

# The Maine Bugle



Number 6

Second Quarter 1998

## First Maine and the Battle of Aldie

John L. Hodsdon, the Adjutant General of Maine, was finishing up his Annual Report for 1861, a task which he would perform each year with meticulous care. But having watched the daily spectacle taking place right across the street from his office where the fledgling 1st Maine Cavalry was encamped, he found it difficult to report their struggles with a straight face. He wrote: *"The men are diligently exercised in drill and discipline both mounted and on foot, and although their progress is commendable, they are excelled in proficiency by their horses, which manifest great intelligence and zeal in their duties."*

It wasn't that Maine folks weren't familiar enough with horses, but they didn't go in much for riding, unlike so many Southerners. They used horses for pulling wagons, buggies, carriages and sleighs. At least one company of recruits were all seafarers from the coast, and they found learning to drill on horseback in snow and ice particularly trying, what with all the small boys, pretty girls and State officials in Augusta looking on.

The regimental historian described one of their low moments: "... Company K was largely composed of sea-faring men and Captain Prince was himself an old sea captain. On the occasion of a review of the regiment by Governor Washburn, Joe Gatchell of this company found himself and horse crowded out of his place in the line, and his best efforts failed to navigate the horse back into place. Captain Prince noticed his situation, and forgetting his military in his anxiety that his company should present a correct appearance before His Excellency, he called out in the old quarter-deck tone and manner, 'Come up there! What in hell are you falling astern for!' This put Joe in sailing trim at once, and quicker than thought he replied, 'Why Captain, I can't get the damn thing in stays!' 'Well, give her more headway, then!' was the reply."

They discovered to their horror that many of the horses purchased for them had never been broken in. The newly raised 11th Maine Infantry moved into camp right next to them and added their hoots

and jeers. The cavalry boys had to learn sabre drill, but were issued no sabres, and so had to improvise with sticks and wooden lathes. To complete their misery, they were encumbered with a band which was supposed to tootle around mounted with them as they performed their maneuvers!

It's a wonder they didn't all desert. But by the spring of 1862 they were in the field, scattered in battalions and squadrons in the Shenandoah Valley and elsewhere in Virginia; and they learned their trade very quickly. In the valley, the Confederate General Turner Ashby said to one of his 1st Maine Cavalry prisoners: *"You are of the 1st Maine Cavalry are you? A fine set of fellows. I have met no such cavalry. They were stubborn as mules. I couldn't move them a damned inch without shelling them. Banks owes his escape to that force!"* But, it would be another year before any Federal cavalry could match the hard-riding skills of their Confederate opponents. At that time, in the spring of 1863, all the companies and battalions were brought back together into one regiment and, beginning in June, they showed their mettle in a series of thunderous fights with J.E.B. Stuart at Brandy Station, Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville.

Years later William O. Howe of Company G wrote a long account of his service for the Adjutant General who was seeking material for a history of Maine's part in the Civil War. Howe had served out his three years with the 1st Maine Cavalry, and re-enlisted with the 1st Maine Volunteer Sharpshooters. That unit was consolidated with the 20th Maine. He was with them at Appomattox. But of all his experiences, the fight at Aldie stood out most in his memory. Here is a partial transcript of his

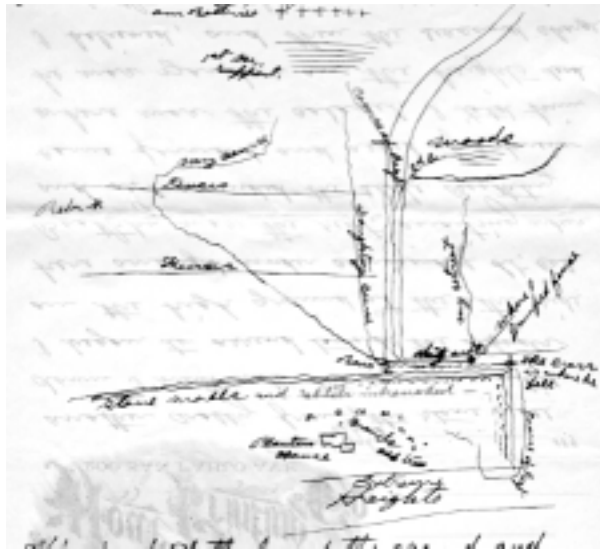
account with his original spelling and punctuation intact:

"I wish to call attention particularly to the part I played in the Aldie Battle at the time of the fall of Colonel Daugherty of the 1st Maine Cavalry = of course the main details and part taken by our Regt. will all be set forth by others in a more general and detailed manner but for the purpose of correcting an error I wish to state



