BATTLE OF CAULK'S FIELD

Republished From Transcript of 1876

For the Transcript
83 EDMONDSON AVENUE,
Baltimore, 31st March, 1876

EBEN F. PERKINS, Esq., Chestertown, Md. My Dear Sir—Will you please publish the enclosed, in the "Transcript," which will interest many of your readers.

Yours truly,
GEO. A. HANSON.

CAULK'S FIELD.

The following are Official Reports of the Battle of Caulk's Field:

ADMIRALTY OFFICE, Sept. 27.
Translated by Vice-Admiral Cochrane.

His Majesty's ship Menelaus,
Off Pool's Island, Chesapeake,
Sept. 1, 1814.

SIR—With grief the deepest it becomes my duty to communicate the death of Sir Peter Parker, Bart, late commander of his majesty's ship Menelaus, and the occurrences attending an attack on the enemy's troops, on the night of the 20th ult., encamped at Bellair. The previous and accompanying letters of Sir Peter Parker will, I presume, fully point out the respect the enemy on all occasions evinced at the approach of our arms, retreating at every attack, though possessing a superiority of numbers of five to one; an intelligent black man gave us information of 200 militia being encamped behind a wood; distant half a mile from the beach, and described their situaton, so as to give us the strongest hopes of cutting off and securing the largest part as our prisoners, destroying the camp, field-pieces, &c., and possessing also certain information that one man out of every five had had been levied as a requisition on the eastern shore for the purpose of beng sent over for the protection of Baltimore, who were only prevented crossing the bay by the activity of the tender and ship's boats. One hundred and four bayonets, with 20 pikes, were landed at eleven o'clock at night, under the immediate direction of Capt. Sir Peter Parker, Bart., the first division headed by myself, and the second division by Lieut. Pearce. On arriving at the ground we discovered the enemy had shifted his position, as we were then informed, to the distance of a mile farther, having taken the look out picket immediately upon our landing, we were in assurance our motions had not been discovered, and with the deepest silence followed on to the camp. After a march between four and five miles in the country, we found the enemy posted on a plain, surrounded by woods, with the camp in their rear; they were drawn up in line, and perfectly ready to receive us; a single moment was not to be lost; by a smart fire and instant charge, we commenced the attack, forced them from their position, putting them before us in full retreat to the rear of their artillery, where they again made a stand, showing a disposition to out flank us on the right; a movement was instantly made by lieutenant Pearce's division to force them from that quarter, and it was at this time, while animating his men n the most heroic manner that Sir Peter Parker received his mortal wound which obliged him to quit the field, and he expired in a few mnutes. Lieut. Pearce, with his division, soon routed the enemy, while that under my command gained and passed the camp. One of the field pieces was momentarily in our possession, but obliged to quit it from superior numbers.

The marines under Lieuts. Beynon and Post formed our centre, and never was bravery more conspicuous. Finding it impossible to close on the enemy, from the rapidity of their retreat, having pursued them upwards of a mile, I deemed it prudent to retire towards the beach, which was effected in the best possible order, taking with us from the field 25 of our wounded—the whole we could find, the enemy not even attempting to regain the ground they had lost, from three prisoners (cavalry) taken by us, we learn their force amounted to 500 militia, a troop of horse, and five pieces of artillery, and since by flags of truce I am led to believe their number much greater.

Repelling a force of such magnitude with so small a body as we opposed to them, will I trust speak for itself, and although our loss has been severe, I hope the lustre acquired to our arms will compensate for it. Permit me to offer to your notice the conduct of Mr. James Stepford Hore, master's mate of this ship, who on this, as well as on other trying occasions, evinced the greatest zeal and gallantry. In justice to sub-lieut. Johnson, commanding the Jane tender, I must beg to notice the handsome manner in which he has at all times volunteered his services.

Herewith I beg leave to enclose you a list of the killed, wounded, and missing in this affair.

I have the honor, to be, &c.,
(Signed)
HEN CREASE, Act. Com.

Total—14 killed, 27 wounded.

AMERICANN ACCOUNT.

Copy of a letter from Col. Philip Reed, of the 1st Regiment of Maryland Militia, to Brig. Ben. Benjamin Chambert:

CAMP AT BELLE AIR,
3d Sept., 1814.

SIR—I avail myself of the first moment I have been able to seize from incessant labor, to inform you that about half-past 11 o'clock, on the night of the 30th ult., I received information that the barges of the enemy, then lying off Waltham's farm, were moving in shore. I concluded their object was to land and burn the houses, &c., at Waltham's, and made the necessary arrangements to prevent them, and to be prepared for an opportunity which I had sought for several days, to strike the enemy. During our march to the point threatened, it was discovered that the blow was almost at our camp. Orders were immediately given to the Quarter Master to remove the camp and baggage, and to the troops to counter-march, pass the road by the right of our camp, and form on the rising ground about three hundred paces to the rear—the right towards Caulk's house, and the left retiring on the road, the artillery in the centre, supported by the infantry on the right and left. I directed Captain Wickes and his second lieutenant Beck, with a part of the rifle company to be formed, so as to rover the road by which the enemy marched, and with this section I determined to post myself, leaving the line to be formed under the direction of Major Wickes and Capt. Chambers.

