

# William M. Jones

## "K" Co. Georgia 50th Infantry



Residence Brooks County, GA; 21 years old

Enlisted on 3/22/1862 as a Private

On 3/22/1862, he mustered into "K" Co. Georgia 50th Infantry.

**Wounded and Captured 7/3/1863 Gettysburg, PA**

(Right leg amputated below knee)

Promotions

5th Sergeant 9/15/1862 (Estimated day)

Surrendered on 5/10/1865 at Tallahassee, FL

Paroled 5/20/1865 Tallahassee, FL

# William M. Jones

## GETTYSBURG CAPTURED BOWIE SIDE-KNIFE



This Confederate Bowie Side-Knife is identified to Sergeant William M. Jones of the 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, and was taken from him when he was captured at a Confederate field hospital with wounds he received during the Battle of Gettysburg at the **Battle for the Wheatfield** at the Rose Farm.

The knife conforms to a design associated with the Columbus Naval Iron Works and has similar characteristic found on other known Naval Iron Works edge weapons. The **Columbus Naval Iron Works** (originally established as the Columbus Iron Foundry in 1853) in Columbus, Georgia, was the Confederacy's second-largest industrial manufacturer.

The knife has a spiral designed wood grip; a 5-inch iron cross guard; is 20 1/2 inches long with a 15 1/2 x 1 7/8-inch cast blade which is peened tight with an iron washer.



On the left side of the blade is a period tag that identifies the knife as being taken from Sgt William Jones 50th Gettysburg in hand writing different then the Reference Number 114 for GAR 19.





# William M. Jones

**Sergeant William M. Jones** served in Company K of the 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment during the American Civil War. He is most notable for his service at the Battle of Gettysburg, where he was severely wounded and subsequently had to have a leg amputated.

Born September 13, 1841 to Malachi D. Jones (father) and Sarah (mother), he enlisted in his hometown of Quitman, where his family had a plantation.

His legacy and military history include the following details:

- **Civil War Service:** Serving under Semmes' Brigade, he participated in several major campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia.
- **Injury at Gettysburg:** On July 2, 1863, during the Battle of Gettysburg, he was badly wounded in the leg, which was later amputated below the knee. He was left behind at a field hospital in the rear and taken as a prisoner of war.
- **Post-War Life:** Following his release and return to Georgia, he settled in Gadsden, where he married Nancy Ophelia Foy in 1865. He later served his community as an Ordinary and Judge in Columbia County.
- **Historical Records:** His accounts of the war, including his vivid reminiscences of being wounded and captured, are preserved and archived in historical collections like the NPS History Gettysburg Seminar Papers and various regimental history databases.

**William Moore Jones**, 5th Sergeant, wounded. During the advance on July 2, 1863 during the Battle of Gettysburg a canister ball struck his right leg between the ankle and knee joint. Carried off the field on a stretcher by James Brice and Clem Humphreys, his foot was amputated in a field hospital by brigade surgeon George Rogers Clark Todd (the brother of Mary Todd Lincoln), aided by the 50th's Assistant Surgeon Henry J. Parramore.

On the retreat, Jones occupied an ambulance with Captain A. J. McBride of the 10th Georgia, but he was left behind in Williamsport, Maryland and taken to a field hospital in Hagerstown. From there he was sent on to the General Hospital near Chester, Pennsylvania, followed by confinement at Point Lookout, until he was exchanged on March 17, 1864. He retired from active service on October 25, 1864.

He was wounded at Chancellorsville two months prior to Gettysburg. Jones died and was buried in Boston, Thomas County, Georgia on March 3, 1936. (Georgia's Virtual Vault, Confederate Pension Applications, Thomas County and Brooks County; Reminiscence by Sgt. William Jones, 50th Georgia Infantry, by Keith Bohannon, Military Images, May-June 1988; War Services and Diary of Sgt. William Moore Jones, Confederate Reminiscences and Letters, 1861-1865, Georgia Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Atlanta, GA: 1995, vol. V, p. 118)

872  
Jones, William M  
Co. K, 50 Georgia Infantry.

(Confederate.)

Private Sergeant

CARD NUMBERS.

1	46191285	20
2	1333	21
3	1436	22
4	1531	23
5	1590	24
6	1644	25
7	1697	26
8	1788	27
9	114394276	28
10	188714	29
11	45694129	30
12	721548	31
13	449547354	32
14	684060	33
15	3917	34
16		35
17		36
18		37
19		38

Number of medical cards herein 2

Number of personal papers herein

INDEX MARK:

See also

(CONFEDERATE.)

*Jl 50 Ga*  
*W M Jones*  
*Privt Col 50 Regt Ga*

Appears on a Register of

**Chimborazo Hospital, No. 2,  
Richmond, Virginia.**

Disease *Right leg amptd below knee*  
Admitted *March 20*, 186*4*.  
Returned to duty \_\_\_\_\_, 186 .  
Deserted \_\_\_\_\_, 186 .  
Discharged \_\_\_\_\_, 186 .  
Furloughed *Mar 29 6 weeks*, 186*4*.  
Died \_\_\_\_\_, 186 .  
Age *22*  
When wounded *July 1*, 186-*3*  
Occupation *Farmer*  
Transferred \_\_\_\_\_, 186 .  
Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Confed. Arch., Chap. 6, File No. 17, page *346*

(625)

*W. Johnson*

Copyist.

(CONFEDERATE.)

J 1 50 1 Ga.

Wm. M. Jones

Sgt. Co. H 50 Regt. Ga.

Appears on a

**Register**

of the Invalid Corps, P. A. C. S.

Date of retirement

Oct 25, 1864.

Military station

Assignment to duty

When

, 186

Date of reexamination

, 186

Remarks:

T. 10

Confed. Arch., Chap. 1, File No. 193, page

72

W. H. Bulling  
Supt.

(686)

505

(CONFEDERATE.)

*J* | *50* | *Ga*

*W. M. Jones*

*Sgt. Co. K. 50 Regt. Ga.*

Appears on

**Hospital Muster Roll**

of paroled prisoners, sick

in **Chimborazo Hospital No. 2,**

at **Richmond, Va.,**

for *to Mar. 1*, 186*4*

*Dated Mar. 25, 1864.*

Enlisted:

When *Mar. 4*, 186*2*

Where *Quitsman*

By whom *Col. Sinclair*

Period *3 years*

Attached to Hospital:

When \_\_\_\_\_, 186

How employed \_\_\_\_\_

Last paid:

By whom *Maj. Davis*

To what time *Mar 1*, 186*3*

Present or absent *Present*

Remarks:

Book mark:

*A. S. Andrews*

(Confederate)

J. | 50 | G'n.

William M. Jones  
Pri., Co. K., 50 Reg't Georgia Infantry.

Appears on

**Company Muster Roll**

of the organization named above,

for 1 May to 31 Aug, 1862.

Enlisted:

When March 4, 1862

Where Quitman Ga

By whom B. H. Sinclair

Period 3 years or more

Last paid:

By whom A. Lawrence

To what time 31 April, 1862

Present or absent Present

Remarks:

Book mark:

A. Brown

(Confederate.)

J. | 50 | Ga.

W. M. Jones  
Sgt., Co. K, 50 Reg't Georgia Infantry.

Appears on

Company Muster Roll

of the organization named above,

for 31 Aug to 31 Dec, 1862.

Enlisted:

When 4 March, 1862

Where Quitman

By whom B. H. Sinclair

Period 3 yrs or war

Last paid:

By whom Maj. Miller

To what time 31 Aug., 1862

Present or absent Present

Remarks:

Book mark:

J. M. Jones  
Copyist

(Confederate)

9 | 50 | Ga.

William W. Jones  
Sgt., Co. A, 50 Reg't Georgia Infantry.  
Appears on

**Company Muster Roll**

of the organization named above,

for Jan & Feb, 1863;  
dated March 12, 1863

Enlisted:

When March 4, 1863

Where Richmond Va.

By whom Lt. B. M. Sinclair

Period 3 years of the war

Last paid:

By whom Mag. Davis

To what time 31 Dec, 1863

Present or absent Present

Remarks:

Book mark:

J. Brown

(Confederate.)

*J.* | **50** | **Ga.**

*Wm M. Jones*  
Sgt., Co. A, 50 Reg't Georgia Infantry.  
Appears on

**Company Muster Roll**

of the organization named above,

for *Feb 29 to Aug 31*, 1864.

Enlisted:

When *March 4*, 1862.

Where *Quitman Ga.*

By whom *Col. Sinclair.*

Period *3 years or the war*

Last paid:

By whom *R. M. Richmond*

To what time *Oct. 31*, 1863.

Present or absent *Absent.*

Remarks: *Abs on account of wounds  
Rec'd in action at Gettysburg  
Pa. July 2, 1863. Leg am-  
putated*

Book mark: \_\_\_\_\_

*J. Brown*  
Copied

(Confederate.)

J | 50 | Ga.

W. H. Jones

Company C, 50 Reg't Georgia Infantry.

Appears on

**Company Muster Roll**

of the organization named above,

for Sept 20th, 1864

Enlisted:

When March 4, 1862

Where Centerville Ga

By whom Col Sinclair

Period 3 years or war

Last paid:

By whom Unknown

To what time Unknown, 186  

Present or absent Absent

Remarks: died in Battle  
at Ga

Book mark: \_\_\_\_\_

J. Brown  
Copyist.

Confederate.

*J* | 50 | Ga.

*Wm M Jones*

*Sgt*, Co. *K*, 50 Reg't Georgia Infantry.

Appears on

**Company Muster Roll**

of the organization named above,

for *March*, 186*4*

Enlisted:

When *4* *March*, 186*2*

Where *Quitman Ga*

By whom *Col Sinclair*

Period *3 years or war*

Last paid:

By whom *Unknown*

To what time *Unknown*, 186*6*

Present or absent *Absent*

Remarks: *Lieut in Breck*  
*Co. H.*

Book mark:

*J. Brown* *Copyist*

(Confederate.)

J | 50 | Ga.

W. M. Jones

S. Sergt., Co. K, 50 Reg't Georgia Infantry.

Appears on

**Company Muster Roll**

of the organization named above,

for Jan & Feb, 1865.

Enlisted:

When 4 March, 1862.

Where Quitman

By whom Col Sinclair

Period 3 yrs or war

Last paid:

By whom None

To what time March 186

Present or absent Absent

Remarks: Sick in Brooke  
County Va

Book mark:

J. Brown

(Confederate.)

J | 50 | Ga.

Wm M. Jones

Co. } Capt. Pliny Sheffield's Company  
(Brooks Volunteers), 50 Reg't.\*

Appears on a

**Bounty Pay and Receipt Roll**

of the organization named above.

Roll dated *Not dated*

, 186

Enlisted :

When *Mar 4*, 1862

Where *Quitman Ga.*

By whom *P. Sheffield*

Period *3 years or war*

Bounty \$ *00* 100

Signature *William M. Jones*

Remarks :

\*This company subsequently became Company K, 50th Regiment Georgia Infantry.

Book mark :

*J. Brown* Copyist.

(Confederate.)

*J. 150 1 Ga*

*W. M. Jones*

*Sgt Co H, 50 Regt Georgia*

Appears on a

**Roll of Prisoners of War**

received at General Hospital, Chester, Pa., Sept.  
17, 1863.\*

Roll dated

*not dated*, 186

Where captured

When captured, 186

Remarks:

\*Letter of transmittal filed under "1106-S. (O. C. G. P.)  
Nov. 26, '63," shows this to be a "roll of prisoners received  
from Hagerstown, Md., Sept. 17, '63."

Hospital roll:

1 sheet

*J. Williamson*

(639b)

Copyist.

(Confederate.)

J | 50 | Ga

Wm M Jones

Sgt Co K 50 Reg Ga

Appears on a

**Roll of Prisoners of War**

at Hammond General Hospital, Point Lookout, Md., who arrived there Oct. 4, 1863, from Chester, Pa., hospital.

Roll dated .....

Not dated, 186 .

Where captured *Gettysburg*

When captured *July 4, 1863*

Remarks: .....

Number of roll:

77; sheet *7*

(089b)

*Alberty*

Copyist.

(Confederate.)

J | 50 | Ga

W M Jones +

Sgt-Co K 50 Reg Ga

Name appears as signature to a

**Roll of Prisoners of War**

paroled at Hammond U. S. General Hospital,  
Point Lookout, Md., and transferred to Major  
J. E. Mulford, Asst. Agent for Exchange, March  
17, 1864.

Roll dated Not dated, 186 .

Where captured Gettysburg  
When captured July 4, 1863.  
Remarks:

Appears in Colby's Names  
as W M Jones

"City Point, Va. March 20th, 1864. Received on within rolls of  
Major John E. Mulford, Asst. Agent of Exchange. Nine Hundred  
and Seventy Nine (979) paroled Confederate prisoners of war.—  
W. H. HATCH, Capt. & A. A. G." (Taken from roll No. 84, Point  
Lookout, Md.)

Number of roll: 3  
Sheet 3

(689b)

Albushy  
Copyist.

(Confederate.)

8 | 50 | 9a

W<sup>m</sup> Jones

Sgt. 50 Regt. 9a.

Appears on a

**Roll**

of prisoners at Seminary Hospital, Hagerstown,  
Md., August, 1863.

Roll dated

Not dated, 186

Where taken

Williamsport

Remarks:

Number of roll

**35** about 2

(639b)

Reuben

Copyist.

(Confederate.)

*J* | *50* | *Ga*

*William Jones*

*Sgt. 50 Regt. Ga.*

Appears on a

**Roll of Prisoners of War**

at Seminary Hospital, Hagerstown, Md.

Roll dated .....

*Not dated, 186* .

Where captured *Williamsport*

When captured ....., 186 .

Remarks : .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Number of roll:  
sheet *3*

*Robuckley*  
Copyst.

(Confederate.)

J. W. M. Jones

Serjt 50 lya Inf

Appears in a

List

of Prisoners of War surrendered to Brig. Gen. E. M. McCook by Maj. Gen. Sam Jones, C. S. A., at Tallahassee, Fla., May 10, 1865.

Where paroled Tallahassee Fla

When paroled May 20, 1865.

Remarks:

Reg. No. 63, P. M. O., 1st Div., Cav. Corps,

M. D. M., page 81

J. J. [Signature]

(Confederate.)

J | 50 | Ga.

