

Official Report Of The Fifty-Seventh

The following pages contain a copy of the hand-written official report by Clement R. Fontaine, written just six days after Pickett's Charge. Fontaine joined the Twentieth Regiment Virginia Volunteers, which later became part of the Fifty-Seventh Virginia Infantry as a First Lieutenant on May 29, 1861. He rose to captain the following year, major on February 14, 1863 and Colonel on July 5, 1863, two days after Pickett's Charge.

Fontaine survived the war, apparently being captured in the final days near Appomattox. Records show that he was paroled by the Union's Provost Marshall at Columbia, VA on May 5, 1863. Columbia is located in Fluvanna County at the confluence of the Rivanna River and the James River. Today, its population is 83, an increase from 49 in 2000 when it was the smallest incorporated town in Virginia.

The Fifty-Seventh edition of the Virginia Regimental Historical Series provides Fontaine's final evaluation of the unit:

"For devotion to a just and righteous cause, no regiment.....is more deserving of commendation than the Fifty-Seventh of Virginia. No set of men....underwent more hardships, or endured more for their country. The history of the brigade will show that besides regular battles participated in, that it performed more detached service than any of its (sister) regiments...Whether on the march, on bivouac, on the battlefield or in camp, it was ever up to its duty and accomplished all that (was) expected of it."

At the end, only eight officers and seventy-nine men of the Fifty-Seventh marched with General Lee to the surrender on April 9, 1865.

A copy of Colonel Fontaine's original report in his handwriting is provided FREE to all purchasers of "Who Were Those Other Heroes With Armistead at the Guns."

carlsell.wordpress.com

sellcarl@aol.com

11
Hd Qrs 5th Va Regt
July 9th 1863

Capt

I have the honor to make the following report of the part taken by the 5th Va Regt. commanded at that time by Col. J B Magruder in a recent battle near Gettysburg Pa on 3^d July 1863. Early in the morning of the 3^d inst our Regiment with the rest of Maj. Genl. Armistead's Brigade was marched to the scene of action and placed in position just in rear of two other of Maj. Genl. Pickett's Division as a support. After remaining some time in line of battle we were advanced several hundred yards to another position still nearer the enemy's Batteries, where we remained more than an hour. When the regt was ordered to advance on the enemy which was done with coolness and gallantry on the part of both men and Officers - under a most terrific fire of artillery and small arms. In passing over the field in front of the enemy's Batteries the regt lost nearly a third of number in killed and wounded besides many others supposed to be taken prisoners. Notwithstanding the murderous fire poured into the regiment from the front, right and left of the line battle continued

undisturbed and a number of men passed beyond the enemy's guns having several of them in their possession, but were forced to relinquish them again because of not having a sufficient number as a support. Just as the regiment reached the enemy's line of battle a number of prisoners threw themselves within our lines, which in the excitement of the moment were ordered to the rear. The men pressing forward to the batteries. The enclosed report of Casualties will show ^{how} much the regiment suffered in killed, wounded and missing.

A case of unsavory conduct is not known to exist on the occasion, all seeming determined to do their duty. Late in the evening the remainder of the regiment was rallied near the camp which had been left in the morning being forced to give up that position which they had so gallantly taken from the enemy because of the disparity of numbers between them and the enemy.

Yours
C. R. Fontaine

I Am Very Respectfully
Yours
(Signed) C. R. Fontaine