

A Past So Fraught With Sorrow

Bert H. Barnett, Gettysburg NMP

On May 23 and 24, 1865, the victorious Union armies gathered for one massive, final “Grand Review” in Washington, D.C. Among the multitude of patriotic streamers and buntings bedecking the parade route was one, much noticed, hanging from the Capitol. It proclaimed, perhaps with an unintended irony, “The only national debt we can never pay is the debt we owe the victorious Union soldiers.” One sharp-eyed veteran, a participant in almost all the war’s eastern campaigns, observed, “I could not help wondering, whether, having made up their minds that they *can never* pay the debt, they will not think it useless to try” [emphasis in original].¹

The sacrifices demanded of the nation to arrive at that point had been terrific—more than 622,000 men dead from various causes. To acknowledge these numbers simply as a block figure, however, is to miss an important portion of the story. Each single loss represented an individual tragedy of the highest order for thousands of families across the country, North and South. To have been one of the “merely wounded” was often to suffer a fate perhaps only debatably better than that of a deceased comrade. Many of these battle casualties were condemned to years of physical agony and mental duress. The side effects that plagued these men often also tore through their post-war lives and families as destructively as any physical projectile, altering relationships with loved ones and reducing the chances for a fuller integration into a post-war world. These are tragic stories, reflecting great loss and sacrifice. Unfortunately, in the larger story of the grand battles, these struggles were too soon forgotten.

Other wounded, however, seemed to overcome their terribly disabling injuries, and in doing so often inspired the promotion of larger messages—moral, religious or patriotic—thus bolstering the idea of “noble sacrifice,” giving *of* and *beyond* themselves. Some who promoted this idea did it actively, during their own lives; at other times these sacrifices were promoted by others as selfless examples of personal loss given in pursuit of a greater cause.

Indeed, the very word *sacrifice* means “to make holy.” No one had focused on this point more literally than did President Abraham Lincoln during his dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery at Gettysburg. In his address there, Lincoln observed that only the sacrifice of the soldiers on the field gave the ground its special nature. He aptly noted, “[I]n a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far beyond our poor power to add or detract.” Yet even Lincoln’s polished platitudes, uplifting as they appeared, called scant attention to the masses of suffering souls that hovered painfully between life and death as a result of the fighting there. “[T]hat from these *honored dead* . . .;” and “[W]e here resolve that the *dead* shall not have *died in vain* . . .” [emphasis added] drew no attention to this class of wounded men.

Edward Everett, in his address at the Cemetery dedication, also overlooked the wounded survivors entirely. “Standing beneath this serene sky,” he intoned, “the mighty Alleghenies dimly towering before us, the *graves* of our brethren beneath our feet . . .” [emphasis added]. No direct mention, by either man, of the masses of suffering humanity that remained as a consequence of battle.

Perhaps one reason little acknowledgment was made of the plight of the wounded Civil War soldiers was the apparent “success,” collectively, in dealing with the impact of the battle’s approximately 26,000 wounded. Of these, many were Confederate wounded who could be moved, and had retreated south with the rest of Lee’s forces. The remainder, both Union and Confederate, had initially been treated

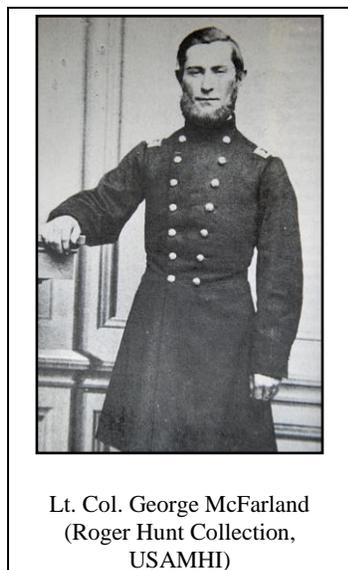
in scattered locations across the town and battleground in numerous impromptu field hospitals. Many of these casualties were eventually consolidated at Camp Letterman military hospital, on high ground three miles east of Gettysburg. From there, surviving patients eventually deemed stable enough for rail travel were placed upon specially built railroad cars designed to ferry them to larger, better-equipped facilities in Baltimore and Philadelphia. This enabled the medical department to more efficiently disperse the casualties away from the battlefield. Just prior to President Lincoln's arrival, only 60 patients remained at Camp Letterman. The final patient was discharged on November 17. Three days later, all the medical officers were relieved of their duties and sent elsewhere.²

Although the mass of misery that had overwhelmed Gettysburg in the weeks following the battle had successfully migrated away from the scene of its manufacture, ongoing personal struggles for survival in the months and years that followed took many different directions. A work tracking the resolution of all the battles' wounded would be massive, if not impossible to complete. Therefore, a choice collection of casualties is presented here as representative of the larger struggles faced by all who shared the misfortune of having been wounded in the battle.

In reviewing these cases, it was noted that three reoccurring and overriding factors often played a significant part in their outcomes. In order, they are:

1. The severity of the wound or injury. In the majority of cases, this trumped all else.
2. The life activities (e.g., religion, a strong family) that the person was involved in prior to their wounding, as these experiences often predisposed a strong belief system or a mental toughness.
3. Lastly, "side mattered." Union soldiers, with access to better medicine, better nutrition and often, more motivated medical attention, usually did better than Confederate soldiers. Possession of rank (from either side) also helped.

Case 1: Lt. Col. George F. McFarland, 151st Pennsylvania Infantry



George Fisher McFarland was born in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, in 1834. Prior to joining the army in September 1862, McFarland had established himself as an educator, purchasing and operating the McAlisterville Academy. In response to President Lincoln's call for more men following the disaster at Second Manassas, McFarland helped to raise Company D of the 151st Pennsylvania Infantry for the war effort. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel on November 18, 1862. On July 1, 1863, McFarland found himself acting in command of his regiment, positioned just west of the Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary. He was hit, "about 4 P.M., after being exposed for several hours":

A ball, or two balls at the same instant hit my legs, first my left, passing directly through it and then my right, shattering the bone to pieces. Fortunately I was near this building used as a hospital ...³

McFarland was taken into the seminary, where he began to fully embrace the miserable experiences of a wounded soldier, no doubt heightened when shortly thereafter he was made a prisoner by the capture of the seminary hospital by the Confederates. However, even before the close of July 1, while unquestionably still in much pain, McFarland determined to communicate with his family. In a quick note of reassurance to his wife Addie, George reported, "I am wounded in both legs and a prisoner. But I am in

good spirits and will no doubt recover ... I will be taken care of and no doubt sent where you can come to see me.” He stated as well, “I did my duty and was wounded by my flag.” That was perhaps about as much detail as he risked revealing to her about the conditions he now faced. Sometime later, he detailed the impact of the capture of the seminary hospital:

[The Rebels] seized and carried off all the instruments, chloroform, etc., and thus deprived [the] surgeon and his assistants who generously remained behind to share the captivity and alleviate the sufferings of the wounded. The Rebel commanding officer ordered every sound Union soldier to be paroled and though promising to return them as hospital nurses (in which capacity they were captured), he marched them off, leaving over three hundred wounded men without a single attendant! For three days we were left without food, drink or attendance.

During this time, McFarland, like so many others, was himself in great need of proper medical attention. On July 5 he again wrote Addie, concerned that his previous attempts had not succeeded. He revealed some of the grittier details of his surroundings, carefully balancing these descriptions with optimistic predictions for his own improvement:

I lay on the floor in my blood for two days when I was put into a bed and shortly after my right leg amputated below the knee. I am doing well. [My] Temperance and abstimeous way of living will cause me to recover fast.⁴

This correspondence, however, missed its intended target, as Addie, after receiving George’s note of July 1, had already determined to go to Gettysburg. The picture of Gettysburg the colonel had carefully attempted to present to Addie through his letters became instantly apparent upon her arrival about July 11—the place had become a ghastly landscape, filled with sufferers of all sorts. Accompanied by her three-year-old son Horace, a new baby, and the family physician, they did what they could to comfort their badly wounded patient. Unlike many poor wounded, who had no one available to extend the direct “family concern,” McFarland seemed to mentally rebound from his ordeal. He quickly re-established his pattern of writing, maintaining daily diary entries, correspondence, and attempting to conduct his business. Two entries here will suffice:

Saturday, August 1—A beautiful cheerful looking day, but very warm. I am sitting up in bed, with my left leg bound up and swung above the bed. My right (amputated) lying on a pillow. Nicholas Kizer, Co. A, 149th Regt. P.V., sitting behind me with his back against mine, and Mrs. McFarland [is] fanning me with Emma on her lap and Horace at her side. This is [my] situation! And this is my first attempt to write with ink, sitting up. I have written a number of letters with a pencil, on my back, and some biographies. Nothing more.

