

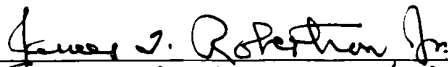
THE TWENTY-SIXTH REGIMENT NORTH CAROLINA TROOPS, CSA

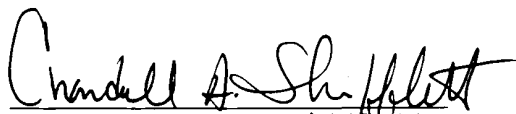
by

David Howell McGee

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
History

APPROVED:


James I. Robertson, Jr., Chairman


Crandall A. Shifflett


Peter Wallenstein

August 7, 1992

Blacksburg, Virginia

THE TWENTY-SIXTH REGIMENT NORTH CAROLINA TROOPS, CSA

by

David Howell McGee

James I. Robertson, Jr., Chairman

History

(ABSTRACT)

This thesis presents a socio-military history of the 26th Regiment North Carolina Troops, C. S. A. The narrative traces the regiment from the creation of the companies that formed the unit through the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse. It focuses on the backgrounds of the men and their experiences in camp, on the march, and in battle.

The ten companies in the regiment were raised by men from eight counties across the piedmont and mountain areas of the state. After training in Raleigh during the late summer, the unit served as part of the coastal defenses near Morehead City. In March, 1862, it participated in the unsuccessful defense of New Bern.

The regiment temporarily joined the Army of Northern Virginia, serving in the Seven Days campaign and the defense of Petersburg. In the spring of 1863, it returned to North Carolina. There the unit participated in the campaign, led by Gen. D. H. Hill, to retake New Bern.

The 26th North Carolina permanently joined the Army of Northern Virginia in May, 1863. After that point, it fought in all the major battles of the army. The regiment's high, and low, point came at the battle of Gettysburg. During the fighting on the first and third days, it suffered 734 casualties. This was the highest loss by any regiment during

the Civil War. The unit rebounded from the losses at Gettysburg, only to lose heavily again at Bristoe Station.

The strong efforts of the officers prevented the regiment from being consolidated with another. By May, 1864, its numbers had risen to 760 men. The unit remained with the army during the bloody Overland Campaign, suffering badly at the Wilderness. Once the army reached Petersburg, the 26th North Carolina served in the trenches and with Hill's corps as a counter to Federal advances. It surrendered with the Army of Northern Virginia in April, 1865, at Appomattox Court House.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer would like to thank all those people who helped bring this thesis into existence. Foremost among these is Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. This work would not have been possible without his guidance and skillful editing.

Dr. Crandall Shifflett and Dr. Peter Wallenstein graciously agreed to serve on my thesis committee. They also provided helpful suggestions and new ways of looking at issues, especially in areas of social history. I thank them both.

The staffs of the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina, the North Carolina State Archives, and Duke University provided much assistance in locating documents among their depositories. I would also like to thank the University of North Carolina Press for granting permission to quote from their materials.

Greg Mast receives my sincere gratitude for his assistance, from its conception and throughout. He gladly shared his files on the regiment and his knowledge of North Carolina's Civil War units. Jeff Stepp, Dennis Williamson, and Randall Garrison also graciously provided copies (and readable transcripts) of documents relating to the unit. I would like to thank all the other members of the reactivated 26th North Carolina, who continually encouraged me in my work.

Finally, I wish to thank my parents, Fred and Helen McGee, for the support they provided in so many ways. This endeavor would not have been possible without them. I dedicate this thesis to them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I - Called to Arms	1
Chapter II - Becoming A Regiment	23
Chapter III - For the Duration	58
Chapter IV - Unparalleled Loss	90
Chapter V - "It Looks Like Our Time Will Come Next"	126
Chapter VI - Dress on the Colors	137
Appendix	159
Bibliography	162

TABLE OF MAPS

MAP 1.	New Bern and Surrounding Area--March, 1862	46
MAP 2.	Battlefield at New Bern--March 14, 1862	51
MAP 3.	Goldsboro-Kinston-New Bern Area of Operations March, 1863	86
MAP 4.	Route of the 26th North Carolina During the Gettysburg Campaign	96
MAP 5.	Position of 26th North Carolina, Morning and Early Afternoon, July 1	103
MAP 6.	Assault on McPherson's Woods -- Afternoon, July 1	107
MAP 7.	Position of Opposing Forces at Gettysburg, Morning, July 3	114
MAP 8.	The Pickett-Pettigrew-Trimble Assault, Afternoon, July 3	118
MAP 9.	Battle of Bristoe Station, Positions of Kirkland's and Cooke's Brigades	132
MAP 10.	Battle of the Wilderness, Hill's Corps-- Afternoon, May 6	140

CHAPTER I
"CALLED TO ARMS"

On Monday, September 2, 1861, approximately 1,000 men of the 26th Regiment North Carolina Troops boarded a train of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad in Raleigh. Like thousands of others, these soldiers had responded to their state's call to arms during the first months of the Civil War. Despite varying backgrounds, social status, or political beliefs, these men united in their various communities to form companies. After the units organized they travelled to Raleigh, where on August 27, they combined to create the 26th North Carolina.¹

Like most Confederate regiments, the 26th North Carolina consisted of ten companies. The men who formed these companies represented a broad geographical section of North Carolina. Most came from eight counties stretching across the central piedmont to the mountain regions of the state. From the piedmont, Anson, Chatham, Moore, Union and Wake provided six of the companies. The other four originated in Ashe, Caldwell, and Wilkes counties in the Appalachian foothills and mountains.²

Similar to most of North Carolina, all of these counties

¹A company was the smallest unit in the organization of Civil War armies. James I. Robertson, Jr., Soldiers Blue and Gray (Columbia, SC, 1988), 21; The Weekly Raleigh Register Sept. 7, 1861.

²Robertson, Soldiers Blue and Gray, 21; Walter Clark (ed.), Histories of the Several Regiments and Battles from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-1865 (Wilmington, NC, 1991), 303-4.

had a predominantly rural, agrarian character. Of the eight, only Wake--containing the state capital of Raleigh was located--had a town of more than 300 persons. Manufacturing played a small part in the economy of these counties. Although they had 305 manufacturing establishments among them, only 977 persons (out of a total population of 114,223 in the eight counties) worked in these businesses in 1860. The vast majority of the people farmed the land.³

The occupations of the men in the 26th North Carolina reflected their rural origins and the predominantly agrarian nature of the state's antebellum economy. Surviving muster rolls do not provide the livelihoods of most soldiers, but an examination of both the 1860 Federal census and muster rolls reveals the vocations of 354 men. Almost seventy-three percent (258) of the men either farmed or worked as farm laborers. Another eighty-five who lived with their parents also came from farm families.⁴

³Joseph C. G. Kennedy (comp.), Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census (Washington, 1864), 359; Joseph C. G. Kennedy (comp.), Manufacturing of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census (Washington, 1864), 420, 422-23, 429, 433-34.

⁴Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr. (comp.), North Carolina Troops: 1861-1865, A Roster (Raleigh, NC, 1991) VII, 463-600. All references to North Carolina Troops will be to volume VII. 1860 Manuscript Census, (Free) Population Schedules, from Anson, Ashe, Caldwell, Chatham, Moore, Union and Wake counties of North Carolina, North Carolina State Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh. Hereafter referenced as NCDAH. Identification in the 1860 census was made by comparing soldier's name, age, and county of residence (and occupation if given) from the roster with names in the manuscript census for the counties listed. In some cases, several persons in the census would have the same name and age as a soldier in the 26th North Carolina. In such a case, the soldier was considered

Of the men who enlisted in the 26th North Carolina initially, 259 were identified in the 1860 census as farmers (or members of a farm family). They came from farms that ranged from having no listed value to plantations worth \$100,000 or more. Nearly thirty-three percent of these men could be classified as landless farmers (owning no real property of value). Another thirty-one percent owned between \$1 and \$1,000 worth of real property. The remaining thirty-six percent held more than \$1,000 worth of real property.⁵

While the majority of the soldiers who farmed came from farms valued at \$1,000 or less, the leaders of the companies (officers and sergeants) tended to represent the upper class landholders. Only three officers and one sergeant held less than \$1,000 worth of realty. The remaining eleven officers and eleven sergeants came from estates of \$1,000 value or more.⁶

Although farming was the principal occupation among the men of the regiment, many other vocations were represented as well. The following list (taken from the 1860 census sample and muster rolls) demonstrates the assortment of livelihoods represented in the 26th North Carolina.

Farmer	207
Farm Laborer	51
Day Laborer	22
Student	21
Mechanic	9

unidentified and not used.

⁵1860 Manuscript Census, (Free) Population Schedules, Anson, Ashe, Caldwell, Chatham, Moore, Union, and Wake counties.

⁶Ibid.

Doctor	7
Blacksmith	5
Carpenter	4
Merchant	4
Lawyer	3
Painter	3
Servant	3
Teacher	3
Harness Maker	2
Millwright	2
Miner	2
Saddler	2
Shoe Maker	2
Turpentine	2
Bar Keeper	1
Brick Mason	1
Cooper	1
Doctor's Clerk	1
Fireman	1
Minister	1
Post Master	1
Printer	1
Surveyor	1
Tailor	1
Well Digger	1 ⁷

The men of the 26th North Carolina also represented a diversity of ages. The average (mean) age of its members was twenty-three years and eleven months old, but the muster rolls reveal ages ranging from fifteen to fifty-five. Of the 1031 men who enlisted in the regiment by the time of its organization (and whose ages were recorded in the company rolls), approximately seventy-eight percent (765) were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine. Another fifteen percent (146) fell between the ages of thirty and

⁷Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600; 1860 Manuscript Census, (Free) Population Schedules, from Anson, Ashe, Caldwell, Chatham, Moore, Union and Wake counties of North Carolina, NCDAH. Where the census or roster stated a soldier's occupation as "day laborer" or "laborer", that soldier was counted as a "day laborer" here. In some cases, a soldier's occupation in the muster rolls differed from that listed in the 1860 census. Where a conflict existed, the occupation listed in the muster rolls was used.

forty-five. Of the remainder, one percent (8) were above the age of forty-five and five percent (56) were under the age of eighteen. Joel Helton, a farmer from Caldwell County, held the distinction of being the oldest at age fifty-five. At the other end, three recruits enlisted at the age of fifteen.⁸

The majority of men in the 26th North Carolina came from counties where Unionist sentiment remained strong during the secession crisis. In February, 1861, North Carolinians voted on a referendum on whether to hold a convention to discuss secession. By a narrow margin, voters rejected the idea of a convention. Of the eight counties which supplied most of the men to the 26th North Carolina, all but three (Anson, Union, and Wake) overwhelmingly rejected the convention. Even in Anson and Wake, sentiment for the Union remained strong as the voters chose Unionist delegates to the convention. In Wilkes and Moore counties voting ran overwhelmingly (ninety-seven and ninety percent of the votes, respectively) against the convention.⁹

Not until the first guns opened fire at Fort Sumter and President Lincoln called for troops (including two regiments

⁸Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600. (Because of rounding, the percentages do not equal 100 percent.) The ages listed are based on information from the muster rolls, which probably did not always reflect the true ages of the soldiers. Based on the 1860 Census manuscripts, at least two of the recruits were no more than fourteen years of age when they enlisted. According to the Census, both were thirteen when it was taken.

⁹Marc W. Kruman, Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865 (Baton Rouge, 1983), 276-78. For a complete discussion on the secession issue in North Carolina, see ibid., 180-221.

from North Carolina) to put down the "insurrection" did secessionists gain the upper hand in the state. Congressman Zebulon Vance (who would later serve as the first colonel of the 26th North Carolina) gave some indication of how the news from Charleston and Washington swayed people from one side to the other. Giving a speech in support of the Union, he had his "hand extended upward in pleading for peace and the Union" when the news of Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops was announced. According to Vance, as his hand came down, "it fell slowly and sadly by the side of a Secessionist." He then urged his listeners to fight for the South.¹⁰

Once the state decided to secede, efforts began to recruit the 30,000 soldiers called for by North Carolina Adjutant General John Hoke. The method of recruiting the companies varied from one county to another. In Wake and Anson counties, the local newspapers aided the process by publishing recruiting advertisements and news stories describing the activities of various units. In areas with little or no newspaper coverage, recruiters relied primarily on printed broadsides and word-of-mouth. Frequently, prominent members of the community lent not only their support and social status to the recruiting efforts, but actively engaged in raising a company themselves.¹¹

¹⁰John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill, 1963), 10; Glenn Tucker, Zeb Vance, Champion of Personal Freedom (Indianapolis, 1965), 105.

¹¹The Greensborough Patriot April 25, 1861; The Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register June 1, 1861; Wadesboro North Carolina Argus May 23, 1861; Robertson, Soldiers Blue and

The next step was to muster the newly formed company into state service. Before it could be mustered, regulations stated that it needed to number at least sixty-four privates and an appropriate number of non-commissioned officers. (The company usually would attempt to enlist more men to reach the suggested number of 100 men per company.) To assist in recruitment, the North Carolina legislature authorized a bounty of \$10 for each man when the company was sworn into state service.¹²

When the required number of men had enlisted, members of the company could select their own officers. Usually, but not always, men who had worked to raise the company were elected as officers. After organizing, the captain of the company reported to the state Adjutant General's office, which sent an officer (from that office) to muster the company into state service. Once formed, the company would then be ordered to one of several central locations across North Carolina, where it was combined with other companies to form a regiment.¹³

Like most Confederate companies, each company in the 26th North Carolina drew most of its members from a single county. Very often a company recruited either in a single community, or if the population eligible for military service

Gray, 11; Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge, 1943), 18.

¹²Richard W. Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes: Nine Crucial Months, December 1860-August, 1861" (Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1968), 98, 160.

¹³Ibid.; Wiley, Johnny Reb, 19-20.

was too small, in several communities close together. This local character became apparent in the "Wake Guards" and the "Jefferson Davis Mountaineers" which recruited in one and two districts, respectively. It also showed when community names became part of the unit names, such as the "Waxhaw Jackson Guards" and the "Hibriten Guards."

The first company that became part of the 26th North Carolina began forming in Moore County in May, 1861. As volunteers enlisted, they received large badges of red, white, and blue ribbon to wear until local tailors completed their uniforms. By May 13, the company had officially organized, and adopted the name of the "Moore Independents."¹⁴ From company headquarters at Carthage, the officers informed the North Carolina Adjutant General's office that the "Independents" stood ready to defend the state. On June 3, the unit officially mustered into service. The state then supplied the company with muskets and other equipment. On July 18, the troops received orders to proceed to the camp of instruction at Garysburg (in the northeastern part of the state). After two weeks of training, the Moore County men moved to Weldon. Ten days later, they received orders to march to Camp Carolina, located on Crabtree Creek several miles north of Raleigh.¹⁵

In Wake County, about ten miles southwest of Raleigh, the Holly Springs community supplied most of the men for

¹⁴Manly Wade Wellman, The County of Moore, 1847-1947: A North Carolina Region's Second Hundred Years (Southern Pines, NC, 1962), 37-41.

¹⁵Ibid., 40-41; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 561.

another company. On May 28, the "Wake Guards" formed with the enlistment of sixty men. Although North Carolina had seceded only eight days earlier, the "Wake Guards" became the fifth company to volunteer from that county.¹⁶ The unit remained at Holly Springs until July 16, adding thirty more recruits during the wait. The men of the company then marched the ten miles to Raleigh through drenching rain on a "powerful muddy" road. There they found shelter from the elements in a Baptist Church. The next day, the soldiers continued on to the camp of instruction at Crabtree.¹⁷

Chatham County, adjoining Wake to the west, provided additional troops to the 26th North Carolina. On May 28, the "Chatham Independent Guards," organized when eighty-four men enlisted at the Cartersville community in the western part of the county. For the next several weeks, the men drilled regularly at Cartersville while they waited for their uniforms to be made. The company also continued to recruit, and by June 4 contained 101 "strong able bodied men."¹⁸

In the mountains of the northwest corner of the state, men from the Town and Southeastern districts of Ashe County formed another company. Organizing on May 17 at Jefferson,

¹⁶Elizabeth Reid Murray, Wake: Capital County of North Carolina (Raleigh, 1983), 473; The Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register June 1, 1861.

¹⁷Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 506-07; Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register July 24, 1861; J. Q. Adams to his father, July 17, 1861, Adams Family Letters, NCDALH.

¹⁸Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 519-33; Greensborough Patriot July 18, 1861; Orren A. Hanner to John Harrington, June 4, 1861, O. A. Hanner Letters, photocopy in possession of the writer.

the recruits demonstrated their patriotic fervor by naming the company the "Jeff Davis Mountaineers" (also known as the "Jeff Davis Mountain Rifles") after the president of the Confederacy. The Ashe County men remained at home several weeks drilling and recruiting. While they were still at home, nineteen-year-old Henry K. Burgwyn, member of a wealthy eastern North Carolina planter family and recent graduate of Virginia Military Institute, came to Ashe County on a recruiting mission of his own. His efforts met with an unqualified lack of success (he only had two uncertain recruits after one week). However, he remained in Ashe and assisted the "Jeff Davis Mountaineers" in their training. Later, the men of the company publicly expressed their gratitude for "the efficient lessons" Burgwyn provided.¹⁹

On June 13, the "Jeff Davis Mountaineers" left their homes and travelled to the state capitol, arriving five days later. Despite the warm welcome they received in Raleigh, news from home dampened their spirits. As they left Ashe County, one of their number, Allen Porter, became ill and remained behind. The company learned of his death when they reached Raleigh. Porter became the first of 670 men from the 26th North Carolina who would die in service. In the small mountain communities, each death would be noticed and

¹⁹Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 466-67; Martin Crawford, "Confederate Volunteering and Enlistment in Ashe County, North Carolina, 1861-1862," Civil War History 37 (March 1991): 38-39; Archie K. Davis, Boy Colonel of the Confederacy: The Life and Times of Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. (Chapel Hill, 1985), 71-72; Raleigh The Spirit of the Age, July 13, 1861.

felt.²⁰

In the foothills south of Ashe, the men of Caldwell County worked to recruit troops destined for the 26th North Carolina. Although the sparsely populated county had already provided one company, by early June, efforts to raise another unit had begun. The recruiters, who included such prominent local citizens as Samuel F. Patterson (a wealthy planter, merchant and state legislator), travelled around the county to lend their voices to the enlistment effort. On July 15, the recruiting efforts paid off as the "Hibriten Guards" organized at Lenoir.²¹

Before leaving home, the "Hibriten Guards" received a company flag from their community. Miss Laura Norwood (accompanied by twelve young girls) made the presentation in a formal ceremony in Lenoir. The flag had the North Carolina coat of arms painted on a blue field. The material came from a dress belonging to Annie Rankin, Capt. Nathaniel Rankin's youngest sister, with the coat of arms painted by another sister. The "Guards" left Lenoir on July 31, and marched to

²⁰Ibid.

²¹S. F. Patterson to Edmund W. Jones, June 16, 1861, Edmund W. Jones Collection, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Hereafter cited as SHC. For a discussion of the social status of Samuel F. Patterson in western North Carolina, see Paul D. Escott, Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900 (Chapel Hill, 1985), 6-7 or John C. Inscoe, Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina (Knoxville, 1989), 118, 124, 159-61. Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 533; Nancy Alexander, Here Will I Dwell: The Story of Caldwell County (Salisbury, NC, 1956), 132.

Newton where they boarded a train for Raleigh.²²

Like the men from Caldwell County, the "Waxhaw Jackson Guards" also received a company flag. On June 5, the Union County unit formed in Monroe. At a July 4 celebration, an estimated 1,000-1,200 citizens gathered at "Wilson's Store" to witness the presentation of the flag. Anna Cureton made the presentation, echoing the words of the Spartan mothers long ago when she told the soldiers to come home with the flag flying when the battle was done, or come home dead "on the flag" from the battlefield. Lieutenant William Wilson accepted for the company. His remarks and the "military bearing" of the troops assured the assembly that the flag was in "safe hands". Three days later, the company departed for Raleigh.²³

Due east of Union, in the state's "cotton belt" along the South Carolina border, the "Pee Dee Wild Cats" from Anson County had two advantages over many units. First, the company already existed during the antebellum period as a local militia unit; secondly, Wadesboro's newspaper, the North Carolina Argus, printed several articles describing the activities of the unit and urging men of the county to enlist.²⁴ Even with these advantages, the earlier creation

²²Alexander, Here Will I Dwell, 132; W. E. Setser to T. W. Setser, Aug. 4, 1861, in Greg Mast (ed.), "The Setser Letters, Part I," Company Front December/January 1988-1989, 28.

²³Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 481; Charlotte The Western Democrat July 23, 1861.

²⁴North Carolina Argus May 23 and 30; June 6, 13, and 20; July 11; and Aug. 8, 1861.

of two other companies in the county meant that recruiting for the "Pee Dee Wild Cats" progressed slowly. Enlistment began in late May, but not until July 1 did the company officially organize.²⁵

After enlisting, its men traveled about Anson County practicing their military drill while efforts continued to recruit additional soldiers. One notable event in which the "Wild Cats" participated came on July 3 at Gould's Fork Academy. At the invitation of the ladies of the community, the company practiced its maneuvers for about an hour before an estimated crowd of 500 spectators. After the drill, the townspeople, including "the beauty of Anson," treated the new soldiers to lunch at a "long table, fairly burdened with the weight of good things." After lunch, the assembled crowd heard several speeches and a performance by the local children's bell choir. The company dispersed around 5 o'clock in the evening, after receiving not only the adoration of the community but also new volunteers.²⁶

The "Pee Dee Wild Cats" remained in Anson County for six

²⁵Greg Mast, "North Carolina Land Units in Confederate Service, 1861-1865: An Order of Battle," Company Front November/December 1990, 26, 32; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 589. The officers selected on July 1 differed from those chosen at a June 15 organizational meeting. At that meeting, Joseph J. Cox and E. R. Liles had been elected as lieutenants. Neither of those men served with the company when it officially enlisted. North Carolina Argus June 20, 1861.

²⁶North Carolina Argus July 11, 1861. The newspaper states that the company received twelve new recruits on July 3, but this number appears to be exaggerated. The roster shows that when the unit organized it had eighty-four men. When the company departed for Raleigh, it only had eighty-nine troops. Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 589-600.

more weeks seeking additional recruits. But even as the company departed for Raleigh, its ranks remained unfilled. The North Carolina Argus pled for volunteers: "Young men, what are you thinking about? Do you expect a better opportunity?" The newspaper apparently had little affect, because only five new members joined the company between the time it organized and its departure for Raleigh.²⁷

The "Caldwell Guards" faced the same problems of recruiting as the "Pee Dee Wildcats," without the Anson unit's advantages. The third company raised in a county with the lowest population of white males of any county represented in the 26th North Carolina, the unit had enlisted only sixty-three men by the time it left Lenoir. The low number of enlistments continued to plague the company. From Camp Carolina, Lieutenant J. T. Jones confided his fears to his father, stating that the "Caldwell Guards" may be left out of the regiment if they did not get more recruits. Even when the regiment left Raleigh in September, no more than sixty-nine soldiers had joined the company.²⁸

The recruiting problems faced by the "Pee Dee Wildcats" and the "Caldwell Guards" occurred in other companies as

²⁷Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 589-600; North Carolina Argus Aug. 8, 1861.

²⁸According to the 1860 census, Caldwell County had only 1,230 men between fifteen and forty years of age. Kennedy, Population, Returns of the Eighth Census, 348-51; John T. Jones to Edward W. Jones, Aug. 31, 1861, Jones Family Papers, SHC; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 573-589. Ironically, the "Caldwell Guards" would have more recruits (250) than any other company in the 26th North Carolina (and possibly the Confederacy) before the war's end. In all, almost 500 men (and one woman) from Caldwell would serve some time in the regiment during the war.

well. If a company had not filled its ranks at the time it organized, it often became difficult to do so later. While four enlisted more than twenty men each between the time they organized and their departure for Raleigh, the other six raised only thirty men combined during the same time period.²⁹

Regardless of the number of recruits, once a company had formed, a key concern became how to equip the troops. The North Carolina Adjutant General's office issued a notice listing the types and quantity of gear each company and man should bring with them. However, with the massive recruiting taking place across North Carolina in the summer of 1861, the state government proved unable to provide gear for many companies. Therefore, the task of supplying clothing and accoutrements to recruits fell to the communities which raised the troops.³⁰

In Caldwell County, the citizens quickly rose to the task of supplying the troops. Before the two companies left Lenoir, the white women of the town prepared clothing and accoutrements for the departing soldiers. Among the items supplied were the following:

²⁹Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600.

³⁰Greensborough Patriot Semi-Weekly May 10, 1861. It was perhaps well for the soldiers that the state could not provide all the gear in the list suggested by the Adjutant General's office. Each soldier was to have: two pairs of pants (very loose), two sack coats, two shirts, two pairs of shoes, a felt hat (if caps were not provided), a knapsack, a haversack, a canteen, a blanket, a rubber overcoat, and "as few" drawers, socks and undershirts as possible. Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 25-28, provides a good description of the problems North Carolina faced in providing gear and equipment during the summer of 1861.

"Hibriten Guards"

10 prs pants
 100 knapsacks and straps
 100 haversacks and straps
 Quantity of lint and
 bandages
 Flag, and three days
 provisions
 This Company furnished
 with pants

"Caldwell Guards"

20 prs pants. 12 prs.
 made by Valley Ladies
 90 fatigue jackets
 80 haversacks, with roller
 straps for do.
 12 mattresses
 Flag and three days
 provisions
 Lint, and some testaments
 This company also had
 fifty blankets given
 them³¹

Whatever their state of equipage, the companies made their way to Raleigh and reported to the camp of instruction at Camp Carolina (also known as Camp Crabtree). This camp was located at the "Crabtree" plantation of Kimbrough Jones, two miles north of Raleigh, near the junction of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad and Crabtree Creek. The state Adjutant General's Office established Camp Carolina to relieve crowded conditions at other camps of instruction, and by July 5 had it ready to receive new soldiers.³²

When Henry K. Burgwyn, formerly a captain in the 4th North Carolina, learned that W. W. Kirkland had stepped down as commander of the Raleigh camp of instruction, he requested that he be placed in charge of the camp. Burgwyn not only received the appointment from the state, he also obtained a promotion to the rank of Major. Trained at V. M. I., Burgwyn was experienced in military drill. The "Lafayette Light Infantry" company of the 1st North Carolina Volunteers had earlier passed a resolution praising him for the "very

³¹[? Harper], Private Journal [ca. 1860's], in the possession of Jeff Stepp, Catawba, NC.

³²Murray, Wake: Capital County, 461; Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 243.

excellent lessons in drill" he gave them at Camp Ellis. After his arrival at Camp Carolina on July 10, Burgwyn wasted no time moving troops into camp and beginning their training.³³

For the new recruits, life at Camp Carolina proved to be a radical change from their civilian lives. Like many Civil War soldiers, their enlistment in the army meant they were away from home for the first time. The community orientation of the companies may have helped alleviate their sense of dislocation, but the problems of adjusting soon became evident.

The first thing many men noticed was the large number of troops gathered in one place. A soldier from Caldwell County noted that as many as 1,800 troops were at the camp when his company arrived. Considering that Caldwell County had a population density of only 30.8 persons per square mile in 1860, the sight of so many strangers crowded into the relatively confined area of the camp must have disconcerted many men.³⁴

³³Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. to Warren Winslow, July 14, 1861, Civil War Collection, Box 36, Folder 11, NCDAA; Iobst, "North Carolina Mobilizes," 243-94; Henry K. Burgwyn to Captain Cole, July 10, 1861, Burgwyn Family Letters, SHC; George B. Atkins (secretary, "Lafayette Light Infantry") to Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., Burgwyn Family Letters, SHC. As noted earlier, the "Jefferson Davis Mountaineers" had also thanked Burgwyn for his tutelage in drill.

³⁴W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, Aug. 4, 1861, in Mast, "The Setser Letters, Part I", 28. Population density of Caldwell County in 1860 derived from Kennedy, Population of the United States in 1860, 349, 351, 355 and Joseph C. G. Kennedy (comp.), Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census (Washington, 1864), 104.

The number of troops gathered at the camp did not provide the only turmoil. The various methods soldiers used to entertain themselves offended the sensibilities of some. A few weeks after arriving at the camp of instruction, T. W. Setser described to his parents some of the sinful activities taking place around him. "i hav bin in and at meny plases, but this is the god dams plase that i ever Seen . . . Som Sings, Som gits drunk, Som curses, Som plays cards and all Sorts of devilment that white men couda think of."³⁵

Setser probably did not exaggerate. On the night of August 4, William T. Baker of the "Waxhaw Jackson Guards" got drunk and attempted to force his way into a house occupied by two women. A neighbor responded to the women's request for help and shot Baker in the abdomen when he threatened the neighbor with a bowie knife.³⁶

The men at Camp Carolina also had to adjust to military routine. Because of the complex system of movements common to nineteenth century army maneuvers, a major purpose of a camp of instruction was teaching the soldiers (and very often the officers) the fundamentals of drill. As a result, drill exercises often consumed the greater portion of a recruit's day. While some soldiers complained about the amount of time spent on drill, others felt that their commanders were not

³⁵T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Aug. 25, 1861, in Mast, "The Setser Letters, Part I," 29.

³⁶The Western Democrat Aug. 13, 1861.

competent and did not spend enough time on drill.³⁷

Learning the proper military protocol caused problems as well. On the first day the "Chatham Boys" spent in camp, Major Burgwyn demanded to know why Captain William McLean had failed to report the roll call of the company. Before the Captain could reply, another message came ordering one corporal and two privates from the company to report to the Major's headquarters immediately. McLean selected Corporal John R. Lane and Privates S. S. Carter and W. G. Carter. The three nervous men went to Burgwyn's headquarters, "wondering if they were going to be promoted, hanged or shot." To their surprise, the Major told Lane, "Corporal, take these men and thoroughly police this Camp; don't leave a watermelon rind or anything filthy in Camp." This order "completely knocked the starch" out of the men, who finally realized they were truly in the army.³⁸

Being separated from their families proved to be the biggest adjustment many of the soldiers had to make. Of 349 men from the 26th North Carolina located in the 1860 census, 200 still lived with their parents.³⁹ As a result, letter writing between the men and their families became extremely important to the soldiers. Not hearing from home often

³⁷For a description of the drill routines in an army camp, see Robertson, Soldiers Blue and Gray, 47-52; John T. Jones to Edmund W. Jones, Aug. 31, 1861, Edmund W. Jones Collection, SHC; T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Aug. 25, 1861, in Mast, "The Setser Letters, Part I," 29.

³⁸Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 305.

³⁹1860 Manuscript Census, (Free) Population Schedules for Anson, Ashe, Caldwell, Chatham, Moore, Union, and Wake counties of North Carolina, NCDAR.

enough proved to be one of the soldiers' biggest complaints, at this time and later in the war.⁴⁰

Sometimes the soldiers' wives, families, and friends echoed that complaint. After Joseph White complained to his wife that he had not received any letters from home, his wife and sister replied that they wanted to hear from him as well.⁴¹ In one instance, a female friend of "dear young" John T. Jones told his father that she had not received any letters from John.⁴²

On August 27, the 26th Regiment North Carolina Troops mustered in for twelve months service. That same day, the men chose their regimental field officers. Although former Congressman Zebulon Baird Vance (at the time the captain of Company F, 14th North Carolina Regiment) was favored for the position of Colonel, he did not run unopposed. On August 24, the Raleigh Register printed a letter to the editor from "An Officer" who urged his "brother officers" of the 26th North Carolina to select the Reverend Cameron F. McRae as colonel of the regiment. This person stated that McRae was a West Point graduate and a "high toned gentleman . . . perfectly

⁴⁰Robertson, Soldiers Blue and Gray, 104.

