

HISTORY

OF THE

TWENTY-NINTH (COLORED) REGT. C. V. INFANTRY.

WRITTEN BY REV. HENRY G. MARSHALL, LATE CAPTAIN OF COMPANY I, TWENTY-NINTH CONNECTICUT VOLUNTEERS.

THE earliest recruit for this regiment was enlisted August 11, 1863, but most of the men came to the regiment at its rendezvous in Fair Haven during the last three months of the year. The full number and more was attained in January, 1864. For lack of officers it was not mustered into the United States service until March 8th. Four days after, Colonel William B. Wooster, formerly Lieutenant-Colonel of the Twentieth Connecticut, reported for duty and soon took command. After the presentation of a flag by the ladies of New Haven, the regiment embarked on a transport March 19th. It arrived at Annapolis, Md., and disembarked March 22d, pitching its first tents near Camp Parole. Not until April 6th was the regiment furnished with muskets, of the best Springfield pattern.

The regiment was assigned to the Ninth Corps, and on the 9th sailed on two transports for Hilton Head, S. C., where it arrived April 13th. Thence it was ordered to Beaufort, S. C., where it disembarked and encamped the same day. Here drill, picket, and guard duty occupied the attention of officers and men nearly four months. August 8th orders came to leave, and the next day the regiment sailed for Bermuda Hundred, Va., arriving August 14th. A part of the regiment was immediately sent on a reconnoissance with a portion of the Tenth Corps. Though coming under fire for the first time, the men displayed great coolness and bravery.

The regiment was assigned to General William G. Birney's Brigade, General D. B. Birney's Division of the Tenth Corps, making, with the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Regiments, United States Colored Infantry, and other colored regiments, a colored division, the Third of the Tenth Corps. It was engaged in an advance at Deep Bottom, under General Butler, and repulsed a rebel attack on the 16th and 17th of August. Returning to the Bermuda Hundred front, it encamped near Point of Rocks. August 24th the Tenth Corps relieved the Eighteenth in the trenches in front of Petersburg, on the right of the place where the mine was exploded. Here the Twenty-ninth remained under constant and wearing duty until September 24th,

when the whole corps was ordered to the rear for rest and replenishing its worn and scanty clothing. On the 28th it marched to Deep Bottom, and the next day, with the Eighteenth Corps, engaged under General Butler in taking Fort Harrison and a part of its connecting line of earthworks, about seven miles from Richmond. An unsuccessful but most persistent attack was made upon Fort Gilmore, the next in the line, but at evening the corps retired to the trenches just in their rear, and proceeded to turn them. The next day the enemy, with heavy re-enforcements, endeavored most vigorously to dislodge them, but without success. October 7th the regiment assisted in repelling an attempt of the enemy to turn the right of the line.

With the Eighth and Forty-fifth Regiments, United State Colored Infantry, the Twenty-ninth constituted the Second Brigade, Third Division, Tenth Corps. On the 13th it joined with others in a reconnoissance in force toward the right of the line, across and beyond the Newmarket Road to the Darbytown Road. There was some sharp fighting and considerable loss of men. On the 27th and 28th of October the Tenth and Eighteenth Corps attacked along nearly their whole front, in conjunction with a forward movement of the Army of the Potomac. The Twenty-ninth formed the skirmish line of its division, and drove the enemy into their works and kept them there. The men behaved admirably, remaining on the advanced line through the entire night, till relieved in the morning. It was the only regiment meeting with loss in this affair at the Kell House. Its loss was eighty. Soon after, the regiment was placed in the First Brigade and assigned the duty of garrisoning the line of forts along the Newmarket Road, a most important duty.

December 5th the Tenth and Eighteenth Corps were re-organized and a corps of colored troops formed, called the Twenty-fifth Corps. The Twenty-ninth was placed in the Second Brigade, First Division, and moved into the line on the left of Fort Harrison. Here it remained during the winter, picketing, drilling, and building forts and roads, in preparation for the spring campaign.

Late in March, 1865, the regiment was moved into Fort Harrison, which was supposed to be undermined and the most probable point of rebel attack. Here they witnessed the last rebel dress-parade on the afternoon of Sunday, April 2d. Early the next morning explosions of rebel gunboats in the James, and of magazines in Fort Darling and in the direction of Richmond, and the coming in of deserters began to announce the rebel evacuation. The heavy firing of the two days before on the distant left across the James, and the order for extreme watchfulness, had prepared the whole division along this, the nearest part of the line to Richmond, for this result. By the earliest dawn the Twenty-ninth was in marching order and eager for the pursuit. The men were soon over the breastworks, through the bristling abatis and the thickly planted torpedoes, and in the deserted rebel fort. They found the guns spiked and the tents standing, but with every breadth of canvas slashed by a knife. They waited to see no more, but hurried out upon the high-road to Richmond, which was strewn with articles cast aside by the retreating rebels. Then began the exciting race to first reach the burning city, the flames and smoke of which could be distinctly seen. Two companies of the Twenty-ninth, C and G, were ordered

forward as skirmishers, and were the first infantry to reach the city. The cavalry scouts had preceded them and were stationed at the entrance of the city to halt all stragglers. The brigade in which was the Twenty-ninth was stationed in Batteries Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the interior line of the defenses of the city.

On the 13th the regiment moved to and through Petersburg, camping near Patrick's Station on the City Point railroad. On the 18th it marched to City Point and sailed to Point Lookout, Md., where it was engaged in guarding the general depot for prisoners of war, containing about 20,000 prisoners, until May 28th, when it was transferred to City Point to await transportation. June 10th it sailed with the Twenty-fifth Corps for Texas, touching at Mobile and New Orleans, and arriving at Brazos de Santiago July 3, 1865. Thence it marched to Brownsville, Tex., where it remained in camp until ordered to Connecticut for muster-out October 14, 1865. It waited at New Orleans for transportation from October 27th to November 11th, when it embarked for New York and Hartford, arriving at the latter place November 24th. The next day the regiment was paid and discharged.

ENGAGEMENTS.

Petersburg, Va., Aug. 12 to Sep. 24, 1864.
Chapin's Farm, Va., Sep. 29, 1864.
Richmond, Va., Sep. 29 to Oct. 1, 1864.

Darbytown Road, Va., Oct. 13, 1864.
Kell House, Va., Oct. 27 and 28, 1864.