Monday, August 10—Rev. Mahlon C. Horine, a graduate of this school came in company with a Mr. Kitzmiller to see me. Mr. H. and myself bargained partially in reference to School, and I expect him to teach him to teach for me. I rec’d Payrolls from Hon Jas. M. Sellers mailed on the 5th, at Hbg.

During the afternoon I commenced charting out a circular for publication—old fashioned work. It did not take me long.

In spite of his seemingly rapid mental readjustments, the wounds to McFarland’s legs had forever left him a changed man, and would take an interminable time to heal:

Tuesday, August 18—“*I am* still confined as closely as ever, my stump about 2/3 healed over, and my left leg is still suppurating badly. The wound has become less, but when is it going to heal up? God only knows. It has been very painful for the past three weeks and is now.”

Thursday, August 20—“My pain was so great that I did not sleep a particle. I never had greater.”

Mon., Sept. 7—“I am not discouraged. My left leg is better and less painful than ever it was. For the whole of last week it ran or suppurated by the ounce, and yet yesterday the skin on the tibia was full of pus. We then left off the bandages and commenced polticing with Flax-seed, and have since continued it. This evening the swelling is all out, the pus on the tibia the same, & all doing finely. I am encouraged.”⁵

On September 16, 1863, George McFarland felt well enough to return to the McAlisterville Academy, opening it in time for the fall semester. During this time, and for a considerable period thereafter, McFarland submitted to numerous periodic removals of bone shards from his left leg, at least one of which he did himself, on April 23, 1864, utilizing a sharpened pocket-knife in place of a proper scalpel. Due to the nature of his wound and subsequent amputation, walking became a ponderous process, not undertaken again until April 1864, utilizing an ill-fitting prosthetic leg. The good professor was likewise never again able to lecture comfortably while standing at a podium, instead choosing to deliver his lectures from a couch or reclining in bed.⁶

In spite of the physical pain that his wounds continued to cause him, McFarland did not let his suffering slow him down. In addition to his teaching and school administrative duties, McFarland continued the practice, which he had begun prior to his wounding, of submitting articles to *The Pennsylvania School Journal*, endorsing his belief in the beneficent work that teachers, through the nobility of education, provided to society. In an October 1866 article humbly entitled, “The Victory At Gettysburg, The Work of the Teacher,” McFarland “[B]oldly affirmed

1. The only superiority the only Union army possessed over the Rebel army was its moral and intellectual power.
2. That through this superiority it triumphed.
3. That this superiority is mainly is traceable to the indefatigable labors of the faithful Christian teacher.”⁷

In 1865 McFarland had removed to Harrisburg to work in the “state school department,” overseeing Pennsylvania’s ten soldier’s orphans’ schools, including his own McAlisterville Academy. With the passing of years, and the reduction of the need for orphans’ schools, he then turned his attention to the temperance movement, opposing the evils of drink. On April 28, 1876, he purchased a newspaper, “The Temperance Vindicator,” an organ of that persuasion.

“Temperance-ing,” as it was then known in those times, was a fairly common activity among certain classes, especially among educators and editors. Being both, McFarland could not fail to partake of this particular brand of social reform. Possession of the paper allowed him a platform from which to actively support his cause. He ran the paper for seven years. In his quieter moments during that time, he studied horticulture and the propagation of roses, operating Harrisburg’s “Riverside Nursery” for many years. During this time, though his cruelly mangled left leg had never truly healed, George McFarland continued on with his life and his interests. As one friend of the family observed,

The shattered leg was for many years an open running sore, which was dressed daily by his faithful wife. Over fifty pieces of splintered bone worked themselves out, or were extracted by the surgeon. He was a man of wonderful energy and will power, and worked to maintain his family, hobbling about on crutches and his wooden leg and pushed his business affairs against all obstacles when many a well man would have been disheartened.

However, as the old wounds began to pain him with more severity as he aged, McFarland eventually turned both businesses over to his son Horace.⁸

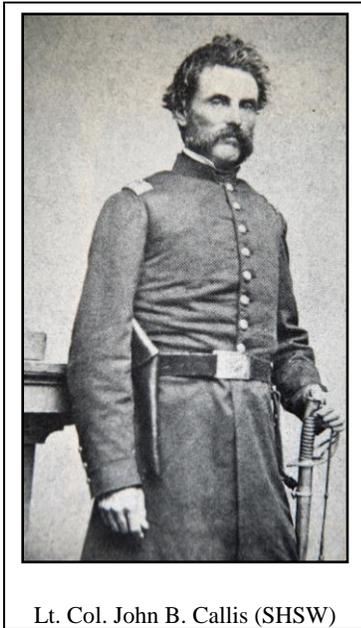
In his declining years, brought on prematurely by the intensity of his wounds, McFarland retained an active set of interests. As was the case with many aging veterans, he wished to perpetuate the memory of the sacrifice of his regiment on the fields of Gettysburg. Elected as the president of the 151st Pennsylvania Regimental Survivors Association, as well as the chairman of the unit's monument committee, George returned to Gettysburg on July 1, 1888, to deliver the keynote address on the occasion of the dedication of the 151st's monument on McPherson Ridge. In his remarks on that occasion, McFarland, ever the teacher, observed:

We can return to our homes, feeling satisfied with our record and grateful to the great state, whose sons we are, for this handsome monument to permanently mark the spot so sacred to us all. These thoughts will serve to soothe the evening of our lives. *But as we fight the battle over with our friends, let us not to forget to impress upon all, especially the young, the great principles for which we fought we fought and suffered.* [emphasis added]⁹

In an attempt to find relief from *his* sufferings, the ailing McFarland travelled to warmer climes, and the 57-year-old died of pneumonia on December 18, 1891, in Tallapoosa, Georgia. His remains were returned to Harrisburg Cemetery for final burial. A "resident acquaintance" of the colonel penned this verse in his memory:

Bright before us shone his record
One of industry and worth,
Kind and patient—thoughtful ever,—
Love for all on Mother Earth.¹⁰

Case 2: Lt. Col. John B. Callis, 7th Wisconsin Infantry



Lt. Col. John B. Callis (SHSW)

Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, on January 3, 1828, John Benton Callis moved to Tennessee at the age of ten, and two years hence to Grant County, Wisconsin. On the frontier the young man pursued some study of medicine, but then turned to mercantile business opportunities until the start of the war. At that time, Callis was a first lieutenant in the Grant County militia. The troops Callis helped raise from that district became Company F of the 7th Wisconsin Infantry, and Callis was ultimately promoted to major on January 5, 1863.¹¹

On July 1, 1863, Callis passed through the morning fighting and bloody afternoon combat in Herbst Woods unscathed. But at approximately 3:30 P.M., after his regiment had fallen back to Seminary Ridge, Callis was shot down, a Minié bullet entering his right side just above his tenth rib, midway between the sternum and the spinal column. After breaking the rib, the ball then passed downward and backward and lodged, presumably, in Callis's lungs. Immediately after being wounded, Callis was taken to the shade of the seminary building by a detail of men from the 7th, under supervision of Captain Martin C. Hobart, also of the 7th Wisconsin. Eventually, for reasons not explained, the major was removed to the north of the railroad cut, and into a clover field, where his

ordeal began in earnest.¹²

Shortly after he was moved, the heat, the flies and the overwhelming realization of the possibility of death began to play on the colonel. His reveries, however, were disrupted by the arrival of the men of the 43rd North Carolina, of Brigadier General Junius Daniel's brigade. As Callis later recalled,

Some of them used me pretty rough, a party of them pulled off one of my boots. I begged them to unbuckle the leather of my spurs as they were tightly buckled around the instep, which made the boots come off hard[.] They did not heed me but pulled and jerked until one boot came off.

