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Brig. Gen. Wm. E. Jones.

Messrs. Editors:

Permit me, through the columns of your valuable paper, to bring to the notice of our authorities and the public, the claims of one of Virginia's noblest and best officers. That officer is Brig. Gen. Wm. E. Jones of Washington, Co., Va.

He entered the Confederate Service at the beginning of this war Capt. of the Washington Mounted Rifles. His company was attached to the 1st Va., Cavalry and was considered, by all who knew it, the best in the regiment. On the 28th day of September, 1861, he was promoted to the Colonelcy of the 1st Va., Cavalry. This regiment, he commanded until the re-organizetion of the army in April, 1862. Under his leadership this regiment was more effective than it ever was before or since. At the re-organization he was defeated for the Colonelcy by Fitz Lee now Maj. Gen. of cavalry. In July following Gen. Jones was appointed Col. of the 7th Va., Cavalry, Ashby's old regiment. Upon the announcement of his being appointed to that command, the officers of the regiment with a single exception tendered their resignations, but they soon found that he was a fine officer, and all became very much pleased with him. He led this regiment gallantly in a desperate fight at Orange C. H., having but 100 men in his attack on 1600 Yankee cavalry, and succeeded in driving the enemy out of the village. On the 19th of September following he was promoted to Brig. Gen'l and was assigned to the command of Robertson's Brigade. In October Gen. Jackson left the Valley of Va., to re-inforce Gen. Lee at Fredericksburg. Gen. Jones was then left in command of the Valley District. He withdrew his Brigade to New Market about the 22d of December.—Bad weather of winter soon set in and his command being wild and undisciplined, he determined to act only on the defensive until he could re-organize and discipline his Brigade and thereby have them in readiness for the early Spring Campaign. During the winter, Gen. Jones kept Courts Martial at work punishing those who deserted, &c.

