

Wilson P. Howell, Captain  
Company I  
25th Alabama Regiment

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BATTLE OF SHILOH  
April 6-7, 1862

On the 5th day of April 1862, the army had marching orders and we took up the line of march toward the Tennessee River. Late in the evening we arrived within less than a mile of the enemy camp and put in line of battle where we remained all night with orders for the men to lie on their arms and while it was quite cool weather, fires were all extinguished at nightfall.

Early on the next morning we were on our feet and ordered forward in line of battle. Up to this moment I didn't remember to have heard a gun fired, but we felt the real tug of war was upon us. And I venture to say that not one percent of the men in line of battle has ever been under fire in battle before.

I remember to have been very anxious for the ball to open and to realize what it was to be in the rush and storm of the conflict of arms. Our line of battle was several miles long and our part of the line, as we advanced was over an undulating wooded country and the line marched in perfect order and on the right and left as far as the eye could see, the line of battle and the regimental battle flags were waving in the calm morning breeze.

Having advanced some three quarters of a mile, we came upon an elevation and looking down the decline some four hundred yards there stood a yankee line of battle.

We had orders to hold our fire till within good shooting distance. When we had advanced to within 200 yards of their line they fired on us. We at once returned the fire. After exchanging a few rounds we were ordered to lie down which the men very promptly did and after continuing the fire for a little while, we were ordered to charge and up we got and at them we went with what was afterward known in army circles on both sides as the "Rebel Yell" and they instantly took to their heels.

Our regiment ran into an artillery camp and as an evidence that we had taken them by complete surprise we found their breakfast cooking on their campfires and such camp equipage, we had not dreamed of such as clothing, blankets in large boxes not even opened and an endless

variety of eatables with fruits, pickels, etc and any amount of glass and silver ware. This detained our onward movement for some half hour during which time the enemy had reformed just over the hill and opened on us with their artillery.

I will say just here that the yanks having the first fire on us, gave them somewhat the advantage in cutting down our men. Our Brigadier General (Gladden) was mortally wounded by the first volley as well as a number of other officers and men. General Gladden was just in rear of our regiment when he was wounded - he was carried to the rear and if I remember his leg was amputated from which he soon died. Colonel Zack Deas being the Senior Colonel of the brigade took command [1].

I will here relate a little incident of a man in my company. In the summer of '61 when the company was being raised at Oak Level one B.J. Waddell who had just returned from Texas joined our company and had a fine rifle gun which he had secured in the west and insisted that he must carry it to shoot yankees and in our first engagement which I have already described, having shot his rifle a few rounds and while on his knees trying to reload, a yankee bullet struck him in the heel, which disabled him in the balance of the war and while he is still living and resides near Anniston, Alabama. I don't think he has ever recovered from that gun shot.

Our lines were reformed at the yankee camp and we were ordered forward upon the enemy and we soon repulsed them the second time and during the live long day we would charge and counter charge and the rush and storm of battle seemed to make the ground beneath us tremble.

My information is that the official reports of that historic battle gives the casualties in killed, wounded and captured at about ten thousand on each side, aggregating twenty thousand fell in one day.

Among the killed on our side was General Albert Sidney Johnson, our Chief Commander. I do not remember to have seen him during the battle that day, but I remember to have seen a member of his staff Governor Isham G. Harris, then Governor of Tennessee and into whose arms General Johnson fell when he was shot.

I remember also that during the hottest of the fight was the first time I saw Colonel T. Hindman who commanded that day an Arkansas Regiment and who was afterward a Major General in the Army of Tennessee. Captain Harper of Company "A" in our regiment was killed outright. Lieutenant T.G. Slaughter, one of the bravest of the brave fell seriously wounded on that day from which he has never recovered till this day, but has been for forty years an efficient and honored

itinerant Methodist preacher.

Just before night we had driven the enemy for over two miles back to Pittsburg landing on the Tennessee river. So near were we to the river that they shelled us from their gunboats with their mortar guns. About two hours by ---. Colonel Prentiss with his Kentucky Brigade were captured and marched to the rear.

About dark the firing ceased and it began to rain and rained nearly all night. And so far as I could see or hear the army rested for the night without being reorganized or without orders of any kind for the next day.

