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CHAPTER XXI THE SEVENTH REGIMENT.

Organization—Assigned to Gen. Butler's New England Division—Departure for the Gulf—Arrival at Ship Island—Occupation of Fort Pike—Stationed at Carrollton—Moves to Baton Rouge—At Vicksburg—Hardships, sickness and deaths—Return to Baton Rouge—Battle of Baton Rouge—Butler's censure—Action of the Vermont Legislature—Court of Inquiry; its action reviewed—Return to Carrollton—Changes of field and staff—Sketch of Col. Holbrook—Moves to Pensacola—Santa Rosa Island—Fort Pickens—Barrancas—Skirmish at Jackson's Bridge—Reenlistment and veteran furlough—Actions at Gonzales Station and Marianna—Mobile campaign—Spanish Fort—Whistler—Ordered to Texas—On the Rio Grande—Muster out and Final Statement.

The service of the first six regiments, as we have seen, was confined to the theatre of war within one hundred and fifty miles of the national capital. The scene now changes to a region a thousand miles away; from the Potomac to the Mississippi; from the red soil and rugged surface of Virginia to the level and luxuriant cane fields of Louisiana.

In his message to the Legislature which met in October, 1861, Governor Holbrook announced that two more regiments would be required, in addition to the six three-years' regiments already raised, to fill the quota of Vermont under the existing calls for troops. Bills were accordingly enacted, one authorizing the governor to raise one regiment specially designated to form a part of the division which General Benjamin F. Butler was then organizing for service in the far South, and another authorizing the governor to raise and equip a regiment "to serve in the army of the United States

until the expiration of three years from the first day of June, A. D. 1861," without further designation. The Seventh regiment was recruited under the latter act.

The recruiting officers and stations were as follows: Middlebury, Henry M. Porter; Brandon, William Cronan; Burlington, David B. Peck; Swanton, Albert B. Jewett; Cavendish, Salmon Dutton; Poultney, Charles C. Ruggles; Johnson, Samuel Morgan; Northfield, David P. Barber; Woodstock, Mahlon M. Young; Rutland, John B. Kilburn. Recruiting began at once and was completed in about ten weeks. The companies organized as follows—the order of the companies being determined by Adjutant General Washburn:

A,	Burlington,	organized January 14, 1862,	Captain	David B. Peck
B,	Brandon,	organized January 6, 1862,	"	William Cronan
C,	Middlebury,	organized January 15, 1862,	"	Henry M. Porter
D,	Rutland,	organized January 7, 1862,	"	John B. Kilburn
E,	Johnson,	organized January 9, 1862,	"	Daniel Landon
F,	Swanton,	organized January 9, 1862,	"	Lorenzo D. Brooks
G,	Cavendish,	organized January 31, 1862,	"	Salmon Dutton
H,	Woodstock,	organized February 3, 1862,	"	Mahlon M. Young
I,	Poultney,	organized February 1, 1862,	"	Charles C. Ruggles
K,	Northfield,	organized February 1, 1862,	"	David P. Barber

The rendezvous was at Rutland and by the 4th of February the companies had all arrived there. The camp was designated as "Camp Phelps," in honor of Brig. General John W. Phelps. The field and staff officers of the regiment were announced as follows:

Colonel—George T. Roberts, Rutland.
 Lieut. Colonel—Volney S. Fullam, Ludlow.
 Major—William C. Holbrook, Brattleboro.
 Adjutant—Charles E. Parker, Vergennes.
 Quartermaster—E. A. Morse, Rutland.
 Surgeon—Frank W. Kelley, Derby Line.
 Assistant Surgeon—Enoch Blanchard, Lyndon.
 Chaplain—Rev. Henry M. Frost, Middlebury.

The regiment was well officered. Its colonel was a native of Clarendon and of revolutionary descent. His grandfather on his father's side was General Christopher Roberts of the continental army. His mother's father was Dr. Silas Hodges, who was a surgeon in the same army and for a time attached to General Washington's military family. Colonel Roberts, when the war broke out, was the manager of the marble quarries at West Rutland, of which his brother-in-law, General H. H. Baxter, was the principal owner. He enlisted upon the first call for volunteers, and went out with the First regiment as first lieutenant of the Rutland company. He had attracted the favorable notice of General Phelps, as an efficient officer, and it was upon General Phelps's recommendation that he was appointed colonel of the Seventh. He was in the prime of vigorous manhood, 38 years old, of fine fact and figure, soldierly in bearing, large of heart and loyal in every fibre. Lieut. Colonel Fullam was captain of company I of the Second regiment, when appointed lieutenant colonel. Major Holbrook, though not yet of age, had seen a year's service as first lieutenant of company F of the Fourth regiment. Quartermaster Morse had been the efficient quartermaster of the First regiment. Surgeon Kelley was a graduate of the medical department of the University of Vermont and had been practicing his profession for a short time in Alabama, just before the war. Chaplain Frost had recently taken orders in the Episcopal church. Of the line officers, Captains Peck, Cronan and Dutton had been officers of the First regiment, and others had served in the ranks of that regiment. There was thus a good proportion of experienced soldiers among the officers. The rank and file was of the best Vermont material, many of the men having also served in the First regiment, which was more numerously represented in the Seventh than in any other of the three-years' regiment. The regiment was armed with new Springfield rifles. It remained at Rutland

for five weeks during a time of severe cold and snows of almost unprecedented depth; but the men were comfortably quartered in barracks and did not suffer. The customary run of measles was experienced. On the 12th of February it was mustered into the service of the United States by Captain J. W. Jones, U. S. A., with 1014 officers and men.

Though the Seventh had not been raised as a "Butler regiment," the fact became known before it left the State that General Butler had obtained from the war department an assignment of the regiment to his division. This assignment was not agreeable to the officers and men, who would have preferred to join the Army of the Potomac; but it was accepted with little murmuring.

On the 10th of March the regiment left Rutland, by railroad, for New York, where it had a cordial reception. On the 13th the officers of the Seventh were entertained by the "Sons of Vermont," at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where a levee was held in honor of the regiment. Hon. E. W. Stoughton, president of the Association of Sons of Vermont, presided at the supper and proposed the health of the officers. Colonel Roberts responded and speeches were made by Hon. E. D. Culver, Parke Goodwin, Major Holbrook and others. On the 14th the regiment embarked on two sailing transports, the "Premier" and "Tamerlane," which proceeded to sea under sealed orders. They were detained at Sandy Hook for several days, by unfavorable weather. On leaving their anchorage the ships parted company, and neither saw anything of the other till they arrived at their destination. This proved to be Ship Island, in the Gulf of Mexico—a fragment of the State of Louisiana over which the United States flag then floated.

The voyage was long and in part tempestuous and the men suffered much from sea sickness and confinement in their close and ill-arranged quarters on shipboard. Two men, James P. Hutchinson, of company H, and Frank Price,

of company I, died during the passage, the latter from the effects of an accidental wound, and were buried at sea.

The Premier, conveying the right wing of the regiment, under Colonel Roberts, was the first to arrive. It sighted Ship Island on the 5th of April, after a voyage of twenty-two days, and on the 7th the five companies disembarked and pitched camp on the island, on the right of the camp of the Eighth Vermont regiment, which had preceded them from New York by a day or two and landed at Ship Island the same day that they did. The Tamerlane arrived on the 10th. The Vermonters here found themselves on a narrow strip of snow-white sand, thrown up by the waves, about seven miles long and from one-quarter to three-quarters of a mile wide. The only vegetation upon it was a grove of pines at the northeastern end, from which the troops rafted wood for the cook-fires. The other end of the island was covered with the camps of the regiments of General Butler's division, numbering 7,000 or 8,000 troops on the ground. Though the barren sand was in strong contrast with their visions of tropical verdure, the men were glad to exchange the troop-ships for any kind of terra firma, and were also glad to be assigned to the command of General Phelps, the old commander of the First Vermont. General Phelps had been on the island for four months, having occupied the island with the Twenty-sixth Massachusetts, Ninth Connecticut and a battery in December, 1861, when he signalized the even and inaugurated the friction between himself and General Butler and the government at Washington which finally resulted in his resignation, by issuing his famous proclamation, addressed to the loyal citizens of the Southwest, declaring slavery to be incompatible with free government and its overthrow to be the aim and object of the government in the prosecution of the war.

Ship Island was now a scene of no little military stir. General Butler had arrived a few days before, had estab-

lished there the headquarters of the new Department of the Gulf, and was preparing, in connection with Farragut and the fleet, for the operations against New Orleans which were the first object of the expedition. In the organization of the troops of the Department of the Gulf, by order dated March 31st, the Seventh was assigned to the First brigade, General Phelps, consisting of the Seventh and Eighth Vermont, the Ninth, Tenth and Thirteenth Connecticut, the Eighth New Hampshire, Seventh and Eighth Maine, Fourth Massachusetts battery, First and Second Vermont batteries and a company of the Second Massachusetts cavalry. The regiment had barely landed when the trouble with General Butler, which lasted as long as the regiment was under his command, began.

For the disembarkation of the troops, as shoal water compelled the transports to lie off the shore, Quartermaster Morse had obtained the use of the "Saxon," a small steamer appropriated by General for his headquarters' service. The permission did not in terms include the landing of the tents and baggage; but in order that the men might have shelter from sun and storm the quartermaster landed the tents with the troops. The slight delay occasioned by this operation displeased General Butler; and it is said that an accidental rap over the head from a tent pole, received while he was storming round among the men, as they were bringing the tents on shore, did not tend to allay his wrath. He forthwith placed Quartermaster Morse under arrest; but did not keep him long, for a furious storm, which arose that night and lasted for two days, in which but for the tents and cooking apparatus so landed the men would have suffered both from rain and hunger, fully vindicated the quartermaster's action.¹

¹ Captain Morse was subsequently placed in very responsible positions by General Butler and stood high in his confidence.

During their stay at Ship Island the men lived on salt rations, the barrels containing which were rolled by hand for miles, and drew their water from shallow wells sunk in the sand. They were occupied chiefly in company drill, the deep sand making battalion drill difficult and indeed dangerous, as was shown by many cases of hernia occurring among the troops.

During the exciting scenes of the last week in April, attending Farragut's silencing of Forts Jackson and Saint Philip and the occupation of New Orleans, the Vermont regiments remained on Ship Island. They heard the booming of the cannon, a hundred miles away, and at times the smoke of the conflicts and conflagrations was drifted over them by the southwest wind; and they awaited impatiently the outcome of the enterprise. There was great rejoicing when, on the 2d of May, the news came that New Orleans had fallen, and that they were wanted there. General Shepley, who had been left in command at Ship Island, was directed to occupy Forts Pike and Woods, guarding the entrance to Lake Pontchartrain, which had been abandoned by the confederates, with the other defences of New Orleans. The detachment sent to Fort Pike consisted of companies B, C and thirty men of company D of the Seventh Vermont, under Major Holbrook. They proceeded thither in the gunboats "New London" and "Calhoun" and occupied Fort Pike on the 5th of May. They found it a strong bastioned and casemated work, surrounded by a moat, and armed with heavy guns. In forty-eight hours they had removed the spikes from the guns and placed the fort in condition for defence. They remained in it for several weeks, during which period company B, Captain Cronan, was sent up Pearl River in a gunboat, with a company of the Thirtieth Massachusetts, and captured there the steamer "White Cloud." They were fired on by guerrillas, during the expedition, and one man, Croydon B. Rowell of company B, received a

wound from which he died four days after—the first wound and death from a hostile bullet, in the regiment.

When ordered to New Orleans the regiment embarked on the steamer "Whitman," an ill-fated craft which a few months after took fire and sank on the Mississippi, carrying down with her a considerable number of sick and wounded Union soldiers. Three hours after she started, in the early hours of the morning, the assistant engineer reported to Colonel Roberts the startling fact that the engineer was a rebel and that he was evidently preparing to blow up the boat. He had then let nearly all the water out of the boiler, doubled the head of steam and made ready a small boat, in which he evidently designed to make his escape, leaving the agencies he had put in motion to effect the explosion of the boiler. Colonel Roberts at once placed him under arrest and ordered the assistant to take the boat back to Ship Island, where a trusty engineer was secured and the "Whitman" started again. The passage was made by the shortest route, through Lake Pontchartrain, and on the 16th of May the regiment reported to General John W. Phelps, in command at Carrollton, six miles up the river from New Orleans. It had a cordial welcome from General Phelps, and was comfortably quartered in the buildings of the United States arsenal. Here the regiment had three and a half miles of earth-works to guard. The men at first enjoyed the new scenes, the groves of orange and lemon trees, and the blackberries, which grew abundantly about the camp. But during the month spent there the camp became unwholesome in consequence of the flooding of the ground around by a crevasse in the levee. The men had some severe fatigue duty, in protecting the camp from the incursions of the water, and when this receded, the air was contaminated by decomposing animal and vegetable matter left by the water. Colonel Roberts was prostrated with fever; malarial diseases made a large sick-list; the regiment had received no pay

since leaving Rutland; and much discontent prevailed. The heat was oppressive, and the men found even two hours of daily drill, morning and evening, a burden.

On the 6th of June an order from General Butler directed Lieut. Colonel Fullam, commanding, to prepare the regiment to embark on the steamers "Iberville," for some point not stated. On the 15th, after nine days of waiting, and while Lieut. Colonel Fullam was in New Orleans, where he spent a day in a vain endeavor to procure an interview of a few moments with General Butler, in order to represent the condition of the regiment and ascertain something about its probable destination, the "Iberville" appeared, bringing an order for immediate embarkation. The regiment went on board in haste, leaving much of its camp equipage, and was landed next day at Baton Rouge, the capital of Louisiana, 75 miles above New Orleans in a straight line, and double the distance by the river. There Lieut. Colonel Fullam reported to Brig. General Thomas Williams, in command at that point, and there Major Holbrook, with company B, rejoined the regiment, leaving company C and the detachment of company D, under command of Captain Porter, to garrison Fort Pike.

At this time, though Baton Rouge and Natchez had been taken by the fleet, a formidable obstacle to the opening of the Mississippi remained at Vicksburg. Here the bluffs, 20 feet above the river, afforded a commanding position; and here the confederate general Martin L. Smith, a West Point graduated and officer of engineers in the United States army before the war, had been sent, after the fall of New Orleans, with a large force, to finish and man the batteries which had been begun in April, upon a plan proposed by General Beauregard. Six batteries had been completed and armed with heavy guns sent up from Pensacola, and other works were in active progress, when, on the 18th of May, the advance of Farragut's fleet summoned the city

to surrender. General Smith declined the invitation, and as a reconnoissance satisfied General Williams that his force was insufficient to reduce the works, the expedition returned to Baton Rouge. A more formidable demonstration was made against Vicksburg a month later, in which the Seventh took part.

On the 16th of June, General Butler ordered General Williams to take his brigade of three regiments, which was to be strengthened by the addition of the Seventh Vermont, a battery and a small cavalry force, and "proceed to Vicksburg with the flag officer and take the town or have it burned at all hazards." Under an evident impression that this might not be as easy to accomplish as to order, General Butler further ordered General Williams to "send up a regiment or two at once and cut off the neck of land beyond Vicksburg, by means of a trench across." This trench he directed to be made "about four feet deep and five feet wide." "The river," added General Butler, "will do the rest for us." This project for changing the channel of the Mississippi opposite Vicksburg was not a new idea. A line for such a canal had been laid out several years before by the State of Louisiana, during a dispute with the State of Mississippi over their boundaries, which the former State hoped to settle by threatening to cut off Vicksburg from the river. The idea was eagerly adopted by General Butler, and was earnestly attempted by General Williams, and the attempt was subsequently renewed, in vain, with the immense outlay of labor, by General U. S. Grant, under instructions from Washington, though he had little faith in the project.