W. M. Jones.

Serjt. - 50 Ga. Infy

Appears on a

**Roll of Prisoners of War,**

belonging to the Confederate Army, surrendered by Maj. Gen. Sam Jones, commanding Confederate Forces in Florida, to Brig. Gen. E. M. McCook, U. S. V., commanding U. S. Forces at Tallahassee, Florida, and vicinity, in compliance with the terms of a Military Convention made on April 26, 1865, at Bennett's House, near Durham's Station, N. C., between General J. E. Johnston, of the Confederate Armies, and Major General W. T. Sherman, U. S. A., and approved by Lieut. Gen. U. S. Grant, U. S. A.

Roll dated not dated.

Paroled at Tallahassee, Fla., May 20, 1865.

Where surrendered Tallahassee.

When surrendered May 10, 1865.

Remarks:

Number of roll:

21

(639b)

J. T. Husley

Copied.

him surrendered at  
Tallahassee Fla., May  
10, 1865 and paroled  
at same place May  
20, 1865.

12<sup>45</sup> 9/9/15

F.V.V.  
J.

204,  
Sept. 9, 1915.

Respectfully returned to the  
Commissioner of Pensions,  
State of Georgia, Atlanta.

The records show that William H. Jones, private and sergeant, Company K, 50th Reg't Georgia Infantry, C.S.A., enlisted March 4, 1862, and that he was surrendered May 10, and paroled May 20, 1865, at Tallahassee, Florida.

H. P. McCain  
The Adjutant General.

James William M.  
Supt K 50 Ga

MEDICAL CARD NUMBERS

2575974  
2630379

Book Marks

Confid

J 50 Ga

W<sup>1863</sup> M Jones

Rank, *Sergeant* Co. *K*, 50 Reg't *Ga*

Complaint, *Amputation R*  
*leg lower third*

Admitted *Oct 4*, 1863

To **Hammond, U. S. A. Gen'l Hosp.,**  
**Point Lookout, Md.**

Ret'd to duty ..... 18 .

Deserted ..... 18 .

Disch'd from service ..... 18 .

Sent to G. H. *March 17*, 1864

On furlough ..... 18 .

Died ..... 18 .

Remarks: *Maj Mulford for*  
*Exchange*  
*March 10*

Md. Reg. No. *94*; Hos. No. *1714*; Page *82*

*High*

(o 3-073)

Copyist

(204-86)

J. 1 50 1 Geo

W. M. Jones

Rank, Sgt. K Co. 50 Reg't Geo

Complaint, -

Admitted Sep. 17, 1863,

To U. S. A. General Hospital  
Chester, Pa.

Ret'd to duty \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_

Deserted \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_

Disch'd from service \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_

Sent to G. H. \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_

On furlough \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_

Died \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: Sent to G. H. Cooper

Oct. 2, 63

Pa. Reg. No. 517; Hos. No. 3385; Page 84

Marshall

CONFEDERATE

Statement of Service Reference Slip.

Comr Pensions, Ga.  
(Source of communication.)

William M. Jones  
(Name.)

Priv., Co. K., 50 Reg't Ga. Inf.  
Priv. & Sergt.

Enl. Mch. 4, 1862.

M.R. Jan. & Feb. 1865

(last on file) Absent.

Sick in Brooks Co., Ga.

P. & W. records show him  
captured at Gettysburg  
July 4, 1863.

Paroled at Hammond  
U.S. Gen. Hosp., Point Lookout  
Md., and transf'd for Ex-  
change Mch. 17, 1864.

Among men rec'd at  
City Point Va., Mch. 20,  
1864.

Later P. & W. records show

(over)

# 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment

1862	
March 4	Organized at Savannah
March	Drilled at Camp Davis, near Guyton, Georgia
March 22	Officers were elected. The field officers were Colonel William R. Manning, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Kearse and Major Phillip C. Pendleton
	Assigned to the defenses of Savannah
July 17	Transferred to Richmond, Virginia and assigned to Drayton's Brigade of David R. Jones' Division of Longstreet's Command.
August 28-30	<b>Second Battle of Manassas (Bull Run)</b> The regiment lost nine men wounded
September 14	<b>Battle of South Mountain</b> The regiment fought at Fox's Gap near Boonesboro. Lieutenant William Grissom was killed, Captain John Riley and Lieutenant Francis Mobley were mortally wounded, and Lieutenants Aaron Dowling, James Finch and Daniel D. Gaskins were wounded.
September 17	<b>Battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam)</b> The regiment was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kearse. It lost 29 men killed and 97 wounded in fighting near Burnside's Bridge. From the marker for Drayton's Brigade on the Antietam battlefield: <i>September 15-17, 1862.</i> <i>Drayton's Brigade reached Sharpsburg about 11 A.M., September 15th and was posted on the southwest slope of Cemetery Hill. Late in the day it was moved to the rear of the high ground northwest of this point and formed on the left of Kemper's Brigade. On the 16th the 50th Georgia was detached and sent to the support of Toombs' Brigade at the Burnside Bridge. The Brigade was exposed to artillery fire on the 16th and 17th from the enemy's long-range guns beyond the Antietam. About 3 P.M., of the 17th, the enemy, having forced a crossing at and below the bridge, attacked the Brigade and forced it back to the streets of the</i>

	<i>town. It soon reformed and joined by Garnett's Brigade, cooperated with Kemper and Toombs in checking the further advance of the enemy.</i>
October 8	Major Pendleton resigned. Captain Duncan Curry was promoted to major.
	Assigned to Semmes' Brigade
December 13	<b>Battle of Fredericksburg</b>
<b>1863</b>	
February 24	Major Curry resigned. Captain William O. Fleming was promoted to major.
May 1-4	<b>Battle of Chancellorsville</b>
July 2 -3	<p><b>Battle of Gettysburg</b></p> <p>The regiment was commanded by Colonel William R. Manning and brought 302 men to the field. It lost 16 men killed, 62 men wounded and 14 missing. Lieutenant Colonel Kearsse was killed in the fighting on the Rose Farm on July 2.</p> <p>From the marker on the Gettysburg battlefield:</p> <p><b>July 2.</b> <i>Arrived about 3.30 P. M. and formed line 50 yards west of this. Advanced about 5 P. M. in support of Kershaw and Anderson and took a prominent part in the severe and protracted conflict on Rose Hill and in the ravine and forest east of there and in the vicinity of the Loop. Participated also in the general advance late in the evening by which the Union forces were forced out of the Wheatfield and across Plum Run Valley. Brig Gen. Paul J. Semmes fell mortally wounded in the ravine near the Loop.</i></p> <p><b>July 3.</b> <i>During the afternoon Anderson's Brigade being withdrawn for duty elsewhere the Brigade was left in the occupancy of the woodland south of the Wheatfield. At 1 P. M. under orders, it resumed its original position near here.</i></p> <p><b>July 4.</b> <i>About midnight began the march to Hagerstown Md.</i></p> <p>When General Semmes was mortally wounded, Colonel Goode Bryan of the 16th Georgia took command of the brigade.</p>
July 31	Colonel Manning resigned due to medical reasons. Captain Peter A.S. McGlashan of Company E was promoted to colonel and Major Fleming to lieutenant colonel.
August	Colonel Bryan was promoted to brigadier general and given permanent command of the brigade.

September	The regiment moved to the Western Theater with Longstreet but arrived too late to fight at Chickamauga
September – November	Siege of Chattanooga
November 29	<b>Siege of Knoxville</b>
November 23	Battle of Fort Sanders
December 22	Lieutenant Colonel Fleming resigned to take his seat in the Georgia legislature. Major Pliny Sheffield was promoted to lieutenant colonel and Captain John Spence to major.
<b>1864</b>	
March	The regiment returned to the Army of Northern Virginia. General Kershaw took over the division from General McLaws.
May 5-8	<b>Battle of the Wilderness</b> The regiment was commanded by Colonel Peter McGlashan. Lieutenant Colonel Sheffield was wounded, losing his right arm.
May 8-21	<b>Battle of Spotsylvania Court House</b>
May 22-26	<b>North Anna River</b>
May 26-28	<b>Pamunkey River</b>
May 28-31	<b>Totopotomy River</b>
June 1-3	<b>Battle of Cold Harbor</b>
June 16	<b>Assault on Petersburg</b>
June	Siege of Petersburg begins
July 27-29	<b>First Battle of Deep Bottom</b>

August 6	The regiment was sent with Kershaw's Division to the Shenandoah Valley, where it was temporarily attached to Lieutenant General Jubal Early's Army of the Valley
September 14	Since Sheridan and his Union Army of the Shenandoah was inactive Kershaw's Division was ordered back to rejoin Lee at Richmond and began to leave the Valley.
September 26	Kershaw received news of the Confederate defeat at the Third Battle of Winchester and returned to rejoin Early in the Shenandoah Valley.
October 19	<b>Battle of Cedar Creek</b> Colonel Peter McGlashan was wounded.
November 14	Kershaw's Division left the Shenandoah Valley to return to the Army of Northern Virginia around Petersburg.
December 28	Colonel James Simms was promoted to brigadier general commanding the brigade, which became known as Simm's Brigade of Kershaw's Division.
<b>1865</b>	
February 14	Major Spence was given a leave of absence
April 6	<b>Sayler's Creek</b> Colonel McGlashan and many of the regiment were captured.
April 9	<b>Appomattox Court House</b> The regiment surrendered 3 officers, 2 surgeons and 25 enlisted men.

\*\*\*\*\*

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel William R. Manning, saw its first major combat at the **Second Battle of Manassas (Bull Run)** on August 28–30, 1862. Assigned to **Drayton's Brigade**, the regiment suffered light casualties but gained crucial battle experience before taking on heavier losses at Fox's Gap and Antietam.

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# 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment



The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment was organized on March 4, 1862, at Savannah, Georgia. Upon mustering into service, they drilled at Camp Davis, and served around the defenses of Savannah, Georgia until July of 1862 when they were ordered to Richmond.

At Richmond, Virginia, the 50th Georgia was attached to General Thomas Drayton's Brigade and was present at Manassas during the late afternoon hours. As General Lee advanced his army toward Maryland in September of 1862, this would prove to be the bloodiest campaign for the 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment. While defending Fox's Gap upon South Mountain, General Drayton ordered the 51st and the 50th Georgia Infantry into a sunken road, this decision proved to have a devastatingly deadly consequence. Company F was the last in line and was shot down by Union soldiers from the front, flank and rear, they were in a fire fight that surrounded them on all sides. Out of the 230 rifles that went into battle, the 50th Georgia suffered about sixty percent casualties, as they tried to run out of the sunken lane at Fox's Gap.

During the Battle of Antietam the 50th Georgia was detached to aid Toomb's Brigade near the Burnside Brigade. In November, two months after the Maryland Campaign, Drayton's Brigade was ordered to be broken up and the 50th Georgia was ordered to Semmes' Brigade of McLaws' Division. The 50th Georgia participated in Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. By the fall of 1863, it was engaged at the Siege of Knoxville and returned to Lee's Army in Virginia where they fought bravely during the Siege of Petersburg, the Battle of Cedar Creek, and the Battle of Saylor's Creek.

# 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment

The **50th Georgia Infantry Regiment** fought at the **Second Battle of Manassas (Bull Run)** from August 28–30, 1862. Organized in early 1862 and recruited heavily from "Wiregrass" Georgia, the regiment suffered 9 men wounded during this engagement.

Here are the specific details regarding their involvement:

- **Brigade Assignment:** Part of **Drayton's Brigade**, which also included the 51st Georgia Infantry, the 15th South Carolina Infantry, and Phillip's (Georgia) Legion.
- **Division & Command:** Drayton's Brigade was assigned to **David R. Jones' Division**, which was part of Longstreet's Command (later Longstreet's Wing of the Army of Northern Virginia).
- **Outcome:** The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia secured a decisive victory, driving the Union Army of Virginia back to Bull Run.

Following this battle, the 50th Georgia saw even heavier combat just weeks later during the Maryland Campaign at the Battle of South Mountain (Fox's Gap) and the Battle of Antietam.

\*\*\*\*\*

At the **Battle of South Mountain** on September 14, 1862, the 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment suffered devastating casualties at Fox's Gap. Part of Brig. Gen. Thomas F. Drayton's Brigade, the regiment was caught in an exposed position by Union forces and was nearly decimated, losing 47 killed and 112 wounded.

The catastrophic engagement for the 50th Georgia is detailed below:

- **The Engagement:** On the late afternoon of September 14, 1862, the regiment was ordered to deploy from behind a stone wall into the Old Sharpsburg Road.
- **The Ambush:** They were caught in an open, exposed position and subjected to intense volley fire from Brig. Gen. Orlando B. Willcox's Union division.
- **Casualties:** Of the roughly 225 men engaged, 47 were killed instantly or fatally wounded, and 112 were wounded. This staggering 70% casualty rate effectively broke their resistance, forcing the survivors into a frantic retreat.
- **Legacy:** The regiment's sacrifice is memorialized at the Fox's Gap battlefield, where the "Wiregrass Georgians" wayside marker stands today near the North Carolina monument.

\*\*\*\*\*

During the Battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam) on September 17, 1862, the **50th Georgia Infantry Regiment** played a crucial role on the Confederate right flank. Attached to Brigadier General Robert Toombs's brigade (Drayton's Brigade), they helped defend the lower crossing of Antietam Creek.

## Key Actions & Timeline

- **Initial Deployment:** On the morning of September 17, the 50th Georgia, along with the 2nd and 20th Georgia, were deployed on the heights commanding the crucial **Burnside's Bridge** and Snavely's Ford.

- **Holding the Line:** Heavily outnumbered, this small but determined contingent of Georgians served as sharpshooters. They famously held off repeated crossing attempts by the Union IX Corps for several hours, stalling Major General Ambrose Burnside's advance.
- **The Retreat:** By 1:00 PM, Union forces forced passage across the bridge and ford. The 50th Georgia and the rest of Toombs's brigade were forced to withdraw toward the suburbs of Sharpsburg.
- **Counterattack:** Re-forming on the Antietam Furnace Road, they joined with other brigades (including Archer's, Kemper's, and Garnett's) to launch an effective late-afternoon counterattack against the advancing Federal troops.