Early next morning, we were attacked by fresh troops, but owing to the exhausted and disorganized condition of our troops we fell back that afternoon to the community of Corinth. The Federal army approached cautiously toward that point and laid seige to that place, but we held it till sometime in May when we fell back to Tupelo, Mississippi [2].

During that spring we had many volunteer recruits. At this stage of hostilities it became apparent that many able bodied men within the military age would be forced into the army, hence many preferred to volunteer. Among these recruits were my youngest brother Milton Howell and my two brothers-in-laws, John A. and Samuel A. Parker, besides a number of my neighbors boys from about Oak Level. All of whom joined my company. [3]

I believe it was during our stay at Corinth that our Brigade then commanded for a time by General Gardner was joined by the 39th Alabama Regiment commanded by Colonel Henry D. Clayton who became Major General during the war and who was for many years Circuit Judge in Southeast Alabama and who I believe died while he was President of the State University. His son, H.D. Clayton Jr. is now a member of Congress from the Eufaula District.

My memory may be at fault as to the time Colonel Claytons regiment joined us, but I remember distinctly they were with us during our Kentucky Campaign in the fall of 1862.

I believe it was while we were at Tupelo, Mississippi that Capt. Alexander of Company "I" resigned and I was promoted to the Captaincy just before we started into Kentucky.

I shall always remember with a degree of sadness of a pathetic and sudden death in my company during the seige of Corinth. Our regiment was sent out one night on picket or out post duty and one young man,

Asbury Coppock was quite unwell and the Doctor for reasons but known to himself did not excuse from duty this young man. So he had to go out with the regiment, but I excused him from guard duty after we got to the picket line and the weather being pleasant he lay down in a quiet place near the line and the next morning to our great astonishment he was dead.

I think it was along about this time that Capt. Edwin C. Turner of Company "H" resigned and he was succeeded by the 1st Lt. Wm. Spence. I think too that Captain Wiley H. Pope of Company "C" resigned and that company was commanded till the end of the war by Lt. Willis Pledger of Columbiana. Up to this time, middle and west Tennessee and North Alabama were occupied by the Federal troops, and General Braxton Bragg who had been in command since the Shiloh battle planned his Kentucky Campaign to draw the enemy out of this territory.

So in August, the movement of the troops began. The infantry were removed by rail from Tupelo by way of Mobile, Montgomery, Atlanta to Chattanooga and so soon as the army could all reach the neighborhood of Chattanooga sometime in the early part of September 1862 [4] we crossed the Tennessee river above that place across Walden's Ridge to Pikesville crossing the Cumberland river some distance above Nashville and into Kentucky.

During that March, Company "I" was detailed to guard the wagon train of the regiment. I remember soon after we reached Kentucky, we were marching along one evening and we met a U.S. Mail rider on horseback and of course the rider was released, but the mail was detained.

It was soon ascertained that a considerable force of the enemy were encamped at Munfordville. Where the railroad running from Louisville to Nashville crossed the Greenbriar river and General Bragg had planned for their capture by sending General Chalmers of Mississippi to make demonstration in their front, while the other part of the army would go around in their rear and demand their surrender.

General Chalmers moved onto their front and offered battle and the yanks came out and give Chalmers and his force quite a thrashing. It was said that Chalmers attacked of his own accord and without orders from General Bragg.

During the night after the fight a large force marched to the rear of Munfordville and the next morning Bragg demanded an unconditional surrender, which was accorded to. There were 4,000 surrendered.

The army was there pushed on toward Louisville but encountered a heavy force at Perryville where a considerable battle was fought at

which only a part of the army was engaged. Our men suffered considerable loss, but no decisive results secured.

The 25th Alabama was not in the Perryville battle. Detached at time with General Kirby Smith (OWR, Serial 23, page 923). Bragg pushed onto Harrisburg, Kentucky and by this time the enemy had withdrawn from Tennessee and North Alabama and concentrating a force in Kentucky too formidable for our forces.

On leaving Chattanooga, we were required to leave behind all surplus baggage and clothing and at this time the men were getting bare of shoes and clothing as were many of the officers and winter was approaching and it was thought the better part of valor to get nearer our base of supplies and we began to move in that direction.

