

THIS WAS THE CIVIL WAR

Saga of 'The Gallant Pelham'



SIGNIFICANT CASUALTY—There were 15 fights at Kelly's Ford, Va., during the Civil War and the most significant casualty occurred on March 17, 1863. That day marked the death of Maj. John Pelham, Pelham joined the Confederate forces and became almost a legend in his own lifetime. He was called "The Gallant" by Gen. Robert E. Lee, who joined the whole Confederacy in mourning Pelham's death. Pelham is shown above in a photo made during the war. (UPI)

By MERTON T. AKERS
UPI Correspondent

The history books call the fight at Kelly's Ford Va., on March 17, 1863 an engagement.

In the language of military men that means the cavalry clash — a minor Federal victory — was something less than a battle and something more than a skirmish.

All told during the Civil War there were 15 fights of one sort or another at Kelly's Ford which made the history books. Eleven of these were called skirmishes, two were called operations (scouting or two achieved the status of engagement) and only engagements.

This crossing of the Rappahannock River above Fredericksburg was a sort of "Grand Central Terminal" during the war. Sooner or later, it seemed, everybody in the eastern theater splashed through it.

But whether historians call a fight a skirmish or engagement or battle, those few who got killed in one of these small affairs are no less dead than if they had fallen storming a parapet under the eyes of thousands. They simply die obscurely, likely as not with never a line in an official dispatch. Or perhaps they are buried where they fell and their names become only another in a long column of casualties.

Of the 211 casualties recorded on both sides in the March 17 affair at Kelly's Ford, the only death which

the history books talk about in detail was that of Maj. John Pelham, called "The Gallant Pelham."

In War From Start

Pelham had been in the war almost from the start. He was studying at West Point and soon after his native state of Alabama seceded he resigned. In May 1861 he made his way through the Federal lines and enlisted in the Confederate artillery.

He fought as a captain with distinction at both battles of Bull Run and on the Peninsula. At Antietam he was made a major for gallantry. He handled the horse artillery for Gen. J. E. B. Stuart with a spirit never before shown in that arm. He even invented new tactics.

It was at the battle of Fredericksburg where he earned the name of "The Gallant." It was bestowed by none other than Gen. Robert E. Lee when Pelham with two guns held up the advance of a Federal division.

"It is glorious to see such courage in one so young," Lee said of him that day.

Col. W. W. Blackford, Stuart's engineering officer, described Pelham as "tall, slender, beautifully proportioned and very graceful, a superb rider and as brave as Julius Caesar."

Blackford, who often read aloud to Pelham from martial books, added that he was "as grand a flirt as ever lived."

The blonde, blue-eyed Pelham took part in the Kelly's

Ford engagement partly by accident, partly by order and partly because he loved a good fight.

Asked For Leave

A few days before Kelly's Ford Pelham asked Stuart for a leave to go and see a girl in Orange, Va., so he might thank her in person for some candy she had sent.

Stuart granted the leave to the young artilleryman — he was just 24 at the time — and the major set out early the next morning before Stuart could change his mind. (Stuart was likely to grant a leave at night and then recall the man the next morning.)

Pelham was nearly to Orange when a courier caught up with him. Stuart had changed his mind as usual.

But Pelham remained the night in Orange. History is silent on whether he saw the girl, Miss Nannie Price, one of Stuart's Richmond cousins, but Pelham never was one to avoid women and it seems reasonable to believe he kept his date.

From Orange Pelham went to Culpepper, Va., where Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, threatened by a Union cavalry force, was commanding. There Pelham met Stuart.

The Federal cavalry under Brig. Gen. W. W. Averell — about 2,100 men with six guns — forced Kelly's Ford early in the morning of March 17 against a few of Lee's cavalrymen.

Lee promptly moved his 800 men to the ford to cut off Averell's force before it could hit the Orange & Alexandria railroad about four miles away.

Pelham and Stuart borrowed horses and rode out to see the fight.

Lee's riders sighted the Federals about a half mile from the ford. They seemed deployed as if expecting an attack. Lee talked to Stuart who gave him the word to go in.

Fire Too Hot

One squadron of the Third Virginia Cavalry pushed toward a stone fence behind which the Federal sharpshooters were operating. The Federal fire was too hot for the Confederates and the squadron fell back. Stuart rode in to rally it.

Then the Third charged at fours, yelling and swinging the stone fence in columns of sabers. But the fence was too high to jump and the regiment veered left toward some farm buildings looking for a gate.

Here Pelham rode into the charge.

The classic account of Pelham's death was written by Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman in "Lee's Lieutenants."

"The joy of battle was in the boy's shining eyes," he wrote.

"As he waved his sword, he smiled and shouted 'forward' . . . and cut across the angle of the column to reach its head. By the time he approached the farm buildings, the men were steaming through a gap in the fence and were filing off to the extreme left . . . Pelham drew rein at the gate and yelled encouragement to the men as they passed."

"In the high ecstasy of conflict, he stood in his stirrups, sword uplifted, battle shout on his lips. Overhead a roar, a flash, the loud explosion of a shell. The horse leaped. Pelham fell. He lay on his back. The smile did not fail. His eyes remained open; his face was not marred. He looked as if at the moment he would rise and shake off the dust and shout again, 'forward!' but in the back of his head, just at the hairline, there was a small bleeding wound where a fragment of shell had entered."

Draped Across Horse

Pelham's body was draped across a cavalry horse and started for Culpepper. Halfway there the body was placed on the grass and Pelham was found to be breathing. An ambulance carried him to a house in Culpepper.

There he died soon after noon.

Three Confederate girls put on mourning for him.

Of the many tributes to Pelham as his body lay in state in Richmond — and journeyed to Alabama, perhaps the best was from General Lee, who originally called him "The Gallant."

