

*History One Hundred and Eleventh  
Regiment O.V.I. W.S. Thurstin.  
Vrooman, Anderson & Bateman  
Printers. Toledo. Ohio. 1894*

right and front lit up our way, and we were soon advised that the camp was Hood's infantry, who had been repulsed by Stanley during the day. Just here we received a volley from a rebel out-post, the bullets whistling over our heads. As the boys used to say "we considered where it came from," and paid no attention to it. Soon we were marching within long rifle range of Hood's great army, and could easily distinguish the men moving around among the camp fires.

Why we were permitted to slip out of the mouth of the sack, which Hood could have closed at anytime, by a dash of fifteen minutes duration, is one of the incomprehensible things of history. Just as the sun rose in the morning of the 30th, we were passing through Spring Hill and could be said to be again within the Union lines. We moved on until we came to the place near Thompson's Station, three miles north of Spring Hill, where we found a lot of wagons which had been captured by the rebel cavalry and partly burned the day before. We were here mixed up with our wagon trains, which so nearly filled the pike that we could not march in our usual order in column. Being so wearied by our constant service for three days and nights, the regiment had straggled badly, and was in a very disorganized condition.

Suddenly from the east, through a gap in the hills, there came a squadron of rebel cavalry, yelling like Indians, and firing as they came. Instantly a panic seized the teamsters and stragglers, some of the drivers jumped from their mules and took to the fields, others, with shouts, with whip and spur got their teams into a dead run and went clattering down the pike. The Colonel's black horse seemed to be taken with a sudden desire to "go west and grow up with the country," and tried to bolt after the fugitives.

Lieutenant Gustavus F. Smith, of Company E, was the nearest line officer at the head of the regiment, and promptly dashing through the line of flying wagons, called to his men to follow and charge the advancing column. The example was as contagious as the panic had been, and soon we had a formidable line of skirmishers interposed between the rebels and our train.

Our rifles were ordering the rebels to halt, when, to the northward a section of Canby's battery wheeled out of the road, a half mile away and commenced sending shell into the rebel ranks. In a moment they had covered their retreat with such a cloud of dust that the boys instinctively ceased firing and commenced laughing.

Van Horno in his "Army of the Cumberland," says this attack was repulsed by Wood's skirmishers. He was probably led into this mistake by not knowing that our regiment was afloat upon the road and fighting upon general principles. We never heard any complaint when we took a job of fighting which had been assigned to another command. But when we gathered a paltry pile of lumber in North Carolina, to protect ourselves from a cruel, cold storm, the theoretical martinets held up their hands in astonishment at our piratical western ways, and ordered us to consider ourselves under arrest. As late as the winter of 1864, common sense was a high crime on the Atlantic coast.

We reached Franklin among the last troops of the army. My recollection is that it was as late as two o'clock in the afternoon, but authorities, entitled to credit, say that the rear guard got in about noon. You remember that we found intrenchments on each side of the Franklin pike when we came in, the road-bed having been left undisturbed, so that the trains and artillery might not be delayed in moving into town. The Carter House, an ordinary sized brick house, stood on the west side of the pike just inside of our intrenchments. We moved to the north and west of the Carter House and stacked arms. Very soon afterward we were called upon for a detail of men to throw up a section of earthworks. I do not remember any occasion when it was more difficult to get a fatigue party to do the work assigned to them, than on this occasion.

You had been without sleep for the most of three nights, and had marched 23 miles, with scarcely any rest since 9 o'clock of the evening before. Nature rebelled against any additional draft on her reserve forces. There is little wonder that you pronounced it unreasonable when orders came requiring you to intrench. Having marked out the line of intrenchment for the fatigue party, and waiting until, in a measure, they warmed up to the work, stimulated in great measure, no doubt, by the exercise of that soldier's privilege, which was so much in vogue in Flanders, I returned to the regiment, where the men were mostly asleep.

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Hood's movement to Florence indicated what his campaign was to be, and gave as complete notice of his intentions as though he had made public all of his orders to subordinates. This was not generalship, because it released Sherman on the one hand, and warned Thomas on the other.

