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REPORT

PROCEEDINGS OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

UNION

REPORT

OF

BRIG. GEN. HENRY M. NAGLEE.

COMMANDING FIRST BRIGADE, CASEY'S DIVISION,

U.S. Army. ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, *1st brigade*

OF THE PART TAKEN BY HIS BRIGADE IN

THE BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES.

MAY 31, 1862.

WITH AN APPENDIX,
CONTAINING THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF GEN. CASEY.

PHILADELPHIA:
COLLINS, PRINTER, 705 JAYNE STREET.

1862.

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BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES.

LIEUTENANT:

BEFORE alluding to the occurrences of the 31st of May, it would probably add to a better understanding of the subject to refer to the advance of my Brigade on the 24th, 25th, and 26th, a week previous.

Having crossed the R. R. Bridge, and examined the Chickahominy from the R. R. to Bottom's Bridge on the 20th, and made a reconnoissance from the "Chimneys" near Bottom's Bridge, to within two miles of the James River on the Quaker Road, on the 23d, Gen. McClellan ordered me to make a reconnoissance of the road and country by the Williamsburg Road, as far as the Seven Pines, on Saturday the 24th, with instructions, "if possible, to advance to the 'Seven Pines,' or the forks of the direct road to Richmond, and the road turning to the right into the road leading from 'New Bridge' to Richmond, and to hold that point, if practicable." Under these instructions, with the addition of two batteries of Col. Bailey's N. Y. 1st Artillery, and Col. Gregg's Cavalry, we pushed the reconnoissance, not without considera-

ble opposition, to the "Seven Pines" on the day referred to; one mile and a half beyond the "Pines" on the following day, and to a line perpendicular to the railroad from Richmond to West Point, intersecting it midway between the fifth and sixth mile posts, on the day following the last; and on the day after, the 27th, extended it across to the "Nine Mile road" where it is intersected by the road to Garnett's house, and thence by this road bearing to the right; our picket lines extended to the Chickahominy. This line, from the river across the Rail Road to the Williamsburg road, about three miles long, was picketed at first by the First Brigade, and afterwards by Casey's Division, but placed more directly under the charge and protection of the regiments of the First Brigade, which were encamped along its entire length for that purpose.

The picket line proposed to be kept up, and the supports to the same, from the left of the above picket line on the Williamsburg road to the White Oak Swamp, were especially intrusted to Gen. Couch.

This was the line of our advance on Saturday the 31st of May, at 12 M., when two shells thrown into our camp first announced the hostile intentions of the enemy. No alarm was felt by any one, for it was seldom that twenty-four hours passed that we did not exchange similar salutations.

Soon after it was reported that an attack was impending, the usual orders were issued, and within

half an hour the troops moved to positions that were assigned to them by Gen. Casey.

Being at this time on the "Nine Mile road," near a breast-work fronting the "Old Tavern" then under construction, and judging, from the discharges of musketry becoming frequent, that something serious was intended, I hastened in the direction indicated by the fire, and soon arrived upon the ground, on the Williamsburg road, about three-quarters of a mile in front of the "Seven Pines," where I found Gen Casey, who had placed the 100th N. Y., Col. Brown, on the left of that road, behind a field of large timber that had been cut down. On the right of the same road was placed Capt. Spratt's N. Y. battery of 4 pieces. On the right of this were three companies of the 11th Maine, Col. Plaisted, and on the right of the 11th Maine were eight companies of the 104th Penna., Col. Davis. Four companies of the 11th Maine were on picket duty, but, being driven in, formed with the 56th N. Y., Lt.-Col. Jaudan, at his encampment, in line of battle, parallel with and about 800 yards in rear of the picket line, 200 yards to the left of the Rail Road. Col. Dodge's 52d Penna., supporting the picket line on the extreme right, formed at his encampment on the Nine Mile road three-quarters of a mile in rear of the large Garnett field. The remaining companies of the 104th Pa. and 11th Maine were on picket duty along the large field in the direction of the Chickahominy.

