

Fortifications of Nashville

15 February 2023

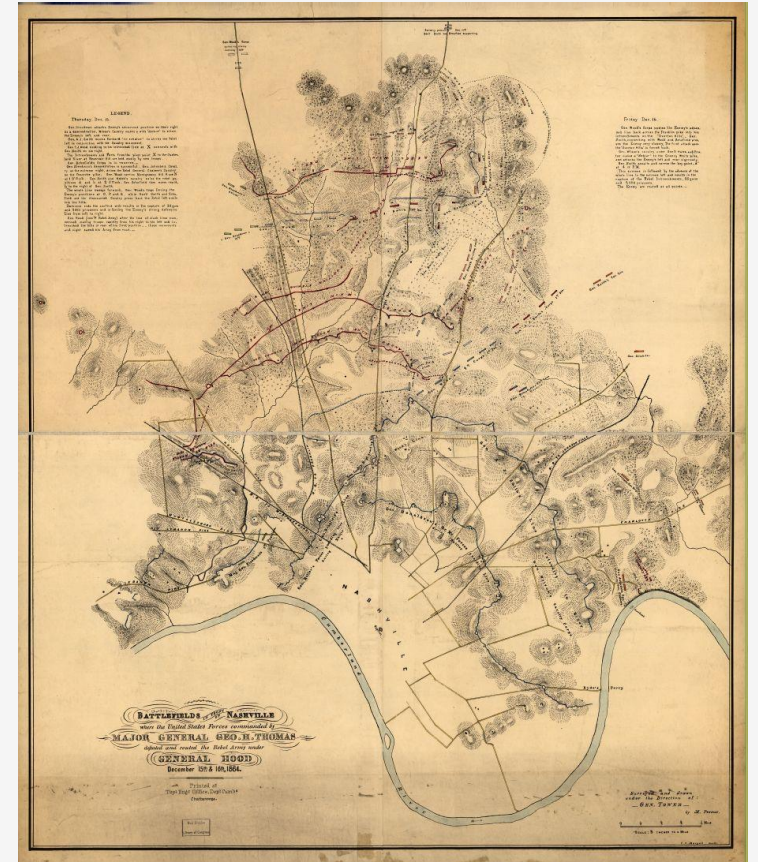


December 1864

After the brutal Battle of Franklin, Federal forces fall back to Nashville, and John Bell Hood, moves the battered Army of Tennessee north

By 2 December the Army of Tennessee takes up positions South of Nashville just outside of the range of the guns of Fort Negley and the other defenses

Work on the defenses of Nashville continues at a feverish pace, while Hood, not having enough Soldiers to attack prepares to lay siege as best he can

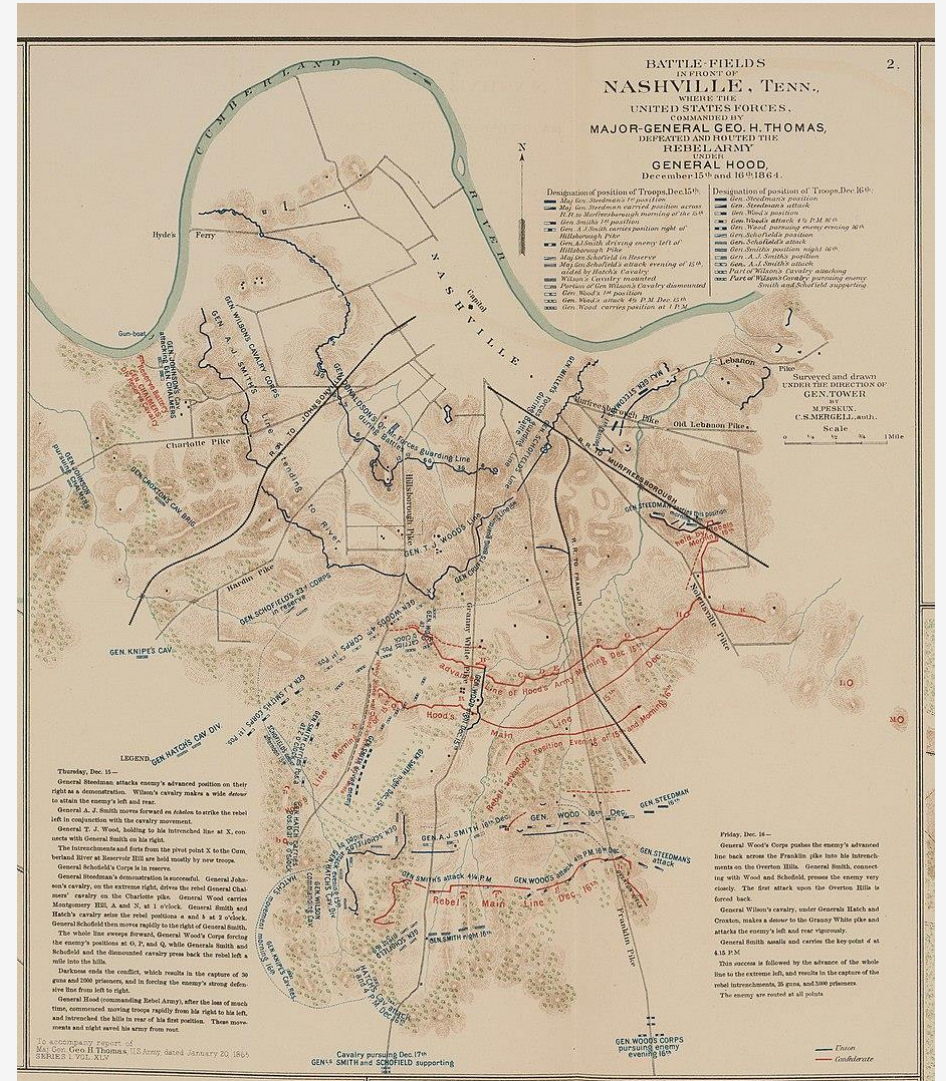


Situation 2 December-15 December

- As both sides prepare for an inevitable battle, entrenching continues across both lines as Hood is not able to attack the formidable defensive system, and Thomas wants to fully prepare before launching any assault
- Hood hopes that Thomas would attack him, smashing his army against the Confederate entrenchments, after which Hood could counterattack and take Nashville.
- Partially to draw out Thomas, and partially to acquire much needed food and supplies, Hood sends Bate and later Forrest to attack the railroads and garrison near Murfreesboro
- Thomas doesn't take the bait, and with his line now even weaker, Hood orders a series of redoubts to be build shoring up his weak left flank
 - He emphasizes this point directing that commanders take personal charge of this building
- Mother nature intervenes and an ice storm hits the area

