

Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Civil War Resources

Title: "A Brief Experience as a Soldier during the Invasion of Pennsylvania," by William Peirsol

Date: June 18 - July 20, 1863

Location: SC 974.8432 P358b

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

A Brief Experience as a Soldier During the
Invasion of Pennsylvania by the
Confederate Army in



WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

PHILADELPHIA:
AVIL PRINTING COMPANY
3943 MARKET STREET.

*Sister Mary
Compliments
Brother Will*

A Brief Experience as a Soldier During the
Invasion of Pennsylvania by the
Confederate Army in



WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

PHILADELPHIA:
AVIL PRINTING COMPANY
3943 MARKET STREET.

DEDICATED to Captain Harry C. Kennedy, F. Co. 1st Reg.
Gray Reserves of Phila., 32d Reg. Penna. Militia.

WM. H. PEIRSOL.

A. D. 1865.

My Brief Experience as a Soldier.

ON the morning of the eighteenth of June, 1863, the First Regiment of Gray Reserves, of Philadelphia, (Thirty-second Regiment of Pennsylvania Militia), under command of Colonel Charles S. Smith, received orders from Governor Andrew G. Curtin to report at Harrisburg. At an early hour the members of the Regiment, accompanied by their friends, could be seen wending their way in the direction of their respective armories to complete arrangements for the departure. At the armories the men were busily engaged in folding blankets, packing knapsacks, selecting and exchanging equipments. A few remarks pertaining to my separation from those whom I dearly love, and I will proceed upon the theme of your selection, to wit—"My Brief Experience as a Soldier." Never did I utter the word "farewell," embodying as it does so much significance, with such a joyful heart as I did on the beautiful day of June 18, 1863.

Harbor not for one moment the presumption that I was unmindful of the danger that threatened our country, or failed to appreciate the import of a mother's tear, that mute but unmistakable evidence of affection. No! It was the consciousness that I was about to discharge a duty which I owed to my country and native State. Perhaps it will not prove uninteresting to acquaint you with a description of the cars in which we travelled to the State Capitol. Delude yourself not with the impression that we were accommodated in first-class passenger cars with plush-covered seats, for such was not our good fortune; we were transported in freight cars. The crowded condition of the cars made our journey from the city to Harrisburg anything but agreeable. We reached our destination about 10 o'clock P. M., and were instructed by our

officers to sleep in the cars for the night. It was quite an easy task for them to promulgate these instructions, but in the execution of them we experienced no little discomfort. After a little manœuvering (for, bear in mind we were packed together like sheep), I managed to get into a posture for sleeping, with my back resting against the side of the car. You well remember the epithet, "feather-bed" soldiers, had been applied to our regiment, as well as to other military organizations (at the time when danger was remote), by individuals who had an antipathy against anything in shape of a musket, and likewise an aversion to suits made of blue cloth, ornamented with brass buttons. I assure you that upon this occasion I failed to realize that I was a "feather-bed" soldier.

JUNE 19.—About 3 o'clock, A. M., a number of us tiring of the comforts of our feathered couches vacated them, and indulged in conversation regarding our future movements. Unfortunately, we were not allowed to discuss this subject without being called to task by those who were determined to "sleep it out." Exclamations such as "Confound you early birds, hold your tongues," and many other expressions which plainly evinced the sleepers to be in anything but a passive frame of mind. At 4 o'clock the reveille awakened the sleepers, and it was amusing to witness the dilatory manner in which they accepted the situation. The morning was very unpleasant, owing to the prevalence of a thick mist. After the roll-call our knapsacks were distributed to us, and we then marched to a corn-field about a quarter of a mile from Camp Curtin.

About 12 o'clock our first dinner was served. It consisted of coffee, served from a molasses hogshead, which answered very well as a substitute for a sugar-bowl, together with "hard tack." During the afternoon the accumulation of dark, heavy clouds notified us of the approach of a thunder storm. We wasted no time in collecting fence rails and arranged them in such a way, with the aid of our gum blankets, to afford us shelter. Except those detailed for guard duty all hands turned in early this evening and slept soundly.

JUNE 20.—Nothing of any importance occurred. During the day most of our time was occupied in improving our rapidly-constructed habitations. In the afternoon we had a repetition of yesterday's storm, continuing throughout the night.