Calvin Sanger Douty  
1813-1863  
Colonel, 1st Maine Cavalry  
Killed at Aldie, Virginia

that when that famous charge was made, up the road towards the heights of Aldie Col. Daughtry kept to the right and in the open field while the Regt. charged up the road close at the heels of the enemy and midst such a storm of dust that it was impossible to tell the dividing point between friends and foes. To add still more to the confusion and bewilderment of the situation; the storm of shot and shell which came pouring down into the road and spreading devastation to our troopers; rendered it quite out of the power of the Colonel to have anything like control over the infuriated old 1st Maine who at that particular moment knew no officers and who like a wild horse with the furor of a tornado plunged onward and upward with but one object - i.e. to reach the heights or die. This was the situation and while Daughtry's subordinate staff and field officers were in the fray and mostly, as I believe, at their proper stations; The Col. for the purpose of a more advantageous position of command regardless of the additional danger charged up on his old white horse in the open field; along side and as near to the troops as was advisable considering the blinding clouds of dust, which completely obscured the troops therein. I know these facts because when the charge was ordered, the enemy was pouring down upon us and in both field and road the fight for a few moments became a hand to hand conflict and when the enemy could no longer stand the keen edge of the old Pine Tree Statesmens sword and turned to flee before their persuers I found myself in deadly conflict with an enemy which had led me a chase far to the right of the main force, but when I discovered my position and that the Regiment had taken the road I fired a final shot at my antagonist which sent him reeling away on his horse and struck a bee line for the main force. There were a few scattering men still in the open field but they soon found their way into the cloud of dust and no one was then individually visable, but a lone horseman charging up the line leaping fences and every obsticle that lay in his path; as I followed closely in his wake I saw that it was Col. Daughtry; the line of dust and smoke was one long line stretching from the summate of the hill to the base and no man could tell where the dividing point between friend and foe began or ended but the column charged on and on up the slope and I followed, believing the while that it was our columns all along the line. The canonading from the heights had ceased in a measure and when the Col had reached the terminus of the field and at a point where the road turned in a right angle to the left, he espied me in his wake and with his sword uplifted he shouted where is the head of the regt. I pointed ahead believing that the regt was in possession of the hill: The column plunged on through the opening in the fence over a pair of bars and through a dugout road in the side of the hill and elevated on the right by a heavy stone wall. this dugout was litterally filled with dead and dyeing men and horses and about twenty rods from the right angle the stone wall ended, or rather was intersected by another which joined at right-angles and ran over the brow of the hill leaving the field open



beyond the intersection. Here it was at this corner as the Colonel was turning to the right to go in to the open field beyond, with his sword hand raised that I last saw him alive. Just then a voly came from behind the stone walls and the Colonel fell. My horse was wounded and I received a slight wound in the right ancle. I saw my life depended upon my speedy flight and jumping my horse over the fence down the slope on the other side I just escaped another volly from behind the stone wall. down I went into the canyon untill I began to assend towards the woods on the high ground at the other side. here arranged under command of Lt. Col. Boothby was the regt. awaiting orders and as I assended the slope Boothby came forward and asked if I knew where was the Colonel. I told him he was yonder on the heights dead I believed, and then the second charge and the most misurible ever known was made by the old first main cavalry. Inside of ten minutes the life of this indomnable hero was avenged, the heights captured and Colonel Dautys body recovered from the point where I last saw him in life. His wound was two Buckshots under the right arm pit which must have entered the heart. I will here show you a diagram of the situation. [see inset]

This is about the lay of the ground, and the history of Daughtry's fall, which has been misquoted as a general thing, but which more forcibly expresses the terrable hell hole we captured singlehanded and alone as a regiment. It further conveys the awfull disadvantages to which the colonel was subjected in this particular fight but the truth robs the colonel of no laurals which are so justly due to him as a brave man for it shows that his great anxiety was to be in a position where he might see

as well as to lead and thus guard his regiment against a reckless plung to their death but all this desire to be cautious and still lead, cost him his life; for the verry thought that the regiment had surpassed his lead fired his brave heart with a recklessness that knew no restraint - If the historian thinks it advisable to make note of this event I am ready to varify it under oath any time in honor of the bravery of my old and much esteemed Colonel. I might add that when I mad the leap over the fence (a leap for life) and went sailing down the canyon I believe it was the longest leap every mad by man or beast, for my horses feet did not strike ground for several rods but when they did I was so severely thrust upon the horn of my saddle that the injury has ever since been a serious disability and barr against physical exertion or manual labor."

Sources: 1861 Report of the Adjutant General of Maine, Augusta, 1862; William O. Howe's manuscript of his Civil War service, 1896; and one of the best regimental histories ever written by a veteran, Edward P. Tobie's History of the First Maine Cavalry, Boston, 1887.

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## “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, The Boys Are Marching...”

