Government he felt bound to support and the people he loved. On soon discovering that the situation was hopeless, he resigned his commission and returned to private life. He died in Lebanon, Tennessee on August 19, 1867 and is buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery, Lebanon. General Campbell is known as a soldier and statesman and next to Andrew Jackson, is considered as Tennessee's best known military hero.

Thus, the name, Campbell, takes its place as the name of one of America's top military installations and home of the famed 101 Airborne Division.