

CHAPTER IV.  

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Except some slight skirmishing at Williamsport, the First Maryland was not engaged after passing Hagerstown, and upon reaching Virginia it was ordered to Winchester to recruit.

It was here Company F, under command of the gallant Schwartz, joined the battalion. This company was a great acquisition, and was finely officered.

The battalion remained at Winchester ten days, when it was ordered to join Fitzhugh Lee, whose cavalry brigade was then encamped near Leetown. On the promotion of General Lee to the command of a division, a short time after, the battalion was assigned to the brigade commanded by General Lomax.

From this time until the 11th of October, 1863, the battalion was engaged in picket duty, occasionally skirmishing with the enemy.

A few days prior to the 11th, General Robert E. Lee began his movement to gain the rear of Meade's army, then confronting along the line of the Rappahannock.

On the 9th General Fitzhugh Lee broke camp, and at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 11th of October his division moved toward the Rappahannock. Lomax's Brigade marching toward Morton's Ford, whilst Wickham's Brigade marched to Raccoon Ford.

General J. E. B. Stuart personally superintended the movement of the whole cavalry column higher up the river, advancing by way of Culpeper Court House. These dispositions were designed to cover General Lee's movements, by interposing the cavalry between his line of march and the enemy.

Before Lomax's Brigade reached Morton's Ford reports from pickets represented the enemy as advancing in force, and upon reaching the river a heavy column was found occupying both sides. The collision between the hostile forces was abrupt and sudden, for to both it was unexpected. In a very few minutes the First Maryland was formed and vigorously attacked the enemy. The check, however, was only momentary, but long enough to enable Lomax to make some disposition of his troops.

The battle soon became general, and continued for more than three hours. Lomax did not have a single piece of artillery, whilst the enemy was well supplied. At length, by a sweeping charge of the whole line, the enemy were compelled to retire toward the river, and the struggle was over at this point. About half way down to the river's bank their cavalry turned and covered the retreat of the main body by making a gallant charge that struck the First Maryland Battalion, which held the extreme left of the line, but it was handsomely repulsed, the brave officer who led it falling mortally wounded in their midst.