

CHAPTER XV.

Off For Petersburg-----Continuous Hard Marching-----
Hatcher's Run-----Skirmishing-----List Of Casualties-----
A Narrow Escape For Captain Mann And Forty Men
-----Fort Gregg Carried By Assault-----Some Incidents
Connected With The Charge-----Report Of Lieutenant
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Of Casualties-----A Good Day's March-----Lee's Retreat
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Finally, on the morning of the 25th, our division started on the march with a pontoon train and entrenching tools. Leaving Camp Holly to our left, our division moved out on the White House road, through a dense evergreen forest among the Chickahominy swamps. Our anticipations were that we were going out to meet Sheridan, on his way to join the Army of the Potomac from White House, which he had reached from the Shenandoah Valley on the 19th. After moving out some distance, we took the Charles City road. Cavalry was posted all along. We soon came to some of McClellan's battle fields covered with fortifications and the debris of battle. We halted at noon near the Chickahominy, and the pontoon corps began the construction of a pontoon bridge across the river. The bridge was scarcely laid before some of Sheridan's troopers made their appearance and crossed over, but Sheridan himself, with the main part of his cavalry, had crossed further down, and were now well on their way to James' Landing, on the James. It was a great disappointment to our old division of the Army of West Virginia not to meet our old commanders. Sheridan and Crook. Next morning we counter-marched for the James. Coming within sight of our old camp, we filed to the left, and went into camp at Deep Bottom Landing. We found Sheridan crossing to the south side of the James at James' Landing, a little below us. Monday, March 27th, we stripped for battle, casting aside everything not absolutely necessary. We never before marched so light. Just after sundown we crossed the James on pontoons, wound along the river bank some distance, and then turning to the right entered the dense evergreen forest. Were it not for fires at intervals, we could not have made much headway in the darkness and splashing mud. Crossed the Appomattox below the Point of Rocks, and filing to the right took the Petersburg road. Halted at 4 A.M. opposite the Petersburg front. Picket firing was very lively in front. We slept about three hours, and then marched very rapidly along the lines to the left. Large bodies of troops were everywhere, forts and earthworks on all sides. Everything was on the move. On our march to-day we passed Sheridan's cavalry taking a rest. Also passed General Mead's headquarters. Marched fifteen miles, and went into camp after crossing the Weldon and Grant's military railroads. The next morning we moved at daylight. Going a short distance, we relieved the 2d corps, taking their quarters at Humphrey's Station. Grant, Sheridan, Mead and Crook passed us on their way to the front. On the 29th, Captain Hamilton L. Karr was promoted to Major, First Lieutenant Richmond O. Knowles to Captain, and Second Lieutenant Wm. H. Bush to First Lieutenant.

At 5 o'clock the morning of the 30th, our division crossed Hatcher's Run, the left connecting with right of the 2d corps, and the right resting near Hatcher's Run, our brigade being on the right. During the day we moved forward in conjunction with the 2d corps, our brigade, at night, connecting on the right with Foster's 2d division. General Harris' brigade was on the left, and Colonel Curtis' being in reserve. Skirmishing was lively all day, our regiment having a few wounded. Early in the morning of the 31st, our brigade was ordered to drive in the enemy's picket line in our front, in order to develop the position of the enemy. This was very gallantly done. The enemy's entire picket line was either captured or driven within his works, and our own picket line established within 400 yards of the enemy's works, enabling us to completely silence his artillery on this part of his line, and giving us a very important advantage. Lieutenant Colonel Kellogg, of the 123d Ohio, had charge of our skirmish line, and he is very highly praised by General Turner for his gallantry on this occasion. After this advance we fortified, and during the remainder of that day and the 1st of April we were engaged in strengthening our position. The loss of our regiment on the 30th and 31st was two killed and nine wounded, as follows:

KILLED.

John E. Smith, Company E; Emanuel Byers, Company C.---2.

WOUNDED.

Erastus H. White, Company B; Corporal Abner G. Carlton, Company C; John M. Carlton, Company C; Andrew J. Morris, Company C; Jos. S. Johnson, Company C; James Agin, Company D; James A. Strong, Company G; Miner Starkey, Company F; George Beach, Company I.---9.

Sheridan had, early in the morning of the 30th of March, connected his right with the left of the 5th corps near the Boydton plank road. The enemy were found to have constructed a very strong line of entrenchments to cover the position known as Five Forks, of great strategic value, where five roads meet in the woods, three of which led back to the South Side Railroad, and the possession of which would be equivalent to turning the enemy's right flank.

