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# DEEDS OF VALOR

FROM RECORDS IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE  
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

HOW AMERICAN HEROES WON THE  
MEDAL OF HONOR

HISTORY OF OUR RECENT WARS AND EXPLORATIONS

FROM PERSONAL REMINISCENCES AND RECORDS OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED  
MEN WHO WERE REWARDED BY CONGRESS FOR MOST CONSPICUOUS  
ACTS OF BRAVERY ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, ON THE HIGH  
SEAS AND IN ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS.

AMONG OTHER RECORDS THE STIRRING ADVENTURES OF:

Admiral W. S. SCHLEY  
Admiral GEO. DEWEY  
Lieut.-Gen'l NELSON A. MILES  
Maj.-Gen'l WM. R. SHAFER  
Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT  
Admiral D. D. PORTER

Admiral GEO. W. MELVILLE  
Lieut. G. W. DeLONG  
General A. W. GREELY  
Commander W. D. CUSHING  
Hon. L. P. di CESNOLA  
Gen'l F. J. BELL

Hon. WM. F. CODY, (Buffalo Bill)  
Gen'l MARION P. MAUS  
Gen'l ARTHUR McARTHUR, Jr.  
Gen'l DELEVAN BATES  
Gen'l JULIUS STAHL  
Hon. JOHN C. BLACK

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INTRODUCTION BY

BRIG.-GEN'L H. M. DUFFIELD, U. S. V.

Illustrated

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

THE PERRIEN-KEYDEL COMPANY

DETROIT, MICH., U. S. A.

1907

Twice his horse was shot from under him. Finally a bullet struck and shattered his right arm. Waving the fractured limb high above him, he aroused his soldiers to still greater ardor and enthusiasm. Such heroic fighting the enemy could not withstand. They fled. General Howard was carried to the rear by his admiring soldiers. The brave leader's arm was amputated; but he again went to the front, as soon as he had recovered from the operation and continued on his career of undying fame.

## THOUGH WOUNDED, REMAINED AT HIS POST

"I WAS engaged with the pioneers of the brigade on the 31st of May, 1862, in constructing a bridge across the Chickahominy River. An attack of the Confederates on our extreme left, on the Virginia side of the Chickahominy, caused the Second Corps to be thrown across the river immediately after twelve o'clock noon, and the battle of Fair Oaks began soon after.

"As my services were not necessary at the bridge, I took half of my command of forty-five men, and proceeded to the head of the brigade, reaching it just as it was about to engage the enemy. I was directed by General Dana to proceed across an open field in front of an advancing rebel regiment, which I did, arriving at the point designated with only four out of a party of twenty-two men, eighteen having been killed or wounded within a couple of minutes.

"The adjutant of the regiment to which I belonged, the Seventh Michigan Infantry, was, about this time, dangerously wounded and incapacitated for



WM. E. SHAFTEE,  
1st Lieutenant, Co. I, 7th Michigan Infantry.  
Highest rank attained: Major-General, U. S. A.  
Born at Galesburg, Mich., Oct. 16, 1835.

**Fair Oaks.**— On the 30th of May, 1862, the right wing of the Union Army rested near New Bridge, on the west bank of the Chickahominy, the center at Seven Pines, and the left on the White Oak Swamp. General Sumner's Corps remained on the east side of the river. The force was under command of General McClellan.

The efforts of General Johnston, the Confederate commander, were directed chiefly against the left wing, where Heintzelman's and Keyes' Divisions were placed. The Union position was supported at this point by General Kearney, Berry's Brigade, and an Irish Battalion, and was held in spite of repeated assaults in force. The arrival of General Sumner's Corps decided the day in favor of the Federals.

Fighting was resumed on the following day on the left bank of the river, and ceased about midday with the retreat of the enemy.

The Union loss was 5,739; the Confederate, 7,997.

It was in this battle that General Johnston, the Confederate commander, was disabled, and relieved by General Lee.

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further service, whereupon I was directed by Major Richardson, who commanded the regiment that afternoon, to assume the duties of regimental adjutant, which I did.

“Just at the close of the battle, about half an hour later, my horse was shot from under me and I was wounded, a severe flesh wound, but as no bones were hit, my injuries were not considered dangerous. I was perfectly able to remain in the field, and did so during the fight of the next day. In order to escape being sent north with the wounded, I went to the rear of the command and remained there for two or three days until the wounded had all been sent



IN FRONT OF AN ADVANCING REBEL REGIMENT

away, and I then returned to my regiment. I was unable to ride a horse, and was confined to my couch and there performed the duties of adjutant, so far as the office part of the work was concerned.

“At the change of base I had the choice of being left in the hands of the enemy or mounting my horse and going with our troops, and although riding horseback in my then wounded condition was very painful, I adopted the latter alternative, and was with the regiment in all of the seven days’ battles subsequent.”

General Shafter, who gives this account of his services at Fair Oaks, voluntarily went with half of his little band into the battle, when his pioneer

work gave him a satisfactory reason for remaining at the grapevine bridge, instead of engaging in the gallant charge of his regiment, and remained in action for twenty-four hours after receiving a bullet wound. His intelligent energy and activity during the battle, and his example of soldierly heroism, had an effect on the men, to which a great share of their success may be credited.

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## HEROIC RESCUE OF TWO FLAGS

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THE One hundred and fourth Pennsylvania Infantry had been under fire for an hour and a half at the battle of Fair Oaks, and a large number of the men had fallen. The fighting line had been maintained unusually well, and the men fought more like veterans of a hundred battles than recruits under fire for almost the first time. The enemy was pressing them in front and flank, and his fire had become so warm as to endanger the battery they were supporting. He approached within a short distance of the right. At this crisis, a charge was ordered in the hope of checking his advance. The One hundred and fourth had no expectation of crossing bayonets with the rebels, but hoped to gain time. The men were ordered to cease firing and fix bayonets, which was done with great promptness, considering their excited condition. The command was given: "Charge bayonets, forward, double-quick, march!" and the men sprang toward the enemy with a tremendous yell.

They advanced about a hundred yards over a piece of ground covered with dwarf bushes. In the way was an old worn fence that had not been observed before, which cut the old line of battle at an angle of about thirty degrees. The men sprang over this obstacle into the clearing where the enemy stood, and immediately began to reform and open fire. Both flags were carried over the fence by the bearers. This movement had the desired effect. It was foolhardy under the circumstances, but it staggered the enemy, and the heavy fire checked him at once. It soon became apparent that the regiment must relinquish the ground unless re-enforced, and Lieutenant Ashenfelder was dispatched across to the Williamsburg road to request General Casey to send support. The general sent word to hold out a few minutes longer, when re-enforcements would be sent.

It must be understood that, at this time, the One hundred and fourth Pennsylvania was engaged single-handed, in front of the line of the army, with a



W. H. PURCELL,  
Sergeant, Co. G, 104th Penn. Infantry.  
Born at Upper Black Eddy, Buck Co., Pa.,  
Aug. 1, 1837.