
Daily Morning News

—A V A N N A H, G A.

FRIDAY MORNING, AUGUST 2, 1861.

BATTLE FIELD, NEAR MANASSAS, }
July 25th, 1861. }

Dear Father: As you requested me, upon parting with you, to let you hear the particulars of the first battle of much importance that might occur in the vicinity wherever we might be located, and as I promised you I would do so, such an opportunity as the soldier usually finds at present presents itself, and I cheerfully comply.

On Thursday, the 18th inst., after lying on our arms for several days at Winchester, expecting to be attacked by large forces under Gen. Patterson's command, we received intelligence that Gen. Beauregard was engaged in a fight at this place, and the forces we had hitherto expected to meet at Winchester were moving rapidly toward this place. We were informed that Gen. Beauregard was already fighting against fearful odds, and that our immediate aid was highly essential. It was then 2 o'clock P. M. Orders were given to strike tents, which was executed almost instantly. Immediately afterwards we took up our line of march to Piedmont, a station on the Railroad from where we could get transportation to the Junction at this place. We continued the march, with but little to eat, and without scarcely any water fit to drink, during the evening and night. Being hurried off from our camps so unexpectedly was our only reason for being short of something to eat, for we get a plenty of meat and bread when we have time to prepare it.

About 2 o'clock A. M. we arrived at the Shenandoah River, and owing to the large numbers having to cross, there not being conveyances for all, we unhesitatingly plunged in and waded across. Our army, though tired and weary, then proceeded, with blistered feet and much fatigued limbs, to cross the Blue Ridge, where, if we had had the golden beams of the mid-day sunshine upon us, instead of the milder rays of the moon, I could not describe the beautiful scenery.

But enough of this. It is not my desire to undertake to describe our hardships or the scenery we have had the advantage of seeing, but to carry out what I have in the commencement undertaken. I did not expect, when I left home, to rest "on flowery beds of ease," but I must admit, the rocky beds we have to repose on are a little harder than I bargained for.

We arrived at Piedmont Friday, 19th, at 10 A. M., where we remained until Sunday, 21st inst. In transporting the various regiments from Piedmont, it was done according to age of commission, and as Brigadier-General Bartow and Col. Gartrell had precedence of our regiment, we were compelled to await our time. We would have got to the field in time to have taken part in the fight, but for the carelessness of an engineer, who, by his carelessness, or by an wilful act, ran into another train and caused a general smashing, which it took a considerable time to remove. We were too late by several hours. A more indignant set of men you never saw than those of the 9th regiment.

I have taken a thorough view of the battle field immediately around our camps, and such destruction I never before witnessed. In many places you cannot walk without treading on the dead bodies of the enemy. Their loss could not have been less than from twelve to fifteen thousand killed, wounded and prisoners. Their own report of killed and wounded is from four to five thousand, and you are aware that they would not swell their figures. This number they however admit. At the first battle, on the Thursday previous to the fight on Sunday, their loss was over one thousand killed and wounded, while our loss was estimated at thirty killed and wounded. Our total loss in both fights will not exceed one thousand killed and wounded.

The dead bodies of the Yankees are lying all along the road and in the woods from here to Fairfax C. H., a distance of about fifteen miles. We took all their artillery—ninety three pieces. Amongst the batteries taken was Sherman's, the West Point batteries, and others I do not remember the names of. We also took enough provisions to feed fifty thousand men for weeks. It would be too tedious to undertake to tell all we did take from them. Their loss is not less than one million dollars, and perhaps is a great deal more.

The Georgians of our brigade took the much boasted Sherman's battery. Never did men fight like our men. Those that fell, fell like men. They had to contend for a long time against eight or ten to one, and although I feel the utmost regret, yet I know they each rest in a hero's grave.

Scott brought his best troops, and undoubtedly expected, with his best drilled men and superior numbers, to crush us out at once, and thus end the campaign. He made a tremendous attack on our forces with the left wing of his army, and when he thought he had the majority of our forces drawn off, he made an effort to reach our railroad, and no doubt expected to have entirely cut us off from any further communication with Richmond or Piedmont. But his plans, although good, did not succeed well. The few Georgians that met him maintained their position for four or five hours, after which time Gen. Johnston had them reinforced, when they were driven back like dogs. Brigadier-General Bartow had his horse shot from under him, at the same time receiving a wound in the foot. But this was nothing to a man with his well-known nerve. He rallied his men, though badly cut up at that time, and joined in with Col. Gartrell, and remarked that if he had the 9th Georgia Regiment with him all would be well, and prayed for their arrival. He kept a man at the Junction waiting to conduct us to the field all day; but, alas! our arrival was too late.

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Col. Gartrell's horse was killed from under him by a bombshell, he, at the same time, receiving a wound in the leg. The shock was so great that his own men thought him dead.

When Col. Gartrell fell from his horse and was thought dead, or mortally wounded, Gen. Bartow seized the flag that Col. G. had dropped and waved it over his head, exclaiming: "Georgians, if you love me and your country, follow me. Never let it be said that Georgians faltered." As the men rallied Col. Gartrell recovered and mounted another horse, rode up to Gen. Bartow and said: "Sir, that is my flag, I am yet able to bear it. If I fall again, then take it."

Gen. Bartow responded, and at the same instant received his fatal wound. Col. Gartrell insisted that Gen. B. should allow him to have him borne from the field, but Gen. B. refused, saying: "I die, but I die with my men; you rush on, and never stop till the victory is ours."

The battle ground extended over some eight miles, and where Gen. B. and Col. Gartrell fought was where the work was well done. When they were reinforced by Gen. Beauregard, our men opened such a deadly fire on the enemy that they could stand it no longer, and such running no one ever saw. They lost nearly everything they had. In short, they fled like sheep before wolves. They kept running, and our forces, cavalry principally, following them to within a few miles of Alexandria. It is said they attempted to cross the Potomac at Alexandria, and were fired into by their own party to prevent their crossing.

When President Davis was seen passing over the battle field, the poor fellows, that lay upon their backs wounded, bleeding and exhausted—when they saw him, though they could do no more, they waved their hats as he passed, and cheered for Jeff. Davis and the South. Wherever the ranks had been broken and the men scattered, when they saw the President of the South in their midst they shouted that they would follow him to death, and rallied once more for the last successful onslaught. President Davis, with his cavalry, chased the enemy for miles, and the President, being so eager in pursuit, did not return until after night.

Let us now look one moment to our wounded. What heart does not feel a pang of anguish as well as pride to see many a mother's darling—the laughing dimples of youth yet upon his beardless cheek—rush gayly by the scene of strife and blood, and hot tears rush to eyes unused to weep at the thought of that fair head pillowed on the bloody turf? And yet where could mortal die as well? Pity the desolate ones at home. But for him the death that must have come at last, and torn him reluctantly from earth, has come sooner than, perhaps, nature intended. And perhaps this manner of dying

remembered, and their names lisped by generations
Yet to rise. But, oh! how painful to a feeling,
generous heart to hear the groans of the wounded—
some almost gone—but while they live are
begging for water; some begging their friends
to take their little precious jewels to their lovely
companions at home they never could again
on earth be permitted to see; others praying to
live to fight in the last battles for freedom's
cause; others lying weltering in their blood,
with a smile on their face, proud to know that
when the cold, green sod should cover them
they would fill a hero's grave; others asking
their friends at home not to grieve for them—
they were dying the death they most desired,
fighting for their country. All these are hard
things for the sympathetic heart to witness; but
such scenes were my lot to see. But for him
who dies in his country's cause, a country
mourns his loss, every patriotic heart honors his
memory, every eye weeps with his relatives, and
every heart is willing to share the burden of his
relative's woes. I believe I have given you the
most important items incident to the battle, and
now, in conclusion, I beg that I be kindly re-
membered to mother, sisters and brothers.

Hoping to hear from you at all convenient op-
portunities,

I remain, with much esteem,

Your affectionate son,

R. A. HARDEE,
Capt. Comd'g Brooks Rifles,
9th Georgia Regiment.