To give a more complete outline of the position, it might be recapitulated that Sheridan, with the cavalry, occupied the extreme left, and was working round to get beyond the enemy's right. Next toward the right in order lay the 5th, the 2d, the 24th, the 6th, the 9th corps, with a division of the 25th in reserve. Early on the morning of 31st, Warren began to move the 5th corps. At Gravelly Run, it was met by the enemy in strong force and driven back, and the attack was not checked until met by Miles' division of the 2d corps. Towards noon Sheridan had been also attacked on the left and portions of his cavalry driven back. About 5 o'clock the 5th corps, having rallied, advanced its lines again. During all the 31st of March, the 9th and 25th corps were not engaged, but about 10 o'clock at night the 6th, 9th and 24th opened a general cannonade, which was continued till four o'clock on the following morning. The great events of the first of April were inaugurated by the enemy at 4 o'clock in the morning, by an attack on Foster's division of the 24th corps. The onset was so sudden and impetuous that the enemy planted their colors on the fortifications held by Damby's brigade, and was near routing the entire division. Our division instantly came to its support, the 116th charging the rebels in possession of Damby's works, and they were driven out almost as suddenly as they came in. A musketry and artillery fire broke out along the center and right of the line, but it was soon over, with little loss on either side. The rebels captured a few prisoners in their charge, but we captured a great many more from them when we drove them out. Seven slightly wounded was the result in our regiment, and a number of prisoners passed to the rear through our ranks.

An exciting incident occurred to Captain Mann and forty men of our regiment. On the evening of the 31st, the Captain was summoned to division headquarters by General Turner, who advised him that he had been selected to take charge of forty select men, to be supplied with axes, whose duty it would be to advance in the morning, in advance of the skirmish line, and cut away the abatis in front of the rebel works, so that his troops, who were to make an assault at daylight, could pass through. At 12 o'clock, the Captain and his men moved out in front of our works, and lay down to await the time of the movement in the morning. But the enemy, probably anticipating our tactics, made an assault upon our works a little before the time fixed for our assault upon theirs. The battle raged right over the prostrate forms of the Captain's detail, many rebels being killed and wounded right among his men. They hugged the ground closely throughout the struggle, and when the rebels were repulsed, the Captain and his forty brave pioneers came within our works, where they were greeted as if they had risen from the dead. Nobody expected to see one of them alive again, and probably had they gone on the mission assigned them the night before, but few, if any, of them would have escaped alive. The assault contemplated by General Turner was not made, the assault of the enemy, just described, disarranging his plans, and besides because other plans were at once conceived.

But all day on the 1st, the most desperate and decisive fighting had been going on about Five Forks on the left. The day before, Sheridan had met with some reverses in his efforts to flank the rebel right. At night General Grant had placed Sheridan in command, not only of all the cavalry, but of the 5th corps under Warren, determined that the disasters of the day before should not be repeated. Sheridan now controlled four divisions of cavalry and three of infantry, aggregating not far from 30,000 strong, and double that which the enemy could concentrate against him at Five Forks, while the rebel lines, all the way from

Dinwiddie Court House to Petersburg, were threatened by forces largely superior to theirs. At daybreak, Sheridan put his whole cavalry force in motion to accomplish his mission of getting round the rebel right. Five Forks was the strategic point of the whole rebel position. That taken, and the positions would be completely turned and rendered untenable. Sheridan worked his way steadily up to the entrenchments on all sides, while the enemy fell back, fighting fiercely. Finally a division of the cavalry got well round on the enemy's flank and rear. About 3 o'clock, the 5th corps was ordered up to support the cavalry. As soon as it arrived, Ayres' and Crawford's division were swung in on the left, Ayres' striking the flank of the enemy's works. Crawford, advancing, found himself in the rebel rear.

"The Great Civil War," speaks of the battle from this point as follows: "The enemy had steadily fallen back at first, fighting obstinately, however, till 5 o'clock, when they made a decisive stand, and then for two hours raged one of the most fearful contests of the war. Riding to all parts of the field, Sheridan cheered, urged and drove on his men, and at length they nearly surrounded the enemy's position, swarmed over the parapets, and the rebel troops, exhausted with their great efforts, and much weakened by the havoc which had been made in their ranks, and seeing it useless longer to resist the overwhelming force pouring in upon them, broke and rushed to the rear, seeking to escape by the only outlet still open. There was another fierce struggle, but by half-past seven the battle was over."

Thus Five Forks fell into our hands, and that night Custer's and McKenzie's divisions of cavalry pressed on in pursuit of the fugitives. The 2d corps had all day been swinging forward so as to connect with the 5th, fighting hard all the way, and in the evening Miles' division pushed on to Sheridan at Five Forks.

We thus give a brief account of the movements on the left on the 1st, so that a clearer idea may be had of the importance of our own movements on the right on the 2d.

