

### My First Experience Under Fire.

On the last day of April 1862, my Regiment, the 154th, N. Y. Vols. moved from Kelley's Ford on the Rapahanock river along with the army of the Potomac, under fighting Joe Hooker, and our objective point was Lee's army. After a long and weary march, fording the Rapidan at Germania Mills. We halted about midnight near the Dowdell Tavern, having marched about 30 miles.

The next morning May 1st, our corps the 11th was placed in position along the Plank Road facing south, the balance of the army had taken position to the left, reaching down towards the United States ford, just above Fredricksburg. We lay in camp all day resting, while to our left there was some canonading but it was not near enough to us to be very disagreeable. Along in the afternoon my regiment were directed to tear down an old building that stood near the Dowdell House, and while engaged at it, the enemy fired one shell which went directly over us and exploded in our rear without doing any damage except to our feelings. That was the first screech that many of us had ever heard from a Rebel shell, and the music was anything but pleasant and of all the instruments I have ever heard played upon, before or since, there is nothing that compares with it and it was just a slight hint of what we were to hear on the morrow.

The night passed quietly and Saturday May 2nd, opened a bright lovely day, some few changes were made in the position of the troops in our vicinity, my regiment was moved across the Plank Road with the right resting in yards of the Dowdell Tavern, and from this point (where Gen. Howard had his Head Qrs.) we could look off to the southwest and in a notch in the woods where a road wound over a hill, we could plainly see a column of Confederate troops, at such times, all sorts of conjectures and rumors are started, and the prevailing one seemed to be that the enemy were retreating; but oh! how terribly some one blundered on that occasion, for subsequent events showed that was Jackson's column and instead of retreating, had moved round to our right and rear, and under cover of the dense thickets in that well named "wilderness country" he formed his columns for an attack upon the unprotected right flank and rear of our corps.

Company G of which I was a member at that time, had been temporarily detached from the regiment and had been sent a short distance from the regiment to occupy some breastworks that had been vacated by some other troops in the changing of positions: all was quiet along our front not a single shot was being fired, many of the boys were preparing their evening meal

from the rear and it was evident that there was but one thing to do: if our flanks could not be supported we must fall back to another line and after the order had been given repeatedly the regiment fell back sullenly, fleeing as they fell back to the woods, but not until that pretty bright banner, Old Glory, had one ball through the staff and 27 through the folds, and 45 members were killed, 100 wounded, and 130 taken prisoners: a loss of 275 out of 550 present for duty.

Upon reaching the little clearing near Hazel grove, a new line was being formed and another attempt made to stop the victorious charge of Jackson's troops which were sweeping all before them, here we saw the heroic charge Keenan made as he hurled his troopers on the head of the advancing Rebel column, and while his command was too small to stop Jackson long it helped to gain a little time for Pleasanton to get his artillery (with some pieces from our 11th corps battery) into position. Captain M. B. Cheeney ordered Co. G to take position in the rear and support Martins battery, which he did: and never did artillery-men do more rapid and heroic work than these batteries. The sun had gone down and night was throwing her shades over this terrible scene of carnage, and yet the cannon's were being fired so rapidly that it was one continual blaze of lightning and one continuous roar. Commands given in the loudest tones could barely be distinguished a few feet away. At this point Jackson's victorious troops were stopped for the night.

The slacking of the confederate fire showed their assault was over and our batteries ceased firing, and Co. G, with about thirty members from other companies who had fell in with us were posted on picket. Not far from 9 p. m. a part of the 3rd corps came up from the direction of the furnace, and went into position; here for a few minutes I spoke to my brother, Captain Bird. Captain C. B. Potter and other Ellicottville members of the 37th N. Y., our visit was cut short by the order of Col. Hayman commanding their brigade and his voice rang out clear on the night air: "By the right of companies to the front, forward guide center" and they were soon lost sight of in the darkness; but their whereabouts were soon ascertained by a tremendous crash of musketry, as they struck Jackson's lines, and it sounded as if all the incarnate demons of hell had been let loose, and there in the midnight darkness in a dense forest, those contending forces were engaged in a death struggle, it was to fierce to last long. Here the gallant Jackson lost his life and the two contending lines mutually disengaged from this death struggle, and lay upon their arms but a few yards apart and watched each other until daylight.

wounding a member of my company. I thought of my home and friends in Ellicottville, would I ever see them again, the odds certainly were heavy against me and yet amidst all this shower of iron hail I did not think I should be struck, although every moment some comrade was stricken down: but we had been told to hold that position at all hazards.

