

BIRD, Pickens Butler Maj., 2nd Florida Battalion, 10th Regt. Florida Inf., 6th Florida Battalion

The National Archives contain no documents for P. B. Bird in the files for Officers or Miscellaneous. P. B. Bird appears in Wyllie's list of officers as a Major with the 6th Florida Battalion, but no such unit exists in the National Archives Records. Peckins B. Bird, however, appears in the files for state of Florida, Second Battalion Florida Infantry, with a total of 35 documents. This endorsement is rare, with only one known, and it eluded identification for years. The endorsement reads "Issued Oct 21st 1862, P B Bird" with the signature in a very large and flowing script.



Maj. Pickens Butler Bird.

image: www.geni.com/people/Col-Pickens-Butler-Bird-CSA, from Odis D. Kendrick, through Bill Cudlipp Annuttaliga Farm, Brooksville, Florida, April 2nd, 1892.

1862 Pickens B. Bird, aged 29 years, enlisted for the duration of the war on August 8th, 1862, at Monticello, Florida, and was elected as Captain of Company A, 2nd Battalion (Brevard's) Partisan Rangers. This unit would subsequently become Company D of the 2nd Battalion Florida Infantry. On September 2nd Bird signed a voucher for mileage between Lake City and Tallahassee, Florida. In November 1862 he was stationed at Camp Finegan and on detached service attending a court martial.

1863 On January 17th Bird was paid \$619.66 for the period from August 8th, 1862 to December 31st, 1862. On January 18th Bird signed a special requisition at Lake City, Florida, for clothing for 100

men, 100 caps and 100 pairs of shoes, noting that "the company [was] without shoes and caps."

On May 29th Bird signed a requisition for 50 pairs of shoes, and he signed a special requisition for tents, spades, and axes at Tallahassee, Florida, on August 11th. In September Bird was absent on a sick furlough. A roll dated the same month located the unit at Lake City, Florida. A roll dated November, and a month after the Treasury note was issued, located the unit at Tallahassee, Florida, and serving with the Department of East and Middle Florida, commanded by Brig. Gen'l Jos. Finegan; Bird was still noted as a Captain at this time.

1864 The website familysearch.org states that some of the companies of the Florida 2nd Battalion Partisan Rangers merged into the 10th Florida Regiment, and the National Archives files bear this out with five documents for P. B. Bird in the files for the Tenth Infantry. This website also corrects the spelling of his name listed in the National Archives from Peckins B. Bird to Pickens Butler Bird. A roster of the 10th Infantry dated February 1865 corroborated Bird's enlistment in the 2nd Battalion and noted that he was promoted on September 5th, 1863, [to Major, retroactively] reporting to the "10th Florida Regiment, Finegan's Brigade, Mahone's Division, 3d (A. P. Hill's) Corps, Army of Northern Virginia; organized June 11th 1864, mustered into service...2d Fla Batt'n Aug. 14, 1862; Term, War."

A document was signed on February 19th, 1864, by Maj. P. B. Bird for ordnance and ordnance stores. The signature is similar to those found on other documents in Bird's files, but the title of Major is new and the unit is now named the 6th Battalion Florida Volunteers, which corroborates Wyllie's list of officers. There are no entries for a 6th Battalion in the National Archives files for Florida, but this website: battleofolustee.org/6th_fl_inf.html sheds considerable light. This website states that in May 1864 the War Department requested Gen'l Patton Anderson, commanding the District of Florida, to send a brigade sent to Richmond. Brig. Gen'l Joseph Finegan was sent with his brigade, which included the 6th Florida Battalion. They joined Hill's Corps at Hanover Junction, Virginia, on May 28th, 1864. "The unit participated at the Battle of Cold Harbor [May 31st to June 12th], where Major Pickens Bird was killed." After Cold Harbor, Finegan's Brigade consisted of the 2nd, 6th, 8th, 9th, and 11th Florida Regiments.

The identification of this officer was elusive. Interpretations of the first initial in the endorsement were confusing, and initial searches of the Officers files in the National Archives were failures. At last we have a solid identification.

