COL. R. H. G. MINTY
AND THE
4th MICHIGAN
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CAVALRY.

Reprinted from the Louisville Journal.

One of the cavalry camps near the fort on Shelby street was the scene of a very pleasant reunion on the 16th inst. The 4th Michigan cavalry, Colonel R. H. G. Minty's old regiment, after two years and three months of uninterrupted hard service at the front, had been sent here to remount. On the occasion referred to the Colonel, in behalf of the friends of the regiment in Flint, Michigan, presented his war-worn troops with a beautiful stand of colors, the gift of the ladies of Flint. The presentation letter was read by Captain Robert Burns, A. A. General of Col. Minty's brigade, and a committee appointed to reply.
The flag is a model of neatness and good taste. In the center of a groundwork of rich blue silk is the national coat of arms, with a star for each State. Around this center, tastefully arranged in handsome gilt letters, the names of twelve battles in which the regiment has fought. In the center of the opposite side there is the coat of arms of the State of Michigan, and this Latin motto, "In jure vincimus," and around the border, as on the other side, the names of twelve other battle-fields.* This flag was ready for presentation in April last, but the regiment had left before it could be forwarded, and has only now become so settled in camp as to give opportunity for the presentation. On a silver-plate on the staff stand engraved the names of sixteen other battles in which this noble regiment has fought since the flag was finished, during the memorable campaign against Atlanta. Among the battle-fields on the flag are Stone River, Shiloh, Franklin, Sparta, Middleton, Rover, Unionville, Liberty, Snow Hill, McMinville, Lebanon, Chickamauga, Reed's Bridge, Hill Creek, Chattanooga, Cleveland; on the silver plate, Rome, Kingston, Dallas, Powder Spring, Big Shanty, Kinsaw Mountain, Chattahoochie, Covington, Stone Mountain, Latimer's Mills, Flat Shoals, Lovejoy's Station, Jonesboro, and Atlanta. The whole number being forty, and this makes no account of minor skirmishes which might be added, swelling the number to hundreds. Immediately after the flag presentation, the following order, which explains itself, was read to the regiment, the parties therein named being present:

*The staff has a plate on which is engraved: "Presented to the 4th regiment Michigan cavalry by their friends in Flint;" "Blessings on our noble boys;" "Victory over every foe."
Michigan, Corporal C. M. Bickford is appointed 2d Lieutenant, vice Jones, resigned.

By order of Col. R. H. G. MINTY, Commanding.
J. G. DICKINSON, 1st Lieutenant and Adjutant.

A few words about this noble regiment and its gallant commander will hardly be considered out of place in this connection: The 4th Michigan cavalry, Colonel Minty commanding, crossed the Ohio river twelve hundred strong, at the time when the rebel army, under General Bragg, was threatening Louisville, in October, 1862, and participated in the military movements that drove the rebels from Kentucky. Making a hasty march from Crab Orchard to Munfordville, it joined in the hunt after John Morgan, and followed that noted rebel and horse-thief across the Cumberland River. When General Rosecrans advanced towards Murfreesboro, the 1st cavalry brigade, of which the 4th Michigan was then a part, and to the command of which Colonel Minty had been appointed, moved out in advance of the center column. The 4th Michigan cavalry fired the first gun, and had the first man killed in the memorable series of desperate fights, which, spreading over many miles of country, and occupying many days, together constitute the battle of Stone River. Colonel Minty, with his 1st brigade, the 4th Michigan included, led a sabre charge on the evening of December 31st, which checked the then victorious rebels. From that time the enemy gained nothing. Minty's was the first cavalry to enter Murfreesboro, after Bragg's forces were withdrawn.

When Rosecrans advanced toward Tullahoma, Minty's brigade, after a hard fight, drove a heavy force of the enemy from Shelbyville, killing and wounding a great number and capturing 600 prisoners, with three pieces of artillery. When Bragg, reinforced by Longstreet, fell upon Rosecrans's army on the 19th of September, 1863, Minty, with his brigade, fought the advancing columns of the enemy one day almost alone, and, by a series of brilliant cavalry movements, held the whole rebel army at bay until the General could collect his scattered troops; and the General himself said that his cavalry here saved his army. During Sherman's last campaign, Minty, with his brigade, was always where hard work and desperate fighting were to be performed. His command was detached from Garrard's division, and formed a part of the force that, under Kilpatrick, passed around the two armies, cutting the Macon Railroad, after the disastrous failures of McCook and Stone man. Here, near Lovejoy's Station, Colonel Minty led his brigade—his own old regiment, the 4th Michigan, being in the center—in one of the most brilliant and successful cavalry charges of the war, literally cutting his way through the rebel army and saving Kilpatrick's command.

Minty's brigade has been known as the 1st brigade, 2d cavalry division, and was composed of the 4th United States, 7th Pennsylvania, and 4th Michigan cavalry. In the reorganization now going on it is to be known as the 2d brigade of the 9d division, and will consist of the 4th Michigan, 7th Pennsylvania, and 1st, 3d, and 4th Ohio.

