

SECOND BULL RUN.

How the Battle Was Fought—The Story Retold by Two Soldiers.

By JOHN D. VAUTIER, Co. 58th Pa.

"Tower's Brigade, consisting of the 29th and 44th N. Y. and 88th and 90th Pa., of Ricketts's Division, McDowell's Third Corps, Army of Virginia, Gen. John Pope in command, reached Bull Run battlefield on the afternoon of Friday, Aug. 29, 1862, after a series of excessively hard marches and movements that began on the Rapidan River on Aug. 18, and continued, without intermission, until after the battle of Chantilly, Sept. 1, 1862.

In reviewing the strategic movements of the Union and Confederate armies during this brief but strenuous campaign, lasting about one month, it is amazing what ignorance Gen. Pope displayed in regard to the intentions, location, spirit and strength of his opponents, and the contempt with which he measured their combative powers to the last. On the other hand, the Southern Generals appeared to have gauged Pope's generalship and their every movement was carried out with remarkable precision, to the utter discomfort and defeat of the Union General, and though his army fought never so bravely, it was a losing contest from beginning to the bitter end.

ARRIVING ON THE BATTLEFIELD. The second battle of Bull Run really began on the evening of the 28th of August, was continued all the 29th, and fought to a finish on Saturday, the 30th, the different divisions of both armies being pushed into action as they arrived on the field.

Ricketts's Division bivouacked on the night of the 29th near the Henry House, and on the morning of the 30th was massed near the Matthews and Dogan farms, being held in reserve.

Here rations were distributed while the lines were being arranged for further operations, defensive and offensive, mostly offensive, for Pope had conceived the idea that the Johnny rebs had fought out and that their chief aim in life now was to get out of reach of our avenging legions.

Where this idea originated, I have no contrary but, as it was, Pope telegraphed the news to Gen. Halleck as an actual fact, and the good tidings sent a thrill of joy through the loyal sections of the country, which was mostly dispelled a few hours later.

PURSUITING THE ENEMY. That Pope believed Lee's army was defeated and flying before us is doubt, though Porter, Reynolds, Sigel and others insisted that Lee had no thought of retreating, but was arranging his lines for a determined and concentrated attack on the Union positions; but to all these protests Pope paid no attention, and about noon organized strong columns to go after the enemy, press him all day, and pick up any stragglers, cannon, wagon, or anything else they could get their hands on.

Gen. McDowell was to direct this pleasant duty, and Ricketts's Division was to lead on the right. About 3 or 4 o'clock the head of our column pulled in the rear, and to go after those knapsacks, Johnnies—first piling our knapsacks in a field, but we never saw those knapsacks again—a job that we were more than willing to do, though no fellow could exactly understand why they were on the run, hiking for the mountains; but we were easily persuaded to believe the good news, and we cheerfully footed after them, fully determined to get after those knapsacks, and to see what they were up to.

There had not been much doing during the morning in the fighting line, and I remember the marching of Ricketts's Division and seeing that renowned General carelessly leaning on a brass cannon, while a rifle cannon threw an occasional shell toward a farm house a half mile or more to the right; but the enemy's positions were evidently not ready to respond yet. Everything comes to those who wait, and these waiting artists got plenty of practice in the day.

It must have been between 3 and 4 o'clock when our two brigades (Tower's and Hartstuffs) marched north on the Sudley road to rejoin the other two brigades (Hays's and Johnson's) of the 13th Corps, who had been sent to the extreme right early in the morning; but the march had not gone far before the real intentions of the enemy had been fathomed, and instead of 30,000 troops of all arms to crush the Union left south of the Warrenton pike.

By some unaccountable blunder the line south of the Warrenton road had been entirely neglected, and to meet this emergency Warren rushed his semi-brigade of two regiments into the breach, supported by McClean's Brigade of Sigel's Corps, and presently by Johnson's (Hartstuffs) Brigade of the Pennsylvania Reserves, and Tower's and Hartstuffs's Brigades, and when these troops had been broken up, the 13th Corps, consisting of seven brigades of Sigel's Corps. These seven brigades in succession bore the brunt of Longstreet's and Stuart's attack in the angle formed by the Warrenton and Sidley roads, west of the Henry House Hill.

