

## Reveille Dedication

### To the Fallen at Franklin

“It was four o’clock on that dark and dismal....day when the line of battle was formed, and those devoted heroes were ordered forward, to

*‘Strike for their altars and their fires,’  
For the green graves of their sires,  
For God and their native land.’*

As they marched on down through an open field toward the rampart of blood and death, the Federal batteries began to open and mow and gather into the garner of death, as brave, and good, and pure spirits as the world ever saw....A sheet of fire was poured into our very faces, and for a moment we halted as if in despair, as the terrible avalanche of shot and shell laid low those brave and gallant heroes, whose bleeding wounds attested that the struggle would be desperate. Forward, men! The air loaded with death-dealing missiles. Never on this earth did men fight against such terrible odds. It seemed that the very elements of heaven and earth were in one mighty uproar. Forward, men! And the blood spurts in a perfect jet from the dead and wounded. The earth is red with blood. It runs in streams, making little rivulets as it flows....The death-angel shrieks and laughs and old Father Time is busy with his sickle, as he gathers in the last harvest of death, crying, ‘More, more, more!’ while his rapacious maw is glutted with the slain.” (Excerpted from *Co. Aytch* by Sam R. Watkins, ©1962, McMillan Publishing)

So Sam Watkins described the terrible battle of Franklin. This is dedicated to those “brave and gallant heroes” who lost their lives at Franklin on November 30, 1864, and especially to one , John Anderson, Co. K, 33<sup>rd</sup> Mississippi Infantry, who now lies in McGavock Cemetery, Mississippi Section.

John Anderson had served in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Miss. Inf. along with his younger brother James Jefferson Anderson (my G-Grandfather ) since they had volunteered for service with the Amite Defenders in March, 1862. By the time of Franklin they were both seasoned veterans having been involved in a number of battles including the siege of Jackson (defense line near the Cotton Bale Battery position in north Jackson) and Peachtree Creek in the defense of Atlanta. Apparently neither of them had been furloughed for any home leave as no records show them ever having been absent due to leave.

At Franklin, Loring’s Division, Featherston’s Brigade, which included the 33<sup>rd</sup>, was positioned on the far right of the Confederate attack formation. To their right were Lewisburg Pike and the Harpeth River with only elements of Jackson’s cavalry (dismounted) protecting the flank against a Federal movement down the pike. John Anderson apparently took a ball or shrapnel during the approach to the Federal line and retired from the field under his own power. While awaiting medical assistance at the rear assembly area, he apparently received a second, fatal, wound to the head from either a Federal musket fired errantly high or a shrapnel shard from an aerial artillery burst. Following the battle, my G-Grandfather found him sitting beneath a shot-ravaged tree, his life drained away. He was interred with the rest of the Mississippians lost there that day.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> reached the Federal earthworks but were unable to breach the defenses. The colors were lost when Lt. Henry Clay Shaw retrieved them from the fallen color-bearer some 15 paces from the earthworks and planted them on the works moments before his death.

In analyzing the Battle of Franklin, most historians fault General Hood’s judgement in carrying a fight to the lines at Franklin. But it must be said that no one can fault the soldier’s of Hood’s army for failing to give what was asked, even to the death. Historians consider the losses at Franklin to have been an unnecessary waste, and in the context of achieving a victory, they were. But we must look upon those lost there as dutiful, gallant men striving to do what was asked in furtherance of the independence of the Confederate States and defense of the South. It is in this context that we must consider their deaths and must, therefore, pay them the homage and respect due to all Southern patriots.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wayne Anderson, Editor

**Next month’s dedication will be presented by:  
Nick Walters**