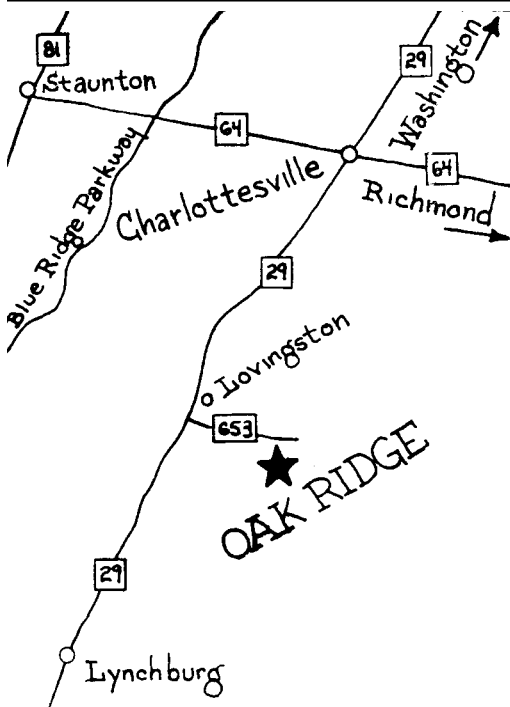
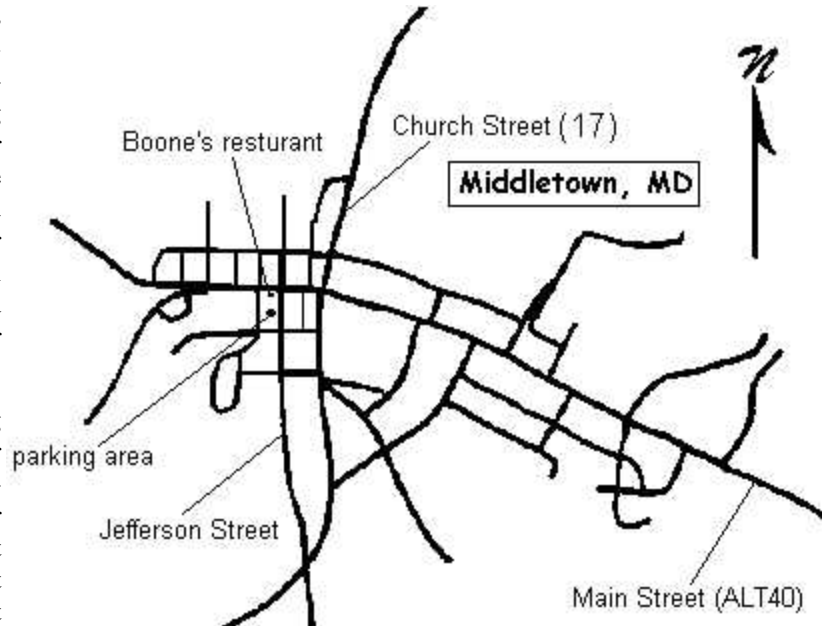
This march will cover a distance of approximately 10.7 miles between Middletown and Burkittsville Maryland, an historic area that was covered by Union and Confederate forces during the Antietam campaign. At a point approximately halfway we will camp overnight, and complete the march on Sunday, the 29<sup>th</sup>.

The march will be conducted in uniform with all accoutrements and weapons (dismounted men may forego sabres.) Blankets and ponchos top the list of what to bring. A blanket and a gum-blanket minimum, a poncho and maybe another blanket or shelter-half are recommended. Rolled into this bedroll should be an extra shirt, underdrawers, and a pair or two of socks. You should bring a pocket knife, matches, and some ¼” manila line (that’s rope to you lubbers) The line is for tying your bedroll, stringing up your poncho or shelter half, etc. Bring your haversack to carry your food in. Some types of food to bring include; cooked, cured or dried meat, rice, potato (raw or baked), apple, dried fruit, nuts, a chunk of cheese, some spices, sugar, coffee. Bring enough for you to have food for two days, but remember you have to carry whatever you bring so don’t go overboard. Everything should be in period packaging; wrapped in cloth, in cloth bags, tin, card or wood boxes, small bottles, etc. No foil, plastic, or other modern packaging. Do fill your canteen and bring it along.

Bring talc or some other item for chafing and feet, and bug repellent may come in handy as well. Some cloth rags for washing, pot holding, or shoving under a strap that’s digging into your shoulder. Bring your toothbrush, and other such personal items such as medicines, and don’t forget some TP. You may want to bring your overcoat, if it’s not needed you can leave it in the vehicle. You may also want to bring your camera.

Check your gear! Make sure it fits right, rides relatively high, and isn’t about to give out. You do not need caps or cartridges, but you won’t need to empty your cartridge box.

