

1st TN infantry
CSA

**PATRIOTS
IN
DISGUISE**

Women Warriors
of the Civil War

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images of the dying soldiers and the amputating table caused her to bolt awake and jump out of bed. Repeatedly, she had to convince herself that she was not still there in the hospital. A few days later, sorely in need of rest and a change of scenery, Belle found space on the steamer *Black Hawk* back to Illinois with a delegation of visitors. About twenty members of the regiment also were on board. She said good-bye to her husband, who had to return to camp.

"Each parting seemed harder than the last," she wrote, "for I knew now the dangers and uncertainties to which he was exposed. But my health had been failing . . . and I felt I must recruit now, or I might not be able to spend the summer with him." On board the *Black Hawk* conversation naturally centered on the battle just concluded.

As an eyewitness, Belle was the center of attention and was bombarded with questions.

The terrible scenes were still before [me] and seemed to be a dreadful part of me, which I was glad to have removed, if relating them might have that effect. I told my story to quite an audience of ladies and gentleman, Governor Yates being of the number. As I was one of the very few ladies who were present at the battle, and had witnessed so large a portion of its scenes, the story seemed to interest all who heard.

Soon one of the party, impressed by her story, suggested that Belle deserved a commission more than some of the officers, and another suggested that it be done. The governor directed his secretary to fill out a commission form giving Belle the rank of major. The document was formally signed, sealed, and handed to her amidst general congratulations.

After a brief period of rest back in Illinois, Belle rejoined her husband in the field and shared the hardships of camp life, seeing service in Mississippi and being an eyewitness to the duel between Confederate shore batteries and Union gunboats at Vicksburg in July, 1863. When Lieutenant Reynolds's period of service expired in the spring of 1864, they gratefully returned to the quiet of home and hearth.

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An undetermined number of other women also were at the battle of Shiloh in one capacity or another, including at least three with

Confederate regiments, one as a soldier. Agatha Young reports three others on the Union side: Modenia Weston, who served as a nurse on the battlefield and on the hospital boats; Mrs. Jerusha Small, helping the wounded on the battlefield with her husband's 12th Iowa Infantry Regiment; and Lucy Kaiser, a free-lance, tart-tongued nurse who was under fire on the battlefield.

When W. D. Philips joined the 4th Kentucky Infantry Regiment (Confederate) as quartermaster, September, 1861 in Bowling Green, his wife refused to stay behind. Bettie Taylor Philips went with him and shared the fortunes of war, "in camp, on long marches, often under shot and shell of the enemy." She ministered to the sick, wounded, and dying of the famous "Orphan Brigade," so-called because they were not recognized by the state of Kentucky and had to train and organize mainly in Tennessee.

At the battle of Shiloh, Bettie cared for the wounded and dying soldiers. After two years of hardships, her health began to fail and she set out for home to rest. At Nashville she was arrested by Federal soldiers, who started to search her. "Stop where you are!" she cried, drawing her pistol. "I will never submit to the humiliation of being searched by men. Send a woman to me." The soldiers tactfully retreated, bringing a woman to complete the search. Bettie Taylor Philips was sent to Louisville and tried as a spy, but was acquitted and set free. Later she returned to camp and remained with the brigade until the end of the war, afterwards returning home to Uniontown, Kentucky.

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Betsy Sullivan joined her husband, John, in Company K of the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment (Confederate) when it was organized at Pulaski in May, 1861. She became known as "Mother Sullivan," ministering to sick and wounded soldiers, mending their clothes, and cooking and washing for them. The regiment went first to West Virginia and then to northern Virginia, where it served under Stonewall Jackson. "She marched on foot with her knapsack on her back through the mountains of West Virginia, slept on the frozen ground, under the cold skies, a blanket her only covering, her knapsack, her pillow."

Early in 1862 the regiment was ordered back to Tennessee. Betsy was with the soldiers on the battlefields of Shiloh and Corinth—"Not in the rear, working in a hospital, but on the battleground

with her boys, carrying bandages and with canteens of water suspended from her shoulders, she bound up wounds and stanching the life blood of many soldiers, moistened the lips of the dying, and closed the eyes of the dead."