On the 20th of June the Seventh embarked on the "Ceres" and "Morning Light"—to participate in this second expedition to Vicksburg. The naval force was a powerful one, comprising three ships of war, ten gunboats and 16 mortar-boats, all under Captain Farragut. The infantry force was insignificant for its purpose. General Williams's

Command consisted of the Ninth Connecticut, Thirtieth Massachusetts and Fourth Wisconsin regiments, eight companies of the Seventh Vermont, Nim's Massachusetts battery and two sections of Everett's battery, numbering all told about 2,500 men and 10 guns. The Seventh Vermont took ten days' rations but no camp equipage save a few cooking utensils; and for some reason only a week's supply of medical stores. The eight companies, with the field and staff officers, numbered about 750 men, about 100 being left in hospital at Carrollton in charge of Surgeon Kelley, and 30 at Baton Rouge. Colonel Roberts and Adjutant Parker were left sick at Carrollton. Major Holbrook accompanied the regiment but was soon taken ill, and a full third of the line officers were ailing and really unfit for duty. As the expedition approached Grand Gulf, where the previous expedition had been fired into, an infantry force was landed, including a battalion of the Seventh under Lieut. Colonel Fullam, with orders to make a detour and approach the place from the rear. The march was commenced about mid-day; the heat was intense, drinking water scarce, and a number of men fell out on the march. The village was approached, as planned, from the rear, but might as well have been reached by a direct approach, as the confederate force there had decamped, and no resistance was offered, except the firing of a few stray shots from some houses in the outskirts. In retribution for the attack made on the previous expedition and as a warning to other towns along the river General Williams ordered the village to be burned. The torch was accordingly applied that night and the force proceeded up the river by the light of the blazing houses. The effect of the severe example thus made was such that no more attacks of the sort were made from inhabited towns, though the Union transports were repeatedly attacked by batteries established by the enemy at Grand Gulf and in the thick forests lining the shores of the river, to which but slight

response could commonly be made by the small arms of the infantry on board.

The transports bearing the regiment reached Vicksburg June 25th and made fast to the river bank a little below the enemy's batteries, just out of range of their guns. Next day the bombardment of the confederate works began and was continued by day and night, with no decisive result. Collecting a force of 1,200 negroes from the neighboring plantations, General Williams set them to work on the canal. In order to toughen the men of the Seventh he ordered them to drill daily with knapsacks. To this was soon added severe fatigue duty upon the canal. The health of the command at once began to suffer. Having no tents, the men were kept in confined quarters on board the transports, till the number of sick became so great as to require all the room on board, when the position of the regiment fit for duty was directed to encamp on shore, where, sleeping on the ground and managing with the aid of boughs and drift-wood and a few shelter tents to secure only an imperfect protection from the night damps, their condition was little if any bettered.

The peninsula opposite Vicksburg, on which they were encamped, was partially protected from overflow by levees; but, nevertheless, a considerable portion of it was annually, and sometimes oftener, submerged for weeks. At the time the regiment reached Vicksburg the river was still high from the Spring freshets, but it soon began to fall at the rate of nearly a foot a day, leaving here and there large pools of stagnant water covered with a thick green scum, containing, in the language of Assistant Surgeon Blanchard, "as much death to the square inch as it would be possible for the laboratory of nature to compound." At night the lowlands were shrouded in dense fogs, surcharged with poisonous exhalations. The sickness inevitable amid such surroundings was greatly aggravated by the want of wholesome food, use of impure water, and lack of suitable medical stores, the small

stock brought from Baton Rouge being soon exhausted, and only a scanty supply being obtainable from the fleet surgeons. The hopeless character of their task added to the depression of the troops. The garrison of Vicksburg consisted of five brigades—Helm's, Bowen's, Preston's, Statham's and Smith's—with a corresponding number of field batteries, in addition to the heavy guns upon the works, making an army of upwards of 15,000 men, or more than four times the number of troops under General Williams. The confederate commander, General Van Dorn, was actively strengthening the fortifications and mounting on the bluffs heavy guns brought from Mobile and Richmond. Under date of July 2d Farragut reported: "General Williams has with him about 3,000 men. * * The army officers have shown a great anxiety to do everything to help us, but their force is too small to attack the town. * * I am satisfied that it is not possible to take Vicksburg without an army of 12,000 to 15,000 men." That the Federal force was utterly inadequate, was as apparent to every private soldier to Farragut and General Williams. The troops also soon lost their faith in the canal project. The soil was a stiff clay, and an excavation six or seven feet in depth failed to disclose the sandy substratum essential to the success of the project. Moreover, as the current of the river set against the shore opposite to the mouth of the canal, the river rendered no assistance, and finally, to make the scheme still more hopeless, the river began to fall faster than the canal could be deepened. The soldiers christened the trench "Butler's Ditch" and "Folly Creek," and anticipated no more from it than the confederates feared.

In a letter to Adjutant General Washburn at this time Quartermaster Morse reported colonel Roberts still sick at Carrollton; Major Holbrook recovering from illness; Adjutant Parker sick; Captains Peck, Ruggles, Young and Cronan, and Lieutenants Clark, Fish and Gates more or less disabled; the weather hot and debilitating; the men all

weak and hardly able to be on duty; the effective numbers of the seventh very small, as of the other three Union regiments at Vicksburg,--while confederate prisoners taken reported an army of from 15,000 to 20,000 men behind the rebel works.

The utter hopelessness of success in the object of the expedition, which pervaded the entire command, in time changed to apprehension for their own safety. Their position was in fact a perilous one. The fleet was their only protection from capture; and this was not secure from attack. Some of the mortar-boats, anchored close to the Vicksburg shore, were much annoyed by sharp-shooters hidden on the thickly-wooded banks, and it was feared that an effort might be made to capture these vessels. For their better protection an infantry force, including a detail from the Seventh regiment under Lieutenant Jackson V. Parker of company B, was sent to the Vicksburg side of the river and posted in the swamps a short distance from the mortar-boats. The arrangement was calculated to invite an attempt to capture the infantry guard, which was soon made by the enemy, who also hoped to take a "blacksmith shop" or two—that being the name given by them to the mortar vessels, on account of the quantity of iron scattered from their 13-inch shells.

The attack was made with considerable force; the Federal pickets were driven in; and the detachment fell back to the edge of the stream, closely followed by the enemy. As the latter emerged from the woods, they were met by a shower of grape and canister from howitzers on the boats and beat a hasty retreat. A number were killed and wounded, and for days afterward the Union forces were collecting muskets and cartridge-boxes thrown down in their flight, and shoes left sticking in the mud. Lieutenant Parker and his men spent about ten days in this dangerous position, continually

exposed to scattering musketry fire from the confederate outposts.

By the middle of July so many men were prostrated with disease that it was with difficulty the regiment could furnish its complement of soldiers for guard duty. In fact in the whole regiment, after the first fortnight, there were not at any one time over four officers and one hundred men fit for duty. Hardly a day passed without a death in the regiment, and in one day three men from one company died between rise and set of sun. In time their numbers became so reduced that none could be spared for funeral escorts and those who died were necessarily buried without any ceremony, in the army clothing in which they died. Malarial diseases pervaded the entire command. In one day seven men died in one of the other regiments. The stock of medicines became exhausted. The sickness on the flotilla also increased, until nearly every vessel bore the appearance of a hospital, filled with sufferers from swamp fever, ague, dengue, dysentery and general debility. Dr. Blanchard, assistant surgeon of the Seventh, and the only physician they had with them, although himself weakened by the malaria, was untiring in his labors, and did all that patient skill could accomplish for the care of the sick; but in spite of his care and that of his assistants, the sick list increased till it largely outnumbered the roll of effectives.

On the 8th of July officers and men were cheered by the arrival of Colonel Roberts, who, having recovered, resumed command of the regiment. His passage up the river was not without danger, the transport which bore him and Lieutenant Clark having to run the gauntlet of some confederate batteries at Grand Gulf. The cabins and staterooms were riddle with shot, some of which passed entirely through the board, wounding several of the crew.

On the 15th of July a new peril was added to the situation. On the morning of that day the formidable confederate

iron-class ram, Arkansas, which had been built up the Yazoo River, which empties into the Mississippi just above Vicksburg, suddenly made her appearance, driving before her two of the three light-draft gunboats which had been sent up earlier in the morning to look for the ram and had found her sooner than they expected to. The Arkansas passed down through the fleet, which was now above Vicksburg, receiving without damage the broadsides of Farragut's ships, none of which had steam enough up to enable them to engage her more actively, and proceeded to the shelter of the confederate batteries. This exploit of the Arkansas was a matter of deep mortification to Farragut, as it was of exultation to the enemy, while the apparent immunity of the ram to injury from the fire of the fleet caused consternation among the Federal forces, especially those upon the unarmed transports and on shore. In apprehension of an immediate attack, General Williams issued orders to disembark the sick from the transports and move them across the peninsula, to be nearer the fleet. Surgeon Blanchard, describing the execution of this unnecessary order, says:

"By some means, I scarcely know how, we got three hundred sick and helpless men over to the levee opposite Vicksburg, without tents or blankets, and without food or medicines. Just at night it began to rain in a drizzling sort of way. I managed to get a limited supply of crackers and tea and spent the night wading through the mud distributing these articles of nourishment, which were all I could obtain. The next morning we received orders to return to the transports."

This last order was a result of Farragut's determination to take his fleet that night back to its former position below Vicksburg. About nine o'clock his ships got under way, and shortly afterwards the mortar-boats and Union batteries opened a furious bombardment. The enemy, anticipating Farragut's movement, at once set fire to tar bar-

rels and bonfires to light up the river in their front, and as the vessels of the fleet came within range of the Confederate guns, a terrific cannonade was begun. For over an hour the roar of hundreds of pieces of heavy ordnance filled the air. By midnight the entire squadron had passed the batteries, and anchored opposite the Union transports below Vicksburg. It had been part of the plan to attack and endeavor to destroy the Arkansas in passage; but as she lay in the shadow of the bluff, Farragut, who had intended to grapple her with his flag ship, failed to find her, in the darkness, and she was not harmed. An attempt, three days later, to destroy her, by the Union ram Queen of the West, had no better success. Although the fleet was not seriously damaged in re-passing the batteries it was felt by Farragut and Williams that the Union position was a hazardous one. Supplies were nearly exhausted, and it was with the greatest difficulty and danger that the line of communication was kept open. The Confederates had established new batteries at Grand Gulf, and no vessel could reach Vicksburg except under the convoy of gunboats. The river was rapidly falling, and Farragut became anxious lest his larger vessels should not be able to return to deep water. All welcomed the order, which came July 20th, to return to Baton Rouge.

An incident attending the departure greatly enhanced the gloom which prevailed in the Seventh regiment. The transport Ceres, which was still little else than a floating hospital, was sent, at night, to take a cargo of the negroes who had been digging out the canal to a point twelve miles below Vicksburg. A number of sick officers and men, including Colonel Roberts, Captains Peck, Dutton and Mosely, and Lieutenants Harris and Gates, remained on the steamer; and a guard, under captain Lorenzo Brooks of company F, was placed on board. The enemy, noticing the departure of the Ceres without the escort of a gunboat, ran a light

battery from Vicksburg down to a point about six miles below, where the river made a bend and the current was strong; and after the transport had landed her load and was on her return, opened fire on her from the shore. Owing to the curve in the channel, the steamer was within range for a long distance, and but for the facts that the night was dark, and that all her lights were immediately extinguished, she would probably have been sunk. As it was she was struck twenty-three times by six-pound solid shot and shells. The second shot struck Captain Brooks, killing him instantly. Eight shots passed entirely through the boat, some of them below the water line, and one struck one of the engines, stopping it and leaving the boat turning round in the channel in front of the battery. The injury to the machinery, however, proved to be only the knocking of a lever-rod out of place. It was promptly replaced and the *Ceres* started along. The leaks were stopped by stuffing the shot-holes with pieces of mattresses and clothing, and the boat soon passed out of range without further loss of life. The death of Captain Brooks was the first death among the commissioned officers of the Seventh, and was deeply felt throughout the regiment.²

A second death among the line officers occurred the next day, in the hospital at Carrollton—that of Captain Charles C. Ruggles of company I. He had been left sick at Ship Island on the departure of the regiment for New Orleans, and was subsequently transferred to the hospital at Carrollton, where upon convalescence he was placed in command of the soldiers in convalescent camp. Here, while engaged in the over-zealous discharge of his duties, he sustained a

² Captain Brooks was commissioned in January, 1862, and had proved himself an efficient and popular young officer. His body was taken to Baton Rouge, on the return of the regiment thither, the day after his death, and there buried with military honors. His remains were subsequently removed to his home in Swanton.

sunstroke, from which he died July 24th, 1862. His untimely death, in the 24th year of his age, was deeply deplored by the officers and men, with whom he was deservedly a favorite.³

A third death of an officer occurred four days later—that of Second Lieutenant Richard T. Cull, of company E, who succumbed to sickness and died, in his 43d year, at Baton Rouge, July 28th, 1862. He was buried at that place, with military honors. He was a faithful and capable officer and was sincerely mounted.

A little expedition was undertaken by Quartermaster Morse about this time to procure some fresh meat, which was much needed, especially for the sick. Taking Captain Dutton and a guard of forty men, he went twenty miles back into the country and brought in thirty head of cattle. The confiscation by Morse and Dutton of some wagons and teams, taken to carry sick men, displeased General Williams, who placed both officers under arrest for appropriating private property. They were, however, soon released.

The return to Baton Rouge occasioned a mournful amount of suffering among the sick men, who constituted fully one-half of the command at this time. On the 20th 350 sick men of the Seventh were removed from the hospital boats of the fleet, to the steamer Morning Light, the process occupying the entire day. The steamer was detained at Vicksburg for three days after Captain Kilburn of company D, who had charge of the transportation, had reported all ready to leave. The sick men, filling every available space on board, suffered greatly from their crowded

³ His remains were temporarily interred at Carrollton, and were subsequently removed to his home in Poultney, where they were buried with impressive ceremonies, participated in by the citizens and Masonic lodges of several towns.

Condition and from the intense heat, and a number died on board the Morning Light before they started.⁴

Dr. Blanchard was with them, but was himself suffering from malaria and, as heretofore, was without needed medicines for the sufferers. At last, on the 24th, the order to move was received, and the Morning Light started down the river, in advance of the rest of the fleet, under the convoy of a gunboat. That night both boats grounded and in spite of all efforts remained stationary till overtaken and dragged out of the mud, the next day, by other steamers. During this detention two men died and were buried in their blankets, in trenches dug on shore. That evening they reached Baton Rouge, and during the night they were removed to a hotel on shore, which was occupied as a hospital. No less than six men died that night, during the removal. The main body of the expedition left Vicksburg on the evening of the 24th, the remainder of the Seventh bringing up the rear, and reached Baton Rouge July 26th.

The failure of this ill-starred expedition, ordered and conducted in opposition to the judgment and advice of experience naval and military men, was due to General Butler's under-rating of the numbers and resources of the enemy. It formed the subject of a glowing congratulatory proclamation, issued from Richmond by the Confederate Secretary of War. For all the regiments of General Williams's command, and especially for the Seventh, it was a terrible, almost a destructive experience. The Seventh Vermont went to Vicksburg a body of some 700 effective men, eager for active service. It mustered on its return to Baton Rouge, thirty-six days after, less than one hundred men fit for duty! In the course of a week after their return, however, a hundred convalescents reported for duty; and to these, on the last day of July, were added a hundred men of companies C and

⁴ Statement of Captain John. B. Kilburn.

D, who had been detached three months before to garrison Fort Pike, and had remained there until this time.

Chaplain Frost resigned August 9th, and was succeeded by Rev. W. C. Hopkins, a son of Bishop Hopkins of Vermont and a worthy minister of the Episcopal church.

The failure of the expedition against Vicksburg encouraged the enemy to take the offensive, and on the very day that the last of the Union fleet left Vicksburg, General Van Dorn despatched Major General John C. Breckenridge, with a force of 5,000 men, by rail, to Camp Moore, a Confederate rendezvous on the New Orleans railroad, 60 miles northeast of Baton Rouge. He was there to be reinforced by the brigade of General Ruggles, and was then to march rapidly to Baton Rouge and overwhelm the Federal troops at that point. His ability to accomplish this was not doubted, for his force was double that of General Williams, while the ram Arkansas was to co-operate with him and neutralize the aid of the Union gunboats. His success would inflict a severe loss on the Federal army in Louisiana; would bring to the Confederate cause the prestige of re-taking the capital of Louisiana; would give the Confederates control of the navigation of the Red river, and reopen to the Confederacy, in Western Louisiana and Texas, a large area for supplies. Probably it was part of the plan, after the taking of Baton Rouge, to push a force down to Carrollton, and capture General Phelps's command at that point.