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The **50th Georgia Infantry Regiment** fought at the Battle of Fredericksburg (December 11–15, 1862) as part of the **Army of Northern Virginia**. Commanded by **Colonel William R. Manning**, the regiment was assigned to **Brigadier General Paul J. Semmes' Brigade** within **Major General Lafayette McLaws' Division**.

#### Regimental Highlights at Fredericksburg:

- **Brigade Roster:** Alongside the 50th Georgia, Semmes' Brigade included the 10th, 51st, and 53rd Georgia Infantry regiments.
- **Position:** They were positioned on **Marye's Heights**, defending the critical Confederate line against repeated Union assaults.
- **Role:** While Semmes' Brigade saw heavy fighting and casualties, the 50th Georgia provided vital support in reinforcing the line at the stone wall against the Union's costly frontal attacks.

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During the Battle of Chancellorsville (May 1–6, 1863), the **50th Georgia Infantry Regiment** fought under Lt. Col. Francis Kearse. They were part of Brig. Gen. Paul J. Semmes's brigade, attached to Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws's division in Gen. James Longstreet's First Corps.

#### Regimental Role & Actions

- **Brigade Lineup:** Alongside the 10th, 51st, and 53rd Georgia regiments, the 50th Georgia served as the left-flanking regiment of Semmes's Brigade.
- **Initial Actions:** On April 30 and May 1, the 50th Georgia and the 53rd Georgia were pushed forward in reserve positions near the Pratt House before advancing to pursue Union troops and establish skirmish lines.
- **Salem Church Engagement:** Semmes's Brigade was heavily engaged during the latter part of the campaign, particularly in the fighting at Salem Church on May 3, which successfully halted Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick's Union advance.
- **Casualties:** The regiment suffered notable losses over the multi-day engagement while helping solidify the Confederate defensive line.

# 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment was a Confederate unit organized at Savannah, Georgia, during the spring of 1862, with companies recruited primarily from the southern counties of Ware, Coffee, Lowndes, Thomas, DeKalb, Clinch, Colquitt, Berrien, and Brooks. Its initial service focused on coastal defenses in the District of Georgia, but by July 1862, it transferred to Virginia and joined the Army of Northern Virginia under brigades led successively by Generals Drayton, Semmes, Bryan, and Simms.

The regiment participated in pivotal eastern theater campaigns, sustaining heavy casualties in battles such as Antietam—where it lost 29 killed and 97 wounded near Burnside's Bridge—Chancellorsville, with 17 killed and 153 wounded, and Gettysburg, suffering about 30 percent losses among its 302 engaged men, including the death of Lieutenant Colonel Francis Kearse. Detached westward with Longstreet's corps in September 1863 for the Chattanooga and Knoxville campaigns (arriving after Chickamauga), it then rejoined major operations at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, and Cedar Creek, where Colonel Peter McGlashan was wounded. Commanded initially by Colonel William R. Manning—who resigned for health reasons in 1863—and later by McGlashan, the unit endured successive leadership changes among lieutenant colonels and majors amid mounting attrition. Most of its remaining strength was captured at Saylor's Creek on April 6, 1865, with the few survivors—1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 surgeons, and 25 men—surrendering at Appomattox Court House three days later.

## Formation and Organization

### Recruitment and Muster

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment was organized during the spring of 1862 at Savannah, Georgia, with recruits primarily drawn from rural southern counties including Pierce, Ware, Coffee, Lowndes, Thomas, Decatur, Clinch, Colquitt, Berrien, and Brooks. These areas supplied volunteers responding to Confederate mobilization efforts following Union advances along the Georgia coast, forming ten companies of infantry from pre-existing local militia units and new enlistees, many of whom were farmers and laborers enlisting for terms of three years or the war's duration. Following initial assembly, the regiment moved to Camp Davis near Guyton for training and formal muster into Confederate service, with companies undergoing medical examinations and officer elections around early to mid-March. Field officers were elected on March 22, 1862, marking the completion of organizational muster, after which the unit drilled in basic infantry tactics and awaited assignment to coastal defenses. Muster rolls for individual companies, such as Company I ("Berrien Light Infantry"), record enlistments and musters dated from March 4 to March 30, 1862, reflecting a staggered process to equip and arm the roughly 800-1,000 men initially present, though exact aggregate figures vary by source due to incomplete early records. Recruitment emphasized local loyalties, with companies retaining names like "Clinch Volunteers" (Company G) and "Valdosta Guards" (Company D), fostering unit cohesion among men from shared communities; however, desertion risks later emerged from these regional ties as hardships mounted. Once mustered, the regiment received standard Confederate-issue equipment, including Enfield or Springfield muskets where available, though supply shortages delayed full outfitting until April 1862.

### Structure and Companies

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment followed the standard organizational structure of Confederate infantry units, comprising ten companies lettered A through K (skipping J as per convention), with

each company typically mustering 60 to 100 men at formation, though actual strengths varied due to recruitment and attrition. The regiment included field-grade officers such as a colonel, lieutenant colonel, and major, supported by a small staff for adjutant, quartermaster, and medical functions, but operational command emphasized company-level leadership under the field officers. Companies were formed from volunteer enlistments in early 1862, primarily from rural counties in southern Georgia, reflecting local militia traditions and geographic recruitment patterns that prioritized men familiar with the region's terrain and economy.

Company	Nickname	Primary County(ies) of Recruitment	Initial or Key Captain(s)
A	Satilla Rangers	Pierce	John T. Wilson
B	Ware Volunteers	Ware	P.B. Bedford; Phillip Coleman Pendleton
C	Coffee Guards	Coffee	John M. Spence
D	Valdosta Guards	Lowndes	James T. Bevill
E	Thomas County Rangers	Thomas	Cicero H. Young
F	Decatur Infantry	Decatur	Duncan Curry; William O. Flemming
G	Clinch Volunteers	Clinch	John B. Osteen
H	Colquitt Marksmen	Colquitt	Jesse M. Wells
I	Berrien Light Infantry	Berrien	E.C. Morgan
K	Brooks Volunteers	Brooks; Fayette	Pliny Sheffield

These companies assembled at Camp Davis near Guyton, Georgia, by mid-March 1862, with field officer elections held on March 22, enabling rapid integration into brigade formations for coastal defense duties. Recruitment emphasized able-bodied men aged 18 to 35, though exemptions and substitutions were common, leading to heterogeneous company compositions that included farmers, laborers, and minor professionals bonded by county loyalties. Commanders were elected by company members, fostering unit cohesion but occasionally resulting in inexperienced leadership that required wartime adjustments through promotions or transfers.

## Leadership and Command

### Field Officers

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment's field officers comprised colonels, lieutenant colonels, and majors who led the unit through its service in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Initial elections on March 22, 1862, at Camp Davis near Guyton, Georgia, selected Colonel William R. Manning as the regiment's first commanding officer, with subsequent promotions and casualties shaping leadership changes. **Colonels**

- William R. Manning: Original colonel, overseeing early organization and coastal defense before transfer to Virginia.

- Peter McGlashan (also listed as Peter A. S. McGlashan): Promoted to colonel later in the war, commanding during engagements including the Siege of Petersburg; present but hospitalized during key actions in August 1864.
- **Lieutenant Colonels**
- William O. Fleming: Promoted to lieutenant colonel on July 31, 1863, following earlier service as captain and major.
- Francis Kearse: Commanded the regiment at Gettysburg, where he was mortally wounded on July 2, 1863, during assaults in the Peach Orchard sector.
- Pliny Sheffield: Promoted from major to lieutenant colonel around December 1863 following attrition in prior campaigns.

## Majors

- Duncan Curry: Promoted from captain to major in late 1862; resigned February 24, 1863, amid health or command issues.
- P. C. Pendleton: Served as major, contributing to field command rotations.
- John M. Spence: Promoted from captain to major on December 22, 1863; assumed temporary regimental command during periods of higher officer absence, such as August 1864 at Petersburg.

Leadership transitions reflected heavy casualties and the demands of prolonged campaigning, with majors often stepping up to lieutenant colonel or colonel roles as vacancies arose from wounds, resignations, or promotions to brigade staff. While sources like NPS include DeKalb County in recruitment, no dedicated company is identified in detailed rosters; contributions likely supplemented other units.

## Company-Level Leadership

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment comprised ten companies lettered A through K, each initially organized as independent volunteer units from counties in southern Georgia and mustered into Confederate service between March 4 and April 14, 1862, under captains elected by their members. Company-level leadership experienced frequent turnover due to battlefield casualties, promotions to regimental field grades, resignations for health or political reasons, and re-elections, reflecting the decentralized command structure typical of Confederate volunteer regiments. Original captains and their associated counties included:

Company	Nickname/County Affiliation	Original Captain
A	Satilla Rangers (Pierce County)	John T. Wilson
B	Ware Volunteers (Ware County)	P. B. Bedford (Phillip Coleman Pendleton served early, resigning as major October 8, 1862)
C	Coffee Guards (Coffee County)	John M. Spence (promoted to major December 22, 1863)

Company	Nickname/County Affiliation	Original Captain
D	Valdosta Guards (Lowndes County)	James T. Bevill
E	Thomas County Rangers (Thomas County)	Cicero H. Young (Peter A. S. McGlashan, initial lieutenant, promoted to colonel July 31, 1863)
F	Decatur Infantry (Decatur County)	Duncan Curry (promoted to major October 8, 1862; William O. Fleming succeeded as captain, later promoted to major February 24, 1863, and lieutenant colonel July 31, 1863)
G	Clinch Volunteers (Clinch County)	John B. Osteen (John Riley O'Steen mortally wounded September 14, 1862, at South Mountain)
H	Colquitt Marksmen (Colquitt County)	Jesse M. Wells (Lott Townsend later promoted to captain)
I	Berrien Light Infantry (Berrien County)	E. C. Morgan (Townsend also served as captain; Elijah C. Morgan led initially until promotion)
K	Brooks Volunteers (Brooks and Fayette Counties)	Pliny Sheffield (promoted to major July 31, 1863, and lieutenant colonel December 22, 1863)

Lieutenants, often numbering two or three per company, supported captains in drill, discipline, and combat but saw similar attrition; for instance, in Company I, 1st Lt. John C. McMillan resigned May 23, 1862, and 2nd Lt. Francis L. Mobley was mortally wounded September 14, 1862, at South Mountain. By mid-1863, promotions from company ranks had depleted junior leadership, with survivors like those in Companies E and F ascending to higher command amid heavy losses at Gettysburg, where the regiment suffered over 50% casualties among officers present. These changes underscored the reliance on local elites—planters, merchants, and farmers—for initial officership, with merit-based advancements constrained by political influences and state laws mandating elections for vacancies.

## Military Service

### Coastal Defense and Transfer to Virginia (1862)

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment was organized on March 4, 1862, at Savannah, Georgia, with recruits drawn primarily from counties including Ware, Coffee, Lowndes, Thomas, DeKalb, Clinch, Colquitt, Berrien, and Brooks. Following muster, the regiment underwent training at Camp Davis near Savannah, where it focused on drill and preparation for defensive duties. Assigned to the District of Georgia, the 50th conducted coastal defense operations around Savannah from spring through early summer 1862, guarding against potential Union naval incursions and amphibious threats along the Georgia coastline. These duties involved garrison work, fortification reinforcement, and patrols in the Savannah River area, though no major engagements occurred during this period, reflecting the static nature of Confederate coastal defenses prior to intensified Union blockading efforts. The regiment's role contributed to the protection of vital ports and rail hubs, with Savannah serving as a key logistical base for Confederate forces in the Southeast. In July 1862, amid growing Confederate needs in the Eastern Theater following McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, the 50th was transferred northward to Richmond, Virginia, to reinforce the Army of Northern Virginia. Upon arrival, it was brigaded under

Brigadier General Thomas F. Drayton in Major General David R. Jones's division of Lieutenant General James Longstreet's command, marking its shift from local defense to field operations in Virginia. It participated in the Northern Virginia Campaign, including the Second Battle of Bull Run, and the Maryland Campaign, suffering 29 killed and 97 wounded at Antietam. This redeployment, involving approximately 300-400 effectives at the time, positioned the regiment for further operations.

### Eastern Theater Campaigns (1863)

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, serving in Brigadier General Paul J. Semmes' brigade within Major General Lafayette McLaws' division of Lieutenant General James Longstreet's First Corps, Army of Northern Virginia, participated in the Chancellorsville campaign from May 1 to 6, 1863. While much of Longstreet's corps was detached for operations in the Suffolk area, Semmes' brigade remained with General Robert E. Lee's main force near Fredericksburg, Virginia, positioning to counter Union movements across the Rappahannock River. On May 3, 1863, the 50th Georgia formed part of Semmes' line that blunted the advance of Major General John Sedgwick's VI Corps toward Fredericksburg, engaging in defensive actions and counterattacks around Salem Church that helped repel the Federal thrust. The regiment suffered heavy losses in the intense fighting, recording 17 killed and 153 wounded out of its effective strength. Following the Confederate victory, the unit rejoined the army's reorganization efforts in northern Virginia, preparing for subsequent operations without further major engagements in the Eastern Theater until July.

### Gettysburg and Subsequent Engagements (1863-1865)

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment participated in the Battle of Gettysburg from July 1 to 3, 1863, as part of Brigadier General Paul J. Semmes's brigade in Major General Lafayette McLaws's division, Lieutenant General James Longstreet's First Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. Under Colonel William R. Manning, where Lieutenant Colonel Francis Kearse suffered a mortal wound, after which Major Peter A. S. McGlashan assumed command during the fighting, the regiment saw action on July 2 near the Peach Orchard and Wheatfield. It entered the engagement with 302 men and sustained approximately 30 percent casualties, reflecting heavy losses from Union artillery and infantry fire in the exposed positions of McLaws's assault on the Union left flank. Following the Confederate retreat from Gettysburg, the regiment joined the Army of Northern Virginia's reorganization and maneuvered southward before being detached in late 1863 for operations in East Tennessee, including the Siege of Knoxville from November to December 1863, where it supported efforts to dislodge Union forces under Major General Ambrose Burnside but saw no major assault actions. Reassigned to Virginia by early 1864, it rejoined Lieutenant General James Longstreet's corps (later under Lieutenant General Richard Anderson) for the Overland Campaign, enduring the dense underbrush and close-quarters combat of the Battle of the Wilderness on May 5-7, 1864, followed by the prolonged entrenchments and assaults at Spotsylvania Court House from May 8 to 21, 1864, and the costly frontal attacks at Cold Harbor from May 31 to June 12, 1864. In the summer of 1864, the regiment supported Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early's Shenandoah Valley Campaign, engaging Union forces in maneuvers aimed at relieving pressure on Petersburg, before returning to the siege lines around Petersburg and Richmond. By April 1865, amid General Robert E. Lee's desperate retreat, the depleted unit suffered further attrition at the Battle of Saylor's Creek on April 6, where many were disabled or captured during the collapse of the Confederate right flank. The remnants—1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 surgeons, and 25 enlisted men—surrendered with Lee at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, marking the end of their service.

