THE EIGHTEENTH NORTH CAROLINA INFANTRY REGIMENT, C. S. A.

by

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(ABSTRACT)

In the spring of 1861, eager young men gathered in small towns in five southeastern North Carolina counties and enlisted in ten local companies. After spending the summer in a Wilmington training camp, these companies were combined to form the 18th North Carolina Infantry Regiment. The regiment served for a short time in South Carolina before joining the war in Virginia as a member of Gen. Lawrence Branch's brigade. The 18th North Carolina first saw combat in May, 1862, at the Battle of Hanover Court House. A month later, the unit fought in the Seven Days' Battles as part of the Army of Northern Virginia. The 18th North Carolina took an active role in the victorious campaigns of the autumn.

In May, 1863, it had the misfortune to be the "friendly" unit that wounded Gen. Stonewall Jackson in the woods near Chancellorsville. At Gettysburg, the 18th North Carolina assaulted the Union center with the rest of the ill-fated soldiers in Pickett's Charge. The regiment struggled with the army against Grant in the long campaign that culminated in the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House in April, 1865. This is the history of the 18th North Carolina from its creation to its surrender.
Acknowledgments

This thesis, from its conception to its completion, would not have been possible without the guidance of Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. My most sincere thanks go to him for his meticulous editing and his unending patience. Dr. Dan Thorp and Dr. Thomas Howard graciously agreed to serve on my committee. I thank them both for their suggestions and their willingness to remain "in the dark" for many months. To the "ladies of the department" -- Linda Harris, Rhonda McDaniel, and Jan Francis -- I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude for taking me by the hand and leading me through the trials and tribulations of graduate study at Virginia Tech. I thank my good friend and fellow student John Hoerl for his moral support and his frequent offers to read my chapters. Finally, absolutely none of this work would have been possible without the support and patience of Ann and Kemp Dozier and Missy Hale. I only hope that someday they will truly know what they mean to me. With this in mind, I dedicate this thesis to them.
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Chapter One - From Citizens to Soldiers

North Carolina was the last state to secede from the Union. Unlike the deep South, North Carolina had remained loyal to the Federal government throughout the 1860-1861 drama. The state legislature greeted news of Abraham Lincoln's election with a "wait and see" attitude. To the legislators, Lincoln's election presented no immediate threat to slavery in North Carolina. Like Virginia, North Carolina's economy centered around tobacco, a crop less dependent upon slave labor. In Wilmington a cry for action appeared in the daily paper: "Will North Carolina persist in maintaining her ancient reputation as the practical advocate of the speedy principles of Old Rip Van Winkle?"\footnote{1}

Following the fall of Fort Sumter on April 13, 1861, the steadily growing secessionist voice in North Carolina erupted in overwhelming support for South Carolina. Perhaps some took the words of the Wilmington writer to heart. Conservative unionists in North Carolina quickly allied themselves with the secessionists behind the banner of state rights.\footnote{2}

The final blow, severing any and all ties with the Federal government, occurred on April 15, when Lincoln called for 75,000 troops to put down the Southern insurrection. Governor John W. Ellis, responding to the request for North Carolina troops to aid the North, answered: "You can get no troops from North Carolina." Ellis, who leaned toward the secessionist camp, considered the use of force against Southerners a complete violation of the "laws of the country."\footnote{3}

\footnote{1 John G. Barrett, \textit{The Civil War in North Carolina} (Chapel Hill, 1963), 3--4; \textit{Wilmington Daily Herald}, Apr. 13, 1861.}

\footnote{2 Barrett, \textit{The Civil War in North Carolina}, 9.}

\footnote{3 U.S. War Dept., comp., \textit{War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies} (Washington, D.C., 1880-1901), Ser. 1, I, p. 486 [Cited hereafter as \textit{O. R.}; otherwise cited, all references will be to Series 1].}
The call for a state convention to consider the issue of secession immediately followed Governor Ellis' refusal to send troops to Washington, D. C. Before the convention met, however, the General Assembly authorized Ellis to raise 10,000 state troops and 20,000 twelve-month volunteers. Prior to the convention, it became clear to all what action North Carolina would take. On May 20, 1861, the North Carolina state convention overwhelmingly passed an ordinance of secession.⁴

The General Assembly assigned the enormous task of raising and organizing troops to Colonel John F. Hoke, the recently appointed Adjutant General of North Carolina. Under the pre-secession act of the Assembly for raising volunteer units, Col. Hoke organized ten regiments, including the 8th North Carolina Volunteer Infantry. This regiment would later be designated the 18th North Carolina Regiment.⁵

The 8th Volunteers, raised in southeastern North Carolina, drew its ten companies from five counties. Four companies were organized in New Hanover County, two each in Columbus and Bladen County, and one each in Robeson and Richmond County. Each company enlisted for one year and immediately elected or appointed a captain from its ranks. The captains chosen in 1861, however, were replaced in April, 1862, when the entire regiment reorganized.

On April 15, 1861, "The German Volunteers," a state militia unit from Wilmington, officially organized for the war. Named for the large number of German-born members in the unit, the company drew primarily from New Hanover County (the first of four companies to do so). Five days later, Christian Cornelhsean swore to lead "The German Volunteers." Born in the German state of Hanover. Cornelhsean was appointed captain in an

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effort to ease the transition of the Germans from civilians to soldiers. Communication problems were avoided with a captain fluent in German as well as English.6

The second company to organize in New Hanover County was "The Wilmington Rifle Guards." The "Guards" were a comparatively young unit. Of the 100 men in the company, all were between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two; only one was married. On April 15, the young New Hanover County men swore to defend their state for a period of one year. On that same Monday, the company elected Pendelton O. Meares, a thirty-three-year-old lawyer as captain. In Meares's first directive to the men of the new company, he stated: "Wilmington Rifle Guards, ATTENTION! You are hereby ordered to attend a CALLED DRILL of the company, to be held at your Armory, this evening at 8 o'clock. By order of Capt. O. P. Meares." The men would learn quickly what it meant to be a soldier.7

On April 15, another militia unit eagerly organized in Wilmington. Calling itself the "Wilmington Light Infantry," the company and its captain, twenty-six-year-old Henry Savage, assembled in front of the Carolina Hotel that evening. Colonel J. L. Cantwell, the Adjutant General in Wilmington, ordered the "Light Infantry" - along with "The Wilmington Rifle Guards" and "The German Volunteers" - to report "fully armed and equipped." The members of the old militia were ready to put their peacetime preparations to use. Being well-trained companies, the "Wilmington Light Infantry" and "The German

6 Weymouth T. Jordan and Louis H. Manarin, comps., North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster (Raleigh, 1990), VI, 308 [Cited hereafter as N. C. Troops; unless otherwise stated, all references will be to Vol. VI]. The old militia unit that later organized as "The German Volunteers" originally formed Feb. 22, 1853. Of the 55 men who enlisted on April 15, 1861, 31 were German-born.

7 Ibid., 400; Walter Clark, ed., Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-1865 (Raleigh, 1901), II, 16 [Cited hereafter as N. C. Regiments; unless otherwise stated, all references will be to Vol. II]; Jordan, N. C. Troops, 400; Wilmington Daily Herald, Apr. 15, 1861. On July 20, 1861, Capt. Meares was elected Lieutenant Colonel and transferred to the field and staff of the regiment. Lieutenant Robert D. Williams, a twenty-one-year-old merchant, replaced Meares on the same day.
Volunteers" furnished many officers for other units throughout the state.8

A month prior to the formal ordinance of secession, North Carolina officials had sought to gain control of Federal forts in the state. Colonel J. L. Cantwell acted swiftly by ordering the "Wilmington Light Infantry," "The German Volunteers" and the "Wilmington Rifle Guards" to seize Fort Caswell south of Wilmington on the Cape Fear River. On April 16, the three militia units peacefully occupied the fort. For the next several weeks men of the units assumed different roles than what they had expected. Along with local laborers, young soldiers prepared the fort for war. Guns had to be mounted, eighteen in all; quarters had to be built; a railway connecting the fort with the nearby wharf had to be laid; a deeper ditch had to be dug around the fort. The rifle was not yet the tool of war for the Wilmington boys.9

On April 23, the first of two Columbus County companies enlisted in the city of Whiteville. Organized by John W. Ellis, a thirty-two-year-old lawyer, the company proudly named itself the "Columbus Guards No. 1." Less than a week later, on April 29, the seventy-three men of the unit encamped at the fairgrounds in Wilmington. One local reporter noted that he found "the boys all hearty and eager for the fray, though military discipline goes hard with some of them." Seemingly endless hours of drill, under Capt. Ellis, shattered any illusions the men may have had concerning military life.10

One day after the men of the "Columbus Guards No. 1" took the oath to defend their

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8 Jordan, N. C. Troops, 378; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 16; Wilmington Daily Herald, Apr. 15 and 19, 1861. On May 20, 1863, the "Wilmington Light Infantry" enlisted as a unit in the state militia.

9 Diary of William James Hamiss Bellamy, Feb. 27, 1862, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina [Cited hereafter as S.H.C.]; O. R., 1, 477.

10 Jordan, N. C. Troops, 389; Wilmington Daily Herald, May 1, 1861. Captain John Ellis resigned prior to July 16, 1861 to run for the North Carolina Senate, to which he was elected. On July 15, the company elected David N. Gore, a twenty-five-year-old "divinity," captain.
state, another Columbus County attorney offered his services and those of his men to the state. Thirty-two-year-old Forney George collected men from Bugg Hill, Lee's Township, and Whiteville for a new company. On April 24, the "Columbus Guards No. 3" enlisted for one year and immediately reported for duty at Fort Caswell in Brunswick County.11

On April 26, almost a month prior to North Carolina's ordinance of secession, men in Bladen County enlisted in Elizabethtown and formed the "Bladen Guards." That same day, George Tait, a twenty-six-year-old merchant born in Haddington, Scotland, became captain of the company. The county itself contributed to the formation of its companies by appropriating $15,000 for the equipment of the volunteers and for the support of the families of the young soldiers. Local citizens gathered to view the spectacle of enlistment. As one woman noted in her diary, "Evening has come, the boys have come."12

Robert Tait, a twenty-nine-year-old Bladen County merchant, joined his younger brother George in organizing a company. Formed at Elizabethtown on May 3, the "Bladen Light Infantry" anxiously awaited its first duty. Thirteen days after enlisting, the "Bladen Light Infantry," together with the "Bladen Guards," boarded the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherfordton Railroad and travelled to Wilmington. The city openly welcomed "the very flower of the young men of Bladen County."13

On May 8, Robeson County's one contribution to the 8th Regiment formed in the city of Lumberton. A local lawyer, William Stokes Norment, organized the company. Shortly thereafter, "The Robeson Rifle Guard" left for Wilmington and the war.14

11 Jordan, N. C. Troops, 332.

12 Ibid., 412; Wilmington Journal, May 16, 1861; The Diary of Elizabeth Ellis Robeson, Bladen County, North Carolina, from 1847 to 1866 (Elizabethtown, N.C., 1975). The "Bladen Guards" later elected Capt. Tait to the rank of major. After July 20, 1861, he served on the field and staff of the regiment. Lieutenant Thomas J. Purdie, a thirty-year-old farmer, became captain of the company and later served as colonel of the regiment.

13 Jordan, N. C. Troops, 322; Wilmington Journal, May 16, 1861.

14 Jordan, N. C. Troops, 343.
The fourth and final New Hanover County company organized on May 17 on the lower Black River. John R. Hawes and the "Moore's Creek Rifle Guards" enlisted in defense of their state for one year. The company elected Hawes, a surgeon by profession, to serve as its first captain.\textsuperscript{15}

On June 1, 1861, the last company of the 8th Volunteers to muster into service formed. Two weeks after the North Carolina General Assembly voted to leave the union, the "Scotch Boys" enlisted in Richmond County. Forty-three-year-old Charles Malloy served as its first captain. The "Scotch Boys" figured prominently on the drill field. Of its 94 officers and men, 60 stood over six feet tall. Like the other companies of the 8th Volunteers, the giants of Richmond County left for Wilmington filled with the excitement of youth.\textsuperscript{16}

The Wilmington fairgrounds served as home for the ten new companies. Throughout the month of June, young recruits were fashioned into soldiers by local drill instructors. Constant marching and instruction in the minutia of military life undoubtedly filled the days, while relaxation ruled the nights. Boys from the different companies found themselves overwhelmed by the number of new faces and names that now entered their lives. Youths who had never left home found themselves in a new and exciting world. Drill itself, especially instruction in the use of weapons, offered an opportunity to show off any skills the recruits might have. Crack shots revelled in the chance to display their talents.

Camp life for the young soldiers, while new and exciting, did have its moments of drudgery. Aside from seemingly endless marching, individual companies carried out important duties at the camp, duties that had practical as well as instructive value. One such

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 355. Captain Hawes received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina in 1840. He later earned his medical degree from the University of New York.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 367; Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 17. The average height of the "Scotch Boys" was over six feet, one inches an almost unheard of average for that time.
necessary duty was guard detail. The "Moore's Creek Rifle Guards" and the "Columbus Guards No. 1" shared sentinel duty at the camp commissary storeroom. On June 17, Captain Hawes's "Rifle Guards" took the first watch. From 8:30 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., men selected from the two companies alternately stood guard.\(^{17}\)

Once in camp, individual companies continued to accept new recruits. Daily advertisements in the Wilmington newspapers appealed to growing Southern patriotism and prompted boys to enlist in the cause. Captain Hawes soon increased the number of the "Moore's Creek Rifle Guards" from 79 to 100 men. The other companies filled their ranks as well so that by the middle of the summer, the regiment could boast a full complement of 1,000 men.\(^ {18}\)

The first month in Wilmington proved hectic for the young men from southeastern North Carolina. Initial elections for captain of each company had already taken place at the time the units formed. Additional company officers were now necessary to organize and maintain each unit. Recruits who learned quickly on the drill field, and who displayed leadership capabilities, were elected company-grade officers.

Camp life itself provided much that had been missing in the lives of the young soldiers. Constant exposure to the ideas and experiences of others helped solidify the bond between the men. Country boys and city boys united under the banner of Southern pride. Living in camp offered more practical benefits as well. Health care to many became available on a regular basis for the first time. The Marine hospital in Wilmington became a general hospital and offered daily medical assistance for ailing soldiers. Its doors opened at 8:00 a.m. and would accept any soldier accompanied by a non-commissioned officer from

\(^{17}\) Special Order No. 110, John R. Hawes Papers, S.H.C.

his unit.19

By the end of June, the men of the future 8th Regiment were excited with the news that they would be changing camps. Because of the large influx of new recruits, Wilmington authorities looked to establish other camps to relieve the burden of the city's population explosion. Camp Wyatt, named for the first Confederate soldier to lose his life in the war, welcomed nine of the ten companies. Captain George Tait's "Bladen Guards" were temporarily assigned garrison duty at the batteries on Confederate Point at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. The first to arrive at Camp Wyatt on June 30 were the "Robeson Rifle Guards," the "Bladen Light Infantry," and the "Scotch Boys." The rest of the companies arrived by the following day.20

Having quickly settled into their new home, the boys received word that they would undergo their first full inspection. Camp authorities hoped to accomplish two main goals with this inspection. First, the commanding officers wanted to insure that the transfer of men from Wilmington was complete. Secondly, the state continued to call for the formation of more regiments. Hence, a need existed to establish a new unit out of the collection of random companies stationed in Camp Wyatt. With these thoughts in mind, on Tuesday, July 2. Lt. Col. R. H. Riddick arrived to report on the condition of "arms, accoutrements in the possession of each company."21

The inspection revealed much about the early days of the war. Along with regulation equipment provided for each soldier, the men received ample supplies of food in camp. In the summer of 1861, food shortages were as yet unknown in the Southern armies. The following list of rations received by the "Moore's Creek Rifle Guards" for the week of July

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19 Special Order No. 116, ibid.
20 Special Order No. 128, ibid.
21 Special Order No. 132, ibid.
3-10 illustrates this point:

290 lbs. of Bacon
1 barrel of flour 196 lbs.
1 bag of flour 98 lbs.
1 bag of flour 42 lbs.
6 Bus. Meal
16 qts. of beans
30 qts. of peas
1 bag 32 lbs. of coffee
1 bag 64 lbs. of sugar
5 lbs. sperm candles
21 lbs. of soap
11 qts. of salt\(^\text{22}\)

During that first week at Camp Wyatt, troops experienced an interesting diversion from daily drill. On July 4, state authorities ordered the men to celebrate the "anniversary of American Independence." As Confederate leaders believed their break with the Union held similar meaning, they thought of themselves as initiating a "second war of independence." Companies formed at noon and paraded around the drill field in the presence of local guests. At the same time, the "Bladen Guards," still stationed at Confederate Point, fired the guns of their battery in celebration.\(^\text{23}\)

The inspection over, Wilmington authorities acted promptly. On July 11, Special Order No. 141 called for the organization of a new infantry regiment. The nine companies in Camp Wyatt, along with Tait's company at Confederate Point, were designated the 8th Regiment North Carolina Volunteers. On July 13, each company formerly mustered into the regiment. The company designations were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co. A</th>
<th>&quot;German Volunteers&quot;</th>
<th>Capt. Christian Cornelhson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co. B</td>
<td>&quot;Bladen Light Infantry&quot;</td>
<td>Capt. Robert Tait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. C</td>
<td>&quot;Columbus Guards No. 3&quot;</td>
<td>Capt. Forney George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. D</td>
<td>&quot;The Robeson Rifle Guard&quot;</td>
<td>Capt. William Norment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. E</td>
<td>&quot;Moore's Creek Rifle Guards&quot;</td>
<td>Capt. John Hawes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. F</td>
<td>&quot;Scotch Boys&quot;</td>
<td>Capt. Charles Malloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. G</td>
<td>&quot;Wilmington Light Infantry&quot;</td>
<td>Capt. Henry Savage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. H</td>
<td>&quot;Columbus Guards No. 1&quot;</td>
<td>Capt. David Gore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. I</td>
<td>&quot;Wilmington Rifle Guards&quot;</td>
<td>Capt. Oliver Meares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{22}\) Rations list for July 3-10, 1861. ibid.

\(^{23}\) Special Order No. 135. ibid.
That same day, the captains in the 8th Regiment gathered at the quarters of the senior officer of the regiment to elect regimental officers. Major James Dillard Radcliffe, a former principal of a Wilmington military school and officer in the engineer department of the Cape Fear defenses, was elected colonel. Captain Meares of Company I was elected lieutenant-colonel and Robert Tait of Company K became the regimental major.25

The new unit spent the next several months under one of the best drillmasters in the state. Colonel Radcliffe's tenure as principal of the Wilmington military school trained him well for the task at hand. Duty, honor, and discipline were concepts especially familiar to Radcliffe. Although individual companies had been drilling all summer, the 8th Regiment needed to be molded into a single unit. By the end of the summer, as one member of the unit later recalled, Col. Radcliffe "soon had the regiment in good shape."26

In the midst of continued training, many in the regiment grew anxious to fight. News from Virginia that the Yankees had been routed at Manassas in mid-July only increased the excitement of the Tarheel boys. In letters home the young recruits expressed deep desire to take part in the growing struggle. Andrew J. Proffit, a twenty-eight-year-old private in Company D, wrote to his cousin and offered an explanation for his enlistment. "Who on all this green earth is there that had not rather die on the field of battle then to suffer old Abe and his hireling crew to subjugate and rule over us." Each day brought the fear that the war might end before the 8th Regiment could join in the fight against "old Abe."27

In the middle of September, the regiment finally broke from its routine. Confederate


25 Ibid., 17.

26 Ibid.

27 "Dear Cousin", July 14, 1862, Proffit Family Papers, S.H.C.
authorities considered the protection of the coastline, and, more importantly the entrance to the Cape Fear River, critical. Under the direction of Brig. Gen. Theophilus Holmes, commander of the Southern Department of the coastal defenses, a fort was to be constructed on the coastal side of the mouth of the Cape Fear. Daily concern over possible Federal naval attacks prompted Holmes to push for the completion of this fort. With this in mind, he ordered the 8th North Carolina to aid in laying the foundations of what would later be Fort Fisher. The nine companies of the regiment reluctantly left Camp Wyatt and headed south instead of north to the war. At the same time, Company K left its station at Confederate Point, south of Fort Fisher, and crossed the New Inlet channel to man another battery on Zeke's Island. For the next month, strengthening coastal defenses remained the single task of the regiment.²⁸

Federal attention had indeed been drawn to the coastline of the Confederate states. Specifically, Port Royal, S. C., attracted the eye of Captain Samuel DuPont, commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Located on the coast between Charleston and Savannah, Port Royal provided a safe harbor from which the Union navy could effectively operate its blockade. Throughout October, DuPont planned a naval expedition against the port. On November 1, the Federal fleet set sail.²⁹

Confederate authorities immediately responded. Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin informed Governor Francis W. Pickens that a Union fleet was destined for Port Royal. The governor of South Carolina quickly asked Sec. Benjamin to telegraph Brig. Gen. Joseph Anderson in Wilmington and request that reinforcements be immediately sent to the Port Royal area. The troops readily available included Col. Thomas Clingman's 25th

²⁸ Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 32; Jordan, N. C. Troops, 17.
and Radcliffe's 8th North Carolina.\textsuperscript{30}

On November 7, North Carolina troops gathered their gear and marched six miles north to Sugar Loaf Landing on the Cape Fear River. Because of confusion in relaying orders, the regiment sat at the landing for the next thirty-six hours and watched steamers pass. Finally, the 8th Regiment boarded a vessel and travelled north to Wilmington where, together with the 25th North Carolina, they were to board a train. Once in the city, the regiments encountered another delay of one day before they departed for South Carolina. The units camped for one night in Charleston while waiting to travel the final leg of their journey. On November 11, the two regiments disembarked at Pocataligo, midway between Charleston and Savannah.\textsuperscript{31}

Before they arrived, the regiments heard the news that Port Royal had fallen to Federal forces on the seventh. The feeling that they had once again missed the fight spread throughout the 8th North Carolina. As one member of the unit noted: "Enthusiastic expectation changed to abject despair."

By this time the men in the regiment had grown accustomed to the soldierly habit of complaining in general. Many felt they were not furnished with enough "camp necessities." One soldier later wrote: "It is safe to say that our nine companies had more cooking utensils than A. P. Hill's corps, to which we afterward belonged, had at any time in 1863-64-65."\textsuperscript{32}

Protection of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad against possible attacks by the Union army demanded constant attention after the fall of Port Royal. Located only five miles from the coast, the rail lines were vulnerable to raids. A number of country roads led from the coast to the towns along the line. Grahamville, a small crossroads village, sat


\textsuperscript{31}Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 18.

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid.
between the coast and the rail towns of Coosawhatchie, Gapher Hall, and Ferebeeville. A Federal force sweeping toward the railroad would have to move through Grahamville. Brigadier General Robert E. Lee, then overseeing the district, realized that the small Confederate force assembled could not block a Federal landing along the coast. He ordered that certain strategically located positions be defended. With this in mind, Lee ordered the 25th and the 8th North Carolina to guard the roads east of Grahamville.\(^3\)\(^3\)

The 8th Regiment encamped on the Huguenin Plantation east of the town. There the men established Camp Stephens as their new home for the winter. Initially, the regiment formed on the right of the defense line in support of a howitzer battery. Throughout November and into December, the 8th guarded the approaches from the coast. When not in the field, Col. Radcliffe's unit continued to drill in camp. Lack of enemy activity often led to boredom, and mischief was the most common remedy for inactivity. Drill, as every officer knew well, was the military's answer to boredom.\(^3\)\(^4\)

Shortly after the 8th Regiment arrived at Camp Stephens, Col. Radcliffe presented the unit with redesignation orders. The new Adjutant General of North Carolina, Brig. Gen. James G. Martin, sought to clarify the confusing situation that existed between the two separate troop organizations in North Carolina. Under the old arrangement, there were ten state troop regiments and fourteen volunteer regiments. The confusion arose because both organizations had units numbered from the 1st to the 10th. The Adjutant and Inspector General's Office in Richmond, Va., solved the problem with Special Orders No. 222. This order, issued on November 14, 1861, simply added the number ten to each of the volunteer regiment numbers. The 8th Volunteer Regiment, under this system, became the 18th


\(^{34}\) *O. R.*, VI, 324; Jordan, *N. C. Troops*, 18.
Regiment North Carolina Volunteers.\footnote{Manarin. \textit{Military Organizations}, 2; \textit{O. R.}, LI, pt. 2, 377.}

The newly designated unit spent its first winter away from home. Most of the men had never been absent from family and friends at Christmas time. In an effort to boost low morale, Col. Radcliffe allowed the unit to stage various "entertainments." Amateur talents in the regiment performed for the rest of the boys. Private Ned Stanton, of Company E, was a particular favorite of the regiment. His act, entitled a "Review of the Army," had everyone howling with laughter as he rode around the camp "on an ass' colt."\footnote{Clark. \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 18.}

The first year of the war witnessed the transformation of the men of the 18th North Carolina from citizens to soldiers. Although they had yet to fight, the men in the unit felt prepared. In Grahamville, S. C., the young troops celebrated the coming of the new year as best they could. However, guard duty and drill seemed endless. Many wished for action in the approaching year. Their wish would be granted soon enough.
Chapter Two - Service in South Carolina

At the end of a cold day in January, 1862, Private William Bellamy of Company I sat down to record his thoughts in a diary. "All quiet in camp today," he wrote. "No Rumours of an attack in our vicinity."¹

The men of the 18th North Carolina began 1862 as they had ended the previous year, in an atmosphere of peace and quiet. The war had yet to touch the young regiment encamped near the coast of South Carolina. Daily hopes for action went unrealized. Drill and other mundane camp duties continued to dominate the lives of the eager recruits.

In this seemingly peaceful atmosphere, however, Private Ned Johnson of Company I died from what would prove to be the greatest cause of death in the war: disease. Johnson contracted typhoid fever in the swampy lowland region of South Carolina. William Bellamy noted in his diary that Johnson was the "only member we have lost since we have been organized into a company."²

Frustration reached a high in late January when a nearby cavalry unit continually spread word of approaching yankee troops. After several of the alarms proved false, Col. Radcliffe decided to guarantee accurate information by ordering Lt. Col. Meares to lead a scouting party east to the Broad River, where the Federals would most likely land. On January 26, Meares gathered three companies of the 18th North Carolina, along with a week's rations, and marched from camp.³

After a tedious march the small party reached Boyd's Landing, three miles above the Broad on the Euhaw River. Advance pickets of the regiment spotted Federal troops on the

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¹ Bellamy Diary, Jan. 22, 1862, S.H.C.
² Ibid.
³ Clark, N. C. Regiments, 19; Bellamy Diary, Jan. 26, 1862, S.H.C.
other side of the Broad River. Having established the enemy’s location, the three companies quickly settled as best they could into a makeshift camp at the landing. During the day men watched for gunboats and at night they listened for troops crossing the river.\(^4\)

Nerves were indeed tight in the evenings while the men waited for the enemy to move. Alarms were frequent and hard to verify. One such alarm occurred on the first night while the 18th North Carolina stood watch. An anxious cavalryman, on duty as a courier, was in the act of explaining to the outpost where the enemy troops were when suddenly the sound of splashing came from the direction of the Federal camp. All talk and movement ceased. The courier begged for permission to ride back to Boyd's Landing and bring up the rest of the scouting party. A nearby officer explained that he would not call for the reserves until he actually saw the enemy crossing the river. When the first splashes stopped and then later began again, the men took that to signify efforts to land below and above them.

The cavalryman persisted in his efforts to ride back for more troops. Only after someone threatened to shoot him did the frightened courier stop. Quietly the small outpost took position along the bank of the river. The soldiers lay flat on top of cornstalks taken from a nearby cornfield. Arranged behind an embankment, with only one man as lookout, the men waited for the word to rise and shoot. All fell silent as the oaring sound ceased again. Minutes of tension passed when suddenly a splash close to the bank prompted some of the men to lift their heads above the earthwork to catch a glimpse of the approaching enemy. At that moment a school of porpoises rose out of the water in front of the anxious men and then turned just as quickly and swam away. All at once the men broke out in a fit of nervous laughter as they realized the true source of the splashes. Greatly relieved, young soldiers put down the weapons that they were about to use for the first time.\(^5\)

\(^{4}\) Ibid.

