

THE STORY

OF THE

Marches, Battles and Incidents

OF THE

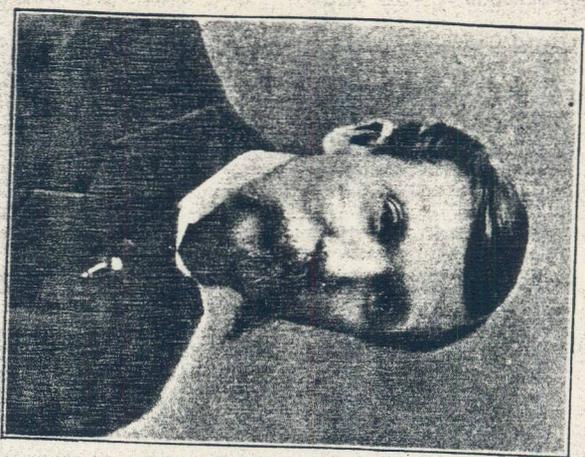
**THIRD UNITED STATES  
COLORED CAVALRY**

A Fighting Regiment in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-5.

With official orders and reports relating thereto,  
compiled from the Rebellion Records.

BY

ED. M. MAIN, Late Major,  
NEW ORLEANS, . . . . LOUISIANA.



MAJOR E. M. MAIN,  
Third U. S. C. C.

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and South together. Years after the war, while on a visit to the old home on Bayou Bartholomew, with his wife and son, Lieutenant Whiting died of malarial fever.

On the 10th, the command resumed the march, crossing Bayou Macon about 11 a. m., and reached Caines' Landing, on the Mississippi River, that evening, where the transports were waiting to take the command up the river to Memphis.

The hardships, exposures and suffering endured on this raid surpasses any like experience of the war. The weather was cold, snow and sleet falling repeatedly. The spring rains had set in, rendering the roads well nigh impassable. The rivers and small streams were out of their banks, overflowing the bottom lands. Bridges were swept away, and crossings made extremely difficult. Frequently the command would be out of sight of land for a whole day at a time. The horses splashed and floundered through mud and water from knee to belly deep. Where bridges were gone—swept away—swimming was the only alternative, and many men lost their lives in this way. Eight men of the Third U. S. Colored Cavalry alone, were drowned in swimming streams. No regular order of march could be maintained; it was a sort of go as you please. Not much attention was paid to the usual route of travel as regarded roads. After one regiment had passed over the ground it was rendered too boggy for others to follow, so the command scattered, each regiment seeking a new route, thus leaving a wide trail, which could be traced years after the war.

One incident happened that excited the sympathy of the entire command. On the 6th of February, while crossing a stream with muddy banks, acting Lieutenant David P. Sherty's horse fell on him, breaking his leg. The accident occurred about 4 p. m., and on being rescued from the mud and water, he was helped on his horse at his own request, and continued with his company until the command went into camp that night, when the surgeon set the broken bones and made him as comfortable as possible.

It was proposed to leave him at some wayside house until he could be sent for, but he would not listen to it, declaring that he would ride his horse and keep with the command. It being impossible to procure any kind of a conveyance in that sparsely settled region, he was allowed to have his way. And so, with his

broken leg well wrapped and padded with cotton, and a detail of men to take care of him, he made the march to Gaines Landing, four days in the saddle with a broken leg.

Sherfy was one of the white sergeants, and having been recommended for promotion, was acting Lieutenant. He was a man with a history. A native of Tennessee, he was living in Arkansas at the outbreak of the war, and incurring the ill-will of the ultra secessionists on account of his Union sentiments, he attempted to flee the country, but was hunted down, captured and forced to serve in the rebel army, from which he subsequently escaped, and made his way to the Union lines in southeast Missouri, traveling over 200 miles on foot, hiding in the woods by day and traveling by night. On reaching the Union lines, he enlisted in a company of Illinois Cavalry, under the name of George W Garber, assuming this name to hide his identity in case of being captured by the enemy. Subsequently he became a member of the famous Eleventh Illinois Infantry, in which regiment he did gallant service, being promoted to the rank of sergeant for meritorious conduct in action. He was discharged from the Eleventh Illinois Infantry to accept promotion in the Third U. S. Colored Cavalry, coming to this regiment with testimonials of the highest character.

SECOND LIEUTENANT DAVID P. SHERFY.

