

As the Army of Northern Virginia gradually fell back in the direction of the old battle-field of Gaines' Mill, or Cold Harbor, the battalion was daily under fire, and a number of the men were wounded, but none seriously.

On the evening of the 2d of June General Lee had formed his line of battle upon the historic field of two years before. It was here the First Maryland won fame, and it was here that the Second was to prove itself a worthy successor of the First. The battle fought in June, 1862, was one of the most desperate of the war, and the one in June, 1864, was no less bloody, but in the latter the loss of the enemy was appalling, whilst that of the Confederates was insignificant. In the first the Confederates assumed the offensive, in the latter it was the Federals. As a distinguished Southern officer said soon after the battle : " Cold Harbor was not war ; it was murder ;" and was it a wonder, then, that Grant's troops, after repeated repulses, in which they saw their comrades slain by thousands, refused finally to renew the unequal contest ? The indomitable Grant well said it was the only battle he ever fought that he regretted having made. In this, as in all the battles that he fought with Grant, General Lee's superior genius was apparent. From the time he crossed the Rapidan with an army so overwhelming in numbers that a speedy termination of the war seemed imminent, Grant had been foiled in his every attempt to march direct upon Richmond, and his repulses had been repeated and bloody.

In this engagement the Second Maryland was assigned a position in reserve some three hundred yards in rear of a salient held by Edgar's battalion of Echols' Virginia Brigade of Breckinridge's Division.

It was midnight of the 2d of June when, after much countermarching, the battalion halted and the men were ordered to lay upon their arms to await any emergency. They were tired, for they had marched many weary miles in the past few days, and the strain to which they had been subjected had been fearful. No wonder, then, they slept soundly, and their awakening was rude and rather unexpected. From where they lay wrapped in their blankets they were sheltered somewhat from the direct fire of the enemy owing to a rise in the ground in their front, but not so from a flank fire on their left, where a body of Federal troops held a position on higher ground. Between the Second Maryland and the salient held by Echols' troops was a dwelling and outhouses which somewhat obscured their view of the salient, where eight pieces of artillery were in position. In the rear of the Marylanders, some three or four hundred yards was Finnigan's Brigade of Floridians, which had been engaged in throwing up a reserve line of works, to be used in case any disaster should occur at the first.

It will thus be seen that the position assigned the Second Maryland was a most responsible one, and one well calculated to put them to their mettle should anything befall Echols. And that very same came to pass, and proved that