

CHAPTER VI.

Hunter Relieves Sigel-----Hunter's Order On Assuming
Command-----Short Of Rations For The First Time-----
Battle of Piedmont-----Bravery Of The Regiment-----
List Of Casualties-----One Or Two Amusing Incidents,
And Some Not So Amusing, Connected With The
Battle-----On To Staunton

General Hunter assumed command on the 21st. He found the army in bad shape. A thousand men were without arms and two thousand were without shoes. He at once began the work of fitting out the army and getting it in shape for active service: All stores of every kind were ordered turned over, and a great many other things ordered done, as will be seen from the following order:

“HEADQUARTERS DEPT., West Virginia.
In the Field, Near Cedar Creek,
May 22d, 1864

(General Order No. 29.)

It is of the utmost importance that this army be placed in a situation for immediate efficiency. We are contending against an enemy who is in earnest, and if we expect success we must be in earnest. We must be willing to suffer for a short time, that a glorious result may crown our efforts. The country is expecting every man to do his duty, and this done, an ever kind Providence will certainly grant us a complete success.

I. Every tent will be immediately turned in for transportation to Martinsburg, and all baggage not expressly allowed by this order will be at once sent to the rear. There will be but one wagon allowed to each Regiment; this will only be used to transport spare ammunition, camp kettles, tools and mess pans. Every wagon will have *eight* picked horses or mules, *two* drivers and *two* saddles. One wagon and one ambulance will be allowed to Department Headquarters, and the same to Division and Brigade Headquarters. The other ambulances will be under the immediate order of the Medical Director.

II. For the expedition on hand, the clothes each soldier has on his back, with *one* pair of extra shoes and socks, are amply sufficient. Everything else in the shape of clothing will be packed to-day and sent to the rear. Each knapsack will contain *one hundred rounds of ammunition*, carefully packed; *four pounds* of hard bread to last *eight* days; *ten* rations of coffee, sugar and salt; one pair of shoes and socks, and nothing else.

III. Brigade and all other commanders will be held strictly responsible that their commands are supplied from the country. Cattle, sheep, hogs, and if necessary horses and mules must be taken and slaughtered. These supplies will be seized under the direction of officers duly authorized, and upon a system which will be hereafter regulated. No straggling or pillaging will be allowed. Brigade and other commanders will be held responsible that there is no waste, and that there is a proper and orderly division amongst their men of the supplies taken for our use.

IV. Commanders will attend personally to the prompt execution of this order, so that we may move to-morrow morning. They will see that in passing through a country in this way, depending upon it for forage and supplies, great additional vigilance is required on the part of every officer in the command of men for the enforcement of discipline.

V. The commanding General expects from every officer and soldier of the army

in the field an earnest and unhesitating support, and relies with confidence upon an ever kind Providence for the result. The Lieutenant General commanding the Armies of the United States, who is now victoriously pressing back the enemy upon their last stronghold, expects much from the army of the Shenandoah, and he must not be disappointed.

VI. In conclusion, the Major General commanding, while holding every officer to the strictest responsibility of his position, and prepared to enforce discipline with severity when necessary, will never cease to urge the prompt promotion of all officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted men who earn recognition by their gallantry and good conduct.

By order of MAJOR GENERAL HUNTER.

CHAS. G. HALPINE, Assistant Adjutant General

This order looked like “business.” General Sigel had ordered all knapsacks sent to Martinsburg before starting from Winchester, and now Captain Keyes was sent to bring them up, for, among other things, we were to carry 100 rounds of ammunition in our knapsacks. What had not been taken by other regiments before he got to Martinsburg were lost or cut open and destroyed, so we had to draw a new supply. Quartermaster Sergeant Walker, however, hunted up about 200 in other regiments. The Adjutant reporting fifty pairs of shoes wanted, the Quartermaster reported 175 pairs wanted, and so it proved before we were shod. One day while on the march afterwards, some officer riding by asked, “What troops are these?” Jim Hall, of Company A, quickly replied, “Troops! This is Hunter’s ammunition train.” He asked no more questions, but rode off laughing. The 160th Ohio was now added to our brigade.