THE BATTLE OF BATON ROUGE.

General Breckenridge marched from Camp Moore July 30th, with eighteen regiments and four batteries, in two divisions, commanded by Brig. Generals Ruggles and Clark—each a division consisting of two brigades, commanded respectively by Brig. General Helm and Colonels Thompson, Allen and Hunt. To meet this formidable force General Williams had but six regiments, the Ninth Con-

necticut, Fourteenth Maine, Thirtieth Massachusetts, Seventh Vermont, Sixth Michigan and Twenty-first Indiana; three light batteries, the Second, Fourth and Sixth Massachusetts; and a company of Massachusetts cavalry. The effective force of all of these organizations was terribly reduced by illness. The Seventh Vermont took less than 250 muskets, out of over 700, into the battle. The batteries were so reduced that details had to be made from the infantry regiments to eke out their numbers, and they were short-handed at that. The six regiments did not take over 2000 bayonets into action.

Baton Rouge is on the east bank of the Mississippi, which runs north and south at that point. North of the town Bayou Gross opens from the river. The troops of Williams's command were encamped in the timber just outside of the city, upon and between the three roads which radiate to the north and east—the Clinton road leading northerly; the Greenwell Spring road to the northeast, and the Government or Clay Cut road to the east.

General Thomas Williams was a brave, educated and experienced soldier, a graduate of West Point, who had seen service in the Mexican war, in which he was thrice brevetted for meritorious service. But for some unexplained reason, he had not fortified his position at Baton Rouge. Though warned of the approach of Breckenridge with what there was every reason to suppose was a vastly superior force, not a shovelful of earth was moved for the protection of this lines.

In the afternoon of August 4th General Williams, apprised by his scouts of the approach of the enemy, notified his regimental and battery commanders that an attack might be expected on the next morning. Before daylight of the 5th he disposed his forces in a single line with his left resting on Bayou Gross and his right extending across the Clay Cut Road, about a mile from the State capitol, in

the following order, from left to right: Fourth Wisconsin, Ninth Connecticut, Fourteenth Maine, Twenty-first Indiana, Sixth Michigan. Two regiments, the Seventh Vermont and Thirtieth Massachusetts, formed a short second line partly in the rear of the Indiana and Michigan regiments, and extending beyond them to the right. The batteries were posted at different points in the line. It was an unfortunate feature of this arrangement that the line was formed in the rear of the camps of two of the regiments. These were consequently occupied by Breckenridge in his first advance, and the tents and army stores in them were burned by the enemy before they left the field.

The first firing occurred before light on the picket line. The battle commenced in earnest at daybreak, and in a dense fog. Beginning on the right the firing extended along the whole front, and continued with varying energy for over five hours. The Union line was out-flanked and forced back on its right; but fresh positions were taken, farther back, by the regiments and batteries, and by nine o'clock the advance of the enemy was checked. His last and severest attack was made on the right. Here on the Federal side Colonel Roberts of the Seventh Vermont, Lieut. Colonel Keith, commanding the Twenty-first Indiana, and General Williams fell in turn, the first mortally wounded, the second severely wounded, and the last killed by a rifle ball through the chest. On the Confederate side Brig. General Clark, two colonels commanding brigades and several regimental commanders were killed or severely wounded. The fighting swayed back at last to a point where the Union gunboats on the right could participate, and after the repulse of the enemy they, by the fire of their heavy guns, aided in his discomfiture. At ten o'clock Breckenridge withdrew his forces from the field to a position a mile in the rear, intending, as he states in his report, to renew the engagement, when the ram Arkan-

sas, on whose co-operation he had counted, should arrive. But the Arkansas did not appear, owing to some trouble with her machinery; and when the Union gunboats attacked her next day, she was set on fire and blown up by her crew. Breckenridge thereupon retired ten miles to the Comite river, and thence to Port Hudson. The Union troops held the field, buried the dead of both sides and took care of large numbers of the confederate wounded. The losses on the Union side were 84 killed, 266 wounded and 33 missing—an aggregate of 383. The tabular statement of the Confederate losses shows 84 killed, 313 wounded and 56 missing—aggregate 453. The tables do not include a force of "partisan rangers" and some militia attached to Breckenridge's command. Lieutenant Godfrey Weitzel, of Butler's staff, who was despatched to the field immediately after the battle, reported on the 7th that they had "already buried over 250 rebels." Breckenridge abandoned five caissons, and one of this regiments lost its colors.⁵ It was a mortifying repulse for the Confederates, but the Union troops were too much enfeebled by illness to pursue.⁶

As regards the part taken by the Seventh Vermont in the battle, the morning report of the regiment, the day before, showed an aggregate of 311 officers and men present for duty. About 200 men were sick in hospital, and nearly 300 sick in camp. Two officers and 42 men were on guard and picket duty, leaving 267 officers and men to form in line. The regiment had in the line about 225 bayonets. Captain Peck and several men left their beds in hospital, in order to take part in the fighting. Major Holbrook, as field-officer of the day, accompanied by Lieutenant Clark, spent the night before the battle in inspection of the extended

⁵ Those of the Fourth Louisiana, captured by the Sixth Michigan.

⁶ "Our forces cannot pursue; only about 1200 of the 2500 engaged could march five miles."—Lieut. Weitzel's report.

picket line. About three o'clock A. M., the night being foggy and very dark, picket firing began in front, on the Greenwell Spring road.. This appears from General Breckenridge's report to have been occasioned by a company of mounted Confederate "rangers" pushing forward through the rebel picket line. They were fired on by the Union pickets, and retreating in haste, stampeded the brigade of General Helm, whose troops fired on each other, and General Helm was dangerously injured by the fall of his horse; Lieutenant Todd, one of his aids, was killed; a line officer and a number of men were wounded, and two guns of Cobb's Kentucky battery were disabled in some way in the panic. Major Holbrook, hearing the firing, hurried to the spot and rode through and beyond his own picket line without knowing it till he was halted and fired on by the enemy. Turning back he was fired on again by the Union pickets; but the darkness prevented any accurate aim and he received no injury. He was deploying a line of skirmishers when the enemy's skirmishers advanced, their line extending to the Union left across the Clinton road, and the Union skirmishers fell back gradually to the main line. The camps were of course aroused by the firing in front and the regiments fell into line, in the darkness.

General Williams had apparently left his plan of defense to be formed after the enemy's plan of attack should be developed; and the only direction received by Colonel Roberts the night before, was to form his regiment in front of his camp in case of attack, and await orders, with discretionary permission to move to any point where the enemy was attacking in force. General Williams expected that the main attack would be made upon his left, with the co-operation of the Confederate ram Arkansas, and his expectation was confirmed when the advance of the enemy's skirmishers upon his left was reported to him by Major Holbrook. It was about half past three o'clock when the Seventh fell into line in front

of its camp, which was on Florida street, on the right of the Greenwell spring road. The regiment was standing in line, and under fire from the Confederate batteries, when Major Holbrook, who had been sent by General Williams to look after the skirmish line on the right, stopped on his way thither to inform colonel Roberts that General Williams expected the main attack upon his left. Colonel Roberts accordingly moved the regiment to the left to support that portion of the line. As it was impossible to distinguish objects at any distance in the fog, Lieut. Colonel Fullam was sent forward to learn the position of the line in front; but he could only discover that the Twenty-first Indiana, which had been there, had moved to the right. In the meantime the firing became heavy on the right, where Ruggles's brigade was making a determined assault, which fell chiefly upon the Fourteenth Maine and Twenty-first Indiana. Seeing that he was not needed where he was, and his men being in danger from a section of Manning's battery, which was posted a short distance to his rear and was pitching round-shot and shell into as well as over his line, Colonel Roberts moved his regiment back to its former position in front of his camp. Through the smoke and fog which screened everything in front came many bullets and occasional discharges of grape; but Colonel Roberts hesitated to return the fire for fear that the Indiana regiment might be in front of him, and his men were standing motionless, when General Williams rode up and ordered him to open fire.⁷ He accordingly gave the order to "fire by battalion." Several volleys had been fired, when an officer of the Twenty-first Indiana came back to say that the Seventh was firing into them. Colonel Roberts at once ordered his regiment to cease firing. The order had

⁷ "The regiment stood unmoved under fire without returning the same, until ordered by General Williams to load and fire as rapidly as possible. That order I heard myself, from the lips of General Williams, not twenty minutes before he fell."—Statement of Captain S. Dutton.

scarcely been obeyed, when he fell with a bullet wound in the neck and as he was borne to the rear a second bullet entered his thigh and passed upward into the abdomen, inflicting a mortal wound. Lieut. Colonel Fullam was not with the regiment when Colonel Roberts fell, having been sent back to tell Manning's battery that they were endangering the Seventh Vermont, and the command devolved for the time being on Captain Porter. General Williams had passed on to the right, and discovering that the enemy was pressing around his right flank, had ordered the three regiments on that flank to fall back a short distance, and the movement had begun when General Williams fell. Captain Porter moved the Seventh back, to correspond with the retrograde movement on the right, to a position in the rear of its camp, when Lieut. Colonel Fullam returned through a shower of bullets which wounded his horse and assume the command of the regiment. During the next hour the enemy made three attempts to carry a piece of woods on the right, but was each time repulsed and finally retired. The regiment was then posted, with the rest of the right wing, near the penitentiary grounds, and stood to arms during the day; but the enemy did not again advance. The loss of the Seventh Vermont in this action was one officer and nine men wounded (of whom three died of their wounds), and five missing. Colonel Roberts sank gradually from internal hemorrhage, and died at noon of the 7th. He was the first field-officer of a Vermont regiment killed in battle. His death was a great grief to the officers and men of his command and occasioned deep feeling and sorrow in Vermont. Corporal Bertrand Billings of company C, received a ball through his body and died the next day. Charles Larrabee of company K was shot in the chest and died on the 24th. Jack Russell, a lad too young to enlist, who accompanied Major Holbrook from Vermont as his servant, was also killed. He had followed Major Holbrook to the picket line,

on the right, and was shot through the body. His body was found next day at the extreme front.⁸

The first and only instance of official censure of a Vermont organization during the war—a wholly unmerited censure as will be shown—occurred in connection with this engagement. Four days after the battle General Butler issued a magniloquent order, in which he enormously exaggerated the losses of the enemy and the captures made by the Union troops; complimented the latter without exception, and authorized the several regiments engaged to inscribe "Baton Rouge" on their colors. A few days after, a report reached the officers of the regiment that statements attributing misconduct to the Seventh Vermont had been made and that General Butler was going to make an example of the regiment. The rumor was confirmed at an interview between General Butler and Major Holbrook, on the 26th, in which after informing the latter that he had been recommended for the vacant colonelcy General Butler further informed him that he had prepared an order censuring the regiment for "discreditable behavior in the face of the enemy." Major Holbrook denied in detail the statements upon which General Butler based his blame of the regiment; gave him the names of eye-witnesses of high standing who would testify to the good conduct of the Seventh; protested against his condemning the regiment unheard; and asked for a court of inquiry to establish the truth in the case. His request and protest were in vain, and on the 30th the order, prepared before the interview, was promulgated. In this order the censure of the Seventh Vermont was enhanced by

⁸ The wounded were, company C, Corporal Aaron Piper, arm amputated; Henry Clark, foot; company B, Edward Din, wrist; James McGarry, ankle; company D, Thomas Bixby, head; company E, T. P. Stearns, side; company I, Henry Beebe, slightly. J. Sullivan, J. Fitzgerald and T. Donpier of company K, and C. A. Smith of company H, were reported missing.

extended and elaborate praise bestowed on other troops and individuals. So far as it related to the Vermont regiment it was as follows:

General Orders,
No. 62 1/2.

Headquarters Department of the Gulf
New Orleans, August 25th, 1862.

The commanding general has carefully revised the official reports of the action of August 5th at Baton Rouge, to collect the evidence of the gallant deeds and meritorious services of those engaged in that brilliant victory. The name of the lamented and gallant General Williams has already passed into history. Colonel Roberts of the Seventh Vermont volunteers, fell mortally wounded while rallying his men. He was worthy of a better disciplined regiment and a better fate. Glorious as it is to die for one's country, yet his regiment gave him the inexpressible pain of seeing it break in confusion when not pressed by the enemy and refuse to march to the aid of the outnumbered and almost overwhelmed Indianians. The Seventh Vermont regiment, by a fatal mistake, had already fired into the same regiment they had refused to support, killed and wounding several. The commanding general therefore excepts the Seventh Vermont from General Orders No. 57, and will not permit their colors to be inscribed with a name which could bring to its officers and men no proud thought. It is further ordered that the colors of that regiment be not borne by them until such time as they shall have earned the right to them, and the earliest opportunity will be given this regiment, to show whether they are worthy descendants of those who fought beside Allen and with Starke at Bennington.

The following have honorable mention. * * * John Donoghue, Fourth Massachusetts battery, who brought off from the camp of the Seventh Vermont regiment their colors at the time of their retreat. * * *

By command of Major-General Butler.
WM. H. WEIGEL,
First Lieutenant and Acting Assistant Adjutant-General.

The official communications and proceedings which followed this extraordinary proclamation are as follows:

Camp Williams, La., Aug. 31st, 1862.

General Lorenzo Thomas, Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.:

In justice to the regiment which I have the honor to command, the Seventh regiment of Vermont Volunteers, I find myself under necessity of calling for an examination into the statements made by the major-general commanding the department in Order No. 62 1/2, dates August 25th, 1862, which are calculated, in my opinion, to bring unmerited disgrace upon the regiment and the State from which it comes. I respectfully request that a court of inquiry may be assembled as soon as convenient to inves-

tigate and report upon the battle of Baton Rouge and the part taken in that engagement by my regiment, with the view that justice may be done to it and the service. Regretting exceedingly to find myself impelled to ask for the scrutiny of a victory which should fill all generous hearts only with gratitude and pride, I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. C. HOLBROOK,
Major, Commanding Seventh Regiment Vermont Volunteers.

[Endorsement.]

Camp Parapet, La., September 2d, 1862.

It is much to be regretted that a regiment in this quarter should be compelled to defend itself against unmerited dishonor from its commanding general as well as against the enemy and extraordinary exposure and disease; but I concur with Major Holbrook in the necessity of an investigation into the facts connected with the battle of Baton Rouge by a court of inquiry, with the view of doing justice to the Seventh Vermont Volunteers and to the service.

J. W. PHELPS,
Brigadier-General.

Headquarters Department of the Gulf,
New Orleans, La., September 14th, 1862.

Brigadier-General Thomas, Adjutant-General:

General: I inclose the somewhat anomalous application of Major Holbrook, commanding the Seventh regiment Vermont volunteers, with a copy of the general order complained about. It will be seen that I only give the result of official reports, so that I do not feel personally touched by the matter or manner of the communication. Of the conduct of Major Holbrook there is no complaint; being field officer of the day, of the post, he was not in the action. If consistent with the rules of the service to inquire into the resume by the commanding general of the events of an action, I should be glad to have it done. For if the regiment has been unjustly treated it could give no one more pleasure than myself to see it righted. As there has been some rivalry of feeling I do not think it would be best to detail a court from the officers of the regiments at Baton Rouge. I may further say that I suggested to Major Holbrook that he might select his court of inquiry from any of the officers here not of that brigade.

BENJ. F. BUTLER,
Major-General, Commanding.

Washington, October 3d, 1862.

Maj.-General Benjamin F. Butler, New Orleans:

General: Your letter of September 14th, inclosing the application of Major W. C. Holbrook for a court of inquiry on the conduct of the Seventh Vermont Volunteers at the battle of Baton Rouge, has been received and

referred to the Secretary of War. No officer can at this time be sent to new Orleans to constitute such a court. The course suggested by you in regard to the proposed investigation seems unobjectionable in all respects. You have full authority to adopt it.

H. W. Halleck,
General-in-Chief.
Montpelier, Vt., October 13th, 1862.

Hon. E. M. Stanton:

I wrote you a few weeks since of the charges of General Butler in his order No. 62 ½, against the Seventh Vermont regiment in the battle at Baton Rouge. These charges are believed to be grossly unjust, and have stirred up the people of Vermont. ?Nothing short of an entirely impartial court of inquiry, to be appointed at and sent on from Washington, will satisfy our people. They are brave, loyal and patriotic to the core, and for that very reason will not quietly sit down under charges which reflect upon the State. May I have assurances that action will be taken at Washington?

