

CHAPTER II.

The Organization-----To The Rescue of Parkersburg,
Then of Gallipolis-----Mustered Into The U. S. Service
-----Into West Virginia-----Our First Fight-----We
Defeat General Jones and 4,000 Cavalry At Moore-
field-----Gen. Milroy's Congratulations.

The One Hundred and Sixteenth Ohio rendezvoused at Camp Putnam, Marietta, on the 25th of August, 1862. Several of its companies had for some days been guarding the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, then supposed to be in danger of destruction by rebel raids from the Virginia side of the Ohio river. Some of the road's bridges had been burned and others set on fire.

But three or four officers of the 116th had ever seen any military service. The military committees of the several counties, in which the companies composing the regiment had been raised, met at Marietta on the 17th of August and selected the following field and staff officers for recommendation to the Governor: James Washburne, of Monroe County, Colonel; Thos. F. Wildes, of Athens County, Lieutenant Colonel; W. Thomas Morris, of Monroe County, Major; W. Reed Golden, Of Athens County, Adjutant; Artemus W. Williams, of Meigs County, Quartermaster. Subsequently Frederick L. Ballard, of Athens County, was selected Adjutant, *vice* Golden, whom the Governor declined to receive because he was lame. These officers were all commissioned by Governor Tod. At a later date the officers held a meeting and elected Rev. E. W. Brady Chaplain and Elmer Armstrong Sutler. Dr. Walter R. Gilkey was assigned to the regiment as surgeon, Jr. J. Q. A. Hudson, first assistant surgeon and Dr. James Johnson second assistant surgeon. Milton A. Ellis master Sergeant, and Ezra L. Walker Commissary Sergeant. Colonel Washburne had been a captain in the 25th Ohio, from which he came with an excellent record for bravery and efficiency. The date of rank of these officers was: Washburne, August 22; Wildes, August 18; Morris, August 19; Ballard, September 8; Williams, September 3.

Companies A, C, D, E, and F were raised in Monroe County, Companies B and G in Meigs County, Companies I and K in Athens County, and Company H in Noble County. Some drilling was done at Camp Putnam by squad and company, but the regiment was never in line there. Lieutenant Colonel Wildes joined the regiment on the 25th of August. On the 1st of September the regiment was ordered to Parkersburg to watch the movements of Jenkins, who was supposed to be threatening that place. At this time neither officers nor men had been mustered in. All were without uniforms, accoutrements, blankets, cooking utensils and camp equipage except that belonging to Camp Putnam. The men were armed with an old Belgian rifle, intended more for show than use, and they did not even make a good show, being rusty and out of order, and in a demoralized condition generally. The men had been in camp and doing duty of various kinds for several days without a change of clothing. There was yet no Adjutant with the regiment and only one field officer; scarcely an officer had a sword or even a shoulder strap, and none had uniforms; there was not a horse in the regiment; not an officer with the regiment knew how to form a battalion, how to move it after it was formed, what commands to give or how to give them. Such was the situation of affairs when Col. Putnam hurried into camp late in the afternoon of September 1st, with orders from Gov. Tod directing the 116th to hasten to Parkersburg. Imagine the surprise and indignation of officers and men on the reception of this order under the circumstances! Had any one in camp known anything of war or its regulations there would without doubt have been loud murmurings, if not a mutiny then and there, but there was nothing of the kind. On the contrary, the order was obeyed with as much alacrity, as the regiment ever afterwards obeyed an order, and within an hour we were on the march to Parkersburg. There was no pageant in the march from Camp Putnam to the depot that evening. No banners waved over those men, no music cheered them, no bugle stirred their souls with its flaring blast. As we have said, there was not even a uniform among them. The farmer, the professor, the student, the smith and the miner were in that line. The farmer marched in the garments he brought from the furrow, the professor and student in those they had worn in the school-room, the smith and the miner were attired as they had been in the shop and the mine. Here were the sturdy yeomanry of the Southeastern Ohio marching to the scenes of war. From the hills and quiet fields of Monroe were five hundred of her hardy sons of toil; from Meigs two hundred, at the head of one a farmer, and at the head of the other a professor, and behind him marched his whole academy; from little Athens, two hundred, at the head of one a jolly business man, and behind him the very flower of

the village of his residence, at the head of the other “a good carpenter but not much of a soldier,” as he often used to say to himself, and following him were the stoutest and hardiest of the miners of the Hocking Valley; from Noble, one hundred, headed by an intrepid and dauntless wounded soldier, followed by the pick of her chivalric youth, and by the irrepressible “Private Dalzell.” And these thousand true men, loved well at home, and made of sterling stuff, were on their way to war, to actual war. And their untaught, uncouth and unprepared condition made the spectacle of their march to the front as the sun was going down the sky that evening more interesting and more impressive, than if they had been clothed in the panoply of war. It was long after dark when we were ferried over the Ohio to the trembling city of Parkersburg. Of course it rained! What soldier ever knew it not to rain when he was least prepared for it? And so now it fairly poured as though the Heavens were baptizing us with their waters, preparatory to the baptism of fire which we were for years to receive in that State of Virginia, to whose shores we were being slowly ferried across the beautiful Ohio, which ran neutral between its loyal and disloyal banks.

