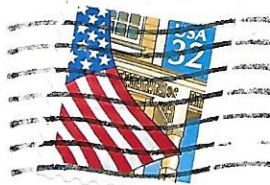


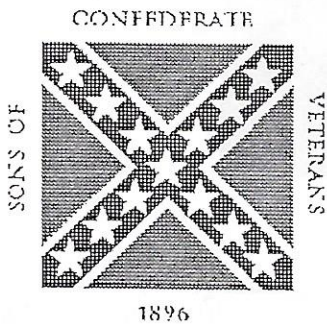


B. G. Humphreys
Constitutional Governor of Mississippi



THE DELTA GENERAL
SCV NEWSLETTER FOR THE
B.G. HUMPHREYS CAMP.
EDITOR: GARY SHELTON
P.O. BOX 291
STONEVILLE, MS. 38776

Dan McCaskill
205 Cypress St.
Leland, MS 38756



THE DELTA GENERAL

SCV NEWSLETTER FOR BRIG-GEN BENJAMIN GRUBB HUMPHREYS
CAMP # 1625

INDIANOLA, MS.

VOL- 3 # 3

APRIL\MAY 1995



B. G. HUMPHREYS

EDITOR IN CHIEF:
GARY W. SHELTON
P.O. BOX 291
STONEVILLE, MS.
38776

THIS ISSUE IS SPONSORED BY : THE CAMP AT LARGE

This newsletter is sponsored from donations accepted from previous meetings and is being used in the memory of PATSY DEAN CROWLEY McCOWN

PATSY DEAN CROWLEY McCOWN ;
Wife of our fellow compatriot Earl M. McCown Jr. passed away on April 4, 1995 and was buried in Cleavland, Mississippi. Patsy was born at Mena, Arkansas on August 14, 1933. Earl and Patsy were wed Aug. 23, 1955 in Little Rock Arkansas. Patsy was the granddaughter of the late PVT James Zachary Crowley and grand niece of the late 1/LT George W. Crowley, both of Company A, Cherokee Legion, Georgia State Militia in 1864-65.

Earl and Patsy have Three Children: (Vicki Cobb, Earl III, John Wesley) and seven granddaughters. Our prayers are with them and I hope they forgive me for not getting this information out to all of you sooner.

JOIN US ON
THURSDAY MAY
18, 1995. AND
HEAR YOUR
FELLOW
COMPATRIOT
"MR. HENRY
McCABE.
HENRY WILL
SPEAK TO US ON
ARTILLERY. COME
EARLY AND HEAR
THE BOOMING OF
THE COFFEE
PERCOLATOR. AND
GET IN ON SOME
SEMI-BRILLIANT
CONVERSATIONS
AND ARGUMENTS.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary W. Shelton", with a large flourish underneath.

Don't forget the SCV meeting in Vicksburg On June 2 and 3. I will be going down early on Saturday and if anyone needs to car pool call me at 686-4032.

The April meeting was officially canceled because of bad weather and the speaker was fixed up for a latter time.

The Rear Sight

By Paul B. Jenkins

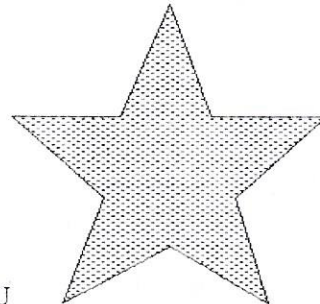
The late Gen. MacArthur told the writer that when the Filipino leader, Aquinaldo, was captured by Funston and his men, there was one question he (Aquinaldo) was burning to ask to someone. It was this: Why, when his men fired so much ammunition, and so rapidly, were so few American soldiers hit, and why did they come rushing straight at the firing Filipinos, as if they weren't afraid at all?

For answer, Gen.

