

# **DODGE GRENVILLE MELLEN**

THE BATTLE OF ATLANTA

Grenville Dodge

**The Battle of Atlanta**

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# **Grenville Mellen Dodge**

## **The Battle of Atlanta and Other Campaigns, Addresses, Etc**

### **THE SOUTHWESTERN CAMPAIGN**

The Southwest became prominent before the nation early in the war from the doubt existing as to the position of Missouri, which was saved by the energy and determination of Frank P. Blair and Colonel Nathaniel Lyon; the latter first capturing Camp Jackson, on May 10th, 1861. He then, picking up what force he could without waiting for them to be disciplined or drilled, marched rapidly against the Missouri State troops under Price, who were driven to the southwest through Springfield, where, being joined by the troops from Arkansas, under Colonel McCullough, they stood and fought the battle of Wilson's Creek. This would have been a great victory for the Union forces if Lyon had not divided his forces at the request of General Siegel and trusted the latter to carry out his plan of attack in the rear while Lyon attacked in the front. This General Siegel failed to do, leaving the field when the battle was half over, and allowing Lyon to fight it out alone. Even then, if Lyon had not been killed at the head of his Army while fighting the whole force of the enemy, it would have turned out to be a great victory for the Union forces, and would have held that country. The death of Lyon caused a return of his troops to Rolla and Sedalia, and opened up again the whole of Missouri to the Missouri State troops under General Price.

One of the notable facts of this battle of Wilson's Creek was that it was fought by young officers who ranked only as Captains and Lieutenants, all of whom afterwards became distinguished officers in the war – Schofield, Sturgis, Totten, DuBois, and Sweeny – and from the fact that in the first great battle of the Southwest one of the two commanders of Armies falling at the head of their forces in battle was killed here – General Lyon. The other was General McPherson, who fell at Atlanta.

Lyon pursued the tactics of Grant by attacking the enemy wherever to be found, and not taking into consideration the disparity of forces. The excitement caused by Lyon's campaigns induced the Government to create the Western Department, and assign to it on July 25th, 1861, General John C. Fremont as its commander.

In August, 1861, I landed in St. Louis with my Regiment, the Fourth Iowa Infantry, and soon after was sent to Rolla, Mo., which was then the most important outpost, being the nearest to the enemy's Army. Soon after I reached there General Fremont commenced formulating his plans for the campaign in the South, and being the commander of that outpost I was in daily communication with him. There was a constant stream of reports coming from the enemy's lines that seemed to give great importance to their strength and their position, and I was continually ordered to send out scouts and troops to test the information. I invariably found it wrong and my telegrams will show my opinion of those reports.

Soon after arriving at Rolla I was placed in command of the post, and had quite a force under me, and was ordered to prepare to winter there.

The battle of Wilson's Creek was fought on August 10th, and soon thereafter General Price formed his plan of campaign to move north into north Missouri and endeavor to hold it by the recruits that he could obtain there. With from five to ten thousand men of the Missouri State Guards, General Price moved, and as he marched north in September his Army increased heavily in numbers and enthusiasm. The Federal forces were scattered all over Missouri – some eighty thousand in all. At least half of these could have been concentrated to operate against any force of the enemy, but they were all protecting towns, cities and railways and endeavoring to make Missouri loyal, while Price

concentrated and moved where he pleased, until, on September 21, 1861, he captured Lexington, with some 3,000 or more prisoners. The movement of Price on Lexington and the defeat and capture of our forces there, forced Fremont to concentrate, and he moved with four Divisions, making an Army of 38,000, on Springfield, which he reached October 27th. Price was then far south of that place. Had our forces been concentrated to meet Price's Army we had enough to defeat him; but the moment Fremont commenced concentrating his four Divisions to act against him, Price moved back as fast as he had advanced, and did not stop until he was south of Springfield and near supports in Arkansas.

General McCullough, in his letters from Springfield, Mo., August 24th, says that there were only 3,000 troops in Springfield and all the Arkansas troops had left the service. Price's total force was about 12,000 men, and on November 7th he reached and joined McCullough and suggested to General A. S. Johnston a campaign against St. Louis, offering to raise in Missouri and Arkansas a force of 25,000 men in such a campaign, and stated he should wait for Fremont at Pineville, Ark., believing in that rugged country he could defeat him.

While at Rolla I was ordered to send a force to take Salem, to the south of me, and I entrusted the command of the force to Colonel Greusel, of the Thirteenth Illinois Infantry. I issued to him the following instructions:

If the men who are away from home are in the rebel Army, or if their families cannot give a good account of them or their whereabouts, take their property or that portion of it worth taking; also their slaves. Be sure that they are aiding the enemy, then take all they have got.

When I wrote these instructions I had not considered for a moment what a row the order to take the slaves would cause. I simply treated them as other property. It was written innocently, but made a sensation I never dreamed of, and I have often since been quoted as one of the first to liberate and utilize the negro.

On the return of Lyon's Army to Rolla I was ordered by General Fremont to report at his headquarters in St. Louis. On my arrival in St. Louis I reported myself to his Adjutant, who was in the basement of the old home of Thomas A. Benton, on Choutau Avenue, but was unable to obtain an interview with the General. I showed my dispatch to his Adjutant-General, and waited there two days. I met any number of staff officers, and was handed about from one to another, never reaching or hearing from General Fremont. After remaining in St. Louis two days I considered it was my duty to return to my command, and left a note to the Adjutant stating that I had waited there two days for an interview with General Fremont, and had left for my command, and that if wanted would return to St. Louis again.

Evidently no communication was made to Fremont of my presence in the city or of my note, for soon after I arrived at Rolla I received a sharp note from him asking why I had not reported as ordered. I answered by wire that I had reported, had been unable to see him, and would report immediately again in St. Louis. I was determined to see him this time, and I, therefore, went directly to Colonel Benton's house, and, taking a sealed envelope in my hand, marched right up the front steps, passed all the guards as though I belonged there, and went into his room and reported myself present. I there learned from him as much of his plans as he thought best to give me in regard to his movements, and obtained from him the information that Price's Army was not far from Rolla, and instructions to be on the alert. I supposed that my command at Rolla was to accompany his march to Springfield, and on my return to Rolla made every preparation to do so, but never received the order. Everything in the department was absolutely chaos. It was impossible to obtain provisions, accouterments, equipment, or anything else upon a proper requisition. Everything seemed to require an order from one of General Fremont's staff, and my own Regiment suffered a long time before I could get for it the necessary arms, clothing, equipment, etc.

While I was at Rolla the dispatch sent by the Government to General Curtis, to be forwarded to Fremont at Springfield, relieving him of the command, was brought by a staff officer to me with the request that I should see that the staff officer had an escort and went through promptly to Springfield. General Curtis, who was from my own state, wrote me a private note stating the importance of pushing this staff officer through. President Lincoln sent the order to General Curtis with this peculiar note:

*Washington, October 24, 1861.*

*Brigadier-General S. R. Curtis:*

My Dear Sir: – Herewith is a document, half letter, half order, which, wishing you to see but not to make public, I send unsealed. Please read it and then inclose it to the officer who may be in command of the Department of the West at the time it reaches you. I cannot know now whether Fremont or Hunter will then be in command. Yours truly,

*A. Lincoln.*

In a few days I received a letter from General Hunter, who had relieved General Fremont, instructing me that thereafter everything in the department must be carried on in accordance with the orders of the War Department and the Army Regulations, and I immediately saw a change for the better. I was soldier enough, although I had not had much experience then, to know that the methods being pursued under Fremont could bring nothing but disaster to the service. Every order was signed by somebody acting as a General, a Colonel, or something else, while in fact many of them had no rank whatever, and in looking over my own orders I do not know why I did not sign myself as an Acting General, as those who succeeded me did. Even after General Halleck took command I noticed in the orders of General Hunter that he assigned persons to the command of a Brigade as Acting Brigadier-Generals instead of their rank as Colonel Commanding, etc.

I remained at Rolla until the return of the troops under General Hunter; and finally those commanded by Sigel, Asboth and Osterhaus were encamped at Rolla outside of the post and were reporting directly to the commanding officer of the department, while I as post commander reported directly to the same authority.

General Hunter as soon as he took command wired the War Department that there was no force of the enemy in his neighborhood, although orders had been given by Fremont a day or two before to march out and fight Price's Army. Hunter, therefore, in accordance with his orders from Washington, abandoned the pursuit, although with the force he had he could have driven Price and McCullough south of the Arkansas River, and probably have avoided the later campaign that ended in the Battle of Pea Ridge. Hunter moved his forces back to Rolla and Sedalia and sent 18,000 of his men to join General Grant in the campaigns up the Tennessee River.

This force at Rolla was mostly Germans, and the change of commanders from Fremont to Hunter, and later to Halleck, was unsatisfactory to them, though one of the officers, General Osterhaus, took no part in the feeling and sentiment that seemed to exist that for success it was necessary to have Fremont or Sigel in command, and my understanding was that the force at Rolla during the winter of 1861-62 was the nucleus of the force that was again to march to the Southwest under the orders of General Halleck and to be commanded by General Sigel. General Halleck, when he assumed command of the department, in his letters to the War Department and his orders to the troops showed plainly his disgust at the condition of matters in that department. He wrote to the War Department:

One week's experience here is sufficient to prove that everything is in complete chaos. The most astounding orders and contracts for supplies of all kinds have been made, and large amounts purported to have been received, but there is

nothing to show that they have ever been properly issued and they cannot now be found.