⁴¹Senura White to J. J. White, Aug. 25, 1861 and Ruth White to J. J. White, Aug. 21, 1861, J. J. White Letters, in the possession of The Society for the Historical Preservation of the 26th Regiment North Carolina Troops, Incorporated.

⁴²Maria L. Spear to Edmund W. Jones, June 6, 1861, Edmund W. Jones Collection, SHC. Jones, who appeared to have had a number of lady friends both at home and at the University of North Carolina, later told his father, that he "hardly had a moment of leisure" to write. John T. Jones to Edmund W. Jones, Aug. 31, 1861, Edmund W. Jones Collection, SHC.

matured, and in his prime." Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., McRae's brother-in-law, most likely wrote the letter.⁴³

Despite the nomination of McRae, the men of the 26th North Carolina elected Vance to serve as their commanding officer. He remained in this position until his August, 1862 election as governor of North Carolina. As Vance's second in command, the commander of Camp Carolina, Major Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., was elected lieutenant colonel. Captain Abner B. Carmichael, commanding the "Wilkes Volunteers", received the vote as major.⁴⁴

Once the regiment organized, each company received a letter designation that it retained for the duration of the war. The companies and their captains were:

- Company A - "Jeff Davis Mountaineers" - Andrew McMillan
- Company B - "Waxhaw Jackson Guards" - J. C. Steele
- Company C - "Wilkes Volunteers" - Alexander Horton
- Company D - "Wake Guards" - Oscar Rand
- Company E - "Independent Guards" - William Webster
- Company F - "Hibriten Guards" - Nathaniel Rankin
- Company G - "Chatham Boys" - William McLean
- Company H - "Moore Independents" - William Martin
- Company I - "Caldwell Guards" - Wilson White
- Company K - "Pee Dee Wild Cats"; James Carraway⁴⁵

The men of the 26th North Carolina had little time to

⁴³Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463; The Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register Aug. 24, 1861.

⁴⁴Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463. Carmichael was replaced as captain of the "Wilkes Volunteers" by Lt. Alexander Horton. Ibid., 494.

⁴⁵Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 303-06. Andrew McMillan became captain of the "Jeff Davis Mountaineers" following the resignation of Aras Cox, who became the chaplain of the 22 North Carolina Regiment. The handwritten letter J closely resembled the letter I, and thus was not used in company designations to avoid confusion. Robertson, Soldiers Blue and Gray, 21.

drill together as a unit before leaving Raleigh. On August 30, news reached the state capital at Raleigh of Union troop landings at Cape Hatteras on the North Carolina coast. With the fall of the forts at Hatteras, defending Fort Macon on Bogue Island became vital. Despite its lack of training, the unit received orders to proceed to Bogue Island immediately. During the next two days, officers and men scrambled to complete preparations for leaving. Those soldiers who did not yet have weapons, equipment, or uniforms received them. By nightfall on September 1, the regiment stood ready to depart Raleigh.⁴⁶

⁴⁶The State Journal Aug. 31, 1861; Clark, N. C. Regiments, 307.

CHAPTER II

"BECOMING A REGIMENT"

During the early morning hours of September 2, the soldiers of the 26th North Carolina roused from their slumber. The day the men had anxiously awaited had arrived at last. Now they were leaving the camp of instruction for their first duty post and a chance to fight the enemy.

By 3:00 a.m., the troops had finished their breakfast and were making final preparations for leaving. Later that morning, commanded by Lt. Col. Burgwyn in the absence of Col. Vance, they boarded the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad and departed for the coast. Reaching New Bern, Burgwyn received orders from Brig. Gen. R. C. Gatlin to proceed with the unit to Morehead City. At 11:00 p.m., the train finally reached its destination. Weary men spent the night on the railroad cars.¹

During the time the soldiers remained in Morehead City, Gatlin received a report that Federal forces were planning an attack on Fort Macon. The brick masonry fort stood on the eastern end of Bogue Island (Bogue runs east to west rather than north to south), which was separated from the mainland by a shallow sound. Because it guarded the ports at Morehead City and Beaufort, Fort Macon was vital to the coastal defenses of the state. Gatlin decided to move the

¹James Quincy Adams to his parents, Sept. 7, 1861, Quincy Family Papers, NCDAH; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. Journal, Sept. 2, 1861, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC (hereafter cited as the Burgwyn Journal).

26th and 7th North Carolina regiments across to Bogue Island where they could support the fort if the enemy attacked.²

To prepare for the move, Lt. Col. Burgwyn and several other officers visited the island on September 4 and selected a position for the regiment's camp. They located a site about six miles south of Fort Macon, which they named Camp Burgwyn in honor of the lieutenant colonel's father. While on the trip across to the island, the men watched as a large warship came into sight and received fire from the guns at the fort.³

When the officers returned to Morehead City in the evening, they learned that Col. Vance had joined the regiment. Vance had been on furlough at his home in Asheville when the news of his election as colonel of the 26th North Carolina reached him. He left Asheville on September 1 and travelled nearly the length of the state to reach his new command.⁴

About 1:00 p.m. the next day, the regiment began its move to Bogue Island. While some of the troops had no trouble crossing and reached the island around 9:00 p.m., another group had anything but a smooth journey. Those men set out to cross the sound in a steamboat, but its boiler

²U. S. War Department, comp., War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, (Washington, 1888-1901), Ser. I, IV, 574. Hereafter cited as the OR; all references will be to Series I unless otherwise noted.

³Burgwyn Journal, Sept. 4 and Sept. 5, 1861.

⁴Ibid.; Zebulon Vance to his wife, Sept. 15, 1861, in Frontis W. Johnston (ed.), The Papers of Zebulon Baird Vance, (Raleigh: 1963), I, 114.

sprang a leak and the steamer had to turn back. The troops then boarded a schooner; it promptly ran aground. Finally they rowed small boats across the sound and reached their destination around three o'clock in the morning.⁵

Vance and Burgwyn had gone ahead of the troops to make arrangements for receiving the men. According to Burgwyn, the disembarkation of the regiment created quite a "scene of confusion." Company officers failed to arrive with their men and the field officers had to supervise the unloading of the soldiers.⁶

Their new surroundings must have seemed rather strange to these men from the piedmont and mountain portions of the state. As part of a string of barrier islands known as the Outer Banks, Bogue Island lay near the southern end of the island chain. It was approximately a mile wide and nearly twenty-five miles long, and was bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on one side and Bogue Sound on the other. Vegetation on the island consisted mainly of dune grasses and dense thickets of short shrub-like trees, which William Glenn described as being so thick that "a rabbit can hardly get thru." The predominate feature of the island was deep sand which the wind blew about in every direction.⁷

⁵Burgwyn Journal, Sept. 5, 1861; James Quincy Adams to his parents, Sept. 7, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH. Company G remained in Morehead City, guarding the town and a bridge about ten miles to the north. Joseph J. White to Senura White, Sept. 7, 1861, White Letters, 26th NCT.

⁶Burgwyn Journal, Sept. 5, 1861.

⁷William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Oct. 7, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; "Webster's Company of Volunteers," Confederate Veteran, XXIII (1915), 400.

The day after the troops landed on Bogue Island, they began setting up their camp. After erecting their tents, locating an adequate supply of drinking water received top priority. The soldiers dug wells in the sand. Fortunately, they only had to dig about four feet deep before striking water. Although the taste of the water was not very good, it proved sufficient for the men's needs.⁸

Camp Burgwyn quickly took on the air of a permanent encampment. During September, the regiment received over 30,000 feet of lumber for their building requirements. For the remainder of the month the soldiers remained busy setting up large canvas wall tents, putting wooden floors in their tents, and building stables (for the officers' horses) and kitchens.⁹

Besides working on their camp, the men labored "a rit smar" on the island's defenses. In one instance they built a position for an artillery battery. First, they carried lumber from a boat landing to the site to provide the flooring and a defensive wall for the battery. The soldiers then brought up the ammunition and powder for the guns. According to one man, two cannon balls were a load because they weighed "a bout thirty four pounds" apiece.¹⁰

⁸James Quincy Adams to his parents, Sept. 7, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH; William H. Glenn to Jane R. Glenn, Sept. 18, 1861, Duke.

⁹Quarterly return of quartermaster stores expended at Camp Burgwyn, Sept. 1861, Box 17, folder 4, Civil War Collection, NCDAH.

¹⁰William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Nov. 11, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; I. A. Jarratt to his mother, Oct. 24, 1861, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke.

Because there was no bridge connecting the island with the mainland, boats ferried the building materials, rations, forage for the animals, firewood, and various other stores across Bogue Sound. The water in the sound was so shallow that the men had to wade out to the vessels to bring in the supplies. While this did not present a problem in September, the colder weather and resulting drop in water temperature later on must have made this a particularly unpleasant experience during the winter months.¹¹

Even though building the camp and defenses and carrying supplies consumed much of their time, the soldiers spent the main part of their days on drill and guard duty. When the 26th North Carolina arrived on Bogue Island, it remained more a collection of ten different companies than a well-disciplined military unit. Col. Vance and Lt. Col. Burgwyn immediately set out to prepare the troops for the combat that lay ahead.¹²

When the weather permitted (the drill field flooded any time it rained), the troops practiced about six hours a day. Vance left most of the training and discipline to the more experienced Burgwyn, who worked the troops "continually." Despite the amount of drill that he put the troops through, as late as December 26, Burgwyn remained unsatisfied with the conduct of the men. He stated that the discipline of the regiment was "wretched" and that Col. Vance had become convinced that severe remedies must be used to cure the

¹¹Ibid.; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 307.

¹²Clark, Several Regiments, II, 307.

problem.¹³

Although Burgwyn's efforts would show their benefits in battle, at the time he quickly earned the hearty dislike of the troops. According to Thomas J. Cureton, Burgwyn was very strict in camp, "so much so, that up to the battle of New Bern he was very unpopular, and I often heard the men say if they ever got into a fight with him what they would do, etc., etc." Burgwyn would never achieve the popularity that Vance had with the troops, but he did mold them into an efficient fighting unit.¹⁴

One reason for the necessity of drill and discipline came from the constant presence of the Federal threat to the coast. From the day the 26th North Carolina arrived on Bogue Island until the time the regiment moved back to the mainland, "Old Abes Ships" remained in sight almost every day. Usually, from one to three vessels could be spotted at any given moment. Despite the threat, the men expressed a conviction that their defenses could withstand any attack. W. E. Setser stated that all the men were anxious to fight, and that if the "yankees want to get thinder and trim just let them land hear . . . we will feed them on canon plates

¹³James Quincey Adams to his father, Oct. 3, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH; Tucker, Zeb Vance, 117; Burgwyn Journal, Oct. 18, 1861; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. to Henry K. Burgwyn, Sr., Dec. 26, 1861, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC.

¹⁴Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 329. Burgwyn's strict discipline continued throughout his command. At one point after Burgwyn became colonel of the regiment, Lt. Orren Hanner became so infuriated with his commander that he referred to him as a "damn shit" and a "damn rascal." According to Hanner, the colonel treated the company officers like dogs. Orren Hanner to John Harrington, Dec. 29, 1862, John McLean Harrington Papers, Duke.

and grape and musketry."¹⁵

The soldiers remained ready to combat any possible landing by the enemy. On several instances from late September through mid-October they went on alert when reports came of Federal troops disembarking on the island. When these alarms sounded, the officers called their companies to arms and gave instructions for preparing combat. Usually this meant that the troops were to cook three days' rations and have their weapons close at hand. On occasion, some of the companies would march to a position to oppose a threatened landing. In every case, however, the alarms turned out to be false and the men relaxed their guard.¹⁶

When not drilling or standing guard, the soldiers employed a variety of means to enjoy their free time. As was the case at the camp of instruction, writing families and friends at home became one of their favorite activities. Although the letters varied greatly in content and quantity, the desire of the men to receive news (along with more tangible items) came through very clearly.

The soldiers frequently requested food from home. While such novelty items as fresh fish and oysters proved

¹⁵B. G. Hollinsworth to his cousin, Oct. 15, 1861, Joseph W. Hollinsworth Papers, SHC; William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Dec. 2, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; James Quincy Adams to his parents, Sept. 7, 1861, Adams Family Papers, SHC; W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, Oct. 14, 1861, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 1", 29.

¹⁶Burgwyn Journal, Sept. 22, 1861; William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Oct. 7, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Oct. 14, 1861 in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 1", 30.

fine for a time, the men quickly grew bored with such a diet, especially when often eating the same thing three times a day. Foods that may have seemed common back home gained a new appeal after the troops had been without them for a while. Gus Jarratt had only been with the regiment a short time before he requested that his brother send a box of food with onions and cabbages included. The men of company G were delighted to receive about three bushels of food from home, especially since the items included such delicacies as cheese, butter, and cakes. When one soldier received a box of apples from his wife, he did not have them for "three minutes" before other men came around wanting some.¹⁷

The soldiers looked to their families for provide much of their clothing. Although the army's quartermaster department sometimes supplied clothes, these garments were often of inferior quality and fit. Fortunately for the soldiers, at least during the first months of the war, they received a number of shipments of apparel from home. With the onset of colder weather, soldiers began seeking warmer clothes. In some cases, the army issued overcoats to the soldiers; usually there were not enough to go around. As a result, the soldiers turned to their families for such items

¹⁷James Quincy Adams to his parents, Dec. 6, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH; I. A. Jarratt to John Jarratt, Oct. 20, 1861, Jarratt-Puryear Letters, Duke; Joseph White to Senura White, Sept. 17, 1861, Joseph White Letters, 26th NCT; Joseph White to Senura White, Oct. 18, 1861, Ibid.

as overcoats, comforters, and extra blankets.¹⁸

Most soldiers had little (if any money) and, if families and friends had not helped supply them, would have had to rely solely on what little the army could provide. On September 17, Col. Zebulon Vance informed the governor that a portion of the regiment was "almost in a state of mutiny on account of their non-receipt of their pay." He stated that the soldiers had become so destitute that they could not purchase fish, cheap and abundant as it was on Bogue Island. Even with this warning, the men did not receive their first pay from the army until early November.¹⁹

More than anything else, soldiers wanted to see people from home. When the men found they could not get furloughs to go home (except in rare cases when they were ill), they repeatedly pleaded with family and friends to come see them in camp. After several women had visited the regiment to see their relatives, Joseph White beseeched his wife "for Gods sake come never mind the cost I wil pay." Others in

¹⁸Quartermaster report of Lt. G. W. Reives, Box 17, Folder 3, Civil War Collection, NCDAAH; Joseph White to Senura White, Oct. 22, 1861, Joseph White Letters, 26th NCT; Wadesboro North Carolina Argus Dec. 12, 1861; Raleigh Standard Nov. 13, 1861; Neill A. Ray to Mary Ray, Dec. 14, 1861, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke; Charlotte Western Democrat Nov. 16, 1861; I. A. Jarratt to John Jarratt, Oct. 20, 1861, Jarratt-Puryear Letters, Duke; William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Dec. 2, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke. Glenn appears to be rather unusual in that he spoke of having so many clothes that he might have to sell some.

¹⁹Zebulon Vance to Governor Clark, Sept. 17, 1861 in Vance Letter Book, Box 49, Folder 11, Civil War Collection, NCDAAH; William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Nov. 11, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke.

the regiment expressed much the same sentiment as they became homesick. Even Col. Vance was not immune to the feeling. He asked his wife to come down to New Bern where he would be able to visit with her.²⁰

Although soldiers generally wished the best for their family and friends back home, their feelings for those men who remained at home instead of joining the army were very different. Sometimes the troops simply called on the men of their area to volunteer. More often, the emotions expressed became quite harsh. Noah Deaton referred to the men who had nothing to keep them from joining the army as "such cowards that they would suffer subjugation rather than fight." Deaton hoped no one would take offense at his words, but said that if they did the best remedy would be for the offended men to take up arms and defend their homes. Another soldier became even more vehement and stated that he would be glad to see such men drafted and forced to take the front ranks in battle.²¹

When not writing letters, many of the men set out to

²⁰Conditions for granting furloughs are found in R. H. Riddick to Zebulon Vance, Sept. 20, 1861, Vance Letter Book, Box 49, Folder 11, Civil War Collection, NCDAH. Requests for visits from family and friends are from Joseph White to Senura White, Oct. 22, 1861, Joseph White Letters, 26th NCT; James Q. Adams to his father, Oct. 3, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH; Neill A. Ray to Christian Ray, Oct. 13, 1861, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke; Zebulon Vance to his wife, Oct. 13, 1861 in Johnston, Papers of Zebulon Vance, 117.

²¹Letter from "Chatham", Raleigh Standard, Sept. 25, 1861; Joseph White to Senura White, Oct. 9, 1861, Joseph White Letters, 26th NCT; Noah Deaton to Miss Christian Ray, Oct. 7, 1861, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke. Deaton told Miss Ray that he hoped the ladies of the Chatham County would not "countenance such fellows."

explore their surroundings whenever they got the chance. While some of the soldiers took rides on boats around Bogue Sound and to surrounding islands, others preferred to do their travelling on dry land. A few walked the six miles up to Fort Macon to get a look at its defenses and visit with friends.²²

The ocean and its bounty seemed to hold a particular thrill for many of the men. Hunting seashells became a popular pasttime. Joseph White travelled up to Shackleford Banks (an island two miles above Fort Macon) for the purpose of finding some shells. He told his wife that he had some "verry pretty conk shells" and fifteen to twenty types of other shells.²³

Visiting the saltworks along the coast provided another diversion for the men. The process of making salt by evaporiting seawater intrigued the soldiers. Several tried to get some of the precious commodity to send home.²⁴

Two other ways that individuals found to pass the time involved highly contrasting activities. While one group of men found comfort in their religion, holding prayer meetings

²²Joseph White to Senura White, Oct. 9, 1861, Joseph White Letters, 26th NCT; James Quincy Adams to his parents, Oct. 3, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH.

²³Joseph White to Senura White, Oct. 9, 1861, Joseph White Letters, 26th NCT; Neill A. Ray to Mary Ray, Dec. 14, 1861, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke.

²⁴Neill A. Ray to Mary Ray, Dec. 14, 1861, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke; James Q. Adams to his father, Dec. 31, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH. For more information on the value of the coastal saltworks to the Confederacy, see Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 259-260; Peter Wallenstein, From Slave South to New South, (Chapel Hill, 1987), 103.

every night and having sermons on Sundays, others found solace in drinking alcohol. According to T. W. Setser, who had complained about the drinking and rowdiness at the camp of instruction, he and several other men went over to Beaufort and "got tite." Other soldiers frequently requested that someone from home send or bring them whiskey or brandy.²⁵

While the troops found ways to combat the boredom of army routine, they did not easily find a way to battle a much more serious problem. Not long after the regiment moved to the coast, illness swept through the camp. The 26th North Carolina quickly came face to face with its deadliest enemy.

Like most Confederate units, the first diseases to affect the regiment were "children's illnesses", such as measles and mumps. Less than two weeks after the regiment had arrived at Camp Burgwyn, Col. Vance reported that a "great many" men had fallen sick with those two ailments. Measles, in particular, spread rapidly through the camp. On September 15, Joseph White wrote his wife that twenty-five men in company G had measles. Two days later, the number had risen to forty. Although measles and mumps did not directly cause many deaths (only two deaths on Bogue Island were attributed to measles), the resulting weakness of the immune system left the soldiers susceptible to more serious

²⁵William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Oct. 7, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; I. A. Jarratt to John Jarratt, Oct. 20, 1861, Jarratt-Puryear Letters, Duke; T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Oct. 14, 1861 in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 1", 30.

diseases.²⁶

Impure water and unsanitary conditions in the camp contributed to most of the illnesses suffered by the troops. With the water table being near the surface and the shallow wells being in the camp, the number of ailments caused by impure water grew the longer the regiment remained on the island. Although the writings of the soldiers reveal no information about their sanitary habits during the period, it is likely that when they wished to relieve themselves they simply chose a convenient location without regard to possible problems with diseases. Thus, germs spread through the water and then through the troops.

While only four men died from typhoid or other fevers during September and October, the months of November and December saw the count rise to six. At the same time, the number of deaths caused by illnesses listed simply as "disease" or unknown jumped from four to fourteen. These unknown ailments were probably diarrhea or dysentery, both of which, like typhoid, were transmitted through impure water. Once the regiment moved to a less closed camp on the mainland in December, the number of disease-related deaths dropped dramatically, with only two being recorded for the month of January.²⁷

Such medical facilities as existed to prevent and treat

²⁶Wiley, Johnny Reb, 251; Robertson, Soldiers Blue and Gray, 150; Zebulon Vance to his wife, Sept. 15, 1861, in Johnston, Papers of Vance, I, 115; Joseph J. White to Senura White, Sept. 15, 1861 and Sept. 17, 1861, Joseph White Letters, 26th NCT; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-601.

²⁷Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600.

diseases proved inadequate for the task. Although immunization was tried in at least one company, no records exist that show much effort was expended to prevent sickness from occurring or spreading. Once an illness did occur, the physicians often had no idea how to combat it. When Lt. Col. Burgwyn contracted typhoid, he went first to the hospital at Carolina City where the regimental surgeons treated him. While at the hospital, the "drunken doctor" who Burgwyn had recommended as regimental surgeon, continually treated him with calomel. Not until Burgwyn's father moved him to New Bern and put him under the care of the family's doctor did Burgwyn begin to improve.²⁸

For the men of the regiment who had not yet faced battle, deaths caused by diseases made an impact. The relatively small number of deaths meant that the soldiers could publicly pay their respects to their deceased comrades. During the period between November, 1861 and February, 1862, the Raleigh Standard printed five regimental letters expressing regret at deaths caused by disease. Once the troops became engaged in combat and faced the epidemics of 1862, the number of deaths became so high as to prevent continuing the practice of publishing "death" resolutions.²⁹

²⁸Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 307; Burgwyn Journal, Jan. 4, 1862. The type of vaccination that was administered to Company G was not revealed. However, Joseph White reported that it had caused his arm to be "verry sore" and that he would not drill any more until it got better. Joseph White to Senura White, Sept. 11, 1861.

²⁹Raleigh Standard, Nov. 6 and 27, Dec. 4 and 11, 1861; Feb. 12, 1862.

During the three months the 26th North Carolina spent on Bogue Island, two events took place which broke the monotony of camp life. The first occurred in mid-October, when the regiment moved to a new site known as Camp Wilkes, located approximately one and one-half miles below Fort Macon. According to one of the men, a "beautiful cedar grove" served as the site of the new camp. The soldier believed that it would make a good place for winter quarters if the regiment was to remain on the island.³⁰

The second incident began on November 1, when a severe tempest swept the area around Bogue Island. The storm blew down a number of tents and left part of the camp submerged. More importantly, the storm brought with it an unusual visitor the next day. As Col. Vance returned from a visit to Fort Macon, he met several of his soldiers escorting a Yankee sailor carrying a white flag. When questioned by the colonel, the seaman replied that he had come from the steamer Union, which had run aground on the island during the storm. The Northerner was going to the fort to surrender the survivors of the wreck. After learning the location of the crew, Vance led two companies at the double quick about five miles below the camp, where they found the men from the ship. The troops took the eighty-one seamen as prisoners. Vance promptly sent the Yankees under guard to

³⁰Neill A. Ray to Christian Ray, Oct. 13, 1861, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke.

Fort Macon.³¹

These were the first Federal troops that the North Carolinians had met since the war began. Although some of the Confederates sympathized with the sailors, most seemed to look on them with disdain. According to one soldier, the main reason the Yankees served in the navy was to procure subsistence for themselves and their families. Another reported that the vaunted Federals had given up without any type of a fight, even though they had weapons at hand.³²

The colonel then dispatched Company K and a number of troops from a nearby artillery battery to march the seventeen miles to the site where the Union had run aground. Once there, the soldiers found a large quantity of valuable material among the wreckage. The men recovered "30 or 40 Minie Rifles" and about the same number of muskets, several large casks of powder, two rifled cannon, the ship's engine, and a quantity of clothing and bedding. Among the more unusual things the men found were twenty-four "very good" horses (of the more than sixty originally on the ship), seven barrels of whisky, and a "great many bottles of

³¹The editor of the newspaper described the storm as a "hurricane." Raleigh State Journal Nov. 6, 1861. Letter from "Chatham," Raleigh Standard, Nov. 13, 1861; Zebulon Vance to Gen. R. C. Gatlin, Nov. 15, 1861, Vance Letter Book, Box 49, Folder 11, Civil War Collection, NCDAH. Vance sent the letter to Gatlin to rebut charges from the governor's office that Vance had acted improperly in his handling of the prisoners and the wreck.

³²A. S. Caddell to his father, Nov. 3, 1861, A. S. Caddell Papers, Duke; Raleigh Standard, Nov. 13, 1861; W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, undated, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 1", 30.

champaign."

The men of Companies B and D came under hostile fire for the first time when several Federal vessels opened fire on the men as they scavenged the wreck. Although the ships fired twenty-one shells at the troops, the men took refuge behind sand dunes and suffered no casualties. Several of the soldiers kept an unexploded shell and fragments from other shells (including one piece "half as big as a head") as souvenirs.³³

Although the scavenging of the Union provided the men with a break from the monotony of life on the island, they were eager to move to winter quarters on the mainland. Throughout the fall, numerous ideas had been proposed to move the 26th North Carolina to a number of different locations in the state. None of these transfers ever materialized. Finally, on November 27, the regiment moved to a new camp located on the mainland about halfway between Morehead City and Carolina City and nearly three-quarters of a mile from Bogue Sound. The new camp was named Camp Vance.³⁴

³³James Quincy Adams to his father, Nov. 20, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAAH; William H. Glenn to Jane Glenn, Nov. 19, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke.

³⁴Letter from "Chatham," Raleigh Standard, Nov. 13, 1861; William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Dec. 2, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke. At least four different proposals were made to move the regiment to such places as western North Carolina, Shackleford Banks, or Wilmington, and to take part in an effort to retake Hatteras Island. O.R., IV, 559; O.R., Ser. III, IV, 332, 361; I. A. Jarratt to John Jarratt, Oct. 20, 1861, Jarratt-Puryear Family Papers, Duke.

Soldiers quickly busied themselves building their winter houses in what several referred to as a pleasant place in the "piney woods." Before long the men were "snugly quartered" in their homes, enjoying the abundance of wood and "tolerably good" water located nearby. Even so, one member of the regiment remained unsatisfied. He lamented the fact that although plenty of squirrels inhabited the woods, the men could not waste cartridges shooting at them.³⁵

Minor problems aside, the troops in the regiment gladly traded in their tents for wooden houses. According to W. E. Setser, they had a good house, plenty to eat, and could relax and play the fiddle. His cousin, T. W. Setser, added that he thought their house was one of the "purtes plases that your ever seen."³⁶

Colonel Vance relaxed the normal routine of the troops during the Christmas season. For five days, the men did not have to drill, only reporting for roll call and guard duty. On the day after Christmas, a soldier from Chatham got married in a ceremony held at the regiment's camp. Some of the soldiers overdid things and ended up in the guard house.

³⁵William H. Glenn to Robert Glenn, Dec. 2, 1861, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; James Quincy Adams to his parents, Dec. 6, 1861, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH; Neill A. Ray to Mary A. Ray, Dec. 14, 1861, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke; Letter from "Chatham," Raleigh Standard, Jan. 15, 1862.

³⁶W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, Jan. 12, 1862 in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 1," 31; T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Jan. 13, 1862, ibid.

But even so, the men enjoyed having a "rowdy time."³⁷

On New Year's Eve, the big party of the season took place at Beaufort. It was reserved primarily for the officers and only two privates from each company could attend. Although sixty or seventy of the "beauties of the burg" were at the party, Lt. Col. Burgwyn stated that none of the ladies were pretty. One private reported the next day that the party-goers must have "kicked up a powerful dust they have not got back yet."³⁸

However, life at Camp Vance did not revolve around the parties, as one soldier informed his readers in a melodramatic lament. "Winter with its chilling winds and its cold rains has come. 'Tis a dark and gloomy day, and the shivering sentinels as they walk the wary rounds painfully remind us that the soldier's life is not altogether romantic."³⁹

In addition, Burgwyn remained unsatisfied with the military precision of the regiment. He felt that the troops had made little progress in drill during his absence with typhoid and was determined to remedy that situation promptly. The men also found themselves restricted to the

³⁷Neill A. Ray to Miss Christian Ray, Dec. 29, 1861, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke.

³⁸Invitation to the party contained in the Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. to his mother, Jan. 3, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Joseph White to his wife, Jan. 1, 1862, Joseph White Letters, 26th NCT.

³⁹Letter from "Chatham," Raleigh Standard, Jan. 15, 1862.

area around the camp. Word came that no more furloughs would be issued at the time.⁴⁰

The reason for the increase in drill and the ban on furloughs came from the fact that a large Federal force under Gen. Ambrose Burnside sat off the coast of North Carolina. Not knowing where the Yankees might choose to attack, Col. Vance's superiors ordered him to keep the regiment prepared to move at any time. On January 26, word reached Vance that Burnside had moved his expedition into the Pamlico Sound. The 26th North Carolina was to proceed immediately to New Bern.⁴¹

That afternoon, six companies under Vance bid an "affectionate farewell" to their comfortable winter quarters and hurriedly boarded the train that would transport them to New Bern. Lt. Col. Burgwyn remained behind with orders to bring the other companies the following day. Late in the night, Vance and his troops arrived at Fort Thompson, a defensive line about four miles down the Neuse River from New Bern.⁴²

⁴⁰Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. to his mother, Jan. 3, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, Jan. 13, 1862 in Mast, "The Setser Letters, Part 1", 31.

⁴¹Letter to the editor in the Wadesboro North Carolina Argus Feb. 6, 1861.

⁴²Ibid.; William H. Glenn to Jane Glenn, Jan. 27, 1862, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; Burgwyn Journal, Feb. 5, 1862. Clark, in N. C. Regiments, II, 308, erroneously states on that the regiment moved sometime after February 10 and the fall of Roanoke Island. Not everyone was upset at leaving Camp Vance. One of the men in Company K thought that the change in base provided a good break in the monotony and that the location near New Bern meant the men could

Vance selected a spot for the regiment's camp about a half-mile behind the works at Fort Thompson. Given the rainy conditions during the months of February and March, the location chosen turned out to be a poor one. The camp was in a low, wet place that had poor drainage because of the clay soil. Friction arose between Vance and Lt. Col. Burgwyn over the camp's location. Burgwyn wanted to move the troops to a better site, but the colonel decided to remain where they were because the men had already built "chimneys" for their tents.⁴³

The soldiers had little time to stay in their tents. As soon as the regiment arrived at Fort Thompson, they were put to work improving the defensive line there. When the troops arrived at their new post, the defensive line consisted of an earth and log breastwork that ran from Fort Thompson and the Neuse River on the left to a brickyard next to the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad on the right. A small marsh lay between the railroad and Bryce's Creek, an unfordable stream to the far right of the Confederate

sometimes get "a little something extra in the way of eatables." Letter to the editor, Wadesboro North Carolina Argus, Jan. 29, 1862.

