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## A Unit History of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry

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A UNIT HISTORY  
OF THE  
SECOND RHODE ISLAND CAVALRY  
1862 -- 1863

BY  
DONALD FISHER HARRISON

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
IN  
HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

1960

## ABSTRACT

The Second Rhode Island Cavalry was activated by a state executive order over Governor Smith's signature on August 31, 1862. It called for the formation of one battalion under the command of Major Augustus W. Corliss at Providence, Rhode Island. Volunteering went so well that on November 15, 1862, an additional order was published forming a full sized regiment. After filling the ranks with men who were procured for the most part by high bounties, the regiment left as soon as possible for action in the Department of the Gulf at New Orleans, under the command of Major General Nathaniel P. Banks.

Having arrived in New Orleans, the regiment was assigned various reconnaissance and patrol duties within one of the divisions in Banks' command. An active part was taken by the regiment in the first move on Port Hudson in March, 1863. A critical need for cavalry in the Department of the Gulf was felt by Banks and changed his employment somewhat of the Rhode Islanders. Moving to the west of the Mississippi, parts of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry were committed in a movement all the way north to Alexandria, Louisiana, in an effort to outflank the Confederate position at Port Hudson. When this failed, the unit was moved back to the scene of the original siege at

Port Hudson.

Major Robert C. Anthony, executive officer of the regiment, became ill and was sent to Brashear City, Louisiana for rest. In the path of a Confederate drive on New Orleans, Brashear City was readied for defense, and placed under Anthony's command. The convalescents were overcome by a tactical surprise and the entire garrison was captured. Meanwhile, the greater part of the regiment was on duty in the vicinity of Port Hudson. A skirmish with two regiments of Arkansas infantry inflicted several casualties on the Rhode Islanders. In July, 1863 the regiment was sent to Springfield Landing to break up an attack by Confederate raiders and again received casualties.

Reduced by battle casualties, sickness, and desertions, the regiment was first consolidated into one battalion by General Banks, then later deactivated. The officers were released from the service, and the enlisted men were transferred to another cavalry regiment. In defiance of this deactivation, the enlisted men mutinied against Colonel Harai Robinson, commanding officer of the unit into which they were ordered, and the officer charged with the responsibility of the changeover.

Robinson reacted violently himself to the mutiny, bringing up his own unit abreast of the Rhode Islanders, and threatening to fire if they did not move. As the mutiny subsided, he arrested the two ringleaders, and had them executed as an example for both units to see. Feeling

in Providence was very strongly against Robinson for his action; however, nothing of consequence came of it,

A Court of Inquiry was called by Banks which acquitted Robinson of all blame. The writer feels that Robinson, although acting in good faith and in the performance of his duty, carried out the suppression with ruthless disregard of the fact that the mutiny was at that time past the crisis, and that such a severe measure was not warranted.

## PREFACE

Tracing a unit history is fascinating work, particularly if it is in the period of the American Civil War. There is at present a revival of interest in that war, in which the writer has been caught up. This work seeks to trace the entire life cycle of a cavalry regiment from activation in Providence, Rhode Island, in April, 1862 to deactivation in Thibodaux, Louisiana, in August, 1863. Particular emphasis is placed on the events that surrounded a mutiny in protest of the deactivation.

Sources include reports by state officials of Rhode Island, military reports from the official records of the army in the war, accounts from Providence newspapers, and secondary works. The major portion of the material used was found in the library of the University of Rhode Island and the Providence Public Library. Some assistance was received through correspondence with private institutions and persons.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge indebtedness to a few of the many individuals who advised and assisted me in the completion of this work. While I express my deepest appreciation for their assistance, they are in no way responsible for the handling of the material or for errors in

fact or presentation. I would especially like to thank Dr. William Metz for his advice throughout the work on this paper. The generous and skillful assistance of Dr. Daniel H. Thomas and Dr. Walter L. Simmons was very valuable in achieving better organization and clarity. I cannot forget the encouragement and counsel of Dr. William A. Itter over the past three years, without which I could not have prepared myself for this field of study. I am indebted to Mr. Francis P. Allen and the staff of the Library of the University of Rhode Island for their kind indulgence, and to Mr. Stuart C. Sherman, Librarian of the Providence Public Library, and his staff, particularly Mrs. Eleanor G. Pyne of the Reference Department.

Some valuable assistance was obtained from Captain Robert R. Rudy of the Office of the Chief of Military History of the Department of the Army, from Professor A. Arthur Schiller of the School of Law of Columbia University, and from Mr. W. Joseph Harrison, III, an attorney in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in regards to the Camp Hubbard mutiny. Colonel Charles R. Herrmann and Major Elias B. Brand and other members of the Military Science Department of the University of Rhode Island were helpful with their interest and rather free use of office hours.

Without the long hours of patient and kind understanding of my wife, Catherine, this work could never have progressed. Her additional editorial assistance before

submitting the paper to my professors helped in the overall preparation. The final typescript was made by her under various pressures of children, relatives, and an impending military transfer. Her influence was indelibly felt throughout all stages.



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## CHAPTER I

### PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

#### Preceding Cavalry Regiments

The Battle of Bull Run, fought in 1861, pointed out many things to the inexperienced, impatient people in high places of the Federal government. Probably as important as any other lesson learned from the battle was that there was shown the need for reconnaissance and security troops. Units mobile enough to traverse great distances, relatively unobserved by the enemy, and yet with sufficient force at their disposal to create a striking force to protect themselves were needed. The answer could only be found in the mounted soldier, the cavalryman. General McClellan foresaw this need early in the war and pressed the War Department for cavalry units under his command.

Rhode Island contributed its full share of cavalry units. There was first activated a New England Cavalry Regiment that contained some Rhode Island volunteers. Later, the New Hampshire Cavalry was activated, containing a Rhode Island Battalion, mostly of men from the Providence area. The state was finally given a full-sized unit of its own when it gained permission to form a volunteer unit, the First Rhode Island Cavalry Regiment.

Sent away with much pomp and ceremony, the First Rhode Island Cavalry was assigned to the Army of the Potomac in March, 1862. Highly regarded by many, it nobly upheld the name of the state, giving Rhode Island its first military heroes of the war. Books extolling its record were written, persons were decorated, and the unit was heaped with gifts by the citizens of the state. The First Rhode Island Cavalry Regiment continued in existence throughout the war, participating in all the major actions of the Army of the Potomac in the Eastern Theater.

Spurred on by the success of the First Cavalry, Rhode Island activated the Seventh Squadron, Rhode Island Cavalry, in June, 1862. This unit consisted of the equivalent of only one battalion of three month volunteers and was sent to Washington during the scare caused by Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson's operations in the Shenandoah Valley. Under the command of Major Augustus W. Corliss, it was assigned to Brigadier General Julius White at Harper's Ferry on September 5, 1862.<sup>1</sup> September 8 under Major Corliss it was sent on reconnaissance into Solomon's Gap. It traveled south to Jefferson, Virginia, and drove in enemy pickets. Capturing twenty-five prisoners, it pushed on to within two

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. War Department, War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and the Confederate Armies (128 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, Volume XIX, Part I, Reports, p. 533. Hereafter referred to as OR, followed by the series, volume and part, if any, all in Arabic numbers. (Above reference would be OR 1-19-1, p. 533.)

miles of Jackson's main army, and returned without loss.<sup>1</sup>

### Activation and Recruiting

Meanwhile, manpower shortages in the Federal Army were being felt by the nation, and on July 2, 1862, President Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 more volunteers. Rhode Island's quota was partially satisfied by the activation of two new volunteer units, the Seventh Rhode Island Infantry, and the Second Rhode Island Cavalry. These two eventually accounted for about half of the quota.<sup>2</sup> The call was for a three year term of enlistment and by September the War Department had sent its specifics to the Governor of Rhode Island. The Adjutant General of Rhode Island, on October 1, 1862, ordered the activation<sup>3</sup> of one battalion of cavalry under the command of Major Corliss. The Seventh Squadron was now on its way home, and Major Corliss was called to Washington to appear as a witness at an Army Board of Inquiry. After appearing on October 21,<sup>4</sup> he journeyed back to Providence, where he took an active part in recruiting volunteers for the Second Regiment.

Already in Providence to take charge of the recruiting program was Captain Robert C. Anthony. Captain Anthony, a

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-19-1, p. 535.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 3-3, p. 780. The Seventh (939), and the Second (714), totaled 1,653 volunteer soldiers and officers.

<sup>3</sup>See Figure 1, page 4.

<sup>4</sup>OR 1-12, p. 791.

Figure One

General Orders, No. 47. Adjutant General's Office, Providence, October 1, 1862.

In pursuance of authority received from the Secretary of War, the First Battalion, Second Regiment Rhode Island Cavalry, to be under the command of Major Augustus W. Corliss, to serve for a period of three years, or during the war is hereby ordered:

The Camp is established at the "Dexter Training Ground."  
The Battalion will be organized as follows:

One Major  
One Battalion Adjutant  
One Battalion Quartermaster  
One Assistant Surgeon  
One Battalion Sergeant Major  
One Battalion Quartermaster Sergeant  
One Battalion Commissary Sergeant  
One Battalion Hospital Steward  
One Battalion Saddler's Sergeant  
One Battalion Veterinary Sergeant  
Four Captains  
Four First Lieutenants  
Four Second Lieutenants  
Four First Sergeants  
Four Company Quartermaster Sergeants  
Four Company Commissary Sergeants  
Twenty Sergeants  
Thirty-two Corporals  
Eight Teamsters  
Eight Farriers or Blacksmiths  
Four Saddlers  
Four Wagoners  
Three hundred and twenty Privates

By order of the Commander in Chief:

EDWARD G. Mauraan, A.G.

Fig. 1.-State of Rhode Island General Orders No. 47.  
It appeared in the Providence Daily Post, October 3, 1862,  
p.2, c.7, and ran for five days.

native of west Providence, had originally been commissioned in the First Rhode Island Cavalry, and in that unit had commanded the third battalion. On April 16, 1862, he saw action at Warrenton Junction, Virginia, with his unit. Later in General Abercrombie's brigade, he took his battalion deep behind Confederate lines on a reconnaissance to the Rappahanock River. By October, 1862, he was back in Providence helping to form the Second Cavalry.<sup>1</sup> Captain Anthony set up recruiting offices at the corner of Orange and Westminster Streets and started to seek men for his company.<sup>2</sup> Taking an advertisement in the Providence Daily Post on October 4,<sup>3</sup> he continued it to December 22. By November, men were starting to come in, and Major Corliss was able to set up the framework for accepting recruits into four companies. Company A was recruited by Captain Anthony. For command of Company B, another former Seventh Squadron officer was selected, Captain George A. Smith. A former enlisted man, he had been commissioned in July,<sup>4</sup> and sent home to recruit for the new regiment. He was commissioned a captain on October 3,

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<sup>1</sup>Apparently he was called back, but by coming, he had to accept a one grade reduction, for he had held a major's commission in the First Cavalry.

<sup>2</sup>Throughout this work, the cavalry "troop" is referred to as a "company." According to the common usage of the period both terms are correct and refer to the same size units. The same reasoning would refer to the "squadron" and the "battalion," which is the next larger unit.

<sup>3</sup>P.2, c.4. See Figure 2, page 6.

<sup>4</sup>Providence Journal, September 2, 1862, v.2, c.4.



Figures Two and Three

ATTENTION TROOPERS!

OFF FOR THE WAR AGAIN!!

Young and Active men wanted for a Troop; of Horse for the Second Rhode Island Regiment Cavalry.

This is a dashing and pleasant service, and young men can all make good horsemen.

Office, Corner of Orange and Westminster Streets, upstairs, room No. 5.

R. C. Anthony  
Captain, Second Rhode Island Regiment, Cavalry

Fig. 2.-Advertisement in the Providence Daily Post, October 4, 1862, p.3, c.1, appearing from that date until December 22.

HURRAH FOR TEXAS!

THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY!!

The First Battalion Second Regiment Rhode Island Cavalry, under the command of Major A. W. Corliss, has been ordered to join the expedition of General N. P. Banks, destined for Texas. Now is the time to join this crack regiment. By so doing you will escape the mud and snow of Virginia, and the cold winter of the North. Bounty \$25 when sworn into service; \$300 when you leave the state and \$75 when discharged.--A good opportunity to settle on the rich prairies of this noble state, is offered at the close of the rebellion. RECRUITING OFFICERS: Captain R. C. Anthony, corner Orange and Westminster Streets, upstairs; Captain G. A. Smith, Dorrance Street; Captain William H. Stevens, corner North Main Street and Market Square. The Fourth Company is recruiting at Camp Maurean.

A. W. Corliss  
Major, Commanding

Fig. 3.-Advertisement in the Providence Daily Post, November 11, 1862, p.3, c.3, running until January 23, 1863.

1862,<sup>1</sup> and took up recruiting offices on Dorrance Street in Providence. Commanding Company C was Captain William H. Stevens. Also a veteran of the Seventh Squadron, his original commission dated from the preceding June, when he had served under Anthony.<sup>2</sup> He left to help in the new unit and was commissioned a captain by the governor in October. He set up recruiting offices on the corner of North Main Street and Market Square. Company D was recruiting at Camp Mauran and was without a commander until December, when Captain George W. Beach was appointed from Boston, Massachusetts.<sup>3</sup> On November 11 Major Corliss put an advertisement in the Providence Daily Post, asking for men for the battalion and announcing that the regiment was to be committed in an expedition under General Banks.<sup>4</sup>

Recruiting progressed very rapidly, and by November 15 the governor authorized the activation and recruiting for a second and third battalion.<sup>5</sup> Major Corliss was promoted to

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<sup>1</sup>State of Rhode Island, "Adjutant General's Report for the Year 1865," Register of Rhode Island Volunteers 1861-65 (Providence: Providence Press Company, 1877), p. 209. Hereafter referred to as Register.

