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CHAPTER XXVII THE SEVENTEENTH REGIMENT.

Organization—Departure for the Field—Assigned to the Ninth Army Corps—The Wilderness—Spottsylvania—Tolopotomoy—Cold Harbor—Petersburg—Battle of the Mine and Death of Major Reynolds—Popular Spring Church and Death of Lieut. Colonel Cummings—Winter Quarters in Fort Davis—Final Assault on the Defenses of Petersburg—Pursuit of Lee—Muster out and Return Home.

The Seventeenth and last of the infantry regiments of Vermont had a brief and bloody history. It took the field before its ranks were filled or its regimental organization completed. It marched from the mustering ground into the carnage of the Wilderness; held its third battalion drill on the field of battle; placed the name of a bloody battle-field on its colors for every month of its service, and was under almost constant fire till Richmond fell. With the smallest aggregate of numbers, its list of killed and wounded in battle exceeded that of some of the largest regiments.

The order under which recruiting for the regiment began, was issued by Governor Holbrook, August 3d, 1863. The nine-months regiments had just been mustered out and it was confidently expected that this and still another infantry regiment would be filled by the re-enlistment of the nine-months men, and enlistments for the regiment were at first confined to men who had received an honorable discharge after nine months' service. But the nine-months troops in Vermont were chiefly men whose business or other relations in life made it especially difficult for them to enter the army for an longer period; and as the belief was general after the fall of Vicksburg and the victory of Gettysburg that thee troops in the field would be able soon to end the war, enlisting made little progress for several months. The

restriction confining the bounties offered to men who had seen service was removed in September; but as the bounty for recruits for the new regiments was but \$100, while thrice that sum was offered to those enlisting in the old regiments, most of the recruits went to the latter. The War Department finally, December 31st, authorized the same bounty to be paid to recruits for the new regiments as that paid those for the old; but it was not till the 5th of January, 1864, that the first company for the Seventeenth was filled. This organized at Burlington, with 90 men, as company A, Captain Stephen F. Brown.

Early in March, company B, Captain Andrew J. Davis, was mustered in with 83 officers and men; company C, Captain Frank Kenfield, with 86 officers and men; and company D, Captain Henry A. Eaton, with 83 officers and men. On the 12th of April, company E, Captain George S. Robinson; company F, Captain Lyman E. Knapp; and company G, Captain Eldin J. Hartshorn, were mustered in, each with 83 officers and men. The companies rendezvoused at Burlington on the Fair Ground north of the city.

The colonel and lieutenant colonel of the regiment were selected in February, in the persons of Colonel Francis V. Randall, of Montpelier, late colonel of the Thirteenth Vermont, and Lieut. Colonel Charles Cummings, late lieutenant colonel of the Sixteenth Vermont. Colonel Randall was active in promoting the work of recruiting; but as the rules of the War Department did not permit a colonel to be mustered for a battalion of seven companies, he did not at once assume the command, and the battalion left the State under the command of Lieut. Colonel Cummings. Its organization was completed in April by the appointment of Captain William B. Reynolds, of Milton, of the Sixth Vermont, as major; of Lieutenant James S. Peck, of Montpelier, late adjutant of the Thirteenth, as adjutant; of Buel J. Derby, of Huntington, late commissary sergeant of the Twelfth, as quartermas-

ter; of P. O'M. Edson, of Chester, assistant surgeon of the First Vermont Cavalry, as surgeon; and of Henry Spohn, of Brattleboro, as assistant surgeon. The field officers and company commanders had thus all seen service in the field. Several of the lieutenants and most of the non-commissioned officers had served in the Second brigade.

The battalion left the State of the 18th of April; arrive at Alexandria April 22d, and was assigned to the Second brigade of the Second division of the Ninth Army Corps. The other regiments of the brigade were the Sixth, Ninth, and Eleventh New Hampshire and Thirty-first and Thirty-second Maine. The New Hampshire regiments had all seen plenty of fighting. The two Maine regiments, like the Seventeenth, were new troops. The brigade commander was Colonel Simon G. Griffin of the Sixth New Hampshire. He had been appointed from civil life; had been two years in the service, and was a brave, resolute and capable commander. The division commander was Brigadier General Robert B. Potter of New York, son of Bishop Potter of Pennsylvania, and grandson of President Nott of Union College, a brave and spirited officer. The corps commander was the always chivalrous and often unlucky Burnside, who, having command the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Ohio, had returned to the command of the Ninth Corps, which he originally organized and led .the corps had been doing duty in Tennessee; had been brought east after the raising the siege of Knoxville; had been re-organized at Annapolis, and now formed a body of 25,000 men, including a division of colored troops—the first boy of such troops that formed a part of the Army of the Potomac. At this time it was marching to the front, to cooperate with the army under Grant, in his overland campaign against Richmond.

THE WILDERNESS AND SPOTSYLANIA.

The Seventeenth joined the brigade in Alexandria, on the 25th, and started forward with it on the 27th of April

marching that day to Fairfax Station; the next to Bristoe's; thence on the 4th of May to Bealton Station. On the 5th it crossed the Rappahannock at Rappahannock Station, and the Rapidan at Germanna Ford. These marches were long and hard; most of the men of the Seventeenth were wholly unused to marching, many of them were coming down with measles, and nearly a fourth of their number gave out on the march. The remainder, about 400 in number, halted on the night of the 5th on the tangled field of the Wilderness, in the rear of the Sixth Corps. The carnage of the first day's battle had just ceased; night had fallen on the field; and scarce realizing that they were in the lines of the Army of the Potomac, on one of the bloodiest battlefields of the war, and knowing little of the events of the day, the exhausted men dropped for a few hours' rest. They were roused soon after midnight, and at two o'clock in the morning of the 6th led the advance of the brigade and division along the Germanna Plank Road, and thence to the higher ground towards Chewing's house, at the centre of the Union lines, where the division was placed, in preparation for the general assault to take place at daybreak. Though Burnside did not get his corps into position in time to attack at the hour fixed, Griffin's brigade was in line of battle at sunrise, the Seventeenth Vermont having the right of the brigade, and advanced through successive belts of wood and across open fields toward Parker's store, till the skirmishers came upon a line of the enemy¹ and were driven back to the edge of the woods. At nine A.M. the Seventeenth advanced through pine thickets so dense that the men had at times to crawl upon their hands and knees; drove the opposing line from its position behind a rail fence, and occupied its place. The regiment was without connection or support on its right; but maintained its position during the forenoon, and until after the regiment on its left had

¹ Probably of Ramseur's brigade.

fallen back. While in this exposed situation it repulsed, with loss, an attack of the enemy upon both flanks, and held its ground till noon. In this fighting Captain Brown of company A received a wound which cost him his arm, and a number of men were wounded.

At noon the brigade was moved with the division a mile to the left, toward Tapp's, and went into position half a mile or more to the right of the ground on which the First Vermont brigade made its fight that day. About one o'clock the regiment was the right of the line of Potter's division, which was formed in the rear of some troops of Hancock's corps, which had been holding the ground, but at that time were making no effort to advance. It here came under a sharp musketry fire, and Lieut. Colonel Cummings received a scalp wound. He was taken to the rear and the command of the regiment devolved on Major Reynolds, who moved it under partial cover. Captain Kenfield of company C, and Lieutenant Martin of company E, were also wounded at this time. At two P. M. General Burnside ordered Griffin to attack the enemy, whose line was behind some log breastworks in a wood beyond a swampy ravine.² The brigade advanced promptly. Stepping over some troops lying on the ground in front,³ it charged and drove back the opposing line for some distance. "In this charge," says Major Reynolds, "no colors were advanced before those of this regiment." Colonel Griffin's testimony is that "the Seventeenth Vermont did nobly, though it was their first baptism of fire." As the brigade moved forward the troops in the lines behind, which should have kept their place, animated by the steady advance of Griffin's brigade rose without orders, and advanced with them. This caused

² "This appears to have been the line held by Perry's brigade of Anderson's division, and Law's brigade of Field's division."—General A. A. Humphreys, *Virginia Campaign of 1864*, p. 46.