⁴³John Quincy Adams to his father, Jan. 29, 1862, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH; William H. Glenn to Jane Glenn, Mar. 5, 1862, Glenn Family Papers, Duke; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. to his mother, Feb. 18, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC. The location of the camp and continued exposure of the men to the elements most likely contributed to the pneumonia that infected the camp at that time. O. A. Hanner to John M. Harrington, Feb. 26, 1862, John M. Harrington Papers, Duke.

line.⁴⁴

General L. O'B. Branch, the district commander, was not satisfied with the existing defenses at Fort Thompson. After it was learned that Burnside's troops had attacked through what was thought to be an impenetrable swamp at Roanoke Island, Branch worried that Federal forces might also push their way through the marsh beside his defenses and get behind his main line. Therefore, he ordered Vance to have the 26th North Carolina construct a continuation of the line from the railroad to Bryce's Creek. Because of the marsh, Branch decided that the extension should be placed on the hills behind Bullen's creek, about 150 yards behind the main line.⁴⁵

Unable to obtain slave labor, Branch was forced to employ his troops to build the breastworks. The men worked every day for a month in building a series of redans on the hilltops that rose above the gullies flowing into Bullen's creek. Orren Hanner told his cousin that it had not taken him very long to learn the proper way to use a shovel.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 309; Richard Allen Sauers, "General Ambrose E. Burnside's 1862 North Carolina Campaign" (Dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1987), 289.

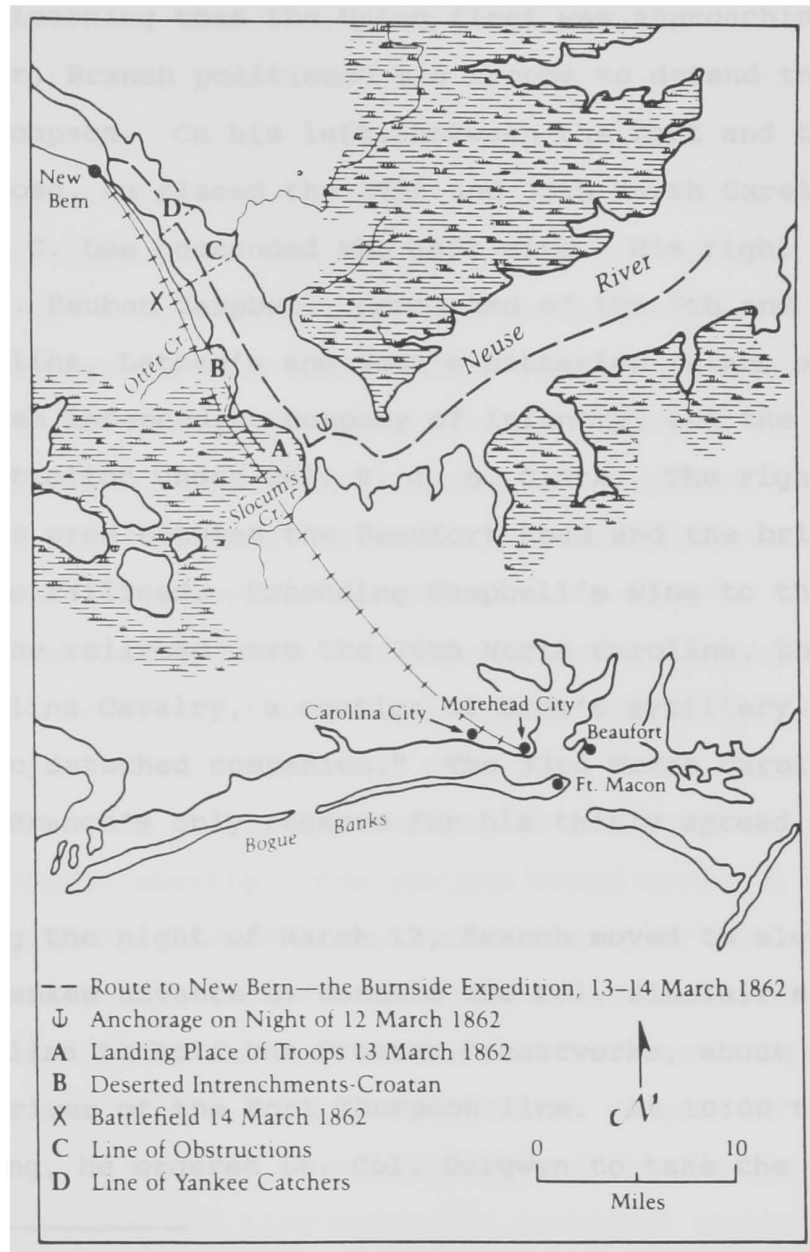
⁴⁵Sauers, "Burnside," 306; OR, IX, 255. Branch failed to extend the entrenchment to protect the right flank of the troops in the brickyard. This oversight would turn out to be critical in the defeat of the Confederates at New Bern.

⁴⁶Orren A. Hanner to John M. Harrington, Feb. 26, 1862, John M. Harrington Papers, Duke; W. E. Setster to W. A. Setser, Feb. 9, 1862, in Mast, "The Setser Letters, Part 1", 32.

Even after Roanoke Island fell to Burnside's troops on February 8, the Confederates still did not know where he might strike next. Therefore, the officers continued to drill their troops in preparation for a possible attack against New Bern. The same day Roanake was captured, Gen. Branch held a general review to inspect all his forces. Branch's command, besides the 26th North Carolina, consisted of the 7th, 27th, 33rd, 35th, and 37th North Carolina regiments. In addition, he had at his disposal the 2nd North Carolina Cavalry, Latham's and Brem's batteries of artillery, a battalion of militia infantry, and several independent companies of state troops. Branch had approximately 4,500 men under his immediate command.⁴⁷

Burnside remained in the area around Roanoke Island until March 11, when he embarked the brigades of John G. Foster, Jesse L. Reno, and John G. Parke (along with their artillery) and sailed to the mouth of the Neuse River. On the morning of March 13, in a "cold penetrating rain," Burnside landed his nearly 10,000 troops approximately sixteen miles below New Bern. The Federal force commenced moving toward the town along the tracks of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad and on the New Bern-Beaufort

⁴⁷According to John Quincy Adams, Branch called the 26th North Carolina the "finest drilled regiment" at the review. John Quincy Adams to his father, Feb. 9, 1862, Adams Family Papers, NCDAH; Clark, Several Regiments, II, 308.



Naval and land assault on New Bern, North Carolina, 13–14 March 1862

MAP 1.

New Bern and Surrounding Area--March, 1862⁴⁹

⁴⁹Map adapted from Davis, Boy Colonel, 116.

road.⁴⁹

Upon learning that the Union fleet was approaching the Neuse River, Branch positioned his troops to defend the line at Fort Thompson. On his left, between the fort and the Beaufort Road, he placed the 27th and 37th North Carolina. Colonel C. C. Lee commanded the left wing. His right wing, led by Col. Reuben Campbell, consisted of the 7th and 35th North Carolina, Latham's and Brem's batteries (minus one section), an independent company of infantry, and the militia battalion under Col. H. J. B. Clark. The right wing covered the area between the Beaufort Road and the brick kiln on the railroad. Extending Campbell's wing to the right of the railroad were the 26th North Carolina, the 2nd North Carolina Cavalry, a section of Brem's artillery, and "one or two detached companies." The 33rd North Carolina served as Branch's only reserve for his thinly spread front line.⁵⁰

During the night of March 12, Branch moved to slow any possible Yankee advance by sending the Col. Sinclair's 35th North Carolina to hold the Croatan breastworks, about six miles downriver of the Fort Thompson line. At 10:00 the next morning, he ordered Lt. Col. Burgwyn to take the 26th

⁴⁹Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel (eds.), Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, (New York: 1884-1887), I, 347-348 (hereafter cited as Battle and Leaders); Sauers, "Burnside," 289; Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 308-309.

⁵⁰Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 310. A section of artillery normally consisted of two guns, as was the case here.

North Carolina and the section of Brem's artillery to support Sinclair. (Vance remained behind in charge of the right wing since Col. Campbell had gone to the front.) Riding a train down to the Croatan breastworks, the regiment arrived just as Sinclair's troops were retreating before the Northerners' approach. Burgwyn moved forward and soon arrived at the breastworks. The troops remained at the breastworks about an hour before Col. Campbell, seeing that the rear of the 26th North Carolina was exposed to an attack by the oncoming Federal force, ordered the regiment to fall back to the main defenses. The troops quickly reboarded the train and travelled back to the Confederate line.⁵¹

Vance remained busy in the days before the battle. On March 12, he ordered a redan built across Weatherby Road, a small farm lane that ran between the right of his line and Brice's Creek. He placed the section of Brem's artillery, two companies of cavalry (from the 2nd North Carolina Cavalry Regiment), and an independent company of infantry to guard the road. About 2:00 a.m. on March 14, he received orders to strengthen that portion of the line and responded by sending Companies B, E, and K under the command of Lt. Col. Burgwyn to join the forces already at the road. Vance placed the left of his line under the immediate command of Maj. Abner Carmichael. His force--consisting of seventy-

⁵¹Sauers, "Burnside," 314-15; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. to mother, Mar. 17, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, Mar. 21, 1862 in Mast, "The Setser Letters, Part 1", 33; Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 310.

seven men from Company D under Capt. Oscar Rand, sixty-eight men from Company A, and twenty-five men from Company G-- occupied a rifle pit near the railroad. This position was located to the right rear of the militia battalion holding the brick kiln. Vance kept the remainder of the regiment under his immediate command at the center of his position.⁵²

Most of the 26th North Carolina, along with a good portion of Branch's other troops, would fight against Burnside's forces at a disadvantage. With the exception of Companies D and E, which were armed with rifles, the men of the regiment carried smoothbore "altered muskets." In battle, this meant that the Federal troops, shouldering Enfield rifles, would be able to fire on the men of the 26th North Carolina at a distance farther than the fire could be returned.⁵³

All day and well into the night of March 13, the heavy rain continued as the Confederates remained in their earthworks awaiting the enemy. Sometime before daylight the next day, the rain stopped. In its place was a dense fog

⁵²Report of Col. Zebulon Vance, OR, IX, 255; Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 314.

⁵³Sauers, "Burnside," 302. The muskets carried by the men of the 26th North Carolina were probably flintlock weapons converted to use percussion caps. The smoothbore muskets had an effective range of 100 yards as opposed to a range of 400 yards for rifles. According to one account, Companies D and E, the senior companies when the regiment formed, were assigned to the flank positions of the regiment and therefore armed with rifled muskets. "Webster's Company of Volunteers," Confederate Veteran, XXIII (1915), 399.

that severely limited visibility.⁵⁴

Around 7:30 a.m. on March 14, firing began on the left of the Confederate line as Federal troops under Gen. Foster advanced. Shortly thereafter, the firing spread to the right across the defensive position all the way to the railroad as Gen. Reno's men joined the attack. (Parke's brigade remained in reserve at this time.) The Federal advance progressed slowly in the beginning because Foster's brigade had encountered the entrenchments in their front and Reno's men were fighting their way through the marshy woods.⁵⁵

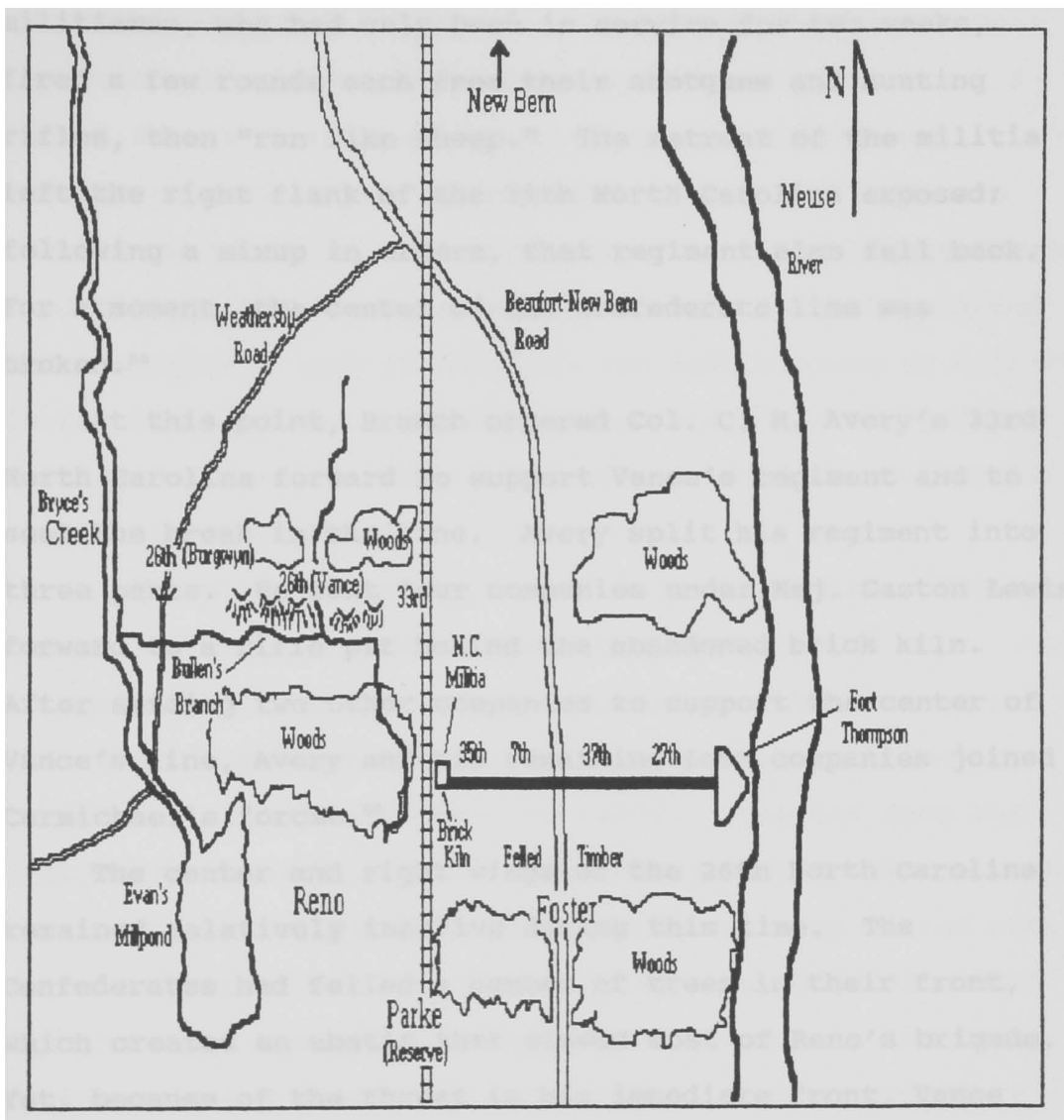
Not long after the battle opened, enemy soldiers began appearing in front of Maj. Carmichael's position. The Union troops had advanced under the cover of the woods until they neared the Confederate position. Carmichael ordered a volley fired into the head of the approaching column. The Yankees promptly returned the volley, but fired high. While one portion of the Federal force continued to shoot at Carmichael's men, another group attempted to turn his flank. A volley from the defensive position halted the flanking movement.⁵⁶

A regiment from Parke's brigade, however, came up and flanked the position of the militia battalion. The

⁵⁴Sauers, "Burnside," 325.

⁵⁵Capt. Oscar Rand, quoted in Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 34; Sauers, "Burnside," 355.

⁵⁶Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 315.



MAP 2

Battlefield at New Bern--March 14, 1862⁵⁷

⁵⁷Map adapted from O.R., IX, 248.

militiamen, who had only been in service for two weeks, fired a few rounds each from their shotguns and hunting rifles, then "ran like sheep." The retreat of the militia left the right flank of the 35th North Carolina exposed; following a mixup in orders, that regiment also fell back. For a moment, the center of the Confederate line was broken.⁵⁸

At this point, Branch ordered Col. C. M. Avery's 33rd North Carolina forward to support Vance's regiment and to seal the break in the line. Avery split his regiment into three parts. He sent four companies under Maj. Gaston Lewis forward to a rifle pit behind the abandoned brick kiln. After sending two other companies to support the center of Vance's line, Avery and his remaining four companies joined Carmichael's forces.⁵⁹

The center and right wings of the 26th North Carolina remained relatively inactive during this time. The Confederates had felled a number of trees in their front, which created an abatis that slowed most of Reno's brigade. Yet, because of the threat in his immediate front, Vance could not reinforce the more heavily engaged forces under Carmichael and Avery.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 315.

⁵⁹Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 103; Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 315.

⁶⁰Sauers, "Burnside," 355. One soldier reported that because the enemy did not come too near the right of the regiment, the men on that side of the line only fired about ten rounds apiece. W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, Mar. 21,

Around 11:00 a.m., as Avery and Carmichael stood near the railroad watching the action around the brick kiln, a bullet struck Carmichael in the head and killed him instantly. The person who fired the fatal shot may have been attracted by a small (three by four inches) Confederate flag flying from the major's hat. Carmichael had received the flag from a lady in New Bern and had promised to wear it in the first battle. Not long after the major fell, Capt. William Martin of Company H was killed as he stood near the center of the regiment.⁶¹

The Union troops continued to push forward. Soon the entire left of the Confederate line began to fall back. Colonel Avery found his men under fire from both front and left flank. Realizing he could not hold his position any longer, Avery gave the order to retire. The men from the 26th North Carolina who were with him joined in the retreat. The Confederates fell back through a woody area filled with dense underbrush that disrupted their line of march. When Avery's force emerged from the woods, the men on the left found their way blocked by a battery of Federal artillery supported by two regiments of infantry. When a Yankee officer rode up and demanded their surrender, Avery and the troops with him complied. The men who had been on the right of Avery's line used the woods to help cover their retreat

1862 in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 1", 33.

⁶¹Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 316-17; Sauers, "Burnside," 346.

and thus escaped.⁶²

Around noon, Vance received word from Capt. J. J. Young that the enemy was now in the left rear of the regiment. On learning this, and seeing Avery's men fall back, Vance ordered the remainder of the men under his command to retreat. The men fired one final ineffective volley and then quickly left their trenches. The troops reformed their line in the woods "without panic or confusion." The colonel then sent a messenger to Burgwyn to follow with the forces on the right of the line. The regiment crossed the Weathersby road and moved toward the two bridges leading across the Trent River and safety. Before the men travelled very far, both bridges were seen to be on fire. Vance turned the troops toward Brice's Creek.⁶³

On reaching the unfordable creek, the soldiers found one small boat which could carry three men. Some of the soldiers panicked, threw their guns and gear away, and swam across the river. Three men drowned while attempting the swim. Vance himself had a close call when his horse floundered while he tried to swim it across the creek. The colonel, weighted down by his accoutrements, nearly drowned

⁶²Sauers, "Burnside," 356; Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 319-20. Branch had earlier sent two couriers to Avery and Vance, ordering the two regiments to retreat. However, because none of the couriers reached the them, the two colonels remained ignorant of the retreat until they were nearly surrounded.

⁶³OR, IX, 254-256; Zebulon Vance to his wife, Mar. 20, 1862, in Johnston, Letters of Vance, 129. The bridges had been burned to prevent the Federal forces from crossing.

before being rescued. He somehow managed to swim across the river, still wearing his sword, pistol, and cartridge box. Vance then rode down to the house of a local citizen and procured three more boats which he hurried to where his men waited.⁶⁴

As the boats came up, more men wanted to board the crafts than the boats could hold. To prevent overloading, Burgwyn and Capt. William Graham stood along the line and counted off eighteen men (the number the boats could hold) for each trip across the creek. Burgwyn had to threaten one man (who pushed through without permission) with his sword before the soldier got out of the boat. For a little over an hour, this process was repeated until all the troops had been ferried over the creek. Burgwyn crossed the creek last, just as Yankee skirmishers appeared several hundred yards away.⁶⁵

Once over Brice's Creek, Vance moved the regiment (joined by a portion of the 33rd North Carolina under Lt. Col. Hoke) toward Trenton. When they reached the town, the troops crossed the Trent River and continued on to the designated gathering point at Kinston. Around noon on March

⁶⁴OR, IX, 256; Zebulon Vance to his wife, Mar. 20, 1862, in Johnston, Letters of Vance, I, 128-29; Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 323.

⁶⁵Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. to his mother, Mar. 17, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Raleigh Standard, Apr. 16, 1862.

16, the troops reached Kinston.⁶⁶

As the 26th North Carolina neared Kinston it received an escort from the famed Moravian brass band from Salem. The musicians met the troops and marched them into town playing "Dixie." The stirring notes of that tune must have made the steps of the weary soldiers a little lighter.⁶⁷

The 26th North Carolina had performed well at New Bern. Although most of the regiment had not been heavily engaged in the fighting, the men had held their ground, not retreating until the remainder of the Confederate forces had already left the field. The retreat itself had been orderly and well managed for the most part, with the only signs of panic occurring when the soldiers were confronted with the unfordable Brice's Creek. Yet the discipline drilled into the troops by Lt. Col. Burgwyn manifested itself, allowing the regiment to ferry across with few problems. After

⁶⁶OR, IX, 256. The arrival of the regiment at Kinston must have surprised a number of people. A rumor had spread immediately after the battle that Vance and his men had been captured by Burnside's forces. The rumor probably arose because the bridges, thought to be the only way to get a large body of troops across the river, had been burned before the 26th North Carolina could cross. Zebulon Vance to his wife, Mar. 20, 1863, in Johnston, Letters of Vance, I, 130.

⁶⁷Tucker, Zeb Vance, 128; Winston-Salem Twin Cities Sentinel, June 10, 1914 (hereafter cited as Sentinel). All references to the Sentinel are published extracts from a wartime journal kept by Julius A. Leinbach, a member of the 26th North Carolina Regimental Band. In early March, Col. Vance had met with Samuel T. Mickey, the band's leader, and arranged for the Moravian Band to become attached to the regiment. Its members were to be paid by the officers of the unit. Although technically not a part of the 26th North Carolina until later, the band served with the regiment for the remainder of the war.

crossing the creek, the men then covered forty-eight miles in forty hours by marching over muddy roads night and day, never stopping to rest for more than four hours."⁶⁸

Within a few days after the regiment arrived at Kinston, the morale of the troops had improved dramatically. A number of the men, some believing that the battle of New Bern had been lost because of poor leadership by Gen. Branch and the failure of the militia to hold its ground, expressed their desire to fight the Yankees again. As one soldier told his father, "we ar ready for the blasted thing again . . . they may over pour us, but they cant Scear us."⁶⁹

⁶⁸Zebulon Vance to his wife, Mar. 20, 1863 in Johnston, Letters of Vance, I, 130.

⁶⁹Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. to Henry K. Burgwyn, Sr., Mar. 20, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC. W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, Mar. 21, 1862 in Mast, "Setser Letters, Part 1", 33.

CHAPTER III

"FOR THE DURATION OF THE WAR"

The 26th North Carolina remained at Kinston through early June. During this period, the regiment underwent a number of organizational changes. The first came on March 17, when a reorganization of Confederate troops in eastern North Carolina transferred it from Branch's command to the brigade of Gen. Robert Ransom. Those men who did not like the leadership of Gen. Branch soon had a chance to experience service under a different general. Along with the 26th North Carolina, the new brigade included the 24th, 25th, 35th, 48th, and 49th North Carolina regiments.¹

Although the new brigade was composed of units with little if any combat experience, Ransom moved quickly to bring a fighting edge to his troops. A West Point graduate and former Regular Army officer, he believed in having a well-disciplined unit. Ransom conducted numerous drills and strictly enforced camp regulations while the unit remained at Kinston.²

The men of the 26th North Carolina quickly tired of their daily routine at Kinston. They wanted something more

¹Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 328. Both Orren A. Hanner and Lt. Col. Burgwyn expressed contempt for Branch, referring to him as a "political general." O. A. Hanner to John Harrington, Feb. 26, 1862, John McLean Harrington Papers, Duke; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Mar. 17, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC.

²Mark M. Boatner III, The Civil War Dictionary (New York, 1988), 679; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 328.

exciting to occupy their time other than two drills and a dress parade each day. While the enlisted men may have been bored, the officers remained busy trying to solve a number of ongoing problems.³

The first obstacle to be overcome involved clothing and equipping the regiment. When the Federal forces broke the Confederate line at New Bern, they captured the camp of the 26th North Carolina (located close behind the lines) and took everything except what the men had with them during the battle. Quartermaster J. J. Young reported that all the tents, blankets, overcoats, and extra clothing for the men were gone. In addition, the regiment lost 879 knapsacks, 806 haversacks, 524 canteens, 569 cartridge boxes, and 495 muskets. Young attributed the "great loss" in guns (and presumably cartridge boxes) to the fact that many men were sick or at home on a reenlistment furlough, and their gear was in camp when the enemy captured it.⁴

Immediately after arriving at Kinston, Col. Vance appealed to the people of the state for assistance. He pleaded through the Raleigh Standard for clothes; his men were "in a most destitute condition" and the government would not be able to supply the regiment with clothing for weeks. Within a week after Vance's call, clothes poured into camp.

³Sentinel, June 20, 1914.

⁴Report of Capt. J. J. Young, Regimental Quartermaster, Box 53, Folder 14, Civil War Collection, NCDAR; W. E. Setser to W. A. Setser, Mar. 21, 1862, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 1," 33.

On April 2, the Standard needed a full column to print a list of all the goods sent to the regiment. The assistance did not end there, as clothing continued to arrive over the next several weeks.⁵

Vance also had to rebuild the numerical strength of his troops. Late in March he told his wife that although the men were in good spirits, the regiment was much reduced by "sickness and loss in battle." Disease again swept through the unit, this time killing and disabling a number of soldiers. From the middle of March through the end of May, sixty-two men died from typhoid fever and other illnesses. The poor campsite at New Bern, the ongoing exposure to the elements, and the poor sanitation habits of the soldiers all took their toll.⁶

To attract recruits to the regiment, Vance began an ardent enlistment campaign. This included newspaper advertisements in which Vance stated the number of troops needed by each company. He also warned that "men liable to draft in those counties had better come along at once like white men, and not wait for the sheriff to bring them to me."

While it is not possible to determine what attracted the new men--the recruiting campaign, the threat of conscription, or the lure of the \$65 bounty--they flocked to the regiment.

⁵Raleigh Standard, Mar. 26, Apr. 2, and Apr. 23, 1862; Raleigh State Journal, Apr. 9, 1862.

⁶Zebulon Vance to wife, Mar. 23, 1862, in Johnston, Papers of Vance, I, 131; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-601.

Fifty-four men enlisted in Company K alone. From March 20 to March 30, the regiment received 114 recruits. Ninety more joined over the next two months.⁷

Two of the recruits brought a touch of notoriety (and humor) to the regiment. On March 20, Keith and Samuel Blalock, from Caldwell County, enlisted in Company F. The Blalocks served for one month before Keith contracted a rash from rolling in poison sumac. The rash was so severe that the doctors could not diagnose the cause and, fearing he had a contagious disease, dismissed him from service. Samuel then went to Col. Vance and asked to be dismissed as well--on the grounds that he was a woman. On examination, the surgeon verified the claim, and she received a discharge along with her husband Keith. According to a newspaper account, Malinda (Samuel's real name) had "drilled with her company and was learning fast . . . it was unanimously voted that Mrs. Blaylow [sic] was 'some punkins'."⁸

⁷Raleigh Standard, Apr. 30, 1862; Charlotte Western Democrat, Apr. 15, 1862; Wadesboro North Carolina Argus, June 6, 1862; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-601. The only two companies which did not advertise for recruits were F and I, from Caldwell County. Those two had already received a number of men as part of Vance's plan to build a legion (discussed later). Many of the recruits for F and I did not remain with the regiment long, transferring to the newly formed 58th North Carolina.

⁸Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 535; Clark, N. C. Regiments, II, 330-31; Charlotte Western Democrat, May 6, 1862. The Blaylocks had been known in their community to be Unionist sympathizers. They probably joined the 26th North Carolina in an attempt to reach Federal lines in the eastern part of the state. When that failed, they obtained their discharges and returned to Caldwell County. There Keith quickly joined up with Union guerilla forces led by Col. George W. Kirk. During much of the time Keith served with

In addition to bringing in new recruits, the officers of the regiment had to convince their men (who had originally enlisted to serve for twelve months) to reenlist for the duration of the war. The reenlistment process had begun back in February and continued while the unit remained at Kinston. Colonel Vance, an excellent speaker, entreated his troops to remain with the regiment. His appeal, along with the threat of conscription, helped bring a number of reenlistments. By April 22, a sufficient number of men signed up to fight "for the duration," allowing the 26th North Carolina to reorganize officially for the war.⁹

As part of the reorganization, soldiers were allowed to elect their company officers. Company officers would then choose the field officers. During this process, a number of changes occurred in the regiment's leadership. Six companies received new captains. At the same time, Maj. Nathaniel P. Rankin resigned and Lt. James S. Kendall was elected to replace him.¹⁰

Vance's popularity with his soldiers brought him easy reelection as colonel. For Lt. Col. Burgwyn, the issue remained in doubt for some time. His reputation as a tough

Kirk, Malinda rode with him. William R. Trotter, Bushwhackers: The Civil War in North Carolina, the Mountains (Winston-Salem, 1988), 147-54.

⁹William H. Glenn to Elizabeth Glenn, Feb. 18, 1862, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; Sentinel, June 20, 1914; I. A. Jarratt to father, Apr. 22, 1862, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke.

¹⁰Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 328, 330.

drillmaster made him unpopular with the troops. This was offset to a large degree by his performance at New Bern, where he had consistently brought up the rear of the regiment as it retreated. In the end, Burgwyn won reelection by a majority no more than four votes.¹¹

Ransom's brigade remained in the area around Kinston and Goldsboro until the middle of June. During that period it saw limited skirmish action as Burnside consolidated his hold on New Bern. At the same time, in Virginia, Gen. George B. McClellan began his Peninsula Campaign against Richmond.

As reports from Richmond reached eastern North Carolina, the soldiers prepared to depart for Virginia. On the evening of June 19, Vance addressed his troops: "Fellow soldiers, it gives me great pleasure to announce to you that we will leave for Richmond, Va., tomorrow morning by daylight to take part in the vital struggle now pending before its walls." The soldiers greeted Vance's speech with "shouts of exultation."¹²

When the regiment reached the railroad the next morning, they found that the train had room for only eight companies. The other two waited for a later train. Nonetheless, the troops began their trip to Virginia. On reaching Goldsboro, one car broke down and several others jumped the tracks. The

¹¹Ibid.; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to father, Apr. 23, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC. According to Burgwyn, considerable maneuvering took place to have another person elected as lieutenant colonel.

¹²Sentinel, June 20, 1914; letter from S. P. Dula in the Raleigh Standard, July 16, 1862.

men got the train moving again after several hours' work. Heavily loaded, the train moved slowly, at one point covering only eleven miles in nine hours. On the evening of June 21, after a thirty-hour journey, the troops debarked at Petersburg.¹³

The 26th North Carolina, along with the remainder of Ransom's brigade, remained at Petersburg for several days. During that time Ransom kept the soldiers ready to march. He ordered that each man have "light knapsacks, 40 rounds of cartridges, and 4 days rations" prepared.¹⁴

On the morning of June 24, the regiment received orders to board the train for Richmond at one o'clock that afternoon. The troops marched to the depot, only to learn their departure would be delayed. About 9:00 p.m. they boarded. The nearly 900 men had to be "pushed . . . shoved, and crammed" into only seventeen cars (including stable cars with horses) to make room for the entire regiment. Reaching Richmond at 1:00 a.m., the men bivouacked on the grounds of Capital Square.¹⁵

After a few hours' rest, the regiment and the rest of

¹³Sentinel, June 20, 1914; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to father, June 22, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Sentinel, June 20, 1914; letter from S. P. Dula in Raleigh Standard, July 16, 1862; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, July 14, 1862. Burgwyn wrote this thirty-eight page letter in the form of a journal, covering the period from June 24-July 3. Unless otherwise noted, narrative and quotations concerning the regiment's activities during this period come from this journal.