When spring opened he had moulded this confused mass of fine material into a most magnificent Brigade, well disciplined, well armed and equipped. During the latter part of winter all the members of the Legislature, from the Valley, became very much dissatisfied with his management of affairs there, and petitioned the Sec. of War to have him removed. Scouts returning on the 25th of February, 1863, reported to the Capt. comd'g picket near Strasburg, how a Yankee picket at Kernstown might be captured. The young Captain glowing with enthusiasm, and eager for the fray, started with his party that night to capture them. The next morning (26th) dawned on a party of brave Marylanders, leading up the valley, eleven Yankee captives. Soon they were pursued by 480 Yankee cavalry, (13th Penn. and 1st New York,) who drove in Gen. Jones' pickets above Strasburg and followed them nearly to Woodstock.—News having been conveyed by the pickets to Gen. Jones that the enemy were advancing, he at once ordered out the 7th and 11th Reg'ts Va. Cav., and started with his staff to meet the enemy. At Mowrytown he came in sight of them and halted till his reg'ts could come up. Soon the 11th came well closed up. The Gen. at once moved down to attack the enemy, knowing that a vigorous attack would make up his great disparity in numbers; for he only had 120 men to attack 480, nevertheless he ordered a charge and led off. The enemy did not discover that they were about to be attacked until the Gen. at the head of the 11th was within 100 yards of them.—Their rear guard was dismounted, and ere they could mount the Gen. had dashed past them and was pushing on after the rest of the Yankees who were flying in wild confusion, hotly pursued by the 11th. They were hotly pressed until they had gotten two miles below Strasburg. The 11th having taken about as many prisoners as it had in the beginning of the fight, abandoned the pursuit, and the enemy thinking they were safe, stopped to rest, and dismounted at Cedar Creek. Soon the 7th came down at a rapid trot. The Gen. at once ordered Col. Dulany to charge them as soon as he came in sight. Coming in sight of them and seeing that he had a narrow bridge across which to charge, the Col. detached one company and sent it to the right to cross the stream below the bridge and strike the enemy in flank. This struck the enemy with terror and he again broke in wild confusion, hotly pursued by the 7th which overtook the Yankees at Middletown with drawn sabres. Here they killed, wounded and captured a large number of Yankess and pursued them nearly to Newtown. The Gen. with his two regiments then started back to camp, carrying up with him 190 prisoners.—The killed and wounded in this engagement would make the entire loss of the enemy 230 men. This victory did away with the petition of the Valley Legislators. On the 21st of April following, Gen. Jones started with all his available force to North Western Virginia. On this trip he accomplished a great deal with very little cost to himself. He killed, wounded and captured 750 of the enemy, brought out 1200 horses, 1000 cattle, destroyed 750 small arms, 1 piece of artillery, 16 bridges, and one tunnel on the B. & O. and N. W. Va R. R. His command marched 32 days under the most trying circumstances.—He also destroyed the Oil Wells on the Little Kanawha, together with all the machinery, and 150,000 barrels of oil. Returning by way of Lewisburg, to the valley, he was immediately ordered to Culpeper C. H., to join Gen. Stuart who at once commenced having grand reviews. Gen. Jones' Brigade was camped one mile north of Brandy Station and to the left of the R. R. Beckhams Battalion of artillery was camped two miles north of Brandy Station and one mile in front of Gen. Jones' Brigade. There was nothing but one company of cavalry, between the artillery and the enemy on picket. On the morning of the 9th of June the enemy dashed across the Rappahannock and attacked the pickets at day light. This company on picket made a desperate resistance. Hearing the firing, Gen. Jones started at once to the scene of action. When he passed the artillery camp, the men were asleep, the horses were grazing in a large field, and the pickets fighting desperately not half a mile in advance of the camp. Just at this time the 6th Va., Cavalry came down the road at a gallop to the support of its pickets. The Gen. at once ordered it to charge on the right of the road, and to fight desperately in order to save the artillery; soon the 7th Va., Cavalry came, and it was ordered to charge on the left of the road. These two regiments fought well and checked the enemy till the horses could be caught, harnessed, hitched to, and the artillery moved into a position of usefulness. The remainder of the Brigade having now taken position near the artillery, the 6th and 7th regiments were ordered to retire on the right and left of the road. The enemy now advanced to the edge of the woods and deployed footmen as skirmishers. Thinking that he would draw them out of the woods, the 12th reg't was ordered to charge the sharp shooters. This regiment went boldly a head until within about 30 paces of the woods, when they received a terrible volley, and were at the same time charged by cavalry. The fight now became general and the whole Brigade was engaged in less than five minutes. Victory crowned his efforts, and the enemy were again driven back thro' the woods. By this time Gen. Hampton had taken position on Gen. Jones' right and Gen. W. H. F. Lee on his left, Gen. Stuart was now on the field. Soon a courier came post-haste saying the enemy held Brandy Station in the rear. Three regiments from Jones' Brigade were immediately sent to meet them, but were so far out numbered that they sent for more assistance. Hampton had been withdrawn from Jones' right and Jones was left to hold his position with only one battery and two rigiments of cavalry. Soon another order from Gen. Stuart came calling everything to his assistance at the Miller house. All was now withdrawn and hurried on to Gen. Stuart. The 11th coming in sight charged by Gen. Jones' order, carried the hill, captured a battery of three guns and drove the enemy from every position. Thus making the day glorious. Later in the day, the enemy made an effort to turn Gen. Jones' left, but were met promptly by Gen. W. H. F. Lee, and driven back. Being satisfied with his days work, the enemy retired to the north bank of the river, and by dark Gen. Jones had re-established his pickets where they had been driven from in the morning. Every one, well acquainted with the ups and downs of that day, must say that Gen. Jones by his unprecedented vigilance and courage saved Gen. Stuart from a most shameful surprise and disastrous defeat. Had it not been for the promptness and