THE DELTA GENERAL

MacArthur picked up a Krag rifle, put his finger on the rear sight, and said: "It is because your men don't know what this thing is for and don't know how to use it!" And Aquinaldo looked at the indicated sight and said: "Well, what is it for?" (This was Gen. Arthur MacArthur, father of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, and the event the Philippine Insurrection of 1889-1902.-The Editors) [February 1918] [Reprinted in *American Rifleman* February 1993]

IF AT FIRST



YOU

DON'T

SECEDE . . .

★ Stephen Dodson Ramseur ★



Stephen Ramseur as a major of artillery in 1861, his only known wartime pose. (Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Va.)

Stephen Dodson Ramseur, whose aggressive leadership on the battlefield personified the spirit of the Army of Northern Virginia, was born in Lincolnton, North Carolina, on May 31, 1837. A member of the slaveholding upper class, he attended the best local schools and spent two years at Davidson College before securing an appointment to West Point in 1855. Slender and graceful, Ramseur was a devout Presbyterian who stood just over five feet, eight inches tall and excelled in military aspects of the West Point curriculum, serving as a captain in the Battalion of Cadets and graduating fourteenth of forty one members in the class of 1860. Commissioned a brevet 2d lieutenant in the 3d Artillery on July 1, 1860, he was promoted to 2d lieutenant of the 4th Artillery on March 19, 1861 (to date from February 1 of that year).

Ramseur never reported to his new unit. A staunch supporter of slavery and Southern rights, he resigned his commission on April 6, 1861, well before his native state left the Union. Appointed 1st lieutenant in the Confederate artillery on April 22, Ramseur soon learned that he had been elected captain of the Ellis Light Artillery of Raleigh, North Carolina. He took charge of that battery, which on May 8 became Company A, 10th Regiment North Carolina State Troops, and received promotion to major of artillery, to rank from May 16. Ramseur's men fired the salute that signaled North Carolina's secession from the Union on May 20, 1861, before joining Confederate forces in Virginia in late July. Given command of a battalion of artillery under John B. Magruder, Ramseur first experienced combat in a skirmish at Dam No. 1 near Yorktown on April 15, 1862. Twelve days later he was commissioned colonel of the 49th North Carolina Infantry (to rank from April 12), a position he had actively sought.

Ramseur and his new regiment fought in the Seven Days' Campaign as part of Robert Ransom's brigade in Major General Benjamin Huger's division. Their heaviest action came on July 1 at Malvern Hill, where Ramseur suffered a crippling wound in his right arm. A six-month convalescence followed, during which Ramseur was promoted to brigadier general, to rank from November 1, 1862, and assigned to command the brigade previously headed by George Burgwyn Anderson. Ramseur had missed the campaigns of Second Manassas and Sharpsburg because of his wound and would miss Fredericksburg as well before taking charge of his brigade in January 1863. Made up of the 2d, 4th, 14th, and 30th North Carolina, the brigade served in Major General Robert Rodes division of Lieutenant General "Stonewall" Jackson's II Corps.

Over the next fifteen months Ramseur forged a record as one of the best brigadiers in the history of the Army of Northern Virginia. His fearlessness in combat became "conspicuous throughout the army," noted one of his subordinates. Another witness remarked that Ramseur "absolutely reveled in the fierce joys of the strife, his whole being seemed to kindle and burn and glow amid the excitements of danger." His brigade launched a desperate assault at Chancellorsville on May 3, 1863, that helped reunite the divided wings of Lee's army. The commanding general praised Ramseur, who had received another wound, as "among the best" brigadiers in the army, and the reticent Jackson "especially commended" his conduct. Ramseur's regiments helped to shatter the right flank of the Union I Corps on the afternoon of July 1 at Gettysburg, took part in the Mine Run Campaign, and filled a gap between the II and III corps at a critical point during the Battle of the Wilderness on May 6, 1864. Ramseur's finest hour as a brigadier came in the "Mule Shoe" at Spotsylvania on May 12, 1864, when he led a brilliant counterattack that helped restore the broken Confederate line. Wounded a third time, he received thanks directly from Lee and credit from Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell for mounting a charge of unsurpassed gallantry.