Ransom's brigade joined Gen. Benjamin Huger's division near King's Schoolhouse, some five miles from Richmond on the Williamsburg Road and opposite the battlefield of Seven Pines. Huger's position was under attack by Union Gen. Joseph J. Hooker's division. Huger brought up Ransom's troops to help stem the Federal advance.¹⁶

As the troops filed into their position a mile and a half behind the advance forces, heavy artillery and rifle fire broke out on the front lines. While the men of the 26th North Carolina waited for orders to move forward, they saw ambulances and stretcher bearers pass carrying the wounded. The occasional "suppressed groan" certainly informed the new recruits that "war was no pastime."¹⁷

The regimental band played the stirring strains of "Marseilles" as the men moved forward to a position close behind the front lines. While they awaited further orders, the troops endured a bombardment in the woods all around them. After nightfall, the unit, along with Col. Matt Ransom's regiment, started out on picket duty. Vance took five companies and moved through the woods to find the Georgia regiment he was to relieve. Burgwyn was to follow with the balance of the men and to post them "as best

¹⁶Joseph P. Cullen, The Peninsula Campaign, 1862: McClellan and Lee Struggle for Richmond, (Harrisburg, PA, 1973), 84-85.

¹⁷Raleigh Standard, July 9, 1862; O.R., XI, pt. 2, 787, 791-92.

possible."¹⁸

The lieutenant colonel took his men into the woods; but before they went 200 yards, they became entangled in a swampy area. Burgwyn repeatedly tried to find his way to Vance's position. Yet limited visibility ("10 paces") hampered the effort. Giving up the search, he posted his men as best he could in the dark. Unfortunately, Burgwyn placed some of the men "entirely within the enemies [sic] lines." He then made another effort to locate Vance.¹⁹

Scarcely had Burgwyn found the other half of the regiment when shooting began from where he had left his men. Almost immediately, firing erupted along the entire line of the 26th North Carolina. While some of the men lay behind a rail fence, the "Yankees poked their guns through the cracks to fire at them." In Burgwyn's sector, men were receiving fire from front and rear, often at distances of less than ten yards. Some had their beards singed by rifle blasts. As the musket balls flew among them "thick as hail," most of the troops fell back in disarray, reforming at some distance to the rear of the picket line. Only Companies G, H, and K held their positions.²⁰

At this point Lt. Col. Burgwyn became irate with his

¹⁸Sentinel, June 20, 1914; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 331-32.

¹⁹Cullen described the land around King's Schoolhouse as being heavily wooded with a belt of swampy soil running through the middle of it. Cullen, Peninsula Campaign, 84-85.

²⁰William H. Glenn to Jane Glenn, July 14, 1862, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 332.

brigade commander. Informing Ransom that the pickets were driven in, he requested further instructions. Ransom simply told Burgwyn to retake his former position. Burgwyn fumed at being ordered to go back to a spot he did not think he could find "to save myself from the gallows, and in hunting which I was liable at any moment to run upon a concealed foe." Nonetheless, he led the men who had regrouped (about 100) back into the woods. He remained there until morning, when he united his force with that of Vance.²¹

At daylight on June 26, the reformed regiment moved forward with other troops and retook the picket lines which the Federal troops had abandoned sometime during the night. Around 9:00 a.m., orders reached Vance to advance 300 yards and extend the regiment. This meant that the 26th North Carolina formed a skirmish line that covered the front of the Confederate line for about three-quarters of a mile. The weary troops settled down in their new position and tried to rest. Except for killing two Yankees who wandered too close to the picket line, little happened for the remainder of the day. Confederates stripped one of the dead men of his Enfield rifle and accoutrements. His boots became the property of a "not over sensitive Confed. who required just such an article."²²

About 5:00 p.m., another regiment relieved the 26th

²¹Ransom was less than pleased with the regiment's performance at King's Schoolhouse. O.R., XI, pt. 2, 793.

²²Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, July 14, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC.

North Carolina from picket duty. As the men reached their camp they heard a "terrific cannonading" break the stillness of the evening. On the north side of the Chickahominy River, Gen. Robert E. Lee's offensive against the George McClellan's Army of the Potomac had begun in earnest near Mechanicsville. Although the rifle fire could not be heard from that distance, the roar of the artillery continued until around 9:00 p.m.²³

Early the next morning, the men moved forward in support of a Georgia regiment. As they advanced, word came that Lee's army had taken possession of Mechanicsville, "completely defeating the enemy." Continuing on, they passed over ground where much of the June 25 battle had been fought. According to Burgwyn, "guns and equipments and bits of clothing, and finally unburied ghastly bodies met our gaze at every step. The sight was one calculated to excite reflections of the most serious nature."

After going about 400 yards, the troops met scattered fire. Skirmishers moved out to discover the exact location of the enemy. Commands, coming from the Federal lines, indicated that an attack was forthcoming. As the enemy formed, Confederate artillery opened fire on the Union position and stopped the threatened advance. The regiment

²³Although the battle at Mechanicsville began between 3:00-4:00 p.m., the men of the 26th evidently did not notice the firing until later. For a description of Lee's attack at Mechanicsville, see Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command (New York, 1942-44), I, 510-14.

remained in place until nightfall, when it was relieved.²⁴

The troops spent most of June 28 resting and preparing rations. At 4:00 p.m., Vance received orders to support a Virginia regiment on picket. Advancing down the Williamsburg Road, he split the regiment in two, sending Burgwyn with four companies to the left of the road while keeping six companies on the right. During the night the men heard "rumblings of wagons and apparently a great commotion in the enemy's camps. Large fires were seen to burn brightly." The "commotion" the troops heard came from McClellan's army as it burned its stores and continued its retreat.²⁵

Shortly after daybreak, the men pushed forward rapidly and found the Federal entrenchments around Seven Pines abandoned. The evidence of battle lay in abundance. Trees marked by artillery and rifle fire, human and equine bodies laying unburied, and discarded equipment remained in plain view of the soldiers. Officers kept the troops in their ranks and did not permit them to enjoy the bounty of the abandoned camp. A few somehow managed to gather relics "by which to remember the Yankees."²⁶

The regiment received orders to return to camp as quickly as possible, get breakfast, and to proceed down the

²⁴Ransom attributed the repulse of the Federal force to the brisk fire from the 26th North Carolina. O.R., XI, pt. 2, 793.

²⁵Cullen, Peninsula Campaign, 128-30.

²⁶Letter from S. P. Dula in Raleigh Standard, July 16, 1862.

Charles City Road in pursuit of the enemy. Around 10:00 a.m., shortly after the unit began its march, Gen. Huger received orders from Gen. John B. Magruder to protect the right of his force. Huger's troops remained in support of Magruder for almost three hours before Gen. Lee ordered the division to proceed down the Charles City road.²⁷

After bivouacking the night of June 29 along the road, the men of the 26th North Carolina broke camp and continued their march. Around 4:00 p.m., they reached White Oak Swamp. The soldiers could hear the sound of fighting a mile ahead of them. Although the firing continued until dark, Huger did not commit his troops to battle. The men camped that night along the swamp.²⁸

While the troops were moving forward, the musicians followed behind and assisted the regimental surgeon. Band members dressed the wounds of the slightly injured, and helped the surgeon with the more serious cases (such as amputations). They also attended to a number of other medical tasks.²⁹

Early on the morning of July 1, the men broke camp and resumed their pursuit of McClellan's army. By noon, they reached the battleground near Frayser's Farm (the battle the men had heard the previous day), where many of the wounded still lay pleading for assistance. Burgwyn stated that the

²⁷O.R., XI, pt. 2, 789.

²⁸Ibid., 789-90.

²⁹Sentinel, July 20 and July 27, 1914.

smell of the "putrid air," the sights and sounds, all conspired to make a vivid impression on his memory.

The soldiers would confront much worse before the day ended. Soon after passing Frayser's Farm, Ransom's brigade moved to support the flank of Magruder's division as it assaulted the Federal position on Malvern Hill. McClellan had posted a strong artillery force, supported by infantry, atop the hill. Magruder's plan called for his troops to attack across "gentle slope of cleared land laid out in clover and corn" for about a mile.³⁰

As the men of the 26th North Carolina watched, the Confederate regiments moved forward only to be "mowed down . . . with their artillery." At 7:00 p.m., the brigade received orders to move into position to charge the enemy. Ransom halted the regiment before it advanced far. After making the troops form in close order, while the shells fell around them, he sent them forward.³¹

The men advanced up the Quaker Church Road (which cut through the middle of the battlefield). They had not gone very far when they came to a point where the road forked, and they took the wrong branch. Pushing forward, they met "skulkers from all states" retiring from the battle. Burgwyn grabbed one skulker and threatened to kill him with a sword unless he guided the lieutenant colonel into the battle. The

³⁰O.R., XI, pt. 2, 794.

³¹Ibid.; I. A. Jarratt to mother, July 9, 1862, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke.

man agreed.³²

The regiment remained under fire from Union artillery the entire time. As Vance led the troops forward, they took advantage of a "little swell in the ground" to stop and reform their line of battle. Darkness fell, but men scrambled over a fence and continued the charge. They kept their course by relying on flashes from the Federal cannon. As the soldiers got closer to the enemy, they came upon other Confederates laying on the ground. These men told Burgwyn not to fire because friendly troops lay in front of the regiment. He stopped the unit and ordered his troops to lay down.³³

After the fighting ceased about 10:00 p.m., Ransom ordered his brigade to move quietly off the field. Part of the regiment did so in good order. Earlier however, Vance with a portion of the unit had been ordered into a small piece of woods. In the confusion they became separated from the others. During the night the men lay on or near the battlefield listening to the cries of the wounded. Burgwyn

³²Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, July 14, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC. According to a map in Cullen, Peninsula Campaign, 153, the Quaker Church Road forked about a quarter-mile from the Federal artillery batteries. If the 26th North Carolina took the wrong branch, it was for a time proceeding away from the battlefield (toward Richmond).

³³I. A. Jarratt to mother, July 24, 1862, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke. According to Burgwyn, one company (most likely Company I) failed to hear the order to halt and advanced right up to the edge of the artillery batteries. The body of one man was "found next day within 15 yds of the guns." Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, July 14, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Raleigh Standard, Aug. 27, 1862.

could distinctly hear them call, "3rd Alabama come and take me off; 2nd Louisiana give me some water."³⁴

As a cold rain fell on the morning of July 2, the Confederates looked over the grisly battlefield at Malvern Hill and saw that McClellan's army had left during the night. The officers of Ransom's brigade spent the remainder of the day collecting stragglers and organizing their units. They also struggled to care for the numerous wounded men (Confederate and Federal) as best they could.

The regiment remained near the battlefield for two days, then made its way back toward Richmond. On July 6, the troops received "a much needed rest." The next day they resumed their hot, dusty march. By July 9, the men reached their new camp at Drewry's Bluff.³⁵

Because Huger's division was not heavily engaged during most of the Seven Days, the 26th North Carolina suffered lightly in comparison to many other units in the Confederate army. During the campaign the unit lost 15 killed (or mortally wounded), 56 wounded, and 2 captured. With the exception of being partially routed the night of June 25 at King's Schoolhouse, the regiment performed the limited tasks assigned it during the campaign. The men knew they had

³⁴O.R., XI, pt. 2, 795. Even with the cries of the wounded all around them, some of the men were so exhausted that they fell asleep "amongst the dead and wounded." I. A. Jarratt to mother, July 24, 1862, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 333.

³⁵Sentinel, June 27, 1914; W. E. Setser to parents, July 16, 1862, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 2," 27.

played a role in defeating McClellan and their morale remained strong.³⁶

The regiment remained at Drewry's Bluff for three weeks. On July 29, it moved to Camp French, near Petersburg. The men spent much of this time building breastworks to make the area easier to defend against enemy attack. On one occasion the unit marched down to City Point. From there the men could see McClellan's camp across the river. Near dark, Gus Jarratt ventured down to the edge of the water and got a look at the "celebrated Monitor."³⁷

Two major changes took place in the regiment at Petersburg. In mid-August, Vance left the unit. A short time later, the 26th North Carolina was transferred from Ransom's brigade.

In early June, 1862, a number of people pushed Vance's name forward as a gubernatorial candidate. On June 15 he accepted the nomination. Vance won the election by a landslide, beating his opponent by more than a two-to-one margin (almost four-to-one among the soldiers). With his election, governor-elect Vance left the regiment. On August 11, the officers presented him with a ceremonial sword. The evening before he departed, Vance made a speech to his troops that "brought the tears to many an eye that had long been a

³⁶Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600.

³⁷W. E. Setser to parents, July 16, 1862, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 2," 27; John T. Jones to Edmund W. Jones, Aug. 16, 1862, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC; I. A. Jarratt to father, Aug. 14, 1862, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke.

stranger to such a thing." The next morning, Vance left the 26th North Carolina.³⁸

During his time as colonel, Vance had performed his duties reasonably well. Although lacking the military knowledge of Burgwyn, he brought to the position a number of other skills. Among these were the ability to recruit and inspire troops with his oratory skills, and his evident concern for the men who served under him. While Vance and Burgwyn did not always get along with each other, together they formed an effective team. In many instances Vance treated Burgwyn as a co-commander rather than a subordinate. One dealt with organizing and caring for the soldiers; the other handled the drill and discipline necessary to create an efficient military unit.

The issue of who would be the next colonel precipitated the second major change for the regiment. Burgwyn appeared the logical replacement for Vance, but he soon ran into strong opposition from outside the unit. General Ransom made quite clear his view that he considered Burgwyn too young to make a competent commander. Over the objections of the regiment, he nominated the lieutenant colonel of the 1st North Carolina Cavalry (Ransom's first command) to lead the 26th North Carolina. Ransom even went to see President Jefferson Davis concerning the matter. Davis told him that the conscription act (which allowed units to choose their

³⁸Raleigh Standard, June 11, June 25, and Aug. 27, 1862; Wadesboro North Carolina Argus, June 26, 1862; J. T. Jones to Edmund Jones, Aug. 16, 1862, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC.

officers) would not allow Burgwyn's promotion to be blocked. Thus, at age twenty, Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., became the "boy colonel."³⁹

Because of the tension between Ransom and Burgwyn, the latter petitioned to have the regiment transferred to another brigade. Orders soon came from Richmond to shift the 26th North Carolina to the brigade commanded by Gen. J. Johnston Pettigrew. On August 27, as Ransom's troops marched out of camp heading north, the regiment marched south to Camp French near Petersburg. There it joined with the 11th, 44th, 47th, and 52nd North Carolina regiments.⁴⁰

The 26th occupied a unique position in Pettigrew's brigade: it was the only unit which had seen any combat. Despite this advantage, Burgwyn labored to improve what he believed was a "disorganized" unit. Every day the troops practiced battalion maneuvers for two hours in the morning and two more hours in the evening. Following the second drill, the troops formed for dress parade. The colonel also worked to keep his men physically fit. Three times a week the troops went on six mile marches.⁴¹

³⁹John T. Jones to Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr, Aug. 11, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Joseph J. Young to Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., Aug. 22, 1862, *ibid.*; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Aug. 24, 1862, *ibid.*; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 334.

⁴⁰Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Aug. 17, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 334-36; Sentinel, July 4, 1914.

⁴¹Davis, Boy Colonel, 195; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Sept. 2, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; L. L. Polk to wife, Sept. 9, 1862, L. L. Polk Papers, SHC; L. L. Polk to mother, Oct. 17, 1862, *ibid.*

During the fall of 1862 the regiment grew in number. At one time, Capt. John R. Lane travelled to Raleigh and returned with 110 volunteers and conscripts. In mid-October, Burgwyn informed his father that the unit had 1,172 men. He may have been correct in stating that it was "perhaps the largest regiment in the C.S.A."⁴²

The final task Burgwyn faced in shaping the unit to suit him was to fill the vacant offices of lieutenant colonel and major. He wanted either Capt. Oscar Rand or Capt. John T. Jones as his second-in-command. Objections from his senior captains forced him to change plans. After nearly two months of dispute, the vacancies were finally filled. Captain John R. Lane received the appointment to lieutenant colonel and Capt. Jones became the major. Although Burgwyn showed some disappointment in Lane's promotion, he expressed his pleasure at the overall situation of the regiment.⁴³

For the most part, the soldiers fared well at Camp French. Moderately cool fall weather allowed the men to drill and work on the entrenchments without suffering as they had during the hot, humid summer months. They also enjoyed visits from family and friends. In addition to bringing a

⁴²Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to father, Sept. 27, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to father, Oct. 16, 1862, ibid.

⁴³Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to father, Sept. 9, 1862, ibid.; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Oct. 14, 1862, ibid. Although Burgwyn seemed content with the regiment's situation, Sgt. Maj. Leonidas L. Polk stated that "the Regt. is very much dissatisfied. We all want old Zeb back with us." L. L. Polk to mother, L. L. Polk Papers, SHC.

touch of home to the camp, these visitors often brought clothes, food, liquor, and other delicacies."⁴⁴

The major complaints of the troops concerned a lack of food and shoes. L. L. Polk told his mother that he ate all he could, "for it is precious little. We are living very hard so far as eating is concerned." The problem came not from a scarcity of food so much as high prices. According to William Glenn, soldiers with money used most of it to feed themselves, while those without "must beg" or go hungry.⁴⁵

A lack of shoes presented another problem. In September, when Pettigrew's brigade advanced on Suffolk, Burgwyn had to leave behind those without shoes. On October 16, he told his father that not less than 200 men were without shoes and many more nearly barefoot. The problem remained a month later. As the regiment campaigned in eastern North Carolina, a number of troops marched barefoot through mud and snow.⁴⁶

The 26th North Carolina participated in a number of minor campaigns during the fall and winter of 1862-1863. The

⁴⁴Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Sept. 7, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; L. L. Polk to wife, Sept. 9, 1862, L. L. Polk Papers, SHC; J. L. Henry to wife, Sept. 11, 1862, J. L. Henry Papers, Duke; W. E. Setser to family, Dec. 31, 1862, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 3," 10-11.

⁴⁵L. L. Polk to mother, Oct. 17, 1862, L. L. Polk Papers, SHC; William Glenn to mother, Sept. 3, 1862, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke.

⁴⁶W. W. Edwards to unidentified, Sept. 16, 1862, typescript in possession of Greg Mast; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to father, Oct. 16, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; W. E. Setser to family, Nov. 15, 1862, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 3," 10.

first of these came in the middle of September, when Pettigrew's brigade (and several other attached units) advanced on the Federal base at Suffolk. Confederates progressed as far as the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad, twenty-five miles from Suffolk, when word came to halt the movement and return to Petersburg. Soldiers trudged back to camp in "a bad humor because we had to march so far and did not get to whip the yankees."⁴⁷

After remaining in camp for nearly a month, the regiment received orders to proceed to eastern North Carolina. There it worked with the 17th and 59th North Carolina regiments in an operation against the Union garrison at Plymouth. As the Confederates neared the town, Col. Radcliffe, commanding the expedition, detached the five companies of the 26th North Carolina to watch the Federal forces at nearby Washington. Radcliffe's move turned out to be prudent. While he attempted to capture Plymouth, Gen. John G. Foster moved up to Washington with over 5,000 men in an effort to trap the three Rebel regiments.⁴⁸

On November 2, Foster's troops moved out from

⁴⁷The anger over the aborted advance extended from the privates all the way up to Pettigrew. Clyde N. Wilson, Carolina Cavalier: The Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew, (Athens, 1990), 172-73; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Sept. 23, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; I. A. Jarratt to brother, Sept. 25, 1862, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke; William Glenn to brother, Sept. 24, 1862, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke.

⁴⁸Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to father, Oct. 27, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 337; O.R., XVIII, 20-21.

Washington. A short time later they encountered two companies from the 26th North Carolina at Little Creek. The Federal commander pushed a brigade forward to drive them back. For nearly an hour, the Tarheels (reinforced by two more companies) held their ground at the creek. Realizing they would soon be overrun, Burgwyn pulled them back to another position behind a creek and pond at Rawls' Mill. There the troops delayed the Union advance for a half-hour. As the sun set, the Confederates burned the bridge at the mill and withdrew into the darkness. Although forced to retreat, the five companies delayed Foster's advance long enough to allow the other two North Carolina units time to pull back from Plymouth."

The regiment returned to its quarters at Camp French. Except for a brief trip back to North Carolina in mid-December, when Foster threatened to cut the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad at Goldsboro, the troops remained at their base for the next six weeks. The men quickly erected log houses for their winter quarters. Each building measured approximately sixteen by eighty feet, and was divided into six rooms. The dwellings were "chinked and daubed" and had a chimney for every two rooms. From eight to ten enlisted men shared a room. The officers had a house for themselves,

"At one point, the fire from Companies K and I at Little Creek became so heavy that the Union officers reported they were coming under artillery fire. O.R., XVIII, 20-23; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 338.

which allowed them more room than the privates.⁵⁰

Yet like the previous year, the men did not get to enjoy their quarters very long. Less than six weeks passed before the regiment was ordered to join the rest of Pettigrew's forces in North Carolina. At the time the brigade operated from Magnolia, south of Goldsboro, on the Wilmington and Weldon line.⁵¹

Although the troops had no tents, they got along well in their new location. A plentiful supply of food, clothing, and blankets helped compensate somewhat for the exposure. Men even built "houses" out of brush to serve as a wind break. Drilling and marching consumed most of their time. To some enlisted soldiers, marching from one place to another, then back, seemed quite pointless.⁵²

During this period, Capt. Louis G. Young, Assistant Adjutant General for the brigade, inspected the regiment. He evaluated the men on the basis of discipline, instruction, clothing, military appearance, weapons, equipment, and officer capability. Young rated Companies H and K as the best in the regiment. He stated that Company I was the "most indifferent Company . . . but not so bad as to be reported for its deficiencies." Young also noted that many companies

⁵⁰Orren Hanner to John Harrington, Nov. 30, 1862, John M. Harrington Papers, Duke; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Dec. 8, 1862, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC.

⁵¹Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 176.

⁵²Ibid., 177; I. A. Jarratt to mother, Mar. 5, 1863, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke; Sentinel, July 11, 1914.

were equipped with both muskets and rifles, and suggested they be armed with the same type of weapons if possible.⁵³

The most serious complaint of the soldiers concerned furloughs. For the troops in the 26th North Carolina, along with those from many other Southern regiments, the Confederate Army's system of granting leave became a tantalizing morsel that remained out of reach for most. According to regulations, only one out of every twenty-five men in an outfit could go home at any given time. Yet a catch existed. Companies which had deserters or men absent without leave did not receive any furloughs. In Burgwyn's regiment, all ten companies were disqualified from receiving a furlough under the rules.⁵⁴

The outrage of the soldiers over the lack of furloughs became tangible. "An Officer" and "A Private" from the regiment wrote letters to the Raleigh Standard. They angrily denounced the system for granting leave. The officer argued that a "few unpatriotic, cowardly" deserters kept all the men in the unit from getting a furlough. He pleaded in the name of common sense and humanity for passes for the "gallant men

⁵³Lewis G. Young to J. J. Pettigrew, Mar. 2, 1863, quoted in Davis, Boy Colonel, 244. Young failed to note, and most likely did not see, that some of the enlisted men carried revolvers. Under army regulations privates could not carry pistols because they might, "in a fit of passion, at some supposed insult, shoot those in command." George Glenn to mother, Apr. 11, 1862, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; Charlotte Western Democate, July 30, 1861.

⁵⁴Richard Bardolph, "North Carolina Troops and the Deserter Problem," North Carolina Historical Review, LXVI (January, 1989), 70-71; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 495-600.

. . . who have braved the storms of two wintry campaigns . . . barefooted and nearly naked."⁵⁵

More than leave was at stake in this issue. Desertions and absences without leave had become a major problem for the army. A variety of reasons appear to have led to the defections. Some men worried about the welfare and safety of their families. Leonidas L. Polk confided his unease in a letter to his mother, telling her that he believed his wife and children would not be safe living in their isolated house by themselves. Another soldier worried about his family having sufficient food. He reminded his wife to claim her share of food provided to soldiers' families by county.⁵⁶

Other men undoubtedly left because they did not identify with the Confederate cause. A strong pro-Union sentiment remained in the northwestern mountain and central piedmont counties. Although these counties had ~~sent~~ responded strongly to the state's first call for recruits, many people now argued that the war had become a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight." Such sentiments expressed in newspapers and letters from home did not strengthen a soldier's resolve to remain with his unit.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Raleigh Standard, Feb. 18 and Apr. 15, 1863.

⁵⁶Leonidas. L. Polk to mother, Oct. 17, 1862, Leonidas L. Polk Papers, SHC; James Wright to wife, Jan. 8, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH.

⁵⁷Bartlett, Civil War in North Carolina, 181-86; Bardolph, "The Deserter Problem," 62; Richard Reid, "A Test Case of the 'Crying Evil': Desertion Among North Carolina Troops during the Civil War," North Carolina Historical Review, LVIII (July, 1981), 247-49.

Confederate authorities hoped the system of furloughs would induce soldiers to remain with their units. In February, General Gustavus W. Smith, commander of the district, and Governor Vance issued proclamations granting a full pardon for deserters if they would return to their units immediately.⁵⁸

The 26th North Carolina had its share of deserters. On January 21, the Standard printed a notice from Col. Burgwyn offering a reward for the "apprehension and delivery" of sixty-two deserters from the regiment. To prevent further desertions, Burgwyn made the threat of a firing squad very clear to his troops. In December, 1862, Sgt. Andrew Wyatt of Company B deserted. He was soon captured and a court-martial condemned him to be shot. On January 26, Pettigrew's entire brigade assembled to witness the execution. An officer read the death sentence as the firing squad (formed from Wyatt's company) took its position in front of the condemned man. Although the same officer then read another order granting Wyatt a reprieve, the point got through to the soldiers. Desertions, which had peaked in December and January, dropped dramatically over the next three months.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Bardolph, "The Deserter Problem," 71-72. February 10 was set as the initial deadline. Vance later extended it another month. Charlotte Western Democrat, Feb. 3 and Feb. 24, 1863.

⁵⁹Raleigh Standard, Jan. 21, 1863. Vivid descriptions of the near execution of Wyatt can be found in the letters of L. L. Polk to wife, Jan. 27, 1863, L. L. Polk Papers, SHC; William Glenn to mother, Jan. 27, 1863, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; Sentinel, July 18, 1914. Andrew Wyatt remained with the regiment and was killed "bravely doing his duty" on

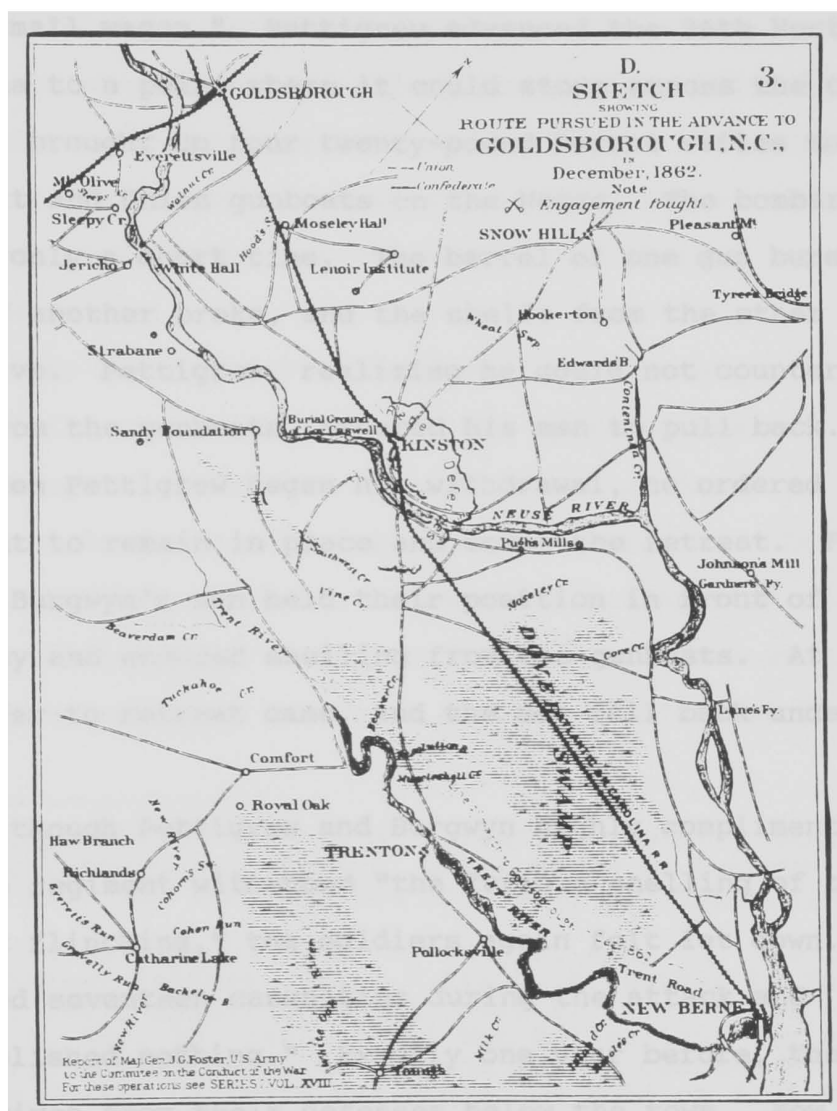
The daily camp routine ended in March when Gen. Daniel H. Hill took command of the troops in eastern North Carolina. Hill decided to attack the main Federal garrison at New Bern. His plan called for Gen. Junius Daniel's brigade to march on the town by a road along the Trent River, and for the brigade under Pettigrew to proceed down a road to Barrington's Ferry on the north side of the Neuse River. That way, the brigades would assault the garrison from two directions at the same time.⁶⁰

On March 9, Pettigrew's men left Goldsboro. During the morning a heavy rain fell and turned the roads to mud. For four days the troops continued their fatiguing march through rain and mud. Bridges over the creeks often broke under the weight of the wagons and heavy artillery accompanying the brigade. At one point, the men of the 26th North Carolina had to ford a creek some thirty yards wide. Soldiers joked that wading provided a good way to get rid of the mud. At dark on March 13, the infantry stopped eight miles from the ferry. Everything was set to attack the Federal fort next day.⁶¹

the first day at Gettysburg. Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 400-01. Desertions in December and January totalled thirty-seven. That number fell to nine during February through April. Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 495-600.

⁶⁰Hill coordinated his demonstration against New Bern at the same time Gen. James Longstreet advanced on the Federal garrison at Suffolk. One of the reasons for these operations was to gather food supplies from eastern North Carolina and Virginia. Daniel H. Hill, Confederate Military History: North Carolina, (Wilmington, 1987), 151-52.

⁶¹O.R., XVIII, 192-94; Sentinel, July 25, 1914.



MAP 3.

Goldsboro-Kinston-New Bern Area of Operations

March, 1863⁶²

⁶²Map from O.R. Atlas, Plate XCI, 3.

