

WAR STORIES.

First Georgia Regulars at the Battle of Waterloo, S. C.

W. H. Andrews, in Atlanta Journal.

After the battle of Olustie, Fla., on February 20, 1864, General Seymour commanding the Federal army, retreated to Jacksonville with the Confederates under the command of General Finnegan in pursuit. I was told by citizens along the route that they went back, every man for himself, and the devil for the hindmost. At Baldwin we saw several stockades they had built by digging a trench like the four walls of a house, then standing pine logs up all around with loopholes to shoot through. No doubt they would have been good protection from infantry, but the good Lord deliver me from being inside of one with artillery brought to bear on it. General Finnegan's command went into camp six miles below Baldwin at Camp Milton. The regulars were transferred from Harrison to Colquitt's brigade. On April the first the regulars with two pieces of Gambol's artillery under the command of Captain Miller marched 20 miles to a point on the St. John's River above Jacksonville and burnt the United States Steamer Maple Leaf that had been sunk by a torpedo, and deserted by the crew after taking everything off but the machinery and some mattresses. An officer with a detail of men went to the boat in the batteau and fired it and after they returned several shots were fired into it by the artillery. At a farm house near the river we saw a flock of goats. We had left camp without anything to eat, so Captain Grieres ordered two men detailed from each company to kill 10 goats for the regiment. Sergeant Humphreys and Corporal J. N. Smith were detailed from company M. The wagon was ordered to wait for them, but did not on account of a landing on the river five miles below us, where the enemy could have cut us off. Humphreys and Smith carried their goat 8 miles on a pole suspended between them, the rest of the men left theirs by the roadside. That night company M was placed on picket, and while we had plenty of goat meat, we had no bread. Sergeant Humphreys with Corporal T. J. Musgrove struck out through the country in search of bread, which they failed to find, but secured some fine sweet potatoes. What a feast we had with roasted potatoes and kid baked around the campfire placed on sticks. I must pause here long enough to pay a well deserved tribute to my gallant chum and boon companion, Sergeant William G. Humphreys, who performed more service than any one in his company, if not in his regiment. He was about five feet four inches high and weighed about 139 pounds with the appearance of a beardless boy. Blessed with an iron constitution he was never wounded or sick a day during the war and was with the regulars in every battle they were engaged in. He was a hero ever ready and reliable soldier, and never shirked his duty in camps or on the battlefield, but was always ready and willing to perform any and all duties required of him. He could get over more ground than any one I saw during the war and was one of the most successful foragers, if there was to be had anything to eat in the country, Humphreys would be sure to find it, and the part I liked he always divided with the writer, who would have gone hungry on many occasions if it had not been for his generous chum, who was always kind and true to his comrades in arms. When I with five other non-commissioned officers, were recommended to the secretary of war for commissions by the officers of the regiment, he offered to assist me in purchasing my sword and uniform, and I believe he would have preferred seeing me with gold braid in my collar and a sword by my side than to have had them himself. No one but an old soldier can realize the love I bear my gallant old comrade who is living at Dexter, S. C. Long may he live and be blessed with peace and plenty in his declining years. The next morning we returned to camp with Lieutenant James R. DuBose in command of the company. First Sergeant James Copeland was the tallest man in the regulars, and by the way one of our bravest and best soldiers. The boys talked to him like he was up among the trees. Hello, Jim, is it cold up where you are, or Jim had me down a chew of tobacco, all of which he would take in a good humor. One day while the regiment was drilling near Colquitt's headquarters we halted to rest. A lieutenant from the Nineteenth Georgia came walking down the line and halted near Copeland, who looked up and saw him. A sly smile overspread his face and the boys dove the yelling. He had found one man he had to look up to as the lieutenant was several inches the tallest.

