

## PETERSBURG, VA

**JUNE 15TH, 1864 - APRIL 2ND, 1865**

Army of the Potomac and Army of the James. When the Army of the Potomac began the campaign from the Rapidan to the James on May 4, 1864, Gen. Butler, with the Army of the James, was directed to move against Richmond by the south bank of the James river,

and Gen. Hunter was to move up the Shenandoah Valley, "destroying, as far as practicable, railroads that could be used as lines of supplies to the enemy, and also the James river and the Kanawha canal." After the battle of Cold Harbor on June 3, Grant resolved to

transfer the field of operations to the south side of the James, and on the 5th he sent a despatch to Gen. Halleck, chief of staff, in which he stated: "My idea from the start has been to beat Lee's army if possible north of Richmond; then after destroying his lines

of communication on the north side of the James river to transfer the army to the south side and besiege Lee in Richmond, or follow him south if he should retreat. \* \* \* Once on the south side of the James river, I can cut off all sources of supply to the enemy except what is

furnished by the canal. If Hunter succeeds in reaching Lynchburg, that will be lost to him also. Should Hunter not succeed, I will still make the effort to destroy the canal by sending cavalry up the south side of the river with a pontoon train to cross wherever they can."

Grant had now adopted practically the same plan that had been proposed by McClellan two years before. In June, 1862, McClellan said: "The superiority of the James river route as a line of attack and supply is too obvious to need exposition," and again in August, when the authorities in Washington were needlessly alarmed for the safety of the national capital, he telegraphed Gen. Halleck: "Here is the true defense of Washington. It is here on the banks of the James, that the fate of the Union should be decided." In view of the final success of the army under Grant these words are prophetic. The siege of Petersburg was also the siege of Richmond, for with the fall of the former the latter was doomed. From Richmond the James river flows south in almost a straight line for 10 miles, when it turns toward the southeast and after a sinuous course receives the Appomattox at City Point. Petersburg is located on the Appomattox, 10 miles above its mouth and 22 miles south of Richmond. The two cities were connected by the Richmond & Petersburg railway. From Petersburg the South Side railroad ran west along the bank of the Appomattox to Lynchburg; the Weldon railroad ran south and the Norfolk southeast. A short line also connected Petersburg with City Point. Directly across the James from Richmond was the village of Manchester, from which the Richmond & Danville railroad ran west along the south bank of the James river, while along the north bank of that stream was the Kanawha canal, mentioned by Grant in his despatch to Halleck. To cut these lines of communication was the first object of the Federal commander. About half way between Petersburg and City Point are the Point of Rocks and Broadway landing on the Appomattox. From this point to the Dutch Gap bend on the James the distance in a straight line is about 3 miles. The peninsula enclosed by the two rivers below this line is known as Bermuda Hundred, which had been occupied by Butler early in May and a line of works constructed across the neck of the peninsula. This position was a strong one for defense, but Gen. Beauregard, commanding the defenses of Petersburg, threw up a line of works immediately in Butler's front, thus preventing his further advance and bottling him up on the peninsula, where he remained until the Army of the Potomac moved to the south side of the James. On June 9, Kautz charged and carried a portion of the Petersburg works, but not being supported by the infantry was unable to hold them, though he brought out 40 prisoners and 1 piece of artillery when he withdrew. The withdrawal of troops from Cold Harbor began on the 10th. Shortly after dark on the 12th the 18th corps, the last to leave the trenches, took up the march to White House landing on the Pamunkey river, where the men were embarked on transports, and by sunset on the 14th the corps joined Butler at Bermuda Hundred, near the junction of the James and Appomattox rivers. The other corps crossed the Chickahominy and