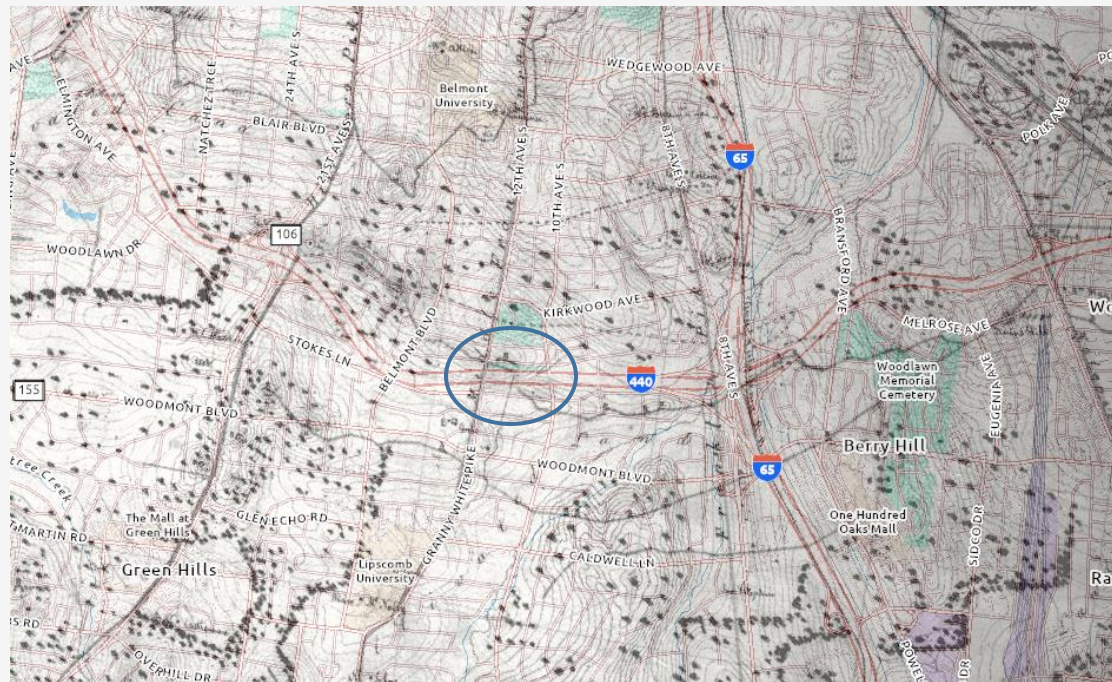
"The slopes in front of the lines were a continuous glare of ice, so that movement away from the roads and broken paths could be made only with the greatest difficulty and at a snail's pace. Men and horses were seen falling whenever they attempted to move across country. A Man slipping on the hillside had no choice but to sit down and slide to the bottom, and groups of men in the forts and lines found constant entertainment in watching these mishaps . . ."

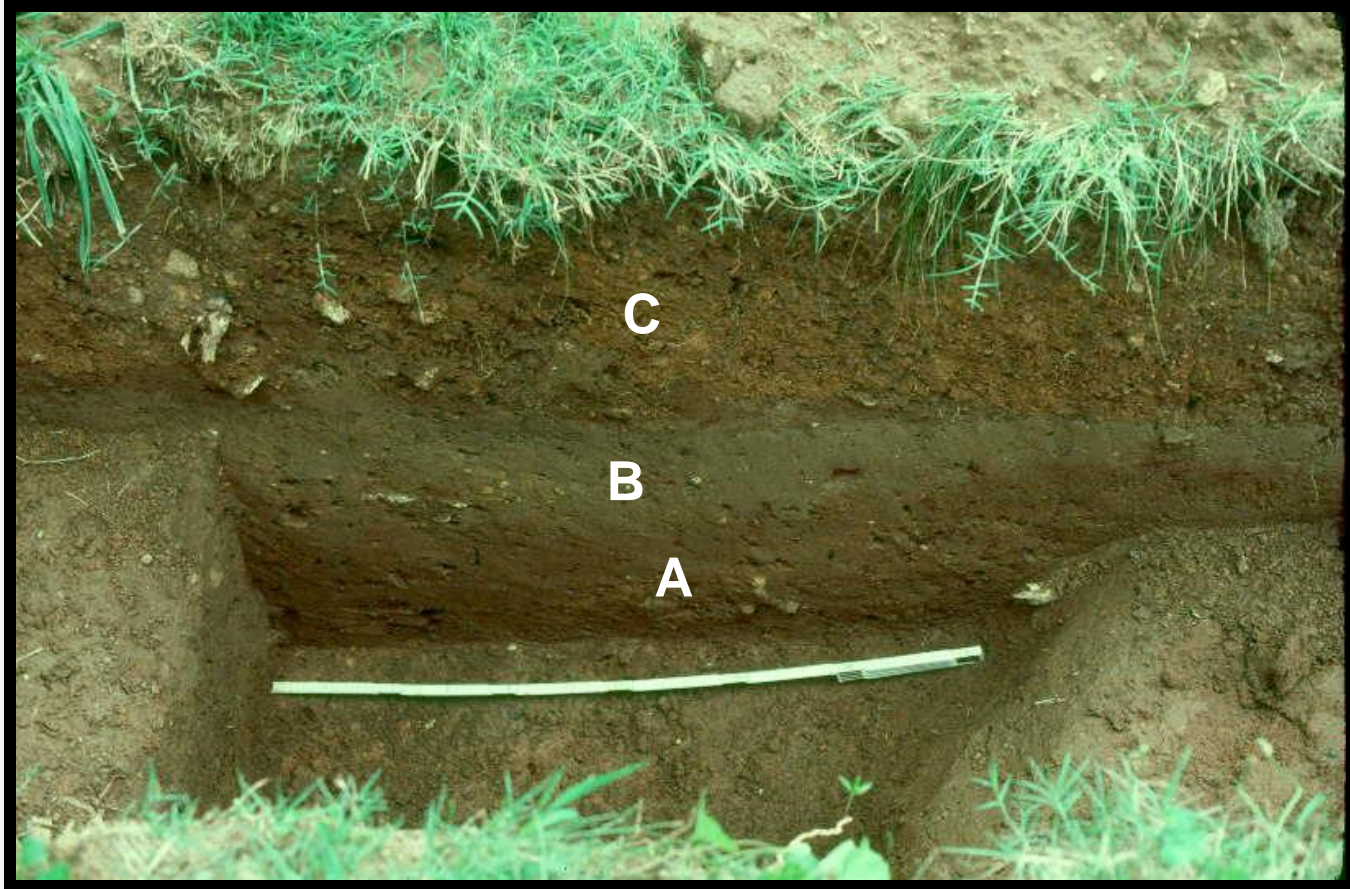
-J.D. Cox



Confederate Entrenchments

Alabama soldier Edgar Jones wrote that while he enjoyed the warmth of his new home it gave him "a sort of graveyard feeling" since the shelters were remarkably similar to graves.