JUNE 21.—When we awakened this morning the dampness of our clothing disclosed the unwelcome fact that our roofs were not impervious to the elements. In the afternoon the regiment received its allotment of tents. We all felt now as though we had a home. In the evening we had religious services in camp, and very impressive they were. After the benediction, the men separated and retired to their respective quarters. Before closing the record of this day I desire to call your attention to an event which I know will not prove uninteresting. It is this: Before turning in for the night, a number of gentlemen sang with much feeling those beautiful words, "Home, Sweet Home." It touched the heart of many a man. Upon another occasion this event would have perhaps commanded but a passing recognition, but now that many miles intervened between us and the subject of the song, made us appreciate more fully its beautiful lines. As the words fell from the lips of the singers, how vividly did they recall to mind the thoughts of home, with its beloved inmates, its pleasures, comforts and blessings. How earnest, too, were the prayers that ascended to heaven this night on behalf of the dear ones we parted from. To us each word was magnified into a verse, and each verse into a volume.

JUNE 22 and 23.—Nothing of any importance occurred.

JUNE 24.—Through the kindness of Captain Kennedy, I was furnished with a pass to Harrisburg, and upon reaching there I found the inhabitants very much alarmed in anticipation of an attack upon the city. Merchants were busily engaged in packing their goods for transportation to points beyond the reach of the Confederate army, while the thoroughfares were packed with refugees, negroes constituting no small portion of these unfortunates. Bed and wearing ap-

parel they carried with them, while to their sides clung little children, conscious of the danger that threatened them.

JUNE 25.—This was a day of unusual excitement in camp. About 11 o'clock a message was received from Governor Curtin, requesting that the Regiment be sworn into the United States service for six months, intimating that in case of our refusal to comply, we could return to Philadelphia as we would not receive pay or subsistence from the State of Pennsylvania.

This was surely reducing matters to two very delicate points, however, we unanimously decided to reject the Governor's proposition, but in doing so we entertained no idea of accepting the alternative. We felt confident that our friends in Philadelphia would cheerfully respond to any call that necessity might compel us to make. When we departed from Philadelphia, it was with the determination to remain in the State service until our services were no longer required. We felt that we were justified in taking the stand we did, for this reason, had the peril been so imminent as represented by the Governor, it certainly was bad policy on his part to inaugurate a controversy as to State or United States service.

Later in the day, Mr. George Moore, an official in our city, made his appearance in camp and proceeded to address the men in opposition to their decision. We paid due respect to his argument until he said: "You are not going to disgrace yourselves like cowards." This indiscreet remark of a man who carried a cane in lieu of a musket was an insult to the patriotism and self-respect of the regiment that would have been resented in a very unceremonious manner, had it not been for the timely intervention of our officers. Deeming "discretion the better part of valor," Mr. Moore hastily left the camp, no doubt feeling that he had fallen "a victim to his own folly." That you may judge for yourself whether we were justified in pursuing the course we did, I will give you the facts as communicated to us by our officers. In arriving at a conclusion, bear in mind, that our regiment was composed very largely of business men.

Prior to our departure from Philadelphia, a committee went to Harrisburg for the purpose of consulting with the Governor as to the probable length of the service, in order to enable the men to shape their business matters accordingly. Governor Curtin informed the committee that it was his intention to discharge the regiment as soon as its services were no longer required, and to effect this end, he proposed having it mustered into the State service for the emergency; all he wanted was a sufficient force to combat the enemy now invading our State in force. Under this impression we left Philadelphia. We individually felt as Hamlet did when he said: "Though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me."

JUNE 26.--Rain throughout the day, nothing of any importance to report.

JUNE 27.—About 10 o'clock, Col. Smith formed the Regiment and read the Governor's Proclamation entreating all men in the State capable of bearing arms to organize and be prepared to move upon receipt of orders to defend the State Capitol. The dreaded hour had at last arrived. Late in the afternoon we were sworn into the State service for three months. In the evening several of us were granted permission to leave camp to make some purchases in Harrisburg. We returned to camp about 9 o'clock, when, to our amazement, we learned that the Regiment had received orders to march with overcoats, canteens and haversacks. What this order indicated, none could surmise, but the fact of leaving in camp their arms, encouraged us in the belief that its absence would be but temporary. All of us being anxious to identify ourselves with all the operations of the "*Grays*," we hastily gathered up our trappings and started in pursuit. We had gone but a short distance when we were informed that the Regiment was moving in the direction of Harrisburg. By quickening our steps, we, in a very little while, overtook our comrades before they had reached the Capitol. What our destination was, no one seemed to know, but "Rumor" had it (which later proved to be the fact) that we were to throw up entrenchments on the other side of the Susquehanna river. We crossed the bridge, traversed muddy