A website for P. B. Bird is managed by R. Owen Wyant at www.geni.com/people/Col-Pickens-Butler-Bird-CSA and states that Pickens Butler Bird was born circa January 12th, 1833, and died June 6th, 1864. He is buried at Richmond, Virginia. This website lists him at times as a Colonel, while all other sources in the National Archives list his final rank as Major. Of interest in this website is a letter written by Capt. James F. Tucker to Daniel B. Bird, the son of P. B. Bird:

"Mr. D. B. Bird, Jr. [D. B. Bird, Sr. was P. B. Bird's father], Monticello, Florida

"My Dear Sir:

"Your esteemed favor asking the facts concerning your father's death received. It affords me a mournful pleasure to comply with your request, and I will be most happy if in anyway I can contribute to your mother's desire.

"As to your father's death and the manner of it there can be no doubt or uncertainty. He fell in the performance of duty at the post of danger, I may say leading a "forlorn hope" and acquitted himself most nobly as became a brave Confederate soldier. These facts are known to a crowd (?) of witnesses - his comrades, who watched his daring charge and saw his untimely fall.

"Well do I remember the day, one of the most eventful of my life. It was on the 3rd day of June, 1864, at the Second Battle of Cold Harbor where the genius of Lee again baffled and defeated the persistence of Grant. The circumstances were about as follows.

"Under cover of the early dawn of day, the enemy assaulted and captured a part of our line - held by General Breckenridge's Division - to which we were acting as a Reserve. Our brigade had bivouacked upon the ground, and the charging troops of the enemy were almost upon us before General Finegan could get his men into line and ready to repulse them. But our men responded promptly and moved with such alacrity as to "sweep the enemy before them like a whirlwind", as was described by Georgia's great war correspondent, P. W. A. We had recaptured and reoccupied our entrenchments, but the enemy's sharpshooters still occupied a line of rifle pits covering our front, from which they kept up an annoying and deadly fire. About 10 o'clock in the morning it was determined to make an effort to recover them. A detail from the Brigade was made and Major Bird ordered to command it. At the word, they all leaped over the breastworks and started at a run. As they did so, the enemy received them with a destructive fire, both from the rifle pits and their main line, resulting in the killing and wounding of

nearly every man who composed the detail, among them your gallant and heroic father.

"My eyes were upon him from the moment he started up that desperate charge until he fell, pieced by two bullets.

"In less time than I take to write it, in response to a mute appeal which I can never forget, I jumped over the breastworks and ran to his assistance. I had just reached his side and was in the act of lifting him up when I too was shot down. About the same time, Lieutenant Lane of our battalion (the 6th Florida) came out on the same mission and met the same fate, the poor fellow dying from his wounds some days afterward. Still another ventured a rescue, and he was also shot down.

"Later on, when the murderous fire had slackened a little, Sgt. Bryan of my Co. "D" came to my assistance and two others whose names I cannot now recall to your father's and by hugging the ground fairly dragged us inside our works, a little way at a time, as the lull in the enemy's fire would allow them to move.

"After getting inside the breastworks we were compelled to lie there all day and far into the night, before the furious fire would admit our removal, and even then after we had started, the litter bearers were once or twice compelled to drop their burdens and lie prone upon the ground to protect themselves from the deadly missiles (sp) that filled the air. After halting a while at the field hospital, where we received the first surgical attention since being wounded twelve hours before, we were carried to the corps hospital where we were kept until ambulances could be had to convey us to Richmond. We were placed in the Howard Grove Hospital, which was under the charge of Dr. T. M. Palmer, with Dr. Babcock, late of Jacksonville, as his assistant. Mrs. M. M. Reid, was there as a ministering angel doing all that woman could and what only woman can do - to soothe, comfort and console the wounded, whose name was legion.

"Mrs. D. Palmer was there also, thus your father fell into the hands of skillful surgeons and kind and sympathetic friends; but alas, his wounds were mortal. The surgeons' art, nor the tears and prayers of woman, availed him naught.

