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"THE LAST SHOT"

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In my article, designated "The First Shot", I reviewed the principal events that led up to that noted incident which occurred January 9th, 1861. In this participated only the Citadel Corps of The Battalion of State Cadets. This corps was then under the direct command of Major P. F. Stevens, then superintendent of The Citadel. But the few troops on Morris Island were under the general command of Col. John L. Branch - a Citadel graduate.

In this account, ^{are} my personal recollections of "The Last Shot" participated in, exclusively, by the Arsenal Cadets of the Confederate Army. We should not forget that, at that time 1860 to 1865 the Battalion of State Cadets was composed of the Citadel Corps - the first, second and third classes, and the Arsenal Corps - the fourth class. The former at Charleston; the latter at Columbia, S. C.

I cannot enumerate, even briefly, the many events in which during these four years the Battalion participated, but I must tell something of those events that occurred, and that concerned the Battalion during the five months preceding the close of the War Between the States.

General Sherman was marching his large army through Georgia. This army was in four divisions. As they went, pillaging and devastating was the usual accompaniment. The last of the year 1864 was drawing near. By this onward march Savannah was soon in his rear and he to be free to pass unopposed through South Carolina. Just as Savannah fell when outflanked, must fall Charleston, Fort Moultrie, Fort Johnson and Fort Sumter. Fort Sumter, the bone of contention from the beginning of 1861 to the early month of 1865. In April 1861 this stronghold in Charleston harbor and, the key to the metropolis of our State was surrendered into the hands of the Confederate forces. By shot and by shell,

night and day they tried these four years. Every assault failed. The gallant General Stephen Elliott never lowered his flag. The finest vessels of the U. S. Navy were in the offing, watching, waiting, yes, waiting until General Sherman could unlock our "back door", and thus open our "front door," to the unwelcome visitor."

Toward the last of November, 1864, our Governor ordered the Battalion of Cadets into the field. The Arsenal Cadets under Capt. J. P. Thomas with Lieuts. J. B. Patrick, A. J. Norris, and R. O. Sams, proceeded to Charleston and reported to Major J. B. White, at the Citadel, commander of the Battalion. Federal forces were now endeavoring to sever connections between Savannah and Charleston by cutting the Charleston and Savannah Railroad near Coosawhatchee. We received orders to report to Major-General Samuel Jones, the Confederate Commander at that point. The Battalion boarded the train at Charleston, December 4th, 1864. At Tulsfinny we disembarked, and were ordered to protect the trestle over Tulsfinny Creek. On the sixth the enemy advanced from their base at Gregory Point and were met by the Georgia Battalion, supported by the Battalion of Cadets. Greatly outnumbered, the Confederate forces were ordered to fall back and concentrate on the railroad. Early in the morning of the 7th, four companies, including the Battalion of Cadets, with a battery of artillery, moved against the enemy. The skirmishers soon became engaged. There was rapid firing all along the line. The artillery ^{was} soon became engaged, but the enemy brought up troops in overwhelming numbers and, again the Confederates were withdrawn to the railroad. The Federals now established batteries about a mile from the railroad. Col. Edwards fortified his position behind the railroad, especially near the trestle and awaited the attack of the Federals. This was not long delayed. They moved forward twice during the 9th, but each time ^{was} driven off with great loss by our well-directed fire of both infantry and artillery. The loss of the Federals

in the two engagements, the 7th and 9th, was estimated at 300. After this they ^{contented} ~~contented~~ themselves by keeping up a steady fire on the railroad and on our encampments in the rear. On the 25th of December, The Citadel Cadets, now the entire Battalion, was ordered to James Island and attached to Brigadier-General Stephen Elliott's brigade or command. The officers of the Arsenal Academy were now remanded to Columbia to take charge of the new recruits, constituting the fourth class who went to report for duty January 1st, 1865, about one hundred forty in number. We were nearing the close of the great struggles. Sherman was marching his vast army through South Carolina. Now was their opportunity to show the first State that dared to secede from the union, what war meant as they cut a wide swath of desolation through her richest territory. The South already exhausted, yet still loyal to the principals for which she fought and suffered, was witnessing the advancing hosts of the Federals as her coils drew tighter and tighter still until her "strangle hold" was complete. Women and children and former ^{slaves} slaves were silent witnesses to the wanton destruction wherever the invaders foot had pressed. Charleston, Fort Sumter, James Island had now, February 17th, 1865, been evacuated by the Confederate forces. The Citadel Cadets formed a unit of this command. Joining General Hard^{er's} Corps, they passed through Cheraw, S. C. and into North Carolina, where they became an integral part of General Joseph E. Johnston's command. The vanguard of Sherman's army was now nearing Columbia. Accompanying it was a vast horde of camp followers, stragglers, robbers - in front of, on either flank and in the rear, fattening on the prey. On the 10th of February 1865, for the last time, the Arsenal Cadets, Capt. Thomas commanding, were called out and placed under Confederate Command. A detachment was placed in charge of a small battery of Artillery guarding the head of the bridge over the Congaree River, the Columbia end of the bridge. This detachment was withdrawn after this bridge was burned by order of the