Callis was also worked over and relieved of \$220 in cash, most of which was shortly returned to him upon the fortunate appearance of Confederate Colonel Thomas Kenan of the 43rd, who, perhaps from the coincidence of also being from Fayetteville, provided a detail of two soldiers to assist the suffering Union officer. According to the Callis's own account, it was during this time that he was brusquely told that his death was imminent. In an undated letter to Gettysburg historian John Bachelder, Callis stated that during this time he was examined by a physician who then commented to the paroling officer, "You need not parole that officer, he won't live 6 hours."¹³

As a result of this hasty and somewhat erroneous diagnosis, Callis would be left, unaided, on the field for a total of *forty-three* hours, until the return of the Federal forces following the close of the battle. Lying there during that time, Callis continued to cough painfully while exposed to the elements. His fever was broken somewhat by the rain on the evening of July 1, during which time the colonel awaited his fate. Observing the ebb and flow of battle, and conscious enough to determine that the Confederate retreat might mean his death if he were trampled by horses, Callis implored some Confederates to take him to a nearby porch, until he was properly relocated to the home of Dr. J.W.C. O'Neal, in Gettysburg. Here, Callis's convulsive coughing spasms continued, as did his fever. He had developed jaundice as well, and all of these factors contributed to his overall pain. The wound in his side, however, was showing slow signs of improvement. Callis remained at the O'Neal home nearly a month, receiving good care. On

August 2, Callis was transported to the more expansive quarters of the home of Gettysburg postmaster David A. Buehler and his wife, Fannie.

Carried to the third floor, Major Callis was joined by his wife Martha, who had left their six children to be at her ailing husband's bedside. Her appearance and attentions, in addition to his sustained rest, had the beneficial effects desired: by August 12, the entrance wound had healed "and the tenderness nearly absent; liver still hard and slightly enlarged; right lung dull on percussion; appetite good, and general health much improved." The bullet, however, still remained lodged within Callis's body, doing more damage every time he moved. Based upon the fraudulent indicators of improvement, however, this terribly unwell man soon embarked upon a journey home to Wisconsin that nearly killed him.¹⁴

As Callis's train departed Gettysburg, its rocking motion loosened the lodged bullet, prompting a near-fatal bleeding episode. Later, as the train approached Altoona, Pennsylvania, Callis began to expectorate a dark, bitter-tasting fluid, which a doctor there diagnosed as pure bile from his liver. With few options, and the discharge continuing, Callis and his wife resumed their hazardous journey, although Callis by that time was again coughing heavily and repeatedly. The couple arrived in Chicago, travelling on to Boscobel, Wisconsin, where, during a two-week forced suspension of his trip, Callis expelled nearly a quart of blood-tainted green bile from his body. Following this agonizing period, Callis finally reached home. He did not move unassisted again until October 5.¹⁵

Even with all he had endured, however, Callis expressed a desire to return to active service, travelling as far as Washington, D.C., where intense pain forced him again to seek medical aid for bouts of coughing and irregular hemorrhages from the lungs. During one of these episodes, at an officer's hospital in Annapolis, Maryland, on November 16, 1863, "in a paroxysm of coughing," two pieces of dark blue flannel cloth, dragged into his lungs at the moment of his wounding, were finally cast out. Evaluated by physicians again on the November 20 and 26, the initially optimistic diagnosis proved unfounded, and Callis was discharged from the army for disability on December, 28, 1863. His disability was "rated total and permanent," and he was pensioned accordingly. However, on June 20, 1864, Callis received an appointment as a major in the Veteran Reserve Corps, or "Hancock's Corps," as it was also called, at which point his pension was dropped. Donning a uniform again did not affect a cure, but it undoubtedly provided Callis challenges that engaged more of his attention away from his irretrievably damaged body. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in February 1865, and served until mustered out in May 1867, at which time his pension was restored. According to Callis's accounting to Bachelder, his responsibilities then included commanding the 7th Regimental Battery Reserves, as well as being made military superintendent of the War Department at Washington, D.C.¹⁶

One of Callis's proudest moments must have come in 1869, during the return to Gettysburg for the dedication of the Soldiers' National Monument in the Soldiers' National Cemetery. On the staff of General George G. Meade for the ceremonies, Callis recalled that he and Meade visited the area of the first day's battle. When Meade asked why Callis did not stop his regiment's attack against Archer's Confederate brigade when ordered but continued the attack, Callis replied, "It was too late to stop." General Meade then supposedly responded, "It was a very hazardous movement, but it was the most fortunate hazard in the day in this, it stopped the Confederate advance and gave me time to dispose of my troops on Cemetery Ridge, Culps Hill, and Round Top, the impregnable points where the battle was won. Congratulate yourself on that, Col."¹⁷

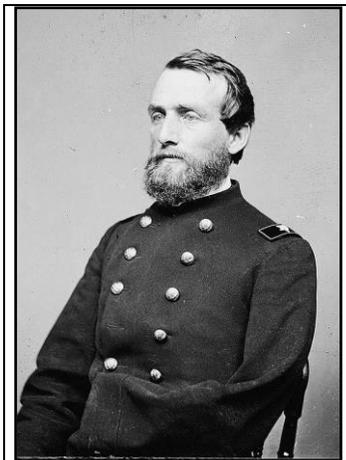
After leaving the volunteer service Callis was commissioned a captain in the 45th U.S. Infantry. His regiment may have been stationed in Alabama for that is where the captain ended up. He left the service in February 1868 and won a seat representing a district in Alabama in the U.S. Congress that same year. However, during this time, his frailties were never far away. A communication from pension examiner C.F. Fulley, dated August 30, 1870, reported that Callis was still subject to:

Hemorrhage from the lungs, and to partial paralysis of the lower extremities. The lower portion of the right lung is consolidated [hardened] and adherent to the pleura [lining of the lung]; the patient is weak and emaciated.

Fulley rated Callis's disability as total. The unfortunate retention of the bullet in Callis's right lung, along with infectious matter introduced at the time of his wounding, prompted recurrent infections in the lungs and chest cavity. As partial recompense for his sufferings, Callis continued to receive pension payments into 1872.¹⁸

Callis returned to Wisconsin in the early 1870's where he performed his last notable public service when he was elected to the State Assembly in 1874. But the increasingly apparent effects resulting from his wounding—periods of partial paralysis of the legs as noted above, in conjunction with the signature hacking coughs, vomiting and bloody pus restricting him to a sick-bed for increasing periods of time—began to take their toll on his health. Ultimately, he eventually required first assistance, then attendance, from his long-suffering wife, Martha, who dutifully fed, dressed and lovingly tended her painfully decaying husband, until his death on September 24, 1898. It had taken some thirty-five years beyond the promised "six hours" following his wounding, but the determined and afflicted Colonel Callis was finally at rest.¹⁹

Case 3: Col. Lucius Fairchild, 2nd Wisconsin Infantry



Col. Lucius Fairchild (LOC)

Another striking case from the first day of the battle involved the wounding of Col. Lucius Fairchild, of the 2nd Wisconsin Infantry. Born in what is now Kent, in Portage County, Ohio, he was educated as a youth in Cleveland, but later participated in the gold rush of 1849, which drew him to California. He returned to Ohio in 1855. In April 1861, his militia unit, the Governor's Guards, was re-titled Company K of the 1st Wisconsin Infantry, though later incorporated as a portion of the 2nd Wisconsin. Fairchild had also sought a regular army commission and on August 5, 1861 he was commissioned captain in the regular army, but he requested and received an open ended leave of absence in order to accept a volunteer commission as lieutenant colonel of the 2nd Wisconsin on August 17, 1861. Following the death of the regiment's colonel in the 2nd Manassas campaign Fairchild was promoted to colonel of the 2nd on September 1, 1862.²⁰

