



# TRAVELLER



The official publication of the General Robert E. Lee Camp #1640

Sons of Confederate Veterans, Germantown, Tennessee

*Duty, Honor, Integrity, Chivalry*

*Deo Vindici*

**September, 2012**

**CAMP MEETING**  
**September 10, 2012**  
**7:00 p.m. at the Pickering Center**  
**Don't miss our next camp meeting.**

## **The Sun Stood Still**

**Colonel John B. Gordon**

*In Remembrance of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Sharpsburg*



*Colonel Gordon was in command of the 6th Alabama Regiment, part of Rodes' Brigade, D. H. Hill's Division, and was posted in the Sunken Road at the center of the Confederate line. These Reminiscences were written some years later ...*

### **On the Fighting on the Confederate Left, Earlier in the Morning of September 17:**

On the elevated points beyond the narrow valley the Union batteries were rolled into position, and the Confederate heavy guns unlimbered to answer them.

For one or more seconds, and before the first sounds

reached us, we saw the great volumes of white smoke rolling from the mouths of McClellan's artillery. The next second brought the roar of the heavy discharges and the loud explosions of hostile shells in the midst of our lines, inaugurating the great battle. The Confederate batteries promptly responded; and while the artillery of both armies thundered, McClellan's compact columns of infantry fell upon the left of Lee's lines with the crushing weight of a land-slide. The Confederate battle line was too weak to withstand the momentum of such a charge. Pressed back, but neither hopelessly broken nor dismayed, the Southern troops, enthused by Lee's presence, reformed their lines, and, with a shout as piercing as the blast of a thousand bugles, rushed in counter-charge upon the exulting Federals, hurled them back in confusion, and recovered all the ground that had been lost.

Again and again, hour after hour, by charges and counter-charges, this portion of the field was lost and recovered, until the green corn that grew upon it looked as if it had been struck by a storm of bloody hail.

### **In Preparation ...**

Up to this hour not a shot had been fired in my front. There was an ominous lull on the left. From sheer exhaustion, both sides, like battered and bleeding athletes, seemed willing to rest. General Lee took advantage of the respite and rode along his lines on the right and centre. He was accompanied by Division Commander General D. H. Hill. With that wonderful power which he possessed of divining the plans and purposes of his antagonist, General Lee had decided that the Union commander's next heavy blow would fall upon our centre, and those of us who held that important position were notified of this conclusion. We were cautioned to be prepared for a determined assault and urged to hold that centre at

any sacrifice, as a break at that point would endanger his entire army. My troops held the most advanced position on this part of the field, and there was no supporting line behind us. It was evident, therefore, that my small force was to receive the first impact of the expected charge and to be subjected to the deadliest fire. To comfort General Lee and General Hill, and especially to make, if possible, my men still more resolute of purpose, I called aloud to these officers as they rode away: "These men are going to stay here, General, till the sun goes down or victory is won." Alas! many of the brave fellows are there now.

General Lee had scarcely reached his left before the predicted assault came. The day was clear and beautiful, with scarcely a cloud in the sky. The men in blue filed down the opposite slope, crossed the little stream (Antietam), and formed in my front, an assaulting column four lines deep. The front line came to a "charge bayonets," the other lines to a "right shoulder shift." The brave Union commander, superbly mounted, placed himself in front, while his band in rear cheered them with martial music. It was a thrilling spectacle. The entire force, I concluded, was composed of fresh troops from Washington or some camp of instruction. So far as I could see, every soldier wore white gaiters around his ankles. The banners above them had apparently never been discolored by the smoke and dust of battle. Their gleaming bayonets flashed like burnished silver in the sunlight. With the precision of step and perfect alignment of a holiday parade, this magnificent array moved to the charge, every step keeping time to the tap of the deep-sounding drum. As we stood looking upon that brilliant pageant, I thought, if I did not say, "What a pity to spoil with bullets such a scene of martial beauty!"

