Lexandria Gazette

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Alexandria, Va.

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The Three Guns That Turned the Tide of the Battle at Bull Run.

No battle of the civil war has been the subject of so much discussion as the second battle of Manassas or Bull Run. The titerature of this one battle would make a large library, and would contain contributions from distinguished military men on both sides, from non-combatant critics, from statesmen and historians, and from foreign

The battle, considered merely as a great military engagement, would have occupied a large place in history and would have inspired much ephemeral literature but for one reason; on account of one angry dis-pute, it has continued to be a live issue for a quarter of a century after its smoke had died away.

The interminable controversy over the

Fitz John Porter case has caused the second Bull Run to be fought over a thousand times since it was fought in reality by Jack-son and Longstreet on one side and by Pope, Porter and McDowell on the other.

For fifteen years the Perter case was be-fore Congress and the fierce discussion of it has kept every incident of this battle fresh in the popular mind. Porter's case involv ed not only bitter personal prejudices but it came to be almost a party question, and never until a democratic administration. came into power was the cruel injustice to the gallaut general set right, and then only by an act which was by no means commen-surate with the wrong which had been en-dured by Porter for twenty-three years.

The details and circumstances of this bat tle are far more familiar to the popular mind than those of any other battle of the civil war, not excepting Gettysburg, the desperate struggle which broke the back of the

The linest cyclorama yet constructed in this country represents the second Manassas. It cost \$125,000 and is a most life like por-

Everybody agrees that the tide of the fight was turned by the opportune use of a few guns of the confederate artillery. On this point both federal and confederate authorities coincide. On the 30th of August the second day of the battle, Fitz John Por-ter's corps had come up. It bore the brunt of the severe fighting of that day. In the afternoon at half-past three o'clock, Porter made a determined assault on Jackson who was entrenched behind the historic railroad cut. Jackson's men were worn out and being pressed by fresh troops were about to give way. Longstreet was on Jackson's right, and if Jackson had begun to fall back Longstreet would probably also have re

It was at this critical moment that one battery of artillery opened on Porter's corps a rapid and terrific fire, which moved down his men like wheat beneath the scythe. This battery was on a bill not more than four hundred yards from the advancing and confident columns of Porter, and was so situated that it could pour an enfilleding fire into the rear of the federals as they advanced. The effect of every shot from these guas, according to the reports of cenfederate and federal officers, could be clearly seen. Only three guns were used, but they were fired with such deadly precision and with such rapidity that Porter's column could not long withstand their terrificeffect. The troops which a moment before had been flushed with the confidence of victory wavered, stopped, and then fell back. Jackson's men dashed over the embankment and began the pursuit. The three guns on the hill were noved effect of every shot from these guns, according The three guns on the hill were moved down as the enemy began his ratreat, so as to continue their deadly work. By this time they had to be simed with great care to prevent damage to Jackson's men, who were pressing close on the retreating general. By this time Longstreet's whole division and the prevent damage to the second the retreating general. were pressing close on the retreating enemy. By this time Longstreet's whole division advanced, sweeping down from the right and threatening the capture of Porter's entire army. The retreat of the federals soon be-came a precipitate flight, and the confederate victory was complete.

Whose battery was it that checked Porter's advance? It is strange that this ques-tion has not been settled before. In the cyclorams at Washington one of the batteries of Stephen D. Lee's command is represented as doing this deadly work.

This is impossible, owing to the position which Lee held at Jackson's right. He could not have occupied the position which

was held by the fatal guns.

While all the official reports of the battle on both sides refer to the battery which stopped Porter's advance, not one of them designates from what command it came. Gen. S. D. Lee in his report does not claim that his artillery did the work.

The question has been finally settled the testimony of Gen. Longstreet, who dered the battery to the position it held, and who observed its fearful execution. Recently Col. W. H. Chapman, special revenue agent with headquarters at Atlanta, addressed to Geu. Longstreet the following

COLONEL CHAPMAN TO GENERAL LONGSTREET. ATLANTA, Ga., August 27th, 1887.—General James Lonstreet, Gainesville, Ga., Dear Sir: I have long thought of asking you, as a matter of This correspondence clears up all doubt

justice to the officers and men of my battery, (Dixie Artillery from Page county, Virginia,) as well as to myself and for the truth of history, to set aright the matter as to whose battery it was that broke up the charge of Fitz John Porter's corps at the second battle of Manassas, just twenty-five years are

years ago.

