

**Captain Peter Simonson  
5<sup>th</sup> Indiana Battery**

**Acting chief of artillery for the 1<sup>st</sup> Division (4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps), Simonson on June 16, 1864 was busy entrenching here a 4-gun battery of artillery when he was killed by a Confederate bullet. The Confederate was perhaps a sharpshooter armed with an English made rifle with scope known as a Whitworth. The Whitworth fired a six-sided bullet that could kill a target one-half mile away. However, the two armies were within a few hundred feet of each other at this point, so it is not unreasonable to believe he could have been killed by a common Confederate rifleman.**

**Text written by Dr. Phil Secrist**

References and footnotes provided by Barbara Flack, April 22, 2007

Additional wording and changed provided by John Cissell, June 11, 2007

Sources – Captain Peter Simonson

Baumgartner, Richard A. and Larry M. Strayer. *Kennesaw Mountain June 1864*. Huntington, WV: Blue Acorn Press, 1998.

Bearss, Edwin C. Troup Movement Map, Sheet III-B for June 15-18, 1864, overlay plus base map. Drawn in approximately 1964. (On file at the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park Research Library. All other information obtained from this research library will be designated with the letters "KMNBP".)

Castel, Albert. *Decision in the West: The Atlanta Campaign of 1864*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992.

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Philip Secrist, telephone conversation with Barbara Flack March 5, 2007.

Strayer, Larry M. and Richard A. Baumgartner, ed. *Echoes of Battle: The Atlanta Campaign*. Huntington, WV: Blue Acorn Press, 1991.

Secrist, Philip L., Dr. *Sherman's 1864 Trail of Battle to Atlanta*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006.

U.S. War Department. *The War of the Rebellion, A compilation of the official records of the union and Confederate armies*. Series I, Volume XXXVIII. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891. (Information obtained from this source will have the designation of "OR".)

Willie Johnson (Interpretive Ranger at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park), conversation with Barbara Flack at the research library, April 11, 2007.

Captain Peter Simonson  
5<sup>th</sup> Indiana Battery

Acting chief of artillery<sup>1</sup> for the 1<sup>st</sup> Division (4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps)<sup>2</sup>, Simonson on June 16, 1864 was busy entrenching here<sup>3</sup> a 4-gun<sup>4</sup> battery of artillery when he was killed by a Confederate bullet<sup>5</sup>. The Confederate was perhaps a sharpshooter armed<sup>6</sup> with an English made rifle with scope known as a Whitworth<sup>7</sup>. The Whitworth fired a six-sided bullet<sup>8</sup> that could kill a target one-half mile away<sup>9</sup>. However, the two armies were within a few hundred feet<sup>10</sup> of each other at this point so it is not unreasonable to believe he could have been killed by a common Confederate rifleman.

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<sup>1</sup> All sources investigated refer to Simonson as the “Chief of Artillery”. During my 3/5/07 conversation with Dr. Secrist, he stated that a person with that title usually held a higher rank such as Brigadier General or Major General. As Simonson was a rising star before his death, he was given additional responsibility and was acting in this capacity, but as a captain, he would not yet have earned the title of a full chief. Examples of Dr. Secrist’s point were found in the OR, Part I, P. 89-91 in which the field forces for the Atlanta campaign were described. The Chiefs of Artillery for the Headquarters Guard and the Army of the Cumberland both held the rank of Brigadier General.

<sup>2</sup> OR, Part I, 90-91.

<sup>3</sup> The Bearss Troup Movement map showed the position of the 5<sup>th</sup> Indiana Battery during this time to be at approximately the present-day intersection of Kennesaw-Due West Road and Frank Kirk Road.

<sup>4</sup> Secrist, (Sherman’s Trail), 181, endnote 114. Note: The Artillery Study at KMNBP showed the 5<sup>th</sup> Indiana to be a 6-gun battery, with two 3-inch rifles and four 12-pound Napoleons. Baumgartner, 30 stated that the 5<sup>th</sup> Indiana Battery had six rifles on June 14<sup>th</sup>, two days earlier when Gen. Polk was killed. OR, Part I, 488 cited an example where the guns were detached in the Tunnel Hill area in May of 1864, but I did not find information stating two of the guns were detached in this particular instance.

<sup>5</sup> OR, Part I, 223, 482; Part IV, 493.

<sup>6</sup> I am not able to substantiate what type of gun the sniper was armed with.

<sup>7</sup> Fuller stated that it is believed this was the only imported gun to be used exclusively by the South and it was used to arm sharpshooters (227), who were specially selected because of their marksmanship (228), and that most of the Whitworth rifles were equipped with telescopic sights (229).

<sup>8</sup> Fuller, 228. It also used a cylindrical bullet. He referred to a study by Walter M. Cline who studied the ammunition used by both sides during the Atlanta campaign. Cline found many cylindrical bullets, but no hexagonal bullets. It was not stated where exactly Cline conducted his study or how extensive it was.

<sup>9</sup> Fuller, 227.

<sup>10</sup> EDAW, Cultural Opportunities Map, the relative positions of Simonson and sniper were illustrated.

Note: I was not able to substantiate what type of weapon the sniper was holding. Secrist, (Sherman’s Trail), 181, endnote 114 stated the sniper was later captured and provided details of the shooting. Secrist (conversation) referred me to Strayer for details of the interrogation, but I did not find those details there or in any of the references listed above. Castel, 281 stated that soldiers of the 101<sup>st</sup> Ohio captured a Rebel sniper who reported he fired at Simonson three times before hitting him. No other details from that report were given.

Note: Secrist, (Sherman’s Trail), 181, endnote 114, Secrist (conversation), the author stated he found an unfired hexagonal bullet during a 1995 field study of the area.