men from one of Colquitt's regiments being drummed around to the different regiments in the brigade with a large piece of pasteboard tacked on their backs with the words hog thief in large letters. Before they got around and while passing one of the regiments some of the boys charged the procession and tore the pasteboards off, putting an end to the proceedings. No doubt the boys felt considerably humiliated at being thus publicly exposed, but if all had been in the procession who had killed or had eat of a stolen hog there would not have been many left to see the procession go by. I have no idea the boys would have killed the hog if it had not tried to bite them, then its doom was sealed, as no soldier would submit to being bitten by a hog. We were camped in thick pine woods with the ground strewn with dry pine burrs which would burn like paper. The 6th Georgia challenged the 1st Georgia for a pine burr battle at night, which was accepted and the boys proceeded to gather up their ordnance supplies. After dark both regiments turned out and formed lines of battle, each man with a lighted burr in his hand. For awhile the fire flew thick and fast, but the 6th was too strong for the 1st, so the 1st surrendered and then joined forces with the 6th and attacked the 19th, which was the largest regiment in the brigade. The 19th turned out from the colonel down and formed in front of their camps. The battle raged for sometime with the 1st and 6th trying to force the 19th back through their camps, but the 19th fought like demons and with one grand charge and all together, drove the 1st and 6th away from their camps. General Harrison's brigade was on the opposite side of the railroad and was so well pleased with the fireworks they challenged Colquitt's brigade to mortal combat the next night, which was eagerly accepted. Both sides made ample preparations during the day and when night spread her dark mantle over the dense pine forest both sides were ready and eager for the fray. Not wishing to take a hand, I occupied an elevated position near Colquitt's headquarters, where I had a splendid view of Harrison's camp and the ground between them. Skirmishers were thrown out from each line and advanced, each skirmisher holding a lighted burr in his hand. It was not long before they were hotly engaged, first one line and then the other would be driven back, then a flank movement would be tried and counteracted. In the meantime the lines of battle slowly advanced and met about half way between the camps. First one side and then the other would be driven back, then they would charge and regain their ground. It looked to me like 10,000 balls of fire were shooting through the air and was one of the grandest displays of fireworks I ever expect to witness. After fighting for some time Colquitt's men in one grand charge swept Harrison's men beyond their camps and then slowly retired. The battle was fought up in a spirit of friendly rivalry, but it would seem that a great many men cannot enjoy anything unless some one was getting hurt. While numbers had their hands and faces burned, others were injured with lightwood knots used in the place of burrs. Harrison's men also lost a good many things while Colquitt's men were in their camps. The next day orders were issued against any more pine burr battles. The next thing in camp was a camp meeting. The men built an arbor and made seats out of pine logs, and there was a hallelujah time of it, the boys shouted and numbers joined the church. The meeting was broken up by Colquitt's brigade being ordered to Savannah, Ga., and the regulars to Camp Finnegan on the 19th of April. Colquitt's brigade was a splendid body of men and like most Georgians, good fighters. On the 1st of May the regulars relieved a portion of the 6th Florida near Jacksonville. While there 40 of the regulars joined the U. S. navy. When the enemy landed at Jacksonville a number of citizens fled the town, some of them near us in the country. It was not long before they were in destitute circumstances. The regulars divided their scanty rations with them, the soldiers being very liberal when their sympathies were aroused. While some of the boys were visiting in the country a young lady was displaying her jewelry, and after the boys left missed one of her rings. She came to camp with her father and pointed out Private Posey, of Co. G, as the man who had stolen her ring. He was arrested and searched and the ring found on him. He was a noted thief, and the officers decided to turn him over to the men to punish him as

