

The next move was to a piny old field on Potato Run, near Stewart's house, where, towards the end of the month, the division was paraded on three sides of a square to witness the shooting of a substitute deserter from the Fourth Maryland. He followed his coffin around the square with unmoved expression and steady step, keeping time to his own dead march, and, after the execution, the troops were marched in review past the bloody remains.

On the 27th of September, 1863, another move was made about four miles westerly to Summerduck Run, and on the morning of the 29th, just after the brigade guard had been mounted, with the assistance of the brigade band, there was another move west to a point near Cedar Run, guarding Raccoon Ford, of the Rapidan. The division was here masked by a dense forest of heavy timber. Blazing trunks of solid hickory, piled with reckless extravagance, cheered the men with a genial air of home comfort and lighted the path of mounted orderlies.

#### Meade's Retreat.

Another active campaign was now at hand, to counteract a rapid flank movement of Lee's army toward Meade's rear. The movement commenced, so far as the Seventh was concerned, at two o'clock on the morning of October 10, 1863, by a forward demonstration of the 1st Corps upon Morton's Ford of the Rapidan. From this point the retreat commenced that night, and the Rappahannock was recrossed at Kelly's Ford. It was at this time a frequent subject of remark among the men that they had often heard firing in front and on the flank during a march, but never before in the rear. From a hill above the ford, looking back, could be distinctly seen every shell as it burst in the air, the distant Blue Ridge forming a dark background for the puffs of white smoke. The hot cavalry fighting which had been going on all day did not end with it, and there continued to be seen the flash of the guns and of the bursting shells until long after dark.

At one o'clock on the morning of October 13, 1863, began the heaviest march yet made, from Kelly's Ford to a point beyond Bristoe Station, some twenty-seven or eight miles, carrying eight days' rations. If the private soldiers of the Seventh had been polled, their verdict would have been that this eight days' ration business was a fraud. There was never more than about four or five days eating in them; the balance was a dead loss to the men as well as to the Government, spoiled by mixture, by wet, by perspiration, by dirt, by mildew, sometimes by bugs, until the revolting pasty garbage would be heaved out on the roadside. The only parties benefited were the contractors, for, as a rule, a reissue of three days' rations, when attainable, was an absolute necessity.

It was nearly ten o'clock at night when the Seventh bivouacked a mile or so beyond Bristoe, in a place selected for purely military reasons, with no reference, of course, to convenience or comfort. Those whose good luck it was to stretch themselves under the warm shelter of some level spreading pine, upon ground softly padded with fragrant leaves, soon forgot the toils and burdens of that march. Those whose misery it was to be detailed for picket, must be left to their own reflections, aching backs, and blistered feet.

#### Centreville.

At daylight of the 14th, the 1st Corps resumed the march northward, and the Maryland brigade took its turn in guarding the ammunition train. It was now apparent that the two armies were running a foot-race on parallel lines for the strongly fortified and