\(^{5}\) Clark, N. C. Regiments. 19.
The next day the small detachment returned to Boyd's Landing with the tale of the porpoises. Those at the landing greeted the news with laughter as well. For the rest of the time spent away from Camp Stephens, the three companies enjoyed themselves as best they could -- singing and playing ball instead of drill and picket duty. On January 29, Lt. Col. Meares ordered the men to gather their gear and prepare for the return to camp. Before they reached Camp Stephens, the three companies came upon several ladies from nearby Grahamville. The young women were accompanying Col. Radcliffe's wife on a visit to the camp. The expedition served as a temporary break from dreary camp routines, and the ladies' visit made the return to those routines slightly less painful.⁶

Continuing alarms throughout the period prompted Col. Radcliffe to organize his command into a defensive posture. He ordered the construction of a series of earthworks to be built around the camp. Organized squads stood guard at regularly scheduled intervals. Colonel Radcliffe's efficient and rigid system also provided for constant reconnaissance toward the coast. Throughout the month of February the 18th North Carolina stood alert against an unpredicatable enemy.⁷

While stationed several states away from the main theaters of war, the men in the regiment were able to keep up with the latest news. The mail system in South Carolina continued to function normally, bringing papers and letters from home. On February 10, word of the fall of Fort Henry and, closer to home, Burnside's expedition into northeastern North Carolina dampened the spirits of the Tar Heel regiment. Several in the unit pleaded for the chance to return to their native state to defend their families against the invading enemy.⁸

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⁶Bellamy Diary, Jan. 28 and 29, 1862, S.H.C.
⁷Ibid., Feb. 2, 1862.
⁸Ibid., Feb. 10, 1862.
North Carolina authorities seemed on the verge of granting the young men their request. Government officials called for the immediate return of the 18th and 25th regiments. News of this sent cheers through Camp Stephens, and preparations for the long journey home began. Hopes were crushed swiftly when the men learned that General R. E. Lee, then inspecting coastal defenses on the South Carolina coast, had denied North Carolina's request. The enemy was too near, he said, to allow the regiments to abandon their post.

Rather than allow the situation in camp to become chaotic, Col. Radcliffe maintained strict control over the frustrated regiment. He continued to enforce a steady regimen of daily drill and instruction. Inactive as the 18th North Carolina was, the colonel remained determined to keep the unit in prime fighting condition. When not on the drill field, the boys in the regiment constructed more permanent winter quarters. Radcliffe ordered a twelve-man detail from each company to cut down trees and fashion log houses for the regiment. Once again the colonel had little trouble finding a cure for boredom.9

On the night of February 20, a chance for the regiment to do battle appeared imminent. At tattoo (the final roll call of the day) the regimental drummer sounded the "long roll" signaling the approach of enemy forces. The men grabbed their gear and spent the rest of the night in eager anticipation. Early the next morning the colonel ordered an inspection of "arms - accoutrements, knapsacks, haversacks and canteens." Immediately following the inspection the regiment formed on the parade ground and marched to the breastworks located one mile to the east. Private Bellamy noted that the regiment was "anxious as any unit to show themselves in a fight against the enemy."10

The approaching Federals never arrived. The report proved to be yet another hoax.

9 Ibid., Feb. 18, 1862.

The 18th North Carolina turned around and marched back into camp filled with anxiety and a hatred and distrust of nearby cavalry units for constantly raising false alarms. The war appeared to be passing by without the regiment joining in the fight. Frustration reached an all-time high in the unit. The only bright spot was the fact that -- for most of the soldiers -- their term of enlistment was ending. They had agreed to remain in the service for one year and before long that tedious year would be over.

Regiments across the South suffered from low morale. Recent set-backs in the west, inactivity in the east, and homesickness deflated once-high spirits throughout the Confederacy. The romantic enthusiasm that prompted young men to enlist in the spring of 1861 began to sour by the time winter arrived. The Confederate government, responding to the possibility of losing large numbers of recruits, passed a new enlistment act in December. The measure appealed to men whose term of enlistment was ending to reenlist for two more years, either in the same unit or in a new one with newly elected officers. Along with a chance to start in a new unit, each soldier would receive a $50 bounty and a one-month furlough. With the onset of spring and the possibility of large-scale Union advances, the government was desperate to field as many armies as possible.11

The new enlistment act appealed to the men of the 18th North Carolina. Tired of guarding an unimportant post in remote South Carolina, the veteran soldiers thrilled at the prospect of leaving the unit and heading north to the war in Virginia. Because the Secretary of War demanded that new enlistments last for a two-year period, some of the men gathered to form new units in accordance with the December act. On February 25, the majority of Company H met to elect officers for a new cavalry unit they wished to form. Aware of the situation, Col. Radcliffe reacted quickly by breaking up the meeting and ordering the men

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back to their posts. A professional soldier, the colonel was not about to stand by and permit
the destruction of his regiment so long as General Lee counted on its presence.

Many throughout the regiment strongly resented the colonel’s actions. Radcliffe’s
sense of discipline and devotion to duty clashed with the homesick and anxious young men
from North Carolina. William Bellamy joined in the attacks on Radcliffe. "It is a pretty
come off," he wrote, "that a Colonel of a Regiment should assume the authority of repealing
what the Confederate Congress of America enacts." 12

As February drew to a close, the 18th North Carolina returned to its dreary routine.
The colonel firmly maintained the daily schedule of drill both as punishment for the
commotion on the twenty-fifth and as a general cure for mischief. On the last day of the
month, Radcliffe called for a general inspection of the regiment. The troops assembled on
the parade ground, each man expecting a long day of drill. Relief came when the colonel
announced that President Davis had declared the day one of "humiliation and prayer." All
military activities were suspended for the rest of the afternoon. Instead of drill, the regiment
gathered to hear a sermon preached by the regimental chaplain. Colin Shaw.

Amid the damp winter months in South Carolina, officers continually struggled to
maintain morale in the regiment. Visits by the ladies from Grahamville brightened the
dreary days to a small degree. Most effective, however, was the day in March when the
soldiers received their pay. Each signed his name on the muster and collected the two-
month wages of $22. Although the money brought momentary joy to the men, the amount
proved insufficient to cover the costs of various popular items. Salt, bacon, and flour had all
increased in price because of increased demand and wartime shortages. A reported
overdose of salty foods in camp, as well as climbing prices, resulted in the regimental
surgeon’s recommending a drastic decrease in the consumption of salty foods. In addition,

12 Bellamy Diary. Feb. 25, 1862. S.H.C.
he prescribed a coffee substitute consisting of molasses, vinegar and water; items more plentiful and less expensive.\textsuperscript{13}

At the end of the first week in March, Col. Radcliffe assembled the regiment in order to reenlist the unit for a period of three years or the war. A cold wind swept through camp carrying away anything not tied down. The colonel gave the men the evening to consider the idea of remaining in the regiment for the next three years. The following morning the colonel had each captain call roll for his company to determine the number of men willing to stay in the regiment. Out of almost 1,000 men, 16 answered positively. Not one soldier in Companies E, I, or G volunteered for the new enlistment. Within days, a shocked Radcliffe organized a group of twenty men, one private and one officer from each company, to travel to North Carolina in search of recruits. Each pair would go to the county of organization for their company and find recruits. In addition, and as a final desperate act, Radcliffe asked officials in North Carolina to transfer the regiment back to Wilmington before it could be dissolved.\textsuperscript{14}

State authorities reacted almost immediately, but not because of Radcliffe's plea. A Union force under General Ambrose Burnside was moving up the Neuse River toward the city of New Bern. The North Carolina government quickly called for as many of its regiments as possible to return home to halt the Federal advance. On March 13, the 18th and 25th Regiments were ordered to Wilmington to reinforce the troops there under the command of Brigadier General Lawrence O'Bryan Branch.\textsuperscript{15}

"This news was hailed with great joy," recalled Private Bellamy. Two days later

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., Mar. 3 and 4, 1862.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., Mar. 7, 8, and 10, 1862.
\textsuperscript{15} O. R., IX, 442-44.
excited men boarded trains in Grahamville and began the "slow-tedious" ride home. Stopping in Charleston on the first day, the men switched to box cars and continued toward Wilmington after midnight. The next day the regiments changed cars once again. For the remainder of the journey they rode in the comfort of passenger cars. Early on the morning of March 17, the soldiers arrived "with gay spirits" in Wilmington and were met at the station by family and friends.\(^\text{16}\)

After only a few hours' rest, the 18th North Carolina continued on to Goldsboro. Before the regiment left, however, Company K, stationed for the last five months at Zeke's Island near Wilmington, once again joined the unit. After disembarking in Goldsboro, the 18th North Carolina began the five-hour march to Kinston, where Branch's force was bivouacked.

Upon reaching Kinston, Radcliffe received orders placing the 18th North Carolina in a newly formed brigade. The regiment would no longer operate as an independent organization. Throughout the rest of the war, the 18th North Carolina remained attached to this brigade. Then commanded by Brig. Gen. Branch, the newly designated 2nd Brigade consisted of the 18th, 25th, 28th, 33rd, and 37th North Carolina Regiments.\(^\text{17}\)

The men of the 18th North Carolina settled into camp and wondered about their new commander. Branch, born in Enfield, North Carolina in 1820, grew up in and around the Washington, D. C. political arena. He first travelled to the capital city in 1829 with his guardian, Governor John Branch of Tennessee. Branch served as Secretary of the Navy under President Jackson. Eleven years later, young Branch began to practice law in distant Florida. Anxious to return to his birthplace, Branch accepted an offer to serve as president of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Company. He held that position from 1852 until his

\(^{16}\) Bellamy Diary, Mar. 14, 15, and 17, S.H.C.; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 20.

\(^{17}\) O. R., IX. 447.
1855 election to the United States Congress. Branch returned to Washington to serve during the turbulent years prior to the outbreak of the war. In April, 1861, unable to bear arms against his native state, Branch answered Governor Ellis' call for volunteers. He immediately returned to Raleigh, where he enlisted as a private in the "Raleigh Rifles." His experiences in Washington, however, proved too valuable to the state. Accordingly, the governor appointed him Quartermaster and Paymaster General of North Carolina. Branch served in this capacity until August, when he resigned with the intention of serving in the field. A month later, he was commissioned colonel of the 33rd North Carolina. Barely two months had passed when, in November, Branch gained his brigadier general's star and was placed in command of the troops in Wilmington.\(^{18}\)

The 18th North Carolina spent little time settling into camp near Kinston. Reports of Federal naval activity on the Neuse River prompted Branch to pull his brigade back toward Goldsboro and away from the threat of gunboat fire. Heavy rains on the 20th slowed the march. Along the route members of the 18th North Carolina were quartered in houses -- comfortable shelter from the inclement weather. On the afternoon of March 21, the regiment concluded its eight mile march closer to Goldsboro and began clearing the ground for its new camp.

From its position between Kinston and Goldsboro, the 18th North Carolina served as a scouting party for the next two weeks. A duty all too familiar to the men, the "long tedious" marches in search of the enemy wore on the already impatient soldiers. Distractions proved a welcome break from old routines. A nearby liquor trade provided one such diversion. Those off duty could easily walk down the road and find an enjoyable way to spend their break. Once again, the colonel got wind of the disturbance. Radcliffe immediately ordered the liquor supply confiscated and proudly informed General Branch of

\(^{18}\) Biographical notes in Lawrence O'Bryan Branch Papers, University of Virginia.
his actions. Radcliffe's stern measures further alienated the regiment.\(^{19}\)

As March passed, the young men in the 18th North Carolina looked forward to the coming month. Word arrived from Wilmington that the regiment was to be discharged on the anniversary of its organization. By mid-April, tension between the men and Col. Radcliffe had reached an all-time high. One full year of inaction and constant military discipline wore heavily on eager men who longed for either home or a fight. The most recent incident, the destruction of the liquor trade, was the last straw.\(^{20}\)

Prospects of going home soon ended. In the west, Confederate forces under Generals Sidney Johnston and P. G. T. Beauregard suffered defeat at the hands of U. S. Grant in the battle of Shiloh. In the east, an army of 100,000 Federals under Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan landed at Fort Monroe on the tip of the Virginia peninsula between the York and the James Rivers. Government officials in Richmond met to consider the threat of the Union advances. President Davis, with the urging of Secretary of War George Randolph, pushed Congress to enact the first military draft in American history. On April 16, the Confederate Congress passed a conscription act obligating all white males between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five to serve for three years or the war.\(^{21}\)

Before Col. Radcliffe could dismiss the men, rumor of the conscription act reached the regiment. As a part of the new act, the old twelve-month volunteers were given the opportunity to reelect their regimental officers. In the case of the 18th North Carolina, almost every company-grade officer was replaced with someone new. Hoping to make a clean break from the last year, the men effected a complete reorganization of the unit. Most important, the source of frustration, Col. Radcliffe, lost command of the regiment. Thirty-

\(^{19}\) Bellamy Diary, Mar. 23 and Apr. 7, 1862, S.H.C.; Radcliffe to Branch, Mar. 23, 1862, Branch Papers, U. Va.


seven-year-old Robert H. Cowan replaced Radcliffe as the new colonel.

Cowan, born in Wilmington and a graduate of the University of North Carolina, represented a fresh start for the regiment. State authorities promoted Cowan, formerly a lieutenant-colonel in the 3rd North Carolina, to colonel and gave him command of the 18th North Carolina. His reputation as an excellent drillmaster preceded him. Unlike Radcliffe, Col. Cowan held the respect of his former unit. When he departed from his old regiment, the men, filled with regret, presented him with the gracious gift of a "magnificent horse."  

At the end of April the new officers began the task of refitting the unit and preparing for the coming spring. Events in Virginia, however, soon forced Cowan and his reorganized regiment to test themselves for the first time.

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22 Clark, N. C. _Regiments_, 20; Robert K. Krick, _Lee’s Colonels: A Biographical Register of the Field Officers of the Army of Northern Virginia_ (Dayton, O., 1984), 90; Jordan, _N. C. Troops_, 305; Clark, _N. C. Regiments_, 1, 179
Chapter Three - First Blood

Preparations ended quickly. On May 5, Branch ordered the brigade to collect its gear and march to the nearest railroad station. The brigade's destination was Gordonsville, Va. Less than two weeks after its reorganization, the 18th North Carolina was finally heading toward the war. With glad spirits the men quickly packed their belongings, formed in line, and marched out of camp under the direction of their new colonel.

Confederate leaders, among them Robert E. Lee, were concerned that Union forces north and northwest of Richmond might attempt to unite and move on the capital. General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's forces, then operating in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, were, for the moment, keeping Federal troops busy. However, the possibility of a linkage between enemy forces in the Valley and those in Fredericksburg, under Maj. Gen. Irvin McDowell, remained a real threat. Accordingly, Lee ordered Branch to join Maj. Gen. Richard Ewell's troops in Gordonsville. Located east of the Blue Ridge mountains, Gordonsville served as a jump-off point for Confederate forces attempting to intercept any Union movement between the Valley and Fredericksburg. After a three day journey, the 18th North Carolina arrived with the rest of the brigade in Gordonsville.¹

When Branch met with Ewell, he was told two things. Ewell explained that the brigade was to act specifically as a barrier between the two Federal armies separated by the Blue Ridge. Second, in order to facilitate matters, each of Branch's regiments was to maintain ten days' supply of rations. With these instructions in mind, the men of the 18th North Carolina eagerly awaited the action they had long been denied. The soldiers established camp on the outskirts of Gordonsville and prepared for marching orders that

¹*O.R., XIII, pt. 3, 880-81; Bellamy Diary, May 8, 1862. Prior to leaving for Virginia, the 7th North Carolina replaced the 25th Regiment in the brigade.*
might arrive at any moment.²

On the morning of May 14, excitement in camp rose when word spread that Ewell had sent marching orders to Branch. The rumor proved to be true. General Ewell, then located northwest of Gordonsville in the Luray Valley, desired Branch to march his brigade into the Luray Valley by way of Fisher's Gap. Ewell would then swing south and join Branch at Luray. The combined force would either march west to New Market, toward Jackson's army, or cross back over the Blue Ridge and advance to Fredericksburg. Branch met with his officers and ordered them to be ready to leave Gordonsville early on the 17th.³

The next five days were the most hectic yet for the men of the 18th North Carolina. Orders and counter-orders sent the regiment back and forth along the same roads. The march was a series of fits and starts as rain poured steadily. In order to facilitate quick marches, the men left their excess baggage behind. General Ewell specifically ordered the men to carry five days' rations and little else. "The road to glory," he wrote, "cannot be followed with much baggage."⁴

Because of a slow start on the morning of May 17, the brigade did not begin its march until around noon. A driving rain forced Branch to call a halt after covering only thirteen miles. By then darkness had arrived. Men in the regiment found any available spot on the side of the road and slept without the comfort of tents.

Early the next morning, again in heavy rain, the soaked soldiers formed in the road and continued to march toward the distant Blue Ridge. On what one member of the 18th

⁴ *O. R.*, XII, pt. 3, 890.
North Carolina described as a "horrible road," the regiment covered thirty miles that day and halted on the other side of Madison Court House. Completely exhausted and miserable, the men collapsed at the foot of the mountains in a field of clover. Located along the banks of a small creek, the field provided plenty of wheat and hay for soldier "mattresses." With stiff bodies and sore feet, the men rose early on May 19 to cross the Blue Ridge at Fisher's Gap. Shortly after beginning the march a courier bearing new orders rode up to Branch. The message was from General Joseph Johnston, then commanding the army east of Richmond. In brief language, Johnston ordered Branch to turn his brigade around and advance immediately to the vicinity of Hanover Court House.\(^5\)

As word of the new orders spread throughout the brigade, the men of the 18th North Carolina greeted the news with open frustration. Their hopes of joining "Stonewall" Jackson dashed, the regiment simply turned around and began its march back to Gordonsville. That day the brigade backtracked eighteen miles before it halted for the night. The next day the men reached Madison Court House, where General Branch took the time to advise Ewell of Johnston's orders. Branch also sent his quartermaster ahead to Gordonsville to arrange for rail transportation to Hanover Court House.

At 5 A.M. on May 21, the brigade started on the final leg of its journey east. After a four-hour march that morning, the regiments arrived in Gordonsville. Granted a three-hour rest, the men of the 18th North Carolina looked back on the past five days with disgust. Unaccustomed to long marches, the regiment had covered sixty miles on the rain-swollen road to and from Gordonsville. Part of the reason for the three-hour rest was so that stragglers who had remained behind in Madison Court House with, in some cases, extremely sore feet could catch up with the brigade. Around noon, the train carrying the five North Carolina regiments pulled out of the station.

At sundown, the 18th North Carolina finally arrived at its new destination: the small historic village of Hanover Court House. The soldiers slept that night in the yard around the old court house. In a state of total exhaustion, some were "tired enough to sleep without supper."\(^6\)

Branch’s brigade served two major purposes while at Hanover Court House. Most important, it protected the Virginia Central Railroad, the vital communication and supply link that ran through central Virginia. Federal forces operating from Fredericksburg might attempt to move south and cut the rail line near the courthouse. Consequently, Johnston promptly placed Branch there to defend that junction. Second, if the enemy were to advance toward the railroad, nothing stood in his way between the courthouse and Fredericksburg except a single Confederate brigade under Brig. Gen. Joseph R. Anderson. In such an event, Johnston wanted Branch to combine with Anderson and form a more formidable defense. Branch was to accomplish both of these goals while maintaining communication with the main Confederate army near Richmond.\(^7\)

Before Anderson’s brigade could reach Branch at Hanover Court House, Federal cavalry movements near the small village of Mechanicsville prompted Johnston to alter his original plans. He quickly suggested to Branch that he not remain encamped at the court house. Fearing that Branch might be cut off from the main force east of Richmond, Johnston felt that a "position much nearer the Chickahominy than your present one would be better."

On May 25, Branch notified Johnston that he intended to move south along the railroad toward Richmond and find a suitable position to wait for Anderson’s troops.

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\(^7\) Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants, 1, 219; O. R., XI, pt. 3, 535.
Earlier that morning, Anderson sent word that he had reached Hanover Junction after a long march and that he would move by rail to Hanover Court House the next day. With Anderson's position established, Branch realized that he would have to remain along the railroad on his way toward Richmond. Johnston approved Branch's plan with reluctance. He again stressed the importance of protecting the rail line, while at the same time maintaining a connection with the main army. Johnston further suggested that Branch familiarize himself with all of the routes to the Chickahominy River and from there to the army.\(^8\)

Branch sent orders to each of his officers to prepare for an early march the next morning. Colonel Cowan gathered the men and gave the word to organize their equipment and make all the necessary preparations. Before long, however, the colonel learned that not all of his men would be available the next morning. Twenty-five soldiers in the 18th North Carolina reported to sick-call. Similar numbers appeared in the other regiments before the next day began. As a result, Branch ordered that the sick, along with the brigade's extra baggage, be loaded onto available railroad cars and be sent to Richmond before the march began. Delays in organizing the effort lasted through the night and forced the early march to commence later in the day.\(^9\)

By midday on May 26, the men restlessly formed in the road leading south from Hanover Court House. In the midst of a steady rain the brigade marched four and a half miles, crossed the railroad tracks, and turned southwest on the Ashcake road. That road led eventually back to the northwest to Ashland. However, the brigade stopped just west of the rail lines, at a point about four miles southeast of Ashland. The men bivouacked that night.

\(^8\) Ibid., 537, 543-44.

around an old Presbyterian building known as Slash Church. Branch chose this position for two main reasons. The site provided contact with the railroad down which Anderson's troops were due anytime. Also, the camp lay just north of a crossroads that offered two possible routes of escape for the brigade. The road that passed by the church and crossed the Ashcake road ran southwest toward the Chickahominy. It was down this road that Branch would travel with Anderson's troops to join with the main army near Richmond. The Ashcake road, which bent to the northwest, provided Branch with an avenue of escape if the enemy were to push his brigade from its position near the railroad.

Having settled down for the night, the men of the 18th North Carolina felt that they were once again being led away from the enemy. More importantly, they cursed the fact that their baggage was at that moment somewhere in Richmond. This left the men with no shelter from the steady rain.10

Early on the morning of the 27th, General Branch sent Colonel James H. Lane's 28th North Carolina and part of Latham's Battery (which joined the brigade the night before it left Hanover Court House) to the southeast toward Taliaferro's Mill to scout the enemy. At 10 A.M. Lane's advance pickets sent word that the enemy was north of the Chickahominy and was fast approaching the railroad from the east. While the 28th and Latham's Battery delayed the Federals, Branch acted promptly. He formed the remaining regiments of the brigade in the Ashcake Road and prepared to march toward the point where the road crossed the rail line. Almost an hour after forming in the road, the men started toward the crossing. The distance to this point, slightly less than a mile, seemed to take forever as the anxious men in the 18th North Carolina readied themselves for what would be their first fight.11

10 Bellamy Diary, May 15 to June 2, 1862, S.H.C.; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 21; Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 219.

11 Bellamy Diary, May 15 to June 2, 1862, S.H.C.
Around noon the Brigade reached the crossing where Branch quickly formed the men in line of battle. Colonel Cowan formed his men on the right of the Ashcake Road with the regiment's left flank resting against the edge of the road. The crack of distant gunfire revealed that the enemy had reached a point between the railroad and Hanover Court House. Branch gave the word and the 18th North Carolina began its march toward the firing.

The ground provided swift marching as the men crossed cultivated fields and gently rolling hills. The hills in fact offered some cover for the regiment as it advanced. The 18th North Carolina reached the yard of a farmhouse and gained its first glimpse of the enemy. About 600 yards farther up the road lay the intersection of the Ashcake and the New Bridge roads. The Ashcake Road bent northeastward at that point while the New Bridge Road began at the intersection and ran directly south. Federal's stood in the New Bridge Road and faced west toward the advancing Southerners. The plan of battle called for the 18th North Carolina to form the center of an attack on the Union line while the 37th and the 33rd Regiments would assault its left and right flanks. Latham's Battery would provide artillery support for the charge.\(^{12}\)

Orders for the attack given, the 18th North Carolina fixed bayonets and reformed near the farmhouse. Colonel Cowan called for the double quick pace. The regiment advanced in this fashion for some 300 yards before it came under heavy fire. All at once, soldiers in the 2nd Maine and the 44th New York unleashed a terrific volley on the charging Confederates. As the 18th North Carolina crossed the open fields in front of the Union line, the men maintained their steady pace, halting only briefly to fire into the enemy's ranks. The colonel of the 44th New York recalled that this "fire swept through our ranks like a storm of hail. Our banner was pierced by over forty of the enemy's balls."\(^{13}\)


Map 1. The Battle of Hanover Court House, May 27, 1862. (Source: Gabbert, Military Operations in Hanover County, 18).
The Federals maintained a steady fire into the 18th's ranks. The ground immediately in front of the Federal line became littered with the victims of Union gunfire. Company F suffered the most. Twenty men went down with wounds while twenty-one more, lost in the confusion of their first battle, were captured by Federal pickets.

Men in the regiment reacted to battle in different ways. Few exhibited sheer bravery better than Private Shepherd Averitt of Company E. While standing in full view of an entire enemy regiment, Averitt repeatedly loaded and fired his rifle until he was forced to withdraw after firing 60 rounds of ammunition. In contrast, and unable to cope with the overwhelming violence of battle, Captain Thomas Brown, Jr., of Company A threw down his weapon and offered himself up to his captors.\(^\text{14}\)

The volume of Union fire soon forced Cowan to shift the regiment to the right. A small outcropping of woods bordered by a fence offered much needed protection for the advancing unit. Once there, however, the 18th North Carolina bogged down under even more concentrated enemy fire. Every time the Carolinians tried to leap the fence, the 44th New York unleashed a deadly fire in their direction. Exhausted, and with their ammunition nearly spent, the men in the regiment began to pull back. Federal reinforcements and the strength of their position made a continued charge impossible. Slowly, under Cowan's calm direction, the regiment retreated along the Ashcake Road to the rail line. General Branch later noted that the unit's withdrawal had been accomplished in "perfect order."\(^\text{15}\)

The regiment did not halt for long at Peake's Station. Enemy movement to the north along the railroad threatened to cut off Branch's line of retreat. After a brief stand and fight, Branch ordered the brigade to march toward the safety of Ashland. Following a four-mile march up the Ashcake Road to the outskirts of the town, the 18th North Carolina collapsed

\(^{14}\text{Jordan, N. C. Troops, }717, 308. \text{ Casualty figures in Company F were determined by examining the Company roster in Jordan, N. C. Troops, 367-78.}\)

\(^{15}\text{O. R., XI, pt. 1. 731-32}\)
that night in a state of complete exhaustion.\textsuperscript{16}

After the battle of Hanover Court House the men reacted with mixed emotions. Exhilaration over their first combat experience was tempered by the pain of losing comrades. That night, as they lay in meps around the makeshift camp, sprinkled silence during the roll call testified to the horror of war. Regimental records indicate that out of 215 total casualties, 23 men were killed, 90 were wounded, and the remaining 102 men were prisoners of the enemy.\textsuperscript{17}

Both Col. Cowan and the regiment received praise for their actions during the battle. As one member of the 18th North Carolina recalled, Cowan displayed great "coolness and fortitude, did not stand idly looking on, but emptied time after time the well put in load from his Navy repeater." Through his actions on the field Cowan gained the respect of his men. Branch stated in general that the 18th North Carolina performed admirably. He wrote that the unit "made the charge most gallantly" and that only the enemy's strong position prevented the regiment from achieving success.\textsuperscript{18}

Before retiring for the night Branch received an important dispatch from the army in front of Richmond. Major General Ambrose Powell Hill, in a precisely worded message, informed Branch that his brigade, together with Anderson's, was to form a division under Hill's command, and that he should "prepare to move in this direction."\textsuperscript{19}

The direction Branch and Anderson took was due south down the Telegraph Road which led into Richmond from the north. Early the next morning, the men of the 18th North Carolina gathered what little gear they had and marched toward Richmond and their

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 742.

\textsuperscript{17} Bellamy Diary, May 15 to June 2, 1862, S.H.C.; Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 305-423.


