

BITS OF WAR HISTORY

THE FIFTH NORTH CAROLINA CAVALRY SIXTY-THIRD REGIMENT.

BY COLONEL JOHN M. GALLOWAY.

The Regiment was Organized at Garysburg and was Very Strong, Numbering Over 1,000 Men--Capture of Plymouth Dec. 13, 1862--Joined Lee's Army May, 1863--First Engagement at Brandy Station--Hard Fights and Harder Fare--Five Forks

The Fifth North Carolina Cavalry 63rd, Regiment North Carolina Troops was organized at Garysburg, North Carolina in the early Fall of 1862. It was composed of companies enlisted under the Partisan Ranger Act of the Confederate Congress. The Act promised many special rights and privilege to the Rangers not the least of which was the clause saying that all property captured from the enemy became at once the private property of the captor. Most of the officers of the Fifth and many of the men had previously been in the army; thinking that the Ranger service would afford greater scope for individual exploit and consequent glory they had managed by one means or another to get a transfer. The field and staff officers were Col. Peter G. Evans, Chatham county; Lieut. Col. S. B. Evans, Goldsboro; Major James H. McNeill, Fayetteville, N. C.; Adjutant J. Turner Morehead, Greensboro, N. C.; Sergeant-Major George Haigh. The Captains of Companies in order of seniority: Capt. Shaw Company C.; Capt. Galloway, Company D.; Capt. Erwin, Company E.; Capt. Harris, Company F.; Capt. McClellan, Company G.; Capt. Boone, Company H.; Captain Rankin, Company I.; Capt. Wharton, Company K.; Capt. Roberts, Company B.; Capt. McKellar, Company A., Major McNeill had been Captain of Company A.

Moore's roster makes several errors in regard to this regiment. Col. Evans' old Company is put down as Company B of this regiment. It belonged to the 3rd Cavalry, 69th Regiment, N. C. Troops. Moore puts S. B. Evans, Colonel, he was only Lieut.-Colonel; Peter G. Evans was Colonel. Moore puts Capt. Harris as Major and Colonel and killed at Five Forks. Capt. Harris was never promoted and never wounded nor killed.

The Regiment was very strong numbering over 1,000 men. We remained at Garysburg some months, drilled and instructed by Brigadier General Beverly H. Robertson, of Virginia. Gen. Robertson was a West Pointer, very strict, and sometimes irascible on military points. In social intercourse he was a pleasant, polished gentleman. Late in November we moved lower down the Roanoke, and picketed about Washington and Plymouth. In December an expedition was planned to capture Plymouth. A regiment of infantry, a battery of artillery, and four companies of our regiment were assigned to the enterprise, the whole under command of Col. Lamb, of the infantry. Lt. Col. Evans commanded the cavalry. The plan was to capture the pickets, and take the place by surprise. We reached the picket station just before day of December 13, 1862, captured all but one, he escaped firing his musket as he ran. This gave notice of our approach, and when we reached Plymouth a body of Federals was seen forming across the main street ready to receive us. The cavalry was ordered to charge these men, which was done in good style, and with a full allowance of the famous rebel yell. The enemy fired one volley and broke in all directions. Some escaped to the gunboats in skiffs, some hid, some took to the houses, and fired from the windows. Quite a lively cannonade ensued between the gunboats and our battery. We captured more provisions and clothing than we could move. Col. Lamb finally decided to retire, fearing the gunboats would go up the river and cut off his retreat. We captured quite a number of prisoners. Our casualties were Capt. Galloway, of the cavalry, severely wounded; three infantry privates wounded by the fire from the houses.

Capt. Galloway was wounded by that first volley, but did not retire until the affair was over.

