



# Covered with Glory: The 26th North Carolina Infantry at Gettysburg

*Rod Gragg*

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Here, fully told for the first time, is the unforgettable story of the 26th North Carolina Infantry at the Battle of Gettysburg. In July 1863 the regiment's eight-hundred-plus troops--young men from North Carolina's mountains, farmlands, and hamlets--were thrust into the firestorm of Gettysburg, the greatest battle ever fought in North America. By the time the fighting ended, the 26th North Carolina had suffered what some authorities would calculate to be the highest casualties of any regiment in the Civil War.

Following a bone-wearying march into Pennsylvania with the rest of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, the soldiers of the 26th found themselves in ferocious, almost face-to-face combat with some of the hardest-fighting troops in the Federal army--the heralded Iron Brigade. The bloody contest on McPherson's Ridge produced some of Gettysburg's fiercest fighting, and the troops involved--men from North Carolina, Michigan, and Indiana--established an enduring legacy of American fortitude and will.

On Gettysburg's third day of battle, the 26th North Carolina was placed in the front ranks of Pickett's Charge. Following a massive artillery barrage, the tattered regiment was commanded to go the distance in what would prove to be the most famous assault of the war. At one point, as he watched the men of the 26th in battle, Brigadier General James J. Pettigrew dispatched a message to the regiment's commander: "Tell him his regiment has covered itself with glory today."

The story of the 26th North Carolina at Gettysburg is an American saga of duty performed in the worst of warfare. It unfolds through the lives of key characters--the regiment's twenty-one year old commander, Colonel Henry K. Burgwyn, Jr.; its second-in-command, twenty-six-year-old farmer-turned-lieutenant colonel John R. Lane; twenty-two-year-old Major John Jones, who had abandoned his college studies to join the army; and common soldiers like Private Jimmie Moore, a North Carolina mountain boy who had gone to war at the age of fifteen.

*Covered In Glory* is an intensely personal narrative based on exhaustive research into the diaries, letters, memoirs, and official records of the men who struggled on the bloody field at Gettysburg. It is a powerful, moving account of American courage and sacrifice.

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