We will meet in Middletown, MD by 0930 on March 28<sup>th</sup>. From the east, take Alt40 to Middletown. After the traffic light at Church Street, past Jefferson Street, turn left into the parking lot behind Boone’s Restaurant (see map). Equipment will be inspected and packed and we will step off no later than 1000.



## Stanardsville

The 13th annual reenactment and the 134th anniversary of the battle of Stanardsville will take place **April 19th** at the Oakridge Estate near Arrington, Virginia. Originally held in the town of Stanardsville, the event outgrew the towns ability to sponser it and was moved down route 29 to the 4800 acre Oakridge Estate. For years the event always seemed to conflict with some other event that drew badly needed Union forces away. This year the National Regiment and some other troops that have not normally frequented this event are planning to attend and should serve to boost Union numbers.

The Oak Ridge Estate has existed since colonial times. The oldest part of the existing house was buildt in 1802 by Robert Rives. It was purchased by Thomas Ryan around 1902. Isabella Coleman lived at Oakridge after her husband was killed at 2nd Manassass. South Carolinian, William Miles lived in the house for a time after the war. The estate is now owned by the Holland family who are restoring the house and outbuildings, the greenhouse, and a private railroad station.

Registration opens Friday, April 18th. Anyone not registered, and if you didn't tell me you were going you were not registered, will have to pay the walk-on fee. The map to the right shows how to get there...

# 1st Maine Cavalry's Third Annual Ball to Benefit The Baltimore Civil War Museum at President Street Station



Will be held on April 25th from 7 to 11 pm at the Polish National Alliance Hall at 1627 Eastern Avenue, in Fells Point, Baltimore. As before there will be live music, and Dan Stanton will call the dances. Period garb is requested, but not required. If you know some folks that would like to attend, tickets are \$12.00 and can be gotten from Maria Rooney at 410-354-0409 or from Maj Bunker at China Sea Marine in Fells Point - 410-276-8220. Unit members and a guest do not need tickets to attend.

<b>March 28-29</b>	<b>Company Hike</b>	n/a
A 10 mile hike in Western Maryland near South Mountain.		
<b>April 17-19</b>	<b>Stannardsville</b>	\$5
14th annual event at Oak Ridge Estates near Arrington VA.		
<b>April 25</b>	<b>President Street Station Ball</b>	n/a
3rd annual ball to benefit PSS at the Polish Alliance Hall.		
<b>May 15-17</b>	<b>Fairfax VA</b>	\$2
New event at Van Dyck Park.		
<b>May 22-24</b>	<b>Wilmington DE</b>	\$6
6th annual event at Brandywine Creek Park.		
<b>May 29-30</b>	<b>Cavalry Ride</b>	?
Ride for preservation in Loudon County VA		
<b>June 12-14</b>	<b>Point Lookout MD</b>	?
Living history at Ft Lincoln with Vincent's Brigade.		
<b>June 12-14</b>	<b>Peake's Island ME</b>	?
Living history encampment to benefit GAR hall.		
<b>July 2-5</b>	<b>Gettysburg PA</b>	\$8
135th Gettysburg, monster event at Pumping Station Road.		
<b>July 31-August 2</b>	<b>Leesburg VA</b>	\$5
Ida Lee Park		
<b>August 14-16</b>	<b>Lewes DE</b>	\$5
New event.		
<b>September 11-13</b>	<b>Boonesboro MD</b>	\$5
2nd annual event.		
<b>October 2-4</b>	<b>Rising Sun MD</b>	\$3
7th annual event at Town Park.		
<b>October 16-18</b>	<b>Cedar Creek VA</b>	\$6
Shake out that great-coat!		
<b>Oct 30-Nov 1</b>	<b>Fort Branch NC</b>	\$5
A fine friendly event, and they feed you!		

If you don't notify me about what events you plan to attend, you will not be registered for them.

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## Sutlers

- C&D Jarnagin Co.** PO Box 1860  
Uniforms & accoutrements Corinth MS 38834  
601-287-4977
- Coutry Cloth, Inc.** Charlie Childs  
Clothing patterns & kits 13797-C Georgetown Street, NE  
Paris OH 44669  
216-862-3307
- Missouri Boot & Shoe** 417-451-6100  
Brogans
- Montana Boot Co.** 406-222-7721  
Boots
- F. Burgess & Co.** 908-576-1624  
Sword belts, boxes, tack, etc.
- Doug Kidd** 1158 Apple Blossom Road  
Saddles & tack Springdale AK 72762
- Paul Smith** Box 93  
Forage caps McKnightstown PA 17343  
717-337-3929
- CJ Daley Reproductions** 105 West Green Street  
Garments & accoutrements Middletown MD 21769  
301-371-5792

This list is by no means complete! If you have any maker of quality, authentic item that should be on this list, send it in!