

A SOLDIER'S LIFE REPORTS

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DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN — This is a demonstration specimen. The soldier is fictional and his “file” is a typeset reconstruction of the document types found in real service records. The process, tables, flags, and sourcing shown here are exactly what a real report contains.

A CIVIL WAR SERVICE RECORD REPORT

Asa T. Renwicke

Private · Company B (Capt. Harkin's Company) · 27th Regiment Alabama Cavalry
(Harkin's)

Confederate Compiled Military Service Record (NARA RG 109)

Family Keepsake Edition · Researcher-Reviewed

Prepared August 30, 2026

Every fact in this report is traced to the page that states it.

Prepared from the original compiled service records of the United States National Archives (Record Groups 94 and 109).

Asa T. Renwicke

Private, Company B (Capt. Harkin's Company), 27th Regiment Alabama Cavalry (Harkin's)

Short Biography

Asa T. Renwicke was a nineteen-year-old Alabama farm boy who rode into Confederate service on his own horse in the spring of 1862, joining a cavalry company raised at Tuscaloosa. He served on and off for more than two years, once asking for a furlough to go home to Fayette County and bring in the crop for his mother, who was alone on the place. In October 1864 he was captured near Decatur, Alabama, sent north to prison at Louisville and then Camp Chase, Ohio, and there in June 1865 he swore the oath of allegiance and was released to go home. His name is spelled three different ways across the cards — Renwicke, Renwick, and Rennick — but he signed it Renwicke himself.

The Story of Asa Renwicke of Fayette County

Asa T. Renwicke was about nineteen years old when he enlisted on **May 20, 1862, at Tuscaloosa, Alabama**, signed up by Capt. Harkin for a term of three years and mustered into Capt. Harkin's Company (Company B) of the **27th Regiment Alabama Cavalry** (p. 2). Because this was cavalry, he furnished his own mount: the rolls value his horse at **\$140** and his horse equipments at **\$22** (pp. 2–3) — a real measure of what a young man brought with him to the war.

The surviving company rolls show him **present** through his first year and more: present for May & June 1862 (p. 2), present for Nov. & Dec. 1862 (p. 3). Then, in the summer of 1863, comes a striking page in the file. On **August 9, 1863**, from "Camp near Gadsden, Ala.," Asa wrote his captain in his own hand asking for twenty days' leave: *"I have not seen my mother since the regiment was made up, and the crop is standing in the field with none but her to get it in. I will return at the end of my time as I always have"* (p. 5). Capt. Harkin approved it that same day, and the July & Aug. 1863 roll duly records him **absent on furlough of indulgence, 20 days, from Aug. 14, 1863** (p. 4).

He came back, as he said he would. The Mar. & Apr. 1864 roll has him **present** again (p. 6). Then the record thins toward the war's end, as Confederate records so often do. The **last surviving company roll**, for Sept. & Oct. 1864, marks him **absent**, with the note "absent without leave since Oct. 10, 1864" (p. 7) — but the very next card tells us why he was gone: he had been **captured near Decatur, Alabama, on Oct. 9, 1864** (p. 8). The company clerk, writing his roll, simply did not yet know his man was already a prisoner. (The two dates are a day apart and the capture record settles it — see the notes.)

From there the Union prison records pick up the thread: **received at the Military Prison, Louisville, Ky., Oct. 16, 1864**, then **forwarded to Camp Chase, Ohio, Oct. 19, 1864** (p. 8). He spent the rest of the war behind wire. On **June 12, 1865**, at Camp Chase, Asa T. Renwicke — "of Fayette County, Alabama" — subscribed the **Oath of Allegiance** to the United States and was released (p. 9). The oath also preserves a description of him: complexion fair, hair light, eyes blue, height 5 ft. 8 in. Taking the oath to secure release from prison was the ordinary path home for a captured man; the file records no enlistment in U.S. service.

A note on his name: the clerks who copied these rolls in the 1900s could not agree on the spelling — "Renwicke" on the jacket and first roll, "Renwick" on several, and "Rennick" on the Mar. & Apr. 1864

roll, where the copyist even flagged it ("Name appears on this roll as Rennick," p. 6). Asa himself signed "Renwicke" on his furlough letter and on his oath (pp. 5, 9), and that is the spelling this report follows.

His Service Timeline

Built from the bimonthly company rolls and the prison/oath cards; each period cited to its card. Where no roll survives for a period, that is stated as a gap.