Without tents or blankets and without quarters, we took possession of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad depot and after satisfying ourselves that Jenkins was not likely to burn the town before morning, we spread out a great quantity of sacked grain, with which the depot was stored, and lying down, slept soundly until morning. The town and the roads leading into it were picketed by some of the officers of the regiment most of the night. Before daylight next morning we were up and ready to move to a camping place selected a mile or more out of town. Here we found rations enough prepared for four regiments. A company in command of Captain J. H. Dickey stationed there, knowing our condition and expecting more in the same plight, had been cooking nearly all night, and now we partook of an excellent breakfast. As we were preparing to leave the depot that morning the old freight agent arrived, and seeing the use we had made of his freight during the night, was the maddest man for a few minutes any of us ever saw. He actually knocked down a couple of men who had the impudence to laugh at his rage, and to avoid further demonstrations of that sort the men tied him to a post, where he securely remained whilst the regiment was making its escape to camp.

About the streets were a good many old soldiers, some on furlough and more who were stragglers from the recent engagements in that part of Virginia. We felt uncomfortable in their presence and when we began to prepare to move out to camp we realized more than ever our untaught condition. How to form we did not know, so we concluded to let Captain Teters go ahead and the rest to follow him as best they could. How we got out to camp none of us ever knew, but when we got there and found breakfast ready, we knew just what to do. Here was something, after all, that we had done before. That day Colonel Mulligan’s “Irish Brigade” and other troops arrived and we did our first guard and picket duty. The loyal Governor Boreman was in Parkersburg at that time, and an order was issued, that no citizen could pass in or out, until recognized as a Union man by him. It gave the Governor plenty of work to do for a couple of days. Colonel Mulligan’s men camped beside us, and seeing our destitute condition, generously loaned us their cooking utensils, and gave our men a great many useful lessons in army life. Our men never forgot this kindness, and whenever they afterwards caught sight of the green flags of those gallant and whole-souled Irishmen, they gave them “three cheers and a tiger.”

One of the first things we did was, to tear down a whisky shanty and empty the filthy contents of several barrels, kegs and bottles into the gutters. We found the keepers of the place to be old acquaintances from Athens, who had been treated the same way there by some soldiers from Camp Jewett and compelled to leave the town. They would sell whiskey to soldiers wherever they were, orders or no orders, and none but extreme measures were appreciated by them, so we broke up their business.

On the 4th, Colonel Washburn and Major Morris arrived in camp. Sometime before our appearance in Parkersburg, General Cox left the Kanawha Valley with all the available troops to join the Army of the Potomac, in which he performed gallant services, as will be remembered, in the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. He had left Colonel Lightburn in command, whose force was soon driven to the Ohio River. On the 2d, Colonel Rathbone surrendered the 11th West Virginia to Jenkins, at a point a few miles from Parkersburg. He and his officers were paroled and came into Parkersburg on the 3rd. About the same time General Morgan began his retreat from Cumberland Gap to the Ohio River at Gallipolis, which he reached about the 4th. On the 6th of September, we were ordered, with about the same haste as from Marietta, to Gallipolis. As we passed through Athens early in the morning of the 7th M. M. Greene, who happened to

be at the depot, said if we would wait fifteen minutes the citizens would give us our breakfasts. We waited and they did not disappoint us. Before the time was up the road leading to the depot was thronged with men, women and children bringing coffee, bread, meat, pies, cakes, etc. Many were at their breakfasts and brought all they had on their tables. The entire regiment was fed bountifully. Some of the companies from the other counties were surprised at this swift way of doing things. We landed at Oak Hill that evening, and after supper, marched to Centerville, where we went into camp about 10 P. M. Arrived at Gallipolis early next day and went into camp in the Fair Grounds. Some of General Morgan's troops on arriving here looked about as hard as we did after the Lynchburg raid. All the Union forces in West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky were now lying along or near the Ohio River and the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, most of them on the Ohio side. The "Home Guard" and militia in all the counties bordering on the Ohio were called out and ordered to Gallipolis, and when we arrived there the country about the city was full of soldiers. A very large force of militia was here, among them a company of 130 men from Athens County in command of Captain A. D. Jaynes. Two other companies from Athens were also there, one under Captain F. H. Hackman, the other under Captain Silas Pruden. Adjutant Ballard went to Cincinnati from here on business for the regiment, and Lieutenant H. L. Karr acted as Adjutant in his absence. On the 12th Colonel Washburn was sent up the Kanawha, with the three companies of the 92d O. V. I. And some other troops, to reinforce Colonel Lightburn, who was fighting above Charleston and falling back toward the Ohio before a vastly superior force of rebels. He was gone three days, Lightburn's forces, in the meantime, having reached the Ohio at Point Pleasant, where he fortified. General Morgan soon organized the miscellaneous companies and regiments into a formidable army. In a few days after our arrival General Cox arrived and assumed command. Our first camp was some distance above Gallipolis, where we entered upon the work of drilling in real earnest. Upon the arrival of General Cox we were moved three miles below Gallipolis. From our first camp we could occasionally see the rebels on the opposite side, seemingly content with having driven the "Yanks" off the "sacred soil." Colonel Lightburn's forces arrived at Point Pleasant from Charleston on the 20th. On the 16th and 17th of September, the regiment, excepting companies K and F, which were not quite full, owing to some desertions and some rejections which reduced them below the minimum, was mustered into the United States service, and we received clothing, camp and garrison equipage, and better arms. Over forty of Captain Hull's men refused to be mustered and left camp as deserters. This conduct was very disgraceful and left company K with less than the minimum, so that it could not be mustered. One of his lieutenants, Miers, also refused to be mustered. General George B. Wright paid us a visit shortly after our arrival at Gallipolis, and made a speech to the regiment, in which he complimented us very highly on our willingness and promptness in obeying orders in moving from point to point to defend the border before we were mustered in, or properly equipped.