Soon after my arrival upon the ground—about one o'clock P. M.—the fire then being frequent, and from the direction of the main Richmond stage road, Gen. Casey gave an order to the 100th N. Y., and 104th Pa., and 11th Maine, to charge, when, as reported by Col. Davis, the regiments sprang forward “towards the enemy with a tremendous yell. In our way was a high worm fence which cut our former line of battle, but the boys sprang over it, into the same inclosure with the enemy, where we formed and renewed the fight. The battle now raged with great fury, and the firing was much hotter than before. Spratt's battery during this time had kept up a lively fire in the same direction. At about 3 P. M., the enemy being largely reinforced, pressed us in front and flank, and seeing that we could not hold our position much longer, unless reinforced, I dispatched an officer to Gen. Casey for that purpose. The Colonel of the 100th N. Y. being killed, the Colonel of 104th severely wounded, the Major mortally wounded, the Lieutenant-Colonel absent, half of our men having been killed or wounded, the enemy, ten times our number, within a few feet of us, one of them striking Sergeant Porter, the left guide of the 104th, over the neck with his musket, several of the 11th Maine being bayoneted, and receiving no reinforcements, we were ordered, with 'Spratt's' battery, to retire ; but, unfortunately,

“the horses of one of the pieces being killed, we were
“compelled to abandon that piece.”

The enemy endeavored to follow up this success, and was advancing in closed columns, when, our troops having been sufficiently withdrawn, Col. Bailey, of the 1st N. Y. Artillery, at my request, directed the fire of the batteries of Fitch and Bates, situated in and near the redoubt, to be concentrated upon the advancing mass. At every discharge of grape and canister wide gaps were opened in his ranks, which were filled as soon as opened; still he pressed on, until, after many trials, with immense loss, finding that he was “advancing into the very jaws of death,” with sullen hesitation he concluded to desist at this point.

I congratulated Col. Bailey upon his gallant conduct and good services, as above described, and suggested that in the event of being compelled to abandon another piece, he should instruct his gunners to spike before leaving it. He went into the redoubt to give these orders, when he was shot by a rifle ball through the forehead, and died a few minutes after, the State losing a gallant soldier, and his artillerymen a friend to whom they were entirely devoted.

Soon after this, Major Van Valkenburgh, of the same artillery, was killed by a rifle ball whilst actively engaged in working these batteries, and, but a little while after, Lieut. Rumsey, the Adjutant, in the same manner. All of the field and staff officers being killed,

I assumed the direction of the batteries composing the 1st N. Y. Artillery.

No reinforcements having been sent to us, and desirous of following up the success above referred to, about 3½ P. M. I rode to the rear, and led up the 55th N. Y., Lt.-Col. Thourote, and placed it in line perpendicular to the Williamsburg road, about fifty yards in advance of the redoubt, the left resting a short distance from the road. Before getting into position they were compelled to march over the bodies of their killed and wounded comrades, and soon afterwards found themselves fully engaged. Leaving the 55th, my attention was directed towards the right, where I found the 56th N. Y. with the 11th Maine, who, after four hours' contest, had fallen back about four hundred yards, and were again placed by me, at four hours and ten minutes, in a depression in the ground, about midway between the Williamsburg road and the railroad, and about three hundred yards in front of the Nine Mile road. Near by I found the 52d Pa., which had been ordered from the right, and I placed them in echelon to the right, and front of the 56th, with the right resting upon and in rear of a large pond. At this time the fire here had considerably slackened, but was increasing on the left. Returning, in about an hour, to the left, I found the 55th engaged to their utmost extent, and ascertained for the first time that the enemy had discovered, what I had long feared, that there were none of our troops

between the White Oak Swamp and a line parallel with and but two hundred yards from the Williamsburg road. He had more than an hour before discovered this, and with sharpshooters concealed in the woods, to the left and rear of the redoubt and rifle-pits, they had killed many of our most valuable officers, had picked off the cannoniers, and had killed from three to four horses out of every team attached to the 1st N. Y. Artillery, and, at the time of my return, had driven our men from the rifle-pits. No time was to be lost; Fitch's battery was ordered to the rear. The battery under Lt. Hart was next ordered to retire, but it was soon found that but one limber could be moved. I ordered the pieces to be spiked; but after spiking the pieces in the redoubt, those on the outside of it were in the possession of the enemy. By way of precaution, I had ordered the prolongues to be fixed to the sections of Regan's battery, still firing up the Williamsburg road, and ordered it to retire firing, until in the abattis that crosses the road. I then withdrew the 55th, under the protection of its fire. This regiment had fought most gallantly, suffered severely, and contributed much, in the end, towards saving Regan's battery from falling into the hands of the enemy. And then, the entire field in front of, and including the redoubt, was in possession of the enemy, who had pressed to within a few yards of us, it being necessary to support many of the wounded horses, to keep them from falling in