Our 3d Division moved forward by rail from Georgia and placed itself within supporting distance of the 4th Corps, near Pulaski, General Strickland's Brigade being posted at Columbia. Our brigade under Colonel Moore, and General Gallup's Brigade, of our division were hurried back from Johnsonville, our brigade going to Columbia, and General Cooper with the other going to Centerville, 30 miles west of Columbia, on Duck River. Ruger came forward with the other brigade so that we had at Columbia, and consequently at Franklin, substantially all of the 23d Corps except General Cooper's Brigade.

On the 12th of November, General Sherman having invested General Thomas with the command of the department, and with the means to get together troops enough to equal Hood's forces, cut his lines of communication and started from Rome on his march for the sea, with about 60,000 men.

He left Atlanta on the morning of the 15th of November, after destroying everything there and at Rome, which could be of any use to the enemy. The Confederate government having placed General Beauregard in command of the department consisting of Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, as soon as he heard of Sherman's advance, ordered Hood forward into Tennessee and the contemplated movement upon Nashville commenced. If Hood had started ten days before and moved his troops upon parallel roads as Sherman did in his advance, it would have been impossible for General Thomas to have concentrated troops enough to have materially arrested his progress, until he approached Nashville, and this, for the reason that the 4th Corps and the troops of the 23d then in the field, could not have found a safe line, confronting more than one of Hood's Corps, while Hood's remaining corps, could have marched past their flanks and compelled a prompt retreat from every position taken by them.

With all of the time given us for preparation, we came upon the field at Franklin with only about one half as many men as Hood had. There were 85 regiments of infantry belonging to the two corps, while Hood had 204, including some few battalions. Hood's

cavalry was largely superior in numbers to ours, but we have no means of ascertaining the actual fighting force.

We had 11 batteries and the Confederates had 27, or in guns, we had 66, and the Confederates 108. Of our forces on the field, General Beatty's Division of the 4th Corps, was on the north side of the river and not engaged. General Kimball's 1st Division of the 4th Corps, was on our right flank, and I assume it was not engaged, for the reason, that an examination of the muster-out rolls of all the Ohio regiments of that division, does not show a single casualty at the battle of Franklin.

The two brigades of Lane and Conrad, of Wagner's Division of the 4th Corps, would have been of more use to us, if they had been back at Nashville, because of the blunder of holding them in front so long that our firing was prevented, until the enemy had nearly reached our works. It is safe to assume that the enemy would not have reached our lines at all, if Lane and Conrad had been out of our way.

The troops which did the effective fighting, were Opdycke's Brigade of Wagner's Division of the 4th Corps, and the 3d Division of the 23d Corps, and Moore's and Mohrington's Brigades of our 2d Division of the 23d Corps. Against these six brigades, of 24 regiments, or if we count Wagner's two brigades, eight brigades of 36 regiments, came Stewart's and Cheatham's two corps and Johnson's Division of Lee's Corps, which by accurate count contained twelve regiments and three battalions from Georgia, 36 regiments from Tennessee, two regiments from North Carolina, four regiments from South Carolina, twelve regiments from Texas, eighteen regiments from Alabama, 32 regiments and three battalions from Mississippi, fifteen regiments from Arkansas, five regiments from Florida and three "Confederate" regiments, all infantry, and aggregating 139 regiments, and adding the six battalions, the equivalent of 142 regiments, only lacking two regiments of being four times our number of regiments.

So were the forces gathered for a battle which upon our part came unexpectedly, and was delivered suddenly and with the greatest vigor and determination.

Upon my return from the line, where the fatigued party were working, Colonel Sherwood suggested that our men had been skirmishing so long, that their cartridge boxes were nearly empty, and asked me to ride out and order up some ammunition from our

ordnance train. Looking to the north and east, we saw the wagon trains, on the other side of the Harpeth River, and supposing the ordnance stores of the 23d Corps were among the trains in sight, I rode leisurely over the river to order up the needed supplies. I had visited all of the trains and had returned to a point near the wagon bridge, when my attention was attracted to a commotion among a group of officers in Fort Granger, who were using their glasses, making observations to the southward. The next moment, a shot was fired from the fort, followed by others in quick succession. The shells from the guns were bursting about half a mile to the southward. Following close upon the artillery fire, came the rattle of musketry, and I had barely time to cross the bridge and get into the streets of Franklin, when I was met by ambulances, caissons, wagons, pack-horses, and all the impedimenta of an army going pell-mell for the bridges. Evidently the street leading from the Carter House, had bitten too large a mouthful from the panicky element of the army. For a few moments it seemed almost impossible to make way against the tumultuous tide which filled the street from house-front to house-front, and rising higher overflowed the adjacent yards.