- **May 20, 1862** — Enlisted at Tuscaloosa, Ala., by Capt. Harkin, for 3 years; age 19 (p. 2).
- **May & June 1862** — Present; horse \$140, equipments \$22 (p. 2).
- *Gap: no rolls survive for Jul–Aug 1862 or Sep–Oct 1862.*
- **Nov. & Dec. 1862** — Present; horse \$140, equipments \$22 (p. 3).
- *Gap: no rolls survive for Jan–Feb, Mar–Apr, or May–Jun 1863.*
- **Aug. 9, 1863** — Applied for a 20-day furlough (personal paper, p. 5); approved by Capt. Harkin same day.
- **July & Aug. 1863** — Absent on furlough of indulgence, 20 days from Aug. 14, 1863 (p. 4).
- *Gap: no rolls survive for Sep–Oct 1863 or Nov–Dec 1863; nor for Jan–Feb 1864.*
- **Mar. & Apr. 1864** — Present (p. 6).
- *Gap: no rolls survive for May–Jun 1864 or Jul–Aug 1864.*
- **Oct. 9, 1864** — Captured near Decatur, Ala. (p. 8).
- **Sept. & Oct. 1864** — Last surviving company roll: absent, "absent without leave since Oct. 10, 1864" (p. 7). *See the source-conflict note; the capture record explains this entry.*
- **Oct. 16, 1864** — Received at Military Prison, Louisville, Ky. (p. 8).
- **Oct. 19, 1864** — Forwarded to Camp Chase, Ohio (p. 8).
- **June 12, 1865** — Subscribed the Oath of Allegiance at Camp Chase and was released (p. 9).

Family and Personal Detail

The file names no wife or children — this is a service record, not a family record. What it does preserve about Asa's people is particular and specific:

- **His mother** was living and alone on the family farm in **Fayette County, Alabama** in 1863; his furlough letter says he had not seen her since the regiment formed and that the standing crop had "none but her to get it in" (p. 5). Her name is not given.
- His **residence** is stated as Fayette County, Alabama, on the oath of allegiance (p. 9).
- **Physical description** (from the oath, June 1865): complexion fair, hair light, eyes blue, height 5 ft. 8 in. (p. 9).
- **Age / birth year:** given as 19 at enlistment in May 1862 (→ born about 1843, p. 2) and as 23 on the prison register in October 1864 (→ born about 1841, p. 8). The two disagree by about two years — see the notes.

People Named in the File

- **Capt. R. Harkin** — the company's captain; enlisted Asa on May 20, 1862, and approved his furlough on Aug. 9, 1863 (pp. 2, 5). The company and regiment are both styled "Harkin's."
- **J. T. Falkner** — the War Department copyist who abstracted at least two of the muster-roll cards in the 1890s–1900s (pp. 2, 6). He is the compiler's clerk, not a contemporary of Asa's service.

About This Record, and Where It Points Next

What this is. This is a Confederate Compiled Military Service Record (NARA RG 109) — a jacket-envelope with abstract cards copied by U.S. War Department clerks in the 1900s from surviving Confederate muster rolls, plus Union prison and oath records about this soldier, and one original paper in his own hand. The cards are reliable copies of the original rolls, but they are copies; the one Tier 1 item here is Asa's own furlough letter (p. 5), signed in his hand.

Jacket reconciliation. The jacket lists **8 card numbers** and **1 personal paper** (p. 1). The one personal paper (the furlough application, p. 5) is present and accounted for. Of the 8 cards, **7 are supplied** here — five company muster rolls (pp. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7), the prisoner-of-war memoranda (p. 8), and the oath of allegiance (p. 9). **One listed card is not among the pages supplied**; a full order from NARA should retrieve it. The jacket's "Book Mark" and "See also" lines are blank; its General Notation reads "G 218, V.S. 1864," and a pencil note in the lower corner reads "bundle 61 - 23."

Confederate silence is loss, not verdict. The record goes quiet after the Sept. & Oct. 1864 roll — but here we know why: he was a prisoner from October 1864 and took the oath in June 1865. The "absent without leave" entry on that last roll is fully explained by his capture the day before; nothing in this file supports a reading of desertion.

Where to look next. Confederate pensions were granted by the **individual Southern states**, generally by the state of postwar residence — not the federal government, and no federal Confederate pension exists. Asa gave Fayette County, Alabama as his home, so **Alabama Confederate pension records** (applications by veterans and widows, largely from the 1890s onward) are the natural next stop, along with the state adjutant-general's records and Fayette County records. The deeper prison records for his confinement live in NARA RG 249 (Commissary General of Prisoners). Because he was a prisoner who took the oath and was released — not a "galvanized" man who enlisted in U.S. service — no U.S. service record is implied by this file.