marched across the country, striking the James river in the vicinity of Malvern hill. By the 20th of June Grant had about 110,000 men in front of the Petersburg and Richmond intrenchments. His forces were organized as follows: The Army of the Potomac, Maj.-Gen. George G. Meade, commanding, consisted of the 2nd 5th, 6th and 9th corps of infantry and the cavalry corps. The 2nd corps was commanded by Maj.-Gen. Winfield S. Hancock and was composed of three divisions, the first under command of Brig.-Gen. Francis C. Barlow, the 2nd under Maj.-Gen. John Gibbon, and the 3rd under Maj.-Gen. David B. Birney. The 5th corps, commanded by Maj.-Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren, embraced four divisions, respectively commanded by Brig.-Gens. Charles Griffin, Romeyn B. Ayres, Samuel W. Crawford and Lysander Cutler. The 6th corps, Maj.-Gen. Horatio G. Wright commanding, included three divisions, the 1st commanded by Brig.-Gen. David A. Russell, the 2nd by Brig.-Gen. George W. Getty, and the 3rd by Brig.-Gen. James B. Ricketts. Maj.-Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside was in command of the 9th corps. which was composed of four divisions respectively commanded by Brig.-Gens. James H. Ledlie, Robert H. Potter, Orlando B. Willcox and Edward Ferrero, the last named being composed of colored troops. The cavalry corps was under command of Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, and was made up of three divisions, the 1st commanded by Brig.-Gen. Alfred T. A. Torbert, the 2nd by Brig.-Gen. David McM. Gregg, and the 3rd by Brig.-Gen. James H. Wilson. With the 2nd corps was the artillery brigade of Col. John C. Tidball, Col. Charles S. Wainwright commanded the artillery brigade of the 5th corps, and Col. Charles H. Tompkins of the 6th, while the artillery of the 9th was distributed among the several divisions. Capt. James M. Robertson's brigade of horse artillery was attached to Sheridan's command. The Army of the James, Maj.-Gen. Benjamin F. Butler commanding, was made up of the 10th. and 18th infantry corps, the cavalry division under Brig. Gen. August V. Kautz, the siege artillery under Col. Henry L. Abbot, and the naval brigade under Brig.-Gen. Charles K. Graham. The 10th. corps, commanded by Brig.-Gen. William H. T. Brooks, included the three divisions commanded by Brig.-Gens. Alfred H. Terry, John W. Turner and Orris K. Ferry. The 18th corps, commanded by Maj.-Gen. William F. Smith, embraced the three divisions under Brig.-Gens. George J. Stannard, John H. Martindale and Edward W. Hinks. In addition to the regular organizations named there were some unattached troops. Early on the morning of June 13, Lee discovered that the Federal troops in his front had been withdrawn, and immediately put his own army in motion for the Richmond and Petersburg intrenchments. The Confederate works about the two cities are thus described by Hotchkiss in the Virginia volume of the Confederate Military History: "At this time, Beauregard's left rested on the navigable Appomattox, about one mile north of east from Petersburg. \* \* \* On his right, Anderson, with the First corps, extended the Confederate line for some 3 miles to the southward, in front of Petersburg, crossing the Norfolk & Petersburg railroad in the vicinity of the Jerusalem plank road, thence westward for some 2 miles; the Third corps, under A. P. Hill, extended the Confederate right, on the south of Petersburg, to the Weldon & Petersburg railroad. Pickett's division took up the line on the west side of the Appomattox and extended it north to the James, at the big bend opposite Dutch gap. The fortifications on the north of the James from Chaffin's bluff northward, along the front of Richmond, were held by batteries and by local troops in command of Lieut.-Gen. R. S. Ewell. Subsequently the Confederate works were extended to the southwest of Petersburg for more than 10 miles to beyond Hatcher's run, until Lee's line of defensive works, consisting of forts and redoubts connected by breastworks and strengthened by all means known to the art of war, extended for nearly 40 miles." According to the same authority, "Lee had, in his 40-mile line, for the defense of Richmond and Petersburg, some 54,000 men, the remaining veterans of the