TOWER TO THE RESCUE. As our two brigades, with Hall's and Leppien's Maine Batteries, counter-marched on the north in the direction of the Chinn House, the division moved under a fierce fire of the Confederate artillery, advantageously posted on the hills back of the house. We formed line of battle on the left, and the 13th Corps on the hill, but the ranks had been broken by the rapid march and there was no chance to properly deploy under the biting fire of the enemy now sweeping the hill.

As we went in we met scores of red-legged Zouaves of Warren's Brigade (the 5th and 10th N. Y.) coming out, many of them wounded and bleeding and many supporting wounded comrades to the rear, and while this was not an inspiring sight for us, still, they were not panicky, but were working their way to the rear with their disabled comrades in an orderly way. When we reached the top of the hill I loaded my rifle and looked for something to shoot at, but though all kinds of missiles were tearing through our ranks, dropping our men by the dozens, for a while we did not see a Johnny. I stepped out to the front to see what the boys were firing at, and saw, not a hundred yards away, at the bottom of our hill, a line of Confederates, evidently a regiment, as they had a red battle flag, who were lying down and industriously sharpshooting our line.

I called the attention of our men to these friends, and we gave them such a

hot fire that they soon got up and dusted. One fellow ran straight up the hill to the Chinn House, and I fired at him, but made a good miss, my ball throwing up the dirt a foot or two from him; then he stopped running and walked up the hill, while the rifle balls spattered all about him; but evidently he got safely away. I would have given him another for luck, but he was gone before I could tear cartridge and ram and prime my load.

A SOLDIER'S FEELING IN BATTLE. I have often been asked how a soldier feels in battle. This is a hard question to answer, as it all depends on circumstances. If the men are well handled and have confidence in the Generals, are assured that the commanders know their business and are not blindly or recklessly pushing the soldiers in the fight, the spirit of the men, singular and collective, is good, and every fellow will stand up with his comrades to the bloody work.

This confidence was always felt in McClellan, Meade and Grant, but probably more in "Little Mac" than in any other General in command of the Army of the Potomac. If the men did not think their Generals were smart enough to meet the enemy, their fighting qualities were correspondingly weakened. I think every man was more or less scared going into action; he simply couldn't help it; the terrifying shriek of the cannon balls, the agonizing sights of the mangled and bleeding, the shouts and example of comrades and the desire to do the common foe as much harm as possible, largely drove away the sense of fear and caused one to fight to the death.

There were many soldiers in the 88th Pa. whom, if they were frightened, did not show it, still, I have heard them confess they were as much scared as anyone else. As for my own feelings, I can safely say that I never went into one of the dozen engagements that I participated in, but that I wished I were a hundred miles away; but after being in the thick of the fray, loading and firing at the enemy, the sense of personal peril almost entirely disappeared, and the excitement of the fight, the shouts and example of comrades and the desire to do the common foe as much harm as possible, largely drove away the sense of fear and caused one to fight to the death.

MAP SHOWING POSITIONS AT BULL RUN BETWEEN 4 AND 5 P. M., AUG. 30.

NOTE.—When Longstreet advanced he overwhelmed Warren, Anderson and McLean, and then swept Tower away. At least the entire Union lines had been brought back to the Sudley Road, retreating over Bull Run during the night.

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But to go on with the fight. Soon a Confederate battery with some white horses in it, said to be the Washington Artillery, galloped into position near the Chinn Farmhouse, and opening on the 13th Corps with a massed fire, our ranks, now wavering in some confusion.

To make things worse, some cannon of our own batteries came swinging in our rear, their red battle flags to the noise of the firing and yelling of the men was so great that none could hear or know what to do, and some of our men were knocked down and injured by the shells being so much excited as to fire. In short, there appeared to be no directing minds, and every fellow shouted and swore as if he were the General in command, and the 13th Corps, not a line of soldiers in orderly array, every soldier was courageously doing the best he could under the most disadvantageous surroundings.