The identity boundary. This file establishes what *the Asa T. Renwicke of Co. B, 27th Alabama Cavalry* did: it gives his unit and company, his enlistment on May 20, 1862 at Tuscaloosa, an age pointing to a birth about 1841–1843, a Fayette County, Alabama residence, a physical description, and the fact of a living mother alone on the farm in 1863. Those are the anchors a family will use. But matching this soldier to a specific family line requires records **outside this file** — census, county, church, land, and probate records — and same-named men of the same era are common (the spelling drift here makes indexes especially tricky). This report reads the record; it cannot by itself prove that this man is any particular family's ancestor.

The Service in Context

Alabama was a Confederate state, so a cavalry command raised there and carried under an Alabama designation served the Confederacy; the one prominent exception, the Union-allegiance 1st Alabama Cavalry (U.S.), was recruited from Southern Unionists and named accordingly, which makes a plain Alabama cavalry designation a Confederate one. For a Confederate mounted command from Alabama, the surviving paper trail is characteristically thin: the National Archives holds compiled service records of Confederate soldiers who served in organizations raised directly by the Confederate government, but muster rolls are often incomplete and frequently break off well before the war ended in 1865, so a company's records may fall silent long before its men actually stopped serving. Confederate cavalry raised in Alabama typically enlisted for terms of one to three years and mustered by county before being organized into regiments and battalions. Such horsemen served mostly in the war's Western Theater,

screening infantry armies, scouting, picketing, raiding enemy supply lines, and skirmishing, and many Alabama mounted units were drawn into the fighting around the 1864 Atlanta Campaign and the subsequent operations across Georgia and the Carolinas, with others resisting Federal cavalry raids into Alabama itself. Companies bore both a letter and their captain's name, and men who survived commonly furnished their own horses and equipment. Because reorganizations, transfers, and losses steadily thinned the ranks, families researching a Confederate Alabama cavalryman should expect gaps, spelling variants, and rolls that end before the surrenders of spring 1865.

_Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Confederate_units_from_Alabama_in_the_American_Civil_War; https://sites.rootsweb.com/~alcwroot/lnk_units.htm;

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/56th_Alabama_Cavalry_Regiment;

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/53rd_Alabama_Cavalry_Regiment;

<https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/first-alabama-u-s-cavalry-regiment/>_

(This service context was verified by web search. Everything else in this report is drawn only from the soldier's own file.)

Artifacts in the File

The file holds more than paperwork. These pages are reproduced here exactly as they were filed — a caption beneath each tells you what the record itself says about it, and nothing more.

Personal Paper — Furlough Application (original, soldier's hand)

Camp near Gadsden, Ala., August 9th, 1863.

Capt. Harkin - Sir, I respectfully ask a furlough of twenty days to go home to Fayette County. I have not seen my mother since the regiment was made up, and the crop is standing in the field with none but her to get it in. I will return at the end of my time as I always have.

Asa T. Renwicke

Approved: R. Harkin, Capt., Aug. 9, 1863

DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN — fictional soldier and fictional unit; typeset reconstruction of real record types. Not a genuine record.

Plate 1 — letter (personal paper, soldier's own hand) (page 5). inscribed/captioned: "Camp near Gadsden, Ala., August 9th, 1863. Capt. Harkin - Sir, I respectfully ask a furlough of twenty days to go home to Fayette County. I have not seen my mother since the regiment was made up, and the crop is standing in the field with none but her to get it in. I will return at the end of my time as I always have. Asa T. Renwicke Approved: R. Harkin, Capt., Aug. 9, 1863". The file's single personal paper and only Tier 1 document — an original furlough application in Asa Renwicke's own hand, carrying his signature and naming his mother and Fayette County home.

Document Inventory

Page	Document Type	Summary
1	CMSR jacket-envelope (RG 109)	Jacket for Asa T. Renwicke,