the traces. At 5.15 P. M., we brought the last sections of Bailey's 1st N. Y. Artillery from the field, the air being at this time literally filled with iron and lead. Returning rapidly to my 56th N. Y., 11th Maine, and 52d Pa., my anticipations here were realized; being successful in turning our left flank, the enemy had opened a most destructive cross fire upon them, from the pieces near the redoubt, that had not been spiked, and this, with the fire from their immediate front, was no longer to be endured, and they were withdrawn, and marched down the Nine Mile road, and placed in position, in rear of this road, about three hundred yards from the Seven Pines, where soon their services were required. In the meanwhile, Col. Neil, of the 23d Pa., had come upon the ground occupied by Col. Dodge, and induced him to advance in front, and to the right of the position that had been assigned to him, whilst he, Col. Neil, occupied that which the 52d Pa. vacated. But these dispositions were scarcely made, before the masses of the enemy broke through, and a few minutes sufficed to leave the half of Dodge's command upon the ground, and to force Neil precipitately from his position.

The remaining portion of the 52d—for it was now reduced to a little over one hundred men—were conducted along the Nine Mile road to the Seven Pines, where, finding the rifle-pits occupied, they took possession of a fence, and some outhouses, and did most

effective service. Afterwards, they crossed to the left of Couch's position, and advanced two hundred yards, into, and along the woods, to the left and front of the Seven Pines, where they remained actively employed, until near dark, when the enemy advancing rapidly in masses to the rear of the Nine Mile road, inclined towards the Williamsburg road, sweeping everything from the field, our forces making one general, simultaneous movement to the rear, which did not stop until all had arrived at the line of defence, one mile in that direction. The 52d having their retreat cut off, escaped by passing through the woods to the left and rear, to the sawmill, at the White Oak Swamp, and thence to the line above referred to, where they rejoined their comrades of the 1st Brigade. Following down the Nine Mile road, after Dodge retired from his first position, about 500 yards from the intersection of the Seven Pines, I found Col. J. Adams commanding the 1st Long Island, which was placed across the road, a portion of the right flank being in rear of it, with the left flank extending to the front and left. Advising Col. Adams of the rapid approach of the enemy—of the direction he was coming, and of the position of the 56th N. Y. and 104th Pa. on his left, he withdrew the left flank of the Long Island to the rear of the Nine Mile road, making a continuous line with the above, and the men were ordered to lie down, that they should escape the murderous fire that was incessantly pouring in from the front.

Scarcely was this done, before the 87th N. Y., Col. Stephen E. Dodge, of Kearney's Division, Heintzelman's Corps, came along the Nine Mile road, with rapid step, cheering most vociferously, passed the 56th N. Y., 104th Pennsylvania, and 1st Long Island about fifty yards, received a volley, broke, and passed the whole of them, running over the backs of those lying down, the latter remaining undisturbed until ordered to rise and meet the accumulated force that was bearing all before it. Volley after volley was given, and received. An order was given to charge, but one hundred yards brought us into such close proximity with the enemy, "that a sheet of fire was blazing in our faces." The ranks on both sides were rapidly thinning; but still the great disparity in our numbers continued. So close were the contending forces, that our men in many instances, whilst at a charge, poured their fire into the breasts of the enemy, within a few feet from the points of their bayonets. This dreadful contest lasted until nearly dark. My 56th and 104th suffered dreadfully, lost the greater part of their officers and men, and were compelled to give way, carrying their wounded with them.

It was then, in the language of Lt. Haney, of the 104th, "that I (Lt. Haney) and Lt. Ashenfelder and others led Capt. Corcoran, Capt. Swatzlander, and Lt. Hendric off the field. It was about half an hour before dark. We went down the Nine Mile road, and along the Williamsburg road. The fighting was

nearly over. Our troops were all retiring. We saw the enemy, not over seventy-five yards in our rear, and no troops between us and them. All of our forces were moving back, little regard being paid to brigade, regimental, or even company organization. Kearney's troops came, but did not stay long. Capt. Corcoran becoming continually weaker, we were compelled to carry him."

Fully confirming the statements of my officers, I assert that I saw no running, and there was no panic, but all moved off together, with a single purpose, and that one, to make a stand upon the line of defences, one mile in the rear, the only one of sufficient capacity to enable us to defend ourselves against vastly superior numbers, until our reinforcements could be brought together.