We started up the Valley on the 26th of May. The 160th Ohio protested so much against going to the front that it was sent back, on the 30th, from Rude’s Hill. On the 1st of June flour was issued to us for the first time, much to our disgust. We reached Harrisonburg on the 3d of June and left on the following day, moving by way of Port Republic. The army crossed the river at Port Republic and camped for the night. Our rear was considerably annoyed by guerrillas, during the last two or three days, and our communications partially destroyed. From a letter written from Staunton, June 8th, by Sergeant Walker, I quote a very clear, detailed account of our movements up to this point:

“We left Cedar Creek May 26th, 1864, after having sent back all our tents and everything else that could not be carried on our backs. Passing through Strasburg, General Hunter ordered the men to burn several buildings from which several of our men had been bushwhacked. The folks were allowed to take nothing from the houses. Hunter says ‘this bushwhacking has got to be stopped,’ and you may depend upon it he will stop it. Many of our men were obliged to march without shoes, and it was really a pitiful sight to see them marching along, leaving marks of blood on the ground. We were put on half rations of bread from the very start, and for several days had been without any. May 29, marched from Woodstock to Mt. Jackson, where we encamped on the same ground on which we fought two weeks ago. Passing through Edinburg we found a great quantity of salt, which we took. Just before leaving the town, one of the men went into a garden to get some onions, and a woman came out and drove him out with rocks. Good! May 31st, went out with Captain Kellogg, of the 123d Ohio, foraging, brought in a great quantity of flour, wheat and salt. This salt is some that has been sent to the counties by the Government, to be sold to the citizens at ten cents per pound, or about \$30 a barrel. An order came to-day from General Hunter forbidding us to burn anything but rails; strange order. June 3d, marched from Mt. Jackson to Harrisonburg. The latter is the county seat of Rockingham County, and is a very pretty place. The court house is a very pretty, (rather old) brick building, situated about the center of the town, with a fine yard around it. Just outside the yard is a large spring about twelve feet in diameter, round and walled up several feet, with marble steps going down to the water. The whole is covered with a circular roof supported on pillars, which makes it look very nice. The streets immediately

around the court house are of respectable width, but as a general rule they are very narrow. In fact, I have noticed that in all the Virginia towns we have passed through, the streets are narrow. There are a great many fine residences in and near the town. Our foraging parties search the houses and stores for flour, meat, etc, taking all they found. They also found some muslin valued by the rebels at \$2,000, a bale of batting, valued at \$245. We also destroyed three printing offices. June 4th, we expected to go directly up the Valley towards Staunton, but turned off the pike to the left soon after leaving the town, and passed the old Cross Key's battle ground, and so on to Port Republic. It was here...Port R...that Fremont came so near capturing Jackson two years ago. You may remember he sent Colonel Carlan to destroy a bridge at this place, but Colonel C. concluded to try to *hold* the bridge, and Jackson drove him from it, and made his escape, and whipped Carlan. As soon as he crossed his army Jackson burned the bridge and so prevented Fremont from following him."