Army of Northern Virginia, and of the department of North Carolina and Southern Virginia, Beauregard's army." From official sources it is learned that on June 30, Lee's forces numbered 54,751 men, which was gradually increased until on December 20, he had 66,533. During the same period the Union army had lost in killed, wounded and missing 47,554 men, but recruits had been brought in until on Dec. 20, Grant had 110,364 men of all arms in front of the Confederate works. About 4 a.m. on June 15, Smith's corps and Kautz's cavalry left Broadway landing for an assault on Beauregard's works. Kautz soon met the Confederate skirmishers and at Baylor's farm about 4 miles from Petersburg, a force of infantry and artillery was found occupying a line of rifle-pits. Hinks' division of colored troops made a vigorous attack, dislodged the enemy and captured 1 piece of artillery. Smith then advanced about a mile and a half to the Jordan farm, where his entire front was subjected to an artillery fire that drove the Union batteries from their position. Some delay was incurred in reconnoitering, but at 7 p. m. the divisions of Brooks and Hinks pushed forward and carried the works, capturing over 200 prisoners, 4 guns, with horses, caissons and ammunition, several stands of colors and the intrenching tools. About the same time Martindale's division carried the works between Jordan's house and the Appomattox, capturing 2 pieces of artillery and equipments complete. Hancock was directed on the evening of the 18th to hold his corps in readiness to move, but he was delayed in waiting for rations from City Point until 10:30 a.m. on the 15th when the command moved without the rations. Owing to an incorrect map he was unable to join Smith until after the action at Jordan's was over. At 8 o'clock that evening Burnside started the 9th corps to reinforce Smith and Hancock, and at 10 o'clock the next morning his command went into position on Hancock's left. Hancock was placed in command of all the troops and ordered to make a general assault at 6 p.m. Before that hour Egan's brigade of Birney's division assaulted and carried a redoubt, known as redan No. 12, on Birney's left. In the attack at 6 o'clock redans Nos. 4, 13 and 14, with their connecting lines of breastworks, were carried, but with considerable loss to the assailants. At dawn on the 17th Potter's division surprised the enemy in the works on the ridge near the Shand house, captured 4 guns, 5 stands of colors, 600 prisoners and 1,500 stands of small arms. This was accomplished without a shot being fired, the bayonet alone being used. The Confederates were asleep with their arms in their hands, but Potter's men moved so quietly, and at the same time so swiftly, that they were over the works before the alarm could be given. Those captured surrendered without resistance and the others fled precipitately to an intrenched position along the west side of Harrison's creek. Later in the day this line was attacked by Willcox, but owing to a heavy enfilading fire of artillery from the left, and the lack of proper support, the assault was repulsed. Hartranft's brigade went into this action with 1,890 men, of whom but 1,050 came back. In the meantime Warren's corps had come up and taken position on the left of Burnside. From prisoners Meade learned the character of Beauregard's intrenchments and the strength of his force, and ordered an assault by the whole line to be made at daylight on the morning of the 18th, hoping to carry the works before Lee could send reinforcements. When the line advanced on the morning of the 18th it was found that the enemy had evacuated the trenches held the day before and now occupied a new line some distance farther back toward the city of Petersburg. It was also discovered that Field's and Kershaw's divisions had arrived during the night and were already in position to meet the assault. On account of the change in the enemy's position and the nature of the ground over which the Federal troops had to advance, the attack was postponed until 12 o'clock. The 2nd corps then made two attacks on the right of the Prince George Court House road, but both were repulsed. Burnside encountered some difficulty in driving the Confederates