Ramseur's reward for exceptional service at the brigade level was assignment of temporary command of Major General Jubal A. Early's division on May 27 (Early had been moved up to corps headquarters). Promoted to major general on June 1, 1864—just one day past his twenty-seventh birthday—Ramseur became the youngest West Pointer to achieve that rank in the Confederate army. He had experienced a difficult debut as a divisional chief at

Bethesda Church on May 30 but performed competently at Cold Harbor before accompanying Early and the II Corps to the Shenandoah Valley in mid-June.

Campaigning over the next four months illustrated Ramseur's promise as a divisional leader. His troops led the way into Lynchburg on June 17 and fought at the Monocacy on July 9. Poor reconnaissance at Stephenson's Depot on July 20 resulted in a defeat that stung Ramseur deeply. Unwilling to shoulder responsibility for the debacle, he blamed his subordinates and the men in the ranks. He and his division overcame a shaky start at Third Winchester on September 19 to mount a memorable defense against long odds. Henry Kyd Douglas, who had observed the II Corps in most of its contests, stated that never "did that division or any other do better work." Three days later at Fisher's Hill the story was less positive. Ramseur, now in charge of Rodes old division because the latter had been killed at Third Winchester, responded sluggishly to Federals on his left flank and thereby aggravated an already difficult situation for the Confederates.

On October 19 at Cedar Creek Ramseur answered any questions about his capacity for divisional command. He handled his men effortlessly during the successful morning assaults against the Union Army of the Shenandoah. Married the previous October 28 to his cousin Ellen Richmond, he had recently learned of the birth of their first child and hoped a victory would bring a furlough to see his family. Dressed in full uniform, a flower in his lapel to honor his child, he galloped along his lines urging the men forward. "His presence and manner," thought one of his brigadiers, "was electrical." After the tide turned against the Confederates later in the day, Ramseur rallied part of his division, holding off Federals until about 5:00 P.M. when a musket ball entered his side and pierced both lungs. Federal cavalry captured him during the ensuing Confederate retreat. Carried to Union headquarters at Belle Grove, he died on the morning of October 20. His remains were transferred to Confederate lines near Richmond on November 3 and subsequently buried in the Episcopal cemetery in Lincolnton.

Gary W. Gallagher

Cox, William Ruffin, *Address on the Life and Character of Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Ramseur Before the Ladies' Memorial Association of Raleigh, N.C., May 10th, 1891* (Raleigh, 1891)

Gallagher, Gary W, *Stephen Dodson Ramseur; Lee's Gallant General* (Chapel Hill, 1985)

James Dearing was born at the family home, "Otterburne," in Campbell County, Virginia, on April 25, 1840. He attended several preparatory schools in his native state, including the renowned Hanover Academy. Dearing entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1858, which began a military career that occupied all of the few remaining years of his life.



The young Virginian displayed a confidence at West Point that won him the same popular acceptance that later marked his Confederate military service. A fellow cadet reported that Dearing introduced the tune "Dixie" to the military academy and was well known for singing and playing the music that would later carry such strong sectional connotations. Dearing's rambunctious behavior at West Point earned him a hefty burden of demerits and prompted a contemporary to call him "a reckless, handsome boy." Recklessness notwithstanding, Dearing achieved solid competence academically; he stood thirteenth among fifty-two cadets who passed his first year, and sixteenth of forty-one his second year.