A large portion of our men were now out of rations, except coffee, sugar and salt. After crossing the river at Port Republic, and passing through the village, we went into camp in a piece of woods on the right of the road, and after making coffee, lay down for the night. We were called out early the following morning, June 5th, and took the road without having made even a cup of coffee for breakfast, but with a promise that we should get something to eat very soon. We had marched but a short distance in the direction of Staunton, when we met considerable numbers of the enemy. Before advancing very far we formed line of battle, and advanced behind skirmishers, driving the enemy before us, until we reached Piedmont, where we found the enemy in force, well protected behind rail and log breastworks. The 116th was on the extreme left in this advance, and had several opportunities, of which it availed itself, of enfilading the rebels as they fell back. We reached their lines about 10 A.M. Without waiting for Thoburn, who was, as we understood, coming upon their flank. Moore's and Wynkoop's brigades charged and drove the enemy behind his works. Our men advanced on a charge nearly up to the works, but were there repulsed with severe loss. Re-forming our lines, in a few minutes we made a second charge, meeting with a second repulse and with even greater loss than before. Falling back to a slight cover of a rise of ground, we halted and lay down to await Thoburn's coming, as we ought to have done in the first place. We were still within short rifle range of the enemy's works, and a sharp fire of musketry and artillery was kept up on both sides constantly for over two hours. Colonel Washburn's horse was shot under him in the first charge. A battery of 12-pound pieces came on to the infantry line on the right, shortly after we fell back from the second charge, which did terrible execution, with solid shot thrown into the enemy's rail breastworks. The enemy had once or twice tried to turn our right. The demoralization which every shot created in their ranks could be plainly seen, crowds of the enemy fleeing from the spot where a shot struck the rails, when our infantry would open fire upon them the moment they showed themselves, the guns of the battery also saluting them at the same time with grape and cannister. About 3 P.M. Colonel Thoburn appeared on their right flank, having moved across a ravine by a long and tedious detour. As soon as he was seen charging on their flank, Moore and Wynkoop rose, and with a yell charged across the ground we had charged twice before, and which was covered with our dead and wounded. This time we scaled their works, capturing 1,500 prisoners and completely routing the rest. We captured, besides three pieces of artillery, about 3,000 stand of small arms and a number of wagons and ambulances. General Jones, the rebel commander, was killed. We saw his body in the woods a short distance behind the works, with a bullet hole through his forehead. This was the most desperate and stubbornly contested battle we were ever engaged in, and tried the mettle of our regiment most thoroughly. The 116th lost 181 men killed and wounded, forty-one being killed and thirteen afterwards dying of their wounds. Every color bearer and every one of the color guard were wounded, some of them very seriously. Our loss was as follows:

KILLED.

Company A—Nathaniel D. Hayden, Addey Brock, Jacob Zimmerly, Elijah Bennett, Newton Meeks.-----5.

Company C—Fred. F. Neptune, John Latchaw, George W. Gannon, Henry Pfeifer, Isaac Barrett, Robert E. Chambers, James B. Mobberly, Corporal Adam Rodecker.-----8.

Company B—Sylvester C. Shumway.-----1.

Company D—Corporal Robert Armstrong, John Detwiler, Robert H. H. Dyer, Elias B. Brock, Joseph Seimons, Samuel Alford, Henry B. Hixenbaugh, Richard Mahoney, Washington Bryan, Scott Dixon.-----10.

Company E—Moses McCulloch, Francis Swartz.-----2.

Company F—Corporal William King, Morris Krouse, Garrison Miracle, George W. Johnson, James F. Hughes, Richard Philps, Joshua Mercer, William Setton.-----8.

Company H—Stephen C. McCoy, James Harrison, Solomon Rich.-----3.

Company I—Corporal Richard B. Miller, Frederick Warren.-----2.

Company K—Edward Henshaw, Nelson B. Clements.-----2.

Total killed. 41.

WOUNDED.

Company A—Sergeant Mann Smith, knee; Corporal Fred. R. Rose, shoulder; Corporal William Brock, Jacob C. Keyler, hips; James Kimpton, shoulder; David Barens, wrist; Sergeant Daniel C. Hunt, arm; Cyrus Spriggs, arm; Samuel Tidd, side; Robert McCammon, hand; Corporal Benjamin F. Dye, hip; Robert Smith, arm; John Smythe, arm; John A. Harmon, leg; Albert Gates, leg; James C. Hall, leg.-----16

Company B—Marion Coleman, shoulder; George W. Keyes, shoulder; John Baker, side; John Anderson, face; Sergeant Uriah Hoyt, leg; Sergeant Wm. H. Bush, leg; Wells Grubb, arm; Davis Watson, arm; John Doland, leg.-----9.

