

Paroling Confederate officers at Greensboro. (26)

from Sherman that—unlike the first agreement—did not delve into political matters. Sherman entrusted Major General John M. Schofield with putting the military convention into effect. Schofield announced that he would give ten days rations to the Army of Tennessee if the Confederates would provide the necessary transportation. To work out these and other details, Johnston appointed Hardee.⁸³

A tabular summary of officers and men of Walthall's division of Stewart's corps showed 3,512 officers and men present on April 26. The Confederates received official word of the terms on the afternoon of April 27. The officers and men of Johnston's army were now officially surrendered. They were informed that in a day or two their paroles would be made out and they could then start for home. Lieutenant W. A. Johnson reported that Kershaw's brigade started surrendering its wagons, stock and ordnance supplies and equipment to the Federals on April 27. Major Ridley wrote, "the war is over. Around the campfires the surrender was discussed. Confusion and unrest prevailed with the stern realization that the Southern army had finally been subdued."⁸⁴

Greensboro resident Mrs. Jacob Henry Smith, wife of the Presbyterian minister, observed the Confederate veterans:

Nothing recalls more eloquently the pain and pathos of [the past] eventful days than the haunting strains of the old war songs, as they came floating in on many a sleepless and sorrowful night, sung by the soldiers in passing. "We're Tenting Tonight on the Old Campground," "There's a Low Green Valley on the Old Kentucky Shore," "The Years Creep

Slowly By, Lorena”—these and many more served to beguile the weary and home sick hours. Their mission by campfire and field is ended, but in many a veteran’s heart they will echo on forever.⁸⁵

While the final muster rolls of Johnston’s army were filled out, the Confederate ordnance officers collected and turned in ordnance and small-arms to Lieutenant J. M. Payne, the Greensboro post ordnance officer of Sherman’s army. Johnston ordered his corps commanders to turn over four-fifths of their small-arms, ammunition and equipment to the Federals.⁸⁶

On April 27, Lieutenant Payne reported that 8,467 small-arms had been turned in to him by the Confederate ordnance officers. Interestingly, this did not include the small-arms of Kershaw’s brigade. The arms to be turned in by Kennedy’s command were supposed to be at least 750, making a total of 9,217 small-arms.⁸⁷

The reason the weapons of Kershaw’s brigade were not turned in became apparent on April 29. That morning, Kennedy’s South Carolinians were detached from Walthall’s division and marched into Greensboro to serve as a garrison, or provost marshal, force. Kennedy’s command guarded the remaining Confederate ordnance and other supplies. Lieutenant W. A. Johnson of Company G. of the 2nd South Carolina guarded two thousand head of horses in an old field on the edge of town. These former Confederate army animals would be turned over to the Federals the next day. Other details of Kennedy’s brigade guarded commissary supplies and ammunition stores near the Greensboro Railroad Depot.⁸⁸

On May 3, the time had come for the Federals to take possession of the Confederate stores and munitions in Greensboro. This job fell to a single infantry regiment—the 104th Ohio. With only four hundred men, the 104th arrived at the Greensboro railroad depot on flatcars from Raleigh on the afternoon of May 3. The Federals were met by Brigadier General John D. Kennedy, who was Confederate post commander. At two in the afternoon, Kennedy’s garrison relieved the Federals. After nearly four years of fighting and three weeks following General Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, Kershaw’s South Carolina veterans had the singular honor of being the last Provost Guard of the largest remaining army in the Confederacy.⁸⁹

With a great deal of trepidation, the veteran Union soldiers of the 104th Ohio found themselves surrounded by thousands of their former enemy. Like most Union troops, the men of the 104th Ohio had a healthy respect for the ragged Southerners, the Confederates’ fighting prowess having been proved on many battlefields. The fact that the Southerners had surrendered did not diminish the anxiety felt by the Ohio infantrymen.

