

Historical Sketch
of the
Third Maine Regt.

Since organization at
Augusta, Maine, May, 1861

Historical Sketch of 3rd Maine Regt.

The "Third Regiment, Maine Volunteers" left the city of Augusta, on the morning of June 5th, 1861 (having been mustered into the United States Service the day previous), under Command of Col O.O. Howard and arrived in the city of Washington on the evening of the 7th. On the 8th inst. the Regiment was ordered to a camp of Instruction on Meridian Hill, where it remained till the 6th day of July, then crossed the Potomac, and encamped in front of Fort Ellsworth, being at that time the advance Regiment.

On the 11th day of July the Regiment moved to Clermont, and encamped on the estate of the rebel Commodore Forrest, 3 miles from the previous camp, and still in advance of all others. Here the Regiment was Brigaded with the 4th and 5th Maine, and the 2nd Vermont Vols., Col O.O. Howard, Actg. Brig. Gen. Commanding. On the 11th July, we advanced our picket line to Springfield Station, and on the 14th began the March on Bull Run, arriving at Centerville on the 17th and at Bull Run on the 21st. Major Staples commanding the Regiment. In that disastrous battle, the Regiment sustained itself nobly, till the panic seized the troops, when it was found impossible to rally them, our loss being 8 killed, 29 wounded, and 12 taken prisoners. The entire baggage of the Regiment, together with the knapsacks of the men fell into the hands of the enemy.

On the 23d July, we were again on our previous Camp ground (Clermont) where we remained till Aug 10th when ordered to the right of Fort Ellsworth, where a new Brigade was formed consisting of the 3rd and 4th Maine, and 38th and 40th New York Regiments, under Command of Brig. Gen. John Sedgewick. While at this camp the Brigade built "Fort Worth," by details of men from each Regiment daily.

On the 27th and 28th of Aug., a portion of the Regiment, under Major Staples, had a brilliant skirmish with the enemy at "Bailey's Cross Roads," without any loss on our part. The regiment remained in this camp, doing picket duty, working on fortifications, and drilling till the 27th of September, when the Brigade was ordered forward to take position on Foule's Estate, on the Old Fairfax Road and was then posted to the Division of Gen. Heintzleman.

Having formed a complete "Breastwork" in our front, the regiment furnished daily details of men for the construction of "Fort Lyon," one of the most important fortresses in the vicinity of the Capitol. At this time, Col. Howard having been promoted to Brig. General, Major Staples succeeded to the Colonelcy of the Regiment, and Company, Battalion, and Brigade drills followed each other in close succession during the remainder of our stay in this Camp, which in honor of Gen. Howard was called "Camp Howard."

On the 17th of March, the Regiment, together with the balance of the Brigade, and Division, broke up camp, took transports at Alexandria, and sailed for Fortress Monroe, where, with the Brigade, six Companies arrived on the 19th. The other four companies, viz; Captains Lakeman, Morgan, Johnson and Richmond's were placed on board unseaworthy tugs, and having been overtaken by a squall were driven into St. Mary's Harbor, Md., near the mouth of the Potomac, and did not join the Regiment for six or eight days after our arrival, they being at the time short of rations.

Historical Sketch of the Third Maine Regiment

Col. Moses B. Lakeman, 3rd Maine Regiment

(Compiled by Charleen Bearce Lambert, Charlamb@mediaone.net, from original at the Maine Archives)

The army remained at Hampden till April 3rd, and at that date moved forward to Yorktown, when we arrived on the afternoon of the 5th, encamping in the face of the enemy, and within range of their guns. At the siege of Yorktown the regiment sustained no minor part, being one of the few who never permitted themselves to be “surprised,” and laboring both day and night on the formidable works erected there, oftentimes under shot and shell, or the more deadly “Grape and Canister.”

The evacuation of Yorktown, found us among the first in pursuit of the enemy, hence the severe loss of the Brigade at the Battle of Williamsburg, before arriving at which place, the men were nearly exhausted from the severity of the March, through mud, a foot, and in some instances two feet deep. Arriving within two miles of the Battlefield, the Brigade filed off, and halting, deposited their knapsacks, and were again on the march. At the field, Gen. Heintzleman detached the 3d and 4th Maine Regiments from the Brigade, and being reinforced by three other Regiments, marched to and formed line of Battle on the plain to the left of the battlefield, in order to prevent the possibility of a flank movement, in the mean time the balance of the Brigade had advanced, and engaged the enemy. At sunset we were withdrawn from the plain and marched to the scene of action, to relieve the Regiments then engaged, When an order from Gen. Kearney was given us to “file into the woods and bivoac, for Williamsburg was won,” every man was completely saturated with water, for the rain had been falling in torrents throughout the day. We lost two men, wounded.