The enemy in the mean time had blockaded our line of retreat which we had come and our only way out was by way of Cumberland Gap into East Tennessee and Eastern Kentucky through which we came out being a barren country the army suffered for rations. [5]

We had secured a fine lot of Kentucky beefs, but we got out of bread and salt and for 4 or 5 days we were without bread or substitute therefore. While this was the fall of the year and gathering time, there was but little or no corn in that region. As about the only substitute for bread, was to pick up white oak acorns during the day and roast them at night when we camp. Now and then we would get a few ears of corn and parch and eat and occasionally find in some deserted field a pumpkin and roast it.

Our Army wagons had been sent on far in advance to prevent them being raided by the federal cavalry. For several days our Brigade was the rear guard of the army and they pressed us hard and fighting was kept up, more or less day and night and but for the vigilance of General Joe Wheeler who was now in command of a part at least of our cavalry, the army would likely been captured.

We finally overtook the wagon train just before we reached Cumberland Gap and the teamsters having anticipated our destitution had cooked up a lot of cold water biscuits and thrown them in the army wagons among the pots and when we reached them, upon a fair division of bread, there was one biscuit apiece and I thought then and still think it was the best bread I had ever tasted.

We soon crossed the Gap into East Tennessee and came within a few miles of Knoxville and went into camp and the first night there fell a heavy snow (this was the first of November) and I suppose fifty percent of the army were shoeless and coatless and the Confederate

government was unable to supply us. One man from each company was at once sent to the community where the companies were raised to get shoes and clothing for the men.

I came home to get supplies for Company "I". In coming home I took the train at Knoxville and come to Chattanooga thence to Rome, Georgia, which is the nearest railroad point to Oak Level 40 miles. On arriving home, I soon learned that the young ladies of White Plains and Robbietown, 15 miles below Oak Level had during that fall, organized themselves into a society to raise funds and material and make clothing for the soldiers. I at once went to White Plains and ascertained that they had just finished a fine lot of winter clothing. Coats, pants and vests from thick home made jeans.

The society was called together to whom I made a statement as to the destitution of my company and they cheerfully gave me a fine lot of clothing sufficient to supply the entire company. I purchased a good lot of home made shoes from one Wm. Stewart who ran a shoe shop at Ladiga, Alabama and within ten days or two weeks I had supplies for the company.

During my absence on this trip the army had moved round from Knoxville, by way of Chattanooga to Murphreesboro, Tennessee. So when I got ready to return, I employed a man with oxen and wagon to carry the supplies to Rome, Georgia where I secured a box car to put my things in and got aboard the car and headed for Chattanooga.

When I arrived at that place I found I would have to remain there several days. The transportation facilities were so deficient that they were several days behind in shipping troops and army supplies. There was but one railroad into Middle Tennessee where the army had gone and another impediment was the yankees. While they occupied that section the spring previous had burned the railroad bridge which spanned the Tennessee River at Bridgeport and the cars had to be floated across the river on a steam boat.

Finally I reached the army at Murphreesboro sometime in December. [6]

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[1] Col. D.W. Adams took command of the brigade on the fall of Gladden. Later Adams was wounded and then Deas came in command. See Deas' report (OR, Serial 10, page 538).  
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[2] The loss by regiment not given, but the brigade lost 129 killed, 597 wounded, and 103 missing (OR, Serial 10, page 535). Colonel Adams says in his report (OR, Serial 10, page 537), "During the time I was in command of the First Louisiana Regiment and the brigade, the

officers and men generally acted with great gallantry and courage, and the brigade is entitled to credit for having carried one of the enemy's strongest positions" . Colonel Deas in his report (OWR, Serial 10, page 539), mentions Major George D. Johnston and Adjutant John Stout as field officers who especially distinguished themselves for their coolness and gallant bearing under the hottest fire.

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[3] In the reported organization of the Seconds Corps, Army of the Mississippi, for April 28th, 1862, the brigade organization was unchanged except that Brig. Gen Frank Gardner commanded the brigade (OR, Serial 11, page 461). The effective total of the Army, May 15th, 1862, was 51,218 and aggregate present was 74,279 (OR, Serial 11, page 523) .

On May 26th, 1862, the organization is the same, except that the 25th Alabama is omitted (OR, Serial, 11, page 549) .

