



CSS Alabama - commissioned 1862 sunk in battle 1864

Obituary of David Herbert Llewellyn, Surgeon Aboard the Confederate States Ship Alabama

David Herbert Llewellyn, who perished in the noble performance of his duty in the late action off Cherbourg, was the son of the Rev. David Llewellyn, perpetual curate of Easton Royal, Wilts. He was educated at Marlborough College, was an articled pupil of Dr. Hassall of Richmond, and subsequently studied his profession at Charing Cross Hospital from 1856 to 1859. He was Silver Medalist in Surgery and Chymistry.

He was with the "Alabama" throughout the whole of her eventful career, and was much respected by all on board. We are enabled to give a copy of the last letter we believe he ever wrote. It was addressed to Mr. Travers, the residential medical officer of Charing Cross Hospital, and is as follows:-

Cherbourg, June 14, 1864.

Dear Travers,

Here we are. I send this by a gentleman coming to London. An enemy is outside. If she only stays long enough, we go out and fight her. If I live, expect to see me in London shortly. If I die, give my best love to all who know me. If Monsieur A. de Caillett should call on you, please show him every attention.

I remain, dear Travers, ever yours,

D. H. Llewellyn.

How poor Llewellyn did his duty as a man and a surgeon may be judged by the following touching episode which was seen to occur during the late battle:- The whaleboat and dinghy, the only two boats uninjured, were lowered and the wounded men placed in them, Mr. Fulham being sent in charge of them in the Kearsage. When the boats were full, a man who was unwounded endeavoured to enter one but was held back by the surgeon of the ship – Mr. Llewellyn.

“See”, he said, “I want to save my life as much as you do; but let the wounded men be saved first”. “Doctor”, said the officer in the boat, “We can make room for you”. “I will not imperil the wounded men,” was his reply. He remained behind and sank with the ship - a loss much deplored by all the officers and men.

Noble and self-denying as was the conduct of the late surgeon of the “Alabama”, we are proud in the conviction that the same chivalrous spirit animates the medical officers of the united services of this kingdom. There has been much talk of their being “non-combatant officers”, but where are we to look for greater heroism or self-devotion, even in the cannon’s mouth? And yet Llewellyn was the type of class whom the Admiralty and the Horse Guards have thought fit, by every means in their power, to degrade and insult. No wonder, under such circumstances, that the service is now so unpopular that there are more than 200 vacancies which cannot be filled up.

The cause in which the real hero of the late naval duel perished is not one which can be acknowledged by any national testimonial; but we are glad that his fellow students contemplate the erection of a tablet to his memory in the hospital in which he so greatly distinguished himself, and which his kindly and generous spirit had gained for him the greatest esteem and affection. It would be a fitting monument to his memory, and we trust that it will be placed in so appropriate a place.

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