

26th North Carolina Regiment "Bravery And Determination"

The 26th North Carolina Regiment started the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg with 800 men. By sunset, 588 of them were either dead or wounded. Yelling like demons, they had courageously charged and taken the formidable federal position on Seminary Ridge. Fourteen colorbearers in the 26th were shot down in succession. One of them was 21 year-old Henry King Burgwyn, the youngest colonel in the Confederate army, who stained the flag with his blood as he fell wrapped in its folds. All 90 soldiers in the 26th's Company F had fallen.

Mustered into Confederate service on August 27, 1861, the 26th Regiment served its first 10 months in eastern North Carolina in an undistinguished effort to contest the foothold made by the Union forces. On June 21, 1862, the regiment arrived at Petersburg, VA., and became a part of Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Then began an association that lasted until the regiment's flag was finally and forever furled at Appomattox. They participated in some of the hardest-fought battles of the war, including Malvern Hill, Bristoe, and Spotsylvania; but it was Gettysburg that earned them a place in the Civil War record books.

After their disastrous first day at Gettysburg, the 26th was not utilized in the actions fought on the second day. But the third day of the battle found the regiment charging under its battle flag across the fields to the federal position behind the stone wall on Cemetery Ridge. Members of the 26th North Carolina advanced as far as any other of the Confederate troops that took part in Pickett's charge, and like the rest, they paid a terrible price for their bravery and determination. Only 90 soldiers from the 26th North Carolina were able to make their way back to the Confederate lines on Seminary Ridge. The Battle of Gettysburg claimed as casualties 88 percent of the regiment, the highest percentage of casualties for any regiment, North or South, in any battle.

Fascinating Fact:

Approximately 2,000 men served in the 26th North Carolina Regiment during the course of the war. Just 131 of them were left to receive their paroles at Appomattox.

FROM THE PLAQUE ON THE 26TH NC MONUMENT AT GETTYSBURG. . .

TWENTY-SIXTH NORTH CAROLINA REGIMENT
PETTIGREW'S BRIGADE
HETH'S DIVISION
HILL'S CORPS
ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

ALTHOUGH NEARLY DESTROYED DURING ITS SUCCESSFUL ATTACK AGAINST MEREDITH'S IRON BRIGADE ON JULY 1, THE TWENTY-SIXTH NORTH CAROLINA REGIMENT JOINED IN THE PETTIGREW-PICKETT CHARGE ON THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 3. ADVANCING UNDER SOLID SHOT, SPHERICAL CASE, CANISTER, AND MUSKETRY THE REGIMENT CHARGED TO WITHIN TEN PACES OF THE STONE WALL IN THEIR FRONT.

THE SCENE WAS DESCRIBED BY AN ARTILLERYMAN OF A RHODE ISLAND BATTERY: ". . . AS A REGIMENT OF PETTIGREW'S BRIGADE (THE TWENTY-SIXTH NORTH CAROLINA) WAS CHARGING. . .AND HAD ALMOST REACHED THE WALL JUST IN FRONT OF US, SERGE M.C.ONLEY CRIED OUT . . .'FIRE THAT GUN! PULL! PULL!' THE NO. 4 OBEYED ORDERS AND THE GAP MADE IN THAT NORTH CAROLINA REGIMENT WAS SIMPLY TERRIBLE." UNDER THIS GALLING FIRE, THE TWENTY-SIXTH NORTH CAROLINA WAS COMPELLED TO RETIRE WITH THE BRIGADE FROM THIS POINT TO SEMINARY RIDGE.

"THE MEN OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH REGIMENT WOULD DRESS THEIR COLORS IN SPITE OF THE WORLD."

ERECTED BY THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
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