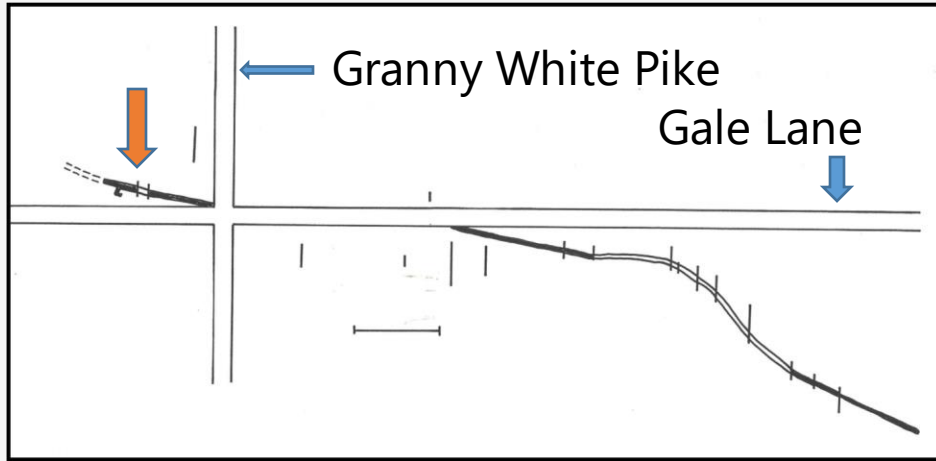




Trench Profile

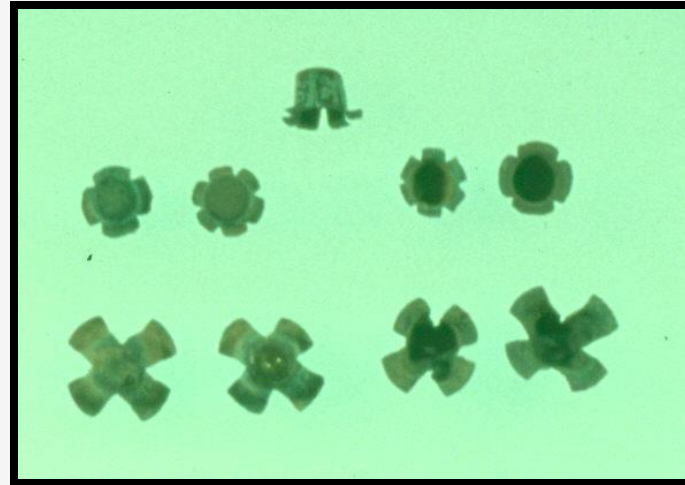
- A. Original Fill
- B. Old Plow Zone
- C. 1930s Fill