From the report of Colonel Joe Wheeler (OR, Serial 10, pages 853-855) May 28th, 1862, the 25th Alabama was in the brilliant little engagement on the Monterey and Farmington roads. Wheeler says: "The conduct of the officers and men in this affair was commendable, subjected as they were to a heavy fire of both artillery and infantry, from a foe secreted by the density of undergrowth. They advanced steadily, not using their arms until they were ordered, when they fired with good effect". The loss to those engaged was 8 killed, 28 wounded and 7 missing. Lt. Col. Geo. D. Johnston commanded the 25th Alabama, which lost 1 killed, 1 wounded, and 1 missing.

In the reported organization for June 30th, 1862 (OR, Serial 10, page 788) the 25th Alabama is again with the brigade, and the 39th Alabama, Colonel H.D. Clayton is added.

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[4] The regiment was at Chattanooga on August 18th and 20th, 1862, and the organization is the same as on June 30th, and is the Right Wing of the Army, commanded by Maj. Gen. D. Polk. The strength of the division at this time (or 22nd) was 556 officers and 7,634 men (OR, Serial 23, pages 764 & 772). The command commenced the Kentucky Campaign on the 28th of August, 1862, see Polk's correspondence with Bragg (OR, Serial 23, page 786). On October 1st, 1862, the brigade (Gardner's) had effectives 2,303 and present 2,526. On the 8th of October, General Withers had an engagement with the Federal Sill near Salt River, capturing some 500 prisoners and 15 to 20 wagons, see correspondence of Gen. Kirby Smith with Gen. Bragg (OR, Serial 23, page 927). Brig. Gen. J.R. Duncan was assigned to the command of Whither's division, while he was put on detached duty (OR, Serial 23, pages 938-939) .

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[5] In the Life of General Kirby Smith, pages 219-220, "it will be

seen that on October 10th, 1862, two days after the Battle of Perryville, that as the advance of General Smith's army was entering Harrodsburg, Kentucky, General Bragg's rear was leaving the place. General Smith urged very strongly that Bragg should bring back his forces, and the united armies to give battle to Buel at Harrodsburg, Smith firmly believing they could defeat him. Bragg agreed to it, but in the evening wrote Smith a note saying he had declined giving battle, and would continue the retreat, which he did, while Smith was busy putting his men in line of battle, his men filled with enthusiasm at the prospect".

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[6] OR, Serial 30, page 418, shows the organization the same on November 22nd, 1862 as at Chattanooga, in August, and that General Withers returned to the command of the division on November 10th; and pages 430-431 shows the commanding officers of the regiments on November 29th.

The brigade had at this time 1,835 for duty and 1,965 present, exclusive of artillery. Page 449 shows the promotion of Colonel Z.C. Deas to Brig. Gen., announced on December 14th, 1862, who had been recommended for promotion by General Bragg, on November 21st, page 508-509.

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#### BATTLE OF MURFREESBORO

General Bragg having evacuated Kentucky, the Federal troops under command of General Rosecrans had been concentrated about Nashville and Bragg's army around Murfreesboro. Only about 25 miles lay between the two armies. So about the last of December Rosecrans advanced on Murfreesboro sufficiently near to offer battle. So on the morning of 31st December we accepted the challenge and at them we went. The enemy were posted in line of battle on the opposite side of a plantation from us some 800 yards and we advanced on thm through the open field under heavy artillery fire as well as musketry and our loss was very heavy in going through the field. Four men, Sid Phillips, Gus Pool, Charly Roper and Jack Ezzell of Company "I" were killed out right. Lieutenant Archibald Patterson of Company "H" was also killed and every company of the regiment met a similar fate, in killed and wounded.

Our line, in the face of their concentrated fire, got within fifty yards of their battery when our line gave way and stampeded back through the field and we suffered worse than while advancing.

Among the killed in that unfortunate stampede was Major Costello who had just been promoted from the Captaincy of Company "K". It looked



for a time that all was lost and we had some difficulty in rallying the men and reforming the line of another attack.