As before stated, a furious cannonade was kept up all along the front of the 6th, 9th and 24th corps, until 4 o'clock on the morning of the 2d. At that hour, these several corps were massed for a charge, the 6th in front of Forts Welch and Fisher, and Turner's and Foster's divisions of the 24th on both sides of Hatcher's Run, in front of Fort Gregg, Turner's division in support of Foster's. At 4 o'clock, the 6th moved on the double quick across the intervening space of 800 yards, and after several hours of hard fighting captured the two forts in their front. The 24th had further to move, but it also was successful in capturing Fort Gregg, a very formidable work in its front. The 116th won great praise for its gallantry in its charge on Fort Gregg. In the assault on Fort Gregg, the 116th was in the third line of the assaulting column. The first line was checked, the second also. When our line came up, it was also checked by the troops lying in front of us, extending back from the ditch around the fort four or five rods. In the final rush, our line was first on their feet and charged over and through the other troops, many of them joining in the charge. Our colors, with the colors of the 10th Connecticut, were the first planted upon the parapet of the fort. These two stands of colors, it was claimed at the time, were planted simultaneously. The 116th colors were carried by Corporal Francis J. Stout, of company C, who took them up at Cedar Creek, after they had been shot down several times, and he carried them to the close of the war. The record of modern warfare hardly furnishes a parallel to the desperate encounter which took place on the parapet of Fort Gregg. Thirteen rebels were found inside the fort killed by bayonet thrusts, while scores were wounded by the same weapon. Union and rebel soldiers lay dead on the parapet and inside the fort in each other's grasps. Nor were officers the only brave ones. There was scarcely a private soldier of our regiment who was not worthy of special mention and praise for his gallantry. Sergeant E. C. King, of company F, is said to have been among the first to scale the enemy's works. He was promised a Medal of Honor, but for some reason never received it. There were numerous noted acts of bravery on the part of officers and men. A party of men, privates Williams and Reusser of E, Forsythe of D, Joseph Van Meter of G, and Corporal Thompson of F, advanced in a squad by themselves under the lead of Sergeant Reithmiller of E, to a bank close up to the fort, and lay down, watching for a chance to dash forward. Seeing the chance, all rose together to start, but that instant the brave Sergeant was killed. The rest of the party ran on, and digging holes in its side with their bayonets, climbed on to the parapet of the fort. In a moment they were joined by Corporal Stout bearing the colors, and the rest of the regiment. Then followed the most desperate fighting, the rebels trying to capture the colors and kill its bearers. The men clustered around their colors, and here we met our most serious loss in killed and wounded. As the men drove the rebels back, and were jumping from the parapet into the fort, a rebel Captain cried out: "Never surrender to the d---d Yankees." The words were scarcely

out of his mouth, before John Cole of B, and Ephraim Williams of E, clubbed their guns, and he soon paid for the remark with his life. At the same moment, a rebel and John W. Reusser of E, leveled their guns upon each other. They each fired at the same instant, the rebel's ball grazing Reusser's ear, and Reusser's ball going through the breast of the rebel. Forsythe was attacked by two big burly rebels. He bayoneted one, and was himself bayoneted in the leg by the other, just as the surrender was made. Corporal Freeman C. Thompson of F, and Joseph Van Meter of G, were conspicuous for their bravery from first to last in the attack and capture of Fort Gregg, and were each awarded a "Medal of Honor" by the Secretary of War. Corporal Thompson was knocked off the parapet into the ditch twice by clubbed muskets. A third time he mounted it, and lying down beside Van Meter, they two fired directly into the fort, while others, unable to get up, handed up loaded guns, and re-loaded those handed down to them by these two gallant soldiers. Finally, the men covering the parapet on all sides, the rebels who had been in partial cover under the walls, rose up and made a last desperate effort to drive our men down. Then our men rose, and rushing down into the fort, engaged in a hand to hand struggle, and forced a surrender in a short time. In the final struggle, Van Meter wrenched a rebel flag from the hands of its bearer. Thirteen men in the division were awarded "Medals of Honor," and all accompanied General Gibbon in charge of rebel flags to Washington, after the surrender of Lee. Joseph Gerolds, of H, seized a rebel officer on the parapet, and after a desperate struggle, compelled him to surrender his sword. Colonel Teters was, as usual, conspicuous for his great gallantry, and led the regiment throughout the attack with the utmost fearlessness and bravery. All the officers behaved splendidly, and where all did so nobly, it seems invidious to single out any for special mention. All, however, concede that Lieutenant Wm. H. Bush, who was killed in the charge, and Captain Mann, Lieutenant Wm. Biddenharn, and Lieutenant Reese Williams greatly distinguished themselves, and added fresh laurels to their former reputations as gallant officers.

Lieutenant Colonel Potter, in command of the brigade, says in his report of the battle of Fort Gregg: "I moved with the 116th Ohio and 34th Massachusetts from Hatcher's Run. About 8 A.M. came onto the field in front of Fort Gregg, a very strong position held by the enemy. My command supported General Foster's division of the 24th A. C., advancing with him. As we advanced, I found some rebel pickets behind an entrenched line, who annoyed my flank at first. I advanced by an oblique movement to the right, and then by a left half wheel, succeeded in placing one regiment of my command, the 116th Ohio, on the southern front of the fort. This gave me a direct fire on this front and an enfilading fire on the westerly front. We advanced rapidly without firing till we reached a road some fifty yards from the fort, where we lay down and poured in a rapid and accurate fire. We suffered severely in reaching this point, but once there we had the best of it. After lying here some twenty-five minutes, and succeeding in a great measure in silencing the enemy's fire, we charged the work and placed our colors on the fort among the first. The attack was gallantly made and most stubbornly resisted. The enemy refused to yield till we were fairly within his works. My loss was one commissioned officer and sixteen men killed, and sixty-three wounded."...*Colonel Potter's report, April 2, 1865.*

In this movement the 34th Massachusetts was on the right, the 116th on the left, and when the "left half wheel" mentioned by Colonel Potter was made, the 116th bore the brunt of the movement and suffered great loss. Colonel Potter reports seventeen killed and sixty-three wounded, including one commissioned officer killed, Lieutenant Bush, of the 116th. It will be seen that our killed was fifteen and wounded thirty-three. General Lincoln, in his history of the 34th Massachusetts, gives the loss of his regiment as five killed and thirty-two wounded. Consolidating these losses makes the loss of the two regiments twenty killed and sixty-five wounded. It is probable that the severely wounded in our regiment on the 1st of April are included in our report for the 2d, and that the discrepancy in the number killed is accounted for by including a few who, being mortally wounded, died after Colonel Potter's report of casualties was made, which seems to have been made on the evening after the battle. The loss of the 116th in the charge exceeded that of any other regiment engaged, being fifteen killed and thirty-three wounded. It is given in full below:

KILLED.