From after experience I give it as my opinion that if we had taken up in good shape, lined up and ordered to lie down and hold the hill, we would have held that position till dark, in spite of the persistent and ferocious shelling of our ranks. Our soldiers stood up bravely to their work, and though I saw many dead and wounded lying everywhere and could see the track of the balls as they tore through the ranks, I was not a cowardly fellow, and in some unfortunate's body, I saw no shirking, no running to the rear.

Presently long lines of Confederate infantry, with their red battle flags to the front, deployed and marched straight against our position, firing as they came, the little puffs of white smoke marking their line as they advanced. I remember very distinctly the order to fire, and the pieces, pulling the lanyards and watching the shot, but the horses attached to the limbers were wounded and ran off, leaving the guns without ammunition.

OUR LINES WAVING. Now our lines began to fall back, and I remember that I would shoot and then fall to the rear to load, and by the time I got to the rear I would find the 13th Corps in the front again by the line slowly receding. I looked toward Hartstuffs's Brigade, on the right, and they were slowly receding, but they were only a few yards or so in their front the color-bearer of a Pennsylvania regiment lay on the ground, but waving his colors in the face of the advancing foe.

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the woods on our left flank, and some of the men prepared to fire on them, but somebody shouted: "Don't fire! They are Porter's troops," but all doubts were soon dispelled; when they got within range they opened a savage fire that swept the hill.

This was enough—dashed, raked by several batteries within easy range, under a withering fire from the advancing troops, the Union line on Bald Hill broke, I stayed as long as I could, but when it was, in my opinion, time to go I hiked to the rear in great shape, though probably the proper thing for me to do was to contest the bloody field inch by inch, and so on, but I didn't contest any more; I had enough, and if our wayward boaters wanted that farm more than I they were welcome to it.

Our losses had been heavy. The 88th Pa. reported a loss of 161 out of 400 engaged, of which 28 were killed or mortally wounded.

OUR DEAD AND WOUNDED. Lieut.-Col. Joseph A. McLean, commanding the regiment, was shot, and falling off his frightened horse, received an other ghastly wound, dying on the field. His last words were: "I die for my country and the old flag."

Capt. John J. Belsterling, of Co. C, was killed at the head of his company, and many others were killed or wounded, among the wounded being Capt. Louis Wagner and Lieut. Robert B. Beath, both of Co. D, and afterward Commanders-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: The following is an account of the great explosion at Mobile as I saw it. I am relying upon memory, and it is therefore probable that some minor details may have been forgotten, but I have not inadvertently omitted from my story. One can not well forget a scene like that. Even now I can hear the awful noise of the explosion and the deafening roar of the air and the fire in all directions. The explosion occurred in a large building which was said to contain 30 tons of powder were stored—certainly a large amount, and the quantity of powder there were immense quantities of small cannon balls and shells and other military stores. The cause of the explosion was unknown, the supposition being that it was the result of carelessness in handling capped shells. I was guard drummer on that day, and stood on the parade ground, facing the building, and saw the explosion from the northeast. The explosion occurred and myself. The entire edifice, except the west side, went with it, and the building fell to the ground. Altogether 13 blocks were destroyed. In order to convey a better understanding, I will attempt to give a more minute description of the scene. The building was a warehouse, covered an entire block. Nearly all of the buildings destroyed were similar to the one in which the explosion occurred. A brick wall 25 feet high, and 10 feet thick, stood on the line around the block. Over this was a roof 50 or 75 feet wide, leaving an open space inside, which was our parade ground. Many buildings remote from the line demolished or damaged. On the street facing the bay all of the glass in the front end of the buildings was broken. Fragments of glass covering the sidewalk, distant a half mile from the explosion, and small cannon balls and shells, bricks, lamp-posts, and miscellaneous debris went up with the fire and smoke to a high and unknown altitude, many of the missiles and fragments falling coming down over a mile from the place of accession. Some of the vessels in the bay were wrecked, and it was said that the dishes were distant a mile from the explosion, and that a railway train 40 miles north felt the concussion. According to the statement of a city paper, people on the following morning, the issue were of the explosion, and many of the buildings were still standing. The 29th Wis. lost four men who were on guard in and about the magazine, and I believe the body of one was never found. An Iowa boy, who was still living, told me that he escaped. The Iowans had occupied the north side of the same building in which the 29th Wis. was quartered, but they moved out in the forenoon. Had they remained in the building, they would have been falling north wall. As it was we dug out two men left in their barracks, sick—A. ROBERTS, Co. F, 29th Wis.; mustered out at Camp C. H. Wis., Lincoln in Boulevard, Freeport, Ill.

