

THE BATTLE OF RESACA.

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The Dalton-Atlanta Campaign displayed more military strategy than any in the war between the States. With the three armies—the Tennessee, the Ohio and the Cumberland, all under Sherman—confronting Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, and aggregating two or three times that of his army, there was not a more skillful game upon the military chessboard. Being so greatly outnumbered, his only policy was to strike in detail. Vigilance and boldness, attended with great risk, had to be employed promptly to baffle his gigantic foe. It was wonderful to see our line stretched out in skirmish style to confront the enemy's solid ranks, and even then a withdrawal of troops from right to left to meet the flank movements with success, at the same time to be ready for Sherman's dashes on our weak points. It was the cleanest retreat on record, with comparatively small loss of men and stores.

The Federal General, Joseph Hooker, pronounced it the greatest campaign of the war, and the finesse used as establishing the great generalship of Gen. Johnston, and Gen. Wolsey, of English fame, says 'twas the most brilliant on record. The result was a loss of 40,000 to the Federal arms to about 10,000 to the Confederates in the Hundred Days Fight. There was one place, though, where Sherman, had he been the able general many supposed, would have taken some of Johnston's glory from him. The only time he ever got Johnston apparently in "a nine hole" was at Resaca, on May 15, 1864. Stewart's Division of Hood's Corps occupied the extreme right of Johnston's Army, his right on the Connesauga—the Oostanaula in his rear. Stewart's Division, at that time, was composed of Gibson's Louisiana, Clayton's and Baker's Alabama, Stovall's Georgia, and Maney's Tennessee Brigades, and Holman's Tennessee Cavalry. That part of Stewart's report touching on the battle will give our position more fully, and veterans of the Army of Tennessee will more vividly recall the trials of that terrible day.

"On Sunday morning, the 15th," Gen. Stewart says, "my line was advanced, the right of it half a mile and passing in front of Mr. Green's house, the left only a few hundred yards, and the new position was soon intrenched. About 3 p. m., I received directions to advance and attack the enemy in my front at 4 o'clock, provided I had not myself been attacked by that time. Shortly previous to four, information came to me of a heavy movement of the enemy to my front, which information was transmitted to the Lieutenant General (Hood) commanding corps. My instructions were, in advancing, to gradually wheel toward the left, and I was notified that Gen. Stevenson, on my left, would also advance at four precisely. Clayton, on the left, and Stovall, on the right of the front line, were caused to make a half wheel to the left to place them in the proper direction, and were also instructed to continue inclining by a slight wheel to the left, in advancing. This, it will be perceived, placed them in echelon, the object being to prevent my right toward the river from being turn-

ed. Maney's Brigade, which had reported to me, and a small body of cavalry under Col. Holman were directed to move out on the right, outflanking and covering Stovall's right. Gibson and Baker were brought forward and placed in position as supports to Clayton and Stovall, and the order to advance given. The men moved forward with great spirit and determination and soon engaged the enemy. At this moment, an order came from Gen. Hood, by Lieut.-Col. Cunningham, not to make the attack, which, however, had already commenced. We encountered the enemy in heavy force, protected by breastworks and logs. The ground over which Stovall's Brigade passed was covered with a dense undergrowth and brush. Regiments, in consequence, became separated and the brigade soon began to fall back. Hastening to it and finding it impossible to reform it on the ground it occupied, it was suffered to fall back to its intrenched position, Baker's Brigade retiring with it. Clayton, being thus unsupported on the right and Stevenson's Division not having advanced, also retired, and Gibson fell back, by my order, as did Maney also."

This famous order, countermanding the former order of attack at Resaca, was ever a matter of contention between Generals Johnston and Hood, the former saying that he had countermanded, the latter asserting that he had not time to execute it. Be that as it may, when Col. Cunningham brought it our first line was charging on the breastworks; but it was only Stewart's Division doing this; the other two divisions of Hood's Corps had received the countermand order. The execution of this order, with our lines in close quarters and fully engaged, was the trying thing for staff officers on duty. Gen. Stewart sent Lieut. Scott, volunteer aide, to Clayton, Lieut. Cahal to Stovall, then he called on the writer to go to Gen. Maney. I felt as if that parallel ride from left to right of over half a mile, taking the fire by Clayton's and Stovall's Brigades, would be my last. Hooker and Schofield and McPherson, massed, were pouring the shot and shell nigh on to a tempest. I spurred my horse to a run; the balls were so terrific that I checked up a little, fearing that my horse might get shot and turn a somersault in falling. The checking process didn't suit, for it seemed like death to tarry. I spurred up again and (how any human being lived through it I can't imagine) came up with some litter-bearers, who hugged the trees closely and would not talk. Moments seemed hours. I rode through brush and copse into an open field, and finally struck the left of Maney's Brigade lying down behind the railroad, hotly engaged. Just in rear of them, I spied a staff officer of Gen. Maney, Lieut. L. B. McFarland, now of Memphis, Tenn., riding as coolly and unconcernedly as if no battle were raging. I accosted him with the query, "Where's Gen. Maney?" He said, "On the right of the Brigade," and that Maney had placed him to look after the left. I told him that the brigades on his left were falling back, that if a charge should be made his brigade would be lost, and to pass the order down the line, from Gen. Stewart, to retire rapidly. In the meantime I