Every act and movement of the Union commander in my front clearly indicated his purpose to discard bullets and depend upon bayonets. He essayed to break through Lee's centre by the crushing weight and momentum of his solid column. It was my business to prevent this; and how to do it with my single line was the tremendous problem which had to be solved, and solved quickly; for the column was coming. As I saw this solid mass of men moving upon me with determined step and front of steel, every conceivable plan of meeting and repelling it was rapidly considered. To oppose man against man and strength against strength was impossible; for there were four lines of blue to my one of gray. My first impulse was to open fire upon the compact mass as soon as it came within reach of my rifles, and to pour into its front an incessant hail-storm of bullets

during its entire advance across the broad, open plain; but after a moment's reflection that plan was also discarded. It was rejected because, during the few minutes required for the column to reach my line, I could not hope to kill and disable a sufficient number of the enemy to reduce his strength to an equality with mine.

The only remaining plan was one which I had never tried but in the efficacy of which I had the utmost faith. It was to hold my fire until the advancing Federals were almost upon my lines, and then turn loose a sheet of flame and lead into their faces. I did not believe that any troops on earth, with empty guns in their hands, could withstand so sudden a shock and withering a fire.

### **On the Combat in the Sunken Road:**

The programme was fixed in my own mind, all horses were sent to the rear, and my men were at once directed to lie down upon the grass and clover. They were quickly made to understand, through my aides and line officers, that the Federals were coming upon them with unloaded guns; that not a shot would be fired at them, and that not one of our rifles was to be discharged until my voice should be heard from the centre commanding "Fire!" They were carefully instructed in the details. They were notified that I would stand at the centre, watching the advance, while they were lying upon their breasts with rifles pressed to their shoulders, and that they were not to expect my order to fire until the Federals were so close upon us that every Confederate bullet would take effect.

There was no artillery at this point upon either side, and not a rifle was discharged. The stillness was literally oppressive, as in close order, with the commander still riding in front, this column of Union infantry moved majestically in the charge. In a few minutes they were within easy range of our rifles, and some of my impatient men asked permission to fire. "Not yet," I replied. "Wait for the order." Soon they were so close that we might have seen the eagles on their buttons; but my brave and eager boys still waited for the order. Now the front rank was within a few rods of where I stood. It would not do to wait another second, and with all my lung power I shouted "Fire!" My rifles flamed and roared in the Federals' faces like a blinding blaze of lightning accompanied by the quick and deadly thunderbolt.

The effect was appalling. The entire front line, with few exceptions, went down in the consuming blast. The gallant commander and his horse fell in a heap near where I stood--the horse dead, the rider unhurt.

Before his rear lines could recover from the terrific shock, my exultant men were on their feet, devouring them with successive volleys. Even then these stubborn blue lines retreated in fairly good order. My front had been cleared; Lee's centre had been saved; and yet not a drop of blood had been lost by my men. The result, however, of this first effort to penetrate the Confederate centre did not satisfy the intrepid Union commander. Beyond the range of my rifles he reformed his men into three lines, and on foot led them to the second charge, still with unloaded guns. This advance was also repulsed; but again and again did he advance in four successive charges in the fruitless effort to break through my lines with the bayonets. Finally his troops were ordered to load. He drew up in close rank and easy range, and opened a galling fire upon my line.

I must turn aside from my story at this point to express my regret that I have never been able to ascertain the name of this lion-hearted Union officer. His indomitable will and great courage have been equaled on other fields and in both armies; but I do not believe they have ever been surpassed. Just before I fell and was borne unconscious from the field, I saw this undaunted commander attempting to lead his men in another charge.

The fire from these hostile American lines at close quarters now became furious and deadly. The list of the slain was lengthened with each passing moment. I was not at the front when, near nightfall [actually about 1:30 PM when the line was broken], the awful carnage ceased; but one of my officers long afterward assured me that he could have walked on the dead bodies of my men from one end of the line to the other. This, perhaps, was not literally true; but the statement did not greatly exaggerate the shocking slaughter. Before I was wholly disabled and carried to the rear, I walked along my line and found an old man and his son lying side by side. The son was dead, the father mortally wounded. The gray-haired hero called me and said: "Here we are. My boy is dead, and I shall go soon; but it is all right." Of such were the early volunteers.