The remainder of the winter passed without incident. We did picket duty, assisted in stopping the attempted Federal advance on Goldsboro, but had no casualties. Those were halcyon days for us. We were in a friendly country, supplies for man and horse comparatively abundant. The ladies delighted in us, and we had a good time. Early in May we received orders to join Lee's army. We had been brigaded with the 4th Cavalry, Col. Ferrebee, and put under Gen. Robertson. We halted some days near Richmond, Va., to have our horses shod, clothing and arms furnished the men, and then set out for the historic and desolated fields of Virginia. We reached Lee's army in time for Gen. Stuart's grand cavalry review on the field of Brandy Station. Our regiments were in full strength, our men and horses fresh, and on the field of review we made a much better appearance than the rusty clad squadrons of Stuart and Hampton. The chaff and wheat were soon to be separated. The morning after this review the shrill bugle call "boots and saddles" resounded early. Mounting quickly we were moved down the Kelley's ford road, and soon came in sight of the enemy. One squadron of the Fifth was dismounted, and thrown forward as skirmishers. The Yanks had been advancing, but halted when they saw us. We remained looking at each other for some time, when the dismounted squadron was recalled, remounted and the brigade went at the gallop towards Fleetwood, General Stuart's headquarters. The Yanks had brought up a battery and shelled our rear as we went off doing no damage however. When we passed on the main field of Brandy Station, cannon was booming, dust and smoke obscured the vision, and no one could tell what would happen next. One man was seen to throw up his arms and fall from his horse and all supposed him dead; he was wounded, after development

proved that his distress was purely mental. The brigade drew up in line just in rear of Fleetwood House and in support of a battery. The smoke and dust having lifted, we had a full view of the entire field. Blue and gray horsemen were moving rapidly in many parts of the field and frequently coming in sharp collision. Just on the opposite side of the field, a battery was posted, which was firing on our battery. We could see the discharge of each piece, and a few seconds after could see when the shell struck. The apparent commander of the Federal battery and support was riding a magnificent white horse. One of our shells struck this horse and rider and made fragments of them. About 2 p. m. we heard very rapid carbine firing on our left, a few minutes after we were moved to that direction and found that the brigade to which the Second North Carolina Company belonged had been severely engaged and the Second had lost heavily--Col. Sol Williams was killed here. We moved after the retiring Yanks, but did not overtake them. No one of our regiment or brigade was physically hurt that day.

Our luck was different in the next collision. This collision occurred at Middleburg June 17. The fifth squadron of the Fifth regiment was in front and about dusk was ordered to charge on some Yanks in the road. These Yanks were simply a decoy. A whole regiment was dismounted and behind a stone fence. As the squadron pursuing the decoys came abreast of the dismounted regiment it opened fire, killing one man, wounding and disabling about twenty men and horses. Only seventeen men of the squadron followed the Captain through the fire. Of the remainder some tried to turn back, some dismounted and took shelter behind the stone fence. Fortunately the rear of the regiment was close at hand, dismounted, got over the fence and attacked the Yanks in flank. Still more fortunately a Virginia regiment passing on a road perpendicular to the road charged upon. This regiment heard the firing, halted and was ready to receive the Yanks as they gave way before the flank attack. Nearly the entire regiment of Yanks was captured, about 800 men. The Fifth lost two men killed, about twenty wounded, among whom were three Lieutenants. Our greatest loss was Major McNeill, severely wounded in the hip. He was handling his portion of the flank attack very skillfully. He was disabled for many months.

During the 18th, 19th and 20th of June we fought over the ground between Middleburg and Upperville, alternately advancing and retreating. On the morning of the 21st the fighting assumed a fiercer form than heretofore and it was soon evident that the Yanks were much stronger than usual. Swinton tells us that "Hooker reinforced his cavalry with a division of infantry, being determined to find out if any of Lee's infantry was east of the mountains." Stuart gradually retired, stubbornly contesting every available position. The fiercest fight was in the streets of Upperville where it became a hand to hand conflict. A flank attack by fresh Federal troops decided the conflict and the Confederates retired in more or less disorder. The Captain of the fifth squadron succeeded in getting his men out in fairly good order and was marching leisurely towards Paris while Col. Evans rode up and said that as this was the only organized body of his regiment he could find, he wished us to get on the turnpike and stop a charge the Yanks were about to make. We were then about two hundred yards off the main turnpike. We moved over on the pike and took position on a gentle acclivity. Very soon General Stuart rode up. He examined the movements of the enemy with his field glass. There was a stone fence about two hundred yards in front of our position and perpendicular to the battle. The Yanks had started some skirmishers out to get possession of this fence. General Stuart requested the captain of the squadron to take about twenty men and get to the fence before the Yanks, which was done. The mounted Yanks beginning to advance, Col. Evans waited to charge; General Stuart thought best not to charge but finally yielded to Col. Evans' wishes and allowed him to make the charge. This charge stopped the Federal advance, but at quite a loss to us, Col. Evans was mortally wounded and captured, two men and several horses killed and quite a number wounded. Adjutant Morehead had many holes in his clothing and several skin wounds, but nothing serious. Sergeant Henry Hobson of Co. H, a very gallant soldier, was wounded in many places and his clothes riddled. He was captured, but as exchanges were rapid in those days, he soon returned to us but little the worse for his hurts. The Yanks made no further advance and the brigade rested that night at Ashby's Gap. For most of the men it was the first experience of the real hardships of war and it was somewhat demoralizing. More men went to Co. Q than were wounded and killed. At Ashby's Gap Lieut. Col. Gordon, of the 1st N. C. C., joined us, taking command of the regiment by direction of General Stuart. Gordon gained our confidence and respect at once, and the longer he remained with us the more the feeling grew. Gordon was every inch a soldier and his previous experience in Virginia campaigns enabled him to give us many points about taking care of ourselves and horses which were of great value to us.

