

## TWENTY-SIXTH MISSISSIPPI REGIMENT.

BY W. M. GRAHAM, CEDAR BLUFF, MISS.

In my feeble way I will write something of the 26th Mississippi Regiment. Every company of the regiment was made up in Tishomingo County, mostly farmers, their ages ranging from eighteen to twenty-five. Many of them could shoot off a squirrel's head in the top of a tree with an old-fashioned rifle. The regiment was organized at Iuka, Miss. Arthur E. Reynolds, of Corinth, was colonel and F. Marion Boone was lieutenant colonel. He was as brave a man as ever went to war. About November we were sent to Union City, from there to Bowling Green, Ky., and thence to Fort Donelson, where we received our "baptism of fire" by being marched right up to a line of battle in file of fours, and were fired on while in this shape. We were on the slant of a little hill, else we would have been swept off the face of the earth. Of course this threw us into temporary confusion, but we soon got straightened out and went at them like veterans.

Right here I saw a case of as pure "grit" as was ever displayed on any battlefield. I saw Comrade Wash Bigham (afterwards captain of the company) shot in the center of the forehead, with blood running down all over his face and in his eyes, support his gun by the side of a tree, squirrel fashion, and fire. We were captured with the rest of the garrison and sent to Camp Morton, Ind. We fared splendidly as long as Colonel Owens was commander of the post. Colonel Owens was colonel of the 60th Indiana Regiment, and a perfect gentleman. He would go to the barracks very often and call the roll himself, and would listen to every request a prisoner had to make. I heard that he said he could pick one hundred men out of that prison and whip his whole regiment.

We were sent to Vicksburg and exchanged in September, and were in many marches and countermarches around Jackson and Vicksburg. We were at Baker's Creek, got out with Loring by marching clear around the Yankee army, and returned to Jackson by way of Crystal Springs. We were with Gen. J. E. Johnston in the rear of Grant, and later were in the siege of Jackson. In April, 1864, after the retreat to Demopolis, Ala., we were sent to Virginia and put into General Davis's brigade. We were called "new issue" by the balance of the brigade. I suppose it was because we had come from the West—the Army of Tennessee.

When the battle of the Wilderness came on, Davis's Brigade was formed just to the left of the Orange plank road. The position of my regiment was several hundred yards from the road. The fighting commenced near the plank road first, and had been going on for some time. I presume the troops engaged had exhausted their ammunition. The 26th was detached and marched back up the line to take their places. I shall never forget the scene that met our eyes as we marched up to that line—some dead, some lying flat on the ground, still others squatting had been firing at close range on level ground until they had nearly exhausted their ammunition. We had been on the firing line but a short time when Colonel Boone touched the writer on the shoulder and said: "Go tell Captain Gallagher to move forward."

Captain Gallagher was a Mexican War veteran, tall and straight, and as brave as ever drew a sword. When I reached him, he was standing just behind his company, looking straight through toward the front. Just as I was in the act of speaking to him a bullet struck him (I think in the forehead) and he fell dead. I gave the order to Lieutenant Luther, and by

the time I got back to my company the regiment was on the move. The enemy had a battery a short distance up the road; and when we commenced crossing that road, they began to pour grape into us, which swept a space about thirty yards wide. I don't know whether any other troops charged at the same time or not. We soon came to their line of battle. We halted then, and some other troops came up and took our places. I saw another officer killed. Just as we commenced to fall back a ball struck Lieutenant Roberts, of Company A, in the back of the head, and he fell dead. We lay on our arms that night in rear of the line of battle.

The firing commenced early the next morning, and we witnessed one of the worst stampedes I ever saw. Davis formed line; and when the stampeded men had all passed, we had orders to fire and fall back, which we did and in good order. It looked as though all was lost, but Longstreet's men came in just at this time and saved the day. We were in reserve until late in the evening, when an Alabama brigade gave way and Davis's Brigade was called on to check the enemy. We met our men just at the top of a hill coming pellmell, the Yanks right after them with their little "huzzaw." As soon as we passed our men we raised the Rebel yell, and they turned back as suddenly as if they had struck a stone wall. We hadn't gone far when we were ordered to halt, and we threw up together some old logs for breastworks, and the enemy charged us repeatedly the rest of the evening. It was here that we lost our brave and beloved Lieutenant Colonel Boone. We went to Spottsylvania Sunday evening, and were in an engagement about May 10 on our left flank at some mills (I don't remember the name). We were not attacked on the day of the great fight of the 12th, but were in breastworks on the right flank.

The 26th was at Cold Harbor and several smaller engagements around Petersburg and one on the Weldon Railroad, where we lost half of the company engaged in killed and wounded, among whom was our highly esteemed Capt. Phil Hay. He was as kind and smooth in his manners as a woman. I never heard a rough word escape his lips. Davis's Brigade was captured on the 2d of April, 1865, while holding the right of the works and we were sent to Fort Delaware. We had to live on six crackers and about three or four ounces of meat a day. We left Fort Delaware on June 11, 1865, to return to our devastated homes.

LONGEVITY OF CONFEDERATE "COLONELS."—H. W. Wood, writing in the G. A. R. corner of the Madison (Wis.) Democrat, states: "There is one noticeable difference between the Grand Army and the Confederate organizations. Whoever will take pains to read journal after journal of our encampments, either State or national, will scarcely find a place where a man is called general, colonel, major, or captain. So far as distinctions of rank are concerned, with us they are dropped and all are equal. It is true that we hear this one or that called 'General' when, in fact, he was only a private in the rear rank, and perchance a poor one at that; but when he has anything to do in Post or Encampment, he is recorded like all the rest of us, as simple comrade. But the records of the meetings of the Confederates would make one think that there is not a private now living down South. All have such titles as would make one of us common, everyday fellows in the ranks feel like hunting for a back seat somewhere. Whenever we read a story of the South in which there is a soldier, or a dozen of them, the page is set full of capital G's and C's and M's. I wonder just why this is so?"