Half way up from the angle of the street, to the Carter House, I met broken and disorganized regiments of Wagner's Division, among whom, their officers were riding back and forth, trying to rally and bring them back toward the works. At first it looked as though our line had been crushed at the center, and nothing could save the little army from destruction. The next glance showed Opedyke's brigade, of Wagner's division, and the right regiments of Reilly's brigade of our 3d division, in their counter-charge to regain the ground lost at the center. It was only a run such as one could make while holding his breath, but, it was the irresistible charge, of men, who recognizing a deadly peril determine to extricate themselves. With a cheer they swept back to the main line, clearing the way with bayonet and bullet, but so converging as they advanced that Opedyke passed to the eastward of the Carter House, and regained the center of the line. At this time, I rode to the right of the Carter House, and into a sink-hole at the northwest corner of the Carter House yard, where I hitched my horse to the fence. Where your stacks of guns had stood, Bridge's Illinois Battery was planting its blows across the line as rapidly as the guns could be handled. When I left you at work, I left my sword and revolver on the

ground, with other headquarter baggage. When I returned Bridge's guns were spouting fire continuously across the interval.

To say that "the air was all a yell, and the earth was all aflame," would be putting it in a mild mannered way. The tempest of lead and iron beat the surface of the earth into dust, as the spray upon great waters, leaps under the lash of the advancing storm.

To run from the cover of the sink-hole to the cover of the rifle pit, would take only a short minute; knowing that the regiment ought to be in the rifle-pits, which they were digging when I went away, I started, bare handed, for the works. On the way I stopped upon some officers sword which had been lost during the charge and counter-charge, and took it for company. Reaching the ditch at the left of Company G, I found you fighting bayonet to bayonet and muzzle to muzzle, as you never fought before or since.

The engagement had commenced not more than ten minutes before, and yet the rebels were within bayonet touch of the light earthworks where you stood, and seemed possessed with a desperate purpose to overwhelm your line, at whatever cost. Sheet lightning played into the rebels faces, smoke enveloped everybody. The curses of the living in their desperate struggle for life, mingled with the groans of the dying.

Our men fired so rapidly that many of their guns became disabled. The guns of the dead and wounded were loaded by the officers and men in the rear rank, and exchanged for empty guns with the men in front. Soon the cry, "Give us more ammunition," ran up and down the line. The officers tried to suppress it, so that the rebels should not know our weakness, and endeavored to add to the supply, from the boxes of those who were disabled.

At the first attack Colonel Strickland's brigade which had been formed between our regiment and the Columbia pike at the Carter House, fell back, and did not again occupy that part of the line. This left the left wing of our regiment in the air, exposed to an onfilading fire from above, which we were powerless to prevent. By firing left oblique our men relieved themselves somewhat from the nearest and most deadly of this fire, but to the more distant fire we were exposed to the end of the action.

When our ammunition was nearly exhausted, a regiment moving by the flank, left in front, came up to occupy the works on our left, but when in our rear and not more than ten feet away from us, they were caught in that fierce onfilade and threw themselves flat on the

ground for protection. Immediately we called upon these men for ammunition, and for their guns, in cases where our men had disabled theirs, so that before the end of the battle we had taken a large proportion of their ammunition and a considerable number of guns.

Historians state that this gap in the line at our left was re-occupied during the action, but in that they are mistaken. The line remained empty up to the moment of our evacuation. Lieut. Fernando Bennett, of Company C, recognizing the advantage to his men of the protection which would be afforded by filling that line, sprang to the head of the fallen column, and tried to rally the men, but was killed outright, together with a large number of the men whom he had induced to get upon their feet.

