

moves of their winter camp until spring brought the campaign of their first battle. ¹⁷ During the winter Colonel Jones took ten days leaves ¹⁸ in February and March.

General Joseph Hooker had drilled and conditioned the army through the late winter months. Hooker's commands included the 154th through much of the war and "Fighting Joe" grew friendly with Colonel Jones. In their first review by the new commander the regiment led its division onto the field. Colonel Jones was told by Hooker that his command had marched as well as the veteran regiments. On April 18, 1863, Buschbeck's brigade marched to Kelly's Ford on the upper Rappahannock River, and two weeks later a large portion of the army joined them. On the evening of April 28, Jones gathered his officers and gave them their orders. The 154th was to lead the way for Hooker's bold flank movement. The regiment boarded pontoons and crossed the river under a hasty volley delivered by Confederate cavalry vedettes, who turned and fled. A bridge was laid and the Army of the Potomac was on its way to Chancellorsville. ¹⁹

When "Stonewall" Jackson's mighty surprise attack rolled down on the 11th Corps on the evening of May 2, the 154th New York was the farthest regiment in line from the initial shock. It was posted in a clearing at Dowdall's Tavern on the Plank Road, which served as headquarters for corps commander Oliver Otis Howard and General Von Steinwehr. Thus there was ample time for Colonel Jones to get his men under arms and into line. A shallow rifle pit built facing the wrong way across the Plank Road was the only protection. The 154th formed the extreme left of the so-called "Buschbeck line" and as such