



## **Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee**

William H. Nulty

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At the end of 1863 the Federal forces in the Department of the South were tied up in siege operations against Charleston and Savannah, operations that showed little progress or promise. The commander of the Department, Major General Quincy A. Gillmore, led an expedition into Florida to recruit blacks, cut off commissary supplies headed for other parts of the Confederacy, and disrupt the railroad system within Florida. Expedition forces landed at Jacksonville on February 7, 1864.

The engagement at Olustee, not far from Gainesville, took place on February 20, 1864. it was the largest Civil War battle in Florida and one of the bloodiest Union defeats of the entire war. Nonetheless, because the engagement forced the Confederacy to divert 15,000 men from the thinly manned defense of Charleston and Savannah, it delayed critical reinforcement of the Army of Tennessee, which was fighting desperately to prevent the Union invasion of northwestern Georgia. Makin use of detailed maps and diagrams, Nulty presents a vivid account of this fascination Civil War effort.



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