Cadet Dearing should have finished his third year at West Point in June 1861, but by then he and most other Southerners had gone back to their homes to defend them. He and his friend Thomas L. Rosser both resigned on April 22, 1861, only three days short of Dearing's twenty-first birthday. Rosser became an officer in the Washington Artillery of New Orleans and tried to secure a similar posting for Dearing. When the Louisiana unit rolled through Lynchburg en route to the front June 2-3, 1861, Dearing joined and went off to war, though without any official rank. It was not until July 16 that Dearing was commissioned as 2d lieutenant of infantry, though the commission was delivered to Major J. B. Walton of the Washington Artillery and the new lieutenant remained on artillery duty. Oddly, the commission dated Dearing's rank from March 16, when he had been firmly ensconced in the service of another army, and it was not confirmed until October 4, 1862 (a delay somewhat longer than usual but by no means unique).

Lieutenant Dearing fought with the Washington Artillery through the First Battle of Manassas, riding conspicuously under fire with the battalion's leaders. He remained with the Louisiana artillerists through the long quiet spell that stretched through the remainder of 1861 and into 1862. In February of 1862 Dearing

received promotion to the rank of 1st lieutenant and took command of the 3d Company of the Washington Artillery. A few weeks later he jumped another step in rank when a Virginia battery from his hometown of Lynchburg elected him their captain in April during the reorganization of units directed by an act of the Confederate Congress. The new captain led

his battery to Virginia's peninsula and quickly found action before the end of April on the Yorktown-Warwick River line. Dearing won plaudits for his performance at the Battle of Williamsburg on May 5, 1862. Again at the end of that month he caught the eyes of superiors while fighting in the Battle of Seven Pines by showing what James Longstreet called "conspicuous courage and energy."

A bout with illness kept Captain Dearing out of the Seven Days' battles. When he returned, Dearing and his battery fought briefly near the climax of Second Manassas, but then left the Army of Northern Virginia and headed for southeastern Virginia on detail during the fall of 1862. Dearing returned to the army and played a minor role at Fredericksburg, then in January 1863 was promoted to major and assigned to artillery duty with Pickett's Division. Commanded by Longstreet, Pickett and Dearing and the rest of the division left on an expedition in the Suffolk region. In keeping with the unsuccessful results of the entire campaign, Dearing lost some guns near Suffolk and missed the Chancellorsville Campaign in the process.

Major Dearing commanded the four-battery artillery battalion assigned to Pickett's Division during the Gettysburg Campaign. On July 1, with his own unit still in reserve, Dearing struggled to the front and found opportunity to serve as a volunteer subordinate to E. P. Alexander during the fighting around the Peach Orchard. The next day Pickett's artillery commander had more than enough to occupy him with his own command, as he supported the division's famous charge. Eppa Hunton, who commanded a regiment in the charge, called Dearing "one of the bravest and best of artillery officers." Dearing told Hunton that after the artillery barrage "he was going with us in the charge...that he had always gone with this Division." As the infantry advanced, though,

An early war view of Dearing, perhaps as a lieutenant. (Evans, *Confederate Military History*)

"Dearing passed with his caissons to the rear at full speed," yelling to Hunton, "For God's sake wait till I get some ammunition!" In the aftermath of Gettysburg, Dearing and Alexander served together on a board that delivered several pointed recommendations for improvement in Southern artillery and ammunition.

Gettysburg proved to be Dearing's last major artillery action. That autumn Pickett detailed his subordinate to cavalry duty; the transplant took hold quickly and permanently. In January 1864 Dearing won promotion to colonel. (A March 14, 1864, promotion to lieutenant colonel of artillery suggests that the January rank ran afoul of some complication.) During that month he also married Roxana Birchett (1844–1926) of Petersburg; the couple had one child, a daughter born August 31, 1864. The newly converted and promoted cavalry commander led mounted troops during the early months of 1864 in operations at New Berne, Plymouth, and Washington in North Carolina. Dearing's success in those affairs, plus the warm endorsements of General R. F. Hoke and others, resulted in promotion for Dearing on April 29 to the rank of brigadier general, though no official record of his promotion survives.