Two comrades started to carry off a wounded friend when a shell exploded in their midst and all three went down a lifeless mass, and for two mortal long hours, (which seemed an age) we lay there and held that position without being able to make reply as they were just beyond rifle range. After a while the battery ceased firing at us, as they had to turn their attention to another part of the field and it was a great relief to us when the troops on our right changed their position and we were ordered to fall back which was done none too quick as our right flank had been turned and we just barely escaped capture and that was all. As we passed through the line of reserve artillery of over thirty pieces near Hooker's Head Quarters, the artillerymen were beckoning us to hurry in so they could open up and when those pieces opened up how we cheered and yelled "give it to them boys." About 2 p. m. we joined the regiment on the road leading to the United States ford, our corps holding a position to the left of the 2nd corps.

ALEX. BIRD.

### State Agricultural Society.

The N. Y. State Agricultural Society and Farmer's Institute's for 1894, for Catt. Co. will be held at Franklinville, Tuesday and Wednesday Jan. 23 and 24th; East Randolph, Thursday and Friday Jan. 25 and 26th; Gowanda Friday and Saturday Jan. 26 and 27th; Otto Monday Feb. 5th. People are invited to bring samples of the products of their farm's and place on exhibition at these meetings. We are pleased to say that the value of these meetings appear greater and of more value every year and the interest in them increases. We can do no greater favor to our farmer friends who have never attended these meetings, than to call their attention to them and urge an attendance. We urgently request young people of the vicinity to attend and take an active part. Knowledge and skill are acquired to make farming pay, and the vigor of young men and women ought to be largely given to it.

O. H. Smith  
Ellicottville.

### Niagara Falls Tunnel.

The great Niagara Falls Tunnel has been completed and tested and pronounced to be perfect. The erection of another tunnel will be commenced

**B. A.**

Buffalo Jan.

### SHOE SALE:

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Company G of which I was a member at that time, had been temporarily detached from the regiment and had been sent a short distance from the regiment to occupy some breastworks that had been vacated by some other troops in the changing of positions: all was quiet along our front not a single shot was being fired, many of the boys were preparing their evening meal when suddenly without picket firing, which usually precedes a battle, Jackson's columns burst through the woods into the clearing, and with crashing volleys poured into the 1st. div. of our corps. And while pickets charge at Gettysburg which was hurled against the center of our army and heralded as one of the grandest of the war, his attacking columns did not number one half as many men, as Jackson hurled upon our unprotected and unsupported right. The uproar on our right was not in the direction we were facing, and had been told to look for the enemy, Looking up the Plank Road we could see our troops being driven from their position and retreating down the road towards us; we had ample time on our part of the field to reform to meet the coming storm. We could see the sheets of flame and smoke from the advancing line of the enemy, while our retreating lines were making a feeble reply, as they were being driven in confusion from the field. Soon I heard my first minie ball as it passed over being fired from a long distance, it had that peculiar key which is not described upon the musical gamut, but sounds like Pe-u. Our attention was so taken up with the scene before us, that I did not think of my personal safety, until we began to hear a continual pattering in the dirt around us, and the balls had changed that first key to one something like sist, sist, and that dull thud which told that some of our boys had been struck. We tried hard to rally the retreating troops on our line, but it was no use, but few of them stopped; the Rebs. had now opened with a battery which they were running right down the Plank Road and were pouring canister and spherical case into our lines; as soon as our front was cleared of stragglers, our new lines opened up such a destructive fire on Jackson's advancing columns at short range, that they were staggered, but they were flushed with victory, and they outnumbered us ten to one, and they renewed their exertions and such crashes of musketry as were heard a round the house of Melzi Chancellors, are seldom heard on a battle field; reaching round to our right and left, they were pouring a deadly fire upon us which would soon strike

