

William Henry Smallwood, 43rd Virginia Cavalry

William "Henry" Smallwood was enlisted as a private in Company A on June 10, 1863 by John S. Mosby at Rector's Crossroads, Fauquier County, Virginia. He appears on a July 1, 1863 clothing receipt roll and appears as "present" on a June – December 1863 muster roll.¹ Smallwood participated in Mosby's July 4, 1864 raid on Point-of-Rocks, Maryland. He was mortally wounded in the fight with the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry on July 6, 1864 at Mt. Zion Church near Aldie, Virginia and died on July 7, 1864.²

Henry Smallwood was born in Fauquier County, the son of James and Mary E. Smallwood. The family would relocate to neighboring Loudoun County near Aldie by 1860.³ An older brother, Charles Thomas Smallwood, entered the war in 1862 serving with the 1st Virginia Cavalry.⁴

According to ranger and post-war author, John H. Alexander, referring to the casualties sustained by the 43rd in the fight at Mt. Zion Church, "Eight of our men were wounded; Henry Smallwood, Hugh Waters, Tom Lake and Frank Woolf, were lads of my own set, and my particular chums. Henry's death, which soon followed, was a great sorrow to me. He was a quiet, unostentatious little fellow, and absolutely reliable."⁵

Editor's Comments: Henry Smallwood was the ideal soldier for Mosby's Command because what the partisan leader liked best was youth. Ranger and post-war author John W. Munson stated that Mosby "agreed with Napoleon that boys make the best soldiers."⁶ Ranger John H. Alexander, referring to the youth in the 43rd, noted that Mosby indicated "they are the best soldiers I have. They haven't sense enough to know danger when they see it, and will fight anything I tell them to."⁷ Henry Smallwood was the only Confederate fatality in the 43rd's overwhelming victory over the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry at Mt. Zion Church. He is buried in Sharon Cemetery in Middleburg, Virginia. His tombstone reads, "In Memory of - Our Brother - William H. - Son of - James & Mary E. Smallwood - Co. A. Mosby's Batt. - Wounded July 6 - Died July 7, 1864 - Aged 18 yrs. 8 mos. & 18 dys."

Let us never forget the sacrifice of William Henry Smallwood.

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¹ National Archives, Washington DC, Compiled Military Service Records for soldiers serving in the 43rd Battalion, Virginia Partisan Rangers, Microfilm #324, Roll #208, record #1279.

² Jewel, Mrs. Walter T., "Death Records of Loudoun County, Virginia", page 69.

³ 1860 Federal Census, Loudoun County Virginia, page 282.

⁴ Driver, Robert J., "1st Virginia Cavalry", H. E. Howard Inc., Lynchburg, VA, 1991, page 228.

⁵ Alexander, John H., "Mosby's Men", pages 94-5.

⁶ Munson, John W., "Reminiscences of a Mosby Guerrilla", pages 8-9.

⁷ Alexander, John H., "Mosby's Men", page 24.