



On to RICHMOND

By FRANK H. RENTFROW

(Illustrated by FREDERICK S. THOMAS)

IT WAS a hot July day of 1862. Aboard the battle-wrecked *Galena* the Marine Guard stood at attention. Bugles shrilled their flourishes, and the cheers of the soldiers at Harrison's Landing could be heard above the brazen notes. The seamen froze in rigid blue ranks. But there were great gaps in the formation, for, less than two months ago, Rebel shore batteries had swept away nearly half of the crew. Forty per cent casualties in a four-hour fight! That ordeal was indelibly stamped on the faces of the survivors lined up to welcome the visiting dignitaries aboard.

Apart from the others were three men. Corporal John Mackie, commanding the Marine Guard, stood flanked by two seamen. He stiffened perceptibly, with flushed face and eyes glinting with pride. A tall, gaunt man stepped

away from the visitors and extended his hand to the Marine corporal. They smiled.

The rest of the visitors were smiling too. Admiral Goldsborough positively beamed. His lost gunboats had been found. He had been worried about those four ships inconceivably swallowed up in the narrow confines of the James River. No one seemed to know where they were—except the enemy.

"On to Richmond!" was the cry of the North. And McClellan, to appease it, maneuvered his army like pawns on the chessboard of war. Now he was ready to strike at the Confederate Capital. Admiral Goldsborough dispatched ships from Hampton Roads to assist the troops and to open the James River for the passage of supplies. In response to Secretary of the Navy Welles' orders to "Push all the boats you can spare up James River, even

to Richmond," the *Galena*, *Port Royal*, *Aroostook*, and *Naugatuck* cleared Hampton Roads—and then vanished.

The disappearance of the ships caused sleepless nights. The Navy Department wanted to know where they were, and Admiral Goldsborough, replying on May 13, reported that they had been last heard from on the 11th, somewhere in James River, about twenty-five miles from City Point. General McClellan was apprehensive too, for he depended on those warships to aid him. On May 15 he wrote to the Secretary of War to say, "I have heard nothing of the James River gunboats." But on the following day he added, "A contraband just in reports that he heard an officer of the Confederate Army say our gunboats had reached within 8 miles of Richmond." So, apparently, they weren't lost at all. The Confederates knew where they were.

It is not surprising that the Confederates DID know, for the Yankee guns had blasted Rebel river fortifications into silence. Aboard the *Galena* Corporal Mackie and his dozen men were kept busy, engaging the Confederate sharpshooters in a moving rifle duel. Every foot of the fleet's progress was contested. Arriving at City Point, they found the place burned and abandoned by the defenders.

On May 13 the gallant little *Monitor* joined the other ships, and the flotilla continued up the James. The banks began pressing in on them as the river grew narrower, and as Mackie afterwards said, "crooked as a ram's horn, with very high banks, heavily wooded on both sides, from which the fleet was constantly being fired on by Confederate sharpshooters hidden in the underbrush."

About eight miles below Richmond their progress was halted abruptly by sunken ships and submerged piles. The obstructions could not be cleared, for on Drewry's Bluff a battery of ten guns frowned down to command the situation. There was nothing to do but fight; so the ships formed for action. They were in single line, with the *Galena* leading and only 100 yards from the fort. The Marines were engaged in sniping at gunners even before Captain Rodgers gave the command to fire.

The *Galena* opened first, but her guns couldn't be raised sufficiently. It would have required an elevation of nearly thirty-five degrees to reach the Rebel batteries almost above them. Then the Confederate guns went into action and the plunging fire just about blasted the ships out of the water. The fleet dropped back to an effective range and anchored.

Then the fight began in earnest. It was the final defense before Richmond, and the gray-clad gunners had been ordered to stick to the last man. All guns that could be brought to bear were in action and the battle raged in wild fury. The fire from the fort began to weaken. But the *Monitor* had already fallen back, and the unarmored Yankee ships were badly smashed and in danger of destruction. So they moved about 1,000 yards down the river and left the *Galena* to engage the enemy practically alone.