\textsuperscript{19} \textit{O. R.}, XI, pt. 3, 554.
new commander. The brigade halted six miles down the road just north of a small roadside village known as Yellow Tavern. Beside the road lay large open fields mostly owned by the Chamberlain family. The weary regiment settled in a small grove of trees surrounded by an "immense plantation of clover."\(^{20}\)

Hill ordered Branch's brigade to remain encamped on the Chamberlain farm for the time being. The brigade was to serve as an advance picket line guarding the northern approaches to the city. Any movement by Union troops north of the Chickahominy was to be immediately reported to Gen. Hill, then located to the southeast at the Meadow Bridge crossing of the river.

For the next several weeks the Army of Northern Virginia enjoyed a peaceful break from battle. General Robert E. Lee, the new commander of the Confederate army, spent the time directing the improvement of fortifications around Richmond and formulating a battle strategy against the stalled Union army.

The 18th North Carolina thoroughly enjoyed this brief period of rest. The men settled into a makeshift camp consisting of "rude shelters made by boughs and blankets." The more inventive in the unit fashioned comfortable hammocks out of carpet blankets sent by "Carolina's Patriotic Daughters." News and mail arrived daily, carried by messengers riding up the Brook Turnpike. The only major duty that the regiment performed, aside from drill, involved scouting the river some five miles north of the camp. Occasional skirmishes between pickets on opposite sides of the river broke out, but, in general, the 18th saw no hard duty for the next several weeks.\(^{21}\)

Grumblings around camp concerning the battle near Hanover Court House momentarily interrupted the peaceful atmosphere. Several men in the brigade complained to

\(^{20}\) Bellamy Diary, June 6 to July 10, 1862, S.H.C.

\(^{21}\) Ibid.
Richmond newspapers that Branch did not bring to battle all of the forces available to him. In response, Branch produced a dispatch from General Lee to the brigade. It praised its actions at Hanover Court House. In particular, Lee complimented Branch on the "manner in which you have discharged the duties of the position in which you were placed." Those who criticized Branch withdrew in silence in the face of Gen. Lee's approval.  

Colonel Cowan immediately acted to prevent any problems between himself and Gen. Branch. To avoid being included in the attack on Branch, Cowan had a message published in a newspaper declaring his innocence in the "Hanover" affair. Cowan added that he had only good feelings toward Branch and his ability to command. The affair ended as quickly as it began. Throughout this period, and despite the rumors, the regiment's confidence in both Cowan and Branch continued to grow.

The brief period of relaxation ended abruptly on June 25, when Branch ordered the brigade to prepare to break camp. That afternoon, after marching out of camp northward on the Telegraph Road, the brigade halted on the southern bank of the Chickahominy near where the road crossed the river. There the 18th North Carolina took up a position to observe the enemy and guard the nearby river crossing. Rumors quickly circulated through the ranks that the regiment would be crossing the river early the next day.

The brigade's movement was to form the early stages of Gen. Lee's ambitious plan of attack. In what would be his first battle plan as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee devised a complex strategy aimed at crushing McClellan's Federal forces east of Richmond. The Union army sat some eight to ten miles from the city in a line running from north to south. The bulk of McClellan's forces lay south of the Chickahominy, which

22 Clark, N. C. Regiments. 23-4.


24 Clark, N. C. Regiments. 25.
flowed from the north of Richmond to the southeast until it emptied into the James River halfway down the peninsula. Confederate reconnaissance revealed that the right flank of the Federal army stood exposed north of the Chickahominy. The lone Union V Corps under Gen. Fitz-John Porter remained there to guard the York River Railroad, which ran east to McClellan's supply base on the Pamunkey River.

Lee's plan called for Jackson's force to move from the Valley and descend upon Porter's right flank, thus pushing him east. At the same time, three divisions under A. P. Hill, James Longstreet, and D. H. Hill would simultaneously hit Porter's center and left. Lee gambled that McClellan would then choose to withdraw, either east down the peninsula or directly south to the safety of his gunboats on the James River.²⁵

In this ambitious plan, Branch's brigade was to serve as the link between Stonewall Jackson's approaching force and A. P. Hill's division, waiting downriver at the Meadow Bridge crossing. Lee's orders specified that Branch on June 26 was to cross the river at 3 A.M. From there the brigade was to march northeastward toward Slash Church. At the same time, Jackson would be advancing through Ashland along the Asheake Road heading toward the Virginia Central line. Once he established contact with Jackson, Branch was to turn his brigade southeast and advance down a road parallel to the Chickahominy. Upon reaching the Meadow Bridge Road, Branch was to halt his command and allow the rest of Hill's division to cross the river and lead the way to the distant village of Mechanicsville. There the arrival of Hill's force would push the enemy to the east and allow the divisions of D. H. Hill and Longstreet to cross the river. At that point the bulk of Lee's army would be north of the Chickahominy and McClellan's dangling flank would be rolled up.²⁶

On the evening of June 25, with the plan set in motion, the men of the 18th North


Map 2. Branch's route to Mechanicsville, June 26, 1862. (Source: Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, 1, 507).
Carolina checked their weapons and prepared for their pre-dawn march.

At 3 A.M., the young soldiers rose. An hour later they were assembled and ready. Branch's orders were, in his words, "explicit." He was to hold his position on the south bank of the river until he heard from Jackson. The men, fully alert and anxious, stood with their guns in hand for the next four hours. Jackson was late. His weary troops were six hours behind schedule. At 8 A.M., Hill sent word to Branch that he was to remain where he was until Jackson communicated with him, or unless Hill himself issued new orders. Rather than remain visible to the enemy in the open fields south of the river, Branch pulled the brigade back down the road a half a mile and there waited for Jackson.

Word finally came at 10 A.M. Jackson had just reached the Virginia Central line near Slash Church. Without delay, Branch ordered the brigade to move up the road and cross the river. The enemy offered little resistance as the Tar Heel boys reached the opposite bank. Small exchanges of fire between the advance elements of the brigade and fleeing Federal pickets broke the silence of the morning.27

The 18th North Carolina did not participate in the skirmishing. Instead, being farther back in the column, the men collected gear left behind by the enemy. One of the first things Private Bellamy noticed when he crossed the river was "shoes, camp litter and blue clothes." Copies of Harper's Weekly and assorted provisions indicated not only where the enemy had been but that he had indeed "skeedaddled."28

Spirits rose in the 18th North Carolina when, around 2 P.M., the men learned that Branch had met with Gen. Ewell, whose troops were marching down a road slightly north and parallel to the one that Branch's brigade was using. After a brief meeting between the two generals, the brigade continued its advance. Following a short skirmish at Atlee's

27 Ibid., 881-82.
28 Bellamy Diary, June 6 to July 10, 1862, S.H.C.
Station on the Fredericksburg Railroad, lead elements of the brigade reached the Meadow Bridge Road around 4 P.M. Instead of halting to allow Hill to cross the river and take the lead, stragglers informed Branch that Hill's brigades had already crossed and were en route to Mechanicsville. Branch quickly resumed the march in an effort to catch up to Hill and offer him support. Shortly before sunset the 18th North Carolina entered the small crossroads village of Mechanicsville.

The village itself was deserted: Hill's men had already swept through it pushing the Federals from their position. The men in the regiment could see Hill's battle line stretched over the open fields east of the village. Across a creek in front of the Confederate line the enemy was massed on high ground. Crossing open ground, the 18th North Carolina moved up to support a small battery on the left of Hill's line. The main fight had already ended. All that remained was an early evening artillery barrage. Consequently, as the regiment moved toward the battery, Federal cannon fire swept the area. The 18th North Carolina managed the movement with little damage. Only three men fell wounded during the advance when a shell exploded nearby. Sergeant Ollin Munn of Company B was the first in the regiment to fall in what would prove to be a costly series of battles for the 18th North Carolina. That night, exhausted from the long march, the soldiers slept in line of battle with their weapons loaded and by their sides.²⁹

Early on June 27, the Federal batteries opened fire once again on the Confederates. For over an hour they pounded the fields between Beaver Dam Creek and Mechanicsville. By 9 A.M. the firing slackened. General Hill, anxious to attack, ordered Branch to prepare to storm the emplacements on the high ground across Beaver Dam Creek. Branch waited for signs of other movements against the enemy. That sign came when Brig. Gen. Maxcy Gregg's South Carolina brigade began to assault the enemy position. At that moment

Branch ordered his men forward.\textsuperscript{30}

As the troops plunged into the creek and struggled across, they encountered little to no enemy resistance. When they reached the other side, they found empty breastworks. Aware that Stonewall Jackson's troops had arrived during the night on his far right flank, McClellan ordered Porter to pull his corps back along the north bank of the Chickahominy. At the same time McClellan began shifting his supply base from the Pamunkey to the James River. Proof of the Union army's hasty withdrawal lay all around. First Gregg and then Branch noted "evidences of a rout and precipitate flight were most striking."\textsuperscript{31}

The 18th North Carolina, along with the rest of the brigade, filed into the country road down which the Federal's had withdrawn. Anxious to pursue and overtake the enemy before he could cross the river, Hill pushed his division toward the crossroad of Cold Harbor. Before reaching that point, the lead brigade under Gregg encountered the rear guard of the Union V Corps. With what A. P. Hill described as "the handsomest charge in line I have seen during the war," Gregg drove the bluecoats from their position near Gaines' Mill. Hill's Light Division continued passed the mill moving slowly toward the now concentrated V Corps. When Branch arrived at a bend in the road, known locally as New Cold Harbor, the Union force appeared in strength several hundred yards to the south.\textsuperscript{32}

The ground in front of the brigade opened into cultivated fields broken by thick patches of woods. Some 200 yards directly south, the ground dipped and then rose again to form a plateau bordered farther south by the Chickahominy. At the base of the rise lay a small creek choked by trees and thick underbrush which gave it the appearance of boggy swamp. Along the heights above Boatswain's Creek, the Union line lay waiting.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., \textit{O. R.}, XI, pt. 3, 622.

\textsuperscript{31} Freeman, \textit{Lee's Lieutenants}, 1, 517; \textit{O. R.}, XI, pt. 2, 883.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
Map 3. The Battle of Gaines' Mill, June 27, 1862. (Source: Clifford Dowdey, The Seven Days: The Emergence of Lee (Boston, 1964), 225.)
Geography favored the enemy position. Union soldiers stood on high ground along the semi-circular course of the creek which ran from the south to the northeast. The gentle slope of the ground rising from the creek allowed the Federal's to form several lines of defense, one behind the other.\textsuperscript{33}

By 2:30 p.m. the Confederates were assembled in line of battle. Branch's and Anderson's brigades formed in the center of Hill's line. Branch's left rested on a country lane that wound southeast of New Cold Harbor, while its right brushed a road that ran directly south toward the Union line. Anderson's left was about 250 yards from Branch's right flank. With Gregg on his left and Anderson off to his right, Branch prepared to attack. To facilitate easy movement and unaware of the enemy's strong position, Branch left the 18th, along with the 33rd and 37th North Carolina, in reserve back on the Cold Harbor Road. Almost immediately he realized his mistake and sent for the three regiments.\textsuperscript{34}

By the time the 18th North Carolina reached the field it was nearing 4 p.m. The advance was slow and tedious as soldiers moved through dense woods and open fields under intense enemy fire. Cowan yelled for the men to proceed toward the left flank of the brigade. The nature of the ground forced the regiment to wheel to the right. The deep ravine leading to the creek prevented the brigade from maintaining its formation. Soon the 18th North Carolina became completely separated from the rest of the brigade. Originally on the right of the lane leading to the southeast, the regiment now found itself on the right of the road which ran directly south. Cowan continued to direct the men forward in the midst of terrific volleys of Federal rifle fire. The regiment reached the bottom of the ravine but never crossed the meandering creek. On the other side, three lines of bluecoats poured heavy volleys into the isolated unit. The air was thick with minie balls coming from all

\textsuperscript{33} Robert U. Johnson and C. C. Buel, eds., \textit{Battles and Leaders of the Civil War} (New York, 1884-87), II, 331 [Cited hereafter as \textit{Battles and Leaders}].

\textsuperscript{34} Freeman, \textit{Lee's Lieutenants}, I, 520; \textit{O. R.}, Xl, pt. 2, 883.
directions. The Federals assaulted the regiment in its front and flank. Private Thomas Simpson of Company E took a shot in his side as he attempted to fire his rifle. Not far away, Pvt. Joseph White fell dead. The regiment made several attempts to cross the creek but met with failure each time. Though the 18th North Carolina had been broken and forced back frequently. Col. Cowan never lost control of his men. He later stated that his "commands were obeyed with the promptness, if not the precision of drill." Unable to withstand further enemy fire, the regiment withdrew for good.35

The men, exhausted and hot, made their way back to the Cold Harbor Road. Despite the heavy fighting of the afternoon, the 18th North Carolina suffered remarkably little in the action near the creek; 14 men were wounded and Pvt. White was the only fatality. The unit was fortunate, according to Col. Cowan. In his estimation, "nothing but the thickness of the woods saved the 18th North Carolina from total destruction."36

For the remainder of the day the regiment watched from a distance as Confederates from John Bell Hood's Texas brigade broke through the Federal lines and forced them to retreat from their strong position. That night the soldiers in the 18th North Carolina slept on top of the heights they had struggled to climb earlier. For the second day in a row, members of Hill's Light Division had borne the brunt of the fighting.37

The next day provided little rest for the weary regiment. Burial details spent the long day engaged in the gruesome task of digging graves for the dead Confederates who lay on the ground before Boatswain's Creek. Some 8,000 men lost their lives in Lee's only victory during what would become known as the Seven Days' Battles.38

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37 McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 467.
38 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, 1. 536.
Early on June 29, forward scouts learned that Porter's Corps had crossed the river during the night. McClellan's retreat to the James River had begun. In another bold move, Lee planned to send nine divisions on six different roads in order to hit the Federals in the flank. As part of this strategy, Hill's and Longstreet's divisions were to cross the Chickahominy at New Bridge, advance down the Darbytown Road to the Long Bridge Road, and attack the enemy where possible.39

That afternoon the two divisions gathered their equipment and marched from the Gaines' Mill battlefield in pursuit of the retreating Union army. Longstreet and Hill led the column south across the river and toward the Darbytown Road. The roads were clear of traffic, thus guaranteeing an easier march. Following this route the divisions turned to the southeast and after a fourteen-mile hike reached the Long Bridge Road as evening fell. In the distance, about two miles to the east, the rumble of wagons pinpointed the moving columns of the Army of the Potomac. The bluecoats were moving south on the Willis Church Road, which crossed the Long Bridge Road at a crossroads called Riddell's Shop. Longstreet and Hill hoped to drive their troops directly east and smash into the unsuspecting Union column.

The plan had been for Longstreet's division to lead the attack with the Light Division to offer support if necessary. Longstreet counted on the act of surprise to allow him to attack the enemy with a smaller force. Any hopes of surprising the enemy, however, vanished early on June 30 when Federal artillery opened on the Southerners. Despite this, the attack went ahead as scheduled. Hill watched as Longstreet's men swept into the fields in front of the enemy. Around noon, seeing Longstreet's brigades bog down in the face of heavy resistance, Hill ordered his men forward.

Branch immediately formed his brigade with the rest of the division, masked behind a

small patch of woods to the right of the Long Bridge Road. Gazing directly east across an open field, the 18th North Carolina spotted its target. In the shadow of the woods running along the Willis Church Road stood a small farmhouse. In the yard of the house a Union battery continued to hamper Confederate efforts to cross the field.

At 2 P.M., with enemy shells falling nearby, Hill ordered Branch's brigade forward. With no guide available, the brigade simply directed itself toward the distant battery. Choking on heat and dust, the men in the 18th North Carolina advanced in a steady line across the open field. Someone in the ranks began shouting "Stonewall" and soon the rest of the men adopted the cry. Cowan later recalled that they began chanting this while under heavy fire from the enemy.

Before the regiment could reach the farm yard, Federal rifle fire mixed with grape shot forced the 18th North Carolina to veer down into a ravine bordered by a fence. There Cowan reorganized the regiment and waited for the firing to slacken. All at once the men rushed out of the ravine and negotiated the fence not far from the Union line. As at Gaines' Mill, the air was filled with enemy bullets. Soldiers struggled to avoid the deadly missiles while attempting to remain in formation. Captain John McGill of Company B fell to the ground with a foot wound. Also in Company B, Pvt. Henry Gause was wounded when a shell fragment slammed into his chest and knocked him backward. With the aid of timely reinforcements sent by Branch, the 18th North Carolina charged into the farmyard and overwhelmed the lone Union battery.40

Nearly exhausted, the men in the 18th North Carolina regrouped and waited for the rest of the brigade to come up before they continued to advance. Their final effort involved pushing enemy infantry back into the strip of woods just west of the Willis Church Road. Branch ordered the brigade to halt when Federal fire on the right indicated the brigade's

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flank was exposed. The battle ended as the Confederates pulled back slightly in the face of overwhelming numbers. Night came and the men in the 18th North Carolina slept in the farm yard around the guns they had captured.\textsuperscript{41}

Though victorious, the 18th North Carolina suffered tremendously at the Battle of Frayser's Farm. Out of 65 total casualties, 13 men lost their lives. The constant fighting of the past five days was taking its toll on the regiment. Frayser's Farm alone accounted for losses of slightly less than twenty percent of the regiment's total strength.\textsuperscript{42}

Early the next morning, the brigade moved back to its starting position of the previous day. Once there, Hill sent the brigade to join Gen. John B. Magruder's division in its advance against the Federal guns posted on Malvern Hill. The next several hours proved confusing for the brigade. Orders and counter-orders sent the unit up and down the road between Hill's division and Malvern Hill. The brigade never saw any action that day as Lee's forces attempted to pierce the impregnable Union position. Under constant fire from land and gunboat cannon fire, the men sought shelter in the low ground north of the battlefield. For a period of time, Branch ordered the entire brigade to lie down until the enemy fire ceased. In late afternoon, the 18th North Carolina returned to the camp of the Light Division on the Long Bridge Road.\textsuperscript{43}

For the next month the regiment saw no action. Missing more than half its numbers, the regiment settled into a routine of picket duty while at the same time accepting new recruits. Colonel Cowan reported that he had under 400 men when the regiment first crossed the Chickahominy, and in the two battles of Gaines' Mill and Frayser's

\textsuperscript{41} O. R., XI, pt. 2, 891; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 27.

\textsuperscript{42} Jordan, N. C. Troops, 305-423.

\textsuperscript{43} O. R., XI, pt. 2, 884.
Farm, the regiment lost 80 soldiers.\footnote{Ibid., 892. Jordan, *N. C. Troops*, 305-423. Colonel Cowan's report stated that the regiment's losses totaled 224. An examination of the roster, however, reveals only 80 definite names. Sickness and desertion may account for the large discrepancy. Bellamy Diary, June 6 to July 10, 1862, S.H.C.}

The young soldiers reacted to their first campaign with mixed emotions. The entire Army of Northern Virginia celebrated after it successfully forced McClellan to withdraw to the banks of the James River. "V.: fought them at every point," wrote one member of the 18th North Carolina. Saving Richmond for the moment overshadowed much of the criticism of General Lee's first campaign. However, men in the 18th North Carolina noted with regret that McClellan had escaped total destruction. Some levelled their comments on individual commanders whose actions, they felt, prevented Confederate victory. "The negligence, drunkenness and stupidity of some few cowardly Braggarts," wrote Private Bellamy, allowed the Union army to survive to fight another day.\footnote{Bellamy Diary, June 6 to July 10, 1862, S.H.C.}

Encamped on the Charles City Road, 13 miles east of Richmond, the 18th North Carolina enjoyed a deserved rest. Colonel Cowan, himself recovering from general fatigue and soreness, sent men to Richmond daily for medical treatment. The regiment also spent much of the first week in July escorting prisoners to Richmond's growing population of captured Federals. En route to the city, soldiers witnessed the devastation wrought by the desperate fighting in the region. Throughout the area east of Richmond, men were engaged in burying the dead of both armies. Near Beaver Dam Creek a large number of bodies lay uncovered. As one man recalled, "the stench was terrible."\footnote{Cowan to Branch, July 4, 1862, Branch Papers, U. Va.; Bellamy Diary, June 6 to July 10, 1862, S.H.C.}

On July 29, Branch proudly authorized each regiment in the brigade to inscribe on its battle flags the names of all the battles in which it had participated over the past five months. After waiting for almost a full year, the 18th North Carolina finally got to join in the fight.
The young men from southeastern North Carolina proudly recorded the following names on their banner: Slash Church, Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill, Frayser's Farm, and Malvern Hill. The list, seemingly long in the summer of 1862, would soon grow.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Southern Historical Society Papers}, VIII (1880), 104 [cited hereafter as \textit{S.H.S.P.}].
Chapter Four - "We fought them at every point"

McClellan's inactivity below Richmond negated one threat to the Confederate capital. Northwest of the city, however, Union efforts soon drew General Lee's attention. A newly created Federal force under Gen. John Pope, operating north of the Rappahannock River, threatened to cut off Lee's rail lines to the Valley. In mid-July, Lee sent Jackson with 13,000 troops to Gordonsville to protect that vital rail junction. Jackson appealed to Lee for reinforcements after discovering that his small army was no match for Pope's Army of Virginia.1 On July 27, Hill's Light Division boarded trains on the familiar Virginia Central line and embarked for Gordonsville.1

Branch's brigade spent the next several days encamped five miles southeast of Gordonsville, while Jackson and Hill watched Pope. Branch did not allow his men to lie around during this period. He enforced rigid discipline in the form of daily drill. Rather than continue to train separately, however, the five North Carolina regiments drilled as one unit. In this way, Branch hoped to increase the skillful coordination of his entire brigade. Private Samuel Ashe of Company I of the 18th North Carolina North Carolina attributed much of the later success of the division to these brigade drills.2

On August 3, Confederates reported two small divisions under Gen. Nathaniel Banks advancing toward the small town of Culpeper Court House. Jackson immediately ordered a general move for the purpose of attacking the undersized Federal force.3

At daybreak on August 6, Branch's brigade assembled for the day's march. Word

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1 O. R., XII, pt. 2, 176.
2 Samuel Ashe Reminiscences, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.
quickly spread that no baggage would be taken. Leaving tents, cooking utensils, and any other bulky items behind, the 18th North Carolina filed through Gordonsville on the road to Orange Court House. After a long march under a burning sun the regiment collapsed by the side of the road around 9:00 that night.

The next day the regiment crossed plantation fields and byroads en route to Orange Court House. Men in the 18th North Carolina dropped to the ground soon after reaching the town around midnight. After a brief council with Jackson, Hill returned to the division with the following day's marching orders. The Light Division was to file out of the town in line behind Ewell's division and in front of Jackson's old division. Through a miscommunication, however, the next morning became a nightmare march for the members of Hill's division. Jackson had changed his mind at some point before dawn. Instead of sending Ewell in the lead, Jackson had Ewell's division march out of town by a different route. Unaware that the plans had been altered, Hill and his division stood by the side of the road and waited for Ewell's men to pass. As the long line of Confederate soldiers moved past Hill, he began to wonder. All at once he realized that the brigades he saw belonged to Jackson's division. Unwilling to interrupt the march, Hill held his men out until Jackson's entire division and baggage train had passed. For most of the morning of August 8, the men of the 18th North Carolina stood by the road and watched Jackson's veterans heading north.

The lead elements of the army were nowhere near Culpeper Court House when an angry Stonewall Jackson called a halt to the march. Traffic jams and unbearable heat prevented an easy advance that day. Hill's men bivouacked in fields beside the road less than two miles on the other side of Orange Court House. That night the frustrated soldiers ate without utensils and slept once more in the open without tents.4

4 O. R., XII, pt. 2, 222-3: Robertson, A. P. Hill, 100-2; Diary of Walter Waighstall Lenoir, Jan. 2, 1863, S.H.C.
The men of the 18th North Carolina, frustrated by the confusion of the previous day, awakened early on August 9 and prepared for another march. As the day wore on the advance toward Culpeper Court House seemed to take forever as the temperature rose. By midday soldiers began falling out of the ranks, choking on the dust kicked up by thousands of feet. Branch's men fell in behind the lead brigade under Gen. E. L. Thomas as it arrived about ten miles southwest of Culpeper late in the afternoon. Off in the distance the low rumble of cannon fire indicated that a battle had erupted.\(^5\)

Branch's brigade remained in support during the early stages of the Battle of Cedar Mountain. Most of the action until 6 p.m. took place on the right side of the Confederate line. The brigade watched as Thomas' men marched off to the right to support batteries engaging the enemy.

General Hill formed the remainder of his division in a field to the left of the Culpeper Road. That road ran to the east through the middle of the battlefield. Directly ahead, and hidden in a dense wood, Jackson's division, forming the Confederate left, waited for the Federal's to attack.\(^6\)

Around 6 p.m. a Union brigade slammed into Jackson's thin line. The impact sent the right regiment of the celebrated Stonewall Brigade back in disorder. Men of the 46th Pennsylvania pushed the 27th Virginia 100 yards to the rear. While this took place, Jackson himself rode back to Hill and called for immediate support. The first brigade available to Jackson was Branch's.\(^7\)

\(^5\) Robertson, \textit{A. P. Hill}, 103.


Forced to assemble the men quickly, Branch ordered them forward. The 18th North Carolina stood second from the left in the brigade's formation as it began to move into the dense woods. The woods, thick with underbrush, forced the men in the regiments to scatter slightly in their advance. The fact that the brigade formed so quickly caused confusion in the 7th North Carolina, the far left regiment. Consequently, that regiment lagged behind and flanked farther to the right, leaving the 18th North Carolina as the new left of the brigade.\(^8\)

Colonel Cowan's men "moved cheerfully and irresistably forward" for about 150 yards before they came upon the retreating 27th Virginia. The regiment spread out to allow the men of the Stonewall Brigade to pass through. When it did so, many of the men from the 27th filled the gaps and fought with the North Carolinians. The 18th North Carolina immediately fired several volleys into the ranks of the advancing enemy. The effect was deadly. The scattered and spent remnants of the 46th Pennsylvania fell back toward a wheatfield that bordered the woods to the east.\(^9\)

At this time the entire brigade shifted to the southeast toward a point where the road, the woods, and the wheatfield converged. The 18th North Carolina became separated from the rest of the brigade during this movement. The boys in the regiment continued to push to the east over ground covered with Union and Confederate dead. They finally halted when they reached a fence bordering the wheatfield. There the 18th North Carolina remained until Archer's brigade, sent by Hill, appeared on its left.\(^10\)

While they stood behind the fence and reformed with the rest of the brigade, the men in the 18th North Carolina spotted a lone Union regiment, the 10th Maine, crossing to their left in front of them in the wheatfield. Unable to resist, the entire Confederate left,

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\(^8\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Ibid., 220; Lenoir Diary, Jan. 10, 1863, S.H.C.

north of the Culpeper Road, fired into the enemy unit. This caused it to break in panic and run for the protection of the woods on the eastern edge of the field. The Confederates stopped firing and began to hear the sounds of approaching horses immediately after the 10th Maine disappeared into the distant woods. At that moment, the 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiment charged down the Culpeper Road directly toward the Southern line. The Union cavalry unit, in something similar to the Charge of the Light Brigade, rode straight into the face of enemy fire. As the horses reached Branch’s position, they turned toward the north and entered the wheatfield, crossing directly in front of the 18th North Carolina. The excited Tar Heel boys unleashed several volleys into the cavalry unit’s flank before it could escape. Like the 10th Maine, the 1st Pennsylvania made for the eastern woods as fast as it could.\footnote{Krick, Stonewall at Cedar Mountain. 222.}

Immediately following the failed cavalarly charge, Branch ordered his brigade forward into the wheatfield. The men halted in the middle of the field and awaited further orders. The color bearer of the 18th North Carolina stepped forward of the line a few moments later, planted his flag, and stood facing the enemy to the east. The men cheered this as well as the fact that Stonewall Jackson was now on the field. The general rode along the line with his hat in his hand raised high and halted briefly to meet with Branch. Shortly thereafter, Branch wheeled the brigade to the right and marched it to the southeast across the Culpeper Road until it reached the left of Ewell’s division. Completely exhausted, men in the brigade staggered across the road, some holding each other up during the advance. Hill, having sent the remainder of his division after the retreating Federals, ordered Branch’s brigade to halt where it was. That night men in the regiment remained on the field and "slept on the ground they had so bravely won."\footnote{Ibid., 265; O. R., XII, pt. 2, 220, 222.}
The 18th North Carolina suffered a small number of casualties despite the seemingly vicious combat in the woods bordering the wheatfield. The regiment's roster lists a total of 17 casualties in the action on August 9. Only one man in the regiment died that day. Private William Browning of Company B lost his life during the struggle against the lone Union regiment in the woods.\textsuperscript{13}

Following the battle the regiment engaged in the all-too-familiar duty of burying the dead. Three days later, on the morning of August 12, the Light Division marched back toward Gordonsville. It halted midway between there and Orange Court House at the Crenshaw Farm for a brief rest. The harsh nature of the advance on the 9th culminating in the exhausting fight that afternoon, took its toll on the men. Consequently, they sought any available moment to relax. For the next two days the 18th North Carolina recuperated from its active roll in the fight at Cedar Mountain.\textsuperscript{14}

Following Jackson's victory over Pope, it became clear to both Lee and Jackson that Pope's small force was being reinforced. East of Richmond, activity in the Federal camp along the James River indicated that part of McClellan's force was returning to northern Virginia. Assured of no more direct threat from McClellan, Lee felt that the best course of action was to reunite his divided army near Gordonsville and to strike Pope before the bulk of McClellan's force could join him. Accordingly, on August 13 Longstreet's divisions left Richmond and made for Gordonsville.

