COMPANY FRONT THE OFFICIAL MACAZINE OF THE TWENTY SIZE FORTH CAROLINA

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Front Cover

26th Regiment North Carolina Troops Battle Flag, captured July 3, 1863 Now in located at the North Carolina Musuem of History

Image courtesy of the Museum of the Confederacy

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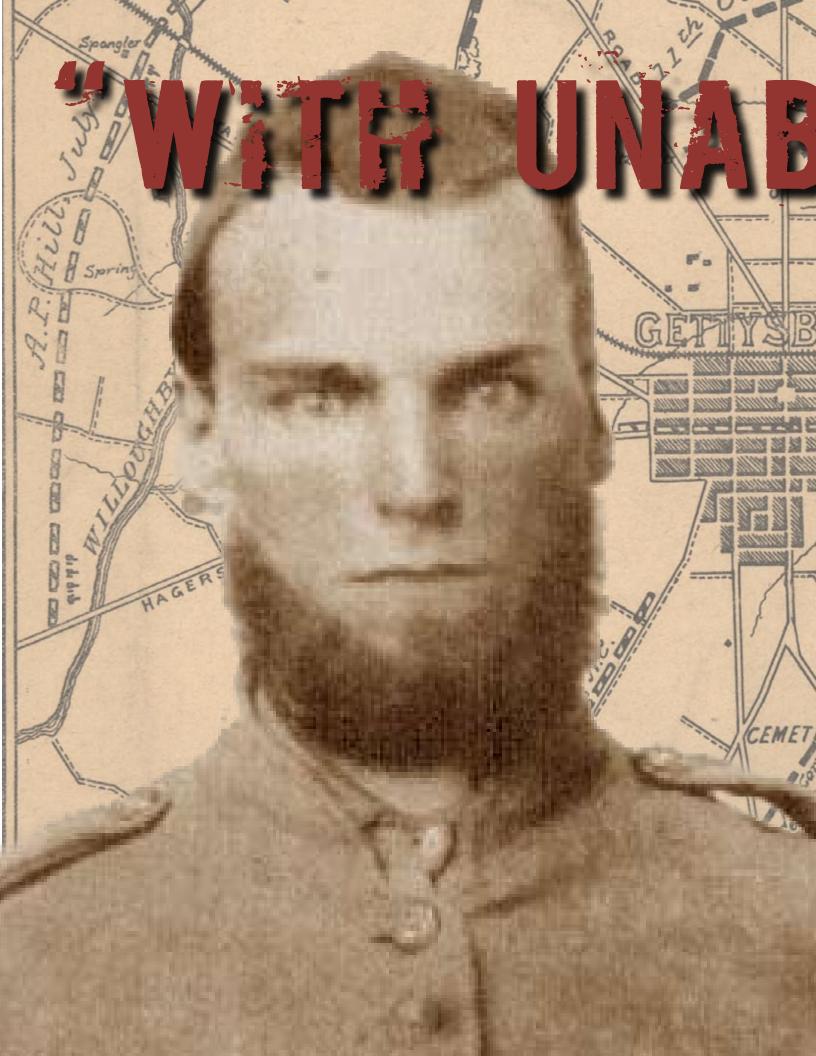
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THE 52ND NORTH CAROLINA TROOPS AT THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