At daybreak on March 14, Confederate artillery began to shell Fort Anderson. The only way to attack the fort was across a causeway "a quarter of a mile long and wide enough for a small wagon." Pettigrew advanced the 26th North Carolina to a point where it could storm across the causeway. He then brought up four twenty-pound Parrot rifles to shell the fort and Union gunboats on the Neuse. The bombardment lasted only a short time. The barrel of one gun burst, the axle of another broke, and the shells from the other two were defective. Pettigrew, realizing he could not counter the fire from the gunboats, ordered his men to pull back.⁶³

When Pettigrew began his withdrawal, he ordered the regiment to remain in place and cover the retreat. For six hours, Burgwyn's men held their position in front of the causeway and endured shelling from the gunboats. At last, the order to retreat came, and the men fell back under fire.⁶⁴

Although Pettigrew and Burgwyn highly complimented the way the regiment withstood "the furious shelling of the enemy without flinching," the soldiers again felt let down. They suffered seventeen casualties during the attack and "accomplished nothing." Exactly one year before, they had been driven from their defenses below the town. Now, when they had a chance to retake it, the failure of the

⁶³O.R., XVIII, 192-93; Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 183.

⁶⁴O. R., XVIII, 193-94; I. A. Jarratt to mother, Mar. 17, 1863, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke; Davis, Boy Colonel, 242.

Confederate artillery stopped them.⁶⁵

For the next month, the regiment moved through the eastern part of the state. During this period it had several small skirmishes with Federal troops. The unit also took part in an aborted siege against Washington. Finally, on April 18, it reached the town of Hookerton, where the men rested for ten days. According to W. E. Setser, the soldiers seemed to be in "good har," but tired of eastern North Carolina.⁶⁶

Setser and his fellow soldiers would soon get a chance to leave the state. While they had operated against New Bern and Washington, Union Gen. Joseph Hooker prepared to attack the Robert E. Lee's army near Fredricksburg, Va. On April 30, Col. Burgwyn wrote his mother that he expected the 26th North Carolina to be called to Virginia within a week. The next day he received orders to proceed to Richmond.⁶⁷

⁶⁵O.R., XVIII, 194; I. A. Jarratt to mother, Mar. 17, 1863, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Mar. 15, 1863, quoted in Davis, Boy Colonel, 242.

⁶⁶William Fleming to W. A. Setser, Apr. 13, 1863, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 3," 11; W. E. Setser to family, Mar. 24, 1863, ibid.; Sentinel, July 1, 1914; Muster Roll, Company B, Apr. 30, 1863, Civil War Collection, Box 49, Folder 17, NCDAH. Apparently, the men of Company K shared Setser's desire to leave the state. A soldier from the 43rd North Carolina passed the regiment as it prepared to leave for Richmond. He said the men in his regiment could "easily perceive that the 'Wild Cats' didn't much regret to exchange the frog-ponds, mud-holes, mosquitoes, and stagnant water of this section for the hills, clear skies, and pure water of the Rappahannock." Wadesboro North Carolina Argus, May 21, 1863.

⁶⁷Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, Apr. 30, 1863, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Davis, Boy Colonel, 258.

The regiment had been in service for nearly two years. Although it could not be classified as a "veteran" combat unit, the troops did have battle experience. While many Confederate units lost some of their best officers and men, the soldiers of the 26th North Carolina had grown in number and received countless hours of drill and discipline. The regiment now stood ready to join the Army of Northern Virginia.

CHAPTER IV

"UNPARALLELED LOSS"

The 26th North Carolina's journey to Virginia began ominously. At 10 p.m., May 1, the troops boarded two trains for Richmond. During the night, the one carrying the "right wing" of the regiment halted to let a mail train pass. As the first waited on a sidetrack, the one behind, transporting the 11th North Carolina, failed to stop and crashed into it. James Wright (of Company C) reported that "a great many freight boxes and flats were badly injured both before and behind me . . . one poor fellow in Company G had his head mashed all to pieces . . . another poor fellow was caught between the boxes at his hips." The accident killed two men from the regiment. Another eight or nine were injured. After the wreckage was cleared, the regiment continued on to Richmond and on the morning of May 3 reached the city.¹

Most of Pettigrew's brigade stopped in Richmond, but the 26th North Carolina continued on to Hanover Junction. The junction was about twenty-five miles north of the capital. There the Central Railroad met the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac line.²

Burgwyn received orders to have his troops guard the bridges over the North Anna River against Federal cavalry

¹Davis, Boy Colonel, 259; James Wright to family, May 2, 1863, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH.

²Muster Roll, Company K, June 30, 1863, Box 53, Folder 1, Civil War Collection, NCDAH; James Wright to parents, May 5, 1863, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH.

under Gen. George Stoneman. The Union troopers were part of a diversionary force dispatched by Gen. Joseph Hooker during the Chancellorsville campaign. By sending them into the Richmond area, Hooker hoped to prevent Confederate troops away from reinforcing Lee's army.³

The regiment narrowly missed encountering part of Stoneman's column. Shortly after the troops arrived at Hanover Junction, Federal cavalry struck Ashland Station, halfway between Richmond and the junction. Burgwyn's men remained on alert for several days as rumors had Stoneman's whereabouts in several places at once. However, the only encounter the soldiers had with the raiders came when they captured a few stragglers.⁴

Once the danger of combat passed, the troops settled down to enjoy their new post. In letters to their families, the men spoke of how much they liked the location. T. W. Setser told his uncle that he would "a heape druther Stay her[e] than in the estern parte of North Carolina a mong them frog pons." One thing Setser and other soldiers noticed was that the water tasted much better in Virginia.⁵

³I. A. Jarratt to mother, May 7, 1863, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke; Davis, Boy Colonel, 259; Johnson and Buell (eds.), Battles and Leaders, III, 152-53.

⁴James Wright to parents, May 5, 1863, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH; Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to mother, May 8, 1863, Burgwyn Family Papers, SHC; Orran Hanner to John Harrington, June 5, 1863, John M. Harrington Papers, Duke.

⁵Orran Hanner to John Harrington, June 5, 1863, John M. Harrington Papers, Duke; I. A. Jarratt to mother, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke; T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, May 21, 1863, in Mast "Setser Letters, Pt. 3," 12; James Wright to wife, May 5, 1863, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH.

While the regiment remained at Hanover Junction, the Confederate Congress "in the plentitude of their legislative wisdom," changed the design of the flag. To show his "appreciation of its beauty," Burgwyn asked his sister Maria to make a new silk flag for the unit. He told her that, if necessary, she or one of her "sufficiently patriotic" friends should sacrifice a silk dress for the material.⁶

During this period, changes in the Army of Northern Virginia made the 26th North Carolina an official part of it. Robert E. Lee decided to reorganize his army into three corps following the death of Gen. Thomas J. Jackson. He appointed Gen. Ambrose P. Hill to command the Third Corps. This corps consisted of the divisions of William Dorsey Pender, Richard Anderson, and one newly created for Henry Heth. Heth's division contained two veteran brigades led by James J. Archer and John M. Brockenbrough. The brigades of Pettigrew and Joseph R. Davis were added to complete the division.⁷

On June 7, Pettigrew's troops moved north to Hamilton's Crossing, near Fredericksburg. There they occupied breastworks south of town. The men formed part of the extreme

⁶Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr., to Maria Burgwyn, May 10, 1863. Burgwyn did not state whether he wanted a new national flag (the "Stainless Banner") or the new battle flag (the Third Bunting Issue). In early May, the Confederate Congress changed the design of both. Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr., The Flags of the Confederacy, An Illustrated History (Memphis, 1988), 14-17, 54. The 26th North Carolina carried a new battle flag during the Gettysburg campaign. Whether it was made by Maria Burgwyn or government issue remains unknown. Davis, Boy Colonel, 270.

⁷James I. Robertson, Jr., General A. P. Hill: The Story of a Confederate Warrior (New York, 1987), 193, 196.

right of Lee's army. The Gettysburg campaign began in mid-June when Lee sent the corps of James Longstreet and Richard Ewell toward the Shenandoah Valley. The Third Corps remained in the town's defenses in an effort to divert the Federal commanders.⁸

The 26th North Carolina remained in the trenches one day, then moved eight miles down the Rappahannock on picket duty. While along the river, the troops came into contact with Federal pickets on the other side. According to W. E. Setser, "they talk and quarel with each other; We changed Some harpers with them yesterday; We have orders to not shoot at each other unless eather Side advances." The exchanges ended on June 14, when the regiment returned to the breastworks.⁹

The next day, Heth's division left Fredericksburg and followed the rest of the army. The men of the 26th North Carolina were resting when the long roll of the drums summoned them to take their place in the line of march. Thomas Perrett described the scene. "The Regiment made a fine appearance as it marched out from its bivouac that beautiful June morning with the men beaming in their splendid gray uniforms, the colors flying, and the band playing; everything seemed

⁸Sentinel, Aug. 15, 1914; Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 187. The 44th North Carolina of Pettigrew's brigade remained behind to guard the railroad at Hanover Junction.

⁹Muster Roll, Company K, Box 53, Folder 1, Civil War Collection, NCDAA; W. E. Setser to family, June 9, 1863. The fraternization between picket lines became commonplace during the war. See Robertson, Soldiers Blue and Gray, 139-41.

propitious of success."¹⁰

The men passed through Chancellorsville, where a fierce struggle between the two armies had taken place a few weeks earlier. For the new soldiers, this provided their first view of a battlefield. James Wright described in a letter to his family the torn timber, the bloated bodies of the horses, and the partially unburied soldiers to his family. The scene was "a great sight to me," he concluded.¹¹

The column continued toward Culpepper Courthouse. While the men knew their immediate destination, they speculated on where the army would go. Some believed it would halt at Winchester; others expected Lee to invade Maryland or Pennsylvania.¹²

Whatever direction the army travelled, some of the troops decided they did not want to go with it. As the army left Fredericksburg, the number of desertions in the regiment (and Pettigrew's brigade) rose dramatically. According to one soldier, fourteen men, on June 16, slipped away from the regiment. A little later, he told his family that sixteen left the 52nd North Carolina in one night. In all, twenty-one

¹⁰Robertson, A. P. Hill, 200; Diary of Henry Clay Albright, June 15, 1863, Henry Clay Albright Papers, NCDAAH (hereafter referenced as Albright Diary); Thomas Perrett, "Reminiscences of the Civil War: A Trip That Didn't Pay," 1, Box 71, Folder 46, Civil War Collection, NCDAAH.

¹¹James Wright to family, June 17, 1863, John W. Wright Family Papers, NCDAAH.

¹²Ibid.; Sentinel, Aug. 22, 1914; J. L. Henry to wife, June 20, 1863, J. L. Henry Papers, Duke.

deserted the 26th North Carolina on the march to Gettysburg.¹³

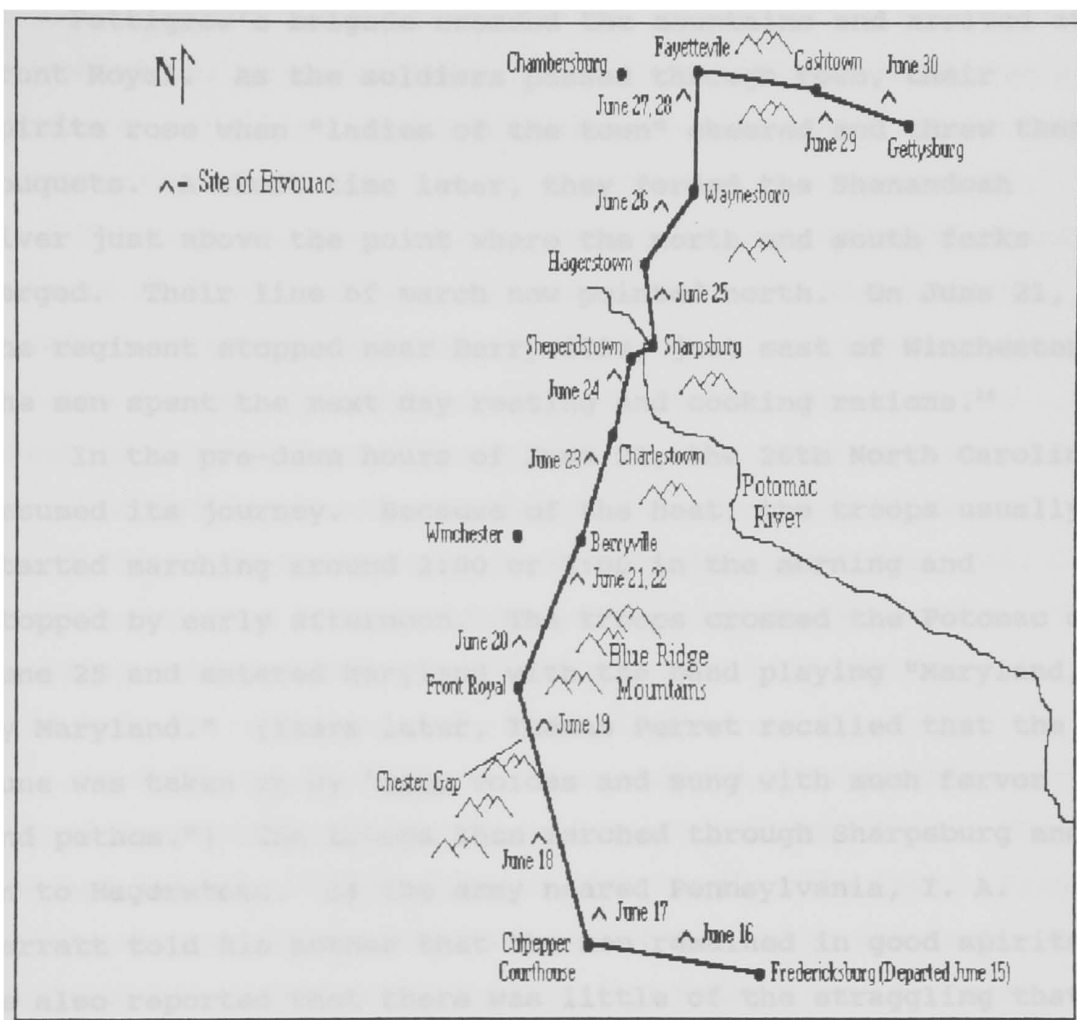
On June 17, the troops arrived at Culpepper Courthouse. They could see the Blue Ridge mountains in the distance. When the march resumed next morning, the column continued in a northwesterly direction. Two days of steady marching brought the men to Chester's Gap.¹⁴

After they set up camp that night, a peculiar rattling sound told the soldiers they had chosen a particularly bad location. A rattlesnake den lay somewhere close. Before the men lay down for the night they killed at least six of the reptiles. One snake, slain on the spot where Col Burgwyn's tent was set, had sixteen rattles. J. A. Bush remembered that everyone found a place to lie down and kept quiet for the night. Early the next morning, the men "were up in arms, chasing in deadly combat the hideous sentinels of the night before." The troops gladly left camp and resumed their march.¹⁵

¹³James Wright to family, June 17, 1863, John W. Wright Family Papers, NCDAH; James Wright to father, June 22, 1863, ibid.; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 495-600. The desertions on the march to Gettysburg continued a trend that began in May, 1863. At that time, so many troops from North Carolina deserted that Lee and Pettigrew felt compelled to bring the problem to Gov. Vance's attention. Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 187-89. Unfortunately, available evidence reveals little about the reasons for the large number of desertions during a period when the morale of the Army of Northern Virginia was considered at its peak.

¹⁴Albright Diary, June 19; Sentinel, Aug. 22, 1914.

¹⁵J. A. Bush, "From 1861 to 1865 As I Remember," Lenoir News-Topic, May 25, 1922; Perrett, "Trip That Didn't Pay," 2; Sentinel, Aug. 22, 1914.



Map 4.

Route of the 26th North Carolina
During the Gettysburg Campaign

Pettigrew's brigade crossed the mountains and arrived at Front Royal. As the soldiers passed through town, their spirits rose when "ladies of the town" cheered and threw them bouquets. A short time later, they forded the Shenandoah River just above the point where the north and south forks merged. Their line of march now pointed north. On June 21, the regiment stopped near Berryville, just east of Winchester. The men spent the next day resting and cooking rations.¹⁶

In the pre-dawn hours of June 23, the 26th North Carolina resumed its journey. Because of the heat, the troops usually started marching around 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning and stopped by early afternoon. The troops crossed the Potomac on June 25 and entered Maryland with the band playing "Maryland, my Maryland." (Years later, Thomas Perret recalled that the tune was taken up by "many voices and sung with much fervor and pathos.") The troops then marched through Sharpsburg and on to Hagerstown. As the army neared Pennsylvania, I. A. Jarratt told his mother that the men remained in good spirits. He also reported that there was little of the straggling that "ruined our army last summer."¹⁷

At 1 p.m. on June 26, Pettigrew's brigade crossed Antietam Creek into Pennsylvania. Several hours later the troops stopped for the day near a farm. Although Gen. Robert

¹⁶Albright Diary, June 20-22; Sentinel, Aug. 22 and Aug. 29, 1914; Perrett, "Trip That Didn't Pay," 4.

¹⁷Albright Diary, June 23-25; J. A. Bush, "1861 to 1865," Lenoir News-Topic, May 25, 1922; Sentinel, Aug. 29, 1914; Perrett, "Trip That Didn't Pay," 5; I. A. Jarratt to mother, June 24, 1863, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke.

E. Lee had issued General Orders No. 73, restricting foraging by individual soldiers, it was not long before some Tarheels disobeyed orders and "pressed chicken, vegetables, etc." into Confederate service.¹⁸

The next day the regiment pushed through Waynesboro and stopped at Fayetteville. On Sunday, June 28, the regiment remained in camp, where the chaplain held religious services for the troops. Julius Leinbach stated that the minister preached a "very forceful and appropriate sermon on the text 'The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.'" After the service, a band member noted that Col. Burgwyn appeared "deeply impressed" during the preaching. The musician believed that the regiment would lose the colonel on this trip.¹⁹

By 5:00 a.m. on June 29, the soldiers were marching east out of Fayetteville in the direction of South Mountain. They reached the top of the mountain after a six mile trek. From there, they could see the town of Gettysburg to the east. The regiment bivouacked that night at New Salem, near Cashtown. The next morning, the soldiers mustered to receive their pay. The rolls from that day show that 902 officers and men were

¹⁸Albright Diary, June 26; Richard Harwell, Lee (abridgment of the four volume R. E. Lee, by Douglas Southall Freeman) (New York, 1961), 318-19; Sentinel, Aug. 29, 1914. Soldiers from Pettigrew's brigade later stole honey from a farmer's beehive. As it was suggested that some of the men were from the 26th North Carolina, Burgyn and Lt. Col. Lane sought out the owner of the hives and paid him. Perrett, "Trip That Didn't Pay," 7.

¹⁹Albright Diary, June 27-28; Sentinel, Aug. 29, 1914.

present with their companies.²⁰

After the muster, Gen. Pettigrew started with three of his regiments (including the 26th North Carolina) toward Gettysburg. Thinking the town undefended except by militia, he planned to requisition supplies for the army's use. Pettigrew issued orders that everyone was to leave knapsacks in camp; anyone unable to make a forced march should remain behind. Despite the muddy road (from rain the night before), the troops covered the nine miles to Gettysburg quickly. On the outskirts of the town, the brigade encountered a strong picket of Federal cavalry. Pettigrew had orders not to bring on an engagement, so he withdrew and marched his troops back to camp.²¹

While Pettigrew reported his findings to Gens. Heth and Hill, the men of the 26th North Carolina collected their knapsacks and returned towards Gettysburg. The regiment marched to within three and a half miles of the town. Burgwyn halted the troops on the west side of a small creek that ran across the turnpike. The men, "all worn out and broked down" from their marching, set up camp in a small grove to the right of the road. That night, Lt. Col. Lane had charge of the pickets. After he established his line, two women, "much distressed and alarmed, because they were cut off from their

²⁰Sentinel, Sept. 5, 1914; Albright Diary, June 29; Perrett, "Trip That Didn't Pay," 8; Regimental Muster Rolls, Companies A-I and K, June 30, 1863, Boxes 49-53, Civil War Collection, NCDAH.

²¹Clark, V, 115-16; Albright Diary, June 30, 1863; Sentinel, Sept. 5, 1914.

houses," approached him. The lieutenant colonel assured the ladies that Confederates did not make war on females. He then advanced the picket line beyond their houses and allowed the women to reach their homes.²²

At 5 a.m. on July 1, Heth started his division toward Gettysburg to get badly needed shoes. Archer's brigade led the column, followed by Davis', Pettigrew's, and Brockenbrough's units. Although neither Hill nor Heth expected to encounter anything more than Federal cavalry and local militia troops, William Dorsey Pender's division was sent to provide support if serious resistance developed. The last instruction Hill gave Heth was: "Do not bring on an engagement."²³

As the soldiers marched through the morning mist, they crossed Marsh Creek about three and a half miles west of Gettysburg. A vidette from Gen. John Buford's Federal cavalry division fired a warning shot. Immediately the brigades of Archer and Davis formed a line of battle along the road. Three lines of skirmishers moved to the front. While the lead Confederate units pushed forward against the enemy cavalry, the troops under Pettigrew and Brockenbrough continued down

²²For a detailed account of the meeting between Pettigrew, Heth, and Hill, see Robertson, A. P. Hill, 205-6; Clark, N.C. Troops, V, 116-17. Albright Diary, June 30, 1863; O. R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 642; Clark, II, 342.

²³O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 637; Warren W. Hassler, Jr., Crisis at the Crossroads: The First Day at Gettysburg (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1970), 29; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 207.

the pike.²⁴

As the head of the 26th North Carolina reached the top of the first hill east of Marsh Creek, Union artillery fire swept the road. Some excitement filled the ranks but was soon quieted. The brigade filed off to the right of the turnpike about 100 yards. As the regiments passed Pettigrew, he gave the command: "Echelon by battalion, the 26th Regiment by the left flank." As each unit passed the one in front of it, the command "By the left flank, march" was issued. In a short time the brigade had formed a line of battle. Pettigrew halted the troops and awaited further instructions.²⁵

Meanwhile, Archer and Davis continued their advance. They pushed the dismounted cavalry off Herr Ridge, past Willoughby Run, and up the slope of McPherson Ridge. By 10 a.m. the Confederates were only a mile from the center of town. At that moment, soldiers from Gen. John Reynolds' I Corps reinforced Buford's troopers. Archer's men pushed through McPherson's Woods and ran straight into the famed Iron Brigade. This battle-hardened unit chased the Confederates back through the woods, across the creek, and up Herr Ridge.

²⁴Calvin D. Cowles (comp.), Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, 1891-1895), XCV (hereafter cited as O.R. Atlas); Hassler, Crisis at the Crossroads, 31; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 207; Perrett, "Trip That Didn't Pay," 8.

²⁵Perrett, "Trip That Didn't Pay," 9-10. While marching, a unit is normally formed in a column four ranks wide. The column moves by its right flank. This formation works well for moving troops quickly, but is a poor alignment for fighting. The command, "by the left flank, march," provides the quickest way to get the troops from a column into a two rank line of battle.

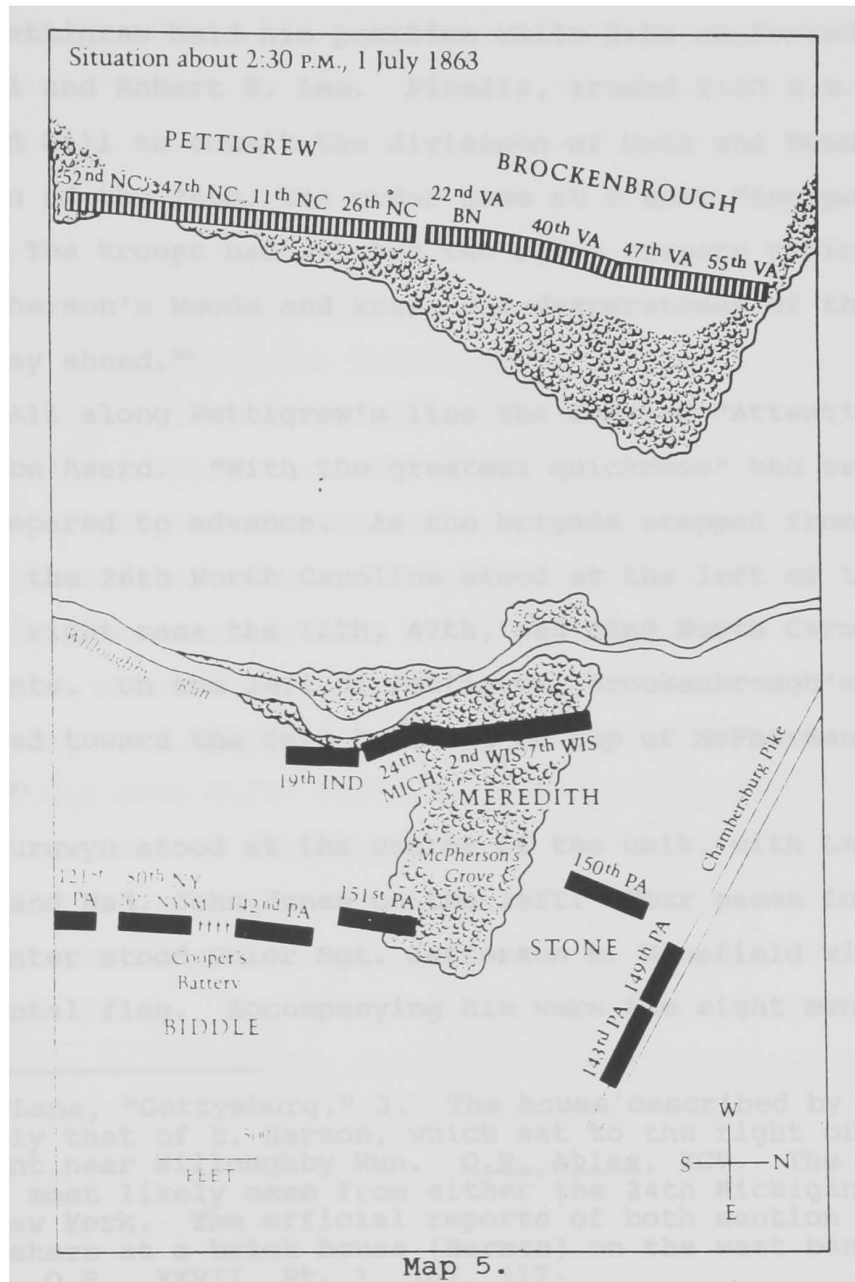
To the north of Chambersburg Pike, Joseph Davis' troops received much the same treatment.²⁶

Pettigrew moved his brigade forward to the western slope of Herr Ridge. For about half an hour, the unit remained behind the guns of William Pegram. The troops then crossed the top of Herr Ridge and took a position in a strip of woods facing McPherson's Ridge. After throwing out skirmishers, the men tried to find cover from enemy fire. Details were sent to the rear to bring back water. Officers worked their way among the ranks, offering words of encouragement and sometimes joking with the soldiers. To the north, the lines of Gen. Richard S. Ewell's corps could be seen advancing against Union positions on Oak Ridge. According to Lt. Col. Lane, "Never was a grander sight beheld. The lines extended more than a mile, all directly visible to us."²⁷

While the 26th North Carolina waited for orders to advance, the companies on the right of the unit were harassed by snipers on top of a farm house in their right front. Lieutenant J. A. Lowe, of Company G, volunteered to "take them down." He crept along a fence until reaching a position from which the "sharp shooters" could be seen. Lowe soon silenced

²⁶Hassler, Crisis at the Crossroads, 26-54. Herr Ridge, Willoughby Run, and McPherson's Ridge all run in a north-south direction. McPherson's Woods lay about 300 yards south of the Chambersburg Pike. The woods measured roughly 600 yards east-west and 150-250 yards north-south.

²⁷O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 642-43; John R. Lane, "Address at Gettysburg," 3, John Randolph Lane Papers, SHC (hereafter referenced as Lane, "Gettysburg"); Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 349-50. No religious services were held for the men of the 26th owing to the absence of the regiment's chaplains. Ibid.



Position of 26th North Carolina
Morning and Early Afternoon, July 1st

²⁸Davis, Boy Colonel, 330.

the riflemen with a few shots.²⁹

Pettigrew held his position while Heth conferred with A. P. Hill and Robert E. Lee. Finally, around 2:30 p.m., Lee ordered Hill to commit the divisions of Heth and Pender. For the men of the 26th, the order came at a most "inopportune" time. The troops had watched the enemy prepare their position in McPherson's Woods and knew "the desperatness of the charge" that lay ahead.³⁰

All along Pettigrew's line the command "Attention!" could be heard. "With the greatest quickness" the troops rose and prepared to advance. As the brigade stepped from the woods, the 26th North Carolina stood at the left of the line. To its right came the 11th, 47th, and 52nd North Carolina regiments. On the left of Pettigrew, Brockenbrough's brigade advanced toward the farm building on top of McPherson's ridge.³¹

Burgwyn stood at the center of the unit, with Lane on the right and Maj. John Jones on the left. Four paces in front of the center stood Color Sgt. Jefferson B. Mansfield with the regimental flag. Accompanying him were the eight men of the

²⁹Lane, "Gettysburg," 3. The house described by Lane was probably that of E. Harmon, which sat to the right of the regiment near Willoughby Run. O.R. Atlas, XCV. The Federal troops most likely came from either the 24th Michigan or the 80th New York. The official reports of both mention placing skirmishers at a brick house (Harmon) on the west bank of the creek. O.R., XXVII, Pt. 1, 267, 317.

³⁰James L. Morrison (ed.), The Memoirs of Henry Heth (Westport, CT, 1974), 175; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 209-11; Lane, "Gettysburg," 4.

³¹Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 351; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 643.

color guard. At the command, "Forward March," the troops moved towards McPherson's Woods in "beautiful style, at the quick time." As they advanced through the wheatfield the enemy opened fire. Although a few men were hit, most of the bullets passed over the line. As the regiment neared Willoughby Run, the Confederates began shooting at the Federal force in the woods.³²

The veterans of the Iron Brigade waited on the other side of the creek. They prepared to hold their position "at all hazards." Directly in front of the North Carolinians stood the 24th Michigan and 19th Indiana. According to Col. Henry Morrow, commander of the Michigan troops, his men held their fire until the Confederates were at close range. Even then, the woods, brush, and slope of the hill prevented their shots from being very accurate.³³

As the 26th North Carolina reached Willoughby Run its casualties mounted steadily. Not only was the rifle fire from the front becoming more effective, but shells and canister from James H. Cooper's Pennsylvania artillery battery raked the right flank. The left and right portions of the regiment found gaps in the briars and underbrush and crossed the creek with little difficulty. Along the center, however, the loss "was frightful" as men crowded along a few narrow paths to ford the branch.³⁴

³²Lane, "Gettysburg," 4-5; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 643.

³³Ibid., Pt. 1, 268, 274, 279.

³⁴Lane, "Gettysburg," 5; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 1, 364.