and obstructed roads, and as though endeavoring to emulate the King of France, "marched up the hill and then marched down again." Eventually we reached a locality where we found troops constructing earthworks and mounting cannon. Gathered around the blazing camp-fire were soldiers off duty, enjoying their pipe and playing cards. We continued our course over hills thickly covered with underbrush and felled trees, which made marching very tiresome and progress consequently slow. Occasionally we were halted, for a few moment's rest, when the men dropped and fell instantly asleep. But our repose was of brief duration. In about ten minutes the command fall in "F Company," awakened us. Again in line we moved on and in a short time reached incompleated earthworks. A large fire was started and companies A and J were ordered to work, the other companies of the Regiment were located at different points, engaged in the same occupation. At 12 o'clock our company (F) was ordered to turn in for two hour's sleep. Collecting rails and branches of felled trees, with leaves spread over them, we managed to make quite a comfortable "feather bed."

JUNE 28.—At 2 o'clock we were ordered to relieve the working party, and after laboring with pick and spade for two hours, we (without any reluctance) handed our implements over to others, turned in and slept until 6 o'clock at which hour all hands fell in line and marched back to camp arriving there about 7 o'clock.

At 8 o'clock orders were received to pack knapsacks and hold ourselves in readiness to move at a moment's notice. After dinner, new muskets with ammunition were distributed. All the afternoon there was intense excitement in camp, boxes containing military clothing and equipments were hurriedly sent in cars from Camp Curtin to Harrisburg. At 5 o'clock we broke camp. As we marched through the city, very little enthusiasm was evinced on the part of the citizens. We crossed the Harrisburg bridge and moved up the river road about three miles, when the Regiment was ordered into a dense woods to our left. F Co. was thrown in the advance

of the Regiment in a large wheat field. Captain Harry C. Kennedy now selected a detail of twelve men from our company (in which number I had the honor of being included) and stationed us some distance in advance of our company, with instructions to fire upon any troops approaching our position by the river road. He impressed upon us the importance and honor of the duty assigned us; adding that it was reported that the enemy contemplated flanking our right wing, and to execute this movement it would be necessary for them to approach us by this road.

We arranged ourselves in such a way that the tall wheat afforded complete concealment. All was silent save the occasional rustling of the wheat and the movement of the water of the Susquehanna. The soldiers, save those on guard, were enjoying refreshing sleep. "The Queen of Night" as she penetrated the silvery clouds beneath the heavens, illumined the peaceful scene below, so picturesque, for the moment we seemed to ignore the possibility of the ground we were guarding being moistened with human blood. No demonstration was made this night and in the morning we rejoined our company.

JUNE 29.—In the afternoon heavy artillery firing was heard toward the front. The Regiment was ordered under arms and Company A ordered to occupy a high hill towards the front and to report any movement by the enemy in that quarter. The firing lasted for some time and then ceased. We subsequently learned that the disturbance was the result of an effort on the part of the rebels to feel our position at Oyster Point on the extreme front of the works surrounding the Capitol. E. Spencer Miller's Battery, from Philadelphia, stationed there, prevented them from obtaining any valuable information.

JUNE 30.—Rain and nothing of any importance, with the exception of receiving shelter tents. This was the first covering we had been favored with since we left Harrisburg. In the evening orders reached us to prepare to move with two days' rations.

JULY 1.—At 2 o'clock in the morning we broke camp and after marching about two miles we halted and rested by the

road-side until 7 o'clock. At 9 o'clock the brigade was formed, comprising four regiments and a battery from Philadelphia, commanded by captain Landis, all under the command of General Brisbane. All the arrangements prior to a long march being perfected, we moved off, our destination being Carlisle, the Gray Reserves heading the column. On either side in advance of us was deployed U. S. Cavalry to scour the country, for we were now marching through a section of our State occupied by detached bodies of rebels. The heat was intense, it was one of those sultry days that so severely tax one's strength. It was not very long before the men commenced to yield by scores to the burning rays of the sun. General Brisbane observing the condition of his men, ordered a halt. I need scarcely intimate to you that it was cheerfully and promptly obeyed.