The officers and men rapidly improved in the manual of arms and in squad and company drill. We had now a fine looking regiment. Most of the men were very large, healthy, strong fellows, giving promise of great endurance and a capability of making their regiment and themselves a record in whatever field of service they might be called to act. Officers' school was also established, and the whole regiment was soon as busy as a hive in learning the art of war. Some battalion drill was also indulged in, but it was not performed with much skill and generally ended in disgust all around.

Among the troops we met at Gallipolis was the 40th Ohio. Very strict orders were in force, at one time, in regard to passing any one in or out. One day, as Captain Teters was on duty on the river road east of Gallipolis, Colonel Taylor of that regiment rode up to the guard and attempted to pass out. He had on a "linen duster" and no sign of his rank was visible. Captain Teters ordered him to halt. This he declined to do, until the Captain caught his horse by the bridle and stopped him. He made a motion to draw a revolver from his holster, when the Captain drew his from a holster on his sword belt, and getting the "drop" on him ordered the Colonel to "dismount and surrender." The Colonel obeyed promptly. Colonel Taylor then told who he was and again demanded to be passed through the lines. Teter's mettle was up by this time, and he held the Colonel a prisoner, refusing to recognize his rank or his right to pass his guard without authority from General Cox's headquarters. High words ensued and the Captain was about ordering his prisoner under guard to the Provost Marshal, when General Cox, with some members of his staff, happened to ride up. Explanations followed and the Colonel rode off a wiser if not a better officer. General Cox personally thanked Captain Teters for his care in enforcing orders and reproved Colonel Taylor for his conduct.

While we lay here was probably the darkest and gloomiest period of the war. A despondent feeling overspread the whole North. Union men were discouraged and the disloyal element was correspondingly jubilant. President Lincoln had on the 22d of September issued his proclamation "that on the first day of January, 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of any State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward and forever free." Partisan feeling ran high, even in the army. Many officers resigned, declaring they would no longer serve in an "abolition war." The newspapers, according to their partisan bias, applauded or denounced the proclamation. The large enlistments during the months of July, August and September, had drained the country of many of the warmest supporters of the Government at home, and at the October elections, many of the Northern States, including Ohio, seemed to manifest their disapproval of the proclamation and the conduct of the war by voting for the Democratic party, which refused its sanction to any scheme of emancipation. In the army, and especially in the Army of the Potomac, the predominant feeling was suspected to be adverse to the proclamation. If the October elections could be taken as an expression, the majority of the Northern people were also adverse to it. Many efforts were made to turn the tide of discontent and re-establish the confidence of the country. The meeting of the "Governors of the Loyal States" at Altoona, Pa., was a notable effort in this direction. Among other things done by this meeting was the adoption of an address to President Lincoln and the country, in which, among other things, they said: "We hail with heartfelt gratitude and encouraged hopes the proclamation issued on the 22d instant, declaring emancipated from their bondage all persons held to service or labor as slaves in the rebel States where rebellion shall last until the first day of January ensuing." With a view to suppressing the disloyal tendencies of many and to restrain their interfering with and discouraging enlistments, President Lincoln issued another proclamation on the 24th of September. We quote from it as follows:

"WHEREAS, It has become necessary to call into service not only volunteers, but also portions of the militia of the States by draft in order to suppress the insurrection existing in the United States, and disloyal persons are not adequately restrained by the ordinary processes of the law from hindering this measure, and from giving aid and comfort in various ways to the insurrection,

Now, THEREFORE, be it ordered:

First, That during the existing insurrection, and as a necessary measure for suppressing the Same, all rebels and insurgents, their aiders and abettors, with the United States, and all Persons discouraging volunteer enlistments, resisting militia drafts, or guilty of any disloyal practices, affording aid and comfort to the rebels against the authority of the United States, Shall be subject to martial law and liable to trial and punishment by court martial or military commissioners."