from the railroad cut, but finally succeeded and established his corps within a hundred yards of the enemy's main line. Warren's assault was also unsuccessful, though some of Griffin's men fell within 20 feet of the enemy's works. Martindale's division carried a line of rifle-pits, but made no attack on the main line. The positions gained by the several commands were then intrenched "and the siege of Petersburg was begun in earnest. From that time until the fall of the city on April 2, 1865, there was almost daily skirmishing at some point along the lines in front of Petersburg, with more serious engagements on the Jerusalem plank road, at Deep Bottom, long the Weldon, South Side and Danville railroads, Reams' Station, Yellow Tavern, Globe Tavern, Dinwiddie Court. House, Fort Harrison, Chaffin's farm, Fair Oaks, Hatcher's run, Five Forks, Sailor's creek, and a number of minor skirmishes, each of which is herein treated under the proper head. In Potter's division of the 9th corps was the 48th Pa., a Regiment made up chiefly of miners from Schuylkill county and commanded by Lieut.-Col. Henry Pleasants, who was a practical mining engineer. After the assault of the 18th the men of this regiment began discussing the feasibility of running a mine under the enemy's works, and the plan was finally proposed by Pleasants to Burnside, who gave the project his unqualified approval and gained Meade's consent to it. The portion of the works to be mined was known as Elliott's salient, being occupied by Elliott's brigade of Bushrod Johnson's division and was near the center of the line on the east side of the city. With no tools but the pick and shovel the Pennsylvanians excavated a main gallery 522 feet in length with lateral galleries 37 and 38 feet long running under and nearly parallel to the enemy's works, the earth taken from the tunnel being carried out in cracker boxes. The work was commenced on June 25, and on July 27 the mine was charged with 8,000 pounds of powder which was placed in eight magazines of 1,000 pounds each. On the 26th Burnside reported his plan for an assault to follow immediately upon the explosion of the mine. This plan contemplated the placing of Ferrero's division in the advance, because his other divisions had been under a heavy fire, day and night, for more than a month, while the colored troops had been held as a reserve. This selection was not approved by Meade and Grant, partly for the reason that it might be charged they were willing to sacrifice the negro soldiers by pushing them forward and partly because Ferrero's division had never been in close contact with the enemy and it was not known how they would conduct themselves in such an emergency, though the men had been drilling for several weeks for the work, and were not only willing but anxious for the undertaking. A division was then selected by lot, and it fell to Gen. Ledlie to lead the assault. This was Burnside's weakest division and was commanded by a man whom Gen. Humphreys, Meade's chief of staff, characterizes as "an officer whose total unfitness for such a duty ought to have been known to Gen. Burnside, though it is not possible that it could have been. It was not known to Gen. Meade." On the 29th an order was issued from headquarters providing that "At half past three in the morning of the 30th, Maj.-Gen. Burnside will spring his mine, and his assaulting columns will immediately move rapidly upon the breach, seize the crest in the rear and effect a lodgment there. He will be followed by Maj.-Gen. Ord (now in command of the 18th corps), who will support him on the right, directing his movement to the crest indicated, and by Maj.-Gen. Warren who will support him on the left. Upon the explosion of the mine the artillery of all kinds in battery will open upon those points of the enemy's works whose fire covers the ground over which our columns must move, care being taken to avoid impeding the progress of our troops. Special instructions respecting the direction of the fire will be issued through the Chief of Artillery." At the appointed time Ledlie's division was in position in two lines, Marshall's brigade in front and Bartlett's in the rear, ready to charge into the breach the moment the mine was sprung. Four o'clock came and still no

explosion. Officers and men who had been in a state of feverish expectancy since shortly after midnight, began to grow restless. An officer was sent to Burnside to inquire the cause of the delay, and it was learned that the fuse had died out. Lieut. Jacob Douty and Sergt. Henry Rees volunteered to enter the gallery and reignite the fuse. Their efforts were crowned with success though they had barely emerged from the mouth of the mine at 4:45 when the explosion took place. A solid mass of earth, mingled with timbers, dismantled cannon and human beings, rose 200 feet in the air, and where Elliott's salient had stood was a ragged crater 170 feet long, 60 wide and 30 feet deep, filled with dust and debris. Immediately the Federal artillery-about 160 guns and mortars- opened fire and as soon as the dust had cleared away Marshall's line advanced closely followed by Bartlett's, but the men could not resist the temptation to crowd forward to look into the hole, and the two brigades became hopelessly mixed. When the explosion occurred the Confederates hurried away from the intrenchments for 200 or 300 yards on either side of the mine, but the confusion of Ledlie's men and the delay in restoring something like order gave the enemy time to recover from his bewilderment, so that when the Union troops attempted to cross the crater they were met by a fire of musketry, straggling at first but increasing in effectiveness until at the end of half an hour the two brigades were huddled in a confused mass in the hole, unable to advance or withdraw. Gen. Humphreys says: "Gen. Ledlie did not accompany, much less lead, his division. He remained, according to the testimony before the Court of Inquiry that followed, in a bomb-proof about 50 yards inside our intrenchments, from which he could see nothing that was going on. He could not have given the instructions he received to his brigade commanders. Had the division advanced in column of attack, led by a resolute, intelligent commander, it would have gained the crest in fifteen minutes after the explosion, and before any serious opposition could have been made to it." Willcox sent in part of a brigade on the left of the mine, halting the remainder of his command until Ledlie's men should advance. He was criticized by the court of inquiry for not making efforts "commensurate with the occasion to carry out Gen. Burnside's order to advance to Cemetery Hill." Ferrero moved in the rear of Willcox and upon reaching the most advanced line of the Federal works was compelled to halt on account of other troops occupying the position assigned to him. After some delay he was ordered to advance and carry the crest beyond the crater and was moving forward for that purpose when he was directed to halt. All seemed to be confusion, for in a little while the order to advance was renewed. By this time the enemy had strengthened his position on the hill and when Ferrero tried to carry it he failed. His colored troops established their valor, however, as in his report Ferrero says: "They were repulsed, but veterans could hardly have stood the fire to which they were exposed." At 6:30 orders were again sent to the division commanders not to halt at the works, but to advance at once to the crest without waiting for mutual support. Potter had moved his division forward by the flank soon after Ledlie began his advance. Upon reaching the vicinity of the mine Griffin's brigade turned to the right, took possession of the intrenchments which the Confederates had abandoned and began an attack upon Elliott's troops which were forced back after a long and severe contest. The other brigade attacked on the right of Griffin but was repulsed. The support of Ord and Warren did not come up to the expectations and at 9:15, after four hours of desultory fighting, Burnside received a peremptory order to withdraw his troops from the enemy's lines and cease offensive operations. This order was sent into the crater with instructions to the brigade commanders to consult and determine as to the time and manner of retiring. They sent back a request that a heavy fire of artillery and infantry should be opened to cover the withdrawal, but before the messenger reached Burnside the enemy made another attack and the men fell back

