1-1-1861

Diary of Corporal William E. Walsh: First Rhode Island Cavalry, 1861-1865

William E. Walsh

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Corporal William Walsh

Providence, R.I.
May 17th, 1865

Notes In Brief,

Enlisted At Providence, R.I. In Captain J.B. Woods, Co. G. 1st R.I. Cav. As Private, on December 2nd, 1861, For 3 yrs. The Regt left the State on the 14th of March, 1862, and proceeded to Washington D.C. We remained here a short time to get horses, etc. We left there and went to Camp Mudd in Virginia. In the neighbourhood of Warrenton Junction. There we lost a good many men by diarrhea. We was under command of Colonel Lauton in Abercrombees Brigade. After a time we moved to Camp Alliance nearer to Warrenton Junction.
And while here General Shields
Took our 3rd Battallion of
Newhampshire men With him.
And the 2 Battallions of RI.
Men went in the Rear.
While with Shields the 3rd
Battallion had a Severe fight.
Against Great odds. Your
Boys lost 8 men and 1 Captain
We was put under other Generals.
Whose names I forget now.
So I write from memory.
But all events we was Sent
up the Luray Valley up tp
Millers Bridge. Near
Fort Republic Va.
From there we went Back
to Manasses. In the meantime
Our Col Resigned on account
Of ill heath. then the Responsiby
Rested on Lt Col Sayles.
After Suffering every privation.
Wanting food, water, + sleep.
Shortly after arriving there
We was Reviewd. by General
Mc dowell, and Govonor
WmSprague. here we got
A new fit out horses clothing
And Such things as we needed.
And while here Col Alfred
N Duffie, was appointed to
take charge of the Regt. He,
At once made Such changes
As was considered best. for
us. We went through a
Series. of drills for 3 months
when we was ordered in the
Field. All that I Remember
Now Is, we was at the
2nd Bull Run., Cedar mountain
Chantilla from there to
Washington, In Mc Clellan
Campaign. We fought undr
Kearny, Joe Hooker, Kimball.
Shields. and a dozen, others
whose names I forget now.
Then we went through, the Popes Campaign. on the Rappahanoc. And we was at the Battle of Fredricksburg. on Both occasions. And after the 2nd one, we went into Camp, where we Remaind all winter. That was at Potomac Creek. This time Burnside was, stuck in the Mudd, where we knew what hunger was. Living, on 10 Small hard tack Per day, and we usually eat Seven, at the first meal, During those times, many men Deserted and the men was Discharged, for disability, Brought on by hunger while we lay here we had new Recruits. And they was discharged, Again before old men I never wish to go through Such Campaigns again
No. 2 Continuation