Minie Balls



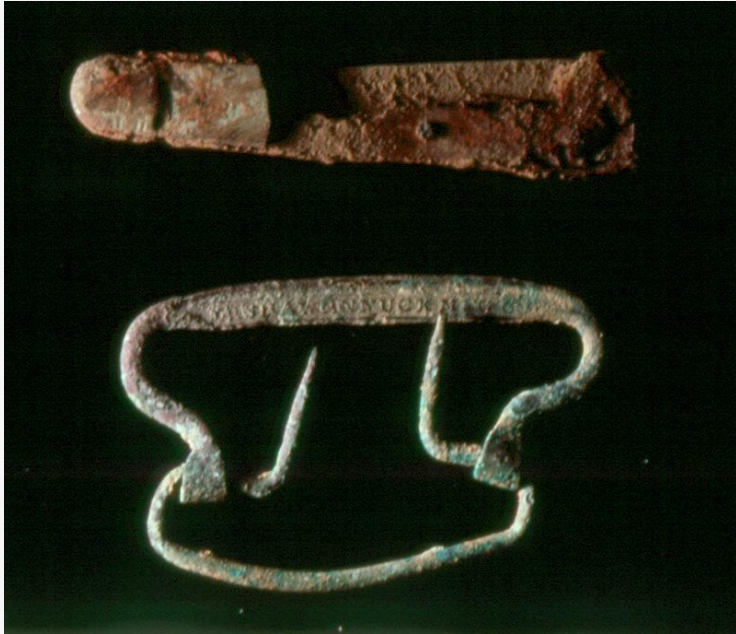
Percussion Caps

Spencer Cartridge



**Buck and Ball
Williams Cleaners**



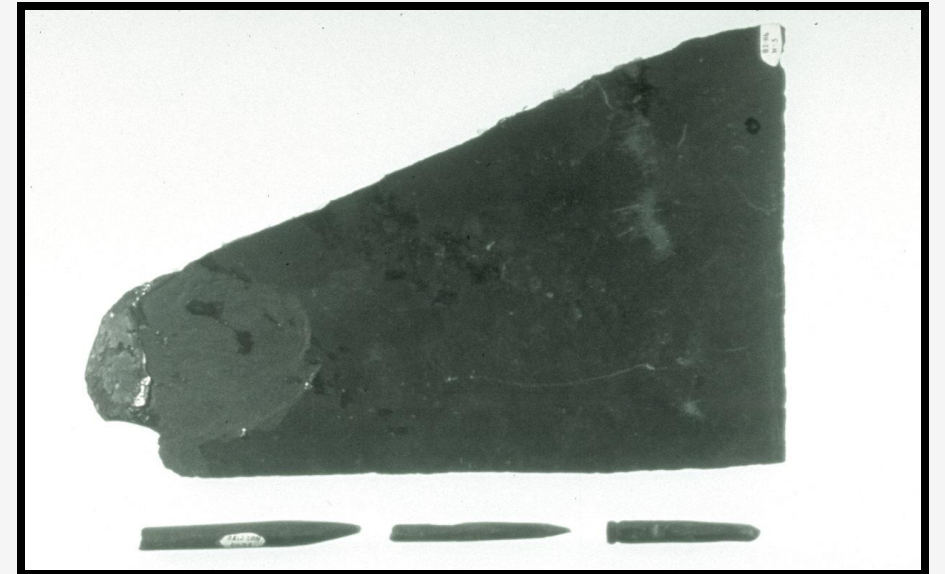


Clasp Knife
Belt Buckle



Coins

Slate Board and Pencils





Cut Nails and Tack



Parched Corn

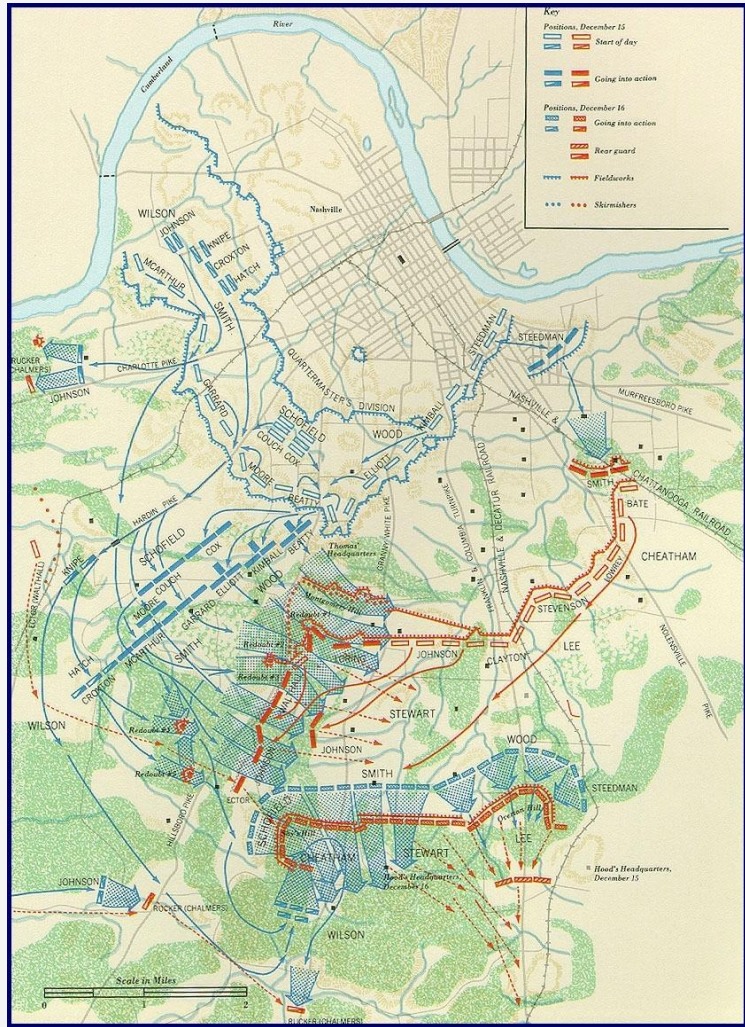
The Battle Begins

On December 15, Thomas launched a demonstration on the Confederate right across the line of the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad.

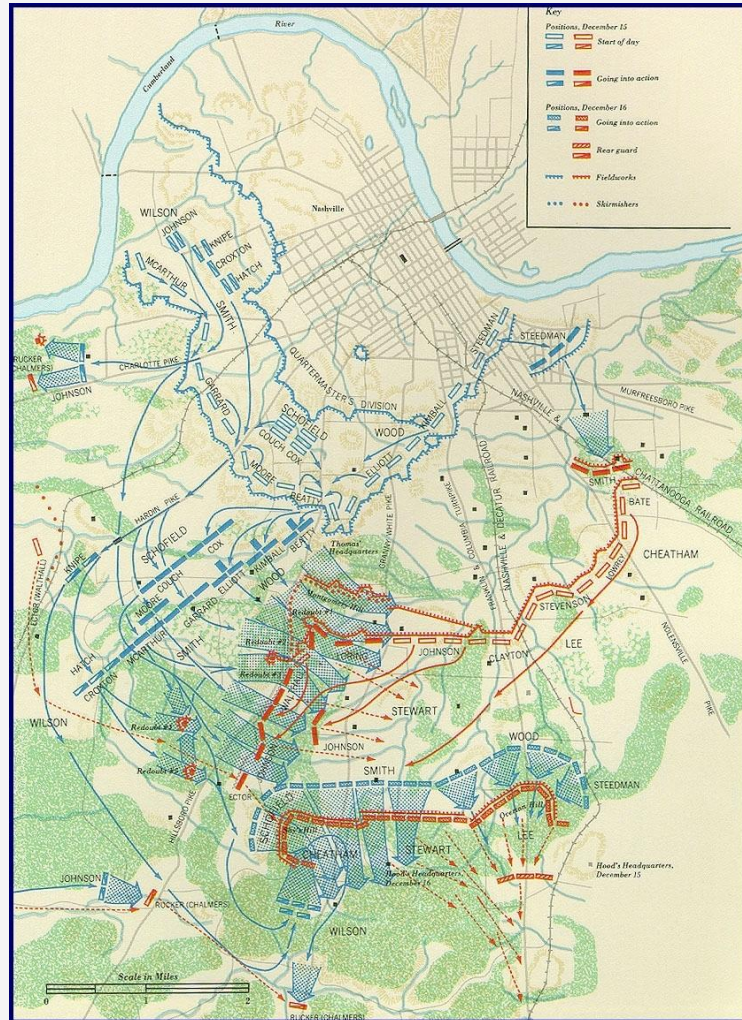
At the same time, his main assault fell on a cluster of redoubts on the Confederate left. Confederates held briefly and then displaced back to the main line

Thomas swung the bulk of his forces out of the defensive of Nashville in a grand-wheeling offensive. Confederate Redoubts #1-#5 fell as the Federals outflanked and overwhelmed the left of Hood's line. What remained of Hood's army retreated two miles further south during the night and established a new defensive line.