A REMINISCENCE. EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: At the surrender of Cumberland Gap, Ky., Sept. 9, 1862, by Gen. Frazier to Gen. Shackelford, the 13th Corps, five companies of a regiment of 2,200 prisoners. Six companies of infantry, three from the 129th Ohio, three from the 88th Ohio and three companies of cavalry from the 9th Tenn., were sent to the State of Ohio, and through to Lexington, Ky. Gen. Frazier and his staff were not put under guard, but were allowed to ride through with their horses along with the command. I was a member of the staff, and was with General and his staff, my company being one of the guarding detachments with the prisoners. On Frazier's staff was an Aid. Lieutenant, by the name of Harrison, who was a member of the 13th Corps. I inquired of me where I was from. I told him I belonged in Ohio, in Tuscarawas County. I noticed that the Lieutenant became somewhat excited, and became curious to know where I was from. Finally I asked him if he had ever been in that section of the State of Ohio. After a moment he answered me by saying that he had never been there, and that he was among the number the Hon. John A. Bingham. As a matter of course I became inquisitive, and this is the story, as near as I can remember, he told me: "I was a member of the staff of Harrison County, Ohio, for the South. I finally drifted into Knoxville, Tenn., where I engaged as Superintendent of the woods, and was engaged when the war broke out. Responding to the call of the South, I entered the Confederate service, was commissioned a First Lieutenant, and as such officer I have served the last year of the war. I was with the 13th Corps, Ohio, an adjoining County to yours; some of us, nor shall they know if in my power to do so, I will send you a letter, and my people reside in Harrison County, Ohio, a radically wrong, and the right will prevail and the South will be victorious, and forever maintain her independence. All asking you to send me word to my friends or acquaintances my whereabouts or of your meeting with me. Do this. Do you promise me?"

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: Permit me to ask if First Lieut. Geo. W. Bowers, Co. B, 129th Ohio, whose communication is published in your issue of the 28th, in relation to the "Persimmon Brigade," is not a little off when he says that Longstreet's army had lived off the country near East Tennessee, prior to the advent of Gen. Burnside's army in that region. Now, according to my recollection, Gen. Burnside's army entered East Tennessee about the first of September, 1862, at which time the 129th Ohio was in the service with Gen. Robert E. Lee in the Army of Northern Virginia, and about that time was sent west to reinforce Gen. Bragg, and participated with Bragg in invading the State of Tennessee, and the Union army under Rosecrans at Chickamauga, and was not till after Chickamauga that Longstreet moved against Gen. Burnside at Knoxville, and therefore Gen. Longstreet's army was not living off the country near East Tennessee prior to the advent of Gen. Burnside's army in that region. I occupied East Tennessee, early in September of 1863.—HEZEKIAH MOODY, Private, 17th Ind., "Persimmon Brigade," Copenhagen, Ind.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: I served in the Army of the Cumberland from Murfreesboro down the line to Chickamauga and back to Nashville. I am perfectly familiar with many things Gen. Raim recites, and he hits center. I was in command of the convalescents, and had charge of the cattle for Sherman's army that Gen. Joe Wheeler ran into between Gallatin and Carterville, Ga. Unfortunately we were in the minority by a large majority, and Joe took all the cattle he wanted, and as time was limited, I did not demand any requisition. I never heard whether the C. S. A. paid Uncle Sam for them or not.