³ Hartranft's and Bliss's brigades of the Ninth Corps.

some confusion, but the advance was maintained, and 199 prisoners, including seven officers, were taken behind their breastworks. After a while the enemy, having been reinforced, attacked the unsupported left flank of the brigade and it was driven back to the line from which it started. Here it halted, intrenched its line and held its position during the night. The Seventeenth did more than its share of the fighting of the brigade this day, and the courage and coolness shown by the men, both surprised and delighted their officers. The losses of the regiment considerably exceeded those of any other regiment in the brigade. It took but 313 muskets into line, owing to the causes before mentioned, and its casualties were 10 killed, 64 wounded, 10 of whom died of their wounds, and six missing—a total of 80.⁴ Captains Brown and Kenfield both received bullets through the left arm. The former suffered amputation and his injury occasioned his honorable discharge three months after. Lieutenant Martin received a severe wound in the leg. Lieut. Colonel Cumming's wound was not serious, and he returned to duty a few days later.

The next afternoon the corps was withdrawn and during the night moved to Chancellorsville, and thence toward Spottsylvania Court House, by the Fredericksburg road. The regiment crossed the Ny river with the division on the 19th, and took position to support Wilcox's division of the Ninth Corps, which was then engaged. The corps moved back across the Ny on the afternoon of the 11th, and two hours later was

⁴ The killed were Samuel T. Ballard of company A; John Kelly and Joseph Sorrell of company B; George E. Whitfield of company C; Austin Pleud and Don L. Willis of company D; Corporal Charles H. Carson of company E; Levi A. Cross and Ebenezer Saulsbury of company F, and Sergeant Erastus M. Dunbar of company G. Those who died of their wounds were: Joseph Bissett, Henry M. Carley and Patrick Carroll of company A; Corporal Lucian H. Bingham, William H. Bassett and Byron A. Batchelder of company C; Carlos C. Sherman of company D; William Biscomer of company E; Lucius Ingalls and Langdon O. Morse of company G.

ordered back to its former position in front of the confederate right, now intrenched just north of Spottsylvania Court House. For three days the other army corps had been engaged in sanguinary but indecisive fighting and the Sixth Corps was mourning the loss of General Sedgwick, killed two days before. Orders were issued the night of the 11th for an assault next morning in which the Ninth Corps was to support Hancock in his famous assault upon the historic salient. Potter's division accordingly advanced at four A. M., Griffin's brigade leading and moving to the right through the woods, to connect with the left of Hancock's corps. The brigade soon met the enemy's pickets and drove them back on their main line which opened fire on the left of Griffin's line. To meet this he changed direction to the left, and moved to the edge of an open field in front of and quite near to the enemy's works, along the eastern face of the salient, which had been carried by Hancock with the aid of the First Vermont brigade. But Gordon had driven Hancock's left out of the works, and as Griffin emerged from the woods, the portion of Birney's division so driven out was falling back through the open ground, closely followed by the enemy. The retreating troops swept back upon and past the right of Griffin's brigade, carrying with them the Ninth New Hampshire, which was on the right of the brigade line. The rest of Griffin's line stood firm and received the enemy with a fire on the flank which covered the ground with their dead and wounded, and effectually checked Gordon's progress. This action of Griffin's brigade doubtless save the Second Corps from serious disaster. The opposing lines maintained their positions during most of the day, neither being able to dislodge the other; and the position secured by Griffin was permanently held. In this important service, which gave Colonel Griffin the star of a brigadier, the Seventeenth Vermont had a prominent part. This was described as follows by Major

Reynolds, who commanded the regiment, Lieut. Colonel Cummings being still unfit for duty:

At four A. M. on the 12th, I was ordered to advance and attack the enemy, having the Sixth New Hampshire Volunteers on my right, and the Thirty-first Maine Volunteers on my left, in line, our brigade being first on the left of the Second Army Corps. The enemy's skirmishers were soon met, and driven in about one mile, upon their main lines. At five A. M. we met the enemy in line of battle, outside of his entrenchments, and immediately opened fire. The enemy being in a ravine, we were compelled to occupy the crest of the low ridge in his front, distant perhaps thirty rods from his line of battle. Notwithstanding the apparent advantage which the enemy at first held, his position finally proved his ruin, as he was unable either to withdraw into his entrenchments or to drive us from his front. At seven A. M., having exhausted our ammunition, (forty rounds per man), as well as all that could be procured from the dead and wounded, we were relieved by the Forty-eighth regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, and withdrew about twenty paces, where we remained with fixed bayonets, while ammunition was brought forward. During the cessation of fire, while my regiment was being relieved, about fifty of the Twenty-sixth Georgia Volunteers who had been in our front, availed themselves of the moment and came within our lines as prisoners of war. The few survivors of the regiment made good their escape from the ravine, leaving in our hands a very large number of dead and wounded, including one field officer. Many of the wounded were brought within our lines at night.⁵

At eleven A. M. I was ordered to support the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania Volunteers in an advance upon the enemy's works, having to move across an open field, about one hundred and fifty yards, under fire from the enemy in his entrenchments. Having gained the shelter of a wooded knoll on my left, a few yards from the enemy, and finding that the attacking force on my right had been repulsed, I withdrew without attacking, and with slight loss, to the position previously occupied. The Forty-eighth Pennsylvania

⁵ "On the 12th, the Seventeenth drove a portion of a Confederate regiment into a ravine from which it could not escape, and held them for two hours, when a Pennsylvania regiment came down on their flank and took them prisoners, without having made a charge or fired a gun! General Griffin said they were justly the prisoners of the Seventeenth."—Letter of Lieut. Colonel Cummings to General Washburn.

Regiment formed in my rear, as a support, during the remainder of the day. The enemy made several attempts during the day to dislodge us, with shell, grape and canister, from a battery distant about four hundred yards from our front. In every attempt he met a very decided repulse, his gunners being shot down at their guns and his battery finally silenced. Our position was made secure at night by erecting a rough parapet of rails, logs and earth, and this position we occupied, constantly under fire, without relief, and with only such rest as men catch who rest upon their arms, until two A. M. yesterday, 19th instant, when we were withdrawn to our present position, about three miles further to the left.

The regiment lost 12 killed, 58 wounded, of whom seven died of their wounds, and two missing, one of whom, Andrew J. Sprout of company F, died in prison at Andersonville, Sept. 4th, 1864.⁶ Among the wounded were Captain Lyman E. Knapp of company F, and Lieutenant Henry Gilmore, company A. Captain Knapp was struck by a ball, which glanced from his skull, rendering him temporarily insensible, but he remained in the line till sent by Major Reynolds to the rear. After two days he returned to the command of his company. Lieutenant Gilmore's wound was a severe one, occasioning his final discharge a year later, after prolonged disability and suffering. Lieutenant George W. Kingsbury of company F was severely wounded while on picket on the night of May 15th, by a soldier of the Sixth New Hampshire, who mistook him for a rebel; and was discharged on account of his wound in October following.

In the assault made by the Second, Sixth and Ninth Corps on Lee's left at Spottsylvania, on the 18th of May, the

⁶ The killed were: Company A: Franklin Buskey and Isaac Mitchell; company B, Moody L. Haskell; company C, Corporal Luman M. Davis, James A. Hodgeman and Samuel J. Allen; company E, Sergeant Charles E. Gould; company F, Sergeant James H. Newton, Edwin R. Allard and Henry Cotta; company G, George C. Cargill and Peter E. Dupont.

regiment was again engaged. In the course of this battle the troops of the Second Corps on the right of Griffin's brigade were repulsed, and came obliquely into the lines of the latter, but rallied, and advanced again with Griffin's brigade. The latter carried a wooded knoll in its front, but could not dislodge the enemy from his works beyond, and Griffin was soon attacked in turn. The troops on the left again gave way, and two of Griffin's regiments, intermingled with them, joined them in their retreat; but the rest of the brigade, including the Seventeenth Vermont, stood firm, and the others soon rallied and assisted in holding the advanced ground.