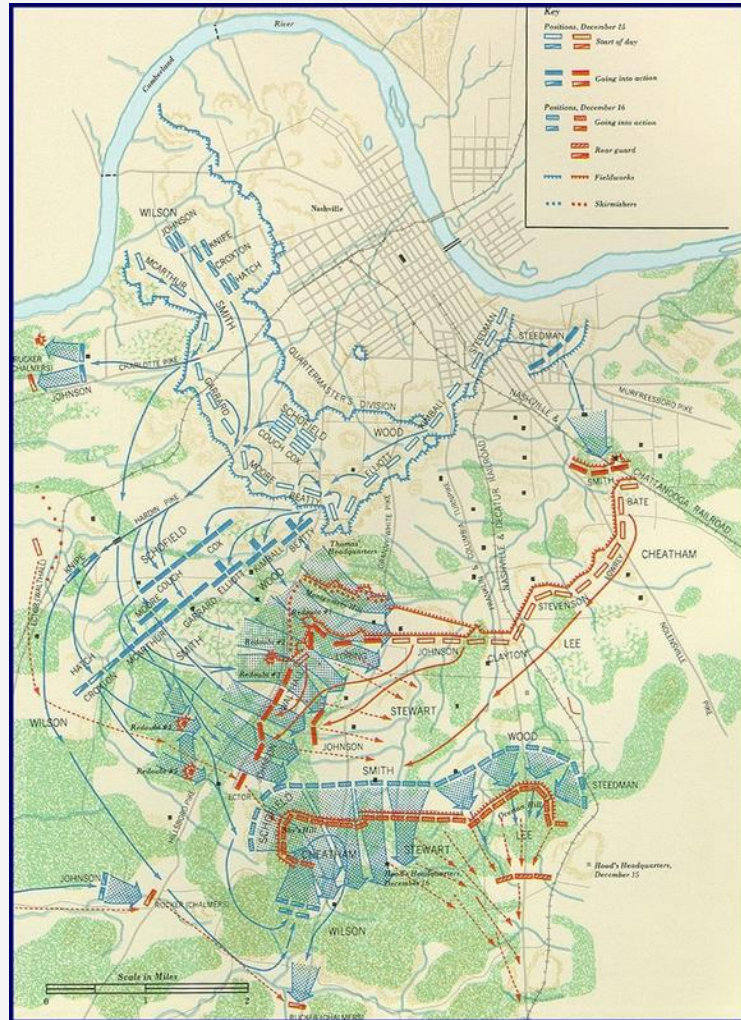




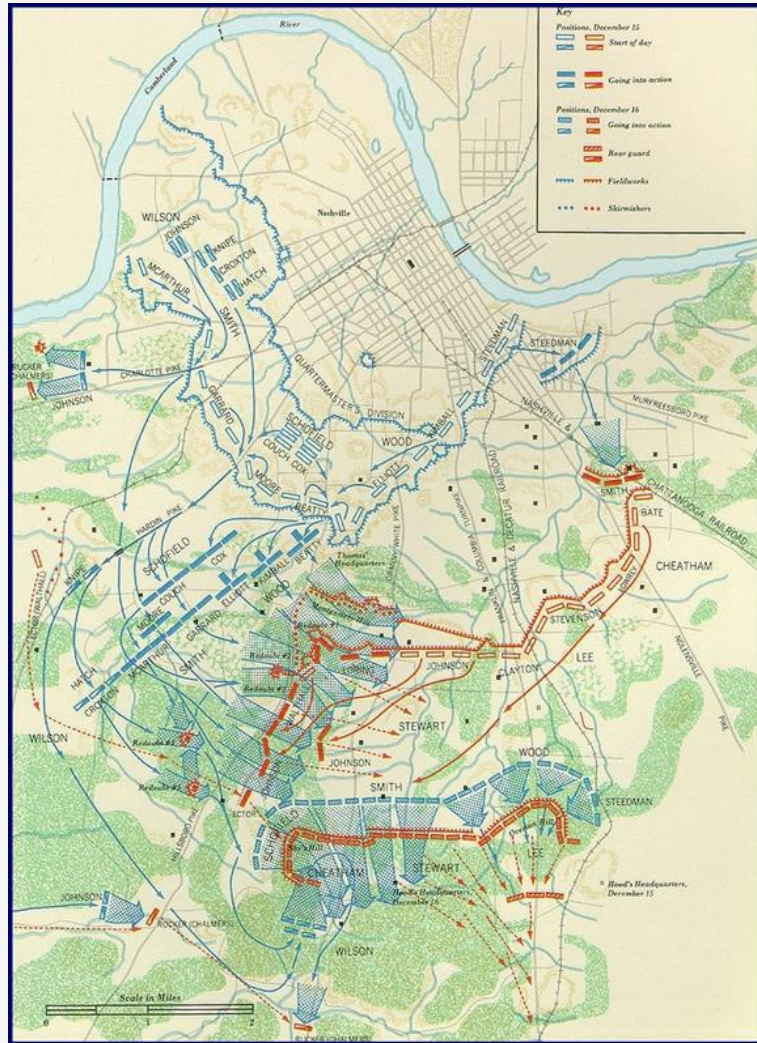
Redoubt #1



Redoubt #4



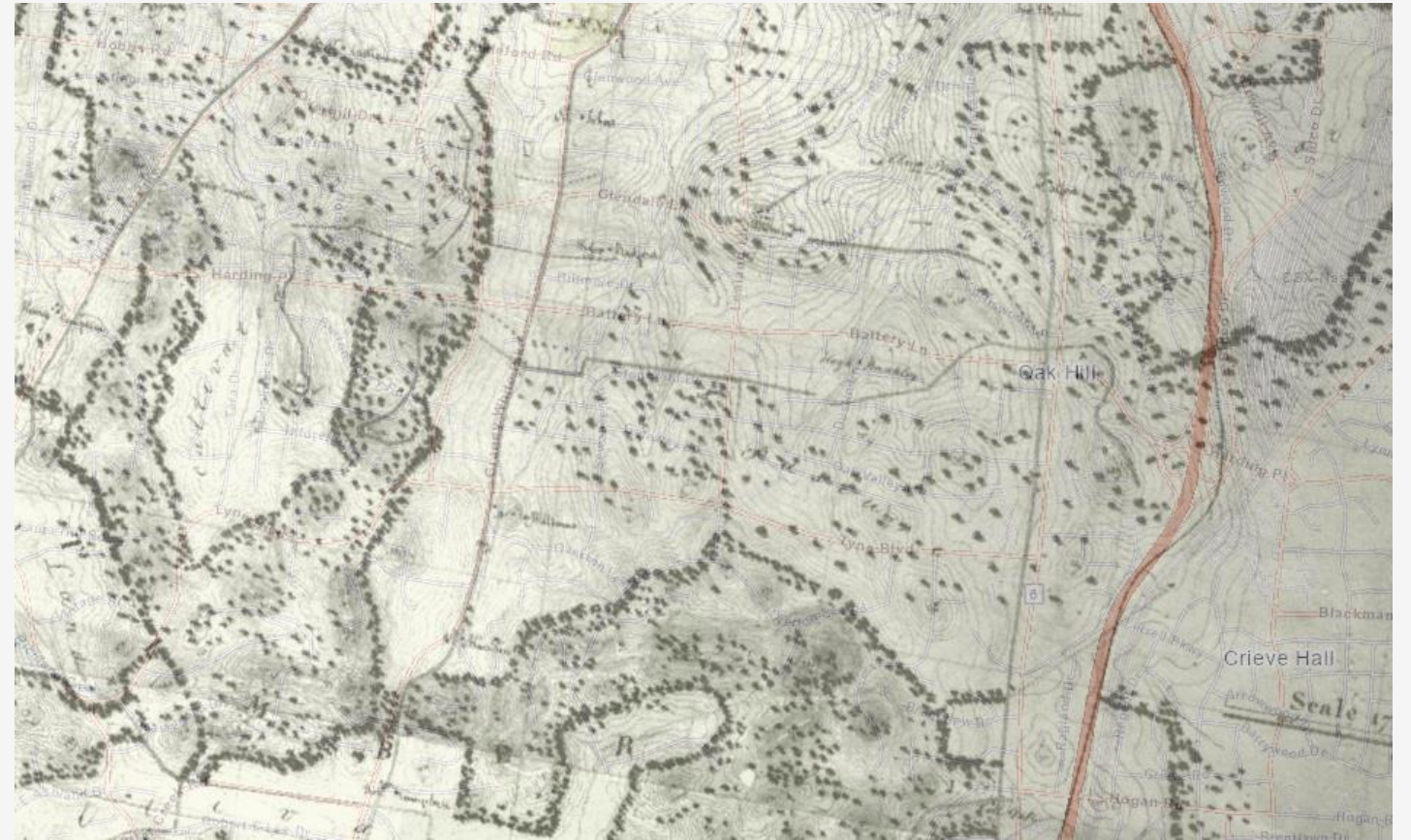
Granbury's Lunette (Confederate Right)



Situation 16 December 1864

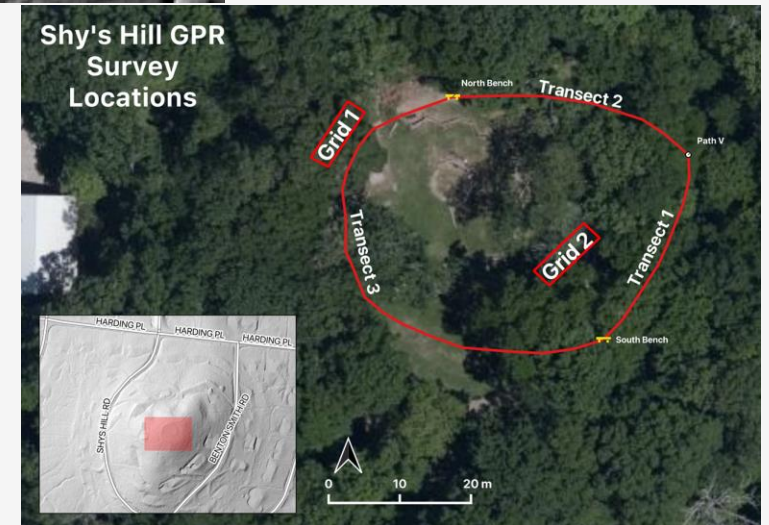
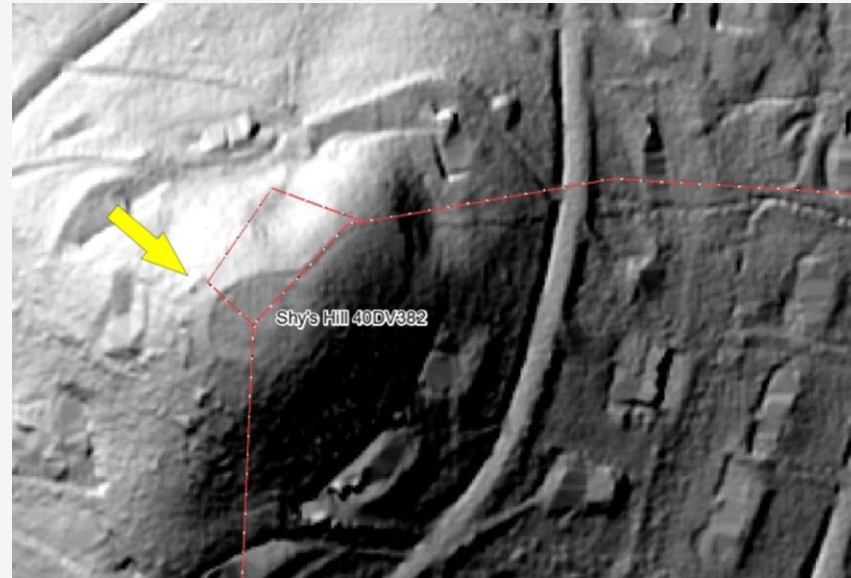
Thomas renewed the attack on the afternoon of December 16. He followed the pattern of the first day, hoping to pin the Confederate right while smashing the left. This time the diversion was more successful. The Southerners defending Peach Orchard Hill repulsed the four-brigade Union attack, but they could not spare any reinforcements to bolster other parts of their lines.

The Confederate left was anchored on Compton's Hill. In the shadows of the setting sun, Brig. Gen. John McArthur, on his own initiative, ordered his three brigades to charge the hill. McArthur's attack broke the Confederate line and soon threatened to sweep up Hood's whole army. Col. William Shy of the 20th Tennessee died defending the hill, and the prominence was renamed in his honor.