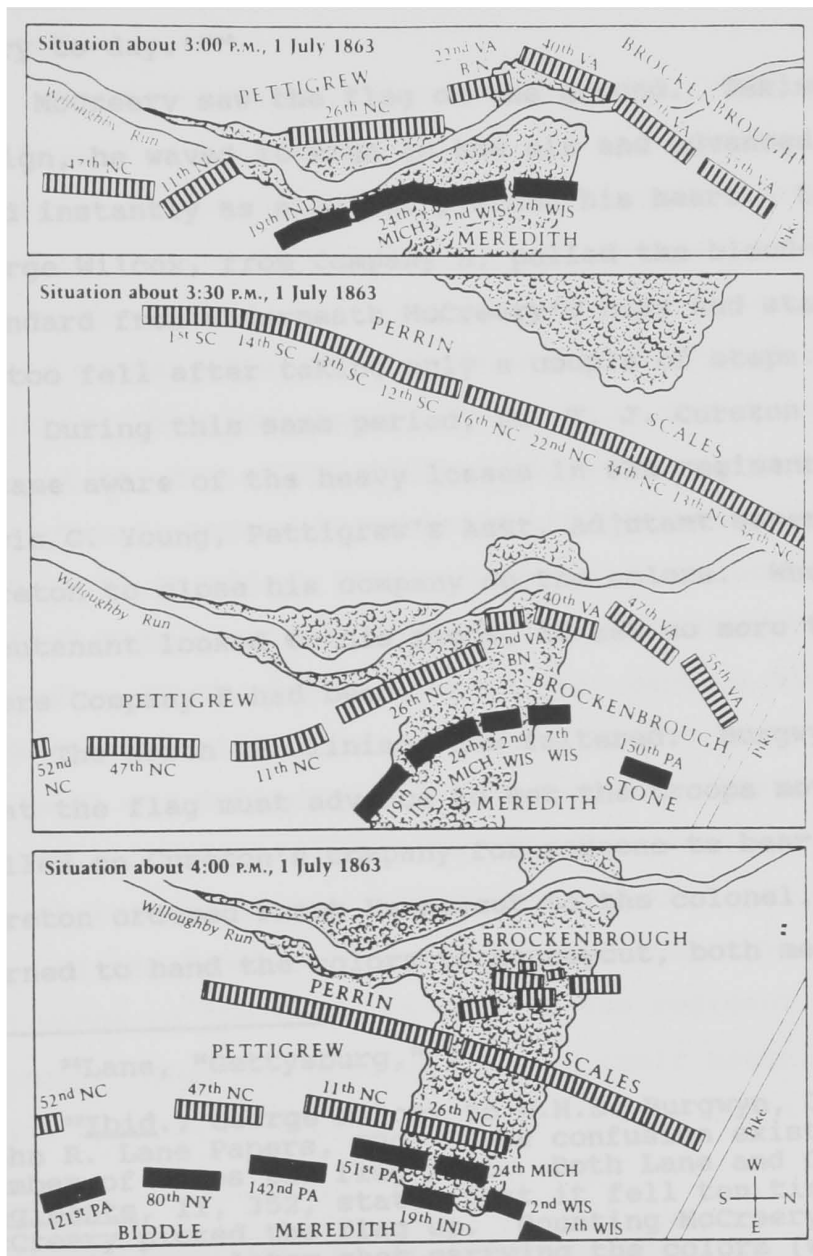
Once across Willoughby Run, the regiment reformed its ranks and continued to advance. The fire from the Federal troops took a very heavy toll among the men. One officer reported that the "bullets were as thick as hailstones in a storm." The first Union line, on the brow of the hill, gave way. Colonel Morrow reported that the Confederates "came on with rapid strides, yelling like demons." As Lane hurried from his position to the center of the line, Burgwyn met him and stated that "it is all right in the centre and on the left; we have broken the first line of the enemy."³⁵

Halfway up the hill the regiment encountered the second line of the enemy. The men from Michigan and Indiana made a desperate stand. Opposing forces closed to within twenty yards of one another and traded volley after volley. The dead and wounded of both sides lay intermingled with one another.³⁶

By this time, the colors of the 26th North Carolina had fallen nine times. The entire color guard lay dead or wounded. Captain W. W. McCreery, of Pettigrew's staff, rushed

³⁵Lane, "Gettysburg," 5; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 15, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 1, 268.

³⁶Lane, "Gettysburg," 5; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 15, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 1, 268. Accounts from both the 26th North Carolina and the 24th Michigan agree that the two units traded fire at a distance of no more than twenty yards. O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 643; Donald L. Smith, The Twenty-Fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade (Harrisburg, 1962), 131. The size of the Tarheel unit and the fire it delivered caused an early historian of the Michigan force to observe that "fresh regiment after regiment" attacked its ranks. O. B. Curtis, History of the Twenty-Fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade (Detroit, 1891), 162.



Map 6.

Assault on McPherson's Woods--Afternoon, July 1³⁷

³⁷Davis, Boy Colonel, 331.

to Burgwyn with a message from the general. "'Tell him' says Gen. Pettigrew, 'his regiment has covered itself with glory to-day.'"³⁸

McCreery saw the flag on the ground. Taking the fallen ensign, he waved it high in the air and advanced. He fell dead instantly as a bullet pierced his heart. Lieutenant George Wilcox, from Company H, pulled the blood-soaked standard from underneath McCreery's body and started forward. He too fell after taking only a couple of steps.³⁹

During this same period, Lt. T. J. Cureton of Company B became aware of the heavy losses in the regiment. Captain Lewis G. Young, Pettigrew's Asst. Adjutant General, ordered Cureton to close his company on the colors. When the lieutenant looked to his right, he saw no more than three men where Company F had been.⁴⁰

The North Carolinians now faltered. Burgwyn realized that the flag must advance to get the troops moving again. He called on Cureton's company for someone to bear the standard. Cureton ordered Frank Hunnecut to the colonel. As Burgwyn turned to hand the colors to Hunnecut, both men were struck

³⁸Lane, "Gettysburg," 5.

³⁹Ibid.; George Wilcox to W.H.S. Burgwyn, June 21, 1900, John R. Lane Papers, SHC. Some confusion exists as to the number of times the flag fell. Both Lane and Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 352, stated that it fell ten times before McCreery picked the flag up. Counting McCreery, they go on to list five men later shot carrying the colors (which would make a total of fifteen). However, they stated that the total number of flagbearers killed or wounded was fourteen, which will be the number used for this work.

⁴⁰T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 15, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC.

almost simultaneously and fell to the ground mortally wounded. The regiment recoiled from the "murderous fire" from the enemy.⁴¹

Lieutenant Colonel Lane moved to the right and ordered the troops on that side to close on the center. He then gave the order to fix bayonets. As the line reformed, Lane raised the flag and shouted "Twenty-Sixth, follow me."⁴²

With a cheer, the soldiers advanced through the smoke filled woods. They pushed the Federals from their second position. Rushing onward, the men struck the enemy's third line at the top of the hill. The 24th Michigan and 151st Pennsylvania made a brief stand, but frontal fire from the 26th North Carolina, combined with a flanking movement by the rest of Pettigrew's brigade, forced the Union troops to retreat. As the Federal troops fell back, a Michigan sergeant took careful aim at Lane. As Lane turned to see if the regiment was following him, the sergeant fired, hitting Lane in the back of the neck. For the fourteenth and final time, the regimental colors fell to the ground.⁴³

As the Federal forces retreated toward Seminary Ridge, 400 yards to the east, the men of the regiment tried to regroup. They had used up most of their ammunition in the drive through McPherson's Woods. The soldiers searched the

⁴¹Lane, "Gettysburg," 6; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 15, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC.

⁴²Lane, "Gettysburg," 6-7.

⁴³Ibid.; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 15, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 1, 268-69, 328; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 353.

cartridge boxes of the dead and wounded that lay about. As they prepared to advance again, Dorsey Pender's fresh division passed through the ranks and relieved the exhausted troops. The day's fighting came to an end for the 26th North Carolina.⁴⁴

According to Gen. Pettigrew, the regiment faced at least three Federal units and perhaps as many as five, forcing them to retreat from a strong position. Although the regiment won the "red field" of McPherson's Woods, it paid a terrible price in killed and wounded. It entered the battle numbering around 800 men under arms. When roll call was taken the next day, fewer than 250 men answered. According to William W. Fox, in Regimental Losses in the Civil War, the 26th North Carolina lost 86 killed and 502 wounded in action on the first day at Gettysburg.⁴⁵

Major John T. Jones, now commanding the regiment, received orders to return to Herr Ridge. As the survivors moved through the woods they encountered fallen comrades at nearly every step. After tending to the wounded (Confederate

⁴⁴O.R., XXVII, Pt. 1, 269; Pt. 2, 643.

⁴⁵Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 357. Pettigrew's statement was supported by Union statements after the battle. During the struggle for McPherson's Woods, the regiment definitely faced the 24th Michigan, 19th Indiana, and 151st Pennsylvania. The reports from the Federal side indicated that the Tarheels most likely encountered the 2nd and 7th Wisconsin as well. O.R., XXVII, Pt. 1, 274, 279-80. Warren Hassler, in Crisis at the Crossroads, 154, credited Pettigrew's brigade with being primarily responsible for forcing the Union I Corps from McPherson's Ridge. William F. Fox, Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865 (Albany, 1889), 555-56. Owing to the loss in officers and the resulting confusion in regimental organization, the number of men reported as lost remains unclear.

and Federal) as best they could, the troops made their way back to the woody area on Herr Ridge and bivouacked for the night.⁴⁶

On July 2, Lee continued his assault on the Union lines. In late afternoon, three divisions from Gen. James Longstreet's and A. P. Hill's corps attacked enemy positions along the southern half of the battlefield. Federal troops managed to stop the Confederate advance after several hours of heavy fighting. Later in the evening, several brigades from Gen. Richard Ewell's corps charged Federal strongpoints on Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill. The Northern forces repulsed this assault also.

Pettigrew's troops spent the second day at their bivouac on Herr's Ridge. While the men recuperated from the rigors of the first day's fight, Pettigrew (now in command of the division after Heth had been wounded on July 1) worked diligently to add more troops to his ranks. He went around to the hospitals and returned all the slightly wounded to their units. The general also armed the cooks and other men on special duty and put them in the ranks.⁴⁷

During the night of July 1, members of the regimental band helped the surgeons tend the wounded. According to one musician, they worked until they were exhausted, slept a little, then returned again. In the afternoon of July 2,

⁴⁶T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 15, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 22, 1890, ibid.; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 643.

⁴⁷Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 362; Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 194-95.

Pettigrew ordered the band (along with the musicians from the 11th North Carolina) to play for the troops. Samuel Mickey, the bandleader, later stated that "the two bands played numerous pieces which seemed to cheer and enliven the soldiers." The performers finished the concert and returned to their duties tending the wounded.⁴⁸

Late in the afternoon of July 2, the brigade moved from Herr Ridge to a new location on Seminary Ridge, about a mile to the southwest. The men encamped that night along the western slope of the ridge. Early the next morning, the troops advanced into McMillan's Woods. There Col. James K. Marshall, commanding the brigade, placed his soldiers in a small hollow where they would be somewhat sheltered from the scattered fire of artillery and skirmishers.⁴⁹

At the same time the remainder of Heth's division filed into place. From left to right were the brigades of Brockenbrough, Davis, Pettigrew (Marshall), and Archer. General George E. Pickett's division of Virginians took up position to the right of Archer. About 100 yards behind Heth's men were the North Carolinians under Alfred M. Scales and John H. Lane from Dorsey Pender's division. In front of the Confederate lines stood the massed artillery of Hill's and

⁴⁸Sentinel, Sept. 5, 1914; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 399.

⁴⁹Albright Diary, July 2, 1863; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 22, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC; Clark, N.C. Regiments, V, 124; Albright Diary, July 3, 1863.

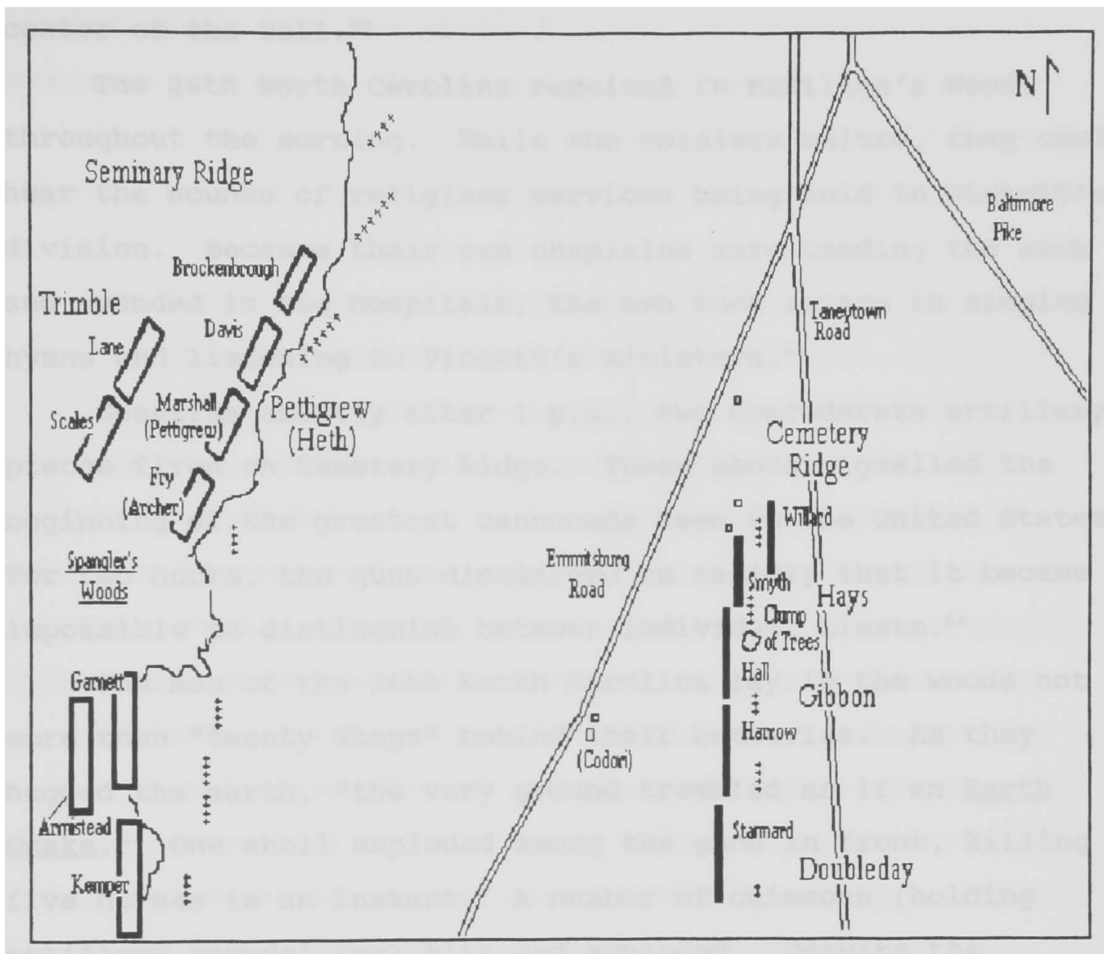
Longstreet's corps.⁵⁰

Lee selected these units, nine brigades in all, for an assault against the center of the Federal line on Cemetery Ridge. After the attacks against the Union left and right flanks failed on July 2, Lee decided to hurl his troops against the middle of the enemy's position. He placed Longstreet in overall command of the strike force.⁵¹

While the commanders made their final preparations for the advance, Capt. Samuel Wagg and Lt. T. J. Cureton walked to a position in front of the artillery. From there they observed the field which they would cross. Cemetery Ridge lay about a mile to the east. Cureton described the intervening ground as ". . . a beautiful field covered with Grass etc., a lane fence reaching through rather diagonally across, nothing or anything, not eve an hill to protect a charging line from artillery etc.--only the commerce lane fence." A low stone wall ran along the length of Cemetery Ridge. Their target, a small cluster of trees, stood less than fifty yards behind the

⁵⁰George R. Stewart, Pickett's Charge (Greenwich, 1963), 89. Stewart stated that Heth's division formed in two lines, with half of each regiment in the first and the remainder in the second. No mention of such an unusual arrangement is made in any of the regimental (or brigade) histories or contemporary accounts from Pettigrew's troops. Because Dorsey Pender was wounded on July 2, Lee placed the brigades of Lane and Scales under the overall command of Gen. Isaac Trimble. Edwin B. Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command (New York, 1968), 462.

⁵¹Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 141-51. This selection provides the best concise summary of the preparations leading up to the Pickett-Pettigrew-Trimble assault.



Map 7.

Position of Opposing Forces at Gettysburg

Morning, July 3

center of the wall.⁵²

The 26th North Carolina remained in McMillan's Woods throughout the morning. While the soldiers waited, they could hear the sounds of religious services being held in Pickett's division. Because their own chaplains were tending the sick and wounded in the hospitals, the men took solace in singing hymns and listening to Pickett's ministers.⁵³

Sometime shortly after 1 p.m., two Confederate artillery pieces fired on Cemetery Ridge. These shots signalled the beginning of the greatest cannonade seen in the United States. For two hours, the guns discharged so rapidly that it became impossible to distinguish between individual blasts.⁵⁴

The men of the 26th North Carolina lay in the woods not more than "twenty Steps" behind their batteries. As they hugged the earth, "the very ground trembled as if an Earth Quake." One shell exploded among the guns in front, killing five horses in an instant. A number of caissons (holding artillery rounds) took hits and exploded. Despite the violence of the barrage, the regiment suffered few injuries because of their position behind a hill.⁵⁵

Around 3 p.m., the artillery fire ceased. Infantrymen

⁵²T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 22, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC; Kathleen Georg Harrison, "Ridges of Grim War," Blue and Gray V (July, 1988), 10.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Harrison, "Ridges of Grim War," 36.

⁵⁵T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 22, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC; T. W. Setzer to W. A. Setzer, July 29, 1863, in Mast, "Setzer Letters, Pt. 3," 15.

rose to their feet and moved in front of the guns. As the troops formed ranks, Pettigrew rode up to Col. Marshall and exclaimed, "Now Colonel, for the honor of the Good Old North State, forward!" Officers echoed the command throughout the brigade.⁵⁶

The grayclad troops stepped forward. Heth's four brigades made up the left half of the front line, with two from Pickett's division forming the right. About 100 yards to the rear came the two units under Trimble's command and Pickett's third brigade. As Lee watched the movement, he noted the bloody bandages worn by many among Pettigrew's and Trimble's ranks. He told Trimble that "many of these poor boys should go to the rear; they are not fit for duty."⁵⁷

Confusion developed as soon as the advance began. On the left of Heth's line, Davis' and Brockenbrough's troops were slow to emerge from the woods and rushed to catch the main body. The right of the division moved diagonally to the right to connect with Pickett's left brigade just as that unit shifted left to connect with Heth. Officers quickly corrected the alignment and the troops drove forward screaming the "Rebel Yell."⁵⁸

⁵⁶Clark, N.C. Regiments, V, 141; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 22, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC.

⁵⁷Clark, N.C. Regiments, V, 101-4; Stewart, Pickett's Charge, 106, 151. In all, approximately 10,500 troops made up the main assault column. This number differs greatly from the traditionally accepted figure of 15,000 troops. Even adding the troops from several brigades that provided support, the total would not be more than 12,000 men. Ibid., 158-59.

⁵⁸O.R., XXVII, pt. 2, 644; Stewart, Pickett's Charge, 165.

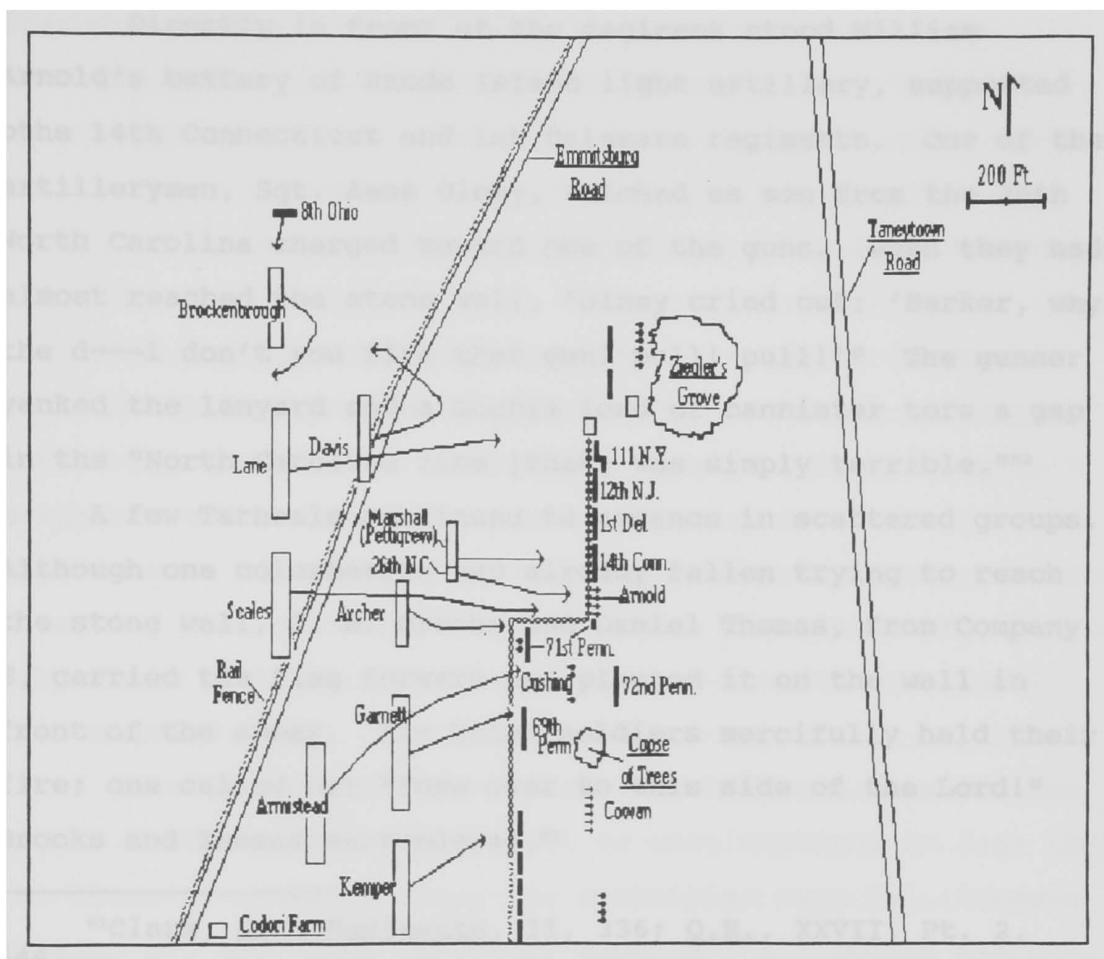
The men strode across the open valley at the quick step--the standard rate of march. T. J. Cureton stated that "as far as the eye could see on either side, [he] saw that splendid sight of perfect line of Battle." As Confederate infantry closed to about a half-mile of the Federal position, enemy artillery shelled them with "grape and cannister." The brigades on the left of the line (under Brockenbrough and Davis) came under a severe flank fire. These two units soon faltered, then fell back. Marshall's men now formed the left of the Rebel line.⁵⁹

The men of the 26th North Carolina reached the post and rail fence along the Emmitsburg Pike. They were now within 250 yards of the stone wall. Once through the fence, the soldiers reformed their ranks in the road. At this point, the Union infantry greeted the Confederates with a "perfect hail-storm of lead." A Northern officer observing the charge later wrote: "Their graceful lines underwent an instantaneous transformation; in a dense cloud of smoke and dust, arms, heads, blankets, guns, and knapsacks, were tossed in the air, and the moans from the battlefield were heard from amid the storm of battle."⁶⁰

The Southerners returned the fire and pressed forward. By the time they were about forty yards from the stone wall, casualties had reduced the regiment to the size of a "skirmish

⁵⁹Albright Diary, July 3, 1863; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 22, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 644; Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 197.

⁶⁰Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 336; V, 105, 126.



Map 8.
The Pickett-Pettigrew-Trimble Assault
Afternoon, July 3

line."⁶¹

Directly in front of the regiment stood William Arnold's battery of Rhode Island light artillery, supported by the 14th Connecticut and 1st Delaware regiments. One of the artillerymen, Sgt. Amos Olney, watched as men from the 26th North Carolina charged toward one of the guns. When they had almost reached the stone wall, "Olney cried out: 'Barker, why the d---l don't you fire that gun! pull! pull!'" The gunner yanked the lanyard and a double load of cannister tore a gap in the "North Carolina line [that] was simply terrible."⁶²

A few Tarheels continued to advance in scattered groups. Although one colorbearer had already fallen trying to reach the stone wall, J. M. Brooks and Daniel Thomas, from Company E, carried the flag forward and planted it on the wall in front of the enemy. The Union soldiers mercifully held their fire; one called out "Come over to this side of the Lord!" Brooks and Thomas surrendered.⁶³

⁶¹Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 336; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 644.

⁶²Thomas M. Aldrich, The History of Battery A, First Regiment Rhode Island Light Artillery (Providence, 1904), 216.

⁶³Clark, N.C. Regiments, V, 134. Four colorbearers, besides Brooks and Thomas, had been shot on the third day. This brought to twenty the number of men who had been killed, wounded, or captured carrying the regimental flag. Ibid., II, 374. The Union soldiers who captured Brooks and Thomas probably belonged to the 14th Connecticut. Charles D. Page, History of the Fourteenth Regiment Connecticut Vol. Infantry (Meriden, CN, 1906), 152-56. Kathleen Georg Harrison, chief historian at Gettysburg National Military Park, stated that the advance of the 26th North Carolina was probably the deepest of any unit during the Pickett-Pettigrew-Trimble charge. Harrison, "Ridges of Grim War," 48. A monument to the regiment stands on Cemetery Ridge less than fifteen yards in front of Arnold's battery.

As units to the left of the regiment fell back under the fierce fire from their front and flank, the remnants of the 26th also gave way. Those who could escape fled "as quickly as possible" from the advancing Federal troops. Many others fell prisoner. Several officers tried to regroup the men along the Emmitsburg Pike. Most kept on going toward Seminary Ridge.⁶⁴

Once the survivors had reached the relative safety of their own lines, Pettigrew ordered them to "rally and form" behind the Confederate artillery. By nightfall, Pettigrew's brigade could form a "pretty good skirmish line" to protect the cannons. The 26th North Carolina numbered nearly 230 men (counting the cooks and extra duty men) when the charge began. Only three officers and sixty-seven men answered roll call that night.⁶⁵

The regiment was shattered. Of the more than 800 men in the ranks on July 1, 734 fell or were captured in less than two hours of combat. Among the casualties were Col. Burgwyn (dead), Lt. Col. Lane (severely wounded), all twenty men who had carried the regimental colors, eighty of the eighty-two men in Company E, and all ninety-three men of Company F. This last company contained three sets of twins. At the end of the battle, five of the six lay dead. The losses suffered by the 26th North Carolina at Gettysburg were the highest of any

⁶⁴O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 644; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 22, 1890, John R. Lane Papers, SHC.

⁶⁵Clark, N.C. Regiments, V, 134; T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, June 22, 1863, John R. Lane Papers, SHC.

regiment in a single battle during the war.⁶⁶

The command structure of the regiment (and the brigade) also suffered greatly. Major Jones was the only uninjured field officer left among Pettigrew's unit. As such, he temporarily led the brigade. Captain Henry C. Albright commanded the regiment. Three lieutenants remained able for duty and were in charge of their respective companies. Non-commissioned officers led the remaining troops.⁶⁷

The Confederates held their position throughout the next day. They expected to be attacked at any moment by Federal troops on Cemetery Ridge. Yet with the exception of occasional skirmishing between pickets, the field remained quiet. During the afternoon a heavy rain began to fall. The ambulances and wagons of the army started toward the passes through South Mountain. Shortly after dark, Heth's division marched westward down the Fairfield Road. The retreat to Virginia had begun.⁶⁸

For the next three days soldiers wearily slogged their way through mud and water "full knee deep." On July 7, they reached Hagerstown. Although the army had neared the Potomac,

⁶⁶Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 358-66. These figures include 183 killed or mortally wounded, 487 wounded and 64 captured. The men taken prisoner surrendered on July 3 or thereafter. Fox, Regimental Losses, 556.

⁶⁷O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 644-45. Although Jones had been wounded on both the first and third days of the battle, the injuries were slight and he remained with the troops. Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 200.

⁶⁸Albright Diary, July 4, 1863; Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 165.

it could not cross over because heavy rains had swollen the river to near-flood stage.⁶⁹

The men spent the next two days resting. About 2 p.m. on July 10, the 26th North Carolina left its bivouac and marched about twelve miles from town. Pettigrew's brigade formed a line of battle against a possible attack by Federal cavalry. Although the sounds of cavalry and picket fighting could be heard nearby, the regiment did not become engaged in the action. Later that evening, the regiment moved to another position about eight miles away. There the troops again formed their ranks and began digging fortifications. The men remained in the trenches, expecting Meade's army to attack, for the next two days.⁷⁰

About twilight on July 13, Heth's division "absconded" in the direction of the Potomac. As a thunderstorm raged about them, the soldiers marched all night without halting, through mud and water "half leg deep." It took Heth's men twelve hours to cover seven miles. Around 8 a.m. on July 14, A. P. Hill halted the column at a farm clearing about a mile and a half from the river. He ordered Heth to form his unit in a line of battle across the road. The exhausted infantry stacked their rifles and lay down to rest. The men soon fell asleep, feeling secure "as there was a force of cavalry

⁶⁹Albright Diary, July 5-9, 1863; Coddington, Gettysburg Campaign, 565-66. Coddington's work provides the best overall account of the retreat and pursuit from Gettysburg.

⁷⁰Albright Diary, July 10-12, 1863.

between us and the enemy."⁷¹

Shortly after 11 a.m., as Heth and Pettigrew stood conversing in the farmyard, a troop of about fifty cavalry emerged from the woodline and rode straight at the officers. Someone gave the command to fire. However, Heth, believing the cavalry to be Confederates, countermanded the order. By the time someone realized the horsemen were Federals, the troopers were nearly in the midst of the Confederates.⁷²

Infantrymen scrambled to their feet and grabbed rifles. Unfortunately, most of the weapons were unloaded. One officer called the ensuing struggle "a hand to hand fight as is seldom seen in this war." Men clubbed Yankees from their horses with the butts of their guns, fence rails, and even an axe. In a short period of time, most of the mounted troopers had been killed or captured. Only two or three escaped.⁷³

During the melee, Pettigrew pulled out a small revolver and advanced on one of the Federals. He pulled the trigger, but the gun misfired. The cavalryman shot Pettigrew in the stomach. Seeing this, Nevel B. Staten, of Company B, "seized a big stone and crushed the breast of the Yankee, killing him."⁷⁴

⁷¹Albright Diary, July 13-14, 1863; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 227; John T. Jones to father, July 17, 1863, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC.

⁷²O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 640; Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 202.

⁷³John T. Jones to father, July 17, 1863, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC; O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 640-41.

⁷⁴Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 202; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 376.

In a matter of minutes the fight had ended. Major Jones called it "the funniest affair I have ever been in." The Federal cavalry had charged believing that only stragglers remained in front of them. Too late they discovered that they were riding into the midst of a full division. Although the Confederates suffered few casualties in the skirmish, Gen. Pettigrew was mortally wounded.⁷⁵

Heth finally moved his men down the road toward the river. As they waited to cross the pontoon bridge, a larger force of Federal horsemen attacked. The Confederates drove them off, but about 500 of the Southern rearguard were taken prisoner. Among that number were fifty-five men from the 26th North Carolina. The remainder of the regiment crossed the Potomac just as the bridge was cut loose from its moorings on the north bank.⁷⁶

Once they crossed the river, the men had time to reflect on their performance at Gettysburg. They believed the regiment had proven itself during the battle. In the first day's action in McPherson's Woods, they fought units from one of the premier brigades in the Union army and drove the enemy from the field. The number of killed and wounded in that struggle attested to the courage and discipline of the soldiers as well as the tenacity and marksmanship of their

⁷⁵John T. Jones to father, July 17, 1863, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC; Wilson, Carolina Cavalier, 203.