At length Joe Gingery came up with a box of cartridges, which being rapidly dealt out to the men, relieved our anxiety about ammunition. The regiment which we made so good use of, I should say from recollection, was the 183d Ohio, but General Cox says in his dispatches that it was the 112th Illinois. In that respect I think he is mistaken as he evidently is in saying that we cut down the locust grove in our front to make into breast works. We cut down some of the trees with musket balls during the engagement, and may have cut a few trees for the breastworks, but the body of the grove stood there as partial protection to the Confederates.

Between 9 and 10 o'clock, the Colonel called me down to the right of the regiment and directed me to pass the order from officer to officer in a whisper, that we would evacuate the works about 11:00 p. m., and that the men should be kept awake and directed to move without orders silently by the right flank, each man being expected to follow the man next on his right. This order I communicated as directed.

About this time Joseph Gingery came up and notified me, that he had found my horse in the sink-hole where I had left him, and run him off the field, delivering him to Ostrander, who had the other horses in charge, and where I found my horse when we finally withdrew. This was among the last of the many acts of kindness for which many of us were indebted to bluff, kind-hearted Joe Gingery. He told me there, of the desperate wound our Sergeant Major was stricken with, and the many others he had helped to carry from the field, showing a wealth of simple kindness, for which he did not have full credit. When he left me no one after-

ward appears to have seen him alive. In scouring around the field in search of wounded men, he was doubtless wounded, and as appears from the marks upon his body and clothes, was killed by the rebels after they took the field.

Individual instances of daring on both sides were numerous during the engagement. A very large muscular rebel jumped over our works, just to the left of Company C, and engaged Sergeant John E. Woodworth in a hand to hand encounter. After several thrusts and parries, in which neither got any advantage, the rebel suddenly vaulted to the rear, and pitched his gun, bayonet first, at the Sergeant driving the steel into his thigh. The rebel then tried to spring back to the other side of the works, but when midway over, was caught by our fire and fell on top of the bank dead.

Lieutenant Kintigh, during a lull in the firing, was talking to me about the casualties which had come under his observation, when a musket ball cut off his thumb. It was the constant interchange of civilities such as this, that kept both sides from retiring for the night.

The loss in our regiment was 52 men, or about one in eight of those engaged. Had it not been for the rugged fighting qualities of the rank and file of our regiment, the army could have hardly escaped disaster. If our regiment had retreated as did those to our left, a clear gap would have been made in our lines, without any second line from which to stop a column charging through the interval. From the time I got to the line, until the close of the fight, the men with muskets were the ones who were chiefly conspicuous in the fight. In such a melee as that, officers are in the way. Every foot of available space along the crest of the embankment needed a resolute Union soldier with a fixed bayonet to fill it.

The battle of Franklin had been fought. So far as military results were concerned it was, since Mission Ridge, the greatest Union victory won by the Western army. In Virginia, Grant raised his slouched hat, and a hundred shotted guns, around invested Richmond, sent intelligence to Lee's beleaguered battalions that morning was beginning to dawn along the loyal lines of the nation. While Hood had been confidently moving northward, it seemed as though the boast "that he would carry the war to the banks of the Ohio," was rapidly ripening into an accepted prophesy. Now, 6252 of the veterans of the Atlanta campaign had been subtracted from his list of present for duty, and thirteen commandants

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## CHAPTER XV

BATTLE OF FRANKLIN, THE BLOODIEST BATTLE OF THE  
WAR—THIRTEEN GENERALS KILLED OR WOUNDED

**T**HE BATTLE of Franklin, fought Nov. 30, 1864, was the most destructive of human life, in proportion to the number engaged, of any battle in the four years' war. It was the fiercest death grapple of all battles on either continent. Thirty-six authentic recitals have been published in book form of this battle, North and South, and all agree it pointed the most signal gesture to the speedy downfall of the Southern Confederacy. Even the president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, in his after-the-war book, "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy," classes the battle of Franklin as the bloodiest of the war.

Major General Schofield, who commanded the Union army at Franklin, has been criticized by war students and writers because he was not on the field during the battle and because he placed his lines of defense in front of a river which would prevent safe retreat of his army in case of defeat. It is said General Thomas, supreme commander, ordered General

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Schofield to make his defensive stand on the north bank of the Harpeth river, in order to put the river between the two armies and give the Union army an open road to Nashville in case of defeat or disaster.