In the movement to the North Anna the regiment moved with the brigade in the evening of May 20th, in advance of the corps, to the crossing of the Po near Stannard's Mill, whence it moved with the corps to Guinea Station. Lieut. Colonel Cummings resumed command on the 23d.

On the 24th, the regiment crossed the river with Potter's division, which was sent to support Hancock. On the 25th the Ninth Corps, which had been thus far a separate organization, was formally incorporated with the Army of the Potomac, General Burnside waiving his superiority to General Meade in rank. On the 26th the regiment rejoined the corps on the north side of the river, and marching easterly crossed the Pamunkey at Dabney's Ferry near Hanover Town, on the night of the 28th. On the 30th it advanced to a position on Totopotomoy Creek, and in the afternoon of the 31st, in the feeling of the enemy's lines which was in progress all along the front, the regiment advanced with the brigade and drove the enemy in front from their works, sending them flying across the fields beyond. In this affair one man was killed and four were fatally wounded.⁷

⁷ Killed—John Minor of company A.

Died of wounds—Rodman Bessey, Hubbell Lee and John W. Tweeddale of company A, and William Marshall of company E.

The position near the Totopotomoy was held for two days, when the Ninth Corps began to withdraw, in the movement of the army to Cold Harbor. While this withdrawal was in progress, the rear of the corps was attacked by Rodes's and Heth's divisions, and was in serious danger until Wilcox's and Potter's divisions got into position near Bethesda Church and repulsed the enemy. In the withdrawal of Griffin's brigade, the picket line in front, under command of Captain Knapp, was left to hold back the enemy. The skirmishers, ignorant that their supports had moved away, resisted for several hours the pressure of the enemy's skirmishers, repulsing three vigorous advances of the latter. By a fourth assault in stronger force Knapp's line was driven in. He fell back with his men through some ravines leading to the rear, found that the brigade had gone, and, directed by a staff officer who had been sent to withdraw the pickets, joined the brigade. At four P. M. the enemy attacked the rear of the division and was repulsed and held back, chiefly by Griffin's brigade, which took position behind the scarp of some old earthworks thrown up in former operations at that point, till after dark.

In the arrangement of the lines of the army for the battle of Cold Harbor, next day, June 3d, Griffin's brigade being the right of the Ninth Corps, held the extreme right of the army, near Bethesda Church. The brigade did not take active part in the general assault of the early morning. Potter's division, however, was advanced, and established itself close upon the enemy's mainline, there held by Early's corps. In the afternoon Griffin's brigade was ordered to support the First brigade in an assault on the enemy's entrenchments. The Seventeenth was on the extreme right, and was moved out into an open field, at right angles with the line of the brigade. Here it came under an enfilading fire from the enemy's skirmishers, whereupon Lieut. Colonel Cummings detached the two right companies, and sent them farther to

the right, where they soon silenced the opposing fire. At this time the general order for a suspension of offensive operations was received and the regiment and brigade withdrew.

The loss of the regiment at Cold Harbor, June 3d, was one killed and 17 wounded, five of whom died of their wounds.⁸ Captain A. J. Davis, company B, one of the most active and reliable officers in the regiment, was wounded in the leg, and died a few days after. Lieutenant Gardner W. Gibson of company D was also wounded, and died in the general hospital at Washington on the 14th. On the 7th and 8th of June the regiment was under fire, and on the 8th had two men wounded, both of whom died of their wounds.⁹

On the 8th of June, company H, Captain Charles H. Corey, with 57 effective men, joined the regiment, which before its arrival numbered but 178 muskets. Next day Burnside's corps was drawn nearer to Cold Harbor, extending along Matadequin Creek toward Allen's mill-pond. Here the regiment remained, with the corps, till the 12th of June. Burnside's lines were not pressed as closely against the enemy as those of some of the other corps, and the experiences of the men of the Seventeenth were less trying than those which have been described of the Vermont troops in the Sixth Corps; but on the 8th of June, Lieut. Colonel Cummings writes: "During the last fifteen days we have been under fire every day but three, and two of those days we were on the march."

⁸ Killed—Sergeant Charles N. Rood, company D.

Fatally wounded—Silas J. Moulton, company C; Corp. Henry J. Russ, company D; and Francis Curtis, company F.

Corporal Scott of Company F, a brave young soldier who left Middlebury college to enlist, was struck by a shell which took off his foot at the ankle. He received this injury without groan or remark, except to say, in a low voice, as he grasped the bleeding stump:

"Captain, you don't know how that hurt!"—Incident narrated by Captain L. E. Knapp.

⁹ Seymour F. Wells, company B, and Andrew J. Marvin, company D.

IN FRONT OF PETERSBURG.

In the movement of the army to the James the Seventeenth Vermont, starting with the brigade June 12th, arrived at the river on the night of the 14th, having had but four hours' sleep in forty-eight hours; crossed at Wilcox's Landing at eleven P. M. of the 15th, and at noon of the next day reached the front of Petersburg, after a march of 22 miles, with ranks thinned by hard marching on short rations. There was little rest for the tired men, however, for before sundown they were in line of battle, to support the left of the Second Corps in an assault upon the defenses of Petersburg. After this had ended in the capture of two redans, a fresh assault was arranged to be made at daylight by General Griffin with his own and Curtin's brigades of Potter's division.

"I spent the entire night," says General Griffin, "moving my troops through the felled timber, getting them in proper position. I placed my brigade at the left of the Second Corps in a ravine immediately in front of the Shand house * * * with Curtin on my left, and a little further to the rear, I formed my brigade in two lines. * * My orders were not to fire a shot, but to depend wholly on the bayonet. * * * we swept their line for a mile from where my right rested, gathering in prisoners and abandoned arms and equipments, all the way; four pieces of artillery with caissons and horses, a stand of colors, six hundred prisoners and 1,500 stand of arms fell into our hands."¹⁰

Had the other troops which were to follow up this attack advanced promptly, Petersburg would probably have been taken that morning.

The stand of colors, two of the guns, and many of the prisoners thus captured were taken by the Seventeenth Vermont. The regiment, with the Ninth New Hampshire and

¹⁰ Paper read before the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Thirty-second Maine, assaulted the northerly face of the earthworks at the Shand house. The line was formed for the assault, with the Seventeenth on the right, in a ravine within a hundred yards of the enemy's works. The utmost silence was enjoined, and the canteens were placed in the haversacks to prevent rattling. At the earliest dawn, the command "forward" was passed along in whispers, and the troops moved noiselessly to and over the works in front, and bayoneted all who attempted resistance.¹¹

The colors taken by the Seventeenth were those of the Seventeenth Tennessee, of Fulton's brigade, of Buckner's corps. The adjutant and 70 men of that regiment were captured at the same time. The Vermont regiment then moved along the enemy's line for some distance, and assisted in the captured made by the other regiments of the brigade. In such a brilliant manner did the regiment celebrate the anniversary of Bunker Hill¹² and it was entitled to a large share of the praise accorded to the division by General Meade, who wrote to Burnside: "It affords me great satisfaction to congratulate you and your gallant corps on the successful assault on the morning of the 17th. Knowing the wearied condition of your men, from a night march of over twenty-two miles and the continued movement during the night of the 16th, their persistence and success is highly creditable."

The losses of the regiment on the 17th were six killed¹³

¹¹ "It is said that bayonet wounds are seldom known; but I can vouch for many that were made that early morning."—Captain L. E. Knapp.

¹² "I cannot refrain from noticing the coincidence, that on the anniversary of the 17th of June the Seventeenth Vermont captured the colors of the Seventeenth Tennessee, together with guns and prisoners number more than half their own number."—Lieut. Colonel Cummings's report.

The regiment took 135 muskets into the charge.