⁷⁶O.R., XXVII, Pt. 2, 644; Coddington, Gettysburg Campaign, 571. Lieutenant Cureton stated he was the last man to cross the bridge before it was cut loose from the north bank. T. J. Cureton to John R. Lane, John R. Lane Papers, SHC.

opponents. The long months of daily drill by Col. Burgwyn had paid off.

The troops held mixed emotions about the charge against Cemetery Ridge. On one hand, they were proud of what they saw as the "unparalleled bravery" of the assault. Yet at the same time, the men angrily denounced reports in the Richmond newspapers that blamed Pettigrew's men for the failure of the attack. Major Jones informed his father that these reports were lies. He stated: "Tell a man in this army that North Carolinians failed to go where Virginians went and he would think you a fool."⁷⁷

⁷⁷Albright Diary, July 3, 1863; Noah Deaton to wife, Aug. 12, 1863, Noah Deaton Papers, Duke; John T. Jones to father, Aug. 17, 1863, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC.

CHAPTER V

"IT LOOKS LIKE OUR TIME WILL COME NEXT"

On July 15, the troops continued their march south. They reached Bunker Hill that afternoon and halted. For five days, A. P. Hill allowed his men to rest in camp. The corps that so boldly marched northward only a few weeks before resembled a ragtag body of scarecrows. Pettigrew's brigade contained "about 500 broken down, half famished men." The clothing of many soldiers hung about them in tattered rags. To make matters worse, few provisions could be found in the area.¹

By July 21, the troops had resumed their southward journey. Except for a brief skirmish on July 24, when Federal cavalry under George A. Custer attempted to hinder the movement of Hill's corps, the march proved uneventful. On July 25, the Confederates halted in the vicinity of Culpeper. They remained there until the first week of August, when Hill shifted his troops to Orange Court House.²

The encampment of the 26th North Carolina sat on a hill about a mile and a half from the town. For the next ten weeks, Gen. Hill set about rebuilding the morale of the troops and increasing their numbers. One of the first things he did was improve the physical welfare of his men.³

For once, the soldiers received food in abundance. One

¹Albright Diary, July 15-20; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 228.

²Albright Diary, July 25-Aug. 3; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 230.

³Letter from J. A. P. to Wadesboro North Carolina Argus, Sept. 3, 1863; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 230.

man reported his company stayed "very busy" eating rations. They also received new clothing. Noah Deaton told his wife that, to his knowledge, "every man has as much as he needs for the present."⁴

Although Hill kept the troops busy, they were not worked very severely. They drilled regularly, policed their quarters daily, and stood for inspection on occasion. Every few days the regiment took its turn on picket duty. Even this did not prove onerous. As had been the case when they were stationed at Fredericksburg, the lookouts agreed not to fire upon each other. An officer told his brother that the opposing sentries soon appeared "quite friendly" with each other. One man felt that camp routine provided the soldiers a "very lazy life." He stated that they "spend most of their time lying in the shade, sleeping, or writing wives, parents or sweethearts."⁵

The morale of many soldiers soon improved in the relaxed atmosphere at Orange Court House. Their esprit de corps also received a boost from a more spiritual source. During the late summer and fall of 1863, the "great revival along the Rapidan" swept through the camps of the Army of Northern Virginia. Every day and night, the sounds of sermons and

⁴Letter from J. A. P. to Wadesboro North Carolina Argus, Sept. 3, 1863; George Glenn to mother, Aug. 30, 1863, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke; Noah Deaton to wife, Aug. 12, 1863, Noah Deaton Papers, Duke.

⁵Letter from J. A. P. to Wadesboro North Carolina Argus, Sept. 3, 1863; Henry C. Albright to brother, Sept. 24, 1863, Henry C. Albright Papers, NCDAH.

prayer and singing could be heard.⁶

The revival sparked one of the few complaints heard from the men in the 26th North Carolina at this time. The grievance arose because the regiment did not have a chaplain (in fact had not had one officially since it left North Carolina). Because of this lack, the soldiers had religious services only on those occasions when a chaplain from another regiment would come and preach.⁷

Despite the apparent contentment in camp during this period, a serious problem plagued the entire army. Since the retreat from Gettysburg large numbers of soldiers had deserted. The situation became so desperate that President Davis, at Lee's suggestion, published a proclamation which argued that the enemy's superiority in numbers was caused by men who had abandoned their duty. He asked the civilian population to refuse shelter to any deserters. In the same address, Davis offered a full pardon to all who returned to their regiments within twenty days. The proclamation had little success in getting men to return to their units.⁸

The 26th North Carolina showed that it was not immune to the problem. On July 31, Julius Leinbach noted in his diary that desertions were becoming more frequent; nineteen men had

⁶Drew Gilpin Faust, "Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army," Journal of Southern History LII (1987), 72; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 231.

⁷Letter from G. D. S. to Biblical Recorder, Aug. 22, 1863; letter from J. A. P. to Wadesboro North Carolina Argus, Sept. 3, 1863; letter from Abner B. Hayes to Raleigh Spirit of the Age, Sep. 21, 1863.

⁸Bardolph, "Confederate Dilemma," 84-85.

left the regiment the night before. Captain Henry Albright expressed little confidence that many of Company G would remain in the ranks. He told his brother that, with few exceptions, "they all speak favorably of desertion." Between mid-July and the end of September, twenty-five men were officially reported as deserters or absent without leave.⁹

The causes for desertions varied with the men. The losses at Gettysburg and Vicksburg undoubtedly convinced some that the Confederate cause was hopeless. Letters from home persuaded others that their families were suffering and needed them. Much of the blame, however, was placed on the growing peace movement in North Carolina and on the Raleigh Standard, which supported reunion.¹⁰

Feelings about the peace movement evidently differed between the officers and the enlisted men. The officers expressed their "mortification . . . at the course of our people at home" and quickly passed a resolution publicly condemning the Standard. They argued that few of the North Carolina troops supported the efforts for obtaining peace. A

⁹Sentinel, Sept. 26, 1914; Henry C. Albright to brother, Aug. 21, 1863, Henry C. Albright Papers, NCDAH; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 495-600. Many of the desertions must not have been reported officially, because Jordan, for the period from July 16-August 15, listed only fifteen men as deserting. This figure is well under the number given by Leinbach.

¹⁰John T. Jones to father, Aug. 17, 1863, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC; Sentinel, Sept. 26, 1914; Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 190-91. Feelings against William Holden's Standard rose so high that when Longstreet's corps passed through Raleigh on its way to Chickamauga, soldiers belonging to a Georgia brigade wrecked its offices. Holden's supporters retaliated by wrecking the offices of a pro-government newspaper. Ibid, 195.

number of the enlisted men strongly disagreed. They felt the officers had passed the resolution without giving the soldiers a chance to speak. One soldier told the Standard that he was a "peace private . . . and two-thirds of the regiment are the same way." Other men, in the regiment and the brigade, echoed this feeling, stating that their sentiments lay with the "people at home."¹¹

Although the problems caused by desertions and the peace movement remained, events in Virginia soon focused attention there. On September 10, Gen. William W. Kirkland assumed command of the brigade. Previously the colonel of the 21st North Carolina (in Ewell's corps), he had served in the army since First Manassas. At about the same time, a North Carolina brigade led by Gen John R. Cooke joined the division.¹²

The months of August and September were fairly quiet along the Rapidan River, as only minor skirmishing took place between the two opposing armies. Early in October the lull in the fighting came to an end. Lee decided to remove the Federal "menace" from Virginia by launching a flank attack against Meade's forces.¹³

On October 9, the 26th North Carolina left its camp as A.

¹¹John T. Jones to father, Aug. 17, 1863, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC; James D. McIver to John McIver, Aug. 14, 1863, John McIver Papers, Duke; Raleigh Standard, Aug. 19, 1863; Sentinel, Sept. 26, 1914.

¹²Sentinel, Oct. 3, 1914; Boatner, Civil War Dictionary, 465; Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 243.

¹³Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 239; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 233.

P. Hill's corps moved northward. Skirting Cedar Mountain, the troops travelled eastward until they struck the Warrenton Turnpike north of Culpeper. As Meade learned of Lee's intentions, he quickly retreated northward along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Lee pursued in hope of cutting the Federal line at some point along the railroad.¹⁴

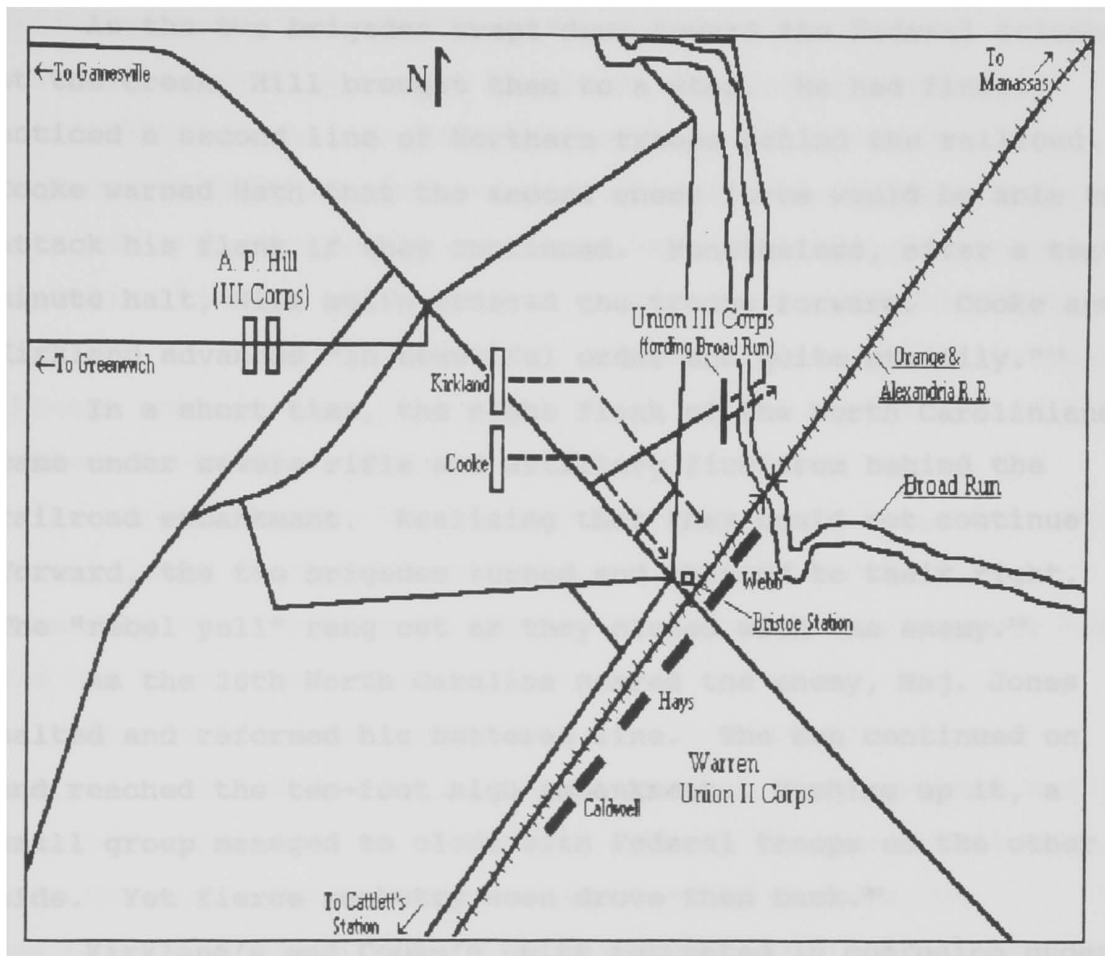
By 10 a.m on October 14, Hill's men reached the town of Greenwich. There they found campfires still burning, indicating that the enemy was not very far ahead. The troops pushed ahead and came upon the enemy near Bristoe Station. As Hill surveyed the scene, he noted that the Federal III Corps waited to ford Broad Run. Although the creek would not be difficult to cross, it might delay the enemy long enough for the Confederates to launch an attack.¹⁵

Hill believed no time should be lost in attacking. He hurried Heth's division forward to the hills overlooking the ford. Once it arrived, Hill ordered Heth to form three brigades in a line of battle and attack. Cooke's men took up a position along the right of the road with Kirkland's troops on his left. Before the third brigade, under Gen. Henry H. Walker, could complete its formation, Hill commanded Heth to push forward with the units already in line.¹⁶

¹⁴Sentinel, Oct. 17, 1914; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 233-34.

¹⁵Sentinel, Oct. 17, 1914; Freeman, Lee's Lieutenant's, III, 282.

¹⁶O.R., XXIX, Pt. 1, 426, 430. "Mudwall" Walker replaced Brockenbrough as commander of the Virginia brigade. A short time later, the badly understrength unit was combined with the remnants of Archer's brigade. Walker led the combined unit. Stewart Sifakis, Who Was Who in the Civil War (New York,



Map 9.

Battle of Bristoe Station

Positions of Kirkland's and Cooke's Brigades¹⁷

1988), 683.

¹⁷Based on map in O.R. Atlas, Plate XLV, 7.

As the two brigades swept down toward the Federal column at the creek, Hill brought them to a stop. He had finally noticed a second line of Northern troops behind the railroad. Cooke warned Heth that the second enemy force would be able to attack his flank if they continued. Nonetheless, after a ten-minute halt, Hill again ordered the troops forward. Cooke and Kirkland advanced "in beautiful order and quite steadily."¹⁸

In a short time, the right flank of the North Carolinians came under severe rifle and artillery fire from behind the railroad embankment. Realizing that they could not continue forward, the two brigades turned and charged to their right. The "rebel yell" rang out as they closed with the enemy.¹⁹

As the 26th North Carolina neared the enemy, Maj. Jones halted and reformed his battered line. The men continued on and reached the ten-foot high embankment. Rushing up it, a small group managed to close with Federal troops on the other side. Yet fierce musketry soon drove them back.²⁰

Kirkland's and Cooke's units retreated in confusion under the heavy fire. A number of soldiers decided not to run the gauntlet and remained under the shelter of the embankment. Union troops soon captured them.²¹

The battle ended with the retreat. The two Confederate

¹⁸O.R., XXIX, Pt. 2, 426-27, 430-31.

¹⁹Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, 245; C. A. Tuttle, "Company F, 26th Regt. N.C. Troops at Bristow Station, Va., Oct. 14, 1863," Lenoir News-Topic, June 24, 1896.

²⁰Ibid.; letter to Raleigh Standard, Oct. 28, 1863.

²¹Tuttle, "Company F," Lenoir News-Topic, June 24, 1896; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 238.

brigades making the attack were mangled. Cooke reported 700 casualties among his men. Kirkland suffered slightly less, losing 602 troops. In the 26th North Carolina, 31 men lay dead or mortally wounded, 66 were wounded and another 71 fell prisoner. Company F had the unenviable distinction of nearly repeating its 100 percent loss at Gettysburg. Of the thirty-four men who made the attack at Bristoe Station, only two came through unhurt. One of the survivors, Thomas Setser, told his father-in-law that "when I look a round and see nun of our boys, and think what has becom of them, I cante helpe but cry, and it looks like our time will come next." George Glenn summed up the attitude of the regiment when he stated that "we did not gane anything by that fight."²²

The Confederates retired southward across the Rappahannock and Rapidan, destroying miles of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad as they went. Except for a brief time in late November, during the Mine Run campaign (where the regiment was lightly engaged), the troops remained in camp during the winter months. Men rapidly set to work building comfortable quarters. Many laid floors and built chimneys for their tents. Others erected small shanties. While the quarters were often crowded, they provided adequate protection

²²O.R., XXIX, Pt. 1, 433; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600; Thomas W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Oct. 20, 1863, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 4," 13; George Glenn to brother, Oct. 21, 1863, Elizabeth Glenn Papers, Duke. To his credit, A. P. Hill took the blame for the fiasco, reporting that he made the attack "too hastily." O.R., XXIX, Pt. 1, 427.

from the elements.²³

During November, Col. Lane returned to the regiment. Wounded severely on the first day at Gettysburg, he had been at home on furlough since that time. Upon reaching his unit, he found the troops "low in spirits and few in number." The summer and fall campaigns reduced the regiment's strength so much that Gen. Kirkland warned Lane that the 26th North Carolina might be consolidated with another unit. The officers immediately exerted their efforts to recruit new soldiers and to bring those absent back into the ranks. Lane reported that their efforts were "crowned with success." By the end of the year the regiment numbered at least 305 men. The threatened merger was avoided.²⁴

Although the officers remained busy during the winter, enlisted men frequently used the word "dull" to describe their routine. Christmas was dull, drill was dull, reviews by their commanders were dull, and most of all, the food was dull. Apparently the only thing that lightened their spirits was the prospect of receiving a furlough. A change in the system of granting leave allowed more men the chance to go home. The

²³D. S. Liles to mother, Dec. 15, 1863, 26th NCT, Inc.; Henry C. Albright to brother, Dec. 30, 1863, Henry C. Albright Papers, NCDAH; James Wright to family, Dec. 29, 1863, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH.

²⁴Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 380-81. Lane received his promotion to colonel when he rejoined the regiment. At the same time, John T. Jones was promoted to lieutenant colonel and James T. Adams to major. All the commissions bore the date of July 1, 1863 in recognition of their "heroic conduct" on that day. Ibid. The muster rolls for Companies A-I (roll for K cannot be located) reveal 305 men present for duty on Dec. 31, 1863. Regimental Muster Rolls, Companies A-I, June 30, 1863, Boxes 49-53, Civil War Collection, NCDAH.

soldiers heartily approved the new rules.²⁵

At the same time, the army cracked down on deserters. In one letter after another, soldiers told their families and friends of the executions they witnessed in their brigade. James Wright informed his wife and parents that between January and April, 1864, he had witnessed seven executions in his brigade. One letter described in detail how the firing squad had to discharge three volleys before the prisoner died. Wright even included a diagram of the scene. In another instance, he commanded a squad that guarded two condemned men the night before they were shot. One man, George W. Owens, talked to Wright about his impending death. "He did not fear being shot, he appeared to give satisfaction to all that talked with him." The threat of execution may have helped stem the tide of desertions. According to George Underwood, an early chronicler of the regiment, many deserters returned to the regiment, "gave themselves up and ever afterwards made good soldiers."²⁶

With the arrival of good weather around the middle of April, the soldiers believed that active campaigning would

²⁵James Wright to family, Dec. 29, 1863, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAAH; D. S. Liles to W. A. Winfield, Jan. 5, 1863, 26th NCT, Inc; Henry C. Albright to brother, Dec. 30, 1863, Henry C. Albright Papers, NCDAAH. The new system allowed one man out of every twenty-five present to receive a furlough. This was a significant increase from granting a leave to one man for every one hundred present. *Ibid*.

²⁶James Wright to family, Feb. 1, Feb. 18, Mar. 20, and Mar. 24, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAAH; W. W. Edwards to Mr. R. B. Paschal, Mar. 6, 1864, typescript in possession of writer; D. S. Liles to family, Apr. 3, 1864, 26th NCT, Inc.; J. L. Henry to brother, Apr. 20, 1864, J. L. Henry Papers, Duke.

come soon. One indication came from the increase in drill to twice a day. By April 26, regimental officers had received orders to send tents and baggage to the rear and to be prepared to march at a moment's notice.²⁷

The labor expended by the officers during the winter to rebuild the regiment had succeeded. By the first of May, the 26th North Carolina, which had nearly lost its separate existence, numbered 760 men. According to Lt. Col. Jones, the soldiers were "never in so fine a condition and they feel confident of victory." Whether they would be ready for the hard campaigns of 1864 remained to be seen.²⁸

²⁷James Wright to wife, Apr. 16, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH; Henry C. Albright to brother, Apr. 16, 1864, Henry C. Albright Papers, NCDAH; John T. Jones to father, Apr. 26, 1864, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC.

²⁸Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 381; John T. Jones to father, Apr. 26, 1864, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC.

CHAPTER VI
"DRESS ON THE COLORS"

As the Civil War entered its fourth year, the new General-in-Chief of the Federal armies, Ulysses S. Grant, launched a new offensive against Richmond and the Army of Northern Virginia. Shortly after midnight on May 4, the Army of the Potomac began crossing the Rapidan. Observers at the Confederate signal station atop Clark's Mountain informed Lee of the movement. He quickly moved his forces to block the Union advance. The Overland Campaign of 1864 had begun.¹

Lee wanted to make contact with the Federal army before it cleared a forest known locally as the Wilderness. The area owed its name to its heavy second growth timber and dense undergrowth. If Lee could force Grant to give battle amid the tangle of the Wilderness, the numerical superiority of the Union forces would be minimized.²

Early in the afternoon of May 4, A. P. Hill's corps started down the Orange Plank Road in the direction of Fredericksburg. Heth's division headed the column. About sunset, the troops reached the old Confederate entrenchments near Mine Run and bivouacked for the night.³

At dawn the next morning, Heth's troops continued eastward along the Plank Road. Kirkland's brigade took the

¹Robertson, A. P. Hill, 251; Edward Steere, The Wilderness Campaign (Harrisburg, 1960), 47, 73.

²Steere, Wilderness Campaign, 1.

³Robertson, A. P. Hill, 251-52; Morrison, Heth Memoirs, 182; Albright Diary, May 12, 1864.

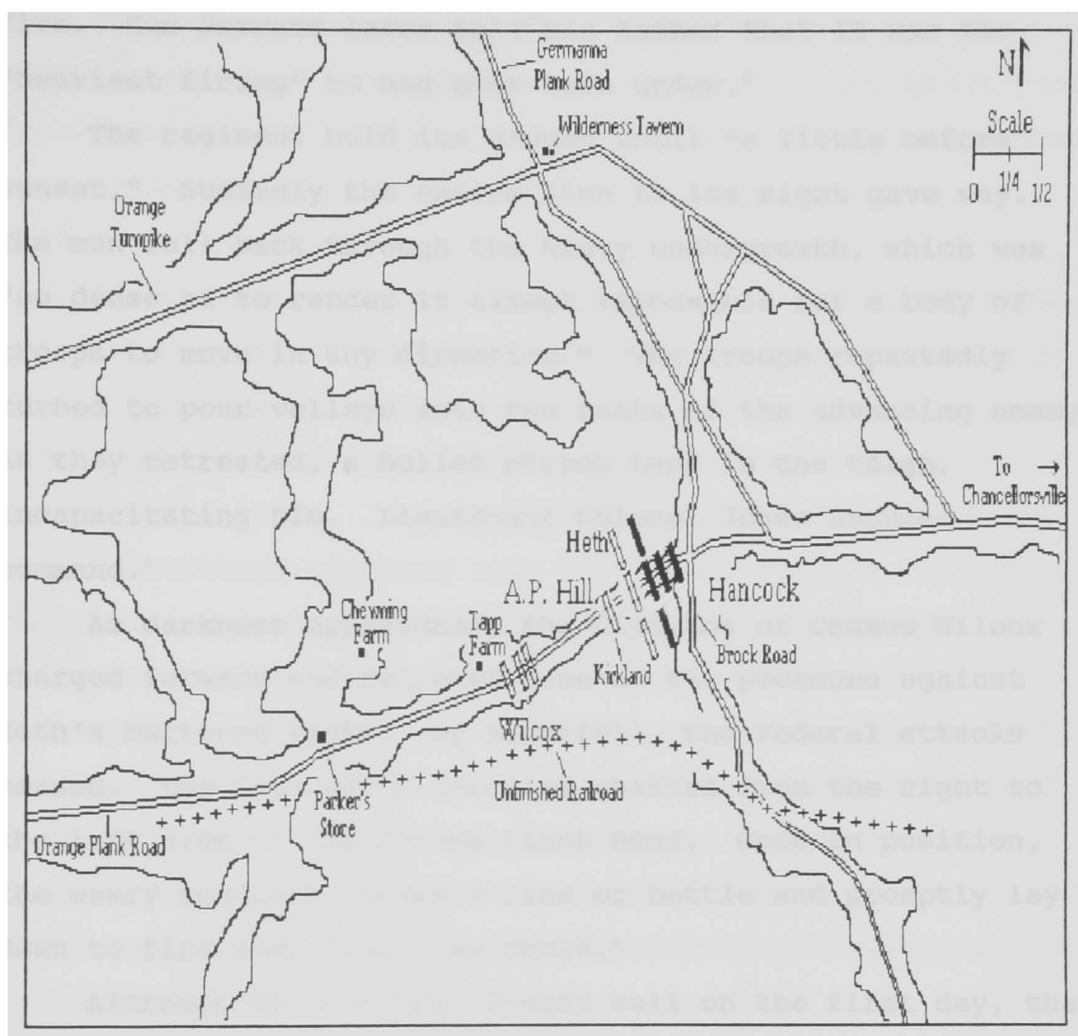
lead. Soon after the Confederates entered the Wilderness, they encountered enemy cavalry. The infantrymen quickly formed skirmish lines and advanced through the woods. The Union troopers, armed with Spencer repeating carbines, poured a heavy fire into the advancing gray lines. Nonetheless, Kirkland's regiments pushed forward and occupied the crossroads at Parker's Store.⁴

At this point, the brigades of Cooke, Davis, and Walker advanced to the front. The three units formed a line of battle and proceeded down the Plank Road toward its intersection with the Brock Road. While the balance of Heth's division pressed eastward, the 26th North Carolina and Kirkland's other regiments sat down to rest. An hour later, the brigade continued forward and took up a position in rear of Cooke.⁵

Around 4 p.m. three Federal divisions burst through the woods and struck Heth's front. General Kirkland sent the 26th North Carolina to support Cooke's forces. Colonel Lane led his men down the road at the double quick. They soon reached the spot where the Confederates were hotly engaged with the enemy. Cooke ordered Lane forward to assist the 46th North Carolina. The regiment went into position "in splendid order" under a heavy musketry. The soldiers fell to the ground, below the dense clouds of smoke, and returned the

⁴Steere, Wilderness Campaign, 115; Albright Diary, May 5, 1864.

⁵Steere, Wilderness Campaign, 145-46; Albright Diary, May 5, 1864; James Wright to family, May 9, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH.



MAP 10.

Battle of the Wilderness

Hill's Corps -- Afternoon, May 6

fire. Gus Jarratt later told his father that it was the "heaviest firing" he had ever been under.⁶

The regiment held its ground until "a little before sunset." Suddenly the entire line to its right gave way. The men fell back through the heavy undergrowth, which was "so dense as to render it almost impossible for a body of troops to move in any direction." The troops repeatedly turned to pour volleys into the ranks of the advancing enemy. As they retreated, a bullet struck Lane in the thigh, incapacitating him. Lieutenant Colonel Jones assumed command.⁷

As darkness approached, the division of Cadmus Wilcox charged forward and relieved some of the pressure against Heth's battered ranks. By nightfall, the Federal attacks ceased. The 26th North Carolina shifted from the right to the left side of the Orange Plank Road. Once in position, the weary soldiers formed a line of battle and promptly lay down to find what rest they could.⁸

Although Hill's corps fought well on the first day, the next promised to be more difficult. Believing that Gen. Longstreet would have his troops on the field by midnight, Lee and Hill allowed the exhausted men of Heth and Wilcox to remain where they had stopped at day's end. According to

⁶Robertson, A. P. Hill, 255; Albright Diary, May 5, 1864; James Wright to family, May 9, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAR; I. A. Jarratt to father, May 12, 1864, Jarratt-Puryear Family Papers, Duke.

⁷Albright Diary, May 5, 1864; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 382.

⁸Ibid.

Heth the two divisions were "so mixed, and lying at every conceivable angle, that we cannot fire a shot without firing into each other." He and Wilcox sought permission to adjust their jumbled ranks. Hill told them to let the soldiers rest.⁹

Early the next morning, the 26th North Carolina switched positions again. This time it moved back to the south side of the Plank Road. Shortly after dawn, the Union II Corps shattered the tense stillness as it attacked along Hill's entire front.¹⁰

One officer reported that the Federal attack crumpled the Confederate left flank "as a sheet of paper would be rolled without the power of effective resistance." Kirkland's brigade briefly held its ground, but an enfilading fire soon routed it. As Kirkland retreated, the 26th North Carolina turned and made a brief charge. This delayed the Union advance long enough to allow the brigade to form a new line. Shortly afterwards, Longstreet's corps arrived and relieved Hill's splintered units.¹¹

As the regiment moved to the rear, the men learned that Lt. Col. Jones had fallen mortally wounded by a gunshot wound in the back. The wound occurred as the men sought cover from the unusually heavy fire at the beginning of the Federal

⁹Robertson, A. P. Hill, 261-62; Morrison, Heth Memoirs, 183-84.

¹⁰Albright Diary, May 6, 1864; Steere, Wilderness Campaign, 328.

¹¹Clark, N.C. Regiments, I, 595; II, 382; Albright Diary, May 6, 1864.

assault. After Jones fell, Lane returned to command the regiment. He led the troops to their new position near the Chewning Farm. After throwing up breastworks, the soldiers settled down to relax. They remained near the farm until late afternoon. At that time the unit advanced to support a planned assault by several brigades of Gen. Richard H. Anderson's division. The charge failed to materialize and the regiment returned to its trenches.¹²

On May 7, the opposing armies held their ground. Except for occasional skirmishing the lines remained quiet. The men of the 26th North Carolina spent the daylight hours strengthening the earthworks they had begun the day before. That evening, the unit shifted a short distance to its right and set up a bivouac.¹³

At the same time, Grant began moving his army to the southeast, trying to get between Lee and Richmond. Lee countered by quickly sending part of his troops in the same direction. The fighting in the Wilderness was over; now the race for the crossroads at Spotsylvania Court House had begun.¹⁴

During the afternoon of May 8, Heth's division started toward the Court House. The troops marched four or five

¹²W. W. Gaithers to Edmund W. Jones, May 26, 1864, Edmund W. Jones Papers, SHC; J. J. Young to Edmund W. Jones, May 25, 1864, ibid.; Albright Diary, May 6, 1864; Steere, Wilderness Campaign, 422-25.

¹³Robert Garth Scott, Into the Wilderness with the Army of the Potomac (Bloomington, 1985), 180-82; Albright Diary, May 7, 1864.

¹⁴William D. Matter, If It Takes All Summer: The Battle of Spotsylvania (Chapel Hill, 1988), 22-33.

miles before they halted and set up camp for the night. Late in the afternoon they heard the sounds of "heavy firing" as the two armies renewed the conflict.¹⁵

Early the next morning, the division resumed its trek. Some time around noon, the troops reached the Spotsylvania Court House. Kirkland's brigade filed into the newly dug trenches just east of the village. As was becoming the habit of soldiers on both sides, the men immediately set to work building and improving the earthworks.¹⁶

On the morning of May 10, Heth's troops left the entrenchments and proceeded toward the Po River. Their objective was to drive back a Union column that threatened the Confederate left flank. After some "very hard marching" they encountered a division from the Federal II Corps. The Southerners made three charges against the enemy line. They succeeded in forcing the Northern troops back across the river. Afterwards, Heth issued a congratulatory order to his men, praising them for their valor in driving the enemy back.¹⁷

The 26th North Carolina, along with the rest of Heth's

¹⁵Matter, Takes All Summer, 80; Albright Diary, May 8, 1864. The firing they heard came from the clash at Laurel Hill, between Longstreet's (now commanded by Richard Anderson) and Ewell's corps and the Federal V and VI corps.