While at Potomac Creek,

We had to go about,

Eight miles off. to do picket

Duty. and it was the devil's

Own work= I have Passed

Over many Small and import

Events. on account of only

writing from memory

But to Resume

On the 24 Feb 1863

While on Picket I and 3

Comissioned officers 1 each of 1st RI

3rd + 4 Penn, and 39 Men was

Surrounded, and taken Prisones

We was taken to Culpeper

Gordonsville and on to Richmond Va

Where Sympathetic old ladies

wanted us all hanged for their

Particular amusement

But it is Presumed their wish
was not Complied with
After Parading us all they
wanted they took us inside
of the World Renounced Prison
Of Libby How many Sad,
Stories, Could be told about
This Infernal place. I Saw
Citizens that was there a year.
Some more for nothing, only
They had a preference for the
Old flag. and the Laws that
Sustain it over the Loyal
States. Only a couple of days
Before we got there. one
Man Put His Head out of
The window. and the Greyback.
Fired at him and Shot
An Innocent man lying on
The floor above.
And I Saw 2 men Shot.
After being taken prisoners.
And had no arms.
To defend themselves that was
The Southron Cav
Almost a terror in
Those days. We was only
In that Celebrated Boarding
House Libby 7 days 14 all
Together, from time of being
Taken till paroled. We had
one Small loaf. with a Small
Peice of Beef. and one pint of
Soup. for a days Ration.
We arrived at Annopolis. in
Season. Where we had enough
To Eat and a new out fit.
And we threw away. the
Lice. of the Chivalry. good
Sized ones they was too.
During all this time my
Health was Rather Poor.
While at annopolis. I got
A furlough. and Came home.
And Staid 49 days. and
went back to annopolis.
From this time. I have notes
I will make a Remark here
After being taken prisoner
Our Cav met and fought.
The Black Horse Cav. Stewarts
And they was whipped to their
Hearts content and they have
Never been able to Stand
our
Before of Cavalry Since.
We lost in our Regt Some
killd and Wounded.
I dont know the Number
After arriving at annopolis
I went to work for the Sutler
Till the 29th of May 1863
Then all exchanged prisoners went
To baltimore. as Gen Lee.
was Bent on taking that City.
That night the alarm bells
was Rung, and 8000 Citizens
of Union Leagues. turned
Out, with all the military there.
To protect the city. as it was
Said the Rebs was Coming
The Street was barricaded. and Artillery planted on every avenue where they thought the enemy Might Come. But no enemy Came. But he got to Chambersburg Pennsylvania, where the atrocities they Commited I have nothing to Say It is the duty of the faithful Historian to Chronicle.

The Squad I Came to Baltimore with, part done Provost duty, And Patrol also I and 4 others was detaied to guard a fort we went there on 17th June 163