The address of the Governors and the latter proclamation by the President had the effect to restore, in a great measure, the confidence of the loyal people, and to suppress open demonstrations of hostility to the Government on the part of those opposing enlistment, the draft, the suppression of the rebellion by force of arms, and the emancipation of the slaves of the South. But while this was true as to open opposition, there were organized immediately afterwards secret political societies all over the North, prominent among which was the one known in history as the "Order of Knights of the Golden Circle," all of which were notoriously disloyal in character and design. These two proclamations of the President sharply defined the future policy of the Government, and as sharply developed the antagonisms and prejudices of the people in relation to the vexed question of slavery. The anti-slavery element of the country regarded the emancipation proclamation as a blow at the root of the rebellion, and believed that it would lend new vigor to the efforts to suppress it and new life and hopes to the hearts of the people. To this element had been added by this time a vastly more numerous one composed of patriotic people, regardless of party in all parts of the country, who had come to believe that slavery was an element of strength to the rebellion and who favored its destruction as a means of destroying and suppressing the rebellion. To this latter class belonged Governor Tod, of Ohio, Governor Pierpont, of Virginia, Governor Bradford, of Maryland, Governor Morton of Indiana, what was known as the "Douglas Democracy," and, in short, the great body of the loyal people of the country. Among them now there was but little division of opinion on the importance of slavery to the rebellion, and hence their hearty endorsement of the emancipation proclamation. And so it

followed that they also endorsed the proclamation which aimed at those who discouraged enlistments and resisted the draft as a necessary war measure. But with the opponents to the proclamation, with the lukewarm supporters of the Union, and with the avowed opponents of the war, the two measures were denounced as “arbitrary interferences of the Government with the personal rights of a citizen,” and the feeling aroused by their discussion was bitter and vindictive beyond anything ever before, or since, witnessed in this country. The feeling ran so high, and discussion became so bitter and hostile in the Army of the Potomac, that General McClellan on the 7th of October issued an order forbidding discussion of the proclamation. Other army commanders found it necessary to follow his example in this respect. Our own regiment was not free from this feeling, and it did not entirely abate until after the action taken at Romney in January following. Enlistments were almost entirely checked, as Colonel Washburn found, who, taking companies K and F back to Camp Putnam, tried to fill them up. Such, then, was the state of public affairs, when the 116th entered the service in the fall of 1862.

On the 16th of October the regiment left Gallipolis for Parkersburg. On the march we passed through Meigs and Athens Counties, the homes of many of our men. The first night we stopped at Cheshire, in Gallia County. The next day we passed through Pomeroy and that night camped at Chester. The next day we took dinner at Tupper’s Plains, the home of Captain Keyes and most of his company, and that night we camped at Coolville, the home of Captain Fuller and most of his company. We met with grand receptions at all these places, the people turning out *en masse* to greet us, having everything prepared in most lavish abundance for our comfort on our arrival at each place of stopping. We arrived at Belpre, opposite Parkersburg, on the 19th, from which point Colonel Washburn went to Camp Putnam with companies K and F. He did not succeed in filling them until the 28th of October, when they were mustered into the service. It required more hard work to secure about a dozen men each for those two companies, than it did to recruit all the rest of the regiment. On the 22^d, the balance of the 116th crossed the river to Parkersburg and took the cars to Clarksburg, arriving there the following morning. That night ride to Clarksburg was a terribly disagreeable one. It was very cold, and there being no fire or means of making fire in the old rickety cattle cars in which we were being moved, the men were in imminent danger of freezing. Finally, as the men expressed it, a “council of war” was held and this plan adopted to warm the cars: The lining of the cars was torn off, whittled or broken up, the doors closed and fires built on the board seats. When in danger or burning through a seat it would be moved to another spot, and so on during the night, with regular guards detailed to keep up the fire and watch it. Of course the smoke had to be disposed of. This was done by standing it as long as they could, when the doors would be opened on both sides of the cars to allow the smoke to blow out. Looking forward from the rear car the train appeared almost entirely enveloped in smoke. But when we arrived in Clarksburg the next morning, the charred seats, the absent lining of the cars, and the blackened hands and faces of the men showed pretty plainly, how they had spent the night in fighting the cold. At Parkersburg, we were put into a brigade commanded by Colonel Latham, and Lieutenant Sibley was detached from the regiment and assigned as an aide on his staff. At Clarksburg, we met the 36th, 23^d and some other regiments just returned from making for themselves a glorious record on the South Mountain and Antietam battlefields. We met many acquaintances among them and were deeply interested in their stirring accounts of those battles, and especially of the desperate stand made by General Cox’s Kanawha Division, the left of the army during the first day’s fight at South Mountain. Now that we were soldiers, we found ourselves taking a sort of family interest in the deeds of other soldiers never so strongly felt by us before. Here we also met General Milroy, who had just been assigned to command the “Cheat Mountain Division,” of which we were to form a part. General Crook, who had won his star in the battles named, was also there. At Clarksburg, we received further equipments in the way of teams and Sibley tents. On the 26th we started on the march for Buckhannon; reaching there on the 27th. The roads could hardly have been worse, if made to order, and added to this, it rained hard from almost the moment of starting from Clarksburg. That night it continued to rain even harder than during the day. “Sibley stoves” had not yet been issued and the boys complained terribly because they had nothing to burn but “wet rails.” Sibley tents did not draw very well, and the fires built in them soon filled them with dense volumes of smoke. For raw soldiers, that was a very uncomfortable night, but dismal as it was, some of the men went out “foraging” and next morning several had breakfast of roast pig and turkey. On reaching Buckhannon that day, the regiment was followed by a train of twenty-seven loaded wagons, and a cloud of citizens loaded with complaints against us for “pressing” their horses, etc., into the service. General Milroy was hard pressed for an apology for us, but finally getting all the citizens’ horses and wagons together, he dismissed them for their homes, each with his own vehicle and enough good army rations to keep them in

good cheer on their journey. From what he knew of the 116th on the train from Parkersburg, and this, too, he said he thought the 116th Ohio would take care of itself. We thought so, too.