Several prominent soldiers who were in the battle of Franklin have criticized General Schofield because he didn't appear on the field. I never have joined in this criticism because of my high regard for General Schofield as commanding officer and soldier during the hundred days' Atlanta campaign.

Captain Shellebarger of Company C, 64th Ohio veterans, was in the Franklin battle. He is a brother of Congressman Shellebarger of Nebraska and formerly governor of that state. In 1916 Captain Shellebarger published a book on the battle of Franklin. As he has a record which entitles him to be heard, I quote without comment an extract from his book:

"General Schofield was sitting idly in Dr. Cliffe's house in Franklin just before the battle, indifferent to reports that were coming to him, when he skedaddled for the fort across the river as soon as the firing began, abandoning the conduct of the battle to his subordinates."

I am not attempting to rewrite history; only to give my memories of a day never to be forgotten.

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It was 3:30 Nov. 30, 1864, that General Hood, commanding the gray army, sat on his war horse under a wide spreading linden tree overlooking the little town of Franklin. He threw the stump of his leg that was shot off at Chickamauga over the pommel of his saddle, pulled out his field glass and took a survey of the Union army, in plain sight in the valley below.

Of this scene John Trotwood Moore, historian and state librarian of Tennessee, says in his book on the battle:

"It was the silence that always precedes a great battle. Presently the silence was broken by the soft strains of music which floated up from the town below. It was the Federal band playing "Just Before the Battle, Mother." The men in gray on the hill and the men in the valley below listened. There were tears in many eyes, as the pathetic words were well remembered.

'Just Before the Battle, Mother,  
'I Am Thinking Most of You.'"

I remember the scene just before the battle, as described by John Trotwood Moore; I see it now as I saw it then—a lovely valley basking in the mel-

low glory of November sunshine. I see the little town of Franklin, quiet yet restless, just inside the circle of the Federal lines. These lines extended from river to river. Suddenly General Hood closed his field glasses, wheeled his horse and rode back to General Stewart, with the command: "General, we will charge the Federal lines in front." Stewart formed his corps on the right. General Cheatham formed his corps on the left. A cannon on the ridge sounded the signal for the charge. With bayonets fixed the heavy columns, all veterans, marched with a steady and even tread down the slope. The fiercest and bloodiest battle of the centuries was on. General Forrest's cavalry on the extreme right rested on the Harpeth river.

In 1874 a Southern soldier who was in that battle line with General Cleburne, wrote a valuable article on this marvelous charge in the Southern Magazine, then edited by General Bazil Duke of Louisville. I quote a paragraph:

"The hottest part of the line was a black-locust thicket just at the right of the Columbia pike."

This is correct; I was at that part of the line. I have a distinct recollection of that locust thicket and I can see now, as I saw then, that waving line of shining bayonets as it rushed to the works with that

defiant rebel yell, and the mad, murderous conflict that followed.

My horse "Firefly" was shot at the first onset. On the immediate left of my regiment our line was broken and a brigade was forced back in confusion. General Cox, in command of our army on the battlefield, in his valuable history of Franklin (page 131) says:

"When the front line gave way, Moore's brigade was seriously involved. Colonel Sherwood, commanding the left regiment of the brigade, had his men fix bayonets and prepare for a hand-to-hand fight on the parapet."

General Cleburne, commander of a division, was leading the charge of the gray army. His horse was fatally shot within 50 yards of our front. Then he attempted to lead his division on foot, but he fell fatally pierced by minnie balls. General Carter fell, mortally wounded, before reaching our line. Brigadier General Strahl reached the ditch. He stood on the bodies of the dead and gave commands, trying to rally his men. He was shot dead. Just in front of my regiment, facing that famous locust thicket, General Cockrell of Missouri was wounded. (This officer recovered and was later United States senator from Missouri). Two brigades to the left

General George W. Gordon of Tennessee was wounded and captured. Not a hundred yards to the right lay General Granberry dead, close to the Federal line. General Walthal, at the left of my command, had two horses shot under him and was wounded.

