

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

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Illustrated

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

THE PERRIEN-KEYDEL COMPANY

DETROIT, MICH., U. S. A.

1907

Point, Colonel Hesseitine moved his hundred men cautiously and began making his way down the peninsular. At ten o'clock that night the party was struck by the severest norther of the winter and at one o'clock in the morning the bivouac was made. Resuming the march in the morning they plodded along until 2 P. M., when twenty miles from the fort they were discovered by the Scioto and with great difficulty were taken aboard. Not a man or equipment was lost during the entire experience.



EVERETT W. ANDERSON,
Sergeant, Co. M, 15th Penn. Cav.
Born in Chester Co., Pa., July
12, 1839.

CAPTURED GENERAL VANCE

AFTER the battle of Chickamauga, the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry was sent out to the Sequatchie Valley to forage for the relief of the Army of the Cumberland, penned up at Chattanooga.

On the 14th of January, 1864, while campaigning along the French Broad River, word was received that General Robert B. Vance had captured a wagon train of Union supplies at Sevierville, besides 200 infantrymen and numerous Union citizens, and that he was retreating towards Ashville.

Colonel William I. Palmer, commanding the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry, started after Vance, whose passage being blocked by large trees thrown across the road by

Northern sympathizers, was soon overtaken. Colonel Palmer detailed a party of twenty men to charge through the enemy's rear, which was done successfully, and then the general charge followed, resulting in a total surprise of the enemy and the recapture of all the property. A small squad commanded by Sergeant Everett W. Anderson, of Company M, was looking after the wounded, and thereby became scattered. Thus it happened that Sergeant Anderson, while dismounted and caring for the wounded, had his attention called by a comrade, to the approach of five Confederates. Quickly mounting his horse, Anderson wheeled about and faced General Vance, two aides and two orderlies. Covering the General with his revolver, Anderson demanded their surrender. Seeing that his captor was fingering the trigger of his gun suggestively, General Vance threw his revolver to the ground, at the same time objecting to surrendering to an enlisted man. He said that he would surrender only to a commissioned officer. Anderson thought differently, however, and completed the capture of the five men before his comrades had reached the prisoners and their keeper.

News of a capture brought Colonel Palmer to the scene, and saluting, he extended his hand with: "I am happy to meet you, General Vance." The reply of the prisoner was: "Much more so than I am, under the circumstances."

He leaped from the top of the mine; the explosion took place; the earth was scattered in all directions and a great abyss remained, but the young lieutenant was unharmed.

"It was as deliberate an act of self-sacrifice and valor as was ever performed in our country or any other," said one of his superior officers.

ONLY ONE MAN LOST IN A GALLANT RAID

HAVING driven Hood from Nashville, General Thomas lost no time in sending detachments of cavalry after the fleeing Confederates, who, scattering in different directions, were trying to find their respective ways back to Selma, Mobile or the Carolinas. Because of continuous rains and subsequent bad roads, the pursuit undertaken by the bodies of infantry, as accessory to the cavalry operations, was stopped early in January, 1865, at Eastport, Miss.

Among the forces of Union cavalry thus sent to the south was the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry, in command of Colonel William J. Palmer, he having been directed on the 13th to march in pursuit of the rebel General Lyon, who was thought to have crossed the Paint Rock River. As most of his horses were much fagged from a previous expedition, Colonel Palmer took with him only 180 men.

At 4 A. M. on the 24th, after having learned that Lyon had passed through Warrenton and would probably bivouac the same night at Red Hill, Colonel Palmer started for that place and surprised his camp of 350 men. One battalion of fifty men, in command of Lieutenant-Colonel Lamborn, had first been detached to take one of Lyon's regiments, which was encamped with its artillery near Red Hill, a second battalion to take a camp of 150 men one mile from there, while Palmer and the remaining battalion pushed on to capture Lyon, who was quartered with his staff and escort at the house of Tom Noble, half a mile beyond. The advance guard reached Lyon's headquarters and captured him at the door of Noble's house, in his night clothes. The general surrendered to Sergeant Arthur P. Lyon while the advance guard was charging the escort, but begged permission to put on his pantaloons, coat and boots, which Sergeant Lyon granted, accompanying him into the bedroom for that purpose. At that moment the escort fired a volley at the advance guard, when the sergeant said: "Come, General, I can't allow you much more time." The general then suddenly seized a pistol and shot the sergeant, killing him



WILLIAM J. PALMER,
Colonel, 15th Penn'a Cavalry.
Highest rank attained: Brevet
Brig.-General.
Born, Kinsdale Farm, Kent Co., Del.,
Sept. 18, 1836.

instantly, and made his escape through the back door in the dark. Colonel Palmer pushed on in the direction of other camp fires which could be seen ahead. These proved to be at the artillery camp, where one regiment of the enemy had already become alarmed by the firing and had saddled up and moved out, only to be met by the battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel Lamborn, who at once attacked them.

Colonel Palmer thus surprised General Lyon's superior force, routed him and took over one hundred prisoners, a piece of artillery and munitions of war with the loss of only one man, Sergeant Lyon.

SWAM THE RIVER UNDER DIFFICULTIES



S. RODMOND SMITH,

Captain, Co. C, 4th Del. Inf.
Highest rank attained:
Brevet Major, U. S. Vols.
Born at Wilmington, Del.,
April 20, 1841.

DAVID E. BUCKINGHAM,

1st Lieut., Co. E, 4th Del. Inf.
Highest rank attained:
Captain, U. S. V.
Born at Pleasant Hill, Del.,
Feb. 8, 1840.