vigor with which Gen. Jones met the enemy on this occasion, all of Gen. Stuart's Battalion (16 pieces) of artillery must have been lost. About the 18th of June, cavalry fighting commenced at Middleburg. On the 21st, Gen. Jones being camped at Union, Loudon Co., received orders from Gen. Stuart, in case he heard the firing on the Middleburg and Upperville pike receding, that he must fall back in the direction of Uppervilll and join him (Gen S.) at that point. The firing was soon heard, receding rapidly. The enemy were now making demonstations in Gen. Jones' front. He determined to move in the execution of his orders, and started towards Upperville. About one mile and a half from Upperville, Gen. Jones formed a junction with Col. Chambliss (Gen. W. H. F. Lee's) brigade, who was falling back towards the same point, but ere they could reach Uupperville, Gen. Stuart had been driven back through there, and in attempting to join Stuart, was attacked by vastly superior numbers of the enemy. Here ensued one of the most desperate cavalry fights of the war, but being out numbered so far he was compelled to retire which he did in good order, and joined Gen. Stuart at Paris. In this fight Gen. Jones inflicted on the enemy a heavier loss than he sustained himself. On the following day the enemy retired to Middleburg and Gen. Jones moved to Snickersville and picketed the roads to Leesburg and Aldie. On the 24th of June he was ordered by Brig. Gen. Robertson to move to Berryville, thence by way of Williamsport into Pennsylvania. On the 3d of July, Gen. Jones received orders, in the absence of Gen. Robertson, to move some cavalry in the direction of Fairfield. He at once moved his brigade towards the point designated. About two miles from Fairfield, Gen. Jones encountered the 6th U. S. regular cavalry and at once ordered the 7th Va., to charge, which failed to drive the enemy from his position. The 6th Va., was then ordered to charge and made one of the most brilliant charges of the war. It was entirely successful and the fruits of this fight was 210 killed, wounded and prisoners. But for the timely arrival of Gen. Jones at this point, all the wagons of Gen. Stuart's Division must have fallen an easy prey to the enemy. On the 4th of July, Gen. Ewell's wagon train commenced passing Fairfield. Late in the evening a report came that the enemy were advancing on the Emmettsburg and Waynesboro road.—Gen. Jones knew that the wagon train was in great danger, in passing Monterey, and asked that he might go with his brigade to that point, for its protection. This was granted and his command was immediately put in motion. Having a very narrow and difficult road to travel up the side of the mountain, it was impossible for the command to pass the wagon train. They were ordered to follow as rapidly as possible and the General with his Staff moved as speedily as possible to Monterey on the top of South mountain. When he arrived there soon after dark, he found Capt. Emack with his company of Marylanders and one piece of artillery to protect the passing train. Gen. Jones immediately ordered all of his couriers to dismount and assist this company which was hard pressed by a Division of Federal cavalry, with 32 pieces of artillery. Soon after Gen. Jones left Fairfield, Gen. Robertson ordered the 7th Va., cavalry to remain with him, and ordered Gen. Jones to take Col. Farrabee's regiment of his brigade, already on the road to Monterey, with him. Col. F's regiment was accordingly ordered up as rapidly as possible. The brave company of Marylanders were encouraged with the hope of speedy re-enforcements and were exhorted to fight to the bitter end. Capt. Emack had but two rounds of grape for his howitzer, and Gen. Jones told him to lose his piece there if it had to be lost.—When Col. Farrabee's regiment arrived they were dismounted and sent to the assistance of the gallant Emack's company. The enemy were thus held in check from dark until 12 o'clock at night, when they resorted to a charge of cavalry, which swept everything before it. The enemy having passed Gen. Jones' troops he stood with his staff to give them a volley. As the enemy came he fired and made his escape amind the coufusion of wagons, stragglers, &c. He then proceeded to Williamsport, where a large number of wagons had already arrived. Here he found the wagons of our whole army in a helpless condition, the river so swollen that they could not possibly cross, and no troops to protect them. He immediately assumed command and organized the teamsters into companies, leaving, one man to five teams. On the 6th of July, Gen. Imboden with his command arrived, and also two regiments from Martinsburg. Having straightened affairs and put every thing in fighting trim, he resolved to turn over to Gen. Imboden the protection of the trains, and left on the night of the 6th to go through the lines of the enemy and join his command, then near Hagerstown. With difficulty he succeeded. On the evening of the 7th, Gen. Imboden was attacked. Gen. Jones fell in rear of the enemy, and with 11th Va., charged and drove them rapidly away. As soon as the river became fordable, Gen. Jones was ordered to cross the river and throw himself in front of Harpers Ferry.—The 12th Va. cavalry was on picket here and captured 100 prisoners, with their horses, arms, and equipments. Our army having recrossed the Potomac and moved in the direction of Culpeper C. H., Gen Jones was left in the valley till the last and being intercepted at Front Royal by the enemy, had to make a detour by New Market and Sperryville, and accompanied Maj. Gen. Early's Division to Culpeper C. H. On the 31st he was ordered to Rixieville, and was (that day) arrested by Gen. Stuart. His trial came off in September, and showed that Gen. Stuart had persecuted him to the uttermost extremity, by arresting him upon charges wholly unfounded, and which Gen. Stuart failed to substantiate before the Court. Gen. Jones was then relieved of his old Bri'g at his own request, and was ordered to report for duty to Maj. Gen. Sam. Jones. He was soon put in command of his present Brigade near Abingdon. As the army advanced into Tennessee, Gen. Jones occupied the extreme left. He left his camp at Carter Depot, Nov. 4th, in obedience to orders from Maj. Gen. Ransom, and moved in the direction of Rogersville. When within 22 miles of Rogersville, Gen. Jones ascertained that it would be impracticable to make the attack as Gen. Ransom had directed, and made a detour to the right, crossing the river 12 miles above Rogersville, and arrived in town in rear of the enemy before they were aware of his approach, and before Col. Giltner attacked the pickets in front. Here Gen. Jones assisted by Col. Giltner, captured 850 Yankees, 4 guns, 40 wagons, 1000 stand of small arms, &c.