In a letter to Mrs. Lee on March 19 from Fredericksburg, the four-star general wrote of the major:

"I grieve over the loss of major Pelham. He had been stricken down in the midst of his career of usefulness and honor, which in its progress I had hoped would have expanded in brightness."

The Medical Roundup

by *Walter Alvarez*
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(Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1963)

BREASTS TOO LARGE OR TOO SMALL

I used to try to talk surgeons into helping unhappy women by removing the excess tissue from pendulous breasts but for years I failed. The surgeons feared that any operation on the breast which would interfere with the function of the tiny ducts might, in some unknown way, lead to the production of cancer.

Today, a number of surgeons have lost this fear, and have gone ahead to help the big-breasted or fallen-breasted woman who often is distressed and embarrassed. But some surgeons are still arguing as to how the nipple should be transplanted. According to Dr. Philip Thorek of Chicago, the best technique is to remove the nipple together with the areola (the pink or dark circle around the nipple) and then to graft it onto the skin above, where it used to be before the breast became large or much elongated, and hung down.

Dr. Thorek tells me that for a long time now he has been transplanting the nipples, without any failure. Obviously, no milk can ever come away through such a nipple. Dr. Thorek says that the woman with the "cut-down" and "remodeled" breasts are very grateful.

There are also many unhappy women who write to say they are almost as flat-chested as a man. It is not surprising that some develop an inferiority complex. Many are afraid to go out with an admirer, and they are afraid to marry a man without first telling him the truth. Today, with the movie people making so much of the full-bosomed girl starting out in the business world, feels that if she is to hold her job, she had better wear "falsies."

Few Sympathetic
few of us physicians are as sympathetic as we should be with these unhappy girls and women. I personally feel that plastic surgeons should make every effort to perfect a technique for inserting behind the thin breasts of these women a sort of plastic material which will push the breast forward. Naturally, the material must remain soft.

A while ago I had a long talk with a plastic surgeon who has spent years searching for a plastic that will work as he and his patients want it to do. Eventually, he found one, and now has learned to sterilize it; well that when it is put in place, it

does not get infected, and does not get infected, and does not have to be taken out again.

A couple of years ago, the doctor wrote me that he felt he had the problems solved, because all of the operations of this type that he had performed had been successful. No "problem" in the previous year so that it had to be removed.

One problem is that when a girl writes me from a small town in Canada or the United States, I have difficulty finding a surgeon for her.

Some plastic surgeons tell me that they try to make what looks and feels like a breast out of muscle around onto the front of the chest wall, but I can't feel enthusiastic about this technique.

I feel that one should ever try to discourage these girls and women from trying to have something done. They should not be condemned to remain miserable and unhappy. I do hope many capable surgeons come to their rescue.

One great trouble today is that with the modern craze for muing the surgeon for things do not quite to the \$500,000 — and getting it — if things do not go quite to the woman's satisfaction — no sensible man cares to take the terrible risk.

Cancer Of The Voice Box

Anyone whose voice suddenly changes and doesn't clear up in a few days should go immediately to a good throat man and have him look into the voice box with his little mirror. He may see what looks like a little wart on one of the cords; and if this is promptly clipped off, even if microscopic examination shows it to be an active cancer, the man's life and his voice are likely to be saved. If nothing is done, and a cancer spreads into the lymph nodes on each side of the voice box, the man is likely to lose his larynx (voice box) and he can even lose his life.

Fortunately, today modern radiation treatment, if quickly used, can cure one of these cancers. So much depends on whether the whole larynx has to be taken out.

I hear that Henry Viscardi of Abilities, Incorporated, has developed an electrical apparatus that will enable a whisperer to talk loudly.

Usually we begin to have problems with vision when we get to be 45 or so. Dr. Alvarez has prepared a booklet, "How to Regard Your Vision," which may prove valuable to you. You may obtain it by sending 25 cents and a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request for it to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MM, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

Problem-Solving Approach in School Learning Praised

By DAVID NYDICK
UPI Education Specialist

One method of teaching children social studies is the problem-solving approach. It is one of the interesting ways for children to learn.

A look at a particular problem studied by a group of students will give you an idea of the broad growth which might occur. The question was raised in a classroom as to why the United States had developed so much faster than the other countries in the Americas. A discussion followed which brought out many possible answers such as our form of government, natural resources, climate, etc.

Class Divided

The class became highly interested and decided to go more deeply into the reasons for the rapid growth. They talked about ways to approach this study. It was decided to divide the class into small interest groups. Each group studied a different aspect of our nation's progress in relation to other countries.

The committee which studied the effects of government started with an analysis of the Constitution. As the members examined this basic law, they were searching constantly for its effects upon our way of life and continuous growth. It often was necessary to uncover why it as they did. As the group compared our government with those of other nations, they began to appreciate the real meaning of our democratic form of government. Their

enthusiasm grew as their understanding developed.

The students developed many important academic skills. The research included the use of reference books, analysis and comparison of ideas, note taking, reading, writing, grammar, spelling, and public speaking. The learning which takes place in the problem-solving approach is endless. It covers almost every area of the school program.

This method of teaching involves the child in a vast number of experiences. He learns through his own initiative and efforts. A student with enthusiasm is on the right track. He will need to master skills in order to satisfy his curiosity. He will begin to think.

Meaningful Knowledge

The value of this approach lies in its contribution of meaningful knowledge. The accumulation of factual information is advantageous when it adds to understanding. The particular problem studied donated much to the students' understanding and knowledge of the American heritage. They became aware of their own participation and responsibilities as citizens.

Perhaps the problem-solving approach is one which helps meet the needs of our society. We want people to develop initiative, civic responsibility, the ability to think, curiosity, and appreciation of our society. This method seems to achieve these aims while allowing for individual differences in interest and ability.

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