Of the condition of the troops he found in his department, he wrote:

Some of these corps are not only organized in a way entirely contrary to law, but are by no means reliable, being mostly foreigners, and officered in many cases by foreign adventurers, or perhaps refugees from justice; and, having been tampered with by political partizans for political purposes, they constitute a very dangerous element to society as well as to the Army itself. Wherever they go they convert all Union men into bitter enemies. The men, if properly officered, would make good soldiers, but with their present officers they are little better than an armed mob.

They were not paid, had not been mustered into our service, and the commissions emanated from General Fremont, not from the State or Government.

General Halleck's plans evidently were to make a campaign against Price as soon as he could organize the forces concentrated at Rolla. Price's headquarters were at Springfield, and his northerly line was along the Osage Valley. His force was estimated anywhere from 10,000 to 30,000. As outposts General Halleck had Rolla, Jefferson City, and Sedalia. There was located at Rolla five or six thousand troops; at Sedalia and along that line about ten or twelve thousand, under General Pope, including Jeff C. Davis's Division; but these troops Halleck intended to send down the Mississippi and up the Tennessee.

General Pope in his letters to General Halleck urged that he be allowed to move on Price and destroy his Army, which he said he could do with his force. Rumors of Price's force and their movements were a constant terror and excitement throughout Missouri. The whole of northern Missouri was aroused by Price's proximity, and all the counties had recruiting officers from his Army enrolling and sending it recruits. The numbers of these recruiting officers and their small squads of recruits were magnified into thousands, and Price, when he sent a thousand men to Lexington for the purpose of holding that place and recruiting, brought orders from Halleck for a movement of all the troops to cut him off. The prompt movement of Halleck kept him from remaining there very long, but he was enabled to take about three thousand recruits from there without molestation from us.

Price's campaign as planned for the winter was to have General McCullough's Arkansas force, which was lying at Cross Timbers, near Elkhorn Tavern, and Van Buren in Arkansas, join him. Price complained bitterly of his inability to obtain any aid from McCullough, stating that if he could obtain it he could march into northern Missouri and hold the State, and recruit there an Army of Missourians; which, from my experience in the State, I have no doubt he would have done if he could have moved there and held his position.

General Halleck's plan evidently was to move a body from Rolla directly on Springfield, with the intention of striking and defeating Price before Price could receive reinforcements, but Halleck had a great disinclination to move until he had organized the forces in the State of Missouri into Brigades and Divisions, had them properly mustered and officered, and had his staff departments so arranged that they could be depended upon to take care of any moving column. This disinclination of Halleck to move carried us on to the first of January.

In December General Siegel was given command of the troops at Rolla, and Captain Phil Sheridan was sent there as Quartermaster for that Army. His ability and foresight in organizing the transportation of an Army, feeding it, and fitting it for a campaign, was shown every day.

On December 26th General Halleck assigned General S. R. Curtis to the command of the District of Southwest Missouri. This included the forces under Siegel at Rolla, and caused very severe comments from them. From the letters of Halleck, written at the time and afterwards, this placing of Siegel under Curtis was caused by the letters and opinions – in fact, the denunciations – of Siegel made by Captains Schofield, Totten, and Sturgis, when with Lyon in the Wilson's Creek campaign.



Evidently Halleck lost all faith in Siegel as commander of the Southwestern Army, and therefore assigned Brigadier-General Samuel R. Curtis, who had been stationed at St. Louis, to the command. But General Siegel was still left in command of two Divisions of the troops near Rolla, which was a great mistake.

As soon as General Curtis assumed command General Halleck commenced urging him to move to the south on Springfield, agreeing to send to him Colonel Jeff C. Davis's Division to join him before reaching Springfield, which Division was about 5,000 strong, and was with Pope on the Lamine River line. Curtis hesitated, and did not feel secure with the forces he had, although Halleck did not believe Price would stand for a fight, or that Curtis would need Jeff C. Davis's Division.

The Army of the Southwest, about seven thousand strong, was organized at Rolla, and moved from there January 14th, towards Springfield, halting at Lebanon. From Lebanon it moved on to Marshfield, where Colonel Jeff C. Davis, with his Division, joined it. Great preparations were made there for the attack upon Price, and we moved out of Marshfield prepared for battle, General Siegel commanding the First and Second Divisions, one under General Osterhaus and the other under General Asboth. General Jeff C. Davis, from General Pope's Army, commanded the Third Division, and Colonel Eugene A. Carr the Fourth Division, a Brigade of which I commanded.

When within about three miles of Springfield we received orders to attack that town the next morning, and moved at midnight. All the reports we received were that Price was in Springfield ready for battle. I had the extreme left, and put out my skirmishers soon after midnight, supposing, of course, that I was in front of the enemy, although I had seen nothing of them. In the darkness I lost track of the company of the Fourth Iowa, who were the skirmishers of my Brigade, and was greatly worried at the fact, but at daylight I met them on the road mounted upon horses and dressed in all kinds of costumes. The officer in command, who was an enterprising one, had started his skirmish-line, and, not meeting any enemy, had pushed right into Springfield, which he found evacuated except for a rear guard and a number of horses. They mounted the horses and rode back to us. All this time our extreme right, under Siegel, was using its artillery upon the town, not knowing that the enemy had gone.

General Curtis, in his order of battle, instructed Captain Sheridan to line up his transportation in the rear of the line of battle, so that it could be used as a defensive obstruction for the troops to fall back to, provided they met any check or were driven back. Captain Sheridan looked on this order as a very singular one, and says that he could, in his imagination, if anything happened our army, see his transportation flying over that rough country, knowing that his mule-drivers would be the first to run, most likely from a false report, not even waiting for an attack. While this order at the time caused no comment, it now, after our long experience, looks very ridiculous, though not more so than many others, we received at the beginning of the war.

It was not long before we were all on the march through and beyond Springfield, Price and his Army being in full retreat, with a force, so far as we could learn, of about ten thousand men. We followed him as rapidly as possible, he leaving a strong rear guard under Colonel Little to stop us at every stream. General Siegel had urged upon General Curtis a detour by his two Divisions to head off Price or stop him, so that he could attack him in front while we attacked his rear. Curtis had acceded to this. I had the advance following up Price, and endeavored to hold him, while Siegel moved by another road, expecting to catch him in flank or get ahead of him.

I remember that about noon of each day at some good defensive point, generally across a creek with a wide, open valley, Price would open out with his artillery and cavalry and act as though he intended to give battle. Our cavalry would fall back to give way to our infantry, and we would go into line, put out our skirmishers, and lose half a day, and as night came on Price would get out without our accomplishing anything. I remember distinctly that my Regiment would go into line, strip themselves, and throw down the chickens, potatoes, apples, and other eatables they had foraged and taken during the day, and as they would go forward the troops in our rear would come up and

gobble what they had dropped. About the third time the Regiment went into line I noticed the boys had left nothing but their knapsacks, and were holding on to their chickens and provisions. One of the boys saw me looking at them, and thinking I was going to order them to drop what they had in their hands or on their backs, he appealed to me, saying, "Colonel, we have fed that damned Thirty-sixth Illinois Infantry every day and left ourselves without any supper. They put up this game that is going on to get our chickens. There ain't any Price on that side of the river, and they can't fool us any longer if they do you."

At Cane Creek, Flat Creek, Sugar Creek, etc., we had pretty sharp skirmishes. I soon discovered the plan of Price. It was to leave a strong rear-guard and make a great show while his trains and the rest of his Army were pushing to the South as fast as possible; so as soon as I saw him stop I went at him head-on with the cavalry and infantry, not even waiting to deploy more than a Regiment. Price's men would line the road and get one or two volleys at us and then slip off into the woods before we could deploy or return their fire. They did not get hurt much, but we did; but at the same time it broke up his game of holding us back, and we kept close on to his rear. For two or three days we were looking for Siegel to get in ahead and check Price, when to our astonishment a report came from our rear that he had turned his column in on our road some eight miles behind us, and there was a general howl from the force that had been pounding away at Price's rear.

Finally we pushed Price back to Fayetteville, Ark., where we landed during the month of February, and where we were halted by General Halleck's orders, who stated that he would relieve our front of the enemy by his movements with the rest of his forces through Southeast Missouri, down the Mississippi, and up the Tennessee.

While Price was laying at Springfield, in December, he communicated with the Confederate Government, and changed all his Missouri State force as far as practicable into Confederate troops. He also complained to the Government, and to General Polk, who commanded at Columbus, Ky., of the impossibility of obtaining the co-operation of the Confederate forces west of the Mississippi River. From the representations of Polk and Price, the Confederate Government organized all the country west of the Mississippi River into a department known as the Trans-Mississippi District, and placed it under the command of General Earl Van Dorn, who assumed command early in February, 1862. As soon as he assumed command General Van Dorn prepared to make an aggressive campaign, using all his forces in Arkansas and those under Price, estimating that they would reach 30,000 troops. His plan was to move his forces directly from Arkansas northward, west of Iron Mountain, by way of Salem, while Price moved from Springfield directly east and joined his column by way of Salem and Rolla, thence the combined column to move directly on St. Louis, Van Dorn calculating that he could strike and capture St. Louis before Halleck could concentrate his troops or obtain any knowledge of his movements that would enable him to defeat him before reaching St. Louis. Van Dorn expected to make this move in February, and his plans and the energy with which he executed them and concentrated his troops shows him to have been an officer of ability and great energy. General Halleck's prompt movement of General Curtis's army from Rolla southwest in January, thus driving Price out of Springfield, compelled Van Dorn to change his plans, and instead of moving towards St. Louis he moved his troops by Van Buren and the Boston Mountains, making a junction with Price's force in the Boston Mountains below Fayetteville, and while General Curtis's Army was laying at Cross Hollows, evidently in full security, thinking his campaign was over and expecting Price and Van Dorn to be drawn away from his front by the movement down the Mississippi. General Curtis was obliged to scatter his forces in that destitute country over a wide expanse so as to obtain food and forage. Van Dorn, without our having any knowledge of the fact, marched over the Boston Mountains, and it was March 3d before General Curtis was aware that Van Dorn was almost in his front and on his flank. The Union refugees flying before Van Dorn's movement gave us the first reliable notice of the new combination and the new movement. General Curtis immediately sent out orders, and, by marching all night, during heavy snows and severe cold weather, was able to concentrate most of

his force on Sugar Creek, near Bentonville. General Siegel and his force did not move promptly, as ordered by Curtis, and was almost cut off before reaching Bentonville. He had to cut his way through a portion of Van Dorn's Cavalry, which he was able to do without much loss, and our line was formed on the north side of Sugar Creek, facing to the south, – a strong position, – expecting to receive Van Dorn's attack on the main telegraph road from Fayetteville to Springfield. We were on a plateau with a broad open valley in our front. In the rear of us was what was known as the Cross Timbers, a deep gorge. To the west of us was much open ground, over which was a road parallel to the main road, passing down what was known as Little Cross Timbers, and entering the Springfield and Fayetteville road about midway between Elkhorn Tavern and Cassville, some four miles in our rear.