Col. Minty has been earnestly recommended to the President and Secretary of War for promotion. First, in 1861, for gallant conduct while with the 3d Michigan cavalry. Second, by Maj. Gen. Stanley, Chief of Cavalry, and Gen. Rosecrans in the spring of '63. Third, by Gen. Rosecrans in his official report in the
autumn of 1863. Fourth, by Generals Stanley, Thomas, and Elliot, in the spring of 1864; and fifth, by Generals Kilpatrick and Sherman for gallant conduct during the late campaign. The Governor of Michigan, with the two U. S. Senators, and all the Representatives in Congress but one, have united in asking of the War Department a star for this successful and brilliant cavalry commander. His friends have ceased to look for justice. He is no favorite with West Point martinet, and scorns the sycophantic throng that lie watching around the portals near Washington. He has been more than two years Colonel commanding a brigade. His friends have long ceased to look for justice to this truly worthy officer. When this "cruel war" is over, and history does justice to those who have fought, it will be seen how little minds invested with temporary power, from motives of jealousy so mean that they can hardly be believed, have withheld that which was due honest merit, while blustering pretence and worthless impudence have stolen honors due better men. Impartial history will do justice to the soldier who has faithfully served his country and successfully led her armies during this her terrible struggle for life. F.
Louisville, Nov. 28, 1864.

MINTY'S
Saber Brigade.

THE PART THEY TOOK IN THE CHATTANOOGA CAMPAIGN.

CHICKAMAUGA.


Reprinted from the National Tribune.

WYANDOTTE, MICH.
THE HERALD STEAM PRESS.
1862.
MINTY'S SABER BRIGADE.

I.

SOME time ago I was honored by receiving from the War Department a magnificent set of 10 maps of the battlefield of Chickamauga, Sept. 19 and 20, 1863. These maps were compiled, drawn and corrected by able and distinguished officers of the Engineer Corps, under the directions of Col. Merritt, Chief Engineer of the Army of the Cumberland. They are a most valuable addition to the correct and truthful history of that great and sanguinary battle.

Five of these maps (A—1, 2, 3 and 4) cover the 19th, and five (5, 6, 7, 8 and Z) cover the 20th of September.

In addition to giving the position of each command in the various phases of the battle, each map has an explanatory legend describing the movements.

Minty's Cavalry appears on these maps many times and in many positions, and in the legend is awarded no unimportant part.

In connection with the history of the battle as given in the legend, I believe that a truthful narrative of the part taken by Minty's Saber Brigade in the Chattanooga campaign and in the battle of Chickamauga will prove to be of interest to the comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic, but above all, it will form a page in history which will do justice to those gallant men whom I had the honor to command from prior to the battle of Stone River until after we sent Jefferson Davis, the head and front of the rebellion, a prisoner to the Capitol of our rescued and restored country.

After the close of the Tullahoma campaign, when our great commander, Gen. Rosecrans, or “Old Rosy,” as he was familiarly called, had driven Bragg from the line of Duck River and from Tullahoma, thus gaining possession of that beautiful and fertile section, middle Tennessee, he established his headquarters at Winchester, under the shadow of the Cumberland Mountains, and
devoted himself actively to the work of reopening the railroad and accumulating supplies at the front in sufficient quantities to enable him to make a further advance.

On the first day of August, 1863, I was detached from the Cavalry Corps, and ordered to cover the left of the army in its advance to Chattanooga, and incidentally to "clear the rebel cavalry out of the country as we advanced." I reported to Gen. Crittenden, commanding the left wing, and under orders from him proceeded at once to McMinnville, where Gen. Van Cleve's Division held the left of our position.

My brigade consisted of—

The 4th U. S. Cav., Capt. J. B. McIntyre commanding.
The 7th Pa. Cav., Col. W. B. Sipes commanding.

One battalion of the 31st Ind. Cav., Lieut.-Col. Cline commanding.

One section Chicago Board of Trade Battery, Lieut. Griffin commanding.

The rebel cavalry which I was expected to "clear out of the country" was the brigade of Gen. Dibrell, which was then camped in the vicinity of Sparta, Tenn., the home of Dibrell, to which place, we understood, he had returned for the purpose of recruiting his command and of picking up his stragglers, who had returned to their homes "to see their folks."

Learning that Dibrell was camped at Clark's Mill, one mile northwest from Sparta, I determined, if possible, to surprise him. His pickets occupied the line of Rock River; a bold, rugged stream, with rocky banks, absolutely impassable for cavalry, except at a few points known as fords. Three of these fords were available for my purpose. They were known as Dillon's Ford, Rock Island Ford and Lower Ford. Any or all of these could be held by a few determined men against almost any force that could be brought against them. Going down one bank, crossing the stream, and going up the other bank, it was necessary to wind your declivity way in and out, round great rocks and bowlders, so that the passage of the river was difficult, with nothing but natural obstacles to contend with.

I left McMinnville at 4 P. M., Aug. 4, and arrived at Mud Creek, three miles from Lower Ford, at 9 P. M. At this point I detached Col. Kline with his battalion, with orders to endeavor to make a crossing at Dillon's Ford; if he succeeded, to gain, as rapidly as possible, the Sparta and McMinnville road, turn to his left, and capture the picket at Rock Island, at which point I promised to meet him at midnight.

Covered by the pitchy darkness of a wild and stormy night, Col. Kline crossed the river, with only one shot fired at him; but that shot alarmed the picket at Rock Island, and when we arrived there, sharp at the appointed time, midnight, I found that the rebels had scattered over the country, every foot of which they were familiar with, and thus frustrated the intended surprise. A few moments later Col. Kline joined me; he had captured 14 men.

