Recollections of Captain William L. Balthia of Staunton Artillery, concerning an incident just before entering the field of battle, on Peindexter farm, at Malvern Hill, July 1st, 1862.

We were lying on the old church road near a lane that entered the Peindexter farm with the infantry who were in line of battle on that road. The fire of the artillery from the enemy became very heated and although pretty well sheltered in the woods we could see that the lines of infantry were being decimated by the shells of the enemy falling among them. We were then ordered to approach the field by way of that lane. After arriving near the gate I was ordered by Gen. Whiting to have trees cut so as to move my guns out of the lane to make room for others that would follow. Gen. Whiting stating that he wanted 50 guns in that lane before we could enter the field in order to make a simultaneous move into the field. Gen. Jackson and his staff then rode up and before we could cut any trees or move the battery from the lane he ordered Gen. Whiting to put the batteries that were in the lane at that time in the field. Gen. Whiting protested and said: "Gen. Jackson I understand we were not to enter the field until 50 guns arrived. These few guns will not be able to live in the field five minutes." I was at that time on my horse with Dr. Carter Berkeley besides Gen. Jackson and Whiting. In answer to Gen. Whiting's protest Gen. Jackson said: "General, obey orders." He answered: "I always obey orders promptly but do not obey these willingly." He then turned to me and ordered me to advance with the battery. We passed in the field but a short distance before we came in sight of the enemy's artillery which opened on us as soon as we were in view. Not having a good position when they opened on us we had to advance towards their immense batteries over a quarter of a mile in the face of that fire. For a little while on our approach we were hid from the main batteries but at that particular time we were exposed to the heavy fire of a battery at the head of a ravine on our right and we had at that time come in contact with a deep gulley that we were unable to cross at that point and were compelled to move down the gulley perhaps 50 yds before we reached a crossing. We suffered considerably by making that move. We then crossed the gulley where it became shallow and mounted the hill to the position that we started to attain and there found a beautiful position. We engaged the batteries and at one time had the whole artillery force concentrated on us, where we remained until we exhausted every ounce of our ammunition and then borrowed some from the batteries that came up, among them Peague's and Carpenter's.

The above was dictated to Mr. W. P. Eskridge, my Secretary, June 29th, 1876.

Adj. Hutchins