

Operations of Second South Carolina Regiment in Campaigns of 1864 and 1865.

By Colonel WILLIAM WALLACE, Commanding.

At sunrise on the morning of the 6th of May, we were marching by the right flank along the Plank road when suddenly we heard firing; heard the minnie balls whistling and falling amongst us; saw our troops running rapidly to the rear, and learned that the enemy had surprised and routed them. Kershaw's division formed line in the midst of this confusion, like cool and well trained veterans, as they were, checked the enemy and soon drove them back. The Second regiment was on the left of the Plank road, near a battery of artillery, and, although completely flanked at one time by the giving way of the troops on the right, gallantly stood their ground, though suffering terribly; they and the battery keeping up a well directed fire to the right oblique until the enemy gave way. General Lee now appeared on our left, leading Hood's brigade. We rejoined our brigade on the right of the Plank road, and again advanced to the attack. As we were rising a wooded hill we were met by one of our brigades flying in confusion, the officers in vain endeavoring to rally their men. We met the enemy on the crest of the hill and again drove them back. We were soon relieved by Jenkins' brigade, under command of that able and efficient officer, General Bratton, and ordered to march to the rear and rest. We had scarcely thrown ourselves upon the ground when General Bratton requested that a regiment should be sent him to fill a gap in the lines which the enemy had discovered and were preparing to break through. I was ordered to take the Second regiment and report to him. A staff officer showed me the gap, when I double-quickened to it and reached it just in time, as the enemy were within forty yards of it. As we reached the point we poured a well directed volley into them, killing a large number and putting the rest to flight. General Bratton witnessed the conduct of the regiment on this occasion, and spoke of it in the highest terms. The enemy, up to this time, had been routed at all points, and General Longstreet was just advancing to give the finishing stroke to the victory, by cutting them in half, when he was unfortunately wounded by our own men.

Our regiment lost severely by this battle. Colonel Kennedy was again wounded and the gallant Lieutenant-Colonel Gaillard killed,

both early in the action, when fighting near the battery. The command of the regiment consequently devolved upon myself as the only field officer present. The 7th was spent in burying the dead and marching slowly towards the right. At night we made a forced march towards Spotsylvania Courthouse, near which point we arrived at daylight and slept till sunrise, when we were aroused and double-quickened about a mile. We had just been placed in position by General Stuart, of the cavalry, when the enemy advanced to the attack, thinking they would meet nothing but cavalry. We opened a terrific fire upon them which killed a great many and drove the rest back in confusion. They soon returned, however, bringing artillery to bear upon our frail breastworks of rails. The men stood their ground, however, and again drove them back with great slaughter. General Stuart remained with our regiment during the entire action, sitting on his horse amidst a storm of bullets, laughing and joking with the men and commending them highly for their courage and for the rapidity and accuracy of their fire. Poor fellow! he left us after the fight was over, and, to the regret of all, we heard a few days after of his death. The rest of the army soon came up and fortified the heights which we held that morning. The battle raged with great fury for several days, but Grant, finding that he could not reach Richmond by that route, rolled on towards the Pamunkey. He made a feint at Northanna bridge, but finding Lee ready for him, continued his march for the Peninsula.

The regiment did good service at this point, four companies holding the bridge successfully against a large force of the enemy.

Grant still rolling on by his left flank, Lee marched by his right to be ready to confront him whenever he should offer battle. This he did again at Cold Harbor, about the 1st of June. One brigade, under the lamented Colonel Keitt, was sent out to reconnoitre and came upon the enemy in large force, strongly entrenched. Keitt was killed and the brigade suffered severely. A few skirmishers thrown out would have accomplished the object of a reconnoissance and would have saved the lives of many brave men. Our troops, finding the enemy entrenched, fell back and began to fortify. Soon our line was established and the usual skirmishing and sharpshooting commenced. That same afternoon, being on the extreme left of Kershaw's division, I received orders to hasten with the Second regiment to General Kershaw's headquarters. I found the General in a good deal of excitement. He informed me that our line had been broken on the right of his division, directed me to hasten

there and if I found a regiment of the enemy flanking his position to charge them. I hurried to the point indicated, found that our troops, to the extent of a brigade and a half, had been driven from their works and the enemy in possession of them. I determined to charge, however, and succeeded in driving them from their position with but little loss. Our regiment numbered one hundred and twenty men. The enemy driven out consisted of the Forty-eighth and One-hundred-and-twelfth New York. We captured the colors of the Forty-eighth, took some prisoners and killed many whilst making their escape from the trenches. We lost in this charge one of our most efficient officers, Captain Ralph Elliott, a brother of General Stephen Elliott. He was a brave soldier and a most estimable gentleman.

The regiment was at the siege of Petersburg and did good service there. They threw up breastworks under a heavy fire, and held them for eight days until relieved. The regiment was then held in reserve at Petersburg and was thrown continually to the extremities of the line to resist the flank movements of the enemy. It was afterwards sent to the Valley and operated there under General Early for several months, sharing his victories and defeats. It was then ordered back to the lines in front of Richmond, and was marched almost every night in midwinter, the ground covered with snow, to some threatened point, and was at last sent to South Carolina, in January, 1865, to aid in defending its native State from the invasion of Sherman. But they were marched to Charleston whilst Sherman was burning Columbia, evacuated that place with scarcely an enemy in sight, and were conducted in ignominious retreat into North Carolina, while Sherman, unresisted, was destroying the vitals of their State. The regiment was engaged in the two small battles in North Carolina—Bentonville and Averasboro'. They were small affairs and merely intended as temporary checks to the enemy. General Joe Johnston, I believe, never had any other object in view. The regiment was reorganized at Smithfield, North Carolina, by the consolidation of the Twentieth with it. It retained its name and colors. It had five hundred men present for duty. Its officers were William Wallace, Colonel; J. D. Grahame, Lieutenant-Colonel, and J. S. Leaphart, Major. The regiment remained at Smithfield for some weeks, reorganizing and drilling, and then marched to join General Lee. At Raleigh we heard rumors of his surrender, which were not believed; but soon

after they were confirmed by stragglers from his army, whom we met on our march. We soon after surrendered to General Sherman at Greensboro', and, being paroled, returned home.

WILLIAM WALLACE,
Colonel Second South Carolina Regiment.

Report of General Harris Concerning an Incident at the Battle of the Wilderness.

HEADQUARTERS BRIGADE, December 2d, 1864.

Lieutenant-General R. H. ANDERSON :

General—Your note, inquiring about an incident which happened on the evening of the sixth of May last, in the Wilderness, during the advance of my brigade, is received. The main facts related by you are true. The enemy were moving by the flank with the apparent intention of getting in rear of the brigades of Davis, Perry and Law, when my brigade suddenly encountered them. They halted, came to a front and fired one volley, which wounded Colonel Manlove and four or five of my men.

My command then fired, gave a yell and charged, driving the enemy with ease, killing thirty or forty, including one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, a captain and inspector of ordnance on General Burnside's staff; wounding many and capturing ninety or one hundred, including one colonel.

Hoping this incomplete narration of facts will prove satisfactory,

I am, General, with high respect, your obedient servant,

W. H. HARRIS, *Brigadier-General.*