<sup>2</sup>Providence Journal, September 2, 1862, p.2, c.4.

<sup>3</sup>Register, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup>p.3, c.3. See Figure 3, page 6.

<sup>5</sup>The third battalion though authorized was never realized.

Lieutenant Colonel.<sup>1</sup> A General Order of the Adjutant General of Rhode Island was published similar to that shown in Figure 1. To help out in the formation of the second battalion, Captain Charles N. Manchester of the First Rhode Island Cavalry was brought home and commissioned a major. Manchester had been a lieutenant at the Warrenton Junction action with Anthony, and the two were reported to be good friends. Major Manchester took up quarters at No. 18 Dorrance Street and supervised the recruiting for the Second Battalion, which consisted of Companies E, F, G, and H.<sup>2</sup> Commanding Company E was Captain Edwin A. Hardy, who at the time of the original activation had been appointed adjutant. By January 15, 1863, he was promoted to Captain.<sup>3</sup> Commanding Company F was Captain Peter Brucker. Commissioned in January, 1863,<sup>4</sup> Brucker was a very popular officer and was frequently invited out to the homes of the better families of Providence during his period of recruiting. According to the Providence Daily Post, he gained the affection and esteem of his men quickly, and was able to establish a high degree of discipline.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>State of Rhode Island, Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations for the Year 1865, by Brigadier General Elisha Dyer (2 vols.; Providence: E. L. Freeman and Son, 1895), II, 159. Hereafter referred to by the author: Dyer.

<sup>2</sup>Providence Daily Post, January 30, 1863, p.3, c.1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., January 17, 1863, p.3, c.1.

<sup>4</sup>Register, p. 169.

<sup>5</sup>January 26, 1863, p.2, c.5.

A former enlisted man from East Greenwich, Rhode Island, was selected to command Company G. Captain William W. B. Greene was a private in Company E when his appointment as captain was made by the governor in January, 1863.<sup>1</sup> Company H was mustered in later than the rest, and Captain George Henry Getchell was not commissioned as a captain by the governor until March 14.<sup>2</sup>

#### Outfitting and Movement to New Orleans

The mission that was to be the regiment's was established as a "Southern Expedition" when the Governor received the following message from Secretary of War Stanton:

General Banks has established his headquarters in New York to organize a Southern expedition. All the troops in your state not otherwise appropriated are placed at his command. You will please confer with him, answer his requisition, and render him every aid in your power to speedily organize his command.<sup>3</sup>

By this arrangement a temporary headquarters was set up in New York, and much of the direction of the Department of the Gulf was conducted from there. Colonel Corliss left in December for New York, where he checked in and then left by ocean steamer for New Orleans. As each company left Providence, it likewise went to New York, and then to New Orleans by ocean steamer.<sup>4</sup> Major Manchester was left in charge of the

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<sup>1</sup>Register, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>3</sup>October 28, 1862, OR 3-2, p. 691.

<sup>4</sup>Obviously, the military situation at that time would not allow land travel between Rhode Island and Louisiana. Therefore the safest and most economical means was by ocean

regiment's affairs in Providence.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the two battalions had to be outfitted by the State of Rhode Island before they were mustered into Federal service. This was the responsibility of the State Quartermaster General, and involved many things. The men had to be given uniforms. They had to be given weapons. During their period of activation they had to be fed and trained. Horses had to be bought, fed, and cared for. Barracks had to be procured. In addition, it was the responsibility of the State of Rhode Island to transport these men to New York, where they were mustered into Federal service.

During the year 1862, the Rhode Island State Finance Committee reported a total expenditure by the State Quartermaster General of \$8,527.74 for the Second Rhode Island Cavalry.<sup>2</sup> This figure did not include either the bounties paid to the men for volunteering or a bill for \$11,000.00 for the purchase of the horses.<sup>3</sup> For the year 1863 the

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steamer from New York to New Orleans, which by that time had been reoccupied by an amphibious assault, and was under military occupation by Major General Benjamin F. Butler.

<sup>1</sup>Providence Daily Post, January 30, 1863, p.3, c.1.

<sup>2</sup>State of Rhode Island, Report of the Finance Committee upon the Accounts of the Adjutant General, Quartermaster General and General Treasurer February 10, 1863 (Public Document No. 14 to the "Acts and Resolves" of the January Session for 1863 of the Rhode Island State Legislature; Providence: Alfred Anthony, 1863), p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Report of the Finance Committee, p. 3.

total was \$8,792.10.<sup>1</sup> Included were a sundry of varied expenses. For instance, \$30.00 was spent to clean an armory in Providence which was used for a barracks; \$62.70 was paid to the Providence Gas Company for gas used at the barracks; and \$102.00 was paid to Lewis P. Child for rent and damages to the rooms at the barracks.<sup>2</sup> That totals almost \$200.00 for the barracks alone. The \$11,000.00 previously mentioned for the purchase of horses represents only a portion of the cost for them. The interest to the bank on the loan to buy the horses totaled \$1022.54, about 10%. On December 29, 1862, William E. Hamlin was paid \$24.25 for horse medicine. Thomas A. Howland was paid \$328.25 for branding the horses and shipping them off to New York. Later for forage furnished to the horses in New York, Mr. Howland received \$4,772.43.<sup>3</sup> This represents a total of \$17,147.47 for horses.

There is a reasonable doubt that there was much training in Rhode Island for the regiment. The units spent most of their time getting the men established into companies and organizing all the various sub units. Non-commissioned officers had to be appointed. Other company officers had

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<sup>1</sup>State of Rhode Island, Report of the Quartermaster General, George Lewis Cooke, Made to the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island at its January Session, 1864 (Public Document No. 3 to the "Acts and Resolves" of the January Session for 1864 of the Rhode Island State Legislature; Providence: Alfred Anthony, 1864), pp. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

to get accustomed to the companies.

The First Battalion departed in December. Companies A and B left for New York on December 2, 1862. Company C left on December 12, and Company D on December 29.<sup>1</sup> The battalion had filled rapidly and most of the available manpower had been used up. By the time the Second Battalion was filling, there were many outsiders, slackers, and ruffians who appeared before the recruiters, not because of patriotic zeal, but for the bounties offered. Many never reached the battlefield, but deserted.<sup>2</sup>

This Second Battalion, then, spending the most time filling in Providence, presented the most news to the public. On January 26, for instance, Company F presented Providence with a street parade, accompanied by a brass band. "They appeared finely, being all men of good physical development and moving with precision."<sup>3</sup> The men were restless, as soldiers at idle periods are, and they had their share of street brawls. The sling shot was a favorite weapon and in one instance, a "Dutchman and two Irishmen" got into a brawl in which one man received "two or three severe blows on

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<sup>1</sup>State of Rhode Island, Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Rhode Island for the Year 1862, presented to the Honorable General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island in Providence, December 31, 1862 (Providence: Alfred Anthony, 1863), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Morale and discipline will be dealt with in a later chapter.

<sup>3</sup>Providence Daily Post, p. 2, c.5.

the head."<sup>1</sup> In another brawl on Broad Street, four men pursued another into an oyster saloon and delivered sabre wounds as well as those from a sling shot.<sup>2</sup> On the afternoon of the twenty-ninth, fifteen or twenty recruits from Company G left their barracks and "traveled about the streets singing, shouting, and insulting people whom they met."<sup>3</sup>

These "ruffians" of the Second Battalion created much confusion and bitterness from the start. An excellent example is Company E, the "German Company." This company received its name from the fact that the recruiting officer and most of the men recruited by him were German immigrants. According to a newspaper account, an agreement existed between the recruiter and the recruited that they should secure the state bounty and then desert. When the facts became known, the Provost Marshall took swift action. All were placed in detention and taken to Fort Adams, near Newport, Rhode Island. There they were put under the surveillance of one hundred and fifty regulars.<sup>4</sup> Later the whole unit was placed on board the schooner, Louisa H. Endicott, and Provost Marshalls from other states were brought on board to identify deserters and men from other recruitments.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., January 23, p.3, c.2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., January 28, p.3, c.1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., January 29, p.3, c.1.

<sup>4</sup>Regular Army troops.

<sup>5</sup>Providence Daily Post, January 14, p.3, c.1.



Captain Hardy was given command of the unit, and they were brought back to Providence. They were allowed to come ashore only briefly to be sworn into Federal service, and then made to go back on board the schooner. By this time, there were only ninety-two left of the original one hundred and five. The rest had deserted. The schooner sailed for New York, from whence the men were to go to New Orleans. Lutz, the illegal recruiter, was taken to Fort Lafayette, New York, where he was to answer other charges more grave than the ones in Rhode Island.<sup>1</sup>

Company G had its share of these men also. The state bounty was not paid until the company reached New York. Even then it wasn't paid until the men were on board the transport that was to take them to New Orleans. After the bounty was paid, six of the men jumped ship and hid on board a steam-tug that was alongside, discharging grain for the horses. They were detected and taken back, and placed under guard. Finally, the guard, together with the six original men, and eleven others, all succeeded in making good their escape.<sup>2</sup> Five other deserters were apprehended from a group that had escaped from Long Island after having been paid the three hundred and twenty-five dollar bounty. Two had gotten to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and three to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., January 19, p.3, c.1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., February 7, p.3, c.1.

Boston, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup>

Each company of the Second Battalion left as soon as it was filled. Company E, with three officers and ninety-nine men, left on January 23; Companies F and G, consisting of three officers and one hundred men each, left on January 31; Company H, with two officers and sixty men, departed on March 28.<sup>2</sup> Transportation was by train to New York by way of Groton. At New York, they were transferred directly to a transport.<sup>3</sup>

The transports Crescent, Belle Wood, and Undaunted,<sup>4</sup> steamed out of New York harbor and took the long voyage down the Atlantic seaboard, around Florida, into the Gulf of Mexico, and then up the Mississippi River to New Orleans.

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<sup>1</sup>Providence Daily Post, January 23, p.3, c.1.

<sup>2</sup>State of Rhode Island, Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations for the Year 1863 (Public Document Appendix No. 4 to the "Acts and Resolves" for the January Session of the Rhode Island State Legislature for 1864; Providence: Alfred Anthony, 1864), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Providence Daily Post, January 28, p. 3, c.1.

<sup>4</sup>OR 1-15, p. 673.

## CHAPTER II

### OPERATIONS: MARCH TO JUNE 1863

#### The First Movement on Port Hudson

With the exception of Company H, the entire regiment closed into the Department of the Gulf Theater of Operations by March 5. Companies B, C, D, and F arrived on February 13 from New York.<sup>1</sup> They debarked from troop steamers at New Orleans: horses, men, weapons, and extra equipment, all had to come off. The men were tired from the long ocean voyage. The last to unload was Company G, and Colonel Corliss consolidated the regiment for movement into the combat zone. They embarked on commandeered river boats, and started up the Mississippi River to Baton Rouge.<sup>2</sup> Company A was left back in New Orleans to guard the baggage and supplies.<sup>3</sup>

The general movement against Port Hudson was one of great strategic and national importance. The year before,

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-15, p. 673.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick H. Dyer, A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion (3 vols.: Volume I, Number and Organization of the Armies of the United States; Volume II, Chronological Record; Volume III, Regimental Histories; New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959), III, 1627. Hereafter referred to as Dyer, Compendium, with the volume and page in Arabic numbers.

<sup>3</sup>Military baggage and supplies, which could include rations for the troops, forage for the horses, ammunition, extra weapons, heavy equipment for engineering work, etc. This was a normal task for a troop (or company) of cavalry.

when Admiral Farragut steamed up the mouth of the Mississippi, and General Butler's troops stormed the city of New Orleans, President Lincoln saw possibilities of being able to put the Anaconda Plan<sup>1</sup> into effect. General Grant's forces had been moving down the Mississippi River for several months. The Shiloh Campaign, Island No. 10, and the move on Vicksburg, were all destined eventually to cut the Confederacy in two. The states of Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas would be severed from the rest of the Confederacy, and Texas beef would no longer travel along the Vicksburg Railroad to supply Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. With a general movement by Grant, now in command to the north against the bastion of Vicksburg, matched simultaneously by General Banks' movement in the south against Port Hudson, the North would be able to cut off the last two strongholds on the Mississippi and make the split a reality. Both Banks and Grant knew this. However, each general, thinking his own campaign to be the more important, felt, with good basis, that the other should economize his forces to the bone, and release the rest to be used in one overwhelming concentration of force to defeat each Confederate stronghold in detail. Each man was stubborn. Both campaigns as a result were to drag on not only against the enemy, but the tempers and patience of these two generals. It was only when Grant was able to concentrate against the rear of Vicksburg, that he was able to force a decision. After

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<sup>1</sup>General Scott's 1861 plan to defeat the Confederacy.

displaying a rare show of pluck and daring, he severed his line of communications and struck out on land. On July 4, 1863, Pemberton at Vicksburg asked Grant for terms. As soon as the Confederate troops in Fort Hudson learned of the Vicksburg surrender, their fighting spirit waned, and it was only a matter of time until they would be forced to strike their colors.