### Casualties, Equipment, and Effectiveness

#### Combat Losses and Attrition

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment experienced severe combat losses early in its service, particularly during the Maryland Campaign of September 1862. At Fox's Gap on South Mountain on September 14, the regiment suffered approximately 51 killed, 116 wounded, and 36 captured, resulting in an estimated casualty rate exceeding 80 percent of its engaged strength. These losses, drawn from brigade reports and regimental rosters, reflected the regiment's exposed position in defending against Union assaults under Ambrose Burnside's corps, with many casualties occurring in hand-to-hand fighting amid dense terrain. Subsequent engagements compounded the attrition. During the Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg) on September 17, surgeons reported 29 killed and 97 wounded, based on official Confederate medical returns, though campaign-wide figures for the regiment totaled 53 killed, 124 wounded, 4 missing, and 36 captured across South Mountain and Antietam actions. By early 1863, at Chancellorsville (May 1-4), the regiment lost 17 killed and 153 wounded, representing over half its then-available force in prolonged fighting under heavy artillery and infantry fire. These repeated high-percentage losses eroded manpower, with survivors often reassigned or detailed for hospital duty, contributing to chronic understrength plaguing Confederate units in the Army of Northern Virginia. At Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863), the 50th Georgia entered with 302 effectives under Colonel William R. Manning and incurred 16 killed, 62 wounded, and 14 missing, primarily during fighting in the Wheatfield area and assaults toward the Rose Farm. Later campaigns, including the Wilderness (May 1864) and Petersburg siege (1864-1865), inflicted further attrition through skirmishes and bombardments, though specific regimental tallies are less documented; aggregate brigade returns indicate ongoing depletion, with the regiment's effective strength rarely exceeding 200 by 1865 due to cumulative combat deaths, wounds incapacitating return to duty, and captures.

Battle	Killed	Wounded	Missing/Captured	Notes
South Mountain (Sep. 14, 1862)	51	116	36 captured	~86% casualty rate
Antietam Campaign (Sep. 1862)	29 (additional)	97 (additional)	4 missing	Medical reports; OR I, 19, p. 811
Chancellorsville (May 1863)	17	153	-	Over 50% of force engaged
Gettysburg (Jul. 1863)	16	62	14 missing	302 effectives present

No comprehensive postwar muster-out rolls quantify total combat fatalities, but regimental histories estimate over 300 battle deaths when excluding disease, underscoring the unit's role in attritional warfare that progressively diminished its combat effectiveness.

#### Armament and Tactical Role

The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, organized in spring 1862, was equipped with muskets as its primary small arms, consistent with many early Confederate infantry units reliant on state-issued or imported weapons amid shortages of modern rifles. Following severe losses at South Mountain on September 14, 1862, where over 80% of the regiment became casualties, surviving elements mustered scarcely 100 muskets for subsequent actions in the Maryland Campaign, highlighting the unit's dependence on basic shoulder arms without specialized equipment like repeating rifles. Artillery support was brigade-level rather than regimental, with the 50th integrated into formations backed by batteries such as those in Drayton's or Semmes' brigades during engagements like Antietam and Gettysburg. Tactically, the regiment functioned as standard line infantry within the Army of Northern Virginia, executing assaults, holding defensive positions, and occasionally skirmishing in brigade

maneuvers from Second Manassas through Appomattox. At Fox's Gap during the Battle of South Mountain, it anchored the Confederate left flank in an L-shaped line along the Old Sharpsburg Road, enduring crossfire from Union forces and covering retreats before withdrawing under heavy musketry, demonstrating its role in static defense and retrograde operations. In major offensives, such as the July 2, 1863, advance toward the Rose Farm at Gettysburg, the unit advanced in close-order formation as part of Semmes' Brigade, absorbing artillery and small-arms fire during frontal assaults typical of Eastern Theater tactics. Later, under Simms' Brigade during the Petersburg Siege, it conducted skirmish operations, including a successful July 26, 1864, probe at Deep Bottom, reflecting adaptability to trench warfare and limited offensive probes amid attrition. Effectiveness was constrained by high casualties and equipment wear, yet the regiment's persistence in conventional infantry roles contributed to brigade-level cohesion until surrender.

## Surrender and Post-War Legacy

### Appomattox and Dissolution

As the Army of Northern Virginia retreated westward in early April 1865 amid the collapse of Confederate defenses around Petersburg, the 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, severely depleted by prior campaigns, participated in the desperate maneuvers to evade Union encirclement. On April 6, during the Battle of Sailor's Creek, the regiment suffered catastrophic losses, with most of its remaining men captured or disabled in the rout of Lieutenant General Richard Ewell's corps, contributing to one of the war's heaviest single-day Confederate defeats. The remnants of the 50th Georgia, numbering approximately 30 officers and men including 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 2 surgeons, and 25 enlisted personnel, reached Appomattox Court House by April 9, where General Robert E. Lee formally surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Union General Ulysses S. Grant. Under the terms of the surrender, these survivors stacked arms and were paroled, with provisions allowing them to return home unmolested provided they adhered to oaths not to take up arms against the United States again. The regiment's dissolution followed immediately from the Appomattox capitulation, as the unit effectively disbanded with no further organization or muster; paroled soldiers dispersed to Georgia and adjacent states, resuming civilian lives amid Reconstruction. Individual accounts from veterans, such as those paroled on-site or released from Union prisons shortly thereafter, document returns to farming and local communities, marking the end of the 50th Georgia's service after three years of continuous field operations.



# The Battle of South Mountain

On September 14, 1862, Robert E. Lee's opportunistic first invasion of the North was turned back at the gaps of South Mountain near Boonsboro, Maryland. The fighting was desperate and for the numbers engaged rather bloody. It has become just a footnote in history, but it was here that the Confederacy reached its high tide.



***The Bloody 50th: Georgia's sons are slaughtered at South Mountain***

Assigned to the brigade of Thomas Drayton, the 50th Georgia Infantry held the Confederate left flank during the afternoon fighting at Fox's Gap. Unfortunately, this would end up putting them in the crosshairs of Union arms from three different directions. The Georgians were decimated by the Union musketry until over 80% of their number lay dead and wounded in the Old Sharpsburg Road. The following is a brief history of the regiment, its role in the 1862 Maryland Campaign, and a casualty list from its fight on the mountain.

What would become the 50th Georgia Infantry was organized and mustered into Confederate service in March 1862 at Savannah, Georgia. The various companies of the regiment were recruited in the south and southeastern parts of the state. The companies with county of origin:

- Company A- Sastilla Rangers, Pierce County
- Company B- Ware Volunteers, Ware County
- Company C- Coffee County Guards, Coffee County
- Company D- Valdosta Guards, Lowndes County
- Company E- Thomas County Rangers, Thomas County
- Company F- Decatur Infantry, Decatur County
- Company G- Clinch Volunteers, Clinch and Echols Counties
- Company H- Colquitt Marksman, Colquitt County
- Company I- Berrian Light Infantry, Berrian County
- Company K- Brooks Volunteers, Brooks County

The regiment was placed under the command of Colonel William R. Manning. During the first months of service the regiment was stationed in the defenses of Savannah. In July 1862, the 50th was transferred to the newly formed brigade under Brigadier General Thomas F. Drayton. It was brigaded

with the 51st Georgia, 15th South Carolina, 3rd South Carolina Battalion, and the Phillips' Georgia Legion. The new brigade was ordered to report to Richmond to help make up for losses suffered during the recent battles on the Virginia Peninsula. The men of 50th Regiment left their native state on July 20, 1862 with orders to report to Richmond. Many of them would never set foot in Georgia again.

Arriving in Richmond about a week later, the 50th and the rest of Drayton's brigade were placed into the division of General David R. Jones. After spending nearly 2 weeks in the defenses of Richmond, the regiment was on the road towards Gordonsville, Virginia and beyond with James Longstreet's command to meet the advancing Union army under John Pope. When word the Stonewall Jackson made contact with Pope's army near the old Bull Run battlefield, Longstreet's command picked up the pace of their march and eventually re-united with Jackson's men in the afternoon of August 28th. The coming fight would be the 50th's first taste of battle. Fortunately, the 50th was posted on the extreme right of the Confederate line with the rest of Drayton's brigade after reports of a Union flanking movement. When the Confederate counterattack came in the afternoon of August 30th, Drayton's brigade was still posted on the extreme right. General Jones', seeing an advantage, pressed his division forward, with the exception of Drayton, who remained in his original position until it was too dark to do anything of consequence. Drayton did eventually get his brigade into line but did little fighting. The 50th Georgia was reported to have suffered only 9 men wounded.

The regiment then marched to the vicinity of Leesburg, Virginia where the Confederate high command planned the next move. It was decided that a movement into Maryland would be the most advantageous for the Confederate cause and immediately troops were put into motion and beginning on September 4th, Confederate troops were tramping across the Maryland countryside. The 50th Georgia was one of the last regiments to cross the Potomac, crossing on September 6th. By the 7th, the regiment was encamped outside of Frederick, Maryland. It was during this brief rest period that Special Orders 191, the infamous order that outlined the Confederate campaign in Maryland, was written. The order went into motion on September 10th, and after marching through Boonsboro, Funkstown, and Hagerstown, the regiment went back into camp to the south of Hagerstown on the road leading to Williamsport. On September 14th, the order of the day was there was to be a forced march from their encampment to Boonsborough where D.H. Hill's division was being heavily pressed by two Union Army corps. Setting out just before sunrise, the 50th, along with the rest of Longstreet's command, marched through suffocating heat and dust before finally reaching the bast of South Mountain early in the afternoon.

Drayton's brigade was ordered to Fox's Gap to bolster a planned Confederate attack that would sweep up over the mountain and into the Union 9th Corps' left flank. Drayton put his brigade into position in the Old Sharpsburg Road that crossed South Mountain at the gap. His brigade was deployed in an L-shaped line with the 50th Georgia forming the extreme right of the L, holding the line starting in the northeastern corner of Daniel Wise's North Field. Between 3 and 4 in the afternoon, Drayton, inexplicably, ordered the three regiments in the road (Phillips' Legion, 3rd South Carolina Battalion, and the 15th South Carolina) to advance into Wise's South Field. The 50th and 51st Regiment were to re-deployed into the road bed to cover the advance of these three regiments and then eventually they too would advance into the South Field.

Initially the advance was, believed, to be opposed by only the Ohioans of the Kanawha Division in the immediate front of Drayton's men. The 50th Georgia, on the left of the 51st, now began to receive fire from the left front. This startled the Georgian's and some tried to shift their fire to the left against this

new threat. Those regiments in the open field recoiled against this deadly cross-fire and began to pull back. The Georgians in the road attempted to cover the withdrawal of their comrades. Now, a Union regiment suddenly appeared in the rear of the Old Sharpsburg Road. Now the 50th Georgia was taking fire from the front, left, and now rear. For the Union men, it was like shooting fish in a barrel. The Georgians attempted to hold their position for as long as possible but it was a futile resistance. The 51st Georgia evacuated the road and the 50th followed suit, with many men running through the gauntlet. The Confederate dead and wounded began to pile up in the road as the Confederates withdrew, making the withdrawal even more chaotic. After an hour of fighting, the 50th Georgia was a shadow of its former self. The regiment lost at least 51 killed, 116 wounded, and 36 captured or missing for a total of 205.

The fighting on the mountain ended around 10 o'clock that night and the remnants of the 50th Georgia regrouped and retreated with the rest of the Confederate forces in the immediate vicinity towards Sharpsburg on the night of the 14th. When word that Harper's Ferry would fall the next day reached the eyes of the dejected General Robert E. Lee, the commanding general decided to make a stand in Maryland in an attempt to salvage what was left of his Maryland Campaign. On the 15th, he massed what troops he had with him on the hills outside of Sharpsburg to await the arrival of Stonewall Jackson's command that was enveloping Harper's Ferry and the legions of Union infantry that were slowly pursuing the Confederates.

The skeleton of the 50th was posted on Cemetery Hill (present day location of Antietam National Cemetery) on the 15th. When Drayton's brigade was again moved farther to the right, the 50th was detached and ordered to support Robert Toombs' brigade in holding the Rohrbach (Burnside's) Bridge. From General Toombs' report, the 50th numbered "scarcely 100 muskets." Positioned just below the bridge to cover the area between the bridge and Snavelly's Ford. Avoiding the main Union thrust against the bridge, the 50th held the approaches from Snavelly Ford. Just as Toombs' Georgians were forced out of their rifle pits, the Union infantry division of Issac Rodman's appeared opposite Snavelly's Ford and the men of the 50th, with too few numbers, got off a few shots before withdrawing. The regiment would return to Drayton and resist the advance of Burnside's 9th Corps in the fields south of Sharpsburg. The weight in Union numbers was beginning to tell with Burnside's men advancing nearly into Sharpsburg. Fortunately, A.P. Hill's division of Confederate infantry arrived and slammed into the Union flank forcing a retreat back towards the Antietam by the 9th Corps.

On the night of September 18th, the 50th thankfully marched out of Maryland and to the safety of Virginia. When the Union 5th Corps pursued the Confederates to the river crossing at Shepherdstown, an artillery battle ensued on the 19th and when Union infantry crossed the Potomac, the outnumbered Confederates fled. On the 20th, a renewed Union advance ran into the division of A.P. Hill who had been ordered back to the crossing. The 50th Georgia was with Hill during this sharp skirmish that pushed Union forces back across the river.