they saw proper. The boys held a council of war and decided to drum him out of camp on a rail, which was procured and Posey placed on the shoulders of two stout men, with drums and fire playing the rogue's march. Posey had a small stick in his hand, to which he fastened his handkerchief, using it for a flag. He was enjoying his ride and having all the fun by himself, so the boys held another council of war and decided to try what virtue, if any, there was in the wagon whips. Posey was carried out of camp, strapped to a log and 75 lashes administered, with the admonition that if he returned to camp we would kill him; but he got back by the time we did. He was not only a thief but a coward, having shot off his right forefinger in '61 to get out of the army. On May 7th the regulars were ordered to Savannah. We went by rail to Madison, and marched from there to Quitman, Ga., where we got on the cars and went to Savannah, arriving there on the 10th, and went into camp near the park. There the regulars received a number of conscripts. Some were good men, others either deserted or became hospital rats. I don't mean to cast any aspersions on those who were forced into the army at that time by calling them conscripts, for the regulars who were the first Georgians at the front served the last 15 months of the war as conscripts, Congress having passed a law to that effect on the 17th of February, 1861. All males between the ages of 16 and 60 years were forced into the army. Co. M received some on crutches. The Confederacy was then tottering on its last legs, and no doubt the graveyards were resurrected in the hope of finding some poor devil who was playing out of the war. On the 16th of May the regulars marched to Greenwich Point, below Savannah, and pitched our tents, where we found sand flies and mosquitoes world without end. On the 26th we relieved the First Georgia volunteers at Whitmarsh Island, where we remained, doing heavy picket duty until the 3d day of July, when the regiment was ordered to Charleston, S. C. The regiment marched to Savannah and boarded a train of box cars standing in the sun that were hot enough to fry eggs or beef stake on top, but the boys soon ventilated them by punching off the sides with their rifles. Before reaching Charleston we left the cars and marched across the Stono River onto John's Island, halting a little before day. The island, from what I could learn, was about three miles in width and a number of miles in length. We must have entered the island at the south end, as there were two roads, one on each side of the island. On the 4th we marched about three miles down the road on the east side and bivouacked until the next morning. The Stono scouts captured the surgeon of the 26th New York colored troops. We were reinforced by two companies of the 32d Georgia, two companies of the Second South Carolina cavalry with two pieces of the Washington artillery, from Charleston. On the 5th we marched about three miles further down the road and encountered three companies of the 26th New York under Major Die. The artillery opened on them, killing three and stampeding the rest. Two companies of the regulars were deployed as skirmishers, one on each side of the road, to keep from being ambushed, as the woods was a dense thicket of undergrowth, and you could see scarcely ten feet. Major R. A. Wayne, in command, ordered Sergeant Major John T. Cheshire to carry an order to one of the companies in advance and by some unaccountable means missed our men and was shot down by 10 negroes before he was aware of their presence. He was shot through the body and after he fell several attempted to run their bayonets through him but were prevented by one of their white officers. The skirmishers arrived in time to rescue him and the negroes fled. While we were in hot pursuit of them Major Wayne received orders that the main body of the enemy were advancing on the other road and we would be liable to be cut off. We made tracks back to the other road and then marched down that to meet them. Night coming on the command was halted and companies F and M placed on picket. On the morning of the 6th the command moved forward with F and M in advance deployed as skirmishers. After going about one mile we encountered the enemy in force on the Waterloo plantation, which I will describe to the best of my recollection. The public road ran through the plantation from north to south, and the fields were enclosed with banks of dirt thrown up from the ditches, and one of the same kind ran through the field from east to west. F and M were halted in the field at the cross ditch, as we could hear the enemy at the north side of the field about 700 yards distant. We did not have long to wait before we heard in the enemies' lines, "Forward, skirmishers." We were then ordered to, "Rats to your holes," and every man concealed himself behind the bank of dirt, which made splendid breastworks. We saw