### **On his Wounds:**

The first volley from the Union lines in my front sent a ball through the brain of the chivalric Colonel Tew, of North Carolina, to whom I was talking, and another ball through the calf of my right leg. On the right and the left my men were falling under the death-dealing crossfire like trees in a hurricane. The persistent Federals, who had lost so heavily from repeated repulses, seemed now determined to kill

enough Confederates to make the debits and credits of the battle's balance-sheet more nearly even. Both sides stood in the open at short range and without the semblance of breastworks, and the firing was doing a deadly work. Higher up in the same leg I was again shot; but still no bone was broken. I was able to walk along the line and give encouragement to my resolute riflemen, who were firing with the coolness and steadiness of peace soldiers in target practice. When later in the day the third ball pierced my left arm, tearing asunder the tendons and mangling the flesh, they caught sight of the blood running down my fingers, and these devoted and big-hearted men, while still loading their guns, pleaded with me to leave them and go to the rear, pledging me that they would stay there and fight to the last. I could not consent to leave them in such a crisis. The surgeons were all busy at the field-hospitals in the rear, and there was no way, therefore, of stanching the blood, but I had a vigorous constitution, and this was doing me good service. A fourth ball ripped through my shoulder, leaving its base and a wad of clothing in its track. I could still stand and walk, although the shocks and loss of blood had left but little of my normal strength. I remembered the pledge to the commander that we would stay there till the battle ended or night came. I looked at the sun. It moved very slowly; in fact, it seemed to stand still.

I thought I saw some wavering in my line, near the extreme right, and Private Vickers, of Alabama, volunteered to carry any orders I might wish to send. I directed him to go quickly and remind the men of the pledge to General Lee, and to say to them that I was still on the field and intended to stay there. He bounded away like an Olympic racer; but he had gone less than fifty yards when he fell, instantly killed by a ball through his head. I then attempted to go myself, although I was bloody and faint, and my legs did not bear me steadily. I had gone but a short distance when I was shot down by a fifth ball, which struck me squarely in the face, and passed out, barely missing the jugular vein. I fell forward and lay unconscious with my face in my cap; and it would seem that I might have been smothered by the blood running into my cap from this last wound but for the act of some Yankee, who, as if to save my life, had at a previous hour during the battle, shot a hole through the cap, which let the blood out.

(Excerpted from: John Brown Gordon,  
*Reminiscences of the Civil War*)



# *Confederate Silver Dollar*

*Coin in plastic sleeve \$65.00 ea.  
Coin encased in plastic \$75.00 ea.  
Add \$20.00 for shipping & handling*

*\*Price subject to change with market fluctuation.  
Call for live quotes*



*The coin itself is one troy ounce of .999 fine silver. It was minted in Washington State by the Northwest Territorial Mint (NWTM).*

*One side of the coin features the Great Seal of the Confederacy, showing Colonial George Washington astride his horse. The other side of the coin was designed in 2002. The scripture "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" is from Psalm 33:12 and celebrates the strong Christian faith and tradition of the old South. The centerpiece is an eagle from a U.S. 1830s silver half-dollar, a coin in circulation during the war. The Breastplate or shield has the "Stars and Bars" of the battle flag with CSA (Confederate States of America) above.*

*Much history rests in this coin. It can be kept as a treasured keepsake or given as a gift.*

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Tarry Beasley*

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## Commander's Corner

Gentlemen,

The AUGUST MEETING was terrific. We had a great speaker, Col. Arthur Oliver who explained the campaign that Lee laid out which out flanked the yankees and drew them back to Northern Virginia and Manassas where the Army of Northern Virginia whipped the yankees again. You should have been there. Don't miss any of the upcoming talks that will be presented to the Camp at our regular meetings. There were 31 present at the August meeting.

DUES are DUE and you should have received a bill for them in August. If you have not then we do not have your current mailing address or you allowed your dues to lapse last year. Please renew them NOW. The dues if you are not a life member are 60.00 unless you did not pay last year then there is a 5.00 reinstatement fee also. Life members should deduct 25.00 from that amount. Let's have a 100% renewal by all our 80 members this month. Mail your check to the R. E . Lee Camp at P.O. Box 171251 Memphis, TN 38187.

BRING a FRIEND to the next camp meeting and recruit a new member. There are still silver dollar size Seal of the Confederacy in sterling silver available for members who recruit and you can do it simply by asking someone to come with you to the meetings.

DINNER MEETINGS were discussed at the last meeting and the possibility of meeting at a restaurant in the Germantown area about 6:00 with the business session and program following at 7:00. Please come to this September meeting at the Pickering center prepared to express your opinion as to whether that would be interesting or helpful to you and a place that you believe would be appropriate.