On the 30th, the 123d Ohio joined us with the same teams again, they having even a larger train than we had. By this time, Milroy's stock of patience began to give out, and he issued an order forbidding the army to molest the property of citizens, unless we had satisfactory evidence of their disloyalty, which "evidence" was not hard to get, when we wanted anything. There never was much trouble in getting this kind of "evidence," whenever we found ourselves in want of transportation, and we were always in want of it, for every soldier, now, had three times as much stuff as he ought to have in active field service. Colonel Washburn joined us on the 31st with companies K and F, and now we had a full regiment, completely equipped, rather *too* completely, in fact, and ready, as we thought, for any service assigned us. We were now brigaded with the 122d and 123d Ohio regiments, with Colonel Washburn as Brigade Commander. Colonel Washburn made Adjutant Ballard his Assistant Adjutant General, and Quartermaster Williams his A. A. Q. M. Quartermaster Sergeant W. J. Lee accompanied the Quartermaster. Lieutenant Hiram L. Sibley, of company B, was detailed as Acting Adjutant. What became of our other brigade no one seems to know and but few remember ever having even seen our first brigade commander. At any rate Lieutenant Sibley came back to us at Buckhannon, just in time to assume the duties of his new position of Adjutant of his regiment. Lieutenant Alexander Cochran, of company I, was detailed as Acting Quartermaster of the regiment, and Corporal George K. Campbell, of B, was appointed Acting Quartermaster Sergeant. We kept up our drilling with great diligence, and were every day improving in the tactics, while the discipline was strict, and as the men sometimes thought, severe. Lieutenant Robert Wilson, of company A, an officer who gave bright promise of being one of the best in the regiment, was here stricken down with fever, was sent home, and soon afterward died. His was our first death. We found General Milroy a very kind and courteous officer, full of energy and loyalty. No slave was ever turned back from *his* lines, for he ardently supported the policy of the Administration, embodied in the emancipation proclamation.

The enemy was quite active in guerilla warfare in all West Virginia, and we had plenty of scouting and picketing to do, all of which was teaching our men the value of discipline and strict obedience to orders in and out of camp. But, notwithstanding, there would sometimes occur grave misconduct and violation of orders. One night it was discovered that quite a number of men were out of camp and away in the country foraging on their own account. Strong guards were placed at different points about the camp, and a detail sent out after the foragers. They were met some distance out, returning to camp loaded down with honey and fresh meat of different kinds, and marched to headquarters. It was afterwards learned that another party had been out earlier the same night which had gotten safely back to camp with their plunder. Search was at once made and most of the plunder, and the men who had it, discovered. Colonel Washburn was just about assuming command of the brigade, having received his orders, but discovering this, he stopped awhile to discipline these unruly fellows. The boys never forgot the short, sharp lecture he delivered to them, and going out of camp after plunder during the night was put a stop to for some time afterwards. Nobody was punished and all agreed to be good boys in the future, and they kept their word.

November 9th, we broke camp and started for Beverly. That night we camped at the middle fork of the Tygart Valley River. Just as we stacked arms, a team ran away. The wagon was upset and a general smashup made of everything. The soldiers made a rush for the wreck with the double purpose of catching the runaway team and helping the unfortunate mule driver. The wagon proved to be loaded with medical stores, among which was a large quantity of bottled wine, whisky and brandy, and observing the contents of the dilapidated wagon, the soldiers very soon captured "the bottles with corks out," as they afterward said, when called to account, but it was more than suspected that they also captured all the bottles whose "corks" could be *pulled* out. It was, however, always claimed by the men of the 116th that the 123d appropriated the bottles whose corks could be pulled out, and that they, acting simply on the maxim "waste not, want not," took only the bottles with the corks out. It was too intricate a question to settle off hand in the conflicting state of the proof, and was dropped as one of those things "no fellow can find out." Major Morris, to whom an investigation of the matter was referred, was found next morning with several bottles with "corks out," which he said "had been offered in evidence." We reached Beverly next day, passing over the battle ground of Rich Mountain, and through some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in Virginia. While lying here we were the recipients of many kindnesses from Mrs. Arnold, the only surviving sister of Stonewall Jackson. She was a thoroughly loyal woman, and kept the stars and stripes