I returned to McMinnville, arriving at 11 A. M., Aug. 5.

I was informed that Dibrell moved his camp from one locality to another every day or two, and it was therefore difficult to know just where to strike him. On the 8th I was informed that he was camped two miles south of Sparta; so, at 3 p. m. on that date, with 774 men of all ranks, I marched for Spencer, situated almost directly east from McMinnville and south from Sparta, and lying among the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains. We arrived at Spencer at 11:30 p. m., and halted long enough to make coffee and feed horses.

The country was terribly rough and rugged, and the night was dark as Erebus. However, I had a guide who was thoroughly familiar with the locality, and we pushed forward, crossed Caney Fork at the mouth of Cane Creek, and at break of day struck Dibrell's pickets about four miles south of Sparta.

My advance was 155 men of the 4th Mich., commanded by Maj. Horace Gray, whom I had instructed not to pay any attention to or return the fire of the rebel pickets, but to drive and follow them on the gallop, and they would lead him directly to their camp.

The pickets led us through Sparta, where I was informed that Dibrell had moved camp the evening before, and was now about three miles north, on the east bank of the Salt Killer Creek.

The long night march and the morning gallop had tired our horses, and consequently the rebel pickets were enabled to alarm the camp before we could strike it. Still, Maj. Gray dislodged and drove Dibrell across the creek before the column could render any assistance.

Gen. Dibrell took up a strong position on a hill commanding a narrow, rickety bridge, which was the only means of crossing the creek at this point.
I crossed Capt. McIntyre with the 4th Regulars at a rocky ford some distance below the bridge, and instructed him to sharply attack the enemy's right; Col. Sipes was directed to support Capt. McIntyre, while with the 4th Mich. and 3d Ind. I made a direct attack at the bridge. The moment his flank was touched, Dibrell abandoned his strong position and scattered on the run.

My loss was confined exclusively to the 4th Mich., which regiment had three men killed and one officer and one man wounded. We saw one officer and 13 of Dibrell's men killed, and we captured one officer and nine men.

The 4th Regulars, 7th Pa., and 3d Ind. scoured the country in every direction, but their horses were too tired to overtake the freshly-mounted rebels.

In “Campaigns of Forrest,” page 294, the author, referring to this affair, says: “The attack was made with so much dash, that escape of any of Dibrell's men was due to the fleetness of their horses.”

We returned to McMinnville on the following day—the 10th.

On Aug. 17 the general advance of the army commenced.

The order of march required me to be at Pikeville, in the Sequatchie Valley, on the night of the 18th. I marched from McMinnville at 2 A.M. on the 17th, on the direct road to Sparta, and as we approached that place learned that Dibrell was camped near Sperry's mill, on the banks of the Cali Killer.

The 4th Mich. and 7th Pa. moved up the east bank, and the 4th U.S. and 3d Ind. the west bank of the creek. The broken nature of the ground, and the numerous branches or creeks that crossed the line of advance, delayed these latter regiments more than I had anticipated.

The 4th Mich. and 7th Pa. pushed forward rapidly, and were soon actively engaged. The enemy scattered and the fight extended over a large extent of country; they were driven as far as Yankee Town, over 10 miles from Sperry's Mill. Here I abandoned the pursuit and returned to Sparta.

About four miles from Sparta the road I was moving on led close to the Cali Killer, with a high, wooded hill on the opposite side.

I was riding about 10 rods in advance of the 4th U.S., which regiment was at the head of my column. Capt. Burns, my A.A. A.G., and Capt. Vale, my A.A. I.G., were riding at my side, and three Orderlies following. Serg't Burch, Corp't Hodges—who carried the brigade battleflag—and my Bugler, Bailey, a half-breed Indian, of the 4th Regulars.

Capt. Burns turning to me, said: “Colonel, this is the first time I have known you to move without an advance-guard.”

I replied: “It is scarcely necessary, we will bivouac immediately; but I should not do it. A bold dash of 50 men would throw the head of the column into confusion,” and turning in my saddle I said to the Bugler: “Bailey, give my compliments to Capt. McIntyre, and request him to send a dozen men to the front as an advance-guard.”

Vale, in “Minty and the Cavalry,” pages 296 and 297, says: “On this hill, across the creek, two regiments of Dibrell's command, which had been cut off by the preceding advance, were lying in ambush, being protected from immediate assault by the creek there unfordable. * * * As the Bugler wheeled his horse and started on the gallop, a volley from the men in ambush was fired at the five men thus riding alone. Capt. Vale had four holes bored across his shoulders by a raking shot from left to right. Serg't Burch, one of the Orderlies, was shot in the thigh and his leg broken: Col. Minty's horse received three balls, and the horses of both Orderlies were killed.”

The last number of the Chattanooga Rebel ever published in Chattanooga, a sheet about 12 inches square, and printed on one side only, contains the following paragraph: “In the fight at Sparta on the 17th, the notorious Yankee cavalry General Minty was killed.”

A force was crossed about a quarter of a mile down the creek, which soon dislodged the enemy, who retreated rapidly toward Kingston, and in the morning no trace of them could be found, except their dead, whom the citizens were ordered to bury.