in some disorder, leaving the wounded to fall into the hands of the Confederates. The Union loss on the 30th was 419 killed, 1,679 wounded and 1,910 missing. Marshall and Bartlett were both captured and 23 regimental commanders were reported either killed, wounded or missing. On the Confederate side the loss in Elliott's brigade was 677, and as Weisinger's brigade lost about as heavily the total casualties among the enemy numbered probably not far from 1,000, most of whom were killed or wounded, as but few prisoners were taken by the Federals. On July 5, Gen. Early, commanding the Confederate forces in the Shenandoah valley, crossed the Potomac near Shepherdstown and moved toward Washington, hoping thereby to compel Grant to withdraw troops from in front of Richmond and Petersburg for the defense of the national capital and thus giving Lee an opportunity to once more assume the offensive. Grant did send Wright with the 6th corps to Washington and this corps was not with the Army of the Potomac again until the early part of December. Soon after the mine explosion Lee felt that he could reduce his force at Petersburg and sent Kershaw's division to reinforce Early in the valley. Grant met this movement by sending Sheridan with two divisions of cavalry early in August to operate against Early. After the failure of Burnside's mine no more assaults were made on the Confederate fortifications, the Union army conducting the siege by regular approaches, raids against the railroads and various movements by detachments. A few days after the battle of Hatcher's run (Oct. 27,) the army went into winter quarters and from that time until the next spring the operations were confined to occasional picket firing and artillery duels. Late in the summer Butler conceived the idea of cutting a canal across the narrow neck of the peninsula known as Dutch gap, by means of which the Union gunboats could ascend the James river without running the fire of the Confederate batteries. The isthmus was less than half a mile in width and by the close of the year the canal was completed, except a bulkhead at the upper end. This was blown up on New Year's day, but the earth fell back in the canal and the enemy immediately planted a battery opposite the entrance to the canal, thus preventing its being opened, and the whole scheme came to naught. By the latter part of March, 1865, numerous changes occurred in the Union army. Hancock had been sent north to organize a new corps and the 2nd was now commanded by Maj.- Gen. A. A. Humphreys' the divisions being commanded by Miles, Barlow and Mott. Cutler's division of the 5th corps was no longer in existence as a separate organization. The divisions of the 6th corps were commanded by Wheaton, Getty and Seymour. After the mine explosion Burnside was, at his own request, granted leave of absence, the command of the 9th corps being turned over to Maj.-Gen. John G. Parke. Willcox took command of the 1st division, Potter of the 2nd and Brig.-Gen. John F. Hartranft of the 3rd. Sheridan still commanded the cavalry of the army, the 1st and 3rd divisions, commanded by Devin and Custer, being known as the Army of the Shenandoah under command of Gen. Merritt, and the 2nd division was commanded by Gen. George Crook. Wilson had been sent to Gen. Thomas at Nashville, Tenn. The Army of the James, Maj.-Gen. E. O. C. Ord commanding, was composed of the 24th and 25th corps and some detached troops guarding the defenses of Bermuda Hundred and the landings along the James. The 24th corps, under Maj.- Gen. John Gibbon, included the divisions of Foster, Devens and Turner, and the 25th, Maj.-Gen. Godfrey Weitzel commanding, consisted of the divisions of Maj.-Gen. August V. Kautz, Brig.-Gen. William Birney, and the cavalry division under Brig.-Gen. Ranald S. Mackenzie. On the last day of March the total strength of the army that was destined to close the war in Virginia was 114,335 men. On Feb. 27, 1865, Sheridan, with the two divisions of cavalry left Winchester and moved up the Shenandoah valley via Staunton and Charlottesville to within a short distance of Lynchburg, destroying the James river canal for some distance, and