General John Adams, who was leading his brigade, fell mortally wounded in front of the brigade of Colonel Jack Casement of Ohio. Deeply touched with his splendid courage Colonel Casement had cotton brought from the old cotton gin nearby and placed under the head of the dying soldier, saying as a last word: "You are too brave a man to die." In the full fury of the contest, when a whole brigade front of our line of battle was held by a cordon of the gray army three lines deep, Colonel Emerson Updyke of Ohio, who was commanding a brigade in reserve, without waiting for orders, led a charge against the furious hosts of Hood and not only stunned them but partially restored our broken lines. The salvation of our army at Franklin is due to General Updyke's quick and heroic action.

Thirteen Confederate generals were either dead or wounded. Colonels were commanding divisions and captains were commanding regiments. Colonel Banks of Mississippi in his war book pub-

lished in 1908 says (and he was in the battle):

"In addition to the 13 generals killed or wounded 45 colonels were killed or wounded and eight others were missing."

Here is the list. Killed: Generals Gist, Cleburne, Adams, Strahl and Granberry. Wounded: Generals Gordon, Brown, Carter, Cockrell, Scott, Manigault, Quarles and Walthall.

About 9 o'clock at night, when there was a lull in musketry firing, the wails of the wounded and the dying were heart-rending; but the smoke had settled on the field in front so dense that vision was obscured 100 yards away. I was then in command of the battle line of the brigade, as all officers of the brigade of higher rank had been killed or wounded. I gave the order to cease firing. Standing on our hastily constructed breastworks (about four feet high) I saw a gray figure approaching on his hands and knees, moaning piteously. I jumped over the earthworks and pulled him over to our side. He lived only a few minutes. His last words, "We are all cut to pieces—Oh, God, what will become of my poor mother?" He was from Missouri, General Cockrell's brigade.

And what a night that was.

After the battle the dead lay around the breast-

works from river to river. Outside the breastworks in a wider line from river to river—a wider and thicker line—lay the Confederate dead. Amid the smoke and grime of battle and under the dun clouds of smoke almost hiding the stars, the blue and the gray looked the same. I stood on the parapet just before midnight and saw all that could be seen, I saw and heard all that my eyes could see, or my rent soul contemplate in such an awful environment. It was a spectacle to appall the stoutest heart. A Nashville poet wrote:

"Ten thousand men, when the warfare was o'er,  
"Lay on the battlefield crimsoned in gore."

The wounded, shivering in the chilled November air; the heart-rending cries of the desperately wounded and the prayers of the dying filled me with an anguish that no language can describe. From that hour to this I have hated war.

The editor of the Nashville Times was on that battlefield. In an editorial, Dec. 3, three days after the battle, he says:

"The 111th Ohio Infantry, Colonel Sherwood commanding, was exposed to the shock of the fierce charges at Franklin and stood firm with signal valor.

Its losses were very severe. Of its officers, Lieutenants Bennett and Curtis were killed, Major McCord was severely wounded, Captains Southworth and Dowling were very severely wounded, also Lieutenants Baker, Beery, Kintigh and Dalton."

Colonel Orlando H. Moore, the assigned commander of our brigade, issued a general order after the battle in which our brigade was given credit for saving the integrity of the battle line in the severest crisis of the battle, with especial reference to my regiment. I quote a paragraph from Colonel Moore's general order:

"Headquarters Second Brigade, Second Division, 23rd Corps, Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 2, 1864.  
General orders:

"The heroic spirit which inspired the command was forcibly illustrated by the gallant 111th regiment of Ohio infantry (Colonel Sherwood commanding) on the left flank of the brigade. When the enemy carried the works on their left they stood firm and crossed bayonets with them, holding them in check. By command of Orlando H. Moore, commanding Second Brigade."