Taken from Clark's Regiments, North Carolina Troops, Vo. III, Pgs. 235-240

By John H. Robinson, Adj. 52nd NC

STEV

On 14 June we left the lines in front of Fredericksburg and started on the ever memorable Gettysburg campaign. By easy marches we reached Culpepper Court House on the 17th. Continuing the march on the 18th, passing through Berryville, Charlestown, and other villages, we reached Shepherdstown on the 23rd, and on the 24th waded the Potomac at this point, thence proceeding leisurely towards Gettysburg, passing through the battle field of Sharpsburg, crossing the Antietam river on the stone bridge, on through Chambersburg, Pa., and halting on the 29th at Cashtown, a village at the foot of the mountains on the Baltimore and Chambersburg pike, and distant about six miles northwest from Gettysburg. Here we rested until the morning of 1 July. On the evening of the 29th Company B, Fifty-second Regiment, under command of First Lieutenant W. E. Kyle, was detailed to picket the Emmettsburg road at the village called Millertown, about five miles to the right of our camp, and during the night had a skirmish with a picket post held by the enemy's cavalry. During the night of the 30th the company was withdrawn and reported at camp. Early on the morning of 1 July we moved in the direction of Gettysburg. Archer's Brigade on Heth's Division, leading the advance, encountered a heavy force, commanded by General Buford, of the enemy's cavalry, on the Chambersburg road about one mile from Gettysburg, and was at once engaged; the cavalry, pressing Archer very hard, and skillfully using their artillery, checked his advance, when Pettigrew's Brigade, the Fifty-second holding the right of his line, as rapidly advanced to his support. By a vigorous attack we succeeded in forcing Buford's line back in the direction of the town, when, being reinforced by a heavy infantry column, they in turn checked Heth's advance. By this time Pettigrew's Brigade had reached Willoughby's Run, westward from the town and halted; lying here under a heavy shelling from the enemy's guns, and greatly annoyed by their sharpshooters, who occupied, at this time, the second story of a brick building immediately in front of our line, we awaited the arrival of Anderson's Division of Hill's Crops which was moving up to strengthen the lines

About noon we advanced and Pettigrew's Brigade encountered the enemy in an open field when a most desperate fight ensued. I have already stated the Colonel Marshall's regiment held the right of Pettigrew's line, and as we advanced through the open field our right flank was menaced by a body of the enemy's cavalry, seeking an opportunity to charge our lines. While on the advance and under heavy fire Colonel Marshall formed his regiment in square to guard against attack from this body, and at the same time deployed Company

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B, under command of Lieutenant W. E. Kyle, to protect his flank. This gallant officer succeeded in holding the cavalry in check and finally drove them from our flank. This maneuver was executed by the regiment as promptly and accurately as if it had been upon its drill grounds. The fighting continued with unabated fury until sundown, when we had gradually, but steadily, driven the enemy's lines back upon the town, but at a tremendous cost of valuable lives. About this time-sundown or nearly so-General Pender was sent to our relief, and passing over our lines took up the fight and drove the enemy into and through the town, halting only when commanded to do so, and thus ended the first day's fight so far as the Fifty-second Regiment was concerned. The losses in the brigade were appalling, and those of the Fifty-second Regiment very heavy. Here the gallant Captain McCain, of Company I, fell dead, pierced by a minie ball, while leading his company in the thickest of the fight. About the same time the young and chivalrous Captain Blackburn, of Company K, fell dead at the head of his company while leading his men to victory. Robert Bivens, 37th NCT



In addition to this great loss many valuable officers were wounded and the loss in the ranks was very heavy. At this time, over thirty-seven years having elapsed, and without access to records, I am unable to state the casualties with accuracy.

On the second day our regiment was

not engaged. A greater portion of the forenoon of the 3rd was consumed in perfecting the arrangements for the assault on Cemetery Hill. General Lee was concentrating his batteries along the brow of Seminary Ridge, and by noon had massed 145 cannon to open the attack. To reply to these guns the enemy, who were able to see what was going on in our lines, had crowned Cemetery Hill, according to report, with 80 cannon. On this day, Heth's Division was under command of General Pettigrew, General Heth having received a disabling would the day before.

Pettigrew's Brigade was commanded

by colonel Marshall, and the Fiftysecond Regiment was under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Parks. The column of attack was lying under the crest of the ridge in rear of our guns. Pettigrew's Brigade occupied the position in the line immediately to the left of Archer, who joined the left of Kemper's Brigade of Pickett's Division, which occupied the right of the column of attack. Between 1 and 2 o'clock in the after noon our guns opened upon the enemy's batteries and elicited a prompt and spirited reply. This artillery duel was continued for the space of about two hours without intermission, and the roar of the guns and bursting of shell were frightful to hear and dreadful to contemplate. A slackening of the enemy's fire was taken advantage of to advance the column of attack. In obedience to orders the line moved gallantly and steadily forward under fire of our guns until it reached a point beyond which it was unsafe to fire over our heads. Steadily the advance was made, and as steadily and coolly met with a murderous fire from the enemy's cannon, charged with grape, shrapnel and canister. Still the line advanced, and at every stem our comrades fell on every side, killed or wounded. Still we advanced under the incessant discharge of the cannon, assisted by the infantry's rifles, and had almost attained success, when by the overpowering force and almost impregnable position of the enemy, our lines were forced back, and then the slaughter was terrific. We fell back to the point from which the attack was made, rallying all whom it was possible to reach, and reforming our shattered lines.