For some unaccountable reason history does not give the name of the battery referred to in the official reports of yourself and General C. M. Wilcox, as the one which first opened fire under your immediate cyc, in front of Whiting's brigade, of Hood's division, on the left of the Gainesville and

fortune of the day. Pope's left wing gave way before it at every point and his right being assatted in flank and threatened in rear, relaxed its efforts and began to retire.

In the painting by Phillipitean of this battle which has been on exhibition at the "Panorama of the Second Battle of Manassas," in Washington, D. C., for twelve months, it is represented that the artillery commanded by Col. S. D. Lee opened the attack on, and broke up the charge of Fitz John Porter's corps, from a position on the left of Wilcox's division, while the battery referred to by yourself and General Wilcox is not represented, and the position from which it fired is left a blank on the canvas as far as batteries are concerned.

In your report published in "official records of union and confederate armies," series I, vol. XII, part II., page 565, you say: "At 3:30 o'clock in the afternoon I rode to the front for the purpose of completing arrangements for making a diversion in favor of a flank movement then under contemplation. Just after reaching my front line I received a message for reinforcements for General Jackson, who was said to be severely pressed. From an eminence near by one portion of the enemy's masses attacking Jackson were immediately within my view and within easy range of batteries in that position. If gave me an opportunity I had not expected to have, and I made haste to use it. Two batteries were ordered for the purpose, and one placed in position immediately and epened. Just as this fire began, I received a message from the commanding general informing me of General Jackson's condition and his wants. As it was evident that the attack against General Jackson scondition and his wants. As it was evident that the attack against General Jackson scondition and his wants. As it was evident that the attack against General Jackson scondition and his wants. As it was evident that the attack against General Jackson scondition and his wants. As it was evident that the attack against General Jackson scondition and his wants. of these batteries. I made no movement with my troops. Before the second battery could be placed in position the enemy began to retire, and in less than ten minutes the ranks were broken and that portion of his army put to flight. A fair opportunity was offered me, and the intended diversion was changed into an attack. My whole line was rushed forward at a charge. The troops sprang to their work, and moved forward with all the steadiness and firmness that characterized war-worm veterans. The batteries, continuing their play mon the confused masses, completed the route of mon the confused masses, completed the route o therefore made against the forces in my

Irone.

In the official report of Gen. C. M. Wilcox, published in the same volume, page 559, he says:
"About 3:30 p. m. the enemy's infantry were seen emerging from a wood upon an open field in line of battle, the wood and field being in front of Jackson's extreme right and to the left and near Featherston's brigade, this field about 500 yards wide terminating 150 yards from Jackson's line, wide terminating 190 yards from Jackson's Inc, the ground here rising rather steeply for a short distance, and level to the railroad, behind the embankment of which at this point were Jackson's men. Seeing this advance of the enemy I repaired at once to the interval between Pryor's and Featherston's brigades. From this point there was an excellent view of the field and not more than 400 yards distant. The first line of the enemy advanced in fine style across the open field. trayai of the battle at its turning point.

This cyclorama is on exhibition in Washington, which is only about thirty miles from the scene of the conflict. It has been viewed by hundreds of thousands of spectators, among whom were many men who shared in the deadly struggle there depicted with such mimic power.

It is strange that after all that has been said and written about this battle that there should be inaccuracies and misunderstandings about some of the most important features of it.

upon the heid, I was in the act of ordering a bat-tery to be placed in position to fire upon them, when a battery was directed by the major-general commanding to fire upon them, the battery being near the turnpike, in an excellent and command-ing position. The fire of this battery was most opportunely delivered upon this advancing line of the cuency.

the enemy.

