



SOLDIER'S HEART

Being the Story of the Enlistment and
Due Service of the Boy Charley Goddard
in the First Minnesota Volunteers

BY THREE-TIME NEWBERY HONOR WINNER
GARY PAULSEN

CHAPTER ONE

JUNE 1861

He heard it all, Charley did; heard the drums and songs and slogans and knew what everybody and his rooster was crowing.

There was going to be a shooting war. They were having town meetings and nailing up posters all over Minnesota and the excitement was so high Charley had seen girls faint at the meetings, just faint from the noise and hullaballoo. It was better than a circus. Or what he thought a circus must be like. He'd never seen one. He'd never seen anything but Winona,

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Minnesota, and the river five miles each way from town.

There would be a shooting war. There were rebels who had violated the law and fired on Fort Sumter and the only thing they'd respect was steel, it was said, and he knew they were right, and the Union was right, and one other thing they said as well—if a man didn't hurry he'd miss it. The only shooting war to come in a man's life and if a man didn't step right along he'd miss the whole thing.

Charley didn't figure to miss it. The only problem was that Charley wasn't rightly a man yet, at least not to the army. He was fifteen and while he worked as a man worked, in the fields all of a day and into night, and looked like a man standing tall and just a bit thin with hands so big they covered a stove lid, he didn't make a beard yet and his voice had only just dropped enough so he could talk with men.

If they knew, he thought, if they knew he was but fifteen they wouldn't take him at all.

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But Charley watched and Charley listened and Charley learned.

Minnesota was forming a volunteer regiment to go off and fight. It would have near on a thousand men when it was full, men from Winona and Taylor's Falls and Mankato and as far north as Deerwood and from the capital, St. Paul, as well.

A thousand men. And Charley had learned one thing about an army: One part of an army didn't always know the business of another part. The thousand men in the regiment would be in companies of eighty to a hundred men from each section and it would be hard for a man to know men who weren't from the same area.

Charley couldn't join where they knew him. Somebody would spill the beans and he'd get sent back or used as a runner or drummer boy. He wasn't any boy. He was going to sign to fight as a man and he knew a way to do it.

They would gather at Fort Snelling, up along

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Charley Goddard in the First
Minnesota Volunteers

In June 1861, when the Civil War began, Charley Goddard left his farm and enlisted in the First Minnesota Volunteers. He was fifteen. He didn't rightly know what a "shooting war" meant, or what he was fighting for. All he knew was that he didn't want to miss out on a great adventure.

The shooting war meant the horror of combat and the wild luck of survival. It meant knowing how it feels to cross a field toward the enemy, waiting for fire. Waiting for death. And Charley learned: *This is how it's done.*

When he entered the service he was a boy. When he came back he was different. He was only nineteen, but he was a man said to have "soldier's heart."

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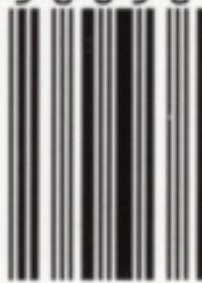
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