In this fatal charge our losses were

very heavy. The gallant Marshall, pierced through the body (Editors note - he was shot in the head) while leading his brigade to the attack, fell from his horse, dead, within a very short distance of the enemy's lines. In his death our cause sustained a very great loss. Of his rank the Confederate Army had few equals and no superiors. His regiment was greatly attached to him; his uniform courtesy, coupled with great firmness and rigid discipline in camp, as well as on the march, had won the entire confidence of his men, and all mourned him as a brother lost. Lieutenant-Colonel Parks was shot through both thighs, and fell into the hands of the enemy, and our brave and dashing Major Richardson Sealed, with his life, his devotion to the cause he loved so well, and for the advancement of whose success he had striven so zealously. He was instantly killed by a rifle ball while leading the left wing of his regiment. Of the line officers, but few escaped wounds or capture.

The regiment was commanded on the 4th by Captain Nathaniel A. Foster, of Company F, the Junior Captain engaged in the fight. The Adjutant of the regiment reported the losses in the engagements of the first and third days as 33 killed on the field, 114 wounded and 169 missing. Of this latter, nearly all of whom fell into the enemy's hands it is fair to presume many were wounded. (Editor's note - the 52nd NC entered the fight with 553 men, out of which 341 became a casualty – 46 killed, 64 wounded, 140 wounded & captured, 91 captured)

We held our lines during the night of the 3rd and the day of the 4th, strengthening them with temporary works, and expecting an attack by the Federal army. As no advance was made by the enemy, General Lee began to retire in the direction of the Potomac on the night of the 4th In consequence of the death of our field officers on the 3rd, Captain B. F. Little, of Company F, was commissioned Lieutenant-Colonel, and Captain Eric Erson, of Company H, was commissioned Major, the officers of Companies E and H were each promoted on grade, as were also the officers of Companies I and K, in consequence of the death of Captains McCain and Blackburn. On account of the bad roads and caution observed on retiring, we did not reach Hagerstown, Md., until the 10th. Finding the waters of the Potomac so much swollen from recent heavy rains as to make fording impracticable, and General Lee's pontoon bridge partially destroyed, we halted at this place. On the morning of the 11th our regiment went into line of battle about three miles from the town, expecting General Meade would attack us as soon as he had come up. We held this line until the night of the 13th, with occasional skirmishing between the picket lines. During this halt the pontoon bridge had been repaired so as to be available, and was thrown across the Potomac at Falling Waters. The rain had been falling nearly ever day since we began to fall back from Gettysburg, and consequently the roads were in a horrible condition. During the 13th wagon trains were put in motion to cross the river, and at night the troops from our portion of the line were withdrawn and marched for the pontoon bridge, but the roads were so cut up by the heavy wagon trains and the artillery as to make the







LAT

Taken from The Gettysburg Magazine, Issue # 8, January 1993, "North Carolina in the Pickett-Pettigrew-Trimble Charge at Gettysburg" by Michael W. Taylor. (Pages 67-93)

"The editors of the Raleigh Observer sent out a questionnaire concerning the Third Day's Charge to surviving North Carolina Officers and published a selection of the responses on November 30, 1877."

The following letters came from this issue.

The B. F. Little Letter

Little's Mills, Richmond Co., N.C., Sept. 20, 1877.

Messrs. Editors: Your favor of the 17th inst. is received, and I answer by return mail. I will state your questions in the order you gave them, and answer below.

Q. What was your rank and command on the third day of Gettysburg? A. I was then Capt. of Co. E., 52nd N. C. Regiment, Pettigrew's Brigade, Heth's Division.

Q. How far did you and your men go to the front, and by whose orders did you and your men come to the rear. A. I was shot down when within about fifty yards of the enemy's works, and the ground between where I lay and the works was thickly strewn with killed and wounded, some of them having fallen immediately at the works, and as to 'coming to the rear,' very few ever got to the rear at all, all the badly wounded going taken prisoners; a few only getting back, and they as best they could when all was over, I never heard an order after I was shot, and I have no idea any of my company did. Officers and men were about the time mowed down so rapidly and the fighting so hot, that orders could not be heard if given. I lay where I fell until the fight was over, perfectly conscious, and no retreating men ever passed my line of vision, and I was so situated that I had a good view I do not think a single one of my men ever got back to the rear, except those who were slightly wounded before, they arrived at the place where I was wounded. Those who went beyond fared as I have before stated. And such was the case with the companies on either side of mine.