Lieutenant William H. Bush, Company B; Sergeant Fred E. Humphrey, Company B; Sergeant Myron R. Hitchcock, Company B; Corporal James M. Hartley, Company B; Privates William Hall, Company C; William H. Mobberly, Company C; Sergeant John G. Reithmiller, Company E; Corporal Louis W. Mozena, Company E;

Robert S. Hutcheson, Company E; Gilbert McCoy, Company E; Samuel Rutener, Company E; Martin Hysell, Company G; James Irwin Rogers, Company H; James Lindsay, Company K; David G. Groce, Company K. Total killed, 15.

WOUNDED.

John P. Kibble, Company B; Otis P. Henry, Company B; Benj. F. McLain, Company B; Philip Feiger, Company B; John Truax, Company C; Geo. W. Sampson, Company C; Sergeant Wm. O. Belt, Company D; Corporal Samuel Forsythe, Company D; Eli Whitlatch, Company D; John M. Bougher, Company E; Frederick Stephens, Company E; Levi Howell, Company E; Jacob S. Hurd, Company E; Andrew J. Curtis, Company E; John Schappat, Company E; David Amos, Company F; Corporal Edward King, Company F; Valentine Mahl, Company F; Henry Dillon, Company F; George Ray, Company F; Corporal David Longstreth, Company G; Corporal Edward Lowry, Company G; Samuel Barrett, Company G; Sergeant B. F. Sammons, Company H; Henry C. Mathews, Company H, right foot shot off by a shell; Corporal Jeremiah Swain, Company H; Joseph Smith, Company H; James R. P. Keyser, Company H; Nathaniel Butler, Company H; Corporal Armstrong Johnson, Company H; Isaac Yoho, Company H; Sergeant Geo. H. Bean, Company I; Charles Andrews, Company K; Total wounded, 33.

Company A was not engaged in this or any of the battles of this campaign, being detached as Provost Guard at Division Headquarters.

In a letter to the Athens Messenger, published April 20th, 1865, Quartermaster Sergeant Wm. T. Pattersen says: "To render Petersburg untenable and its evacuation and capture certain, Fort Gregg, a formidable work, defended by men *selected* for its defense, must be taken. It was situated near General A. P. Hill's headquarters. The 116th was one of the regiments selected to assault and take this fort. It did its part nobly. Never did men display greater bravery. Lieutenant Colonel Teters was conspicuous for gallantry. Every officer and man did all that brave men could do. Out of 350 engaged, the 116th lost fifteen killed and thirty-five wounded. It was a desperate charge, and one of the few instances in the war where bayonets were used. Many of the prisoners bore bayonet wounds. The rebel General A. P. Hill was killed here."

The loss of our regiment on the 2d was cause of great mourning. Company B was fearfully stricken in the death of four of its finest men. Lieutenant Bush was a brave man, a most worthy and exemplary citizen, and in every way that a man could be, was a true soldier and noble officer. He was wounded at the battle of Piedmont. Sergeant Humphrey was very severely wounded in the battle of Lynchburg, in the shoulder and neck, while most gallantly bearing the colors of the regiment, as before stated, and remained a prisoner for several months. He was First Sergeant of this company at the time of his death. No man in the company made a better record as a soldier than Sergeant Humphrey. Sergeant Hitchcock was a finely educated, brave and courteous gentleman, and was always to be found at his post of duty. He was chief of Division Orderlies at Division Headquarters, and was in discharge of his duty delivering orders on the field when he received a mortal wound, of which he soon after died. In the Athens (O.) Messenger of March 16th, 1861, appears an account of the closing exercises of the "Third Term of Tupper's Plains Seminary," from which is taken the following mention of Sergeant Hitchcock, then a student at the Seminary: "The music selected for the occasion was most appropriate and beautiful, and gave evidence of the ability of Prof. M. R. Hitchcock." He was a musician of very high order, and often relieved the monotony and dullness of camp life with his sweet singing. He organized a quartette in company B which was not easily excelled. Few men had more friends in the regiment or at home than Sergeant Hitchcock. Corporal James M. Hartley had been wounded quite severely in the head at Fisher's Hill. He was a fine man and a brave and efficient soldier. Sergeant John. G. Reithmiller was a splendid soldier and highly esteemed man. At the time of his death he was the Orderly Sergeant of company E, and his loss was a great one to his company and his friends. He, too, was quite severely wounded at Lynchburg. Our very best men seemed fated to fall that day. This record shows that these men were always in the fore front of battle. By a little comparison, the reader will find many more names among our list of killed and wounded of that day that were on our lists of wounded in battles before.