Frederick Holbrook,
Governor of Vermont.

The Legislature of Vermont was in session when General Butler's order reached the State, and on the 13th of October the following resolution, introduced by Mr. Houghton of Pawlet, was adopted by the House:

Resolved, That His Excellency, the Governor, be requested to demand an investigation by the War Department at Washington of all the circumstances relating to the conduct of the Seventh Vermont regiment at the battle of Baton Rouge. And be it further

Resolved, That if it appears that the charges against said regiment for cowardice and unsoldier-like conduct are false, that the governor be requested to demand the immediate transfer of the Seventh regiment to some other department of the United States service.

The Vermont Senate first adopted a resolution asking the governor for any information in his possession touching the alleged misconduct of the Seventh Vermont, to which Governor Holbrook made reply that though his information was in the shape of letters and statements not suitable to be laid before the Senate, he believed injustice had been done to the regiment and that the credit of the State and of the regiment demanded a thorough investigation. The follow-

ing resolution, introduced October 16th by Senator George F. Edmunds of Chittenden county, was then adopted:

Whereas, Charges of misconduct have been made by the general commanding the Department of the Gulf against the Seventh regiment Vermont Volunteers. And *Whereas*, It is due to the honor and dignity of the State that such charges be fully investigated, in order that any injustice therein may be publicly declared, therefore,

Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives, that the governor be requested to demand of the President of the United States, as an act of justice to said regiment and to the State of Vermont, that a board of inquiry be appointed to hear and determine such charges as soon as may be, according to the usual course of military inquiry.

In supporting this resolution Mr. Edmunds said:

The subject touched the pride of Vermont, her sense of honor and love of justice. He had good reason to believe that the charges against the Seventh were invented (he used the term deliberately) by somebody. He had as good reasons as anybody could have, to believe that the regiment stood its ground under fire, with orders not to fire, until they were ordered by General Williams himself. It was in obedience to that order that they fired as they did; so that nothing like the charges alluded to in the order of the general commanding could be the result of any "mistake" which they or their officers made. All the testimony, aside from that, showed that the regiment behaved gallantly in every respect. It has been said that they left their colors on the field. The identical "colors" were at the governor's room. They were a small, insignificant piece of bunting, and it need not surprise any one if they were left sticking in the mud somewhere on the battlefield where nobody could notice them, all frittered as they were by the winds and rain of the Mississippi valley, until there was not enough silk left to make a pocket-handkerchief for a pauper.

In due time a Board of Inquiry was ordered by General Butler, and he forwarded its proceedings to Governor Holbrook, with the remark that he trusted that when he (the governor) read the proceedings he would see that "no injustice had been done to the regiment [save] in the single par-

ticalar of its colors." The proceedings of the Board, as officially reported, were as follows:

BOARD OF INQUIRY

DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF,
City of New Orleans, October 23, 1862.

Pursuant to special orders from department headquarters, viz:

SPECIAL ORDERS, HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF
No. 462. New Orleans, October 21, 1862

A board of inquiry, consisting of the following officers: Col. H. C. Deming, president; Col. J. W. Turner, Lieut. Col. A. B. Farr, Lieut. W. L. G. Greene, recorder, is ordered to examine and report upon the facts and circumstances relative to the condition as to discipline and efficiency of the Seventh Regiment Vermont Volunteers at the time of the battle of Baton Rouge and the conduct of the officers and men in that action.

By order of Major-General Butler;
R. S. Davis,
Captain and Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF,
New Orleans, November 3, 1862.

The board met pursuant to adjournment. Present, all the members. The board, having fully weighed and considered the evidence, report as follows: It appears from the evidence that when the Seventh Regiment Vermont Volunteers was called upon to participate in the battle of Baton Rouge it had been very much reduced in numbers and doubtless in morale by the severities of the campaign at Vicksburg and by long confinement on board transports. On the morning of the battle the regiment had present for duty about 250 men, about 520 men sick, of whom 200 were in hospital. About 225 men were in line early in the action. The commanding officer of the regiment, Colonel Roberts, fell under the sharpest volley that was fired that day, and shortly after his fall the regiment fled about 100 feet to the rear and to the cover of some gullies in a disorderly manner. About two-fifths of the men present for duty did not return to the position in line of battle during the day. It appears that early in the action Lieutenant-Colonel Fullam had been dispatched by his colonel to see to the firing of a battery which was endangering the regiment; that Major Holbrook was officer of the day. Upon the fall of the colonel, therefore, the command of the regiment devolved temporarily upon Captain (now Major) Porter, who seems to have behaved creditably in a trying position. When the lieutenant-colonel returned he assumed command of the regiment. The only testimony before the board discreditable to him is the following, from Lieutenant-Colonel Elliott 's deposition:

I did see something in the conduct of officers which I thought deserving of censure. I saw Colonel Fullam, after they had fallen back, seeking protection, drawing his regiment up in a ravine. I asked him what he was doing there. He said he was getting his men into a sheltered position. I saw no other officers show a disposition to evade duty. I think the regiment was over 200 yards in the rear of their camp.

So far as any evidence appears it would seem that the line officers behaved well during the day. It appears that the Seventh Vermont Regiment, or a part of it, did fire into the Twenty-first Indiana, but there is an exculpation to be found in the testimony of the commanding officer of the Indiana regiment, Captain Grimsley, to wit:

Occupying the position they did the Seventh had no means of knowing where we were. * * * My impression is that when we received the volleys from the Seventh Vermont we ran under a fire which was already going on.

It appears also from the testimony of various witnesses that the field was covered by dense fog and smoke, so that it was quite impossible to distinguish a friend from a foe at the distance the two regiments were apart; and, moreover, that the position of the Indiana regiment was very frequently changed.

It does not appear that any orders were communicated to the Vermont regiment during the day which they disobeyed. It appears that the colors of the regiment were retained by the color guard during the action, and were brought off the field by the guard when the regiment fell back. It appears that the camp colors alleged by Captain Manning, of the Fourth Massachusetts Battery, to have been brought from the camp of the Seventh Vermont by John Donoghue were two markers of the form in common use and one small United States flag, which had been used for no military purpose for a long time previously.

HENRY C. DEMING,
Colonel Twelfth Regt. Conn. Vols., President of the Court.

JNO. W. TURNER,
Colonel and C. S.

A. B. FARR,

Lieutenant-Colonel Twenty-sixth Regiment Massachusetts Vols.,

WILLIAM L. G. GREENE,

Lieutenant Second Louisiana Volunteers, Recorder.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF,
New Orleans, November 6, 1862.

The commanding general has examined with care the findings, proceedings, and testimony of the court of inquiry, whereof Col. Henry C. Deming is president, in the matter of the Seventh Regiment Vermont Volunteers, and approves the proceedings and findings. It is apparent that every conclusion arrived at by the court is supported by the testimony of the witnesses called on behalf of the regiment. The general is constrained to find that the charge against the regiment of breaking in disorder before the enemy is fully proved. Two-fifths of the regiment never returned to the line of battle after they broke and fled; that the regiment did fire upon the Indiana regiment, and that that was the only firing done by the regiment that day, although they held the center of the line, which was most hotly pressed. The general is glad to find that most of the line officers

behaved well, and that the official reports which led him to believe that the regimental colors were lost by the regiment were mistakes, and therefore he has pleasure in ordering the colors of the regiment to be restored to the regiment with privilege to carry them, but he cannot order them to be inscribed with the name of the glorious battle of Baton Rouge. The general doubts not that now, having an officer as commander who will not form them out of sight for shelter in a ravine during an action as did their late lieutenant-colonel, the regiment will in its next action retrieve its position and earn a proud name for itself and State.

BENJ. F. BUTLER
Major-General, Commanding

Taking his time, two weeks later General Butler issued the following order:

General Orders,
No. 98.

HDQRS. DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF,
New Orleans, November 20, 1862.

The commanding general, upon the finding of the board of inquiry upon the conduct of the Seventh Regiment Vermont Volunteers at the battle of Baton Rouge, learns that he was led into a mistake by the official reports of that action as to the loss by that regiment of its colors, it proving to have been the camp color left in camp and not the regimental color that was brought off the field by the Massachusetts battery. He therefore has pleasure in ordering the regimental colors to be restored to the regiment, not doubting that it will in its next action earn for itself a position and name which will be a credit to itself, its State, and country.

By command of Major-General Butler,
GEO. C. STRONG,
Assistant Adjutant-General and Chief of Staff.

General Butler's duplicity in his statements in regard to the colors of the regiment, in his letter to Adjutant-General Thomas, in his approval of the findings of the board of inquiry, and in General Order No. 98, is apparent. His repeated assertion that he was led by the official reports to believe that the Seventh Vermont lost its regimental colors, was deliberately false. The "official reports" contain but one allusion to the matter, which is the statement in the report of Captain Charles Manning of the Fourth Massachusetts battery, that "John Donoghue brought off from the camp of the Seventh Vermont regiment their camp colors at the time of the retreat." Whatever "camp colors" may be, General Butler understood them to be one thing, and the regi-

mental colors another; for he noted the distinction between them At no time could General Butler have had reason to suppose that the Seventh lost its regimental colors. He knew before the publication of his original censure, that the regiment did not lose its colors. His assertion that he was "led to believe," by the reports, that the regimental colors were lost upon the field, was a transparent falsehood. The truth is that General Butler had a grudge against the Seventh Vermont, which he was determined to gratify. This was well known to many in General Butler's command. It was alluded to by General John W. Phelps, in a letter to Colonel Holbrook, quoted by the latter in his history of the Seventh Vermont, as follows:

The general [Butler] began quarreling with officers of the Seventh almost before it had fairly landed at Ship Island, and he seems to have kept it up to the last, pursuing the Seventh through the strife and havoc of battle, where he was not personally present, and under circumstances of difficulty, crowned with success, where a generous spirit would have been disposed to overlook minor faults, even if they had been committed. What his motives were for thus pursuing the Seventh, and seeking to incite variance between that regiment and the Twenty-first Indiana regiment, I cannot say; but it is evident that if he [Butler] were to run for the presidency in the ensuing election of 1864, the large electoral vote of Indiana might be of great moment to him, and that it would be a good bargain to win it even at the expense of losing the Whig vote of Vermont. But whatever the objects of General Butler may have been, they were little in accord with the occasion that called for military service in the Southwest in 1862, which was the most important theatre of action of the whole war.

The conduct of General Butler and the result of the court of inquiry must be judged in the light of this personal spite against the Seventh. The charge that the regiment lost its colors, General Butler was compelled to retract as publicly as he had made it; and his further charge that the regiment "broke in confusion when not pressed by the

enemy" could after this have little weight of its own. But how about the statement of the board of inquiry that the regiment "fled one hundred feet to the rear in a disorderly manner?" In regard to this finding it is to be remembered that the board consisted of officers of General Butler's command, selected by himself. General Butler indeed states that they were selected by Major Holbrook. But this is contradicted by that officer. Major Holbrook says: "He [General Butler] first selected them and then magnanimously asked if I had any objection to the members. I declined to become sponsor for a court convened under his direction." One of the members of the board, Commissary Turner, was a member of General Butler's staff. Another, Lieutenant Greene, was an officer of a colored regiment, who owed his appointment to General Butler. All, of course, were especially anxious not to offend General Butler. It was fortunate that the regiment came off as well as it did, at the hands of a board so constituted. A truly impartial court could have reached no such conclusion.

Reviewing the evidence, it appears that the original charge against the regiment was made by Captain James Grimsley, who commanded the Twenty-first Indiana after its lieutenant colonel was wounded. After describing the situation of his regiment, as about surrounded by the enemy, it having, as he said, a regiment of Louisiana troops in its front, a battalion deployed as skirmishers uncomfortably near on its right, "which opened on us a most galling fire," while "another or two regiments formed in our camp opened upon our rear a hot fire," Captain Grimsley adds:

Our fighting now became upon the principle of "every man for himself." * * * To add to the danger and desperation of our situation, the Seventh Vermont, from their camp back of us, opened a fire in the direction of all engaged, which killed many of our own men outright and

wounded several more. At this we gave back, when we met General Williams and acquainted him with the fact. He gave the Vermonters a severe reprimand and ordered them forward to our support. We reformed and moved down to our old position. * * * At the most critical period of the fight the Seventh Vermont regiment, which was ordered by General Williams to support us, refused to do so.

These statements of Grimsley comprise everything in the reports of participants in the battle, that in any way reflects upon the conduct of the seventh Vermont. Opposed to them is the statement in the official report of Colonel N. A. M. Dudley of the Thirtieth Massachusetts, who commanded the right wing of General Williams's line. After mentioning the fact that Manning's battery fell back "with considerable confusion, leaving one piece and caisson," Colonel Dudley says:

Captain Manning quickly rallied his men and went into battery on the right of the Twenty-first Indiana, well supported on the right by the Seventh Vermont, Lieut. Colonel Fullam (Colonel Roberts having been mortally wounded), and with this battery did good service. In the meantime the enemy appeared in strong force directly in front of the Twenty-first Indiana, Seventh Vermont and Thirtieth Massachusetts. At one time these three brave regiments stood face to face with the enemy within 40 yards of each other. For full one hour the contest for this piece of wood was terrific. * * * At this juncture of the contest I ordered Lieutenant Trull to fire his three left pieces obliquely across the front of the Twenty-first Indiana, Thirtieth Massachusetts and Seventh Vermont. This was the turning point on the right wing. This galling fire of canister, with the terrible discharge of the musketry of three regiments, effectually silenced the enemy's fire, and they withdrew again to the fields in the rear. * * * It cannot be expected that I should mention all the brave exploits of persons or even regiments, particularly on an occasion when all did so well. Our lines were very much extended and I frequently necessarily found myself separated from each regiment; but on no occasion did I see a single regiment misbehave. All seemed to act with a coolness and determination that surprised even ourselves after the excitement of the action was over.

That under the circumstances any serious misconduct on the part of the Seventh Vermont regiment could have escaped Colonel Dudley's knowledge is not supposable. His report, confirmed by others, shows that there were other troops beside the Seventh that fell back, some of them in "confusion," whose conduct should also have been rebuked by General Butler, if he was disposed to distributed his censure impartially.

Before the board of inquiry, Captain Grimsley, while in the main sustaining his report, varied from it in an important pint by testifying that when the Seventh Vermont moved to the rear they moved in good order "as though they might have had an order so to move."

Colonel Dudley testified:

That the Seventh was under his command during the latter part of the action, he being senior officer of the right wing; that he saw nothing to censure in the conduct of the Seventh; that the first he saw of the Seventh was when General Williams sent him an order to take back his command to the neighborhood of Boulevard street; that in executing this movement he found the Seventh in the rear of their tents; that he asked what they were doing there, and they said they had fallen back with the rest; that he then gave them the order to fall back; that at that time there were regiments in their rear—the Fourteenth Maine was in their rear; that the only troops in front of them was the Sixth Michigan and Nim's battery; that he gave the Seventh two orders himself, both of which they obeyed; that he had no knowledge of any of the orders which he sent by staff officers being disobeyed; that he did not know anything of the firing into the Twenty-first Indiana by the Seventh; that the Twenty-first was scattered over the field very much, and it was impossible to tell where they were, and they even complained of his regiment firing into them; that he doubted very much whether they were fired into from the rear at all.

Lieutenant Frederick M. Norcross of the Thirtieth Massachusetts testified:

That he was present t the battle of Baton Rouge and

acted as aid to Colonel Dudley, and had occasion to notice the conduct of the Seventh Vermont; that there was nothing unfavorable in their conduct which attracted his attention; that he did not at any time see any disorder in their ranks; that he was generally posted near them and saw the regiment when the general order was given for the whole line to fall back; that they fell back with the ret in good order 150 yards; that this was about eight A. M.; that the falling back was by order of General Williams to the whole right wing; that the Seventh did not fall back any further than the rest of the force, but with the line.