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Q. Did Pickett's Division go any further than your command?A. They did not.

Q. Did any of your men reach the enemy's works? A. When I was taken prisoner and borne to the enemy's rear, I passed over their works, and found some of my men killed and wounded immediately at the works.

Q. What were the casualties in your command on the third day & etc? A. Of my company, three commissioned officers went into the fight-all were wounded, and my company was reduced to a mere squad.

I am sorry that I cannot lay my hand upon the list of casualties of our regiment. But on the 3rd day, our Colonel [J. K. Marshall] was killed near the works than where I fell. Our Lieutenant Colonel [Marcus A. Parks] was shot through both thighs a little to the rear of the Colonel. The Major [John Q. Richardson] was mortally wounded very near the works, and I saw him in a dying condition, when I was borne to the rear, lying where he fell. My information is that every commissioned officer of the regiment was either killed or wounded on the 1st and 3rd days except one, and such as were on detached service. The letter of Capt. Young, from which you quote, gives the loss of the Brigade for the three days of the fight, or rather for the 1st and 3rd day, not being engaged on the 2nd day.

I take it that the main point that North Carolinians wish to establish in the controversy is, that Pettigrew's Brigade did not give way on the 3rd, but that it went as far, fought as hard, and suffered greater loss than any Brigade in Pickett's Division. (I have no doubt that this latter can be established.) His (Pettigrew's) Brigade was the only North Carolina Brigade in Heth's Division which Division was commanded by Pettigrew on the 3rd day. Even if some Brigade to our left did give way under a pressure that could not be resisted, or otherwise, it was not a Brigade of North Carolinians.

I include a letter of Maj. Jones, of the 26th N. C. Regiment, which you may not have at command, which gives a statement from the lips of Gen. Pettigrew himself. The Letter of H. K. Burgwyn, Sr., tells something as to what 'sort of stuff' Maj. Jones was composed of. And Gov. Vance can give you any desired information concerning him. Maj. Jones and Capt. Young cover the whole ground, and they, especially the latter, occupied positions that enabled them to be eyewitnesses of a great extent of the field that was present to myself. As Capt. Young states, the Division, commanded by Gen. Pettigrew went forward as a continuation of Pickett's line, on his left, and in perfect order, and I can say there was no giving way as far as my vision extended up to the time I was wounded, and it seemed to me that in a few moments after in the words of Gen. Trimble, the Brigade was 'literally shot to pieces;' and I cannot see how Pickett's troops were better organized when they reached the works than were Pettigrew's.

The only 'giving way' that I could see on the part of Pettigrew's Brigade was the 'giving way' by falling to the earth, killed or wounded.

I have talked with officers of the several regiments of the brigade, who were near the works when wounded, and their observations as to what transpired around them were very much such as fell under my eye.

I have, very hurriedly, endeavored to give you such information as was at my command. You desire a reply at once, and I have had to write while on the eve of leaving home, and have not put things in a shape for publication, but simply state facts which you can give in your own words by my authority.

Please do me the favor to return the slip containing the letter of Maj. Jones and Col. Burgwyn when you shall have done with them.

Very truly yours,

B. F. Little







Skip Smith

THE DEDICATION CEREMONY FOR THE BATTLE FLAG OF THE 52ND NORTH CAROLINA

The 52nd NC was officially organized on April 22, 1862, at Camp Mangum, near Raleigh. The ten companies that formed the 52nd NC were:

- The Cabarrus Riflemen, from Cabarrus County Co. A
- The Randolph Guards from Randolph County Co. B
- The Orapeake Guards from Gates County Co. C
- The McCulloch's Avengers from Stokes County Co. D
- The Richmond Regulators from Richmond County Co. E
- The Wilkes Grays from Wilkes County Co. F
- The Dry Pond Dixies from Lincoln County Co. G
- The Spring Hill Guards from Lincoln County Co. H
- The Stanly Rebels from Stanly County Co. I
- The Fighting Boys from Forsyth County Co. K