General Turner, in his report of the battle of Fort Gregg, says: "During the night of the 1st and morning of the 2d, in obedience to orders received direct from Major General Ord, I massed Colonel Curtis' and Colonel Potter's brigades on the right of Colonel Damby's brigade of the 1st division in preparation for an assault, which, however, was countermanded by Major General Gibbon. Shortly after daybreak, I directed General Harris to advance a strong skirmish line up to the enemy's works to ascertain if he was leaving, of which I had strong suspicions, which was accordingly done. Lieutenant Colonel Kellogg of the 123d Ohio, of the 1st brigade, who had been left on the skirmish line with his regiment under General Harris' order, when Lieutenant Colonel Potter's brigade was moved off during the night, advanced with his regiment with General Harris' line. This line, after some slight resistance, carried the enemy's works, capturing two guns, three battle flags and some prisoners. Before General Harris has reached the enemy's line, I received an order to send two brigades to our signal tower near Port Gregg in support of the 6th corps, which, I was then informed, had broken the enemy's line. I accompanied these two brigades (the 1st and 2d) and subsequently, in the afternoon, I found them in support of Foster's division, which immediately after my arrival, moved to the assault of Fort Gregg, an important out-work of the enemy's defenses around Petersburg. Colonel Curtis and Colonel Potter moved in close support to the 1st division, and joined hands with Foster's troops in the desperate struggle which took place for the possession of Fort Gregg. After nearly half an hour of desperate fighting, this work was carried, but with the loss of many brave officers and men. Immediately after the capture of Fort Gregg, an adjoining work of the enemy was carried by General Harris, who reported to me shortly after with its garrison, some sixty in number, including its commander."---*General F. W. Turner's report, April 26, 1865.*

Two of the cannon here captured were taken from General Milroy at Winchester, in June, 1863.

The night of the 2d, the 116th was placed on picket in front of another fort close by, into which it advanced its skirmishers about 4 o'clock on the morning of the 3d, the enemy abandoning it during the night. In a report made on the 4th, Colonel Potter says: "I have the honor to report that on the night of the 2d, I placed the 116th regiment O. V. I. On picket in front of my brigade. I instructed Lieutenant Colonel Teters commanding to post his videttes?? well up to the enemy's works. He reports that about 4 A.M., finding that the enemy had abandoned the works, he advanced a portion of his skirmish line into the fort. He found about sixty stand of arms and a small quantity of tobacco." The fort thus occupied was Fort Lee.

On the morning of the 3d, we found the enemy gone. Fort Gregg is about two miles from Petersburg, in a southwesterly direction, with it and the works taken by the 6th and 9th corps the day before, Petersburg must easily fall, and so, without awaiting our coming, the rebels evacuated it during the night. Early in the morning, we received the news of the fall of Richmond also, and very soon both Richmond and Petersburg were occupied by Federal troops without opposition. O, what rejoicing! What cheering and what gladness among the troops! General Devan's division occupied Richmond. But the work was not yet finished. Lee was making a desperate effort to escape, and pursuit was begun early on the morning of the 31st. *

* "At nightfall, April 2d, Lee's army commenced crossing the Appomattox, and before dawn was far on its way to Amelia Court House, Lee's purpose being, as previously agreed upon in a conference with me, to march to Danville, Virginia."
---*Jefferson Davis in "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government."*

The column of the Army of the James under General Ord accompanied by General Grant, pushed on that day fifteen miles, our division in the advance, the purpose of our march being to get between Lee and Danville. Jefferson Davis again says: "This was done, and thus Lee was prevented from carrying out his original purpose, and directed his course toward Lynchburg." Our column marched along the Cox road to Sutherland Station, ten miles west of Petersburg, and from that point, leaving the main line of march of the body of the army, marched along the railroad to Wilson's Station, where we encamped for the night. Still following the railroad on the 5th, our division in the advance, reached Blacks and Whites about 2 o'clock. Thence, the roads being very good, we pushed on briskly to Nottaway, nine miles from Burkesville. At this point, having marched twenty miles, it was proposed to stop and rest. But at half-past 6, Sheridan's dispatch reached Grant informing him of the state of things, and the two divisions of the 24th corps were pushed on to Burkesville, which we reached at 11 P.M. At the same hour Grant joined Sheridan at Jettersville. The 2d and 6th corps had, during the day, attacked Lee's retreating army near Dratonville and

driven it across Sailor's Creek, where General Sheridan met it with the cavalry. The head of Lee's army was directed towards Farmville. After a hard fight at Sailor's Creek about 10,000 of the enemy surrendered, among the prisoners being General Ewell, Kershaw, Curtis Lee and several other prominent officers. Lee, with the remainder of his force, made his way toward Farmville. Early on the morning of the same day, the two divisions of our corps took up the line of march for Farmville, intending to head off Lee in his retreat. It was a tight race between us. We met the head of the enemy's column at Rice's Station, where our regiment was engaged with considerable loss, and drove them back upon Farmville.