¹³ Killed—Solomon Bingham of company B; Ralph E. Dwinell of company C; Sergeant Samuel B. Norton and Charles E. Boyd of company F; and Marshall Mercy of company H. Those who died of their wounds were: Corporal Daniel P. Fox of company A; Warren B. Whitcomb of company B; Corporal William W. Bugbee, George W. Eldred, Albert L. Merchant and Joseph Smith of company F; and Sergeant Uriah T. Jacobs of company Y.

and 20 wounded, of whom seven died of their wounds. Among the killed was Lieutenant Guy H. Guyer of company C, one of the bravest officers in the regiment, who fell early in the charge, shot through the left breast. The regiment was engaged on the skirmish line on the 18th, and had four men wounded, two of whom died of their wounds¹⁴; and on the 19th had three men killed in the trenches and two wounded, one of whom died of his wounds.¹⁵

A period of several weeks of almost constant fighting along the picket lines and artillery duels followed; and from the 20th of June to the 29th of July the regiment was almost constantly under fire in the trenches. It suffered losses nearly every day. The fact that the division of colored troops had now joined the corps, made the enemy especially spiteful, and the picket firing was incessant along the front of the Ninth Corps, though suspended by mutual understanding along the fronts of other corps. The casualties during this time were seven killed and 27 wounded, four of whom died of their wounds.¹⁶ The heat was oppressive, and disease and exhaustion did their part in thinning the ranks of the regiment. On the 20th of June, Colonel Cummings, in a private letter to Adjutant General Washburn, said: "I

¹⁴ James Glines of company C, and Franklin Carter of company G.

¹⁵ Killed—Abram Bissett of company A, Nelson Arnold of company D, and Nelson Bully of company F. Nelson Ladabosh of company A died of his wounds.

¹⁶ The killed were: Ebenezer Smith, company A; John H. Hall, company C; Henry A. Day and William M. Holsapple, company F; Corporal Harvey P. Wiley, company G; and Henry H. Aldin and Josiah Rose, company H..

Those who died of wounds were: Corporal Henry M. Dudley, John Gaborie, Henry Mora and Larhett Wescott of company H.

am writing where balls go through my shelter, six inches above my head. * *
* I am safe in saying that the Seventeenth has a reputation for doing its fully duty, conceded by all the regiments in the division. Our pickets have never been driven in as yet. This cannot be said of any other regiment in the division, even within the last month. On the morning of the 17th, the little Seventeenth stood alone in an advanced position when Frank's entire brigade on our right and rear ran pell-mell. All the officers I have for duty are Captains Knapp, Hartshorn and Corey; First Lieutenants Brigham, Hicks and Needham; and Second Lieutenants Pierce and Converse. Eaton is Brigade commissary. Companies E and B have no commissioned officers." On the 25th of June there were but 250 men present, all told. On the 21st of July, Colonel Cummings reported but 150 men present for duty. Of the 24 line officers who went out with their companies, but eight were now with the regiment—four having been killed, four disabled by wounds, one resigned, and the other seven being absent.

BATTLE OF THE MINE.

In the permanent investment of Petersburg, the Ninth Corps held the portion of the Union lines extending from the Hare house, due east of Petersburg and about a mile from the city, for two miles to the south. Its lines were pressed pretty closely up to the enemy's. From the 17th of June to the 30th of July nothing of especial note occurred. Then the arduous routine of picket duty and service in the trenches was broken by the ill-fated affair of the Mine. This project was the special property of the corps, suggested by Colonel Pleasants, who commanded a regiment of Pennsylvania miners; adopted by General Potter; approved by General Burnside, and assented to reluctantly by General Meade, and more willingly by General Grant. The work involved the

running of an underground gallery, 500 feet long, to a point directly under a Confederate redan, known as Elliott's Salient, held by Elliott's brigade of Bushrod Johnson's division. Under this, transverse galleries were run, and charged with 8,000 pounds of powder. The work of preparation of the mine occupied a month. The explosion was arranged to take place just before daylight on the 30th, and was to be the signal for a general assault, to be made by the Ninth Corps, supported on left and right by the Fifth and Eighteenth Corps, and by the Second Corps, if needed. The Ninth Corps was to advance at once to the crest beyond, along which was the enemy's inside line of works. As these commanded the city, the seizure of them would involve the fall of Petersburg. The artillery of all kinds along Burnside's front was to take part and keep down the fire of the enemy's artillery upon the ground over which the Union columns were to charge.

Burnside first selected Ferrero's division of colored troops to lead the assault, for the reasons that they were willing and anxious to undertake the duty, that he was glad to give them an opportunity to show their fighting quality, and that they were comparatively fresh troops, while constant marching, fighting and skirmishing in the trenches and on picket had well-nigh exhausted the men of the other divisions. The selected was disapproved by General Meade, because the task was one requiring troops of tried worth, while Ferrero's division was as yet untried; and, because, if the assault proved a failure, it would be charged that the colored troops were shoved in on a forlorn hope, because their lives were regarded as of small account. The colored division being thus ruled out, General Burnside, instead of selecting the best man and division, foolishly decided between his three white divisions by lot. The lot fell upon General Ledlie—a New York man (originally colonel of the Third New York Light Artillery) who was first brought into prominence

by this affair, after which he disappeared from public view.¹⁷

Burnside's battle order accordingly directed Ledlie to lead the charge, and Generals Potter and Wilcox were to follow with their divisions, bearing respectively to the right and left, to protect Ledlie's flanks till the first line of works was passed, when they were to diverge—Potter moving to Cemetery Hill and Wilcox to the enemy's second line of works on the Jerusalem plank road. A defect in the fuse delayed for an hour the firing of the mine. At twenty minutes before five it exploded, blowing into the air a six-gun battery and 250 men of the Eighteenth and Twenty-third South Carolina regiments, and leaving a crater two hundred feet long, fifty wide and twenty-five deep. The Union artillery at once opened a terrific cannonade from over 100 guns and mortars, and the troops advanced. Ledlie's division soon filled the crater with a mass of troops, but did not advance beyond it, till the enemy began to recover from his surprise, and Elliott got troops enough into position, with artillery, to effectively resist the attempts to advance which followed later. Potter and Wilcox carried a portion of the intrenchments north and south of the crater. But two brigades of Mahone's division were soon upon the ground, followed by other troops, and so far from assaulting the second line of works, the troops of the Ninth Corps soon had all that they could do to hold the portion which they had carried. The colored troops, 6,000 in number, advanced later; but did not get outside of the Union trenches till eight o'clock. Then they charged, cheering. One brigade got beyond the crater and took 200 prisoners. The other two brigades crowded into the crater. Here organizations became wholly lost, and white and black mingled in a huddle, which prevented any effective

¹⁷ "General Ledlie, an officer whose total unfitness for such a duty ought to have been known to General Burnside, though it is not possible that it could have been. It was not known to General Meade."—General A. A. Humphreys.

fighting except on the part of two or three regiments whose commanders made out to disentangle their men. Ledlie and Ferrero did not accompany their troops, and of course did nothing in the way of remedying the confusion.¹⁸ Seven hours of a hot forenoon were spent at first in unavailing efforts to push forward the various columns to the enemy's second line and then in attempts to extricate the troops. The crater became an amphitheatre of slaughter. The supporting divisions fell back, and the Ninth Corps finally withdrew in disorganized masses, through a deadly fire, with the loss of four thousand men killed, wounded and captured. The Eighteenth Corps lost several hundred men.

The only division commander who escaped censure by the Military Court of Enquiry which investigated this affair was General Potter.¹⁹ The movement of his division was lead by Griffin's brigade, which struck the enemy's line to the right of the crater, pushed through the abatis and obstructions, and took 200 yards of rifle-pits. Two of his regiments advanced for one or two hundred yards beyond. But the works on Cemetery Hill were too strongly manned by the time the advance was made, to be assaulted with success. The division fell back under a heavy fire of artillery and musketry, and finally returned to the Union trenches with a loss of half of its number. Of the seven regimental commanders of Griffin's brigade not one returned unhurt. Three of them were killed, three wounded and one captured, and the losses of the rank and file were fearful.

The Seventeenth Vermont was commanded in this battle by Major Reynolds It mustered for the assault eight

¹⁸ The Court of Enquiry on this disaster, after hearing much contradictory testimony, reported that both these officers were in a bomb proof, inside the Union works, when they should have been directing the operations in front.