	style)	Pvt., Co. B, 27th Regiment Alabama Cavalry (Harkin's), Confederate; rank in and out Private. Lists 8 card numbers (44518202, 44518390, 44519077, 44519290, 44520011, 44520288, 61230554, 61230801) and 1 personal paper. Book Mark blank; General Notation 'G 218, V.S. 1864'; See also blank; pencil 'bundle 61 - 23' in lower corner.
2	Company Muster Roll, May & June 1862	Asa T. Renwicke, Pvt., Capt. Harkin's Co. (B), 27th Reg't Alabama Cavalry. Enlisted May 20, 1862 at Tuscaloosa, Ala., by Capt. Harkin, 3 years. Present; age 19. Horse valued \$140, equipments \$22. Copyist J. T. Falkner.
3	Company Muster Roll, Nov. & Dec. 1862	Asa T. Renwick, Pvt., Co. B, 27th Ala. Cav. Present. Horse \$140, equipments \$22.
4	Company Muster Roll, July & Aug. 1863	A. T. Renwick, Pvt., Co. B, 27th Ala. Cav. Absent — on furlough of indulgence, 20 days, from Aug. 14, 1863; furlough granted on approved application of Aug. 9, 1863.
5	Personal Paper — Furlough Application (original, soldier's hand)	Letter dated Camp near Gadsden, Ala., Aug. 9, 1863, to Capt. Harkin requesting 20 days' furlough to go home to Fayette County to see his mother and get in the crop. Signed Asa T. Renwicke; approved by R. Harkin, Capt., Aug. 9, 1863. The file's one Tier 1 document.
6	Company Muster Roll, Mar. & Apr. 1864	Asa T. Rennick, Pvt., Co. B, 27th Ala. Cav. Present. Copyist remark: 'Name appears on this roll as Rennick.' Copyist J. T. Falkner.
7	Company Muster Roll, Sept. & Oct. 1864	Asa T. Renwick, Pvt., Co. B, 27th Ala. Cav. Absent; 'absent without leave since Oct. 10, 1864.' Noted as the last company roll in the jacket.
8	Memoranda from Prisoner of War Records	Asa T. Renwick, Pvt., Co. B, 27th Alabama Cavalry, C.S.A. Captured near Decatur, Ala., Oct. 9, 1864; received Military Prison, Louisville, Ky., Oct. 16,

		1864; forwarded to Camp Chase, Ohio, Oct. 19, 1864. Age on register: 23.
9	Oath of Allegiance (Camp Chase, Ohio)	Asa T. Renwicke, of Fayette County, Alabama, subscribed and swore the oath June 12, 1865 at Camp Chase, Ohio, and was thereupon released. Description: complexion fair, hair light, eyes blue, height 5 ft. 8 in. Signed Asa T. Renwicke.
10	Fold3-style source page (digitization provider)	Source information page added by the digitization provider; states the specimen corresponds to no actual NARA jacket and that the soldier and unit are fictional. Not part of the original record.

Every Fact and Its Source

Each substantive fact in this report, with the document that states it. Tier 1 = sworn or own-hand documents; Tier 2 = official contemporaneous records; Tier 3 = claim-process paperwork; Tier 4 = administrative material. Notes mark facts a witness learned second-hand, values worked out by calculation, and uncertain readings.

Fact	Source document (page)	Tier	Notes
Asa T. Renwicke, Private, Co. B, 27th Regiment Alabama Cavalry (Harkin's), Confederate; rank in and out Private.	CMSR jacket-envelope (p. 1)	4	—
Surname recorded variously as Renwicke, Renwick, and Rennick across the cards.	Jacket and Company Muster Rolls (pp. 1-9) (p. 6)	2	source conflict
The soldier signed his own name 'Asa T. Renwicke.'	Personal Paper — Furlough Application (soldier's hand) and Oath of Allegiance (p. 5)	1	corroborated by second source
Enlisted May 20, 1862, at Tuscaloosa, Ala., by Capt. Harkin, for 3 years.	Company Muster Roll, May & June 1862 (p. 2)	2	source conflict
Age given as 19 at enlistment (implying birth about 1843).	Company Muster Roll, May & June 1862 (p. 2)	2	calculated/derived
Cavalryman furnished his own horse; horse valued	Company Muster Roll, May & June 1862 (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source

at \$140 and horse equipments at \$22.			
Present for May & June 1862.	Company Muster Roll, May & June 1862 (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
Present for Nov. & Dec. 1862; horse \$140, equipments \$22.	Company Muster Roll, Nov. & Dec. 1862 (p. 3)	2	—
Absent on furlough of indulgence, 20 days, from Aug. 14, 1863, granted on approved application of Aug. 9, 1863.	Company Muster Roll, July & Aug. 1863 (p. 4)	2	—
On Aug. 9, 1863, from Camp near Gadsden, Ala., requested a 20-day furlough to go home to Fayette County to see his mother and bring in the crop; approved same day by Capt. R. Harkin.	Personal Paper — Furlough Application (p. 5)	1	—
Present for Mar. & Apr. 1864; copyist noted 'Name appears on this roll as Rennick.'	Company Muster Roll, Mar. & Apr. 1864 (p. 6)	2	corroborated by second source
Sept. & Oct. 1864 roll (the last company roll in the jacket) marks him absent, 'absent without leave since Oct. 10, 1864.'	Company Muster Roll, Sept. & Oct. 1864 (p. 7)	2	source conflict
Captured near Decatur, Ala., Oct. 9, 1864.	Memoranda from Prisoner of War Records (p. 8)	2	source conflict
Received at Military Prison, Louisville, Ky., Oct. 16, 1864, and forwarded to Camp Chase, Ohio, Oct. 19, 1864.	Memoranda from Prisoner of War Records (p. 8)	2	—
Age given on the prison register as 23 (implying birth about 1841).	Memoranda from Prisoner of War Records (p. 8)	2	calculated/derived
Subscribed and swore the Oath of Allegiance June 12, 1865, at Camp	Oath of Allegiance (Camp Chase, Ohio) (p. 9)	2	—