Notes from my books Now Monday Aug. 3rd heat 95 degrees August 11th Heat 130 deg Sep 2nd John Conlen died at annopolis M.D. of Fever.
Sep 17th Anniversary of Battle of Antietam M.D.
Oct 17th I went on the Washington Monument Baltimore
Dec 22nd first Snow in Baltimore
“31st left Baltimore for Washington went to Camp Stoneman.
Jan 5th Reenlisted for 3 yrs.
In January went to my Company, at Warrenton Junction Va.
Staid there 1 month. got a Furlough. for 35 days. had it Extended 20 days more.
Receivd for Reenlisting the on 1st 2 years
Old U.S. Bounty of $1,00 and $400 More and $300 From the State of R.I..
Making a total of $8,00.
On April 8th 1864 we all left Providence. Went to N.Y. and Remaind there waiting for Transportation about 4 days. Left there got to Washington.
Promptly. Went into Camp at Camp Stoneman. Here we got Arms etc. May 9th left here went to Briston Station on Cars. 10th Went to Rappahannock, Station. Returned to Fairfax. 11th went to Vienna. Went Near Chantilla on foot. 12th Went to Chantilla farm. 13th went to frying pan. 14th ________________ 15th got back to Vienna. Had been looking for guerillas Left for Bell plain. Arrivd on 16th. 17th Gaurding Rebs. Our army was fighting through That county toward fredrickburg Spotsylvania Court house down To Richmond in this Campaign. 18th on picket at oak wood Church 3 Miles from fredricksburg. 21st Got our horses and equipments.
Tuesday May 24th   Broke Camp.  
Heavy Rain and hail Storm.  
Such as is Seldom seen north.  
Stones weighed 1/2 oz and we  
Had enough to do to manage our  
Horses. as for Seeing that was  
out of the question.  
25th   we arrived at Port Royal.  
At this place I Saw a torpedo  
Made to explode by a Galvanic battery.  
It was about 3 ft long and as  
Much Round. nice play thing that  
26   crossed the River went on  
Picket some days. Very fine land  
In this place.  
30th   Left Port Royal for White  
House on pamunkey River.  
At this time we was with Gen  
Abercrombee at the base of Supplies  
While with him we went out foraging  
For horses. Passed through Caroline  
County.  
May 31st   arrived at Bowling Green  
Col Lisonold of 4th N.Y.  hanged 2  
Guerillas for killing some  
of our men.  
June  
July 1st   I and 4 others caught  
1 Reb Captain a Spy and horse theif
No 4 Continuation
He got away again.
Through Neglect of gaurd
Came to Pamunkey River. this day. Crossed on pontoon.
Staid over night at Eastern View Hanover County. 4th Arrivd
At White house Landing.
June 5th 1864 went to West Point.
6th Came back Heavy thunder Storm. on bolt fell and blinded
The whole Squad for 15 minuets.
The Shock was So Sudden that 2 men was dismounted Suddenly but no one was hurt.
We was here on 8th.
8th went out near West Point.
But this happen on 11th.
The advance came on guerillas and one of our boys was badly wounded with buck Shot he is in the Service at present but has lost The use of his Left arm he is In the Invalide Corps at Rocky Point Wm R Spink
11th Went to King Wm Ct house
King Wm County the foregoing man was Wounded here.
As we was Coming back We
Ran into more Rebs, in our uniform, Was ordered to Surrendr
I thought they Was in fun
They fired at I and my
Companion my horse was
Shot in the fore Shoulder and
Disabled. I got another horse
To w Ride back to Camp.
And the worst of it was they got off all Safe_ 12th went out
To Kg WmCt House again.
14th A Squad of us went to Gammons Bluff 10 miles from White house
our picket attacked on 15th
2 men taken prisoner
I got away the other was shot
Through the Shouldr. in Cold Blood June 20th went to
Signall gunboat. Coming back.
We Ran into Rebs. they fired one Shot of artillery. But hurt no one. they took one prisoner as he got dismounted. This was the day White house was attacked. but the gun Boats kept them off. Well. We went back to Gammons Bluff. Staid there all night. 21st the Rebs fired into our Gun boat. but a few doses of Grape and Canister set Them Running. We heard Sheridan had Come up with His Cav. So we went through All Safe. That night we Joined The Reserve Brigade of Sheridans Cav. 22nd got to Jones Bridge 15 miles from Harrison Landing. 23 Lay all day for Rest. 24th went over Chichomony Passed Chas City Ct House. Passed Wilsons Landing.
Staid over night near here.  
25th Moved on to Wyandott Landing. 
on Picket Sunday 26 June. 
My wedding day with nothingng To Eat and a blue loo look 
For More. 27th Hot one Man Sunstruck. 29th left 
Wyandott Landing. Passed Prince Geo Ct House, halted. 
30th Moved on Went to Jones hole 
Came Back to Reams. Station. 
Had my leg Cut very bad by Accident. July 1st turned 
In my horse. Went in the Ambulance to City point. 
Cav Corps Hospital. had 4 Stitches in my leg. Lay in Hospital. 3 weeks. Left for Remount Camp at Light House point. 25th We heard of fall of Atlanta Georgia. 
While in hospital Genls Grant And Sheridan passed through.
Detached to Horse Battery D 2nd U.S. Artillery. the Squad I was With Start at Light house Point till July 31st. We left For Washington DC. Aug 2nd Arrived at Washington. Went into Camp Near Camp Stoneman. Was assigned to 2nd detachment. As driver on Caisson. 4th was a general fast day 5th Left Washington Went into Camp Near Tennaly town D.C. 7th Moved on Passed Rockville Came To Sandy Hook. Crossed at Harpers ferry. 10th Left Harpers ferry. Moved on. up the valley. 11th Very Sharp fight. My Batteries in action (Those I was with) Friday 12th Came to New town.
Rebs retreating. Skirmishing.  
At this time my Regt was  
Sent out on a Reconnaissance. 
And was Reported all captured. but  
was not. 14th the Rebs  
Took one waggon from our Brigade.  
15th Lay near Middle town.  
Frederick County. Passed Beryville  
Staid here looking for enemy.  
19th Still near Beryville.  
21st Left Camp Near Beryville.  
Came to Charlestown. We Retreating  
The Rebs Close on our heels.  
22nd left Chastown. Came to  
Shepardstown. Staid here all day.  
23rd My Regt lost all Company books.  
A Week before got the news on this date  
24th Moved a Short distance.  
25th Moved again met the  
Enemy. and we fell back.  
Fell back all day but made  
Stands. Smart fighting all day.  
Came in Sight of Boliver heights
26th Staid here all day
28th Left here Severe Skirmishing
All day. drove the Rebs finely all day.
And out of Smithville.
29th Was punished for Supposed
Disobedience of orders Fault of Sergt
Skirmishing after the River
Battery in action. Orderly Sergeant
Scott was Shot through the head
And died in a few minuets.
This was at Smithville._
We fell back the Rebs occupid
Smithville. We had 2 men Wounded
In this action. 30th Moved near
Beryville. Sep 2nd Moved down
The Charlestown road a few miles.
Rebs Close up. Moved on to Beryville
Passed white oak. 4th Moved back
Again Came on Rebs fighting
Early in the morning. Some
Flanking done We got the best
Flank. Lay around Some days.
7th one Section went out on
a Reconnisance._
Had a Small brush with Rebs. 
Evening Came back Without loss. 
The doctor an Lt Chapin was 
Both Drunk and fought 
9th Right Section went out again my 
Section 
Severe fighting all day Near Chastown. 
13 We We Went out again Battery in 
Action. Came back to Camp. 
The Cav took 300 prisoners at 
Oppequas Creek. 17th Still Near 
Beryville. 18th left here at 
2 A.M. found Rebs befor light. 
Captured 13 guerillas all Shot. 
The guerillas Shot one of our 
Captains and 2 men in cold blood. 
Went on to Luray. 24th got there 
Here we took a good many prisoners. 
Sunday 25th Moved over the mountain 
To New market. here we was 
Releivd by the 6th Pennsylani Battery. 
The Cav went on up to Harrisonburg 
And we went back to pleasant 
Valley M.D. to Recruit our horses.
No 6 Continuation
The march up to Newmarket was very Severe on Horses. We Had a Great many men Dismounted. Those men went Back to Remount Camp, Pleasant Valley M.D.
Sep 25th Moved back Staid at Edinburgh all night. Move on Staid near Winchester.
27th Staid at Boliver Heights.
28th Went into pleasant Valley. Where I remaind till Nov first
In the meantime Startling things Was going on up the valley
Oct 15th Some Guerillas made A dash into Pennsylani and M.D. Considerable excitement about it.
19th Battle of Cedar Creek Va We could hear the cannonading very plain although about 100 miles off. The 6th Corps Gen Wright.
The Cav Corps Gen torbett.  
And the timely Coming up  
of Little Phil Sheridan. Saved  
us from a Sad disaster.