The 50th Georgia would remain with the Army of Northern Virginia for the remainder of the war. In November 1862, the 50th Georgia was assigned to the brigade of Paul Semmes. During the Battle of Fredericksburg, the regiment was away from the firing line so few casualties were suffered. In 1863, the regiment would be engaged at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. When Longstreet's Corps was transferred to the western theatre, the 50th would participate in the Siege of Chattanooga, the Knoxville Campaign, and other operations in east Tennessee. In May 1864, the regiment again found itself in the East where it immediately went into combat when Ulysses S. Grant, the overall Union commander, ran into Lee's waiting Confederates in the Wilderness. The regiment would suffer heavily

at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and in the early stages of the Petersburg Siege. The regiment would join Jubal Early during his campaign in the Shenandoah Valley during the late summer and fall of 1864. Here it would take part in the battles of Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek. With Confederate defenses weakening around Richmond and Petersburg, those Confederates under Early were ordered back to Petersburg. The 50th would remain here until April when the Union breakthrough finally came. The regiment would surrender on April 9th at Appomattox.

## The "Wiregrass" Georgians

### 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, C.S.A.

*The 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, of Brig. Gen. Thomas F. Drayton's Brigade, was decimated by elements of Brig. Gen. Orlando B. Wilcox's 3,600-man Federal division on the late afternoon of September 14, 1862.*

*The Wiregrass Georgians were caught in an exposed position while deploying from behind the protection of a stone wall into the Old Sharpsburg Road and cut to pieces when Wilcox's division launched a simultaneous assault against the confederate lines.*

*The dead and wounded piled up in the sunken road as volley after volley raked the huddled 50th Georgians. After about thirty minutes of horrific enemy fire, the Georgian's resistance broke and the survivors retreated out of the road to the west through the gauntlet of enemy rifles.*

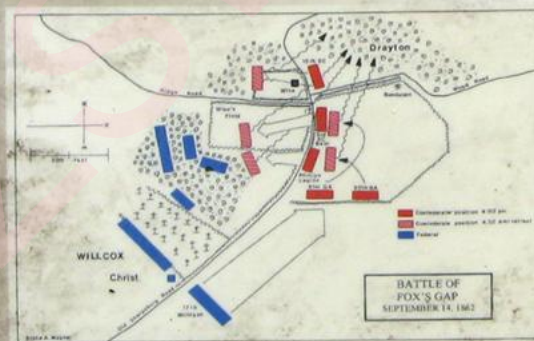
*Of the estimated 225 officers and enlisted men engaged, 47 were killed, and 112 wounded, 22 mortally. Many of the wounded had to be left on the field and were captured.*

## The "Wiregrass" Georgians

### 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, CSA

A few hundred feet north of this site, the 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, of Brig. Gen. Thomas F. Drayton's Brigade, was decimated by elements of Brig. Gen. Orlando B. Wilcox's 3,600-man Federal division on the late afternoon of September 14, 1862.

The Wiregrass Georgians were caught in an exposed position while deploying from behind the protection of a stone wall into the Old Sharpsburg Road and cut to pieces when Wilcox's division launched a simultaneous assault against the Confederate lines.



engaged, 47 were killed, and 112 wounded, 22 mortally. Many of the wounded had to be left on the field and were captured.

Dedicated by Descendants of the 50th Georgia Infantry Regiment, CSA  
Georgia Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans



◀ "The enemy was posted behind a fence and trees, not over sixty or seventy yards from us, pouring their deadly volleys into us in comparative security. Some of the boldest enemy would come out into the road and fire down it."  
—Lt. William O. Fleming, Co. F.

The dead and wounded piled up in the sunken road as volley after volley raked the huddled 50th Georgians. After about thirty minutes of horrific enemy fire, the Georgians' resistance broke and the survivors retreated out of the road to the west through the gauntlet of enemy rifles.

Of the estimated 225 officers and enlisted men



▲ "Out of 210 carried into the fight over 125 were killed and wounded in less than twenty minutes. The slaughter was horrible."

"When ordered to retreat I could scarce extricate myself from the dead and wounded around me. A man could have walked from the head of our line to the foot on their bodies."  
—Lt. Peter A.S. McGlashan, Co. E.

# The Battle of Gettysburg

## Semmes's Brigade



From the monument

**C. S. A.  
Army of Northern Virginia  
Longstreet's Corps McLaws's Division  
Semmes's Brigade  
10th 50th 51st 53rd Georgia Infantry**

***July 2. Arrived about 3.30 P. M. and formed line 50 yards west of this. Advanced about 5 P.M. in support of Kershaw and Anderson and took a prominent part in the severe and protracted conflict on Rose Hill and in the ravine and forest east of there and in the vicinity of the Loop. Participated also in the general advance late in the evening by which the Union forces were forced out of the Wheatfield and across Plum Run Valley. Brig Gen. Paul J. Semmes fell mortally wounded in the ravine near the Loop.***

***July 3. During the afternoon Anderson's Brigade being withdrawn for duty elsewhere the Brigade was left in the occupancy of the woodland south of the Wheatfield. At 1 P. M. under orders it resumed its original position near here.***

***July 4. About midnight began the march to Hagerstown Md.***

***Present about 1200 Losses 430***

## Position Marker in the Rose Woods



### **Marker to Semmes' Confederate Brigade at Gettysburg**

From the marker in the Rose Woods

**Army of Northern Virginia  
Longstreet's Corps McLaw's Division  
Semmes' Brigade  
10th 50th 51st 53rd Georgia Infantry**

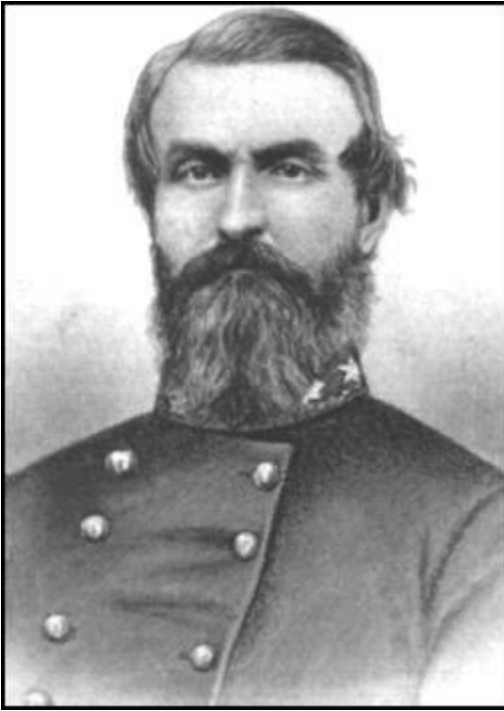
**July 2. Arrived on the field about 3.30 P. M. Advanced about 5 o'clock in support of Kershaw's and Anderson's Brigades and took an active part in the conflict on Rose Hill and in the ravine and forest east of there in the vicinity of the Loop. Participated in the general advance late in the evening by which the Union forces were forced out of the Wheatfield and across Plum Run Valley. Brig. Gen. J. Semmes fell mortally wounded in the ravine near the Loop.**

**One of Semmes' men was Sgt. William M. Jones (Co. K, 50th GA). Jones was badly wounded in the leg July 2. He was taken to a hospital in the rear. He didn't seem to trust the regimental surgeon, who wanted to amputate Jones' leg. Jones asked for a second opinion from the brigade surgeon, Dr. George R. C. Todd. Dr. Todd agreed that the leg needed to be removed. Jones asked that Dr. Todd perform the operation. The amputation was successful, and Jones survived his Gettysburg experience. In so doing, he provided an interesting footnote in history, for Dr. Todd was President Lincoln's brother-in-law. Jones said that Todd arrived July 5. He may have been mistaken about the date, but he would have known Surgeon Todd.**

# Gettysburg Off the Beaten Path: Semmes Rocks

by Evan Portman

Posted on July 10, 2024



Of the nine generals killed or mortally wounded at Gettysburg, five met their fate on the afternoon of July 2. One of those officers, Confederate Brig. Gen. Paul Semmes, has several conflicting stories regarding the exact location where he received his mortal wound.

Semmes and his men waited all afternoon to go into battle. They listened as Gen. John Bell Hood's division engaged Union troops at Devil's Den and Little Round Top and heard the thunderous cannon in the Peach Orchard as Joseph Kershaw's brigade swept through. Finally, the Georgians stepped off from Warfield Ridge and followed Kershaw's South Carolinians in the *en echelon* attack.

**Brigadier General Paul Semmes**



Confederate dead; View on the left, on the battlefield of Gettysburg” by Alexander Gardner. The casualties in the photograph are likely Georgians from Semmes’s Brigade. Library of Congress.

But as the South Carolinians wheeled to the left and crashed against the Peach Orchard like a lapping wave, Semmes’s Georgians continued straight, tramping across the George Rose farm and into the Wheatfield. But that’s when stories begin to diverge.

**Sergeant William Jones of the 50th Georgia** remembered Semmes falling early in the fight. “We advanced about two hundred yards when Col. Frank Kearsse was killed by a grape shot, and soon afterward, Gen. Semmes was shot in the thigh, from which it is said he bled to death,” Jones recalled.

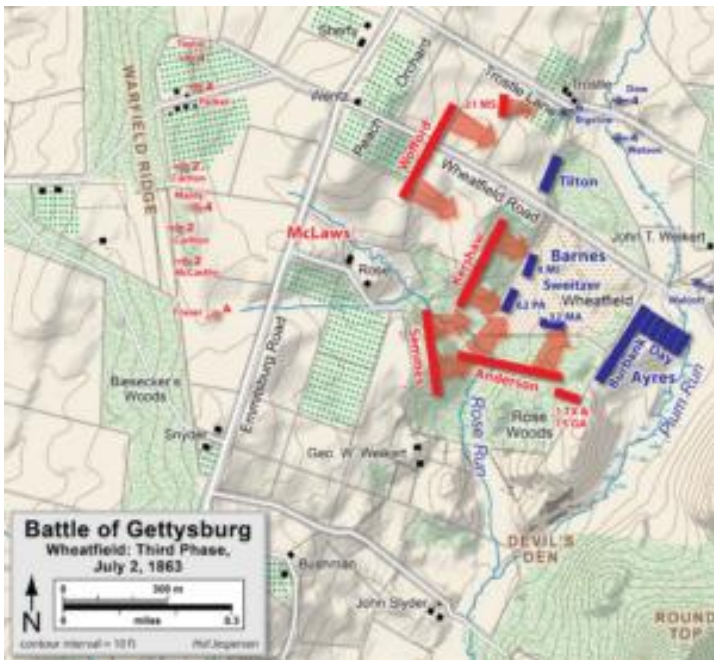
Another soldier, Col. Wyatt Aiken of the 7th South Carolina, claimed that Semmes was hit even earlier in the attack while crossing the Emmitsburg Road. That is unlikely, however, since Aiken would have been in front of Semmes’s brigade as the Georgians crossed the road and would not have been in a position to witness Semmes’s wounding. However, Capt. George Hillyer of the 9th Georgia placed Gen. Semmes between two large boulders in the southwest corner of the Wheatfield at the time of his wounding. This location seems more likely, but it seems to contradict how Semmes received his wound. The general was allegedly wounded by grapeshot or canister, which would seem unlikely to strike Semmes when he was between two rocks. The nearest battery (Capt. George B. Winslow’s Battery D, 1st New York Light Artillery) was about 300 yards away—within canister range—but it is possible Semmes was struck by an exploding shell fragment, instead.

#### The Semmes Rocks.



Thus, early historians and battlefield guides referred to those two boulders as the Semmes Rocks. National Park Service historian and Licensed Battlefield Guide Col. Jacob Sheads believed Semmes was passing through the rocks when he was hit. In any event, Semmes applied a tourniquet to his thigh almost immediately after being wounded. “Gen. Semmes had carried a tourniquet on his person since the beginning of the war,” journalist Peter Wellington Alexander wrote. “He

applied the tourniquet with his own hands and stopped the hemorrhage until a surgeon could take up the artery; otherwise, he must have died in a few minutes.” Semmes himself testified to this fact in his last letter to his wife on July 9, 1863: “I was wounded in the leg but stopped the flow of blood in the field by a Tourniquet applied by myself and drawn by one of my men of the 10 Ga & lost but little blood.” After stabilizing his wound, several of Semmes’s men carried him away from the fighting.



The Wheatfield, July 2, 1863. Wikipedia.

Major Samuel Prioleau Hamilton of Cabell's Artillery battalion recalled his encounter with Semmes after the general was wounded:

*I was standing at the guns where the gallant [John C.] Frazer had just before been struck down, when I observed a wounded man being borne from the field in a blanket. By the number of attendants, I soon perceived it was an officer of rank and in a moment after recognized that officer as Gen. Semmes. Almost at the same instant he saw me, and called me to him, whither I had already started. I found him weak and exhausted, shot through the thigh, the femoral artery being almost severed. He caused himself to be lowered into a reclining position, and his*

*eye brightening with a fire of peculiar brightness, he said: 'Major Hamilton, I am glad to see you. I am badly wounded, (pointing to the spot,) and I believe I shall die—Perhaps, I may not; but something warns me that the chances are against my recovery. You and I are from the same State, and I wish you [...] to bear testimony to the fact that I fell at the head of my brigade, leading them in a charge which up to that time was successful. I love my country as devotedly as any man ever has or can do. I had hoped to be spared to continue my endeavors (of whatever value they might be,) to secure her independence. My love for those I leave at home is beyond expression; you will understand and appreciate those to be the most sacred and holiest emotions of the human heart. But as much as these considerations weigh with me, and make me cling to life, with an assured trust and reliance in the goodness and mercies of God, I shall die with perfect resignation if it be known where my death-wound was received; that it was in my appointed place, where a soldier should, and where my State and country had a right to expect.'*

Semmes traveled by ambulance to Martinsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia) where he succumbed to his wounds on July 10. He is buried in Linwood Cemetery in Columbia, Georgia. The Semmes Rocks remain on the Gettysburg battlefield and are located just off DeTrobiand Avenue.



# Rose Farm

## The Battle for the Wheatfield at the Rose Farm



At less than fifty yards, the men of Colonel Pat Kelly's famed Irish Brigade prepare to fire their first volley into General Joseph Kershaw's South Carolinians in the Wheatfield at Gettysburg.

The farm of George and Dorothy Rose is south of Gettysburg on the eastern side of Emmitsburg Road. The farmhouse dates back to 1811 and was completed in its present form in 1824. The barn was built in 1812. George Rose was a butcher from Germantown, Pennsylvania, who had recently purchased the farm from Jacob Benner for over \$8,000.