The story of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry is centered around this siege by the Department of the Gulf (in reality an Army Corps, the Nineteenth), against Fort Hudson. The Rhode Island regiment was one of four cavalry units in support of four infantry divisions in the corps. Two of these cavalry units, the Second Rhode Island, and the First Louisiana, were in the same division, under Major General Christopher C. Augur. General Augur's division, commanded by a major general, and having more cavalry than the others, was naturally the one in the thick of the fighting. The Second Rhode Island Cavalry, a seasoned group,<sup>1</sup> received tasks commensurate with its experience. The other unit, the First Louisiana Cavalry under Colonel (then Major) Harai Robinson, was a new one. Recruited mostly from the occupied territory of New Orleans, horses and men were not accustomed to the rigors of fighting. Before many days had passed,

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<sup>1</sup>Almost all of the officers had been in the Seventh Squadron, Rhode Island Cavalry, seeing major action at Warrenton Junction against Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley.

however, the Louisiana Cavalry gained experience, as did the other units in the Department of the Gulf.

### The Need For Cavalry

General Banks was in great need of cavalry throughout the entire campaign. In the months preceding the general movement on Port Hudson, Major Robinson scoured the area around New Orleans looking for suitable mounts for his own and the other units that were due to arrive. Robinson's report to General Banks is indicative of how urgently the Department needed the cavalry service. The shortage of good horses in the New Orleans area was probably due to Confederate requirements of the previous year. However, there were several hundred available. Good horsemen existed in the infantry units already in waiting to move on Port Hudson. There were some cavalry carbines available; cut down shotguns could be used as a substitute for the rest. Saddle makers were in New Orleans, and could be requisitioned. The shortage of sabres was not important, since the Departmental Quartermaster was equipped to manufacture lances.<sup>1</sup> Within a month, Robinson had to admit that he had been unable to get more than two hundred horses. There were no spares in his own command of about five hundred men, and, if new cavalry units were made using the existing horses, spares

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-15, pp. 652-53. This is not too unusual to create new units in a combat area. One can see how desperate General Banks was. Presumably the lances would have been made of wood.

would not be available for any of the units then in existence. The only answer to the problem, reasoned Robinson, was to import horses from the North, and to insist on better care of those in use in the volunteer units.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, General Banks directed that some units be "extemporized" from the infantry, and waited for the arrival of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry.<sup>2</sup> Later, Banks was to feel the need of the cavalry that he so desperately wanted before moving out of New Orleans against Port Hudson. To do the outpost work and screening missions<sup>3</sup> that were expected of highly mobile cavalry, large detachments of infantry were being wasted. These were slow and uncertain and could not duplicate what small parties of cavalry could accomplish "speedily and accurately." A brigade of infantry, for instance, could not cover the frontage that a squadron of cavalry could control.<sup>4</sup> With the loss of a Massachusetts unit, the Second Rhode Island Cavalry was indeed a blessing!

By March 7 the whole movement got underway. Admiral Farragut requisitioned enough river transportation to start some of the units forward. Those units that did not take the river, started north on the road. General Augur's infantry

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 1103. To transport horses on a sea journey at that time demanded great care, and the only method of transportation and communication with the North was by the two week sea voyage from New York by ocean steamer.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 619.

<sup>3</sup>Reconnaissance and outpost protection.

<sup>4</sup>OR 1-15, p. 259.

division arrived at Baton Rouge on March 13, and immediately took up defensive positions. In all, General Banks had seventeen hundred troops at Baton Rouge. As soon as the Rhode Islanders arrived, General Banks pushed them out in front on the road to Port Hudson. Temporarily assigned to General Emory's division, Companies B, C, D, and E went out in front to reconnoiter,<sup>1</sup> with orders to cut down the flank bridges. Company F stayed with about three thousand other men under Colonel T. E. Chickering to guard the rear of the column at Baton Rouge.<sup>2</sup> Then General Banks attempted to make some type of contact with Admiral Farragut up the river from Port Hudson. He sent Colonel Parmele with six companies of the 174th New York and Companies D and E of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry. They returned unsuccessful, because Port Hudson had been fortified by the Confederates.<sup>3</sup>

#### Operations in Western Louisiana

Upon finding that Port Hudson was fortified, General Banks abandoned his original idea of joining Grant before Vicksburg, and proceeded to devote all his attention to the

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-53, pp. 549-50.

<sup>2</sup>Richard B. Irwin, History of the Nineteenth Army Corps (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892), p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 83. Irwin cites a "squadron." This could mean possibly anything with the exception of Company F. It is assumed to be Companies D and E since they were used later for a similar mission on the 27th.



objective before him.<sup>1</sup> Moving directly north, with the Mississippi River on his left, Banks selected two parallel roads leading to the fort. (See Figure 4, page 23). Finding that the position was heavily fortified,<sup>2</sup> he decided to use a small force to keep the Confederates occupied, and try to move around them. This meant going through western Louisiana. He cut across the river, and went through the neck on Grand Lake, then moved across the Atchafalaya Bayou, and up the Bayou Teche.

By now the flood waters of the Louisiana spring were beginning to take their toll. The river was unusually high, making the bayous running into it swollen. Before the Confederates had left the area, they had cut all the levees and consequently a great deal of the area west of the Mississippi River was a swamp. At one point, the troops took an entire day disembarking from their boats, an operation that normally might have taken half an hour. After finally getting ashore, contact with the enemy was resumed. Confederate General Richard Taylor, commanding the opposing force, succeeded in evading Banks, forcing the Federal troops to pursue the Confederates all the way north to Alexandria.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel (eds.), Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (4 vols.; New York: The Century Company, 1888), III, 586. The Capture of Port Hudson, by Richard B. Irwin, U.S.V. (Hereafter referred to as Battles and Leaders followed by the page, since there is only one selection used.

<sup>2</sup>Approximately 20,000 men versus Banks' 14,000.



Fig. 4. - Port Hudson and Vicinity

(See Figure 5, Page 25).

During this movement, the Second Rhode Island Cavalry was split up into many forces, each company being loaned out to an infantry commander as a reconnaissance force for an expedition. Companies D and E were given to Dudley's Brigade to help him accomplish his mission of opening up communications with the naval forces to the north. They succeeded in moving around Port Hudson to a point on the Mississippi near the mouth of the False River called Hermitage Landing.<sup>1</sup> (See Figure 4, page 23). Company F was still with the field trains, and Company A in New Orleans.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, Colonel Corliss moved along with the main party of Banks' force, from Algiers, to Berwick, and, by April 14, to Franklin.<sup>3</sup> The two companies that were detailed with General Emory's division accompanied the Fourth Wisconsin and one section of artillery for a special reconnoitering party all the way to Bayous Cocodrie and Bœuff, found the bridges destroyed, and lost sight of the enemy.<sup>4</sup> On April 29 Corliss was

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-15, p. 257. This force also included Company B, Massachusetts Unattached Cavalry.

<sup>2</sup>This is not clear, since, during this period, General Dyer's account lists one of the companies as a "bodyguard for General Banks." It is assumed that this would have been Company A, or the only other one unaccounted for, Company B. At this point Company H had not even arrived at New Orleans, having left Providence on March 28.

<sup>3</sup>Dyer, Compendium, III, 1627.

<sup>4</sup>April 21, OR 1-15, p. 299.



Fig. 5. - Theater of operations for the Department of the Gulf, March to August, 1863.

sent back to ascertain, if possible, the movements of the enemy.<sup>1</sup> This time he traveled as far as fifty miles in front of the advancing troops, and found nothing. The road from where they were to Simsport was reported good, and the party had pushed all the way through Chicotville. Only a small picket of the enemy was encountered, and Colonel Corliss captured that. He recommended strongly that the Department push on to Alexandria.<sup>2</sup> To make sure there was absolutely no cavalry in the area, Major Robinson was ordered out with the remaining cavalry to disperse anything he found.

#### The Siege of Port Hudson

It was at this point that General Banks decided to abandon his original plan to reinforce General Grant to the north, and instead, elected to move suddenly back to Simsport (see Figure 5, page 25), cross the Mississippi, and try to take Port Hudson from the other side. General Augur's division had gotten into position and the rest of Banks' force was to reinforce him. On May 18 the Second Rhode Island Cavalry moved to Monett's Plantation, and started on the Bayou Sara Road. By May 25, they had reached Bayou Sara and moved on Port Hudson.<sup>3</sup> By May 26 General Banks was able to mass 14,000 men against the Confederate fort. The next day

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<sup>1</sup>It is not clear whether he had any of his own companies with him.

<sup>2</sup>OR 1-15, p. 305.

<sup>3</sup>Dyer, Compendium, 3, p. 1627.

he attacked. The infantry, not having taken a complete reconnaissance of the terrain, faltered in an open area under direct fire of Confederate sharpshooters, and the assault failed. General Banks settled down to siege operations.

During this period (May 28 to July 8) the siege of Port Hudson took place. Trenches were built by the Federal forces in order to inch closer and closer. Siege artillery was brought up and placed in position. Meanwhile the cavalry was free to reconnoiter and patrol. The two companies that were attached to General Emory's division were committed with six companies of the 110th New York at Fausse Point, on the western side of the Mississippi River, opposite Port Hudson. Protecting Banks' right flank, they were also to protect the Union Navy now freely moving up and down the river. At one point a skirmish awarded them eleven Confederate prisoners, among them a man of influence, a Major Vigne, "who is represented as having taken active part in the rebellion, drilling, and forcing conscripts into service."<sup>1</sup>

During the siege, very little action took place in and around Fort Hudson, but elsewhere in General Banks' command, numerous skirmishes took place. Three of these battles concerned the Second Rhode Island Cavalry. On June 23, Major Anthony's garrison at Brashear City surrendered. On July 2 Colonel Corliss led a charge on a group

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-26-1, pp. 551-52. June 12, 1863.

of Confederate raiders. These three battles will be treated in detail in Chapter III.

## CHAPTER III

### OPERATIONS: JUNE TO AUGUST 1863

#### Brashear City

Sickness was a major factor in diminishing effective strength throughout the campaign in Louisiana. In the first place, the great majority of Federal soldiers in the Department of the Gulf were from the New England states and were not accustomed to the climate of the bayou country. Secondly, it was late spring and the constant rains had not allowed many men to stay dry. As a result, the disease rate ran high. It ran considerably higher than all other casualties. During the entire campaign, the regiment lost seven men due to enemy action, while thirty-seven were disabled from disease, fourteen of whom actually died.<sup>1</sup>

During the fighting in western Louisiana, Major Anthony had been taken sick, but continued in command of his battalion until May 19, when the regimental medical director sent him to the hospital at Brashear City. He had remained in the saddle most of the time he had been sick, and the medical director felt that the rest was necessary.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Register. These figures were compiled by a survey of each man's name in the regimental roster.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 160.



General Kirby Smith decided to come back from western Louisiana and attempt to recapture General Banks' base of operations at New Orleans. To accomplish this, he looked to General Richard Taylor, the Confederate commander who had fled into Texas the month before. Taylor had reorganized his forces and received replacements until his group consisted of five thousand.<sup>1</sup> He left Washington, Louisiana, on June 10, and moved twenty-eight miles to Morgan's Ferry by one of the few roads that was left passable from the rains. He crossed the Atchafalaya on June 14, and rode along the Bayou Fordoche with the intention of reaching the Mississippi at Hermitage Landing, but a broken bridge turned him northward round the sweep of False River toward Waterloo.<sup>2</sup> (See Figure 6, page 31).

At this point he came upon a Federal force at False Point, consisting of the 110th New York and reinforced by two companies of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry,<sup>3</sup> under the command of Colonel C. H. Sage. Taylor immediately attacked.<sup>4</sup> Sage resisted with his picket force, but as soon as he discovered the true strength of the Confederates, he moved down the levee to the corner of the lower fleet that was anchored

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<sup>1</sup>Battles and Leaders, p. 595.

<sup>2</sup>Irwin, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup>It cannot be determined which companies.

<sup>4</sup>Kenneth P. Williams, Lincoln Finds a General (5 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), V. 42.