¹⁶Albright Diary, May 9, 1864; Gerald F. Linderman, Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War (New York, 1987), 142-43.

¹⁷Albright Diary, May 10, 1864; Morrison, Heth Memoirs, 188. General Winfield S. Hancock, commander of the Federal II Corps, disputed the Confederate version of the battle. He stated that his troops were not driven back, but ordered to withdraw. Matter, Takes All Summer, 144-48.

division, returned to the trenches at Spotsylvania Court House. During the night of May 11, the regiment received orders to report to the army's quartermaster. Upon doing so the men heard the "glad tidings" that they would accompany a forage train to collect fodder for the horses. The wagons needed an escort because much of the route they would take lay close to enemy lines. For the remainder of the night and much of the next day, the troops rode in the wagons. Late in the evening of May 13, they returned to the village. The regiment spent the night in the courthouse yard.¹⁸

On the morning of May 14, the unit moved to support the rest of Kirkland's brigade. The troops remained in their position as reserves for the next four days. Daniel Liles told his mother that "were it not for the firing of the skirmishers or the occasional explosion of a shell from the enemies batteries, we would almost forget that we were so near the enemy." Not until May 18 did the heavy fighting resume. That morning, the Federal artillery opened with a "terrible cannonade" against the Confederate lines. The Union infantry followed the bombardment with a "feeble" charge that Henry Albright described as a complete failure.¹⁹

¹⁸Albright Diary, May 10-13, 1864; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 384-85.

¹⁹Albright Diary, May 14-18, 1864; Daniel S. Liles to mother, May 21, 1864, Daniel S. Liles Letters, 26th N.C.T., Inc. The infantry assault made so little impact on the Confederates that neither Liles nor James Wright mentioned it in their letters, although both did describe the artillery bombardment. Ibid.; James Wright to family, May 21, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAH.

On May 20, Grant abandoned the assaults at Spotsylvania and shifted his army to the southeast. This maneuver forced Lee to abandon his trenches and pursue. The following evening, Hill's corps started in the direction of Beaver Dam Station. The troops continued their severe march along the Virginia Central Railroad line. By mid-morning of May 23, the troops ended their thirty-mile tramp at Anderson's Station, about three miles from Hanover Junction.²⁰

Late that afternoon, Hill sent Heth's brigades to support Wilcox's division in an attempt to repel a Federal column that had crossed to the south of the North Anna River. Heth's troops saw little action in the attack. The 26th North Carolina engaged the enemy's skirmishers, but did not participate in the main assault. Unable to drive the enemy back, the Confederates retired to their defenses.²¹

Failing to penetrate the defenses at the North Anna river, the Union Army once more marched by its left flank in an effort to get between Confederates and Richmond. Lee quickly countered. On the morning of May 27, Heth's troops abandoned their trenches and headed in the direction of Richmond. Three days later they took up a new defensive line near Mechanicsville. As soon as the 26th North Carolina halted, the men started to fortify their position. This pattern had been repeated so often that James Wright told his family that he spent the month of May "marching, fighting,

²⁰Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 496; Albright Diary, May 21-24, 1864; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 274.

²¹Morrison, Heth Memoirs, 188; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 274-76; Albright Diary, May 23, 1864.

and throwing up breastworks."²²

The first day of June found the Union army poised for another assault on Lee's lines. During the afternoon, Federal troops charged the earthworks of Kirkland and Cooke. The Confederate artillery beat back the attack so easily that many of the infantrymen barely noticed it. One man described the action as "heavy skirmishing"; another stated that the day was "quiet with some firing on the left of the regiment."²³

Things heated up the next evening when Kirkland's brigade struck at the enemy entrenchments. The charge faltered before the Union works. The two sides held their ground and exchanged a "heavy fire" which did little damage to either. After nightfall, the Southerners returned to their own defenses.²⁴

In the early morning hours of June 3, Grant launched a major assault against the Confederate earthworks at Cold Harbor. Heavy fighting took place over much of the line. The Federal attackers were brutally repulsed, losing 7,000 men in the charge. Most of the casualties occurred during the first fifteen minutes.²⁵

Because Heth's division held the far left of Lee's line,

²²Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 498; Albright Diary, May 27-30, 1864; James Wright to family, May 31, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, NCDAR.

²³Robertson, A. P. Hill, 278; J. L. Henry to brother, June 2, 1864, J. L. Henry Papers, Duke; Albright Diary, June 1, 1864.

²⁴Ibid., June 2, 1864.

²⁵Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 508.

the 26th North Carolina avoided the heaviest fighting during the battle. Sometime in the morning, Kirkland's brigade occupied the abandoned enemy breastworks in its front. The Federals retaliated by advancing a line of battle to within 400 yards of the works. The two sides spent the remainder of the day exchanging skirmish fire. According to Henry Albright, "they annoyed us very much with their sharpshooters." During the night, Northern troops worked their way behind the rear of Kirkland's line. This forced the unit to fall back to its original works.²⁶

The regiment remained near Cold Harbor for six more days. On June 9, it moved to the south side of the Chickahominy River and took up picket duty near Bottom's Bridge, about twelve miles from Richmond. While there the men enjoyed a brief interlude from the fighting. During this respite, they received "enough to eat and some to spare," making up for the times they had gone hungry while on the march. Although the Confederate and Union sentries were stationed very close together, the opponents stayed "on very friendly terms." The men of the regiment felt quite content with their situation.²⁷

²⁶Morrison, Heth Memoirs, 189; Albright Diary, June 3-4, 1864.

²⁷Albright Diary, June 9-12, 1864; James Wright to family, June 12, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, NCDH; Daniel Liles to sister, June 12, 1864, 26th N.C.T., Inc. Ironically, the food ration issued to Kirkland's brigade caused some conflict in the army. General Robert Ransom complained that his men, doing the same duties as Kirkland's, received less food. The affair went all the way to Secretary of War James Seddon before being settled. O.R., XXXVI, pt. 3, 898-99.

Daniel Liles took advantage of the proximity of the two lines to trade with the Federal pickets. He exchanged "some tobacco for a splendid canteen and . . . some cornbread for crackers and sugar and coffee." Liles stated that the Northerners were "quite a clever set of fellows," but warned if they tried to cross over the river without permission they would get "lead balls instead of cornbread and tobacco."²⁸

The lull ended when Grant slipped away from Lee and shifted the Union army across the James and Appomattox rivers. He planned to capture the vital rail center of Petersburg, south of Richmond. Grant's maneuver forced Lee to rush reinforcements to the undermanned defenses there.²⁹

On the evening of June 17, the 26th North Carolina left their position along the Charles City Road and started for Petersburg. The men halted that night near White Cross. At three o'clock the next morning, they resumed their journey. Hill, knowing that the fate of Petersburg might depend on his corps, pushed the troops vigorously.³⁰

The regiment crossed the James on a pontoon bridge at Chaffin's Bluff. After striking the Richmond and Petersburg turnpike, the soldiers marched "furiously . . . fighting thirst and spitting dust" as they went. About five miles from Petersburg the men boarded a train and rode for three or four miles. After finishing the journey on foot, the weary

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 528-33.

³⁰Albright Diary, June 17-18, 1864; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 283.

infantry filed into the trenches south of the city. One soldier called the journey "the hardest day's marching we have had during the present campaign; I think I was never so tired in all my life."³¹

The seven-week campaign from the Wilderness to Petersburg exacted a severe toll on the 26th North Carolina. The numerous battles, large and small, inflicted 180 casualties among the ranks. More men, most likely broken down by the near constant exertions, died of disease. The hot, dry weather of late May and June contributed to the suffering.³²

The regiment remained in the entrenchments around Petersburg for most of the next two months. The weather continued to be dry through most of July, causing some discomfort. But it would be one of the lesser problems faced by the troops. One soldier from Moore County wrote a friend back home, giving a vivid description of the hardships and demoralization the men faced while they remained in the trenches.

Thair is a continuel sharpshooting kept up from our brestworks at each other. We hav to have trenches cut to go after water and they do too. Thair is a continuel shelling kept up nearly all the time with morters, but it is only once and a while they can drop them [in] our brestworks and we drop ours in thair brestworks too . . . We hav to ly in our trenches day and knight, rain or shine, hot or cold. Thair is som[e] killed or wounded more or

³¹Albright Diary, June 18, 1864; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 283.

³²Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600. Most of the casualties (130) occurred in the two days of fighting in the Wilderness. Another 23 men (including 20 captured) were lost at Spotsylvania Court House, and 27 more fell at Cold Harbor.

less every day by mortar shells or sharp shooters. The men hav becom[e] so careless, they don car much for any thing.³³

The latter part of August saw the 26th North Carolina on the move again. This time, it joined in the effort to counter a Federal thrust against the Weldon Railroad, which linked Petersburg to southern Virginia and North Carolina. It would be their first action under the leadership of William MacRae, who had replaced Kirkland (wounded at Cold Harbor) as brigade commander. In July, he had joined the unit as it escorted a wagon train going to bring in supplies. The colonel temporarily commanding the unit had permitted the men to ride in the wagons. MacRae quickly had the soldiers out and marching again. One officer later observed that the restoration of strict discipline prepared the troops "for the trying ordeal through which they were to pass from now to the end."³⁴

The fight for the Weldon Railroad came about as Grant, looking for a way to hasten the fall of Petersburg, decided to cut one of the major supply lines to the city. On August 17, he ordered Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren's V Corps to attack the railroad. The Federals struck the line in the vicinity of Globe Tavern, about four miles south of the city.³⁵

³³Daniel Liles to sister, July 17, 1864, Daniel Liles Letters, 26th N.C.T., Inc.; Unidentified writer to John B. Ray, July 29, 1864, Nevin Ray Papers, Duke.

³⁴Clark, N.C. Regiments, V, 563-64. MacRae had previously commanded the 15th North Carolina of Cooke's brigade.

³⁵John Horn, The Destruction of the Weldon Railroad: Deep Bottom, Globe Tavern, and Reams Station, August 14-25, 1864 (Lynchburg, VA, 1991), 54-56.

The Confederates reacted quickly to the threat. Hill dispatched part of Heth's division to parry Warren's thrust. On August 18, Heth attacked at Globe Tavern. Although he succeeded initially, his force lacked sufficient strength to completely drive the Federal troops from the railroad. Hill ordered more troops forward to support Heth.³⁶

On August 21, MacRae's brigade joined the action at Globe Tavern. Early that morning William Mahone's division attacked the Union lines. At the same time, MacRae's men (along with Ransom's brigade) advanced and drove the Federal pickets from their front. The North Carolinians continued forward through a dense stand of trees. Reaching the southern edge of the woods, they stormed another lightly-held line of entrenchments. Close on the heels of the fleeing Northerners, the Tarheels rushed the main enemy works.³⁷

Many of the men in the 26th North Carolina reached the Federal entrenchments. They were pinned down there by fire from four Union batteries. According to T. W. Setser, "tha made the grape and Canister fly." MacRae's and Ransom's troops, alone in front of the Northern lines, found themselves pinned against defenses too strong to capture and too dangerous to flee. All day long, men lay pressed up tight against the enemy works. Only after nightfall could

³⁶Horn, Weldon Railroad, 61-68.

³⁷Ibid., 100; Clark, N.C. Regiments, I, 599; T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Aug. 28, 1864, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 4," 16.

they fall back in relative safety.³⁸

Following the success of Warren's corps in occupying the area around Globe Tavern, Gen. Winfield S. Hancock's II Corps struck the railroad near Reams' Station. On August 24, seven brigades from Hill's corps, along with cavalry and artillery support, quietly made their way close the Union lines. Early the next afternoon Hill attacked. Two brigades from Wilcox's division made the first charge, but were repulsed. Hill decided to let Heth lead the next assault.³⁹

At 5 p.m., the three North Carolina units under MacRae, Cooke, and Lane advanced. Cooke and Lane started first because they had to cover rough terrain and abatis in their front. When MacRae saw that Lane's men were held up under severe fire he ordered his brigade forward. MacRae told his troops that when the charge began, "every man must yell as though he were a division in himself, dash for the enemy's works, and not fire until there."⁴⁰

The attack succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. As the Tarheels surged forward at the double quick, the inexperienced Federal troops fired one volley and "then throd[e] down the[i]r guns and come runing over" to surrender.

³⁸Horn, Weldon Railroad, 100; T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Aug. 28, 1864, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 4," 16; Daniel Liles to family, Aug. 28, 1864, Daniel Liles Letters, 26th N.C.T., Inc. One officer in MacRae's brigade stated that if Warren had known how few the Confederates were in his front, he could have easily captured the better part of both brigades. Clark, N.C. Regiments, I, 599.

³⁹Robertson, A. P. Hill, 298-99.

⁴⁰Horn, Weldon Railroad, 155-56; Clark, N.C. Regiments, IV, 565.

James Wright boasted that the breastworks fell "at the point of a bayonet." Other Confederate units soon joined the assault. Although Hancock tried desperately to rally his men, the II Corps disintegrated. Before the day ended, the Southerners captured over 2,100 prisoners, 9 cannon, 3,100 rifles, and 16 flags.⁴¹

Four days later, Gen. Lee stated in a letter to Governor Vance that the "gallantry and conduct" of the men under Cooke, MacRae, and Lane "were never more deserving of admiration than in the engagement at Reams' Station." Inspector-General Samuel Cooper continued the praises a month later. He reported that troops under MacRae and Cooke were "in specially good order and commanded by two most excellent officers." MacRae had one of the finest assault units in the Army of Northern Virginia, and the men knew it.⁴²

Soldiers in the 26th North Carolina knew other things as well. They followed the progress of the war, not only at Petersburg, but in the Valley and in Georgia as well. The men realized that the South had little chance for victory. They also read letters from home, telling of problems faced by their families. Finally, they looked around their ranks and saw how many comrades had fallen in combat or to disease. They knew the regiment could no longer recruit troops to make up for these losses.

⁴¹T. W. Setser to W. A. Setser, Aug. 18, 1864, in Mast, "Setser Letters, Pt. 4," 16; James Wright to family, Aug. 27, 1864, John Wright Family Papers, SHC; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 300; Horn, Weldon Railroad, 157-71.

⁴²O.R., XLII, Pt. 2, 1207, 1275; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 302.

Many members of the regiment decided it was time to quit. During the period from May-August, 1864, desertions had dropped to an average of only six per month. In the last four months of the year the number rose to nearly nine each month. But the worst did not come until the beginning of the next year. From January-March, 1865, sixty-two men deserted the unit. Many who left during that period were long-time veterans, men who had fought for the South since 1861. They simply gave up any hope of a Confederate victory.⁴³

During the last months of 1864, the troops who remained with the regiment faced difficult times. They spent many of their days building and improving the defenses around Petersburg. Captain Gus Jarratt felt that if work on the breastworks continued much longer, they would be so strong that the "Yankees can't get in even if there was no men in them." But every time the Confederates perfected their line, Grant extended his lines further to the west. This forced Lee's army to follow suit.⁴⁴

At times Grant overextended his forces. Twice, the 26th North Carolina took part in blunting Union offensives. On September 30, the Federal V and IX Corps launched an assault on Southern positions near Peeble's Farm. Heth's division counterattacked, recovering much of the ground lost earlier in the day. Four weeks later, on October 27, Heth's and Wilcox's divisions were called upon to stop the better part

⁴³Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 495-600.

⁴⁴I. A. Jarratt to brother, Nov. 14, 1864, Jarratt-Puryear Papers, Duke.

of three Union corps near Burgess' Mill. After the Confederates penetrated the enemy lines, MacRae's brigade found itself unsupported on either flank. Facing about, the North Carolinians again cut their way through the enemy and returned to their original lines. The brigade suffered a heavy loss in prisoners during the battle. The 26th North Carolina lost its battleflag and fifty-five men captured.⁴⁵

As the winter months passed, the troops suffered under the harsh conditions. During the cold, wet weather, the only thing keeping the soldiers warm was "green pine wood," which produced more smoke than heat. The men's clothing usually hung in tatters. Most of the little food they got was of poor quality. In his report on the battle at Hatcher's Run, Gen. Lee protested that his men could not fight much longer if they continued to receive inadequate supplies.⁴⁶

Despite all the hardships, a considerable number of men remained with the 26th North Carolina until the end. In late March, 1865, when the Petersburg defenses began to crumble, at least 234 soldiers were still in the ranks.⁴⁷

After the Union victory at Five Forks on April 1, the defenses around Petersburg began to crumble. Grant decided

⁴⁵Richard J. Sommers, Richmond Redeemed: The Siege at Petersburg (Garden City: 1981), 282-89; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 306-7; Clark, N.C. Regiments, III, 31-32; Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 436-600; O.R., XLII, Pt. 1, 304.

⁴⁶James Johnson to wife, October, 24, 1864, typescript in possession of writer; Robertson, A. P. Hill, 310-11; Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 390.

⁴⁷The figure of 234 men present was derived by adding the number of men reported as casualties during the period from Mar. 25-Apr. 7 to the number who were paroled at Appomattox. Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600.

to make the collapse complete. On April 2, he launched an all-out assault against the thinly held Confederate lines.

The 26th and the 11th North Carolina regiments held a portion of the trenches near Hatcher's Run as the final assault began. One officer stated the ranks were so thin that the men stood "five or six feet apart." The line disintegrated when the Federals struck. The Confederates fell back fighting as best they could, but they were hopelessly outnumbered. Almost 100 soldiers from the 26th North Carolina fell prisoner along the route.⁴⁸

On the night of April 2, Lee evacuated Petersburg and Richmond. He moved west towards Amelia Court House hoping to get around the Union army. If possible, he would then take his troops to North Carolina and join with Joseph E. Johnston's army. The Confederate columns progressed slowly along roads clogged with artillery and wagons. The march became "pathetically fatiguing" to the half-starved defenders of Petersburg.⁴⁹

Lee's army reached Amelia Court House by April 5, but found the way south blocked. Lee decided to continue westward. On April 8, as the remnants of the Army of Northern Virginia neared Appomattox Court House, MacRae's brigade formed the rearguard. The pitifully thin line formed

⁴⁸Clark, N.C. Regiments, I, 602. The confused nature of the retreat can be seen in the number of different places that troops from the 26th were taken prisoner. The records indicate that men from the regiment were captured at a Hatcher's Run, the Southside Railroad, Cox Road, Deep Creek, and Five Forks. Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600.

⁴⁹Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 680-87.

a triangle across the road. Fortunately, it was relieved before the Federals could attack.⁵⁰

On April 9, Lee surrendered to Grant. Three days later Lt. Col. James T. Adams signed the paroles for those who remained with the regiment. Out of a unit that had one time numbered nearly 1,200 soldiers, only 120 were left to receive their paroles.⁵¹

The war had ended for the men of the 26th North Carolina. The survivors left Appomattox in small groups, trying to reach their homes and loved ones as best they could. As they departed, the men took with them the right to their boast of later years: "The men of the Twenty-Sixth Regiment would dress on the colors in spite of the world."⁵²

⁵⁰Ibid., 693; Clark, N.C. Regiments, I, 603.

⁵¹Clark, N.C. Regiments, II, 393-95.

⁵²Ibid., II, 423.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1.

CASUALTIES IN THE 26TH NORTH CAROLINA (BY BATTLE)¹

<u>BATTLE</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>MWIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>WPOW</u>	<u>POW</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
New Bern (3/14/62)	10	2	8	2	65	87
King's School House (6/25/62)	3	2	5	0	0	10
Malvern Hill (7/1/62)	7	3	51	0	2	63
Rawls' Mill (11/2/62)	1	1	8	0	2	12
New Bern (3/14/63)	1	0	3	0	0	4
Gettysburg (7/1-7/3/63)	124	59	319	168	64	734
Falling Waters (7/14/63)	0	0	0	2	53	55
Bristoe Station (10/14/63)	19	12	57	9	71	168
Wilderness (5/5-5/7/64)	15	12	83	0	20	130
Spotsylvania Court House (5/8-5/21/64)	1	0	2	0	20	23
Cold Harbor (6/2/64)	7	4	16	0	0	27
Globe Tavern (8/21/64)	5	1	14	0	2	22
Reams' Station (8/25/64)	3	1	19	0	0	23
Jones' Farm (9/30/64)	3	2	5	0	0	10
Burgess' Mill (10/27/64)	3	3	4	2	55	67
Fall of Petersburg-Retreat to Appomattox (3/25-4/8/65)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>124</u>
	203	103	597	184	472	1,559

¹Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600. Forty-one casualties from minor skirmishes are not included in this table. KIA = Killed in Action, MWIA = Mortally Wounded in Action, WIA = Wounded in Action, WPOW = Wounded and Captured, POW = Captured.

TABLE 2.

CASUALTIES IN THE 26TH NORTH CAROLINA (BY COMPANY)²

<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>MWIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>WPOW</u>	<u>POW</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
A	26	14	50	23	61	177
B	24	16	71	22	39	173
C	16	7	53	11	47	134
D	14	5	54	20	75	168
E	17	9	73	28	45	172
F	26	17	67	23	49	182
G	21	8	47	20	47	143
H	19	9	69	13	31	143
I	15	8	58	10	51	142
K	23	11	72	14	33	153
FIELD & STAFF	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>19</u>
	204	106	620	185	485	1,600

²Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600. KIA = Killed in Action, MWIA = Mortally Wounded in Action, WIA = Wounded in Action, WPOW = Wounded and Captured, POW = Captured.

TABLE 3.

NUMBER OF MEN OFFICIALLY LISTED AS DESERTING
FROM THE 26TH NORTH CAROLINA (BY MONTH)³

<u>Month</u>	<u>Deserted</u>	<u>Returned</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Deserted</u>	<u>Returned</u>
Aug. 1861	2	1	June 1863	27	9
Sep. 1861	3	2	July 1863	11	6
Oct. 1861	0	0	Aug. 1863	13	4
Nov. 1861	0	0	Sep. 1863	8	4
Dec. 1861	0	0	Oct. 1863	2	0
Jan. 1862	1	1	Nov. 1863	5	3
Feb. 1862	0	0	Dec. 1863	0	0
Mar. 1862	4	3	Jan. 1864	10	0
Apr. 1862	1	0	Feb. 1864	3	1
May 1862	0	0	Mar. 1864	9	1
June 1862	5	3	Apr. 1864	14	5
July 1862	8	5	May 1864	6	1
Aug. 1862	4	1	June 1864	3	0
Sep. 1862	1	1	July 1864	13	3
Oct. 1862	4	2	Aug. 1864	3	0
Nov. 1862	7	5	Sep. 1864	8	0
Dec. 1862	20	6	Oct. 1864	8	2
Jan. 1863	17	9	Nov. 1864	8	0
Feb. 1863	2	1	Dec. 1864	11	2
Mar. 1863	7	3	Jan. 1865	15	1
Apr. 1863	0	0	Feb. 1865	30	0
May 1863	17	6	Mar. 1865	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u>
			Total	327	93

³Jordan, North Carolina Troops, 463-600. Number includes 237 listed as deserting and 90 listed as absent without leave.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished Manuscripts

- Adams, John Quincy. Papers. North Carolina State Archives.
- Albright, Henry C. Papers. North Carolina State Archives.
- Burgwyn Family Papers, 1861-1865. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.
- Caddell, A. S. Papers. Duke University.
- Deaton, Noah. Papers. Duke University.
- Edwards, W. W. Letters. Typescript in possession of writer.
- Glenn, Elizabeth F. Papers. Duke University.
- Harper Journal. Society for the Historical Preservation of the 26th Regiment North Carolina Troops, Inc.
- Harrington, John McLean. Papers. Duke University.
- Henry, J. L. Papers. Duke University.
- Hollinsworth, Joseph W. Papers. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.
- Jarratt-Puryear Family Papers. Duke University.
- Johnson, James A. Typescript in possession of writer.
- Jones, Edmund W. Papers. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.
- Lane, John Randolph. Papers. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.
- Liles, Daniel S. Letters. Society for the Historical Preservation of the 26th Regiment North Carolina Troops, Inc.
- McIver, John. Papers. Duke University.
- North Carolina Adjutant General's Papers. North Carolina State Archives.
- Perrett, Thomas. "Reminiscences of the Civil War: A Trip That Didn't Pay." North Carolina State Archives.
- Polk, Leonidas L. Letters. Southern Historical Collection,

University of North Carolina.

Ray, Nevin. Papers. Duke University.

Twenty-Sixth Regiment North Carolina Troops, Muster Rolls and Regimental Records. North Carolina State Archives.

United States Census Bureau. Eighth Census of the United States: 1860. Manuscripts of (Free) Population Schedule (Anson, Ashe, Caldwell, Chatham, Moore, Union, and Wake Counties, North Carolina). North Carolina State Archives.

White, Joseph J. Letters. Society for the Historical Preservation of the 26th Regiment North Carolina Troops, Inc.

Wright, John, Family. Papers. North Carolina State Archives.

Published Primary Sources

Clark, Walter, ed. Histories of the Several Regiments and Battles from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-1865. 5 vols. Goldsboro, NC: State of North Carolina, 1901.

Cowles, Calvin D., comp. Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891-1895.

Johnston, Frontis W., ed. The Papers of Zebulon Baird Vance, vol. 1, 1843-1862. Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1963.

Jordan, Weymouth T., comp. North Carolina Troops: 1861-1865, A Roster, Vol. VII. Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1991.

Kennedy, Joseph C. G., comp. Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864.

_____. Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864.

_____. Manufacturing of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864.

Mast, Greg, ed. "The Setser Letters, Part I." Company

Front, Dec./Jan. 1988-89, 27-34.

_____. "The Setser Letters, Part II." Company Front, Feb./Mar. 1989, 24-29.

_____. "The Setser Letters, Part III." Company Front, June/July 1989, 9-14.

_____. "The Setser Letters, Part IV." Company Front, Aug./Sept. 1989, 13-17.

Morrison, James L., ed. The Memoirs of Henry Heth. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974.

U.S. War Dept., comp. War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 128 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

Periodicals

Biblical Recorder. 1863.

Charlotte Western Democrat. 1861-1865.

Confederate Veteran. 1893-1932

Greensborough (N.C.) Patriot. 1861.

Lenoir News-Topic. 1896, 1922.

Semi-Weekly Raleigh Register. 1861.

Raleigh Spirit of the Age. 1861-1865.

Raleigh North Carolina Standard. 1861-1865.

Raleigh State Journal. 1861.

Southern Historical Society Papers. 1876-1952.

Wadesboro North Carolina Argus. 1861-1865.

Weekly Raleigh Register. 1861

Winston-Salem Twin-City Sentinel. 1914-1915.

Secondary Sources

Aldrich, Thomas M. The History of Battery A, First Regiment Rhode Island Light Artillery. Providence: Snow & Farnham, 1904.

- Alexander, Nancy. Here Will I Dwell: The Story of Caldwell County. Salisbury, NC: By the author, 1956.
- Bardolph, Richard. "North Carolina Troops and the Deserter Problem." North Carolina Historical Review LXVI (1989), 61-86, 179-210.
- Barrett, John G. The Civil War in North Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963.
- Boatner, Mark M., III. The Civil War Dictionary. New York: Vintage Books, 1988.
- Cannon, Devereaux D., Jr. The Flags of the Confederacy: An Illustrated History. Memphis: St. Lukes Press, 1988.
- Coddington, Edwin B. The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984.
- Crawford, Martin. "Confederate Volunteering and Enlistment in Ashe County, North Carolina, 1861-1862." Civil War History XXXVII (March 1991): 29-50.
- Cullen, Joseph P. The Peninsula Campaign, 1862: Lee and McClellan Struggle for Richmond. Harrisburg: Stackpole Company, 1973.
- Curtis, O. B. History of the Twenty-Fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade. Detroit: Winn & Hammond, 1891.
- Davis, Archie K. Boy Colonel of the Confederacy: The Life and Times of Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Escott, Paul D. Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. "Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army." Journal of Southern History LIII (Feb. 1987), 63-90.
- Fox, William F. Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865. Albany: Albany Publishing Co., 1889.
- Freeman, Douglas S. Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command. 3 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943-1944.
- Harrison, Kathleen Georg. "Ridges of Grim War." Blue and Gray V (July, 1988), 10-52.
- Harwell, Richard. Lee. (An abridgement of the 4 vol. R. E. Lee, by Douglas S. Freeman). New York: Charles

Scribner's Sons, 1961.

Hassler, Warren W., Jr. Crisis at the Crossroads: The First Day at Gettysburg. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1970.

Hill, Daniel H. Confederate Military History: North Carolina. Wilmington: Broadfoot Publishing, 1987.

Horn, John. The Destruction of the Weldon Railroad: Deep Bottom, Globe Tavern, and Reams Station, August 14-25, 1864. Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, 1991.

Inscoe, John C. Mountain Masters, Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

Iobst, Richard W. "North Carolina Mobilizes: Nine Crucial Months, December, 1860-August, 1861." Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1968.

Kruman, Marc W. Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983.

Linderman, Gerald F. Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War. New York: Free Press, 1987.

Matter, William D. If It Takes All Summer: The Battle of Spotsylvania. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Murray, Elizabeth Reid. Wake: Capital County of North Carolina. Raleigh: Wake County Historical Society, 1983.

Page, Charles D. History of the Fourteenth Regiment Connecticut Vol. Infantry. Meriden, CT: Horton Printing Co., 1906.

Reid, Richard. "A Test Case of the 'Crying Evil': Desertion Among North Carolina Troops During the Civil War." North Carolina Historical Review LVIII (1981), 234-62.

Robertson, James I., Jr. General A. P. Hill: The Story of a Confederate Warrior. New York: Random House, 1987.

_____. Soldiers Blue and Gray. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988.

Sauers, Richard Allen. "General Ambrose E. Burnside's 1862 North Carolina Campaign." Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania

State University, 1987.

Scott, Robert Garth. Into the Wilderness with the Army of the Potomac. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Sifakis, Stewart. Who Was Who in the Civil War. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1988.

Smith, Donald L. The Twenty-Fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade. Harrisburg: Stackpole Company, 1962.

Sommers, Richard J. Richmond Redeemed: The Siege at Petersburg. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1981.

Steere, Edward. The Wilderness Campaign. Harrisburg: Stackpole Company, 1960.

Stewart, George R. Pickett's Charge. Greenwich: , 1963.

Trotter, William R. Bushwhackers: The Civil War in North Carolina, the Mountains. Winston-Salem: , 1988.

Tucker, Glenn. Zeb Vance, Champion of Personal Freedom. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Wallenstein, Peter. From Slave South to New South: Public Policy in Nineteenth-Century Georgia. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987.

Wellman, Manly Wade. The County of Moore, 1847-1947: A North Carolina Region's Second Hundred Years. Southern Pines, NC: Moore County Historical Society, 1962.

Wiley, Bell I. The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943.

Wilson, Clyde N. Carolina Cavalier: The Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990.

Vita

David Howell McGee was born in Marion, North Carolina in 1957. In 1975, he graduated from Freedom High School in Morganton, North Carolina. He received his undergraduate education at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. In 1978, he graduated with honors with a B. A. degree in history. Three years later, he earned his J. D. in law from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. After passing the North Carolina State Bar in August, 1981, he began teaching at Western Piedmont Community College. At Western Piedmont, he taught courses in law and computer programming. While there, he also completed an A. A. S. degree in Business Computer Programming. In August, 1991, he decided to pursue a graduate degree in history at Virginia Tech. He obtained his M. A. in August, 1992.