Company "I," Capt. Morrill, and Company "E," Lt. Sabine, of the 11th Maine, were on picket duty along the Garnett field, in front of which several rebel regiments marched about dark. Some of the men crawled into the wheat, and shot three of the field officers as they marched by. When Sedgwick crossed the Chickahominy, they immediately communicated with him, remained all night upon the picket line, with the enemy in their front and rear, and on Sunday, at 9 A. M., came in, bringing more prisoners than the entire number of men in their ranks.

Second Lt. Rice, of the 11th Maine, was very sick, in the hospital, where there were a number of the

same regiment. After the fight grew warm, he exclaimed: "Boys, every one of you that can hold up his head, follow me." More than twenty followed him. He shouldered a musket, and all joined their regiment, and fought most gallantly. Rice, after seventeen rounds, delivered with deadly effect, for he was an excellent shot, was severely wounded in the thigh, and was carried from the field.

Company "E," 104th Pa., Capt. Harvey, Lt. Croll, and fifty-eight men, were extended on picket duty from the railroad to the corner, at the intersection of the Nine Mile road with the road to Garnett's house, when about 3 P. M. the enemy approached, but left them unmolested after firing some scattering shots, during which time we took thirteen prisoners. After 5 P. M. the enemy again appeared in force along this entire line. With the assistance of their supports, he was held in check for nearly an hour, when, finding themselves surrounded, they were taken prisoners. Capt. Harvey was placed in charge of an officer with five men, and was marching off, when a shell struck, and killed the officer; the Captain taking advantage of the confusion, made his escape; four of the men following his example.

On Saturday, Lt. Col. Hoyt, of the 52d Penna., was in charge of the Pioneers of the 1st Brigade, and two companies of the same Reg't, building a bridge which I had directed to be built across the Chickahominy. Remaining upon the ground, and informing

himself of the proceedings upon the extreme right, he rendered most valuable service by advising Gen. Sumner, as soon as he crossed the swamp, of the precise position of our forces, and those of the enemy. After which, the enemy having pressed down between the railroad and Gen. Sumner, Lt. Col. Hoyt, with the above, and some of the 100th N. Y. that were driven in from the picket lines, near the Chickahominy, remained with Gen. Sumner until Sunday, and behaved well.

After leaving the battle-field, at dark, the Brigade, numbering over one thousand, was marched to the right rifle-pits of the rear defences, but vacated them at the request of Gen. Kearney, and occupied those on the left, with the other brigades of Casey's Division, where we remained under arms, in the rain, all night.

I have shown in the history of the battle of the Seven Pines, the conduct of every one of the regiments of the 1st Brigade, from the time the first volley was fired, at noon, until the enemy, having driven our troops from the ground, near dark, cut off the retreat of the 52d, by the Williamsburg road, and was still annoyed by its deadly fire.

The list of casualties shows that there were taken into the action, 84 officers and 1669 men; and that 35 officers and 603 men were killed, wounded, and taken prisoners, being 42 per cent. of the former, and 37 per cent. of the latter. Of the ninety-three of the

11th Maine, that were led into the fight by Col. Plaisted, 52 were killed and wounded.

The Brigade was among the last enlisted; it had been reduced more than one-half by sickness; that it fought well, none can deny, for it lost 638 of its number; bodies were found over every part of the field, and where these bodies lay, were found double the number of the enemy.

The enemy, more generous than our friends, admit "that we fought most desperately, and against three entire divisions of his army, with two in reserve that, later in the day, were brought in."

For $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours we contested every inch of ground with the enemy, and did not yield in that time the half of a mile. We fought from 12 M. until $3\frac{1}{2}$ P. M., with but little assistance, and until dark, with our comrades of other regiments and of other divisions, wherever we could be of service, and when, at dark, the enemy swept all before him, we were the last to leave the ground.

I am most happy to refer to the kind treatment extended by the enemy to many of the wounded of the Brigade that were taken prisoners.

Since the battle of Seven Pines, now nearly three weeks, a force ten times that of Casey and Couch, has not been able to regain the line of outposts established by the 1st Brigade on the 26th of May; our present line being half a mile in rear thereof.

None of the brigade, regimental, or company bag-

gage was lost. Some of the shelter tents, knapsacks, and blankets fell into the hands of the enemy, which was the natural consequence of being encamped in close proximity with the outposts.

Conduct such as this, if it be not worthy of commendation, should not call forth censure, for censure undeserved chills the ardor and daring of the soldier, and dishonors both the living and the dead.