Lee's orders called for Jackson's command to march out of its camps and position itself along the Rapidan River and await the arrival of Longstreet. On August 15, Jackson's chief engineer presented the general with the best route leading toward the left of the Union army. The plan called for Jackson's three divisions to cross the Rapidan at Somerville Ford

\textsuperscript{13} Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 305-423, 323.

\textsuperscript{14} Robertson, \textit{A. P. Hill}, 108.
and, with Longstreet's divisions, to strike the left flank of the Union force. That night Jackson issued the appropriate orders and the march began. Soon after, Branch's men filed through Orange Court House en route to the Rapidan.\textsuperscript{15}

At dawn on August 20 Branch's brigade waded the river at Somerville Ford. Because Hill's division led the march during the day, the brigade was among the first to encamp that night near the small town of Stevensburg. The march resumed early the next morning with Hill's men falling in behind Taliaferro's division.

Pushing toward the Rappahannock, the brigade crossed the rolling country between the two rivers. It encountered little enemy resistance. When the troops reached Brandy Station, the men in the 18th North Carolina brushed aside a small detachment of Federal cavalry sent to locate Jackson's force. That night the 18th North Carolina slept along the bank of the Rappahannock River.\textsuperscript{16}

The men in the regiment, already weary from several days of marching, prepared for the next stage of the advance. Jackson's force would have to cross the river farther upriver to be in the proper position to launch an attack. With this in mind, Jackson led the men north. Crossing fields and following small dirt roads, the soldiers reached Hazel Run, a small tributary of the Rappahannock. While crossing the run at Welford's Mill, hot and thirsty men dipped their canteens into the cool rushing water and enjoyed a refreshing break. The march continued for about eight more miles before the column halted in the open fields along the Rappahannock across the river from Warrenton Springs.\textsuperscript{17}

That afternoon a portion of Jackson's command crossed the river. Branch's brigade remained on the western bank. Problems arose when a heavy downpour washed away the

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{O. R.}, pt. 2. 551-52.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 641, 649.; Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 29.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{O. R.}, XII, pt. 2. 649.
flimsy dam connecting the two portions of the command. Early on the 23rd, Jackson arrived on the scene and ordered the construction of a temporary bridge so that his force could be reunited. The building of the bridge continued until early the next morning. Once the bridge was completed, Jackson's men began crossing and reassembling on the west bank of the river.\(^{18}\)

The approach of enemy troops from the east prompted A. P. Hill to post his artillery along the high ground to cover the Confederates returning to the west bank. At 10:00 A.M., Federal cannon opened fire on what force they could see. Because Hill's infantry lay sheltered behind his artillery, the Union officers could not see the numbers they were confronting. Hill gave the order for the guns not to return fire until the enemy's infantry became visible. All at once, when Union troops began filing down the road toward the ford, Hill gave the command to fire. The results were predictable. Blankets of shells ripped into the Federal column. Confusion reigned as bluecoats ran for cover from the Confederate bombardment. The cannonade ended when the enemy withdrew into the safety of the woods along the road leading to the ford.\(^{19}\)

The 18th North Carolina was not idle during the day-long artillery duel. General Branch ordered the regiment to move forward and support McIntosh's Battery shortly before the Union guns opened fire in the morning. The 18th North Carolina quickly assembled and moved directly behind the guns. Though not actively engaged, the men remained in immediate support throughout the entire day. Several times Colonel Cowan yelled for the regiment to lie down when the enemy directed his fire on McIntosh's guns. The scream of shells passing overhead and thudding into the nearby ground was more than enough action for the young soldiers. The regiment suffered no losses, but it came away

\(^{18}\) Robertson, *A. P. Hill*, 111; *O. R.*, XII, pt. 2, 650.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 670.
from the experience with a new appreciation for well-used artillery. The men in the 18th North Carolina were among the few who witnessed the galling effect of cannon fire on columned troops. That evening the boys sat around their camp and discussed the day's events, unaware that they would soon be participating in one of the greatest flank marches in the history of warfare.\(^{20}\)

Earlier that afternoon both Jackson and Longstreet met with Lee to discuss further plans. Confederate cavalry units operating across the river discovered that the Federal right flank was "in the air." If a force were sent north and then across the river it could operate on the exposed flank or cut off the Union supply line to Washington, D.C. The three generals decided to attempt just such a maneuver. Jackson's command was to march north and cross the Rappahannock near Waterloo Bridge; from there it was to cut through the Blue Ridge at Thoroughfare Gap and sever the Federal supply line at Manassas Junction. While Jackson's force swept around Pope's right, Longstreet was to "occupy the enemy" and then follow whenever possible. After the meeting, Jackson returned to his camp and made ready for an early march on August 25.\(^{21}\)

Before dawn orders filtered down through the ranks for the men to cook three days' rations. Barely awake, men struggled to collect only the necessary gear for an active campaign -- cooking utensils, weapons, and ammunition. The 18th North Carolina remained unaware of its ultimate destination. Officers met along the route would simply direct the unit in the proper direction.\(^{22}\)

Before the sun rose the march began. August 25 promised to be another hot day. Even in the early hours of the morning the men felt the sheer weight of the humidity so

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 675.

\(^{21}\) Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, II, 82.

\(^{22}\) *Battles and Leaders*, II, 501.
prominent at that time of year in Virginia. Men gained relief from the stifling heat only occasionally when a refreshing breeze swept down the river from the Blue Ridge. Along the road leading out of camp, blurry-eyed men noticed the gray shapes of supply wagons littering the side of the road. These signs indicated that Jackson intended to move swiftly. Only the barest number of ordinance wagons and ambulances followed the steadily moving column.

Throughout the day Jackson led the men north, all the time keeping the river to the right. When the weary column reached Hinson's Mill, just north of Waterloo Bridge, a collective sigh of relief passed through the ranks as it appeared that no enemy lay across the river. A steady stream of hot and shoeless men waded the cool river. By late afternoon the last wagon had crossed and Jackson's force was now on the flank of the enemy.23

Jackson marched the troops to the northeast instead of turning south and advancing against the exposed Federal flank. On into the night the men continued to trudge. Late that evening Branch's brigade halted in the small village of Orlean, while the head of the column encamped near Salem, Virginia. Men so tired, from what Jackson himself called a "severe march," collapsed beside their stacked rifles and fell asleep instantly without even unrolling their blankets.24

The sound of officers assembling their regiments abruptly interrupted the night's rest. Only a few short hours after closing their eyes, the soldiers in the 18th North Carolina were on the road again. The men continued east toward the Blue Ridge, limping along on sore feet, half-awake in the darkness,. Occasional shouts of "Close up" broke the silence as men too tired to talk staggered on. The long march continued all day. Jackson led the men through the mountains at Thoroughfare Gap and then through Gainesville to the southeast.

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23 Clark, N. C. Regiments, 29; Battles and Leaders, II. 501-2.

24 Ibid., 533.
At sunset the column stopped at the small village of Bristoe Station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Men now completely exhausted looked back on the march of the previous two days. They had travelled fifty-four miles in only two days. Roughly half of Lee's army was deep in the rear of the Union army.\(^\text{25}\)

Early on August 27, Branch had the brigade fall in beside the railroad tracks. The men followed the rail line to the northeast and into the important rail junction of Manassas. The soldiers arrived there shortly after sunrise and were amazed at the sight that greeted them. Lining the tracks were piles of Union supplies destined for nearby warehouses. Cars on the tracks containing brand new uniforms for Pope's army stood ready for plunder. The small Federal force guarding the supplies immediately opened fire on Branch's brigade. Shells from enemy artillery did no damage to the Confederates as they quickly pushed the battery and its supporting cavalry out of the junction.\(^\text{26}\)

Excited Southerners descended upon the captured supplies as soon as the small enemy force was dispersed. Men grabbed what they could carry. Sweat-soaked uniforms were shed and replaced with brand new clothes. Those who needed specific items engaged in a crude system of barter with others who had what they wanted. Many of the soldiers had trouble deciding what to take and what to leave behind.\(^\text{27}\)

The men in the 18th North Carolina enjoyed a more leisurely inspection of the captured goods as they were detailed to guard the newly procured items. The soldiers in the regiment gorged themselves on the abundance of food taken from the railroad cars, while the rest of Hill's division pushed north to halt an advancing enemy brigade.\(^\text{1}\) The pillaging of Union supplies continued throughout the day and into the evening. Jackson himself


\(^{26}\) Ibid., 675; *Battles and Leaders*, II, 533.

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
issued orders that Confederates could take all the food that they could carry. Around midnight Jackson ordered the men to set the place ablaze. An hour later, as flames engulfed the railroad cars containing the last of the Federal supplies, Hill marched his men out of Manassas and toward the distant town of Centreville.  

At sunrise Hill’s tired troops reached Centreville. After a few short hours of rest the division turned around and began to march back down the Warrenton Turnpike toward the Stone Bridge crossing of the Bull Run. En route to the bridge, Hill received a message from Jackson advising him that the Federals were retreating up the turnpike to Alexandria. Jackson wanted Hill to contest the Union advance at the Stone Bridge. Hill, having captured Federal orders indicating a different enemy plan, chose to ignore Jackson’s orders and to push on to join Jackson’s force north of the turnpike.

Once across the Bull Run, the Light Division turned off the road to the right and made its way north across the open fields down which the Union army had advanced at the First Battle of Manassas. Jackson’s line lay along a ridge roughly parallel to the turnpike. Branch’s brigade halted in a patch of woods near the Sudley Church and supported a battery immediately in its front. Throughout the rest of the afternoon the men in the 18th North Carolina listened to the roar of combat off to their right. The regiment did not participate in the small but bloody battle of Groveton. A steady fire of shells fired from distant Federal cannon caused some commotion, but the unit suffered no damage on the day. Toward the close of action, Branch did send the 18th North Carolina to the right along the ridge to support Ewell’s men, but the regiment arrived after the enemy had been driven from the field and was therefore not engaged. The soldiers turned around and returned to the Sudley Church area and slept that night behind the cut of an unfinished railroad with weapons by

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28 O. R., XII, pt. 2, 675; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 114.
their sides.\textsuperscript{30}

Early on August 29, Hill placed his division in position on the far left of the Confederate line. Branch's brigade formed immediately behind the front line in a woodline north of the Groveton to Sudley Road. The 18th North Carolinians occupied the center of the brigade line. Throughout the morning hours the regiment watched as blue and gray skirmishers exchanged continual fire. The men in the 18th North Carolina waited for the inevitable Federal attack to commence. By mid-afternoon, Union movements indicated that an attack on the left flank of Jackson's line was imminent.\textsuperscript{31}

At 3 p.m., several Federal brigades launched an assault on the front three brigades of Hill's division. The other three brigades, including Branch's, stood waiting for the order to advance if the enemy succeeded in penetrating the front line. Once the fight began, Branch himself directed troop movements across the portion of the line he supported. At one point, in the midst of a hailstorm of shot, Branch moved to the aid of Gregg's brigade leading the 7th North Carolina. The 18th North Carolina, however, remained in the rear while Yankees smashed into the Southern line.\textsuperscript{32}

Renewed Union efforts on Hill's right threatened to break the Confederate line. Around 5 p.m., Branch reached Colonel Cowan and directed him to advance in support of Archer's brigade, then on the extreme right of the division's front. Without hesitation the 18th North Carolina double-quicked from its position behind Gregg. It passed through a cornfield on its way to the far right. Union shells and random minie balls struck the trees and ground all around the regiment as it marched behind the railroad cut. Private Robert Jessup of Company K went down with a wound in his left leg. Several

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 676.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 671.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.; \textit{S. H. S. P.}, X (1882), 243.
Map 5. The Battle of Second Manassas, August 29, 1862. (Source: John Hennessey, *Second Manassas Battlefield Map Study* (Lynchburg, Va., 1991), Map No. 7.)
others fell as the air filled with lead.\textsuperscript{33}

When he reached the right, Cowan formed the men behind the railroad cut and looked for the trouble spot. The enemy appeared strongest on the far right of Archer's line. Without delay, the 18th North Carolina moved forward into the cut and began firing into the surging enemy lines. Not since the charge at Frayser's Farm had the regiment fought so hard. Wave after wave of Union soldiers ascended the slope south of the railroad cut and unleashed a deadly fire into the regiment's ranks. In Company D, Sgt. Bright Watson fell to the ground with a limp arm. Private Samuel Tedder spun around and fell with several bullets in his hip. Out of ten men wounded that afternoon, Tedder was the only one whose wound proved fatal.\textsuperscript{34}

Union persistence succeeded in pushing the 18th North Carolina back out of the cut and into the open oak woods directly behind the main line. Once in the woods, the regiment reformed and began to fire volley after volley at the enemy. The strength of Confederate fire withered away the Union assaults as Archer's men finally regained control of the railroad cut. The 18th North Carolina, with Archer's men back in its front, could not charge the fleeing enemy. For the next several hours firing continued across the line at a less steady pace. The 18th North Carolina remained in support until the firing ceased long after dark.\textsuperscript{35}

Exhausted from repelling two distinct Union charges, the men in the regiment wearily marched back toward the Sudley Church to the ground they had occupied before the fight began. Before collapsing for the night, every man in the 18th North Carolina searched the ground for cartridge boxes near where Gregg's men had fought. Branch's brigade had


\textsuperscript{34} Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 31; Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 354, 399.

\textsuperscript{35} Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 31.
almost completely depleted its ammunition supply during the long fight that afternoon.36

For the next two days the 18th North Carolina saw no action. On August 30, the soldiers watched as Longstreet's divisions slammed into the left flank of Pope's army and forced it to retreat across the Stone Bridge toward Washington. The next day, in pursuit of the enemy, Jackson led his divisions across Sudley Ford on another flank march. The command arrived that night by way of country roads at the small village of Pleasant Valley on the Little River Turnpike northwest of Fairfax Court House and the retreating Union army.37

Jackson ordered A. P. Hill to push forward and engage the retreating Federals before they could escape to the safety of Washington. Under a dark and threatening sky, the lead elements of the Light Division advanced southeast on the turnpike toward Fairfax. Troops with empty stomachs marched slowly down the road. At 4 p.m., after covering only three miles, the van of Hill's division came into contact with the rear guard of the Union army near the old mansion of Chantilly.38

Without wasting any time Jackson ordered Hill to send two of his brigades forward to "feel and engage" the enemy. Hill immediately selected from his division Branch's and Fields' brigades. Forming on the right side of the pike, the two brigades faced directly south. Branch's regiments stood on the far right of the line. Pressing "eagerly forward" the 18th North Carolina crossed through an open field and into a small woodline bordering its far edge.39

36 O. R., XII, pt. 2, 676.
37 Ibid., 682.
38 Ibid., 647; Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, 130.
As the North Carolina units passed through the trees, dark clouds unleashed a heavy downpour directly into the faces of the advancing Confederates. The regiments, blinded by the driving rain, halted and prepared to fire at the enemy barely visible in a field in their front. The bluecoats immediately opened a deadly fire into the ranks of Branch's brigade. Many of the men in the 18th North Carolina could not return fire because their guns and ammunition were water-logged and would not function.

From the concentration of enemy fire on the right regiments of the brigade, it became clear to Branch that the Federals were trying to flank the brigade. Branch ordered Cowan to shift the 18th North Carolina from its position in the center of the line to the far right. Cowan hustled his men toward the heavy firing, hoping to prevent a flank movement. The unsupported 18th North Carolina blocked the path of the advancing Federals. Union columns fired into the regiment. A wave of minie balls swept through its ranks. In Company F, three men went down. Of the three, 1st Lt. Lawrence Stewart was killed. Nearby, Pvt. James Calder took a shot in the arm. While bearing down on the Union line, Pvt. David Moore of Company E fell to the ground with a wound to his head.40

The two opposing lines stabilized and stood firing at each other for several minutes. Before long, Cowan sent word to Branch that his ammunition was dwindling fast. Fearing the consequences, Branch ordered Cowan to stand at the point of the bayonet if necessary. The strength of the Federals, however, proved too much for the entire brigade. With the timely arrival of reinforcements sent by Hill, Branch ordered his men to pull back into the woods through which they had pushed earlier.

The 18th North Carolina withdrew having suffered surprisingly few casualties. Only one man died on the field, while four others suffered wounds. Despite the small number of casualties, the boys in the 18th North Carolina believed that the small engagement at

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Chantilly had been, for them, one of the severest of the war. The spent regiment pulled back through the woods and into the adjoining field where the bulk of the Confederate force lay in support. That night the 18th North Carolina slept on its arms, exhausted from its combat and soaking wet from the storm.\textsuperscript{41}

Two days later, the Federals having withdrawn to Washington, the Confederate army marched northwest intending to take the war out of Virginia. General Lee considered the moment perfect to launch an invasion into Maryland. A successful campaign north of the Virginia-Maryland border might accomplish several goals. Southern victories, Lee believed, would enhance the possibility of European intervention on the side of the Confederacy. England for one seemed close to recognizing the Southern nation. More definite, an advance into Maryland alone would certainly relieve the hard-pressed farmlands of northern Virginia from the ravaging effects of war. Lee hoped that his army could feed on the lush lands of western Maryland for awhile. Finally, a well-conducted and honorable advance through Maryland might convince that border state to join its Southern kinsmen. Lee truly felt that the people of Maryland were willing to secede but that overbearing politicians in Washington, D. C., held them back.\textsuperscript{42}

On the morning of September 5, Branch's brigade waded across the Potomac and entered the Union. Spirits in the 18th North Carolina rose as the march progressed. Private Andrew J. Proffit proudly wrote home boasting that "the yankees are whipped out of Virginia and our forces are in Maryland in abundance."\textsuperscript{43}

The regiment continued north to the town of Frederick, where the Army of Northern Virginia rested for several days. The 18th North Carolina enjoyed a brief period of

\textsuperscript{41} O. R., XII, pt. 2, 677; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 32.

\textsuperscript{42} O. R., XIX, pt. 1, 144.

\textsuperscript{43} Clark, N. C. Regiments, 32; A. J. Proffit to father, Sept. 8, 1862, Proffit Papers, S.H.C.
relaxation while encamped on a steep hillside on the outskirts of town. Many of the soldiers were worn out after almost eight straight days of marching in the humid heat. The Confederates found an abundance of food along the march and in Frederick. Corn and green apples proved to be the main diet for the hungry soldiers. The regiment welcomed a chance to refit. Men whose clothes were nothing but rags from all the active campaigning of the summer jumped at the opportunity to buy new clothing items in town. For one man, the period of rest enabled him to take his clothes off for the first time since he left home a month earlier.\footnote{A. N. Proffit to Brother, Sept. 9, 1862, S.H.C.; A. J. Proffit to father, Sept. 8, 1862, S.H.C.}

General Branch gratefully accepted a large number of new conscripts while at Frederick. Since the passage of the Conscription Act, brigade commanders whose numbers were dwindling had continually petitioned their home states to send more troops. The North Carolina government finally answered Branch's requests, which began shortly after the brigade's first battle at Hanover Court House. The 18th North Carolina, reduced through sickness, death, and desertion, mustered barely 300 men. The small regiment enthusiastically accepted 474 new soldiers in its hillside camp. The only major drawback was that the conscripts arrived with no arms or equipment.\footnote{William K. McDaid, "Four Years of Arduous Service: The History of the Branch-Lane Brigade in the Civil War" (doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1982), 139; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 32.}

On the morning of September 10, the newly reinforced regiment, with the rest of the brigade, broke camp. Its destination was Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Harper's Ferry lay on a tip of land at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. Its position was important because it stood at the northern end of the Shenandoah Valley and served as a gateway to that great avenue of communication and supply. When the Army of Northern Virginia crossed into Maryland, Lee expected the small Federal garrison at Harper's Ferry to abandon the town, move back to Washington, and join the Army of the Potomac. While
at Frederick, Lee learned that the Federals had remained at Harper's Ferry. Realizing this as a threat to his supply and communications line, Lee considered the possibility of dividing his army and sending a smaller force to capture the small but vital town.

After meeting with Jackson on September 9, Lee issued orders for Jackson's three divisions to march west and cross the Potomac into Virginia. Jackson would then swing south and occupy the heights west of Harper's Ferry after brushing aside a small Union force in Martinsburg. At the same time, two other Confederate detachments would position themselves on the heights across the rivers to the north and south of the town. A combined attack would then force the surrender of Harper's Ferry in time for Jackson's force to rejoin Lee's army at Hagerstown, Md.\footnote{Freeman, \textit{Lee's Lieutenants}, II. 159-61; \textit{O. R.}, XIX, pt. 1, 145.}

On the morning of September 10, Branch's brigade marched from Frederick and headed west toward the South Mountain range of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Branch himself was not with the brigade. Instead, he rode at the head of the Light Division. Following another dispute over marching orders, Jackson had placed A. P. Hill under arrest. Hill turned command over to Branch. By swift marching, the 18th North Carolina reached the Potomac and crossed it on the eleventh. On that day the Light Division arrived at Martinsburg and, after a small skirmish with Union pickets, forced the Federals to retreat to Harper's Ferry. On September 13, with Hill's division in the lead, Jackson continued south toward Harper's Ferry. He halted there late that afternoon. The next day Jackson waited for the other divisions to reach their positions and signal their arrival. By late afternoon, the signals given, Jackson conferred with Hill, previously returned to the command of his division. Jackson, noting that the extreme left of the Union line on Bolivar Heights was occupied by infantry only, ordered Hill to send his division around the left flank of the
enemy line. Hill directed Branch to advance along the bank of the Shenandoah River toward the town, thereby positioning himself "on the left and rear of the enemy's works."  

As darkness fell, Branch's brigade began its move along the river. The 18th North Carolina advanced through difficult terrain, hoping to use the steep vines along the river bank as cover. The men crept forward, pulling themselves up by "bushes, roots, or anything projecting from the mountain sides." Maintaining the formation of the regiment was all but impossible as men struggled to brace themselves and keep their balance. By dawn on September 15, with the 18th North Carolina behind the Federal left flank, Confederate artillery broke the silence. After an hour-long duel, Hill gave the signal for the regiments of the Light Division to attack. The Confederates had not advanced far when exhausted and outnumbered Federals in the town displayed the white flag.  

The prize awaiting the Confederates consisted of "11,000 prisoners, 12,000 stand of arms, 70 pieces of artillery," and a large number of quartermaster's and ordinance stores. The eager men of Hill's division feasted on seemingly vast amounts of food. Many of the men confiscated clothing to replace their tattered uniforms. More importantly, for the new conscripts in the 18th North Carolina, there was an abundant supply of Enfield rifles. One member of the regiment later recalled how clean and neat the Union soldiers and their equipment appeared compared to the "ragged and soiled and lousy" Southerners. For the next two days the Light Division remained at Harper's Ferry guarding the captured Federals. A. P. Hill had been left in charge of the surrender proceedings by Jackson, who led the other divisions north to join Lee's army at the small village of Sharpsburg, Md.  

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47 Ibid., 980.  
48 S. H. S. P., VIII, 243; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 70; O. R., XIX, pt. 1, 980.  
At 6:30 A.M. on September 17, a courier reached Harper's Ferry. Lee urgently requested Hill to bring his force to Sharpsburg as quickly as possible. An hour later, five of the six brigades of the division marched out of Harper's Ferry and toward the distant sounds of battle.\textsuperscript{50}

Hill led his men on a gruelling seventeen-mile advance. The soldiers halted only briefly, two or three times, to catch their breath. The heat and humidity wore on the dusty men. The only relief came near Shepherdstown, when the regiments stepped into the cool waters of the Potomac at Boteler's Ford. Along the exhausting march, men straggled and fell behind; some chose the moment to desert. Four members of the 18th North Carolina deserted their companions that day -- three from Company I and one from Company A. Around 2:30 P.M., after a back-breaking seven-hour march, the lead elements of the division reached the field of battle at Sharpsburg.\textsuperscript{51}

The long line of the Light Division approached the southern portion of the battlefield from the west. Branch's brigade did not reach the field until around 4 P.M. The soldiers in the regiments, from their position on the Harper's Ferry Road, could see in the distance to the east a thin gray line retreating from a wooded ridge. Pursuing these Confederates was the Federal IX Corps under General Ambrose Burnside. For the next hour a fierce battle raged in a cornfield 300 yards northeast of the 18th North Carolina.\textsuperscript{52}

The regiment did not participate in this fight. Left in reserve, the "bone-tired" boys stood in a stubble clearing south of the cornfield. The exhausting march had taken its toll on the Tar Heel boys. As the combat in front of them escalated, men in the 18th North Carolina watched as opposing lines came within thirty yards of each other. Occasionally a

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{O. R.}, XI, pt. 1, 981.


stray shell or a sharpshooter's bullet stirred the resting unit. As one soldier reported, "we did not get to fight but was exposed to the fire of the enemy in an open field."\(^{53}\)

The 18th North Carolina moved forward to help strengthen the thin Confederate line after the fighting ended. The regiment descended into a small valley and then halted behind a stone fence on the edge of the cornfield. As an extra measure, Cowan assembled skirmishers and sent them into the large valley between the regiment and Antietam Creek. For the rest of the evening the regiment stood on the left of the brigade watching for any Federal movement.\(^{54}\)

Although the 18th North Carolina had not been actively engaged that afternoon, it did suffer casualties. The regiment's losses were 3 killed and 12 wounded. The greatest casualty on the day, however, was not in the 18th North Carolina. In the midst of directing his regiments, General Branch fell to the ground with a bullet in his head. The entire brigade mourned the death of its commander. One soldier later recalled how "his men loved him and almost idolized him." General Hill, in his report, expressed deep sadness over the loss of Branch. "He was my senior brigadier," he wrote, "and one to whom I could entrust the command of the division, with all confidence."\(^{55}\)

The 18th North Carolina remained on the field all the next day. The soldiers were constantly exposed to the fire of Federal sharpshooters. The scorching September sun gave way to afternoon showers as the regiment stood watching the Union army.\(^{56}\)

In the early hours of September 19, Lee's army began evacuating its lines around

\(^{53}\) Robertson, _A. P. Hill_, 144, 146; Clark, _N. C. Regiments_, 32; A. J. Proffit to Father, Sept. 22, 1862, S.H.C.

\(^{54}\) Clark, _N. C. Regiments_, 33.


\(^{56}\) A. J. Proffit to father, Sept. 22, 1862, S.H.C.; Clark, _N. C. Regiments_, 33.
Sharpsburg. The entire army moved south toward the Potomac River and Virginia. Branch's brigade, temporarily commanded by Col. James H. Lane of the 28th North Carolina, served as rear guard for the retreating Confederates. The 18th North Carolina stood in line facing the Union army, while the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia waded across the river at Boteler's Ford. At 10 A.M., Branch's brigade crossed the Potomac and joined the army at a point five miles south of Sherperdstown.57

Before dawn on September 20, advancing regiments of the Union V Corps began wading the river in pursuit of the withdrawing Southerners. To prevent the Federals from overtaking Lee's army, Jackson ordered Hill to take his division and contest their river crossing. Hill rapidly marched his brigades toward the Potomac. The Confederates moved so quickly that they arrived near Boteler's Ford before more than four Union regiments could gain the Virginia side of the river. Hill halted the men a half-mile from the ford and formed them in line of battle.