While I was in command at Rolla I had organized by details from the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Missouri Regiments a Corps of scouts who lived in Northern Arkansas and Southern Missouri and were thoroughly acquainted with that country. During the day of the 6th of March, while Siegel was joining us and we were preparing for the battle, some of these scouts came to me and told me that Van Dorn proposed to move to our rear by this Little Cross Timber road. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon I went to General Curtis and reported these facts to him, and also told him of this road and of the feasibility of blockading it, supposing, of course, he would send some of the troops on his extreme right to do it; but he turned to me and said: "You take a portion of your command and go there and blockade the road."

It was after dark before I could reach the Little Cross Timbers, as I had to march infantry to the place, which was quite a distance away from where we were. I took six companies of the Fourth Iowa Infantry and one company of the Third Illinois Cavalry and marched to carry out this order. In the dark two of my companies crossed the road and got lost, while with the other five I got into Cross Timbers Hollows and spent about three hours felling trees all through the gorge, and only left when my cavalry reported the movement of Van Dorn's Army coming down the road. I returned to my camp supposing my two companies had been cut off, but upon discovering that the enemy were coming down the road they managed to get back across it and reached the camp.

I reported immediately to General Curtis's headquarters, and informed him that Van Dorn's Army was moving down that road to his rear. He did not believe it, and thought that I had mistaken some of his cavalry for Van Dorn's Army. There were no pickets out on our right flank, and I so reported to General Curtis, but evidently my report made no impression upon him, and I returned to camp.

Early on the morning of the 7th of March I received a request from General Curtis to report at a schoolhouse that was on the main Fayetteville road a half mile north of Sugar Creek, where I met all the commanders of Divisions, and, I think, some of the Brigade commanders, and where a council of war was being held as to the policy that was to be pursued. I was so confident that Van Dorn was in our rear that when I went to this council I took my Brigade and halted it on the road near where the council was to be held. Generals Siegel, Asboth, and a majority of the officers present, advised that we should fall back to Cassville towards Springfield, and not give battle there, but Colonel Jeff C. Davis and myself protested, and I stated that I believed a portion of Van Dorn's force was then in our rear. The rear of Curtis's Army was in a great deal of confusion; its trains were stretched out on the Fayetteville road and the ground that we were upon was wooded and not very defensible for a battle, unless they attacked us on the Sugar Creek front.

While we were in this council, about 8:30 a. m., scattered firing commenced in our rear near the Elkhorn Tavern, and General Curtis inquired what it was, and asked what troops those were that were out upon the road. I answered that they were mine, and he ordered Colonel Carr to immediately send me to the Elkhorn Tavern and ascertain what the firing meant.

Colonel Carr evidently was of the same opinion as myself, and accompanied me as I moved as rapidly as possible to the Elkhorn Tavern, where we went without being deployed right into battle; in fact, right into the enemy's skirmishers. The fact is, the first notice I had that the battle was on was

when a shell fell among my drummers and fifers, who were at the head of my Regiment, and killed and demoralized them, so that we heard no more of drumming and fifing that day. I immediately deployed a company of the Fourth Iowa, which had been thoroughly drilled as skirmishers, and pushed forward toward the White River road, seeing some teams of the enemy passing that way with forage, and I pushed down the slopes of the Cross Timber Hollows nearly a mile before I developed the enemy in force.

The firing of the artillery and the sharp skirmish firing of my movement satisfied Colonel Carr that the enemy was in force in my front, and he immediately sent back word for his other Brigade, Commanded by Colonel Vandever, of the Ninth Iowa Infantry, to come to the rear, now our front. They had hardly reached the Elkhorn Tavern and deployed into line before Price's whole Army moved in on us in line of battle and disabled two of our batteries. The fighting on this front, with only Carr's two Brigades in line, the strength of both not exceeding three thousand men, was kept up continuously all day, until dark, with varying success.

As soon as I saw, near the middle of the day, the formation of the enemy, I knew that I could not hold the extended line we were covering, and I commenced drawing in my right and closing on Vandever until I backed down through an open field that had been cleared, and where the logs had been hauled to the lower edge of the slope to make a fence. Behind these logs I placed my Brigade and fought all the afternoon, with the enemy sometimes around both flanks and sometimes in my rear.

Colonel Vandever held his line at the Elkhorn Tavern in the edge of thick timber on the main Fayetteville road until late in the afternoon, fighting desperately, when the enemy, taking advantage of the timber as a blind, by largely superior numbers, drove him back across an open field to a line of woods in his rear and in my rear, which he successfully held. I was not aware of his movement until the fire in that direction slackened, and I sent out my adjutant, Lieutenant James A. Williamson (afterwards a Brevet Major-General), who returned and reported that the enemy were in possession of that field; in fact, he ran right into them and received their fire, but got back to me safely. It was then nearly dark. The fire on my front had slackened, and my Brigade was almost entirely out of ammunition. I immediately ordered them to form in column and led them right out from the right, moving in the direction where Vandever's Brigade had formed in its new position. As I moved out I passed right in sight of a column of the Confederate forces, who evidently had come out of the hollow and were forming to again attack Vandever. They probably thought I was a portion of their force, for they made no demonstration towards me, and I passed right by them. As I passed out into the open I could see that General Asboth, who had been brought there by General Curtis, was forming to attack at the Elkhorn Tavern again; and I met General Curtis, who seemed astonished to find me with my force intact. He asked me where I was going. I told him that I was out of ammunition, and that I was bringing out my force to form it on the new line. Paying the command a high compliment, he immediately ordered me to fix bayonets and to charge on the enemy at the same time that Asboth with his reinforcement moved down the Fayetteville road towards the Elkhorn Tavern. I immediately did this, and passed right back over the field where I had been fighting, but found no enemy. They had evidently left my front at the same time I retired, and I returned and went into line on the right of Vandever's Brigade, probably 500 feet in the rear of the original line, and there we laid all night under arms.

Van Dorn's plan of attack was to throw the Arkansas forces under McCullough and McIntosh on Curtis's right, facing the Little Cross Hollow road, while at the same time General Price with his force moved around us by the Little Cross Timber road to our rear and attacked from the Cross Timbers.

When passing through Little Cross Timber Hollow Price struck the timber blockade, and, as he shows in his report, was held there for a long time before he could clear out the roads and get his forces and artillery through. This delayed his attack in the rear until nearly 10 o'clock in the morning. The two forces of McCullough and Price were separated by a high ridge by the name of Pea Ridge,

over which it was impracticable for them to connect, and, therefore, the two attacks were separate and not in concert.

General McCullough, in attacking from the west, struck General Jeff C. Davis's Division. Davis had a Division of troops that had been thoroughly drilled. He was a very competent officer and handled them with great skill, and the attack of McCullough and McIntosh, though desperate, was without avail, both rebel commanders being killed in the attack, which took all the fight out of the Arkansas troops and made their attacks towards evening of very little effect. Davis pursued them so energetically that after the death of their commanders they straggled off towards Arkansas and no more fighting occurred on that flank.

General Siegel's two Divisions had remained facing Sugar Creek. General Curtis had endeavored to bring them forward, but without avail. A Brigade of General Osterhaus's Division aided General Davis during the latter part of the day, but the Brigade from Asboth's Division did not get into line to help Carr until nearly dark, although General Curtis went in person for them. Colonel Carr's troops had been marching two nights before the battle, and on the night of the 7th he asked General Curtis to relieve them, so they could get some sleep. General Curtis promised they should be relieved by one of General Siegel's Divisions, but they held the line all that night right where they were formed, and when we looked for our relief the next morning we learned that General Siegel and his troops were nearly a mile in our rear, taking their breakfast.

The general plan of General Curtis's attack on the morning of the 8th was for a combined movement on Price's Army by both of General Siegel's Divisions, and General Davis, who had been brought over to our front, holding Carr's Division in reserve. We waited a long time for General Siegel to get into position; and in fact before he got into position Colonel Carr had been brought out from the reserve and placed on the right of Davis. The enemy opened out upon us, and my Brigade holding the right I commenced swinging my line in over the ground I had fought over the day before, and discovered that the enemy were withdrawing from us; were not standing and giving battle; and the fighting on the morning of the 8th was merely a fight of Price's rear-guard to enable him to withdraw by the Huntsville road, he having received orders that morning from Van Dorn to do so, Van Dorn notifying Price that this was necessary, as the Arkansas troops, after the death of McCullough and McIntosh, had most of them retreated to the south, leaving Price's Army the only force intact in our rear, so that he now had the difficult problem of getting away from us.

