

PATRIOTIC PALS TAILS OF THE CIVIL WAR

By Chris Stuckenschneider

CHAPTER 3: Shanks, Loyal Hound to the End

Time flies like a Frisbee—here we are again—two chapters under our collars. I'm all yappy about us being palsy-walsy, which, by the way, is a word. I checked in the d-i-c-t-i-o-n-a-r-y, sniffing out nooks and crannies, conducting research right along with Walt.

We left off in St. Louis, with the incident at Camp Jackson, a calamity that determined the city's alliance with the Union. It wasn't long before the entire state "Red Rovered" the Union right over. Missouri's fate was determined. Too bad there weren't any General Chucks commanding troops, at least none that Walt and I have come across.

But there was General Grant—Ulysses S., to be exact. Come the spring of 1862, the Union general was encamped in Shiloh, Tenn., when Confederate troops burst out of the woods led by two Rebel generals. Some powerful fighting took place April 6-7, with the Union initially losing. But the tide turned the second day when relief rounded a bend of the river.

In the end, the Union was considered the victor, but was there really a winner? Both sides were hangdog tired and shocked at the loss of men at Shiloh, one of the biggest battles of the Civil War.

Shanks, a hound born in the backwoods, lived to tell about it, but thousands of soldiers didn't. About 110,000 Union and Rebel soldiers fought at Shiloh, and 23,746 were casualties, either killed,

wounded, captured or unaccounted for.

A crossbreed from Illinois, Shanks witnessed the action alongside his owner, Lt. Louis Pfeiff, who took Shanks with him when he left home to fight for the Union.

We all know a dog is a man's best friend, and Shanks proved that true. He and his master weathered cold, hunger and loneliness, as did other Civil War canines, dogs that shared their masters' bedrolls as they sat around the campfire, sensing the men's fear of what the dawn would bring.

I come from good stock, but Shanks had steel blood in his veins. Shanks was courageous, but he wasn't a handsome hound by any stretch of the dachshund. He was as speckled as a Plymouth Rock Rooster, had lop ears and a lumbering, crooked lope, the result of being kicked by a mule with Missouri bloodlines. But

inside Shank's narrow chest beat a hero's heart.

As the fighting at Shiloh intensified, Shanks charged into battle with Lt. Pfeiff, dodging enemy fire and keeping his wits about him despite the mayhem. Sad to say, Pfeiff fell

at Shiloh, a battle that proved the war was far from over, that many more lives would be lost.

Shank's master, along with the other deceased soldiers, was buried in an unmarked grave. Dog tags hadn't been invented yet, so many of the troops couldn't be identified.

Though his master was gone, Shanks remained steadfast. When Pfeiff was buried, the hound stayed by his graveside, keeping vigil for 12 days, a sentry honoring a lost friend. If it hadn't been for Shanks, Mrs. Pfeiff, who journeyed



Illustration from 1862 showing the Battle of Shiloh. Library of Congress

from Illinois to take her husband's body home, would never have been able to find his grave.

After a day of wandering through the fields, she looked into the setting sun and spotted a hound on the horizon. Glory be, it was Shanks. The hound bounded to her, and the widow buried her tear-stained face in his fur. Shanks responded with slobbery kisses and a bark that said, "follow me."

Though the Battle of Shiloh didn't have a happy ending, for Shanks and Mrs. Pfeiff there was a thimbleful of solace. They were thankful to take their lieutenant home.

I love this heartwarming tale, but it's time to move on. There's an important Southern general to write about and a dog that shares his name.

PAPER TRAINING



Chuck uses a dictionary and other sources for research. Help him find the meaning of three words in chapter three: calamity, alliance and mayhem. Use each of these words in a sentence. Look through your newspaper to find synonyms for these words.

Missouri GLEs: CA R1E, R1G, W2D, W2E; SS 3AI



Photograph of how Shanks may have looked.