On the morning of July 1, 1863, Colonel Fairchild was badly hit in the upper left arm early on, near the opening of the engagement to the west of town. He was removed to the home of the Rev. Dr. Charles Schaeffer along Chambersburg Street, in whose home his arm was amputated. The loss of the arm, though not in his case a wound that threatened his life as critically as the two cases above, nevertheless directly affected the balance of his life. Fairchild sought recompense for his pain and suffering through achievement for the Union cause. He chose to make his visible loss a rallying cry for the righteous. For even as Fairchild, already a recognized War Democrat in Wisconsin, was beginning his recovery, forces within politics and his personality began to meld, finding a way to reconcile his wounding. Known for his unquestioned patriotism, the colonel entered state politics as the new Union Party candidate for the office of secretary of state in the fall of 1863. Forced by state law to resign his state commission, Fairchild was swiftly appointed by President Lincoln a brigadier general of volunteers. As a campaigner, Fairchild was known to wear his empty sleeve openly, "like the muzzle of a gun"—a quiet, effective and constant reminder of the general's sacrifice. The loss of the arm itself was traumatic enough to bedevil Fairchild with "phantom pains"—cramps and aches in an elbow, wrist, hand and forearm no longer there. He suffered these so painfully that he wrote the Schaeffer family

back in Gettysburg, requesting that they exhume his severed limb and ship it home to him. This they did, and the pains gradually diminished. Even acknowledging the psychosomatic component of this experience, it nonetheless reflects the depth of Fairchild's postwar bitterness in other ways.²¹

From his first successful election to the post of secretary of state, Fairchild went on to serve three successive terms as Wisconsin's governor. He then served a term as U.S. consul to Liverpool and one as consul-general at Paris, topped off in the fall of 1879 as U.S. minister to Spain for two years. However, the attraction he felt for veterans' issues, both economic and political, was never far from him, nor did it separate him from his vision of the Republican Party as "the soldier's party." To that end, it was a natural leap for Fairchild, at the conclusion of his diplomatic career, to set his sights on a higher national office. The cadre of his most vocal supporters was his old Wisconsin friends—but for a national office, Fairchild required a national structure. Thus, in 1886, he struck for, and in August of that year received, the leadership of the nation's most powerful veterans lobby—The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR).²²

The central GAR tenets encapsulated veterans' pride, politics, posturing and pensions. Fairchild himself had been a charter member of the first Wisconsin GAR post, organized in 1866. Now, as the organization's national commander, he unashamedly used the position to assert his views on policies affecting Union veterans. It would not be a good time for Grover Cleveland, the first Democratic president since James Buchanan. Cleveland had purchased his way out of the potential ordeals of combat by buying a substitute (albeit for the honorable purpose of supporting his widowed mother), but nonetheless he lacked the veteran's psyche. A noted fisherman, it was widely reported that the president had actually gone fishing on Memorial Day in 1887. Fairchild travelled across the country, ever more stridently condemning Cleveland's "anti-veteran" and therefore presumably anti-American policies that flouted the will of the GAR, mostly in the form of vetoes of various pension measures.

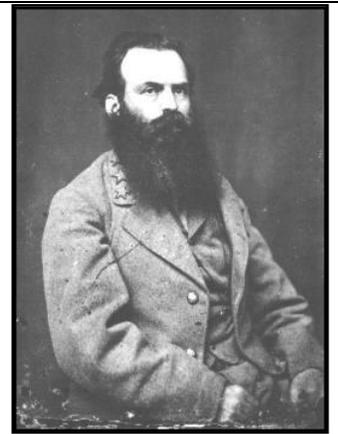
This came to a head in early June 1887, when Cleveland, at the suggestion of Secretary of War William C. Endicott, decided that returning captured Confederate battle flags to their former owners would speed national reconciliation. The resulting firestorm of opposition was a ready-made platform for Fairchild as he attended the meeting of the Alexander Hamilton Post No. 182, located in Harlem, New York, on June 15. There, resolutions severely censuring the president were entertained, and Fairchild was called for. Rebutting the chief executive for the order, Fairchild passionately reminded him and the audience of the cost in human blood that the captured flags represented. Angrily, he inquired, "How can the present loyal Governors of the Southern States accept emblems of treason after their profession of loyalty to the Union?"

He further declaimed, "Must they not return them to the Secretary and say that they have nothing to do with the flags, as the rebel organizations are extinct?" As he continued, Fairchild made plain his belief that the administration's policy of reunion had changed, and it must now be the responsibility of the GAR to speak out against the executive branch's *de facto* recognition of such disloyalty, even treason. In the midst of this emotional whirlwind, fueled by the enraptured awe of the aging veterans gazing upon him, the "old Colonel's" voice rose with anger, until Fairchild fairly thundered, "May God palsy the hand that wrote the order! May God palsy the brain that conceived it! And may God palsy the tongue that dictated it!" Raising his right hand, the one-armed hero of Gettysburg intoned, "I appeal to the sentiment of the nation to forbid this sacrilege." In response, the old soldiers roared their approval, as their old battle cry rang throughout the hall. Many in the crowd surged forward to shake the remaining hand of their commander.²³

Fairchild successfully ignited a firestorm that night, in what would forever be remembered as the "Palsies Speech." Although it had its desired effect in getting the order rescinded, shortly after this speech Fairchild sought to put some distance between himself and his words, describing them as "the bitter words that the Good Lord put into my mouth." But the damage was done; one journalist referred to him thereafter as "the Fairchild of the three palsies." Following this incident, a series of decisions, from a variety of quarters, directed that Fairchild moderate his political rhetoric. As time passed, he retained an active interest in politics and veterans issues, and increasingly, in the various historical societies that

enshrined for him the sacred mythologies of an intertwined God and Union. However, the “Palsies Speech” had perhaps been for him his cathartic high point, which had allowed an open expression of outrage against what had once been done to his country, and personally, to him, at Gettysburg. He recovered, and lived quite a full life, in some ways in part *because* of the crippling hand that Fate had dealt him on that July day. His particular brand of “Red-Shirt” politics became, in a way and for a time, an outlet for many who felt as he did in the post-war era. When he passed, on May 23, 1896, his funeral was the largest ever staged in Wisconsin.²⁴

Case 4: Brigadier-General James L. Kemper, CSA



Brig. Gen. James Kemper
(CWLM)

General James L. Kemper made his mark in antebellum America as a state politician. His pre-war military experience had been as a captain of Virginia volunteers in the Mexican War. Apart from this brief period in the volunteer army Kemper pursued a career as an attorney and politician, serving five terms in the Virginia House of Delegates, where he displayed a keen interest in military matters. He promptly volunteered for Confederate service at the beginning of the war and by June 1862 was promoted to brigadier general and command of an infantry brigade. In Longstreet’s assault on July 3 he suffered a grievous wound (a bullet struck him in the groin and traveled up into his body) that was believed to be mortal and he was left behind with the seriously wounded when the army withdrew to Virginia. By September, however, he was still alive, and was exchanged for Union Gen. Charles Graham.²⁵

Following his repatriation, Kemper was deemed unfit for active field command due to his wound. Nevertheless, he was able to assume the less arduous duty of commanding Virginia’s reserve forces, which he led to the end of the war. The ball that wounded him at Gettysburg was never removed, and Kemper suffered groin pain as a result for the remainder of his life. This no doubt affected the general’s perspective on the battle and the war, much as Colonel Fairchild’s wounding had affected him, albeit in a different direction. Witness this response to an inquiry from John Bachelder in November 1865:

As for Col. Bachelder, I doubt not he tries to compile an honest history ... but I nevertheless respectfully decline acceding to his request. It is obvious that 99/100ths of his material is drawn from northern sources; that the great body of facts on the Confederate side must of necessity be excluded because unknown and inaccessible to him; [and therefore] any such prominence of my command in a northern version of the Battle of Gettysburg would bear too much resemblance to the exhibition of the captives behind the triumphal car of The Roman Emperor to suit either my taste or my principles.²⁶

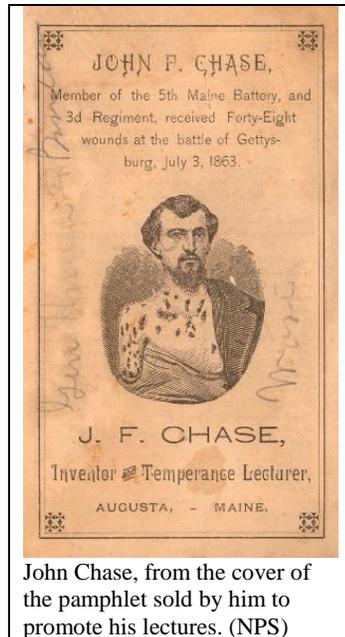
Kemper’s “taste and principles” ultimately drew him back into politics, however, as he canvassed the state for Horace Greeley and the Democrats in the 1872 elections. Later, he served as Virginia’s governor from 1874 to 1878. In this position, he urged expanded civil rights for black citizens—an acknowledgement by the former Confederate general that things had changed in the Old Dominion as a result of the war. This attitude extended to the historical record about the Battle of Gettysburg as well. While his personal pain remained a constant reminder of the war, his attitude about it and his former adversaries mellowed over time.