Major Holbrook, Captains Porter, Barber, Dutton and Cronan, and Lieutenants Parker and Woodman testified in direct contradiction to the statements attributing to the Seventh misconduct and refusal to support the Indiana regiment. Captain Porter testified:

That he was in command of the regiment after Colonel Roberts fell for about twenty minutes; that Colonel Roberts was not killed while rallying his men; that soon after the line was formed General Williams rode up and ordered the Seventh to commence firing; that balls were coming at it pretty fast; that the colonel's horse became unmanageable and he dismounted, and about the same time an officer from the Indiana regiment came up, saying "your are firing into our men;" that the colonel thereupon gave the order to cease firing, and immediately after was wounded; that he was standing but a few feet from him at the time; that the right wing fell back through the camp, whether by orders or not he did not know, as he was engaged at the instant in removing the colonel; that he was informed that he was to take command; that he immediately formed a new line, perhaps 100 feet to the rear, and reported to General Williams that he was in command of the regiment, and asked for orders; that he directed him to take the regiment to the cover of an embankment; that a part of the Fourteenth Maine retired with them; that he remained in command until the lieutenant colonel, who had been sent to see to a battery which had been firing into the regiment, joined it; that he heard no request from the Indiana regiment to come up to its aid, and knew of no order to advance to its support; that he did not refuse to obey any of the orders he received; that he thought the regiment had fired about three volleys when

It was announced that it was firing into the Indiana regiment; then the Seventh fired in the direction of the Indiana camp, where it was supposed the enemy was; that his company was color company; that it carried only the United States flag; that the State colors were not taken out on the field; that the United States colors were preserved and brought off the field.

Color-Sergeant Sherman W. Parkhurst testified:

That he was present at the battle of Baton Rouge and carried the regimental colors; that they did not leave his hands during the engagement; that he brought them off the field; that he was with the color company all the time; that the colors were unfurled; that he stood erect all through the engagement; that it was the United States colors he carried; that the State flag was not taken into the field.

Major Holbrook testified:

That the Seventh had about 250 men present for duty on the day of the battle of Baton Rouge; that it had about 225 men in line; that it had just returned from Vicksburg and the sick "in quarters" were all in camp; that it had about 520 men on the sick-list, of whom about 200 were in hospital; that he was field-officer of the day and was not with the regiment; that after the pickets were driven in he rode past the Seventh, told Colonel Roberts the point of attack, and he, Colonel Roberts, immediately moved the regiment to the left; that he met General Williams a short distance from the regiment, who asking him the point of attack and he told him, as near as he could judge, where the different columns of the enemy would come; that at this time he saw a great number of men running back towards the river, and remembered very distinctly General Williams ordering them to halt that they did not, and he rode in among them, and they stopped, saying they were sick men from the Twenty-first Indiana, and Fourteenth Maine; that he judged there were 150 in all; that General Williams told them to take care of themselves if they were sick; that he was then sent by General Williams to look after the pickets on the right and left flanks and to hold those positions at all hazards; that he never received an order or request to support the Twenty-first Indiana; that he saw no officer of that regiment until the action was over; that the sick men of the Seventh in camp had orders to retire to the river bank, with

The exception of 11 commissioned officers, all of whom were in the engagement; that he saw the regimental colors with the regiment at the penitentiary immediately after the final falling back of the lines; that on or about September 5th he received through his quartermaster four guidons, said to have been brought from the field by John Donoghue; three of them were simple white flags with the figure seven inscribed on them, while the other was a small United States flag, very much tattered and torn, that had been used in the adjutant's office as a blotter; that he heard nothing of the alleged misconduct of the regiment until he arrived at Camp Parapet, about the 24th or 25th of August; that just previous to the battle, the regiment had been on board river transports for the better part of six weeks; that at a review, a short time before the engagement, two or three companies were not represented, their services being needed to bury the dead; that about a week previous to the battle there were but 95 men present for duty in the entire regiment.

Major Holbrook states—and the record supports the statement—that the finding that two-fifths of the regiment did not return to the line, after falling back, was "manufactured, and absolutely unsupported by any evidence." But if it was true that they fell back without orders this was not the first or last time that good troops, under fire from an unseen foe, fell back a hundred feet to the shelter of favoring ground. The Seventh, however, did not fall back without orders. It was ordered to fall back, by General Williams.

The case, then, sums itself up as follows: Of a regiment of nearly 800 men, about one-fourth of its number, many of them enfeebled by disease, went into their first battle. If the worst told of them was true, they at a time of great confusion, in a dense fog and under heavy fire by which they had lost their colonel, retired 100 feet to the shelter of a ravine, whence two-fifths of them, or 90 men, did not return to the line of battle. For this and under a false charge that it lost its colors the entire regiment was censured by general order and its colors taken from it. A packed board of inquiry sustain in part the charge;

Though obliged to find that the regiment did not lose either regimental or camp colors; that it disobeyed no orders; that the line officers behaved well; and that its successive commanders behaved creditably under trying circumstances, with a single exception cited against the lieutenant colonel, as being in the testimony, though the board did not declare it to be sustained.

Had General Butler, when obliged to retract a part of his censure, frankly confessed that he was mistaken as to the rest, it would perhaps be possible and certainly charitable to believe that his course was due to honest misconception of the facts. But he reiterated most of his false charges, adding falsehoods to the findings of the court—such as that the only firing done by the regiment was upon their comrades, and that its "camp color" was brought off the field by other troops—the first of which assertions was a pure invention of General Butler's and the last distinctly disproved by his own court of inquiry! No explanation of General Butler's course in this matter can be made consistent with honor on his part. His motive was malicious. He disliked the regiment because its members, before they left Vermont, opposed their assignment to his command; and he gratified his spite at the expense of truth and justice, and to his own lasting dishonor. The men of the Seventh have always felt keenly the unmerited disgrace placed upon them; but no one of them would be willing to change places with General Butler in the opinion of any candid student of the transaction.

It only remains to add that though General Butler's order restoring to the Seventh its colors did not permit it to inscribe the name of Baton Rouge on its flag, that permission came to it at last, through one who was a far abler, brave and more famous soldier, in the following order:

General Headquarters Military Division
Order, of the Gulf,
No. 1 New Orleans, La., July 10th,
1866.

In compliance with the requirements of General Order, No. 19, 1862, from the War Department, and in accordance with the reports of boards convened to examine into the services rendered by the troops concerned, and by authority of the lieutenant general commanding the armies of the United States, it is hereby ordered that there shall be inscribed upon the colors of the following regiments the names of battles in which they have borne a meritorious part, as hereinafter specified.

* * * * *

Seventh Vermont Veteran Volunteer Infantry: Siege of Vicksburg,
Baton Rouge Gonzales Station, Spanish Fort, Whistler.

By command of

Maj. General. P. H. Sheridan.

Geo. Lee, A. A. Gen.

The Seventh remained at Baton Rouge after the battle in constant expectation of another attack, until the 20th of August, when the forces there were withdrawn by General Butler and the place abandoned for three months or more. After the evacuation of Baton Rouge, the regiment returned to Carrollton and camped near Metarie Ridge, two miles back from the river, with the troops stationed there for the protection of New Orleans.

About this time several important changes took place among the field and staff officers of the regiment. On the 26th of August Lieut. Colonel Fullam, in consequence of the censure attached to him and of the recommendation of Major Holbrook for promotion over his head, resigned, and Major Holbrook was appointed colonel.⁹ Captain Peck of

⁹ Colonel Holbrook was the second son of Governor Holbrook, born in Brattleboro, July 14th, 1842. When 18 years old, while connected with a mercantile house in Boston, he became a member of the "Tigers" of that city, a noted military organization, in which General Nelson A. Miles and other officers who distinguished themselves during the war, obtained their first military training. On the outbreak of the war young Holbrook returned to Brattleboro and in July, 1861, enlisted in company F of the Fourth Vermont, of which he was drill master, and upon its organization was chosen its first lieutenant. He served in the Fourth for a time as acting adjutant, till appointed major of the Seventh, in August, 1862. He was not yet of age and was with a single exception the youngest Vermonter that wore the eagles of a colonel, but was mature for his years, tall, straight and vigorous, and popular with the regiment, which he commanded with ability, being for a time detached from it as brigade commander and commander of the military district of West Florida. To his service with the Seventh Colonel Holbrook has, since the war, added the valuable service of the preparation of a history of the regiment, which has been largely drawn upon for the facts contained in these pages.

company A was promoted to be lieutenant colonel and Captain Porter of company C was appointed major. Lieutenant Morse, the faithful and efficient quartermaster of the regiment, was at this time promoted to be captain and assistant quartermaster of volunteers, a position which he capably filled until the close of the war. He was succeeded as regimental quartermaster by Lieutenant George E. Jones of company E, who went out with the regiment as commissary sergeant. On the 8th of September, Surgeon Kelley resigned and Assistant Surgeon Blanchard was appointed surgeon, and filled the office with fidelity and ability throughout the subsequent service of the regiment. Dr Elihu S. Foster of Topsham and Dr. Henry H. Langdon of Burlington were appointed assistant surgeons and rendered efficient service.

The camp at Carrollton had been named "Camp Williams," but soon became known as "Camp Death," by reason of the great mortality which prevailed among the troops there, especially among those which had participated in the Vicksburg campaign. The seeds of disease, which had been planted in the Vicksburg swamps, now developed with fearful rapidity under the hot summer sun and amid the malarial surroundings of the strip of solid ground between swamps, on which the camps were placed. Fogs prevailed at night and in the early morning, and the stench from the surrounding swamps was often intolerable. The sick list of the Seventh increased with alarming rapidity and the death-

Rate almost kept even pace with it. Had the regiment been sent to a healthier spot on its return from Baton Rouge, doubtless many lives would have been saved. But in spite of repeated representations of the condition of the regiment, made by its medical officers to General Butler, he retained it at Camp Williams through September. On the 30th it was ordered to Camp Kearney, a short distance below Carrollton, where the conditions were more favorable. After a month's sojourn there, during which the health of the men improved somewhat, the regiment moved to New Orleans and was quartered for a few days at the Jackson Cotton Press in the lower part of the city. On the 13th, under command of Major Porter—Colonel Holbrook and Lieut. Colonel Peck being sick with fever¹⁰—it embarked on the steamer Nassau for Pensacola, Fla. The Nassau was a large tug-boat and for lack of room most of the men were confined to the upper deck. They encountered wet weather, were drenched to the skin during most of the voyage, and glad when it ended. When off the entrance to Mobile bay, in the middle of the night, the Nassau was brought to by a round shot across her bows from a Union gunboat and discovered that she was inside of the Federal blockading squadron and heading toward Fort Morgan, then in the hands of the enemy. It was suspected that the captain intended to run his boat under the guns of the fort. He, however, protested his innocence, claiming that in the darkness he had mistaken his course. This was possible, as at that time there were no lights anywhere on the Southern coast. Under a warning from Major Porter that his life would pay the penalty for any treachery, the Nassau proceeded to his destination, where the men were safely landed in the morning of

¹⁰ Colonel Holbrook soon rejoined his command. During his illness he was nursed at the "Hotel Dieu," by the Sisters of Mercy, to whose kindness and attention of Northerners and Southerners alike, in sickness and need, man soldiers testify.

November 14th. Here, in a purer air and amid healthful and invigorating surroundings, where fruits and vegetables were procurable and fish and game abundant, the healthy of the regiment rapidly improved, though the death-rate continued high, from the yielding of the men to chronic diarrhea, fevers and pneumonia contracted in Louisiana.

At Pensacola, Major Porter reported to General Neal Dow, who commanded the garrison. This now consisted of the Fifteenth Maine, Seventh Vermont, Twenty-third Connecticut and two companies of regular artillery, in all about 2,000 men. The men of the Seventh were set to work in the construction of a stockade and other defences against a possible surprise, though the need of fortifying was not apparent, the ground being fully commanded by the Union artillery and the guns of the fleet. On the 29th of December the regiment took part in a reconnoissance under General Dow, to Oakfield, a small settlement about five miles outside the lines. No enemy was found and the troops returned without important incident.

Here at Pensacola the first year of service of the regiment closed, with a sad record of mortality. The number of deaths during 1862, as will be seen from the tabular statement hereafter given, exceeded 300—more than twice and a half as many as in all the other years of the service of the Seventh. The number of men discharged for disability in 1862, was also greater than in any other year except 1863; and most of the discharges in 1863 were occasioned by disabilities from disease incurred before the removal of the regiment to Florida.

Numerous changes of line officers had taken place during the year 1862. In company A Lieutenant D. A. Smalley of company B was appointed captain upon the promotion of Captain Peck; Lieutenant W. L. Harris resigned and Sergeant R. B. Stearns was commissioned as first lieutenant; Second Lieutenant H. B. Fish resigned and Sergeant C. W.

Carpenter was appointed second lieutenant. In company B Second Lieutenant J. V. Parker was promoted to be first lieutenant and Sergeant George Ross appointed second lieutenant. In company C Lieutenant E. V. N. Hitchcock was made captain vice Porter promoted; Second Lieutenant J. Q. Dickinson was promoted first lieutenant and Sergeant H. Hanchet appointed second lieutenant; First Lieutenant Thrall of company D resigned and Sergeant George E. Croff was commissioned as second lieutenant; Captain D. Landon of company E resigned and adjutant C. E. Parker succeeded him as captain; Second Lieutenant George Brown was promoted to first lieutenant, vice Lieutenant G. W. Sheldon appointed adjutant. In company F First Lieutenant E. H. Bullard was promoted captain after Captain Brooks was killed; Second Lieutenant R. C. Gates was promoted to be first lieutenant and Sergeant H. G. Stearns was appointed second lieutenant. In company G First Lieutenant G. M. R. Howard resigned and Second Lieutenant L. P. Bingham was promoted first lieutenant and Sergeant F. N. Finney commissioned as second lieutenant; Lieutenant Charles Clark was promoted captain of company I upon the death of Captain Ruggles; Second Lieutenant A. E. Woodman was promoted to first lieutenant and Sergeant R. M. Green was appointed second lieutenant.

The morning report of January 1st, 1863, showed an aggregate of 620—a reduction of 38 per cent—with 216 on the sick list and 401 reported for duty.

On the 20th of January, Lieutenant Henry H. French of company H, died of fever, brought on by exposure in the Vicksburg campaign.¹¹ About this time, General Banks having succeeded General Butler in the command of the Department of the Gulf, Major Porter was detailed on staff

¹¹ Lieutenant French was scarcely 21 years of age. He was a promising young officer and apparently had a bright and useful career before him. His remains were sent to his home in Woodstock for interment.

duty as assistant provost marshal in New Orleans. At Pensacola General Dow maintained his vigilance and during the month of January and the early part of February frequent scouting parties were sent out, and by way of practice the long roll was frequently sounded at night and the men posted behind the stockade or along the line of defences. The general's precautions were considered excessive by his troops. Early in January General Dow was ordered to New Orleans. Before leaving he reviewed the troops and bade them an affectionate farewell, with the injunctions: "Never allow yourselves to be surprised;"—an admonition which had especial force for them after the subsequent surprise and capture of General Dow.

On the 17th of February, B and G companies, under Captain Dutton, went with other troops on a scouting expedition toward Oakfield, were attacked by a body of cavalry and quite a brisk skirmish ensued, which became a running fight until Oakfield was reached, when the enemy retired.

About the middle of February most of the infantry were withdrawn to Forts Barrancas and Pickens, where a smaller force could better guard the harbor and navy yard, which last, although nearly destroyed by the enemy early in the war, was now the headquarters of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and an important station for coaling and repairing vessels, and an extensive depot of naval stores. The entrance to the harbor was commanded by Fort Pickens, situated on the westerly extremity of Santa Rosa Island. On the 20th of February the regiment was ordered to this island and went into camp outside of the fort. About this time Assistant Surgeon Langdon resigned in impaired health and was succeeded by Dr. Charles H. Tenney of Hardwick.

On the 22d of March, Pensacola was wholly abandoned; and on the 28th of March companies A, D and G were detailed for duty as artillerists in Fort Pickens, taking the place of the regulars of the First and Second Artillery, by

whom the fort had been garrisoned up to that time, they having been ordered to New Orleans. While on Santa Rosa Island nothing of note occurred, the only encounters being with the fleas and copperhead snakes.