The fighting lasted but a short time, mostly with artillery, and occasioned very little loss for that day. We soon discovered the rebels fleeing over the hills and down the White River Road, and being nearest to that road I immediately started my Brigade after them. I had not proceeded far when I received an order from General Curtis to return and hold the battle-field. I was a good deal astonished at this, as I could see the enemy demoralized in my front, with their baggage-trains and their artillery, and I had no doubt, (as I knew the country, having had a detachment stationed at Blackburn's Mills, at the crossing of White River, supplying our Army with forage and grain before the battle,) that I could capture this portion of the army before it could make a crossing of White River.

When I arrived on the battle-field General Curtis told me that General Siegel and his Divisions had gone to the rear towards Cassville; in fact, I myself heard him give one of the Brigades that was passing an order to halt there, which they did not obey, but kept on. General Siegel wrote back advising Curtis to form his new line in the rear of Cross Timbers, as Van Dorn might return to the fight, but Curtis instructed Colonel Carr's Division to remain on the field and hold it, which it did. General Curtis afterwards made very severe complaints to General Halleck of the actions of General Siegel, and in answer General Halleck wrote as follows:

I was by no means surprised at General Siegel's conduct before the battle of Pea Ridge. It was plainly in keeping with what he did at Carthage and Wilson's Creek. After your expedition started I received documentary proof from Captains Sturgis, Schofield, and Totten, and a number of other officers, in regard to his

conduct on those occasions, which destroyed all confidence in him. It was for that reason that I telegraphed to you so often not to let Siegel separate from you. I anticipated that he would try to play you a trick by being absent at the critical moment. I wished to forewarn you of the snare, but I could not then give you my reasons. I am glad you prevented his project and saved your army. I cannot describe to you how much uneasiness I felt for you. You saved your army and won a glorious victory by refusing to take his advice.

Captain Kinsman, of Company B, Fourth Iowa, who was holding Pea Ridge, and witnessed the battle from that point, and could look down upon Carr's Division, described the battle in the rear as follows:

At 8:30 o'clock Colonel Dodge opened the ball, and the battle was soon raging all along the line with a fierceness and obstinacy which omened a terrific struggle. The weather was splendid, and the smoke instead of hanging murkily among the trees, rose rapidly and rolled away over the hills in dense sulphurous masses. The thunder of the artillery was terrific, and the shot and shell hissed and screamed through the air like flying devils, while the infantry of both armies, with their rifles, shot-guns, and muskets, kept a perfect hurricane of death howling through the woods. The rebels fought well, but generally fired too high, and their batteries, although getting our range accurately, missed the elevation much of the time. Their poor shooting was our salvation. Had they done as well as our men, with the tremendous odds against us, they must have annihilated us. The enemy were clear around our right flank, enveloping us, and it looked as though they would capture Dodge's Brigade, when Colonel Dodge took a battalion of Colonel Carr's regiment, the Third Illinois cavalry, and charged the forces that were turning our right flank like a whirlwind. Everything gave way before them. Every man in that battalion seemed to ride for his life, and they swept way around our front, routing and demoralizing that flank of the enemy, and effectually freeing our rear and flank. Price told some of our boys of the Fourth Iowa who were captured on the day of the fight and have since escaped, that we fought more like devils than human beings. The rebel colonels (several of them) inquired of our boys who those black-coated fellows were, and who led them. They said there must have been at least 3,000 of them. When the boys told them there were less than 600 of them, the Colonels said they needn't tell them any such stuff as that; that they knew it was a damned lie. But they sent their compliments to Colonel Dodge for the bravery of himself and his command, and well they might, for opposed to Colonel Dodge's Brigade of 1,050 men, and two guns of the First Iowa Battery, were six regiments of Confederate troops, a large force of Confederate Missouri State troops, and eighteen guns, and many of these Confederate troops were the men who did the hard fighting at the Wilson Creek battle. All day, from 8:30 in the morning till 5:30 at night, Dodge's Brigade held its ground, dealing death into the rebel ranks, and, when dark came, with ammunition expended, the Fourth Iowa walked away from the field in good order, with the sullen savage tread of men who might be driven by main strength, but could not be conquered. Although this was one of the first battles of the war, the Northern men showed their desperate fighting qualities; and on the second day the South met and faced great slaughter.

Fayel, the correspondent of the Missouri Democrat, gives this account of the part Colonel Eugene A. Carr's Fourth Iowa Division took in the battle at Elk Horn Tavern:

Having given an account of the battle fought by Brigadier-General Jeff C. Davis's Division, which occurred the same day, on our left, I will now attempt to give some details of the Elk Horn Battle – the latter having commenced early in the morning. First in order comes a description of the locality near Elk Horn Tavern.

The house is on the Fayetteville and Springfield road, about four miles north of Sugar Creek, between which two points our camp was pitched, on the elevated ridge constituting the northern bank of the creek. Leading north from the tavern, the road drops into the head of the long gorge running towards Keetsville seven miles, known as the "Cross Timbers."

Into the strong fastness north of the Tavern the enemy had obtained a lodgment from 10,000 to 15,000 strong in the rear of our wing, on the morning of the 7th. His strength consisted in part of the following rebel Divisions, as was subsequently ascertained: Frost's, Slack's, Parson's, and Rains's; and the batteries of Ghebor, Clark (six pieces), E. McDonald (three pieces), and Wade (four pieces). There was present also one Regiment of Indians, the whole commanded by General Van Dorn in person, and General Price, who directs the Missouri forces.

Early in the morning, while General Curtis was in consultation with his officers regarding a change of front, consequent on the approach of the enemy on the west of us, news came that the enemy were in close vicinity to the Elk Horn Tavern. The General then immediately ordered Colonel Carr to proceed to effect a dislodgment of the enemy. The formidable numbers present at the time not being known, Colonel Carr directed Colonel Dodge, with the First Brigade of the Fourth Division, to take a position near the Elkhorn Tavern, Colonel Carr accompanying the expedition himself. The point indicated was about a mile and a half distant from our camp, the ground being level and gradually ascending, with open fields on either side of the road, interspersed with an occasional belt of timber.

Colonel Dodge having discovered the enemy in the timber to the right, opened the First Iowa Battery on them, causing considerable execution; two rebels on horseback were seen to fall, and the rest fled. The enemy having fled to the hollow, Colonel Dodge deployed his line, covering as much ground as possible, the Thirty-fifth Illinois being on his left. He sent forward a company of skirmishers from the Fourth Iowa, who soon became sharply engaged with the enemy and the latter opened on us a perfect tornado of round shot, shell, and grape. The Thirty-fifth Illinois became engaged, fighting with determined bravery, and about, this time Colonel Smith was wounded in the head by a shell, which took off a part of his scalp. He also received a bullet in his shoulder, and his horse was shot under him, all about the same time. Just before he was wounded, several ammunition-chests exploded, one after the other, wounding Captain Jones and Lieutenant Gamble, who were standing near Colonel Carr, the latter making a fortunate escape. The explosion of a caisson was terrific.

There was a short lull in the storm of leaden hail, during which time the enemy advanced up the hollow through the brush, along the main road, when Colonel Vandever, who had arrived, ordered forward the infantry. A desperate conflict with small arms ensued. Back rolled the tide of battle, the enemy being driven to the foot of the hill, when he reopened the batteries. Our men fought like heroes; many fell covered with wounds. The latter, when brought to the rear by their comrades, encouraged those who were still breasting the fierce cannonade, by hurrahing for the Union.

Colonel Vandever, in leading forward his brigade, had his horse hit twice, and Colonel Phelps, in the van of his own Regiment, had three horses shot under him. Major Geiger, of the same Regiment, and Captain Hayden, of the Dubuque Battery, had two horses shot under them. Major Coyle, of the Ninth Iowa, was wounded in the leg.

Colonel Dodge having discovered that the enemy were preparing for a general attack, changed his front to the right, covering his men with a log fence, thus compelling the enemy to cross an open field to reach him. Our line was formed and we opened fire with one section of a battery, the other pieces having left the field for want of ammunition. The enemy advanced on our right, left, and center, under cover of a destructive fire, poured in on our works under twelve pieces of artillery. The fighting now lasted over two hours, during which time we held our position; only one Brigade contending against at least six thousand rebel infantry and a heavy bombardment from their artillery, the latter playing upon us at short range. Our men fought like heroes without wincing under the galling fire belching forth from behind trees and rocks, and much of the time from a concealed foe. At one time we were reinforced by three rifled pieces from a German battery, which fired four rounds, and then was compelled to withdraw from the field, being flanked by a Regiment of the enemy.

Colonel Dodge, in order to discover the position of the enemy on his right, directed his firing to cease, when a thousand rebel plush caps and black broad brims popped up into view from the bushes, and, forming, they advanced with great confidence to within one hundred feet of our line. Our men were then ordered to pour in a fire on the dastardly enemy, taking good aim. They were thrown into confusion by our murderous volley and fled.