constantly flying over her house. She was, besides, kind-hearted and attentive, beyond the power of pen to tell to the Union soldiers, many and many an one owing his life to her care. Colonel Washburn went from here to Clarksburg and thence to Columbus for a better class of arms. On the night of the 10th, for the first time, our men “slept on their arms,” our post being threatened with an attack. Our stay at Beverly was an enjoyable season, if we may believe the statements contained in a letter before us, dated November 12th, 1862: “It would do you good to look in upon us to-night. We ate our supper...a good one...just before dark, after which the Major, Doctor Johnson, Lieutenant Cochran, Lieutenant Sibley and a few others came in and seated themselves around as charming a fire as you ever saw in civilization. Then we ate apples and drank cider! What do you think of that? Let me explain. The apples and cider were “foraged” today. Then we smoked and chatted, and finally the Major led off in a song. What a splendid bass voice he has! Our fire is built in a chimney...all that remains of a house that once stood here. Our tent is put up close to the chimney, the fire-place opening into the tent. Orderly Morrison says he will put a mantle-piece up tomorrow, and decorate it with plaster of Paris angels, birds, dogs, squirrels, etc. The mail has arrived, and though it is raining quite hard, the men are running about through the camp following the ‘postmaster.’ Commissary Sergeant Walker has just come dancing in, exclaiming ‘a letter from my wife.’ Here comes the Orderly now with headquarters mail, and a letter is announced for ‘the Colonel,’ another for ‘the Major,’ and so on until nearly all of us are supplied. Then one after another went to his own quarters to read his letters from home, and we are alone with Waterman and the Orderly again. Nothing does a poor, forlorn soldier so much good as a cheerful letter from home. A great many of our officers and men left their homes very unceremoniously, and their families were left to do and care for themselves almost without notice or warning, and now, that winter is coming on, I can see that a great many of them are in great trouble about the comfort of their families. A letter, assuring them that all is right and comfortable at home, removes many a dark cloud and heavy trouble. I can see its effect at once in the countenances and cheerful discharge of duty.”

We lay at Beverly until the 15th, when we took an early start for Webster, marching twenty miles the first day, and twenty-two the next. On this march, we passed over the battle ground of Phillippi. At Webster, our wagon train was left to go overland to New Creek in care of our wagon master, Hiram L. Baker, while we, next day, took the cars on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. A few days after our arrival at New Creek, the men of the regiment presented a field glass to Colonel Washburn, Quartermaster Sergeant Lee making the presentation speech. The Colonel responded briefly, thanking the men for their kindness, and remarking in closing that he hoped soon to have the opportunity of leading the Third Brigade to battle against the enemy. Up to this time the regiment had enjoyed excellent health, but now the measles broke out among us and in a short time fully one-fourth of the regiment was prostrated with the disease. We met our old friends of “the Irish Brigade” here, and acting on the principle that “friends are of no use unless you use them,” we induced Colonel Mulligan to detail a number of this best drilled Sergeants to drill our men, and his Adjutant to drill our officers. The result was most satisfactory. On the 28th of November, company H, in command of Captain Teters, was sent to St. George, in Tucker County, with instructions to thoroughly scout that vicinity, and clear it of a band of bushwhackers and thieves infesting it. He did the work thoroughly and returned to the regiment on the 11th of December. But the measles in their worst form had been among his men also, and he was obliged to leave fourteen men in hospital at St. George. We were, also pretty thoroughly vaccinated at New Creek.

On the 12th of December, we broke camp and marched to Burlington, leaving 124 men in hospital at New Creek, who were afterwards sent to the general hospital at Cumberland, Maryland. We lay at Burlington until the 17th when we started for Petersburg; which we reached on the evening of the 18th; going into camp in a plowed field on the bank of the south branch of the Potomac. The country was now full of rebel cavalry and guerrillas, and the large trains we had with us had to be heavily guarded at all points to prevent their capture. Fourteen teams were allowed to a regiment, but in addition to these sometimes nearly as many more were “pressed into the service” to carry the heavy knapsacks of the men, and the great quantities of baggage belonging to the officers. On the march to Petersburg, Lieutenant Colonel Hunter, of the 123d, becoming separated from his command, was captured by a single rebel who met him with his gun drawn up. The Colonel was, however, recaptured in a few moments afterwards, together with his captor. Captain Brown and Lieutenant Cochran went out one day, while we lay at Petersburg, beyond the picket lines foraging and were fired upon by rebel cavalry. It was with the greatest effort they escaped to camp. The boldness and strength of the rebels in our vicinity caused the greatest vigilance in camp and in

guarding forage trains. On the 21st of December Captain Teters and Lieutenant Karr were sent out with 100 men on a scout, and returned next day with nineteen prisoners. We had captured quite a number of prisoners, up to this time, and on the 23d, Lieutenant Mallory was sent to escort them to Wheeling. On the 28th, the 116th, a section of battery D, 1st West Virginia Light Artillery, Lieutenant Daniels commanding, and a company of cavalry left Petersburg; reaching Moorefield in the afternoon of the same day. There we relieved other troops which were ready to move out on our arrival, accompanied by General Milroy. Colonel Washburn remained at Petersburg with the 123d Ohio, a section of the same battery under command of Lieutenant Chalfant and a company or two of cavalry. As the troops bound for Romney were yet in sight of our camp, the rebel Captain McNeil made a descent on their train and cut loose and ran off the horses and mules of thirteen wagons. General Milroy himself was only a short distance in advance of the point where the train was attacked. The rebels, encouraged by the success of their raids and increasing numbers, were constantly threatening our positions at Petersburg and Moorefield. Union people and "contrabands" had conveyed us information that the rebel forces were concentrating under General Jones to capture these two posts. Petersburg was thirteen miles from Moorefield, and the nearest point on the other side of us was Romney, thirty-five miles away. Our position was, therefore, very critical, if attacked by a large force. General Milroy, who had established his headquarters at Winchester, had nearly 10,000 men mostly new regiments, in his command, but they were scattered in small bodies over a wide extent of territory, except at Winchester, where the main portion was concentrated, and these very generally not in supporting distance of each other.