I remember just at this critical moment General Frank Cheatham, Major General of Tennessee troops came rushing to our aid. Made such a stirring appeal to the men, that our line was soon formed and in the face of another galling fire we charged on them again and so determined were the men that we rushed upon them and captured their battery and drove back the whole line, but they soon reformed their lines and for the live long day we fought over an area of two or three miles and at night fall we had driven them off the field.

Our regiment was led in this fight by Lt. Colonel George D. Johnston who displayed great courage and leadership and won the high esteem and love of the officers and men of the line. At night fall, when the firing ceased he was the only field officer with the regiment.

Our loss in killed and wounded was very heavy. Lt. Scofield of Company "C" from Columbiana was among the killed. I remember during the fight, of coming across his body just after he had fallen, he having been shot dead and I stopped long enough to take a plain gold ring from his finger and his pocket knife and pocket book and preserved them till after the battle and sent them home to his family.

I think I went in that morning with about 40 guns in Company "I" and when the battle closed that night there was only one man Pvt. Bob Clark and myself with the regiment. Most of the others had been either killed, wounded or captured.

Our loss was so heavy, that we did not renew the fight next morning. Although we had the previous day, driven the enemy from every position he had taken, we held the battlefield for two days and the enemy made but one attack on a part of our line and was repulsed.

So about the third night after the battle General Bragg withdrew his army and we fell back to Shelbyville, Tennessee where we went into winter quarters and remained there till June 1863. During that spring we had the longest rest we had enjoyed since the war began. [1]

#### An Incident of the Battle of Murfreesboro

Up to September of 1862, the U.S. government issued only gold and silver as currency. It was after the war began that the government issued paper currency. Known after the war as Green Backs. These notes were signed by the Treasurer of the United States (Mr. Spinner).

At the battle referred to, we drove the yanks off the battlefield and held it for two days. In their stampede one of their pay or quarter masters had abandoned or lost the money in his possession with which to defray army expenses and a man in our regiment captured it and after the battle this man had his pockets full of yankee money. I gave him a dollar of Confederate money for a dollar of his to send home to let out home folks know what sort of money they had. My wife kept it till the close of the war and was all the good money we had when I got home from the war in June '65.

Several army missionaries came and held revival meetings for us. Among the ministers who came and preached for us were Reverend M. Boggs and Watson of south Alabama and I think it was here that the distinguished Dr. Palmer, a Presbyterian Minister came and preached from New Orleans. About the later part of June 1863 the federal army began their advance toward our line and Shelbyville not being a strategic point General Bragg withdrew his army to Chattanooga. On that retreat we were annoyed very much by the yankee cavalry. Our supply train (wagons) had been sent on in advance of the army and our infantry had been detained crossing Cumberland Mountain and once more the soldiers ran out of bread, but we had bacon rations.

I remember the day we crossed the mountain being out of bread, but expected to reach the wagon train that night where we could get bread. But the army had been on a forced march all day and till 9 or 10 o'clock at night and owing to the exhausted condition of the men we were ordered to go into camp without reaching the supply wagons and I remember marching my company out of the road and into what seems to be an Irish potatoe patch and ordered the men to "stack arms" which the men did. And having had no bread since the day before, they were in a bad humor and as usual began to complain of being "starved". While some of the men were spreading down their blankets to lie down and try to sleep (the ground had grown up in crab grass). Some man called out "This is an Irish potato patch!" and on examination it proved to be. Lights were made and the men having plenty of bacon and salt and a few cooking utensils the entire company cooked and ate most of the night as the potatoes was in good substitute for bread and they were the most cheerful set of men I ever saw.

I will state just here that if my memory serves me right, Colonel John Q. Loomis resigned just after the Murfreesboro battle and Lt. Colonel George D. Johnston became Colonel. I also think it was about this time that Captain W.A. Handley of Company "F" resigned and his brother F.M. Handley was made Captain. Next morning after the potatoes had been devoured we left camp with the army and took the

line of march toward Chattanooga that day and overtook the wagon that day and were supplied with bread and I believe the next day was the 4th of July 1863. On this day the army crossed the Tennessee river on pontoon bridge just above Bridgeport. In a day or two we went into camp about two miles south of Chattanooga.