The Farm was at the center of some of the fiercest fighting on the second day of the battle, July 2, 1863. Its features include Stony Hill, Rose Woods, and a twenty-acre field that has come to be known simply as *the Wheatfield*. There, over 20,000 men engaged in brutal and often hand-to-hand combat leaving over six thousand killed or wounded.

### Fighting at the Rose Barn

During the battle of July 2, the Rose barn was first used to shelter Union skirmishers and sharpshooters who were protecting their army's left flank. When the Confederate division of General Lafayette McLaws pressed these skirmishers back, the infantrymen of General Paul Semmes took shelter in the barn to avoid deadly artillery fire. Many Southerners remembered long afterward the sound of the shell and canister as it clattered against the stone.

After the fighting of July 2 ended, the barn was impressed into service as a field hospital by the Confederates. Those who died there were buried around the outer walls of the building. A windstorm unroofed the barn during the 1930s and it decayed rapidly. All that remains today are the stone walls of the barn's foundation.

### Attack and Counterattack at the Wheatfield

The wheatfield that belonged to the Rose family is about twenty acres in size and somewhat trapezoidal in shape. Situated between Devil's Den and The Peach Orchard, it was to become forever known simply as the Wheatfield. It is approximately 300 by 400 yards and surrounded by wood lots.

On the northern edge is Trostle's Woods and a road known simply as the Wheatfield Road. A worm-rail fence on the western edge separates the field from the woods and a rock-strewn knoll known as

the Stony Hill. A stone wall separates the Wheatfield from Rose Woods on the southern edge. To the east of the Wheatfield is Little Round Top, the objective of the Confederate tidal wave that came through this area.

At 4:00pm on the afternoon of July 2, 1863, fighting exploded at Devil's Den, and for the next three hours, a seesaw battle raged at the Peach Orchard, Trostle farm, Devil's Den and Rose farm. The Wheatfield alone changed hands six times. Making the first Confederate assault on the Wheatfield was the brigade of General George Anderson of General John Bell Hood's division. These regiments had already met hot fire crossing the farm.

USA General David Birney called on Colonel Philippe Regis De Trobriand and his brigade of five regiments from Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York and Maine for help. De Trobriand's 17th Maine was sent to the stone wall that divided the Wheatfield and Rose Woods. Shortly thereafter, the Confederate assault advanced with a Rebel yell, preceded by a rush of terrified cattle and hogs.

Anderson swept through the woods to the south and collided with De Trobriand's force, and the fighting was fierce. The 11th Georgia streamed forward and placed its colors on the stone wall held by the 17th Maine, but they were repulsed. During the fighting that followed, a gap formed in the Union line, and the 8th Georgia pushed their way into it, forcing the 17th Maine into a new position along the rail fence on the edge of the Wheatfield.

As the 8th Georgia entered the gap the men received fire from both sides. The Georgians and the 17th Maine engaged in fierce hand to hand combat at the stone wall in the southwestern area of the Wheatfield, just at the edge of the Rose Woods. The Confederates slowly pulled back into the woods, but General Anderson was shot through the thigh as they retreated.

The fighting had been going on for almost an hour. At this point an uneasy calm came over the field, but it did not last long. As the fighting raged in the southern end of the Wheatfield, a brigade of South Carolina soldiers under General Joseph Kershaw were moving toward the Rose Farm from the west. General Kershaw later wrote:

In my center front was a stone house, and to the left of it a stone barn, both about 500 yards from our line, and on a line with the crest of the orchard hill. Along the front of the orchard, and on the face looking toward the stone house, the enemy's infantry was posted. Two batteries of artillery were in position, the one in rear of the orchard, near the crest of the hill, and the other some 200 yards farther back, in the direction of the rocky mountain.

Behind the stone house, on the left, was a morass; on the right a stone wall running parallel with our line of battle. Beyond the morass some 200 yards was a stony hill, covered with heavy timber and thick undergrowth, extending some distance toward the enemy's main line, and inclining to our left, and in rear of the orchard and the batteries described. Beyond the stone wall, and in a line with the stony hill, was a heavy forest, extending far to our right.

From the morass a small stream ran through this wood along the base of the mountain toward the right. Between the stony hill and this forest was an interval of about 100 yards, which was only sparsely covered with scrubby undergrowth, through which a small road ran in the direction of the mountain. Looking down this road from the stone house, a large wheatfield was seen. In rear of the wheatfield, and between that and the mountain, was the enemy's main line of battle, posted behind a stone wall.

## Assault on Stony Hill

The next wave of fighting at the Wheatfield began about 5:20pm. Weathering a hailstorm of shot, shell and canister as they crossed the open fields of the farm, General Kershaw's troops moved in and assaulted Union troops on Stony Hill, the small rocky knoll that borders the west side of the Wheatfield. The fighting swelled to a crescendo and raged steadily for an hour, but Kershaw's Rebels forced the Federals from the key positions they had occupied earlier.

The famed Union Irish Brigade arrived and tramped through the wheatfield to push the Confederates off the knoll. However, Kershaw renewed his attack with reinforcements from a Georgia brigade under General Paul Semmes, who led two of his regiments into a gap on Kershaw's right in the lower part of the wheatfield. However, a fresh Union brigade soon counterattacked.

At the point of the bayonet, the Unionists drove Semmes' men back to the farm orchards south of the house and the two sides fought it out in a seesaw struggle. Southern pressure was relentless and the Union forces began to withdraw from the Wheatfield and surrounding woods. The fighting was close and hand to hand. General Semmes was mortally wounded during this engagement.

Earlier in the day, General Daniel Sickles, without orders or permission, had moved his troops forward half a mile, creating a salient in the Union battle line. Now Sickles was leading his troops into the fray from the Trostle house, but he soon began to withdraw due to the pressure of the advancing Confederates. A cannonball struck Sickles in his right leg, which was later amputated by Union surgeons.

At 6:00pm the Confederate brigades of Generals William Barksdale and William Wofford advanced upon the Peach Orchard. After overwhelming the Union defenders there, Barksdale advanced in a north easterly direction as far as the Trostle farm. Wofford advanced due east down the Wheatfield Road and drove Union troops off Stony Hill and out of the Wheatfield.

The troops in Sickles' III Corps who had been initially positioned there were now all withdrawn from the Wheatfield. Help was sought and came from the 1st division of the Union Army's II Corps, which was commanded by General John C. Caldwell and consisted of four brigades, one of which was commanded by General Samuel Kosciuszko Zook. As he rode ahead of his men, Zook was mortally wounded by a Confederate bullet in the abdomen, and died later that night.

Caldwell's division approached via the Wheatfield Road on the north side of the Wheatfield as the Confederates drove the Union troops from its southern and western sides. Caldwell's brigades charged the Confederates among the wheat and the surrounding woods, driving them back. However, the Confederates reformed quickly and counterattacked.

Coming to their aid were General Wofford's Georgia brigade, who had helped break the Union line at the Peach Orchard and were now hurrying down the Wheatfield Road on Kershaw's left. As Caldwell attacked, two Union brigades of Regular Army infantry of General Romeyn Beck Ayres approached the Wheatfield from the east. When Caldwell's men fell back, Ayres' men delayed the Confederate assault until the retreating troops could set up a defensive position.

This final Confederate assault through the Wheatfield continued past Houck's Ridge into the Valley of Death at about 7:30pm. The brigades of Anderson, Semmes and Kershaw were exhausted from hours of combat in the summer heat and advanced east. Wofford's brigade followed to the left along the Wheatfield Road. As they reached Little Round Top, they were met with a counterattack from the 3rd Division of the V Corps under General Samuel Crawford. Realizing that his troops were too far advanced, Crawford pulled back to the eastern edge of the Wheatfield.

At this point, only General Ayres' troops remained to meet the Confederate units that had captured the Wheatfield. Ayres' Regular brigades spent less than an hour in the Wheatfield and accomplished little. They had protected Caldwell's retreat, but suffered 800 casualties in the process. With Ayres' withdrawal, there were no blue units west of Plum Run or south of Trostle Lane. General James Longstreet's Corps had successfully smashed through Sickles' precarious line.

### **The Fighting Ends**

By 8:00pm, as darkness settled over the bloodstained wheat, all that remained were the groans of the wounded and dying between Little Round Top and the Peach Orchard. Some of the wounded crawled to Plum Run, but could not cross it. The Peach Orchard, the Trostle farm, Devil's Den and the Wheatfield were now in Confederate hands, but the Army of the Potomac still held their strategic positions on Little Round Top. The Rebels had reached Plum Run at the base of Little Round Top but could go no farther.

The loss of life in the Wheatfield was horrific. Charge and counter charge had left the field and surrounding woods strewn with the bodies of more than 6,000 dead and wounded Union and Confederate soldiers. The 61st New York lost 60% of its number, killed or wounded. The 53rd Pennsylvania lost 59% of its men. The 17th Maine lost 58%. Overall, Union regiments averaged losses of approximately 33%. The Confederates suffered similar losses.

Though not as famous as other areas of the battlefield, the gallantry and hard fighting at the Rose Woods, Stony Hill and the Wheatfield was among the best in the Battle of Gettysburg. Four of the seven Union corps were involved in those three and a half hours of sustained fighting. Counting both Northern and Southern forces, sixteen brigades, 68 regiments and over 21,000 men fought in the Wheatfield area.

Alexander Gardner took some of Gettysburg's most famous photographs at the Rose Farm after the fighting ended there. The farm's outbuildings were used as a Confederate field hospital, and it is estimated that between 500 and 1,000 Confederate soldiers were buried on the property. The stone farmhouse is still standing, but all that remains of the barn is its stone foundation.



# Wounded & Captured at Gettysburg

Reminiscence by Sgt. William Jones,  
50th Georgia Infantry  
edited by Keith Bohannon

*When William Jones arrived at his family's Quitman, Georgia plantation in mid-April 1864, he was greeted as a stranger. No doubt the loss of a leg and four months incarceration at Point Lookout had dramatically changed the young soldier. After revealing his identity, Jones was embraced by his mother and "the plantation bell was rung." Soon "everybody on my father's plantation and my Uncle Tommy Denmark's plantation was in my father's yard," wrote Jones, and the day became one of general rejoicing. This young Confederate's harrowing ordeal was finally over.*

*William Moore Jones enlisted in the "Brooks Volunteers" in his hometown of Quitman on March 4, 1862. The Brooks county unit was designated Company K, 50th Georgia Volunteers, a regiment raised from the extreme southern portion of the state. After serving briefly on the Georgia coast, the 50th was transferred to Virginia, arriving in Richmond in late May 1862. During the following months, Private Jones received a promotion to sergeant, and his regiment participated in the battles of Second Manassas, South Mountain, Sharpsburg and Chancellorsville. In the last named engagement, Sergeant Jones was wounded on May 1st, during his regiment's fight with U.S. Regulars of Sykes' Division.*

*The young sergeant's Chancellorsville injury did not prevent him from accompanying his regiment during the subsequent Gettysburg campaign. The role of the 50th Georgia at Gettysburg on July 2nd is somewhat unclear, as no report for the regiment (or Semmes' brigade, to which it was assigned) is to be found in the Official Records. It appears that the 50th was separated from its brigade and fought alongside units of Joseph Kershaw's South Carolina brigade. Sergeant Jones was probably hit by fire from Federal batteries posted along Wheatfield*

*Road, during the advance of the 50th Georgia against the Stony Hill adjacent to the Wheatfield. What follows are Jones' reminiscences of that fateful day and its aftermath.*

Semmes' brigade was called upon about 2:00 P.M. to take a battery located on the Heights, in front of the enemy's line; it seemed that a general advance was made at the same time. The enemy seemed to have the situation well in hand, for, as we went to get over a stone fence, the first shell they threw at us exploded in the midst of my company and killed Jim Alderman and Jim Dixon and wounded George Merriman, Jesse Stephens and several others. We advanced about two hundred yards when Col. Frank Kearsaw was killed by a grape shot, and soon afterward, Gen. Semmes was shot in the thigh, from which it is said he bled to death. The line continued to advance until we were within a hundred yards of the battery, when the line pressed left and we were ordered to right oblique.

While in this position I was shot through the right ankle with an iron from a piece of canister shot. I then stood on my knees and saw our lines capture the battery and drive the enemy over the hill. This was my last battle fought. I lay upon the battlefield in the hot, broiling sun the balance of the day until eleven o'clock that night, when I heard the voices of the litter-bearers of my company and called them to me. The names of the two parties were James Brice and Clem Humphreys, who took me back to a barn where we started to make the charge, placed me on a pile of wheat straw and got me a canteen of water, which I drank with great relish. They then split open my boots and took my feet out of them. After bathing my broken limb they got me another canteen of water and left me to



*Tintype of Sergeant William Moore Jones, Company K, 50th Georgia Volunteers.*

my fate for the balance of the night. On the morning of the 5th of July I sent for Dr. Todd, the Brigade Surgeon (Semmes' Brigade), who arrived about 9 o'clock and after an examination of my right foot declared that it would have to be taken off. I was then placed upon the operating table, not being willing that Dr. Davis, the regimental surgeon of the 50th Ga. Regiment perform the operation, I requested Dr. Todd to perform the operation himself and he called to his assistance Dr. Henry Parramore of Madison, Fla. [Asst. Surgeon of the 50th Ga.] After the operation was performed, Dr. Todd had me placed in an ambulance and also put by my side Cap't McBride of the 10th Ga. Regiment, whose limb was amputated above the knee.

In a train of ambulances filled with wounded soldiers, guarded by a regiment of cavalry, the train moved off towards Williamsport, Pa. [Maryland]. As we were passing through Greencastle, Pa., the left and rear end of the ambulance train was attacked by the enemy's cavalry, and the citizens of the town assisted in cutting down several ambulances before our guard could reach the scene. The enemy's forces were soon repulsed and took their flight. The

wounded in the cut down ambulances were taken and doubled in the other ambulances and the train soon moved on. We had no further trouble until late that evening, when another band of scouting cavalry attacked the train about 5 miles from Williamsport before night, and would have crossed the Potomac, had it not been so badly swollen.

It was then decided that the train would go down the river twelve miles over a rocky road to a pontoon bridge previously laid by our forces. A goodly number of us decided that our condition was such that it was impossible for us to make the trip, and we were placed in a hospital and left to the mercy of the citizens of the town. We remained for nearly two days and nights with but scant attention. Late in the afternoon of the 6th of July some scouting cavalry came in the town and took possession and rendered us all the assistance they could and administered to our wants. We were then left again to our fate, until the next evening, when ambulances came and carried us to Hagerstown, Md., where we remained in a temporary hospital about 8 days. Then we were placed out in tents, a short distance from town, and placed under the charge of some soldiers, where our treatment

was anything but humane. The gangrene appeared in the wounds of some of the soldiers and our attendants never rested until it was injected in every wound in the camp, after which they refused to further dress our wounds.