Vale says, pages 297-8: “The rebel force engaged was 1,600 men; Minty's force was 1,400, and operating in an unknown country, while every cow-path was familiar to the enemy; notwithstanding which they were driven from position after position from 4 to 8 P.M., a distance of 14 miles, often at a gallop. * * * The number captured during the day was 25, representing four different regiments, but the demoralization of their command was such that Dibrell officially reports that the 8th Tenn. alone crossed the Cumberland Mountains, and it, with less than when he reached
Sparta. He likewise reports a loss of eight killed and 30 wounded."

My loss was one drowned, three officers and 12 men wounded.

On the night of the 18th I arrived at Pikesville, in the Sequatchie Valley, established a hospital and left my wounded there, with an Assistant Surgeon in charge.

On the 19th I took possession of Smith's Crossroads, in the Tennessee Valley, making prisoners of 150 men who were surprised at the foot of Wabdron's Ridge.

Sept. 1 Maj. Gray, with the 4th Mich., opened communications with Gen. Burnside's right at Kingston, and made prisoners of 128 men from Buckner's Corps, and on the 2d I reported to Gen. Crittenden, "Buckner's command has crossed the Tennessee River at London, and is now being pushed as fast as possible toward Chattanooga."

On Sept. 13 I crossed the Tennessee River by fording, detached the 3d Ind. to Chattanooga for picket and courier duty, and with the remainder of my brigade drove Pegram's cavalry through Grayville, and about midnight reported to Gen. Crittenden at Lee & Gordon's Mill. On the 14th, under orders from Gen. Crittenden, I crossed Missionary Ridge into Lookout Valley and returned to Gordon's Mill next day.

On the evening of the 15th Gen. Crittenden directed me to proceed at once to Pea Vine Valley and establish my headquarters in the vicinity of Leet's Crossroads.

Crossing the Chickamauga at Reed's Bridge, I moved into Pea Vine Valley, east of Pea Vine Ridge, and at dark camped at Keeler's Mill, on Pea Vine Creek, near the Ringgold road, and sent patrols in the direction of Grayville, Ringgold, Leet's, and Rock Springs. On the return of the patrols during the night, I reported to Gen. Crittenden the information gained, and at about 2 A.M. received the following reply from Capt. Oakleshaw, Assistant Adjutant-General. Twenty-first Corps: "The Major-General commanding directs me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, informing him that Forrest is at Ringgold, Longstreet at Dalton, Pegram at Leet's, and Buckner at Rock Springs. All this would indicate infantry, which the Major-General commanding cannot believe."

Van Horne, in his "History of the Army of the Cumberland," page 837, says: "During the 19th M'Intyre reconnoitered the front, and reported that the enemy was in force at Dalton, Ringgold, Leet's Tanyard, and Rock Springs Church."

On the 16th I reported to Gen. Crittenden that a force of infantry had that morning moved from the direction of Rock Spring toward Ringgold. He replied very curtly, "It was nothing but a small force of dismounted cavalry.

I personally went to Gordon's Mill to see Gen. Crittenden, and followed him to Crawfish Springs, where I found him with Gen. Rosecrans. I did my best to convince him that Gen. Bragg was massing on his left; that he had been reinforced by Gen. Longstreet with two corps. He scouted the idea, and said:

"Longstreet is in Virginia."

I said: "Pardon me, General; Longstreet was yesterday at Dalton, with two corps from the Army of Northern Virginia."

Gen. Rosecrans made some remark. I do not recollect it with sufficient clearness to quote it now; but it indicated that he was inclined to place confidence in my report. Crittenden sprang to his feet and, raising his hand above his head, exclaimed:

"General, I will guarantee, with my corps, to whip every rebel within 20 miles of us."

This settled the matter. Here was a distinguished General, commanding a magnificent corps, the left wing of the army, and I only a Colonel, commanding a little brigade of cavalry. I took my leave with a heavy heart and hastened back to my command.

On the return of my patrols, on the 17th, I sent my report, as usual, to Gen. Crittenden. When my courier returned he informed me that Col. Wilder was at Alexander's Bridge, between my position and Gordon's Mill. This was cheering news, for if I was in a tight place I would rather have Wilder with his splendid brigade of mounted infantry, supporting me, than any brigade in the army. We had worked and fought together, and the two brigades had full and perfect confidence in each other.

Before daybreak on the 18th I had strong patrols on the roads leading to Ringgold and Leet's. About 6 o'clock couriers came in from both directions, reporting the enemy advancing in force. I at once reported this fact to Gen. Gordon Granger, commanding the Reserve Corps, at Rossville; to Gen. Tom Wood, at Gordon's Mill; Gen. Crittenden, at Crawfish Springs; and Col. Wilder, at Alexander's Bridge, and took position on the eastern slope of Pea Vine Ridge.

I will now drop my narrative for a while, and quote from the
legend on the official maps that portion which makes mention of my brigade.