on March 27, effected a Junction with Grant's army in front of Petersburg and Richmond. A few days before his arrival Lee and Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, held a conference in Richmond, at which it was decided to abandon the Richmond and Petersburg lines as soon as the railroads would admit of it, the purpose being to unite Lee's forces with those of Johnston in North Carolina and attack Sherman there. Lee knew that Grant was preparing for a movement against the Danville and South Side railroads and to counteract this he proposed a sortie against the works on the east side of Petersburg, which he believed would oblige Grant to concentrate there, thus thwarting the design on the railroads and postponing the evacuation until the weather was more favorable. The point selected for the attack was a redoubt known as Fort Stedman, about a mile from the Appomattox and not more than 150 yards from the Confederate works. This part of the line was held by the 9th corps, Willcox on the right Potter on the left and Hartranft in reserve, Fort Stedman being garrisoned by a detachment of the 18th N. Y. heavy artillery under Maj. G. M. Randall. Gordon's corps was chosen to lead the assault in which he was to be supported by portions of Hill's and Longstreet's commands. At this time Lee's army was in desperate straits for food. The capture of Fort Fisher in January had closed the port of Wilmington to the Confederacy, thus making it impossible to obtain supplies from abroad. It had become a common occurrence for squads of Confederate soldiers, impelled by the hope of securing better rations, to desert with their arms in their hands and come over to the Union lines. About 4 a.m. on March 25 several such squads, claiming to be deserters, left the enemy's works and when near enough made a dash and overpowered the Federal pickets. Immediately three strong columns emerged from the Confederate abatis, one moving straight on Fort Stedman, one on Battery No 10, a short distance north of the fort, and the third against Battery No. 11, about the same distance on the south of it. The second column broke the main line between Batteries 9 and 10 and then turned toward the fort, taking it on the flank. The garrison was soon overpowered and the guns of the fort, as well as those of Battery 10, were turned on Willcox's troops. Batteries 11 and 12 were quickly captured by the column that had turned to the right, and for a little while it looked as though Gordon's attack was to be a complete success. When the assault was commenced it was so dark that friends and foes could not be distinguished and the artillery of the other batteries could not be used. As soon as it was light enough Gen. McLaughlin, whose brigade occupied the line near Battery 11 opened a mortar fire on the enemy there and soon afterward carried the battery at the point of the bayonet. He then entered Fort Stedman, not knowing it was in the hands of the enemy, and was taken prisoner. Gordon was under the mistaken impression that there were some forts in the rear of the main line and the column which captured Battery 10 was moving to capture these forts when it came in contact with Hartranft's division, which was coming up to Willcox's support, and was driven back to the battery and Fort Stedman. Battery 12 was retaken soon after No. 11, and by 7:30 Parke had driven the Confederates there into the fort, upon which was concentrated the fire of several of the Union batteries on the high ground in the rear. A heavy cross-fire of artillery and infantry was also brought to bear on the open space between the lines, rendering it almost impossible for the enemy to return to his own works or to receive reinforcements. Hartranft then moved against the enemy in the fort and recaptured the position with comparatively small loss, capturing 1,949 prisoners, most of whom had sought shelter in the bomb-proofs, and 9 stands of colors. Many of the Confederates were killed or wounded by the murderous cross-fire, while endeavoring to get back to their own lines. The Union loss was 494 in killed and wounded and 523 missing. The 2nd and 6th corps were then directed to make a reconnaissance of the enemy's works in front of Fort Fisher on the right of Fort Stedman, and