I was then taken with several others, and placed in a cattle car and carried to Philadelphia, where we remained for the night in the railroad yards. The next morning we were carried to Chester, Pa., where was located a Union Hospital. Some of the crowd were removed to the hospital but Jack Connell of Berrien County [Private, Co I, 50th Ga.] and myself were left upon the platform, as we were so bad off they supposed we would die that day. In the afternoon a young Dr. Whitaker, from Philadelphia, came down and offered to assist us, which was gladly accepted. He had an army ambulance to come and take us out to the hospital, when, about sun down, we received medical attention and had our wounds dressed for the first time in 13 days and nights. The gangrene had eaten off nearly all the flap from the end of my leg and the remedies used to stop the progress were almost unbearable. Before these remedies were used, the doctor with a knife, pared off all the decayed portions of the flesh from the limb. We were then placed in a tent out in a park and by his close attention and nursing, in about 10 days the gangrene was stopped in our wounds. He gave us the very kindest of treatment and the very best nourishment that the market could afford. He looked after us twice a day until our strength was renewed and our wounds commenced to heal.

We were then put upon the steamer *Ashland* and carried to Fortress Monroe, where we remained that night, on board the ship. The quarters being overcrowded in the Fortress we were not taken off there but were taken to Point Lookout, Md., where there was a large Union hospital, on October 27th, 1863. At this stage, Connell and I were separated and I was placed in ward #20 and I have no further knowledge of where they took him.

*Connell survived and returned to Berrien County. William Jones' internment at Point Lookout lasted until March 17, 1864, when he was paroled and transferred for exchange. After a brief stay at Chimborazo Hospital in Richmond, Sergeant Jones received a sixty day furlough and set out for his South Georgia home.*

*The manuscript of Sgt. Jones is published here through the courtesy of the Georgia State Archives. Editor Keith Bohannon, a student at the University of Georgia, is a regular contributor*

Confederate Diaries, Vol # F 330-262

(Note: Pages 366 - 387 not copied, as they  
cover the period JAN 1864 - MAR 1864)

V7-6A50

HISTORY OF WAR SERVICE OF SERGEANT

Wm. M. JONES,

Co. K. 50th. Ga. Infantry.

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Contributed by Mrs. F. C. Jones,  
Secretary, John B. Gordon Chapter  
No. 383, Thomasville, Georgia.

U. D. O.

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V7-6A50

PC



*His on file*

Sergt. Wm. M. Jones  
Co. K. 50th. Ga. Regt.

Whose Diary was awarded the Perdue Cup in 1936.

I, William Moore Jones, was born September 13, 1841; was born on my mother's 27th. birthday.

I enlisted on the 4th. March, 1862, in Pliney Sheffield's Company at Quitman, Brooks County, Georgia. We left Quitman on 11th day of March and arrived at our destination, Camp Davis, on the Central R. R., at which point the 50th. Ga. Regiment of Volunteers was organized, and, at which time my company took the position of 'K' in the alphabetical formation of the regiment. The Colonel was Manning; the Lieutenant Colonel was Frank Kearse; the Major was B. F. Curry from Decatur County; the Adjutant was Fleming. We drilled at Camp Davis about 3 weeks and then I took measles and was sent to the hospital at Macon, Ga. While I was absent the regiment was carried to Savannah to blockade the river.

After my recovery, I returned to my company for duty, which was encamped at Sranar's brick yard above Savannah. Soon afterward the regiment was transferred below Savannah to assist in the construction of Ft. Boggs. I was there seized with chills and fever and was soon afterwards sent, with many others, to a convalescent camp at Springfield, in Effingham County, Ga. After being there about 8 or 10 days the regiment was ordered to hasten to Virginia, and, as the regiment came by on its way to Augusta, the most of those in the convalescent camp rejoined the company to go to Virginia.

3

We arrived at the City of Richmond during the Seven Days Fight below the city and in time to engage in the greater portion of the Seven Days Fight, which ended at White Oak Swamp, on the James River, the enemy seeking refuge under cover of the gunboats. From this point, we were sent by rail to Gordonsville, Va. Thence we marched to the assistance of Stonewall Jackson at Manassas. My brigade, Benning's, and 'Tige' Anderson's brigade encountered the enemy first at Thoroughfare Gap and stormed their position and routed them. We then hastened to the assistance of Jackson and were engaged in the Battle of Manassas and the second rout of Bull Run. From this point Lee's Army crossed the Potomac River above Harper's Ferry and proceeded out to Frederick City, Md., where we camped for a few days. From there we proceeded across the mountains to Hagerstown and there encamped for a day and night. We were then ordered to make a forced march back to Boonsborough Gap, where we met and held McClellan's army in check until Jackson's Corps proceeded in the rear of and took Harper's Ferry. The army then concentrated at Sharpsburg on the Antietam River where the two armies were engaged in battle for three days, and no part of our lines were broken at any time during the engagement. On account of an insufficient supply of ammunition, which had from some cause, failed to arrive, Gen. Lee quietly withdrew his army from the scene, without any molestations from the enemy, back into Va., crossing the Potomac near Charlestown, Va. After a rest of several

days the army proceeded to Culpepper Court House, Va., where we were encamped for sometime.

The army was then ordered to proceed to Fredericksburg, Va., to intercept the Federal army commanded by Burnside, on his march to Richmond. We arrived there about the 6th Dec. 1862. R. E. Lee's army took position as follows: Jackson's Corps below the city and across the railroad to Richmond, near Guinea Station; Longstreet's Corps, in the center, opposite the city; A. P. Hill's Corps, on the left, up the river. Burnside's first move was to place a pontoon bridge about one mile below the city, at a level or bluff plain near the river, which was surrounded by a crest of hills. Lee, being apprised of the fact, ordered a battery of artillery carried by hand, after night, and so arranged as to cross fire on said bridge. Soon afterward the Union army began crossing the said bridge and filing right and left by brigades, up and down the river. When probably 8 to 10 thousand had crossed, the artillery opened fire on the bridge and completely destroyed it. The number killed and wounded on the bridge will never be known. The forces that had crossed the river were taken charge of by our lines without firing a gun and as prisoners of war marched out to our rear before midnight. Early next morning Gen. Burnside demanded of Gen. Lee the surrender of the city within 24 hours, or he would destroy it. Gen. Lee refused. During the night Gen. Lee's army removed from the city upwards of two thousand helpless women and children. The next morning early Burnside

commencing shelling the city and continued until the city was almost ruined. Under this cannonading he had two pontoon bridges laid across the river, one opposite the city and one several miles below, upon which his army crossed in two directions, his left wing attacking Stonewall Jackson's Corps at Guinea Station; his right wing attacking Longstreet's Corps and Hill's Corps in front and north of the city. In this engagement my brigade (Paul J. Semmes') supported the Johnson's Siege Artillery, which occupied a position that did greater damage to the enemy's lines that day than any other battery in the engagement. The Washington Artillery on Marye's Heights and to our left, supported by Tom Cobb's Brigade, also did terrible damage to the lines. By night a glorious victory had crowned our army both below and in front of the city. Burnside was completely routed and was pulling back towards the Potomac. Our army settled down into winter quarters, where we remained for several months.

During this interval the Union army was reorganized and placed under the command of General Hooker, who moved northward and crossed the Rappahannock River, hoping to reach the rear of Lee's army. On the morning of May 3rd 1863, Gen. Lee's entire army received marching orders to proceed northward. Longstreet's Corps in center, Jackson's Corps on the left, up the Plank Road, and Hill's Corps on the right, next to the river. About Monday we met the advance of Hooker's army, about two miles southeast of Chancellorsville, composed of a brigade of

New York Zouaves and other troops. We engaged them in a sharp fight which lasted only about twenty five minutes. We repulsed them and they were driven at double quick time towards Chancellorsville. On this engagement I was wounded by a sharp shooter, in the knee, which wound would have been serious but for the fact that the ball hit a small hickory bush which deadened the force of the ball. In this engagement we lost one field officer, Col. Slaughter, of the 53rd. Ga. Regiment.

Our lines moved up that afternoon to within a mile of Chancellorsville. Hooker's forces occupied the entire region beyond the flat branch, covering the town. Stonewall Jackson was killed that night, not far from our brigade, by the picket line, as he was returning from a reconnoitering trip down to this flat branch. The sharpshooting line of the two armies were engaged all that night and next morning, when a general advance was made against Hooker's forces, and heavy fighting continued through the day. Late in the afternoon Jackson's Corps had passed around, and came down in rear upon the right flank of the enemy. At this time a general assault was made by Lee's forces upon the entire line of the enemy, and by night Hooker's army was completely routed and fleeing back toward the river. To keep his forces from being gobbled up, Hooker replaced all his artillery forces in position and shot out in all directions for about two hours, which extended far into the night.

The next morning General Lee was informed that Gen. Sedgwick had crossed the river at Fredericksburg and was moving up the turnpike as though he expected to strike him in the rear. Gen. McLaw's Division was ordered to move at once to intercept him and they were met at Salem Church. Paul J. Semmes' brigade was formed in a line of battle on the left of the road going down towards Fredericksburg. We were attacked by the enemy before we were fully formed and the first man that I saw killed in the 50th Ga. Regiment was Cap't. Richard McLean of Co. E. from Thomas County. The engagement lasted something over two hours. We repulsed eleven successive lines of battle that came against us, when Sedgwick was completely routed and driven back to the river. The fighting was heavy over the entire line but Semmes' brigade seemed to occupy the center of the attack of the enemy. The loss of the 50th Ga. Regiment in this engagement was reported to be 210 killed and wounded. My old friend, Capt. Geo. Fahm, who was acting as color bearer of our regiment, was shot through the right lung, which was thought to be mortal, but he finally recovered. I also lost in this engagement, a distant relative and a special friend, Hazen Miller.

The army recuperated for a short time, when it took up the march towards northern Va., again and crossed the Potomac River at Williamsport, marching out towards Harrisburg, between Green Castle and Chambersburg, where the army camped a short time. The Northern Va. Army then moved in the direction

of Gettysburg, where Longstreet's Corps arrived on the morning of the 2nd of July, 1863. There we found that a portion of the army had engaged the enemy the evening before and run them out of the town. Preparations were being made for a great battle and forces were being distributed on every part of the line. Semmes' brigade was called upon about 2:00 P. M. to take a battery located on the Heights, in front of the enemy's line; it seemed that a general advance was made at the same time. The enemy seemed to have the situation well in hand, for, as we went to get over a stone fence, the first shell they threw at us exploded in the midst of my company and killed Jim Alderman and Jim Dixon and wounded George Merriman, Jesse Stephens and several others. We advanced about two hundred yards when Col. Frank Kearsse was killed by a grape shot and soon afterward, Gen. Semmes' was shot in the thigh, from which it was said he bled to death. The line continued to advance until we were within about a hundred yards of the battery, when the line pressed on the left and we were ordered to right oblique.

While in this position I was shot through the right ankle with an iron from a piece of canister shot. I then stood on my knees and saw our lines capture the battery and drive the enemy over the hill. This was my last battle fought. I lay upon the battlefield in the hot, broiling sun the balance

of the day and until eleven o'clock that night, when I heard the voice of the litter-bearers of my company and called them to me. The names of the two parties were James Brice and Clem Humphreys, who took me back to a barn where we started to make the charge, placed me on a pile of wheat straw and got me a canteen of water, which I drank with great relish. They then split open my boots and took my feet out of them. After bathing my broken limb they got me another canteen of water and left me to my fate for the balance of the night.

On the morning of the 4th of July I was carried to the Field Hospital and placed under a fly tent where I remained that balance of the day and night. On the morning of the 5th of July I sent for Dr. Todd, the Brigade Surgeon, (Semmes' Brigade), who arrived about 9 o'clock and after an examination of my right foot declared that it would have to be taken off. I was then placed upon the operating table, not being willing that Dr. Davis, the regimental surgeon of the 50th Ea. Regiment perform the operation, I requested Dr. Todd to perform the operation himself and he called to his assistance Dr. Henry Parramore of Madison, Fla. After the operation was performed Dr. Todd had me placed in an ambulance and also, put by my side Cap't. McBride of the 10th Ea. Regiment, whose left limb was amputated above the knee.

In a train of ambulances filled with wounded soldiers, guarded by a regiment of cavalry, the train moved off towards Williamsport, Pa. As we were passing through

Greencastle, Pa., the left and rear end of the ambulance train was attacked by the enemy's cavalry, and the citizens of the town assisted in cutting down several ambulances before our guard could reach the scene. The enemy's forces were soon repulsed and took their flight. The wounded in the cut down ambulances were taken and doubled in the other ambulances and the train soon moved on. We had no further trouble until late that evening, when another band of scouting cavalry attacked the train about 5 miles from Williamsport but were soon driven away. We arrived at Williamsport before night, and would have crossed the Potomac, had it not been so badly swollen.

It was then decided that the train would go down the river twelve miles over a rocky road to a pontoon bridge previously laid by our forces. A goodly number of us decided that our condition was such that it would be impossible for us to make the trip, and were placed in a hospital and left to the mercy of the citizens of the town. We remained for nearly two days and nights with but scant attention. Late in the afternoon of the 6th of July some scouting cavalry came in the town and took possession of and rendered us all the assistance they could and administered to our wants. We were then left again to our fate, until the next evening, when ambulances came and carried us to Hagerstown, Md., where we remained in a temporary hospital about 8 days. Then we were placed out in tents, a

short distance from town, and placed under the charge of some soldiers, where our treatment was anything but humane. The gangrene appeared in the wounds of some of the soldiers and our attendants never rested until it was injected in every wound in the camp, after which they refused to further dress our wounds.