**LEGEND ON MAP 1.**
*Preliminary Movements.*
Minty's Cavalry Brigade in front and east of Reed's Bridge, in addition to the threatening demonstrations made by the enemy on the 16th and 17th from the direction of both Ringgold and Lafayette, was early on the 18th apprized, by strong patrols sent out in both directions, that the enemy was advancing in heavy force from Ringgold as well as Lafayette. ** ***

At noon on the 18th Minty was forced back to the west side of Chickamanga Creek, at Reed's Bridge, by a heavy column of infantry preceded by cavalry, which had approached from Ringgold. Wilder's Brigade of Mounted Infantry, which was at Alexander's Bridge, two miles above Minty's position, was also attacked during the forenoon of the 18th, but not in such strength as to force Wilder away from the position. He was then enabled to send two of his regiments (the 72d Ind. and the 136th Ill.) and two guns of Lilly's battery to Minty's assistance when called upon at noon.

With this reinforcement Minty stubbornly resisted the crossing at Reed's Bridge until after 2:30 P.M., when he was forced to retire toward Lee and Gordon's Mill. The enemy's force consisted of four brigades of infantry under B. R. Johnson and Hood, preceded by Pegram's Division of Cavalry, under Forrest. This force was the column designated to initiate the attack upon the left of Gen. Rosecrans' army, in Gen. Bragg's circular, dated Sept. 18, at Leet's Tanyard.

**LEGEND ON MAP 2.**
Minty's Brigade of Cavalry was posted in front of Reed's Bridge toward Ringgold.

**LEGEND ON MAP 3.**
On the afternoon of the 18th, while the enemy was crossing Hood's and Walker's commands below Lee & Gordon's Mill, Crittenden's three divisions were moved into position at the mill, their left front and flank covered by Minty's Brigade of Cavalry and Wilder's Brigade of Mounted Infantry, in close contact with Hood's column.

**LEGEND ON MAP 4.**
Minty's Brigade of Cavalry was posted on the foothills of Missionary Ridge, back of Widow Glenn's, covering the wagon trains moving along the Dry Valley road through McFarland's Gap to Chattanooga.

**LEGEND ON MAP 5.**
The trains of Thomas's and Crittenden's Corps had been moving all day from Crawford Springs along the Dry Valley road toward Chattanooga, guarded by Minty's Brigade of Cavalry, which bivouacked after nightfall about two miles south of Rossville.

**LEGEND ON MAP 6.**
Minty's Brigade of Cavalry was sent forward northeast to Missionary Mills, on Chickamanga Creek, to reconnoiter.

**LEGEND ON MAP 7.**
Minty found no enemy at Missionary Mills and returned to McAfee's Church during the afternoon, after Granger's infantry had departed. Minty then moved out toward Ringgold Bridge, where he attacked Scott's Cavalry late in the afternoon. At night Minty retired toward Rossville.

**LEGEND ON MAP 8.**
The morning of Sept. 21 Rosecrans' army was at Rossville, four miles north of the battlefield. Minty covered the front toward Ringgold with three regiments of cavalry. ** ***

At 9 A.M. Minty, whose Brigade of Cavalry was in front and east of Rossville at the intersection of the roads leading to Ringgold, and to the battlefield, reported to Gen. Thomas the approach of Forrest's Cavalry by both roads. After briskly skirmishing with this force until noon, Minty fell back through the Gap, and was sent to a position on Missionary Ridge, beyond the left of Crittenden. ** ***

Gen. Rosecrans' army during the night of the 21st was withdrawn to Chattanooga, leaving Minty's Cavalry alone on the Ridge north of Rossville Gap.

Soon after sunrise of the 22d, Forrest's Cavalry forced Minty away from Rossville Gap toward Chattanooga.
II.

To resume my narrative: By 6:30 o'clock on the morning of the 18th I was in position on the east slope of Pea Vine Ridge, ready to contest the advance of the approaching enemy. A few moments later my patrols came in; they were closely followed by the rebels, who advanced a strong skirmish-line, followed by heavy columns, on the Ringgold and Leet's (or Lafayette) roads.

I posted one of these columns getting within range. Lieut. Griffin opened fire on it with his two guns, and, so far as we could judge, did considerable execution. This checked the enemy and caused them to deploy. They evidently supposed that there was a strong force opposing them, and they occupied considerable time in getting into position.

At about 11 o'clock I observed a heavy column of dust moving from the direction of Graysville toward Dyer's Ford, away to my left and rear. I sent an officer to Col. Wilder to explain the position to him, and ask him to send a regiment to hold Dyer's Ford and to cover my left. I sent my ambulances across the Chickamauga, and leaving a skirmish-line at the top of the east slope of the ridge, fell back to Reed's Bridge. At about 12 o'clock Col. Miller, from Wilder's Brigade, reported to me with his own regiment (the 72d Ind.), the 129th Ill., and two guns from Lilly's battery. I instructed Col. Miller to proceed at once to Dyer's Ford and to hold it against the force advancing from Graysville.

My skirmishers were now making their appearance over the top of the ridge, being driven by the rebel skirmish-line. My left and rear being taken care of, I advanced to the support of the skirmishers, and the enemy's skirmish-line was driven back on their line of battle in Pea Vine Valley. I estimated this line at 7,000; 13 sets of regimental colors were visible.

The rebel line now advanced, and I was steadily driven back across the ridge. About 300 yards above the bridge there was a poor ford, near which was located Reed's house and orchard; here I posted my two guns, supported by Capt. McCormick's battalion of the 4th U. S. Cav.

The position of the brigade was now most perilous: it was in line on the east side of the Chickamauga, the only means of crossing which was the narrow bridge, only wide enough to allow two men to ride abreast, but the soldier-like steadiness of the men prevented any mishap.