Their places were filled by a fresh Regiment, and Colonel Dodge, finding that the enemy were outflanking him on the right and that his force was too weak to permit an extension of his line, sent for and soon received a reinforcement of five companies of the Eighth Indiana, which were posted on the right. The firing now became terrific. The enemy annoyed us severely by placing a battery on our left, which completely enfiladed our line. The Fourth Iowa now getting short of ammunition, and the Thirty-fifth Illinois having been forced to give way on the left, it was at this critical time that Lieutenant-Colonel Challenor was ordered to rally his men, who were hurled on the enemy, driving his left back a short distance. Having advanced too far, the Lieutenant-Colonel was surrounded and captured with forty of his men. Our ammunition, as before stated, having given out, we fell back to the open field, maintaining our line of battle in splendid order. The enemy rushed forward with their batteries and entire force. The Fourth Iowa halted, turned on them, and checked for a time their advance until the last round of ammunition was exhausted. General Curtis coming up about this stage of the action, was received with a round of cheers from our boys. The General learning that the ammunition had given out, ordered the Fourth Iowa to fix bayonets and charge on the enemy. The men did so briskly, across the field, but found no enemy.

On Colonel Vandever's front the enemy now commenced swarming up the road and along the gorge, and out of the brush in front of us. Our troops fought them bravely, the officers exposing their persons in leading in front of their men; but we were overwhelmed at this time by superior numbers. We retreated across the field, but rallied again along the fence behind our original position. Upon retiring as above mentioned, reinforcements were seen coming up under General Asboth.



In a gallant attempt to resist the advancing column of the enemy, General Asboth received a severe wound in the arm. After the terrible conflict of the day our gallant troops bivouacked in front of the enemy, awaiting the reopening of the conflict in the morning.

Colonel Vandever fought Little's Division. Colonel Dodge's Brigade contended in the morning directly with Rain's and Clark's Divisions, both immediately under the direction of Sterling Price. The latter had his position for some time behind young Clarke's battery.

The enemy fired wagon-nuts, pieces of chain, marble, gravel, and all sorts of projectiles. The overcoat worn by Colonel Dodge was perfectly riddled by the jagged holes made by these unusual missiles.

Colonel Dodge, the day after the battle, received a letter from a widow lady in Illinois, stating that she had three sons in the field fighting for the Union; that her youngest son, who was in feeble health, was in his Brigade, and she asked it as a special favor to her in her loneliness to have him discharged. The young man whose mother had such solicitude in his behalf was named Preston Green, and was killed in the action of the 7th, near Elkhorn, while bravely performing his duty.

During the battle, Colonel Dodge's horse was shot under him. An enlisted man, detailed as clerk in the Adjutant's office, was acting as orderly for Colonel Dodge. When his horse fell, he ordered the orderly to dismount and give him his horse. The orderly said, "You will be killed if you get on another horse; this is the third you have lost." But the orderly dismounted and stood where the Colonel had stood when he asked for the horse, and at that moment was instantly killed by a shot from the enemy. After the battle, the Adjutant, Lieutenant Williamson, found in the orderly's desk a note in which he said he was sure he would be killed in the battle, and in which, also, he left directions as to the disposal of his effects and whom to write to.

In General Price's command there was a Regiment or more of Indians commanded by Colonel Albert B. Pike. They crawled up through the thick timber and attacked my extreme left. I saw them and turned one of the guns of my battery on them, and they left. We saw no more of them, but they scalped and mutilated some of our dead. General Curtis entered a complaint to General Price, who answered that they were not of his command, and that they had scalped some of his dead, and he said he did not approve of their being upon the field. They evidently scalped many of the dead, no matter what side they belonged to.

The battle of Pea Ridge being one of the first of the war and one of unquestioned victory, had a great deal of attention called to it, and for months – in fact for years, and, I think even now – was considered to have been won by General Siegel. The proper credit was not given to General Curtis, while the history and records of the battle show that he was entitled to all of the credit, and fought the battle in opposition to Siegel's views. A statement of the losses shows what commands fought the battle. The total force engaged on our side, according to General Curtis's report, was 10,500 men, formed in four Divisions, Siegel's two Divisions being the largest, the Third and Fourth Divisions having less than 2,000 men each. The losses were:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| First Division,* commanded by Osterhaus            | 144 |
| Second Division,* commanded by Asboth              | 119 |
| Third Division, commanded by Colonel Jeff C. Davis | 329 |
| Fourth Division, commanded by Colonel Carr         | 701 |
| *Divisions were commanded by General Siegel        |     |

Van Dorn's and Price's reports of the battle show how great their defeat was, and why it was, and while for some time General Curtis called anxiously on Halleck for more reinforcements, demanding that the column which was marching South in Kansas be sent to him, Van Dorn and Price, from the time they left the field, never stopped until they landed at Memphis, Tenn., their first movement being towards Pocahontas, with a view of attacking Pope in the rear, who was at New Madrid. Finding New Madrid captured, they turned their forces to Desarc, and were then transported by boats to Memphis. This relieved Missouri of any Confederate force in or near its border, and General Halleck immediately gave General Curtis orders to move on the flank of Van Dorn and keep up with him, but through that swampy, hilly country it was impossible for him to meet Van Dorn, and Curtis with his Army finally landed at Helena, Ark., and most of it joined the Vicksburg siege.

Captain Phil Sheridan was the Quartermaster and Commissary of General Curtis's Army. He kept us in flour, meat, and meal, and sometimes had my whole regiment detailed in running and protecting mills, driving cattle, etc. He had great difficulty in obtaining details, as at that early day a good many commanders, and especially General Siegel and his officers, did not think it the duty of a soldier to be detailed on anything but a soldier's duty; so Sheridan naturally came to me, as he was my Quartermaster while I commanded the post at Rolla, and when with the marching column he camped and tented with me. Sheridan and Curtis had considerable difficulty, and Curtis relieved him and ordered him to report to General Halleck, at St. Louis. We who knew Sheridan's ability, and the necessities of our Army, did all we could to hold him with us. He left us just before the Battle of Pea Ridge, and our Army saw a great difference after he was gone. He used to say to me, "Dodge, if I could get into the line I believe I could do something;" and his ambition was to get as high a rank as I then had and as large a command – a Colonel commanding a Brigade. In his memoirs he pays the Fourth Iowa a great compliment, and says they will have a warm place in his heart during his life.

During the Battle of Pea Ridge Sheridan was at Springfield, Mo., preparing to turn over his property to the officer who was to relieve him, and he there showed his soldierly qualities. The dispatches from Curtis's army had to be relayed at Springfield. The first dispatches after the battle were sent all in praise of General Siegel, and by portions of his command, claiming he had won the battle. Sheridan, knowing this to be untrue, withheld the Siegel dispatches until the telegrams from General Curtis to General Halleck were received, and sent them forward first, notwithstanding the fact that he felt he had been unjustly treated by General Curtis.

This Army had no water or rail communication. It was 300 miles from its nearest supply-depot, and therefore it had to live off of a country that was sparsely settled by poor people; but Sheridan showed that dominant combination of enterprise and energy, by running every mill and using every means of supply within fifty miles of us, that he developed so fully later in the war. He kept us and our stock fairly well supplied; as I remember, there were no complaints. When General Curtis concluded to relieve him, I went with others and endeavored to induce him to change his mind. I had had experience and knew what it was to have an Army well fed a long ways from its base, and I felt that if we lost Sheridan we would suffer, which later proved to be the case; but General Curtis did not listen to us. In fact, he was angry at our appeal, and his Adjutant, General McKinney, came to see us afterwards and urged us not to press the matter; if we did, he said, we might go to the rear with Sheridan.

At the Battle of Pea Ridge and during the campaign we were very destitute of all hospital appliances for the care of the wounded, and the ability and ingenuity of our medical staff in supplying our wants was inestimable. The day after the battle, when we had all our own wounded and so many of the enemy's with us, Mrs. Governor Phelps, the wife of Governor Phelps, of Missouri, who commanded the Twenty-fifth Missouri Infantry, arrived on the field with a general supply of sanitary goods, a part of which had been sent to my Regiment from Philadelphia by the father and mother of Captain Ford, who was then a Lieutenant in Company B, Fourth Iowa Infantry. These were a great relief, as fully one-third of my command were killed and wounded, and were suffering for want of

this class of goods. Mrs. Phelps spent her time day and night on the field aiding the surgeons and succoring the wounded.

General Curtis endeavored to send all the wounded to the rear who could stand the trip. I was hauled 250 miles over a rough road in an ambulance, and if any of you have had the same experience you can judge what I suffered. Captain Burton, of my Regiment, who was severely wounded in the arm, sat on the front seat of that ambulance the whole distance, and never murmured, although he came near losing his arm from the exposure. It was during this ambulance trip, while lying on my back, that I received a telegraphic dispatch from General Halleck notifying me of my promotion for services in this battle. It was thought, and was also stated in the papers, that I could not live, and I told General Halleck afterwards that they expected to have the credit of making a Brigadier-General and at the same time to have a vacancy, too, but that on the vacancy I fooled them, for the promotion insured my getting well.

This campaign demonstrated early in the war what could be accomplished by a small Army 300 miles away from any rail or water communication, in a rugged, mountainous, sparsely settled county, marching in winter, and virtually subsisting upon the country. Nothing escaped that Army that was eatable.

The Battle of Pea Ridge was fought by the two Divisions commanded by Carr and Davis, not exceeding 6,000 men, and it is a lesson in war that is very seldom appreciated: that no one can tell what the result of a battle may be, and that even where forces are very wide apart in numbers it is not always the larger force that wins. In this battle Van Dorn had put twice as many men into the fight as Curtis did, and still was defeated. His dividing his force and attacking our Army at two different points was fatal to his success, as General Curtis had the inside line and could move from one part of his command to another within an hour, while for Van Dorn to move from one portion of his Army to the other would have taken at least half a day, and therefore he was whipped in detail. If he had thrown his whole force upon Curtis's right flank at the point where McCullough fought and was overwhelmed by Davis's Division, there would have been great danger of our Army being defeated, or at least forced to the rear.