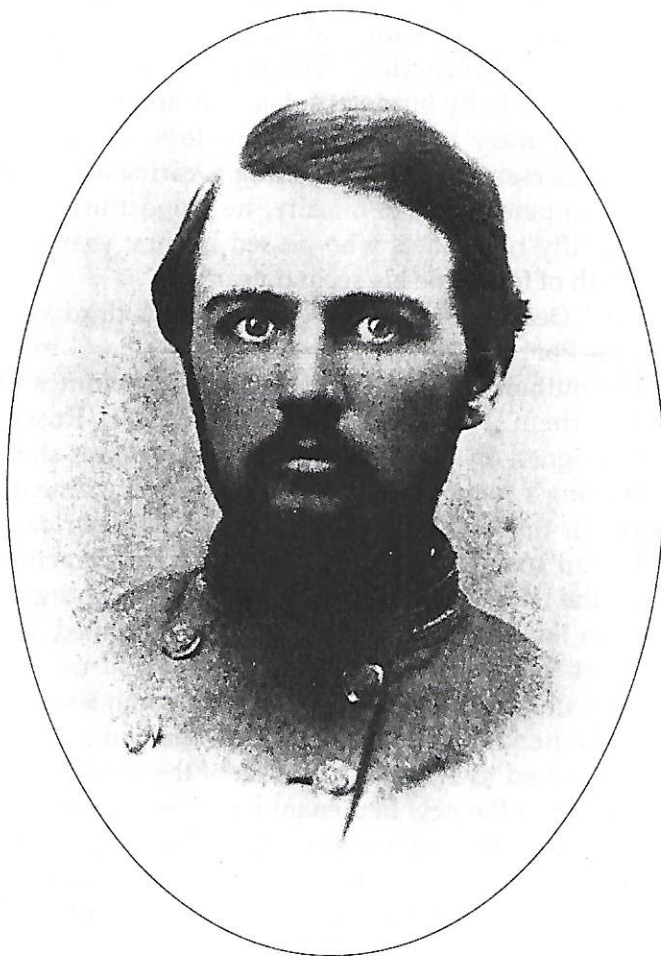
Two weeks after this latest promotion Dearing was back in Virginia, helping Beauregard in the defense of Drewry's Bluff and Petersburg during May and June. The young general played a pivotal part in the June 9 affair at Petersburg, and again during the June 15–18 crisis. As siege operations developed around Petersburg, Dearing led a cavalry brigade in W. H. F. Lee's division. Dearing's brigade also operated independently at times, and sometimes in C. M. Butler's Division, through the long period of the deepening Confederate twilight. The brigade usually consisted of four regiments from North Carolina and Georgia. Dearing frankly admitted the unreliable nature of his command: "I have to stay in the forefront to make these men fight...I'll get myself killed trying to." Even so, Dearing and his men contributed important service during Hampton's highly successful cattle raid in September 1864.

During the Confederacy's waning days, General Dearing took over a command he had long sought—that of the famous Laurel Brigade of Virginia cavalry. He led his new command at Dinwiddie Court House and Five Forks. On April 6, 1865, Dearing and the Laurel Brigade fought one of their country's last