We had now marched about five miles encumbered with our heavy knapsacks. It was suggested that as many wagons as possible be procured from the farmers in the vicinity to convey our luggage. Our energetic captain after considerable trouble succeeded in obtaining a conveyance. We again resumed the march. Many of the houses along the road presented a dilapidated appearance, furniture, bed clothing and household articles were strewn about as though valueless. After marching about seven miles we again halted. I was detailed with others to guard the baggage wagons. I had no sooner entered upon the discharge of the duty assigned me than I learned that General Brisbane wanted one hundred volunteers to proceed to Carlisle in advance of the brigade to occupy the town if not held by the enemy in force. I at once asked to be relieved of the duty I was about to perform, to enable me to accompany the one hundred. My request was granted. After receiving orders we marched on under the command of Captain Kennedy. In a little while we overtook two New York regiments who had about two miles the start of us. Singular to relate, they surmised our mission and extended their lines so as to monopolize the entire road. Failing in our attempt to pass them we changed our base to the other side of the fence, and now commenced an

exciting foot race. We tested their speed for a little while and then reluctantly yielded the race, consoling ourselves with the reflection that in case of a retreat we would have the honor of covering the New York troops as they demonstrated upon this occasion their ability to outrun us. We continued our march, the first halt we made was at a small town called Kingston or Kingstown—the inhabitants treated us very kindly, furnishing us amply with good bread and butter. As we moved on lots of amusement was afforded by the conflicting information as to distance, obtained at different localities. At one place we asked the distance to Carlisle, and were informed that it was positively not over three miles distant; ten minutes later we put the same question to a good natured looking countryman whom we met, and he replied as follows: "Well I reckon its about six or seven miles from here;" then thinking awhile he added that "This is a rough guess of mine, it might turn out to be a mile or two more." In this way we were kept in suspense until we despaired of ever reaching our destination. We however kept our spirits up and marched on, and in due time we sighted Carlisle. About half a mile outside of the town we passed the New York troops with whom we had a foot race, lying along the road completely prostrated by the heat. We arrived in the town about 4 o'clock, when we learned that the rebels had vacated the city during the day. At 6 o'clock the distant tap of the drum notified us of the approach of the brigade, which in a short time came marching into town in fine style, notwithstanding the arduous march of the day. Its arrival created the wildest enthusiasm among the people who, anticipating their wants, had kindly provided for them a supper in the market sheds. The exhausted and hungry troops had just commenced to partake of this very acceptable repast, when the rebel cavalry made a sudden dash into the town and then retreated to the outskirts. The long roll signaled the infantry to arms, while the bugle soon had the battery in position. Our regiment was drawn up in line on the main street. Trees on either side of the street were felled in order to obstruct the thoroughfare. The rebels now opened fire and sent their solid shot and shells in quick succession.

Companies A K and F were ordered back on Pitt street to watch any movement that might be attempted on our flank or rear. The firing increased in rapidity and severity, inflicting great damage to property. Shells were exploding in rapid succession sending their fragments of death in all directions. At intervals the firing would cease and a demand "under a flag of truce," made for the surrender of the town, but upon every occasion their overtures met with a negative response. Some of the scenes during the bombardment were touching in the extreme. Could you have heard the frantic shrieks and witnessed affectionate mothers with babes in their arms rushing wildly through the town, imploring soldiers to secure for them a place of refuge, it would have touched your heart to the quick, and you would have asked the "Ruler of the Universe" to spare you the pain of ever witnessing a spectacle so heart-rending. Their piteous cries mingled with the sound of exploding shell and the striking of the Court House clock made the "night hideous." About 12 o'clock the heavens became suddenly illuminated, occasioned by the rebels applying the torch to the U. S. barracks located on the outskirts of the town, within their lines, and at the same time opened a terrific cannonade, shells following each other in rapid succession.