The Greensboro railroad depot and surrounding fields were now filled with Confederate ordnance and food stores. As the Ohioans got off of the flat cars, they appeared as a blue island in a sea of gray and butternut. Quickly, they formed a

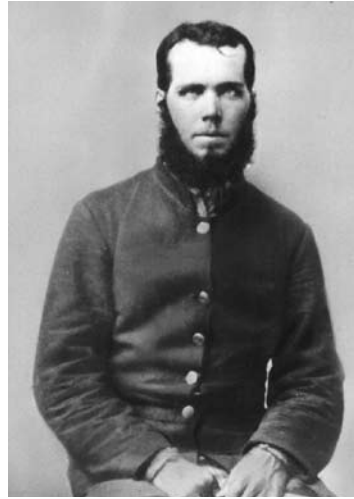
guard for the captured stores. The regiment was divided into three reliefs, or watches, to assume guard duty from Kennedy's South Carolinians.⁹⁰

These circumstances led to an unusual procedure. Since the Confederate and Union soldiers had drilled from the same manual of arms, a changing of the guard was conducted according to steps familiar to both Federal and Confederate soldiers. During this final changing of the guard, it appeared as if the old guard and the new guard belonged to the same army. In the words of Private J. W. Gaskill, a member of Company B of the 104th Ohio:

Relieving this guard from duty over their own property is a new experience and some what embarrassing yet the change is made without friction and apparent regret on the part of the rebel guards we are relieving. The 'Johnnies' knew what we are there for, so after receiving instructions from the sergeant of this guard we march along the line when the rebel guard [sentinel] takes proper position, instructs the 'yank' who relieves him and drops in rear of the line until all are relieved. They are then formed in line by their sergeant and stack arms on which they hang a varied assortment of equipment, break ranks and their warfare is ended.⁹¹

Nineteen-year-old Private George W. Bussey of Company D of the consolidated 7th South Carolina Regiment of Kershaw's brigade later recalled that the day the Army of Tennessee surrendered, his company was guarding a train load of bacon under orders to give away any that was tainted. Bussey and the men of his company consequently gave away a great deal of it to soldiers and citizens alike. Bussey recalled his feelings about the Federal troops' arrival at the Greensboro railway depot:⁹²

It fell to my lot to be on post when the enemy came up to relieve us. Our regiment had gone out a few miles below town. A train load of Bluecoats rolled up beside of our train of bacon and in a short time a detail was sent to relieve me. I simply gave the man directives as to what I was there for and bade him adieu. They did not take my gun or anything I had. I walked leisurely alone down



Private Joel Wilson surrendered at Greensboro. (33)

the R. R. in the direction our regiment had gone, meditating upon what had happened and that the terrible fight was all over with.⁹³

Fortunately for the men of the 104th Ohio, their first night in Greensboro passed without serious incident, and the bleary-eyed Union soldiers gratefully greeted the dawn. Their feeling of relief must have increased around eight on the morning of May 4 when five companies of the 9th New Jersey arrived to reinforce them. Numbering less than twelve hundred men, the Federal troops of the 104th Ohio and 9th New Jersey were among the few Northerners present during the final disbandment of Johnston's army.⁹⁴

Lieutenant W. A. Johnson of Kershaw's brigade noted that, "the enemy were very kind and considerate at the close. They never said an unkind word or did a mean act, but did all they could for us."⁹⁵

Somehow managing to preserve a semblance of military organization and discipline, the remnants of the Army of Tennessee began their march to Salisbury, where they would receive food and other supplies. Johnston and Beauregard remained behind in Greensboro, completing final details of the surrender. Confederate corps commanders were informed that their men would receive ten days' rations when they reached Salisbury. Johnston included an order in his directive that he wanted published "on the last day on which all your troops march together as an army corps, but not sooner." Johnston's farewell message to his army read as follows:

General Orders No. 22 HQ Army of Tennessee.

COMRADES: In terminating our official relations, I earnestly exhort you to observe faithfully the terms of pacification agreed upon; and to discharge the obligation of good and peaceful citizens, as well as you have performed the duties of thorough soldiers in the field. By such a course, you will best secure the comfort of your families and kindred, and restore tranquillity to our country. You will return to your homes with the admiration of our people, won by the courage and noble devotion you have displayed in this long war. I shall always remember with pride the loyal support and generous confidence you have given me. I now part with you with deep regret—and bid you farewell with feelings of cordial friendship; and with earnest wishes that you may have hereafter all the prosperity and happiness to be found in the world.⁹⁶

On May 5, the remnants of the once formidable Confederate Army of Tennessee continued their march to Salisbury—among them was Kershaw's brigade.