I was then taken with several others, and placed in a cattle car and carried to Philadelphia, where we remained for the night in the railroad yards. The next morning we were carried to Chester, Pa., where was located a Union Hospital. Some of the crowd were removed to the hospital but Jack Connell of Berrien County and myself were left upon the platform, as we were so bad off they supposed we would die that day. In the afternoon a young Dr. Whitaker, from Philadelphia, came down and offered to assist us, which was gladly accepted. He had an army ambulance to come and take us out to the hospital, when, about sun down, we received medical attention and had our wounds dressed for the first time in 13 days and nights. The gangrene had eaten off nearly all the flap from the end of my leg and the remedies used to stop its progress were almost unbearable. Before these remedies were used, the doctor with a knife, pared off all the decayed portions of the flesh from the limb. We were then placed in a tent out in a park and by his close attention and nursing, in about 10 days the gangrene was stopped in our wounds. He gave us the very kindest of treatment and the very best nourishment that the

market could afford. He looked after us twice a day until our strength was renewed and our wounds commenced to heal.

We were then put upon the steamer, Ashland, and carried to Fortress Monroe, where we remained that night, on board the ship. The quarters being overcrowded in the Fortress we were not taken off there but were taken to Point Lookout, Md., where there was a large Union hospital. At this stage, Connell and I were separated and I was placed in ward #20 and I have no further knowledge of where they took him.

We arrived at the point on October 27th. 1863. The winter was extremely cold, and the prisoners suffered greatly for the lack of fuel and food. Our bill of fare, for months, was molasses and cold rice for breakfast; 1 qt. of bean water and 1 slice of bread for dinner and a small slice of bread and about one mouthful of cheese or white meat for supper and every Friday night our meat rations were changed to cod-fish. My nurse was named James M. Hazen of Sparrowbush, N. Y. He gave me every attention possible until my leg was entirely well, and afterwards greatly assisted me in procuring more rations than the hospital furnished, oftentimes buying crackers and things from the Sutler's tent for me. After I got so I could walk I engaged in making white pine fans and gutta percha rings, which I sold to the Yankees for sufficient amount to buy my bread and tobacco as long as I had to stay there. An old imp that will never be forgotten by any of the

inmates of ward #20 was old Dr. Harvey of Maine, whose heart was as brutal as a savage.

We remained at this place until March, when an agreement was fixed upon between the two Governments to exchange 1,100 of the maimed soldiers on each side, to be taken from Point Lookout and Richmond. We left Point Lookout on the 27th and arrived at City Point on the James River, where the two vessels were drawn up by the side of each other, and two gangways were put down and the Union soldiers passed over one gangway and the Confederate over the other. This was the grandest scene I ever beheld, 2,200 men, all with a leg or an arm off and some with both. We were carried to Richmond on the steamer Allison and arrived there about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, Sunday, March 28th. We were bountifully supplied with everything good to eat by the good women of Richmond. We were met at the wharf by about 15,000 people, shaking hands and rejoicing until night. We were then carried to Chimborazo Hospital and there remained five days; during our stay there we were all paid off our full wages for services to date. The Government gave us 60 days furlough and transportation home.

I arrived in Savannah on the first Saturday evening in April, 1864, too late to take my train for home; so I went to the Soldier's Home and spent the night. The next morning I visited Spencer's Cavalry and found my brother-in-law, James A. Powell, and remained with him until I left Savannah. I bade him farewell on earth that day, as he was soon afterwards

transferred to Va., and was killed in an engagement at Yellow Tavern.

I left Savannah that afternoon and arrived at Quitman about eleven o'clock at night and was carried up to Cousin Jennie Hardee's and spent the night. The next morning she went with me and we arrived at my father's house about 9 o'clock. No one at home recognized me and talked to me as a stranger. When I revealed myself to them I have never been able to remember whether I got out of the buggy or whether they took me out. The first thing I do remember, I was in my mother's arms. The plantation bell was rung and soon everybody on my father's plantation and Uncle Tommy Denmark's plantation was in my father's yard and that was a day of general rejoicing at home. This was on the 5th day of April, 1864.

Before my furlough expired I went to Lake City, Florida, and appeared before the state examining board and was retired from the army.

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On Thursday night before the fourth Sunday in December, 1862, I made application for membership in the Missionary Baptist Church and was received for baptism, and the following Sunday at 3 P. M. was set as the time to perform the ordinance. I was baptised in a beautiful lake, about three miles northwest of Fredericksburg, Va., by Rev. W. L. Curry, Chaplain of the 50th. Ga. Regiment. I was accompanied to the lake by Capt. John

G. McCall of Quitman, Ga. It was cold, freezing weather and my clothes were frozen in two minutes after I came out of the water, but I felt no ill effects therefrom. I took my certificate of baptism and after I came home, I placed it in the Quitman Baptist Church.

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# *Unwilling Witness to the Rage of Gettysburg*

## The Experience of Battle, July 2

D. Scott Hartwig

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The battle of Gettysburg is the most exhaustively studied battle in American history. The volume of literature produced about it boggles the mind. Richard A. Sauer's bibliography on the Gettysburg campaign published in 1982 listed 2,757 books and articles published since the battle, a seeming staggering quantity. But twenty-two years later, in 2004, he published a second edition. It contained 6,193 entries. Interest in the battle seems insatiable. Through this flood-tide of books and articles we have learned a great deal about generals and generalship, battlefield controversies – which continue to fuel the debates in print, on the field, and in chat rooms – and the courage and sacrifice of the fighting men. But comparatively little attention has been focused upon the actual experience of battle. What did the battle sound like to those in it? What did it smell like? How did the soldiers, who were nearly all veterans of other battles, control their fear so that they might do their duty? What could a typical soldier see of the battle? How different was it from what a commander could see? How did commanders control their men in battle? Do we really understand the tactics they used? Did they deviate at all from the standard training manuals that both armies used? How were the available weapons used and why were they used that way? What effect did the physical circumstances of the soldiers have upon their behavior and performance in the battle? How were men taken prisoner? This paper seeks to examine these and other questions -- to move from the perspective of the commanders to the front, where, as one soldier wrote, "it is all smoke, and dust and noise."

### The Armies

Major General George G. Meade's Union Army of the Potomac and General Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia were both experienced organizations having fought nine major battles – depending upon what one considers a major action – and many smaller actions over a period of thirteen months. The Army of the Potomac was composed exclusively of volunteer soldiers, whether in the regular or volunteer service. The majority of the men in the Army of Northern Virginia were also volunteers, but the Confederate government early on recognized the problems inherent with attempting to continue to attract volunteers and passed a general conscription act in April 1862. Beginning in the summer of 1862 Lee's army began to

cripple and destroy the guns upon the hill.” Yet despite how destructive this description sounds, Cooper reported losses of only two killed, four wounded, one horse killed, and two disabled.<sup>34</sup>

The Confederates reported that the return fire from Cemetery Hill was quite accurate as well, but what likely proved to be the turning point in this lengthy duel was the fire the Federals delivered by the 5<sup>th</sup> Maine battery on Stevens’ Knoll, as well as five guns from the 12<sup>th</sup> Corps artillery brigade placed at the summit of Culp’s Hill. These guns partially enfiladed Latimer’s line. Enfilading fire could produce spectacular damage to an artillery battery because it was such a large target with guns, gun crews, and limbers. The depth of a battery struck head-on by a shell was one gun and one limber (the caissons were nearly always kept to the rear in a covered position). From the flank the depth of a battery was between four and six guns and limbers, thereby dramatically increasing the odds that a single shell would do some damage. It is no accident that the two batteries of Latimer’s battalion that suffered the heaviest losses were the two most easily enfiladed by Union fire. Each suffered more than 20 percent casualties, while Latimer’s other two batteries lost 5.6 and 4.4 percent, respectively.<sup>35</sup>


### Artillery vs. Infantry

While the Union artillery on East Cemetery Hill and Culp’s Hill was successful in drawing the Confederate artillery fire away from the infantry, in the larger engagement on the Union left this proved more difficult, and here artillery caused significant damage and disruption to the infantry. Sickles’ 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps infantry posted along the Emmitsburg road or on the reverse slope of the Emmitsburg Road Ridge were shelled by some sixty-two guns of Longstreet’s corps before the advance of his infantry. Numerous 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps soldiers attested to the fear the shelling produced. “There is nothing more trying to the nerves of soldiers than lying unprotected under a galling artillery fire,” related the historian of the 11<sup>th</sup> New Jersey. John Burnill, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire, commented in a letter home that the artillery fire his regiment endured near Sherfy’s Peach Orchard “made the earth tremble and the air shook and was so full of smoke you could not see.” Captain Adolpho Cavada, of General Humphreys’ staff, described how for more than a quarter of an hour “the crashing, pounding noise of guns and bursting shells was deafening.” The historian of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire added that “never, in all its history, was the regiment exposed to such a terrific artillery fire” as it was that afternoon in the Peach Orchard.<sup>36</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps infantry exposed to this fire, as well as Longstreet’s infantry, which awaited the end of the bombardment to begin its assault, was ordered to lie down for cover, which spared the men many casualties from shell fragments and shrapnel. The 11<sup>th</sup> New Jersey reported that at its position near the Trostle farm, “the air seemed thick with flying missiles. Tons of metal hurtled over and fell around us and it was only by hugging the ground closely that we escaped serious loss.” Frontal fire inflicted relatively few casualties on a prone line, for as one Union officer observed, “It is very difficult to hit a single line of troops.” But an enfilading fire could wreak havoc. The nature of the forward position Sickles occupied offered the Confederate artillery splendid opportunities to deliver a cross-fire that enfiladed nearly everyone from the Peach Orchard north, and the artillery took advantage of this. The 2<sup>nd</sup> New Hampshire, supporting Hart’s 15<sup>th</sup> New York Battery in the Peach Orchard, initially faced west and was enfiladed by fire from the left. “The air was fairly alive with bursting shell and whistling canister (probably shrapnel balls); the leaves fell in showers from the peach trees, and the dirt was thrown up in little jets where the missiles were continually striking,” wrote Martin Haynes. The shelling produced “a steady stream of wounded.” Solid shot could be deadly if it enfiladed a line, and this appears to have been the case with the 2<sup>nd</sup>, for Haynes described some shells skimming “along the ground and wounding as many as half a dozen men in their course.” In two instances shells struck the men’s cartridge boxes, causing them to blow up, with horrific consequences for the wearer.<sup>37</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> New Jersey, providing infantry support to Captain Judson Clark’s 2<sup>nd</sup> New Jersey Battery, endured a similar experience. “We lay flat on the ground, the air was one mass of flying missiles,” wrote Private Heyward Emmell, and “every now and then a shell would drop in our ranks & explode

& kill & wound a great many.” Clark’s gunners stood the fire “like good fellows,” but the 7<sup>th</sup>’s casualties became severe enough that their colonel ordered the regiment to “fall back a few yards to see if he could get out [of] the range a little.” An aide from Brigadier General Charles Graham rode over and told the colonel that he was expected to “support the battery at any cost.” No one ever distinguished the 7<sup>th</sup>’s casualties between those suffered from artillery or infantry fire, but circumstantial evidence implies that those caused by artillery fire were numerous. What effect this had on the men’s staying power in the infantry combat to come is difficult to determine, but if it were true that there was “nothing more trying to the nerves of soldiers than lying unprotected under a galling artillery fire,” then it likely had a significant impact.<sup>38</sup>



Artillery fire proved equally terrifying and destructive when infantry emerged from cover to assault or defend a position. When Longstreet’s infantry moved forward after the preliminary bombardment many Union guns adjusted their fire from the Confederate artillery to their infantry. The 4<sup>th</sup> Texas lost fifteen men to a single shell, illustrating the damage a well-placed round could inflict in a line of battle. Sergeant William Jones, in the 50<sup>th</sup> Georgia of Semmes’ brigade, wrote that the first shell fired at them when they left the cover on Warfield Ridge killed two men and wounded several others. Colonel David Aiken, commanding the 7<sup>th</sup> South Carolina, had two killed and three wounded in his color guard by a single shell. Major George Bass, of the 59<sup>th</sup> Georgia in G. T. Anderson’s brigade, wrote, “I could hear bones crash like glass in a hailstorm,” when shells struck his regiment’s line. William Johnson of the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina recalled that the artillery fire his regiment faced left the field behind them “covered with heads, arms, mangled bodies and the like.” But although all agreed the federal artillery fire inflicted frightful wounds, losses were not crippling. This was due to the difficulty artillery had in tracking a moving line, in bursting their shells over a thin infantry line, and the relatively short radius in which a shell caused damage. The Confederate infantry commanders moved their men as rapidly as conditions and the maintenance of order would permit. First Lieutenant J. C. Reid, in the 8<sup>th</sup> Georgia of G. T. Anderson’s brigade, wrote that as soon as his brigade emerged into the open the men came under fire “from more guns than I could locate, or count.” Their shells were well aimed and “had our advance been slow they would have swept all of us away.” Anderson’s veterans “understood that too well to loiter, and so we dashed on through small wheat fields and over stone fences, filling up every gap made by a hit, and maintaining a line which would have delighted Ney himself.” Their quick movement reduced casualties, and eventually they reached Rose Woods and ground where “we were too low to be seen by the artillery.”

The brigades of Hays and Avery of Early’s division who assaulted East Cemetery Hill are another case in point. As soon as they emerged from their cover they encountered what one member described as a “perfect storm of grape, cannister, schrapnel, etc.” But Hays’ brigade, in particular, advanced too quickly for the Union gunners to adjust their fire and passed through the most exposed point of their attack with relatively light losses. General Hays believed that had the attack taken place in full daylight the result would have been a “horrible slaughter.”<sup>39</sup>

But if circumstances of command error left a formed infantry unit in open view of artillery, the effects could be devastating. This was the experience of the left wing of Brigadier General Joseph Kershaw’s brigade during its assault upon the Union batteries along the Wheatfield road east of the Peach Orchard. After crossing the Emmitsburg road and learning that he would have no flank protection, Kershaw ordered his left wing, consisting of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> South Carolina, and 3<sup>rd</sup> South Carolina battalion, to wheel left and assault the guns that covered the rear of the Peach Orchard and would enfilade his line. The advance against the guns went smoothly enough at first, but mid-way in the attack the entire left wing received misguided orders to move by the right flank. This meant that the men who had been advancing directly toward the guns turned to the right and had to march across the front of the guns. “Guess they thought we had enough sight seeing from the front, and now we were to have a side view,” quipped William A. Johnson of the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina. No longer harassed by the Confederate infantry, the Union gunners blasted the line with canister and shrapnel. “The consequences were fatal,” related Lt. Colonel Franklin Gaillard, of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. “We