

**HISTORY OF THE 58TH REGT.
MASSACHUSETTS VOLS.: FROM
THE
15TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1863,
TO THE CLOSE OF THE REBELLION**

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HISTORY
OF THE
58th Regt. Massachusetts Vols.

From the 15th day of September, 1863,

TO THE
CLOSE OF THE REBELLION.

Frederick C. C.
By F. E. *Cushman*,
C. B.

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PREFACE.

To those who read this brief history, I would respectfully say that it was written from no desire of pecuniary recompense, or to attain note as a historian; but simply with the desire to furnish to each member of the regiment something which he could produce in the future as testimony as to his having served to some purpose in the ranks of the Army of the Union, in the days of the great rebellion.

F. E. C.

HISTORY.

The formation of the 58th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry commenced on or about the 15th day of September, 1863, under the personal supervision of Colonel Silas P. Richmond, of Assonet, Mass. (Colonel Richmond was in command of the 3d Massachusetts Regiment in the nine months' service, and was a very brave and efficient officer.)

On the 25th of April, 1864, the regiment consisted of eight companies, which had been mustered into the United States Service as soon as they had respectively attained the maximum standard.

On the 28th of April, 1864, in compliance with orders received, the above mentioned companies left their place of rendezvous, (Readville, Mass.) under command of Lieutenant Colonel John C. Whiton. Colonel Richmond was left in Massachusetts to recruit the other two companies necessary to procure a regimental organization. The route prescribed for us was by rail via Providence and Groton, thence by steamer to New York, thence by steamer to Amboy, thence by rail to Washington, thence by steamer to Alexandria, Va. Following the above we arrived at the last named place on the evening of Saturday, April 30th. On the passage out, both on the transports and on the cars, we had excellent accommodations. This was owing to the indefatigable perseverance of our Quartermaster, Lieutenant Theodore A. Barton, of New Bedford, Mass., who had the reputation of being one of the best Quartermasters ever furnished by the Old Commonwealth, and time has brightened rather than dimmed the reputation then established. At Alexandria all baggage not deemed essential to active campaigning was stored.

Monday, May 2d, we took cars for Bristow Station, (distant from Alexandria some 30 miles,) reaching there about 7 o'clock in the evening of same day; at this place orders were received assigning us to the 1st Brigade, 2d Division, 9th Army Corps, Colonel John I. Curtin, 45th Pennsylvania Volunteers, commanding; afterwards promoted Brevet Brigadier General, for gallant and meritorious conduct in the field.

On the 4th of May the march for the front commenced; made Beasley Station, distant some 20 miles from Bristow, at 7½ in the evening, where we camped for the night. During the march, owing to the heat and the very muddy condition of the roads, the men, being unused to marching, appeared to suffer severely. On Thursday (May 5th,) broke camp at 5½ o'clock in the morning, crossed over the Rappahannock river, at Rappahannock Station, crossed the Rapidan river at Germania Ford and halted in woods for the night some two miles west of last named river, having marched through the day some 22 miles.

Friday morning, at 2 o'clock, the forward movement was again commenced; marched about 5 miles and halted in the vicinity of a place known as Wilderness Tavern. At 9 o'clock A. M. we were in line of battle participating in the "battle of the Wilderness." Our casualties were 7 enlisted men killed, 23 wounded and 4 missing. On Saturday (6th) the regiment was stationed on picket and remained until 2 o'clock P. M., when orders were received to move to a place designated as "Cross Roads;" here we remained under arms until 1 o'clock the next morning, (Sunday,) when we proceeded to Chancellorsville, reaching there at 8½ A. M.; remained at Chancellorsville during the Sabbath and drew rations. About noon on Monday again took up line of march towards Spottsylvania; marched until 11 P. M. and halted for the night in the vicinity of "Mine Run." Tuesday, at 3 P. M., resumed our march in direction of the place before alluded to, reaching it about 5½ o'clock P. M. Immediately formed line of battle, deployed skirmishers, advanced and halted on the opposite side of a small creek, where we remained all night under arms.

On the morning of the 11th, (Wednesday,) advanced across a meadow in line of battle to its outer edge and threw up breastworks, the enemy's pickets and sharpshooters keeping up an incessant fire during the movement. Towards evening of the 11th we were withdrawn a short distance to the rear, where we remained two hours in the midst of a pouring rain storm. We then again advanced, this time farther towards the right, halted in an open field and threw up temporary breastworks. Here we remained all night under arms in the midst of a cold storm. Our casualties from the 8th to the 11th were 2 enlisted men killed and 1 missing. On the morning of the 12th, about 3 o'clock, moved by the right flank some two miles towards the

right, formed line of battle, were assigned a position, and received orders to hold it at all hazards. The battle commenced at 5 o'clock in the morning and lasted until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when orders came for us to retire to a ravine which lay a little to the rear. Our casualties were 2 commissioned officers (F. Gilbert Ogden, Adjutant of the regiment, and William H. Harley, Captain of Company H—both young men of more than ordinary ability and promise,) and 11 enlisted men killed, 3 commissioned officers and 87 enlisted men wounded, 2 enlisted men missing.

