

Battery Veterans Relived Memories

(Editor's note: A souvenir booklet owned by Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Barmore, 1016 10th street, offers colorful material on Green County's famed Fifth Wisconsin Battery to supplement previous articles published about that unit. This is the first of a series on a glowing address given by the man who succeeded Capt. Oscar Pinney as commander of that battery.)

JUL 29 1961

Vivid memories of battle experiences and warm comradeship were revived for veterans of Monroe's Fifth Wisconsin Battery on the night of Sept. 9, 1886, when a stalwart group of GAR members gathered here for their first reunion.

The occasion was the 25th anniversary of the date when the Fifth Battery was mustered into service in 1861, under command of Capt. Oscar F. Pinney who was fatally wounded in the Battle of Stones River outside Murfreesboro, Tenn., Dec. 31, 1862. Capt. Pinney, who died of his wounds Feb. 17, 1863, was the man for whom Monroe's Grand Army of the Republic Post was named.

It was fitting that the answer to the toast at that gathering should be given by George Q. Gardner of Decorah, Ia. Gardner had left Monroe as a lieutenant in the Fifth Battery and eventually took over command after Capt. Pinney died.

The simple toast was: "The Fifth Wisconsin Battery!"

The first portion of Gardner's eloquent response follows:

COMRADES: — The flood of recollections that "rise in the heart and gather in the eye" prevents the tongue, be it never so eloquent, from fittingly responding to this toast.

To do it justice would be to portray the achievements of the army that opened up the Mississippi River; that, organized by Buell, and led by Rosecrans and Thomas, formed the centrehost of the Union Legions; an army that, beginning its exploits at Shiloh, ceased to fight only when the foes of the National unity and personal liberty ceased to resist.

In all the fierce battles that marked the progress of that coherent and conquering host, the 5th Wisconsin Battery bore its part, and, need I say it, with never a stain on its guidon or a blot on the honor of its flag.

Organized in September, 1861, — 25 years ago — its personnel was made up of men and boys of Monroe, and surrounding coun-



CAPT. O.F. PINNEY
Comrade in Honor, Senior Leader

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try, 150 strong — none of whom were actuated by other than patriotic motives and love of country. Then no bounty allured the recruit; no promised aid for families left behind; — then only \$11 per month and glory. A finer body of men never held up the right hand and swore allegiance to any flag. Nor was there ever a body of men moved to war by purer motives.

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Who will forget the emotions of the last "good-bye" as we gathered at the depot on that pleasant Autumn day and sadly stowed away the Testaments and "housewives" handed us by devoted Christian friends and loving sweet-hearts. To beautiful Racine, on Lake Michigan, we went, and there for four long months the members devoted themselves to the task of becoming efficient and disciplined artillerymen. How well they succeeded let the fallen foemen, who marked their line of fire on the blood-stained slopes of Perry-

ville, Nolansville, Stones River, Chickamauga, the Atlanta Campaign and Jonesboro, testify.

In that deadly and unsatisfactory conflict at Perryville our battery offered its first sacrifice to the bullet on the altar of liberty. We all know his name, and forget not his memory. Nor do we forget that we buried John Smith at dead of night on the red field of battle. The burial of Sir John Moore was vividly called to mind, and while we did not "the sods with our bayonets turn," the rich loam of the Kentucky corn field was hastily and silently manipulated with our pioneer tools.

Civil War Scrapbook

The first
test is his
makes

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Fifth Battery Met Its Greatest Test

(Editor's note: This is the second portion of the address given by Capt. Q. Gardner of Decorah, Ia., at the 25th anniversary reunion of Green County's Fifth Wisconsin Battery here on Sept. 9, 1886.)

"Then comes the historic field of Stones River. How the heart thrills as in the green halls of the Battery-boys' memory is renewed the exciting scenes of those seven days of battle. What memories! Who can give voice to them? A baffled plan; a shattered, flying host; our right wing rolled up in disorder; a storm of musketry, intense and deadly; the gray-clad infantry flushed with triumph advancing in deep columns; the rebel cavalry striking us in the flank and we are in the vortex of the fight.

"A few moments of fiery battle — our every nerve strained to meet the crisis, and we, too, must go with the refluxing tide. We leave upon the field our Captain Pinney, Chas. Adair, George Thomas, and carry away many bleeding comrades. You will all remember the great rout after the lines were broken, and how the rebel cavalry rode through and through us, and shot down our horses to almost the last one, and scattered our command about the field.

"It is a great comfort, however, to know that the 5th Wisconsin stood up to the rack and never ceased to discharge canister into the serried ranks of the enemy until peremptorily ordered to retire. That the Battery



Eliza Meekin Pinney

The widow of the Fifth Battery's fallen commander, Mrs. Oscar F. Pinney survived him until 1919 when she died at the age of 84. She was buried in Greenwood cemetery beside the body of her husband who died of his wounds Feb. 17, 1863.

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retired in good order, and when overrun by the rebel cavalry was in column of pieces, and as free from disorder or excitement as if on parade, you all know; and that notwithstanding the fact that the horses were shot and the boys scattered during the rout of the 20th Corps, in two hours thereafter five guns of the battery, well manned, were shelling the rebel cavalry on the right.

"That was a gloomy December morn. Who can stay the tide of defeat and say 'thus far shalt thou come?' Whatever may be the verdict of posterity the 5th Wisconsin Battery, I am sure, will always honor the stout heart and steady brain that brought us safely through that stern ordeal and 'out of the nettle danger plucked the flower, safety.'

