

Wynn's Cavalry Was All R-C Unit

An All-Roanoke-Chowan team of amateur Confederate cavalrymen organized in the summer of 1863 as federal horsemen caused panic in their region.

The 15th Battalion of North Carolina Cavalry thus operated in the best tradition of the Minute Men, sworn to defend their hearthstones.

James M. Wynn was Lt. Colonel and commanding officer of the unit, which consisted of four tiny companies of Roanoke-Chowan mounted troops.

The unit gathered in mid-summer 1863 at Murfreesboro and then trotted to Weldon for some little instruction in the art of war.

Many of the men in the little unit had already seen service in Confederate units. Some, still recovering from wounds in other

battles, sat uneasily on their mounts.

The commander of the unit had already seen service as a company commander in the second North Carolina Cavalry. Its quartermaster was colorful Bally Asburn Capehart of Murfreesboro, whose tales of Civil War derring-do were to delight audiences for several decades after the battle.

The surgeon was young Starkey Sharp, who had already seen service.

The unit had come into being even as Yankee horsemen were landing at Winton, striking out for Weldon through Hertford and Northampton County, N. C., and the hastily-organized infantry companies that were to become part of the 68th regiment, had gathered at Murfreesboro as rumors of

Northampton Men Fought As Infantrymen for Lee's Army

Men of Northampton County served in companies of two North Carolina Confederate regiments organized in the spring and summer of 1862, the second year of the Civil War.

Company D of the 54th North Carolina was composed of Northampton men under the command of Capt. J. A. Rogers when the regiment organized at Camp Mangum near Raleigh in May of 1862.

In the same camp, the 56th North Carolina was organizing. Its company E was composed of many men from Northampton, with others of Orange, Wake, and Moore counties. Capt. Joseph G. Lockhart was from Northampton, as were the lieutenants, Jacob Jacobs, William Moody and youthful Robert Peebles.

Paul Faison, a Northampton native who had already seen a year's service as major in the 14th regiment, was regimental commander. The youthful colonel had graduated from West Point in 1861, in time to come to the colors of the new Confederate States of

America.

The men of these two units were to spend much of their service in their home state.

The 54th spent its early months in eastern North Carolina before joining the Army of Northern Virginia for the battle of Fredericksburg in December, 1862. From there, it marched to Chancellorsville, in spring, 1863, where men fell in a brilliant charge at the crumbling Union lines.

Captain Rogers was promoted major after the battle, and Junius DeBerry became captain of the Northampton men.

The unit marched up Shenandoah Valley as the main army fought at Gettysburg.

Many Prisoners

In the winter of 1863-4, the Northampton men of the regiment were engaged in a bloody action at Rappahannock Bridge in which most of the unit fell prisoner. Capt. DeBerry was listed as missing in action.

From then on, the regiment was little more than a company. It served in eastern North Carolina and served in the successful assault on Plymouth in April, 1864, when, aided by the ironclad Albemarle, Confederate forces recaptured the Union-held river town.

From its quarters in its home area, the regiment marched in May, 1864, to join the army at Richmond. It helped as Confederate forces bottled up the forces of Union General Benjamin Butler south of Petersburg.

In the battle, Major Rogers fell, shot down by two Union musket balls.

From Richmond, the regiment moved to the Shenandoah Valley again, and along with others of Jubal Early's tiny command, it marched to within sight of Washington, then battled back down the Valley against overwhelming federal forces.

From then on, the battered unit served in the trenches around Richmond, retreated to Appomattox to surrender with the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia.

56th Regiment

Col. Faison's 56th regiment served in many of the same actions as that of the 54th and Northampton men of the two units saw much

Saw Fought in Major Actions: Gates Troops in 33rd

The sky was blue, the weather crisp, hope was high, as Gates County men arrived at Camp Mangum near Raleigh in the late summer of 1861.

The third company of Confederate infantrymen raised in the little eastern county had embarked on a long war career. Unlike the other two units which had marched away six months before, this unit was composed of men enlisted "for the war" and not just 12-month volunteers.

Mixed in with the Gates men, were men of nearby Pasquotank County, and a sprinkling of Edgecombe men. An Edgecombe man was named captain.

Lt. Riddick Gatling of Gates was the company's second-in-command. Joe Boushell of Gates was First Sergeant.