On the following morning at “dawn”, (May 6th) the Regiment with the 4th Maine were ordered to advance in line, and carry Fort Magruder by storm, but our passage thither was not disputed, as the enemy had evacuated the works the night previous, leaving his dead and wounded in our hands. The right of the army having been foremost up to this time, the Commander in Chief saw fit to rest them here a few days, while the left wing pursued the enemy. At Williamsburg our supplies of rations and ammunition being replenished, the dead interred, and the wounded cared for, we were again on the march, and on the 15th inst. arrived at Cumberland Landing, on the Paumunkey River, where we remained a few days, then continuing our march to within a few miles of “Bottom Bridge” on the Chicahominy. On the 23d the regiment was ordered to Picket Longbridge on the same river, joined the Brigade the following day, and on the 25th crossed the Chicahominy at Bottom Bridge, and marched to within a half a mile of Fair Oaks. Nothing of interest occurred till the 30th inst. when the sharp rattling of musketry announced the approach of the enemy, and the regiment was under arms and in line at a moments warning. The whole Brigade was formed and marched to the scene of action, but nothing of importance was done, except changing position, and some slight skirmishing, in which a few slight wounds were received by the regiment. Night having set in we Bivoaced. So ended the Battle of Seven Pines, which proved disastrous to Casey’s division, although a brilliant victory.

On Sunday morning, June 1st the Brigade was under the command of Col. J. H. Hobart Ward, of the 38th New York Regt., and had been from early dawn in “line of battle,” at Fair Oaks. The quick step of scouts to the line was the signal that the enemy were approaching. Our position could not have been better for the purpose of “ambush,” the Fourth Maine having been sent to take a flank position on the right secured themselves splendidly. The 3d Maine, 38th and 40th New York were concealed behind a Virginia fence. On came the enemy, Longstreet’s “crack” division. They formed four distinct “lines of Battle” the last of which was within twenty yards of our leveled muskets. They thought to surprise us, but we turned the tables on them, at the favorable moment the order was given “fire,” and “Charge,” and never was an order more promptly or thoroughly obeyed. The three left companies of our regiment being opposed to an entire Battalion (8th Alabama), who were all either killed, wounded or made prisoners. We drove the enemy, (they madly contesting every foot of ground) through a heavy growth of wood, a swamp, and over a plain, where the 4th Maine Regiment finished the mornings work. The brilliant charge made by the Regiment of the Brigade was the theme of universal praise and Gen. Kearney said our “Brigade had gallantly won the honors of the Day.” Our loss was, in killed and wounded nearly one third of the regiment, principally from the “left wing,” Co.s “B,” “F,” “C,” & “K.”

The Brigade held its position for three days after the Battle, when we were withdrawn and encamped on the ground we fought, and also interred our deceased Comrades on. The duty in the trenches was here very trying, as it was almost continual battle from day to day. We remained in the advance line of the Army until June 25th when we were again engaged in the Battle of "White Oak Swamp", where, by having a good position, the regiment was enabled to do excellent service with very slight loss. On the 29th of June we were withdrawn from the advance line of fortifications before Richmond, at early morning, Major Burt commanding, and crossed White Oak Swamp at Jordan's Ford at dusk in the evening, covered by the left flank company as skirmishers under command of Lieut. Warren Cox who after an advance of nearly two miles in the direction of Charles City Cross Roads came upon the rebels in considerable force, with whom they opened a brisk skirmish, but in consequence of the disparity in force they retired, slowly and in good order, with a loss of one man killed, and one made prisoner.

By order of Gen. Birney we then recrossed the swamp and joined the Brigade, and again crossed White Oak Swamp six miles lower down, gained the highland, and bivouaced (sic) for the night. On the morning of the 30th the Regt. moved forward on the Charles City Road, and took an active part in the "Battle of Charles City Cross Roads," where we held a skirmish line of about half a mile in length. At this battle the regiment lost all baggage, it having been left on the field, by order of Gen. Birney, previous to the opening of the Battle.