The company officers of the Regiment originally wanted Zebulon Vance to be their Colonel, but he of course turned that offer down as he was still the Colonel of the 26th NC. Their second choice was Colonel Robert Hoke of the 33rd NC but, he too rejected the offer. They finally settled on Jimmy Marshall to be their Colonel. Born James Keith Marshall at "Carrington," his father's family home in Virginia on April 17, 1839, he came from a long line of distinguished Virginian and American families. His grandfather, John Marshall, was the former Chief Justice of the Untied State Supreme Court and his great-grandfather, Thomas Marshall, was a classmate of George Washington and commanded a Regiment of Virginia Troops during the American Revolution. Lastly, the Marshall's were also related to the distinguished Lee and Jefferson families from the Old Dominion. Jimmy Marshall graduated from Virginia Military Institute in 1860 and moved to Chowan County, North Carolina where he became a teacher at Dr. Warren's School in Edenton. This livelihood was short lived as the reality of a Civil War was thrust upon the country. Apparently young Jimmy Marshall was well respected as he was quickly elected Captain of the Chowan Dixie Rebels, which was assigned to the 1st North Carolina Volunteers on June 20, 1861. Having just missed the Battle of Big Bethel, Marshall and his company served with the 1st NC Volunteers until it was disbanded on November 12, 1861. By April of 1862, Jimmy Marshall was elected Colonel of the newly formed 52nd NC. Within a month the 52nd NC was placed in Brigadier General James Green Martin's brigade, which

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along with the 52nd NC, consisted of three other North Carolina regiments: the 17th, 44th, and the 47th. General Martin, who was also the Adjutant General of the State of North Carolina, returned home in July of 1862, and took with the 17th NC, which was commanded by his brother Colonel William Martin. The three remaining regiments were transferred on August 26, 1862 to a new Brigade being formed for James Johnston Pettigrew. Soon afterwards the 26th NC was added to Pettigrew's new brigade. The brigade would also add the 11th NC in December 1862. This alignment of five regiments would remain together for the balance of the war.

During the late summer and fall of 1862, the 52nd NC was often detached to southeast Virginia to protect that area from Federal raids but, on December 16th, 1862, the 52nd was ordered to Goldsboro, North Carolina where the next day they experienced their baptism of fire at the Battle of Goldsboro. The 52nd NC would suffer eight men killed, fifty-eight wounded, and thirteen missing in this hotly contested battle. Finally on January 3, 1863, the 52nd was ordered to Rocky Mount, North Carolina where they were finally re-united with the Brigade.

In March of 1863, Pettigrew's Brigade was part of Major General D. H. Hill's attempt to re-take New Bern and Washington, but the Brigade gained much needed experience in working together and under the command of General Pettigrew. Following this failed campaign Pettigrew's Brigade was ordered to Virginia, where in May they were placed in Major General Henry Heth's new Division of Lt. Gen. A. P. Hill's newly created Third Corps in the Army of Northern Virginia. It was during this time that the 52nd NC, along with the rest of the Brigade, received a new ANV patterned Battle Flag. By mid June, Pettigrew's Brigade was on the road north to immortality.

Approaching the crossroads town of Gettysburg on the morning of July 1st, the Brigade was formed in line of battle south of the Chambersburg Pike, with the 52nd NC on the extreme right. Colonel Marshall's Regiment carried 553 officers and men into the fight. While the 26th NC and 11th NC were facing the Union Iron Brigade, the men of the 47th NC and the 52nd NC were up against Biddle's Brigade, Battery L / 1st NY Artillery and elements of Buford's Cavalry. During the attack Colonel Marshall realized that these elements of the cavalry were threatening his unprotected right flank, which caused him to form his Regiment into a hollow square. Once the threat was eliminated, Marshall quickly re-formed the 52nd NC back into a line of battle, deployed Company B as skirmishers on his right flank for protection and pressed home the attack on the 121st Pennsylvania and 80th New York of Biddle's Brigade. Realizing that the left flank of the Pennsylvanians was in the air, Colonel Marshall took advantage of this by flanking the Pennsylvanians which caused Biddle's Brigade to break. While losses in the 11th NC and the 26th NC were approaching catastrophic proportions on July 1st, loses in the 47th NC and the 52nd NC were small in comparison. When the orders were finally given for Pettigrew's Brigade to halt, General William Dorsey Pender's Division quickly took over the attack. Company roll calls

for the 52nd NC showed that there were 26 casualties that included two company Captains, John C. McCain and Julius Blackburn.