In two ranks, the division began to advance across an open field toward the small Federal force. Branch's brigade, in support of Pender, occupied a position on the right of the second line. Federal batteries posted across the river opened fire on the Confederates as the entire division moved forward. The men in the 18th North Carolina pressed on in the face of a "storm of round shot, shell, and grape." New conscripts gazed nervously as shells plowed through the regiment's ranks several times during the advance. Many of the old veterans in the 18th North Carolina believed this to be the heaviest bombardment they had experienced to date. As A. P. Hill later wrote, "it was as if each man felt that the fate of the army was centered on himself."58

When Pender's brigade reached a hill near Boteler's Ford, a lone Federal regiment

57 O. R., XIX, pt. 1, 981, 986.

58 Ibid., 982, 986; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 34; A. J. Proffit to father, Sept. 22, 1862, S.H.C.
attempted to move around its left flank. A short distance away, Brig. Gen. Archer, in command of the second line, immediately ordered Branch's brigade to move to the left and engage the Federal unit. Cowan called for the double-quick pace as the men scampered up the hill to push back the advancing Union soldiers. The 18th North Carolina fired volley after volley into the ranks of the 118th Pennsylvania and forced it down the riverbank and into the river. The 18th North Carolina halted at the riverbank and continued to fire into the mass of fleeing Federals. The men in the regiment watched as Union soldiers fell in the water and quickly drifted downstream. A. P. Hill proudly noted that the "broad surface of the Potomac was blue with the floating bodies of our foe."59

For the next several hours the 18th North Carolina remained along the bank and continued to draw enemy artillery fire. Private Proffit explained to his father how the men stood exposed to Union cannon. "The bombs burst round our heads with terrific fury," he wrote, "and showers of grape and canister fell mingled with limbs of trees thick around us."60

The small engagement near Sherpherdstown on the morning of September 20 was the first real fight for the new conscripts in the regiment. Having drilled with the regiment for a total of only four hours, the young soldiers had experienced the full force of battle. The 18th North Carolina had 4 men killed and 9 men wounded in the charge on the 118th Pennsylvania. Under the calm and effective leadership of men like Capt. John D. Barry of Company I, the regiment successfully pushed the pursuing Federals back to Maryland, thus giving Gen. Lee the chance to withdraw his army safely.61

For the next eight weeks, the 18th North Carolina rested in the lower Shenandoah

59 O. R., XIX, pt. 1, 982, 986; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 149.

60 A. J. Proffit to father, Sept. 22, 1862, S.H.C.

Valley. Bivouacked ten miles north of Winchester near the village of Bunker Hill, the Light Division recuperated from the exhausting Maryland campaign. In the 18th North Carolina, the new conscripts enjoyed uninterrupted training, while veterans in the regiment took any opportunity to relax. Some in the division found the peaceful atmosphere taxing. Artillerist William Pegram complained that quiet camp life was "very stupid and dull to a soldier." 62

In late October the monotony of camp life ended when A. P. Hill moved his men several miles east to the small town of Berryville. Once there, the soldiers set out to wreck large portions of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Under Stonewall Jackson's direction, Hill's division helped destroy over twenty miles of track. 63

Over the next several weeks the Army of Northern Virginia experienced a number of personnel and organizational changes. First, to create more efficient and effective management of the army, Lee divided it into two corps. Longstreet and Jackson were promoted to the rank of lieutenant general and given command of the First and Second Corps, respectively. Hill's men remained under Jackson's command and figured prominently as the largest of his four divisions. 64

The active campaigning in the summer and fall of 1862 had taken its toll on the army's leadership. Vacancies in brigade and regimental commands had to be filled with permanent officers. Branch's brigade had, since Sharpsburg, been under the command of Col. James H. Lane. On November 6, after receiving petitions from the brigade as well as recommendations from Hill, Jackson, and Lee, the Confederate War Department promoted


63 Clark, N. C. Regiments, 34; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 156.

64 O. R., XIX, pt. 2, 683.
Lane to brigadier general and gave him command of Branch's brigade.⁶⁵

James Henry Lane was one of those commanders who truly held the respect and admiration of his men. Like many other officers in the Southern army, he had received his training at the Virginia Military Institute. He was graduated with honors and later returned to the Institute to teach natural philosophy, a subject he had studied under the rigid instruction of Professor Thomas J. Jackson. When war broke out, in the spring of 1861, Lane resigned his position as professor of natural philosophy and instructor of military tactics at the North Carolina Military Institute. Though a Virginian by birth, Lane promptly enlisted as a major in the 1st North Carolina Volunteers. He fought with the regiment in the first battle of the Civil War at Bethel, Va., in June of 1861. In September, Lane was unanimously elected colonel of the 28th North Carolina. When the volunteer regiments were reorganized in April, 1862, he again received the total support of his men. Colonel Lane's strong and effective leadership throughout the summer and fall of 1862 made him the natural choice to follow Branch as the brigade commander.⁶⁶

Lane wasted no time in making his presence known. Following an order from Lee prohibiting gambling in the army, Lane issued his own version of the order to his men. Lane warned that "gambling in this brigade is prohibited and those caught at it will be severely punished." Throughout November, he continually drilled the brigade and led the men on several expeditions.⁶⁷

The personnel change that most directly affected the 18th North Carolina centered

⁶⁵ *Confederate Veteran*, XVI (1908), 469; Special Order No. 234, Nov. 6, 1862, General Order Book, 1862-1863, 37th N. C. Troops, Duke University.


around Col. Cowan. By the end of October, Cowan was physically exhausted. Weakened by the constant strain of campaigning, the colonel suffered severe bouts of diarrhea. On November 1, Cowan officially resigned his commission and returned to his home. Ten days later, Lt. Col. Thomas J. Purdie, from the field and staff of the regiment, was promoted to colonel of the 18th North Carolina.  

By the end of November, the Army of the Potomac, under the command of Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, began moving toward the heights across the Rappahannock from the city of Fredericksburg. Lee, assuming correctly that Burnside was planning to cross the river at that point, shifted his army from the Valley to the vicinity of Fredericksburg.

On November 22, Hill's division marched south out of Winchester on the Valley Turnpike toward the town of New Market. Once there, the division turned east and crossed the Blue Ridge at Fisher's Gap. The men trudged eastward on ground covered with snow. The Light Division reached the Massaponax hills, south of Fredericksburg, on December 3 after a back-breaking schedule of marches lasting from 4:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. each day. Hill's men covered 175 miles in twelve days. As one soldier in the 18th North Carolina recalled, there was "an abundance of rain, sleet and snow during the march, and many of the men were barefooted, as well as thinly clad, but they had the stuff of heroes in them."  

After reaching the Fredericksburg area, the division bivouacked five miles south of the city at Yerby's Farm. There the men waited for Burnside to act. Federal troops began crossing the icy river on the night of December 11, and Lee moved quickly to concentrate his army on the hills west of the Rappahannock. At dawn the next day, Lee ordered Hill's division to march to the south end of the Confederate line and connect with Longstreet's

68 Jordan, N. C. Troops, 305; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 34.

69 O. R., XIX, pt. 1, 990; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 158; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 34.
right flank.\textsuperscript{70}

Early on December 12, Hill’s men filed into the woods just north of Hamilton's Crossing. Directly in front of and parallel to the Southerners, the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad ran due south until it bent to the west at Hamilton’s Crossing. The ground immediately east of the track was mostly level and clear of woods, thus leaving the Federals with open fields over which to advance.\textsuperscript{71}

A. P. Hill immediately formed his men along the railroad. The Confederate battle line ran from Hamilton's Crossing to Deep Run, a total distance of one and a half miles. Hill placed the brigades of Pender, Lane, and Archer directly west of the railroad track. He positioned Thomas in the supporting line in the woods behind the space between Pender and Lane, while Gregg's brigade stood behind the gap between Lane and Archer.\textsuperscript{72}

The hole between Lane's right and Archer's left was close to 600 yards wide. One hundred and fifty yards to the left front of Archer, the ground across the track consisted of a boggy, tree-choked ravine. This small triangular patch of woods jutted out about a quarter-mile toward the Union line. The base of the triangle ran along the railroad for almost 200 yards. Lane, believing that the swampy ground would prove impassable to the bluecoats, placed his right flank some 250 yards north of the wooded area. The tremendous gap in the Confederate line remained exposed well into the battle.\textsuperscript{73}

All day on December 12, Lane's brigade prepared for the impending attack. When Hill placed Braxton's battery on a small rise 150 yards in front of Lane's line, Lane ordered the 18th and 7th North Carolina to cross the tracks and offer infantry support to the

\textsuperscript{70} O. R., XXI, 551-52, 630.

\textsuperscript{71} Freeman, \textit{Lee's Lieutenants}, II. 342.

\textsuperscript{72} O. R., XXI, 645.

\textsuperscript{73} Freeman, \textit{Lee's Lieutenants}, II. 342.
exposed guns. Directly in front of them, the men in the 18th North Carolina could see lines of enemy troops forming in the distance. The soldiers watched and waited. That night, while forward of the main Confederate line, the men slept restlessly in anticipation of an early morning fight.74

As dawn came on December 13, a heavy fog lay thick over the field. Around 9 A.M., the fog began to lift, slowly revealing a long line of bluecoats moving against Jackson’s corps. Soon the enemy’s advance halted as both sides exchanged artillery fire for the next several hours. Federal guns quickly targeted Braxton’s battery and began pouring shell into the area. The fire proved too much for the Confederates in front of Lane’s line. After suffering from both cannon and sharpshooter fire, the 7th and the 18th North Carolina pulled back across the railroad tracks and re-formed with the rest of the brigade. The 18th North Carolina now stood second from the left in the brigade formation.75

At 1 P.M., under the cover of a "furious cannonade," three lines of Union infantry began to approach Hill’s line. Almost immediately, the Federals found the large gap between Lane and Archer. As the Union soldiers closed on Lane’s brigade, the nature of the terrain directed the attacking lines to the right. A small incline of twenty feet separated Lane’s two right regiments from the rest of the brigade. Realizing that this natural barrier momentarily protected the other three regiments, Lane ordered them to hold their fire and conserve their ammunition. The force of the attack bent the right flank of the brigade back at an angle toward the woods in its rear. The fighting became vicious as men in the 37th North Carolina, on the far right of the line, stabbed at the Federals with bayonets and clubbed at them with gun butts.76

74 O. R., XXI, 654.
75 Ibid., 553, 654.
76 Ibid., 553, 655; Freeman, Lee’s Lieutenants, II, 353; William G. Morris letter, Dec. 18, 1862, S.H.C.
Colonel Purdie held his men steady in the face of the oncoming Federals after bending back the right companies of the 18th North Carolina to prevent the enemy from flanking the regiment. The entire regiment engaged the enemy, but the bulk of the fighting centered on its five right companies. In Company C, Pvt. Daniel Green, in the thick of the fight, fell to the ground with wounds to his abdomen and left hip. Private Alfred Hamrick, of Company G, took a bullet in his right side. While directing the men on the right, Col. Purdie felt instant pain after a bullet sliced through his right cheek. The overwhelming weight of the attack on the regiment's right flank forced Purdie to pull the entire unit back 100 yards to the rear. Once in the relative safety of the woods, the 18th North Carolina resumed firing into the ranks of the pursuing Federals.  

As the Union soldiers swept into the woods west of the railroad tracks, Confederate reinforcements arrived to fill the gaps in the Southern line. Thomas' brigade pressed forward from behind Lane's left and, with the 7th and 18th North Carolina, slammed into the Federal line, pushing it out of the woods. At the same time, Gregg's men met the deepest Union penetration in the woods between Lane and Archer. Gregg's brigade, in a dramatic counterattack, halted the Federals and sent them reeling toward the field beyond the railroad tracks.  

By 3 p.m., the battle in front of Jackson's lines had ended with the Union troops pushed back to their starting point of that morning. Exhausted men in the 18th North Carolina staggered to the railroad tracks, where they halted soon after the firing ceased. Several hours later, Hill ordered the men forward in preparation for an early-evening attack. As night fell, the battered regiment slowly climbed the rise in front of it and awaited the

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78 Ibid., 554.
signal to advance. Jackson cancelled the attack. The 18th North Carolina remained in its forward position until midday on December 14, when Early and Taliaferro's divisions relieved Hill's tired men. Lane's brigade withdrew to the top of the ridge in the rear where it settled down for a good night's rest.  

Two days after the battle of Fredericksburg, Burnside withdrew the beaten Union army across the Rappahannock to the safety of Stafford Heights. The armies remained within sight of one another, watching for signs of movement. The weather prevented any further campaigning, and both armies established winter quarters. The Light Division marched from the hills above Hamilton's Crossing and moved eight miles downriver to Corbin's Neck. There the division constructed winter quarters out of wood, canvass, and anything else that provided warmth. In memory of the fallen Gen. Gregg, who died while leading his brigade in the successful counterattack at Fredericksburg, the division dubbed its new home Camp Gregg.  

Once in camp, the 18th North Carolina enjoyed a long needed respite from marching and combat. The most recent fighting stripped the unit of yet more men. The regiment lost a total of 98 men during its five-hour struggle near the railroad tracks. Of the 98 total casualties, 14 were killed on the field of battle. The losses in the 18th North Carolina represented close to one quarter of the total strength of the unit.  

Many of those listed as "wounded" on the company rolls never returned to the regiment. Private John Blackwell of Company B earned a discharge when he completely lost his hearing after a shell exploded near him. Wounded in the leg at Fredericksburg, Pvt. Andrew Cain of Company B was removed to Richmond where his leg was amputated. Like

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79 Robertson, A. P. Hill, 166; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 36; O. R., XXI. 647.  
80 Clark, N. C. Regiments, 36; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 169.  
so many soldiers in the Civil War, Cain died following the operation.\textsuperscript{82} Combat proved to be too much for some in the regiment. Most of the young soldiers behaved admirably, but others did not stand well in battle. When the fighting at Fredericksburg intensified, Capt. Thomas Brown, Jr., of Company A "shamefully ran away and deserted his command." Having already done that in the regiment's first fight at Hanover Court House, Brown earned the disgust of his men. The members of Company A dropped Brown as their captain a month after Fredericksburg.\textsuperscript{83}

To the common man in the Civil War, the most disturbing brand of soldier was the deserter. These men simply walked away from the regiment and either never returned or came back after a long period of rest and recuperation. At Fredericksburg, thirteen men deserted from the 18th North Carolina. Out of these thirteen, only two of the soldiers returned to duty later. Soldiers who remained with their regiments looked upon these men as cowards deserving of the harshest of punishments -- death. One man in the 18th North Carolina got just that. A month after deserting at Fredericksburg, Pvt. Barney Hall of Company A was found guilty of desertion and shot in front of the regiment.\textsuperscript{84}

Some of the men in camp surely reflected back over the past five months. After leaving Richmond in late July, the 18th North Carolina embarked on a series of campaigns that carried the regiment as far north as Maryland. At Cedar Mountain, Second Manassas, Shepherdstown, and Fredericksburg, the 18th North Carolina played an active part in defeating the Federals they opposed. An air of invincibility pervaded the regiment. Only a brief reminder of the 163 casualties suffered along the way showed otherwise. Lee's army, in general, overflowed with self-confidence. Thoughts of victories in the past and the

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 323, 723.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 308.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 313, 305-423.
possibility of more in the future made the dismal Virginia winter slightly more bearable.
Chapter Five - The Tragedy of 1863

Riding the crest of a wave of self-confidence, A. P. Hill's division celebrated the new year with a Grand Review. On January 6, 1863, the 10,000 members of the Light Division paraded in front of a crowd on the Hayfield estate. As one observer noted, "the pageant was a splendid one, though marred by the cold rain that fell slowly most of the time."\(^1\)

For the most part, the time spent in winter quarters passed uneventfully. Throughout the period, Gen. Lane insisted on a routine of drill, twice daily, to keep the men sharp. At night bored soldiers in the 18th North Carolina huddled together in makeshift huts while shivering from frigid temperatures. The only major break from drill came when Lane's brigade assisted in the construction of corduroy roads in the area. The process was slow and tedious. Recently fallen snow had to be removed first before any logs could be laid. To compound the misery, the roadwork, being some distance from camp, forced the soldiers to sleep without cover from the cold winter air. As a result, illness was ever-present in camp during the long winter months.\(^2\)

Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina, despite suffering personal discomfort and boredom, devoted some of their time and energy to a seemingly worthy cause. The Light Division, while preparing for the Grand Review, took up a collection for the relief of the citizens of Fredericksburg. The battle waged there in mid-December had destroyed a great deal of the city and left many families homeless. On January 7, in an overwhelming display of compassion, Hill's division presented the destitute people of Fredericksburg with $10,000 in cash.\(^3\)

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1 Jedediah Hotchkiss, *Make Me a Map of the Valley* (Dallas, 1973), 106.

2 A. J. Proffitt to father, Mar. 12, 1863, S.H.C.; *S. H. S. P.* VIII (1880), 489.

In late January, the Federal army under Burnside attempted to move out of its camps and march west around Lee's left flank. On the evening of the 20th, a violent storm opened on the opposing armies and continued for two days. The roads in the area were "knee deep in mud." Burnside's advance stalled in what amused Confederates termed the "Mud March."  

By the beginning of February, morale in the 18th North Carolina was at an all-time low. Rumors that Lane's brigade was destined for North Carolina spread like wildfire through the camp and excited the young Tar Heels. When Lane assured the men that the rumors were false, high spirits plummeted. Officers and men expecting furloughs were further disappointed when General Lee cancelled all leaves because of enemy movements. Frustrated, the men in the 18th North Carolina continued to endure their dreary routines.  

The soldiers at this point welcomed any diversion from camp duties. A heavy snowfall on February 16 provided just such a break. The next day, while sitting around campfires, the North Carolinians were amazed at the sight of an entire regiment rushing toward them hurling freshly packed snowballs. The 28th North Carolina thus initiated a two-day battle when it swept through the 18th's camp. On the following day, in a real "battle-royal," the 18th North Carolina launched a counterattack and drove back its adversary. By the end of the "snowball campaign," the 18th North Carolina had successfully regained its camp. For the moment, at least, this lifted the spirits of the young soldiers.  

Many in the brigade speculated over the future. Federal activity across the

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5 Ibid., Jan. 26, 1863.  

6 Francis Kennedy diary, Feb. 17 and 18, 1863, S. H. C.
Rappahannock signaled the beginning of the spring campaign season. What would be the Confederate response to future enemy movements? Would there be another Fredericksburg, or would Lee take the offensive? While some in the brigade advocated holding a strong stand, others believed that the best course of action was to strike fast and destroy the Union army. One soldier wrote: "I am of Opinion that Jackson will attack Hooker as soon as the Roads will Permit. I think it is the better plan than to wait for him to attack us."

The 460 men of the 18th North Carolina participated in a tribute to Gen. Lane at the end of March. The entire brigade gathered in camp to show the respect and admiration it held for Lane. The officers of the brigade, amid cheering from the ranks, presented Lane with a new "sword, sash, and belt" as well as a "fine saddle and bridle" for his mount.

The last two weeks in April were anxious ones for the Army of Northern Virginia. The long three and a half months of inactivity came to an abrupt halt when Joseph Hooker's forces began to move. Southern scouts spotted Federal cavalry and scattered infantry units near Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock, west of Fredericksburg. On April 28, Union troops crossed the river below the city directly in front of the Confederate position. Lee reacted immediately. He quickly began concentrating his army on the hills above Hamilton's Crossing. Early on April 29, A. P. Hill's division broke its winter camp and marched to join Lee at Fredericksburg. When the men arrived at Hamilton's Crossing, they formed along the military road as a support to Jubal Early's division.

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8 Provision Returns, 18th North Carolina, Box 2, Folder 65, James H. Lane Papers, Auburn University; Kennedy Diary, Mar. 30, 1863, S.H.C.

All the next day Lee waited for the enemy to strike. By late afternoon, however, the Union army had not moved. The small size of the force in his front and its lack of movement convinced Lee that this was not Hooker's main force. At the same time, reports from J. E. B. Stuart that Federals in large numbers were approaching the Rapidan River crossings west of Fredericksburg indicated that Hooker was attempting to sweep around the Confederate left flank. Lee promptly began shifting the majority of his army west to meet the advancing enemy near the crossroads of Chancellorsville.\textsuperscript{10}

On May 1, the bulk of the army was up and on the move by 3 A.M. Hill's men formed in the road and headed west an hour later. The long line of the Light Division wound its way north until it struck the Plank Road, which ran directly west. Along the march a cheer rose in the ranks as Lee and Jackson passed alongside the men on their way to the front of the column. The troops continued west without stopping until they reached Salem Church, where Hill halted the division for a brief rest. After a much needed break, the men trudged on. Shortly before 11 A.M., the division arrived at a point some four miles east of Chancellorsville where the Orange Plank Road and the Orange Turnpike intersected. Hill led his men down the Plank Road, which continued south of and parallel to the turnpike. He then ordered Brig. Gen. Henry Heth to take three brigades, including Lane's, advance up the Plank Road and the pike, and "feel his way" toward Chancellorsville.\textsuperscript{11}

The advance began at 11 A.M. Lane's brigade formed off to the right of the Plank Road and shuffled forward with skirmishers in front. The sound of riflefire soon drifted southward from the pike as advanced Confederates made contact with Federal outposts. Heth halted the advance when the firing increased, and both sides became "hotly engaged."

\textsuperscript{10}O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 796-97.

\textsuperscript{11}Hotchkiss, \textit{Make Me a Map}, 137; Robertson, \textit{A. P. Hill}, 181; J. E. J. Caldwell, \textit{The History of a Brigade of South Carolinians Known First as "Gregg’s" and Subsequently "McGowan’s Brigade"} (Philadelphia, 1866), 109; O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 885, 890.
Lane's men, not having fired a shot, remained in line of battle about a mile north of the Plank Road. Later in the day, Lane sent the 18th North Carolina forward to support a battery. Enemy fire soon targeted the Southern guns and lobbed shells into the area. This forced the battery to withdraw. The 18th North Carolina, after losing two men, pulled back and joined the brigade for the remainder of the evening.\textsuperscript{12}

That night the two opposing lines faced one another a mile east of Chancellorsville. Lee studied the Federal line and found it to be one of great natural strength. The bulk of the Union army lay in the open fields around Chancellorsville. These open fields, however, were "surrounded on all sides by a dense forest filled with a tangled undergrowth." Along their lines Federal soldiers had thrown up breastworks of logs with felled trees in front which formed "an almost impenetrable abatis." Union artillery commanded the "few narrow roads" that approached Chancellorsville as well as the woods surrounding the village.\textsuperscript{13}

In the pre-dawn hours of May 2, Lee and Jackson met in a grove of pine trees at the intersection of the Plank and Furnace Road to discuss strategy. Seated on "Yankee cracker boxes," the two generals agreed that the Federal position was too strong to attack in its front. Such an assault would only result in devastating losses to the Southern army. At the same time, the Union left was anchored on the Rappahannock and offered no weakness. While Lee and Jackson conferred, J. E. B. Stuart arrived with reports indicating that the enemy's right flank was exposed three miles west of Chancellorsville. Both Lee and Jackson then conceived a plan to sweep around the Federal army's front and descend upon its unsuspecting right. Jackson would lead his entire corps on this bold flank march.\textsuperscript{14}

The 18th North Carolina fell into line between 8 and 9 \textsc{a.m.} on the morning of May 2

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 797, 890, 915, 919.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 797.

\textsuperscript{14} Hotchkiss, \textit{Make Me a Map}, 137; \textit{O. R.}, XXV, pt. 1, 798; McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 640.
and began marching south on the Furnace Road. As one member of Hill's division recalled: "We followed various devious country roads, eastward and southward, crossing, first the Plank Road, and then the unfinished railroad from Fredericksburg to Gordonsville, then moving through an almost unbroken wilderness of woods, until most of us became completely lost. The roads were, fortunately, just wet enough to be easy to the feet and free from dust. The weather was fine, but we suffered for water."

The 2nd Corps, by moving down the Furnace Road and then turning north on the Brock Road, successfully reached the Orange Turnpike, three miles west of Chancellorsville. Hill's division, last in the line of march, arrived at the pike around 4 P.M. after a "long and fatiguing march." Hill began the time-consuming and complicated process of forming the Light Division for the attack. His troops offered support to the leading divisions of Robert Rodes and Raleigh Colston. As Pender and Heth's brigades formed in the woods north of the pike, Lane's regiments stood in the road facing east. Jackson, annoyed at the delays in organizing the men, ordered Rodes forward at 5:15 P.M.

Three lines of gray swept down the pike toward the Union XI Corps. "Position after position was carried," wrote Gen. Lee, "the guns captured, and every effort of the enemy to rally defeated by the impetuous rush of our troops."

The attack stalled around 7:30 P.M. The thick and tangled woods had slowed the first line, causing the front two divisions to melt together into one gray mass. "Cohesion gave way to confusion" as Rodes halted his line shortly thereafter. Surprised Federals formed a strong defensive line across the turnpike to the east.

15 O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 920; Caldwell, South Carolina Brigade, 112.

16 O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 798; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 184.

17 O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 798.

18 Ibid.; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 184.
Jackson, anxious to press the attack, ordered Hill to move his men forward and relieve Rodes' and Colston's spent divisions. A. P. Hill found Lane and told him to advance down the pike and assault the Union line where possible. While Lane organized his regiments, Confederate artillery wheeled into the road behind the Tar Heel brigade and burst into action. Federal cannon immediately responded. Shells exploding in and around the turnpike scattered Lane's brigade. Lane yelled for the men to take cover and wait out the shelling. He sent a messenger to ask Hill to silence the Southern guns, thus giving Lane the chance to move forward. Hill obliged; almost as quickly as it started, the artillery fire ceased on both sides, but not before killing and wounding several in the 18th North Carolina.\footnote{O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 798; S. H. S. P., VIII (1880), 494.}

Lane formed the five regiments for the attack in the relative quiet following the artillery barrage. North of the pike he placed the 28th and the 18th North Carolina, the latter's right resting on the road. The 37th and the 33rd North Carolina filed into the woods south of the turnpike. Out in front, stretching from the 18th's left to the 37th's right, the 33rd North Carolina formed as a skirmish line, probing for the enemy's lines.\footnote{O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 916.}

The regiments began to advance down the road toward the distant Union lines. By 8:30 P.M., the left of the brigade came upon an abandoned line of breastworks running north-south, perpendicular to the turnpike. On the other side of these works a country lane known as the Bullock Road led from the pike on a diagonal course running to the northeast, away from Lane's brigade. Lane halted the brigade when the two left regiments (the 28th and the 18th North Carolina) reached the enemy's works. He decided to ride back, find Gen. Hill, and ask if he should launch his attack. Lane came upon Jackson instead, and asked him what to do. Jackson, without hesitating, said: "Push right ahead, Lane."\footnote{S. H. S. P., VIII (1880), 494.}
Following his brief meeting with Jackson around 9:00 P.M., Lane crossed over to the woods on the right of the pike to inspect his lines before ordering the men forward. At the same time, Jackson, with several members of his staff, rode off to the left into the dense woods directly behind the 18th North Carolina. Jackson, having heard that an old road ran parallel to and north of the turnpike, desired to ride forward and examine the Federal's position. Jackson's party came upon the left of the 18th North Carolina, passed unnoticed through its ranks, and continued east on the Old Mountain Road.22

The tense atmosphere made the men in the 18th North Carolina extremely jumpy. Any noise in the woods drew immediate attention. One such noise off to the regiment's front prompted Col. Purdie and Lt. William McLaurin to ride up the left side of the pike to investigate. The two officers, after covering about sixty yards, came upon a captain in the 33rd North Carolina. He explained that his men were out in front as skirmishers (a fact unknown to the men of the 18th North Carolina). Somewhat relieved, Purdie and McLaurin stood for a moment and listened as men across the pike talked among themselves.

