

The Gray Line News



High Bridge



High Bridge Camp # 1581

Sons of Confederate Veterans

"DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF OUR SOUTHERN HERITAGE"

June 10, 2021

Dear Compatriots,

I hope you and your families are doing well. We got off on a great start this month with our Memorial Day service at the Confederate Cemetery in Farmville. We started the morning putting out flags in front of our Confederate Veterans' graves at West View cemetery and from there went to the ceremony. Everyone had a great time; thank you to all who were able to participate.

Our next meeting will be on June 24th. I hope to see you there. Until then, you and your families take care and stay well.

Respectfully Yours,
Don Reynolds, Commander

"The dominant party cannot reign forever, and truth and justice will prevail at last."
Robert E. Lee

The Last Trench

by Louis Beam

As they walked through the bodies strewn throughout the overrun trenches, one officer could not help but comment on the composition of the dead laying everywhere: "Old men with silver locks lay dead, side by side with mere boys of thirteen or fourteen. It almost makes one sorry to have to fight against people who show such devotion for their homes and their country." Silver haired men lay across the bodies of thirteen-year-old children piled in clumps or scattered individually where a last desperate stand had been made. The blood of both

meeting in one final offering to freedom, liberty and homeland. In clumps they lay with bodies broken, mangled, and torn by shot, explosion, and hand-to-hand mortal combat. A last dying grimace of determination frozen forever on many of the faces. Their blood now coagulating in clumps upon each other and on a ground that could absorb no more. These then were the defenders of the last trench. No ancient Spartan battled more bravely at Thermopylae --- giving his life's blood for freedom. No desperate warrior struggled more bravely upon the parapets of the Alamo while shouting liberty or death to his last gasping breath. For these chosen few now lying at the feet of the victorious foe had died in desperate hand to hand combat when there was no longer time to load the weapons, no longer time to fire. Boys fighting grown men twice their size. Old men fighting hardened soldiers in the strength of their manhood. Young and old had determined to extract with their life's blood the last measure of resistance to the hated foe who now stood upon their soil in overwhelming numbers, war materials, and arrogance.

Mothers would weep bitter tears this night, wives of many years would moan with grief. For their loved ones would never return from this last trench. But their deaths, their desperate bitter defense of all that is holy, would provide time for the Southern commander to make his decision for the rest of the outnumbered force to withdraw and live to fight another day. These honoured few,

these children in rags but recently removed from their mothers' loving arms, moved even the heart of their bitter foe. Now these children lie in death, wrapped in the arms of their fathers, uncles and neighbors. These men and children showed by their courage and gave by their blood, an example for all mankind to follow in generations to come - when the stake is liberty and the prize freedom.

Minutes before, two hundred and fourteen brave souls stood there staring intently while the Stars and Bars gently caressed the wind above their head. Some five hundred yards to their front six thousand battle hardened federal veterans prepared to assault. Suddenly, federal officers could be heard shouting commands and men stepped forward confidently, looking sure of sweeping over the handful before them.

In the last trench the defenders looked at the thousands coming upon them and bowed their heads momentarily to ask God to help them aim straight, shoot fast, and kill many, and yes... "Dear Jesus take my soul to heaven." For the God these men worshiped did not require them to turn the other cheek before the enemy of their people. No pleas to be spared were spoken this day. For this was their moment, their time, their home and loved ones they would die for. Eternal greatness had arrived. Looking up from prayers, young boys and old men glanced at each other in one last moment of reassurance that each would do his duty, fight to the last and die with determined resolve.

Then the terrible struggle began. Yankee cannon blew men to pieces tossing their flesh upon the shirts and faces of their comrades. Lead bullets gouged gaping, gushing holes in the bodies of thirteen-year-old children now become soldiers. It was only with the greatest amount of desperate struggle that they were able to throw back the first assault. The last trench began to fill with patriots blood as the hated destroyer of their homeland fell back to regroup and a brave cheer went up among the defenders of the trench. Young voices that in weeks before had sung in small country

churches now mixed melodiously with the mature voices of their grandfathers' generation.

As the men regained their breath, a soft-spoken Southern accent could be heard drifting down the trench. While carefully stepping over the mangled bodies of young and old a Colonel offered encouragement as he moved down the line. His firm but gentle voice was laced with the nuances of a culture that was about to die. While later generations would mock his accent and trample his children's legacy, no Leonidas ever spoke fairer words or more firmly of duty, honor and homeland to hard pressed soldiers. Suddenly, as federal drums began to beat the advance, he stood for all to hear and his soft voice now grew in strength:

"Stand fast boys! Think now of your mothers and sisters at home. Remember it is for them that you are here today. Be ready now, and when they come, give them your steel and bullets knowing that you fight for the liberty of your loved ones. Be prepared now! And extract from these cruel invaders of our homeland a last bitter measure of payment for our soil. Look you to each other firmly now, knowing that we all die here today as men who fulfill their duty. Eyes forward!"