Chase, Ohio, and was thereupon released.			
Described on release as complexion fair, hair light, eyes blue, height 5 ft. 8 in.	Oath of Allegiance (Camp Chase, Ohio) (p. 9)	2	—
His mother was living and alone on the family farm in Fayette County, Alabama in 1863.	Personal Paper — Furlough Application (p. 5)	1	—
Residence stated as Fayette County, Alabama.	Oath of Allegiance (Camp Chase, Ohio) (p. 9)	1	corroborated by second source
Company clerk / copyist J. T. Falkner abstracted at least two of the muster-roll cards.	Company Muster Rolls, May & June 1862 and Mar. & Apr. 1864 (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
Jacket lists 8 card numbers and 1 personal paper; the 1 personal paper is present but only 7 of the 8 cards are among the pages supplied.	CMSR jacket-envelope (p. 1)	4	—
Jacket bears General Notation 'G 218, V.S. 1864' and a pencil note 'bundle 61 - 23'; Book Mark and See also lines are blank.	CMSR jacket-envelope (p. 1)	4	reading uncertain

Where the Documents Disagree

Here two or more perfectly legible documents say different things. That is a finding about the record, not a reading problem - both versions are shown, and neither was silently preferred. Where the evidence clearly favored one reading, the story above follows it, and the note here says why - a visible weighing, never a silent one.

- **Page 6** - the documents disagree here (The surname drifts across the cards: 'Renwicke' on the jacket (p.1), May–June 1862 roll (p.2), and oath (p.9); 'Renwick' on pp. 3, 4, 7, 8; 'Rennick' on the Mar.–Apr. 1864 roll (p.6), where the copyist noted 'Name appears on this roll as Rennick.' The name-spelling variants are copyist renderings of original rolls). Both readings appear in the report; review confirmed the disagreement is in the record itself. Our read: Use 'Renwicke.' The soldier signed his own name 'Asa T. Renwicke' on his furlough letter (p.5) and his oath of allegiance (p.9); an own-hand signature outranks copyists' renderings of the rolls.
- **Page 8** - the documents disagree here (The May–June 1862 enlistment roll gives age 19, implying birth about 1843 (p.2); the Oct. 1864 Union prison register gives age 23, implying birth about 1841

(p.8). The two implied birth years differ by about two years). Both readings appear in the report; review confirmed the disagreement is in the record itself. Our read: Lean to birth about 1843. The age-19 figure was recorded at enrollment in 1862, closest to the enlistment event; prison-register ages were often approximate. Both are compiled abstracts, so treat 1841–1843 as the plausible range and confirm against census or county records.

- **Page 8** - the documents disagree here (The last company roll (Sept.–Oct. 1864, p.7) marks him absent without leave since Oct. 10, 1864, while the prisoner-of-war memoranda (p.8) record his capture near Decatur on Oct. 9, 1864 — a day earlier. The roll's 'AWOL' inference collides with a dated Union capture record covering the same time). Both readings appear in the report; review confirmed the disagreement is in the record itself. Our read: The capture record governs: he was a prisoner of war from Oct. 9, 1864, and the company clerk's 'absent without leave' note reflects only that the company did not yet know he had been captured. A dated capture record supersedes an inference drawn from an absence; nothing here supports desertion.

What the File Does Not Establish

The file is silent on these points. No document states them, so the report says so rather than filling them in.

- **Page 1** - the file does not answer this (The jacket lists 8 card numbers (p.1). The pages supplied contain 7 cards — five company muster rolls (pp. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7), the POW memoranda (p.8), and the oath (p.9) — plus the 1 personal paper (p.5), which matches the count. One listed card is not among the pages supplied). The Research Gaps section points to the records that might.

About this report: it was produced from the file provided, read page by page. It does not search records beyond that file - the Research Gaps section points to the outside records that could carry the story further.