The enemy's skirmishers swarmed on the west face of the ridge, which is much more precipitous than the east, and a strong column was moving out of the gap, when I ordered the guns to open on them.

I directed Capt. McIntyre to cross the bridge with the 4th U. S. Cav., to move at a good sharp walk, and keep his men well closed up. I ordered the battery and its support to cross the ford and take position on high ground, near some old farm buildings, where they would command both the bridge and ford.

The 4th Mich. followed the 4th U. S., and it was followed by the 7th Pa.; each regiment being placed in position after crossing the bridge.

My entire brigade—except a picket of the 4th Mich., commanded by Lieut. J. H. Simpson, on the Harrison road, lying between Pea Vine Ridge and the Chickamauga, who had been cut off by the last advance of the enemy—was now on the west side of the Chickamauga. Lieut. Simpson joined me later without the loss of a man, having swam the creek.

The rebels made a desperate effort to gain possession of the bridge, which a squadron of the 4th U. S., under Lieut. Wirt Davis—now a Major in the same regiment—was destroying. The planking and fence-rails were sent floating down the stream, while Griffin's guns raked the approaches so thoroughly that the enemy had to fall back in confusion.

On Map A I am shown in this position from 2 to 4 p. m.

In the legend it is stated I was forced across to the west side at 12 o'clock.

To the position on the map is correct; the legend is wrong.

I had sent Capt. Vale, my A. A. I. G., with a report to Gen. Wood, at Gordon's Mill. I was successfully holding my position when I received the following report from Capt. Vale:

"Wilden has had to fall back from Alexander's Bridge: he has retired towards Gordon's Mill, and the enemy is crossing at all points in force."

I at once recalled Col. Miller from Dyer's Ford, informing him of the position, and ordering him to join me with the least possible delay. I held my ground until his arrival at about 4:30 p. m., when I fell back toward Gordon's Mill. I was closely followed by the
enemy, and had to continually turn and check them.

One hundred and two rebel graves at Reed's Bridge attest the effectiveness of our resistance at that point.

On page 313, "Campaigns of Forrest," it is stated: "Johnson was in motion early on Friday morning, 18th, with four brigades—4,300 bayonets, and 12 guns. Forrest covered this column in front and right flank, and came in contact with the Federal cavalry at Kesler's Mill, on Pea Vine Creek. Swiftly dismounting his men a sharp skirmish took place, but Johnson pressing up and throwing forward his skirmishers, the enemy were swept back to Reed's Bridge, where another sharp affair, with severe loss, occurred before the bridge was seized."

On page 314 he says: "Law's and Robertson's Brigades had come up from Ringgold, and Maj-Gen. Hood had joined at Reed's Bridge."

About a mile and a half from Lee & Gordon's Mill I found Wilder in position facing northeast. I said: "Wilder, where do you want me?" He replied: "I think your best position will be to my right." I at once dismounted my men and formed on his right. Later two regiments from Dick's Brigade, of Van Cleve's Division, took position on my right, with their right retired, thus facing the Chickamauga, near Hall's Ford.

The map erroneously places me in this latter position, and Dick's men in the position which I occupied.

As soon as I had placed my men I galloped over to Lee & Gordon's Mill to report to Gen. Wood. I found him writing. Col. Harker sitting near him. As I approached, Harker sprang to his feet and said: "General, here is Col. Minty now."

Gen. Wood looked up and said: "I am glad to see you. I have just reported to Gen. Crittenden that your brigade had been cut off and captured."

"My brigade is all right, General, and is now with Wilder's covering your position."

Gen. Wood added a postscript to his dispatch, "Col. Minty has just come in with his brigade," closed and handed it to a mounted Orderly, who was waiting; then, turning to me, said: "Well, Minty, what have you been doing all day?"

"Fighting the enemy." 
"What have you been fighting?"

"Everything—infantry, artillery and cavalry."

"Where are they?"

"Close to your present position, which is now covered by Wilder's Brigade and mine."

"Do you mean on our side of the creek?"

"On our side of the creek, General."

"Well, come along, and we'll drive them across to their own side."

Gen. Wood and the writer mounted their horses and, followed by a couple of Orderlies, rode to the front to drive Bragg's army across the Chickamauga. As we rode up to Wilder's Brigade Gen. Wood said:

"Where are they, Wilder?"

"Ride forward a dozen paces, General, and you will see them," replied Wilder.

At that moment there was the roar of musketry in front of my brigade, followed by a rebel yell, and a large force came forward on the run.

Gen. Wood turned his head in the direction of the charging enemy, and with a look of blank astonishment, exclaimed: "By ——, they are here," and wheeling his horse galloped back to his command.

Before I could join my gallant men a soul-stirring cheer burst from them, and their Spencer carbines began to speak, and to some purpose, too, for the rebel yell ceased, the charging line halted, turned, and went back considerably faster than it had advanced.

By this time it was quite dark: the contending forces were in such close contact that every movement could be heard by the opposing force.

As the long and anxious night wore slowly on, and no relief or support for my worn-out and weary men made their appearance, I became very anxious. I well knew that if we remained in our then position until after daylight, nothing but a miracle could save us. The overwhelming numbers of the enemy could have crushed us in a moment.