Legend

- € Union Outposts
- >-> Taylor's Route

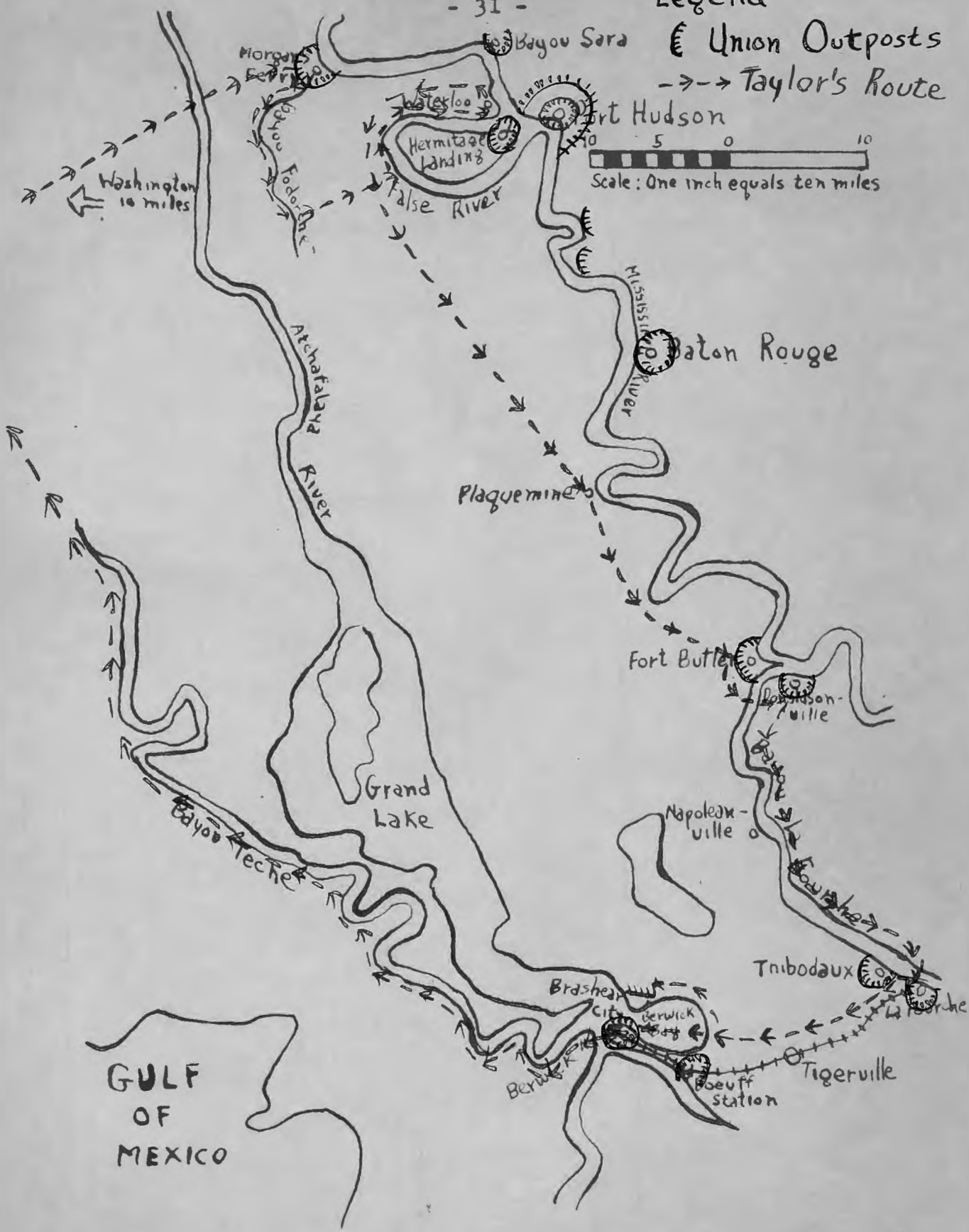
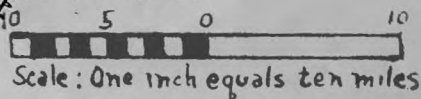


Fig. 6. - Route of General Taylor's Raid, June 10 to June 23, 1863.

off shore. Now under the protection of the gunboats, Sage was safe. Taylor, sensing the danger of the Federal gunboats, backed up and rode off through Plagnemine and then down towards Donaldsonville. Sage's actions protected his force, but lost the chance of giving timely warning of the Confederate force in the Federal rear area.<sup>1</sup> Taylor struck Donaldsonville, but was beaten off by a greatly outnumbered Union garrison. Making a feint at Fort Butler, and under cover of night, he took the cut-off and struck the Bayou La Fourche, six miles below Donaldsonville.

Lieutenant Colonel Stickney, commanding the 47th Massachusetts, received word from Department of the Gulf Rear Headquarters by telegram at 0400 hours<sup>2</sup> on June 20, informing him that the enemy was approaching La Fourche Crossing, and ordering him to send reinforcements to that point. Colonel Stickney, judging that Brashear City was safe for two days at least, left only a small garrison there and moved the majority of his force to La Fourche, intending to return as soon as possible to Brashear City.<sup>3</sup> General Emory in New Orleans sent four hundred men to help him. Taylor was beaten off on June 20 and June 21 at La Fourche. A smaller

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<sup>1</sup>Irwin, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>The twenty-four hour clock system begins at midnight. 0100 is one o'clock in the morning. After twelve o'clock noon, the numbers continue, so that 1300 is one o'clock in the afternoon, and continues through 2400, which is midnight.

<sup>3</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 193.

force under a Colonel C. E. Major was dispatched to Thibodaux to see if they could get around Stickney's flank. At Thibodaux, Major captured the entire garrison of one hundred Union convalescents.<sup>1</sup> Taylor struck again on June 22, but was repulsed.<sup>2</sup> Taylor now turned his attention to Brashear City.

On the afternoon of June 22, Stickney received word to send two companies back to Brashear City to strengthen the garrison. At the time Stickney had left on June 20 he had appointed Major Anthony commander of the garrison. Although there were several others who had more rank than Anthony, he was the only one well enough to assume command. Stickney had served with Anthony earlier in the campaign and had confidence in his ability.<sup>3</sup> Further, he felt that Taylor's Texans could not do much damage because they were poorly armed, poorly trained, and had not yet fought any sizable Union force.<sup>4</sup>

Major Anthony's command consisted of two companies of the 166th New York and about fifty troopers from the 47th Massachusetts, Colonel Stickney's unit. The others, principally convalescents, represented at least thirty regiments from General Banks' force, including some from the Second

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<sup>1</sup>Irwin, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>Williams, V, 42.

<sup>3</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 580.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Rhode Island Cavalry.<sup>1</sup> Major Anthony organized them into watches and strengthened the fort against an attack from Berwick Bay.

On the morning of June 23, Taylor first set up field pieces across the bay opposite Brashear City and began to fire. Anthony's garrison, aroused in a one hundred per cent alert by the bombardment, started to return the fire with their own guns. The entire garrison was placed in and around the part of the fort facing the bay and were readied to repulse the assault that was so certain to come. The Union gunboat Hollyhook approached to within rifle firing distance, but the fire was so heavy that it was beaten off and backed down the bay out of action.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Taylor's infantry, under cover of darkness in the early morning, crossed Berwick Bay in make-shift skiffs that they had been preparing all the night before. They landed on the south shore to the east of Brashear City between it and Ramas. Under the command of Colonel Hunter, they moved into the woods. At about 0630 hours, Hunter gave the order to fix bayonets and forbade them to load their rifles. The Confederates stormed out of the woods, crossed the railroad, captured the railroad station and started toward the garrison on the edge of the bay.

Taken completely by surprise, Anthony's troops gave only

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 911.

<sup>2</sup>Irwin, p. 241.

token resistance and surrendered to an attacking force but half their size.<sup>1</sup> The only Federals that escaped were the Provost Marshall and his staff who had been on the gunboat that had been beaten off.<sup>2</sup> Anthony and more than seven hundred officers and men were captured by Taylor's Confederates.

The Confederacy was overjoyed. Secretary of War Seddon, in reporting to President Davis, termed it a "brilliant success."<sup>3</sup> Anthony and his men and other prisoners captured at Bayou Boeuff were taken back behind Confederate lines on June 27. Considerable correspondence now occurred between the two sides, and on July 25 over 1,360 Union soldiers were paroled back to Union hands.<sup>4</sup> Major Anthony was now out of the military picture, and on August 1, 1863, he was mustered out of the service.<sup>5</sup> He returned to Providence.

#### The Forage Train Incident

Meanwhile, the greater part of the First Battalion was on the east side of the Mississippi River with General Banks' force besieging Port Hudson. Colonel Corliss was in

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<sup>1</sup>Irwin, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup>Report, Colonel Taylor to General Smith, June 23, 1863, as quoted in Williams, V, 44.

<sup>3</sup>OR 4-2, p. 991.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 2-8, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup>Register, p. 164.

command and the battalion had sundry responsibilities, including picket duty, reconnaissance and screening missions. On June 20 Colonel Corliss' group was part of a larger force sent out to protect a forage train<sup>1</sup> between Clinton and Jackson, Louisiana. (See Figure 4, page 23). The force consisted of two hundred and fifty men of the 52nd Massachusetts Infantry, one hundred and twenty-two men from the Second Rhode Island Cavalry, and about two hundred and fifty men of the 6th and 7th Illinois Cavalry.<sup>2</sup> Colonel Grierson's Illinois Cavalry had just completed a record making raid through the back woods of Mississippi as a diversion to Grant's attack on Vicksburg, far to the north.

Suddenly, the group was attacked by two regiments of Arkansas Infantry<sup>3</sup> and a heavy cavalry force, supported by two pieces of light artillery. The Rhode Islanders were in front of the column when the Confederates opened fire, and they returned the fire. Holding them in check, Colonel Corliss sent for his own artillery to support the defence. The Rhode Islanders dismounted and took up firing positions. The artillery must have misunderstood the message, for Colonel Corliss had to send back for them two times more.

In desperation, seeing the serious situation that was

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<sup>1</sup>Food for the horses.

<sup>2</sup>Report, Corliss to State Adjutant General E. C. Mauraan, Adjutant General's Report for 1863, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. The 11th and the 17th regiments.

developing, Colonel Corliss turned, galloped back, and commandeered the field pieces that he needed and started back up to the front of the column. He reached the position just in time, for as the Confederates were reaching his position, the field pieces fired at them. Using all together twenty rounds of spherical case shot, Corliss' little group succeeded in wounding seven and killing one of the enemy. The assault wavered. The Rhode Islanders rushed forward and captured four Confederates. Two men in Company A were taken prisoner, and Lieutenant E. C. Pomroy and Private Frank Brucker were both wounded. Later, when returning to Port Hudson, the train was again attacked. This time the Rhode Islanders were in the rear and saw no action. The Confederates captured about sixty wagons.<sup>1</sup>

#### Springfield Landing

The Second Rhode Island Cavalry returned to the main force under General Banks before Port Hudson. Confederate Colonel Jonathan L. Logan, commanding a portion of the position near Port Hudson, near Clinton, Louisiana, decided to make a diversionary raid in Banks' rear to take away some of the pressure against the fort. (See Figure 4, page 23). He moved out under cover of darkness on July 2, with a cavalry force of about two hundred. His objective was Springfield Landing, an important supply base for Banks'

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<sup>1</sup>Adjutant General's Report for 1863, p. 22.



besieging army. From here, supplies were being ferried up the Mississippi another six miles to be sent overland to his troops.<sup>1</sup>

Taking the small protective garrison completely by surprise, Logan immediately drove in the picket of the 162nd New York Infantry about 0830 hours. Before the alarm had time to be sounded, Logan's troopers had galloped one hundred yards into position and broken into three groups. Group one galloped into a stack of supplies that was protected by Federal Negro troops. Upon being attacked, the Negroes fled into a cottonwood grove nearby and watched the Confederates set fire to all they could find.<sup>2</sup> Group two galloped into the cottonwood grove, scattering and terrifying the Negroes. Some even ran terrified into the river and drowned. Group three, consisting of about half the original force, moved straight through the position towards a little hill on the other side. Here they met with more Federal pickets. Capturing some, they now came face to face with the Second Rhode Island Cavalry.

From a report that there was a party of enemy cavalry in the area, and fearing for the division's mail, General Dwight had sent for Colonel Corliss and his regiment early that morning. Corliss was told to meet a Captain Godfrey of the Louisiana Cavalry, a member of Dwight's staff. He

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<sup>1</sup>LOR 1-26-1, pp. 72-74.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

would direct him to the proper place.

Meeting with Godfrey, who himself had fifteen men, the two groups started toward the Baton Rouge Road, near Springfield Landing. Logan had not yet struck. It was still about 0730 hours. Corliss' men had been in the saddle since 0200 that morning. Everything was quiet, and the party of rebel cavalry previously reported was nowhere to be found. Corliss and Godfrey started back.<sup>1</sup> It was now 0800 hours.

Suddenly a messenger galloped up after they had gone a few miles, and reported that Logan had attacked the supply base. In addition, they came upon two officers in a command buggy. The senior officer, General Augur, turned to Corliss and told him of the seriousness of the situation, ordering him to return to Springfield Landing and save the supplies. Augur drove off rapidly in the direction of Port Hudson to report to General Banks.<sup>2</sup> Corliss immediately sent an officer to move down the road as rapidly as possible and gain any information he could. At the same time, he turned the column around and started back. After they had gone a mile they were startled at receiving a "scattering shot" from the Confederates.<sup>3</sup> Colonel Corliss had run into group three of Logan's cavalry.

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-26-1, pp. 139-40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The Rhode Islanders answered with a volley of their own as soon as they had time to dismount, and, forming into a column of fours, advanced. Group three fell back on Logan's main force. Corliss followed and charged again, but was repulsed. The full weight of Logan's force now counter-charged. Greatly outnumbered, Corliss withdrew. Mid-morning in July in Louisiana, the sun beat down on the road. Dust kicked up so thickly that it was impossible to tell friend from foe.