started to the right, through an open field, to find the Brigade Commander. Talk about thunder and lightning, accompanied by a storm of rain and hail! My experience with bullets through that field was like to it, for "h—l seemed to answer h—l in the cannon's roar." Intermingled with musketry, it created an unintermitted roar of the most deafening and appalling thunper.



LIEUT. L. B. M'FARLAND.

Gen. Maney was working to keep the cavalry connected with his line. His horse having been shot, he was dismounted, but he had taken that of Lieut. James Keeble—his Aide. By this time the brigade was retiring as ordered.

When this order to retire was communicated to Col. Feild, commanding the First Tennessee Infantry on the extreme right, the Federal cavalry were pressing, yet his regiment was formed into a hollow square under the galling fire, and thus retired with a palisade of bristling bayonets confronting. It was like to Napoleon's battle of the pyramids in squares on the march to Cairo, deterring the intrepid Mameluke cavalry, and also to the English squares at Waterloo.

But the problem of getting back confronted me. Gen. Maney urged me to stay with him—that it was death to try the open field again. With a detour, however, I hurried back through the storm, neither I nor my light bay getting a scratch. In this short time three horses had been shot under General Stewart and nearly all the staff were dismounted. Terry Cabal had come back horseless; Lieut. Scott's horse had been shot and had fallen on him, almost paralyzing him; Capt. Stanford, of Stanford's Bat-

tery, killed, yet private John S. McMath was fighting his guns like a madman, and Oliver's and Fennor's Batteries dealing the death shots rapidly. A Virginia regiment, the Fifty-fourth, of Stevenson's Division, the only one that failed to get the countermand orders, lost a hundred men in a few minutes. The dead and dying of our first line was heart-rending.

Had Sherman made a charge on us then there would have been no escape. In this trough, the position was critical—the Connesuaga to the right, the Oostanaula in the rear, and both non-fordable. Whilst Gen. Sherman showed a want of generalship in not following, Old Joe displayed wonderful skill in getting us out. I will never forget Resaca. Ofttimes it occurs to me that our beldness in making the attack saved the army—for Sherman, massed, had given orders to pounce on us, which was postponed when he saw that we were preparing as aggressors.

The playing upon the bridges by the enemy's artillery all that night when our army was crossing added to the horror of the event. Visions of Forrest's charge over the bridge at Chickamauga, and of Napoleon's contest over Lodi, came upon me, but Old Joe stood there on the Oostanaula until all had safely passed.

The closing of Gen. Stewart's report gives vivid conception of it: "During the retreat of the army at night, the division remained in line of battle, crossing the railroad and the Dalton and Resaca road, until the entire army had passed the bridges. The situation was all the while perilous and calculated to try the endurance of our men. They stood firm, however, and remained in position until about three o'clock in the morning, when we retired in obedience to orders."

To confirm the accuracy of his memory, Capt. Ridley submitted the manuscript of his article to Generals Stewart, Maney and Lieut. McFarland. The former refers to it as a very creditable production; McFarland mentions it as a graphic portraiture and makes the additional statement that when he conveyed General Stewart's orders through Ridley to Colonel Feild on the extreme right, he formed his regiment into a hollow square under fire to resist the Federal cavalry, and thus executed the command to retire. "This was the more noticeable to me because it was the only instance in four years of war that I ever saw this maneuver executed during an engagement." Gen. George Maney replied:

MY DEAR CAPTAIN—Upon return home, I found your very kind letter advising of your article on Resaca and its having been submitted to Gen. Stewart, who approved, with compliments upon its merits. With the compliment feature I am most fully in accord. You are, however, in immaterial error in stating that I took Lieut. Keeble's horse after mine was shot. Keeble's services at the moment were far too important for this, and so continued until my command had been withdrawn. It was an orderly's horse I used after my own was shot.