Soon the detached company was serving as a guard force in the vast swamp areas of eastern North Carolina. When Yankee troops overran the Outer Banks and Roanoke Island in early 1862, the company rejoined its regiment—the 33rd North Carolina—near New Bern.

They arrived in time to see action as a part of the line of untried North Carolina troops facing a giant federal attacking force.

The regiment fought in the battle of New Bern on March 14, and young Charles Carter of Gates was one of those killed as the federals broke the Confederate line. James Carter was wounded, permanently disabled. So was Daniel Webb of Gates.

In May, the Gates men and their comrades turned north toward Virginia and their war destiny was set. As a member of Branch's brigade, they were in fight in all the big and bloody battles of that famous army.

They didn't have long to wait. At Slash Church, Virginia, Gates men were among Confederates who repelled one of the first federal moves aimed at Richmond.

It was but a prelude to the Seven Days Battle around Richmond, a fight in which the Confederate army stopped the advance of General McClellan and got in itself a new commander—Robert E. Lee.

The 33rd fought under Stonewall Jackson in the confused action of Seven Days. It was not called on for action in the heaviest fighting.

But the "quiet" times could not last.

As the victorious southern army moved out in Lee's first offensive action against the North, the 33rd came into contact with the enemy.

At Cedar Run on August 9, Holloway Harrell fell under the federal fire. James Pierce was mortally wounded. Mathias Johnson was mortally wounded at Ox Hill a few weeks later. John Porter was killed.

Then the regiment looked on Maryland, and the quiet fields around Antietam Creek.

impending federal attack drifted through the almost undefended Roanoke-Chowan counties.

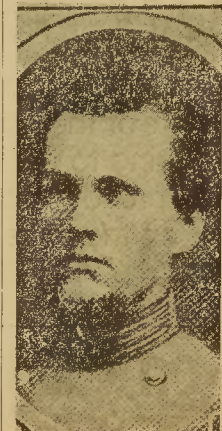
Before Wynn's little unit could get completely organized, the federal activity subsided. The cavalrymen were ordered north to the west bank of the Blackwater River in southside Virginia. Their job: protect the riverline against crossings by federal horsemen based in Suffolk and Norfolk.

For the remainder of the war, the Roanoke-Chowan men, under Captains J. G. Holliday, M. M. Wise, Adjutant J. W. Perry, J. T. Beaman, and Lis. J. F. Branch, H. J. K. Jenkins and J. A. Allen, skirmished with Union troopers, guarded fords, river crossings.

Capehart remembered after the war how the unit took part in a little-publicized phase of the fighting. The battalion traded with the enemy under orders from General Lee. In exchange for federal prisoners, the Confederate commander received badly-needed hospital supplies from Union depots.

The clandestine trading was carried out by men of Wynn's unit, who met Union gunboats on the Nottoway River to exchange the prisoners and pick up the medical supplies.

The unit went on some long



S. N. BUXTON

A young Northampton man who enlisted in the Confederate cavalry with his hometown company as a sergeant, S. N. Buxton, rose to captain of Company H of the 19th Regiment (Second Cavalry).

He served as head of the Northampton troop as it fought near Gettysburg in the summer of 1863, and surrendered with his small unit at Appomattox.

He lived for many years after the war, serving in various political offices in Northampton County, and helped write the history of his regiment in 1897.

He was a citizen of Jackson throughout his life.

May 6. Solomon Baker is a victim of war on July 14.

As the deadly fighting of 1864 ground to a stop in the winter months, the regiment goes into the trenches around Petersburg. It is the twilight of the Confederacy.

Fighting continually as spring came, the regiment, now reduced to a handful, joins the final retreat from the trenches. On April 9, at Appomattox, the Gates men lay down their arms with Lee's forces. Captain Gatling and a tiny group of fellow Gates men turn their faces southeastward, walking back to Gates and the land they have left nearly four years before, vowing to fight "for the war."



BERTIE CAVALRYMEN—These two Bertie County men served as horse soldiers in the famous Fourth North Carolina Cavalry. Young Joseph B. Cherry (left) was captain of Company F, composed of Bertie men. In his 20's, he died in a Confederate hospital of wounds received in fighting less than a month before the end of the war. Lewis Sutton (right) replaced Cherry as company commander, and lived many years after the war. He fought as lieutenant with the famous regiment in all its campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia.



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