

A couple of hours passed, when the command was aroused, saddled up, and prepared to move, Colonel Dorsey having at last received orders to follow in the rear of Mahone's Division, which formed the rear of the Confederate Army. This division had not yet come up, and while awaiting its appearance the command looked on and grieved over the destruction of ordnance and quartermasters' stores, which were now being fired in every direction to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy.

These fires had evidently aroused the enemy into increased action, and his batteries were now in a constant blaze, while the explosion of his shells and the Confederate ammunition wagons made the night hideous with war's most infernal din. Fortunately, the enemy directed his guns at the fires, and as everybody kept away from them, no damage was done.

The First Maryland was drawn up along the roadside waiting to march, and coaxing their horses to eat as much oats as possible. Near by was a train of cars loaded with ammunition, and word was passed to look out, as it was about to be set on fire. For awhile every man stood to horse, but the explosion not ensuing as soon as expected, attention was called off, and the caution forgotten. Bridles were let go, and some of the men walked toward the quartermaster's stores, near the ammunition train, to make further selections. Suddenly a tremendous shock was felt, which threw many to the ground, whilst the horses reared and plunged and broke from their riders, and for a time all was the wildest confusion. When matters had become a little calm, two men belonging to the quartermaster's department were found dead, and twenty horses of the First Maryland had run off at full speed toward Richmond, though fortunately none of the men were hurt beyond a few bruises. The runaway horses must have been terribly frightened, for in their poor condition they ran twenty miles without halting, and only thirteen of the twenty were recovered; and thus the battalion lost the services of seven men, who, being dismounted, had to remain with the wagons. The explosion took place two hundred yards distant, but the force was great enough to knock down those nearest to it, and greatly shock the others.

Soon after this occurrence Mahone's Division came up at the quickstep and in fine order and spirits, which cheered the hearts of the little cavalry band beyond expression. Day had dawned before the rear passed, and just at that time, in the very gray light of morning, was seen a brilliant flash, and for a few moments the earth trembled under foot, and a tremendous explosion plainly told that the fortifications at Drury's Bluff were no more. In ten minutes another flash, shock and explosion ensued, and the Confederate gunboats on the James had shared the fate of the batteries on shore. Other similar explosions followed as smaller magazines were destroyed, filling the whole atmosphere with sulphurous smoke, while the flames licked the sky from many a conflagration, and it was with sad hearts that