They were caught in the open field. The effect of every shot could be seen. A rapid fire of shot, shell and sperical case, delivered with admirable precision, checked their advance. As shells and special case would burst over in front and near the enemy. hem, their ranks would break, hesitate and scatter. This artillery fire alone broke regiment after regiment and drove them back into the

I will relate incidents connected with this matter which you will probably remember.

Between the hours of two and three o'clock on the ovening of the 30th, I had ridden to the position occupied by Featherston's brigade, to which brigade I had been assigned for this campaign and while at the highest point occupied by it we could see the enemy's infantry, about a mile distant, moving in large bodies to the left, and disappear in a body of woods in front of Jackson's left wing. I hurried back to my battery, which was on the left of the turnpike, about 50 yards from it and immediately behind Hood's division. I had only reached there a few minutes when I saw you, accompanied by some of your staff and orderlies, passing along the turnpike to the front. Believing that if you passed through the I will relate incidents connected with this matdriven back, and moved forward to Groveton and took a position in an old apple orchard, from which we fired at the retreating infanity about thirty minutes, and afterward changed to positions at and beyond Groveton. The firing from their batteries at us while in the orchard was terrific. While there the horse I was riding had both hind legs carried away by a cannon ball, and while at Groveton the second one was killed by a shell which exploded in front of me.

I would thank you to make such an indorsement upon this letter as you deem proper in the interest of the truth of history, and in justice to the officers and men of my battery.

Very respectfully.

Late Captain Dixie Artillery. driven back, and moved forward to Groveton and

GENERAL LONGSTREET'S REPLY.

GENERAL LONGSTREET'S REPLY.

GAINISVILLE, Ga., Aug. 28, 1887.—The statements herein made are true and correctly narrated. As I rode to the front on the occasion referred to, I recognized Riley's battery of six guns. Upon seeing the opportunity of opening with artillery an enfliade and reverse fire upon the federal masses attacking Jackson, orders were reliven Col. Manning, of the staff, to send me two or three batteries as soon as possible, and included in the order Riley's, who had six guns, as I now remember. Without noting the particular battery first reporting, I was left under the impression that it was Riley's, and have so stated on several occasions. This is clearly a mistake, and it is equally as clear that Chapman's was the first battery to open on the federal lines in the awkward position in which they were exposed, and this battery, by its fire alone, broke up the attack on Jackson which, at the moment, was about to break through Jackson's position.

The field of vision and of fire was so clear that there is no room for claims of others to the credit of this part of the fight. After the attack was broken, and the federals were retiring and attempting to reform, they came in view of other batteries—those sent in addition to Chapman's—as well as those in position between the right and left wing of the army, when all joined in the fire against the retiring foe. Very respectfully, (Signed)

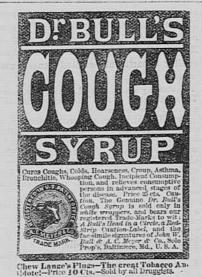
This correspondence clears up all doubt

as to whose battery arrested Porter's advance on Jackson at the critical moment of the great battle

According to Gen. Longstreet, whose testimony of course settles the matter, it was Chapman's battery of Featherston's brigade. The fixing of this fact has an important his torical bearing, and is an act of simple jus-tice to the brave men who stood so faithful ly by their guns and worked them with such terrible effect.

Hood's division, on the left of the Gainesville and Alexandria turnpike, at 3:30 p. m. on the thirtieth of August, 1862.

General Long in his memoirs of Robert E. Lee, in writing of the battle says, on page 198: "At the critical moment when the fate of Jackson's corps was trembling in the balance, Colonel Lee dashed with his artillery into a position that enfilled the federal right wing, and hurled upon it a storm of shot and shell. At the same moment, Longstreet's infantry rushed like atempest against Pope's left, driving everything before it. This azsault was irresistible, and speedily decided the fortune of the day. Pope's left wing gave way before it at every point and his right being assatled in fanks and threatened in rear, relaxed its efforts and began to retire. Col. Chapman, the man who commanded this battery, was also distinguished during the war as one of Mosby's most efficient offi-



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