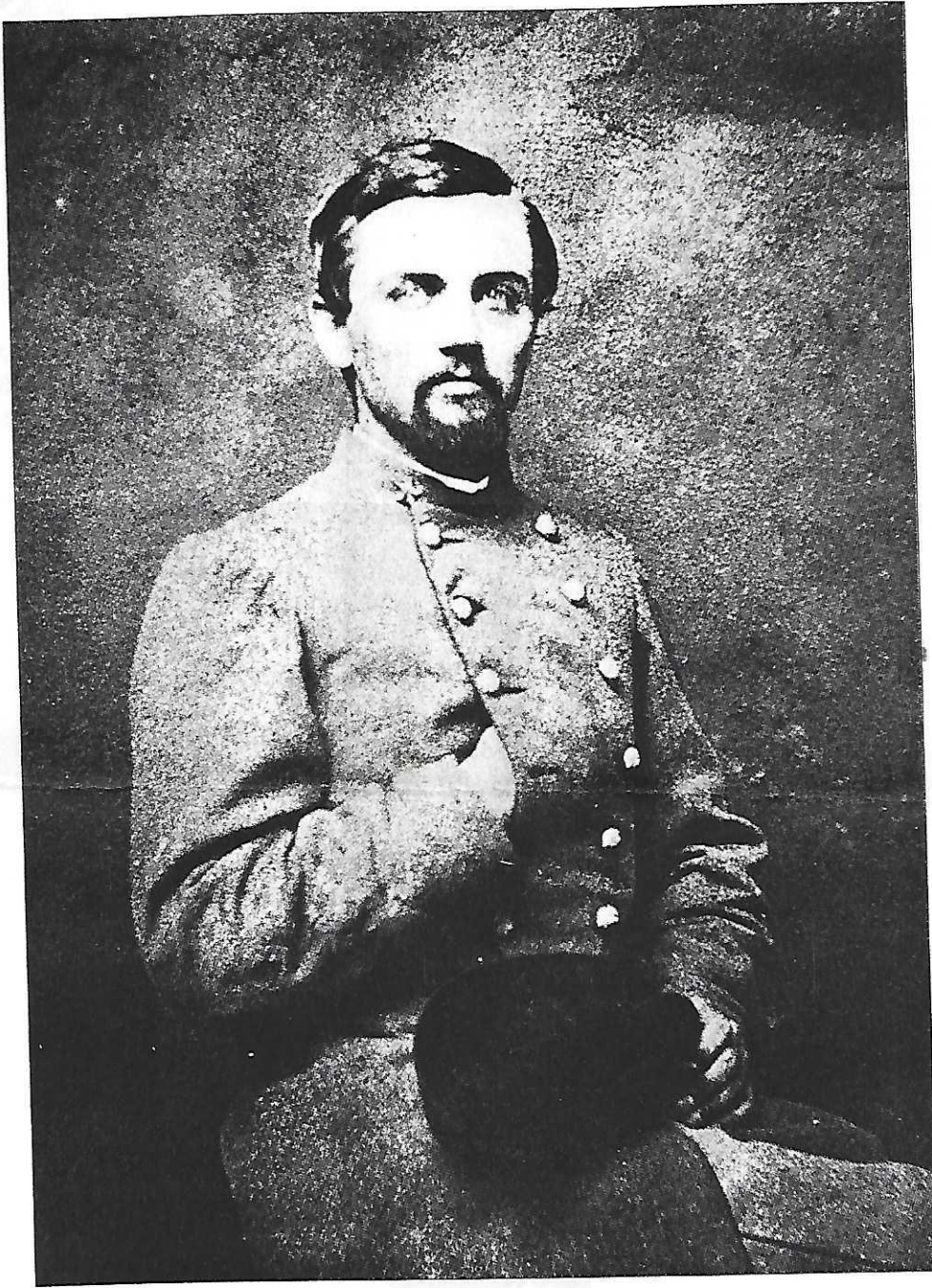
successful cavalry actions. After dramatic hand-to-hand personal combat with two high-ranking Federals, Dearing fell with a severe wound and died in Lynchburg on April 23—two weeks after Appomattox and two days before his twenty-fifth birthday. He had been one of the youngest Confederate generals, and he was the last to die as a direct result of battle wounds.

Robert K. Krick

Halsey, Don P., *Historic and Heroic Lynchburg* (Lynchburg, 1935).
Parker, William L., *General James Dearing* (Lynchburg, 1990).



Young Captain Dearing sat for his portrait while serving with the Washington Artillery, probably in 1862. (Russell W. Hicks, Jr., Collection)



Dearing sat again for the camera after his promotion to major, probably in the spring of 1863, producing this excellent, previously unpublished image. (Russell W. Hicks, Jr., Collection)