JULY 2.—At 1 o'clock A. M., the firing had entirely ceased. We did not regret the cessation of hostilities, for being subjected to a bombardment for over six hours is decidedly more interesting to read about than to experience. At 2½ o'clock the Confederates fired two shells and then under protection of a flag of truce, notified General "Baldy" Smith, our division commander, that firing would be suspended until 10 o'clock A. M., at which hour they would expect an answer to their demand—our unconditional surrender, but in case of further resistance they would open fire on the town and reduce it to ashes.

Taking for granted that our services would not be required until the hour specified by the rebels, we turned in for sleep, with the expectation of having a hot time later in the day.

At 6 o'clock a number of us awakened and took a stroll around town to see what damage the night's work had done. We had not proceeded far before our curiosity was satisfied, houses demolished, trees uprooted, broken cannon carriages, and dead and mangled horses furnished us with a vivid idea of the horrors of war. About 7 o'clock the brigade was moved toward the front ready to meet any movement made by the enemy, for "Baldy" had decided not to acquiesce in the demand made by the rebels at 2½ o'clock this morning.

It was not long before information reached us that under cover of darkness the rebels had abandoned their position and retreated through the mountains. Companies F and D of the "Grays" were detailed for provost duty and Captain Kennedy appointed Provost Marshal, a compliment and an honor well deserved. Captain Harry C. Kennedy was a rigid disciplinarian. His quick conception of any duty he was called upon to perform won for him the confidence of his superiors in rank, and the respect and esteem of all with whom he came in contact. He was an ideal officer. His happiest moments were when engaged in providing for the comfort and welfare of those in his charge. In recognition of these qualities, combining as they do, the man with the soldier (with your permission), I dedicate to him these lines. Late in the afternoon a report reached headquarters that the enemy were moving down Walnut Bottom road in force, but a reconnoissance in that direction proved the report to be incorrect. A description of the manner in which we procured our meals while in Carlisle, may not prove devoid of interest. At meal hours we would start out in squads of three or four, and in regular beggar fashion, rap at the doors of dwellings and solicit alms. We met with alternate success, as beggars generally do. When the reply to our solicitations was made in the stereotyped form, "We have nothing for you," we did not permit these disappointments to deter us from making further efforts, which often resulted in success. It is due to the residents of Carlisle to say that it was not owing to indisposition, but to inability to furnish the Union troops with food, as the rebels who preceded us very naturally insisted upon being well taken care of.

In the evening I was detailed for guard duty on Walnut Bottom road from 9 until 12 o'clock. I could distinctly see the signal lights on the mountains conveying orders to troops, but whether to our forces or Confederates could not ascertain. At 12 o'clock we were relieved, returned to camp and turned in for the night.

JULY 3.—For the first time since our departure from Harrisburg F company breakfasted together. Captain Kennedy purchased from a bakery in town a large quantity of fresh bread—quite a treat I assure you.

JULY 4.—Early in the morning the brigade took up the line of march, en route for Gettysburg. Later in the morning the Provost guard received orders to deposit their knapsacks in baggage wagons. We did as instructed, but it was the last we ever saw of them. A heavy rainstorm which followed their departure from the town, swelled a stream which they were obliged to cross, to such an extent, that in their effort to effect a passage, wagons and teams were carried away. The Provost guard after this always marched in "light order," as we possessed only gum blankets and havelocks. At noon three of us were given permission to leave quarters to procure dinner. We had gone but a short distance when we were overtaken by the severe rain storm just referred to and we immediately sought shelter within a vestibule of a dwelling, where we remained about one hour, during which time I never saw rain fall in such torrents—indeed it seemed to me as though Carlisle was destined to be inundated. The streets were completely flooded, and one could, with a flat bottom boat, have navigated the town. The storm having subsided, we resumed our journey, shortly arriving at our destination, a neat little farm-house on the outskirts. The cordial welcome which greeted us and the hospitable spirit manifested by the inmates impressed us as being particularly kind—we will all hold this visit in appreciative remembrance. After partaking of a dinner which reminded us of home, we spent quite a long time in chatting with our benefactors, indeed so pleasantly and rapidly did the time pass that it was not until 3 o'clock that it occurred

to us that we were serving ourselves instead of our country. Hastily expressing our thanks and appreciation, we hurried back to quarters. Upon our arrival we found that the two companies had been ordered to rejoin the regiment. Quickly taking up our arms, which remained stacked as we had left them, we on the double quick started in pursuit. We had not proceeded very far before we met the "guard" faced about returning on quick time, presenting the appearance of "drowned rats," being drenched with rain from head to foot. The cause of their unexpected return was owing to the swollen condition of the stream which carried away our knapsacks. Its passage being deemed hazardous to attempt, they were ordered back to Carlisle. The two companies repaired to the Court House, and built a fire to dry our clothing. In the evening I was placed on duty at the hospital, Dickinson College.