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[1] On the 30th of December, at the Battle of Murfreesboro fought the 31st of December 1862 to 3rd of January 1863, the brigade was first commanded by Colonel Loomis, who was disabled during the battle and Colonel Coltart then took command (OR, Serial 29, page 658). Page 667 shows the loss of the 25th Alabama to have 3 officers and 13 men killed, 10 officers and 79 men wounded, and 4 men missing. A total of 109; and the brigade, 8 officers and 45 men killed, 52 officers and 536 men wounded, and 31 men missing. On page 973 of Serial 29, the following appears as the Honor Roll of those elected to the place by their companies after the Battle of Murfreesboro;

Sgt. Isaac N. Rhoades, Co. A  
Pvt. Warren A. Jackson, Co. B  
Pvt. Samuel Ellison, Co. C  
Pvt. James A. Mote, Co. D  
Sgt. J.F. Coker (killed in action), Co. F  
Sgt. Patrick H. Smith, Co. G  
Pvt. Marion F. Hazlewood, Co. H  
Pvt. Charles W. Ropers (killed in action), Co. I  
Pvt. J.B. Peacock (killed in action), Co. K

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#### MY HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE

As before stated in this narrative, I was severely wounded in our last battle at Bentonville, N.C. on 19th March 1865. A few days after the battle, I was sent to Smithfield Station, 15 miles away and with a lot of other wounded soldiers sent in boxcars to the hospital at Charlotte, N.C.

The Confederate government had built a general hospital there, by building ten large wards 100 by 30 feet. When our lot of sick and wounded got there, the wards were about filled up. Dr. Mayo of Virginia, was the army surgeon in charge. This was 4 or 5 days after the battle and my broken leg had become very sore and painful. I had hoped from the start, that I would soon be able to go home on wounded furlough. But after getting to the hospital, my leg began to get

worse and worse, and soon took gangrene or blood poison in my wound. And under orders there, I was put in the Gangrene Ward. This malady being contagious, malignant cases of gangrene were kept in a certain ward.

Dr. Mayo expressed his regrets for my having to go there, but said he would give me the best place in the ward. So I was placed in that ward which was almost a Death House. Quite a number of bad cases were there. The doctor applied all the known remedies to arrest the malady, but seemingly to no avail. And it was not long till the doctor thought that amputation was the only thing that would save my life. And in a few days, Dr. Mayo and some other doctors met to do that work. And for some reason they postponed it till the next day and examined my leg. They saw signs of improvement and abandoned the amputation and my leg was saved.

The patients in the hospital were fed on coarse army rations and cooked by army cooks. And soon after entering the hospital, I was in condition that I could not eat the army rations. Dr. Mayo lived with his family on the hospital grounds and his good wife for two months sent my meals from her table three times a day with such delicacies as was suitable for a sick man. And but for the thoughtfulness of this good woman, I have allways believed I would have died.

I remember just before the surrender, the city was threatened with a Yankee raid and orders came to send every soldier away from the hospital who was able to go (there were a number there convalescent). My brother was among the convalescent and while he and I were both very anxious for him to remain, he had to go, but the Yankee raid never came. And finally one day, news came that Johnston had surrendered and the next day the news was confirmed. And in a few days, two men of my company who had been paroled and on their way home called at the hospital to see me and carried the news to my family that I was left in the hospital in North Carolina to die. As they claimed, the doctor told them at the hospital that I would not get well.

It was not long after this when all the nurses in the hospital left and went home. (The hospital nurses were soldiers detailed from the ranks of the army and while the fighting was going on they were very faithful and attentive, lest they should loose their bombproof place, but when there were no bullets to face, they all went home).

And there we were, a number of us not able to give each other a drink of water. We were several days in this condition, when a regiment or two of yankees came there to garrison the city. And they soon found out our condition at the hospital and were kind enough to furnish

nurses, doctors and medicine. And until I was able to be sent off, I had a yankee nurse who was very kind and helpful. So much so that just before I left the hospital, he asked me one day if I would give him my sword. And he had been so very kind to me, I gave it to him. The yankee doctor was also very kind and helpful to us all.

There was one man whose visits and kindness to me during my confinement in that hospital, I shall never forget. He was a Methodist preacher by the name of Butt, who during my greatest illness, visited me everyday and would often kneel down by my bunk and pray for me. And before I left the hospital, presented me with an elegant pair of crutches, which I used for nearly a year after I got home. Dr. Mayo, I think left us about the time the Yankees came there.

