



LUKE G. HARMON, Capt. Co. H., 37th Reg. N. Y. Vol.

### TO BULL RUN AND BACK Fifty Years Ago.

Camp Mary was located about a mile east of the Capitol on the south side of the Bladensburg road and overlooked the Anticosti, a small tributary of the Potomac. A splendid spring on the opposite side of the road supplied the camp with an abundance of cool water.

Here we thought we got down to business, drilling six hours daily. The line officers and sergeants were supplied with copies of Hardie's tactics and our two companies made commendable progress. Company I had somewhat the best of Company H in having quite a number of officers and men who had seen service in the National Guard while Company H had not more than ten men who knew what "attention" as a military command meant prior to their enlistment.

The four weeks we spent here passed off without incident of special importance. Early in July we heard much about a "forward movement" in Virginia, which was likely to end in a battle and the suppression of the rebellion. On the morning of July 21st, 1861, fifty years ago tomorrow we broke camp and with forty rounds of cartridges and three days rations marched to Warhington navy yard to board a steamer waiting for us.

At the two miles down from camp, mutterings were heard through the ranks about the rifles we had been repeatedly promised. When we were about to board the steamer some of the New York companies broke out in open mutiny, stuck their bayonets in the ground and refused to go farther without the rifles. Company I pretty generally joined in with the New York boys and several unruly spirits in Company H, but the officers and most of the men of Company H were conservative and counselled moderation, Lieut. McConnell was particularly active in explaining that such action was most likely to be construed as an act of cowardice and would not

sound well in the papers at home.

Helabored with the officers and men of Company I very effectively. After much argument and delay the men took up their arms and went aboard the steamer and landed at Alexandria where we took a train of freight cars for the front and arrived somewhere in the vicinity of Bull Run battlefield between four and five that afternoon. It was soon evident some of the officers knew there had been a battle and our side had been beaten. Our drum corps was sent out through the woods to beat their drums in different places to make believe there were more of us than there were. Company I was set to destroying some military stores left at the station and dumped a lot of cartridges in some old wells near. They probably worked two hours or more until long after dark. After a while we set out on the return march, some of the way on the railroad and some of the way on roads along side of it. We saw very little of the wreck and rout of which so much has been said in history. When within about five miles of Alexandria early the next morning we met the train we had left the night before and boarding it rode to the city and marched up to Fort Ellsworth overlooking the city and remained there until the afternoon of the next day, July 23d, when the two Cattaraugus Companies were detailed for provost duty in Alexandria.

We found the city overrun with stragglers and deserters and during the three days we were on duty arrested over 3000 and confined them in the old slave pen until we could locate their regiments. We searched all suspected places for whiskey and destroyed it wherever found. Friday afternoon, our last day there, we arrested a straggler from the second New Hampshire Inf. for the murder of a woman in one of the many disorderly houses in the city, and our division was paraded to see him hung the Friday following. That spectacle has been one of the ugly memories of the

war I have never been able to eliminate.

When our three days were up we joined our regiment at Belle View about two miles out of Alexandria. We found the New York companies had become thoroughly infected with the general demoralization apparent all around and showed itself in a large number of desertions, and the mob spirit which had often shown itself at Camp Mary and in the mutiny at the Navy Yard seemed largely in control of the camp.

Our two companies became thoroughly disgusted with the whole New York outfit and our officers appealed to our representative in congress, Hon. Reuben E. Fenton and through his efforts we were detached from the regiment and placed under the orders of the Commander of the defenses of Washington. Company I was ordered to Fort Washington and Company H to the Washington end of Long Bridge and on the morning of Aug. 1861, took leave of the New York Companies for over eight months.

As I shall have little to say of the eight New York Companies until we joined them the following spring I may as well say here that Col. McCunn was soon arrested one night in Washington and was courtmartialled for "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman," and for "being absent from his command without leave," and for "communicating with the enemy without the orders of his superior" and was dismissed from the service Aug. 31st, 1861, and Samuel B. Hayman, a Western New York man, and a captain in the 14th U. S. Inf., was commissioned in Colonel McCunn's place.

With a new Colonel who knew his business and later many new field, staff and line officers several of whom came from companies H and I, and the new rifles they had so long and anxiously waited for there came a gradual change over those wild Irish boys; but when we took leave of them at Belle View no one could have believed that mob would within a year have proven itself over and over again the equal of any of the trained veterans who fought with Napoleon, Wellington or Blucher in the early years of that century, yet such was the case as we shall see later.

Marvin S. Cole,  
Late First Sergt. Co. H,  
37th N. Y. Vol. Inf.