

CAPTAIN WILLIAM THOMAS "TOM" YORK

Contributed By Marlene York

William Thomas "Tom" York was born in 1830, the first of five sons born to Sarah Virginia Blake and Josiah Cowan York, Sr. Josiah fought in the Seminole Indian War, and his father, Captain William York, fought in the Revolutionary War.

Tom, as he was called, volunteered with Company A, First Georgia Cavalry on March 4, 1862. His brother-in-law (Francis York) Captain John Calaway "J.C." Crabb enlisted him at Cedartown, Polk County, Georgia for three years or the duration of the War. Private York's horse was valued at \$130. Captain Crabb's Company was part of Lieutenant Colonel Morrison's Battalion.

Tom received a \$50 bounty, April 17, 1862.

The Army paid him \$.40 per day for the use of his horse and arms. Muster rolls show he was sometimes absent because he was serving as commissary.

On June 3, 1862, he was marked present at Big Creek Gap, Tennessee. He was paid for July and August by Captain Samuel W. Davitt.

On the November-December muster roll, he is listed as "Captain" with the date of rank of May 25, 1862. A pay voucher dated December 21, 1862, states Capt. W.T. York was paid \$140 per month for a total of \$1,120 for service from April through November 1862.

At Camp Beulah in Knox County, Tennessee, on February 28, 1863, Tom was paid a \$100 bounty.

Also enlisted in Company A were Tom's younger brothers, Larkin Blake York, Jasper Newton York, and Abraham Huddleston "Hud" York. Another brother, Josiah Cowan York, Jr., enlisted in time for the Atlanta Campaign when he returned home from Gettysburg wounded in the left eye.

On April 1, 1863, Tom was reassigned to 'the line.' He was succeeded as commissary by L.L. Lamar. He had risen in rank because of his ability to procure and manage supplies and equipment. There are no entries in his service file for the next year. However, the First Georgia Cavalry was busy. They skirmished in East Tennessee, and later took part in Bragg's Kentucky Campaign. They served in Pegram's, Davidson's, and J.J. Morrison's Brigades. They fought at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, twice, near Nashville, in Pegram's Kentucky Raid, in the expedition to Monticello, at Chickamauga, Big Hill, and in the Chattanooga Siege, at Philadelphia with General Nathan Bedford Forrest, and in the Knoxville Siege. Most of the time they fought in General Joseph Wheeler's Cavalry Corps of the Army of Tennessee.

On February 10, 1864, Tom enlisted his younger brother, Josiah Cowan York, Jr. to fight for the remainder of the war.

In the spring and summer of 1864, Tom's signature appears on requisitions as 'W.T. York, Capt., Company A'. Two are signed, 'W. T. York, Commanding', although Captain S.M. May is listed as quartermaster. Supplies were needed to defend Georgia from Sherman's invasion, so the job of quartermaster was both essential and difficult.

For the month of April at Oxford, Alabama, Tom signed a requisition for forage for "70 private horses" for 30 days. The daily allowance of corn for each horse was 10 1/2 lbs., for a total of 22,050 lbs.

Also, in April, at Marietta, Georgia, he ordered seven pairs of pants, 16 pairs of shoes, four shirts, six coats, five pairs of drawers, 'foolcap' paper, letter paper, 70 pairs socks, and one bottle of ink.

On the march near Cartersville, Georgia, on May 1, he ordered for 67 horses, 20,770 lbs. of corn, 1,1,000 lbs. of hay, and 1,550 lbs. of fodder, then on June 2, he ordered more clothing, more paper, and 21 lbs. of rock salt.

For the month of June, at Marietta and vicinity, he requested 17,850 lbs. of corn, 18,900 lbs. fodder, and 4,200 lbs. of hay.

During the Atlanta Campaign, Company A, First Georgia Cavalry was part of Crews-Iverson's Brigade, Martin's Division, Wheelers' Cavalry Corps. Their job was to scout the enemy's positions and to destroy supply trains, tracks, and bridges. Wheeler drilled his horsemen in the art of charging an infantry line, and lined up dummies made of old clothes stuffed with straw. Then he had his troopers charge at full speed, sabers held high, while under fire from blank cartridges.

During the Atlanta Campaign, they fought, bravely, at Tunnel Hill, Resaca, New Hope Church, Pickett's Mill, Dallas, Kennesaw Mountain, Bald Hill, and Peachtree Creek.

At 2:00 p.m., July 21, 1864, Captain William Thomas York was mortally wounded at the Battle of Bald Hill. He was carried from the field to the hospital by his younger brother, Josiah, and was evacuated by train from Atlanta to Barnesville, Georgia, and taken to Mr. Bellah's. Josiah stayed with him and recorded the details of his last days. His account suggests that Tom was shot in the abdomen, and as he became delirious, he talked about his men and his command, calling for cartridges. According to Josiah, Tom died August 2, at 4:40 p.m. The Confederate Register of Officers and Soldiers Killed in Battle states he died August 3 at Kingston Hospital, Camp Kingston, Barnesville, Georgia. He was 34 years old, was succeeded in command by his friend, Jesse W. Crabb.

The 1870 Polk County, Georgia Federal Census lists a household occupied by Matilda York, age 33, and three children: Barney, age 15, Fanny, age 13, and Marietta, age 8. There is a strong possibility this is Tom's family. There is no record of Matilda applying for a Confederate widow's pension in Polk County, but she may have remarried, moved, or not needed one.

Josiah, C. York, Jr.'s son, John Hightower York, recorded that Captain William Thomas York was buried near Jackson, Butts County, Georgia. There is a Confederate Cemetery 16 miles west of

Jackson near Milner, Georgia, just a few miles from Barneville, Georgia. The historic marker states, "In this lonely spot lie the mortal remains of more than 100 unknown soldiers of the Confederacy. Most of them were wounded while heroically defending the City of Atlanta against the overwhelming forces of General Sherman and died in an improvised hospital near Milner."

The paon rocks for head and foot stone have been replaced by the United Daughters of the Confederacy with white marble markers.

It is believed that William Thomas York was not shot at Peachtree Creek. He was actually shot on the 21st at Bald Hill in Atlanta. The First Georgia was shot up bad that day. Their position was overrun with heavy losses. A large number were captured as well as wounded and killed that day. The records of Company A show a lot of casualties on the 20th, but it was the 21st instead. Then on the 22nd they attacked McPherson's wagon trains on the square in Decatur. This is the day that the rest of the army was fighting "The Battle of Atlanta." Much of the battle occurred where the First Georgia had been fighting the day before. Bald Hill then became named "Leggetts Hill" after the Yankee General that captured and held it."