Following Major General Heth's wounding on July 1st, Brigadier General Pettigrew was placed in command of the division. Command of the Brigade passed to Colonel Jimmy Marshall on the evening of July 1. After taking care of their wounded and dead, the men of the Brigade were moved back to Herr Ridge for the night of July 1. The next day the brigade was ordered forward to Seminary Ridge to support Longstreet's assault on July 2nd. There they remained through the night with wondering what the next day would bring. On the morning of July 3rd, orders soon reached the men of the 52nd NC that they and their brigade would be part of a massive attack later that day. During the massive artillery barrage on July 3rd, the men of Marshall's Brigade formed up to the rear of the artillery. General Pettigrew rode over to confer with Colonel Marshall and concluded the short conversation with. "Now Colonel, for the honor of the good Old North State - Forward" at which Colonel Marshall repeated to his brigade. The order of battle for the Brigade was, from right to left - 52nd NC, 47th NC, 26th NC, and the 11th NC. Major John T. Jones of the 26th NC, in his report of the battle wrote, "We all moved off in as magnificent style as I ever saw, the lines perfectly formed" but, this precision was soon to be tested when they reached the Emmittsburg Road and its stout fences. Here the small arms fire and canister rounds from the artillery increased to the point where it was a wonder that anyone came out alive. As the men and boys

of the Pettigrew's old command reached the road, Colonel Marshall was knocked from his horse by an explosion. He quickly remounted and commented to Capt. Stockton Heth (Major General Heth's son) as they were crossing Emmittsburg Rd. that, "We do not know which of us will be the next to fall." Soon afterwards while moving forward Colonel Marshall was struck twice in the forehead and killed instantly. The men of the 52nd NC, who were spared the carnage that fell on the 11th NC and the 26th NC on July 1st, were now literally being shot to pieces. Entering the third days fight with approximately 527 men, they would have only 212 men return to their lines on Seminary Ridge. The 52nd NC officer's ranks paid a heavy price as all Field Officers were a casualty. Along with losing Colonel Marshall, Major John Richardson was also killed during the charge and Lt. Col. Marcus Parks was shot through both thighs and captured. The ranks of the Company Officers faired just as bad as fifteen company officers were killed, wounded, or captured on July 3rd.

Left on the slopes near the Union lines, along with the over 300 casualties of the 52nd NC, was the battle flag of the 52nd NC. It is not known who carried the flag but suffice it to say that no man could live for long while carrying a battle flag that day. As the firing slackened, many Federal soldiers moved out from behind their earthworks. One of those was Corporal Christopher Flynn of Company K, 14th Connecticut Volunteers. Lying among the bodies and on the ground was a battle flag. He quickly seized this fallen banner and found out that it belonged to the 52nd NC. At some point, he or

someone within his Regiment wrote on the border of the flag the story of its capture, thus allowing the opportunity of it being identified in 1905 when the Confederate Battle Flags were returned to their respective states.

In closing, I feel it is appropriate to remember the words of our heroes at this point. In answer to how far he and the men of the 52nd NC made it during the charge at Gettysburg, Capt. B. F. Little of Company E, 52nd NC stated, "I was shot down when within about 50 yards of the enemy's works, and the ground between where I lay and the works was thickly strewn by killed and wounded, some of them having fallen immediately at the works. I do not think a single one of my men ever got back to the rear except those who were slightly wounded before they got to the place where I was wounded. And such was the case with companies on either side of mine. When I was taken prisoner and borne to the rear, I passed over their works and found some of my men killed and wounded immediately at their works."

The Adjutant of the 52nd NC, John H. Robinson had this to say about the fight on July 3rd. "Our Regiment moved gallantly and steadily forward under the covering fire of our guns until it reached a point beyond which it was unsafe to fire over our heads. Steadily the advance was made, and as steadily and coolly met with a murderous fire from the enemy's cannon, charged with grape, shrapnel and canister. Still the line advanced, and at every step our comrades fell on every side, killed or wounded. Still we advanced under the incessant discharge of the cannon, assisted by

the infantry's rifles, and had almost attained success, when by the overpowering force and almost impregnable position of the enemy, our lines were forced back and then the slaughter was terrific. We fell back to the point from which the attack was made, rallying all whom it was possible to reach and reforming our shattered lines."

Even the enemy had words of praise for the men of Pettigrew's Brigade. General Smyth, as he lay wounded stated to a Colonel Swallow that "Pettigrew's Brigade... fought with a determination he had never seen equaled."

Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here today to dedicate this battle flag of the 52nd NC that was captured on the slopes of Cemetery Ridge on July 3rd. Please understand this:

• The eyes of over 500 men dressed on these colors as they stormed up McPherson's Ridge and on that fateful day of July 3rd.

• Almost 350 of the men were killed or wounded marching under the folds of this flag.

• The eyes of Colonel Jimmy Marshall, himself a boy colonel, no doubt watched with pride as his men pushed steadily forward.

• The blood of these men courses in the veins of many of you today and your presence today does them honor.

• Each of us, as citizens of the Old North State, should look upon this Battle Flag with humble respect for it is sacred to all Tar Heels.





By Alan C. Leonard Color Corporal, 26th NCT

Some time ago, in the course of many historical programs in which I have been involved, I was confronted with a question... That question was..."What is so special about that old flag?" To answer a question such as this I found that it requires you to tap into your very soul to find the real reasons and the words to convey those reasons. Obviously we feel strongly that this flag is much more than just a piece of old cloth; but why?

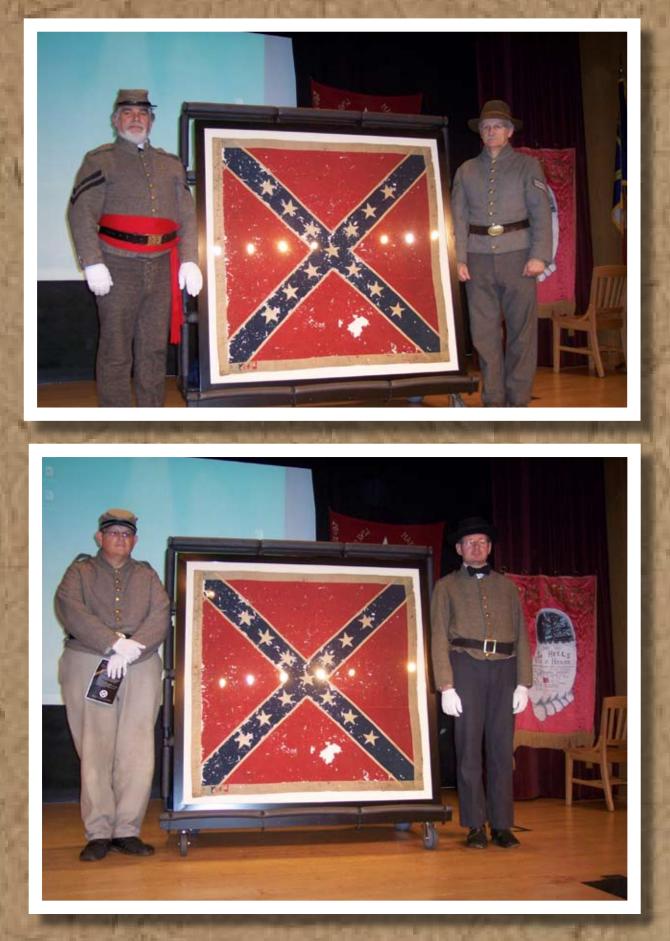
Throughout recorded history we find that it is the actions and deeds of our people that live on. It is not the power or the wealth we may obtain that is remembered for the future, but instead it is what we do with the time we are given in this world. The men that marched beneath the folds of this flag secured their place within our memories by their courageous and selfless actions. The voices of these gallant old soldiers in grey are now silenced to those of us on this side of heaven, and none of them are left to tell their tale. But, there is one witness that still remains. One witness to stand up and loudly say ... "Let me tell you my story and the story of my brave boys. Let me tell you of their hopes and dreams. Let me tell you how glorious they looked as the marched into fire and storm on those fields so very far from home. Let me tell you how they died and how I still carry some of their blood to this very day. While I still exist, the voice of my brave boys will never be silenced. All I ask is...let me tell you.

So now today, we gaze upon this beautiful flag ready to be seen by many more generations thanks to all of your efforts, your dedication, and commitment. And, as I look into the distant future, long after we are all gone and faded to memory ourselves; I can't help but wonder if there will come a day when a small child stands gazing up at this flag and asks his father "What is so special about that old flag?" And, because of what you have done for this flag his father can turn to him and answer "Well son...let me tell you...".









PICTURE CREDITS

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Julie Macie.

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