Suddenly the Rebel fire increased and more riflemen appeared on the parapets. The crew from the Confederate

ironclad *Merrimac* had been rushed down from Richmond to reinforce the Rebel strong point.

The cannonading increased into a nightmare of violence. The *Galena* shivered under the impact. Her six boats were smashed and her stack resembled some strange, fantastic sieve. Great holes gaped in her sides, and her red, slippery decks were littered with broken spars and timbers. A shot struck the quarter-deck wheel and it disappeared in an eruption of splinters.

Gunner Boreum raced up from the magazine and breathlessly reported to Captain Rodgers that only five rounds of fixed ammunition remained. "Send it up as long as it will last," replied the captain, "and then we will use solid shot."

"Aye, aye, sir!" snapped the gunner. He started to return below. An 8-inch shot screamed down and tore him to pieces. Four other men were killed and several wounded by the same projectile. Scarcely had its echo died away when a shell exploded on the deck in the midst of a group of men. A powder monkey in the act of passing a shell was hit and the thing went off in his hands.

Long afterward, when the red horror had lifted from his memory, Mackie said: "Twelve men of the Marine Guard under my command and I were at the ports, taking care of sharpshooters on the opposite bank, and I barely escaped being struck by a ten-inch shot.

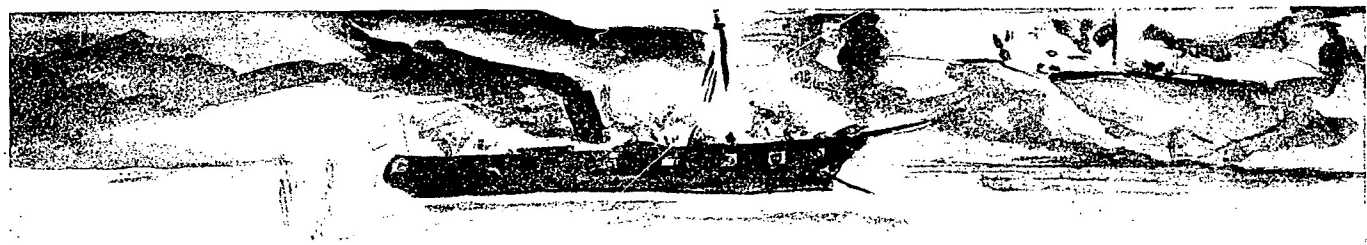
"As soon as the smoke cleared away a terrible sight was revealed to my eyes: the entire after division was down and the deck covered with dead and dying men. Without losing a moment, however, I called out to the men that here was a chance for them, ordering them to clear away the dead and wounded and get the guns in shape. Splinters were swept from the guns, and sand thrown on the deck, which was slippery with human blood, and in an instant the heavy 100-pounder Parrot rifle and two 9-inch Dahlgren guns were ready and at work upon the fort. Our first shot blew up one of the casemates and dismounted one of the guns that had been destroying the ship."

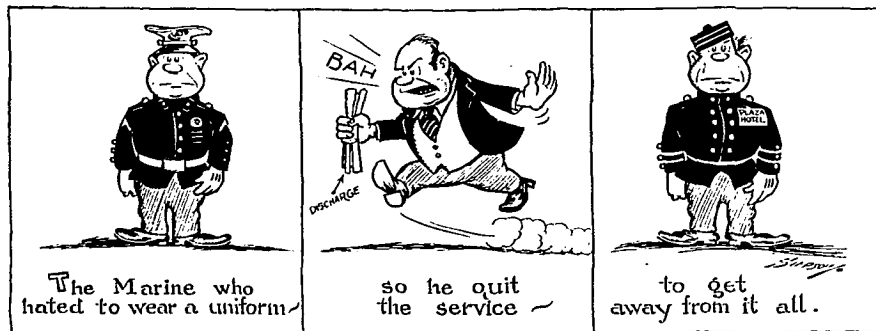
With the *Galena* splintering about them, those Marines fought their guns like maniacs. A hostile shell ripped through into the boiler room. Another set fire to the ship, and the crew stamped out the blaze amid a torrent of shells.