¹⁹ General Burnside received leave of absence a few days after, and Ledlie was soon relieved of his command. Neither of them returned to the army.

commissioned officers and 120 men.²⁰ About 2 o'clock A. M., the regiment moved with the brigade to the point where it was to await the explosion of the mine. After hours of waiting, the dusk brightened into daylight and the sharpshooters' rifles had begun to crack upon the enemy's lines, when a tremble of the ground heralded the muffled thunder of the explosion, and a column of smoke and sand, mingled with caissons, camp equipage and bodies of men, leaped into the air in front. The smoke had hardly cleared from the crater when Ledlie's column started and Griffin at once ordered his brigade forward. Preceded by skirmishers and pioneers with axes, it moved out to the crater. Beyond this was a labyrinth of traverses, rifle-pits and bomb-proofs, held in greater or less force by the enemy, who was already rallying with spirit. Ledlie's troops were making no advance beyond the crater. Griffin's brigade, however, cleared the enemy from a portion of the rifle-pits and of a covered way extending back and to the right, and occupied them for some time.

General Griffin, in a letter to the writer of this history, thus describes the action of his brigade:

Ledlie's division, having the lead, formed close up under our breastworks, and filled nearly all the space back to the deep ravine which ran along their rear—our crooked line of works dipping down into it in some places. My regiments were formed wherever we could find standing room—in the traverses and covered ways in the ravine, and one or two close up under our breastworks, to the right of Ledlie. I think the Seventeenth Vermont was one of these, and near the head of the column, such as it was. I gave each commander of regiment general directions as to his movements, and to my senior colonel, Colonel White of the Thirty-first Maine, the general direction of the head of my column. We moved left in front because I was to follow Ledlie, keeping

²⁰ Lieut. Colonel Cummings, Adjutant Peck and Captains Hartshorn and Robinson were on the sick list, and Captains Eaton and Knapp were on detached service, Eaton being brigade commissary, and Knapp judge advocate of a court martial at division headquarters.

my left up to his right. My orders were to go through the opening caused by the explosion, following Ledlie, then turn or face to the right, double up the enemy's line, but keeping along with Ledlie to support and protect his right flank, and all were to push directly for Cemetery Hill and hold that position. Other troops were to follow me and continue to roll up their flank, and protect my flank in the same way. I took a position to watch the explosion, and saw it, while most of my men could not see it.

At first a heavy column of earth, dust and smoke rose in the air to an estimated height of eighty feet or more. Then came a dull, heavy thud, which I should say might have been heard, or felt, or both, for miles around, if the conditions were favorable. The troops moved at once, but Ledlie's men plunged into the crater and there they stuck. They packed it full, in one solid mass, as thick as they could stand. They would not go through, and were powerless to do anything where they were. The enemy quickly gathered their wits and turned all their fire upon that spot. Ledlie's men refused to leave that excellent cover, and my troops could not get through or over that mass of humanity, nor could any others, as none could pass on either side, for the enemy's lines to the right and left were still intact, protected by abatis, and as tenaciously held as ever by their troops. My men made gallant and desperate attempts to push forward in all directions on our side, got through their abatis and over their works, into their traverses and covered ways, and succeeded in getting farther to the front than any other troops,—the Seventeenth Vermont as far as any—but the difficulties were so great, and the fire so destructive it was impossible to make much headway in that desultory manner, without regular formations.²¹

I worked my way through the crater, climbed to the top of the bank beyond, and did my best to rally the troops out of the crater and form a line up there, but Ledlie's men would not come up; my own men could not get there, and by that time they had turned such a furious fire of artillery and musketry upon us, that no line could be formed there. The first half hour having been lost, all was lost.

²¹ “Our advance was checked by a murderous fire from the enemy on each flank, and from a batter in our front, shielded by a house, through the broad hall of which, running through from side to side, a gun throwing grape and canister raked the crest of the crater and trenches in front.”—Statement of Lieutenant Worthington Pierce.

The men of the Seventeenth for the most part sought shelter in a covered way, where they lay for hours, while various abortive attempts to advance from the crater were made by the other troops, white and black. The advances, however, all lacked unity and force. The enemy's fire grew hotter, as his artillery and musketry were concentrated; and to advance or retreat was almost equally hazardous. About noon Major Reynolds, while encouraging his men to repulse an attack of the enemy upon the right of the regiment, was struck by a musket ball in the left breast. He staggered against Lieutenant W. Pierce, who was near him, saying; "Pierce, I am shot! Can you get me out of this?" He was placed on a rubber blanket and carried into the crater where he expired in a few minutes. He had been conspicuous by his coolness and courage amid the trying scenes of the day, and had taken part in some hand-to-hand fighting in the trenches just before he fell. His death had a sadly disheartening effect on the men; but the regiment did its share in holding the enemy in check, till the trenches and covered way became so packed with men, that it was impossible to use their arms. About one o'clock the order to withdraw—long before given by General Meade—reached General Griffin. About the same time three brigades of Mahone's division, advanced through a ravine to the right, swept down upon the troops in and near the crater. Griffin gave the order to retreat; the enemy enforced it by a volley from the brink of the covered way, and all of the Seventeenth who could get out, started for the Union lines. Some did not start quick enough and Captain Kenfield, Lieutenant Pierce and several men were captured in the works to the right and front of the crate, by troops of Saunders's Alabama brigade. The troops in the crater, after hundreds had been killed and wounded by shells dropped in among them, by musket bullets, and by muskets hurled with bayonets fixed from the edge of the chasm, at last raised a white flag and the battle of the mine ended.

Of the Seventeenth, one officer and he seriously wounded, and a little over half of the men returned. Of the line officers Lieutenant Martin was killed about the same time as Major Reynolds by a canister shot through his head. Lieutenants Hicks, Bingham and Converse fell early in the action. The loss of the battalion in killed and wounded exceeded in proportion to its numbers, that of any other Vermont organization in any one battle, that of the Fifth regiment at Savage's Station alone excepted. The casualties were 10 killed, 46 wounded and 18 missing. Of the men captured, seven died in Confederate prisons.²²

The loss of Major Reynolds, who was one of the best soldiers that entered the service from Vermont, was a heavy blow to the regiment, and he and his brother officers who shared his fate that day were deeply mourned.²³

²² The rank and file killed were Michael Sheehy of company B; Henry A. Luce and Mark B. Slayton of company C; Edward S. Wills of company D, and Stephen H. Fuller of company G. Those who died of their wounds were Sergeant Peter Traver of company A; Joseph Devineau of company B; Corporal Thompson Stoddard of company C; Sergeant James Clark and Frank F. Parmenter of company E; Marquis D. Smith of company F; Charles Archer of company G, and William F. Scarborough of company H. Of these, Traver and Stoddard were captured, and died in the enemy's hands.

Daniel Brown and Philo Dean of company A; Edward D. Carter of company C; Henry H. Wakefield of company E, and George B. Wilson of company G also died in the enemy's hands.

²³ Major William B. Reynolds though a young man, was a veteran soldier. He was a native of Milton, Vt. At the opening of the war he was studying law in the office of Hon. George F. Edmunds, in Burlington. He left his studies to enter the army, and in October, 1861, was commissioned as second lieutenant of company I of the Sixth Vermont. In January 1862, he was promoted to the captaincy of his company. He was captured at Savage's Station in June, 1862, being then sick in hospital, but was exchanged in time to rejoin his regiment at Antietam. He shared the subsequent fortunes of the First brigade, till in April, 1864, he was appointed major of the Seventeenth. Major Reynolds was a man of scholarly tastes and training. Beneath a quiet and unobtrusive demeanor he concealed a remarkable degree of courage, firmness, power of quick decision and coolness in danger. Vermont sent no more worthy son or better soldier to the war. In the words of Surgeon Edson: "he died as he lived, the accomplished gentleman, the genial friend, the faithful soldier, the careful, brave, high-minded commander, the pure-minded patriot and the true Christian man." He was shot through the body and died almost instantly, only calling for water in a whisper, and pointing to a ring on his finger and to the papers in his pocket. The enemy buried his body within their lines.