Confederate Commander,. General E. M. Law, a Citadel graduate, was appointed Provost General over the City and, the Arsenal Cadets comprised his main Provost Guard. General Sherman's forces were now, February 16th, on the other side of the Congaree River firing into the City of Columbia where women and children were helpless. The firing seemed to be directed mainly against the State House building and against the buildings of the Arsenal Academy. The latter were burned and with them were destroyed important archives of the Citadel and of the Arsenal Academies. Those of the Citadel had been sent there for safety. Above Columbia, a pontoon bridge was being laid by the Federals, preparatory to the entrance of their troops into Columbia. Detachment of Cadets under their four commissioned officers, were patrolling the city, quieting disorders and, protecting property. This continued until near midnight of the 16th of February 1865. Orders had been received to join General Garlington's command attached to that of General Beauregard. Our detachments of Cadets were quickly drawn in and, the Arsenal Cadets, lightly equipped, left the city, traveling in a North Easterly direction to join the retreating troops. We were going in the direction of Charlotte, N. C. Before dawn the City of Columbia was in flames. The home of the writer had been pierced by a Parrott shell. While it failed to explode, the marks of its entrance and its exit long remained a ^{mute} witness to the ^vandolism of the Federals. But why particularize and call up the ghosts of the departed past!

At White Oaks, on the C. C. & A. Railroad, South of ~~Charleston~~^{7/10}, our command turned Eastward, hoping to escape Sherman's advancing Cavalry. Crossing the Wateree River in the night, we marched the next day towards Lancaster. Sherman's forces turned at the same point that we did and, ^{was} pushing our rear guard, as we marched into Lancaster. General Garlington here turned the Arsenal Corps over to Capt. J. P. Thomas and told him to seek their safety. Turning our course Northwestward we

marched into North Carolina and eventually ^{reached} marched to Charlotte. From this point we went to Chester, S. C. ^{we} this making an almost circle in our march. Thence we marched to Union and reaching Spartanburg, reported to Gov. Magrath. He had ordered us back into the State as a protection. At this time we were the only organized military command in the State. From Spartanburg the command marched to Greenville. Here we built log houses and were very comfortable in our new encampment. Not long were we allowed to remain thus. Rapidly the end was drawing near. Lee surrendered on the 9th of April. His last battle had been fought. General Grant gave liberal terms, General Johnston surrendered on the 26th. President ^{Davis} sought safety by leaving Richmond with most of his Cabinet and an escort. Stopping in Charlotte, he passed into South Carolina and held his last Cabinet meeting in Abbeville, S. C., then crossed the Savannah River into Georgia on the morning of May 4th. A large detachment from General Stoneman's Cavalry was sent to overtake and arrest the President. The City of Greenville, S. C. was directly in their line of march and pursuit. Capt. J. P. Thomas, our commanding officer, was asked by the city authorities not to make a stand against the raiders, fearing retaliation. It was now the last of April. The city was in great excitement. The line of march was quickly taken. At midnight, the Arsenal Cadets left Greenville and marched towards the town of Williamston. The column was halted in a sheltered lane just after break of day. Ranks were broken but our arms were loaded and still in our hands while we were waiting for a hasty breakfast. Remember the cadets were all young. Only four months had they been in training and none over eighteen. Tired from rapid marching and from the excitement preceding it, many had fallen asleep; some on rails taken from the old worm fence bordering the lane; still others on the bare ground, but still holding their loaded rifles. Suddenly, Stoneman's Cavalry fired a volley into us. The color ^{beams} raised the flag and, ^{while come}

^{collected} veiling around it while ^{others} some protected themselves behind trees and out-houses, the Cadets returned the fire and, ^{with deadly effect,} as was afterwards learned; with deadly effect. Certain it is that, though the cavalrymen hung on our flanks as we continued our march into Williamston, they did not further molest us. We passed through the towns of Belton and Greenwood and encamped in the town of Ninety Six. After a short rest we marched on to Newberry where we established our camp. Here Capt. J. P. Thomas communicated with Gov. Magrath, who was ^{not} in Columbia, by sending Lieut. R. O. Sams to recount the events of the past few days and, ^{to} asking ^{for} further instructions. Admitted to the Governor in his office and reporting to him the events that had transpired from the time the Cadets reached Greenville to the time of their present encampment at Newberry, Governor Magrath considered carefully the situation and sent back to Capt. J. P. Thomas written instructions. Acting under these orders from Gov. A. G. Magrath, our military chief, the entire command of Arsenal Cadets was furloughed from date, May 9th, 1865, for sixty days. The command consisted of Capt. J. P. Thomas, Lieut. J. B. Patrick, Lieut. A. J. Norris, Lieut. R. O. Sams and about one hundred-forty Cadets. Each was permitted to keep his equipment, arms, and ammunition until called for by the State. This furlough was a long one. It has lengthened into over sixty-one years.

Thus practically was disbanded the last organized military command East of the Mississippi River that had been an ^{integral} part of the armies of the Confederacy. Thus, in the War between the States, "The Last Shot" was fired by the Arsenal Cadets and this after they were fired into by a large detachment of the Federal Cavalry.

Look at it as we may, The Battalion of State Cadets, a military organization of the State of South Carolina, participated actively in the events that led up to the last great struggles for State Sovereignty,

throughout that struggle and until "The Last Shot" was fired as the curtain fell at the close of The Great Drama.

The writer was an active participant in the events narrated in the two articles furnished at the request of Col. O. J. Bond, President of The Citadel. "The First Shot" and "The Last Shot". Let me recapitulate. Called out by Gov. F. W. Pickens, the Citadel Cadets fired the first shot of the War between the States, when "The Star of the West" was turned back in her attempt to reinforce Fort Sumter. And the Arsenal Cadets fired the last shot as they repelled the attack made on them by the Cavalry of General Stoneman of the Federal Army.