to attack if it was found the force there had been sufficiently weakened to support Gordon. The intrenched picket line was carried and the Union troops advanced close to the main works, when it was found that Hill occupied them with a force too strong to be assaulted. The enemy tried to recapture the picket line at several points, but every attack was repulsed. In this affair the Union loss was about 900 in killed and wounded and 177 missing. The Confederate loss in killed and wounded was about the same and nearly 1,000 were captured. Grant was now in shape to operate against the railroads on Lee's right. On April 1 the Confederate forces under Gen. Pickett were defeated in the battle of Five Forks, and on the morning of the 2nd the 6th corps broke through the Confederate lines near Hatcher's run, about 4 miles southwest of Petersburg. In an attempt to recover the captured line Gen. A.P. Hill, one of Lee's ablest lieutenants, was killed. The defeat of Pickett and the breaking of his line determined Lee to evacuate the Petersburg fortifications before it was too late, and early on Sunday morning, April 2, he sent the following despatch to Gen. J. C. Breckenridge, Confederate secretary of war: "I see no prospect of doing more than holding our position here till tonight. I am not certain that I can do that. If I can I shall withdraw tonight north of the Appomattox, and, if possible, it will be better to withdraw the whole line tonight from the James river. The brigades on Hatcher's run are cut off from us; the enemy has broken through our lines and intercepted between us and them, and there is no bridge over which they can cross the Appomattox this side of Goode's or Beaver's, which are not very far from the Danville railroad. Our only chance, then, of concentrating our forces is to do so near the Danville railway, which I shall endeavor to do at once. I advise that all preparation be made for leaving Richmond tonight. I will advise you later, according to circumstances." This despatch-reached Richmond at 10:40 a. m. and was handed to President Davis while in attendance upon the service at St. Paul's church. He at once left the church and late in the day, in company with the officials of the Confederate States, took a train for Danville. That night the Confederate army withdrew from Richmond and Petersburg and commenced its last march, the line of which was up the Appomattox river toward Amelia Court House. During the winter the people of Richmond had been kept in ignorance of the real state of affairs and gave themselves up to pleasures, confidently expecting to hear any moment of a great Confederate victory. Lee's despatch, therefore, created consternation among them and there was a mad rush for the railroad stations in the desire to leave the doomed city. But transportation was out of the question, as every available coach and car were loaded with the officials, attaches and effects of the government, and to make matters worse orders had been issued that none should be permitted to board the trains without a pass from the secretary of war who could nowhere be found. Ewell's command was the last to leave the city, and scarcely had his rearguard departed when a fire broke out near the center of the town and the mob took possession. Stores were broken open and plundered private residences were robbed and new fires kindled, until the city was a perfect pandemonium. At 3 a.m. on the 3rd Parke and Wright discovered that the enemy had been withdrawn from the trenches in their front, and upon advancing ascertained that Petersburg was evacuated. Willcox was ordered to occupy the town with his division, while the remainder of the 9th, with all of the 6th and 2nd corps, pushed on after Lee. Weitzel, who commanded the Union forces on the north side of the James, was informed by Gen. Devens about 5 o'clock that the Federal pickets had possession of the enemy's line. Two staff officers, with 40 of the headquarters, cavalry, were sent forward to receive the surrender of the city, in case the Confederates had evacuated it, and soon afterward Weitzel followed with the divisions of Kautz and Devens. Entering the city by the Osborn pike, Weitzel rode direct to the city hall, where he received the formal surrender of the city at 8:15

a.m. For several days Lieut. J. L. de Peyster, a son of Maj.Gen. J. W. de Peyster, had carried a United States flag upon the pommel of his saddle, ready to raise it over the Confederate capitol when the city should fall into the hands of the Union forces. The same flag had waved over Butler's headquarters at New Orleans. Scarcely had the surrender been made before de Peyster, in company with Capt. Langdon, chief of artillery on Weitzel's staff, raised this flag over the state house, bringing Virginia once more under the realm of the Stars and Stripes.