Before I left the hospital, someone sent me my parole. A true copy of which is as follows:

Copy of Military Parole No. 105  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
May 8th 1865

In accordance with the terms of the Military Convention entered into on the Twenty-sixth day of April 1865, between General Joseph E. Johnston, Commanding the Confederate Army and Major General W.T. Sherman, Commanding the United States Army in North Carolina.

Captain W.P. Howell, Company I, 25th Alabama has given his solemn obligation not to take up arms against the Government of the United States until properly released from this obligation and is permitted to return to his home. Not to be disturbed by the United States authorities, so long as he observes this obligation and obey the laws in force where he may reside.

Elis Walcott  
Major & J.A. U.S.A.  
Special Commission

Robt Gibbon  
Major C.S.A.  
Commanding

I give below a copy of another old army paper which is as follows:

"Extract"

Headquarters, Army of Tennessee  
Dalton, Georgia  
January 17th 1864

Special Orders No. 17

II. Under General Orders No. 227. Leave of absence is granted to the following officers for the period set opposite their respective names:

Captain W.P. Howell, 25th Alabama Regiment      20 days

By Command of General Johnston  
Kinloch Falconer  
A.A.G.

Captain W.P. Howell  
25th Alabama Regiment

Major General Hindman  
Commanding Corps

About the first of June, I could go about some on my crutches and was put on the train one morning at Charlotte, North Carolina with several soldiers and sent down to Chester, South Carolina (the railroad having been torn up toward Columbia and Augusta). I remained at Chester two weeks and finally got co---- once across the country 40 miles to Newberry, South Carolina, thence by rail to Abbeville, South Carolina, thence through the country 40 miles to Washington, Georgia, thence by rail to Atlanta and Newman, Georgia, the nearest railroad point home 60 miles to Oak Level, Alabama. I was about a week traveling that 60 miles.

Not being able to walk except on crutches and of course had no money, had to beg my way, some on horseback and then on wagon. But finally I ascended the last hill that overlooked my humble home and while I found but little there but my good and loyal wife and four little children, and I was on my crutches and not able to earn them a living and not a cent to our name.

The day I set my foot on the door step frame, was the happiest day I ever saw.

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TRIBUTE TO THE PRIVATE CONFEDERATE SOLDIER

While I have written in the narrative some well earned tributes to many of the officers of the regiment by name, I desire in this closing chapter of this record to give my estimation of the Private soldier. And first here, I am at a loss for language to express my appreciation and estimate of the heroes who were in the private ranks of the Confederate Army.

It was not only my --- to be ----- in the Confederate Army through the dark and terrible days of 1861-5, but to be in the front from start to finish and I know from personal observation what it meant to be a Private soldier. Many noble and heroic men were found in the official ranks of the army whose deeds of daring and heroism challenged our high admiration, but I am forced to the conviction that the very highest and noblest types of heroism, daring and patriotism were in the private ranks.

The citizen, who, without reward or the hope thereof, moved only by impulse of patriotism and love of country, shouldered his musket, haversack, cartridge box and threw his blanket across his shoulder and bade farewell to home, mother, wife and children. And took his place in the Private ranks and lived much on less than half rations, marching often all night long through cold, rain and wind and then lie down to sleep on the bare ground with many other hardships to say nothing of facing the cruel showers of lead hail he had often to meet.

And often the news came from wife and children that they were destitute and in great want and he only got the pitiful sum of eleven dollars a month in Confederate currency, which owing to it's depreciation would hardly feed his family one week. And while it is true many good men under such terrible pressure left the army and went home, scores and hundreds stood by their colors and were on board the old ship when she went down to rise no more.

While I would not for any ----- notion pluck a single laurel from the soldier who wore the stars and bars. I have always felt that the public press, the pulpit and rostrum has not accorded to the men who was behind the guns that degree of ----- and commendation they so immensely deserve.

In conclusion, I respectfully and earnestly invoke the liberal charity of those who may read this imperfect record for I know too well that there are many defects in it, but under the peculiar

conditions of things which have been connected with work as imperfect  
as it is, I have done about the best I could.

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