As soon as we were fairly settled in camp at Moorefield, we began scouting the country, entrenching, making ourselves acquainted with the roads, and watching the movements of the enemy, especially in the direction of Strasburg, where we soon learned quite a large force lay under General Jones. Inquiring by telegraph of General Milroy what rebel force was at Strasburg, he replied as follows:

"Dec. 30, 1862

Lt. Col. T. F. Wildes, Moorefield, Va.:

*I will take care of the rebels at Strasburg soon. If you are attacked, fight till
The 123d can come to your relief. You can whip any force that comes against you.
R. H. MILROY, Maj. Gen."*

This was encouraging, at least. Moorefield and vicinity was most thoroughly rebel. Only five Union families lived in the place. The women were exceedingly insolent to our soldiers. A great many of the finest houses in the place were vacant, whole families having gone further south to follow the fortunes of the Confederacy. A very fine hotel, with its furniture, carpets and fixtures in place, was transformed into a hospital. General Milroy ordered that we subsist off those who would not take the oath of allegiance to the United States, and to arrest and confine all who refused to take the oath. Upon notifying him of the capture of a notorious rebel bushwhacker living in Moorefield, he telegraphed:

*"Good! Stick him in jail and keep him there till you catch a horde of them that are about
there, and then send them, with descriptions of their crimes, to Major Darr, at Wheeling, Va."*

The women becoming daily more and more insolent, we determined to administer a little discipline to them. Accordingly, as one of them tucked her clothes close about her as she was passing one of our officers on the sidewalk, one day, he politely took her by the arm, and escorted her to the Provost Marshal's office, where she was requested to take the oath, which she very reluctantly did. She then departed "with her feathers all adroop like a "rained-on-fowl." As she left the office, however, she walked far out into the street to avoid walking under the stars and stripes floating from the Provost Marshal's window. She was at once arrested again and sent to Wheeling. As usual, we found the negroes all loyal, trustworthy and vigilant to obtain news of importance to us. In a letter written December 31, 1862, we said: "If we are attacked, it will be within three days, and we are almost sure to be." This shows what was expected.

On the morning of the 3d of January, 1863, before it was yet quite light, our pickets were fired upon on the Petersburg road, and one officer, Lieutenant Okey, and seventeen men taken prisoners. We were prepared

for our visitors. The vigilance maintained and the state of preparation kept up since our arrival at Moorefield found us in position for defence. The regiment numbered about 650 men. General Jones, who attacked us, had about 4,000 cavalry and a battery of artillery. We occupied an excellent position on rising ground east of the village which was skirted on three sides by woods, or thick underbrush, which formed a good cover for our men and their movements. The enemy first sent a large body of dismounted men under cover of his artillery, across the open fields from the direction of the Lost River road, down which he had come. Here he was met by companies B, G and F, and driven back with some loss. In a short time, another attempt to advance upon us was made from the same direction. By this time, one of our cannon had been planted in an open space in the woods, a little in the rear of the infantry. Allowing them to come within a few rods of the foot of the hill, the infantry and our one gun opened upon them a well directed fire, and put them to flight a second time. In a few minutes after this, a large force advanced from the direction of the Winchester road, where they were met by companies E, C and K, under command of Major Morris. They were again repulsed. About the same time a large body of mounted men advanced on the Petersburg road into the village. Captain Teters, with company H, treated them to some fine, vigorous street firing, and drove them out again on the run. In the meantime, their battery had kept up a rapid exchange of compliments with our two guns, which were manned by a brave and competent officer. About 10 A. M., the rebels drew off, and their battery ceased firing. Shortly after this, quite a large body of cavalry with one gun was seen forming on the opposite side of Moorefield. One of our guns was placed in position to meet this threatened attack, and company I sent down in to reinforce H. About noon the enemy fired a shell from the gun on the opposite side of Moorefield. While the smoke was yet curling about it, a shot from our gun dismounted it. This was a most lucky and remarkable shot, and the sergeant who fired it was at once promoted to a lieutenancy in the 5th West Virginia regiment, in which we met him at the rebel works in front of Lynchburg in June, 1864. Company A was now sent down from the hill to confront a force gathering on the Romney road, on our right, and I and C brought in as a reserve. Our section of battery now selected a well protected spot, and began shelling in earnest the rebel battery near the Petersburg road, soon disabling another gun. The artillery duel was not of long duration, before the rebel battery ceased and withdrew. Matters remained very quiet now until about 3 P.M. Whenever the enemy showed any large number, we would shell them and drive them to shelter, and so we watched their movements closely, every moment expecting a charge from some direction, for they were all around us. About this time everything indicated preparations for a final dash upon us, from all sides, with overwhelming numbers. Their artillery opened fire afresh, and lines of skirmishers advanced carefully towards us. But just as we were expecting their lines, now in plain sight, to charge us, artillery was heard out on the road toward Petersburg, and the rebel lines at once fell back from all sides. "What had happened?" "Is Washburn coming?" every one inquired. Field glasses failed to detect any force in that direction, but the smoke of guns out there could be seen from our hill. Now we saw shells exploding in the vicinity of the rebel battery which we knew we did not throw. We placed our colors on a commanding point in full view of the point from which the firing came on the Petersburg road, for we all concluded these guns were, with reinforcements, coming to our relief. Our own guns were opened afresh on the rebel battery, which was now giving its attention to these new comers, and between us it was silenced and withdrawn. A courier was now started to try to get through the rebel lines, and ascertain who our friends were, and convey to them a dispatch, containing suggestions of a combined movement for the capture of that portion of the enemy on the opposite side of Moorefield. Several attempts to get through failed. The enemy was in strong force between. Finally the dispatch was given to Hiram L. Baker, and we attempted to clear a way for him with our artillery. He was successful, and at the same time a courier came through to us who announced that Colonel Washburn was there with his force from Petersburg. We then moved a portion of our regiment out to intercept the rebels on the other side of Moorefield, but without attempting to rejoin General Jones on the Lost River road, they retreated over the mountains and escaped, taking with them Elmer Armstrong, our sutler, whom they had captured at the house of Major Harness, where he had gone with the view of concealing some of his money and goods. Major Harness was an old acquaintance of Mr. Armstrong, they having had dealings in cattle before the war. After taking him away several miles, they released him and the next day he returned to us at Moorefield in a terribly dilapidated condition. Being a "Bible Democrat" did not shield Mr. Armstrong from misusage and insult at the hands of his captors. He was listened to with great interest by the men in his relation of the sad experience he had in riding a raw-boned, bare-backed horse for several miles on the run, and then being released to find his way back through the mountains on foot. The 123d Ohio and the rest of the Petersburg troops joined us at Moorefield before night, the rebels retreating over the Lost River road. They were without tents, blankets or cooking utensils, and the 116th boys were only too happy to