On the 19th of June Colonel Holbrook was placed in command of the troops in the Department of West Florida and removed the regiment, except the companies on duty at Fort Pickens, to Barrancas, on the main land, where a pleasant camp was formed, called Camp Roberts, in memory of their late lamented colonel. Colonel Holbrook's command at first consisted only of the Seventh regiment, under Lieut. Colonel Peck, and two companies of the Second United States Artillery but soon afterward it was reinforced by some colored troops and a company of the Fourteenth New York Cavalry. Companies C and I of the Seventh regiment were detailed to garrison Barrancas redoubt, situation a short distance from Fort Barrancas. The remaining companies, when not on picket duty, were employed in infantry drill and artillery practice upon the guns of the batteries erected at different points. With so many of the companies detached, and with an extended picket line to guard, the labors of the command were arduous. The same men were on picket every other day and in the interim were frequently compelled to work on the fortifications. The enemy were quite active in front and in order to follow their movements scouting parties were frequently sent out. These labors were considerably lightened when, early in September, the command was reinforced by the Eighty-sixth regiment, United States Colored Troops, Colonel Plumley.

On the 6th of September a reconnoitering party of the Seventh regiment, under Captain Young and Lieutenant Parker, captured a squad of eight Confederate troopers at Pensacola. Some of the enemy had been in the habit of coming in small squads into Pensacola, where they were hospitably entertained by the Spanish consul, one

Morino. On the evacuation of Pensacola, Morino retained his residence there; and was thus in a position to gain important information concerning the plans of the Union forces, which he communicated to the enemy. Colonel Holbrook resolved to put a stop to this. Captain Young was accordingly sent one day to attempt to capture one of these junketing parties. On reaching the outskirts of Pensacola he concealed his command in the woods until after nightfall, when he occupied one of the redoubts thrown up by General Dow, from which he was able to observe unseen the approaches to the town. The next morning a party of two officers and six men were seen to ride to Morino's, where they dismounted and entered the house. Young thereupon surrounded the house, captured the party, and took them to Barrancas, in spite of the protest of the consul, who subsequently demanded their return, upon the ground that their capture was an infraction of the law of nations and an insult to Spain, under whose flag they were harbored at the time of their capture; further stating that he had laid the matter before the Spanish ambassador at Washington. General Maury, commander of the Confederate forces at Mobile, also demanded a return of the prisoners, on the same ground. Colonel Holbrook, however, refused to give up the prisoners and informed Morino and General Maury that a consular agent, accredited to the United States government, who remained within the lines of his enemies, could not be allowed to give protection to such enemies. The proceeding had a good effect and open communication between Morino and the enemy ceased. The affair, however, exasperated General Maury and he notified Colonel Holbrook that he would yet capture twice as many Union soldiers as the number taken by Captain Young, and that if any negro troops should fall into his hands he would "flay them alive." In execution of this threat, he commenced a series of night attacks upon the Federal outposts which made extreme vigilance necessary.

Among the incidents of this period was the premature discharge of a howitzer, in artillery practice, by which three men were injured, one of them, Robert Ripley, of company I, fatally. James B. Royce of the same company, was blown into the air and picked up for dead; but he revived, to the surprise of every one, and recovered, with the loss of an arm.

During September, October and November yellow fever raged at the Navy Yard and at Warrenton and Wolsey, two or three miles away; but owing to the precautions taken by the surgeons and Colonel Holbrook, only a dozen cases occurred in the latter's command. Two of these proved fatal. Lieutenant Rollin M. Green of company H, died November 17th, after a three days' illness, in the regimental hospital at Barrancas, where he received all possible care from Surgeon Blanchard and his wife, who fearlessly attended him. He was buried at midnight, by a few of his brother officers, in the Marine Cemetery.¹² Corporal L. O. Wilkins of company B, died November 5th, in a vacant house outside the lines, in which Surgeon Blanchard had established a pest hospital.

During the prevalence of the epidemic Colonel Holbrook and his men were practically shut off from all communication with the outside worlds. No vessels were allowed to enter the port, and no regular mails or supplies were received. The soldiers could not fraternize with their naval friends, and the time dragged heavily for the sequestered troops.

On the 7th of November Colonel Holbrook was relieved of the command of the troops in West Florida by Brig. General Asboth,¹³ and was assigned to the command of

¹² Lieutenant Green was a courageous and efficient officer. No man held the honor of the regiment in higher esteem or was more ready to vindicate it when assailed. He rose from the ranks and won his promotions by meritorious conduct.

¹³ General Alexander Asboth was a Hungarian, who came to America with Kossuth. He was a brave man, reckless of the expenditure of human life and especially fond of dogs and horses, of which he kept half a dozen or more of each, at Barrancas.

the First brigade, consisting of two colored regiments and the main body of the Seventh. It was then supposed that a considerable body of troops would soon rendezvous at Barrancas and Pensacola, to co-operate with Admiral Farragut in the meditated attack upon Mobile, and the members of the regiment began to hope for more active service. Their anticipations, however, were not realized.

During the autumn large numbers of refugees had come into the Union lines to escape the conscription which was forcing every man who could shoulder a musket into the Confederate service. General Asboth directed Adjutant Sheldon of the Seventh, who had served in the United States artillery, to recruit and drill a light battery from their number, and also attempted to organize a cavalry regiment; but the deserters and refugees were found to be too untrustworthy, and the effort was abandoned.

During the year 1863 the regiment lost 133 men, 27 of them by death, and on the 1st of January, 1864, had an aggregate of 484 officers and men of whom 455 were for duty and but 14 on the sick list.

During the year Captains Cronan, company B; Kilburn, company D; Parker, company E, and Clark of company I, resigned, and were succeeded respectively by Lieutenants J. V. Parker, Geo. E. Croff, John L. Moseley and A. E. Woodman. Second Lieutenants Geo. Ross, Chas. H. Sheldon and Allen Spaulding were made first lieutenants, and Quartermaster Sergeant Samuel Buel was appointed second lieutenant vice Croff promoted. First Lieutenant R. C. Gates, company F, resigned and was succeeded by Second Lieutenant Henry Stowell. Second Lieutenant Henry Hanchet, company C, resigned and was succeeded by Sergeant I. N. Collins, who also resigned during the year. Second Lieutenant Frank N. Finney was promoted to be first lieutenant, company D; Sergeant M. L. Gilbert was commissioned as second lieutenant, company G; Second Lieutenant Geo. L. Kelley, company

H, resigned, and Sergeant E. R. Paine was appointed second lieutenant of company H.

Occasional brushes with the confederate cavalry diversified the monotony of camp life. On the 25th of January, a skirmish took place at Jackson's Bridge, on the road to Pensacola, between a mounted party consisting of Colonel Holbrook, Captain Young and Lieutenant Brown, of the Seventh, and twenty of the Fourteenth New York Cavalry, and a party of Confederate cavalry. Holbrook's party charged upon the latter, pursued them for a mile and captured a lieutenant and nine men. One of the New York cavalry-men was slightly wounded and two of the enemy were wounded.

On the 27th of January, Lieutenant George Ross of company B, and Lieutenant Galloway of the First Florida (loyal) Cavalry, with a detail of seventeen men from company B, were sent by General Asboth to Point Washington, at the head of Choctawhatchie Bay, to protect and forward refugees wishing to enlist in the Union army. From Point Washington they advanced about twenty-five miles inland, where they surprised a force which had been stationed there to prevent the escape of refugees and deserters to the Union lines, capturing three officers and forty privates. While trying to bring in the prisoners and plunder they were overtaken by a superior force of the enemy's cavalry, and Ross and Galloway were captured with eleven of the men of the Seventh.¹⁴ The remainder made their escape and reached the Union lines. Lieutenant Ross remained a prisoner of war for thirteen months in the enemy's hands.

On the 13th of February, Lieutenant Frank N. Finney,

¹⁴ Among the men so captured were Sergeant James McGarry, E. C. Barnard, Ambro Bolio, John Burns, Harrison Combs, Edward Phalon, H. W. Stocker, Stephen P. Trumbull and W. Wilkins, all of company B. Of these Bolio, Burns and Stocker died in the Andersonville prison pen, in October and November following, and Combs and Trumbull are believed to have died in the enemy's hands, at dates not recorded.

of company D, returned from Vermont with 110 recruits, who were heartily welcomed by the regiment.

During the same month 335 enlisted men, being all but 59 of the surviving original members of the regiment, re-enlisted for three years, and from that time the regiment was known as the Seventh Vermont Veteran Volunteers. The re-enlisted men were entitled to return to Vermont early in April for a furlough of thirty days. But, owing to a series of vexatious delays, they were detained in Florida for several months. Shortly before this, the question of the date of the expiration of the original term of enlistment, which had been much discussed by the Vermont troops in the Department of the Gulf, was decided by the authorities at Washington. In the case of the other Vermont regiments the only question raised was whether the soldier's term began when he enlisted, or when he was mustered into the United States service—in most cases a matter of a few days or weeks. But in the case of the Seventh and Eighth regiments, and of the First and Second Batteries recruited with them, the question was one of half a year's time. The acts of the Vermont Legislature, under which they were recruited, authorized the raising of these regiments and batteries "to serve for three years from the 1st of June, 1861." The contract in the enlistment papers corresponded with the acts, and only bound the soldier to serve for three years from that date. In the case of the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth regiments, the limitation in similar contracts was disregarded by the War Department and the men were held for three years from the date of their muster in. To the Vermont troops in General Butler's division, for some reason, a different rule was applied. In their case the claim of the men that their term expired June 1st, 1864, was held by the War Department to be good; and those who did not reenlist were mustered out as soon after that date as arrangements for their transportation home could be made.

On the 18th of May, company G was detailed to relieve Captain Larned's company of the Second United States Artillery at Fort Barrancas, and company K relieved Major Allen's regulars at Fort Pickens, leaving but four companies of the Seventh at Camp Roberts. About this time it was rumored that a combined attack was to be made upon the Navy Yard by a land force under Maury and by the formidable ram Tennessee, then lying in Mobile Bay. In anticipation of such an attack, a water battery, mounted with 11-inch and 15-inch guns, was constructed by companies D, F and K, on the west end of Santa Rosa Island, commanding the channel; while on the Barrancas side of the channel additional defences were made to meet any attack from that direction. Every few nights there was picket firing, and the men were frequently under arms all night. In the meantime Farragut was making preparations for the attack upon Forts Morgan and Gaines, at the entrance to Mobile Bay. The enemy on their part were strengthening their position. As they received most of their reinforcements and supplies by the railroad from Montgomery, General Asboth organized an expedition to cut this line of communication. The force consisted of four companies of the Seventh regiment (A, B, E and H), Schmidt's New York Cavalry, a battalion of the First Florida Cavalry, the Eighty-sixth United States Colored Troops, and two mountain howitzers under command of Adjutant Sheldon of the Seventh, the guns being drawn by mules, for want of horses.

GONZALES STATION.

On the afternoon of July 21st the expedition left Barrancas with Schmidt's cavalry in advance, followed by the four companies of the Seventh and Sheldon's guns, the other troops bringing up the rear. Information was received that a considerable force of the enemy was intrenched

At Gonzales Station, fifteen miles from Pensacola. General Asboth planned to reach that point early in the morning in order to surprise the enemy. The outposts were reached a little before daylight, and a lively skirmish ensued. A part of the Seventh under Colonel Holbrook was deployed to the right of the line and pushed forward to a clearing in front of a square redoubt build of logs and earth. The howitzers were brought up and after a half a dozen rounds of spherical case had been thrown into the redoubt, Captains Smalley and Mosely gallantly led an assault across the clearing, and were over the works and among the enemy before they could do more than discharge a couple of volleys. Several of the confederates were captured. The rest beat a headlong retreat to the woods in their rear, pursued some distance by the Union cavalry, and leaving behind them, in their haste, a breakfast of corn-dodgers and bacon for their foes. None of the Vermonters were hurt, though they were under fire for more than an hour. They received much praise from General Asboth for their steadiness and intrepidity. After a rest of several hours the march was resumed. Some ten miles had been made, when General Asboth was informed by a deserter from the enemy that General Maury, with a force of 4,000 men, was marching to cut off his retreat, and that he was then only five or six miles distant. This intelligence was received about dark. After a hasty consultation General Asboth decided to turn back. The troops faced about and marched all night toward Barrancas. A hard storm set in, which somewhat impeded their progress, but saved them from capture. Maury was nearer than reported; but owing to the heavy rain, which obliterated all traces of the march, it was not until the following forenoon that he became aware of the retreat. It was then too late to overtake Asboth's force. The troops reached camp, with their prisoners, on the morning of the 24th, pretty well jaded, having marched over fifty miles in three days.

On the 5th of August the roar of the battle of Mobile Bay, thirty miles away, was distinctly heard at Camp Roberts. After the surrender of Fort Gaines, on the 7th of August, General Granger transferred his force to Mobile Point and invested Fort Morgan; and the Seventh was expecting orders to join him, when the steamer Hudson arrived to convey the men north on their long-looked-for furlough.

VETERAN FURLOUGH.

On the 10th of August the men whose original term had expired, about 400 in number, departed from Barrancas and Fort Pickens, and turned their faces homeward. Just before their departure, the following order was issued by General Asboth:

Headquarters District of West Florida,
Barrancas, Fla., Aug. 9th, 1864.

Special Order, No. 184.

The Seventh Vermont Veteran Volunteers being about to leave this district, the general commanding considers it his pleasant duty to express his full appreciation of the good order and discipline always maintained, and the efficient service constantly rendered by them, not only as infantry at their several posts and in the field, but also most conspicuously as artillerists at the important forts of Pickens and Barrancas. The departure of this veteran regiment becomes thus a severe loss to this command, and the best wishes and warmest thanks of the general commanding follow their gallant commander, Colonel W. C. Holbrook, and all the brave officers and men to their homes and wherever duty calls them. May we meet again in better days for our beloved and common country, the great Republic of the World.

(Signed) Asboth,

Brig.-Gen. Commanding.

The Hudson was ten days in reaching Fort Monroe, where she was obliged to stop for coal, and where she was boarded by an officer of the Health Department, who, on learning that the regiment had come from the port of Pensacola, ordered the steamer to the quarantine station, some miles distant, to remain for thirty days. In vain did the officers protest that there was no infectious sickness among the men; that the steamer had simply touched there to get a few tons of coal; and that to detain a regiment of men

aboard ship so long would surely bring on sickness in some form. The doctor was deaf to all reason, and insisted that the steamer should proceed at once to quarantine, unless a contrary order should be obtained from the post commander. Colonel Holbrook immediately made application to the commander of the post, for leave to go to sea forthwith. He received a reply that his application would be forwarded to Washington for the action of the authorities there, but that in the meantime the directions of the Health Officer must be complied with. The officers, however, determined to sail for New York that night, and as soon as enough coal had been taken aboard, the captain of the Hudson was instructed to drop down to quarantine and there come to anchor, banking his fires. Colonel Holbrook, in order that he might not be guilty of direct disobedience of orders which had been given to him personally, took advantage of an indisposition from which he had been suffering for some days, to go upon the sick list, and Lieut. Colonel Peck assumed command. At soon as it became dark, Colonel Peck directed he captain to proceed on his voyage, and the Hudson was soon out of Hampton Roads and on her course to New York, where she safely arrived three or four days later. An amusing letter, written by Colonel Plumley, who accompanied the regiment from Pensacola, appeared a few days later in one of the New York papers, in which the departure of the steamer from quarantine was accounted for by the explanation that she, through no fault of any one, dragged her anchor all the way from Fortress Monroe to New York! Three weeks after his request was made, Colonel Holbrook received, at Brattleboro, formal permission for the Hudson to complete her voyage.

The regiment arrived August 26th, at Brattleboro, where it was most handsomely received by Governor Smith and the citizens of the town, who had provided a fine collation. The next day the veterans received their thirty days'

furlough, and those who had not re-enlisted were mustered out of the service. The number so mustered out comprised two officers, Captain D. P. Barber, company K, and Lieutenant S. Buel, company D, and 57 men. The return to kindred and friends was very delightful, after the trying experience of two years and a half of exile. But the thought of missing comrades mingled sadness with the joy. Three hundred and fifty members of the regiment lay buried on the banks of the Mississippi and in Florida; and more than two hundred victims of the malaria of Southern swamps had been discharged in shattered health. The men now returning were thus less than half of those who went out together in the spring of 1862.