Among the wounded was Lieut. Grier, of Charlotte, N. C. The wound was slight, and Grier being a good soldier would not have left the field, but for the fact that his mess had left several choice watermelons with the negroes that morning. Grier could not resist the temptation of leading in the attack on the melons, and when his mess returned to the wagons, both Grier and the melons were gone. He soon returned, but never boasted of his exploit.

We advanced next morning over the ground fought over and found no Yanks. Dead horses, head stones to graves and wounded cavalry equipments alone remained to tell of the deadly struggles. It was a beautiful section of country and during the few days we remained in it the inhabitants were very kind to us. Major McClellan, of Stuart's staff, and Col. John S. Mosby, of partisan, fame both agreed that Gen. Robertson was ordered by Stuart to cross the Potomac East of Lee's army and marching between him and the enemy keep Lee well advised

of the movements. We did not do this, but after lingering a few days around Upperville and Paris, followed the track of the main army over the same roads. We found no enemies, and what is worse found no forage for man or beast. The infantry had cleaned up things as they went. We reached the vicinity of Gettysburg, a short while before the last and fatal charge by Lee. We halted, dismounted and were resting when the cannonade began. It was very furious, but very brief. At its close we were mounted and moved towards the front. Many of us thought that the victory was ours and the cavalry ordered up to pursue. In a few moments the head of the column turned to the right and rear, and in less than an hour we were skirmishing for a position to protect the lines of retreat. The skirmish was a success, but the question of supper was not so easily solved. No rations had been issued since leaving Ashby's Gap. No foraging was possible in the track of the main army, so we were hungry, such hunger as civilized man in times of peace never knows. Fortunately for the horses wheat was just ripe and was very fine. They could soon fill themselves, Cherries, raspberries and wheat was our only dependence. One night a squad was bivouacked at a mountain spring and spring house. In the spring house were jars of butter-milk, honey and apple marmalade. We ate more or less abundantly. Let any physician of good standing think of the mixture--cherries, raspberries, wheat bread, honey, milk, apple marmalade, Strange to say very few got on the sick list. Skirmishing went on more or less every day while we remained north of the Potomac with few casualties. We were the last of the Confederate Army to cross the Potomac, doing so by a horse-path ford, on a narrow winding ledge of rock. The river was flushed by the Gettysburg rains and very deep. Even on the ledge of rock a very slight variation put you at once in swimming water. Several men and horses got off the ledge and swam a little, but no one was drowned. For the next several months after our return to Virginia, no fighting took place. Gordon was recalled to the First North Carolina, his ranking officer having been wounded and disabled. This left the regiment in charge of the ranking Captains Shaw and Galloway. Soon after our return we learned of the death of Colonel Peter Evans. The officers met and passed suitable resolutions of respect to his memory and Capt. Galloway was requested to communicate with his widow which was done. A truer friend and a nobler hearted gentleman than Col. Evans never walked the earth. In the Bristow Station campaign the regiment did its full share of the fighting and bore its full share of the losses, the most severe loss being its Adjutant, J. Turner Morehead. A bullet struck him full in the mouth breaking nearly all his front teeth out and passing but at the back of his neck, narrowly missing the spinal column. The wound was first thought to be mortal, but youthful hope and a good constitution saved him. He was lost to us, however. A beautiful and accomplished woman consoled his sufferings and effectually cured him of any wish for further participation in the hardships and dangers of a soldier's life.

