

in progress, indicating renewed contact with Lee's army, now at the end of its retreat. This fight between Buford and Stuart was plainly visible across the Rappahannock, and it was watched with interest, because it was taken to be the prelude of another pitched battle. It turned out to be only a reconnoissance in force.

The Seventh was at this time separated from the Maryland brigade, and it was understood that it, together with some regiments from other brigades, constituted the reserve of the 1st Corps. Among the many rumors in constant circulation was one to the effect that the Seventh Regiment was to be detailed as "sharpshooters." It had been reported that during the two days' skirmishing at Funkstown the fire of our companies I and E had been especially effective. It had been learned officially (so went the rumor) that the enemy's loss during that skirmish in front of the Maryland brigade alone had been eight killed, including a captain, and fifteen wounded. In point of fact, nothing was certainly known about anything.

It was mysteriously whispered in select circles as a particularly choice tit-bit of rumor that "we" had learned to read the enemy's signals, with many cautions to be very careful of the secret, lest the rebels should get hold of it and immediately change their signal code.

There was but little incident of any kind to vary the monotony of camp life at Rappahannock station. Deserters were occasionally shot under sentence of court-martial in some of the neighboring camps, and it was the accepted policy to make these executions as public and ceremonious as possible, to strike terror into the substitutes and bounty-jumpers.

Quite in contrast with the dull monotony of the camps in rear, the picket line or extreme front in contact with the enemy is always interesting. Our division outposts at that time occupied a front of over two miles, the line between the two armies had not been straightened out, and the opposing sentries were within hailing distance, in some cases. This situation sometimes gave occasion for ludicrous mistakes. A too sociable disposition was at times indulged, resulting in the trading of newspapers, coffee, tobacco, etc., but this intercourse was always promptly repressed by the authorities as soon as discovered.

About the middle of September a division of cavalry, supported by the second corps, pushed on as far as Culpeper, not without resistance and loss. A rumor prevailed that we had captured colors, a large number of prisoners and ten guns, reduced afterwards to three.

Advance to the Rapidan.

Early on the morning of the 16th of September, 1863, the long expected order came, and after a march of ten or twelve miles through Brandy and Stevensburg, tents were pitched about half way between that place and Culpeper Courthouse, on Mountain Run. The march was toward the sound of cannon, and many dead and crippled horses were passed.

Here the paymaster made his appearance, and several officers were informed that their pay had been stopped until their regulation "ordnance returns" were duly forwarded. As Government officials became more experienced, greater strictness and more "red tape" was used, and many obscure and neglected "army regulations," which had been a mystery to inexperienced officers and the despair of department clerks, were revived and peremptorily enforced by the quick stimulus of "stopping pay."