The head of the enemy's column soon presented itself and received the fre of our advance party, at seventy paces distance, and being pressed by numbers vastly superior, I repaired to my post in the line, having ordered the offense to return and form on the right of the line. The fire now became general along the whole line, and was sustained by our troops with the most determined valor. The enemy pressed our front, foiled in this he threw himself upon our left flank, which was occupied by Capt. Chambers's company. Here too his efforts were equally unavailing. His fire had nearly ceased, when I was informed that in some parts of our line the cartridges were entirely expended, nor did any of the boxes contain more than a very few rounds, although each man brought about twenty into the field. The artillery cartridges were entirely expended. Under these circumstances I ordered the line to fall back to a convenient spot where a part of the line was fortified, when the few remaining cartridges were distributed amongst a part of the line, which was again brought into the field, where it remained for a considerable time, the night preventing a pursuit. The artillery and infantry for whom there were no cartridges were ordered to this place. The enemy having made every effort in his power, although apprized of our falling back, manifected no disposition to follow us up, but retreated about the time our ammunition was exhausted.

When it is recollected that very few of our officers or men had ever heard the whistling of a ball; that the force of the enemy, as the most accurate in formation enables us to estimate, was double ours; that it was commanded by SIR PETER PARKER of the MENELAUS, one of the most distinguished officers of the British navy, and composed (as ther officers admitted in a subsequent conversation) of as fine men as could be selected from the British service, I feel justified in the assertion, that the gallantry of the officers and men, engaged on this occasion, could not be excelled by any troops. The officers and men performed their duty. It is however but an act of justice to notice those officers who semed to display more than a common degree of gallantry. Maj. Wickes and Capt. Chambers were conspicuous—Captain Wickes and his lieutenant Beck of the rifle corps, lieutenant Eunick and ensign Shriven of Captain Chambers's company, exerted themselves, as did Captain Hynson and his lieutenant Grant, Capt. Ussleton of the brigade artillery and his lieutenants Reed and Brown—Lieut. Tilghman who commanded the guns of the volunteer artillery, in in the absence of Capt. Hands, who is in ill health and from home, was conspicuous for his gallantry, his ensign Thomas also manifested much firmness.

I am indebted to Captain Wilson of the cavalry, who was with me, for his exertions, and also to adjutant Hynson, who displayed much zeal and firmness throughout—to Dr. Blake, Dr. Gordon and to Isaac Spencer, Esq., who were accidentally in camp, I am indebted for their assistance in reconnoitering the enemy on his advance.

You will be surprised, sir, when I inform you that in an engagement of so long continuance in an open field, when the moon shone brilliantly on the rising ground occupied by our troops, while the shade of the neighboring woods, under the protection of which the enemy fought gave us but an indistinct view of any thing but the flash of his guns; that under the dsparity of numbers against us, and the advantages of regular discipline on the side of the enemy, we had not one man killed, and only one sergeant, one corporal ad one private wounded, ad those slightly. The enemy left one midshipman and eight men dead on the field, and nine wounded; six of whom died in the course of a few hours. Sir Peter Parker was amongst the slain—he was mortally wounded by a buckshot, and died before he reached the barges, to which he was conveyed by his men. The enemy's force consisted of marines and musqueteers was in part armed with boarding pikes, swords and pistols, no doubt intended for our tents, as orders had been given by Cir Peter not to fire. Many of these arms, with rockets, muskets, &c., have fallen into our hands, found by the picket guard under ensign Shriven, (Skirven?) which was posted on the battle ground for the remainder of the night. Nothing but the want of ammunition saved the enemy from destruction.

Attached are the names of the wounded; and as an act of justice to those concerned, I enclose you a list of every officer and soldier engaged in this affair. Certain information from the enemy assures us, that his total loss in killed and wounded was forty-two or forty-three, including two wounded lieutenants.

I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

PHIL. REED,
Lieut. Col. Commandant.

Benjamin Chambers, Brigadier General, 6th Brigade Maryland Militia.

Names of the wounded of Capt. Chambers's company. John Magnor, sergeant, slightly in the thigh. Philip Crane, corporal, a ball between the tendons and the bone of the thigh, near the knee.

Of Capt. Page's company—John Glanville, a private, n the arm.



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I. HOLLINS HIMSELF
MILLINGTON, MARYLAND

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ALWYN H. STAVELY

late of said county, deceased. All persons having claims against said deceased's estate are hereby warned to exhibit the same, with the proper vouchers therof, to the undersigned on or before the 2nd day of December, 1934, otherwise thy may by law be excluded from all benefit of said deceased's personal estate.

Given under my hand this 29th day of May, 1934.

R. WROTH STAVELY,
Administrator.

666

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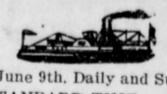
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