By 1886, Kemper even began conversing with Colonel Bachelder. He closed one letter as follows:

I beg you to notify me if I have failed to answer any of your enquiries intelligibly and explicitly enough, and I beg you will not construe any word of this letter to the prejudice of any of our Confederate comrades.²⁷

In his post-political period, Kemper was much in demand as an orator. He also returned to his law practice in Orange County, Virginia. It was there he died, on April 7, 1895, aged 71 years.²⁸

Case 5: Private John F. Chase, 5th Maine Battery



John Chase, from the cover of the pamphlet sold by him to promote his lectures. (NPS)

John F. Chase, a cannoneer with Captain Greenleaf T. Stevens' 5th Maine Battery, had already distinguished himself at the Battle of Chancellorsville, where his determination in the face of the enemy eventually garnered him the Medal of Honor. At Gettysburg, he would be put to an even greater test. Chase later claimed that he had heeded a call to conversion the evening before his wounding, writing, "When I arose from my knees I was a very different boy than I was when I knelt down; all darkness & doubts had disappeared."²⁹

Chase's new-found faith was soon put to a severe test. Positioned on July 2 with his battery on a small rise of ground northwest of Culp's Hill, two guns of the 5th were returning fire against Confederate artillery on Benner's Hill when a shell Chase was loading exploded prematurely. The force of the blast tore off Chase's right arm at the elbow, lacerated his chest and shoulders with forty-eight wounds, and took out his right eye. He was believed too far gone to save and was carried to the rear to die. He lay there, untreated, for two days. He later claimed to have undergone a vivid out-of-body experience during that time:

"I am no believer in Spiritualism, only the spirit or part that never dies that God gives to each one of us ... The body was dead but that part that never dies, the spirit, was hovering over the body. I looked down at the body and could see just how I was wounded, how my clothing was blown away from my body just as plain as I see you today."³⁰

Two days following the battle, Chase, thought to be a corpse, revived as others nearby were being loaded aboard carts for burial. His first words reportedly were, "Did we win the battle?" Informed they had, he was then taken to the Nathaniel Lightner farm barn on the Baltimore Pike, where it was yet expected that he would die. As things calmed a bit, Chase was ultimately moved to the Lutheran Seminary, where it was still touch and go for some time. At one point, with death apparently looming, Chase was once more set outside to die, but rallied. Following a stay at the seminary of some three months, he was shipped to the West Philadelphia Hospital for more complete examination and treatment.³¹

In November, the head surgeon there examined Chase and certified a three-quarter disability rendering him unfit for further service, including service in the Veteran Reserve Corps. He was discharged on November 25, 1863, and returned to Augusta, Maine, to attempt to rebuild his life.

Chase's medical problems plagued him throughout the remainder of his life. An examination six years after his wounding reported a number of related problems. Fitted with a glass eye in his right socket, he reported considerable pain in the right side of his head, while the vision in his remaining eye was impaired. The stump of his arm was reported as quite painful, and his right chest area was described as

“one vast, oozing scar.” Perhaps his most serious lingering problem remained a shortness of breath, caused by heavy amounts of scar tissue in his right lung.

On February 5, 1864, Chase was granted a pension of \$8 per month, to date from the date of his discharge. That pension was increased to \$15 in June 1866 and to \$20 in April 1869, following thorough medical examinations. Despite his serious physical discomforts, Chase approached life with vigor.³² During the years 1884 to 1886, he served two terms as a messenger in the Maine State House of Representatives. While on its face, this does not sound like much, it provided Chase a patronage job that brought him into contact with many legislators who voted or who had leverage on pension issues. His pension, therefore, would over the years be raised to \$46 per month. He needed the funds, for he had married, and by 1884 was raising seven children! To further sustain his family, Chase became an inventor. A creative man he eventually held claim to 47 patents, the most well known of which for a “collapsible ladies hoop-skirt and bustle combination.” Additionally, by April 1888, Chase had become a guest “delineator,” or guide, at the Brooklyn Paul Philippoteaux Cyclorama of the Battle of Gettysburg.³³

All these activities kept Chase active prior to the great Florida “Land Boom,” which enticed him to move south in 1895. There, he busied himself in speculation and promotion, bought a steamboat, and tried unsuccessfully to build a power station and streetcar lines in connection with his “Veteran City” housing development project at St. Petersburg. His interest in land development did not slow his inventiveness; it was in 1909 that he recorded his final patent, for the “Chase Aero,” a new flying machine.³⁴



John Chase (at left) with fellow veterans of his battery at the 5th Maine Battery at their battery’s monument on Steven’s Knoll at Gettysburg, October 1889. (NPS)

While patenting one possible way to get high, he, like George McFarland, was also given over to temperance work. He spoke on it often to veterans, frequently weaving his conclusion together, saying, “Comrades, now for a more sublime victory over a foe which threatens our liberties and all the institutions which alone can make our country great. Let us close up the ranks and move on in a solid column until our flag floats over a temperate and happy people. This is heroism, indeed.”³⁵

John Chase died in St. Petersburg, Florida, on November 17, 1914, at the age of 71, some fifty-one years following his terrible wounding at Gettysburg. His was an experience that would have left

many men completely shattered, but Chase, sustained by pensions and publicity, and possessed with creativity and a positive attitude, had both endured and prospered.³⁶

These five Gettysburg wounded represent those veterans who were able, although with differing levels of success, to re-integrate themselves into society. Others found the transition difficult or impossible to achieve, or they did not survive long enough to have a chance to transition back into society. In either case their wounds and subsequent suffering inflicted a fair amount of misery upon those around them. The unhappy story of Charles Wendell and George Deichler below, represent the damage wrought upon families and the slow, painful and lingering decline experienced by many wounded.

Case 6: Corporal Charles Wendell, 26th Pennsylvania Infantry

Charles Wendell was born to poverty in the Philadelphia almshouse on March 24, 1839. He and his unwed mother, Rachael Lloyd, were very close—she was a “tailoress.” His work as a laborer brought in the majority of the family’s meager income. When Charles enlisted in the 26th Pennsylvania Infantry on May 28, 1861, he reliably sent the bulk of his pay home to his mother through the regiment’s chaplain, Charles Beck.³⁷

During the fighting on July 2 in the Peach Orchard, Corporal Wendell was wounded twice—once in the leg and once in the abdomen. He was found on the field two days later and taken to the hospital at 24th and South Streets in Philadelphia. His mother presumably went to see him, as the distance between their home at 1915 Wilcox Street and the hospital was only about two miles, a 35-minute walk if one chose not to take a horse car. It was in the hospital, exactly one month later, that Charles died, with the official cause of death being listed as “[c]ontusion over liver and stomach.” As unfortunate as the case of poor Corporal Wendell was, he at least was blessed with a relatively short span of post-battle suffering. On August 4, Wendell was buried in the Union Methodist Cemetery. Now more alone than ever, and bereft of income, Rachel applied for a dependent’s benefit on her dead son in October.³⁸

For a heartbroken single mother, the strong faith she had once shared with her son no doubt sustained her as she went about gathering the necessary details of his service and his death to qualify for a pension. She needed a bewildering array of documentation:

1. Her declaration, by affidavit, and other affidavits, showing that she was Wendell’s mother, that she had never married, that Wendell had left no widow or children, and that she depended upon his income
2. The attorney general’s report listing Wendell’s muster-in as a private on June 4, 1861
3. A second report showing his promotion to the rank of corporal
4. A notation showing that Wendell had died from wounds received in action, as well as the surgeon general’s report stating that he had died Aug. 2, 1863, of “contusion over liver and stomach”³⁹

These documents were all acquired and submitted in the fall of 1863. With thousands of like cases already in the hopper from previous battles, in addition to those from the Gettysburg and Vicksburg campaigns just past, the wheels of bureaucracy turned exceedingly slowly. Rachel Lloyd’s dependent’s pension was not approved until April 26, 1864. She received \$8 per month for the loss of her son. In the intervening time before her pension payments began, a locally commissioned song sheet composed “by special request” was advertised and sold to raise money to help her get by. A mother’s private grief, of necessity, thus became an item available for a very public consumption.