There was no strategy nor tactics in this battle; it was simply men standing up and giving and taking, and the one that stood the longest won the battle. The only strategy or tactics was the movement of Van Dorn attacking on the right flank and in the rear, and these moves were fatal to his success. Curtis's Army fought each man for himself. Every commander fought his own part of the battle to the best of his ability, and I think the feeling of all was that unless they won they would have to go to Richmond, as the enemy was in the rear, which fact made us desperate in meeting and defeating the continued attacks of the enemy. I sent for reinforcements once when the enemy was clear around my right flank and in my rear, and they sent me a part of the Eighth Indiana, two companies of the Third Illinois Cavalry, and a section of a battery. The battery fought ten minutes under a heavy fire. The four companies of the Eighth Indiana lined up alongside the Fourth Iowa, and stayed there fighting bravely until the end. The Third Illinois held my right flank. The officer who brought this force to me was Lieutenant Shields, of my own Regiment, who was acting as aid on Colonel Carr's staff. As he rode up to me to report the Eighth Indiana he halted alongside of me, and at the same instant both of our horses fell dead without a struggle – something very unusual. I was quick, and jumped clear of my horse, but Shields's horse fell upon him. I walked away, not thinking of Shields; but he called back to me and said, "Colonel, you are not going to leave me this way are you?" and I returned and helped him from under his horse. An examination of the two horses made the next day, showed that they must have been killed by the same bullet, which passed through their necks at the same place, killing them instantly.

A log house was used by us early in the morning as a temporary hospital. When my skirmishers fell back this log house was left in the lines of the enemy, and Hospital Steward Baker, of the Fourth Iowa, was left in charge of the wounded there. When General Price came up he asked him who

those black-coated devils were, and when Baker told him there were only six hundred he did not believe him. He said no six hundred men could stand such attacks, and paid the Brigade a very high compliment for their fighting, and told Baker to give them his compliments.

I never returned to this Army, but many of the troops who fought so gallantly fought afterwards in Corps and Armies that I was connected with. My own Regiment went into battle with 548 rank and file present. Company B was on detailed service holding Pea Ridge, and had no casualties in line of battle. My Regiment was greatly reduced from sickness and men on furlough, but the bravery and steadiness with which those with me fought was a surprise and a great satisfaction to me. One-third of them fell, and not a straggler left the field. I had drilled the Regiment to most all kinds of conditions – in the open, in the woods – and many complained, and thought I was too severe, as many Regiments at the posts where they were stationed only had the usual exercises; but after this, their first battle, they saw what drilling, maneuvers, and discipline meant, and they had nothing but praise for the severe drilling I had given them. They never fell under my command again, but on every field that they fought they won the praise of their commanders, and General Grant ordered that they should place on their banners, "First at Chickasaw Bayou."

I have never thought that General Curtis has received the credit he was entitled to for this campaign and battle. With 12,000 men he traversed Missouri into Arkansas, living off the country, and showing good judgment in concentrating to meet Van Dorn and refusing to retreat when urged to do so at the conference at the log schoolhouse on the morning of the 7th. The night of the 7th I know some officers thought we ought to try to cut ourselves out to the East, Price being in our rear; but Curtis said he would fight where we were. He then had no knowledge of the condition of the enemy. On the morning of the 8th he brought General Siegel's two Divisions into the fight and concentrated on Price, whose fighting was simply to cover his retreat. General Curtis failed to reap the full benefit of the battle because Siegel went to Cassville, leaving only Davis's and Carr's Divisions on the field. We who took part in this campaign appreciate the difficulties and obstacles Curtis had to overcome, and how bravely and efficiently he commanded, and we honor him for it. So did General Halleck; but the Government, for some reason, failed to give him another command in the field, though they retained him in command of departments to the end of the war.

## Letter of General Grenville M. Dodge to his Father on the Battle of Pea Ridge

*St. Louis, Mo., April 2, 1862.*

DEAR FATHER: – I know there is no one who would like to have a word from me more than you. I write but little – am very weak from my wounds; do not sit up much; but I hope ere long to be all right again. Nothing now but the battle will interest you. It was a terrible three days to me; how I got through God only knows. I got off a sick bed to go to the fight, and I never got a wink of sleep for three days and three nights. The engagement was so long and with us so hot that it did not appear possible for us to hold our ground. We lacked sadly in numbers and artillery, but with good judgment and good grit we made it win. My officers were very brave. Little Captain Taylor would stand and clap his hands as the balls grew thick. Captain Burton was as cool as a cucumber, and liked to have bled to death; then the men, as they crawled back wounded, would cheer me; cheer for the Union; and always say, "Don't give up Colonel, hang to em;" and many who were too badly wounded to leave the field stuck to their places, sitting on the ground, loading and firing. I have heard of brave acts, but such determined pluck I never before dreamed of. My flag-bearer, after having been wounded so he could not hold up the colors, would not leave them. I had to peremptorily order him off. One time when the enemy charged through my lines the boys drove them back in confusion. Price fought bravely; his men deserved a better fate, but although two to one they could not gain much. Their artillery was served splendidly – they had great advantage over us in this. Mine run out of ammunition long before night and left me to the mercy of their grape and canister. Had I have had my full battery at night I could have whipped them badly. After the Fourth Iowa's ammunition gave out or before this all the other Regiments and Brigades had given way, leaving me without support, and when I found my ammunition gone I never felt such a chilling in my life. It is terrible right in the midst of a hot contest to have your cartridges give out. We had fired forty-two rounds, and had but a few left. I saved them and ceased firing, falling back to my supports. The enemy charged me in full force. I halted and they came within fifty feet. We opened on them such a terrible fire they fled. General Curtis rode into the field then and asked me to charge. This would have blanched anybody but an Iowa soldier. No ammunition and to charge! We fixed bayonets, and as I gave the order the boys cheered and cheered, swinging their hats in every direction. CHARGE! and such a yell as they crossed that field with, you never heard – it was unearthly and scared the rebels so bad they never stopped to fire at us or to let us reach them. As we marched back, now dark, nearly one-half the entire Army had got on the ground and the black-coats (Fourth Iowa) had got their fame up. The charge without ammunition took them all, and as we passed down the line the whole Army cheered us. General Curtis complimented us on the field, and what was left of the Fourth Iowa held their heads high that night, though a gloomy one for those who knew our situation. The next morning it fell to my lot to open the battle with my artillery again, and for one hour we poured it into them hot and heavy. We opened with thirty-two guns; they answered with as many, and such a roar you never heard. The enemy could not stand it and fled. Our whole army deployed in sight that morning and it was a grand sight with the artillery playing in open view. I had read of such things, but they were beyond my conception. This closed the battle and we breathed free. I escaped most miraculously. A shell burst right in front of me, and, tearing away my saddle holsters and taking off a large piece of my pants, never even scratched me. My clothes were riddled and I got a hit in the side that is serious, but did not think of it at the time.

*Yours, etc., G. M.*

# THE BATTLE OF ATLANTA

**Fought July 22, 1864**

**A Paper Read Before New York Commandery**

**M. O. L. L**

**By Major-General Grenville M. Dodge**

*Companions:*

On the 17th day of July, 1864, General John B. Hood relieved General Joseph E. Johnston in command of the Confederate Army in front of Atlanta, and on the 20th Hood opened an attack upon Sherman's right, commanded by General Thomas. The attack was a failure, and resulted in a great defeat to Hood's Army and the disarrangement of all his plans.

On the evening of the 21st of July, General Sherman's Army had closed up to within two miles of Atlanta, and on that day Force's Brigade of Leggett's Division of Blair's Seventeenth Army Corps carried a prominent hill, known as Bald or Leggett's Hill, that gave us a clear view of Atlanta, and placed that city within range of our guns. It was a strategic point, and unless the swing of our left was stopped it would dangerously interfere with Hood's communications towards the south. Hood fully appreciated this, and determined upon his celebrated attack in the rear of General Sherman's Army.

On the 22d of July, the Army of the Tennessee was occupying the rebel intrenchments, its right resting very near the Howard House, north of the Augusta Railroad, thence to Leggett's Hill, which had been carried by Force's assault on the evening of the 21st. From this hill Giles A. Smith's Division of the Seventeenth Army Corps stretched out southward on a road that occupied this ridge, with a weak flank in air. To strengthen this flank, by order of General McPherson I sent on the evening of the 21st one Brigade of Fuller's Division, the other being left at Decatur to protect our parked trains. Fuller camped his Brigade about half a mile in the rear of the extreme left and at right angles to Blair's lines and commanding the open ground and valley of the forks of Sugar Creek, a position that proved very strong in the battle. Fuller did not go into line; simply bivouacked ready to respond to any call.

On the morning of the 22d of July, General McPherson called at my headquarters and gave me verbal orders in relation to the movement of the Second (Sweeney's) Division of my command, the Sixteenth Corps, which had been crowded out of the line by the contraction of our lines as we neared Atlanta, and told me that I was to take position on the left of the line that Blair had been instructed to occupy and intrench that morning, and cautioned me about protecting my flank very strongly. McPherson evidently thought that there would be trouble on that flank, for he rode out to examine it himself.