Suddenly, off to the extreme right of the brigade, riflefire broke out. Swiftly, the firing moved up the line toward the road. Purdie and McLaurin, without hesitating, started back to the 18th North Carolina. McLaurin later recalled that the two officers made their way on steps "fast and long."23

Off to their right (north of the turnpike) Stonewall Jackson and his party had turned their horses off the Mountain Road and into the dense woods between the two roads. Federal batteries commenced firing down the pike. Shells exploded in the road and slashed through the trees above as Jackson and his men began riding back toward Lane's line.24

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22 Clark, N. C. Regiments, 37; Lenoir Chambers, Stonewall Jackson (New York, 1959), II, 411.
23 Clark, N. C. Regiments, 37.
24 Confederate Veteran, XIII (1905), 233.
Major John D. Barry of the 18th North Carolina, hearing the distant firing, ordered his men to prepare to shoot at anything that moved in the woods. The soldiers in the front line of the regiment, hearing what sounded like approaching horses, knelt on one knee and raised their rifles. A bright shining moon that night cast shadows through the forest and allowed the men to see just well enough to notice movement, but not well enough to identify the source of the movement.²⁵

All at once, horsemen appeared about thirty yards in the distance. As Capt. Alfred Tolar of Company K recalled: "The tramp of thirty horsemen advancing through the forest at a rapid gait seemed to the average infantryman like a brigade of cavalry."²⁶

Barry gave the order to fire. In the next moment the entire front line of the 18th North Carolina let loose a sheet of lead into the shadowy forms. The effect was deadly. Jackson and his party, including A. P. Hill, were scattered in an instant. Jackson himself fell to the ground bleeding profusely with three wounds in his left arm. As Lt. McLaurin remembered, "horses with riders, and horses without, came into the line with us."²⁷

A. P. Hill moved toward the source of the sounds and yelled for the soldiers to cease fire. When Maj. Barry heard this, he exclaimed: "Who gave that order? It's a lie! Pour it into them!" After only a few scattered shots, however, a member of the Jackson party managed to reach Barry and explain what had happened. Barry immediately called for the regiment to hold its fire.²⁸

Lieutenant McLaurin arose from the ground where he dove when the shooting started. He approached a nearby body that resembled Col. Purdie's and placed a blanket

²⁵ S. H. S. P., VIII (1880), 495; ibid., VI (1878), 267; Reminiscence of Richard M. V. B. Reeves, Fredericksburg National Battlefield Park

²⁶ Clark, N. C. Regiments, V, 99.

²⁷ S. H. S. P., VIII (1880), 495; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 37.

²⁸ Confederate Veteran, XIII (1905), 230.
over the corpse. Moments later, he discovered that the colonel had safely returned to the regiment and that the dead man was one of Jackson’s staff.²⁹

A. P. Hill, almost thirty minutes later, took a shell fragment in his leg. Hill staggered back to safety and passed the command of the 2nd Corps to Gen. Stuart. Hill then gave Henry Heth temporary command of the Light Division. Around 11 P.M., Heth reoriented Lane’s brigade. The 28th and the 18th North Carolina pulled out of their position north of the turnpike and moved to the far right, thus extending the brigade line farther south. The 18th North Carolina now stood second from the right some 300 yards south of the pike. There, the edgy North Carolinians formed in line of battle behind captured Federal breastworks. An enemy attack was imminent. McLaurin recalled how "the least noise brought on a volley."³⁰

An hour of nervous anticipation passed when suddenly Union artillery burst into action. Twenty-eight Federal guns poured shells into the woods surrounding Lane’s brigade, signaling an attack from elements of Dan Sickles’ Union III Corps. One shell exploded in the midst of Company D of the 18th North Carolina, four feet from Pvt Andrew Proffit. Among others, the regimental colorbearer was killed. Seeing this, Col. Purdie ordered Proffit to carry the flag.³¹

Federal infantry charged the brigade after the shelling stopped. The weight of the attack fell on the right three regiments of the brigade. The 18th, 28th, and 33rd North Carolina stood firm in the face of two separate charges and repulsed them both. In the close fighting in the woods, men in the 18th North Carolina captured three Union soldiers, including an aide to Brig. Gen. Alpheus Williams. Heth later praised the three Tar Heel

²⁹ Clark, N. C. Regiments, 38.
³⁰ O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 890, 920; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 39.
regiments. The units, he wrote, "behaved with commendable courage and zeal in repelling at least five times their number."32

The boys in the 18th North Carolina were physically and emotionally spent. The long flank march, the initial assault, the anxiety of remaining in the dense woods, and the two recent enemy attacks, sapped the regiment of its strength. Soldiers collapsed where they stood when the fighting ended. To the east, the boys heard the "clatter of many axes" and the steady rumble of artillery wheels throughout the night as the Federals continued to strengthen their defenses. Men in the 18th North Carolina slept as best they could between occasional exchanges of skirmish fire. More important, the weak soldiers, having not eaten since the previous morning, slept on empty stomachs.33

Barely three hours later, the Tar Heels were awake and poised for an attack. J. E. B. Stuart, now commanding Jackson's corps, intended to renew the assault as early as possible. At 4 A.M., the Confederate line surged forward. The 18th North Carolina pressed through the woods toward a line of breastworks in its front. The regiment moved in "good order" among the oak trees. When it reached the ground in front of the enemy's works, it unleashed a terrific fire into a line of bluecoats. Federal resistance crumbled under the weight of the charge. The North Carolinians easily captured the first line of breastworks. Off in the distance, behind another Union line, stood twenty-eight pieces of artillery.34

Private Proffit, still carrying the flag, continued toward the second line after negotiating the first breastworks. The entire regiment moved with him. All at once confusion reigned. The 28th North Carolina, originally on the 18th's right, did not advance with the regiment. The right flank of the 18th North Carolina was now dangerously

32 O. R., XXV., pt. 1, 890.
33 Clark, N. C. Regiments, 39.
34 Ibid.: O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 920.
exposed. At the same time, the line of cannon, 200 yards away, opened a "terrific and galling fire" of grape and shell on the Southerners. The regiment, pinned down by rifle and artillery fire, remained in front of the second works for nearly thirty minutes.\textsuperscript{35}

Purdie, realizing that the unit's right was exposed and that the men were running out of ammunition, ordered the 18th North Carolina to withdraw. Eager Union soldiers jumped over their works at that moment and attempted to capture as many Confederates as they could. Two Federals ran over to Proffit, grabbed the flag from him, and demanded his surrender. In a gloating manner one of the bluecoats shouted: "Fall in John, ha, ha, ha!" Union soldiers succeeded in capturing twenty-five members of the 18th North Carolina.\textsuperscript{36}

In the midst of the chaos surrounding the withdrawal of the regiment, Col. Purdie fell dead after a minie ball pierced his forehead. Command of the unit fell on Lt. Col. Forney George, who shortly went down wounded. Major Barry assumed command at this point. The bitter fighting had decimated the 18th's company officers. By the time the regiment was forced to retreat, the right five companies were all under the command of one captain, and the left companies took orders from a lieutenant. Unit cohesion no longer existed. The soldiers simply made their way back toward the rear as quickly as possible. Lieutenant McLaurin, shot in the thigh while storming the second works, hobbled off using two muskets as crutches.\textsuperscript{37}

General Lane began to reform the men as the rest of the battered brigade filtered back to the turnpike. Confederate reinforcements continued the attack; Lane was determined to offer support. After a short time the reorganized brigade crossed over to the woods on the


north side of the pike and moved behind Alfred Colquitt's brigade.\textsuperscript{38}

Lane's men pushed forward "without a murmur" through the tangled underbrush. The scene around them was unbelievable. As Lane reported: "the woods we entered were on fire; the heat was excessive; the smoke arising from burning blankets, oilcloths, . . . very offensive. The dead and dying of the enemy could be seen on all sides enveloped in flames, and the ground on which we formed was so hot as at first to be disagreeable to our feet."\textsuperscript{39}

By 10 A.M., the fight for Chancellorsville was over. The two wings of Lee's army had succeeded in pushing the Federals out of their strong position. Fleeing bluecoats began moving north toward their river crossings. The Army of Northern Virginia regrouped for the remainder of the day. The battle-weary 18th North Carolina served as skirmishers on the far left of the Confederate line.\textsuperscript{40}

The battle of Chancellorsville proved very costly for the regiment. It had gone into battle with 460 men. In three days of severe fighting, it lost 157 soldiers. The most important casualty the unit suffered was Col. Purdie, who had demonstrated great courage and audacity in leading his men. Surviving members of the regiment could not help but view Chancellorsville as their worst battle to date. Despite the overall Confederate victory, the death of the regiment's colonel, the wounding of Jackson, and the loss of the battle flag, all weighed heavily on the Carolinians. Beginning on May 4, rain fell for two straight days as if to underscore their somber mood. On May 7, the worn-out regiment assembled on the Orange Turnpike and trudged off toward its old camp south of Fredericksburg.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{O. R.}, XXV, pt. 1, 917, 920.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 917.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 800, 920.

\textsuperscript{41} Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 305-423; Kennedy Diary, May 4 and 5, 1863, S.H.C.; Robertson, \textit{A. P. Hill}, 191. Of the 157 total casualties, 28 were killed and 104 were wounded. The remaining 25 fell into the hands of the enemy.
Prospects of an easy life in camp appealed to the members of the 18th North Carolina as they settled into their old home. The chance to rest and recuperate lifted low spirits in the regiment. On May 10, however, the peaceful atmosphere was sharply interrupted by news that Stonewall Jackson had died of pneumonia after his wounding at Chancellorsville. The entire army mourned the loss of Jackson. In the 18th North Carolina, an overwhelming feeling of guilt pervaded the unit. Soldiers outside the regiment, however, did not blame the Tar Heels. Instead, many believed that under the same circumstances any regiment would have made the same mistake. Quietly, some may have wondered what the general was doing exposing himself to enemy fire in the first place. The turn of events suggested an almost fatalistic outcome. Robert E. Lee offered one such explanation when he wrote that Jackson's abilities were lost to the army "by the decree of an all-wise Providence."\(^{42}\)

Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina managed to put the awful event behind them in the weeks that followed Jackson's death. The regiment busied itself with a steady routine of drill and picket duty. No one complained. As one member of the division recalled: "Picket became light duty as the weather warmed." Time spent away from camp along the bank of the Rappahannock offered many in the regiment a chance to fish. One soldier spoke for all when he wrote that "rest and fine weather made up, in great measure, for our losses."\(^{43}\)

This brief period of rest provided the Army of Northern Virginia with an opportunity to reorganize. Jackson's death alone demanded command reshuffling. When Lee set out to find Jackson's replacement, he ended up rearranging the entire structure of the army. Lee, to increase further its efficiency in combat, divided the army into three equal-sized corps. On

\(^{42}\) *Confederate Veteran*, XIII (1905), 233; *O. R.*, XXV, pt. 2, 791.

\(^{43}\) Caldwell, *South Carolina Brigade*, 126-27.
May 30, Lee announced the changes. The First Corps remained Longstreet's, while the old Second Corps passed to Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell. A. P. Hill was promoted to lieutenant general and given command of a newly created Third Corps. This was an effort to solve the problem of who would get Jackson's old corps.

The 18th North Carolina, like many other units in the army, was affected by this reorganization. Command of the Light Division was vacant once Hill earned his promotion. Accordingly, newly promoted Maj. Gen. William Dorsey Pender assumed command of Hill's old division. The unit itself was streamlined. Lee had to create one new division in order to have a three-division Third Corps. Two of the six brigades in the Light Division (Heth's and Archer's) went to a third division in Hill's new corps. What was now Pender's Light Division consisted of the brigades of Lane, Scales, McGowan, and Thomas. 44

A number of changes took place within the 18th North Carolina. When Col. Purdie died, regimental command technically passed to Lt. Col. Forney George. He had tendered his resignation on April 29 to return home to serve in the North Carolina legislature. He remained with the unit through Chancellorsville when a battle appeared imminent. The day after Jackson's death, George accepted his resignation and left for North Carolina. On May 27, John D. Barry was promoted to colonel of the 18th North Carolina. Barry would serve the balance of the war as the regiment's commander. Other officers were elevated within the unit. Captain John McGill of Company B replaced George as the lieutenant colonel, and John J. Wooten of Company K became the new regimental major. 45

While old and new units grew accustomed to one another and new commanders struggled with new responsibilities, Lee considered the time right to launch a second northern invasion. A bold move into Pennsylvania, he reasoned, might accomplish several


things. Lee firmly believed that the best way to defend Richmond was to take the war far away from the capital. A successful march into the North might also threaten Washington, D. C., and cause the Union high command to take pressure off other parts of the Confederacy. A successful invasion might also help strengthen the growing peace movement in the Northern states. Finally, and most importantly, the Army of Northern Virginia could subsist for a while on the abundant farmlands of Pennsylvania. The region south of the Rappahannock could no longer support Lee's army.\textsuperscript{46}

Hill's corps moved to Hamilton's Crossing at the very beginning of June. Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina continued to relax there while they bivouacked along the railroad tracks. The men enjoyed themselves by reading, singing, and eating well for the first time in weeks. At the same time, Col. Barry worked hard to establish himself as the new commanding officer of the regiment. He demonstrated his devotion to firm discipline by ordering the men to assemble and witness the punishment of a deserter from Company D. The guilty soldier stood before the regiment and received a brand in the shape of the letter "D" on his left hip. Barry hoped that this stern measure would prevent others from deserting in the future.\textsuperscript{47}

During the first week in June, Lee started his army west. He decided to leave Hill's corps in position at Fredericksburg after a small force of Federals on June 5 crossed the Rappahannock. A little over a week later, on June 14, Hooker withdrew his force, aware now that the bulk of Lee's army was moving north. The next day, A. P. Hill led his corps out of Fredericksburg and headed toward Chancellorsville.\textsuperscript{48}

The men continued west after passing Chancellorsville, wading the Rapidan River at

\textsuperscript{46} Freeman, \textit{R. E. Lee}, III, 14, 18-19.

\textsuperscript{47} A. N. Proffit to sister, June 13, 1863, S.H.C.; A. J. Proffit to father, June 4, 1863, S.H.C.

\textsuperscript{48} Freeman, \textit{R. E. Lee}, III, 27, 36; \textit{S. H. S. P.}, II (1876), 37.
Ely's Ford. Over the next ten days, soldiers trudged north toward the Potomac River. The march was a miserable one. Oppressive heat, broken only by occasional downpours, stifled the men. Soldiers unable to bear the high temperatures collapsed by the side of the road. The long column wound its way across the Blue Ridge Mountains at Chester Gap on June 20, after averaging fourteen miles a day. The Confederates experienced brief moments of joy on the long journey. At Port Royal, in the Valley, townsfolk gathered to cheer the passing troops. Finally, on June 25, the Third Corps arrived at Boteler's Ford near Shepherdstown, W. Va. Around noon, sweat-soaked men removed their pants and waded across the Potomac into Maryland. One member of Pender's division recalled: "The ford was up and the current swift but the entire Division crossed without accident save the drowning of one mule."\(^{49}\)

That night the Southerners bivouacked near Hagerstown, Md. Each step fell lighter as the troops approached the Mason-Dixon Line. Pender's entire division grew more confident each day. "The victories of 1862 and the great battle of Chancellorsville this year," one Southerner later wrote, "had led us to believe scarcely anything impossible to Lee's army."\(^{50}\)

On June 27, Hill's Confederates got their first glimpse of Pennsylvania. The men could not believe the lush farmlands. The temptation to fall out of line and gorge themselves proved strong, but General Lee had specifically ordered his army not to ravage the countryside. In Lane's brigade, the men for the most part restrained themselves. General Pender "had issued such strict orders about straggling and plundering that the

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\(^{49}\) Caldwell, *South Carolina Brigade*, 130-31; A. J. Proffit to father, June 24, 1863, S.H.C.; Kennedy Diary, June 21 and 25, 1863, S.H.C.

\(^{50}\) Caldwell, *South Carolina Brigade*, 131, 134.
people have not suffered from us."\(^{51}\)

The peaceful marching came to an abrupt end on July 1. Pender's division, after reaching Chambersburg, turned east and advanced toward the village of Cashtown. Once there, the men halted for a brief rest before continuing on toward the town of Gettysburg, Pa.\(^{52}\)

Soon the sounds of distant combat excited already-anxious Confederates as they moved down the turnpike. Several miles farther and the men could begin to see soldiers of Heth's division fighting in the fields west of Gettysburg. Lane halted his men three miles from the town and shifted the regiments off to the left of the pike. The 18th North Carolina, formed in line of battle, stood second from the right in the brigade. After advancing a mile, the brigade stopped again. Lane led the men in an orderly manner across the road and into the fields to the right of the pike. The brigade now marched on the far right of the division.\(^{53}\)

The North Carolina boys descended a ridge and splashed across a swift stream moving steadily forward up a second ridge. The brigade struggled through a small patch of woods at the top of the second elevation, known as McPherson's Ridge. Breaking out into the open, the Tar Heels gazed out over an expanse of gently rolling fields. Their view of Gettysburg was unobstructed. The men surged forward without hesitating.

Lane placed the 7th North Carolina off to the right, perpendicular to the brigade, to protect against any flank attacks. The 18th North Carolina moved at quick-time march as it crossed the fields west of the town. Before long Federal cavalry, reinforced by a small

\(^{51}\) Kennedy Diary, June 27, 1863, S.H.C.; John McLeod Turner to Emilie, June 28, 1863, Virginia Historical Society.

\(^{52}\) S. H. S. P., II (1876), 222.

\(^{53}\) Kennedy Diary, July 1, 1863, S.H.C.; S. H. S. P., V (1878), 41.
detachment of infantry, slowed Lane's advance. Union troops fired from off to the right in a desperate attempt to flank the Confederates. Lane promptly halted the brigade and ordered the regiments to oblique to the right. Colonel Barry's men, after facing to the right, suddenly "gave a yell and rushed forward at the double-quick." The entire brigade of North Carolinians overwhelmed the Federals and pushed them back toward Cemetery Hill, a prominent rise south of town.

Lane halted the tired brigade when the men reached a peach orchard south of the Fairfield Road. General Pender directed Lane to hold there and not to advance farther. The exhausted brigade remained in position behind a stone fence on Seminary Ridge for the rest of the afternoon and evening.\(^5^4\)

Early on July 2, Lane assembled the 18th North Carolina and sent the regiment to the part of Pender's line near the Lutheran Seminary, located between the Fairfield Road and the Chambersburg Pike. The regiment supported a battery for the rest of the day. Members of the 18th North Carolina stood for hours and watched as the guns threw shells at the mass of enemy troops at Cemetery Hill. The 18th North Carolina returned to the brigade later that night. Upon arriving, the men learned that Gen. Pender had been seriously wounded during the day and that Lane, as the senior brigadier, now commanded the division.\(^5^5\)

On July 3, Gen. Lee, frustrated by failed attempts to turn the enemy's flanks, decided to order an assault against the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. Major Gen. George E. Pickett's division of Longstreet's Corps was to form the bulk of the attacking force, while A. P. Hill was expected to provide a division and two brigades to the effort. Hill chose Henry Heth's division (commanded by Johnston Pettigrew) and the brigades of Lane and Scales to

\(^5^4\) Ibid., 41-42. The Fairfield Road ran southwest out of Gettysburg. On the evening of July 1, Pender's division, south the road, constituted the far right of the Confederate line.

\(^5^5\) Clark. N. C. Regiments, 42; S. H. S. P., V (1878), 42.
represent the Third Corps in the charge.

Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina sat in their camp early that morning and listened to the rumble of artillery wheels passing behind them. Men watched as the Confederate guns were placed in long lines facing Cemetery Ridge. Soon Lane appeared to explain the upcoming attack and to wish his men well. By mid-morning the brigade had started off to join Longstreet's lines. Major Gen. Isaac Trimble caught up with Lane at the head of Hill's column and presented him with orders placing Trimble in command of Pender's division. Lane immediately complied and quickly returned to the command of his brigade.56

Trimble formed the two brigades behind the right half of Pettigrew's division. Lane's men constituted the left flank of the second line. The anxious soldiers stood in line of battle for the next several hours.57

Southern artillery opened the largest cannonade of the war at precisely 1 P.M. Lee hoped to weaken the Union line considerably by battering it with shells. "For two hours," A. P. Hill observed, Confederate guns "rained an incessant storm of missiles upon the enemy's lines."58

The Southern lines started forward around 3 P.M. Lane's brigade passed through the wood line running along Seminary Ridge. The North Carolina brigade followed 150 yards behind Pettigrew's men. Almost a mile of open fields lay between the Confederates and the distant enemy line. Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina pressed forward across the gently rolling farmland with guns loaded and by their sides. Earlier, Gen. Trimble, while issuing a pre-attack speech, had ordered his men to hold their fire until they could do real damage.59

56 Ibid., V (1876), 224.
57 Clark, N. C. Regiments, 42.
58 S. H. S. P., II (1876), 225.
59 Ibid., V (1878), 43–44.
Federal fire raked across the Confederate line as it approached the Emmitsburg Pike. The pike ran diagonally along the base of Cemetery Ridge from northeast to southwest. The road cut across the Southern line of advance offering no protection for the attackers. Lane's men watched as artillery shells tore gaps in the forward lines as they reached the pike. The Tar Heels passed by the dead and wounded of Pettigrew's division; someone in the ranks shouted: "Three cheers for the Old North State!" Trimble, somewhat surprised, leaned to an aide and said, "I believe those fine fellows are going into the enemy's lines."^60

Lane directed the brigade toward the far left flank as it crossed the pike. The remnants of Pettigrew's division, off to the right front, began to wither under tremendous fire. Colonel Barry, at this point, gave the order to fire. Instantly a solid sheet of minie balls ripped into the Union line and drove cannoneers from their guns. The five North Carolina regiments fired several volleys into the blue mass, while all the time struggling forward. The 18th North Carolina, second from the left in the brigade, pushed within a few yards of the stone wall that ran directly in front of the Federal line. All at once, cannon fire from the right and riflefire from the left forced Barry to withdraw the regiment.^61

Both brigades made their way back toward the pike. Lane, on foot after having his mount shot from under him, calmly guided his men across the road and into the open fields. The regiments retreated in line marching with "the deliberation and accuracy of men on drill." On his way back toward Seminary Ridge, Gus Floyd of Company D became separated from the 18th North Carolina. He felt a sharp pain in his thigh and thought he had been shot. After staggering to a barn 150 yards from the Federal line, Floyd examined his thigh and found it to be a mere "flesh wound." He immediately grabbed his rifle and

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^61 Ibid., 43-44; Ibid., VIII (1880), 520.
double-quicked back to the safety of the Confederate lines.\footnote{\(62\)}

Weary and depressed soldiers of the 18th North Carolina returned to their camps behind the artillery line. In the assault, later immortalized as "Pickett's Charge," the regiment lost a total of 118 men. In the chaos before the stone wall, 5 men were killed, 51 were wounded, and 62 members were taken prisoner. The possibility of a Federal counterattack prevented the spent soldiers from relaxing completely. The enemy, however, did not advance as expected. Instead of continuing the fight, the Tar Heels collapsed where they stood. General Lane, still filled with the excitement of battle, complimented each of his regiments on its conduct. He later wrote that his brigade had "never behaved more gallantly than on that terrible and bloody battle-field."\footnote{\(63\)}

On the night of July 4 the army began retreating back to Virginia. Falling rain turned the Fairfield Road into a "quagmire." Soldiers trudged along in mud up to ten inches deep. The North Carolina brigade marched without its commander, as Lane was in charge of the division after Trimble fell wounded and was captured in Pickett's Charge. The army arrived at Williamsport, Md., on July 11. There Lane's men helped to construct a line of breastworks to hold off the pursuing Union army.\footnote{\(64\)}

Two days later, Lane, back in command of the brigade, withdrew the men south toward the pontoon bridge at Falling Waters, W. Va. That evening, forward elements of Lee's army began crossing into Virginia under the protection of Heth's rear guard. Lane's brigade halted in the column a mile short of the river and fell asleep almost immediately.

At sunrise the army continued to cross the Potomac. Ambulances led the way.

\footnote{\(62\) Ibid., V (1880), 39-40; "Autobiography of Gus Floyd," Fredericksburg National Battlefield Park Collection, 8-9.}

\footnote{\(63\) Jordan, N. C. Troops, 305-423; S. H. S. P., V (1878), 40.}

\footnote{\(64\) Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 166; Caldwell, South Carolina Brigade, 146; O. R., XXVII, pt. 2, 667.}
followed by thousands of ragged soldiers. Federals, anxious to disrupt the retreat, attacked the rear guard as soon as the Confederates resumed their march. Lane heard gunfire in the distance and promptly ordered his men to march toward the shooting. The soldiers had almost no ammunition left; so Lane ordered each man to fix bayonet. The regiments halted directly behind Heth's line and formed across the main road in support. Seeing Lane's fresh brigade behind him, Heth ordered his men to move through Lane's ranks and retreat to the river. Lane wasted no time in organizing his defense. He deployed three regiments as skirmishers to slow the enemy's advance. Colonel Barry's 18th North Carolina jogged off to the right front to protect that flank. With little or no ammunition the regiment could only stall the Federals. Barry maintained his line, threatening to charge at any moment. Federal reinforcements, however, soon overwhelmed the small defense line. The 18th North Carolina withdrew toward the Potomac in "excellent order."

The rear-guard action at Falling Waters provided the Army of Northern Virginia with sufficient time to retreat safely back into Virginia. The small fight was not without cost for the 18th North Carolina. The regiment had seventeen men captured and one man wounded in the skirmish. This small engagement proved to be the regiment's last major brush with the enemy in 1863.65

The Southern army rested in the Valley near Bunker Hill, Va., for the next ten days, while Lee watched for any signs of movement from Meade's army. When the Federals began crossing the Potomac River, Lee moved quickly to place his army between the enemy and Richmond. On July 23, rejuvenated Confederates in Lane's brigade climbed the Blue Ridge at Chester Gap and marched to Culpeper Court House, located on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad between the Rappahannock and Rapidan rivers. A week later, the army

65 Ibid.; Jordan, N. C. Troops, 305-423. Heth's and Trimble's divisions were temporarily consolidated into one division under Heth's command immediately following Gettysburg. Lane returned to the command of his old brigade on July 12, 1863.
withdrawed across the Rapidan and encamped near Orange Court House. By August 4, Lee
had his army in a defensive position along the Rapidan River line.\footnote{Kennedy Diary, July 23 and 25, 1863, S.H.C.; Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 303.}

A. P. Hill's corps bivouacked in the countryside west of Orange Court House around
the village of Liberty Mills. Once there, the army did not waste away in idleness. Hill
enforced daily routines of drill and inspection despite the late summer heat. Lane anxiously
accepted new recruits and returning veterans into his withered brigade. Morale in the 18th
North Carolina, and in the rest of the corps as well, began to improve for the first time since
the defeat at Gettysburg.\footnote{Robertson, \textit{A. P. Hill}, 230-31.}

Hill's old Light Division experienced its last change in leadership during the first
week in August. On July 18, Gen. Pender had died from wounds he sustained on the
second day at Gettysburg. A. P. Hill filled the gap in command on August 3 with the
promotion to major general of Cadmus M. Wilcox. The forty-year-old North Carolinian
had proven himself a reliable and skillful field commander, as well as one who fought hard
and stubbornly. Lane's men welcomed Wilcox as their new division commander.\footnote{Ibid.; Ezra Warner, \textit{Generals in Gray}, 337.}

In the beginning of October, Lee planned another bold flank march against the
enemy, then bivouacked around Culpeper Court House. He hoped to sweep around the
Federal right flank and force the enemy to retreat to Washington. Throughout October 8,
men of the 18th North Carolina cooked three days' rations. Early the next morning, Hill's
corps started north on its circuitous march. Wilcox's division passed through Madison
Court House and continued along the eastern base of the Blue Ridge. The men cut across
fields and through woods, thereby staying off main roads. Soldiers waded the
Rappahannock on October 13 and bivouacked near Warrenton, some ten miles northwest of
the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.\(^69\)

The next day, after marching eighteen miles, Hill came upon what he believed was an isolated Federal rear guard at Bristoe Station. In a too-hasty move, Hill sent two brigades of Heth's division directly into the face of most of the Union II Corps. The Confederates suffered 1,381 casualties in forty minutes of combat. Wilcox's men remained in support throughout the battle of Bristoe Station, suffering only one casualty the entire time.\(^70\)

Lane's brigade spent the next two days tearing up the railroad track from Bristoe Station to the Rappahannock River. The men then settled into camp at Brandy Station, just south of the river. The weather had turned cold. Soldiers huddled around campfires in vain attempts to warm themselves. Dropping temperatures and the lack of comfortable winter quarters gave rise to grumblings in the ranks. In this gloomy atmosphere, the 18th North Carolina assembled on November 5 to witness the execution of two men from Company A. Privates John Shook and M. D. Sigman had both deserted on May 22, 1863. The two were sentenced to die by firing squad after being found guilty by a court martial at the end of October. The entire regiment watched as the two men were tied to posts and blindfolded. After a few seconds the squad fired a round, instantly killing one of the men. The other soldier had to be shot a second time. Sights such as these normally affected the men deeply, but, as Pvt. Proffit explained to his father, "I have seen so many horrible things that nothing has much affect on me." Veterans in the 18th North Carolina had been hardened by two years of war.\(^71\)

On November 7, Gen. Meade launched an attack against the unsuspecting Confederate army at Rappahannock Station. Two Federal columns successfully forded the

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\(^69\) A. J. Proffit to father, Oct. 8, 1863, S.H.C.; Kennedy Diary, Oct. 11 and 13, 1863, S.H.C.