On the 13th of September, Lieutenant John Q. Dickinson was appointed regimental quartermaster, in place of R. Q. M. Jones, who had been promoted to be captain and commissary of subsistence. He had for some time served the regiment in that capacity, and continued to discharge the duties of the office with fidelity and ability.¹⁵

While the regiment was on furlough the State officials planned to present it a new sand of colors; and Colonel Holbrook was invited by the governor to name a day for the presentation. The colonel respectfully declined the honor. They were attached, he said, to the old colors, and did not care to exchange them for new ones; and the old colors were borne by the regiment till it was finally disbanded.

¹⁵ Lieutenant Dickinson was subsequently made captain of company F, and was honorably discharged for disability October 10th, 1865. Upon leaving the service he engaged in the lumber business in Florida. He was warned to leave the State, by the Klu Klux organization; but remained. One evening he was called from his house by a messenger who said he was wanted at his office. Next morning his dead body was found in the street riddled with bullets. He was a gentleman of education and ability, of amiable character, and many estimable qualities. He fell a victim to sectional hatred and political conspiracy.

RETURN TO THE FIELD.

On the 27th of September the regiment reassembled at Brattleboro, and on the 30th again left Vermont for the Department of the Gulf. Arriving in New York October 1st, it embarked, on the 4th, on the steamer Cassandra, for New Orleans, where it arrived on the 13th, and was quartered in a cotton press on Annunciation Square. Here intelligence was received of the death of Captain Young, who had been left at Barrancas in charge of the recruits. He had accompanied General Asboth, as a member of his staff, on an expedition to break up and capture a considerable Confederate force established at Marianna, Fla. The Confederates barricaded the streets, and made a desperate defence. The first attack, made by the First Florida Cavalry and some colored troops, was repulsed. Captain Young assisted in rallying the troops and led a second assault in which he fell dead with a charge of buckshot through his body, close to the barricade.¹⁶ General Asboth was wounded and lost a number of his men; but the place was carried; a church in which the Confederates took refuge was burned, and a number of prisoners were captured.

While stationed at Annunciation Square, the regiment was principally employed in guard duty. The men were drilled in street manoeuvres and firing and a number of the officers were detailed for duty on military commissions and courts martial. At this time the Department of the Gulf formed a part of the Military Division of West Mississippi, commanded by Major General E. R. S. Canby, under

¹⁶ Captain Young was a native of Royalton. At the outbreak of the war and at the age of 19, he enlisted, from Hartford, as a member of company B of the First regiment and served with credit through its term of service. He then recruited a company of the Seventh at Woodstock, and was made its first captain. He was a brave, competent and faithful officer, and was sincerely mourned by his comrades of the Seventh. His body was buried at Marianna.

whom the Seventh participated in the campaign which resulted in the capture of the city of Mobile and led to the surrender of General Richard Taylor's army, the third in size in the Confederacy.

On the 22d of December seven men of the Seventh¹⁷ were lost with the steamship North America, which foundered at sea in a gale, off Cape Hatteras, on her way from New Orleans to New York with over two hundred sick and disabled soldiers on board, most of whom when down with the steamer.

On the 1st of January, 1865, the regiment numbered 631 officers and men, with 487 for duty and 105 sick. No changes of field officers had taken place during the year. Lieutenant R. B. Stearns was acting adjutant, during most of the year, in the absence of Adjutant Sheldon, who had leave of absence to recruit a Union battery of native Floridians. In the line, Captain E. V. N. Hitchcock had resigned and been succeeded by Lieutenant H. Stowell as captain of company C. Lieutenant Dickinson of the company had been promoted quartermaster and Sergeant Charles B. McCormic was commissioned as first lieutenant. Commissary Sergeant Geo. E. Cramer had been appointed first lieutenant of company F, vice Stowell, promoted; Sergeant Fernando Randall had been appointed first lieutenant of company H, vice Lieutenant E. R. Paine, resigned; Lieutenant R. B. Stearns had been promoted captain of company K, vice Barber, mustered out; and Quartermaster Sergeant John A. Prindle had been appointed first lieutenant of that company vice Lieutenant Spaulding, resigned.

The winter passed uneventfully in New Orleans. General Canby was in command of the Department of the Gulf. General Dick Taylor had succeeded the unlucky Hood in

¹⁷ James Brown, company A; J. L. Ridgell, company F; Jason Ellis, H. W. Holden and L. B. Paine, company G; A. J. Tilton, company H; and C. E. Dushon, company K.

command of the Confederate Department of the South, east of the Mississippi; Sherman had marched through Georgia to the sea; and after the fall of Savannah, Charleston and Wilmington, Mobile was the only important seaboard city left to the Confederates. Farragut's capture of the forts at the mouth of Mobile Bay had closed the port, but General Dabney H. Maury with a garrison of 15,000 men still held Mobile, thirty miles above the forts. This, according to General Joseph E. Johnston, was the best fortified city in the Confederacy. It was surrounded by three lines of earthworks, defended by fifty-eight forts, having deep ditches through which the tide water flowed. The strongest of these fortifications, Spanish Fort, so-called because it was on the site of an old Spanish fortification, was on the east side of the bay, without works extending for nearly two miles along the bluff, which rose 180 feet above the water. It was garrisoned by General R. L. Gibson with 2,500 men. General Canby was gathering, for the capture of Mobile, an army of about 45,000 men, comprising the Thirteenth Corps, under General Gordon Granger, and the Sixteenth Corps under General A. J. Smith. In this final campaign in the Gulf department the Seventh Vermont had an honorable part.

THE MOBILE CAMPAIGN.

On the 19th of February the regiment received orders to embark on the steamer Clinton and report to General Granger at Mobile Point. Arriving there on the 21st, it was assigned to the Second brigade, Colonel Day, of General Benton's division of the Thirteenth Corps. The other regiments of the brigade were the Ninety-first Illinois, Twenty-ninth Iowa and Fiftieth Indiana. Mobile Point, at the entrance to Mobile Bay, is a long, low peninsula of white sand. Here the regiment was stationed for three weeks. In view of active operations, the baggage of the troops was reduced

To the smallest possible compass, by General Canby's orders. Clothing was limited to one suit, a change of under-garments and an extra pair of shoes; coats were not allowed when blouses could be supplied; camp equipage was reduced to the lowest possible limit, and only shelter tents were issued; sutlers were excluded; rations were confined to army bread and salt meat, and the troops were to keep on hand three days' cooked rations. Camping out under shelter tents on barren sand, during the storms of February and March, was not pleasant, and none were sorry when the orders came to march. General Canby's first movement was against Spanish Fort, and was made by Benton's division. Marching with the division, the Seventh Vermont broke camp early in the morning of March 17th, marched nine miles along the peninsula that day, and camped at night in an open pine forest. On the 18th the division marched thirteen miles along a natural shell bank and camped at 3 P. M. on Bayou Portage. On the 19th a rain storm disclosed the unreliable and swampy character of the ground, the surface, when wet, proving to be a mere crust, covering a bottomless quicksand. The head of the column, passing round Bonsecours Bay, moved only a few miles that day and the rear guard got only a mile and a half. Large details were set at work corduroying the roads. On the 20th, starting at 9 A. M., they moved slowly, the rain falling in torrents and the corduroy all afloat, and made but four miles before night. On the morning of the 21st the rain was still pouring. Benton's division moved on, but the train could not even get out of park. Every team was mired. Words can give but a faint idea of the toil and difficulties of this march. Officers and men were kept constantly at work with axe or spade. Teams and artillery had to be dragged out of the mire by ropes and were with difficulty kept from sinking at every halt. The Confederate cavalry hung about and occasionally annoyed the advance guard. Only about two miles were made

on the 21st. On the 22d the division camped near Fish River, and on the 23d moved over a fair road six miles, to the north fork of the river, which was crossed on a ponton bridge, and went into camp on the right of the Sixteenth Corps, which had moved across the bay on transports. That night the bands played: "Oh, aren't you glad you're out of the Wilderness?" with especial zest.

On the 25th of March, General Canby marched twelve miles, with both corps and some of the heavy artillery. The next day he moved cautiously to within three miles of Spanish Fort, where the troops bivouacked for the night. On the morning of the 27th the lines were formed for the assault, the Sixteenth Corps being on the right and Benton's division of the Thirteenth Corps in the centre. After advancing about a mile in line of battle, sharp fighting commenced between the Union and Confederate skirmishers and the latter were pushed back to within a short distance of their works. The Second Brigade, including the Seventh Vermont, halted within 600 yards of the earthworks and midway between Spanish Fort and the work known as Red Fort. The men lay down under a heavy fire from the guns of Red Fort, which raked the approach through a ravine, and of musketry, and lay all day expecting an order to assault the works. But the Union generals, on inspection of the works in front, found little encouragement for an attempt to carry them by storm. They were in fact well nigh impregnable by direct assault. The attacking lines would have had first to pass through a slashing of felled timber; then to carry a line of rifle-pits; then to assault breastworks strengthened by redoubts heavily armed; and then to attack and carry a large bastioned fort, crowning the top of the bluff, mounted with 7-inch Columbiads and 30-pound Parrot guns. General Canby accordingly changed his plan, and adopted slower and surer methods. His front lines sought such cover as they could, without entrenching—the

enemy's fire being too heavy and continuous to permit of that—and kept their places. During the day company G of the Seventh, under Captain Dutton, was on duty on the skirmish line. It was relieved at nightfall by company D, Captain Croff. The latter advanced his line during the night to within a few paces of the opposing rifle-pits, and kept it there till after daylight next morning, when the enemy opened on him with canister from two field-pieces and he withdrew his skirmishers a short distance to some ground where they found shelter behind logs and stumps and harassed the Confederate gunners by sharp-shooting. As soon as it became dark the troops were set at work throwing up intrenchments, and by morning they had constructed a line of earthworks long enough to cover the front of two regiments. Soon after daylight the Seventh was relieved by the Ninety-first Illinois, and withdrawn two or three hundred yards to the rear. Here they soon found themselves under a vigorous artillery fire, and a solid shot killed an orderly, who had just delivered to Colonel Holbrook an order from brigade headquarters. The regiment moved to the left, out of range, but was again shelled out, and was obliged to move farther to the rear.

In the morning of the 28th Captain Croff was relieved on the skirmish line by companies H and I under Captain E. Woodman. Both companies were under fire all day, and were relieved at night by companies F and C, Captains Ballard and Stowell. They advanced, in a general advance of the skirmish lines during the night, and with a few spades and with bayonets and cups threw up dirt enough to protect themselves. When daylight came they found that the skirmish line of the Sixteenth Corps, which should have connected with them on the left, was some fifty yards farther back, and they were for a time as much exposed by the fire from the rear as from the front. The skirmishers expended nearly eight rounds of ammunition apiece this day. Cap-

tain Croff was detailed as field-officer of the day, in place of another officer who had been wounded, and company B, Captain Parker relieved the companies in front in the course of the night.

For several days and nights the men were thus in the trenches, sleeping in the mud and almost constantly exposed to artillery and musketry fire. Few casualties, however, occurred, with the exception of an unfortunate affair on the 31st, which resulted in the capture by the enemy of Captain Stearns and twenty men of company K, who in the evening of the 30th had relieved company K on the skirmish line. The affair is thus described by General C. C. Andrews, in his History of the Campaign against Mobile:

There was but little firing during the night, and Captain Stearns advanced his line about twenty-five yards and dug new pits—though the detail had but one spade—which brought him in advance of the brigade line of skirmishers. He was within 150 yards of the works of the garrison, and the musketry fire of his men was exceedingly troublesome to their gunners. Soon after noon a shot from that vicinity had instantly killed Colonel Wm. E. Burnett of Texas, Confederate chief of artillery and a valuable officer. He had for a moment taken a rifle in his hand, and was in the act of aiming it from behind the breastworks through a wooden embrasure. Captain Barnes, in Battery McDermott, had been giving considerable attention to these skirmishers, and they were also subject to a fire from Red Fort. Beginning early in the morning, Barnes shelled the line with 6-pound and a 24-pound howitzer for three or four hours, and made some of the men on Stearn's left fall back into the ravine. There was now a lull, and the skirmishers popped out their heads and did some firing themselves, for they were fair marksmen, and had plenty of pluck. Barnes then brought out two 6-pounders from McDermott, placed them on the hilltop, and again fiercely shelled Captain Stearns's position. * * * Arrangement were made in the garrison for a sortie. Captain Clement S. Watson, of General Gibson's staff, volunteered to lead it. The rest of the party was to consist of Lieutenant A. C. Newton, company E, Fourth Louisiana Battalion, and thirty men, fifteen of whom were picked. At two o'clock in the afternoon preparatory to

the sortie the garrison caused the slashing and brush on the right of Captain Stearns to be fired, and the smoke blew over and in front of him. * * * It was now sunset. The cannonading ceased. The same instant Captain Watson and party were over the garrison works, and concealed by the smoke, vigorously rushed upon their expected prisoners. * * * Captain Stearns and twenty of his men were captured. Without parley and without delay their captors received their arms and hurried them away into the garrison, none of the sortie party stopping to occupy the pits. The prisoners were rapidly taken a roundabout way to a position near the water, which appeared to be sheltered from the fire of the besiegers by artificial ravines. But no curiosity now inspired them to notice the interior of the garrison. The prospect before them was dreary.

Captain Stearns was soon notified that he was to have an interview with the general commanding the garrison, and was accordingly conducted down into a ravine, some sixty or seventy feet deep, and about thirty yards wide at the opening. The ravine was triangular with its base facing north. In the apex were two wall tents, into one of which he was taken and introduced to General Gibson. There were present Captain Watson and the lieutenant who accompanied him. The general invited Captain Stearns to partake of his supper, a frugal repast consisting of cold fowl and cold water, with tin table furniture. This invitation was accepted. It was a compliment which would have been paid only to a gallant officer. The garrison had the best opportunity to judge of the courage and fortitude of their prisoners, and the general was generous in acknowledging the tenacity and courage with which, under a most severe fire, they held to their position; and the intelligence and address of both the captors and prisoners seems to have excited mutual respect.

Captain Stearns's report of the transaction corresponds closely with the above. He says:

Soon after daylight on the 31st the enemy opened on me with shell from a gun on one of the inland faces of the fort on our extreme left, and I soon found that they had got our range admirable. I had, during the night, constructed rude bomb-proofs, and during the shelling ordered my men into them. The shelling soon stopped, and all was quiet on the line until about 12 M., when the same gun again opened fire. The shelling was now so terrific that I determined to fall back a short distance as soon as it became dark, and

dispatched Corporal Crothers to regimental headquarters for instructions. I sent word by him that I expected to be assaulted before dark, and requested that the gun which was annoying me be silenced, or that the enemy's lines in my front be shelled, and I would fall back under the fire. At about four o'clock P. M. the enemy fired the slash of trees, etc., covering the ground on the right of me, and I gave the order to my men to fall back singly, as I foresaw that we would be smoked out or burned out, for there were several trees felled close to my position. As soon as the first man left I countermanded the order, for hundreds of bullets were sent after him. I think, however, that he was uninjured. During the shelling many of my men, and others on the left, had left their pits and fallen back. In doing this one of my men (Private Storrs) was wounded. Just before sunset the fire had extended around my rear and on my left, making so dense a smoke that our lines could not be seen. At this time the shelling was resumed, and in less than ten minutes fifteen shells were exploded inside and directly over the pit in which myself and ten men were stationed. I had my men cover themselves as best they could, and ordered bayonets to be fixed in anticipation of a charge being made.

At sunset the shelling suddenly ceased, and the charge was made in which myself and twenty of my men were captured. The assaulting party was composed of Captain Wilcox [should be Watson], of General Gibson's staff, a lieutenant and thirty men, fifteen of whom were picked from the entire garrison. The remainder were volunteers. The charge was so sudden and vigorous that we could offer but little resistance. I gave the command to fire, which was obeyed by the majority of my men, but the next instant every man had at least one musket at his head, with a summons to surrender. I found two muskets and a revolver pointed at me, with a request to come out of the pit. I accepted the alternative thus offered, and in a short time found myself before General Gibson, C. S. A., who paid a very high tribute to the men of my command. He said he had never seen troops standing shelling as we had that day. General Gibson informed me that no other part of the line would be molested; that mine was particularly obnoxious to them, as that forenoon we had killed his chief of artillery, Colonel Burnett, and wounded several others.