Lieutenant John R. Converse, of Panton, was a graduate of Middlebury College of the class of 1862. He enlisted in company I, of the Fourteenth regiment, soon after leaving College; showed especial aptitude as a soldier; fought with noticeable coolness and courage at Gettysburg, and was promoted to be second lieutenant in that regiment. He re-enlisted in May 1864, in company H, of the Seventeenth, of which he was chosen second lieutenant; joined the battalion early in June, and six weeks later fell and was buried within the enemy's lines.

Lieutenant William R. Martin, of Marshfield, was first lieutenant of company C, of the Thirteenth regiment, and fought at Gettysburg. He re-enlisted in the Seventeenth and was severely wounded in the leg in the battle of the Wilderness; and had rejoined the regiment after his recovery only the day before he fell.

Lieutenant Hicks, of company F, a noble young man, and Lieutenant Bingham, of company G, were both reported missing, and were supposed to have been captured, and it was not till months after that it was learned that they were both killed in the crater. Meantime Lieutenant Hicks had been brevetted as captain for gallant and meritorious conduct in the assault of June 17th, and he was subsequently commissioned as captain; his record thus offering the anomaly of a man three months after his death.

Among the wounded was First Lieutenant Henry M. Needham of company H, the only officer of the Seventeenth who returned from the crater. He was wounded in the breast, slightly it was at first supposed, but he died a week after, August 6th.

The prisoners taken in this battle were roughly used by their captors, who were infuriated by a report circulated among them that if the Union assault had been successful Petersburg would have been handed over to the negro troops for rapine. The officers were marched through the streets of Petersburg next day, in a column formed of white officers and negro privates in alternate ranks, and of the enlisted men of the Seventeenth some were wounded by their guards

in the streets of the city.²⁴ Captain Kenfield and Lieutenant Pierce were taken to Danville, Va., and thence later to Columbia, S. C. They spent seven months in captivity and were finally exchanged on the 28th of February following.

It was a little band of sad-faced men that gathered in the regimental camp next day. The regiment was reduced to the number of a company, and companies to corporal's guards, commanded by sergeants. Of the field and staff officers, the only ones on duty were the surgeons and Adjutant Peck, who, though unwell, took command of the regiment. Of the line officers surviving, most were sick and absent. Less than 100 effective men were actually present for duty. The spirit of the survivors was expressed in the words of Quartermaster Derby, in a letter written from the camp that day: "One more fight, and goodbye the Seventeenth; * * * but send us more men and we are all right yet."

A few more men were then about starting from Vermont, for the regiment. August 13th company I, Captain Daniel Conway, numbering 87 men, joined the command; and on the 1st of September 233 officers and men were reported present for duty. Captains Eaton and Knapp were released from detached service in order that the regiment might not be without commissioned officers. Captain Eaton was promoted to be major, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Major Reynolds; and gradually, by accession, promotion and return of officers from the hospitals, the battalion was again supplied with officers. Lieut. Colonel Cummings having gone to Vermont on account of his health, the regiment was commanded by Major Eaton.

²⁴ "Edwin Norton of company C received a bayonet wound in the side in the streets of Petersburg because he could not keep up. A man of company G, name unknown, was cut down with a sabre stroke across the back and several others were knocked down with the butt ends of muskets while they were being marched about Petersburg. Most of the badly wounded died, as their wounds were not dressed by the rebels."—Statement of Corporal O. S. Atherton of company C.

On the 18th of August the Fifth Corps, which had been holding the lines to the left of the Ninth, was marched to the left to seize the Weldon Railroad, and the Ninth Corps, now commanded by General Parke, was moved into the trenches vacated by the Fifth Corps. On the 19th Potter's division was sent with two other divisions of the Ninth Corps to support General Warren, who had been attacked by Lee. With their aid Warren held his position on the railroad, and gained valuable ground which was entrenched and added to the Union lines. On the 21st Lee made another persistent effort to dislodge the Fifth Corps from the railroad. Potter's division participated in the fighting, and the Seventeenth was under arms, but, for once, was not put in.²⁵

The month of September brought a period of comparative rest from the incessant marching, fighting and digging, which for ten weeks had been the daily and nightly experience of the regiment, though the men still had more or less fatigue duty on the works to the left of the Jerusalem Plank Road.

PEEBLES'S FARM OR POPLAR SPRING CHURCH.

In the latter part of September, General Grant arranged for another movement to his left to secure the junction of the Squirrel Level and Poplar Spring Church roads, for a basis for a further advance against the Boydton Plank Road, still farther to the Union left. The junction of the roads named was at Peebles's farm, about five miles southwest of Petersburg. Here a line of Confederate rifle-pits, ending in a redoubt, guarded the position and formed an advanced line, a mile in front of Lee's main line. The movement was to be made by General Warren with two divisions of the Fifth Corps, supported by General Parke with the Second and Third divisions of the Ninth Corps.

²⁵ This is probably the action referred under the title of "Weldon R. R., Aug. 26th," in Adj. General Washburn's list. It does not appear that any action took place on the Weldon road upon that date.

At eight o'clock in the morning of Sept. 30th, Warren assaulted and carried the redoubt and rifle-pits. General Parke supported him on his left, and in the afternoon advanced toward the enemy's main line covering the Boydton Plank Road. He had reached a point about half a mile from this when he was met by Heth's and Wilcox's divisions of Hill's corps. Potter's division became engaged about three P. M. At that hour Griffin, whose brigade was the extreme right of Parke's lines, emerging from a wood, found the enemy in his front, drove I the skirmishers to and beyond the Jones house, and took a position along a crest in front of that house, expecting troops of the Fifth Corps to advance and protect his flank. The Fifth Corps did not come up, however, and Griffin was soon savagely attacked in front and on the right flank and driven back in disorder. The First brigade was next struck, and Potter's whole line was swept back for a mile, with a loss of a thousand men captured. A brigade of the Third division shared in the disorder; but a new line was established by General Parke at the Pegram house with the rest of that division; and with the aid of the First division of the Fifth Corps the enemy's advance was checked at nightfall and the line permanently held.

This action, styled "Poplar Grove Church" in Adjutant General Washburn's reports, occupies comparatively less space in the histories, though nearly a thousand men were killed and wounded in it, on the two sides.²⁶ In it it fell to the lot of the Seventeenth to occupy a position of extreme danger, and again to suffer heavily. It was the right regiment of Griffin's line. In the absence of the supports he had expected, he refused his brigade line on the right to protect that flank. In this position the Vermonters took the brunt of the assault of Wilcox's division. This, in vastly superior force, came suddenly out of some thin

²⁶ The Union loss, the larger part of which fell on the Ninth Corps, was 661 killed and wounded, and 1,350 missing.

wood upon the right, and opened a fire by which Lieut. Colonel Cummings, Major Eaton, Lieutenant Tobin and several men were killed, and a number of enlisted men were wounded. The line of the brigade became broken and the Seventeenth was swept back with it, leaving its dead and wounded on the ground. "Save the colors, boys," was Colonel Cumming's last order, after he was stricken down.²⁷ They were saved, and twice served as a rallying point for the regiment. Adjutant James S. Peck, taking command after the fall of the field officers, halted the battalion to support a section of Jones's battery from which the supports had retreated, and checked the advance of the enemy till the guns were withdrawn. Half a mile farther back, he again halted and again checked the enemy's advance, and he held this last position through that rainy October night, and till the lines were readjusted behind him. The redoubt afterward known as Fort Welch was built upon that spot to

²⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Charles Cummings when the war broke out was the editor of the Brattleboro Phoenix, and the popular clerk of the Vermont House of Representatives. His tastes were not military; but moved by earnest patriotism he enlisted as a private in the Brattleboro company of the Eleventh regiment, in the summer of 1862, and was chosen first lieutenant of the company. A few days after that regiment took the field he was appointed lieutenant colonel of the Sixteenth regiment, with which he served during its term of service. After a short period of rest in the summer of 1863, he was appointed lieutenant colonel of the Seventeenth, and commanded the battalion through most of its service up to this time. He was left bleeding on the field, and in the first returns of casualties, he, with Major Eaton and Lieutenant Tobin, were reported as "wounded and missing." Two days after the information came through the enemy's pickets that he died on the field and had been buried where he fell. A few days later, through the kind offices of members of the Masonic fraternity, of which order he was a prominent members, his remains were disinterred and delivered to his men, by whom they were sent to Vermont. They were finally interred October 26th, at Brattleboro, with Mason honors and especial marks of respect.