At 2 o'clock A.M. on July 1st we marched from this place to Malvern Hill, and here assisted in supporting Randolph's 6th R.I. Battery, being for 8 hours exposed to a severe fire from the enemy's batteries, during which time the Regiment displayed a spirit of resolute bravery; our loss was here very light. On the morning of the 2nd at 2 A.M., we again took up our march in the direction of Harrison's Landing in a severe rain storm, rendering it almost impossible for our worn out men to keep themselves in the ranks. On the morning of the 3d we again formed line, as the enemy's shells gave notice of their close proximity, and proceeded to the front, where we remained, held our ground, and finally encamped. This series of marching and fighting is what has been called the "Seven Days Battles."

From this time till the 15th of August, the Regiment remained in front, erecting "breastworks," and performing picket duty, when they again took up the march for Yorktown, where we arrived August 19th, embarked on transports for Alexandria the 21st, and arrived there the following day.

On the 23rd, we left Alexandria by rail, and proceeded to within 4 miles of the Rappahannock River, in which locality we remained till August 27th, the Regiment being then under the command of Captain Lakeman. The Brigade was then ordered on a flank movement to Greenwich, at which place we arrived shortly before midnight, and at about 2 A.M. the following morning, the Regt. moved in advance of the Brigade as Scouts towards Bristow Station, and continuing the march to Manassas and Centerville, we bivouaced for the night. On the 29th we marched for Bull Run and arrived on the Battle field at about 9 A.M., and participated in the engagement of that day.

On the 30th Maj. Burt, commanding, the regiment supported Randolph's Battery until 3 O'clock P.M., when we retired to the rear, where the Brigade, with all others, were compelled to retire. At this time, the regiment, with Gen. Kearney at its head, returned to the attack, but meeting a rebel brigade, were forced to retire under a murderous fire. A portion of the regiment also encountered another heavy fire while supporting a section of a battery, and with the rest of the forces fell back to Centerville.

September 1st we took up the line of march for Fairfax when again the regiment with the rest of the Brigade went to the assistance of General Stevens' Division, which had been repulsed, and succeeded in checking and driving back the enemy, holding our position till the next morning. Here the gallant and lamented **Kearney** fell, at the ever memorable battle of Chantilly. Our loss in the last named battles was 4 killed, 38 wounded, and 8 missing.

September 2nd the regiment marched for Alexandria where we arrived on the 3^d, and encamped in the vicinity of Fort Lyon. On the 4th Col Staples, (having returned from sick leave) took command. On the 8th the regiment, with the Brigade moved to Fort Worth, and from thence to Fort Bernard, where we remained till the evening of the 15th when we were ordered to proceed to Poolsville and the Monocacy, Md, where we arrived on the 18th and the following day marched for White's Ford, on the Upper Potomac. Here the regiment done duty on the fords from Monocacy River to Conrad's Ferry, at which place Col Staples having command of the Brigade, Lieut. Col Lakeman commanded the regiment, till Oct 11th, when the regiment with the 4th Maine were ordered to the mouth of the Monocacy, (about 8 miles), to intercept the return of Stuarts (Rebel) Cavalry into Virginia.

The regiment arrived at the mouth of the Monocacy about 11 o'clock P.M., and Capt Morgan with two companies was sent forward to hold the Bridge, and form a picket line, and having taken our position, the regiment bivouaced. At 9 o'clock A.M., the following morning, the enemy with field artillery attacked us with the seeming intention of crossing the river at this point. Lieut. Col. Lakeman then sent forward Companies "F" and "H," (under command of Capt Morgan) as skirmishers, to harass the enemys gunners, [and] who encountered a body of Rebel Cavalry, dismounted, and acting as skirmishers whom he attacked and routed, the fire at this time from our own battery, preventing him from following them. In the mean time Major Burt with four companies was engaged supporting Purington's Battery, when learning that the enemy had taken to their horses, and were crossing the Ford three miles lower down. Col. Lakeman with the balance of the regiment immediately started for the Ford, but arrived too late, the enemy had escaped.

We returned to Poolsville in the evening and on the 15th again marched for Whites' Ford where we remained, doing Guard and Picket duty till Oct 28th. We fording the Potomac at this point, and encamped near the river on the Virginia side. Gen. Ward having previously taken command of the Brigade, Col. Staples resumed command of the regiment. While here the other Brigades of the Division, under Gen. Stoneman, joined us, and on the 31st day of October, we marched towards Leesburg, encamping within two miles (west) of it, and making short marches daily, arrived at Warrenton Va, on the Rappahannock on the 7th day of November where we remained, doing duty at Waterloo Bridge till the 16th, when we were ordered to march to Falmouth. Col. Staples at this time having resigned the command devolved on Col. Lakeman.