Company D, leading the retreat, now came upon Confederate infantry to their front. Captain Beach galloped back to inform Colonel Corliss of the new development. Corliss ordered a charge about three hundred yards from the road, toward the advancing infantry. The infantry fell back in the direction of Logan's cavalry, and nothing more was seen of them.<sup>1</sup>

Now reinforced by Colonel Blanchard's 162nd New York, the Federals forced the Confederates back. Logan, however, held on until all the supplies had been burned. Destroying one hundred wagons, Logan killed or wounded one hundred and forty Union troops, and captured two lieutenants and eleven enlisted men from the Second Rhode Island Cavalry.<sup>2</sup> Lieutenants Whitney and Fenner were never paroled with the rest of the men captured. Both were taken the following December

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

to Libby Prison in Charleston harbor. Lieutenant Fenner made an heroic escape in March, 1865, at Northeast Ferry, North Carolina, and was honorably discharged March 12, 1865.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Logan's actions at Springfield Landing were commended by the Confederate General Johnston, commanding at Jackson, Louisiana, for "exhibiting vigor, enterprise and courage."<sup>2</sup>

#### The Surrender of Port Hudson

The Confederate defenders of Port Hudson, weakened and disheartened by Vicksburg's surrender, resisted with all their reserve. Banks, ready to mount another assault, demanded their surrender. On July 5, 1863, the day after Grant marched into Vicksburg, Port Hudson struck its colors.

The Second Rhode Island Cavalry was still divided into the various companies attached to the sub units of the Department of the Gulf. But now that the fighting had stopped, it consolidated at Baton Rouge. Companies E and G came in from picket duty at Fausse Point, Company H arrived from New Orleans, and Company B came from General Banks' headquarters. Deciding to concentrate his cavalry at various places, Banks sent the Second Rhode Island Cavalry to Thibodaux.<sup>3</sup> They were assigned to the Commander of Defenses of New Orleans.

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<sup>1</sup>Register, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup>OR 1-52-2, p. 505.

<sup>3</sup>Special Orders No. 200, Headquarters, Department of the Gulf, August 15, 1863, as quoted in OR 1-26-1, p. 685.

## CHAPTER IV

### MUTINY AT CAMP HUBBARD

#### The Reduction

Volunteer units in the Civil War, unlike those of the Regular Army, received replacements from the home state. Since the drive on Fort Hudson did not receive the publicity that military operations in the East received, it did not prove to be as popular. As a result, there were few volunteers from the recruiting stations in Providence to fill the ranks of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry Regiment. Furthermore, disease, battle casualties, and losses by capture continued to reduce the rank and file. The task of resupplying the regiment with replacement troops began to assume huge proportions in view of the large desertion rate.<sup>1</sup> The Second Rhode Island Cavalry, like all other cavalry units in the Civil War, lost more men while on outpost duty than in pitched battles.<sup>2</sup>

This wear and tear now made the number of men present for duty sink well below the strength permitted for this type of unit. General Banks decreed that they could not be

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<sup>1</sup>Desertions will be discussed in detail in Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup>Dyer, Report for 1865, II, 161.

allowed to go below one-half the minimum strength of the original structure of organization. This unit was down to three hundred and sixty-five men. On July 11 General Banks decided to reduce the two battalions to one. This battalion would consist of four companies,<sup>1</sup> and would not need a regimental headquarters.<sup>2</sup> The order was sent out, and Colonel Corliss, now without a command, together with four other officers, resigned his commission and started home to Rhode Island. Eight officers were retained.<sup>3</sup> Companies A and C were consolidated into a new Company A. Companies B and D became Company B, Companies E and G became Company C, and Companies F and H became Company D.<sup>4</sup> The eight officers retained were Captain McCall and Lieutenant Whitney for Company A, Captain Beach and Lieutenant Turner for Company B, Captain Hardy and Lieutenant Hanning for Company C, and Captain Fitts and Lieutenant Jackson for Company D.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A G Report for 1863, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>The Congressional Act of March 3, 1863 states that, "whenever a regiment of Volunteers of the same arm of the same state is reduced to one-half of the maximum number prescribed by law, the President may direct the consolidation of the companies of such regiment, provided, that no such company formed exceed the maximum made by law. When such consolidation is made, the regimental officers shall be reduced in proportion to the reduction in the number of companies." General Banks' order of July 11 complied with this law.

<sup>3</sup>Register, pp. 431-32.

<sup>4</sup>A G Report for 1863, p. 9. Extracted from Special Order 167, paragraph 14, Headquarters, Department of the Gulf, July 11, 1863.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Special Order 168, paragraph 2, July 12, 1863.

Reduction in ranks grew worse, and on August 24 a more important and far reaching decision was reached. Special Orders No. 209, Paragraph VIII, Headquarters, Department of the Gulf, New Orleans, dated August 24, 1863, read:

The enlisted men of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry are transferred to the First Louisiana Cavalry. The officers are hereby mustered out of the service. Such of them as desire to remain in the service may, upon proving themselves fitted for and deserving of commissions in the First Louisiana Cavalry before a board appointed by its regimental commander, be appointed to fill vacancies. Lieutenant Colonel Robinson, First Louisiana Cavalry, is charged with the execution of this order. By order of Major General Banks.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Mutiny

Colonel Harai Robinson, commanding officer of the First Louisiana Cavalry of Volunteers, took immediate action. From an adjacent bivouac area, he sent out his Quartermaster to Camp Hubbard<sup>2</sup> in order to count and secure the government property. He was especially interested in the horses, as the remount problem<sup>3</sup> was acute in the Department of the Gulf. He approached the officers in Major Anthony's headquarters, imploring them for cooperation in the coming changeover. He received a negative answer to all his requests.

They the Rhode Island officers informed me none wished to remain; none wished to apply for commissions in the

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup>Bivouac of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry.

<sup>3</sup>The problem of obtaining replacement horses. See Chapter II, discussion of shortage of cavalry units.

First Louisiana Cavalry. They did not hesitate in telling me that in their opinion I should never be able to do anything with their men. They further said to me that, as they understood the orders they themselves were already discharged from the service.<sup>1</sup>

By August 29 desertions had increased over the previous day in the Rhode Island unit, and Colonel Robinson had not accomplished the mission as stated in his orders. This time he sent his Adjutant, Lieutenant Hall, over to the Rhode Island camp in order to read the order to the men. He did so at 1600 hours. "Instantaneously, and as if by accord, a tumultuous and general, 'No! No!' was uttered from one end of the line to the other."<sup>2</sup> "After having taken their names, they were dismissed in order to get their clothing, and report back immediately, which they failed to do."<sup>3</sup> "The men said they would not serve in the First Louisiana Cavalry under Colonel Robinson; that they would endure any punishment imposed upon them, but would not serve."<sup>4</sup>

The next morning, Colonel Robinson went over to Camp Hubbard in order to investigate the matter. All the men were assembled in small groups, discussing the situation.

I Colonel Robinson rode up to them, and quietly ordered them to take up their packs and join their respective companies. Not a man offered to obey the order. Two

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<sup>1</sup>Testimony of Colonel Robinson at Court of Inquiry, OR 1-26-1, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Testimony of Captain Francis M. Ives, First Louisiana Cavalry, at the Court of Inquiry, Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 265.



of them arose, and used the following language, or words to this effect: "Colonel, we have made up our minds that, as we enlisted in the Second Rhode Island Cavalry, we will, by God, serve in no other. We will not go. Do as you like, but by God, we won't serve." A murmur of assent ran through the crowd, and not a man moved.<sup>1</sup>

Robinson faced a difficult situation. Some of the Rhode Island men had already deserted that morning. Their actions were indicative that stern measures would have to be taken in order to re-establish discipline. Three of the companies of his own Louisiana unit were recruits, and something like this, if successful, might prove disastrous to their discipline if he allowed the Rhode Islanders to continue unchecked.

I knew that no guard could hold these Rhode Islanders in camp. Imprisonment they did not fear. It was reported to me [source not found] that they courted being sent to some place of confinement in a body, and I was certain that nothing but fear would prevent them from turning into a band of marauders, which would completely demoralize the First Louisiana Cavalry, cause the orders of the Department to fall to the ground, and make military discipline and law a farce.<sup>2</sup>

#### Robinson's Actions

Robinson acted deliberately and decisively. He sent word back to his own camp to Captain Ives to call up the regiment and march them, under arms, to Camp Hubbard, stating that the Rhode Islanders were "in mutiny"<sup>3</sup> He then went back to speak to the men again.

I [Captain Ives] heard three or four of them [Rhode Islanders] talking with their associates, but could not

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<sup>1</sup>Colonel Robinson's Testimony, Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Captain Ives' Testimony, Ibid., p. 265.

hear what they said, but should judge from their actions that they were urging them to mutiny. Colonel Robinson called one of the men up to him and said, "You are the spokesman for these men this morning, and are urging them to mutiny. Do you refuse my order?" The man replied, "Not more than the rest do."<sup>1</sup>

When the Louisiana troops arrived, one company was mounted, and three were on foot. The mounted company was ordered to encircle the camp, and the three on foot were told to form a line facing the Rhode Islanders. Colonel Robinson, with an interpreter accompanying him,<sup>2</sup> spoke to the men in English, Spanish, and French, ordering them to join their companies.<sup>3</sup> The interpreter then repeated the command in German.

Not a man of the mutineers stirred. I then told them emphatically that if they did not rise up and form line, I should order them to be fired on.<sup>4</sup>

The three Louisiana companies were facing the Rhode Islanders. Two were ordered away from the one in the center to form on both of its flanks, forming three sides of a square. The company in the center was then placed at the disposal of the Adjutant. While still in the saddle, Colonel

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<sup>1</sup>Captain Ives' Testimony, Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>2</sup>A further study indicates that a great many of the men recruited in the Second Rhode Island Cavalry's Second Battalion were of foreign birth, from countries where a language other than English was the native tongue, such as the German Company, described earlier in this work. Register, pp. 164-220.

<sup>3</sup>The Rhode Islanders had not kept any unit integrity, and had been ordered to integrate into various companies of the First Louisiana Cavalry.

<sup>4</sup>Colonel Robinson's Testimony, OR 1-26-1, p. 263.

Robinson wrote out an order for Lieutenant Hall. It was an order to proceed as Provost Marshall, executing the two ringleaders. One of these men had incited the riot of August 30, and the other had been a ringleader on August 29. The order read:

First Lieutenant Hall, Adjutant of the First Louisiana Cavalry, is hereby appointed Provost Marshall of the Day, and is charged, as such, with the execution of Private Richard Murphy, Boston, alias Richard Smith, and of Private Frederick Freeman, alias William Davis, mutineers - a military necessity.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Execution

By now, all of the Rhode Islanders except the two men who were detained by Colonel Robinson's order, had joined the Louisiana company to which they had just been newly assigned. Company F, the Louisiana company that was in the center of the formation, was divided into two platoons. These were brought up on line with each other, one prisoner being placed in front of each platoon, ten paces forward. Lieutenant Hall, the Adjutant, went up to each man and offered him time to pray. After blindfolding them, he signaled to Lieutenant Jules A. Masicot, commanding Company F, to fire.<sup>2</sup> Each platoon fired successively, and the men fell to the

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<sup>1</sup>Colonel Robinson's Testimony, Ibid. Their real names were Richard Smith and William Davis. Apparently the other names, Murphy and Freeman, were the names under which they had enlisted. "Report for 1863," Register, pp. 432, 454, and 456.

<sup>2</sup>Testimony of Lieutenant Masicot, OR 1-26-1, p. 267.

ground. Smith was only shot through the legs.<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Hall and the Orderly Sergeant of Company F administered the coup de grace with their pistols.<sup>2</sup> The mutiny was over. It had been put down within a half hour. Colonel Robinson, shaken with the seriousness of the situation, and taking advantage of the astonishment of the Rhode Islanders, turned to the group and said:

Soldiers, and you especially of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry . . . behold here the terrible consequences of rebellion and insubordination! It is very painful for anyone to be compelled to resort to these last extremities, but be assured that every attempt at insubordination will be met in the same way. You are now in a good regiment under good officers, who will take care of you, but who in return will demand strict obedience to orders.<sup>3</sup>

Horror stricken with what they had just witnessed, the men moved into the Louisiana camp in a very meek manner. Colonel Robinson started his report to General Augur.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from an anonymous soldier to the Providence Daily Evening Press, September 22, 1863, p.2, c.2.

<sup>2</sup>Lieutenant Hall's Testimony, OR 1-26-1, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup>Description of the execution, Providence Daily Evening Press, September 22, 1863, p.2, c.2.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCIPLINE AND MORALE

#### Problems at the Beginning of the War

When the results of the Battle of Bull Run proved to be indecisive, both the North and the South fell back to their respective sides to start building their military forces. To the North, the job of recruiting an army that would be sufficient both in numbers and in strength to put down the Rebellion, proved to be a tremendous task. Large groups of men who had never seen a uniform were now thrown together in makeshift camps all around the capital city, building up temporary barricades to protect the seat of the Union government. Consequently, the area around Washington was deluged with various uniforms, weapons, and dialects. With no semblance of organization, sanitation, or discipline, unruly soldiers were everywhere.

Many soldiers had deserted, and the streets of Washington were crowded with straggling officers and men, absent from their stations without authority, whose behavior indicated the general want of discipline and organization.<sup>1</sup>

General George McClellan was given the task of reorganizing and training the Union forces. General Winfield Scott

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<sup>1</sup>General McClellan's Report of Operation, August 4, 1863, OR 1-5, p. 11.

had already made the decision to keep all Regular Army units together. Long before, the idea of putting the regulars into volunteer units as cadre for the new recruits had been advanced. This was vetoed for fear of having to recall them from the frontier where they constantly faced the Indians. So, for the remainder of the war, units would either be regular, volunteer, or state militia.