Major Eaton and Lieutenant Tobin were supposed to be prisoners in the enemy's hands for some time after, and Eaton—a brave young officer—was appointed to the vacant Lieutenant-colonelcy, his commission bearing date of the day after his death.

command an important salient of the Union line.²⁸ In this last stand of the regiment Lieutenant Lucia, commanding company H, received a wound from a musket ball which cost him his left arm, and several men were killed and wounded. Of seven officers and 165 men who marched out with the colors that morning, but three officers, Captains Knapp and Conway and Lieutenant Norton, and 90 men, answered to the roll-call that night.

The losses of the regiment this day were eight killed, 40 wounded, of whom two died of their wounds, and 27 missing, nine of whom died in the enemy's hands,—a total of 75.²⁹

After the battle of the 30th, the Confederate works near the Peebles house were reversed and strengthened, and a strong work erected on the Squirrel Level road, half a mile southwest of Poplar Spring Church, was named Fort Cummings, after Lieut. Colonel Cummings. Here, near the confiscated mansion of General John Pegram, then commanding a division in the opposing lines, the regiment remained for a month.

For a while after the battle of Peebles's Farm, the condition of the regiment was melancholy in the extreme. Adjutant Peck and Captain Conway were in hospital. The other line officers, with a single exception, were either

²⁸ "During nearly all the time he was holding this post Adjutant Peck was exposed without shelter and almost without food amid a steadily falling rain. Worn by fatigue and excitement, chilled by the October rain, already suffering from the pain of incipient pneumonia, he was with difficulty forced by his surgeon to leave his command. He returned to duty long before he was fit for it and so fastened upon himself the disease that followed him to his death."—Letter of Surgeon Edson.

²⁹ The men killed were William Martin and Stephen T. Russ of company D; Oliver M. Green of company G; Joseph Casavant and James S. Collins of company I. George D. Stannard of company F, and Sergeant Salmon K. Gates of company I, died of their wounds.

Those who died in the enemy's hands were William Barber and Thomas Geary of company A; Corporal Loren S. Mallory of company B; Lyman Godfrey, Arthur H. Townshend and Amos Truell of company C; Horace Bacon and Marshall C. Goff of company D, and John Horrigan of company H.

wounded, sick or absent. Surgeon Edson and Captain Knapp were the only officers on duty for twenty-five days; and during this period Captain Knapp commanded the regiment, with non-commissioned officers as company commanders. On the 8th of October the organization and muster in of the tenth company—company K, Captain Yale, with 95 officers and men, took place in Vermont. The Regiment being thus complete, Colonel Francis V. Randall, who had been appointed colonel eight months before, could at last be mustered as colonel, and he was so mustered on the 17th of October. He at once left Vermont with the tenth company for the field, joining the regiment at its camp near the Pegram house on the 27th of October. This arrival more than doubled the effective force of the regiment. The losses of the regiment in killed and wounded since it crossed the Rapidan had been about 400—100 more than it numbered in its first battle. But additions of recruits and return of convalescents again swelled the ranks, and on the 15th of November 316 officers and men were reported present for duty.

On the 27th of October the regiment participated in the unsuccessful movement made by the Ninth, Second and Fifth Corps against the enemy's entrenchments on Hatcher's Run. That night the troops did some entrenching and skirmishing and next day marched back to their former lines, halting once on the way and forming line of battle to oppose the enemy, who followed to within a mile of the camps. In this operation the weight of the fighting fell to the other two corps, and the Seventeenth suffered no loss.

Soon after this the Ninth Corps was transferred to the extreme right of the army, and was placed in the trenches extending from the Appomattox to Fort Hays on the left of the Jerusalem Plank Road. Griffin's brigade held the left of this line, and Colonel Randall was placed in command of Fort Davis, having under him in addition to his own regiment, the Thirty-first Maine and Fifty-sixth Massachusetts

and two batteries of artillery. The Seventeenth remained here for three months. In November Captain Knapp was appointed major and a month later was promoted to be lieutenant colonel, when Eaton's death became known. Dr. S. W. Langdon was taken from the ranks of the Fifth Vermont and appointed second assistant surgeon. Lieutenant Henry Gilmore of company A was promoted captain, vice Brown discharged for wounds. Lieutenant W. Pierce, though still a prisoner, was promoted captain of company D, the First Sergeant Hollis O. Claflin was commissioned as first lieutenant, and commanded that company. Second Lieutenant Charles D. Brainerd of company G was promoted first lieutenant of company F, and commanded that company. In February Surgeon Edson resigned and left the regiment, to the regret of all. He was succeeded by Assistant Surgeon Rutherford of the Tenth Vermont who was promoted to the vacant surgeoncy.

The regiment occupied Fort Davis until the 11th of February, when it moved about a mile to the left. During the winter there was almost daily skirmishing on the picket lines, and artillery duels between the forts, and four or five men of the Seventeenth were wounded during this time. Much of the time of the regiment was now occupied in drill, for which there had hitherto been but little opportunity.

On the 23d of March the regiment lost its quartermaster's tents and a large amount of camp equipage by a fire which broke out in the camp of the Sixth Corps, and extended into that of the Ninth.

FINAL ASSAULT ON PETERSBURG.

In the final grand assault of April 2d upon the lines of Petersburg, the Seventeenth had an honorable part. The task assigned to Potter's division was to attack the enemy's line on the (Union) left of the Jerusalem Plank Road, and

Griffin's brigade led the assault. At ten o'clock of the evening previous the troops were moved into position. Shortly before midnight General Grant, fearing lest Lee might abandon his lines after the Union victory of Five Forks, and fall upon Sheridan, directed the corps commanders to feel of the enemy's lines at several points. In obedience to this directions, Griffin was ordered to move out at once and attack the enemy's line in his front without waiting for daylight. He accordingly advanced with this brigade, in two lines, the Seventeenth Vermont, as usual, being in the front line, and assaulted and carried over half a mile of the enemy's picket line in front of Fort Mahone, capturing 249 prisoners. He was preparing for a further advance, when orders came to suspend operations for the night and to resume the plan for a general assault at daylight next morning. He accordingly withdrew and formed his brigade in the small hours of the night, in column by battalion, in the rear of his picket line to the left of Fort Sedgwick. At daybreak the signal to advance was given and the column moved forward, keeping pace with a similar column of Hartranft's division on its right. Nowhere were the opposing works stronger than here, and the enemy opened a tremendous fire as the columns moved forward, but they advanced steadily, drove in the enemy's picket line, and reaching the breastworks beyond, the pioneers cut away the abatis and in face of heavy musketry and mortar fire, the brigade rushed over the works, taking hundreds of prisoners and several pieces of artillery. Turning then to the left, and supported by Curtin's brigade, Griffin occupied the enemy's line for some distance, but was brought to a stand by some formidable traverses, in which the enemy was strongly posted. In front of the works taken, the enemy was driven back for a quarter of a mile to a strong interior line of works. In assaulting these General Potter was severely wounded, and the division was repulsed with serious loss. Griffin then succeeded to the command

of the division, and resisted with success the attempts made by General Gordon to retake the captured works. Four of the regimental commanders of his brigade were wounded, one mortally, and the loss of the brigade was over 400 killed and wounded.

Colonel Randall being in Vermont upon leave of absence, the Seventeenth was efficiently commanded in this battle by Major Knapp. The regiment had about 300 officers and men in line. In the first advance of the day it charged the works at the right of Fort Mahone. The enemy was everywhere fully prepared to receive the assailants and after several ineffectual efforts the regiment fell back to some rifle-pits which had been dug in front of Fort Sedgwick to protect an advanced picket line. In one of these pits Major Knapp, Lieutenant Brainerd and a dozen or fifteen other Vermonters had taken shelter from the heavy artillery fire, when a bomb from a mortar dropped among them and exploded, wounding eight men, some of them severely.³⁰ The regiment was soon after collected and sent a short distance to the right, and again participated in the active work of the assault, in a manner which won the praise of its superior officers.