Early on the morning of the 6th, the 123d Ohio, 54th Pennsylvania, a squadron of the 4th Massachusetts cavalry, and a large pioneer corps, all under command of General Read, were hastened forward to either possess themselves of the bridges near Farmville, or destroy them. This small force met the enemy crossing the bridges to the south side of the Appomattox. General Read at once attacked. The enemy fell back in his front, only to allow large bodies to fall upon his flanks, and rear, when, being surrounded by an overwhelming force, Lieutenant Colonel Kellogg was obliged to surrender, the gallant General Read having been killed. But a delay was thus occasioned, which enabled General Ord to get up with the remainder of his force and place himself across Lee's path southward. Both sides immediately entrenched. We held Lee there during the night of the 6th. Early on the morning of the 7th, the 2d corps and Crook's division of cavalry came up and attacked the rebels. A sharp engagement followed, in which our army suffered considerable loss, and Lee was driven across to the north side of the Appomattox, and so closely was he followed, that he could not destroy the bridges, and the 2d and 6th corps and a division of cavalry crossed in pursuit. Only the left wing of our regiment was engaged, the right wing having been sent down the Danville Railroad, the morning of the 6th, from Burkesville Junction. Our loss in the engagement on the evening of the 6th and morning of the 7th was all from the skirmish line, as follows:

KILLED.

Robert S. Hutcheson, Company E.---1.

WOUNDED.

William B. McFarland, Company E; Isaac Littleton, Company E; Samuel McConnell, Company E; Thomas Berry, Company K.---4.

At High Bridge the following, who were pioneers, were captured upon the surrender of the 123d Ohio and 54th Pennsylvania:

Uriah Reddin, Company E; John Baker, Company B; John J. Walters, Company E; William H. Bassett, Company C; Jacob Dudley, Company H; John C. Badey, Company I; John E. Ewers, Company I; Hopson L. Sherman, Company I; Perry Gardner, Company K; James Lafever, Company A.---10.

Colonel Potter reports the loss of the brigade in the engagement at Rice's Station as one killed and five wounded, so it will be seen that all the loss fell upon the 116th. He makes no mention of the prisoners we lost at High Bridge.

Early on the morning of the 7th, the enemy was found to have abandoned his position, and we moved on to Farmville, where we remained until 5 o'clock the morning of the 8th, when we moved out on the Lynchburg road, and following General Sheridan's cavalry all day, went into camp near Appomattox Station, about 11 P.M. General Grant passed us on the road serenely smoking a cigar and pushing leisurely to the front on a small black horse. No one would think such momentous events were transpiring under his direction. He appeared as cool and calm as if on a pleasure trip. The roads were terrible. Rain fairly poured nearly all the time, yet, notwithstanding, the army moved with incredible speed. It was the hardest and best day's march, taking the state of the weather and condition of the roads into consideration, that was made by any troops during the war, the distance made from 5 A.M. to 11 P.M. being about thirty-eight miles. The march was in a southwesterly direction till about noon, when it turned abruptly in a northwestwardly direction. Every soldier felt that the object of our movement was to keep south of Lee, and when we turned to the

northwest all seemed to realize that the end was near, and with renewed energies the men pushed on. The firing of the 2d and 6th corps pursuing Lee became more and more distinct as we advanced, and the eagerness of the men to get across Lee's track knew no bounds. The cavalry, under Sheridan, pushed directly for Appomattox Station. Late in the evening, Sheridan struck the railroad at Appomattox Station, drove the rebels from that point, and captured twenty-five pieces of artillery and a large amount of other war material, including a hospital train and four trains loaded with provisions for Lee's army. At 3 o'clock the morning of the 9th, we were again on the move, and after marching four or five miles, the last half of the distance at nearly a double quick, we went into line of battle on the right of the road leading from Appomattox Court House to Lynchburg, the 1st division taking position on the left of the road. Sheridan's cavalry was in our front dismounted, fighting with all their might to hold the enemy until the infantry should come up. The rebels were pressing on hard and rapidly, hoping to break through before the arrival of the infantry, and before their furious attacks the cavalry was stubbornly falling back. As the cavalry met our infantry lines rapidly advancing, they set up a cheer which spoke the relief they felt and their gladness at seeing us there. We were square across Lee's track and in the very front of the head of his retreating and escaping army. The enemy advanced eagerly on the charge as the cavalry fell back and around our flanks, evidently resolved now to break through, when lo! at the edge of the woods appeared the long, strong lines of our infantry coming out with a yell. They recoiled and shrank back as if paralyzed! The infantry pushed on, and, as it advanced to the open ground, before it, could be seen, in the valley about the Court House below, the broken fragments of a once great and proud army. We knew the 2d and 6th corps were beyond in the rear of Lee, for we could hear them firing, and that now, anyhow, Lee and his army were surrounded!