Such a decision created many problems within the volunteer ranks. Competent leaders were at a premium, and for the lack of a better plan, men were permitted to elect their company officers. They, in turn, voted for the regimental officers. Persons of influence or means able to raise groups of men were given commissions of colonel by vote-conscious state governors with little or no regard for their experience or formal training. "Political generals" paraded around Washington's most exclusive establishments with no idea of what the uniform they were wearing represented.

Likewise, the men were just as ignorant. Recruited initially in 1861 for very short periods of time, these men had no sense of belonging to their outfits. Not kept abreast of what the current regulations demanded of the soldier, these men became a disorganized mob. There was only the slightest idea of why they were in Virginia. At night they left the camps and roamed the countryside, sometimes, terrorizing the local inhabitants.

It was only a matter of time before this lack of

discipline came to the attention of persons in high places. In 1861 there were two cases of open revolt in the units stationed around Washington. Had they not been promptly suppressed by the vigorous McClellan, the spirit would no doubt have spread throughout the entire command. The principal disturbance occurred in the New York 79th Volunteers. The men were "Scotch Highlanders." In battle they had proved to be good fighters but they were "intractable in disposition." Their officers were totally incompetent, and deserters were increasing every day, until at one muster there were one hundred and forty men missing. Finally an order was received to march into Virginia, and the men rebelled. Since most of the officers were drunk, Colonel Andrew Porter was sent with a large group of Regulars who "drew up in front of the mutineers and prepared to mow them down if they would not submit."<sup>1</sup> The ringleaders were chained and the officers were dismissed. In another case a regiment was brought to order by transporting sixty-three officers and men to the Dry Tortugas to labor during the rest of the war.

By executing positive action at the point of the trouble, McClellan was then able to look for the origin. "I think the trouble arose more from poor officers than

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<sup>1</sup>"McClellan's Own Story," New York Tribune, August 17, 1861, as quoted in Fred Albert Shannon, The Organization and Administration of the Union Army, 1861-1865 (2 vols.; Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1928), I, 99-100.

from the men," he was able to say.<sup>1</sup> Problems arose from disputes over the length of service, and in many cases, ignorance of military law. All of these problems were eventually solved however, by continued and rigorous training. Competent officers exercising good leadership soon welded the Army of the Potomac into a formidable military force.

Other insubordinate acts came up in the future, but they could be handled with mature judgement, once the origin was determined. In January, 1863, the 96th New York demonstrated because they hadn't been paid.<sup>2</sup> In November a company of Maryland Home Guards refused to leave their state.<sup>3</sup> October, 1863, saw a disgraceful open mutiny at Bloomfield, Missouri. The commanding officer of the post was placed under arrest in his quarters by mutineers and a guard placed over the telegraph operator and his instrument. A battery of artillery was drawn up in line in front of the headquarters. After the insurgents were put down by local troops, a quadruple court martial dishonorably dismissed all the officers from the military service. Again, leadership was the key factor.<sup>4</sup> Major General Foster lectured his command thus:

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<sup>1</sup>Shannon, I, 99-100.

<sup>2</sup>OR 1-18, p. 518.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 449.

<sup>4</sup>OR 1-22-1, pp. 707-21.



It is the duty of the Commanding Officer to use every effort to promote the comfort of the troops, their prompt payment, etc. . . . The duty of a Regimental Officer is to use his efforts to put down any attempt at insubordination, mildly if he can, by force and arms if he must. . . . The Commanding General hopes that no officer or soldier will again so fail his duty. Another offence will surely meet its punishment.<sup>1</sup>

### Mutiny in the Cavalry

There is a point of similarity with these incidents and that at Camp Hubbard. Not realizing the influence that was wielded by the regimental officers of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry, Major General Banks shortsightedly released them all from the service before he consolidated the two regiments. Leadership, then, was denied the enlisted men. A period of inactivity and grumbling followed the exodus of the Rhode Island officers. The burden of enforcement rested solely on the shoulders of strange officers from another unit, one that had been constantly in competition with them for several months. This competition naturally led to indignation and bitterness when the consolidation order was sent down from General Banks' headquarters. As in the case of the Marylanders who didn't want to leave their state, these Rhode Islanders wanted to remain in a unit associated with their home state. But, unlike the case at Bloomfield, the mutiny at Camp Hubbard did not constitute an offensive act, rather one of a lack of response. A "sit down mutiny" is hardly as serious as one in which armed

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<sup>1</sup>LOR 1-18, p. 518.

insurgents besiege the commanding officer's telegraph office.

A last point must be noted. These men were not ignorant, short term volunteers struggling with incompetent officers at the beginning of the war. On the contrary, they were battle-hardened veterans who had been through the Port Hudson Campaign almost from the beginning. They had displayed coolness under fire and had been accustomed to military discipline.

#### Administrative Discipline

Finally, one must look at the problem of individual discipline throughout the war in order to draw some conclusions. "Billy Yank" early in the war had no conception as to why he had to remain with his unit unless excused by competent authority. One account remains as an example. Conditions at Camp Curtin in Pennsylvania more than a year after the beginning of the war were poor. Sentinels were armed with clubs and soldiers came and went as they pleased. "We rushed the guards to go bathing in the river, and we did duty generally when it was convenient." With apparently no shame, the account retells how on one occasion, a soldier was absent for three days on a visit to a neighboring town, and even after that extended visit, his absence was not reported.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>LC. A. Ramsey, "Story of Headquarters Clerk and Sergeant Major," The 148th Pennsylvania Volunteers, p. 336, as quoted in Shannon, I, 179. It is important to note that today there is a difference between being "absent without leave," and "remaining absent with intention to desert." In the Civil War, there was no such distinction made.

This lack of administrative discipline on the part of his officers was typical of a great many units of this time.

Prior to 1861, Army regulations authorized a reward of thirty dollars for the apprehension and delivery of a known deserter. But then, as the large influx of men came into the army in the spring and summer of 1861, and when such a reward would have brought rich dividends for a collapsing discipline in the army, this reward was reduced by Congressional action to five dollars plus the apprehender's expenses. Later, when this was proved to be a poor solution, a system of Provost Marshalls was established in the various Congressional Districts of the loyal states. In addition to enforcing the Enrollment Act, these Provost Marshalls were to detain deserters. Later, an act by Congress provided that after sixty days, a deserter relinquished his right to United States citizenship. This included his rights to vote, own property, and to hold public office.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Problem of High Bounties

Another problem was the large bounties given to the volunteers. The offer of large sums of money to those who would volunteer in a certain regiment attracted some of the most notorious ruffians and rowdies that could be gathered.

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the Provost Marshall General, OR 3-5, pp. 676-77. This is still true in theory. A soldier is "dropped from the rolls as a deserter," after being absent without leave for a period of sixty days. Citizenship, however, is subject to question only if the deserter receives a Dishonorable Discharge.

In 1862 the Militia Draft Act put a kind of competition into the bounty system and huge sums of money were offered to the volunteers. States competed with each other in bargaining for new recruits. This system characterized the whole later period of the war. Substitutes were needed and bounties climbed even higher. In New England and New York where the mercenary element was noticeable in 1863, the prevailing local and state bounties totaled three hundred dollars, which, added to the United States government bounty, exactly equalled the maximum for substitutes. In Rhode Island, some of the towns reported offering as much as three hundred and fifty dollars in extra bounties over and above any other bounties under this draft. The Second Rhode Island Cavalry advertised in the Providence Daily Post a twenty-five dollar bounty when sworn in, three hundred dollars when the recruit left the state, and seventy-five dollars when discharged.<sup>1</sup> This is a total of four hundred dollars. In addition, they offered the opportunity to settle in Texas after the war. The General Treasurer of Rhode Island reported that for the year 1862 he had disbursed \$103,525.00 in bounties for the Second Rhode Island Cavalry alone. This figure represented disbursements for eight hundred and eighty-one men.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>November 11, 1862, p.3, c.3.

<sup>2</sup>QM Report for 1863, p. 17.

### "Bounty Jumpers"

It wasn't long before someone decided that he could enlist, collect the bounty, then desert to enlist somewhere else. This "bounty jumping" was widespread throughout the North, wherever high bounties existed. Bounty brokers sprang up, advancing funds to bounty jumpers provided they could then collect three or four-fold the money. The bounty jumpers sometimes traveled in gangs of five to twenty men. Half of the gang would put on disguises, go into town, and enlist under fictitious names. After collecting the fee, the other half of the gang would then help the new recruits make good their escape. At the next city, the other half would do the disguising and the enlisting.

From three to five thousand of them [bounty jumpers] were estimated to be on Manhattan Island alone, regularly organized in little gangs, revelling in well known hotels; each gang in command of a bounty or substitute broker who advanced the funds and furnished the disguises.<sup>1</sup>

On March 11, 1865, a Provost in New York City captured five hundred and ninety suspects in one raid alone, ". . . the most desperate villains unhung. Most of them [had] enlisted and deserted from three to twenty times each."<sup>2</sup>

The Provost Marshall of Rhode Island, after only a few months in office, was concerned with the problem of bounty jumpers. In his words, the bounty frauds "were so varied,

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<sup>1</sup>New York Tribune, January 2, 1865, quoted in Shannon, II, 72.

<sup>2</sup>OR 3-4, p. 1231.

extensive, and complicated, that it was impossible to unravel them. . . . Organized bodies in the neighboring cities had pre-arranged for enlistments and desertions, and until their movements were discovered, had been carried on to a considerable extent."<sup>1</sup> In addition, he brought out the problem of the dishonest recruiting officer. Evidence pointed out that he went to great lengths to obtain volunteers, obtaining "the enlistment of a less desirable class of persons."<sup>2</sup> After the Federal government had been induced to furnish transportation for the recruits, men were transported to Providence from such far away places as Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, and persuaded to enlist. He estimated that only about ten per cent of these men ever got to their regiments. The rest deserted. The volunteer generally agreed to pay a portion of the bounty, ranging from fifty to one hundred and fifty dollars, back to the recruiter. Sixteen men who had enlisted in the Second Rhode Island Cavalry signed blank receipts over to a recruiting officer. The officer was to fill out the blanks dividing the state bounty of three hundred dollars, thus making the check

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<sup>1</sup>State of Rhode Island, Report of the United States Provost Marshall of Rhode Island, William E. Hamlin, made to his Excellency the Governor Sprague by his request, and by him presented to the General Assembly at its January Session, 1863 (Public Document Appendix No. 6 to the "Acts and Resolves" of the State Legislature for the January, 1863, Session; Providence: Alfred Anthony, 1863), p. 6. Hereafter referred to as PM Report for 1863.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

one hundred and fifty dollars. When the state bounty was paid, the officer was to pay the soldier in cash one hundred and fifty dollars, and take the state check for three hundred dollars. When the state check was cashed, the recruiting officer would give the recruit a pass, thus making the opportunity for and with the understanding he would desert.<sup>1</sup>

Recruiting became so frenzied, that the Governor of Rhode Island asked for and got special authority from the legislature to pay a bounty of ten dollars to the recruiters for every recruit they were able to bring in. The state Quartermaster General reported that this system had "formed no small share of his labors." Eleven recruits were able to bring in one hundred and ten dollars to their recruiters in the Second Rhode Island Cavalry. That same year, the Third Rhode Island Cavalry paid ten dollars a head for five hundred and eighty-two men. Total disbursements of this type for the year were \$22,975.00.<sup>2</sup>

#### Desertion Totals

If, in the gang that was captured in New York, as mentioned earlier, each man was responsible for several desertions, it is safe to assume that the number of desertions far exceed the number of men that actually left. Combine this with the fact that some of the men were not fully

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup>QM Report for 1863, pp. 3-4.

aware of the seriousness of leaving their camp, and it is possible to see why the figures are so relatively high. In all, the army reported 266,339 deserters. General Fry reported that not all of these men stayed away with the intent to desert, so he subtracted twenty-five per cent. This brought down the total to 195,255. He then subtracted the number that had been apprehended and declared that 117,247 men were still at large. When one combines this with the figure of 112,901 men that never answered the call of the 1863 Draft, he cited a total of 230,148 deserters that had not been apprehended.<sup>1</sup> By April 30, 1865, the army was able to cite a total of 2,254,063 soldiers that had served during the war.<sup>2</sup> If one compares the aggregate number of deserters not apprehended, to the figure of the total men serving in the war, a ten per cent desertion rate is indicated. Likewise, when a comparison of the number of men under arms in 1865, 1,000,516,<sup>3</sup> was made with the number of deserters who had left the actual units in the field, the rate was again about ten per cent.

It was estimated by the Rhode Island Provost Marshall that there were eight hundred men absent from their Rhode Island regiments and not yet apprehended at the beginning

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<sup>1</sup>Fry to Stanton, September 11, 1865, OR 3-5, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>OR 3-5, p. 600.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



of the year 1863.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a search of the Adjutant General's list in the Rhode Island Register of Volunteers shows a total of seven hundred and eighty-nine enlisted men during the Second Rhode Island Cavalry's existence. Of these, the Register further shows that three hundred and sixty-eight either deserted or were last reported as absent without authority. This makes the desertion rate for the Second Rhode Island Cavalry a very high forty-six per cent. It is considerably higher than General Fry's ten per cent. Further, if one considers this figure of deserters against the number of men present at any one time, the rate would be even higher. Little wonder that General Banks was concerned with the desertion rate of one of his cavalry units!