Colonel Lowry of the 107th Illinois, just at the right of my regiment, was killed at the first onset. Three minutes later Colonel Mervin Clark, com-

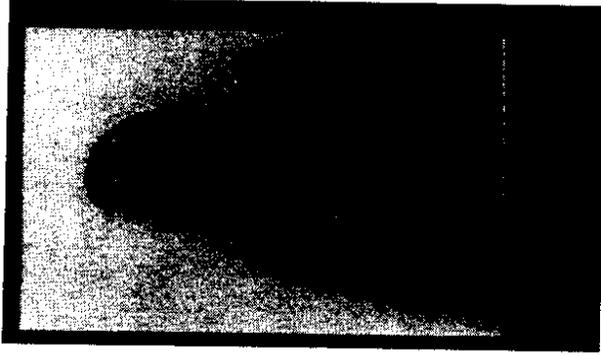
manding the 183rd Ohio, was killed. His regiment was on the immediate left of the 111th Ohio and was forced back in the first onslaught. He was a brave soldier of many battles, but his regiment was under fire for the first time. He refused to fall back and stood waving his sword at the left of my regiment.

I rushed to his side and yelled in his ears: "Go back and rally your regiment." He was shot dead falling against me. A report was sent to the field hospital that I was killed. My faithful orderly, John Gingery, who was assisting the operating surgeons, obtained a stretcher and started for the front with the intention of taking my body to the field hospital. He was shot dead 20 yards from our line of battle. My regiment lost more soldiers in killed and wounded than any regiment of the Union army. I make this statement after a careful investigation of the casualty list of every Union regiment in the battle.

The battle of Franklin broke the morale and aggressive spirit of General Hood's army. It made possible the decisive victory of General Thomas at Nashville. Franklin dug the grave of the Confederacy and Nashville sounded the requiem. These two battles were fought only 15 miles and 15 days apart.

## Memories of Franklin

*In his 1923 book "Memories of the War" Gen. Isaac R. Sherwood recalls the bloody Battle of Franklin.*



I remember the scene just before the battle; I see it now as I saw it then – a lovely valley basking in the mellow glory of November sunshine. I see the little town of Franklin, quiet yet restless, just inside the circle of the Federal lines. These lines extended from river to river. A cannon on the ridge sounded the signal for the charge. With bayonets fixed the heavy columns, all veterans, marched with a steady and even tread down the slope. The fiercest battle of the centuries was on.

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wounded. I gave the order to cease firing. Standing on our hastily constructed breastworks (about four feet high), I saw a gray figure approaching on his hands and knees, moaning piteously. I jumped over the earthworks and pulled him over to our side. He lived only a few minutes. His last words, "We are all cut to pieces – Oh, God, what will become of poor mother?" He was from Missouri, General Cockrell's brigade.

And what a night that was. After the battle the dead lay around the breastworks from river to river. Outside the breastworks in a wider line from river to river – lay the Confederate dead. Amid the smoke and grime of battle and under the dun clouds of smoke almost hiding the stars, the blue and the gray looked the same. I stood on the parapet just before midnight and saw all that could be seen, I saw and heard all that my eyes could see, or my rent soul contemplate in such an awful environment. It was a spectacle to appall the stoutest heart.

The wounded, shivering in the chilled November air; the heart-rending cries of the desperately wounded and prayers of the dying filled me with an anguish that no language can describe. From that hour to this I have hated war.

Colonel Lowry of the 107<sup>th</sup> Illinois, just at the right of my regiment, was killed at the first onset. Three minutes later Colonel Mervin Clark, commanding the 183<sup>rd</sup> Ohio was killed. His regiment was on the immediate left of the 111<sup>th</sup> Ohio and was forced back in the first onslaught. He was a brave soldier of many battles, but his regiment was under fire for the first time. He refused to fall back and stood waving his sword at the left of my regiment.

I rushed to his side and yelled in his ear: "Go back and rally your regiment." He was shot dead, falling against me. A report was sent to the field hospital that I was killed. My faithful orderly, ~~Gingery, who was assisting the operating surgeons, obtained a stretcher and started for the front with the intention of taking my body back to the field hospital. He was shot dead 20 yards from our line of battle. My regiment lost more soldiers killed and wounded than any regiment of the Union army. I make this statement after a careful investigation of the casualty list of every Union regiment in the battle.~~

The battle of Franklin broke the morale and aggressive spirit of General Hood's army. It made possible the decisive victory of General Thomas at Nashville. Franklin dug the grave of the Confederacy and Nashville sounded the requiem. When the true story of this war is written the valley of the Harpeth river and the Brentwood hills, south of Nashville, will become the valor-crowned fields where the destiny of the Southern Confederacy was settled.

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