“Let Me Die at Home”

On the death of Charles J. Wendell, 26th Regiment P. V. By special request.

Written by A. ANDERSON, *Phila.*, Oct. 1863. TUNE—*Farewell, 'tis a lonely sound.*

A noble youth of twenty-four,
In battle without fear,
At Gettysburg a wound received
Which ended his career.

Two days near by the battle field,
He laid upon the ground,
With wounds undressed in agony,
When by his comrades found.

Oft in the silence of the night,
When wounded and alone,
This oft repeated prayer, Dear Lord,
“O let me die at home.”

The soldier and the Christian’s prayer
Was answered “Thy will be done;”
His comrades listened while he prayed,
“O let me die at home.”

Weep not for me, my mother dear,
For me your only son;
Wounded they bring me now to thee,
I’ve come to die at home.

Soon now I’ll pass death’s stormy tide,
Most calmly now I swoon;
Now fallen in my country’s cause,
I’ll rise to heaven my home.

My last battle I have fought,
With me the storm is o’er,
Farewell, dear mother and my friends,
Charles Wendell is no more.

It is unrecorded whether Corporal Wendell was literally permitted to “die at home,” since his primary wound to the abdomen was no doubt considered untreatable. If the lyrics of his memorial song are to be believed, perhaps he was granted that comfort. As for his bereft mother, the census of 1870 showed Rachel Lloyd residing at 1908 Wilcox Street in Philadelphia, apparently still on assistance.⁴⁰

Case 7: Corporal George Deichler, 69th Pennsylvania Infantry



George Deichler enlisted in the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry on August 29, 1861, a largely all-Irish regiment from Philadelphia. Deichler varied from the typical profile of a soldier in the regiment. He was from Lancaster, Pennsylvania and he was not Irish. But he was a good soldier and was promoted to the rank of corporal six months later. During the third day's fight at the Angle at Gettysburg, Deichler was painfully and dangerously wounded by a bullet that struck him in the left groin. The wound kept him out of action for a number of months following. He was a determined man, however, and returned to the ranks in 1864. At the Battle of Ream's Station, Virginia, on August 25, 1864, he was again seriously wounded, by a bullet in his knee and a shell fragment in his head. He required six months of convalescence to recover from this double trauma before returning to the regiment in March 1865. When he did, he was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, shortly before the Second Battle of Hatcher's Run, where he was once again hit—this time in the lower portion of the ascending colon. As the bullet penetrated Deichler's torso, it blew out an exit hole "a little to the left of the last dorsal vertebra." This wound finished Deichler's military career. His

captain, Joseph Garrett, observed, "I considered it serious as the fluids and other matter was coming [sic] out from the Bowels." Deichler received a medical discharge, and in August 1865, began receiving a pension of \$17 per month. It was then, after this superior service to his country that George Deichler's troubles really began.⁴¹

At an unknown time after leaving the service, Deichler moved to Indianapolis, Indiana. On July 26, 1875, he married Annie E. McDougal, but their union would last a mere six years. Deichler's Gettysburg wound may have contributed to that failure, in combination with his drinking; no doubt he imbibed as a remedy for his war-induced pains. Annie, attempting to balance the family books, found other jobs and was reduced to taking in boarders. Eventually, in early June 1881, George simply left the house and returned to Lancaster, where he lived with his father.

Approximately a year following Deichler's return home, he attempted some light work through employment with Davis Kitch, the man contracted with the city to light the streetlights. He began his work July 1, 1882, but quit the position several days afterwards, finding himself "unable to stand the fatigue of walking and exertion incident to such employment." Given the combination of wounds suffered, Deichler simply was not up for further work, even light work. Kitch stated in an affidavit that he did "not know of any lighter or easier employment than lighting lamps, and he [Deichler] was utterly unfitted for that work."⁴²

An insight as to the nature of Deichler's "unfitness" is provided through a statement he submitted in December 1888, requesting an increase in his pension:

I'm nervous have continual pain inside of my body, my wounds of knee and groin pain me. Cannot hold my water any more, it depresses(?) me. Had an operation three years ago, [unintelligible]. No sexual desire any more. Never had children. Never sick during war. Have been laid up during last year from pains and nervous.⁴³

Deichler's pension increase requests, based on material as submitted above, were routinely denied. In 1894, it was observed by his examining surgeon that Deichler "seems demented and melancholic," that he was "a pale, tremulous man," with a "mind enfeebled." Five years later, on

February 24, 1899, this enfeebled man, whose road to decline began at Gettysburg, finally succumbed to pneumonia. Deichler was only 60 years old, yet he had lived longer than the medicine of the day suggested that he should, or that a benign fate should have encouraged.⁴⁴

Of course, Deichler's case was by far not the only such "march to misery," North or South. One example from the Confederate side of the field was that of Pvt. Henry C. Miller, of the 8th South Carolina Infantry. Born on June 8, 1839, in Darlington, South Carolina, Miller was wounded twice on July 2, advancing "into a hot fire." The first shot, a rifle ball, tore off his first (trigger?) finger. Upon seeing this, an officer directed him to return to the rear. Miller refused. "No, sir," he responded. "They will call me a coward if I go back for *that*." A few seconds later, a shell fragment from a Union gun took off his arm "clear and clean" below the shoulder. Caught by another soldier as he fell, he was heard to state, "I will go back now, but I would rather lose my arm than be called a coward." What happened to Miller immediately following this trauma is unclear, though it most likely mirrored the experiences of thousands of other cruelly mangled men following the battle. It is known that Miller did survive—to die in 1897 at the relatively young age of 55 in a poorhouse in Traveler's Rest, South Carolina. Like George Deichler, he had returned home and found survival in his altered state a difficult go. Add to that the additional difficulties imposed by wartime strain and postwar defeat, life in the sparse, pension-less South became nearly unsustainable for many wounded men. What a difference those few extra seconds of bravery and bravado made!⁴⁵

Another casualty from the 8th South Carolina involved Lt. George Bozeman, who was struck in the head by a canister ball from a Napoleon during the advance. The ball penetrated Bozeman's ear and lodged under the bones of his head. Upon seeing this, another officer went to the surgeons and begged that something be done for him. They responded, "Lt. Bozeman is mortally wounded and must die today. We can't help him; we are trying to help those who may live."⁴⁶

On the morning of July 4, the Confederate wounded who could be moved were placed in wagons and hurried off toward Williamsport, Maryland. Among them was George Bozeman. The surgeons there had more time to examine the serious cases, and one of them began to probe for the ball in Bozeman's head. After several efforts with his forceps, he drew from Bozeman's ear a "grape shot" weighing ten ounces. Bozeman, like the good soldier he was, returned to duty upon his recovery, and then remained with the army until the surrender. He lived for many years thereafter, raising "a large family of good citizens." The canister ball, now bearing marks of extracting forceps, was kept by Bozeman as his personal Gettysburg souvenir.⁴⁷

Following the Battle of Gettysburg, the estimated 26,000 suffering men who had "borne the battle" had been changed forever, in ways both seen and unseen. As they dispersed and made their way in the world as best they could, their presence reflected a portion of the broader impact of the conflict upon the nation. A section of one postwar editorial, entitled "The Maimed Soldier," by John H. Martin, which appeared in the Columbus (Ga.) *Daily Enquirer*, on December 3, 1866, gave only an approximation of this impact:

Reader, do you see the empty sleeve hanging from that man's shoulder? You do, and you can see a great many more such, too. —Well,—the arm which once filled that sleeve will never more swing an axe, nor handle a hat, nor even so much as lift a morsel of food to its owner's mouth. The very meat upon his plate has to be cut for him. Do you see another man slowly & painfully hobbling over the ground with a crutch or a wooden leg? You see him too. Well,—that man will never more follow a plow, nor reap a field of wheat, nor do anything else for a livelihood which requires active physical exertion.⁴⁸

Emotional Wounds

But a battlefield trauma, whether life-threatening or merely life-altering, many times left its sufferers with wounds that were as often mental as physical. This fact was poorly understood by the physicians of the day, and subsequently their treatments for the psychological damages inflicted by combat were shallow and insufficient. While one may readily imagine the physical scarring that accompanied the wounding of any the soldiers described above, one cannot but imagine the psychological effects that accompanied exposure to such ghastly wounds, either their own or those experienced nearby, perhaps repetitively. Three cases, taken from the literature of the Battle of Gettysburg, will serve to illustrate this point.