Soon Gen. Jones was ordered to Knoxville, with his own and Giltner's Brigades, to report to Lt. Gen. Longstreet. Soon Longstreet abandoned the siege and fell back to Rogersville.

About the 10th of Dec., Gen. Jones was attacked at Morristown by a Division of Federal cavalry and was driven from his position. He however fell back half a mile, reformed his line and advanced into the town again, when the enemy retired in the direction of Bean's Station. On the 14th of December, Gen. Jones moved with his own and Giltners Brigades to Thorn Hill, where he captured 35 six mule wagons, 60 prisoners, with their arms &c.

On the 1st of January, 1864, Gen. Jones was camped at Little War Gap in clinch mountain and received information of a battalion of Yankee cavalry being camped at Jonesville, Lee Co., Va. He determined to surprise and capture them. He commenced the march at 10 o'clock P. M., on the night of the 2nd of January. The night was exceedingly cold. The thermometer stood 10 degrees below zero. On this march two men were frozen to death and many frost-bitten.—At sun rise on the 3d of January, he attacked the enemy in rear and killed, wounded and captured 406 Yankees. He also captured 3 pieces of artillery, 27 wagons and teams, in a word the entire camp and garrison equipage, together with all their horses and arms. On the 21st of February, Gen. Jones received information that the 11th Tenn. (Federal) cavalry was camped at Wyermans Mll, 5 miles east of Cumberland Gap. He at once determined to surprise and capture this force if possible. His command was in motion by 12 o'clock on the night of the 21st and he attacked the enemy in rear, again, at daylight. Here he killed 13, wounded many and captured 256 prisoners, 8 wagons, 300 stand of small arms, 100 horses and many tents.

Within the last twelve months, Gen. Jones has placed horo-de-combat about 4,000 Yankees, which is more force than he has ever commanded. All this work has been done with a single Brigade, except at Rogersville.

Many officers who have the confidence and esteem of the authorities at Richmond, have been promoted for nothing in comparison with what Gen. Jones has accomplished, yet he is held down a Brigadier, and the authorities even refuse him the means of re-organising and discipling his command.

It can not be denied that he exercises a good influence over his command. When he took command of Robertson's old Brigade, it was scattered and undisciplined, and when he left, it was considered the best Brigade of cavalry in the army of Northern Virginia.

Having accomplished as much as General Jones has done since he has been assigned to the department of East Tennessee, and being the ranking Brigadier of cavalry, one would naturally expect to be promoted to Maj. General, and assigned to command of all the cavalry in the department. But, instead of that, Maj. Gen. Ransom is sent to take command of the cavalry. Surely the authorities must have but little confidence in the Cavalry Commanders in the department of East Tennessee.

However much young men of strong predjudice and high ambition may say against him, does not affect his standing with his command. He is a brave, yet a prudent man, an officer who wields a splendid influence over his men, and one as well calculated to inflect upon the enemy a heavy loss with as little cost as any man to be found. This is proven by his past efforts.

March 21. FRIEND.

From the Bristol Gazette.

Found at Last.

It will gratify many of our readers to learn that the body of Rev. H. B. SWISHER, has been found at last. It will be recolected that he was drowned in the Holston, at Zollicoffer, on the 30th of December last. The following letter written to us by a gentleman residing in Greenville, Tenn., conveys to us the information:

GREENVILLE, TENN.,
March 20, 1864.

I take pleasure in saying to the friends of our beloved brother, H. B. Swisher, who was drowned in the Holston river, near Zollicoffer, December the 30th 1863, that after the lapse of near eleven weeks spent in sorrow and fruitless search, the body was found some 25 miles down the river, near Bowman's Mill, on last Sabbath, the 13th inst.

The body, with a very slight exception, was sound, his faculties distinct as life, resembling one in quiet sleep. The money and papers found upon his person were all sound, nothing missing but his watch. On Wednesday the 15th, his remains were brought to Greenville, and kept in state but a short time at the residence of his father, during which time many kind friends came to weep and tender their condolence to the bereaved parents and sisters.

He was buried in the cemitary at this place, there to sleep undisturbed by the cruel waves of the Holston, or the rude tocsin of war, until God shall call His absent children from their repose in the grave to their rest in Heaven. A BROTHER.

A Union League Broken Up.

Major O'Ferrall with a small force visited Bath, Morgan county, a few days ago, broke up a "Union League" and made the following captures:

Aaron Bechtol, who has been representing the district composed of Morgan, Hampshire, Hardy and Pendleton counties in the "bogus" new State Legislature at Wheeling; Joseph S. Wheat, member of the House of Delegates from Morgan county in same Legislature; Robert Finn, Commonwealth's Attorney for Morgan county, formerly a county Judge, in Missouri; Thos. M. Shrives laborer, and two members of the 18th Lincoln Western Va. Infantry, names not given. Bechtol and Wheat are native-born Virginians, and Finn is an original New Yorker. As before said, these parties were in attendance at a Union League held in Bath, when O'Ferrall and his troops broke in rudely upon their deliberations.