

HEADQUARTERS 3D BRIGADE, GENERAL BANKS’ DIVISION.

March 8, 1862.

CAPT. H. A. COLE, *Commanding Cavalry.*

*Captain:*—I take great pleasure in offering you and your command my thanks and congratulations on the good conduct and gallantry displayed in the affair of yesterday in advance of this town.

My staff officers who were with you speak in high terms of the cool and steady conduct of yourself and Lieutenant Vernon, and of all your non-commissioned officers and men.

Be pleased to make known to your command my appreciation of their good services, and my regret that three of your brave fellows suffered wounds.

I am, Captain, with much respect,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

A. S. WILLIAMS,

*Brigadier-General Commanding.*

On the 11th day of March, 1862, the battalion, with the Brigade, had an engagement with the enemy at Stephenson’s Depot. On the 12th day of March, 1862, the battalion, being the advance guard of Banks’ Division, made a cavalry charge through Winchester, Va., capturing a number of prisoners.

On the 22d day of March, 1862, Companies A and C, with General Williams’ Brigade, marched from Winchester to Berryville on their way to join McDowell’s Army Corps in Eastern Virginia, leaving Companies B and D, with General Shields’ Division, at Winchester.

General (Stonewall) Jackson, learning of the withdrawal of a portion of General Banks’ command from Winchester, made a forced march and impetuous attack upon Shield’s Division, but was defeated in the battle that ensued on the 22d day of March, 1862, in advance of Winchester at Kernstown. Companies B and D took part in the battle, and Companies A and C speedily returned to Winchester on hearing the guns from the battlefield and joined in the pursuit of the enemy.

The battalion remained in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia with General Banks’ Division until September, 1862. After the unfortunate Peninsular Campaign under McClellan, and the ensuing campaign under General Pope, in Northern Virginia, the battalion, under Major Cole, in its efforts to impede the march of Lee’s Confederate Army into Maryland, had a severe engagement at Leesburg, Va., September 2, 1862, in which the battalion, after driving a superior force of the enemy’s cavalry, was overwhelmed by a Brigade of Confederate cavalry, and suffered heavily in killed, wounded and prisoners, inflicting, however, equal loss upon the enemy.

The battalion fell back to Harper’s Ferry, Va., which stronghold was soon surrounded by an overwhelming force of the Confederate Army under General (Stonewall) Jackson. When it was rumored that Harper’s Ferry would be surrendered, “Cole’s Cavalry,” through their officers, respectfully but firmly advised Colonel Miles, U. S. Army, Acting Division Commander of the beleaguered garrison, “that under no circumstances would ‘Cole’s Cavalry’ surrender,” and offered to head and pilot the entire cavalry force of besieged in their efforts to cut their way through the enemy’s lines.