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**A LETTER FROM LEONARD RANDAL TO HIS SON**

by Max S. Lale

The best known example of father-son relationships in modern history is Dwight D. Eisenhower and his son John. Other father-son combinations abound in military history, however. More as a function of age than for other reasons, such pairings almost without exception involve a son subordinate to a father in grade and authority. Experience and the hierarchical nature of military service dictate the relationship.

An unusual reversal of this familial relationship — the father subordinate to the son — is revealed in a letter in the possession of James Thomas Jones, Jr., of Dallas,<sup>1</sup> a copy of which is in the archives of the Harrison County Historical Museum in Marshall. The letter is from Leonard Randal,<sup>2</sup> regimental surgeon of the 28th Texas Cavalry, C.S.A., to his son Horace Randal,<sup>3</sup> commander of a brigade in Walker's Texas Division. In it, the father sets out his reasons for requesting permission to resign his commission and to leave his post as acting surgeon of his son's brigade. The letter follows:

Head Quarters, Randal's Brigade,  
Walker's Division, Camp near Pine Bluff  
22nd March 1863

Col Horace Randal  
Comdg Brigade

Sir I have the honor through you to tender my resignation as Surgeon P.A.C.S. 28th Texas Calvary.

I am sixty three years of age (63) and find my health fast failing — I had hoped to see the end of the war before withdrawing from the service, but advanced age, worn down by protracted Diarrhea, renders it imperative that I should withdraw. I have *two sons* and *three sons-in-laws* in the service all of whom have families, my own family, and five orphan grandchildren, all dependant on me for protection.

These reasons I hope may be found sufficient to justify me for asking to be released from the service by tendering my resignation, and I trust that this will meet with the speedy approval of my immediate and other commanders as well as at the War Department.

I am, Sir,

Respectfully

Your Obedient

Leonard Randal  
Surgeon, 9th Brigade  
Walker's Division

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*Max S. Lale is a past president of the East Texas Historical Association. He is from Marshall and Fort Worth.*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>A great-great-grandson of Leonard Randal and the great-grandson of Mary M. Randal, Horace Randal's sister, who was born in Tennessee in 1837. Interview with Inez Hughes, director of the Harrison County Historical Museum, Marshall.

<sup>2</sup>Born in North Carolina on February 11, 1800, Leonard Randal migrated first to Tennessee and then to Texas after the Revolution, settling near San Augustine. He represented Shelby, Sabine, and Harrison Counties in the Senate in the called session of the Sixth Congress, 1842, and in the Seventh Congress, 1842-1843. During the Mexican-American War he was appointed assistant surgeon in the United States Army on March 3, 1847, and was assigned to the 12th Infantry. He resigned from the service August 3 of the same year. See *The Handbook of Texas*, (Austin 1952), II, 436.

<sup>3</sup>Horace Randal was born January 1, 1833, in Tennessee. As a member of the class of 1854, he was Texas' first graduate from the United States Military Academy, subsequently serving as a second lieutenant at a number of Western posts. He resigned his commission on February 27, 1861, and entered the military service of the Confederacy, first in Virginia as a private soldier. Later he organized the 28th Texas Cavalry at Marshall. In Walker's Texas Division he commanded a brigade at the Battle of Mansfield in early April 1864. Unaware that he had been promoted to the grade of brigadier general to rank from April 8, he was killed at the Battle of Jenkin's Ferry in Arkansas on April 30 of the same year. He is buried in Marshall Cemetery in Marshall. Randall County is named for him. See Webb, *Handbook of Texas*, II, 436.