About 2 o'clock in the morning I mounted and rode back toward Gordon's Mill to try and procure assistance. I had gone but a short distance when I met Gen. Palmer, a soldier who could be relied on at all times, either in council or in fight. Before I had time to say a word he asked me about the position of the opposing
armies. I rapidly gave him a sketch of the day's work, and, describing the then position of my brigade. I told him I was on my way to either Crittenden or Wood to ask for relief or support for my almost worn out command. Turning to one of his staff officers, Gen. Palmer said: "Tell Gen. Hazen to move forward at once and relieve Col. Minty's Brigade."

I replied: "Thank you, General: my poor fellows have not had a bite to eat nor a moment's rest for nearly 24 hours, and this will be a most acceptable relief to them: but Wilder is on my left, and is in exactly the same condition; he has been, opposing one of Longstreet's Corps since yesterday forenoon."

Gen. Palmer at once ordered another brigade forward to relieve Wilder. I have always felt grateful to this gallant and distinguished soldier for his prompt action on that occasion, and it affords me sincere pleasure to have this opportunity of making public acknowledgment.

The infantry moved into position behind us and we withdrew without any disaster and retired to a large cornfield west from Gordon's Mill, where we fed horses, and at about 7 o'clock on the morning of the 19th got the first mouthful of food we had had for 26 hours.

While I was taking my cup of coffee and eating a piece of hardtack, an officer of the 15th Pa. Cav. informed me that Gen. Rosecrans requested me to report to him in person, and added: "I will guide you to him, Colonel."

I found Gen. Rosecrans, surrounded by his staff, standing in front of the Widow Glenn's house. I dismounted and reported to him. He said: "Col. Minty, it is reported that Forrest is between us and Chattanooga playing havoc with our transportation and I want you to go back there and take care of him."

I found the road leading to Chattanooga entirely unobstructed by the enemy, and so reported to Gen. Rosecrans, who directed me to report to Gen. Thomas, who, in turn, ordered me to report to Gen. Gordon Granger, commanding the Reserve Corps, in front of Rossville. Gen. Granger desired me to move to his left and to guard the fords at and near Missionary Mills, and he would like me to get in position as early as possible in the morning. It was now near midnight. By daybreak my pickets had possession of the fords, and during the morning a strong patrol passed through Chickamauga Station and Graysville without meeting the enemy.

About 2 p.m., one of Gen. Granger's staff officers informed me that the General was moving to his right to reinforce Gen. Thomas, and requested me to take possession of the Rossville and Ringgold road.

When I arrived at my new position I sent a patrol to the front with instructions to go as far as the "Red House Bridge." The patrol reported that Gen. Scott, with his brigade, was on the west side of the Chickamauga. This I considered an encroachment on our territory, and at once attacked and drove him across the bridge to the east side of the creek.

By this time I had gained possession of the bridge. Night was upon us. I fell back to McAfee's Church, the position which Gen. Granger had occupied, and felt well to the right for the purpose of forming a junction with the infantry, but in the dark failed to find them. We remained in position all night, sitting on the ground, holding our horses, and procuring but little rest.

We were pretty well worn out with our three days' fighting and want of food and rest, and the feeling that the battle was going against us. The night was cold, and we were thoroughly chilled. The impression prevailed throughout the army that Burnside was on the march from East Tennessee to reinforce Gen. Rosecrans.

A little before break of day we heard cheering away in our rear. Every man sprang to his feet. The blood coursing through our veins warmed our chilled limbs and infused new life into our bodies. More than one called out: "There's Burnside, and we'll whip them yet.

I sent a couple of Orderlies back to learn what force was in our rear. They returned with the information that the whole of Gen. Rosecrans' army was in position at Rossville, three miles directly in our rear. A nice position to be in, truly. A little brigade of cavalry (three regiments) and one section of artillery, in all about 3,000 men, three miles in front of our army, and directly between it and the army we had been fighting for three days.

I waited until I had received the reports from my pickets, when, taking a staff officer and a couple of Orderlies with me, I galloped back to Rossville and reported my position to Gen. Thomas, whom I found in the famous grove of large trees immediately back of the Gap.

As soon as I reported to him he said: "You should not be there, Colonel."
The battle of Chickamanga, as told in history, lasted two
days, the 19th and 20th of September, 1863. For the "Saber
Brigade" it lasted five days, on every one of which, except the 19th,
when it was protecting the trains on the Dry Valley road,
and the entire time of severe fighting. Its stubborn
fighting on the 18th has never been properly appreciated at its ful value. Here I
will transcribe Gen. Bragg's circular or order of battle:

**HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF TENNESSEE.**

**IN THE FIELD, LEFT'S TANYARD, Sept. 18, 1863.**

1. Johnson's column (Hood's), on crossing at or near Reed's
Bridge, will turn to the left by the most practicable route, and
sweep up the Chickamanga toward Lee & Gordon's Mill.
2. Walker, on crossing at Alexander's Bridge, will unite in this
move and push vigorously on the enemy's flank and rear in the
same direction.
3. Buckner, crossing at Telford's Ford, will join in the
movement to the left, and press the enemy up the stream from Polk's
front to Lee & Gordon's Mill.
4. Polk will press his forces to the front of Lee & Gordon's
Mill, and if met by too much resistance will bear to the right and
cross at Dalton's Ford or at Telford's, as may be necessary, and
join in the attack wherever the enemy may be.
5. Hill will cover our left flank from an advance of the enemy
from the cove, and by pressing the cavalry in his front ascertain if
the enemy is reinforcing at Lee & Gordon's Mill, in which event he
will attack them in flank.
6. Wheeler's Cavalry will hold the gaps in Pigeon Mountain,
and cover our rear and left and bring up stragglers.
7. All teams, etc., not with troops, should go toward Ringgold
and Dalton, beyond Taylor's Ridge.