Soon after the close of active operations for 1863, the regiment was sent home for the winter to recruit men and horses. We reassembled at Henderson, N. C., in April, much straightened, and took up our march for Virginia. We reached the main army May 7th, 1864, and went into battle that evening. In this encounter W. A. Lash, President of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad, an 19-year old recruit of Company D, Fifth Regiment, received his "baptism of fire." A fragment of shell tore off the right shoulder lapel of his coat, inflicting some bruises. Most men would have laid up, some would have died. Lash ate his full share of what rations he could get that night, and was all right for hard and fatiguing duty in pursuit of Sheridan next day. In the fall of 1865 the First, Second, Fourth and Fifth Regiments of North Carolina Cavalry had been put into one brigade and Gordon, as Brigadier, put in command. Gordon was a favorite with Stuart, but no promotion was ever better deserved than this. On the 8th Gordon's Brigade was ordered to press Sheridan's rear while Stuart went on to head him off at Richmond. Gordon pressed vigorously and had several fierce little encounters; finally, at Ground Squirrel Church a full fledged battle took place. The force on each side numbered about 2,500. The Fifth Regiment was under command of Lieut. Col. S. B. Evans, he having resigned in the spring. The night before this battle the Captain of the squadron had requested of Col. Evans to be held in reserve, his squadron having already been more engaged and suffered more loss than any other. Col. Evans had agreed. This squadron was a mounted reserve. Thick woods were between us and the battle, and as the firing grew faster and faster, we congratulated ourselves on our secure positions. Soon a mounted orderly from General Gordon, galloped up, requesting our presence on the field. We moved up at the trot and coming so the field saw two regiments of mounted Yankees on the far side. The First cavalry had charged up to one of these regiments and was fighting hand to hand. Dismounted men of both sides were actively engaged as sharpshooters. The Captain of the Fifth squadron ordered a charge straight for the center of the other mounted Yankee regiment. With the famous rebel yell the charge was made. It broke that regiment. The other Yanks seeing it break gave way also, and the field was soon clear. General Gordon coming up told the Captain of the Fifth squadron that he had not intended him to charge but only to show his force, but it was all right gallantly done, and had decided the day. In this engagement Postmaster General Kerr Craig had his horse killed under him and a private of Company D, Fifth regiment had the pleasure of furnishing a captured mount for a short time. No other decided stand was made by the Yanks until we reached Richmond. In reconnoitering their position at a bridge retiring from Richmond General Gordon received a wound which proved to be mortal. Stuart and he died in a few days of each other. Par noble fratrum. Col. Andrews, of the Second, took charge of us for a few days, when