Was born near Jonesborough, Washington County, State of Tennessee, October 19, 1839. At the outbreak of the war, he was living in Arkansas, where his loyalty to the Union, finding expression in outspoken sentiments, brought down upon him the wrath of the ultra secessionists, and he, with others, was compelled to flee the country, closely pursued by a band of partisan rangers, who captured a number of the party and put them to death. The subject of this sketch, being well mounted, led his pursuers a long chase. With a view to reaching the Union lines, he shaped his course for Southeast Missouri, traveling over 200 miles, frequently hiding in the swamp during the day, and traveling by night. When near Charleston, Mo., he was captured by a band of rebel bushwhackers, who took him to the camp of the rebel General Jeff Thompson, where he was held as a Union spy.



DAVID P. SHERFY, alias GEO. W. GARBER,  
1st Sergt. Third U. S. C. C.

General Thompson had information to apprehend, if found, a Union spy by the name of David P. Sherty, but there being no one present who could identify him, he gave his name as George W. Garber, claiming that he lived in St. Louis, and denying that he had ever been in Arkansas.

General Thompson, however, was not satisfied with this statement, and remanded him to the guard-house pending further developments. In the meantime a squad of rebel prisoners in charge of a Union officer, arrived at the camp. These prisoners, by previous agreement, had been sent to General Thompson for exchange, by the Union commander at Birds Point. A list of the Union prisoners, who were to be exchanged was handed to the rebel sergeant on duty at the guard house, who called off the names on the list, each man stepping out as his name was called.

Great was Lieut. Sherty's joy and surprise on hearing his assumed name, George W. Garber, called, but concealing his excitement, he coolly walked out and took his place in the line of exchanged prisoners.

His timely rescue was brought about in this way: Will Carson, a Union scout, was in the rebel camp when Lieut. Sherty was brought in, and the case coming to his knowledge, he reported the matter to the Union commander at Bird's Point, suggesting that the name of George W. Garber be included in the list of prisoners to be exchanged. Thus it was that Lieut. Sherty, known in the army as George W. Garber, retained his alias, fearing that should he again fall into the hands of the enemy, under the name of Sherty, it might go hard with him.

The brave scout, Will Carson, was subsequently killed at the battle of Shiloh, Sunday evening, April 6th, while seated on his horse near the river and but a few yards from General Grant, whose chief-of-scouts he was. A shot from one of the enemy's batteries clove his head from his shoulders. He was an ideal scout, and in his untimely death, the Union army lost a man whose place was never filled.

After this lucky escape from the rebels, Lieut. Sherty proceeded to Cairo, Ill., where he enlisted in Company H, First Illinois Cavalry, which company being disbanded in June, 1862, he re-enlisted, August 1, 1862, in Company C, Eleventh Illinois Infantry, in which regiment he served until March, 1864, taking

part in all the battles and campaigns of that famous regiment, from Fort Donelson to Vicksburg, including the siege of the last named place, and the famous charge of May 22d, winning, for gallant conduct, a Corporal's chevrons. He was discharged from the Eleventh Illinois Infantry, March, 1864, for promotion as 2d Lieutenant, in the Third U. S. Colored Cavalry. He served in the last named regiment with great credit, until September, 1865, when he was compelled to quit the service, by reason of wounds, and unfortunately before receiving his commission.

During the raid in Louisiana and Arkansas, in February, 1865, he had his leg badly fractured by his horse falling on him while floundering in the mud, in crossing a stream. At this time the regiment was far out in the enemy's country, swarming with their cavalry. Unwilling to be left to the uncertain charity of his enemies, on account of his previous experience with them, he insisted on remaining with the command, though suffering intensely. The command being provided with no means of transportation save their horses, and no vehicles of any sort being procurable in that desolate region, the question arose as to how the injured man could be carried back to camp, but the brave Lieutenant solved the problem by declaring that he would ride his horse; so with his leg swathed in splints and bandages and a detail of men to attend him, he rode his horse back to camp, 4 days being consumed in the homeward march. The indomitable pluck displayed by Lieutenant Sherty during this trying ordeal elicited the admiration of the whole command.

## CHAPTER XXI.

REPORT OF COLONEL E. D. OSBAND, COMMANDING CAVALRY EXPEDITION IN SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS AND NORTHEAST LOUISIANA, JANUARY 26 TO FEBRUARY 10, 1865.

HEADQUARTERS, CAVALRY DIVISION,

DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI,

Memphis, Tenn., February 25, 1865.

*Captain*:—I have the honor to forward the following report of