20th. I left the Battery Went  
To Remount Camp got a  
Fit out left there for my Regt 
At Cedar Creek on Nov 1st  
Got to my Regt on 4th  
They was Escort for Gen torbett  
We Remaind here and done the  
usual duties till 9th when we  
Left. was expecting an attack on night  
of 8th 10th we left here  
Went into Winter quaters near  
Winchester 12th Severe Cav fight  
1st New hampshire Cut up bad.  
Gen Powell took 2 peices of  
Artillery and 2 flags. Some prisoners.  
19th Nov Saw Gen Custur and  
Lady for first time. She was  
A Splendid young Woman.  
Custur has a Sallow complexion.
Long curly hair. Tall
And as Smart as a whip.
It is said he has Some indian
Blood in him. 21st Broke camp
Went up to Woodstock.
22nd Went up to Mount Jackson.
Found the enemy in force. With
Infantry. We had only Cav + artillery.
Too Strong for us. fell back to
Woodstock. 30 of us left here
For Winchester with a dispatch.
For Gen Sheridan. It was a
Cold night tedious travelling.
one man had one foot froze
And has done no duty Since.
While here we got turkys from
R.I. for thanksgiving dinner.
Nov 25th Mosely made a dash into
Gen Powels Camp And lost
27 men 9 shot dead. So Mr
B Mosey Rather had the Worst of it
For once. 26th Copied from
A daily paper those names.
Catholic Major Generals in The US Service.
Rosecrans, Meade, Gilmore, Sheridan, Ord, Foster.
Stoneman, Shields, Sickles, Stanly, Newton, Pleasanton, Richardson, Carr, Hunt, Sherman. And others not named.
16 men
Brigadiers
Meagher, Sweeney, Connor, Lawlor, Ewing, devin, Stone, Duffie, Mulligan, Comyn.
10 men
All Popular men and good Generals. And the Rank and File is Nearly one half Irish.
All those that make most talk About our Victories are yankees who stay at home. If it was Not for the Irish and Germans.
The North would have been whipped.
So the Northron army was feed By Emigrants from Europe.
This Cant be denied at all.
After the battle of Cedar Creek. We always Staid near Winchester Va.

Dec 2nd my 3 ys time out.

