

Sydney Herbert Davies

[Confederate]

Sydney Herbert Davies, the eldest son of Royal Navy Admiral George Davies, and his wife Julia Hume, was born in the City of Longfleet, District of Poole, Shire of Dorset in Southwest England on July 30, 1838. Sydney attended the Royal Naval School, at Deptford, England and became a midshipman on the "HMS Rodney", during the period of the Crimean War, joining the old flagship of Nelson, the "Victory", and served in the war at Sebastopol from July 1, 1855. Sydney was discharged from the Royal Navy on November 5, 1856; after serving a six years enlistment. During that time Sydney was awarded two medals for his service in the Crimean war; the Medal and Clasp and a Turkish medal. On October 27, 1857 he was commissioned as an Ensign in the Cambridgeshire Militia and by June 18, 1861 was commissioned Lieutenant in the 16th Regiment of Foot, British Army, going through the School of Musketry at Hythe and later becoming the instructor of musketry to his unit, he was assigned to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he eventually resigned on April 28, 1863. By the time he had resigned his naval career, Sydney had been promoted to Vice Admiral; and upon re-entering civilian life, he was appointed as Chief Constable of Police in Dorset county.

Afterwards Sydney migrated to the United States, leaving Halifax, Nova Scotia in a schooner, running the Union blockade, and arriving in South Carolina; where upon learning of his desire to join the Confederate Army, a Confederate agent induced Sydney to become an agent for the Confederate Government in charge of dispatches, at 38 years of age. Records state that he first served with Walker's Brigade as a volunteer from August 1863 until November 26, 1864; his first engagement being at Chancellorville, Sydney was wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg which occurred on July 1-3, 1864 during the famous 'Pickett's Charge' and took part in the "Battle of the Wilderness". Sydney was with the division of Cavalry that marched out of the Valley during the winter of 1864.

He had tried to acquire a commission as a Major in the **Confederate States Army**, but was instead commissioned as 1st Lieutenant and Drillmaster on November 30, 1864 and appointed Adjutant and Assistant Inspector General assigned to General Henry Heth's Division, Sydney was on February 17, 1865 doing duty in the Inspector General's Department, Heth's Division, when he officially accepted the appointment on January 22, 1865 at Richmond, Virginia. On March 16, 1865 Davies signed papers at a camp near Petersburg, apparently having been captured, as S.H. Davies, A.A.I.G. (A.G.O.349-G). On April 9, 1865 1st Lieutenant Sydney H. Davies, A.A.I.G., Heth's Division, A.N. Va., was paroled. He remained on the staff of General Heth until the Confederacy's surrender at Appomattox.

Davies had a distinguished career in the Confederate States Army with many commendations and recommendations, even to President Davis; and participated in most of the engagements of the unit he served with under General Henry Heth.

After the Surrender of General Robert E. Lee, Davies returned to England, then migrated to Australia and by 1866 had again migrated, to New Zealand, where he became sub-inspector in the Armed Constabulary, and later held a commission in the Egmont North Dunedin Rifle Volunteers. He was with the forces that were engaged against Tlokoweru, was present at the engagement of Nuikamora and commanded a redoubt at Waitara. In August 1870, Sydney attempted to raise an Artillery Volunteer Corps for the New Zealand government, but his offer was rejected when he was told;

"The Government does not wish to have an Artillery Corps at Taranaki, - indeed there are no guns available for them."

On January 29, 1869 the Governor of New Zealand appointed Sydney to be Sub-Inspector of the Armed Constabulary of Colonial Defence and served until September 8, 1869 when his commission was cancelled and John Cunningham was appointed Ensign in the North Dunedin Rifle Volunteers, replacing Sub-Inspector Sydney Herbert Davies. Sydney, a member of the 16th Foot, was awarded the New Zealand War Medal for service during the New Zealand Maori Wars. On January 24, 1872 in the Resident Magistrate's Court a suit was heard involving S.H. Davies vs H. Shuttleworth. Davies was being sued for failure to pay 20 pound promissory note; but was not found to be libel.

Upon retirement George Davies, his father, was promoted to a retired Rear-Admiral, under orders in council of 1st August, 1860 and 9th July, 1864. On May 1, 1867 by Command of the Queen's levee was held at St James's Palace by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on behalf of her Majesty, and about 170 presentations took place, amongst them being the Rear-Admiral George Davies, on promotion, by the Earl of Hardwicke.