JULY 5.—After transporting military stores from the depot to the hospital, which occupied our time until 10 o'clock, we returned to the Court House, and in the afternoon marched to rejoin the regiment. The roads were somewhat better than the previous day, but far from being in good marching order. After marching about six miles we entered the mountains, and now ensued a long, dreary and muddy march, continuing until after dark.

We encamped for the night near a stream. Our condition was anything but enviable—rain falling, no shelter, wet feet and empty stomachs—a combination of discomforts not at all pleasant to experience. A number of us by mere accident found our way into an enclosure, which judging from the odor, we unanimously concluded that its former occupants must have been swine, but without allowing the consciousness of this fact to affect our pride, we determined to make our abode for this night in a "pig pen." In consequence of being in the mountains and detached from our brigade, the comforts of a camp fire were denied us.

JULY 6.—Early this morning we resumed our march. Having no provisions with us save that which our haversacks

contained (hard tack) we were obliged to forego our breakfast. Owing to the heavy rain of last night the roads were in a terrible condition. After marching through a mixture of mud and water for miles, when almost ready to succumb to fatigue, the welcome sight of the brigade, at Pine Grove, a small village at the base of South Mountain, infused new life into us, and within a short time we rejoined our comrades, completely exhausted. Coffee and "tack" were immediately distributed to us forlorn specimens of humanity.

Soon the brigade took up the line of march, but owing to our exhausted condition, General Brisbane granted us two hours' rest, and at the expiration of the time allotted, we ascended the mountain feeling like ourselves again. To me the march over the mountain was the most dreary march of the campaign. After crossing several ranges we came to a road which put us on the Chambersburg Pike, from thence to Fayetteville, where we found the troops bivouacked for the night. Our march for the day, thirty miles, a pretty good day's work for "feather-bed soldiers." Proceeding to where our regiment was located, we sat down pretty well exhausted. Squads of men were in the woods collecting fuel for the fires which were to be kept burning during the night, After finishing our supper of coffee and "tack" we laid down for a sleep, my bed consisting of three fence rails, while my gum blanket protected me from the heavy dew, but afforded no warmth whatever. About midnight several of us having become so chilled, vacated our "rails" and sat around the camp fire until the dawn of day.

JULY 7.—Rain in the morning. For breakfast fat pork was added to the "bill of fare." At 11 o'clock the command was again in motion, and marched until 5 o'clock when we encamped for the night on the outskirts of a town, I think called Kutztown. A comrade and myself conceived a scheme, which if successful, would enable us to make faces at the boys who were compelled to partake of the "regulation supper." We applied for and received permission to pass the lines conditional upon our keeping within sound of the tap of a drum. We

strolled around the country keeping within an imaginary circuit and soon espied a farm-house, and when we reached it found one of the inmates cooking hot cakes. We politely announced our arrival and left to them the problem to solve—the object of our visit. We strolled around the garden viewing the surrounding temptations which our conscience permitted us to crave for, but not to taste thereof. In a little while we were invited in to supper, we certainly did justice to the many good things spread before us. After thanking them for their hospitality, we returned to camp feeling elated over the success of our scheme.

JULY 8.—At 11 o'clock A. M., we marched for Waynesboro. The day being very hot, together with the hilly nature of the country, made marching very tiresome. At a point along the march we crossed a large green field and then ascended a high hill. After our regiment, it being in the advance, had attained the summit we looked around to witness the remainder of the brigade slowly wending its way up the hill. The sun reflecting its rays upon the bright bayonets, presented a spectacle well calculated to inspire us. This scene was in pleasing contrast with the long, gloomy march through the mountains. We arrived at Waynesboro about 6 o'clock, and encamped on a hill about two miles outside of the town. This elevated position enabled us to view the beautiful surrounding country to advantage and inhale the pure, invigorating mountain air. To our front, about a quarter of a mile, flowed the memorable Antietam creek, while to our rear and left in the distance stood the mountains clothed in green. The sun was just descending the horizon, reflecting its variegated rays, as we stacked arms and waited for supper.