of companies to the front, forward guide center" and they were soon lost sight of in the darkness; but their whereabouts were soon ascertained by a tremendous crash of musketry as they struck Jackson's lines, and it sounded as if all the incarnate demons of hell had been let loose, and there in the midnight darkness in a dense forest, those contending forces were engaged in a death struggle, it was fierce to last long. Here the gallant Jackson lost his life and the two contending lines mutually disengaged from this death struggle, and lay upon their arms but a few yards apart and watched each other until daylight. From midnight until daylight not a shot was fired, no sound was heard save the whip-poor-will and the groans of the wounded. Day dawned at length with a dense fog obscuring everything from view, we were drawn in from the picket line and I got a hardtack and a cup of coffee from my brother Wm. for we again ran across the 37th, N. Y. I had left my knapsack as most of the regiment had, when we unslung them for action at the Dowdell Tavern and I had given my canteen freshly filled with water to Col. Jones after he was wounded. Early Sunday morning May 3rd, Captain Cheeney reported to Gen. Ward and we were assigned to a position with the 2nd, Div. of the 12th corps. As soon as the fog began to rise the first move we could see from our position was a Zouave Regt. of the 3rd. corps deploy as skirmishers and advance towards the woods across the clearing, when near the woods they were greeted with a murderous volley from a line of infantry which laid low many of the red trousered boys of that skirmish line, those that were not killed or wounded fell rapidly back. The next move that attracted our attention was a battery of brass cannon, each piece as it came out of the woods was drawn by grey horses and wheeled into position, the sun glistening on the bright guns and the horses disappearing again to the rear in the woods. The first thought as they were leisurely going into position, was why don't our batteries knock the tar out of them fellows before they get to work. I was impatient, but did not have long to wait when one of our batteries opened on them and the Johnnies were prompt to reply; everything seemed to be going against us, the Confederates had the advantage in position and soon silenced our battery; they then turned their attention to us, their first shots were too high, but they soon got our range and almost every shell was exploding among us. I lay flat on the ground, we had no protection whatever, my last 20 years flitted through my thoughts and everything that I had ever done came to mind, a shell burst so close as to burn my face, a piece of it going through my blouse sleeve, and another piece dangerously

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### Niagara Falls Tunnel.

The great Niagara Falls Tunnel has been completed and tested and pronounced to be perfect. The erection of another tunnel will be commenced at once on the Canadian side and real estate is booming. Buffalo people are not at all pleased over the prospect of not obtaining any of this power until the other tunnel is completed.

Great air castles have been built in Buffalo on the strength of the supposition that nearly all of this power would be brought to Buffalo. Niagara Falls people are not crazy, yet. They have just as much room for building as Buffalo has and they intend to improve it. The old hydraulic canal will be opened and after being lowered 12 feet and made one hundred feet wide it will furnish as much power as the tunnel just completed.

### Ho! For California. Something New.

A number of first class Special Trains will be run to California. Composed of Krabel new Elegant Vestibuled Sleeping, Parlor, Dining and Observation Cars.

These trains will be the only ones to the Pacific Coast that furnishes without change through Dining and Parlor Cars, with revolving chairs by day and the usual Sleeping car advantage at night.

First train will leave Chicago, Tuesday Jan. 16th. A very low through rate will be made from Buffalo. Diagrams may be seen and information at General office, Nickel Plate Road, 23 Exchange St. Buffalo.

The survivors of the Army of the Tennessee, and of the army of the Ohio, are making an effort to secure the purchase of the Shiloh battle field, by the government, for the purpose of converting it into a National Park. The men of the North and South, alike, are interested in this work. Let the fields made famous by the deeds of American heroes, and hallowed by their blood, be preserved and made objects of Governmental care, and let every point of interest be appropriately marked to serve as object lessons in loyalty and patriotism to future generations.

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\$6.50 Shoe

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