Company C—Sergeant Mathew W. Maris, leg; Sergeant John S. Heald, breast; Sergeant John L. Beach, hip; Color Sergeant David K. Barrett, arm; George Kistner, arm amputated; Thomas South, arm amputated; Wm. Metz, head; Ellwood Chambers, foot; John Buchwald, shoulder and neck; Corporal John G. Barrett, leg, (died Aug. 19, 1864,); John J. Montgomery, arm; James A. Preshaw, left shoulder, (died Nov. 3, 1864, at Frederick, Md.); Edward Yockey, leg; Philip Schoupe, leg; Albert Vickers, head; Franklin Barnes, leg; Miles H. Davis, (died Oct. 12, 1864, at Frederick, Md.); Riley Thornburg, hip; Emmon H. Beardmore, wrist.-----19.

Company D—Lieutenant Richard T. Chaney, foot; Sergeant James K. Drum, head; William T. Flowers, head, (died at Andersonville, Nov. 5. 1864,); Charles W. Blowers, through breast; Josiah Norris, arm; James C. Headly, hip and ankle, (died at Lynchburg, July 2, 1864,); Henry B. Hixenbaugh, bowels; James A. Sinclair, arm; John H. Windland, arm; John W. Hail, arm; Jacob Hall, side; Eldridge Moffitt, hand; Daniel Bennett, shoulder; Henry Mowder, hip; Hugh Thompson, leg; Samuel Forsyth, hand; Jesse M. Stine, head; Joshua Nixon, shoulder; Peter Hickman, head; Alfred Gray, hip; Peter Schultz, leg; Thomas Rowley, arm; David Conger.-----23.

Company E—Corporal Jas. Skiles, groin; Ephriam?? Henthorn, leg amputated; Madison G. Miller, (died at Staunton, Va., Sept. 12, 1864,); Harrison Cochran, foot; Charles Palmer, leg; William Fisher, shoulder; Corporal Lewis Barcus, leg; Joseph A. Hall, arm; Corporal John J. Atkinson, arm.-----9.

Company F—Sergeant Stephen A. Brown, arm; Corporal Robert Martin, arm; William Sutton, leg amputated; James Carson, hip; Elijah Bunting, side;

Samuel Stephens, leg; Jacob Dillon, thigh; Joseph Rake, leg; Wesley McGee, side; Thomas Patterson, foot; Emanuel Okey, shoulder; James Piggott, head; Lempenious Efaw, thigh.-----13.

Company G—Alexander McFarland, hip; John Rawlings, leg.-----2

Company H—Captain W. B. Teters, leg; Sergeant Joseph Purkey, leg; Sergeant Benjamin C. Drake, leg; Color Sergeant Reese Williams, side; Sergeant William A. Arnold, knee; Corporal Benjamin B. Tilton, ankle; Corporal Jacob Gregg, thigh; Corporal Joseph C. Wilson, leg; Privates Nathaniel Butler, arm; David Bock, hip; Dighton M. Bates, mouth; William T. Cain, foot; John A. Groves, abdomen; John Wesley James, shoulder; John W. Kockley, foot; John J. Keyser, thigh; Eli T. Kirkbride, ankle; John Larrick, bowels, (died Sept. 12, 1864, at Savannah, Ga.); John W. Mott, hand; William McBride, thigh and leg; Andrew Powell, wrist; Simon Sechrist, side; Thomas Spear, arm; Reason Baker, hand; Jas. Dudley.-----25.

Company I—Sergeant John C. Chick, hip; Joseph Morrison, both legs; Jesse Annon, arm; Bradley P. Barrows, arm; Luther Cayton, head; Samuel P. Fleak, side; Ephriam W. Frost, shoulder and breast, (died at Annapolis, Md., Jan. 13, 1865, of scurvy contracted at Andersonville); Consider Frost, both legs, (died at Staunton, Va., June 26, 1864,); Corporal Edwin G. Fuller, through hips; James H. Gilchrist, leg; Jonathan C. S. Gilbert, face, (died Oct. 9th, 1864, at Savannah, Ga.); Nathan Hatch, face and shoulder; Mark W. McAfee, arm; Samuel McCulloch, knee; Elijah Patton, arm; Corporal Fayette Paugh, leg; Rufus B. Stanley, leg; George W. Tasker, groin.-----18.