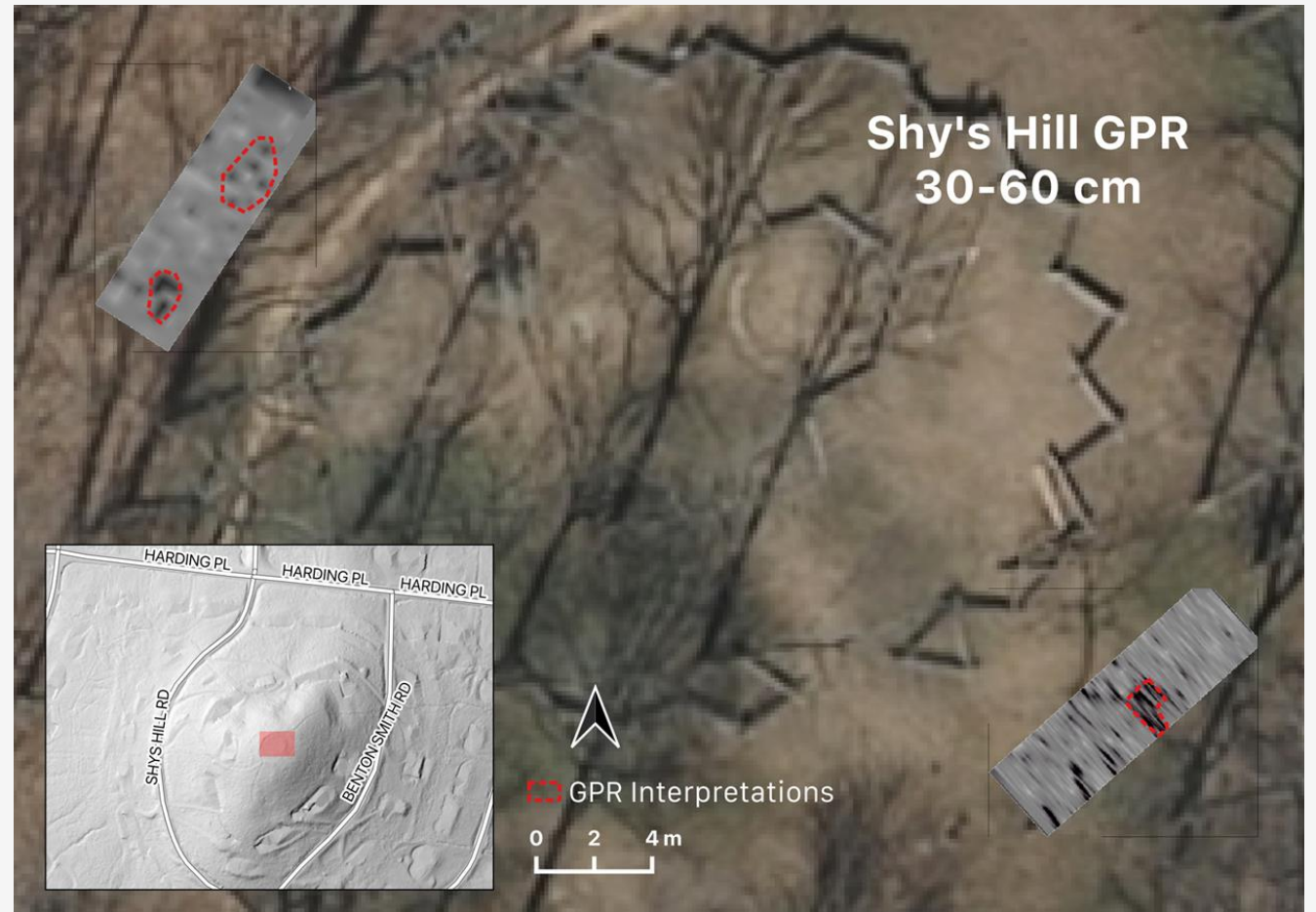
Shy's Hill

- End of the Confederate line on day two of the Battle of Nashville with hastily dug entrenchments
- LiDAR/Satellite images show a small but noticeable rectangular feature
- Unclear how much of the site had been disturbed by previous work/development in the area