Finally, after four hours of combat, Captain Rodgers realized he could not force past the Rebel batteries. So the *Galena* limped out of range. Torn from stem to stern, with 132 holes in her; with her port guns shored up to keep them from tumbling into the coal bunkers, the gallant little ironclad withdrew.

Such bravery could not go unrecognized. That is why, two months later, a group of dignitaries climbed aboard and were amazed that the *Galena* still floated. That is why Corporal John Mackie stood between Quartermaster Regan and Fireman Kenyon, outstanding heroes of the day, to receive credit for his bravery. The Secretary of the Navy was there, and Admiral Goldsborough; Captain Rodgers and the tall, gaunt, weary looking man who held out his hand toward Mackie.

"These, Mr. President," said Captain Rodgers, "are the young heroes of the battle." (Continued on page 52)





the company, who are kept busy on the functioning and nomenclature of the machine gun, while the old salts have practice maneuvers at the Battalion Center of Resistance out in the Combat Area.

Bright and early each morning the company takes to the Old Stadium Trail with axes, picks and a song on their lips, in preparation for the extensive use of the Combat Range. The work put forth can best be told by the fact that sentinels have to be posted in order to prevent the inspecting parties from falling into the camouflaged underground pill boxes.

Of course it takes machine gunners to form the nucleus for a new outfit. Therefore, Sergeant James S. Harris and Privates Robert J. Dawson, Rocco P. Mele and Gerard J. Page have been transferred to B Battery, 15th Marines. Private Albert J. Romer has gone to the First Marine Brigade for duty as truck driver, and Private Gar A. Wingfield is now cooking for the detachment at the Water Works, having been transferred to the Post Service Battalion.

The new men who have joined the company during the past month are Privates George T. Allen, Ira Q. Metcalf, Stephen S. Moosick, Dominic N. Santaniello, Thomas W. Stewart, Robert P. Theobald, James P. Morgan, Michael Pellick, Lester W. Thompson, Hubert L. Cox, Harold L. Davidson, Jesse C. L. Hollingsworth, Paul H. McMackin, Frank J. Stewart and Wallace E. Vaden. All from the Marine Barracks, Parris Island, South Carolina. In addition, Private Joseph H. Mitnacht joined us from Portsmouth, N. H., Russell W. Maitland from the First Marine Brigade, Field Music first class Floyd W. Lowrance from Pensacola, Fla., and last but not least Corporal George W. Compton from the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

After listening to the sermon of the Chief Chaplain a couple of Sundays ago, and hearing him tell how he rose from a sergeant of Marines to be a Captain in the U. S. Navy, Private Joseph P. Murphy has been quite diligent in assisting our Post Chaplain. As a result, the Chaplain has requested Murphy's transfer to the Post Service Battalion, in order that he may have more time to devote to his religious tasks.

SECOND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES

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Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida: Pvt. Lawrence McCormick.

Something else that needs considerable comment is the fact that the 3rd Squad of the 1st Platoon placed first in the Machine Gun race held during the recent field meet. Pvt. Joseph J. Huron field stripped and assembled the gun with lightning like speed. In record time the gun and tripod were on carts and toted away.

Speed, Dash, and Accuracy is their motto.

Undoubtedly it will be "Anchors Aweigh" and "Over the Sea, Let's Go Men" for the annual maneuvers are practically here. We'll see your shining faces on the starboard quarterdeck during general quarters, abandon ship, and man overboard drills. In the event you new comers haven't been on one of the Fleet Landing Exercises there is plenty in store for you. As for you old timers it will be a pleasant tour of duty on the Island of Cocoanuts, Sunshine, and Palms. Being optimistic won't help a lot, so control your nostalgis pains and don't get seasick.