Company K—Lieutenant Gottlieb Sheifley, side; Samuel Spencer, thigh; John Kulow, leg; Thomas Witham, arm; George Lyon, head; Andrew C. Cagg, hand, (died at Andersonville, Ga., Jan. 27, 1865,).-----6.

Total wounded.-----140.

The following is a list of those who died of wounds:

James C. Headley, James A. Preshaw, Miles H. Davis, William T. Flowers, Madison G. Miller, Emanuel Okey, Corporal Robert Martin, John Larrick, Consider Frost, Jonathan C. S. Gilbert, Andrew C. Cagg, Corporal John G. Barrett, Ephriam W. Frost.-----13.

Sergeant Reese Williams, one of the color bearers, was promoted to a lieutenancy for his gallantry. Although shot through the body, the brave fellow would not yield up his colors, and clung to them until he fainted from loss of blood. Being then carried back to the surgeon's, his wound was dressed. Soon recovering consciousness, he rose up from where he had been laid to die and returned to the line, took his colors again and waved them over his head as cheerfully and coolly as though nothing had happened him, and there he held them till the final charge was made. He attempted to advance with the line, but was too weak to do so, and as he gave up the colors to another, he kissed them, and swung his cap and feebly cheered as he saw them carried over the rebel works. For a time after Sergeant Williams was carried from the field, Sergeant Barrett bore bravely both standards with one arm, while the other hung helpless at his side. Captain Mann, on seeing his condition, went forward and took one of the standards from him, and afterward, when the last charge was ordered, the Captain carried the standard which Sergeant Williams was unable to go forward with. Captain Mann was always a hero in battle, and he was especially so in this. His company, C, went into the action with fifty-two men. It came out with just twenty unhurt, having lost thirty-two of its number in killed and wounded. Captain Teters' company, H, lost twenty-eight killed and wounded, more than half the number engaged. Company D lost ten killed and twenty-two wounded. The company was that day in command of Lieutenant Chaney, who though wounded in the foot, remained in command of his company throughout the engagement. His company lost over half of the men it went into action with. He proved himself on that day to be a brave and gallant officer, and well worthy to command the noble men of company D. He was splendidly supported by his brave Orderly Sergeant, Adam J. Myers,

who was next in command. Company F also met with the severe loss of eight killed and thirteen wounded. Captain Brown showed the "white feather," but Lieutenant Martin proved brave, as usual, and all through he and his gallant men behaved splendidly. "Squad I" lost very heavily in proportion to its numbers. Two killed and thirteen wounded was a great sacrifice for it. Lieut. Mosley, as a brave a man as we had among us, was in command of the "squad." It will be noticed that the right and center of the regiment suffered more than the left. This was mainly due to their exposed position. Another gallant officer wounded was Captain Teters, of company H, who was struck in the leg by a shell and very badly hurt. A letter written by me from Staunton, June 8th, thus speaks of this shell: "Just before the last charge a shell struck the ground within two feet of me, plowed the ground up under me, throwing me headlong, and ricocheting out again, passed on and hit Captain Teters in the leg, wounding him quite badly. It didn't explode till it had passed us ten feet or more. Had it exploded where it first struck the ground, the loss of life could not have failed to be great. It was a fortunate escape for us, especially for Captain Teters and myself. I am pretty sore yet and feel a sort of "shook up." I had only one foot on the ground, being in the act of rising from lying down, and the shell passed close under me. My right foot is pretty sore and my abdomen also, but otherwise I am all right, except a bruise from a spent ball on the right knee. It was a stirring time for us. I will write you more fully soon of the splendid conduct of the regiment. This has really been the first battle that thoroughly tested the mettle of our officers and men. You will be proud to know that they stood the terrible test magnificently," I never saw greater bravery than was that day displayed by the color bearers and color guard of the 116th regiment. But to see them all wounded, some we feared mortally, at the close of the battle, brought tears to the eyes of every one who had witnessed their splendid behavior. Nothing could exceed the heroism of the whole regiment in this engagement.

The battle is scarcely more than mentioned in any of the histories of the war, and yet the regiments engaged suffered as terribly and fought as bravely as any equal body of troops in any battle of the war. There were about 8,000 men of all arms engaged on our side, and 6,000 on the other, well fortified. Each side was commanded by brave and skillful officers, and each side had a great deal at stake. If defeated, there would be nothing left for us but retreat, and retreat over so long a distance in the face of a victorious foe, could not be otherwise than very disastrous. On the other hand, if the rebels were defeated, the road to Lynchburg was open and clear to us.

The loss of our army was about 420 killed and wounded. Among the officers killed was Major Schachi, of the 28th Ohio. That gallant regiment lost thirty-three killed and 105 wounded, out of 484 combatants. During its three years term of service the regiment lost ninety-two killed and 180 wounded. Its loss at Piedmont was, therefore, more than one-third its whole number killed and nearly two-thirds its whole number wounded. This shows very clearly the severity of the engagement. General Jones, the rebel commander killed, was in command of the force that surrounded us at Moorefield, January 3d, 1863. His body was found directly in front of the position of the 116th. We saw several men among the prisoners who were in the Moorefield fight. Many of his officers who were among the prisoners gathered about where he lay and wept over his remains. Our officers stood by in respectful and silent sympathy with their grief, for all recognized in him a brave and gallant officer, and felt for him the respect always entertained by one brave man for another, though he be an enemy. Until darkness cut off search and pursuit, both cavalry and infantry were busily engaged in bringing in prisoners from their hiding places. General Vaughan, next in command to Jones, fled to Waynesboro, whence he telegraphed Bragg next day: "Went into the fight yesterday with 5,600. I have not over 3,000 effectives, officers and men, including Imboden's cavalry." Secretary Staunton sent thanks to Hunter for this victory. The next day at Staunton and New Hope, Hunter captured 400 sick and wounded rebels.

One very ludicrous incident occurred while gathering in the prisoners. A very small Irishman by the name of Mike Manning, a member of company I, found hid under the bank of the river close by, a very large and powerful Irishman, whom he brought up as a prisoner of war, with an air of triumph that was truly grand. Mike marched his prisoner ahead of him at the point of the bayonet, abusing him most shamefully for being "a damned rebel and an Irishman, too." The idea of being an Irishman and a rebel was something that Mike could not reconcile. The two would stop every few steps and argue some point involving the Union and secession. This was done in true Irish style, with good strong brogue and both generally talking at once and as loud as they could. Once or twice the rebel Irishman, getting out of patience with his captor's tongue, reached out to catch him, when Mike would "leap to the rear," *a la* zouave, bring his bayonet down

to a charge and order his captive to move on. They soon attracted a crowd of amused spectators, who managed to let the reb get hold of Mike and give him a shaking up, and before they got him loose from Mike he had given him good pay for his abuse, but without hurting him any. They were both possessed of the keenest kind of Irish wit, and many a poor wounded soldier forgot his pain in laughing at the comical scene.

Another amusing incident occurred in the midst of the fight, which we must relate, even at the risk of stirring up the memory of Lieutenant Joseph Purkey. He was then Orderly Sergeant of company H. While we were lying down, waiting the coming of Thoburn, he was severely wounded in the leg. He jumped up the instant he was hit, and supporting himself on his gun, doubled up his fist and shaking it at the rebels, exclaimed, "Now, d—n you, I suppose you think you've done it."

The dead were buried, the wounded moved to Staunton, except the very severely wounded. With such of our regiment as could not be moved we left Dr. T. C. Smith, and the next day marched to Staunton.

Transcribed by:
Diana Hart
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DiHart@juno.com