their skirmish line as they entered the field and it did not take the second look to discover that they were our colored friends, as Private John Smith said, "Nagers, begasus!" We were ordered to lie low and hold our fire until we could see the whites of their eyes. They advanced about 100 yards and halted as they could hear our men in the road talking and laughing. They listened awhile and then dropped in the weeds which were about breast high. We had two 5 pound pieces belonging to the Marion battery on the right of the road which opened on them and put them to flight. There was a large live oak where their line halted and numbers of them made for that, and it was interesting to see the shells burst beneath its branches. Some officer of rank was either killed or seriously wounded under it as they tried all day to carry him out but the shells were too hot for them. On the morning of the 7th we had 350 men stretched over nearly one mile with four guns, two on the left and two on the right of the road, with Major R. A. Wayne in command of the island. We learned after the battle that the enemy numbered 4,500, two white and three colored regiments. About 4 in the evening three colored regiments advanced on our lines, one on the left, one on the center and the other on our extreme right, held by twenty of the Stono scouts. Companies F and M were ordered by the right flank double quick to aid the scouts, and when within two yards of them obliqued to the right, as the enemy were then charging the works. We had not left our works more than 40 yards when a minnie clipped by my head, as I was leading the skirmish line. Glancing to my left beyond the works I saw a stout mulatto loading his rifle. It was the work of an instant to halt, bring my rifle to my shoulder, aim at his breast and press the trigger. At the flash of my rifle he jumped three feet straight up and fell in the weeds. I moved off still at the head of the company and loaded my rifle on the run. I saw the negroes charge over the works, and something else that made my blood run cold, they were bayoneting the wounded, 14 out of the 20 Stono scouts were killed and wounded. It was the 26th N. Y. colored regiment, seven companies crossed the works in line of battle and three by the left flank, forming two sides of a square. We faced them and the battle opened in earnest, 46 Rebels deployed as skirmishers against 1,000 colored troops with white officers. They gradually drove us back and it was heartrending to listen to the appeals of our wounded to be carried to the rear, but we had to leave them to their sad fate. After we had been driven back about 250 yards two companies arrived from the center, company G, of the regulars and a company from the 32d Georgia. Company G struck the flanking column and the 32d stopped at the right of company M. They arrived on the double quick and the lieutenant in command ordered them to charge, but they came to a dead halt. He threatened them with his sword, but all to no purpose. Then he dashed in front of them with his sword in one hand and his hat in the other and said: "Follow me, boys." Then it would have done your heart good to hear the wild rebel yell and see those boys charging to the front. The whole line then 100 strong charged at the same time and it did not take many minutes to drive them beyond the works. When we charged Corporal T. J. Musgrove and myself flushed a colored brother in the weeds. We tried to make him surrender, but he would not and Musgrove killed him. I saw our officers keeping our men from bayoneting the wounded, because they used the bayonets on ours. While we were charging Major Wayne arrived from the left where he had defeated the enemy and led us in the charge. I could hear him above the report of our rifles say: "Give them hell, my regulars." Sergeant Watson, of Company F, was struck by one with his rifle and then choked down, but was saved by Sergeant Copeland shooting him through the body. He bit one of Watson's fingers nearly off before he was pulled off him. The artillery defeated the regiments on the left and center. Captain Louis Kennen and Frank Hill were wounded and our adjutant, H. P. Cook, had his horse killed under him. Night was made hideous by the cries of the wounded calling to their comrades for assistance which they never received. I posted pickets until 12 o'clock at night when I was relieved by Lieut. Anderson W. Reese, while Lieut. James R. DuBose commanded the company. I don't think another such a battle was fought during the war, 350 rifles and four pieces of artillery against the attack of 3,000 men. All honor to Major Wayne and his gallant command. A braver heart never beat in the breast of man than that of Major R. A. Wayne of the regulars. On the morning of the 8th the enemy got their artillery in position on

the right of the road and shelled our position for several hours, wounding several men and horses. At night we were re-enforced by the 28th Georgia battalion, 32d and 47th Georgia regiments, about 1,500 men all told, with General Robertson in command. Before day on the 9th our troops were in line of battle, the regulars and 32d Georgia on the right and the 28th and 47th Georgia on the left of the road. Skirmishers were advanced on the enemy's works, and found cuffy at his old occupation, fast asleep. The music of the rifles soon had him awake and marching for the rear. Our line of battle moved forward and when within 100 yards of the works were halted. The 32d fired two or three volleys, killing some of our own men in the skirmish line, as they were shot from the rear. There was not a gun fired in the regulars, as they were never known to fire without orders. Major Wayne sent his orderly, and of the Stono scouts to the front to see where our skirmish line was. He passed the line, jumped his horse through an embrasure in the works, then returned and told Major Wayne there was not a d—d Yankee over there. We were again ordered forward, expecting every minute to see the flash of the enemy's cannon, and hear the whirring sound of the grape and canister crashing through our ranks as the regulars were moving on the position occupied by them the day before, but they had fallen back to their first line, where the artillery had been carried the night before. We lost in the attack 100 men, mostly of the 28th and 47th. This first line was too strong to attack, so we held what we had. During the day some of the boys went back where the artillery slaughtered them on the 7th to see what cuffy had in his pockets, but found them empty. They were the colored gentlemen we met while wintering in Florida at a ball given by Generals Finnegan and Seymour at Olustie. They found out who we were and had orders to show no quarter or ask any. The boys found cuffy pretty well shod and pulled his shoes, which were smelling loud and long. They tried to wash it out, but the more they rubbed the worse they smelled, so they had to throw them away. At night our friends went on board of their transports in search of a healthier climate and on the 10th the regulars went to James Island, S. C. Sugar Valley, Ga. — The more shiftless a man is the oftener he shifts from one job to another.

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