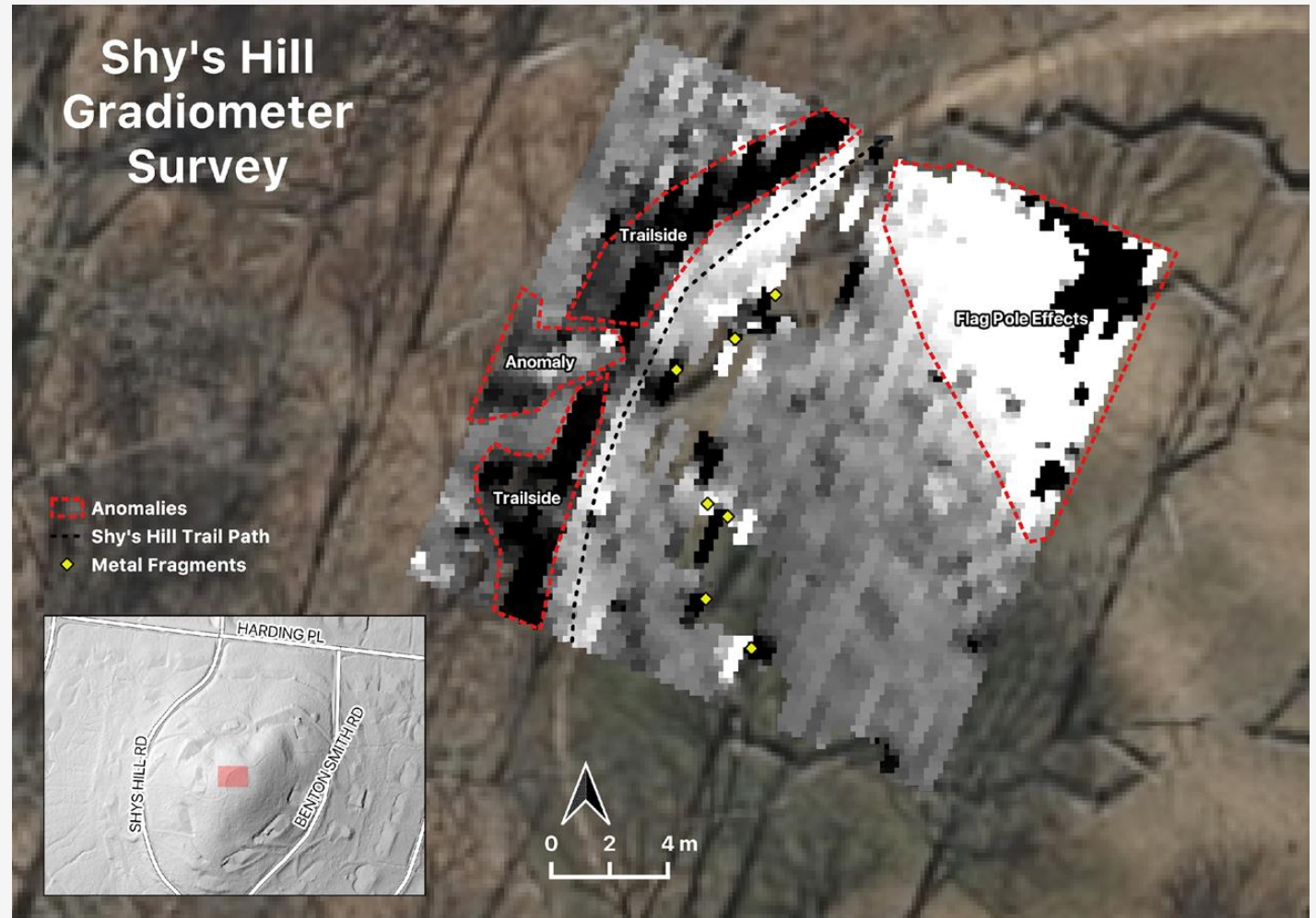
Shy's Hill GPR Results

- Some anomalies were noted at depth consistent with other area civil war finds, but it is unclear as to what they might be
- No evidence of sub-surface pipes or infrastructure detected



Shy's Hill

- The area on the site in the vicinity of the LiDAR anomaly was also surveyed with the magnetic gradiometer
- While a large areas was obscured by the flagpole several features could be noted:
 1. Soil disturbance was observed along the modern trail that surrounds the current hilltop
 2. No subsurface infrastructure was noted
 3. An anomaly of unclear significance was noted past the trailside near the location of the rectangular feature notes on the LiDAR survey



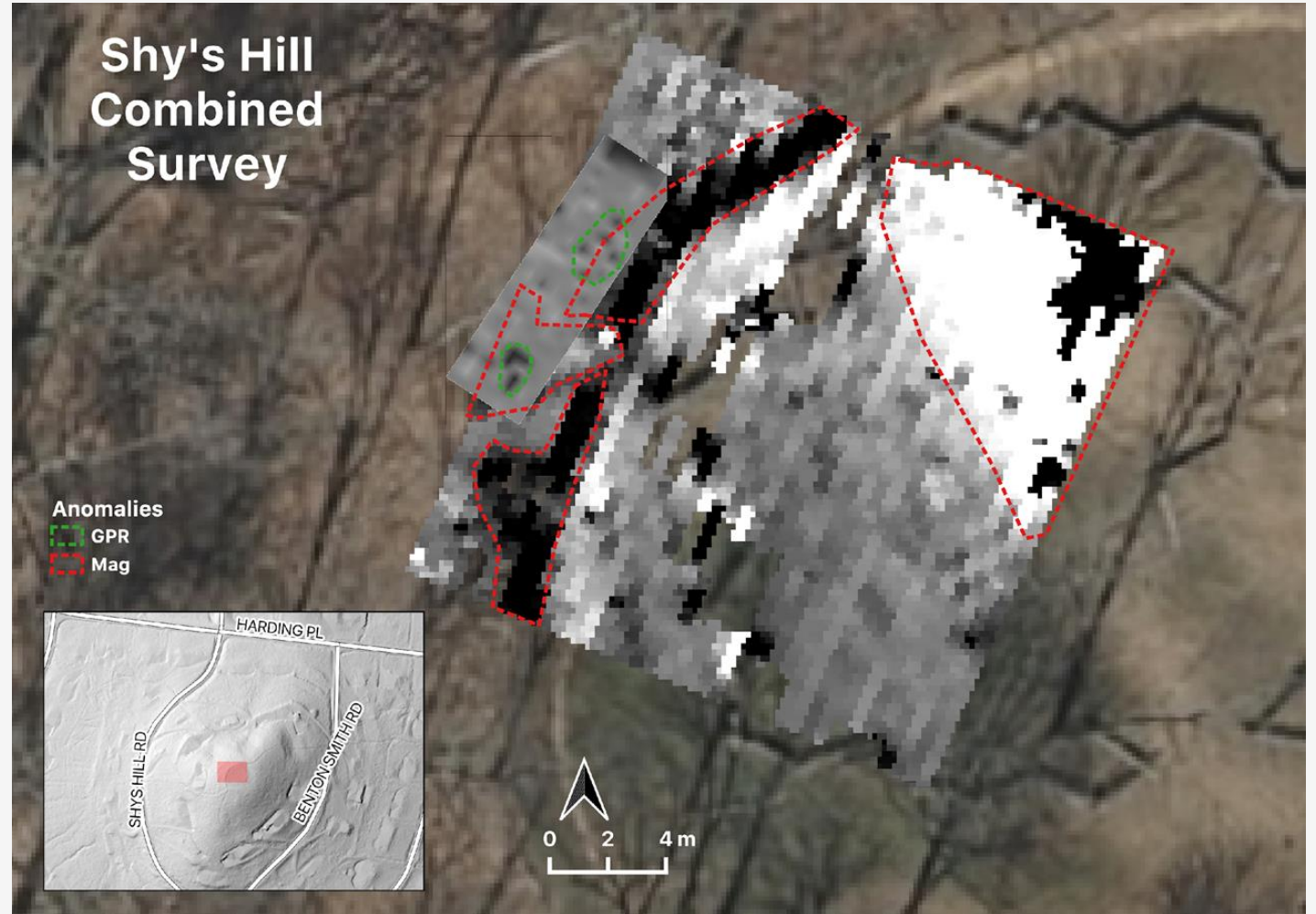
Shy's Hill Overlay

When the GPR and the magnetic gradiometer data is overlaid and aligned with aerial views of the site, the anomalies near the location of the rectangular feature noted on LiDAR line up

As such we can say there is an unknown iron-containing anomaly at a depth consistent with area civil war features that is different than the surrounding soil

This anomaly is also at a location on the site consistent with where entrenchments might have been near a rectangular feature noted on LiDAR imaging = **More investigation warranted!**

However the newer tools allow us to target excavation to locations that are the most likely to yield additional information while causing little or no disruption on the site!



Questions?

