

WAR CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter from Capt. Locke.

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 24.

FRIEND SKIRMERS:—I have a little time to write and will give you a few facts in relation to our engagement on the 18th inst. You have very likely seen several articles in the different papers in regard to our running. I will tell you the truth as near as I can get at it.

When we arrived on the hill in sight of Bull's Run, our batteries opened on the enemy and drove them in the woods in a very short time. After this was done the skirmishers were sent in the woods on the right and made a most desperate fight of ten or fifteen rounds, when they were obliged to retreat a short distance. Next two of Sherman's howitzers well manned were sent to the right at the same place where the skirmishers were, supported by the skirmishers, and us on the reserve, but a short distance from the field of action. The battery fired two rounds of canister shot and were obliged to retire. When they got clear we were ordered by Gen. Tyler to fall in line of battle, double quick, which was done without a man flinching or asking any question as to where they were going. We had nobody to support us either on the right or left, but we marched up like heroes.

The battle field where the skirmish took place, was open woods on the right wing and a dense thicket on the left, where your honorable servant happened to be. (It is well enough here to state that the right wing consisted of the companies of Capts. 1st, Church; 2d, Barnum; 3d, Brower; 4th, Root; 5th, Cole. The left wing, 6th, Capt. Brand; 7th, Locke; 8th, Driscoll; 9th, Irish; 10th, Stone.) The different companies continued and marched up in double quick time through this dense thicket which was almost impossible to make our way through, until the masked battery opened on us with a most terrific fire. I gave the command for my men to fire, which was done well, and then gave the command to fall on the ground and load, which they did and fired again. Then thinking that another fire would kill half or more of my men, I gave the command to retreat, which was given I believe, to all the companies on the left and part of the right wing.

In getting out of this thicket on a retreat the men got very much scattered, and when we got to the open field it was almost impossible to find half of our men, as part of the men ran considerable farther than I felt like doing at that time.

There is no doubt but we have cowards in our regiment, but we have any quantity of men that are of the best of metal. There are a good many with different diseases. Some want to resign, and others want their discharge. I say let them go by all means, we want no such men to fight such battles as we must fight.

Our companies on the left wing got to within twenty feet of this *Hell Hole* and I could not see a man at that distance through this thicket.

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Col. Walrath has been much censured for this retreat. I say Col. Walrath acted the part of a soldier and a brave officer. He was nearer the scene of action than his post required him to be, and remained there during the most intense fire I ever listened to, and when the companies were on the retreat, he did all any officer could do to rally the companies. He shouted, "stop those colors or I will take them myself," and did stop them, and several of the companies, but afterwards they were obliged to retreat to give the batteries a chance for a fire, which was kept up for nearly three hours when our ammunition gave out, and we all retreated to Centerville, a distance of about two miles, and remained there all night, and again re-took our position in the morning and kept it until a general retreat.

I think there was 10,000 men in and around this masked battery, against our brigade of about 4,000. The men all done as well as could be expected of them.

We are now encamped in Virginia near the Long Bridge, where we expect to remain for a few days to get rested and repair damages.

If our *sick men* don't get better soon you will hear from me again. I have considerable interest in their health.

"He who fights and runs away,  
Will live to run another day."

I don't think I shall return to Syracuse until this war is at an end. I had one man killed, Julius O. Westgate, and three others missing who are not known to our people in Syracuse or county.

CAPT. LOCKE,  
Company F. 12th Regiment N. Y. V.