\(^70\) Freeman. Lee's Lieutenants, III, 245-46; Kennedy Diary, Oct. 14, 1863, S.H.C.

river and pushed the gray line south. The 18th North Carolina, resting at Brandy Station, gathered its gear and retreated toward the Rapidan. En route, the regiment attempted to ambush an enemy cavalry unit. Colonel Barry enlisted the aid of a North Carolina company of the 11th Virginia Cavalry Regiment. The plan called for the small cavalry detachment to act as a decoy and lead the enemy into a field surrounded by woods. The 18th North Carolina, waiting in the shadows of the trees, would then rush out and capture the surprised Federals. The operation failed when Union horsemen discovered the hidden regiment before it could spring the trap. A small fight ensued in which one member of the 18th North Carolina was killed and three others were wounded. After this, the regiment marched across the Rapidan and went into winter quarters at Liberty Mills.\(^\text{72}\)

The men spent the next week settling into to their winter camp. "We have put up some fine houses and are fixen to live at home," wrote one soldier in the 18th North Carolina. The severely cold winter of 1863 proved challenging for the army. Men spent their entire free time constructing barriers between them and the biting wind. Colonel Barry gladly accepted new recruits as they trickled in during the bleak winter months. Men in the regiment had hoped to remain at peace in camp, but movements of the Federal army soon interrupted the lazy atmosphere at Liberty Mills.\(^\text{73}\)

At 2:30 A.M. on November 27, Lane formed his brigade and marched from camp toward the east. "Ragged, blanketless, and barefooted" men trudged twenty-three miles and immediately formed a line of battle four miles west of Chancellorsville on the Orange Plank Road. Two miles ahead, across Mine Run, stood the left wing of the Army of the Potomac. The 18th North Carolina moved forward, carefully probing the ground along the run. The


regiment did not fight during the Mine Run campaign. Instead, the soldiers served as skirmishers in front of the Confederate right flank. Intensely cold temperatures made any movement difficult. Aware of the adverse conditions, Lane ordered men on active picket duty to be relieved every half hour.\textsuperscript{74}

One morning, a prize greater than the entire Union army appeared in front of the 18th North Carolina. Lieutenant George Corbett of Company E spotted a flock of wild turkey in a clearing between the two opposing lines. One large turkey in particular attracted the attention of both armies. Corbett and another member of the regiment carefully surrounded the bird and succeeded in bagging it, much to the amusement of onlooking soldiers -- blue and gray. Happy men of the 18th North Carolina feasted on the captured prize that night.\textsuperscript{75}

On December 3, the Tar Heels gladly returned to Liberty Mills after Meade's army withdrew north of the Rapidan without fighting. Many in the brigade were frustrated by the lack of combat. One man, complaining in his diary about the futility of the Mine Run operation, wrote: "This is the second campaign we have made returning to this same camp. I hope we will remain here during the balance of the winter."\textsuperscript{76}

The brigade did remain in camp for the remainder of the winter. Men spent much of the time looking for anything to break the monotony that descended over long periods of inactivity. Periodic religious revivals swept through the camps and renewed the spirit of the army. Governor Zebulon Vance of North Carolina visited the Tar Heel regiments in March, 1864, to gain support for the upcoming election. The largest disruption in the army's routine occurred when a small snowball battle escalated into an army-wide affair.

Regiments, brigades, and corps attacked one another for several days. Things got out of

\textsuperscript{74} Kennedy Diary, Nov. 27, 1863; Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 46; \textit{S. H. S. P.}, 1X (1881), 72.

\textsuperscript{75} Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 46.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 47; Kennedy Diary, Dec. 3, 1863, S.H.C.
hand when someone through a rock and drew blood. Men who resented this ran for their rifles and officers hurried to prevent "the rebel-yell, and snowball from being followed by real powder and ball."\textsuperscript{77}

In the quiet atmosphere of winter quarters, some in the 18th North Carolina turned their attention toward affairs at home. Captain Benjamin Rinaldi of Company A submitted his name in the Bladen County race for sheriff. He promised to "discharge the office with the same fidelity and zeal which he trusts have characterized him as a soldier."\textsuperscript{78}

Others in the regiment sought to reaffirm their dedication to the cause. An anonymous soldier in Company B, looking forward to the resumption of active campaigning in the spring, assured a North Carolina newspaper that although his company had suffered in the past, "none of its members are willing to give up the struggle until our independence is acknowledged by our foe."\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{77} Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}. 46.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Wilmington Journal}, Mar. 5, 1864.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Wilmington Journal}, Feb. 25, 1864.
Chapter Six - From the Wilderness to Petersburg

Throughout the night of May 3 and into the early hours of the 4th, Confederate scouts atop Clark Mountain watched the Federal army file out of its camps north of the Rapidan and march toward the river. Clouds of dust kicked up by Federal soldiers signaled the opening of the 1864 campaign between Grant and Lee. The Union army, under the general direction of Ulysses S. Grant, was moving again toward Richmond.\(^1\)

Lee quickly countered the enemy's advance. On the morning of May 4, two Confederate columns assembled and began to march toward the thick forested region south of the Rapidan known as the Wilderness. Lee hoped to strike Grant's lines there before they could reach the other side. Lee knew that Federal artillery would be virtually useless on the tree-choked roads running through the region. He also realized that it would be very difficult for Grant to organize a strong defense in the dense forest. The Confederate commander intended to strike the enemy's flank and send him back across the Rapidan as he had done almost exactly a year earlier a few miles to the east.\(^2\)

The men in the 18th North Carolina, after cooking three days' rations, marched from their winter camp at Liberty Mills and headed toward Orange Court House. Wilcox led the division through the town and along the Plank Road behind Henry Heth's men. The two divisions of Hill's corps marched all day on the 4th until the column halted near the small village of New Verdierville. At dawn on May 5, the soldiers resumed their advance toward the Wilderness. Hill's plan was to hurry east along the Plank Road to a point where it intersected with the north-south Brock Road. If he could reach the Brock Road before the

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\(^1\) Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, III, 345.

Federals, his divisions could cut off the advancing Yankee columns.  

While Hill advanced on the Plank Road, Ewell's corps moved cautiously down the Orange Turnpike, three miles north of Hill's men. By midday battle had erupted on the turnpike. He, his men quickly moved toward the Brock Road when they heard the sound of musketry off to the north. Before Wilcox could follow, Lee ordered his division to move to the north to connect with Ewell's right flank. Lane's men followed behind Thomas as they marched through the open fields of the Tapp farm toward a distant plateau midway between the two parallel roads. The soldiers ascended to the top of the Chewning farm heights around 2:30 P.M. and looked out over the vast woodlands to the east. The Confederates could see lines of blueclad soldiers moving through the trees toward Heth's position on the Plank Road.  

As soon as Lane's brigade halted north of the Chewning heights, the men heard a "tearing volley of musketry" off in the direction of the Plank Road. Soon a courier rode up bearing orders from Lee. The general urgently requested Wilcox to return to the Plank Road area and move in support of Heth, then busy holding off three full Federal divisions.  

Lane's brigade double-quicked past the Chewning farm and across the Tapp fields to the road. Wilcox directed the men toward the firing. The Tar Heels moved to the south side of the road and into the dense underbrush that characterized the region. Lane led his men deep into the woods toward the far right of Heth's battered line. The advance was slow as soldiers stumbled across swampy ground filled with brush and fallen timber. The 18th North Carolina struggled forward on the far right of the brigade. The approaching darkness made the advance even more tedious. The makeshift line of the brigade halted at a

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3 Robertson, A. P. Hill, 251.
5 Ibid., 220, 227.
Map 9. The Battle of the Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864. (Source: Robert Garth Scott. *Into the Wilderness with the Army of the Potomac* (Bloomington, 1985), 19.)
point 150 yards south of the Plank Road.\textsuperscript{6}

Around 6 p. m. the Confederates in Lane's brigade fired their first shots of the campaign. Opposing lines unleashed volley after volley into one another. Private Richard Reeves of Company E was shot while loading his rifle during this exchange. A bullet travelled through his bent right arm, leaving four wounds as a result. Reeves, bleeding heavily from a severed vein, staggered back toward the rear in search of medical assistance. The nature of the terrain made for confused fighting as officers fought with individual regiments instead of entire brigades. One soldier later recalled that the Wilderness was a "battle of brigades and regiments rather than of corps and divisions."\textsuperscript{7}

For a short time Col. Barry's men, together with the brigade sharpshooters, maintained a strong line on the right. The enemy soon threatened to sweep around the regiment's right. The colonel acted quickly by ordering the right two companies to swing back toward the rear to prevent a flank maneuver. The weight of the attack proved too much for the two companies. The combat on the right forced Barry to shift the entire unit. Men who had been looking east were now facing south. Federal reinforcements soon threatened the front and exposed left of the 18th North Carolina. Unable to hold the position any longer, Barry ordered a withdrawal. The soldiers in the regiment, without regard to formation, stumbled their way through the darkness across the boggy terrain and up to the high ground by the road. Once there the 18th North Carolina reformed behind a line of breastworks with Scales' brigade.\textsuperscript{8}

The fighting died out as it was after 9 p. m. and nothing more could be accomplished. Exhausted members of Wilcox's division bivouacked where their lines last halted. No effort

\textsuperscript{6} S. H. S. P., 1X (1881), 125.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.; Richard M. V. B. Reeves Reminiscence, Fredericksburg National Battlefield Park Collection; Battles and Leaders. IV, 122.

\textsuperscript{8} S. H. S. P., 1X (1881), 125-26.
was made to organize any line of defense for the morning. A. P. Hill explained to Wilcox that he expected Longstreet's corps to arrive during the night and relieve the worn-out brigades. When Wilcox further questioned the situation, Hill stressed Gen. Lee's apparent wishes that the men not be disturbed.⁹

Throughout the rest of the evening, men filtered back to the confused lines searching for their units. Lieutenant Colonel McLaurin of the 18th North Carolina had lost his bearings amid the fierce combat earlier that night and found himself behind the Union lines. McLaurin hid until around 11 P.M. when, under cover of darkness, he found the road and sprinted back to the Southern lines.¹⁰

Men in the 18th North Carolina were awakened on the 6th before daylight. Shadowy forms sat around camp waiting for the arrival of Longstreet's men. "Worn out from fatigue undergone on the previous day," the soldiers gathered what gear they could find in the pre-dawn darkness. Their guns were "out of ammunition and so badly fouled from the firing in the engagement of the 5th that but few of them would fire."¹¹

At 4:30 A.M. the Federals attacked Hill's scattered lines along the Plank Road. The sounds of combat sent men running for their units. Lane promptly formed his brigade as best he could in the confusion. He placed the 33rd, 18th, and 37th North Carolina in line south of the road facing east. A slight delay in the Federal advance gave Lane the opportunity to assemble those three regiments only. The other two remained in the rear during the fighting.¹²

Barry held his men steady and ordered them not to fire because he believed there

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⁹ Battles and Leaders, IV, 123; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 262.

¹⁰ Clark, N. C. Regiments, 47.

¹¹ Report of the 18th North Carolina, May 6 to July 28, 1864, James H. Lane Papers, Auburn University.

¹² Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers; S. H. S. P., 1X (1881), 126-27.
were Confederate troops in his front. Anxious soldiers watched as bluecoats moved up the road to their left and through the woods in front of them.

All at once the crack of gunfire exploded directly behind the 18th North Carolina. Federals responded by unloading minie balls into the left and front of the North Carolinians. The regiment was caught in a deadly crossfire. The left flank wavered and soon fell back under the direction of Col. Barry. Lieutenant Colonel McGill withdrew the right wing at the same time to avoid being exposed on his left. Private Alfred Proffit of Company D, in the confusion, felt the sting of a minie ball above his right eye. Bleeding profusely, Proffit made his way toward the nearest field hospital.13

The two wings of the regiment reached a line of breastworks thirty yards behind them. The enemy pursued so quickly, however, that the men did not have a chance to reform behind the logs. The small withdrawal turned into a general retreat as Confederates all along the Plank Road streamed toward the rear. McGill halted his companies after retreating 200 yards and turned them to charge the enemy. He change his mind before he could give the order. A large number of bluecoats off to the right made the assault "imprudent." McGill led the men 200 yards farther down the road. At that point the small squad came upon the lead brigade of Gen. Joseph Kershaw's division of Longstreet's corps near the hamlet of Parker's Store. McGill immediately reported to Kershaw and offered the services of his men to the general. Kershaw, furious at the sight of so many stragglers, refused McGill's offer and ordered anyone not in his division to clear the vicinity.

Exhausted and out of danger, McGill's portion of the 18th North Carolina rejoined the rest of the regiment a little farther down the Plank Road. Lane reformed the remainder of the brigade and marched north on a farm lane to the Chewning farm to reconnect the Second and Third Corps. The battle had ended for the North Carolinians. Tired soldiers

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13 Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers; A. N. Proffit to sister, May 8, 1864, S.H.C.
spent the rest of the day constructing breastworks along their line and watching as Longstreet's fresh brigades pushed the Federals back to their Brock Road line.\textsuperscript{14}

In two days of combat the regiment lost 56 out of approximately 240 soldiers. The battle-weary unit bivouacked in the Chewning fields for the next two days while both armies recovered from the bloodbath in the Wilderness. On the afternoon of May 8, Lane led the brigade back to the Plank Road and then east toward the Brock Road.\textsuperscript{15}

Instead of finding Federals entrenched along the road, Lane's men were surprised to discover that the Yankees had disappeared. Grant's men had marched out of the Wilderness on the 7th in the direction of Spotsylvania Court House. Lee responded by sending Longstreet's corps, under Gen. Richard Anderson, on a fast march to the courthouse in an effort to keep between the Union army and Richmond.

Around noon on May 9, Lane's brigade arrived at Spotsylvania and immediately began building breastworks just north of the town. All day men in the 18th North Carolina chopped down trees and fashioned strong defenses for what promised to be another bloody battle. Early the next morning the North Carolinians moved farther north and formed in line on the left of Gen. George H. Steuart's brigade of Edward Johnson's division at the base of the inverted U-shaped salient known as the "Mule Shoe." Lane's men now constituted the far right of the Southern line.\textsuperscript{16}

Lane studied the terrain around his brigade and spent the 11th positioning his regiments. The 28th and the 18th North Carolina moved forward of the other three regiments on to small rise to ensure a good connection with Steuart's brigade. These two regiments faced directly east and were separated from the other three by a small creek

\textsuperscript{14} Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers: \textit{S. H. S. P.}, IX (1881), 127.

\textsuperscript{15} Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 305-423. The 18th North Carolina suffered the following casualties in the Battle of the Wilderness: 6 killed, 33 wounded, and 17 captured.

running into the line. Lane placed the remaining three units across the stream behind breastworks that faced toward the northeast. In this formation the three regiments would be able to support the right flank of the 18th North Carolina.\textsuperscript{17}

A cool and damp daybreak on May 12 revealed nothing as a dense fog settled over the land. McGill, in his report, remembered the fog being so thick that "it was scarcely possible to distinguish an object at a distance of 10 paces."\textsuperscript{18}

All at once the quietness ended with a powerful Union assault on the northwest face of the salient. Bluecoats from Burnside's IX Corps smashed through the thin line and swept toward the southeast through Johnson's division. Around 5 A.M., the mass of Union troops reached the far left of Lane's line. Remnants of Steuart's brigade streamed behind the 18th North Carolina followed by pursuing Federals. Barry's men quickly found themselves virtually surrounded with bullets flying all around them. In the confusion, almost half of the regiment was captured. Included in that number was Pvt. John Frink, the regimental flag bearer.\textsuperscript{19}

Lieutenant McLaurin managed to gather a small portion of the regiment and charge in a desperate counterattack. The small effort succeeded in throwing panic into the already disorganized Federal attack. Enemy soldiers, having reached the limit of their advance, fled the area in fear of capture or death. McLaurin's men charged so fast that they overtook several of their own regiment being taken to the Union lines as prisoners. Some of the intended prisoners escaped in the ensuing confusion and rejoined the regiment. Private John Kinlaw of Company K evaded his captors and retrieved his knapsack on the way back.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 146.

\textsuperscript{18} Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers.

to the brigade.\textsuperscript{20}

Members of the 18th North Carolina filtered across the creek and formed on the left of the brigade as it prepared to launch a stronger counterattack. Wilcox rushed reinforcements to the broken line and gave Lane the support he needed. With a loud yell the North Carolinians jumped over the works in front of them and smashed into the Federals. The Confederates drove them out of the salient and continued on their heels for 300 yards before halting and returning to the safety of the breastworks. Bone-tired soldiers in Lane's brigade moved back to the position they held near the courthouse on the 11th and rested in the midst of a midday rainstorm.\textsuperscript{21}

As the day wore on, combat continued on the western face of the Mule Shoe. In mid-afternoon, Wilcox ordered Lane's regiments back to the position they had held earlier. Lee hoped to relieve pressure on Ewell's divisions by attacking the Union lines on the eastern side of the salient. At 3 p.m., Lane sent his skirmishers forward into a patch of woods to brush aside any enemy pickets in the area. Once the woods were cleared, Lane led the rest of the brigade forward. In a clearing north of the woods, a six-gun Union battery continued to pound the rear of Ewell's lines. Lane had orders to capture those guns, while being supported by a brigade from William Mahone's division.\textsuperscript{22}

The 18th North Carolina, second from the left in the brigade, passed through the trees on a line straight for the guns. Over-anxious soldiers in the regiment began yelling before they cleared the woods. As a result the Union gunners turned four of the cannon on the brigade and fired into the approaching Confederates. The brigade broke into a run after

\textsuperscript{20} Clark, N. C. Regiments, 51.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 50-51; S. H. S. P., IX (1881), 147.

the guns fired and soon overcame the battery. Private James Wheeler of Company E in the 18th North Carolina proudly grabbed the battery's flag and carried it for the rest of the day.\textsuperscript{23}

Lane continued to direct the brigade north after the guns were silenced. The soldiers moved across the field toward another patch of woods. As the 18th North Carolina approached the trees, firing broke out behind it. Bewildered soldiers looked back and saw that Mahone's men were shooting in their direction from the woods across the field. Not only had Mahone's troops not followed Lane, but they were now firing into their own men. Commotion in the woods in Lane's front explained why. Burnside had chosen that moment to attack the Confederate breastworks along the eastern face of the salient. Blue lines pushed their way through the woods under fire from all angles. Lane, realizing the damage he could inflict by assaulting the left flank and rear of the charging Federals, ordered an attack. The five North Carolina regiments unloaded several quick volleys into the enemy's ranks before they advanced. Stunned Union soldiers watched as a lone brigade swept toward them from the left.\textsuperscript{24}

Although the 18th North Carolina boasted only 29 men, the shock value of the surprise flank attack contributed to its success. Southerners anxious to avenge the loss of half their regiment captured large groups of amazed Federals. Lane's regiments succeeded in taking close to 400 prisoners as well as three Union battle flags. Lack of support from Mahone, and Union reinforcements on the field, soon forced Lane's brigade to withdraw. The Confederates slowly pulled back across the field, their numbers swollen by Union prisoners.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{S. H. S. P.}, 19 (1881), 148; Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{S. H. S. P.}, 19 (1881), 148; Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers.

\textsuperscript{25} Lane's Report, Sept. 16, 1864, Early Papers.
Feelings toward Mahone's men turned ugly in the 18th North Carolina. McGill, on his way back to the brigade, got into a heated argument with Gen. Mahone over the conduct of his men. When Mahone rode up to McGill and demanded to know what he was doing retreating, McGill replied that he was moving to the rear to rejoin his unit. The general then inquired as to why the "damned North Carolinians were deserting his brave Virginians!" McGill quickly fired back that, if anything, it was the other way around. This brought on a general verbal attack against Lane's brigade that McGill could no longer tolerate. After explaining the imprudence of continuing the fight, McGill told the general that he could "go to hell!" while McGill himself would return to his brigade. McGill, having said this, led the thirty or so men who had gathered around the quarreling pair back to the brigade.26

The decimated 18th North Carolina spent the next nine days bivouacked near the courthouse. One hundred and forty-one members of the regiment had been captured in the morning assault. The small group of survivors spent the time building breastworks in anticipation of another Federal assault. Grant, however, chose not to attack. Instead, on the morning of May 20, his troops filed out of their positions and began marching southeast around Lee's right flank. Lee realized after the Wilderness that his opponent's plan was to make his way slowly toward Richmond by constantly sweeping around the Confederate right. On the morning of the 21st, when he was sure that Grant's forces were moving, Lee opted to march his army to a strong position south of the North Anna River, thereby blocking the Federal advance.27

Wilcox ordered Lane to take his brigade and move south of the courthouse to ascertain the strength of the Union line in that sector. The regiments formed alongside a road and advanced in two lines toward the enemy's works. The 18th North Carolina

26 Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers.
followed on the left of the second line as the soldiers in front hacked their way through an almost impenetrable abatis. The Tar Heels then drove back a strong line of Federal skirmishers from behind the works. Lane's men remained in possession of the breastworks until just before dark, when Wilcox ordered the brigade to join the rest of the army in its march to the North Anna.\textsuperscript{28}

Hill's corps moved south, covering thirty miles in three days, until it reached Anderson's Station on the Virginia Central Railroad. The rest of the army encamped farther east at Hanover Junction. The North Anna River now separated the two armies. Lee once again stood between Grant and Richmond.\textsuperscript{29}

The morning of May 23 gave promise to a quiet day of rest. The 18th North Carolina set up camp in an oak wood along the banks of a small tributary of the South Anna. Empty canteens were soon filled. Lieutenant McLaurin was enjoying a break from the rigors of marching when a private approached him and asked to borrow his pistol. McLaurin handed the man his Colt, and without an explanation the soldier disappeared in the direction of the stream. Moments later the sharp report of the gun broke the silence. A short time later, an angry farmer rode into the camp and complained to Gen. Lane that his soldiers were raiding the farmer's flock of sheep. Lane at once ordered an inspection of the entire camp to uncover the guilty party. He was soon found. The guilty soldier was made to walk in a circle with a sign around his neck declaring his crime while carrying the stolen meat. The farmer was so moved that he not only begged Lane to pardon the man, he also offered the rest of the flock to the hungry soldiers.\textsuperscript{30}

Later that afternoon, enemy movement near Jericho's Ford, three miles northwest of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers, \textit{S. H. S. P.}, IX (1881), 154. Casualties in the 18th North Carolina were 1 man wounded and 3 men captured.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Robertson, \textit{A. P. Hill}, 274.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 54-55.
\end{itemize}
Hill's men, prompted Hill to notify Lee of the possibility of an attempted river crossing. Lee, believing that Grant would cross due north and move on Hanover Junction, expressed the opinion that the Federal's activity at the ford was only a feint. Hill remained unconvinced by Lee's theory. As there were no Confederate outposts at Jericho's Ford, he decided to send Wilcox's division to the river to watch the bluecoats.\(^{31}\)

Wilcox's men trudged west along the railroad until they reached Noel's Station, where they had bivouacked after crossing the North Anna the previous day. The line then moved north beside the road to Jericho's Ford. Lane's men filed into position on the far right of the division. The 18th advanced on the brigade's right, while the 37th North Carolina moved on its immediate left. The soldiers marched in line of battle across open farmland for a mile before coming to a thick band of woods that stood between them and the river. Colonel Barry's men entered the woods and immediately encountered a line of enemy skirmishers. A brief exchange of fire succeeded in driving the Yankees toward the river. The North Carolinians advanced for about 400 yards when a strong line of Federals suddenly appeared in their front deep in the woods. The bulk of Maj. Gen. G. K. Warren's V Corps had crossed the shallow river earlier in the day and was now facing Wilcox's lone division.

All at once the Union line fired a volley at Lane's brigade. The crack of musketry and the sound of minie balls striking the trees around the men affected even the heartiest veteran. Men of the 37th North Carolina could not handle the situation. The entire regiment broke and ran toward the rear. Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina, seeing this, "bleated like sheep" at the fleeing North Staters. Lane, with a gaping hole in his line, withdrew the rest of the brigade back to the field beyond the woods.

Lines reformed and entered the woods a second time. The results were the same. The overmatched brigade fell back under the weight of Warren's troops. Lane then

\(^{31}\) Robertson, *A. P. Hill*, 274.
established a strong line of skirmishers on the edge of the woods. There soldiers remained until dark, collecting the dead and wounded of the brigade. The 18th North Carolina lost four men wounded and two men captured in the small fight. At 11 P.M., Heth's division relieved Wilcox's exhausted brigades. Lane's men limped back to Noel's Station and began building breastworks. Before dawn, however, Hill ordered Wilcox to return to Anderson's Station.\textsuperscript{32}

The Confederates remained in their position south of the river until late on the 27th. Grant decided to continue toward the southeast. In response, Lee moved his troops by forced march to the south bank of Totopotomoy Creek, four miles north of Mechanicsville. On May 30, Hill's men reached the Pole Green Church area. The next day the 18th North Carolina suffered heavy skirmish and artillery fire while entrenching. Eight members of the unit were wounded in the all-day affair.\textsuperscript{33}

Lee continued to counter Grant's moves by extending his lines toward the Chickahominy east of Mechanicsville. On June 2, Hill's troops marched to the far right of the army's line on the heights above Boatswain's Creek, the focal point of the 1862 battle of Gaines' Mill. The 18th North Carolina set to work fortifying the familiar ground against the strong Federal line to the east. For the next two days, the regiment had minor brushes with skirmishers and sharpshooters. Its total losses were two men killed and five men wounded. Most important, Gen. Lane fell with wounds severe enough for him to miss the next two and a half months of the war. In Lane's absence, Col. Barry commanded the brigade.\textsuperscript{34}

After the Battle of Cold Harbor, the brigade marched across the Chickahominy River and bivouacked near Frazier's Farm. On the morning of June 13, the regiments formed in

\textsuperscript{32} S. H. S. P., IX (1881), 241-42; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 55; Jordan, N. C. Troops, 305-423.

\textsuperscript{33} Robertson, A. P. Hill, 277; Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers.

\textsuperscript{34} O. R., XXXVI, pt. 1, 1032; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 56; Jordan, N. C. Troops, 305-423; S. H. S. P., IX (1881), 245.
line of battle and moved toward the intersection of the Willis Church and Long Bridge Road. At the crossroads known as Riddell's Shop, the 18th North Carolina advanced in the face of heavy cannon fire and engaged enemy cavalry, losing three men wounded in the sharp fight.35

The 18th North Carolina camped in the Riddell's Shop vicinity for the next five days. Under Hill's guidance, the soldiers pushed east in search of the advancing Union army. On June 16, Lee learned that Grant's men had started crossing to the southside of the James River. Grant's objective was Petersburg. Hill began moving his corps toward the Chaffin's Bluff crossing of the James at 3 A.M. on the 18th. Lee was now racing his army to join P. G. T. Beauregard's small force before the Federals could capture the important rail city. Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina marched all day until they halted at Battery No. 37, south of the city. The regiment would be engaged in the struggle for Petersburg for the remaining nine and a half months of the war. For the 18th North Carolina, and the Confederacy, it was merely a matter of time.

