

Dear Paul:-

29 September 56

Levi Wallace received a second star for his part in the battle for Fort Donelson particularly the part played by the 8<sup>th</sup> Missouri and Kroff's 11<sup>th</sup> Indiana regiments in recapturing the Nashville road. Wallace was then assigned to command a new division of 12 regiments, in which the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 3<sup>d</sup> Division included the 8<sup>th</sup> Missouri and the 11<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>d</sup> