WADE HAMPTON IN WAR

BORN A MILITARY GENIUS

Reminiscences by His Adjutant General, Major Theodore G. Barker

My first encounter with Gen. Hampton was in May, 1861, when having been appointed by him adjutant of the Hampton legion, I reported to him at his home, near Columbia, for duty, and was there engaged in inspecting the companies which were then uniting into the regiment and in organizing the command.

Col. Hampton had received authority from the war department of the Confederate States to organize a mixed force of artillery, cavalry, and infantry, and the idea then entertained by Col. Hampton, of operating as a sort of independent command.

I found the colonel confined to his room, suffering from a painful attack, and I was impressed by the exhibition of the quietness, patience, and cheerful endurance during his sickness. He, as was well known, had not advocated secession, but, after South Carolina had decided, he never questioned his decision. In addressing himself to the work of preparation for the part he would be called to play in the drama of war, he never underestimated the importance of the task which the Southern States had undertaken. At the same time, it was manifest that his mind and heart were filled with the influence of the highest ideals of heroic performance and devotion to the cause of country. Entertaining a just pride in the part his ancestors had played in the wars of the Revolution and of 1812, he recalled the patriotic services of his grandfather, Wade Hampton, and drew inspiration and enthusiasm from all historic or poetic models of chivalric daring or military achievement.

Col. Hampton was wounded in the subsequent charge ordered by Beauregard on the enemy, who had advanced as far as the Henry house, and he was absent from the field. He was then absent from the camp at Manassas during the following summer, and he was not in communication with headquarters when the reports of the battle of Manassas were being collected. He had been apprised of Gen. Johnston's orders to the troops under Gen. Beauregard's command, that all officers and men were to perform their duty, impelled by their admiration and love for the men. He became a hero in their eyes. And his approval, or their fear of his disapproval, was enough to keep them in the fight.

The evidence of this is to be seen in the record. It was after the first battle of Manassas, when Gen. Johnston was captured by the enemy, and Gen. Beauregard was promoted to the command of the army, that Gen. Hampton turned his attention to the organization of the cavalry corps, which he was to command.

The results of his commands, Gen. Beauregard's promotion, and Gen. Hampton's own promotion, were the foundation of the organization of the cavalry corps. It was with these considerations in mind that Gen. Hampton took charge of the cavalry corps, and the results were such as to justify the confidence reposed in him by his superiors and by the public at large.

The bravery and valor of Gen. Hampton were such as to merit the highest praise. He was a soldier of the old school, who loved the service, and who gave it his best. He was a man of fine qualities, who possessed a fine mind, and who was beloved by all who knew him.
n Rides Today!

And, Gen. Hampton's rule his officers. He put them their mettle, as to the order, the condition and their respective capacities, to the responsibility they had to lay to them discipline, he managed their readiness and zeal upon of the duties of part of the true history of Gen. Hampton's real a fact realized and applied it afterwards by the men. Even Gen. Lee himself came in close relation and he learned to know it, he found it hard to accept "civilian" with the idea which, with Hampton's would have reposed in previous military training—a confidence forwardly marked a degree of this kind to be found. It was a considerable fact, Gen. J. B. Stuart's commander of the cavalry, Wade Hampton, the officer of the first division in spite of the professions of the army. He was entitled. It was whether Hampton could command, and at one as proposed to transfer Gen. Hampton to the Western army and to appoint Buckner or some other old army officer to the place which Stuart had held as corps commander of the cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia. I have always regarded it as a conspicuous example of the intrinsic worth and ability of Gen. Hampton that he completely overcame these prejudices and before the war ended had won the supreme confidence of Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Gen. Hampton had by nature a military instinct, and a genius for war. In the operations of the cavalry in Virginia, his wood-craft stood him in great stead. He was ever in close touch with his scouts, who were permitted to operate within the enemy's lines, watching the enemy and bringing to his headquarters information of the enemy's movements. And it was his great delight after receiving such information to plan some daring movement by which he would surprise the enemy. Habits of a life of luxury before the war never seemed to affect him, nor did the comforts of camp ever nauseate him from the encounter with the severest weather in carrying out his plans for discomforting the enemy. When the roads were frozen, so that they almost seemed a crusade to the cavalry horses to force them to travel over the jagged flints in the frozen hoof-prints, when it was so cold that a soldier of the command had to be taken from his horse and a fire had to be built on the roadside to thaw him out, the general did not hesitate to start out from camp at nightfall, and by a circuitous route pointed out by his trusted scouts reach before daylight a point in the rear of the enemy's cavalry picket—to lie down in the cold, awaiting the dawn, in order to capture a squadron of the enemy before sunrise. On another occasion when Lee's army below Petersburg was suffering from want of fresh meat, Gen. Hampton, learning from his scouts of an expected arrival at a certain landing on the lower Appomattox of a large consignment of beef cattle planned to capture the lot, and reaching, by a circuitous route, the point where the beefes had been landed, surprised the enemy's picket at daylight and before sunrise had the whole herd (2,185 out of a consignment to the Federal committee of 2,185 splendid Pennsylavania steers) turned and on the road to the Confederate lines. Having provided against the pursuit and attack of the enemy by throwing up a line of breastworks across the only road by which the enemy could intercept his command on the return, the general had the booty driven by an outsize rode in rear of his line of defense and delivered to the chief commissary of Lee's army, without the loss of a man or a cow.