Before advancing into the open ground, the lines were halted, aligned and prepared for the onset. Starting again after but a moment's delay, our corps moved steadily forward to the attack, every man as eager for the fray as though fresh from a night's rest and his morning's coffee. It was to be a charge, and the front line was fixing bayonets as it advanced. What was present of the 116th was on the skirmish line well on in the advance, when on a sudden "out from the enemy's line comes a rider, bound on bound, bearing a white flag of truce, to ask for time to consummate surrender." "Halt!" "Halt!" "Halt!" "Cease firing," rang out all along our hot pressing lines. Reluctantly the eager troops stopped, and leaning on their rifles watched the approach of the horseman bearing the white flag. As he neared the middle of the space between the lines, he was met by an officer from our side, and at the same time the white flag appeared at different points along the enemy's lines. The meaning of this was soon spread among the troops. The men mechanically, and without orders, stacked arms. Grant now soon came riding, rather faster than usual, up to Sheridan, held a brief conversation, and then rode forward to where Lee was said to be awaiting him. In a very brief time he returned. For a few moments there was a deathlike stillness, as though everyone was trying to comprehend and take in the full import of the scene before him. But soon some one screamed out in a cheer, and the spell was broken. Instantly the whole army broke out in continuous, thundering, long-drawn-out cheering, yelling, screaming, which, beyond doubt, was the happiest, heartiest, gladdest ever listened to by mortal man. Officers and men threw up their caps and as they came down caught them on their swords or bayonets or stamped them into the ground. As soon as exhaustion shut off the longest winded and collapsed the strongest lungs, our ears were greeted with tumultuous cheering over among the rebels. It seemed as though both sides were overjoyed and would never cease their noisy demonstrations

As remarked above, the left wing of the 116th, at the moment the white flag appeared, was *advancing on the skirmish line*. The satisfaction which this fact afforded that wing of the regiment may be seen in the entry each company made upon its "pay roll on the 30th of April, 1865. In the "record of events" made at that date, we find on each company's roll the following memoranda: "This company was engaged in the recent campaign of General Grant which resulted in the capture of Richmond and Lee's whole army. Broke camp north of the James, March 25, 1865, marched to Hatcher's Run, distance twenty-five miles, there, 31st, engaged the enemy with success. April 2d took part in the capture of Fort Gregg, and then engaged in the pursuit and capture of Lee and his army at Appomattox, Virginia, April 9, 1865, *this company being on the skirmish line at the time of his surrender.*" This was a final record well earned, and one of which the regiment was justly very proud. It paid it well for all its hard fighting, and the hardships it had so patiently endured.

The last shell fired by the enemy injured James Davis, company G. A comrade of his, Orderly Sergeant Francis A. Bartley, writes of the incident as follows: "The last cannon Lee's army fired at us threw a shell into the woods as we were advancing. As it exploded, a piece of it knocked down James Davis, of company G, merely stunning him, however, as he came up in ranks again in a few minutes afterward."

Of course no one need stop to further describe the joy of that victorious army over the surrender of Lee and his army, nor recount the details, so often told, of the surrender. These became long ago the history of the Nation, as well as the proud history of the regiments there present. Our lines were again re-formed upon the restorations of order, and moving forward halted, stacked arms and went into camp a short distance from the surrendered rebel army. How sweet was the rest that followed! How tired that infantry was, no one can understand who was not on that memorable march from Fort Gregg to Appomattox, a march which has no parallel in modern history.

Toward evening of the 9th, the 123d Ohio, 54th Pennsylvania, and also those of our regiment captured at High Bridge, came in. They gave us many particulars occurring inside the rebel lines prior to and at the time of the surrender. They reported that generally the rebels manifested as much satisfaction over the surrender as our own men did, and that the cheering we heard came from the rebels. Some of those closely identified with the rebellion were, however, dreadfully broken down, and a few such shed tears. Shortly after the white flags were raised, General Crook came by where our division was standing behind its stacked arms. The men cheered him lustily and gathered about him to shake hands. He spoke a few kind words to them, among other things saying: "There is not much use for my cavalry while this old West Virginia division is here." The division was in the advance nearly all the time from Petersburg until Lee was headed off and brought to bay at Appomattox, and not better marching was ever done by any army than it led the 24th and 5th corps to do during that time. The following is General Gibbon's order issued on the march, relating to the 24th corps:

HEADQUARTERS 24TH ARMY CORPS,
BEHIND RICHMOND, April 3d, 1865

(General Order No. 41.)

With great satisfaction the Major General commanding congratulates his gallant command upon the successful operations of the past few days. The 24th Army Corps has demonstrated that with a well organized and disciplined force no military achievement is impossible. The marching has been superior to anything of the kind heretofore witnessed, while the desperate assault upon Fort Gregg, the last of the enemy's strongholds around Petersburg, entitles this command to a place alongside their late gallant comrades of Fort Fisher. Your commander is proud of you.

By command of
MAJOR GENERAL JOHN GIBBON.

EDWARD MEADE, Lieutenant Colonel and A. D. C.

General Gibbon's command, the 5th corps under General Griffin, and MacKenzie's cavalry, were designated to remain at Appomattox Court House till the paroling of the surrendered army was completed, and to take charge of the public property. The remainder of the army returned immediately to the vicinity of Burkesville. During the next two days the work of paroling prisoners and gathering in public property continued. It was said that fifty cannon were found buried. Our soldiers and the rebels were as sociable and jolly together as could be. No one would have thought them ever to have been enemies. They were constantly passing back and forth between town and their camps, and making arrangement to go to their homes, which they all seemed very anxious to reach.