Betsy was serving as a battlefield nurse at Perryville, Kentucky, on October 8, 1862—a bloody and hotly contested fight—when her husband sustained a severe head wound and Lieutenant John H. Wooldridge of the same company lost both eyes. (Federal casualties in the battle were 4,211 and Confederate 3,396.) When General Braxton Bragg retreated from Kentucky, the wounded men were left at Harrodsburg and taken prisoner. Betsy went with them to prison, where she continued to take care of her husband and other members of the company. Her later history is not reported.

As a postscript to Shiloh, some seventy years later a secret was accidentally revealed. A homeowner on the Shiloh battlefield in 1934 was digging a flower bed when he discovered the remains of nine Union soldiers buried on the battlefield. Subsequent examination of the skeletons revealed that one of them was a woman! The circumstances suggested that she had been killed by a minie ball found near her remains. The nine bodies were reburied in the Shiloh National Cemetery. "The identity of the woman and why she was dressed in uniform will never be known, but it is probable she was one of the many, yes many, members of her sex who donned uniform and posed as a man in order to fight for the cause she believed in," according to author Fred Brooks.

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On April 19, 1861, one week after the firing on Fort Sumter, Francis C. Barlow, a young lawyer (Harvard graduate, 1855), enlisted as a private in the 12th New York Militia Regiment. The next day he married his sweetheart, Arabella Griffith, a native of New Jersey, and then left with his regiment for Washington, D.C. on April 21st. Arabella followed him within a week, and stayed in camp with him in Washington, and when he was stationed under General Patterson's command at Harper's Ferry. The regiment returned home early in August, 1861. Francis reentered service in November, 1861 as lieutenant colonel of the 61st New York Infantry. The clean-shaven soldier later became known as the "boy general."

Arabella spent the winter of 1861 with her husband in camp at

Alexandria, Virginia. Colonel Barlow and his regiment served under General George B. McClellan in the Virginia Peninsula Campaign in the spring and summer of 1862, the first serious attempt to capture Richmond. After the campaign failed, Arabella joined the Sanitary Commission and helped care for sick and wounded soldiers at Harrison's Landing, until the army withdrew to northern Virginia in August. She then rejoined Barlow in the field during the Maryland campaign, but went north on business and missed the battle of Antietam.

At the battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, Barlow was badly wounded. Arabella arrived on the field the following day, and nursed her husband over the fall and winter of 1862-1863. Barlow was promoted to brigadier general two days after Antietam, but was unfit for further service until the following spring. He then commanded a brigade in XI Corps in May at Chancellorsville and in July at Gettysburg.

Barlow was again severely wounded at Gettysburg and taken prisoner behind enemy lines, temporarily paralyzed and thought by Confederate General John B. Gordon to be mortally wounded. Accordingly, when Arabella made overtures to rescue her husband, Gordon compassionately gave her a pass to enter the lines and allowed her to transport General Barlow behind the Union lines.

Barlow returned to duty in the spring of 1864 in time for General Grant's Virginia campaign, commanding a division of II Corps. At times, Arabella was with General Barlow in the trenches before Petersburg, and after battles helped care for the sick and wounded. During her unceasing labors on behalf of the soldiers, her health was impaired, and she came down with typhus fever. She died in Washington, D.C., on July 27, 1864. Contemporaries praised her as a society woman who labored in the trenches, careless of her own health, long and faithfully in support of the soldiers.

After the war, Francis Barlow returned to his law practice. He was a founder of the American Bar Association and, as New York State Attorney General, initiated prosecution of the infamous Tweed ring, a corrupt faction of Tammany Hall politicians. He died in New York City, January 11, 1896.

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Mrs. Rose K. Rooney is said to have left New Orleans, Louisiana, in June, 1861 to serve with Company K, 15th Louisiana