The regiment's loss in this its last battle were 10 killed and 39 wounded, five of whom died of their wounds. Among the killed was Second Lieutenant J. Edwin Henry of company K.³¹ Among the wounded were Major Knapp,

³⁰ Corporal R. C. Jenne of company I, was here wounded in both legs and suffered amputation of one of them.

³¹ Lieutenant Henry was a son of the late James M. Henry of Waterbury, and a brother of Colonel William H. Henry of the Tenth regiment. Though a youth of but 19 years, he had already shown himself to be a capable and gallant officer. He was one of the foremost in the charge on the enemy's works. His body was taken home to Waterbury, in charge of Colonel Henry, and was buried in that village, April 30th, with especial honors.

The rank and file killed were: Guernsey R. Jordan of company B; John Dunham of company D; Corporal Moses Whitehill, Stephen B. Capron and Horatio S. Lockwood of company G; Frank C. Thompson and Horace E. Needham of company H, and Sidney T. Dolloff and Andrew Godfrey of company L.

Those who died of wounds were: Franklin Taylor of company E; Royal Wallace of company D; John Moody of company H; and Chester J. Johnson and Ziba S. Lyons of company I.

Captain George S. Robinson, and Lieutenants Cassius W. Ellsworth, Henry Cull, and Hollis O. Claflin. Lieutenant Ellsworth's wound (in the leg) proved fatal a fortnight afterward. General Griffin issued an order expressing his pride and satisfaction in the gallant conduct of the officers and soldiers of his brigade, and recommended a number of them for promotion. The list comprised Major Knapp, to be brevet lieutenant colonel; Captain C. W. Corey, to be brevet major; and Lieutenants A. C. Fay, C. D. Brainerd , and H. O. Claflin, to be captains by brevet.

The firing lasted into the night of the 2d. At four o'clock on the morning of the 3d the works in front were found to be evacuated; and Petersburg was soon after formally surrendered to Colonel Ely, whose brigade, of the Ninth Corps, was the first in the city. The third division of the corps garrisoned the city, and General Parke with the other two divisions followed the Sixth Corps in pursuit of Lee. The Seventeenth marched with the brigade and division in the afternoon, and bivouacked that night near Sutherland Station on the South Side Railroad, ten miles west of the city of Petersburg.

The regiment marched with the brigade the next morning in the pursuit of Lee and bivouacked the night of the 4th at Ford's Station; on the 5th at Wellsville, and on the 6th at Nottoway Court House. The 8th found them at Burkesville. The Seventeenth was here detached from the brigade and remained at Burkesville guarding the town and a large number of Confederate prisoners. Here Colonel Randall, after a month's absence at home, returned and took command. The regiment joined the brigade in the vicinity of

Farmville on the 9th, whence, after the surrender of Lee, it went to City Point, where it embarked for Alexandria. General Parke was placed in command of the district of Alexandria, and the regiment was occupied in guard and patrol duty. It took part in the grand review of May 23d, and remained in camp near Washington till the 14th of July. On the 20th of June the recruits whose term would expire before October 1st were mustered out. The rest remained till the 14th of July, when they were mustered out and sent to Vermont.

They arrived at Burlington on the morning of the 18th of July; were received by the citizens and welcomed to the city by Mr. Lucius Bigelow. Colonel Randall responded. After a substantial breakfast prepared and served by the ladies in the City Hall, the men marched to their quarters at the Marine Hospital, where they were paid off on the 24th, and dispersed to their homes.

The officers so returning were Colonel F. V. Randall, Lieut. colonel Lyman E. Knapp, Major James S. Peck, Quartermaster Buel J. Derby, Surgeon J. C. Rutherford, Assistant Surgeon S. W. Langdon, Captain and Brevet Major Charles W. Corey, Captains Henry D. Jordan, Benjamin F. Giddings, Albert C. Raymond, George S. Robinson, Charles D. Brainerd, Eldin J. Hartshorn, Daniel Conway and John L. Yale; Lieutenants and Brevet Captains Arnold C. Fay and Hollis O. Claflin; Lieutenants William B. Burbank, John J. Dale, Josiah B. Carpenter, Joel H. Lucia, William H. Smith, J. W. Townshend, James C. Lamb, Henry Cull, A. C. Inman, Daniel H. Lane, William Cronan, Carlos Bugbee, George E. Austin, Charles A. Watson, Frank Keith, Dennis E. May, George H. Corey, George W. Bacon and Wilbur E. Henry. Only eight of the original officers of the regiment were with it on its return. Fourteen of their number had been killed in battle or died of wounds.

To the good character of the Seventeenth and the value

of its service, its brigade commander, General Griffin, bears testimony as follows: "The Seventeenth Vermont bore an active and honorable part in Grant's campaign through the Wilderness and in the siege of Petersburg and the capture of Lee. It was composed of the best material, and was one of the regiment upon which I could always rely with perfect confidence, however difficult or dangerous the duty to be performed. It was a regiment which reflected great credit upon the State, and one of which the people of Vermont have a right to be proud."³²

The following men of the Seventeenth died in Confederate prisons, in addition to those already mentioned:

Company A, Albert E. Jurdon, Andersonville, July 24th, 1864; Oliver L. Kezer, Salisbury, N. C., January 27th, 1865; Joseph Ladabosh, Andersonville, September 5th, 1864; Oscar J. Pixley, Salisbury, January 15th, 1865. Company D, Joseph Perrault, Andersonville, July 12th, 1864; Kendrick Trow, Andersonville, August 24th, 1864. Company E, Hezekian D. Howland, Salisbury, January 12th, 1865. Company G, Ansel Foster, Jr., Andersonville, August 17th, 1864. Company I, Felix Valley, Salisbury, January 15th, 1865; Edwin Rowell, Salisbury, December 8th, 1864; Abner M. Buckman, January 5th, 1865.

The official record of battles in which the Seventeenth was engaged is as follows:

THE BATTLES OF THE SEVENTEENTH VEMONT.

Wilderness,	May 6 to 9, 1864.
Spottsylvania,	May 12 to 15, 1864.
Spottsylvania,	May 18, 1864.
North Anna,	May 25 and 26, 1864.
Totopotomoy,	May 31, 1864.
Bethesda Church,	June 3, 1864.
Cold Harbor,	June 7 and 8, 1864.
Petersburg,	June 17, 1864.
Petersburg Mine	July 30, 1864.
Weldon Railroad,	Aug. 21, 1864.
Poplar Spring Church,	Sept. 30, 1864.
Hatcher's Run,	Oct. 27 and 28, 1864.
Petersburg,	April 2, 1865.

³² In a public address at Burlington, General Griffin said: "A better regiment than the Seventeenth Vermont never shouldered arms. I do not say this as a compliment. It is a simple truth.

The final statement of the Seventeenth Vermont is as follows:

FINAL STATEMENT.

Original members—com. officers, 34; enlisted men, 835; total	869
Gains	
Promotion from other regiments—com. officers	4
Transfer from other regiments—enlisted men	1
Recruits—enlisted men	244
Total Gain	249
Aggregate	1118
Losses	
Killed in action—com. officers, 10; enlisted men, 60; total	70
Died of wounds—com. officers, 4; enlisted men, 57; total	61
Died of disease—com. officers, 1; enlisted men, 56; total	57
Died (unwounded) in Confederate prisons, 32; from accident, 4; total	36
Total of deaths	224
Honorably discharged—com. officers, resigned, 3; for wounds and disability, com. officers, 6; enlisted men, 83; total	92
Dishonorably discharged—enlisted men	4
Total discharged	96
Promoted to U. S. A. and other regiments—enlisted men	2
Transferred to Veteran Reserve Corps, etc.—enlisted men	46
Deserted, 196; not finally accounted for, 8	204
Total loss	572
Mustered out—com. officers, 38; enlisted men, 508; total	546
Aggregate	1118
Total wounded	279