Colonel Holbrook says: "After the capture of Spanish Fort I went to the pit occupied by Captain Stearns, with sev-

eral officers of our own and other regiments, and it was the opinion of all that none but a hero could have held out as he did." In this official report, Colonel Holbrook says: "I regard the affair as one of the most brilliant of the siege, and Captain Stearns and his men deserve the commendation of every true and brave soldier."

On the 6th of April the regiment was detailed, with the Twenty-ninth Iowa, to assist Bertram's brigade, which held the extreme left of the Union line, in running saps and advancing the approaches to Old Spanish Fort, (otherwise called Battery No. 1), and to Fort McDermott (Battery No. 2), which were the most heavily armed of all the enemy's works, and the most important, because they commanded the channel. The Union gunboats assisted the besiegers in the operations against these forts. Heavy ordnance was concentrated on both sides, and the difference between the explosion of a 10-inch shell and one discharged from an ordinary field piece was soon discovered; nor were the men long in ascertaining that a projectile from a Brooks rifle was much more destructive to fortifications than those fired from light Napoleons. The Seventh was divided into detailed, which reported to the chief engineer, Captain John C. Palfrey, U. S. A., an accomplished and courageous officer. The men worked, so to speak, with the spade in one hand and the musket in the other. Each day brought them nearer the enemy's works and increased their peril. On the day before the evacuation, the saps were within less than one hundred yards of the opposing ramparts. It was dangerous work. If a man exposed head or hand it became a target for the Confederate sharpshooters, and each battery that was erected had in turn to sustain heavy artillery fire. The wailing of shells was constant, day and night, and bombs from cohorn mortars were continually dropping into the saps and trenches. At night the burning fuses disclosed the courses of the shells, and the men could calculate with tolerable certainty where they would

fall; but during the day it required a keen eye to see their approach and agile muscles to avoid them. The fatigue duty on the approaches was especially severe. In some places the ground was rocky, and in others filled with stumps and roots and covered with large logs. The duty became so wearing on the men that the officers sometimes took rifles and went on duty themselves as sharpshooters, while the men rested and slept in bomb-proofs sunk in the earth behind the outer line and covered with layers of logs, sometimes three thick, over which were from one to four feet of earth.

About five o'clock P. M. of the ninth day of the siege, April 4th, a general bombardment of the enemy's works along the entire line was ordered, and the troops formed behind the earthworks, in readiness to assault. The Seventh took position nearly in front of Old Spanish Fort and Fort McDermott, where the artillery fire, for two hours, was very heavy. At this time the advance parallels of the besiegers were within a hundred yards of the Confederate salients. The garrison had also extended counter trenches and rifle-pits to that the sharpshooters on both side were within talking distance. The Union troops had in position thirty-eight siege guns, including six 20-pound rifles, and sixteen mortars, and thirty-seven field guns, all of which opened fire at five P. M., and continued till seven P.M. The orders were for each gun to fire every three minutes. The guns of Old Spanish Fort responded. Clouds of dust rose from the parapets. Meanwhile the sharpshooter in the pits kept up their accustomed firing; but no assault was ordered. So the siege went on. By the 30th, General Canby had in operation on the extreme right four 30-pounders and two 200-pound rifles; and against Spanish Fort, fifty-three siege guns, including nine 200-pound rifles and sixteen mortars, and thirty-seven field guns, a total of ninety-six guns. Four siege rifles and five howitzers on the left centre assailed the garrison's centre and left, and four howitzers close in on the extreme right

enfiladed their centre. A bombardment, which proved to be the final one, opened from all the enemy's guns at 5:30 P. M., and continued two hours. In the course of the evening a portion of Carr's division of the Sixteenth Corps effected a lodgment inside the enemy's works, at a point which would enable them to cut off the retreat of the garrison, and at midnight the enemy began to abandon their works. At one o'clock next morning the silence of the enemy's batteries, followed by a cessation of the firing on the Union side, told the troops that the garrison had either fled or surrendered, and the cheering along the lines showed that the men had not lost their voices in the siege. For thirteen days and nights in succession there had not been a moment that the Seventh was not exposed to either musketry or artillery fire, or both. The men behaved exceedingly well, and many individual acts of heroism were performed by the field and line officers and enlisted men.

At daybreak of Sunday, the 9th of April, the Union troops were able to look over the ground embraced within the enemy's lines, for which they had so earnestly contended. Early that morning Colonel Holbrook received orders to report back to the brigade, and shortly before noon the regiment, with the entire Thirteenth Corps, except Bertram's brigade left to garrison Spanish Fort, was on its way to Blakely, which, since April 2d had been besieged by Major-General Steele's forces from Pensacola. Toward evening, as the troops drew near Steele's line, they heard heavy firing and soon an order came down the line for the Seventh to prepare to take part in an assault. Before, however, the regiment could reach ground where it was able to form, Steele's men had gallantly stormed and carried the rebel works, and the Seventh had no opportunity to participate. General Steele took three generals and three thousand prisoners and forty cannon. The assaulting column suffered some loss from torpedoes planted in front of the works.

All the fore part of the night there was explosions of torpedoes, and some men were killed by them while searching for the dead and wounded. The next morning General Steele set the confederate prisoners to clearing the ground of the torpedoes and little further trouble was experienced from them. Two days after the fall of the forts General Maury evacuated Mobile, and on the 12th the Union forces occupied the city.

The Seventh regiment remained at Blakely until the 11th, when with two divisions of the Thirteenth Corps under General Granger it marched back to Stark's Landing. Intelligence of the fall of Richmond was received on the march. The troops embarked on transports escorted by a fleet of gunboats and proceeded down the bay to Mobile. They landed at Magnolia Point, seven miles from the city, and marching to within a mile of Mobile, encamped for the night. A few of the officers who rode into the city that evening, hoping to get a good supper at one of the hotels, found scarcely anything left there in the way of food but corn bread and bacon.

On the morning of the 13th Benton's division was ordered in pursuit of the retreating enemy, and marched toward Whistler, a station on the Mobile and Ohio railroad, where the machine shops of the railroad were situated, and where the enemy were reported to be destroying much valuable property. Shortly before reaching the town the second brigade, leading the advance, was divided, Colonel Day with the Illinois and Iowa regiments taking a road to the left, while the two other regiments under Colonel Holbrook, kept the line of the railroad. Colonel Day soon struck the enemy's rear guard of cavalry and sent to Holbrook for assistance. His men hurried to the spot and soon found themselves under fire. The enemy had crossed a run skirted by a swamp, firing the bridge as they passed, and were posted on a slight eminence beyond; and the Ninety-first

Illinois were struggling waist-deep in the mud, in an effort to make their way across the swamp. The Seventh pushed forward on a run, passing the Fiftieth Indiana which had been in advance of them, and advanced to the bridge. Lieutenant Gilbert with company G put out the fire, and the regiment crossed the bridge, deployed beyond and opened fire on the enemy, who retreated. The regiment was highly praised for its conduct on this occasion.

General Richard Taylor, in his "Destruction and Reconstruction," alludes to this affair as "the last engagement of the Civil War." It was not such, however, as an action took place nearly a month later at Palmetto Rancho, near Brazos, Texas. This was, however, one of the last two hostile meetings of the war; and as Vermonters took part in the last charge of the Army of the Potomac at Appomattox, so they were in at the death of the Confederacy in the Department of the Gulf.

The regiment remained at Whistler until the 19th, when the division moved to McIntosh Bluff, about forty miles from Mobile, General Taylor's army being then at Meridian, a few miles further north. On the 23d, the Union troops received intelligence of the assassination of President Lincoln. Several Southern families at once sought the protection of the Union officers, fearing violence from the exasperated soldiers. But there was no occasion for their fear. The sad news was received with deep horror and indignation, but retaliation was not thought of by the Northern troops.

The absolute collapse of the Confederacy being now evident, a truce was arranged between General Canby and General Taylor, pending the result of the negotiations between Generals Johnston and Sherman. These having terminated upon the disapproval by the United States government of the terms offered by General Sherman, General Canby prepared to resume hostilities. The Seventh Ver-

mont was under orders to make a reconnoissance, and had started on it, when the column was met by a flag of truce, with the announcement of Taylor's final surrender. This had been arranged between generals Canby and Taylor, at Citronelle, on the 8th of May, and ended all hostilities east of the Mississippi. On the 9th the Seventh returned to Mobile, with the division, by transport, and went into camp a little outside the city limits, where the news was soon received of the surrender of the last remaining Confederate armies, under General Thompson in Arkansas, and Kirby Smith west of the Mississippi.

The loss of the regiment in the campaign against Mobile was 18 men wounded and 25 captured—a total of 43. Of the wounded men four died of their wounds.¹⁸ That the regiment did good service in the campaign and won the favorable opinion of its commanding officers, is shown by the following extract from Colonel Holbrook's report:

In conclusion, I have only to say, that, from brigade to corps commander, each and every one had personally assured me, that they had perfect confidence in my regiment and had on several occasions selected it for dangerous positions in which they feared to trust a less disciplined regiment; and to their testimony I would add my own, and say, that everywhere, and under all circumstance, both officers and men have shown courage, obedience and proficiency in their profession, and in no instance did they ever behave in a discreditable or unsoldier-like manner.

This statement is confirmed by that of General Canby, who, writing to Governor Smith of Vermont said of the Seventh:

"Since I have been in command here, their standing has been always good, and the inspection reports show them to be good soldiers, well drilled and efficient. During the regent campaign in Alabama they took part in the siege of Spanish Fort, and the subsequent operations that resulted in the occupation of the State by the United States forces, and on all occasions behaved well. E. R. S. Canby,

Major General."

On the 2d of June Colonel Holbrook resigned, after nearly four years of honorable service. Captain Woodman

¹⁸ Charles W. Allard, company C, died May 6; Joseph Chamfreau, died June 14th; George J. Wallis, company G died April 8th; and Charles O. Storrs, company K, died April 10th, in the hands of the enemy.

resigned three weeks later, and Captain Stearns and Lieutenant Cramer received honorable discharges. Assistant Surgeon Foster having resigned in February, Dr. Edwin W. Trueworthy, of Burlington, was appointed assistant surgeon, and First Lieutenant Finney of company D, was promoted to be captain of company H. More recruits joined the regiment in May, and it numbered on the 1st of June, 775 officers and men.

The war was over; but the service of the Seventh was not yet ended. It was one of the regiments selected to form the Army of Observation, which, under General Godfrey Weitzel, was stationed on the Rio Grande, to await the outcome of the attempt to establish an empire in Mexico under the protection of France. On the 2d of June it sailed from Mobile, on the steamer Sedgwick, for Brazos, Texas. It arrived there on the 5th and remained till the 14th, when it marched to Clarksville, three miles above the mouth of the Rio Grande, where it remained six weeks, on guard and police duty, without exciting incidents. On the 29th of June Lieut.-Colonel Peck was commissioned as colonel, a promotion to which he was entitled by faithful and gallant service from the outbreak of the war to its close. Major Porter succeeded him as lieutenant colonel, and Captain Edgar M. Bullard of company F was appointed major. On the 4th of July the Declaration of Independence was read, and the commanded listened to an address by General Cole, delivered from the deck of a wrecked schooner in the Rio Grande.

On the 14th of July, 130 one-year recruits were mustered out. August 2d the regiment left Clarksville and marched to Brownsville, some thirty miles up the river, camping the first night at "Palmetto Ranche," where the last action of the war was fought three months before. The next day it reached Brownsville, went into camp on the bank of the Rio Grande, and there remained through the fall and winter.

On the 26th of August Colonel Peck resigned, and Lieut-

Colonel Porter was promoted colonel, Major Bullard lieutenant colonel, and Captain Smalley, major. Major Smalley was mustered out in October, and Captain George E. Croff was commissioned as major. These officers all went out as line officers, had shared the various vicissitudes of the regiment, and had won all their promotions by intelligence and merit. Surgeon Blanchard's term expired, and he was mustered out in September, and Assistant Surgeon Trueworthy was promoted to be surgeon, October 1st. The life at Brownsville was uneventful, the principal entertainment being afforded by the operations of Maximilian's forces, which held Matamoras, and of the Mexicans, who occasionally laid siege to the place, at a safe distance from the imperialists' guns. The chief subjects of discussion among the troops were whether or not the Army of Observation would be sent across the river to drive out the imperialists, and when the regiment would be allowed to go home for final muster out. For this almost all were impatient; and earnest efforts were made by the State authorities to procure their discharge, but these were unavailing till the collapse of Louis Napoleon's Mexican experiment had become apparent, when an order for the discharge of the regiment was obtained. It was accordingly mustered out at Brownsville, March 14th, 1866, with 22 commissioned officers and 326 enlisted men. It at once proceeded by steamer to New Orleans. Here a number of the men, who had decided to remain and go into business in the South, bade good-bye to their comrades. The rest went North by steamer, arriving on the 5th of April, 1866, at Brattleboro, where a cordial reception was given by the citizens to the returning veterans, and the last of Vermont's volunteers to be disbanded were paid off and dispersed to their homes.

The field and staff officers returning with the regiment were Colonel Henry M. Porter, Lieut.-Colonel Edgar M. Bullard, Major George E. Croff, Adjutant Charles H. Leach,

Quartermaster Abner S. Fonda and Surgeon Edwin W. Trueworthy. All of the twenty-two line officers mustered out with the regiment were among its original members, and all but two of them enlisted as privates.

The following table, showing the losses of the regiment by death in the successive years of its service, exhibits a percentage of loss by death exceeding that of any other Vermont regiment. Of its original members, one in every three found graves in the far South. Of the total number of deaths, 375 were from disease (not including those who died in Confederate prisons), a number far exceeding the losses of any other Vermont regiment from similar causes. Most of these deaths occurred in the Vicksburg campaign.

DEATHS.

	1862	1863	1864	1865	Total.
Commissioned Officers	4	2	1	-	7
Non-Commissioned Staff	1	-	1		2
Company A	26	1	2	3*	33
Company B	32	2	9	2	45
Company C	14	5	0	4	23
Company D	20	3	1	3	27
Company E	36	1	4	7	48
Company F	24	-	3	3	30
Company G	31	6	5	3	45
Company H	44	5	4	4	57
Company I	37	3	3	4	47
Company K	<u>26</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>43</u>
Totals	295	31	39	41	407

(*) One man of company A died in 1866.

The list of campaigns and engagements of the Seventh is as follows:

The BATTLES OF THE SEVENTH VERMONT.

Siege of Vicksburg,	June and July, 1862.
Baton Rouge,	Aug. 5, 1862.
Gonzales Station,	July 15, 1864.
Mobile campaign and Spanish Fort,	March 17 to April 11, 1865.
Whistler,	April 13, 1865.

The final statement is as follows:

Final Statement	
Original members—com. officers, 36; enlisted men 907; total	943
Gain	
Promotion from other regiments, com. officers, 2; transfer from other regiments, enlisted men, 1; recruits, appointed com. officers, 5; enlisted men, 620; total, 625; total gain	628
Aggregate	1571
Loss	
Promotion to U.S. army, com. officers, 1; enlisted men, 9; total	10
Transfer to Vet. Res. Corps, enlisted men, 1; to regular army, enlisted men, 5; total	6
Death, killed in action, com. officers, 2; from wounds received in action, com. officers, 1; enlisted men, 8; total	11
Disease, com. officers, 4; enlisted men, 371; total	375
Prisoners, enlisted men	6
From accident, enlisted men	14
Total by Death	406
Discharge, resignation, com. officers	30
For disability, com. officers, 2; enlisted men, 239; total	241
For wounds received in action, enlisted men	6
Dishonorable com. officers, 2; enlisted men, 4; total	6
Total by discharge	283
Deserted	100
Not finally accounted for	1
Total loss	806
Mustered out of service, com. officers, 45; enlisted men, 720; total	765
Aggregate	1572
Total wounded	22
Total re-enlisted	355