"We can almost forget Chickamauga, when we think of Murfreesboro.

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"The star of Rosecrans reached the zenith whence gathering up the fragments of his routed right wing, and abating nothing of heart or hope, by the

force of his will and the power of his personal example, he inspired his army with his own undomitable courage, and achieved a reluctant victory from an almost assured defeat.

"Oh, my Comrades, how can we refer to the scenes of Stones River without deep emotion? For certainly it was for us a 'time that tried men's souls.' I remember well that on that gray December morn Capt. Pinney came to me and said: 'Lieutenant, look well to your section, for I am confident that this will be a day when our very souls will be tried.'

"You all know how well the prophecy was fulfilled. How the Battery was placed on the front line! How it did its duty! How, when in orderly retreat it was not sufficiently supported, and how it was captured. How the men flocked back to the guns when recaptured, and how, on that eventful afternoon, those five guns poured shell and case shot into the rebel Cavalry and Infantry on the right, and this, too, with slight support.

"I cannot dwell upon the many months of waiting that preceded the campaign that gave us the gates of Georgia. But we can all remember the miles of march through which we plodded, as our leader by a series of movements turned the enemy's flanks, and maneuvered Bragg out of his apparently impregnable positions.

"The 'River of Death' is at hand, and we must learn the bitter lesson of defeat, amid the smoke of Chickamauga, obscuring as with a cloud the star of Rosecrans, while a new planet rose upon our ken whose light was ever a beacon of liberty. Oh, Chickamauga! The word is

Battery Held Line In Enemy Attacks

The Battle of Stones River at Murfreesboro, Tenn., in which Green County's Fifth Battery suffered heavy casualties and Capt. Oscar F. Pinney was fatally wounded, was one of the decisive conflicts of the Civil War.

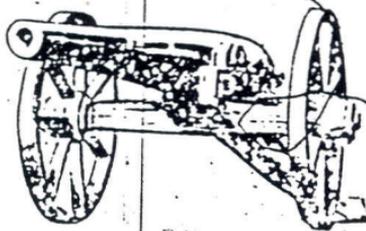
Historians compare it to the first Battle of Bull Run, insofar as the double attacks launched by both sides.

When it was over, the Union had won a victory by standing firm and Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg retreated to the South, ending his futile campaign to invade and take over Kentucky.

Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans had been named in October, 1862, to take command of the Union forces based at Nashville.

A methodical military strategist, he spent a month in Nashville beefing up the Union regiments, piling up supplies and carefully providing for every need before moving toward Bragg's positions at Murfreesboro.

Bragg's forces were lined up ago. (Times staff photo)



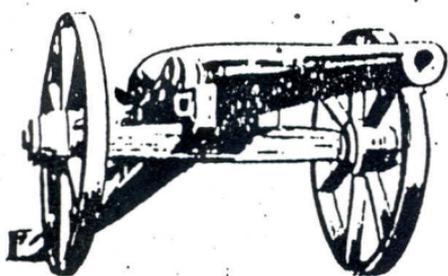
along Stones River northwest of Murfreesboro when the Union army, delayed by Gen. Joe Wheeler's cavalry, arrived. Rosecrans moved his troops up to the opposite bank of the river and prepared to fight.

The battle was joined Dec. 31, 1862. At the start, Bragg's units managed to roll up two Union divisions but were stopped when young Gen. Philip Sheridan, then an infantry commander, refused to budge.

Maj. Gen. George Thomas, commanding the Union center, reinforced Sheridan until the latter's troops ran out of ammunition and artillery shells. The Confederates surged ahead, and

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the Northern troops fell back to the Nashville turnpike.

For some reason, Gen. John C. Breckinridge, whose troops had been held in reserve failed to move fast into the breach and the Union forces were able to hold firmly to the new positions and re-group.

One of the stalwarts of the Union defense was Col. William Hazen who held his artillery positions in the Northern center against murderous attacks. The Fifth Battery was included in his command.

For all purposes, the Battle of Stones River was over. Gen. Bragg expected Gen. Rosecrans to retreat to Nashville and made no serious offensive movements New Year's Day.

On Jan. 2, Union troops crossed Stones River but were driven back, as was an assault by Gen. Breckinridge's Southern divi-

ty. The Confederates lost 10,000.

The Green County artillerymen had distinguished themselves and this area gained a new hero, Sapt. Pinney, who lingered until Feb. 17, 1863, when he died at Murfreesboro.



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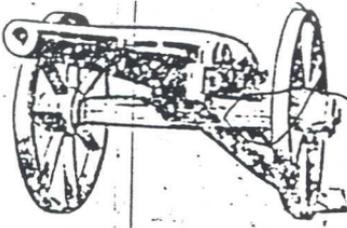
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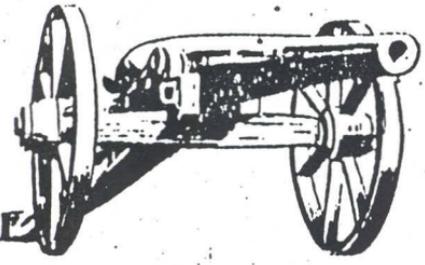
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That was the end of the hostilities in this so-called indecisive battle.

The next day, Gen. Bragg began his retreat, and the Northern army moved into Murfreesboro without firing another shot.

It was a costly victory, however. Of the 45,000 Union troops engaged, 13,000 were killed, wounded or captured. Among them were many from this coun-

ty. The Confederates lost 10,000.

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