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In camp at Bermuda 100-Va.

Extracts from diary of the undersigned during the Drury's Bluff period.

May 12 1864. It has been a stormy day with thunder and lightning. Adj. Sherman 23rd Mass. Came in about 5 o'clock and reported that our forces had formed [sic.] him of battle about 7 miles out, our brigade having the extreme right.

May 13. Lt. Fowler, Brigade Comt [?] came in after dark and reported that Grant had formed junction with Butler and that Butler's army formed the left of Grant's army. The dispatch was read to the troops. A very rainy night.

May 14. Last night A. D. Trout [?] (Co. 7) awoke me at 1 o'clock and said he had just come from the front. Heckman had sent orders to me (H.E.V.) to have everything packed up and sent forward as soon as they should be sent for. Also to send up Capt. Abel's and Lieut. Everton's

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spare horses in the morning. The teams are going out to the front with rations and forage.

May 15. The H.Q. ambulance came in from the front last night. Stokes, the General's cook brought in a big turkey, a box full of chickens, some honey in a glass jar and a sesech [?] clock. The boys are working over the clock now trying to make it go. None of them knows anything about it. Some say "do this" and some "Do that" and they have got it striking as if it never would stop. They stand looking at it in dismay. At noon an orderly rode in with instructions to have everything sent forward. At 2 1.2 P. M. the 1st team was hitched up, and as it would wait until the next team was ready, John D. Stowell [?] (of co. K 23rd Mass) Fairbanks of the

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8th Conn. Hartwell of the 6th or 13th N. Hamp. And I with the General's little rig started out. The road was miserable at first, but after traveling some time we came out at the turnpike, a fine road 3 or 4 roads wide, running between Richmond and Petersburg. The telegraph wires were out all along the road. We saw many dead horses and the stench from them was almost unbearable. After walking some distance we began to hear firing and as we came to the top of a hill where stood the Half-way House we found Sam. Mills (9th N.J. Vols.) and Jim [?] May (23rd Mass.) Many regimental surgeons were here and everything looked as if they expected business. Here too was a line of Field-pieces in position stretching on both sides of the turnpike as far as the eye could reach. We got directions as to Genl. Heckman's

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Hd. Qrs. And pushed on, the firing becoming more and more distinct. After reaching the next mile-post we took a road to the right for 3/4s of a mile and then turning sharp to the left we saw our Hd. Qr. flag stuck up in the ground in front of a house. The house belongs to one Gregory who is said to tend[?] torpedoes on the river. His wife and their servants left last Sunday. I asked on old Auntie what her master told her about the Yankees. "He tole me dat you would make us eat cottonseed" but added, "I tink you bery nice gemmen." After dark our teams came up and we got out table and desk and placed them in the front room, which Capt. Abel made his office.

May 16. Last night we

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turned in in the barn. At one o'clock an orderly and[sic.] routed out Bob (Robert Arlow 9th N.J. Vols, Genl.

Heckman's personal orderly,) and the rest of the orderlies. I heard Bob say that the spare horses were to be taken round to the front door, where the rest of the horses were tied to the fence. As there seemed to be something in the wind, I told my bedfellow Stowell that I would go out and see that was up. Going to the porch of the house I found Metz (9th N.J. ambulance driver for H.Q.,) loading up the mess stuff. McDougall (Lt. & Qrms. Of Brigade) had ordered up the H.Q. team. At this time a Company of the 11th Pa. Cav. Came to the house, went down the lane at a trot and filed through the back gate into the woods. As far as I know the General had not slept a wink

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that night. He was very anxious and had no faith that his brigade could hold the position if attacked. He went to Butler on the 15th and told him his brigade had been in the advance the whole time, were without blankets and coffee and asked that it be relieved. He was told they could not be relieved. He then asked for reinforcements, saying if they would give him some artillery he would hold the position. Artillery was sent but almost as soon as it reported it was ordered away. He marched up and down the veranda with the utmost impatience. Seeing several of us waiting round he told us we had better turn in and get what sleep we could. This we did "bunking" down on the piazza. When I awoke, the day was first breaking. The General

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was still there and nearly all the staff.

The General asked Stokes the cook (9th N.J.) if he had any breakfast cooked? Stokes said "No! everything is packed up." "Well," said the General, "Can't you unpack them?" Just then the firing began in earnest, and we heard the never-to-be-forgotten rebel yell.

"It's a charge" shouted the general and mounting his horse he dashed down the road followed by the Staff. Capt. Abel stopped long enough to give me directions about the Records of Brigade and the office stuff and then he followed.

Before we left with the Hd.Qr. team the "minies" began to fly about H.Q. and a rebel shell tore its way through the barn.

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What follows is what Capt. Abel (A.A.Q. Heckman's Brigade) told me.

"The staff left their horses in the road with the orderlies and entered the woods on foot. When we entered the woods where our line was formed, all that could be seen were two sheets of flame from the opposing muskets. The General sent me to the right of the 9th N.J. with an order and when I got back, Heckman ordered me to go to General Wertzel (Comd[?] 9th [?] Division) and tell him we must have reinforcements. When I returned, the General was missing and the line broken."

A little later a new line was formed near the Half-Way house. The force that came down on our right that morning was variously estimated. A rebel prisoner said, in answer to the query as to how many men

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they had "Twenty thousand and more a coming." Our brigade mustered that morning about 2800 men.

I suppose none of us can forget the fog of that morning or the gloom of the few days following the disaster at Drury's Bluff. My letters home at the time are full of gloomy forebodings. Rumor with her thousand tongues was busy, making and mismaking the most dismal reports. Stories of killed, wounded and missing that went home to the friends of the regiments composing the Brigade must have caused even greater gloom than we experienced. But the Red Star Brigade did not lose its reputation nor its Efficiency [?]. Bad as was the disaster we are certain that it was not the fault of the men themselves, nor of

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its immediate Commander and the boys who passed through that terrible ordeal and lived have reason to be

proud, while not a stain remains upon the shields of those who there gave up their lives or went from that dread field to the Southern prison pens.

H.E. Valentine

The above was read at Co. 7's Reunion June 3rd 1900.