

B re-enlisted. Those of C, H and I elected to wait until their term had expired before doing anything in the matter, many of them preferring other branches of the service to that of the infantry.

The companies which remained with the regiment (A and B being off on furlough) performed picket duty near Sangster's Station, on the line of the railroad. On March 9, 1862, a picket post and a portion of its reserves, belonging to Company F, all under command of First Lieutenant Richard D. Hough, were charged by a detachment of the First New York (Lincoln) Cavalry, and in the fight that followed Lieutenant Joseph H. Stewart and fourteen men of Company F were captured, one of them, Sergeant Edward Sheehan, being slightly wounded. Lieutenant Hidden, who commanded the attacking cavalry, was killed.

Prior to this affair it had become evident to General Johnston and the Confederate Government that the large and splendidly equipped army under McClellan, which had been drilling for months near Washington, was about to assume the offensive. In view of the weak condition of Johnston's army, it was decided to dismantle the works around Centreville and Manassas, send all ordnance and commissary stores to a place of safety, and then abandon Manassas. On the night of March 8, 1862, all being ready, the order to march next morning was issued. What little had to be left behind was destroyed, and when McClellan reached Manassas all was loneliness and ruin. There was no foe to fight, no victory to strive for, nothing to compensate for the time and treasure spent in marshaling and equipping the great army which was to destroy the Confederacy. Johnston marched his troops along the Orange and Alexandria railroad until they reached the Rappahannock. They crossed that river to the south side, which was held by General R. S. Ewell with his division, whilst Johnston marched the remainder of his army to Richmond. To Ewell's division Elzey's Brigade was attached.

An advance of the enemy from Manassas was now expected daily, and the piers of the railroad bridge were mined and filled with explosives to be fired whenever McClellan's vanguard appeared. The First Maryland and the Baltimore Light Artillery were assigned to duty on the river front, and one day in the early part of April keen-eyed watches saw emerging from the distant woods on the opposite side of the river, first a long line of cavalry, next infantry and then artillery. A shot or two from the Baltimore Lights sent the cavalry galloping in every direction, and then the infantry skirmishers were thrown forward, advancing steadily toward the river. Company A, First Maryland, under command of Captain W. W. Goldsborough, was now deployed and thrown forward to meet this skirmish line. Thanks to Colonel George H. Stewart's training, the movement was beautifully executed. General Elzey declaring that it could not have been surpassed by a company of regular soldiers.