Brigadier General P. G. M. B. Young, of Georgia, came to us. He was the beau ideal of a cavalry leader and took our hearts by storm. His favorite motto going into action was, "Here goes for hell or promotion." He certainly took big chances for the locality and got no more of the promotion than he deserved. He remained with us about two weeks when he, too, was wounded. A saying arose among the men that no one could lead us long without being hurt. After a short interval Lieutenant Colonel Barringer, of the First, was promoted Brigadier and put in charge of us. He was a very different man from Gordon or Young. Brave enough but of a prudent, methodical, cautious temperament. At Hanover Town, at Todd's tavern, we fought with many casualties. Not a day passed without some hostile firing, no two nights did we sleep on the same ground. When the two armies finally settled into the lines around Petersburg, Kantz and Wilson were sent on the raid to destroy the railroads into Richmond. We were sent in pursuit. At "Blacks and Whites" a serious contest took place. The Fifth Regiment was that day marching in rear of the Brigade. An orderly came back to hurry it up. Advancing at the trot we came to a clump of woods in which rapid firing was going on. The regiment was ordered to dismount and go in. Lieut. Col. Evans turned over the regiment to Captain Galloway, who took command and went into the woods. We soon came to the line of the First and Second regiments. Furious firing was going on, but as the men were behind hills no damage was done. After a few minutes Captain Galloway called for volunteers to go to the front. Only one man offered, James Hand, of Company D. Advancing to the edge of the woods they came to a deep railroad cut, on the opposite side of which, in thick woods, the Yanks were. As the dirt road crossed the railroad at right angles and with a deep cut the Yanks could not be attacked in front or right flank. The left flank, however, could be attacked by going up the railroad. The Captain and Hand retired, each receiving a bullet in the hat brim as they retired. Hunting left the Lieut. Col. Cowles, of the First, the ranking officer in the fight and a gallant soldier at all times and in all places, Galloway explained the situation. Cowles at once directed that a squad of men be sent to cross the railroad and advance on the Yankee left flank. No sooner did these men begin to cross the railroad than the Yanks fired one or two big volleys and retired. Had the expedient been adopted sooner much valuable time and some ammunition might have been saved. Our greatest loss in this engagement was Col. Andrews of the Second Regiment. He was wounded and died under the surgeon's knife. The Yanks made no further stand till Roanoke Bridge. Here they had already been stopped by some boys and old men and furloughed soldiers. They delayed us by a long range cannonade until they could get away which they did leaving only a few broken down horses and unserviceable guns behind them. Our force had been much decreased chiefly by breaking down. It was decided to pursue with a few choice men and horses and let the others a very large company, proceed leisurely to camp. We met no further opposition. Hampton had made his dispositions so weak that finding all avenues of escape in a body effectually blocked, the raiders decided to break up and try to escape singly or in squads. In the general break up which followed Sergeant Ratliff, of the Fifth Regiment, had the good luck to capture a Federal Colonel with a magnificent gray horse superbly caparisoned. By the Partisan Ranger act this horse and trappings became at once the absolute property of Sergeant Ratliff. Unfortunately for him the horse attracted the attention of Gen. Barringer. Partly by persuasion, partly by authority Ratliff was induced to exchange with the General. Ratliff got a serviceable black chuker of a horse. The General got a charger fit for Charles O'Mally in his best days. By a curious coincidence when General B. was captured in April 1865 this Yankee Colonel was in the crowd which captured him. His first words were "I'll be damned if yonder ain't my horse." Hence we infer that Yankee Colonels do not have the benefits of Sunday School training, or soon forget it.

After this raid the cavalry had a few weeks comparative rest, though there was daily picket firing. Grant's efforts to get a foothold on the Weldon Railroad generally began by a movement on the north bank of the James. The cavalry would be hurried over there and generally brought back more rapidly than we went. These movements, however, were always attended with more or less fighting. On or about the 28th of August, we were hurriedly moved across and came on the wreck of Chambers Cavalry brigade about 1 p. m. Chambers had been killed doing his very best with his little force to stem the torrent. The North Carolina brigade went in, and the Yanks began to retire, we followed them over all the ground they had advanced over, meeting but little resistance, with six men killed and wounded. Grant had accomplished his object, and was retiring anyhow. The Richmond papers of next morning did not mention the North Carolina Cavalry brigade at all, but gave all the credit of resisting Grant and driving him back to Chambers brigade.

About sundown we stopped pursuit, and were marched all night back to the south side. In the morning we were put in, and after a sharp resistance started the Yanks. We pursued eagerly until met by the deadliest and heaviest single discharge we had ever known, it came from an infantry breastwork covering the Weldon Railroad, now in pos-

session of the Yanks. Capt. Galloway, and at least a dozen men of Company D, Fifth Regiment, fell under this volley. In a short time our line was withdrawn, and the Yanks remained master of the Weldon road.

In Hampton's famous cattle raid the Fifth Regiment did its part, but sustained no loss. Towards the latter part of September, Lieut. Col. S. B. Erving having retired, the question of promotion in the regiment came up. Captain Harris raised the point of seniority with Capt. Galloway. It was based on a technical question of what constituted a "muster in." It was referred to the Adjutant General's office in Richmond, and decided in favor of Capt. Galloway.

In October, 1865 the promotions took place. Major McNeill became Colonel, Capt. Shaw Lieut.-Colonel, Capt. Galloway Major. They were "read out" at dress parade.

In the latter days of the Confederacy this was the only commission given to any one below the grade of Brigadier General.