In the higher use of grand tactics, Hampton showed his generalship on many a battle-ground. Conspicuously was this exhibited by his conduct at the battle of Trevilian Station, where he threw his command across Sheridan's line of march and after his first division on the first day had, from the failure of a supporting division commander to carry out the order to attack, been driven back by overwhelming numbers and been badly damaged, Hampton gathered up the scattered remnant of the first division and boldly confronted the enemy on the second day, and, fighting first behind breastworks, checked the advance of a victorious opponent, and then ordered the line to charge, defeating the enemy and putting him to flight back to the point from whence his proposed raid, upon Gen. Lee's lines of supply, had started.

By this victory the proposed destruction of Gen. Lee's communications in rear of his position below Richmond was prevented, and Richmond and Petersburg for the time were saved. Gathering up his forces immediately after driving Sheridan to the shelter...
into the legion from the rear.

When the charge was made the legion was on the extreme right of Beauregard's line, its right flank as it advanced exposed to the fire of the enemy as well as its front.

It is probable from a simple view of the positions on the ground or on the map that, if that hill on which the Robinson house stood and the turnpike immediately in front of it, had not been held by some force, as it was by Col. Hampton from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. of that day the enemy, unresisted, would have swept over the plateau before Gen. Beauregard's rally of his retreating troops could have been made, that the plateau would never have been first occupied by the Confederate forces, that the new line of Beauregard would not have been there formed, and the charge upon the enemy near the Henry house, by the new line, charge decided the battle, would never have been made from that plateau.

This was Wade Hampton's introduction, as a commander and soldier to actual war. The impression made upon his superior officers by his part in the battle of Manassas led to his assignment after the battle to a brigade command on the line of the Bull Run and Occoquan, covering Manassas Junction and the country intervening between Manassas and the Potomac at the mouth of the Occoquan. Infantry regiments from North Carolina and Georgia were added to his command and this outpost line was held by Col. Hampton with infantry, cavalry and artillery, during the winter of 1861-1862.

Col. Hampton was again wounded at the battle of Seven Pines on the Chickahominy, after which battle Gen. Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia. The troops were brigaded according to their different arms, all independent formations were done away with—the infantry of the legion being brigaded with the infantry, the cavalry with the cavalry, and the artillery with the artillery of the army.

In the summer of 1862, Col. Hampton received his commission as brigadier general of cavalry. The legion of his command was enlarged to a regiment and became the Second South Carolina cavalry. Gen. Barnard E. Bee did he withdraw his command. In withdrawing the legion fell back upon the line which Gen. Beauregard had ordered to be formed on the plateau in front of Robinson hill and the Henry house, and took position on the right of Gen. Jackson's

THE STATUE:

Hushed is the blare of the bugle,
Muffled the beat of the drum,
When, to render their faithful greeting,
The gaunt gray warriors come.

Up from the marshes of Beaufort,
From the rolling strand of Horry,
To where palmettoes guard the line
Of the City by the Sea:

From houses of York and Lancaster,
To the plains where the forests mix;
From the rugged hills and winding streams
Of the heart of Ninety-Six:

From Piedmont unto the Pee Dee
Where the yellow waters run,
And the face of the great Atlantic
Is kissed by the rising sun:

They have come to do him honor,
To look on his carved face,
Where the sculptor's hand has molded
The soul of his fighting race.

But beyond the ranks of the living,
Who gaze on his face today,
Are ghostly lines, with solemn poise,
The Paladins of the Grey,
Who have passed to greet their chieftain
On the far shore line of light,
Who bore the toil, who kept the faith,
And passed into the night.