I am willing to donate my spare toward the Lee monument if it is built south of Mason and Dixon's line.—GEO. W. FOREMAN, Captain, Co. B, 68th Ind., Napoleon, Ind.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: In the issue of April 2, Green B. Raum, in giving the roster of the First and Second Brigades, Fourth Division, Seventeenth Corps, makes several mistakes. He says: "Second Brigade, commanded by Maj. Robert H. McEdden, 41st Ill. (battalion), Capt. Michael P. Kanan, Maj. R. H. McEdden commanded the 41st Ill. (battalion) in the Second Brigade, Cos. A, and B. Capt. Michael P. Kanan did not command the 41st Ill. Battalion, for he resigned and went home from April 9, before the army started on the march to Savannah. The 41st battalion, shortly after we left Atlanta, was detailed as provost guard at Corinth, Mississippi, and served as such guard until our march to the 53d Ill. at Savannah, and was never in the Second Brigade, but in the First, or Pott's Army, as the boys called it.—WM. H. PALMER, Lieutenant Commanding, Co. B, 41st Battalion, Commanding Co. G, 53d Ill.; Buffalo Gap, S. Dak.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: The following is an account of the great explosion at Mobile as I saw it. I am relying upon memory, and it is therefore probable that some minor details may have been forgotten, but I have not inadvertently omitted from my story. One can not well forget a scene like that. Even now I can hear the awful noise of the explosion and the deafening roar of the air and the fire in all directions. The explosion occurred in a large building which was said to contain 30 tons of powder were stored—certainly a large amount, and the quantity of powder there were immense quantities of small cannon balls and shells and other military stores. The cause of the explosion was unknown, the supposition being that it was the result of carelessness in handling capped shells. I was guard drummer on that day, and stood on the parade ground, facing the building, and saw the explosion from the northeast. The explosion occurred and myself. The entire edifice, except the west side, went with it, and the building fell to the ground. Altogether 13 blocks were destroyed. In order to convey a better understanding, I will attempt to give a more minute description of the scene. The building was a warehouse, covered an entire block. Nearly all of the buildings destroyed were similar to the one in which the explosion occurred. A brick wall 25 feet high, and 10 feet thick, stood on the line around the block. Over this was a roof 50 or 75 feet wide, leaving an open space inside, which was our parade ground. Many buildings remote from the line demolished or damaged. On the street facing the bay all of the glass in the front end of the buildings was broken. Fragments of glass covering the sidewalk, distant a half mile from the explosion, and small cannon balls and shells, bricks, lamp-posts, and miscellaneous debris went up with the fire and smoke to a high and unknown altitude, many of the missiles and fragments falling coming down over a mile from the place of accession. Some of the vessels in the bay were wrecked, and it was said that the dishes were distant a mile from the explosion, and that a railway train 40 miles north felt the concussion. According to the statement of a city paper, people on the following morning, the issue were of the explosion, and many of the buildings were still standing. The 29th Wis. lost four men who were on guard in and about the magazine, and I believe the body of one was never found. An Iowa boy, who was still living, told me that he escaped. The Iowans had occupied the north side of the same building in which the 29th Wis. was quartered, but they moved out in the forenoon. Had they remained in the building, they would have been falling north wall. As it was we dug out two men left in their barracks, sick—A. ROBERTS, Co. F, 29th Wis.; mustered out at Camp C. H. Wis., Lincoln in Boulevard, Freeport, Ill.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: I can fully corroborate the statements of Capt. Beecham and Comrade J. W. Rodgers, 12th Ind., regarding the horrors of Libby and Belle Isle. I was one of the party with Comrade Rodgers who smashed the locked door of Libby Prison and liberated the prisoners who were in imminent danger of losing their lives in the burning Richmond. The scenes were harrowing to the extreme. The helpless inmates of the prison were apparently forsaken—all hope of relief was abandoned. I was captured, April 8, 1864. My experience was similar to that of others—marched through rain and mud, with little to eat and broken rest at night, and the same order of sufferings and indignities endured. In Libby we were stripped in the presence of old Gen. Winder. While the other boys were undergoing the stripping and the indignities of the prison, I was and surreptitiously abstracted the key and slipped it into my pocket. Of course, the key was useless to me. I simply wanted to annoy old Winder and his tyrannical orderlies. I was in the presence of the second floor preparatory to ushering us into the presence of those prisoners who "had gone before," were greeted with the old man's "Good-bye, boys, you are going, so he sent the Sixth Corps to escort you into Washington. Now, if you do not believe that the Sixth Corps is over there, you will find out when you get there."