ON TO RICHMOND

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The tired eyes of President Lincoln smiled as he shook the hand of each man. Then he turned to the Secretary of the Navy and directed that all three were to be awarded the Medal of Honor. This instance is probably the only time a President of the United States personally, and upon his own initiative, recommended the bestowal of this decoration. A signal honor indeed! And to Corporal John Mackie it was a double honor, for he became the first United States Marine ever to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Of such threads is the web of destiny woven.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

(Continued from page 13)

Sergeant Jones—he was our provost sergeant—run in to stop the riot, when the crowd kept getting bigger and funnier. But he's not so good at stopping riots. About an hour later I had a couple of boys hand him down from the top of the hat-rack where he was impersonating a lobster, and made them promise they'd be gentle putting him to bed.

At last Mac and me figures that we'd spent enough for the evening, his birthday not actually having begun yet, and there being three other cafés left for morning. So when the rest was herded out the café and the old Frog lady begun to count her franes and the casualties to windows and table legs and vin glasses, Mac is so overcome with joy that he wants me to tell everybody that it was his birthday tomorrow. He can't speak much French himself, Mac can't, his shoulders being kind of stiff.

"Tell these curled hair mattresses," he says to me, pointing at the Frogs who hadn't took time to wipe the overflow from their chins, "that tomorrow's my birthday and there's going to be bo-koo excitement in this town."

So I stands on the step and translates. "Demaw," I began (that means tomorrow). Then I points at Mac, and makes a drinking gesture with my mouth and hands,

then points at the Frogs and hollers "voo!" which means "you." "Birthjoor," I explains, pointing once more to Mac. Then I showed them our roll.

Well, when they see that they seem to compray all right, and they can't control themselves another minute.

"Demaw!" one of them howled and they all busts out, cheering and waving their hats. "You got a wonderful gift for languages," Mac says, a little jealous.

"It come easy to me," I answered. "Let's go to bed."

IT WASN'T hardly raining at all in the morning, and we got up early, Mac and me. The other poor boobs in the labor battalion had a train of condiment cans to unload down at the rail-head platform. But Mac and me dressed careful, rolling our puttees wrong way round to show we're on pass.

I'd plumb and completely forgot that St. Neuwic happened to have a battle to celebrate on Mac's birthday. But how could you expect a mess sergeant to remember anything else with all them orders from the major and the colonel to keep in mind? When we walks up the street we see at once there's a lot of excitement. We stopped in the first café, Mac and me, for a couple of private drinks. The Fifi that passes them out was a very affectionate Fifi and intelligent, except in arithmetic, which you could see every time she tried to make change.

"And yes!" she says, very excited, "what a splendid day for the celebrate." Mac sort of stuck out his chest at that. "The most best glory day of all years," Fifi goes on. You must see it when the parade start."

"Parade?" cried Mac. "As sure as hell," Fifi answers very serious. "The big parade to celebrate the glory. The mayor and monsoor le coorie and all the town. It is the splendid day!" "Encore," Mac says, handing back his glass and almost busting, he was so proud. "Three or four encores."

Well, we got out in the street after a while and sure enough, there was flags and Frogs running and kids excited and the town crier whaling his drum and hollering, and the gendarmes out with their shoes shined for a change and everybody headed for the public square. Mac and me joined them. We pulled up at last in front of the Hotel de Ville, which isn't a hotel at all, but a kind of town hall with bankruptcy notices all over its front.

"The French are a friendly race," Mac says to me. "You can't say they ain't appreciative. Only think of all this excitement just over my birthday."

"Listen!" I interrupted. Now a labor battalion never has a band, that I know of, which is all right with me. It's bad enough to have to work all day and all night without needing to listen to the second trombone practicing "Baby's Prayer at Twilight" when you want to sleep. I don't set myself up as a judge, but I've seen a good many Uncle Tom shows and thought I'd heard the worst band in the world. But I hadn't till that day. The best thing about this one was its size. There was only six of them, counting the drum-major as one, but he run around hollering so fast he'd of made an elegant top sergeant.

Well, this band played, such as it was, and out trots the mayor from the Hotel de Ville. He was all dressed up like the admiral in a comic picture, with a funny paper hat and more medals than a colonel in the S. O. S. And at the same time arrives the carriage.