

Ramseur, Stephen Dodson ^[1]

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by John G. Barrett, 1994

13 May 1837–20 Oct. 1864



Stephen Dodson
Ramseur. Image
courtesy of Histories
of the several
regiments and
battalions from
North Carolina, in
the great war 1861-

'65. ^[2]Stephen Dodson Ramseur, Confederate ^[3]soldier, was born in Lincolnton, the son of Jacob A. and Lucy Wilfong Ramseur. He attended school in Lincolnton and Milton and at age sixteen enrolled in Davidson College ^[4]. Ramseur left Davidson in April 1856 to accept an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy ^[5], from which he was graduated on 1 July 1860 standing fourteen in a class of forty-one. Commissioned a second lieutenant, Third Artillery, he was stationed first at Fort Monroe, Va., and then for a short period in Washington, D.C. He was promoted to first lieutenant, Fourth Artillery, on 1 Feb. 1861 but never reported to his new command. Instead, he resigned his commission on 6 Apr. 1861 and offered his services to the Confederacy.

As captain of the Ellis Light Artillery, a Raleigh ^[6] battery, he reported to General John Magruder at Yorktown, Va., in the spring of 1862. That April he was elected colonel of the Forty-ninth North Carolina, a regiment he led with distinction in the Seven Days' fighting before Richmond; though severely wounded at Malvern Hill, he refused to leave the field until the battle was over.

Ramseur was promoted to brigadier general on 1 Nov. 1862 and assigned a brigade in General Robert E. Lee's ^[7]Second Corps. He led his brigade with distinction at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor, suffering wounds on two occasions. During the Cold Harbor campaign he was promoted to the rank of major general and given a division. The promotion, which came on 1 June 1864, only one day after his twenty-seventh birthday, made him the youngest West Pointer to attain that rank in the Confederate army. Following Cold Harbor Ramseur served under Jubal Early at Lynchburg, participated in the Washington Raid, and fought against Philip H. Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley. He was mortally wounded at Cedar Creek, Va., on 19 Oct. 1864. Taken prisoner, he died the next day at Sheridan's headquarters in Winchester. The day before he was wounded Ramseur learned of the birth of a daughter, Mary Dodson. He had married Ellen E. Richmond of Milton, N.C., on 22 Oct. 1863. His body was taken to Lincolnton for burial.

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Additional Resources:

"Stephen D. Ramseur." N.C. Highway Historical Marker O-8, N.C. Office of Archives & History.
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Clark, Walter. *Histories of the several regiments and battalions from North Carolina, in the great war 1861-'65* Raleigh, E.M. Uzzell, printer. 1901. <https://archive.org/details/historiesofsever03clar> [2] (accessed May 21, 2013).

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