



PATRIOTIC RECOLLECTIONS



Just a Little Bit of History:

Interview with Major Jerry Davidson, 2nd Virginia Cavalry USA^(a)

Major Jerry Davidson was badly wounded on the 24th of July 1864, near Winchester, Virginia. The circumstances surrounding his misfortune were of a character that, notwithstanding his wounds, made his experience a very narrow escape. So the REGISTER tackled the Major for a rehearsal of the little affair which was modestly and hesitatingly given.

The rebels had retreated down the valley and the union forces had concentrated at Winchester, for the purpose of following them up. But this following them up didn't last very long, nor continue very far. Our advance had gotten no further than Kernstown when they found the rebels coming up in force, and in a style that meant business.

Our troops retreated as the rebs steadily advanced, and it was during this retreat that Major Davidson met with his little accident, which he will tell substantially in his own words.

Our regiment, the 2nd Virginia Cavalry, was on the left of the pike and about a mile and half from Winchester. We were moving in column, my company at the head, when Colonel Powell ordered us to charge a battery that had taken position on the other side of a field. In coming to the front, the Regiment galloped to my left and we swept toward the battery; but for some reason the left kept going further to the left, and as I tried to keep with them we got from the battery, and soon found ourselves charging infantry in the skirts of the woods. The country is rolling, with little ups and downs, but on we went and when we were within a hundred feet of the enemy's line, there fires was pretty hot. Here it was that Capt. Barber, Ed Thomas, Press Lunceford and others were killed, or mortally wounded.

Here too was where I caught a ball. It struck my breastbone, went through, ranging to the other side and came out beneath the right shoulder. At the same time, my horse was shot and fell, and down I went with him. I immediately got to my feet again, for though I was bleeding freely, from the mouth, I was determined to try to escape. But just as I stood up, a musket ball struck my left thigh and down I went again, and then I thought I was done for. Some of the rebs came to where I was, took a look and went away. There was a log cabin about 50 feet distant, and I concluded to go for it.

So I managed to get up and staggered toward it. When I got to the door, a couple of reb soldiers helped me up the steps and I got in the room. I laid down on the floor. Great gulps of blood came into my mouth and I came near being choked to death. A reb surgeon came in, looked at my wounds and went away

without doing anything to me. Some rebs took my boots, my hat, my haversack and my pocket book that contained about \$60 in money. Some of them talked a little rough. I had \$40 in my watch pocket that they didn't happen to find.

Well, I stayed there in that cabin about two weeks. For the first eight days I didn't eat a bite. The old lady who lived there treated me well. I gave her twenty of the forty dollars, and with the other twenty, sent to Winchester for a doctor. He came, took a look at me, said I was doing well enough, didn't give me a thing, but got the \$20 all the same.

The reb army had passed on down the valley and into Maryland. What I feared was their return, when they might take me in and off to the South. So an old colored man told me he would take me to where another fellow was hiding to keep from being drafted into the rebel army. That was a mile or so distant in a heavy pine thicket. So I went there and spent ten days or so with that man. The old darkey brought me something to eat, and we slept under the blue canopy of heaven, but it was comfortable enough for it was mid-summer. It was a little rough on me for I had no hat or shoes.

Once we thought the rebs might have passed on up the valley, we sallied forth on the pike, but saw nothing to encourage us to relinquish our hiding place, so we returned. A day or so afterward, I concluded to risk a trip to Winchester, which was about two miles distant. I could only limp along very slowly and then would tire quickly on account of my wounded lung. I was bootless and hatless and so presented a woe-begone appearance, and my appearance was by no means deceitful. As I thus trudged along through the woods, not knowing whether I should meet friend or foe, I ran across some boys of my regiment who were out in a little raid. They were agreeably surprised and I was correspondingly happy. They took me into Winchester where I was amply provided for and a leave of absence added to my joys.

Well Major, I'm obliged to you for your interesting experience, said the reporter.

(a) Having been a camp Patriotic Instructor, I know how hard it is to find interesting topics for camp meetings. Over the past year I have compiled 200 stories/bios of Civil War Veterans from Ohio. The first series is from the 1886 Ironton, Ohio REGISTER and is re-printed with the permission of Martha Kounse and Sharon M. Kouns, webowners of lawrencecountyohio.com website. The REGISTER produced 91 articles under the heading of Narrow Escapes, (one a week for 91 weeks) by interviewing Civil War Veterans from their area. This article appeared May 12, 1887.

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