When transferred to Belle Isle I came in contact with the "wicked old Doctor." At "sick call," the unsympathetic Escudian gruffly asked: "What's the matter with you?" I told him that I had fevered. "Nothing of the kind," said he; "there's nothing whatever the matter with you." Of course, I knew I was sick, if that admittance "granted you" was true. One Summer day a smooth-faced boy, so sick that he ought to have been in the hospital, sat with me all day long by the bedside, without a mouthful to eat, the fever said to me that I had fevered upon the whole. About sundown a gentlemanly officer approached us and said: "You sick boys must go to the hospital. The doctor says that you are suffering from an exhilarating effect upon the depressed spirits. He was an infinitely better physician than the 'wicked Doctor.'" When we were taken to the hospital, several shots were fired, apparently at us, from an old mill. Letting the boat drift toward the shore, the officer turned and fired a few shots at the window whence the most of the snoring snored. When we landed some young girls met us and with inquiring eyes viewed our "ragged regimentals."

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: Please say in "The National Tribune" that if the ex-Confederate (if living) will return my commission as Captain, 15th Va., was captured at Cedar Creek, Va., in 1862. I will feel myself under many and lasting obligations to him.

I belonged to Gen. Crook's command, The 13th Corps, Second Division. We were the farthest south of the general line. Between the 14th and 19th we had thrown up a rifle pit on a ridge or eminence. The right of our brigade next to the creek, and the rifle pits on our left circled around northeast and then north. We had our little pupils in the rear of rifle pits on lower ground.

I had received my commission only five or six days previous, and was mustered as Captain, Oct. 14. Our company baggage was back under the big guns at Harper's Ferry. I seemed to have no place as concerned the commission as my haversack, which was black, officer's style haversack. When it was yet quite dark in the morning we went right forward to our rifle pit, leaving my haversack in the second line, and I was a tank movement of the enemy that got over on the south side, and went down the hill 40 or 50 yards toward the Shenandoah River, and saw the rebel line coming up, and I was ordered to take my company, and gave orders. I think by the time my men had fired four or five rounds all the troops on our left had quit their pits or tents, and were fleeing like scared rabbits. By this time we were getting light enough to see men 50 yards, more or less. The Johnnies were over on my left, and almost in my rear. I then ordered my company to be thrown back. I could not stop, as my men were running, and I had a mission without running to great risk of spending the winter in Libby Prison. I also had seven or eight fine plugs of powder, and a couple of cigars, and a few days before. The Johnny may keep the haversack and tobacco, if he will return the commission. Although Gen. Pierpont was the second in command, I was the original very much. I have always understood that it was Gen. Kershaw's division that came up in our front and left rear.—CONNELLY GANDY, Captain, Co. E, 6th W. Va., Independence, W. Va.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: "During the big flood of the Spring of 1865, my company was detached from the cavalry depot at Nashville, Tenn., among other boys, Hughes, 12th Ohio Cav. The work of this detail was in connection with the Pioneer Corps, then engaged on road repairs and bridge building. We had to work day and nights trying to bridge a very swift and deep stream, but had been unable to get the beams in position for the stringers. The beams suggested that we cut screw-eyes on the right side of the stream and threw them into the bed of the stream and then saw off at proper length and attach the upper timbers. We all thought him crazy, but he was right, and he was right. He had pointed one of the upright timbers, then cut a spiral notch about five feet from the lower end. We decided to let him have a trial, so he lashed two of our boys together, and threw them into the stream, and they were so buoyant that they floated to the upper timber, and he then stood the post on end in the bed of the stream, and by using spikes capstaid fashion, we were able to put the beams in position. The success was complete that Hughes was put in charge of post setting, and soon the bridge was finished. At that time Hughes was a boy of profound study, and I was very much interested in his study, and he was promised promotion for this feat, and probably he secured it."

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: I wish to corroborate the statement made by J. V. A. Gillespie, Captain, Co. G, 78th Ohio, of the death of Gen. Polk. I was on the starting line on Aug. 18, 1862, in a diary, and so recorded it. From that diary I wrote a book—the history of the 7th U. S. V. Gen. Polk was killed on Pine Mountain June 14, 1864, by an Indiana soldier, who was killed on 6th Ind., S. DREW, Corporal, Co. C, 74th Ohio, Union, Ohio.

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