Then, in but a few short moments, the second massive wave was upon them and less than one-hundred and fifty yet remained to stand against the shot and shell of the thousands. Desperately they fought, each with every ounce of strength he could muster beating back the flood of foe upon their trench. Unbelievably, as old man and young child stood side by side fighting with their every fiber, gasping for breath not even with time for the wounded to wipe the blood from their eyes — again they turned the tide back. Exhausted, out of breath, and with no hope whatsoever of relief, they were yet proud to the very center of their being of having fulfilled their promise to the commander "to not give up." Once again across the carnage of this field cheering could be heard. Yet it was fainter now, softer, for there was not so much breath left to carry it to the ears of those in the distance. As voices of young lads who but days

before left their mothers loving arms, united with those who long since buried mothers in a far away time, tears sprang to the eyes of comrades. Hearts beat heavily, pounding with emotion for those dead and dying all around them who were giving the last final measure of their lives to their beloved homeland and liberty.

The foe, too, was no coward, and now aware of the mettle of those he faced, he stared at the last trench in growing disbelief. Federal troops regrouping but a short distance away left hundreds of their dead and dying in front of the determined men in the trench. For how could so few hold back so many? In spite of themselves and completely involuntarily, admiration began to spring forth in their hearts for such bravery as they now faced. Fear also raced into their being. Not a fear of losing, for so many could not lose to so few. But rather, fear of death. For they understood clearly now, if they had not before, that when the order came again to move forward, many more of them would have to die if they were to prevail over this valiant band of resolute defenders. They were not so sure their cause was worth this sacrifice. Unlike those who stood now in so few numbers desperately clinging to their positions in the last breath of life, the attackers suffered doubts of the rightness of their government's decision to destroy the liberty of those they opposed. Many in the enemy camp thought to himself that death was to be avoided if at all possible. For they knew for certain, as they listened to the now fainter cheer from the last trench, that strength of numbers, might, and power, do not make for right. They sensed in their very souls that they were killing the best of this land.

Once again the command was given to move forward and take the last trench. Two thousand more fresh federal combat veterans were thrown into the attack.

Across the field with blood now dried upon most faces, steely eyed men and boys looked one last time at friends they had come to love. Comrades with whom they had shared their meager rations or huddled with, shivering in

the previous winters' snow. The older men, their gray hair now stained red with gore from friend and foe, looked upon mere children who so bravely stood beside them. The sun seems now to stand still as each one shares for one brief moment in time a final, everlasting glance of reassurance, encouragement and sweet bitter love. Their beloved flag, the Stars and Bars, now stained with the life's blood of three children who will never turn fourteen and which symbolizes all their hopes for liberty, stirs to life at the sound of the approaching foe.

Eight thousand federal soldiers are now thrown against them. It is a tidal wave of men, bullets and bayonets. Each Southern defender knows that he breathes his last breath as he braces for the fury. Desperate scenes of mortal combat break out all around as the flood sweeps upon and over them. Each man fighting to stave off first three, then five, then ten, then twenty. Each striving to exchange his life for as many of the enemy invaders as he can. Liberty or death has never had stronger defenders nor greater blood to nourish it than that which flows from those dying here. One upon the other they fall, old upon young, young upon old. Finally one last gunner remains standing at his position with all comrades dead or wounded. Surrounded by his enemies they demand for him to cease firing or die. In a brief moment of but a final heartbeat, he enters into the heroic annals of all eternity with the final words "Shoot and be damned," as he fires off one last devastating round into the ranks of the foe. Their bodies have not yet hit the ground when his own comes apart from the bullets tearing through his flesh as he falls upon his discharged weapon.

Truly here, April 2, 1865 at Fort Griffen Virginia stood greatness. Liberty never before know braver defenders.

All grows silent now. Seven hundred of the invaders lay dead and dying. All the defenders of the last trench are dead or wounded and the federal officer steps forward to rip down the Stars and Bars, for there are no men left to defend the colors. This officer serves in the

Army Of The United States. He represents the power and force of the central government. He rips from this nation more than a flag, but tears asunder the constitutional liberties of the people of the United States. For with the last breath of the defenders so, too, has that of the Republic expired.

The Republic will be replaced by unchecked central authority which, as years pass, will unleash a government upon the people that will envelope and choke not just the South, but the very decedents of the officer ripping down the flag. There will be no victory here today for those men who now stand over the crumpled bodies of the defenders. For unknown to them, they bought today with their own blood the chains that will enslave their posterity. America would descend from the lofty plains upon which it was founded to the bitter pits of involuntary service to the government's every dictate. That year was 1865; the last trench was Fort Griffen, Virginia. You live in the fruits produced by that Pyrrhic victory for Washington, D.C.

Show and Tell program

June 24th meeting- Anyone interested should bring their Confederate ancestor's service and biographical information to share with the Camp.

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Next Meeting

June 24,2021

Future Meetings

July 22,2021

Speaker Micheal Smart.
Topic is Cultural Marxism

August 26,2021

September 23,2021

October 28, 2021

November 18, 2021

Upcoming Events

Heart of Virginia September 18th 2021

Amelia Day TBA

Virginia Division SCV MeetingTBA



L to R: David Easter, Russell Bryant, Mrs Russell Bryant, Devlin Moore's nephew, Devlin Moore, Mark Fathbruckner, Moffatt Evans, Chris Burks, Bob Harris, Donnie Reynolds