

TIME LAPSE



Ward Milliken

It was New Year's Eve, 1862, the last day of the Civil War's first year. The Union Army of the Cumberland, commanded by Major General William S. Rosecrans, had moved out of Nashville and engaged the Confederate Army of Tennessee under Braxton Bragg in what would be called the Battle of Stones River (Murfreesboro), Tennessee. The 1st Ohio Cavalry, commanded by twenty-eight-year-old Colonel Minor Milliken, was ordered to repel Confederate cavalry attacks on the rear of the Union army. Colonel Milliken, to the command of "draw sabers," led his regiment in a charge against a superior

force of Confederate cavalry, and soon found himself and a part of his regiment cut off. Colonel Milliken, during a saber fight against several Confederates, was shot in the neck and killed by a bullet from a Rebel pistol.

Milliken was born on July 9, 1834, in Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio, the son of a lawyer, prominent citizen, and former soldier. After spending two years at Hanover College in Indiana, he received a degree from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. After graduation from Miami in 1854, he attended Harvard Law School in Massachusetts. Milliken then returned to practice law in Cincinnati, Ohio, and later purchased

the *Hamilton Intelligencer*, the Republican newspaper of Butler County. After serving as its editor for two years, he sold the newspaper and retired to farming.

When the Civil War broke out, Milliken enlisted as a private and engaged in recruiting the nucleus for a cavalry company, even purchasing twenty-four horses with his own funds. His recruits became part of Captain Burd-sall's Cincinnati Company, and later part of the 1st Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. Milliken was promoted to sergeant and then to lieutenant. After a campaign in West Virginia, he was promoted to major.

Upon resignation of the regiment's first colonel, Milliken, then the junior major, was promoted on January 11, 1862 to lead the 1st Ohio Cavalry as its colonel. Some of his fellow officers charged that Milliken was too young and too ignorant of cavalry tactics to lead Ohio's first cavalry regiment. After going before a board of examiners of Regular Army officers, Milliken officially became colonel of his regiment on June 6, 1862.

The regiment then campaigned in Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky during the summer and fall of 1862. Colonel Milliken was highly complimented by his superiors for his vigorous and aggressive actions against the Rebels. The day after the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky, October 9, 1862 he was assigned to command a provisional brigade of cavalry. Immediately ordered to drive Confederate Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan out of Kentucky, he set out with 1,175 men (600 of whom were on their first campaign), and no artillery. Morgan, on the other hand, had over 2,000 seasoned cavalrymen and two pieces of artillery. Luckily for Milliken and his brigade, he was not able to "catch" Morgan in any substantial strength, and the brigade disbanded by the end of October.

The 1st Ohio then joined the 3d Ohio, 2d and 5th Kentucky Cavalry, with a brigade commanded by a colonel senior to Milliken. This brigade encountered Morgan and defeated him at Gallatin, Tennessee, capturing nearly 100 prisoners. The 1st Ohio spent the rest of November and the greater part of December 1862 involved in numerous scouts, reconnaissances, and skirmishes until the fateful, bloody Battle of Stones River. In a letter to Milliken's parents after the battle, Major General George H. Thomas wrote: "While mourning his loss, you have the consolation of knowing that he fell a Christian and patriot gallantly defending the honor of his country."

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