I moved Sweeney in the rear of our Army, on the road leading from the Augusta Railway down the east branch of Sugar Creek to near where it forks; then, turning west, the road crosses the west branch of Sugar Creek just back of where Fuller was camped, and passed up through a strip of woods and through Blair's lines near where his left was refused. Up this road Sweeney marched until he reached Fuller, when he halted, waiting until the line I had selected on Blair's proposed new left could be intrenched, so that at mid-day, July 22d, the position of the Army of the Tennessee was

as follows: One Division of the Fifteenth across and north of the Augusta Railway facing Atlanta; the balance of the Fifteenth and all of the Seventeenth Corps behind intrenchments running south of the railway along a gentle ridge with a gentle slope and clear valley facing Atlanta in front, and another clear valley in the rear. The Sixteenth Corps was resting on the road described, entirely in the rear of the Seventeenth and Fifteenth Corps, and facing from Atlanta. To the left and left-rear the country was heavily wooded. The enemy, therefore, was enabled, under cover of the forest, to approach close to the rear of our lines.

On the night of July 21st Hood had transferred Hardee's Corps and two Divisions of Wheeler's Cavalry to our rear, going around our left flank, Wheeler attacking Sprague's Brigade of the Sixteenth Army Corps at Decatur, where our trains were parked. At daylight, Stewart's and Cheatham's Corps and the Georgia Militia were withdrawn closer to Atlanta, and placed in a position to attack simultaneously with Hardee, the plan thus involving the destroying of the Army of the Tennessee by attacking it in rear and front and the capturing of all its trains corraled at Decatur. Hardee's was the largest Corps in Hood's Army, and according to Hood there were thus to move upon the Army of the Tennessee about 40,000 troops.

Hood's order of attack was for Hardee to form entirely in the rear of the Army of the Tennessee, but Hardee claims that he met Hood on the night of the 21st; that he was so late in moving his Corps that they changed the plan of attack so that his left was to strike the Seventeenth Corps. He was to swing his right until he enveloped and attacked the rear of the Seventeenth and Fifteenth Corps.

Hood stood in one of the batteries of Atlanta, where he could see Blair's left and the front line of the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Corps. He says he was astonished to see the attack come on Blair's left instead of his rear, and charges his defeat to that fact; but Hardee, when he swung his right and came out in the open, found the Sixteenth Corps in line in the rear of our Army, and he was as much surprised to find us there as our Army was at the sudden attack in our rear. The driving back by the Sixteenth Corps of Hardee's Corps made the latter drift to the left and against Blair, – not only to Blair's left, but into his rear, – so that what Hood declares was the cause of his failure was not Hardee's fault, as his attacks on the Sixteenth Corps were evidently determined and fierce enough to relieve him from all blame in that matter.

Historians and others who have written of the Battle of Atlanta have been misled by being governed in their data by the first dispatches of General Sherman, who was evidently misinformed, as he afterwards corrected his dispatches. He stated in the first dispatch that the attack was at 11 a. m., and on Blair's Corps, and also that General McPherson was killed about 11 a. m. The fact is, Blair was not attacked until half an hour after the attack upon the Sixteenth Corps, and McPherson fell at about 2 p. m. General Sherman was at the Howard House, which was miles away from the scene of Hardee's attack in the rear, and evidently did not at first comprehend the terrific fighting that was in progress, and the serious results that would have been effected had the attack succeeded.

The battle began within fifteen or twenty minutes of 12 o'clock (noon) and lasted until midnight, and covered the ground from the Howard House along the entire front of the Fifteenth (Logan's) Corps, the Seventeenth (Blair's) on the front of the Sixteenth (which was formed in the rear of the Army), and on to Decatur, where Sprague's Brigade of the Sixteenth Army Corps met and defeated Wheeler's Cavalry – a distance of about seven miles.

The Army of the Tennessee had present on that day at Atlanta and Decatur about 26,000 men; there were 10,000 in the Fifteenth Army Corps, 9,000 in the Sixteenth Corps, and 7,000 in the Seventeenth. About 21,000 of these were in line of battle. Three Brigades of the Sixteenth Corps were absent, the Sixteenth Corps having 5,000 men in a single line which received the attack of the four Divisions of Hardee's Corps, Hardee's left, Cleburn's Division lapping the extreme left of Blair and joining Cheatham's Corps which attacked Blair from the Atlanta front; and, according to Hood, they were joined by the Georgia Militia under General Smith. Extending down the line in front of the Armies of the Ohio and the Cumberland, Stewart's Corps occupied the works and held the lines

in front of the Army of the Cumberland. The Sixteenth Army Corps fought in the open ground; the Fifteenth and Seventeenth behind intrenchments.

Where I stood just at the rear of the Sixteenth Army Corps, I could see the entire line of that corps, and could look up and see the enemy's entire front as they emerged from the woods, and I quickly saw that both of my flanks were overlapped by the enemy. Knowing General McPherson was some two miles away, I sent a staff officer to General Giles A. Smith, requesting him to refuse his left and protect the gap between the Seventeenth Corps and my right, which he sent word he would do. Later, as the battle progressed, and I saw no movement on the part of General Smith, I sent another officer to inform him that the enemy were passing my right flank, which was nearly opposite his center, and requested him to refuse his left immediately, or he would be cut off. This officer (Lieutenant D. Sheffly, who belonged to the Signal Corps, and acted as my aide only for the time being) found, on reaching Smith, that he was just becoming engaged; that he had received orders to hold his line, with a promise that other troops would be thrown into the gap.

My second messenger, Lieutenant Sheffly, returning over the road upon which McPherson was a few minutes later shot dead, met the General on the road with a very few attendants, and turned to warn him of his dangerous position, assuring him that the enemy held the woods and were advancing. The General paying no heed to the warning and moving on, my aide turned and followed him. They had proceeded but a short distance into the woods when a sharp command, "Halt," was heard from the skirmish-line of the rebels. Without heeding the command, General McPherson and his party wheeled their horses, and at that moment a heavy volley was poured in, killing McPherson and so frightening the horses that they became unmanageable and plunged into the underbrush in different directions. My aide became separated from the General and the rest of the party, and was knocked from his horse by coming in contact with a tree, and lay for some time in an unconscious condition on the ground. As soon as he was sufficiently recovered he returned on foot to me, having lost his horse and equipments. Of General McPherson he saw nothing after his fall. His watch, crushed by contact with the tree, was stopped at two minutes past 2 o'clock, which fixed the time of General McPherson's death.

General McPherson could not have left his point of observation more than a few minutes when I detected the enemy's advance in the woods some distance to my right, and between that flank and General Blair's rear. Fuller quickly changed front with a portion of his brigade to confront them, and pushing promptly to the attack captured their skirmish-line and drove back their main force. Upon the persons of some of these prisoners we found McPherson's papers, field-glass, etc., which conveyed to me the first knowledge I had of his death; or, rather, as I then supposed, of his capture by the enemy; and seeing that the papers were important I sent them by my Chief of Staff with all haste to General Sherman.

General McPherson, it seems, had just witnessed the decisive grapple of the Sixteenth Corps with the charging columns of the enemy, and, as probably conveying his own reflections at that moment, I quote the language of General Strong, the only staff officer present with him at that critical time:

The General and myself, accompanied only by our orderlies, rode on and took positions on the right of Dodge's line, and witnessed the desperate assaults of Hood's army.

The Divisions of Generals Fuller and Sweeney were formed in a single line of battle in the open fields, without cover of any kind (Fuller's Division on the right,) and were warmly engaged. The enemy, massed in columns three or four lines deep, moved out of the dense timber several hundred yards from General Dodge's position, and after gaining fairly the open fields, halted and opened a rapid fire upon the Sixteenth Corps. They, however, seemed surprised to find our infantry in line of battle, prepared for attack, and after facing for a few minutes the destructive fire



from the Divisions of Generals Fuller and Sweeney, fell back in disorder to the cover of the woods. Here, however, their lines were quickly reformed, and they again advanced, evidently determined to carry the position.

The scene at this time was grand and impressive. It seemed to us that every mounted officer of the attacking column was riding at the front of, or on the right or left of, the first line of battle. The regimental colors waved and fluttered in advance of the lines, and not a shot was fired by the rebel infantry, although the movement was covered by a heavy and well-directed fire from artillery, which was posted in the woods and on higher ground, and which enabled the guns to bear upon our troops with solid shot and shell, firing over the attacking column.

It seemed impossible, however, for the enemy to face the sweeping, deadly fire from Fuller's and Sweeney's Divisions, and the guns of the Fourteenth Ohio and Welker's Batteries of the Sixteenth Corps fairly mowed great swaths in the advancing columns. They showed great steadiness, and closed up the gaps and preserved their alignments; but the iron and leaden hail which was poured upon them was too much for flesh and blood to stand, and, before reaching the center of the open field, the columns were broken up and thrown into great confusion. Taking advantage of this, General Dodge, with portions of General Fuller's and General Sweeney's Divisions, with bayonets fixed, charged the enemy and drove them back to the woods, taking many prisoners.

General McPherson's admiration for the steadiness and determined bravery of the Sixteenth Corps was unbounded. General Dodge held the key to the position.

Had the Sixteenth Corps given way the rebel army would have been in the rear of the Seventeenth and Fifteenth Corps, and would have swept like an avalanche over our supply trains, and the position of the Army of the Tennessee would have been very critical, although, without doubt, the result of the battle would have been in our favor, because the Armies of the Cumberland and the Ohio were close at hand, and the enemy would have been checked and routed further on.

General Blair, in his official report of the battle, says:

I witnessed the first furious assault upon the Sixteenth Army Corps, and its prompt and gallant repulse. It was a fortunate circumstance for that whole army that the Sixteenth Army Corps occupied the position I have attempted to describe, at the moment of the attack; and although it does not become me to comment upon the brave conduct of the officers and men of that Corps, still I can not refrain from expressing my admiration for the manner in which the Sixteenth Corps met and repulsed the repeated and persistent attacks of the enemy.