GERMANTOWN HISTORIC TOUR sponsored and produced by our Camp was also discussed at last month's meeting. Larry Tolbert and Don Harrison who have produced a play and walking tours for years along with Gary Hood the original writer of many of the scripts used at the Elmwood walking tours that our camp produce for 8 to 10 years and who was Commander at the time will be assisting as his health allows. These men can lead us to a successful, educational and profitable event to be proud of. Please come to the meeting and express your thoughts and how you might contribute to the event and what sites in the area you think should be highlighted realizing that we will only do 4 or

possibly 5 sites. The consensus at the August meeting was to put it on in the Spring some 7 or 8 months from now. We will need everyone's help in some manner in putting this event on. Can you do research or act or direct traffic or you name it?

PRESENTATIONS of a Life membership will be made as well as a War Service medal to two of our camp members at the September meeting be there to see these presentations.

THE HONOR GUARD is still recruiting if you are interested in that type service for the Camp and Brigade. Contact Mike Daugherty at 758-8514.

BANKHEAD'S BATTERY is also recruiting if you like to shoot BIG guns (cannons) contact Tarry Beasley at 682-8000 or 240-2014 for more information.

SEPTEMBER 10<sup>th</sup> I look forward to seeing YOU at the usual time 7:00 and place the Pickering Center.

Get Active! Enjoy Your Camp! Honor Your Ancestors and Your Heritage!

Tarry Beasley,  
Commander

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## Notes from the Field

Archer's Brigade at Chancellorsville  
By H.T. Childs Fayetteville, Tenn.

"Then General Archer's shrill, clear voice was heard along the line "Fix bayonets Forward, guide center Charge'em, boys!" With an onward bound and the terrific whoop of the wild Rebel yell, we dashed forward through the dense jungle, the Boon's Hill boys falling in as the line of battle came up, and George Jones happened to fall in by my side. Soon we struck a steep little hill, and right up it we went. Along the brow of this hill the Yankees had thrown up temporary breastworks. They were taken by surprise. Over these works we poked our guns and poured a volley into them as they were getting up. A battalion of artillery was standing there. We killed every horse and, I suppose, every artilleryman. How General Archer got there on his big gray horse I do not know, but he commanded, "Right over, boys!" and, spurring his horse, he scaled the works. Then he waved his sword and commanded, "Halt!" He wanted to re-form his lines. But they would not halt. When on a charge, Tennesseans haven't got a bit of sense."

*(continued)*



*("Notes" continued)*

Mr. Childs was wounded that day, and never saw the Tennessee Brigade again. His father retrieved him from a Richmond hospital, brought him home to heal. He finally recovered, found a horse and further served the Confederacy with Forrest's Escort.

Much has been written about the valor of the Confederate Soldier. But nothing matches the actual account from the soldier in the field. The exploits these men lived becomes real when you read of green corn, snowball fights, the loss of a friend, hornets, fighting, lice, marching, marching, marching, letters from home and the stories of courage and sacrifice that happened everyday. We shall never forget them!

Lieutenant Commander

Mark Buchanan

**SCV LIFE MEMBERS ROSTER**

T. Tarry Beasley II	T. Tarry Beasley III
Winston Blackley	Eugene Callaway
John Cole	W. Kent Daniel Jr.
James Anthony Davis	Hubert Dellinger Jr.,
MD H. Clark Doan	Eugene Forrester
Robert Freeman	Donald Harrison
Frederick Harrison Jr.	Frank Holeman
M. Gary Hood	William P Hunter, Jr.
Bobby Lessel	Jerry C. Lunsford
Frank M. McCroskey	Steve McIntyre
Arthur Oliver	Charles Wendell Park
Steve Reasons	Bill Simmons
Larry J. Spiller, Sr.	Larry J. Spiller, Jr.
Osborn Turner, IV	Charles L Vernon
William C. Wilson	



**Traveller** is the monthly newsletter of:

The General Robert E. Lee Camp #1640

Sons of Confederate Veterans

and

The Mary Custis Lee Chapter,

Order of the Confederate Rose

P.O. Box 171251

Memphis, Tennessee 38187

Steve M. McIntyre, Editor



**Next Camp Meeting \*\* September 10, 2012**  
**Germantown Pickering Center, 7771 Old Poplar Pike, Germantown, TN**