JULY 9.—Nothing of importance occurred, except that food was dealt out to us very sparingly.

JULY 10.—Very warm. In the morning the regiment was inspected, and Capt. Kennedy was complimented by Col. Smith for having F Company first in line. For dinner we were served with a very nutritious dish in shape of boiled hard tack. We accepted it good naturedly, feeling convinced that the

quartermaster had done the best he could with this antiquated food, for to have been compelled to eat it in its natural state would have resulted in the loss of teeth and the dislocation of jaw-bones. The management of the commissary department at Harrisburg was severely criticized. We christened the camp "Camp Starvation."

JULY 11.—Very unwell. About 7 o'clock the brigade started on a reconnoissance in the direction of Hagerstown, owing to the report that the rebels were prowling around the country accumulating grain. K Company, of our regiment, was deployed as skirmishers. Owing to my condition I soon felt the terrible effects of marching, and had I consulted my feelings would have left the line, but I determined to hold out as long as nature sustained me. Suddenly, while crossing a corn field we halted, and were ordered to lie down and not to speak above a whisper. Our officers informed us that at the base of a hill to our front was located a flour mill in possession of the enemy, but in what force had not as yet been ascertained. K Company, after carefully scouring in the vicinity, proceeded to the mill and found it occupied by a squad of rebel soldiers grinding grain. After emptying the flour in the mill-dam, K Company with their captives returned to the regiment. From the prisoners we learned that in the evening a body of rebel cavalry was to call for the flour.

The hour we laid in the corn-field subject to the intense heat of the sun, I was suffering with a raging fever and severe pain; indeed, so heated were my hands, that to afford me temporary relief I buried them in the earth. At 4 o'clock the troops took up the line of march for camp, arriving there about sunset. I was compelled by weakness and pain to "drop out of line" after marching some distance and worry my way to camp as best I could. Without partaking of food I laid down in the tent a very sick boy.

JULY 12.—No improvement in my condition; suffering great pain and burning with fever; under the surgeon's care. Heavy rain storm set in at 4 o'clock P. M.

JULY 13.—At 7 o'clock the brigade broke camp and marched for Hagerstown. Those on the sick list unable to march were furnished with passes by the surgeon to Waynesboro, there to remain until convalescent. With much difficulty the invalids reached the town. I procured quarters at a hotel and the services of a physician.

JULY 14, 15, 16 AND 17.—Very ill. Captain Kennedy being advised of my condition by a kind friend (unknown to me), detailed my friend and comrade, Geo. M. Miller, to take charge of me, with a furlough for twenty days, with permission to go to Philadelphia.

JULY 18.—In response to a telegram from Captain Kennedy, father and mother, after a long and tedious journey, reached me in the afternoon. A father and mother unexpectedly ushered into the sick-room of an absent son! I leave to you to conceive of my feelings upon this occasion.

JULY 19.—A slight improvement. After breakfast the doctor decided it would be prudent to remove me to Philadelphia. Father and mother lost no time in making the necessary arrangements. The proprietor of the hotel kindly furnished a conveyance, with bedding arranged in such a manner as to make the long ride over rough roads as comfortable as possible. We left about 8 o'clock and reached Chambersburg in the afternoon.

JULY 20.—We left Chambersburg at half-past 8 o'clock on the first train that passed over the road since its destruction by the rebels, and arrived at Harrisburg at 11 o'clock. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon we left for Philadelphia, arriving there at half-past 10 o'clock. Thus terminates "My Brief Experience as a Soldier." I do not feel that I can conclude this narrative without appending a tribute to the dear ones at home. To my dear father, mother and grandmother, to my dear brothers and sisters, I acknowledge a debt of gratitude which time will fail to obliterate. A mother's tender love and care, a father's solicitude, a grandmother's constant attention,

a brother's and sister's affectionate hearts and willing hands, were evidences of affection which I will ever hold as among earth's choicest blessings. Every want was affectionately and cheerfully satisfied. I can only tender in return a son's and brother's love and gratitude and a prayer that God will bless them all.

W. H. P.