On October 19, 1874 Sydney married the widow of Alexander Pearson Bissett who died in Scotland, Mrs. Mary Jane (Allen) Bissett who returned to NZ in 1873 taking her one year old daughter Margaret with her, at her home on High Street in at St Andrew's Parish, Dunedin, New Zealand. They spent time in Timaru, then moved to Dunedin in 1896 and the following year moved on to Roslyn, New Zealand. Their children included George born in 1876, died at 7 months burial Oct. 20 1876; Alan Athelstan born in 1879, died at 6 months burial Feb. 23, 1880; and Ethel Louise born in 1881, died at 29 days burial June 16, 1881. It appears all three children died within days or months of being born. During his life Sydney held several civilian positions of importance and was a member of the Imperial Veterans Alliance of New Zealand; for some years serving as Secretary.

Sydney lost his beloved wife, Mary Jane (Bissett) Davies, when she died at 63 years of age on February 8, 1911.

Among the personal papers of Sydney, found after his death, were signed recommendation for promotions from Confederate General's Heath, Arthur and Walker. Each document was countersigned by Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America and J.F. Bodon, Confederate Secretary of War; and personally approved by Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

Sydney Herbert Davies died at 77 years of age on February 15, 1915 on Ross Street in Roslyn, New Zealand of 'Senile Cardiac Disease'; certified to by Doctor J. Wall on the same date. His death was attested to by Mrs. Mary Allen. Sydney had lived in Australia for 19 years and was buried with military honours on February 17, 1915 in Northern Cemetery in Dunedin; Block 114, Plot 0021, Burial register number 85815. His ceremony was accompanied by members of 4th Otago Regiment and Coast Defence Detachment who provided a gun salute for an old soldier. In attendance were seven members of the New Zealand Veterans Association and Colonel Smith of the local defence office.

His gravestone inscription reads;

"SYDNEY HERBERT DAVIES - Died Feb. 15, 1915. Aged 76 years. An ARMY CAPTAIN. Resident of Ross Avenue. Born Poole, England. Lived 49 years in New Zealand."

Sydney Herbert Davies was survived only by a daughter, Mrs. J. Greenfield.

Mary Jane (Bissett) Davies, Sydney's wife who died at 63 years of age was also buried in the same plot on February 8, 1911. Also buried in this Plot are ALLAN ATHELSTON DAVIES, 6 Months buried February 23 1880; ETHEL LOUISINE DAVIES, 29 Days buried June 16, 1881; DAVIES GEORGE BEDIVERE DAVIES 7 Months buried October 20, 1876; ERIC D B M STONYER 10 Years buried January 7, 1903 AND MARGARET STONYER 31 years burial September 2, 1903.

(CONFEDERATE.)	
J. <i>Eda</i>	
<i>S. H. Davies</i>	
<i>1st Lieut + Drillmaster</i>	
Registers	
of Appointments, Confederate States Army.	
State	<i>England</i>
To whom report	<i>Maj Genl Heth</i>
Date of appointment	<i>Nov. 30, 1864</i>
Date of commission	<i>1864</i>
To take rank	<i>Nov. 30, 1864</i>
Date of acceptance	<i>Jan 22, 1865</i>
Delivered	<i>Richmond</i>
Subsequent disposition	
Secretary of War	<i>J. A. Seddon</i>
Remarks:	
Doc't. Arch., Chap. 1, File No. 94, page 110	
(186)	<i>F. Howe</i> Copy

November 25th 1864

My dear Sir

Permit me to introduce to your notice a brave and worthy young Southern - *for* S. H. Davies - a British subject.

Mr Davies has been commended by all of his Superior for his American gallantry in battle. *he has been twice awarded*

As a Volunteer fighter who has always been found in the front ranks of any division in battle I have taken the liberty to give him this note of introduction to your Excellency.

With high esteem
I am very truly
your old friend
J. H. Patton
Major Genl

To His Excellency The President

Sources:

Archives New Zealand, Agency DAAC, Series 1905, Accession D238, Box 335, Record 2930

Katherine Milburn, Hocken Collections,

Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers, and Non-regimental Enlisted Men, M331

Defenders of NZ, 1887, Gudgeon T.W.

Evening Post, 10 September 1869, New Zealand

Evening Post, 16 February 1915, New Zealand

Evening Star, 16 February 1915, New Zealand

Fiona Gray, National Library of New Zealand

Footnote Databanks

Index to Compiled Confederate Military Service Records

National Archives, Washington, D.C.

New Zealand BMD Records

New Zealand Gazette, 29 January and 8 September 1869, New Zealand

Northern Cemetery, Burial Records, Dunedin, New Zealand

Otago Daily Times, 11 February 1911, New Zealand

Otago Daily Times, 18 February 1915, New Zealand

Otago Witness, 2 September 1903, New Zealand

Poverty Bay Herald, 16 February 1915, New Zealand

Sydney Herbert Davies, New Zealand Death Certificate, 1915007061