The Sixteenth Corps has a record in that battle which we seldom see in the annals of war. It met the shock of battle and fired the last shot late that night, as the enemy stubbornly yielded its grasp on Bald Hill. It fought on four parts of the field, and everywhere with equal success. It lost no gun that it took into the engagement, and its losses were almost entirely in killed and wounded – the missing having been captured at Decatur through getting mired in a swamp.

At no time during the Atlanta campaign was there present in the Sixteenth Corps more than two small Divisions of three Brigades each, and at this time these two Divisions were widely scattered; on the Atlanta field only ten Regiments and two Batteries were present, three entire Brigades being absent from the Corps. It was called upon to meet the assault of at least three Divisions or nine Brigades, or at the least forty-nine Regiments, all full to the utmost that a desperate emergency could swell them, impelled by the motive of the preconcerted surprise, and orders from their commander at all hazards to sweep over any and all obstructions; while, on the other hand, the force attacked and

surprised was fighting without orders, guided only by the exigency of the moment. Their captures represented forty-nine different Regiments of the enemy. How many more Regiments were included in those nine Brigades I have never been able to learn. The fact that this small force, technically, if not actually, in march, in a perfectly open field, with this enormously superior force leaping upon them from the cover of dense woods, was able to hold its ground and drive its assailants, pell-mell, back to the cover of the woods again, proves that when a great battle is in progress, or a great emergency occurs, no officer can tell what the result may be when he throws in his forces, be they 5,000 or 20,000 men; and it seems to me to be impossible to draw the line that gives the right to a subordinate officer to use his own judgment in engaging an enemy when a great battle is within his hearing.

Suppose the Sixteenth Corps, with less than 5,000 men, seeing at least three times their number in their front, should have retreated, instead of standing and fighting as it did: What would have been the result? I say that in all my experience in life, until the two forces struck and the Sixteenth Corps stood firm, I never passed more anxious moments.

Sprague's Brigade, of the same corps, was engaged at the same time within hearing, but on a different field, – at Decatur, – fighting and stubbornly holding that place, knowing that if he failed the trains massed there and *en route* from Roswell would be captured. His fight was a gallant and sometimes seemingly almost hopeless one – giving ground inch by inch, until, finally, he obtained a position that he could not be driven from, and one that protected the entire trains of the Army.

As Hardee's attack fell upon the Sixteenth Army Corps, his left Division (Cleburn's) lapped over and beyond Blair's left, and swung around his left front; they poured down through the gap between the left of the Seventeenth and the right of the Sixteenth Corps, taking Blair in front, flank, and rear. Cheatham's Corps moved out of Atlanta and attacked in Blair's front. General Giles A. Smith commanded Blair's left Division, his right connecting with Leggett at Bald Hill, where Leggett's Division held the line until they connected with the Fifteenth Corps, and along this front the battle raged with great fury.

As Cleburn advanced along the open space between the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Corps they cut off from Blair's left and captured a portion of two Regiments of his command, and forced the Seventeenth Corps to form new lines, utilizing the old intrenchments thrown up by the enemy, fighting first on one side and then on the other, as the attack would come from Hardee in the rear or Cheatham in the front, until about 3:30 p. m., when, evidently after a lull, an extraordinary effort was made by the rebels to wipe out Giles A. Smith's Division and capture Leggett's Hill, the enemy approaching under cover of the woods until they were within fifty yards of Smith's temporary position, when they pressed forward until the fight became a hand-to-hand conflict across the trenches occupied by Smith, the troops using bayonet freely and the officers their swords. This attack failed; it was no doubt timed to occur at the same time that Cheatham's Corps attacked from the Atlanta front, which Leggett met. The brunt of Cheatham's attack was against Leggett's Hill, the key to the position of that portion of the Army of the Tennessee. General Giles A. Smith's Division had to give up the works they occupied and fall into line at right angles with Leggett's Division, Leggett's Hill being the apex of the formation; and around this position for three-quarters of an hour more desperate fighting was done that I can describe. Up to midnight the enemy occupied one side of the works while we occupied the other, neither side giving way until Hood saw that the whole attack was a failure, when those who were on the outside of the works finally surrendered to us. Their attack at this angle was a determined and resolute one, advancing up to our breastworks on the crest of the hill, planting their flag side by side with ours, and fighting hand to hand until it grew so dark that nothing could be seen but the flash of guns from the opposite sides of the works. The ground covered by these attacks was literally strewn with the dead of both sides. The loss of Blair's Corps was 1,801 killed, wounded, and missing. Blair's left struck in the rear flank, and the front gave way slowly, gradually, fighting for every inch of ground, until their left was opposite the right flank of the Sixteenth Corps; then they halted, and held the enemy, refusing to give another inch.

It would be difficult in all the annals of war to find a parallel to the fighting of the Seventeenth Corps; first from one side of its works and then from the other, one incident of which was that of Colonel Belknap, of the Union side, who, reaching over the works, seized the Colonel of the Forty-fifth Alabama, and, drawing him over the breastworks, made him a prisoner of war.

About 4 p. m. Cheatham's Corps was ordered by Hood to again attack; they directed their assault this time to the front of the Fifteenth Corps, using the Decatur wagon-road and railway as a guide, and came forward in solid masses, meeting no success until they slipped through to the rear of the Fifteenth Corps by a deep cut used by the railway passing through our intrenchments.

As soon as they reached our rear, Lightburn's Division of the Fifteenth Corps became partially panic-stricken, and fell back, giving up the intrenchments for the whole front of this Division, the enemy capturing the celebrated Degress Battery of 20-pounders and two guns in advance of our lines. The officers of Lightburn's Division rallied it in the line of intrenchments, just in the rear of the position they had in the morning.

General Logan was then in command of the Army of the Tennessee. He rode over to my position, and I sent Mersey's Brigade of the Second Division, under the guidance of Major Edward Jonas, my Aide-de-camp, to the aid of the Fifteenth Corps. Of the performance of that Brigade on that occasion, I quote the words of that staff officer, Major Jonas:

I conducted Mersey's Brigade to the point where needed; arrived at the railroad, he at once deployed and charged, all men of the Fifteenth Corps at hand joining with him. Mersey's Brigade recaptured the works and the guns. Old Colonel Mersey was slightly wounded, and his celebrated horse, "Billy," killed. By your direction I said to General Morgan L. Smith (temporarily in command of the Fifteenth Corps): "General Dodge requests that you return this Brigade at the earliest practicable moment, as there is every indication of renewed assault on our own line," and, after saying that your request would be respected, General Smith added: "Tell General Dodge that his Brigade (Mersey's) has done magnificently, and that it shall have full credit in my report."

Afterwards one of Mersey's officers – Captain Boyd, I think – in trying his skill as an artillerist, cracked one of the recaptured guns. At the same moment of Mersey's attack in front, General Wood's Division of the Fifteenth Army Corps, under the eye of General Sherman, attacked the Confederates occupying our intrenchments in flank, and Williamson's Brigade joined Mersey's in recapturing our line and the batteries – the Fourth Iowa Infantry taking a conspicuous part.

Colonel Mersey and many of his men whom he so gallantly led had served their time before this battle occurred, and were awaiting transportation home. Eloquent words have been written and spoken all over the land in behalf of the honor and the bravery of the soldier; but where is the word spoken or written that can say more for the soldier than the action of these men on that field? They were out of service; they had written that they were coming home, and their eyes and hearts were toward the North. Many an anxious eye was looking for the boy who voluntarily laid down his life that day, and many a devoted father, mother or sister has had untold trouble to obtain recognition in the War Department because the soldier's time had expired. He was mustered out; waiting to go home; and was not known on the records; but on that day he fought on three different parts of the field, without a thought except for his cause and his country.

The continuous attacks of Cheatham made no other impression on the line. Our men were behind the intrenchments and the slaughter of the enemy was something fearful. General J. C. Brown, who commanded the Confederate Division that broke through our line, told me that after breaking through it was impossible to force his men forward; the fire on their flanks and front was so terrific that when driven out of the works one-half of his command was killed, wounded, or missing. The Confederate records sustain this, and it is a wonder that they could force their line so often up to

within 100 to 300 feet of us, where our fire would drive them back in spite of the efforts of their officers, a great many of whom fell in these attacks.

I could see the terrific fighting at Leggett's Hill, but of that along the line of the Fifteenth Corps I can only speak from the records and as told me by General John C. Brown, of the Confederate Army. The stubbornness and coolness with which they contested every inch of the ground won his admiration, and the manner and method with which the line was retaken must have been seen to be appreciated.

When darkness fell upon us the enemy had retired, except around the angle in the Seventeenth Corps, known as Leggett's or Bald Hill. Here there was a continuous fire, desultory and at close quarters, the enemy in places occupying ground close up to our intrenchments. To relieve these men of the Seventeenth Army Corps holding this angle, who were worn out, at the request of General Blair I sent two Regiments of Mersey's Brigade. They crawled in on their hands and knees, and swept the enemy from that front.

The whole of Hood's Army, except Stewart's Corps, was thrown into our rear, upon the flank and the front of the Army of the Tennessee, and after fighting from mid-day until dark were repulsed and driven back. That Army held or commanded the entire battle-field, demonstrating the fact that the Army of the Tennessee alone was able and competent to meet and defeat Hood's entire Army. The battle fell almost entirely upon the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Corps and two Divisions of the Fifteenth Corps, three Brigades of the Sixteenth being absent. The attack of the enemy was made along this line some seven times, and they were seven times repulsed.

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