supply them with everything necessary to their comfort during the night, for we felt that they had without doubt saved us either a severe and bloody fight, or capture, and perhaps both. Our loss was three men wounded by fragments of shell, and twenty prisoners. Corporal Wm. Scott, of company I, was wounded in the shoulder by a fragment of shell, being the first man in the regiment wounded in battle. Two others were slightly wounded, whose names we cannot ascertain. The prisoners were Lieutenant Henry Okey, Company D; Sergeant Benjamin Sheffield, company K; Rawley Ausburg, company K; Byron Battin, company K; Wm. H. Brown, company K; Abraham Butterworth, company K; Joseph Cullison, company K; David Gross, company K; Asa Ladd, company K; Isaiah Matheny, company K; William Robinett, company K; George Sigler, company K; Daniel F. Weddle, company E; John Wilkinson, company K; Corporal Harrison Cochran, company E; Corporal Andrew W. Henthorn, company E; Adam H. Ollam, company E; John J. Walter, company E; Robert J. Hathaway, company E; Samuel Luthey, company E. Lieutenant Henry Okey, who was captured that morning, had tendered his resignation some time before, and it was accepted only the day before his capture. The order for his discharge had not, however, yet reached the regiment. As soon as it did reach it, the information was duly sent to the rebel authorities, and he was soon after released. Lieutenant Okey was too old a man for the service, and its hardships soon broke down his health. But he was a patriotic, good man, and his heart was in the cause. He would gladly have remained with us had his health permitted.

The next day Colonel Mulligan arrived with his "Irish Brigade" and O'Rourke's battery, and the day after his arrival our whole force moved up the Lost River road several miles. We found abundant evidence of the haste with which the enemy retreated on the 3d. Ascertaining that they had moved as far south as Staunton, we returned to Moorefield the same evening. There was no use in infantry trying to catch up with cavalry. General Milroy, Colonel Mulligan and Colonel Washburn commended the 116th very highly for the defense it made of Moorefield against the vastly superior numbers of the enemy, which we afterward learned numbered over 4,000 cavalry and six pieces of artillery. Mr. Armstrong said that when he told them our strength, they called him a "d__d old Yankee liar," and claimed that we had at least three regiments of infantry and a battery of artillery. It was fortunate for us that they thought so, for had their whole force attacked us at once, we could not hope to have successfully resisted them. Though this was the first time the 116th was under fire, it behaved splendidly. Up to this time there had been a good deal of grumbling at the strict discipline maintained and the constant drilling kept up. All now hastened to acknowledge the benefit of this, and from that time on the men of the 116th were never heard to complain of drill or discipline. The day following the battle, General Milroy sent us the following message:

Winchester, Va., Jan. 4, 1863

"Lt. Col. T. F. Wildes, Moorefield, Va.:

Accept my congratulations and thanks, yourself and your gallant command, for the courage and skill with which you defended your post against such overwhelming numbers of the enemy. I thought I was not mistaken when I told you, Dec. 30th, 'you can whip any force that comes against you.' I bespeak for you and your noble regiment a glorious record.

R. H. MILROY, Maj. Gen'l Commanding."

No compliment paid us during the war was more highly appreciated and none more deserving.

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