Some very severe fighting took place in October, one fact of which will always remain indelibly impressed on the writer's mind. One day the Yankees advanced, the Confederates retired contesting all the ground, the next day the Confederates advanced, driving the Yanks over the same ground. There lay the dead of the previous day entirely naked and most of them partially eaten up by hogs. It was calculated to unnerve the stoutest heart.

During the winter of 1865 we suffered unexpectably, the rations was not enough to keep a man in vigor, even if regularly issued. It frequently was not so issued, and we of the Cavalry would parch corn and eat it.

Five Forks ended the fighting for us. It was the most ill advised and murderous battle in which we ever engaged. The Fifth Regiment lost Col. McNeill, Lieut.-Colonel Shaw, Lieut. Lindsay, and a host of gallant soldiers of the line. Lieut. Lindsay told his comrades to turn him on his face and go ahead, a speech worthy of Bayard or Lawrence. Col. Shaw was exempt on three points, age, practicing physician, twenty niggers. He was in delicate health also, but with a patriotism and self-sacrifice worthy an ancient Roman, he stuck to us to the last. Of Col. McNeill I have already spoken. One squadron, the fifth, was not in this fight, in charge of acting Major Erwin, it was on vidette.

Major Galloway was in Petersburg having a wound attended to. He came up with the remnant of the regiment at Clover depot, took command of it and with the remnant of the brigade headed for Farmville, he was met by a staff officer bringing news of Lee's surrender and directing us to report at Danville, Va. Here we were met by instructions from the Secretary of War to go to our homes and await instructions, the commanding officer of each regiment to report to General Johnston at Greensboro. This was done and when Johnston surrendered most of the regiment took paroles--some never did.

Cavalry-Infantry. During the first and second years of the war the cavalry did very little hard fighting. The infantry taunted them more or less. In the third and fourth years the cavalry service was the hardest, while no one battle approximated Gettysburg, the many skirmishes made an aggregate loss fully equal. Company D, of the Fifth Cavalry went into action May 7, 1864, with 68 men in the saddle. August 21st Captain Galloway was wounded. All the other officers had been wounded and 44 of the 68 privates had been hit; six killed on the field.

Confederate Cavalry--Yankee Cavalry. All military men agree that the fighting capacity of men depends greatly on physical vigor and efficient equipment. Physical vigor depends greatly on healthy food and protection from weather. The Confederates had one-fourth pound Nassau bacon and one-half pound corn meal. The Yankees had the full United States Army rations--meat, bread, vegetables, coffee, sugar. The Confederates had no tent, no fly cloths, and very little clothes except what they got from home. The Yanks had tents for their camps and on the march every man had the half of a rubber fly tent. In bivouac two men joined flies stretched it over a pole and were protected from the hardest rain or severest frost.

Military Equipment. The Confederate trooper had issued to him a saddle, a haversack, a canteen, a part of a bridle, an English carbine, a non-descript sabre. A new recruit was always advised to throw away or not draw any of these things, but wait till a battle gave him a chance to get "something worth totin'." The saddle ruined a horse's back, the canteen leaked, the haversack of cotton cloth was no protection, the English carbine was muzzle-loading and would not carry a ball fifty yards accurately. The Yankee McClellan saddle was and is the best army saddle ever invented by the wit of man. The canteen would hold a quart and was covered with woaden cloth, cork stopper chained to the canteen, complete in every way. The haversack was capacious and waterproof. Each trooper had a Spencer rifle which would shoot eight times, without reloading and then could be reloaded at the muzzle for eight or nine shots more quickly than the English carbine for one shot. These rifles would shoot accurate 1,000 yards, and would carry much farther. Each trooper also had coils of y revolver, shooting six shots without reloading carrying farther and with more accuracy than the English carbine. Each Yankee thus had 14 shots to the Confederates one, each one of the 14 more capable of doing harm than the Confederate's one.

The only wonder is that the Confeder-

ate ever stood before him at all. He only did it by capturing his armament. It was a certain sign of a new recruit to see him with any article of Confederate equipment about him.

JOHN M. GALLOWAY, Col 63rd, (5th Cav.) N. C., &c.



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O. J. CARROLL, U. S. Marshal.

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