A notable fatality in Captain James B. Cooper's 1st Pennsylvania Battery B, was recorded in grisly detail by Colonel Charles Wainwright. During the bombardment against East Cemetery Hill on the afternoon of July 2, the Colonel described a man was "so badly blown to pieces ... with ribs so broken open that you could see right into him." Another grotesque visual description came from the pen of Confederate captive John Dooley, wrote of "a poor wounded Confederate walking up and down, wandering anywhere his cracked brain directs him. Just on top of his head *and penetrating into his brain is a large opening into which I might insert my hand* [emphasis added]."⁴⁹

The final horrific image was contributed by Col. Edward P. Alexander, who described a particular moment from July 3:

One of the pictures of the war, stamped in my memory [emphasis added], is one of Kemper's men, whose entire mouth & chin was carried away by one of those flanking shots. I came upon him, sitting up in a fence corner, as I was advancing the guns I had gotten together towards the right flank of the column. We had to halt while the cannoners threw down gaps in the fence for the guns to go through, & as I halted my horse, this poor fellow looked up at me, & I even noted powder smut from the ball showing on the white skin of the cheek.⁵⁰

Although only three examples are noted above, they, like others, so rose above the standard level of battlefield pain and suffering to receive a special notice for gruesomeness by their chroniclers. Wounds of this sort, with enough power to claim the memories and command the pens of battlefield veterans, no doubt had a collective effect upon something of the psyche of those who witnessed so much suffering. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was quite unknown at that time, yet its symptoms afflicted a great number of battle veterans, both those who had been wounded and those who appeared to have survived the stresses of combat physically unscathed.

In his Second Inaugural Address, President Lincoln had called upon the nation to "care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." That would be a tall order, given the devastation that had taken place, and in which the Battle of Gettysburg had played such a prominent part. In many cases, however, the sufferings of the psychologically wounded soldiers would be borne alone, for the vast majority of medical literature of the era propounded the popular theory of "dualism," which taught that the mind and the body were held to be two completely separate systems. One pioneering physician who rejected that belief was Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, working at the Turner's Lane Hospital in Philadelphia. He discarded dualism in favor of a paradigm that sought to explain how the physical and emotional were connected as a unified whole. It was an important advance, and had it been widely embraced, many of these poor souls, wounded as they were, would have received better treatment. As it was, a great many were left untreated to wander through the years following the war, to be dealt with by relatives, the state, or law enforcement. Because of the failure to accurately categorize these men as medically damaged casualties of battle, their connections cannot now be adequately established; yet rest assured that a significant (though unknown) number of men left the Gettysburg battlefield suffering

crippling after-effects of combat as surely as if they had been struck by a projectile. They were as recognized in post-war society as other disabled soldiers, yet were much more misunderstood. Their type would be represented accurately in the literature of the post-war period, however. One such example is the poem “Whisperin’ Bill”, which clearly showed a connection between the mind and body.⁵¹

“Whisperin’ Bill”

By Irving Bacheller, v. 1, 6-14.

So you’re taking the census, mister? there’s three of us living still,
My wife an’ I, an’ our only son, that folks call Whisperin’ Bill;
But Bill couldn’t tell you his name sir, an’ so it’s hardly worth givin’,
For you see a bullet killed his mind and left his body livin’.

Oh, his comrades have often told me that Bill never flinched a bit
When every second a gap in the ranks told where a ball had hit.
An’ one night when the field was covered with the awful harvest o’ war,
They found my boy ‘mongst the martyrs o’ the cause he was fightin’ for.

His fingers was clutched in the dewy grass—Oh, no, sir, he wasn’t dead,
But he lay sort o’ helpless an’ crazy with a rifle-ball in his head;
An’ if Billy had really died that night I’d give all I’ve got worth givin’;
For you see the bullet has killed his mind an’ left his body livin’.

An officer wrote an’ told us how the boy had been hurt in the fight,
But he said that the doctors reckoned they could bring him around all right.
An’ then we heard from a neighbor, disabled at Malvern Hill,
That he thought in the course of a week or so he’d be comin’ home with Bill.

I’ll never forgit the day Bill come—‘twas harvest time again—
An’ the air blown over the yellow fields was sweet with the scent o’ the grain;
The dooryard was full o’ the neighbors who had come to share our joy,
An’ all of us sent up a mighty cheer at the sight o’ that soldier boy.

An’ all of a sudden somebody said; “Alas! don’t the boy know his mother?”
An’ Bill stood a-whisperin’, fearful like, an’ a-starin’ from one to another;
“Don’t be afraid, Bill,” said he to himself, as he stood in his coat o’ blue,
“Why, God’ll take care o’ you, Bill, God’ll take care o’ you.”

He seemed to be loadin’ an’ firin’ a gun, an’ to act like a man who hears
The awful roar o’ the battlefield a-soundin’ in his ears;
I saw that the bullet had touched his brain and somehow made it blind,
With the picture of war before his eyes an’ the fear o’ death in his mind.

I grasped his hand, an’ says I to Bill, “Don’t ye ‘member me?
I’m yer father—don’t ye know me? How frightened ye seem to be!”
But the boy kept a-whisperin’ to himself, as if ‘twas all he knew,
“God’ll take care o’ you, Bill, God’ll take care o’ you.”

He's never known us since that day, nor his sweetheart, an' never will;
Father an' Mother an' sweetheart are all the same to Bill.
An' many's the time his mother sits up the whole night through,
An' smooths his head an' says: "Yes, Bill, God will take care of you."

Unfortunite? Yes, but we can't complain. It's a livin' death more sad
When the body clings to a life of shame an' the soul has gone to the bad;
An' Bill is out o' reach o' harm and danger of every kind,
We only take care of his body, but God takes care of his mind.⁵²

While overdrawn a touch merely for lyrical emphasis, one is still yet forced to concede the parallels in this story to the damage done to the likes of a George Deichler, a Henry C. Miller, or countless, nameless others. The psychological damage done at Gettysburg, and left to metastasize on other fields, would bear bitter fruit for a great many.⁵³

As has been demonstrated by this shallow survey of sufferers, all sorts of lives were changed by the misfortune of having been wounded in battle. The desire to survive is a strong one, and while not all were able to do so comfortably, all did what they could. In little-known stories of painful, post-battle heroism, many were able, in some measure, to overcome what cruel Fate had done to them, but many, likewise, found it difficult. The losses of arms, legs, eyes, or faculties, multiplied so many times over, were not so much "losses" as they were thefts—of national resources in a developing country. To borrow a theme from Dwight Eisenhower in his famous "Cross of Iron" speech, these disabling thefts served, in a greater sense, to rob the country of its laborers, and to break the hopes of its children. A staggering amount of that work was done in the fields of Gettysburg, with lasting and pitiable consequences. To the wounded men themselves, whatever else lay in the future, their memories of Gettysburg forever held a past so fraught with sorrow.⁵⁴

Endnotes

¹ Allen Nevins, ed., *A Diary of Battle; The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright, 1861- 1865* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 527.