We arrived at Falmouth Nov 22nd and encamped, until Decr. 11th, when, being under orders for Fredericksburg, the thunder of guns before the dawn of day reminded us we were for duty. The regiment was in line, and on the march, in their proper position in the Brigade, and with the division and other troops halted after proceeding about a mile. Here the several regiments "stacked arms," and the men were permitted to unslung knapsacks, as the passage of the Rappahannoc River had not been carried. In this position we remained till nearly dusk, when the whole division moved about a mile further to the front, and filing right and left from the road, bivouaced for the night.

All the forenoon of the following day (12th) the men were kept at their arms, ready of any emergency, but it was late in the afternoon before the order to march was received. When it did come, no time was lost, and we marched some six miles in order to cross and reinforce Gen. Franklin, who had been giving battle to the enemy throughout the day. Arriving within about a mile of the Pontoon Bridge, it was discovered that the troops previously sent by this route had not yet crossed, and we were again ordered to bivouac. On the morning of the 13th the regiment was under arms at day-break, and again on the march, and after the delay, seemingly required in moving large bodies, we succeeded in crossing the Rappahannock River, about 10 o'clock A.M.

Gen Birney commanding Division immediately formed his Brigades, and pushed forward to the left of the ground occupied by Gen. Whipple. We were immediately formed into lines of battle by brigades, and ordered to prepare for action. The regiment was then marched by Col Lakeman to the rear (some 175 yards) where they deposited their knapsacks and soon took their position in the line. At this time the shot and shell from the enemy's batteries was flying thick and fast over us, and a few of our men were

wounded. The regiment was ordered forward to the right of our position, to the support of Captain Hall's (2nd Maine) Battery, and remained in position nearly six hours, under a most trying fire from batteries and sharpshooters. The execution done by our Battery on the ranks of the enemy needs no comment from us, our duty was to support it at all hazards, and the position was a "post of honor and danger." The battery having been ordered to change position, it was discovered that one of its guns had been disabled, and that in consequence of the loss of all its horses. The enemy seeing which came boldly forward to seize it, but the unerring aim of a well directed volley from our men, sent them flying back to the cover of their entrenchments beyond the woods. The regiment then escorted the Battery to the position it had been ordered to, and immediately returned and formed line of Battle on the ground previously occupied by the Battery, covering nearly the whole Brigade front. At sunset we were reinforced by the other regiments of the Brigade and that night formed the advance line being in close range for the enemy's sharpshooters. At early morning we were withdrawn from the front, and placed in the second line, where we remained all through the day (14th) and at midnight again took up our previous position (in the advance.) The regiment was of necessity compelled to lay on wet ground, in front of the enemy for about 50 hours, which accounts for the light loss sustained in comparison with others of the Brigade. Our loss was 3 killed, 25 wounded, and four missing, supposed to have been taken prisoners.

On Monday night between the hours of ten and eleven, the regiment, with the rest of the Brigade were withdrawn from the lines, retreated on the pontoons and soon after midnight crossed the river, losing no baggage or public property. Halting a few hours before daylight, the regiments were permitted to rest, and amid a disagreeable rain storm, snatched a "soldiers sleep." At 10 o'clock the next morning, (15th) the regiment with the Brigade marched to the camp grounds previously occupied, and where we now are.

The 3d Maine Regiment has therefore, participated in Fifteen battles or engagements, without reference to the numerous skirmishes, which, since their organization they have been either participators or principal actors in. The engagements are as follows:

"Bull Run", "Bailey's Cross Roads," "Siege of Yorktown,"
"Williamsburg," "Seven Pines," "Fairoaks," "Fairoak Swamp," "Chas. City
Cross Roads," "Malvern Hill," "Glendale," "Manassas," "Chantilly,"
"Monocacy," and "Fredericksburg."

The following table will show the original and present state of the Regiment.

Gen. Hodson:

Sir. There may be a slight discrepancy in the loss of men in this table. I would say that some of the men reported as transferred were from one company to another, and being reported on the original strength and also the present, causes a slight variation.

M. B. Lakeman

Col 3 Me Vols