#### Army Justice

One other possible reason for the high rate was the weakness of the judicial decisions throughout the war. Weak punishments, probably due to the reluctance of inept officers at the beginning to judge harshly their men who had deserted, continued to be given. Army regulations set forth capital punishment as a maximum sentence for those convicted of desertion by a court martial. General Fry considered this fact with the weakness of the apprehension machinery as the chief bottleneck in his work.

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<sup>1</sup>IPM Report for 1863, p. 7.

"Undue mercy," he said, "to deserters was in harsh reality a cruel punishment to those who remained true to their flag."<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1863, not far from Camp Hubbard, a Department of the Gulf General Court Martial let several deserters off with fines of thirty-nine dollars each.<sup>2</sup> It was the exception rather than the rule when men were executed for the offense, and most men were let off with a slap of the wrist. Shannon says of this:

Beyond such minor punishments were those meted out by regular court martial, such sentences extending to the death penalty. Considering the number of desertions throughout the war in comparison to the very small number who were ever executed for the offense, it can be easily ascertained how little effect capital punishment had, as it was administered.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>OR 3-5, p. 678.

<sup>2</sup>Bell Irvin Wiley, The Common Soldier in the Civil War (2 vols.; Vol. I, The Life of Billy Yank; Vol. II, The Life of Johnny Reb; New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1951), I, 206.

<sup>3</sup>Shannon, I, 227.

## CHAPTER VI

### REACTION

#### The Court of Inquiry

A Military Court of Inquiry was established by the Department of the Gulf on September 4 to investigate the Second Rhode Island Cavalry's mutiny. Made up of five senior officers, it included a colonel, two lieutenant colonels, a major, and a captain,<sup>1</sup> all members of New York volunteer units. They met for a period of three days, during which time they heard evidence from Colonel Robinson, Captain Ives, Lieutenant Masiot, and Sergeant Sidney E. Irving, Sergeant Major of the First Louisiana Cavalry, but at the time of the mutiny, sergeant, acting lieutenant, and temporarily commanding a troop in the Rhode Island unit. All these men were eye witnesses to the events of the two days. After deliberating a very short time, the court announced its findings:

I. The origin of the mutiny in the Second Rhode Island Cavalry was the reading of the order of consolidation with the First Louisiana Cavalry, on the 29th of August, 1863.

II. The course of said mutiny was the reading of Special Orders No. 209, Paragraph VIII, Department of the Gulf, consolidating the Second Rhode Island Cavalry, on the 29th of August to the time of arrest and execution of the two men of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry on the 30th day of August, 1863.

III. The suppression of the mutiny was in a prompt and efficient manner in which the ringleaders were executed by order of Lieutenant Colonel Harai Robinson, First Louisiana Cavalry.<sup>1</sup>

The indorsement of these findings by General Banks backed up those of the court and of Colonel Robinson with only the slightest reservations:

It is probable that order could have been maintained in the regiment without the application of capital punishment to the two men executed; but the conduct of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry was such that it is impossible to say how much or how soon the mutiny would have been repeated.

Severe measures were required with them. The Commanding General regrets the necessity for the execution, but is unable, with his knowledge of the facts, to say that it was not justifiable in consideration of all the facts of the case.<sup>2</sup>

#### Reaction in Rhode Island

Reaction at home in Rhode Island was more positive. Speaking for the State, Governor Smith took an active part in protesting the matter. Upon receiving the news of the Consolidation Order of August 24,<sup>3</sup> he protested on September 4 to the Adjutant General's Office in Washington. His first objection was the fact that the officers had been discharged from the service. "Even should they be reappointed, they would lose rank by date of commission."<sup>4</sup> It was bad enough

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 268.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>3</sup>There was no telegraphic communication between New Orleans and the North at that time. The news was carried by dispatch steamer, normally taking from seven to ten days.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Governor Smith to War Department Secretary Stanton, September 4, 1863, OR 1-26-1, p. 270. It is evident

that they lost their commissions, but more degrading to know that their reappointment lay in the discretion of the officers of the First Louisiana. Secondly, the enlisted men were forced to be in some other unit, foreign to the one into which they volunteered. This was unacceptable. "I do therefore . . . request that the order be revoked by your department War Department and the Second Rhode Island Cavalry be allowed to maintain its name and organization."<sup>1</sup> The letter of the Governor was sent to General Banks with endorsements by the War Department for his comment and opinion. In answer, the General cited first the poor record the unit had made while under his command.

. . . but the organization was composed mostly of men beyond control. The deprivations and robberies were frightful. One or two of the men on the march to Alexandria were shot for offenses of this character. They gave us still greater trouble by the erroneous reports made in regard to the movements of the enemy.<sup>2</sup>

General Banks goes on to say that not only was the conduct

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also, that the Governor was in possession of a petition signed by the men which was written at the time of the mutiny and sent to Providence by way of Captain Fitts, who came home to be mustered out. Providence Daily Evening Press, September 22, 1863, p.2, c.2.

LOR 1-26-1, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup>Letter, General Banks to the War Department, October 16, 1863, OR 1-26-1, p. 262. Although it cannot be ascertained that there were any executions on the march to Alexandria, the fact that there were deprivations is borne out in a very violent letter contained in the Providence Daily Evening Press of September 22, p.2, c.2. The letter is from a soldier, perhaps a correspondent of sorts, and accuses several officers by name of gross misconduct, which indicates a perfectly good reason for the regiment to have low morale and a poor state of discipline, as General Banks had charged.

of the unit poor, but upon talking over a possible consolidation, the officers from Rhode Island indicated that Governor Smith would not object.<sup>1</sup>

Upon the resignation of the officers with this representation and under the exigency of which I have described the remnant of the regiment, consisting of only 100 or 200 men, was consolidated with a New York Regiment for the purpose of bringing it into some discipline and protecting us against, first, their deprivations, and secondly, against the panics that their reports occasioned.<sup>2</sup>

When this correspondence reached Providence, along with the news of the mutiny and the actions of Colonel Robinson, Governor Smith again wrote to Secretary Stanton. Again he asked that the order be set aside immediately, but this time he also offered a substitute course of action. He proposed that all enlisted men who were in the regiment be set aside to await another Rhode Island regiment. In the Army of the Potomac, there was a Rhode Island cavalry regiment, the First, " . . . which is in need of these very men that are now disgraced by being torn from their own organization, and placed in every way distasteful to them."<sup>3</sup> Yet these men

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<sup>1</sup>Perhaps General Banks was confused between the consolidation of July 11 and the disbandment of August 24.

<sup>2</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 262. Again General Banks is confused between consolidating into a New York regiment and a Louisiana regiment. The figure of 100 to 200 men present for duty agrees with an article in the Providence Journal of a July return of 181 men present.

<sup>3</sup>It must be remembered that part of the trouble stemmed from the fact that even though Colonel Robinson's unit was a loyal one, they still carried the name of the State of Louisiana. Under such strange circumstances, this was too much for the Rhode Island Yankees.

are volunteers. I will ask your own judgement; should they be treated so? Do not drafted men even receive better treatment?"<sup>1</sup>

The week before, the Providence Daily Post had published an editorial questioning the validity of the order:

That General Banks, having actual need of Cavalry, elected the wrong time for consolidating these two regiments. It is no unusual thing for a regiment to be reduced to one-half its original number. Indeed, Rhode Island has not a regiment in the field today, we think, that can muster five hundred men. Some of them cannot muster three hundred. But we are just now raising men by conscription, and these, of course, may be, and ought to be, and we suppose will be used to fill up these regiments. No special effort was made to fill up the Second Cavalry, and we suppose that it did not occur to him that it might be filled up with conscripts. This ought to have occurred to him, and we can hardly doubt that if the conscripts had been demanded, they would have been sent. The consolidation was not, therefore, seriously called for. At least it might have been avoided by a little effort, even if it had been determined that no regiment should be kept in the field after its numbers fell below fifty per cent of its maximum strength. But, if we understand the facts of the case, common justice and the spirit of the law were trampled upon in effecting this consolidation. If we had half the number of men necessary for a full regiment, we were entitled to at least half the number of Captains, Lieutenants, etc., and an equal proportion of staff officers. The companies, as the law provided, ought to have been consolidated. This, if we understand the facts of the case, was not done. Our officers were contemptuously mustered out of the service and the men were taken to fill the companies of the First Louisiana. If this be true, an outrage was perpetrated which General Banks will find hard to excuse.<sup>2</sup>

Governor Smith next wrote about the execution. It was unbelievable that these men were shot for disobeying orders

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<sup>1</sup>Letter, Secretary Stanton from Governor Smith, November 7, 1863, OR 1-26-1, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>Providence Daily Post, September 26, 1863, p.2, c.1.

and inciting a mutiny. He considered that the men were "simply remonstrating against an order of consolidation."<sup>1</sup> He felt that the order was an "outrage to Rhode Island."<sup>2</sup> Referring finally to Rhode Island's excellent record up to then, he brought up the point that undoubtedly it would affect the future of the volunteering program. "What assurance can we give officers or recruits from this State that they will be protected in their rights if they are to be so summarily dealt with without even a show of justice?"<sup>3</sup>

The Providence Daily Post said of this:

The shooting of two men because they manifested an unwillingness to be thus transferred, was certainly a most outrageously brutal and unjustifiable affair. The regiment had been notified that its separate existence would no longer be recognized. The men were, naturally, indignant, but they did nothing worse than lay down their arms. In this helpless and harmless condition they were told to fall into line, as a pledge that they would obey the orders of their new officers. They did so, with much reluctance, and very slowly. The last two were, at once, placed under arrest and shot. No trial was allowed them and there was nothing of the delay usual in the execution of so terrible a sentence. They disliked this new arrangement, and expressed this dislike by acting the part of laggards. This was their offence, and for this they were butchered.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Third Rhode Island Cavalry

A new idea entered into the picture when recruiting for the Third Rhode Island Cavalry Regiment started in Prov-

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<sup>1</sup>Smith to Stanton, OR 1-26-1, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 271.

<sup>4</sup>September 26, 1863, p.2, c.1.



idence in the fall of 1863. It was discovered that they would also be heading to New Orleans. Final action was accomplished on December 5 when the War Department wrote to General Banks:

Special Orders No. 209 [the disbandment order] has been approved by the General in Chief. A copy of Banks' report giving reasons for the transfer together with the General in Chief's indorsement thereon was forwarded to the Governor of Rhode Island. Since its receipt, the Governor has requested that the enlisted men of the old Second Rhode Island Cavalry be transferred to the Third Rhode Island Cavalry upon its arrival in your Department. For the reasons given by the Governor, you should make this change. We have notified the Governor of this action. The Third Rhode Island Cavalry will depart for your Department at an early date.<sup>1</sup>

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1OR L-26-1, pp. 272-73.

## CHAPTER VII

### OBSERVATIONS

#### Was There a Mutiny?

The fact that this incident was or was not a mutiny is open to conjecture. Certainly it is true that there was an open violation of normal discipline. The regiment collectively was guilty of gross misconduct. Since their officers were not present, the men, resentful of losing their unit identity, balked at soldiering in an outfit made up of Southerners, regardless of their loyalty. To the men, this seemed to justify the lawless attitude that took form in the ring-leaders, Murphy and Freeman.

Mutiny, a violation of the twenty-second Article of War, was defined by Colonel Winthrop as "consisting in an unlawful opposition or resistance to, or defiance of superior military authority, with a deliberate purpose to subvert or prevail over the same."<sup>1</sup> The key to this offense is the intent. If the men merely held meetings with a view to disobeying the order, but finally obeyed, there would have been no mutiny committed. Winthrop goes on to say that a

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<sup>1</sup>William Winthrop, Military Law and Precedents (2 vols.; Washington: W. H. Morrison, Law Bookseller and Publisher, 1886), I, 821.

violent act is not necessary; that the opposition or resistance need not be active or violent. "It thus may consist simply in a persistent refusal or omission (with the intent above specified), to obey orders or do duty."<sup>1</sup> In addition, the resistance had to be of lawful authority.

The incident at Camp Hubbard seems to meet all these standards. First, there was lawful authority. General Banks' order specified Colonel Robinson by name to effect the transfer of the Rhode Islanders to the Louisiana unit. There was definitely an intent to disobey this order. This has been borne out by the testimony of all the persons present. The idea set forth by one Providence editor that the men "simply laid down their arms,"<sup>2</sup> is not valid in the light of Winthrop's reasoning. Legally speaking, throwing down one's arms constitutes an act of mutiny.

#### Colonel Robinson's Actions

Even to the most vehemently opposed Rhode Islander, it must be clear that a mutiny did exist at Camp Hubbard. The big question that must be settled surrounds the method by which the mutiny was put down. Next to misbehavior before the enemy, mutiny is the greatest and most criminal of the offences known to the military code.<sup>3</sup> Articles seven and eight of the Articles of War dealt with the punishment of

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<sup>1</sup>Winthrop, I, 821.

<sup>2</sup>Providence Daily Post, September 26, 1863, p.2, c.1.