DURING the siege of Petersburg, Va., which commenced with the investment of that city by the Federal forces during the early part of June, 1864, it became the aim of General Grant to flank the position of the enemy by swinging to the left. In the execution of this movement on Feb. 5, 1865, occurred the action at Monk's Neck crossing of the Rowanty River, Va., and the engagement at Hatcher's Run on the following day.

Captain S. Rodmond Smith, of Company C, Fourth Delaware Infantry, relates the following about this affair:

"To the Fifth Army Corps was assigned the duty of initiating this movement, and the third brigade of the second division of this corps was under arms, with tents struck and three days' rations in their haversacks, all the preceding night, and about sunrise on the morning of the 5th was marching by the Halifax Road to the west for Monk's Neck Crossing. About eight o'clock A. M. the brigade was halted in the road about a quarter of a mile east of our objective point.

It was ascertained that the bridge over the crossing had been burned to prevent the passage of our troops, and that substantial entrenchments had been erected on the bluff bordering the margin of the stream on the opposite side. A regiment of Pennsylvania "Bucktails," out of our brigade, was detailed to cross the stream and carry the works. After some heavy firing the Bucktails were compelled to retire.

We were ordered to ride over the two lines of earthworks in front of the brigade at full speed and not fire a shot, but dash on and capture the guard on the bridge.

"We did as ordered and went right over the breastworks. Here we dismounted, turned our horses loose, rushed on to the bridge and captured the guards before they knew who we were.

Then taking half a dozen of the prisoners we marched them across ahead of about fifty of us and told them that if they uttered a word or gave any alarm we would shoot them down, and furthermore they were ordered to give the guard at the other end of the bridge the countersign.

"It was a very dark night and under the covered bridge it was impossible to distinguish 'Yank' from 'Johnny.' Our prisoners acted according to our instructions and when they gave the countersign we pushed them aside and rushed for the guns, and, though surprised, the rebels gave us a sharp hand-to-hand fight for about fifteen minutes. One of my opponents was the color-bearer, who fought hard to save his colors, but I succeeded in downing him and seized the flag. We drove them back and captured the two guns, which we found to be double-shotted, but they never got a chance to fire them."

A SUCCESSFUL MISSION OF DESTRUCTION

"About the middle of April, 1865," says Lieutenant-Colonel Charles M. Betts, of the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry, "General William J. Palmer had arrived at Salem, N. C., with a portion of his cavalry division, among which were two battalions of our regiment under command of Major Garner and Captain Kramer, and shortly thereafter General Palmer directed me to attempt the destruction of a railroad bridge north of Greensboro, as well as a factory to the south engaged in the manufacture of fire-arms for the Confederacy. Greensboro was some seventy-five miles east of Salem, and was occupied by a rebel force estimated at 5,000, whose attention it would be necessary to divert to accomplish the work assigned to me.

"'Boots and saddles' was soon sounded and we started off in the early evening accompanied by a guide. About two o'clock A. M. I detached Major Garner with the most of his command to destroy the bridge north, and directed Captain Kramer to take his battalion and capture and burn the factory. Retaining about ninety men with me I advanced to make a demonstration against Greensboro.

"Soon after daylight, when within a few miles of the place, I learned from a negro in the field that a portion of Johnson's Third South Carolina Cavalry was



CHARLES M. BETTS,

Lieutenant-Colonel, 15th Penn. Cav.
Born in Bucks Co., Pa., Aug. 9, 1838.



"THEY BROKE AND FLED TO A NEIGHBORING MEADOW."

encamped about half a mile to our right, the balance scouting to ascertain the whereabouts of the Yankee cavalry, of whose approach they had been apprised. The rebel camp was in an open wood on the left of a road running at right angles to the main road which led from Salem to Greensboro, and adjoining this road was a meadow separated from the woods by a sharp declivity and a fence. The command had no pickets out, depending on their scouting parties to notify them of any danger, and were then cooking breakfast. After a short conference with Adjutant Reiff and Lieutenant Beck, who, I believe, were the only officers of the party besides myself, I detailed a sergeant with ten men having good horses to take the advance and charge when in sight of the camp, making all the noise possible, the balance to follow in support. Those who had horses unfit to charge were instructed to barricade the main road where we turned to the right to reach the camp, and to protect our rear.

“We made the charge, surprised the camp, and after the exchange of some shots the enemy broke and fled to the neighboring meadow, which we reached by moving out to the main road. There they had cover from a deep ditch, but being threatened with ‘no quarter without surrender,’ they threw down their arms and were taken prisoners.

“After eating what they had prepared, we cut the wheels of their wagons, destroyed what arms and equipage they had, and mounted the prisoners on the poorest horses, taking their fresh ones in exchange. Upon drawing them up in line I found I had almost as many prisoners as I had men in my command. I told them that our guard had instructions to shoot without notice anyone attempting to escape, and moved my force and prisoners out to the main road. We fed our horses, and waited long enough for the rebel force at Greensboro to be informed of our presence by any that might have escaped, thereby hoping to prevent them sending any of their force to oppose our battalions north and south.

“I had been instructed to attempt the destruction of a small railroad bridge on the outskirts of Greensboro, and sent Sergeant Seldon L. Wilson and a detail of ten men with good horses on this mission. He succeeded in burning the bridge and without loss rejoined the command the same night at Salem.

“When starting back I detached Sergeant Strickler with ten men for advance guard to attack vigorously any force in front, placing a like number in our rear to drive off anything coming in that direction. This left me about fifty men to guard nearly twice that number of prisoners. We were twice threatened by small parties of rebel cavalry on the road, but drove them off without difficulty. When we reached the rendezvous where the two battalions were to meet us we found only Kramer’s. He had destroyed the factory with many stands of arms in process of manufacture, and like myself was loaded down with prisoners. Major Garner rejoined the command before night, having accomplished all that was assigned to him without loss.”