Chapter Seven - In the Trenches

On the evening of June 18, Lane's men filed into the growing maze of earthworks that protected the vital rail center of Petersburg. Grant's initial attempts to strike fast and capture the city had failed. With the arrival of Lee's army, the Union commander was forced to alter his strategy. Both armies began constructing lines that they would occupy for the next nine and a half months. The siege of Petersburg had begun.

The 18th North Carolina had been in position for less than twenty-four hours when the soldiers marched from the line to a point three miles south of Petersburg on the Weldon Railroad. Federal cavalry units threatened to cut off that important link with North Carolina. The regiment bivouacked for two days beside the tracks in anticipation of battle. On the night of the 21st, Gen. Wilcox led the division back to the line near Battery No. 34. Early the next day, officers in the Lane's brigade assembled the regiments and prepared to move south and intercept an enemy column en route to Weldon Railroad.1

Wilcox's men supported Mahone's division as it attacked Union troops east of the railroad. By 2 P.M. Mahone's Confederates had pushed most of the Federals back toward the Jerusalem Plank Road. Lane's brigade followed behind Mahone and brushed aside enemy rearguard skirmishers. The late afternoon action cost the 18th North Carolina one man killed and three wounded.2

After dark the brigade returned to the Petersburg lines. For the next ten days the 18th North Carolina enjoyed a rest from seemingly endless campaigning. Badly needed recruits and returning veterans trickled into camp and increased the battered regiment's strength to nearly fifty men. During the days soldiers continued to construct trenches

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1 Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers; Robertson, A. P. Hill. 284.

that extended southwest of the city. At night they watched as Federal troops built their lines parallel to the Confederate works.3

On the morning of July 2, Lane's men marched through Petersburg toward the James river crossing at Chaffin's Bluff. Federal movements on the peninsula prompted Lee to seek reinforcements for the thin defenses east of Richmond. A. P. Hill responded by sending Wilcox's division. The 18th North Carolina arrived on the north side of the James after a "hard, hot march." The regiment occupied a position above New Market Heights, east of Riddell's Shop. While there, soldiers settled into a peaceful routine of picket duty for most of July.4

The restful period ended abruptly on the 28th. Union troops, moving west on the Charles City Road, threatened to break the Southern line and march into Richmond. Wilcox rushed Lane's men north to form the right of a Confederate counterattack. At noon the Southern line advanced. The ground on the right delayed the Tar Heel brigade. Men struggled forward in the heat through a "close mass of woods." Recent rains had turned the fields into mud bogs. Lieutenant Col. McGill led his men out into an open field. The enemy's line stood on the opposite side. McGill immediately ordered the regiment forward. North Carolinians, screaming the rebel yell at the top of their lungs, charged across the wet field and temporarily drove back the Union line. McGill halted the excited unit when bluecoats on the right threatened to cut off the regiment. Under "a most galling fire," the 18th North Carolina withdrew back across the field to the safety of the woods. The regiment lost twenty-two men in the sharp fight. The lone death was that of 2nd Lt. F. J. Simpson of Company H. Simpson fell while leading his company across the field in the

4 Clark, N. C. Regiments, 56; Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864, Lane Papers.
charge.\textsuperscript{5}

Two days later the brigade, now under Col. William Barbour of the 28th North Carolina, began to return to the Petersburg lines. When the soldiers reached Chaffin's Bluff, however, Gen. Ewell ordered the regiments to remain on the north side of the river. Confused men marched into nearby Fort Harrison. There they bivouacked until August 1, when Lane's brigade moved back to its old position north of New Market Heights. There men settled into the easy routine of picket duty. "We are now on the line enjoying ourselves fine," one man wrote. "We draw plenty to eat and have nothing to do but cook and eat."\textsuperscript{6}

The peace and quiet came to an end on August 16, when the Tar Heels moved toward another confrontation with the enemy. General Winfield Hancock's plan was to push up the Darbytown Road and sweep around the Confederate left flank. Lee, realizing the enemy's intent, ordered Wilcox's men to reinforce Maj. Gen. Charles Fields' division on the far left, just north of the Darbytown Road. Lane's brigade arrived on the left of the line in midafternoon. Federal troops had already overpowered Ambrose Wright's Georgia brigade. The Union soldiers now stood poised for an attack on the vulnerable Confederate line along Bailey's Creek.\textsuperscript{7}

General Lee personally directed the disposition of troops as they arrived on the field. He placed Lane's unit on the right of a three-brigade line. McGill formed the 18th North Carolina on the far right of the brigade. At 5 p.m., the Confederates advanced. Soldiers brushed aside Federal skirmishers as they moved steadily toward the Union line. McGill led his men across the field and into the hastily formed Federal works. While

\textsuperscript{5} Caldwell, \textit{South Carolina Brigade}, 222-23; Report of 18th N. C., May 6 to July 28, 1864. Lane Papers.

\textsuperscript{6} Caldwell, \textit{South Carolina Brigade}, 227; A. N. Proffit to sister, Aug. 3, 1864, S.H.C.

\textsuperscript{7} Noah Andre Trudeau, \textit{The Last Citadel: Petersburg, Virginia, June 1864 - April 1865} (Boston, 1991), 153, 155; Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 57.
crossing the field, Tar Heels were surprised at the sight of dead and wounded Negro soldiers. This was their first exposure to "blue-black birds." These Union reserve regiments offered little resistance to the veteran North Carolinians as they stormed the works. The victorious Southerners halted after recapturing Wright's old position along Bailey's Creek near Fussell's Mill. The day had gone well for the 18th North Carolina. The unit took over twenty prisoners, while losing only one killed and one wounded.  

Following the battle of Fussell's Mill, Wilcox's division returned to New Market Heights. There the soldiers enjoyed a brief rest. Although casualties had been light in Lane's brigade, the recent battle had stripped the unit of its commanding officer. Colonel Barbour suffered a wound in the fight along Bailey's Creek. The War Department quickly filled the vacant post by placing Brig. Gen. James Connor in temporary command of the North Carolina brigade. In a driving rainstorm on August 18, Connor led the men across the James River and through Petersburg back to the far right of the Confederate line. Weary and rain-soaked soldiers arrived near Battery 45 late the next day.  

A. P. Hill's corps watched carefully for Federal movements along the Weldon Railroad. Southern cavalry regiments combed the area in search of advancing enemy troops. The 18th North Carolina spent most of its time in support of these mounted scouts. By August 24, Confederate horsemen had located a large Federal force near Reams' Station, fourteen miles south of Petersburg.  

Wilcox's division assembled and marched from its trenches late that afternoon. The brigades moved southwest of the city for several miles until they reached a road running east to Reams' Station. That night Lane's exhausted brigade slept in fields around Holly

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8 Report of 18th N. C., Sept. 20, 1864, Lane Papers: Clark, N. C. Regiments, 57.

Church, several miles west of the railroad.¹⁰

After a casual start at 7 A.M. on the 25th, the Confederate troops continued east. Hill led the column across Rowanty Creek and then halted the men for a two hour rest. The march resumed, then stopped again less than a mile from the railroad. Southern troops broke column and formed in lines perpendicular to the road. Lane's brigade moved through an uncultivated field north of the road and halted on the western edge of a thick line of woods. The 18th North Carolina formed on the right flank of the brigade. Soldiers in the regiment stood in the shade of the trees for several hours and watched as Hill's lines south of the road attempted to break through the Union works along the railroad.¹¹

By late afternoon, the first two assaults having failed, Hill ordered Wilcox's men to charge the Federal right flank. At 5 P.M. Lane's Tar Heels led the division's advance toward the Federal line. The brigade started before the other units because the terrain promised slow movement for the North Carolinians. The ground in front of Lane's brigade was choked by underbrush and littered with dense patches of enemy abatis. The 18th North Carolina slashed its way through the brush in small squads. The terrain prevented strict line formation. As soldiers cleared the woods, they began to struggle through the thirty or so yards of felled trees and sharpened branches. Men hacked their way at first, then crawled under the thickest patches of abatis. Those who made it to the other side first found cover from enemy fire and waited for the rest of the brigade before charging the Federal line.¹²

After reforming, the 18th North Carolina stormed the enemy works across the railroad tracks. Screaming men poured into the enemy line, clubbing and stabbing at the


¹¹ Report of Gen. Wilcox, Nov. 16, 1864, LHQ.

Union soldiers. In the confusion, the 18th North Carolina became separated from the brigade and continued forward with Cooke's men. Worn-out Federals fell back under the weight of Wilcox's fresh assault. Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina chased the fleeing bluecoats for over a third of a mile before stopping. Over 2,000 enemy soldiers were prisoners of the Third Corps. The assault ended with the battered Federals retreating to the east. Tired yet excited men in the 18th North Carolina halted near an abandoned Union battery.

Out of twenty-five men engaged in the battle of Reams' Station, the regiment lost one man killed and five men wounded. Seemingly light considering the vicious nature of the battle, the six losses stripped the unit of over twenty percent of its total strength. In the midst of a heavy downpour, the tiny regiment left the area that night and marched through the next day until reaching the lines near Battery 45 on the evening of the 26th.\textsuperscript{13}

Following the victory at Reams' Station, Gen. Lee showered Hill's corps with praise. In a letter to Zebulon Vance, he congratulated the governor on the performance of the Tar Heel soldiers. "The steady courage" of the North Carolinians, Lee wrote, "elicited the warm commendation of their Corps and Division Commanders and the admiration of the army."\textsuperscript{14}

While basking in the light of high praise, Lane's brigade received more good news. General Lane, fully recovered from wounds suffered at Cold Harbor, reassumed command of the brigade four days after Reams' Station. The immeasurable boost in morale after Lane's return strengthened the resolve of the North Carolinians at a time when the future appeared uncertain.

The 18th North Carolina spent much of September on the picket line. Private Alfred Proffit in Company D complained to his sister about the tense nature of such duty. At the

\textsuperscript{13} ibid., 155; Report of 18th N. C., Aug. 28, 1864, Lane Papers; Report of Gen. Wilcox, Nov. 16, 1864, LHQ.

\textsuperscript{14} O. R., XLII, pt. 2, 1207.
same time he assured her that the men were eating well. In this relatively peaceful atmosphere, the regiment gladly accepted fifty-two recruits from Camp Holmes in North Carolina. The regiment that began the war with 1,000 men now consisted of approximately 80 soldiers.\footnote{A. N. Proffit to sister, Sept. 3, 1864, S.H.C.; Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 305-423.}

By mid-September, Federal troops resumed active operations in front of Lane's portion of the line. Proffit reported: "Skirmishing and shelling is going on all the time." On the last day of the month, Lane's brigade again started toward the north side of the James River. The North Carolinians had reached the banks of the Appomattox when they were ordered back to the lines southwest of Petersburg. The 18th North Carolina marched down the Boydton Plank Road to the intersection of the plank and Church Road.\footnote{A. N. Proffit to sister, Sept. 16, 1864, S.H.C.; \textit{S. H. S. P.}, XVII (1890), 411; Report of Gen. Wilcox, Nov. 16, 1864, LHQ.}

Earlier that day, Gen. Wade Hampton's cavalry had reported a large enemy force moving up the Church Road toward the Confederate lines. Portions of the Union V and IX Corps had already driven in Southern pickets and were continuing along the road. Lane and McGowan quickly placed their brigades in line on both sides of the Church Road and studied the ground in front of them.

The country road descended a small hill toward the southeast. At the base of the hill the road crossed a boggy stream fringed with a thick growth of brambles and bushes. On the other side of the stream, dismounted cavalry pickets waited anxiously in pits on both sides of the road. Three hundred yards farther up a gentle slope, on the right side of the road, stood the Jones house. By the time Lane's men had reached the plank-Church intersection, a line of Federal skirmishers stood in the Jones house fields. Without delay, Lane ordered the brigade to move forward and occupy the picket line across the stream.

\textbf{Major Thomas Wooten's brigade sharpshooters marched up the slope to engage...}
the enemy skirmishers. While Wooten's men brushed aside the thin Federal line, Lane formed his men in line of battle on the right side of the Church Road. The 18th North Carolina anchored the left flank of the brigade on the edge of the road.

Soon after Lane's men formed in the swale, Wooten's skirmishers appeared at the top of the hill moving back toward the Confederate line. Wooten's small force had run into a line of Federal infantry in the woods south of the Jones house and had been forced back by the large force. Wilcox acted quickly. He immediately ordered Lane and McGowan to meet the enemy near the Jones house. The 18th North Carolina, with the rest of the brigade, moved up the hill and stopped a hundred yards short of the Federal line. The brigade unleashed several quick volleys, then swept forward in a well-coordinated charge. The sight of two full Confederate brigades bearing down on them proved too much for many of the Union soldiers. Within minutes, the Jones field was clear of bluecoats.17

General Lane recalled how "oil-cloths, knapsacks, and the like, were scattered in every direction by the retreating foe." Some of the knapsacks straps had been cut in the frantic confusion of the Federal retreat. The 18th North Carolina captured almost 120 prisoners near the Jones house in the victorious charge. Without wasting any more time, Lane led the regiments after the Federals. The North Carolina brigade moved toward the woods past the house, where Union soldiers stood in a makeshift line behind piled up fence rails.18

The Confederate line charged into the woods and overwhelmed the fragmented Federals. Lane's men followed on the heels of the retreating enemy. Pursuit ended on the other side of the woods in the fields around the Pegram farmhouse. Behind that house, a stronger Union line stood waiting for the Southerners.

At this point, hoping to initiate a general charge, McGill led a portion of the 18th

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17 Report of Gen. Wilcox, Nov. 16, 1864, LHQ; Report of 18th N. C., Oct. 6, 1864, Lane Papers.

18 S. H. S. P., IX (1881), 355; Report of 18th N. C., Oct. 6, 1864, Lane Papers; Report of Gen. Wilcox, Nov. 16, 1864.
North Carolina toward the enemy line. A small squad formed around the regimental colors, while the rest of the unit moved ahead in a disorganized fashion. A lack of commissioned officers and the large number of untested recruits prevented McGill from advancing a cohesive unit. In the confusion, men moved in every direction instead of in a compact line. Sergeant Jesse Bloodworth, one of the few veteran leaders left in Company K, fell wounded while attempting to maintain formation around the regimental colors. The ferocity of Federal rifle fire and the fact that the regiment was unsupported forced McGill to cancel the assault and return to the main Confederate line near the edge of the woods. After pulling back, the 18th North Carolina remained in that position until dark. Then the entire brigade withdrew to the Jones fields and bivouacked for the night.\(^{19}\)

The Confederates renewed that attack at 7:00 the next morning. For three hours the two opposing forces fought around the Pegram house until the Southerners finally succeeded in capturing the Union works. For the remainder of the day, spent soldiers in the 18th North Carolina lounged around the Pegram house. That night Lane marched the brigade back to the Jones field, where the men slept despite a steady downpour. Early on October 2, weary Confederates trudged back to the trenches near Battery 45.\(^{20}\)

The two-day battle of Jones' Farm, in which the 18th North Carolina suffered nineteen casualties, signaled the end of active operations between opposing armies in 1864. Both sides settled into prolonged picket duty marked with occasional skirmishing. There would be no withdrawing into the safety of winter quarters. Lane's brigade constructed log huts along the Church Road, but picket fire never allowed soldiers to relax in the camps. As temperatures dropped, so did the morale of members of the 18th North Carolina. Private Proffit wrote home in a dejected mood: "We have but little wood and the wind begins to

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\(^{19}\) Report of 18th N. C., Oct. 6, 1864, Lane Papers; *S. H. S. P.*, IX (1881), 356.

\(^{20}\) Report of 18th N. C., Oct. 6, 1864, Lane Papers; *S. H. S. P.*, IX (1881), 356.
blow pretty cool. No prospect of going in winter quarters this winter."\textsuperscript{21}

On December 8, the 18th North Carolina participated in a futile expedition to Jarratt's Station on the Weldon Railroad. The regiment marched south through driving sleet and snow for two days before arriving at the railroad. Expecting to find enemy cavalry, McGill's soldiers found instead several miles of destroyed track. Confederate skirmishers had already brushed aside the Union horsemen. Men shivered at night far from the relative comfort of their Petersburg huts. Lane's brigade pursued the enemy until the 14th, when the miserable soldiers returned to the Battery 45 lines.\textsuperscript{22}

The regiment passed the hard winter of 1864-1865 as best it could. Packages arriving from home brightened dreary days. To boost morale further, Lane offered the use of his headquarters wagons to ensure faster mail pickup. On rare occasions, and to the delight of his men, Lane procured a delicacy known in the camps as "London Times." This meal consisted of canned cooked beef shipped from England. To Lee's hungry soldiers, beef of any kind was a prized meal.\textsuperscript{23}

By the end of 1864, the ranks of the 18th North Carolina swelled with new arrivals. The unit mustered close to 240 men. Not long after, however, disillusioned and exhausted soldiers began deserting in large numbers throughout the army. Over the first three months of 1865, eighty-one members of the 18th North Carolina were dropped from the regiment's rolls. Recruits and veterans alike deserted the Confederacy before its final hour. At the end of March, just prior to the final Union attacks, the 18th North Carolina contained approximately 155 soldiers.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} Report of Gen. Wilcox, Nov. 16, 1864, LHQ; A. N. Proffit to sister, Oct. 14, 1864, S.H.C.

\textsuperscript{22} Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 58; Caldwell, \textit{South Carolina Brigade}, 244-45.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{S. H. S. P.}, XVIII (1890), 420.

\textsuperscript{24} Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 305-423.
Map 13. Position of Lane's brigade on the Petersburg line, April 2, 1865.
(Source: Caldwell, South Carolina Brigade, endpaper.)
The final campaign of the war in Virginia opened on March 25 with a Confederate assault east of Petersburg. In desperation, Lee had ordered an attack on the Federal line at Fort Stedman. The charge failed miserably. Grant responded that afternoon by launching an attack on the far right of Hill's line near Hatcher's Run. The Southern flank held, but Grant's army moved within striking distance of Hill's main line. Confederates manning weak defenses on the right were separated in many places by several yards. Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina stood twelve paces apart in their portion of the line.25

At 9 P.M. on April 1, Federal artillery opened fire on Hill's thin line. Shells burst all around the North Carolinians throughout the evening. The small 18th North Carolina occupied a position directly in front of Fort Gregg, and second to the left in the brigade formation. Just prior to the resumption of active operations, the regiment underwent its final command change. McGill resigned in late March, leaving Maj. Wooten in charge. Though Wooten's rank entitled him to regimental command, his involvement with the brigade sharpshooters prevented him from assuming McGill's vacant post. Instead, Lt. Col. John Poisson of Company G, recently promoted, served as the regiment's commanding officer.26

Around 2 A.M. on the 2nd, enemy picket fire opened on Lane's brigade. A little over two hours later, the entire Federal VI Corps assaulted the right flank of Wilcox's division. The outnumbered Confederate line broke; the division was cut in half. Men hurried to reform in improvised defenses. The 18th North Carolina, to the left of the break, attempted to establish a new line near the Jones house, but the Tar Heels were soon driven up the Church Road toward Fort Gregg. Together with the 33rd North Carolina and Thomas' brigade, the regiment reformed in front of the fort and mounted a counterattack. The maneuver temporarily cleared the area of blueclad soldiers. Renewed Union efforts against


26 S. H. S. P., X (1882), 57; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 63.
the small force splintered the Southern line. Most of the 18th North Carolina withdrew to nearby Battery 45, while a small portion of the unit retreated over the parapets and into Fort Gregg.\textsuperscript{27}

Federal troops quickly swarmed around Fort Gregg. Repeated assaults on the small fort met with failure as members of assorted Confederate commands held off advancing bluecoats. Lane, briefly directixing defenses in the fort, proudly recalled how soldiers from his brigade "bayoneted many of the enemy as they mounted the parapet." After beating back countless waves of Federals in vicious hand-to-hand combat, the weary occupants of Fort Gregg surrendered. Of the many Confederates captured in the fort, fifty-four belonged to the 18th North Carolina.\textsuperscript{28}

Worn-out and confused members of the regiment not in Fort Gregg pulled back to the lines behind Battery 45. General Wilcox rallied remnants of the division and formed as strong a defense as possible. Before long, survivors from the struggle in Fort Gregg, including Gen. Lane, joined Wilcox's men. For the rest of the day, the 18th North Carolina remained in position behind the makeshift line. As night fell, the tired Confederate army began the evacuation of Petersburg.\textsuperscript{29}

Lee hoped that by moving west the army could reach Amelia Court House, resupply, then follow the Richmond and Danville Railroad southwest to a junction with Joseph Johnston's army in North Carolina. On the dreary night of April 2, the 12,500 defenders of Petersburg filed across the Appomattox River en route to fresh supplies at Amelia. Progress was slow as the roads became clogged with wagons, guns, and soldiers. The remnants of Wilcox's division marched as a part of Longstreet's corps, A. P. Hill having

\textsuperscript{27} S. H. S. P., X (1882), 57; Freeman, \textit{Lee's Lieutenants}, III, 680.

\textsuperscript{28} S. H. S. P., X (1882), 58; Jordan, \textit{N. C. Troops}, 305-423.

\textsuperscript{29} Clark, \textit{N. C. Regiments}, 61; S. H. S. P., X (1882), 58.
been killed earlier that morning in the last battles around Petersburg.\textsuperscript{30}

Soldiers in the 18th North Carolina grew more hungry with every step. Before leaving the Petersburg lines, each man in the unit received only a half pound of cornmeal and four ounces of meat as rations for the long march. The soldiers were not overly concerned since they expected an abundant supply of food would be waiting for them at Amelia. These expectations were dashed, however, when the army trudged into town and found that no supplies had been delivered. On the night of April 4, soldiers in Company D sat around a campfire and "fried the meat in a tin can and poured in the meal with some water, made mush and ate."\textsuperscript{31}

Early on April 5, the Southerners started southwest beside the course of the railroad. However, Federal cavalry under Phil Sheridan cut off the Confederate route at Burkeville. Lee immediately altered his plans. Instead of continuing toward Danville, the Army of Northern Virginia would move west to Farmville. That town rested on the Southside Railroad, which ran to Lynchburg. From Farmville, Lee hoped to lead the army farther west and away from pursuing Federals.\textsuperscript{32}

Constant skirmishing with Union cavalry on the left of the Confederate columns slowed the advance to Farmville. On the afternoon of the 6th, Longstreet's footsore men entered the town. Behind them, Ewell's entire corps had been cut off and captured along the banks of Sayler's Creek, several miles east of Farmville. Almost a third of the Army of Northern Virginia was gone. All that remained of the once-powerful Confederate infantry were two corps under Longstreet and John B. Gordon.\textsuperscript{33}


\textsuperscript{32} Freeman, \textit{Lee's Lieutenants}, III, 693-94.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 699, 711.
Efforts to feed the starving men failed once again. Southern troops moving east of the town were unable to destroy High Bridge before Federal cavalry arrived. As blue horsemen crossed the bridge, Lee ordered the army to resume its march without delay. Hungry soldiers in the 18th North Carolina passed through Farm City deep discouraged at another failed opportunity to eat.\textsuperscript{34}

For the next two days, Lee drove the withered Confederate army west toward another supply depot at Appomattox Station. Federal pressure from the rear and from the south prevented any rest. One member of the 18th North Carolina recalled: "On our march to Appomattox Court House we pushed hard, marching and fighting with little time to sleep and almost nothing to eat."\textsuperscript{35}

Confederates too tired and too hungry to continue the advance collapsed by the side of the road, while others who had simply lost heart scattered into the countryside. Only the most loyal and dedicated members of the 18th North Carolina made the final leg of the journey.

On the morning of April 9, the 18th North Carolina formed in line of battle for the last time on a ridge just north of the small village of Appomattox Court House. The sound of battle south of the village indicated that the Southern army was surrounded. Men in the regiment remained unsure what the day might bring -- a fight to the death, escape, or surrender. The answer came when a Federal officer rode through the lines on his way to Lee's headquarters. Anxious hours passed before word spread that Lee had surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Grant.\textsuperscript{36}

The war was over for the soldiers in the 18th North Carolina. Four long years of

\textsuperscript{34} S. H. S. P., X (1882), 58; Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 716.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 720; "Autobiography of Gus Floyd," Fredericksburg National Battlefield Park Collection.

\textsuperscript{36} Clark, N. C. Regiments, 62.
marching and fighting had come to a merciful end for the young men from southeastern North Carolina. Three days after Lee surrendered to Grant in the McLean house, what remained of the Army of Northern Virginia proudly marched through the village of Appomattox Court House and stacked its arms in the presence of the victorious Union army. Earlier that morning, Lt. Col. John Poisson had arranged for the paroles of the ninety-four surviving members of the 18th North Carolina. The men were free to go.  

Though some in the regiment had chosen to depart before the ceremonies on the 12th, most remained to share this last experience with the army. Private Gus Floyd was approached by a close friend on the afternoon of the 9th and asked if he wanted to join with a small group that was heading for North Carolina. Floyd declined the offer. He had entered the war to stay until honorably discharged. Besides, said Floyd, he could not leave without "Uncle Bob's permission." On April 12, Floyd started for North Carolina, filled with proud memories of his service in the 18th North Carolina.  

37 Jordan, N. C. Troops. 305-423; S. H. S. P., XV (1887), 359-61. Of the 94 men who surrendered at Appomattox, 80 had been with the regiment since at least 1862. The remaining 14 had enlisted in 1864.

Appendix

A. Casualties in the 18th North Carolina Regiment, 1861-1865

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<td>FUSSELL'S MILL (8/16/64)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REAMS' STATION (8/25/64)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JONES' FARM (9/30/64)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORT GREGG (4/2/65)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>110</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>1110</td>
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</table>

B. Deaths in the 18th North Carolina Regiment from disease, 1861-1865

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>NICKNAME</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY A</td>
<td>&quot;GERMAN VOLUNTEERS&quot;</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY B</td>
<td>&quot;BLADEX LIGHT INFANTRY&quot;</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY C</td>
<td>&quot;COLUMBUS GUARDS NO. 3&quot;</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY D</td>
<td>&quot;THE ROBESON RIFLE GUARDS&quot;</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY E</td>
<td>&quot;MOORE'S CREEK RIFLE GUARDS&quot;</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY F</td>
<td>&quot;SCOTCH BOYS&quot;</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPANY G</td>
<td>&quot;WILMINGTON LIGHT INFANTRY&quot;</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY H</td>
<td>&quot;COLUMBUS GUARDS NO. 1&quot;</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPANY I</td>
<td>&quot;WILMINGTON RIFLE GUARDS&quot;</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY K</td>
<td>&quot;BLADEX GUARDS&quot;</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>320</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

C. Counties and Dates of Organization in the 18th North Carolina Regiment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY A</td>
<td>NEW HANOVER COUNTY</td>
<td>(4/15/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY B</td>
<td>BLADEX COUNTY</td>
<td>(5/3/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY C</td>
<td>COLUMBUS COUNTY</td>
<td>(4/24/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY D</td>
<td>ROBESON COUNTY</td>
<td>(5/8/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY E</td>
<td>NEW HANOVER COUNTY</td>
<td>(5/17/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY F</td>
<td>RICHMOND COUNTY</td>
<td>(6/1/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY G</td>
<td>NEW HANOVER COUNTY</td>
<td>(4/15/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY H</td>
<td>COLUMBUS COUNTY</td>
<td>(4/23/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY I</td>
<td>NEW HANOVER COUNTY</td>
<td>(4/15/61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY K</td>
<td>BLADEX COUNTY</td>
<td>(4/26/61)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
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Vita

Graham Town Dozier was born in Bedford Hills, New York in 1965, where he lived until he had the good fortune to move to Richmond, Virginia, ten years later. He attended the Collegiate Schools until 1984, when he entered Hampden-Sydney College in pursuit of a Liberal Arts education. In 1988, he graduated *cum laude* with a B. A. in history. During his time at Hampden-Sydney, he was initiated into both Phi Alpha Theta and Phi Beta Kappa. It was there that he fell in love with Civil War history. In the fall of 1989, he enrolled at Virginia Tech, where, after several thesis topic changes, he finally received his M. A. in the late spring of 1992.