<sup>3</sup>Winthrop, I, 821.

mutineers. Article seven made it a capital offense for a soldier to begin, excite, cause, or join in, a mutiny. Article eight made it also punishable by death to stand by while a mutiny was taking place.<sup>1</sup> In each of these cases, however, it says that the accused will be "punished as a court martial shall direct."<sup>2</sup>

It is presumed, first, that Colonel Robinson obtained from article seven his authority to adjudge the death sentence. Did the order written by Colonel Robinson to his adjutant constitute a court martial? Congress gave the authority to the "Commanding General in the Field" to adjudge the death sentence.<sup>3</sup> But the order for transfer gave Colonel Robinson the authority to transfer the men, not to shoot two men in putting down a mutiny. Secondly, it is presumed that Colonel Robinson was acting under perfectly good reasoning under article eight, in that it was an offense to stand by when a mutiny was taking place. Perhaps Colonel Robinson had thought of other incidents when rioting and murder took place and a few musket volleys quelled the mutineers. Certainly there must have been some antagonism between the two units because of their close association and certain competition in the Department.

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<sup>1</sup>U. S. War Department, Revised U. S. Army Regulations, 1863, Appendix: Articles of War (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863), p. 486.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Appendix, Extracts from Acts of Congress, p. 541.

It is against the method of suppression, however, that the criticism should be leveled. It may be said, first, that after the First Louisiana Cavalry troops were drawn up in front of the Rhode Islanders, and the men were peaceably moving away from the scene, the mutiny had ceased to exist. It was after this that Robinson yanked out Smith and Davis. As a matter of fact, these two had been the last to leave. These men, then, were presumed to be the ringleaders. In adjudgment of mutiny, ringleaders are given a more severe sentence than other mutineers;<sup>1</sup> thus Robinson felt that an example must be shown the rest of the mutineers.

But it cannot be forgotten that the law at that time specified the convening of a court martial. This suggests benefit of counsel, an impartial court, and witnesses from both sides of the story. Thus the actions of Robinson are considered stronger than were necessary, or than can be justified. Winthrop says:

While, in extreme cases, an officer is warranted in employing the most vigorous means -- in using a deadly weapon and taking life -- for the suppression of a mutiny, he will not ordinarily thus be warranted in a case of mutiny unaccompanied by violence or where less vehement methods will be entirely effectual. It is requisite in every case, in order to justify the legal departure from legal forms, that it be clearly made out that the mutiny was flagrant, and that it called for strong and instant measures to put it down; and that the means used were not more violent than needful, and that it was not safe to wait for the trial and execution

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<sup>1</sup>Winthrop, I, 830. "The punishment being left discretionary, the Court will naturally and properly adjudge a severer penalty to ringleaders, etc."

of the offenders by the ordinary course of military justice.<sup>1</sup>

In summary, he asserted that:

The mutiny having been effectually brought down, no punishment can be legally inflicted upon the offenders except through the regular course of justice and the sentence of a court martial.<sup>2</sup>

#### Conclusions Regarding the Mutiny

On the part of Banks' headquarters, the report of the Court of Inquiry was a foregone conclusion. It was convened in order to discover, 1) the origin of the mutiny, 2) the length of the mutiny, 3) how the mutiny was suppressed. No mention was made in the convening of the Court as to whether or not a mutiny actually ever existed. In addition, the witnesses called before the Court were all from the Louisiana unit. No attempt was made to call upon any of the Rhode Island officers or enlisted men. The eye witnesses who testified, since they were all from the Louisiana unit, had something to gain by supporting Robinson's position. It is not surprising that the Court found "the suppression in the prompt and efficient manner."<sup>3</sup>

What remains as a question is why nothing was ever done as the case went through the various reviews making its way back to Washington. Certainly Lieutenant Colonel Irwin,

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<sup>1</sup>Winthrop, I, 832.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 833.

<sup>3</sup>OR 1-26-1, p. 262.

Banks' Adjutant General, must have had an opinion. General Banks, excited as he was over the previous conduct of his command in Louisiana, had to defend his concurrence with the Court's findings both against higher criticism from Washington, and against open demands made by Governor Smith.

Order was obtained by Colonel Robinson by fear more than by good leadership. This is a course of action not all American officers prefer to take. Robinson's impulsive nature indicates his probable course of action under times of undue stress. It is an indication of the way he might have acted in the face of the enemy. General Banks should have taken some punitive action against Robinson. The matter was dropped too quickly. That all these men were eventually transferred to the Third Rhode Island Cavalry upon its arrival in the Department of the Gulf in 1864 is the only bright note in the story.

#### Effectiveness of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry

It is difficult to say how effective the unit was. In the first place, there must be some basis for comparison with other units of the same type of organization. The Department of the Gulf had only a few other cavalry units and none of these were together for any great length of time. The various companies were attached to different infantry regiments to be used for reconnaissance, screening, or picket duty. As a result the reputation of the regiment as a whole depended on that of the various smaller unit

commanders. Except for the assault on Port Hudson itself, the battles as described in this work are classified as skirmishes. There were no conflicts involving tens of thousands of men as at Vicksburg, Atlanta, or Gettysburg. Casualties were very light and the encounters were less frequent than in many other areas of the war.

Some of the battles can be observed, however. At Springfield Landing, Colonel Corliss seemed to have good control over his unit and they behaved in good fashion. Faced with a quick decision, Corliss ordered a charge. The fact that the charge failed because they were outnumbered does not detract from the effectiveness of his actions. The Confederates were not able to get past Corliss, and when faced with his charge, had to consolidate, gaining invaluable time for the Union troops. In the Forage Train incident, Corliss acted with coolness and common sense. The men under him were quick to follow his orders, and as a result, the enemy charge was beaten off.

It is true that, like a great many other units in the Department of the Gulf, the Second Rhode Island Cavalry had some incidents of poorly disciplined soldiers. Since the cavalry was habitually broken down into small groups, the discipline was much more difficult to maintain. General Banks had mentioned some trouble with the discipline of individuals within his command on the march through western Louisiana. There is no mention in the List of Volunteers in Dyer's



Report for 1865, however, and it must be assumed that this did not include anyone from the Rhode Island unit.

In May, General Banks reported to General Halleck that he had had to take "severe measures."<sup>1</sup> Brigadier General Emory said of the incidents:

Grave disorders in our rear by the bands of robbers sometimes headed by stragglers from the ranks, which threatened for a moment to disrupt our communications and even to disband and disperse into a band of robbers and thieves some of our less disciplined regiments, induced me to publish an order /directing the 4th Wisconsin to commence military operations against them/. The inducements for plunder in this country are so great that unless high handed measures are taken, many men will be lost to the ranks on the day of battle.<sup>2</sup>

An embittered soldier wrote home to the Providence Daily Evening Press concerning the conduct of Captains Hardy and Beach. Beach had gone directly to Banks and promised to straighten out the discipline in return for a promotion. But, when the regiment was transferred to Thibodaux, he left at Donaldsonville, knowing full well what was to transpire. Fitts, Turner, Jackson, and Hanning remained until a few days prior to the mutiny. In fact, had these officers stayed, the mutiny might not have taken place. Captain Hardy was questioned for his behavior in the combat zone. The correspondent charged that he was always sick when the company was in danger, "no matter how well he breakfasted in the morning." Traveling through the

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<sup>1</sup>OR 1-15, p. 305.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 334.

combat zone, he was supposed to have kept four servants in his employ. "He took home with him two captured horses, two new Burnside carbines, two shotguns, and a box containing magnificent books taken out of a home on our march to Alexandria. What an example for the soldiers!"<sup>1</sup>

The depredations allegedly made by both officers and enlisted men of the regiment evidently continued a bad reputation already established with the people back home during the activation period. The men had not been popular before leaving Providence. The street brawls, the incident of the German company, and all the trouble with bounty jumping made the citizens of Providence think twice before embracing the Second Cavalry. Governor Smith's annual message to the state legislature in January, 1864, did not mention the mutiny. Only a few newspaper editorials covered the subject of Robinson's actions. After the war, published memoirs of Rhode Island officers did not include those who had served in the Second Rhode Island Cavalry.

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<sup>1</sup>Providence Daily Evening Press, September 22, 1863, p.2, c.2.

APPENDIX A

A COMPILED LIST  
OF  
THE OFFICERS OF THE SECOND RHODE ISLAND CAVALRY<sup>a</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel

Augustus W. Corliss

Major

Augustus W. Corliss

C. N. Manchester

Assistant Surgeon

H. W. King

Nathaniel G. Stanton

Adjutant

Edwin A. Hardy  
Welcome Fenner

Walter M. Jackson  
Charles E. Bingham

Quartermaster

William McCready, Jr.

Joseph N. Whitney

Captain

Robert C. Anthony (Co. A)	George W. Beach (Co. D)
George A. Smith (Co. B)-	Edwin A. Hardy (Co. E)
Henry C. Pitts (Co. B)	Peter Brucker (Co. F)
William H. Stevens (Co. C)	William W. B. Greene (Co. G)
George Henry Getchell (Co. H)	

First Lieutenant

Henry J. Whitaker (Co. A)	John D. Hanning (Co. E)
Henry C. Pitts (Co. B)	John Bauer (Co. F)
William J. McCall (Co. C)	Charles W. Turner (Co. G)
William H. H. Smith (Co. D)	Charles E. Bingham (Co. H)
Walter M. Jackson (Co. D)	Walter M. Jackson (Co. H)

Second Lieutenant

Edwin C. Pomroy (Co. A)	Frank Hayes (Co. D)
Joseph N. Whitney (Co. B)	Caleb Brennan (Co. E)
Walter M. Jackson (Co. C)	Horace B. Rogers (Co. F)
Welcome Fenner (Co. C)	Chester L. Turner (Co. G)

<sup>a</sup>Register, p. 163.

## APPENDIX B

### A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

#### 1862

- August 31 Order from War Department to activate a cavalry regiment.
- October 1 Rhode Island General Orders No. 47, activation of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry.
- November 15 Order by War Department to make Second Rhode Island Cavalry into three battalions.
- December 2 Companies A and B leave Providence for New York.
- December 12 Company C leaves Providence for New York.
- December 24 Company D completes filling.
- December 29 Company D leaves Providence for New York.

#### 1863

- January 19 Second battalion filled. A. W. Corliss promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.
- January 20 Company E leaves Providence for New York.
- January 27 Company F leaves Providence for New York.
- January 31 Company G leaves Providence for New York.
- February 13 Companies B, C, D, and F arrive by steamer in New Orleans from New York.
- March 5 All companies except Company H have arrived from New York.
- March 6-7 Second Rhode Island Cavalry moves from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, by river boat. Two men fall overboard and drown.
- March 10 Companies E, C, D, and E in movement. Company A left with departmental brains in New Orleans. Company F with General Augur.

- March 16 Paramele's attempt with 174th New York and squadron of Second Rhode Island Cavalry to communicate with Admiral Farragut.
- March 27 Companies D and E under Dudley's brigade help in opening up communications at a point on the river near the mouth of the False River. (Hermitage Landing)
- March 28 Company H leaves Providence.
- April 1-9 Regiment moves to Algiers, then to Berwick.
- April 14 Regiment is at Franklin, Louisiana.
- April 22 162nd New York under Colonel Blanchard, and one company of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry marched to Barre's Landing, seized the position and captured the little steamboat, Ellen, the last of the Teche fleet.
- April 23 Two companies of the Second Rhode Island Cavalry on an expedition to Bayous Cocodrie and Boeuff, with the 4th Wisconsin.
- April 29 Colonel Corliss sent forward on the Chicotville road to ascertain, if possible, the movements of the enemy.
- April 30 Other portions of the regiment with Weitzel's division.
- May 1 Portions of the regiment near Washington.
- May 5-18 Expedition from Opelousas to Alexandria and Simsport.
- May 18-19 Operations about Monett's Plantation and on the Bayou Sara road.
- May 22-25 Regiment moves to Bayou Sara, then to Port Hudson.
- June 18 Companies E and G at mouth of False River, opposite Fort Hudson, under Colonel Sage of 110th New York.
- June 20-23 Major Anthony left by Lieutenant Colonel Stickney at Brashear City to defend convalescents. Confederates capture the fort and all within on June 23.

- June 20-21 Colonel Corliss and parts of the regiment are sent out to protect forage train between Clinton and Jackson, Louisiana, parts of a larger force.
- July 2 Second Rhode Island Cavalry in skirmish at Springfield Landing with Confederate cavalry.
- July 9 Surrender of Port Hudson.
- July 11 Second Rhode Island Cavalry consolidated into one battalion of four companies. Companies E and G still on picket duty at False Point. Colonel Corliss resigns. Also Major Manchester, Surgeon King, Adjutant Bingham, and Quartermaster McGready.
- July 14 Second Rhode Island Cavalry concentrated at Baton Rouge.
- August 1-15 Second Rhode Island Cavalry in movement from Baton Rouge to Thibodaux, Louisiana.
- August 15 Regiment assigned to the Commander of Defences of New Orleans.
- August 24 Order by General Banks to transfer the enlisted men and muster out the officers.
- August 29-30 Mutiny at Camp Hubbard, Thibodaux.
- September 4 Governor Smith writes letter to Secretary Stanton regarding consolidation.
- September 5 Military Commission assembles to review Colonel Robinson's actions.
- September 14 McCall, Stevens, Pitts, Jackson, and Hayes arrive at Providence from New Orleans by steamer.
- October 16 General Banks writes to Thomas M. Vincent, Adjutant General, Washington, endorsing his right to merge the Second Rhode Island and the First Louisiana Cavalry.
- October 23 General Banks endorses findings of the Court.



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