Of the last few days of marching, General Devens, of the 3d division of the Army of the James, said: "On the morning of the 9th of April, by a march unprecedented in the annals of warfare, the Army of the James had placed itself across the Lynchburg road and closed the avenue of escape. On that morning Lieutenant

General Gordon, of Georgia, who commanded the advance, said to General Lee that his way was barred. 'It can be nothing but cavalry,' said General Lee, 'brush them away; no cavalry can stand against infantry.' It was done as General Lee ordered, but as the cavalry fell back, they revealed the long and gleaming line of steel which marked the line of infantry of the Army of the James. There were Ord and Gibbon, there were Turner and R. S. Foster at the head of their divisions. To throw his exhausted troops upon that wall of steel was a madness of which the rebel chieftain was not capable, and the sword of Lee was laid in the conquering hand of Grant."

In General Lincoln's history of the 34th Massachusetts we find an extract from a Richmond paper of April, 1865, evidently in charge of a Union editor then, which we reproduce here: "The 1st and 2d divisions of the 24th army corps, who were engaged in the pursuit of Lee to Appomattox Court House, after the fall of Petersburg, returned to this city on Tuesday morning. It is reported by military men that General Lee's surrender was necessitated in consequence of the severe marching and skillful maneuvering of these forces. Their marching will compare with any on record. For four successive days they marched respectively eighteen, twenty-three, twenty-seven and thirty-eight miles. By this rapid marching they were enabled to overtake and surround the Confederate forces. Had these two divisions been later in getting round to the right of General Lee, it is confidently believed that he would have made his escape. It was owing to General Ord's energy that his troops marched thirty-eight miles from 3 o'clock in the morning of April 8th to 11 o'clock the following night, when they quietly threw themselves down upon the ground to rest, in front of Lee's army, without the enemy's suspecting, as acknowledged on the following morning, that there was an infantry soldier with ten miles of them, and by four o'clock on the following morning in line of battle, and fighting until a flag of truce was sent from the enemy for a conference. The march certainly as no parallel in the history of the rebellion, or, any war in Europe." *

* Jefferson Davis says of Lee's last hope and of his purpose in directing his course toward Lynchburg when turned from Danville at Farmville: "Lee had never contemplated surrender. He had long before, in language similar to that employed by Washington during the revolution, expressed to me the belief that in the mountains of Virginia he could carry on the war for twenty years, and in directing his march toward Lynchburg, it may be that as an alternative he hoped to reach those mountains, and with the advantage which the topography would give, yet to baffle the hosts which were following him."---*Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government. Volume II, page 656.*

But the great, controlling, overpowering, conquering genius of this last and decisive campaign was General Philip H. Sheridan. To him was assigned the work of turning the enemy's right at Five Forks. After accomplishing this he took up the task of cutting off Lee's escape. The 5th and 24th corps were hurried on after his cavalry. At one time, while Sheridan was north of the Appomattox, Lee was very near making his escape at Farmville, and but for the unparalleled marching of our corps, which met and stopped him at Rice's Station, he would most certainly have succeeded in getting away with a large portion of his army. But at this point he was driven back across to the north side of the Appomattox River, and from that time till he reached Appomattox Court House, kept on that side of the river by the 5th and 24th corps, whose line of march was on the south side of the river. He was followed vigorously by the 2d and 6th corps, and so pushed to his best. His escape was assured if he reached there ahead of the 5th and 24th corps, for although Sheridan could and did reach it before him with his cavalry yet, as Lee remarked, "no cavalry can stand against infantry," and he could "brush them away." But the terrible energy of Sheridan was equal to the task, and these two corps were thrown across the track of Lee just in time, and with not a half hour to spare. As our infantry went into line of battle on the run in the rear of the exhausted cavalry, Lee was at the very same moment engaged in the easy work of "brushing them away" with his infantry. A few minutes more, and he would have been through, and by the night of that day would have occupied the fortifications of Lynchburg with his army, and the struggle have been prolonged.

General Sheridan was never measured correctly by the people of the country. The estimate put upon him that he was a fiery, hot-headed, dashing fellow, a sort of torrent or cyclone, without genius to plan or power to execute, does him great injustice. In my judgment, no officer in the army combined in such harmony the bravery of the soldier with the calm and cool penetration of the General. While he possessed daring resolution, he also possessed moderation and most excellent judgment. Possessing the wild ardor of the

warrior, the havoc, roar and excitement of the battle field only quickened his naturally keen perceptions and made him capable of executing at the most critical moments, the most unexpected and unlooked-for movements. His heroic and successful exploits on every battle field, from Stone River to Cedar Creek, to Five Forks, to Appomattox, show him to be a man of not only great personal bravery, but a man of genius, judgement, great resources, inexhaustible expedients and wonderful executive powers. In the days of chivalry he would have been a knight of uncommon renown. Few men ever lived who were greater leaders, who were greater commanders, or who possessed in an equal degree his power to inspire others with his own fire, dash and daring. No officer in our army could be compared with him in this important respect. When the impartial history of that war comes to be written, this will be the future estimate of General Sheridan.

Transcribed by:
Diana Hart
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DiHart@juno.com

