

Daily Rebel Newspaper Article on 16th Tennessee Regiment

The 16th Tennessee Regiment and its Gallant Colonel.

A gentleman, entirely disconnected with the army, writing in the Shelbyville Banner of a recent date, after giving the official list of killed and wounded of the 16th regiment of Tennessee Volunteers, at the battle of Murfreesborough [sic], pays the following tribute to the worth and merit of the Regiment and its brave commander, Col. John H. Savage. The claims of Col. S., like those of many other meritorious officers, have been entirely overlooked, and his juniors in rank, and in some instances, his inferiors in talent and soldiery acquirements, have been promoted over him. We sincerely trust, for the good of the service, that the authorities will consider the claims of Col. S., and not force him, out of self-respect, to resign his commission in the army:

“I will here take the liberty of saying a few words in regard to this Regiment and its able commander, Col. Savage.

At the beginning of the war, this Regiment was made up in what is known as the Mountain District of the State, and without opposition Col. Savage was selected as its leader. It was sent immediately to North-western Virginia, where it made its first campaign amid the mountains and snows of Alleghany, which is known generally to have been the most severe campaign of the war. Here this noble Regiment, amid hunger and toil, and much of the time without tents, stood the severest test of that most inhospitable clime and country without murmuring at their lot, and with that unconquerable resolution that becomes true soldiers and Tennesseans.

After worrying there with the enemy for several months it was sent to the coast of South Carolina, where it remained on almost constant duty, picketing and skirmishing with the enemy for near four months, and then joined Gen. Beauregard at Corinth, Miss. It made the campaign through Kentucky, losing two hundred men out of about three hundred and seventy at the battle of Perryville. Thus it is seen this Regiment has boxed the compass in its service, and from disease and battle its ranks have been decimated until now comparatively but few faces of the old 16th can be seen among its tents. Brown and weatherworn, they only stand as spared relics of that once proud Regiment of a thousand mountain men.

As to the merits of Col. Savage I need say nothing. His courage and conduct as displayed upon those hard contested fields need no mention here. The living and the dead speak for him. His repeated experience in the service gives him many superior advantages. He was three times engaged in the United States service. When the neutrality of the United States was threatened in the war between Mexico and Texas he volunteered under Gen. Gaines to repel any invasion of our soil. He served through the Florida war and the war with Mexico. In the war with Mexico he went out as Major of the 14th Infantry, and after the battle of Molina del Ray, where he was severely wounded, he became Lt. Col. of the 14th Infantry from Pennsylvania, Virginia and New York.

Is not merit entitled to its reward? what Colonel in the army has seen more service, or who has more cool, calculating courage, than Col. Savage? He has never, to besure [sic], harrassed [sic] and annoyed or even asked this State or the Confederate Government to promote him. He has not yet been guilty of this seeming virtue, and therefore he has been passed apparently unseen; while his juniors in many respects have gone up around him. His friends and countrymen now ask his promotion in view of his tried fitness as a superior commander, and for the sake of the general service. The Mountain District has furnished several fine regiments, whose ranks are now thinned and gone, but as yet has furnished no general to lead them.”

OBSERVER.