Very respectfully, &c.

NAGLEE,

Brig. Gen'l.

To LIEUT. FOSTER,

A. A. A. Gen'l, Casey's Division, Army of the Potomac.



APPENDIX.

THE BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES.

THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF GEN CASEY.

HEADQUARTERS GEN. CASEY'S DIVISION,
POPLAR HILL, HENRICO Co., VA., June, 1862.

CAPTAIN: In obedience to directions from the General commanding the Fourth Corps, I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of my division in the battle of the Seven Pines, on the 31st ult. I occupied with my division the advanced position of the army, about three-fourths of a mile from the cross-roads at the Seven Pines, where I caused rifle-pits and a redoubt to be thrown up; also an abattis to be commenced about one-third of a mile in front of the pits, and parties were employed upon these works on the morning of the 31st.

Previously to occupying my last position I had occupied the cross-roads, and had there also caused an abattis to be cut and earthworks to be commenced. On the 29th, the day on which I moved my camp forward, and also on the 30th, my advanced pickets had been attacked by a body of the enemy on the former day by a force of three hundred, and on the next by one of four hundred in number. The pickets on the first day succeeded in driving the enemy back in confusion, killing and wounding a number, with a loss on my part of but two killed and two wounded. Major Kelly, of the Ninety-sixth Regiment New York Volunteers, was one of my killed. The Major was in command of my pickets at this point, and by his gallant conduct animated the men to the firm resistance

offered. In the attack of the 30th I ordered the One Hundredth Regiment, New York Volunteers, to move to the support of the pickets. With the assistance of this regiment, under the command of Col. Brown, they succeeded in repelling the attack, the enemy leaving six of his dead upon the ground. On the morning of the 31st May, my pickets toward the right of my line succeeded in capturing Lieut. Washington, an Aid of Gen. Johnson, of the rebel service. This circumstance, in connection with the fact that Col. Hunt, my General Officer of the day, had reported to me that his outer pickets had heard cars running nearly all night on the Richmond end of the railroad, led me to exercise increased vigilance. Between 11 and 12 o'clock a mounted vidette was sent in from the advanced pickets, to report that a body of the enemy was in sight, approaching on the Richmond road. I immediately ordered the One Hundred and Third Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers to advance to the front for the purpose of supporting the pickets. It was soon afterward reported to me by a mounted vidette that the enemy were advancing in force; and about the same time two shells were thrown over my camp. I was led to believe that a serious attack was contemplated, and immediately ordered the Division under arms, the men at work on the abattis and rifle pits to be recalled and to join their regiments, the artillery to be harnessed up at once, and made my dispositions to repel the enemy. While these were in progress the pickets commenced firing. I directed Spratt's battery of four pieces, three inch rifle guns, to advance in front of the rifle pits, about one-fourth of a mile, in order to reply with advantage to the enemy's artillery, which I knew was in battery in front of my pickets' line, and also to shell the enemy as soon as the withdrawal of the pickets and their supports should permit. I supported this battery by the One Hundred and Fourth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, the Eleventh Regiment Maine Volunteers, and the One Hundredth Regiment New York Volunteers, of the First Brigade, and the Ninety-second Regiment New York Volunteers of the Third Brigade.

I placed Capt. Bate's Battery, commanded by Lieut. Hart, in the redoubt, Capt. Regan's Battery in rear and on the right of the rifle pits; Capt. Fitch's Battery in rear of the redoubt. The Eighty-fifth Regiment New York Volunteers occupied the rifle pits on the left, and the Eighty-fifth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers those on the right. The One Hundred and First Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers were posted on the right of these regiments, and the Eighty-first, Ninety-sixth and Ninety-eighth New York regiments were advanced to cover the left flank. For several days the Fifty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers had occupied a position on the Nine Mile road, a support to my advanced pickets on my right flank, and the Fifty-sixth regiment New York Volunteers had held a position on the railroad. I made no change in the position of these last two regiments. About fifteen minutes after these dispositions had been completed, I directed the advanced battery to open on the artillery and advancing column of the enemy. In a short time after, the One Hundred and Third Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, which at the first alarm had been ordered to the support of the pickets, came down the road in some confusion, having suffered considerable loss from the fire of the rebel advance. The enemy now attacked me in large force on the centre and both wings, and a brisk fire of musketry extended along the two opposing lines; my artillery in the mean time throwing canister into their ranks with great effect. Perceiving, at length, that the enemy were threatening me upon both wings, for want of reinforcements, which had been repeatedly asked for, and that his column still pressed on, I then, in order to save my artillery, ordered a charge of bayonets by the four supporting regiments of the centre, which was executed in a most gallant and successful manner, under the immediate direction of Brig. Gen. Naglee, commanding First Brigade, the enemy being driven back.