² Gregory A. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land—Gettysburg: The Aftermath of a Battle* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1995), 236.

³ "Colonel McFarland's Diary Reveals War-School Career," *Gettysburg Times*, June 27, 1941 (Gettysburg: Gettysburg National Military Park Library [GNMPL] File V6-PA-151); Samuel P. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-5: Prepared in Compliance With Acts of the Legislature by Samuel P. Bates* (Harrisburg: B. Singerly, State Printer, 1870), 8:681. It is worth noting that Samuel Bates, a family friend of McFarland's, claims that he underwent two amputations, indicating that the first was so badly done that it had to be corrected. Michael A. Dreese, *An Imperishable Fame: The Civil War Experience of George Fisher McFarland* (Mifflintown, Pa.: Juniata County Historical Society, 1997), 143.

⁴ Dreese, *Imperishable Fame*, 143, 139.

⁵ All diary entries from Dreese, *Imperishable Fame*, 144-147.

⁶ "Colonel McFarland's Diary Reveals War-School Career" (GNMPL File V6-PA-151); Dreese, *Imperishable Fame*, 164.

⁷ Dreese, *Imperishable Fame*, 177-178

⁸ *Ibid.*; "Colonel McFarland's Diary Reveals War-School Career" (GNMPL File V6-PA-151); Michael A. Dreese, *Torn Families: Death and Kinship at the Battle of Gettysburg* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2007), 83.

-
- ⁹ John P. Nicholson, ed., *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg: Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments Erected to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Wm. Stanley Ray, State Printer, 1914), 2:770.
- ¹⁰ Dreese, *Imperishable Fame*, 169; Dreese, *Torn Families*, 84; “Colonel McFarland’s Diary Reveals War-School Career” (GNMPL File V6-PA-151).
- ¹¹ Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the U.S Army, 1789-1903* (Gaithersburg, MD: Olde Soldiers Books Inc., 1988), 275.
- ¹² Joseph K. Barnes, ed., *The Medical and Surgical History of The War of The Rebellion* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876), 8:584-585; David and Audrey Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers* (Dayton, Oh.: Morningside Press, 1994), 1:142.
- ¹³ Ladd and Ladd, 1:142-144; Walter E. Clark, ed., *Histories of The Several Regiments and Battalions From North Carolina in The Great War, Written by Members of the Respective Commands* (Goldsboro, N.C.: Nash Brothers, 1901), 5:611-615.
- ¹⁴ Barnes, *Surgical History*, 585.
- ¹⁵ Ladd and Ladd, 1:144; Dreese, *Torn Families*, 88; Barnes, *Surgical History*, 585.
- ¹⁶ Barnes, *Surgical History*, 585; Ladd and Ladd, 1:145.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.* Either Callis sought to bolster his reputation in the history of the battle or his memory was dreadful. He did not command the attack upon Archer, General Meredith did, and neither did he command the 7th Wisconsin. That was Colonel W. W. Robinson. Finally, there were no orders to stop the attack against Archer which proved highly successful.
- ¹⁸ Roger Long, “A Gettysburg Encounter,” *Gettysburg Magazine* 7 (July 1992), 117; Barnes, *Surgical History*, 585.
- ¹⁹ Dreese, *Torn Families*, 88-89.
- ²⁰ Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the U.S Army, 1789-1903* (Gaithersburg, MD: Olde Soldiers Books Inc., 1988), 412; Sam Ross, *The Empty Sleeve: A Biography of Lucius Fairchild* (Madison, Wis.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin 1964), 3-48, *passim*.
- ²¹ Gregory A. Coco, *A Vast Sea of Misery: A History and Guide to the Union and Confederate Field Hospitals at Gettysburg, July 1 – November 20, 1863* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1988), 40; Ross, *The Empty Sleeve*, 51-53. The Union Party was the Republican Party. Lincoln renamed it for the 1864 election so that what the party stood for was more apparent to the voter.
- ²² Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War National Headquarters, “Grand Army of the Republic General Lucius Fairchild Commander-in-Chief 1886/1887,” <http://suvchw.org/garcinc/fairchild.htm> (accessed November 10, 2010); Ross, *The Empty Sleeve*, 202-204.
- ²³ Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of The Republic, 1865 – 1900* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 15; Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War National Headquarters; Ross, *The Empty Sleeve*, 206-208.
- ²⁴ Ross, *The Empty Sleeve*, 208-209, 226.
- ²⁵ Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 169-170;
- ²⁶ Ladd and Ladd, 1:224. Bachelder was not a colonel. This was an honorary title by which he was frequently addressed or referred to.
- ²⁷ Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 170; Ladd and Ladd, 2:1191-1192.
- ²⁸ Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 170.
- ²⁹ John F. Chase, “Reprint of a Speech by Capt. J. F. Chase, of St. Petersburg, Fl., Before a Meeting of The United Veterans of the Blue and the Gray at the G.A.R. Hall, St. Petersburg, Fla., February 27, 1906,” (Gettysburg: GNMPL Vertical File 5-ME-AR).
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ Chase, “Reprint”; Coco, *A Vast Sea*, 81.
- ³² Fred Hawthorne, “John Chase of the 5th Maine Battery,” *The Battlefield Dispatch* (July 1999), 5.
- ³³ *Ibid.*; “With Forty-Eight Wounds,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1886, in GNMPL Vertical File 6-ME5-ART.
- ³⁴ Hawthorne, “John Chase,” 6.
- ³⁵ Text taken from “*Extracts from remarks made by J. F. Chase, at the Memorial Services at the Norridgenock, as taken from the Somerset Reporter;*” flier in the GETT museum collection, GETT 00006187.
- ³⁶ Chase, “Reprint”; Hawthorne, “John Chase,” 6.
- ³⁷ Service and Pension Record of Charles J. Wendell (Gettysburg: GNMPL Vertical File 6-PA-26.)
-

-
- ³⁸ Ibid. While the surgeon general's report states "liver and stomach," his military death certificate only states "contusion over liver." The author utilized maps of war-time Philadelphia to estimate travel times.
- ³⁹ Service and Pension Record of Charles J. Wendell (Gettysburg: GNMPL Vertical File 6-PA-26.)
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers*, 4:734, Barnes, *Surgical History*, 9:77; D. Scott Hartwig, "Casualties of War: The Effects of the Battle of Gettysburg Upon the Men and Families of the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment," in Barbara J. Finfrock, ed., *Unsung Heroes of Gettysburg* (Gettysburg: Gettysburg National Military Park, 1996), 10-11.
- ⁴² Hartwig, "Casualties of War," *Unsung Heroes of Gettysburg*, 11.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ "He was a Hero if a Pauper," *Confederate Veteran Magazine* 5 (October, 1897), 521; Family Pedigree Resource File, Compact Disc # 85, PIN # 100710, (Church of the Latter-Day Saints.)
- ⁴⁶ W. E. James, "Some Experiences of the Battle of Gettysburg," *The Darlington News and Press*, June 11, 1908, (Gettysburg: GNMPL Vertical File 7-8SC).
- ⁴⁷ Ibid
- ⁴⁸ *Daily Enquirer* (Columbus, GA) December 3, 1866, GNMPL, File V7-GA-20.
- ⁴⁹ Nevins, *Diary of Battle*, 243; Joseph T. Durkin, ed., *John Dooley, Confederate Soldier: His War Journal* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), 112.
- ⁵⁰ Gary Gallagher, ed., *Fighting For the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 262.
- ⁵¹ R. Gregory Lande, *Madness, Malingering and Malfeasance: The Transformation of Psychiatry and the Law in the Civil War Era* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2003), 172-174.
- ⁵² W. J. Beecher, compiler, *Poems of Peace and War* (Dansville, New York., Alta E. Owens Publishing, 1910), 90-93.
- ⁵³ Another groundbreaking work in the fairly specialized area of post-traumatic stress in Civil War soldiers is Eric T. Dean's *Shook Over Hell* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), which although it doesn't specifically address cases relating to the Battle of Gettysburg, has much relevant information on the subject of Civil War post-traumatic stress.
- ⁵⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "The Chance For Peace," delivered before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1953. <http://informationclearinghouse.info/article/9743.htm> . (Accessed 2/15/2010.)