4th Promoted Corporal to Date from 1st Inst A long time To wait for promotion.

7th we was Relievad at Corp Hdqrs By first Regulars. Our Regt too small Went into Reserve as Regular Brigade. Gen Devins. Merritts Division. 1st division.

Here we done picket duty etc.

15th We went up to fishers site. Distance 31 Miles. 17th Heard Sherman took Savannah and 25000 prisoners. 180 peaces of Artillery. 19th Packed up went on A Raid. Moved out Went Through front Royal. Staid In Chester gap. Cold windy night
Moved on went through little Washington. Went into Camp
Travelled 32 miles this day.
21st Came to Madison Court.
House. Went on picket Very Severe
Weather. our Brigade went to
within 9 miles of Gordonsville.
 Custur went on had some
Fighting. took and lost men.
Rebs too strong for us We fell
Back to Madison C.H.
24 moved on home again.
25 passed Sulphur Springs Cedar
one Man drowned crossing River
hazel Run
26th Passed through Warrenton
Guerillas Charged on Gen torbett
He was Near been taken prisoner.
2 men shot for Insulting women.
1 wounded. Heard this day that
Mosely was kiled he was wounded
By the 8th Illinois Cav
27th went throug Middleburg.
Crossed Shenandoah River. Water
Was high. got wet up to knees. had a Small horse
28th Pass Millwood and over 2 Streams both very high.
got In camp again after
A dangerous + tedious march
31st Closes this year we was
Mustered for pay and we made
ourselves as comfortable as possible.
Thinking of our friends at home
Now It come To Jan 1st 1865
This day I was on picket
Our 4 companies was
Consolidated into 2
And the 2nd battalion the same
So we had one battalion
We done Camp duty till Feb 27th
In the meantime other things need
Some Notice Feb 11th
The N.Y. Legislature passed a note
of thanks to Sheridan and his
Command 14th We Sent
Home some Recruiting officers
Feb 20th News of Capture of Columbia S.C. by Sherman
21st news of Capture of Charleston.
By Sherman with 770 peices of artillery
24th Report of Capture of Wilmington S.C.
27th Went on another Raid.
Came to Woodstock took 4 prisoners
Shot one more 28th was
Rearguard was skirmishing all day
Lost 1 officer and 4 men fell
Into Shenandoah River not of our
Regt Moved on Went through
New market Sheridan came up
Passed us March first
Came to within a few miles of
Mount Cranford At 3 A.M.
Very much tired Custur took
100 Rebs and Some waggons
2nd Passed through Stanton
Bad travelling Custur took
1340 prisoners 9 peices of artillery
12 Stand of Colars and 100 Waggons
In fact Bagged all of Early army
With the exception of about 200 Cav Gen Early barely got off our Regt was left at Christian Creek to do picket duty. We Staid here till the 4th. In the meantime numbers of Rebs Came in and plenty of Blacks Well mounted all Stolen property on the 4th the 1st RI 1st N.H. 18th penn 22nd NY 4th N.Y. was detaild to go with the prisoners to Winchester All dismounted men with us And all men with poor horses We had It was Supposed 1700 Rebs Came down to Mount Cranford Attacked Near this place But we Sustained no loss that I know of 6th Passed Newmarket Skirmishing all day with guerillas
The Rebs held the ford all Night The 4th NY on front 7th 22nd NY and 1st R.I. Took the advance Charged and Took the ford and held it. We charged a Reb flag but did not take it while the Prisoners was Crossing the Ford Gen Rosser thought to Liberate them and made A Charge on 1st New hampshire In that Charge we took 50 men And killd a number We Lost. a few men 1 Cap in N.H. was wounded not badly We got the prisoners over all Safe, This day our Company was on the advance, I had 6 narrow escapes this day. 8th arrived at Winchester All Safe Bringing in 100 more Prisoners than we had first We slept this night as we
heridan

done much hard Capturing that place
And in Compelling Gen Lee
To Surrender but that is
For the historian to write
Not me
We Remaind doing duty
Till 8th May when I got a
Furlough to Providence where
I Now am, writing this
Having gone all through till
Now without losing my head
or other Serious Injury
May 17th 1865
W Walsh