When the charge had ceased, but not until the troops had reached the edge of the woods, the most terrible fire of musketry commenced that I have ever witnessed. The enemy again advanced in force,

and the flanks having been again severely threatened, a retreat to the works became necessary. To be brief, the rifle-pits were retained until they were almost enveloped by the enemy—the troops, with some exceptions, fighting with spirit and gallantry. The troops then retreated to the second line, in possession of Gen. Couch's Division. Two pieces of artillery were placed in the road between the two lines, which did good execution upon the advancing foe.

On my arrival at the second line, I succeeded in rallying a portion of my division, and, with the assistance of Gen. Kearney, who had just arrived at the head of one of the brigades of his division, attempted to regain possession of my works, but it was found impracticable. The troops of Gen. Couch's division were driven back, although reinforced by the corps of Gen. Heintzelman. The corps of Gens. Keyes and Heintzelman, having retreated to the third line, by direction of Gen. Heintzelman, I then collected together what remained of my division.

The Fifty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers, and the Fifty-sixth Regiment New York Volunteers, were under the particular direction of Brig.-Gen. Naglee, and I refer to his report for further mention of them. Gen. Naglee behaved with distinguished gallantry through the engagement, having a horse killed under him, and receiving four contused wounds from musket balls. Gens. Palmer and Wessels encouraged by their example their men to do their duty on the field. Gen. Wessels had a horse shot under him, and himself received a wound in the shoulder. Lieuts. West and Foster, my Aides-de-Camp, were active through the day, affording me much service and behaving gallantly. Capt. Davis, of the Provost Guard of my division, acted as my aide a portion of the time, rendering much assistance, and conducting himself in a gallant manner. I also feel much indebtedness to my medical director, Dr. Crosby, for the energy he evinced in collecting, and his promptness and skill in providing for the wounded. I have inclosed a list of the killed, wounded, and missing, as also the reports of the com-

manders of the brigades to which I refer. I cannot forbear mention of the severe misfortunes suffered by the division and the service in the loss of Col. G. D. Bailey, my Chief of Artillery, who fell in the attempt to spike the pieces in my redoubt, which were necessarily abandoned. Col. Bailey was an officer of thorough military education, of clear and accurate mind, cool, determined and intrepid in the discharge of his duty, and promising, with riper years, to honor still more the profession to which he was devoted.

About the same time also fell Major Van Valkenburg, of the First Regiment New York Artillery, a brave, and discreet, and energetic officer. Under the circumstances, I think it my duty to add a few remarks with regard to my division. On leaving Washington, eight of the regiments were composed of raw troops. It has been the misfortune of the division, marching through the Peninsula, to be subjected to an ordeal which would have severely tried veteran troops. Furnished with scanty transportation, occupying sickly positions, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, at times without tents or blankets; illy supplied with rations and medical stores, the loss from sickness has been great, especially with the officers. Yet a party from my division took possession of the railroad bridge across the Chickahominy, driving the enemy from it, and my division took the advance on the 23d day of May, and, by an energetic reconnoissance, drove the enemy beyond the Seven Pines. Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, and the fact that there were not five thousand men in line of battle, they withstood for three hours the attack of an overwhelming force of the enemy without the reinforcement of a single man at my first line. The Fifty-fifth Regiment New York Volunteers reached my second line just before it was evacuated. If a portion of my division did not behave as well as could have been wished, it must be remembered to what a terrible ordeal they were subjected, still, those that behaved discreditably were exceptional cases. It is true that the division, after being nearly surrounded by the enemy and losing one-third of the number actually engaged, retreated to the second

line; they would all have been prisoners of war had they delayed their retreat a few minutes longer.

In my humble opinion, from what I witnessed on the 31st, I am convinced that the stubborn and desperate resistance of my division saved the army on the right bank of the Chickahominy from a severe repulse, which might have resulted in a disastrous defeat.

The blood of the gallant dead would cry to me from the ground on which they fell fighting for their country, had I not said what I have to vindicate them from the unmerited aspersions which have been cast upon them.

SILAS CASEY,
Brigadier-General Commanding.

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