"We were placed in the same ward and upon cots only a short distance from each other, I could see and hear all that took place. He was deeply concerned for his fate but realized his awful condition, and when informed there was no hope set himself about making preparations for the end, which could no long be deferred. There were religious devotions and sending of word of love and a sad farewell to his wife and children far away, and who would never again see him in this mortal life, and finally calling all to

witness that he died an honorable and manly death as a Confederate soldier in the performance of his duty in defense of his country; still in his sore extremely thinking of home and family and making such arrangements as his weak and exhausted condition would admit of. With a prayer up his lips, he died a soldier's death and passed to a soldier's reward, on the 5th day of June, 1864.

"Such was the fall and death of your honored father, Major Pickens B. Bird – as generous a soul, as brave a man, and as gallant a soldier as wore the Confederate uniform, and more than that could not be said of any many.

"In his patriotic endeavor, a faithful service and noble death his wife and children possess a legacy sealed by the heart's blood of one of nature's nobleman.

"I trust you will pardon the intrusion of myself into this true story of a . . .

"[The letter ends here... some is missing. Major Pickens B. Bird is buried in the Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia.]"

McNeil



P.B. Bird Capt. J.R.

P. B. Bird's signatures from the National Archives.

The earliest known example, signed on September 2nd, 1862, at Tallahassee, Florida, as "Capt P(artisan) R(angers)."

P.B. Bird Com. Co. H. Brevard Batt.

Signed on January 18th, 1863, at Lake City, Florida, as "Com(anding) Co A, Brevard Batt P(artisan) R(angers)."

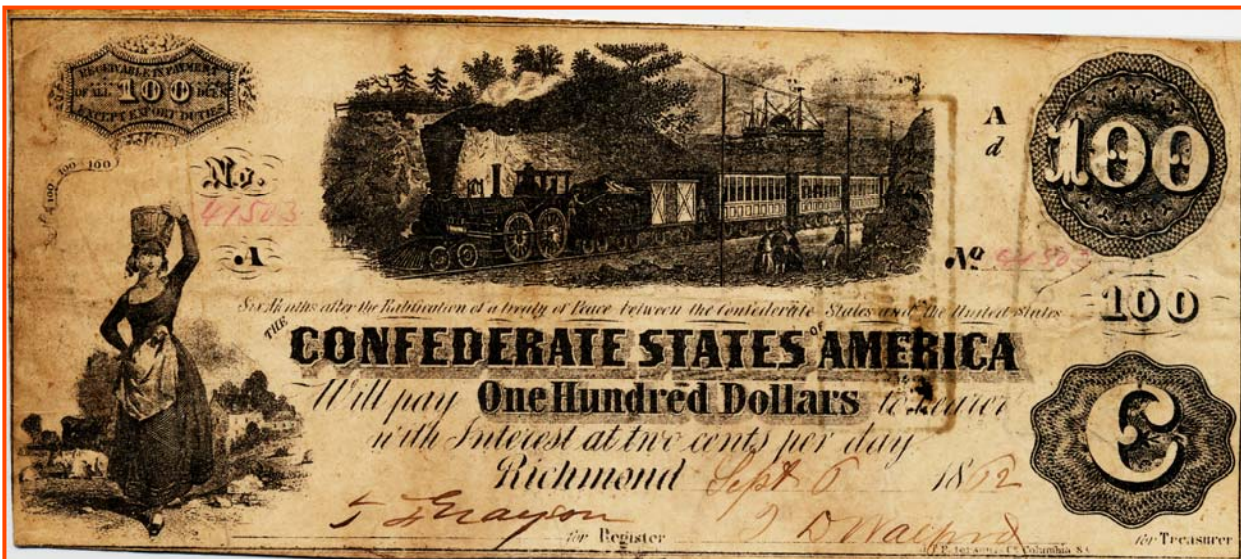
P.B. Bird Capt. to comp. D. Brevard Batt.

Signed on May 29th, 1863, at Camp Finegan, as "Capt, Comp(any) D, Brevard Batt."

P.B. Bird Major General, 6th Batt. Fla. Vol.

Signed on February 19th, 1864, at an illegible location, as "Major Com(man)d(in)g 6 Batt(alion) Fl(oid(a) Vol(unteers)."

images: Fold3.com



Grayson, Wainwright
41503 Ad
6 Sep 1862
images: Fricke