PETERSBURG, VA FEB. 27TH - MARCH 28TH, 1865 Petersburg Va., Feb. 27-March 28, 1865. Sheridan's Expedition. On the 27th Maj.-Gen. P. H. Sheridan left Winchester for an expedition to the front of Petersburg, the object being the destruction of the Virginia Central railroad, the James river canal, and the capture of Lynchburg, after which Sheridan was to join Gen. Sherman's army in North Carolina or return to Winchester. His forces consisted of the 1st and 3rd cavalry divisions of the Army of the Shenandoah, respectively commanded by Brig.-Gen. T. C. Devin and Bvt. Maj.Gen. G. A. Custer; one section of the 2nd and one of the 4th U. S. artillery, and a pontoon train; the total strength being about 10,000 men. Mount Crawford was reached on March 1, and here about 200 of Rosser's Confederate cavalry were discovered trying to burn the bridge over the middle fork of the Shenandoah. Two regiments of Capehart's brigade swam the river above the bridge charged and routed Rosser, pursuing him nearly to Staunton, killing a few of his men and capturing 30 prisoners, with 20 wagons and ambulances, Capehart's loss being 5 men wounded. This caused Gen. Early to retreat from Staunton to Waynesboro, where he intrenched a position. At Staunton Sheridan detached a part of his command for the destruction of some stores at Swoope's station, and pushed on with the main column, Custer's division in advance, for Waynesboro. At Fisherville, 6 miles from Staunton, Custer's advance encountered the enemy's pickets and drove them rapidly to Waynesboro. Without waiting for the 1st division to come up, Custer sent the 2nd brigade against Early's position, to display the force in the works, and directed Lieut.-Col. Whitaker to take three regiments of Pennington's brigade to the extreme right. The 1st Conn., 2nd Ohio and 3rd N. J., all armed with Spencer carbines, were moved to the right and dismounted under cover of the woods. When they were in position to attack, Woodruff's section of horse artillery opened fire with such vigor that the Confederates were compelled to lie down behind their embankment. Wells and Capehart moved their brigades to the attack in front, at the charge, and at the same time the three regiments on the right caught the enemy on the flank, the whole movement being so sudden that Early's men were completely routed and fled in all directions, leaving 11 pieces of artillery, with their horses and caissons, 200 wagons loaded with subsistence, with their teams and harness; a large quantity of ammunition; all the camp equipage and officers, baggage; the headquarters, papers; 16 battle flags and 1,600 prisoners in the hands of the Federals. On the 3rd the expedition moved toward Charlottesville, which place was reached on the 4th, the bridges, depots, etc., between Staunton and Charlottesville having been destroyed during the march. At Charlottesville the command divided, the 1st division moving to Scottsville on the James river, and the 3rd, with the wagon trains, along the Lynchburg railroad, destroying the bridges and culverts as far as Buffalo river. The two divisions came together near New Market, where the dam and locks on the canal were thoroughly destroyed. At Duguidsville, on the 8th, the Confederates fired on Devin's division from across the river, but the 5th U. S. cavalry was dismounted and covered the retirement of the rest of the division. All the locks on the canal between Goochland and Duguidsville were destroyed, as well as large stores of cotton, tobacco and subsistence. Columbia was reached on the 10th. where the expedition rested for a day, and on the 12th the march was resumed toward the Virginia Central railroad,

which was struck at Tolersville on the 13th, and several miles of track torn up. The next day Custer directed his march toward Ground Squirrel bridge, while Devin moved along the railroad to the South Anna. Both bridges were destroyed after a slight skirmish with the guards, in which the 5th U. S. cavalry captured a number of prisoners and 3 pieces of artillery. The 1st division was here ordered to move toward Hanover Court House and the 3rd to push south as far as Ashland, but upon learning that a considerable force of the enemy under Longstreet was moving to intercept the expedition, the two divisions were united, the whole command recrossed the South Anna and moved along the north bank of the Pamunkey to White House landing, which was reached on the 18th. Here the expedition rested until the 25th, when it again took up the march and two days later rejoined the Army of the Potomac. During the movement Sheridan's forces captured 1,603 prisoners, 2,154 horses and mules, 16 battle flags, 17 pieces of artillery and over 2,000 stands of small arms. The line of march was marked by wholesale destruction. Sixteen large mills and factories 26 warehouses and 8 railroad depots, together with their contents of valuable stores, were laid in ashes 47 miles of railroad track, 30 miles of telegraph, 49 canal locks, 44 railroad and several wagon bridges, 10 watertanks, and about 40 canal and flatboats all loaded with provisions, etc., were completely destroyed. Source: The Union Army, vol. 6