**GEN. BRAGG.**

By command of

G. W. BRENT, Assistant Adjutant-General.

If Wilder's Brigade at Alexander's Bridge and Minty's at
Reed's Bridge had not made the stubborn fight they did, which fact
is attested by the 103 rebel dead left at Alexander's Bridge, the 102
rebel dead left at Reed's Bridge and the unknown number left in
Pea Vine Valley, at Dyer's Ford, on the line of retreat from Reed's
Bridge to Lee & Gordon's Mill, and in front of our position near
that place, and by the loss of the entire day to Gen. Bragg, what
would have been the result to that glorious army, the Army of the
Cumberland?

If Bragg had been allowed to carry out his well-planned order of battle, as laid down in his order of the 18th, Crittenden's Corps would have been struck on its left flank by the corps of Hood, Walker and Buckner, while its front would have been attacked by Polk, and must have been annihilated. Before Thomas could have got within supporting distance, and Chattanooga, which had been won in such a masterly manner by our commander, that illustrious soldier, Gen. W. S. Rosecrans, would have been lost. The fruits of two successful campaigns, those of Tullahoma and Chattanooga, would have been snatched from us.

Ora, the historian of "Hood's Campaign in Middle Tennessee," writing to the Mobile Tribune of this day's fighting says: "Preston's Division effected an unopposed crossing at Hunt's (Dalton's) Ford; not so with Johnson and Walker at Reed's and Alexander's Bridges, and without them there was no sweeping up the Chickamauga and vigorously pressing the enemy's flank and rear.

In "Van Horne's History of the Army of the Cumberland," pages 380 and 381, we find: "In preparing for battle on the 18th he (Gen. Bragg) had overlooked causes of detention, and this mistake gave Gen. Rosecrans time to throw his army to the left, between him and Chattanooga. * * * At nightfall on the 18th, Bragg was by no means ready for battle on the 19th, having entirely failed to deliver it on the 18th, as he had planned. * * * Minty and Wilder were on the watch at Reed's and Alexander's Bridges.

These two brigades resisted so persistently that Gen. Bragg mentioned their action as one cause of delay.

Theacher, in his "A Hundred Battles in the West," page 144, says: "On the 17th and 18th of September * * * we began to smell the battle afar off, for occasionally an artillery fight away to the left, toward Chattanooga, could be heard, and we afterwards learned that Col. Minty with his brigade was there disputing the passage of the Chickamauga at Reed's Bridge." On page 150 he adds: "More extended research shows that Crittenden had occupied a position as far east as Ringgold and that Minty had insisted, after Crittenden had joined Thomas, that large bodies of Confederates were moving from the north and east to Bragg's support. * * * Minty had been reported captured beyond Reed's Bridge, and that catastrophe was averted only by rapid movements and desperate fighting."

On page 302 he says: "Minty, on our left, gave timely warning of Bragg's plans against Chattanooga, and without his services in the vicinity of Reed's Bridge and toward Ringgold, Rosecrans's army would never have had the road to Chattanooga open to them after the morning of 19th September. Yale, in "Minty and the Cavalry," page 239, says: "The only Union force beyond the Chickamauga, from its source to its mouth, on the evening of the 17th, was Minty's Brigade at Reed's Bridge and in the Pea Vine Valley." On page 281, he says: "The importance of this day's operations of Minty's and Wilder's Brigades can only be appreciated by remembering that it was Bragg's intention to have thrown Hood, Walker, Buckner, Forrest, and Pegram on Crittenden's left flank, in determined assault, as early as 8 or 10 o'clock in the morning of the 18th, when Polk's Corps was to overwhelm him in an assault from the front; and having disposed of him, pen Thomas up in McLemore's Cove, thus defeating the army in detail. * * * The persistent fighting and daring charges of Minty's men, of which the 102 rebel graves at Reed's Bridge are today mute but undeniable witnesses, compelled him to fight a long, determined battle before crossing; and to slow, cautious movements, with frequent halts and deployments in his after progress, so hampered and delayed his march that there was no sweeping up the creek, and prevented the blow that was planned to fall on Crittenden."

My old comrades of the "Saber Brigade," I have tried to give in the foregoing a true and correct narrative of what you did for our country on those memorable occasions, the Chattanooga campaign and the battle of Chickamauga. I have endeavored to adhere strictly to facts, and not to exaggerate in the slightest degree.

On reading what I have written I am not half satisfied. It seems as if I have not told one tithe of your gallant deeds: of your steady, cheerful, soldierlike bearing, your uncomplaining acceptance of fatigue, hunger and thirst; your grand and heroic fighting. I fear that in avoiding exaggerations I have fallen into the other extreme.

I have written this narrative with the single purpose and desire that history may do justice to you, the aggregate of noble men who formed a grand a brigade as ever drew sabers in defense of their country and flag.