

General Breckinridge was not in error when on placing them where he did he should observe : " This is a most important position, and I feel I can intrust it to that battalion." And how well he was justified in that confidence daylight of that morning proved.

Captain J. Parran Crane was at this time in command of the battalion and Captain John W. Torsch was next in command. Captain Crane gave his immediate attention to the right, while Captain Torsch looked after the left.

Before daylight on the morning of the 3d the enemy began a skirmish fire, but this did not arouse the sleeping men. A few arose and folded their blankets, but the majority of them slept on. But what did these few early risers see ? Through the dim mist they saw what appeared to be a heavy skirmish line of Echols' command running back on their left front. Then a body of men came forward and halted and clustered around the dwelling and outhouses already referred to and then opened fire upon the Marylanders still in their blankets, and many of them were thus shot while they slept. Who were these men who had so suddenly aroused them from their slumbers ? Certainly they could not be of the enemy, for was not Echols in their front. By this time the men were in line, ready to obey any command ; but there was the dread uncertainty as to whether the early morning visitors were friend or foe, and no order was given. Private Charles H. Weems, of Company A, familiarly known as " Buck " Weems, and who was conspicuous for the big straw hat he wore that day, suddenly exclaimed : " I see the gridiron, boys ; let's charge 'em," and at the same moment Captain John W. Torsch, down on the left, called out : " It is the enemy — Charge !" but even before he gave the command the men were in motion ; Weems on the right had started them, and without an instant's hesitation they dashed forward upon the enemy. The dwelling and outhouses between them and the salient were soon reached and here was found a swarm of Federals, who had broken through the salient by a sudden attack and advanced as far as the buildings. Although in overwhelming numbers, these were quickly driven back, with heavy loss, by the furious onset of the Marylanders. Onward the gallant battalion rushed until they reached the salient, there also to find a large force of the enemy who had manned the guns, double-shotted, and who were about to turn them upon their assailants. The conflict was brief, but terrible ; it was hand to hand ; the artillery was wrested from the Federals, and they were driven out of the salient at the point of the bayonet. Lieutenant Charles B. Wise, of Company B, called for volunteers to man two of the guns. In an instant men drilled in the artillery service during the winter at Hanover Junction had them in charge, and they were belching forth canister into the mass of fleeing men who but a few minutes before were exulting in their successful assault upon the Confederate lines. Then, and not until then, had Finnigan been able to get up, when the works were once more