From the 12th to the 19th of May we remained in the locality of the battle-field, during which time we built a line of breastworks, and notwithstanding it was the second line from the enemy, so incessant was the fire from their batteries and sharpshooters, that we suffered considerable loss. On the 18th we moved a short distance to the right and advanced to the front line of works, but shortly after we returned to our former position. Our casualties from the 12th to the 19th of May, inclusive, were 3 enlisted men killed, 1 commissioned officer and 5 enlisted men wounded, 3 enlisted men missing. At 1 o'clock, on the morning of the 19th, we stealthily, under cover of impenetrable darkness, moved 4 miles to the left, in the vicinity of Miss Run; here we halted, formed line of battle, advanced with caution to the outer edge of a narrow strip of woods, built breastworks and remained until the 21st, (Saturday.) During the afternoon we received orders to move. Just about sunset we encountered a battery of the enemy. We were advancing up the road, and their guns being positioned on a high hill, had a fine and commanding range, we fled off by the right flank into the woods, the enemy's shell bursting over our heads continually, but fortunately injuring no one.

The next day, (Sunday, 22d,) at 3 o'clock in the morning, we again took up line of march, proceeding in the direction of North Anna river; reached and halted at Guinea Station at 10 o'clock A. M. for breakfast; continued our march and halted for the night near Bowling Green, distant some 15 miles from the locality we left in the morning. Monday (23d) continued march towards North Anna river, reaching the same at 8 o'clock in the evening, having marched some 18 miles since leaving Bowling Green. Tuesday, (24th) the enemy were reported in force on opposite side of the river; crossed the bridge leading over the same under a heavy artillery

fire from the enemy, (they had planted guns in the morning so as to completely rake the aforesaid bridge, but the accurate fire of our artillerists confused and destroyed the nicety of their range,) which luckily did us no harm. Upon gaining the shore a line of battle was immediately formed and a forward movement made into some woods, the enemy maintaining without intermission a sharp musketry and artillery fire. While we lay in the woods, the clouds, which in the morning looked dark and portentous, assumed a darker hue, and in a short time the rain fell in torrents; the blinding flashes of lightning, joined with the deep rumble of the thunder, produced a scene of gloom if not of terror. As it grew dark the firing had ceased, and it now seemed as if the powers on high alone were in contention. Towards evening, the storm having abated its violence, the line was advanced, breast works built and advance pickets posted; the enemy appeared next morning to be in strong force, yet no attack was made by them. We remained at this point Wednesday and Thursday, the enemy's main line not more than 70 rods distant, the picket line not more than 8. Our casualties while here were 2 enlisted men wounded, 3 enlisted men missing.

Thursday evening, (26th,) we recrossed the river, burning the bridge after crossing; marched about 4 miles and halted until 7 o'clock next morning, (27th;) then continued the march, moving leisurely during the day, halting 2 hours at twilight; at 8 o'clock P. M. again moved forward rapidly until midnight, when we camped. Saturday, (28th,) fell in at an early hour and marched rapidly in direction of Pamunkey river, crossing the same at midnight on pontoons; proceeded on about two miles after crossing the river and camped, having marched during the day some 25 miles. (This day's march was one of the severest and most trying of the whole campaign. Owing to the recent rains the roads had become very muddy, and in many places the men sunk over their knees in mud. The exigencies of the case were too pressing to admit of rests being made, and the weather being suffocatingly warm, it is to be wondered at that so many kept up on that trying occasion.)

Sunday, (29th,) continued the march at daylight in direction of Tollopotomy creek. At about 2 o'clock in the afternoon we halted in the woods and remained until next day; at an early hour started on—marched about 4 miles—halted, and built breastworks. Tuesday, (31st,) moved half a mile to the left and front and built breast-

works again; we found the enemy in force and strongly positioned; no general engagement ensued, but in posting the pickets we experienced the following loss: 3 enlisted men wounded, 1 enlisted man missing. At 4 o'clock A. M. we returned to the first breast works which we had built, and remained there until 2 P. M. of same day, when we took up line of march in direction of Shady Grove Church, the enemy following closely. The casualties on the picket line, which occurred while the pickets were being withdrawn, were 7 enlisted men wounded, 1 enlisted man killed. Having marched some 3 miles to the left of our former position, we halted and rested for the night.

On the morning of the 3d, soon after daylight, we formed line of battle, and passing two other lines of battle, halted in an open field behind a low line of vacated earth works. Here we remained until joined by the 7th Rhode Island and 36th Massachusetts, when we unfurled the colors, crossed the earth works, and advanced towards the woods for the purpose of dislodging the enemy. (The line of battle advanced so steadily, guided so finely, and presented so even a front, as to draw forth praise from all beholding. In this battle our regiment so nobly executed the part assigned to it as to receive, at the close of the day, compliments both of the Division and Brigade Commanders.) Advancing to within about 15 rods of the enemy's works, and finding them in force and strongly positioned, we were ordered to lie down. By the aid of bayonets (to loosen the earth) and tin dippers we were enabled to throw up a slight line of earth works, which protected us in a small degree from the storm of bullets which the enemy were firing at us, and aided us in maintaining the advantageous position we had gained.

The battle commenced at 5½ o'clock in the morning and closed at 6½ in the afternoon. We nobly maintained our position, but at the sacrifice of the lives of many of our best men. Our casualties were 3 commissioned officers and 15 enlisted men killed; 5 commissioned officers and 62 enlisted men wounded. The commissioned officers killed were Major Barnabas Ewer, jr., of Fairhaven, Mass.; Captain Charles M. Upham, Co. A, senior Captain of the regiment, and Captain Thomas McFarland, Co. F. If there ever were any officers who possessed the love and implicit confidence of those over whom they had command, Major Ewer was certainly of the number. He was the universal favorite, both of the officers and men, and never did I