

THE DIAL

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MEMOIRS OF A CONFEDERATE BRIGADIER

General Hagood, commander of the famous Hagood's Brigade of the Confederate Army, died in 1898. He had declined to permit the publication of his memoirs until after his death; a decision which was doubtless due to modesty on his part, but, in the judgment of the present writer, one to be regretted. In his Introduction, dated March 21, 1871, General Hagood tells us that the papers of his brigade "were preserved in the general wreck of Confederate military affairs," but adds: "These memoirs are not prepared for the printer; nor will they, or any part of them, while I control them, be made public." It is better, however, that a narrative should be published during the life-time of the writer, both for his sake and for the sake of his contemporaries; as thus an opportunity will be afforded for the correction of any mistakes that may have crept in.

But we are glad to have these stirring memoirs, even at this late date; and doubtless the surviving members of Hagood's Brigade are glad to have their war-records preserved. The work consists of two parts, the first covering the history of the First Regiment of South Carolina volunteers (twelve months' men), April 12, 1861 to April 12, 1862; and the second, the history of Hagood's Brigade, as it was organized on September 30, 1863, consisting of the 11th, 21st, 25th, and 27th regiments, and the 7th battalion (eight companies) of South Carolina volunteers, numbering 4,246 men. The history of the brigade begins properly with the campaign of 1864 in Virginia, the regiments having previously served on Morris Island in Charleston Harbor. They had there done all that was required of them; but a wider field of action was opened when they were transferred to Virginia, and they were put into a fight as soon as they reached Port Walthal Junction, on the 6th of May, 1864. "The brunt of this action fell upon Hagood's brigade; and in the progress of the narrative it will be seen that it saved Petersburg." General Hagood says (page 226): "The brigade did acquit itself well. It was its first fight upon Virginia soil, and a creditable letter of introduction to the battle-scarred veterans of Lee." Actions at Swift Creek, Drury's Bluff, and on the lines of Bermuda Hundred, are described, and presently we reach the battle of Cold Harbor, where Hagood's brigade lost 16 killed, 103 wounded, and 9 missing, making an aggregate of 128 men. "Grant's severe losses and small success had a powerful effect on the Northern mind, and it is asserted by Federal historians that at this time the war was near a collapse, from which successes elsewhere alone saved it." An account of the battle of Petersburg follows, and a description is given of life in the trenches there, much more trying to the men than battle itself.

The battle of Weldon Road shortly followed, in which Hagood's brigade especially distinguished itself, and General Beauregard spoke of its commander in the highest terms. After a short rest in the rear, and after the taking of Fort Harrison, Hagood's brigade was transferred to the north side of James River, where it remained until the end of that year, when, with the rest of Hoke's division, it was sent to Wilmington to aid in the defense of Fort Fisher, although not stationed in the fort, but at Wilmington, in reserve. As Grant had now relieved Butler, a renewal of the attempt against Fort Fisher was made by Terry with about 8000 men. Bragg ordered Hoke to attack the enemy's new line, but the latter deemed the attempt inadvisable, and at Hoke's request Bragg reconnoitered it, and as he concurred with Hoke, the garrison was left to its fate. This necessitated the evacuation of Wilmington. Bragg returned to Richmond, leaving Hoke in command at Wilmington, and Hagood at Fort Anderson, some miles below ; but on Hagood's advice this fort was evacuated, and a position taken up on Town Creek some six miles above, but it was not held long, and the Confederates withdrew to Kinston, on the Neuse River, between Newbern and Goldsboro.

Hoke's division, including Hagood's brigade, finally fell back to Smithfield and joined General Johnston's command. The remnants of Hood's army, some 5000 men ; Hardee's forces, which had marched from Savannah and Charleston, 11,000 men ; and Bragg's forces of 8000 men, with Wheeler's and Butler's 4000 cavalrymen, formed an army of 28,000 men with which to resist Sherman's 75,000. The battle of Bentonville followed, the last expiring effort of the Army of the West, and of all Confederate troops south of Virginia. In this battle Hagood's brigade lost 249 men killed, wounded, and missing ; and soon afterwards General Hagood was sent to South Carolina to collect absentees. But it was too late. Hagood's farewell order was dated March 30, in which he informed his men that he should be absent forty days ; but before that time elapsed, Lee had surrendered and the Southern Confederacy had no more use for soldiers.

General Hagood's memoirs close with extracts from the diary of Captain Storey, including General Johnston's Order of April 27th, announcing his "military convention" with General Sherman, which came to naught, and he surrendered on the same terms that Grant had extended to Lee.

The work concludes with a roster of the several regiments that constituted Hagood's brigade, a poem by Joseph Blyth Allston, entitled "Charge of Hagood's Brigade," written in the summer of 1864, soon after the charge referred to, "which was always considered by the brigade as their most desperate encounter," and two views of the monument erected to the brigade near Petersburg, Virginia. A long list of *Errata* is given, but a frequent one, "dr." for "pdr.," is omitted.

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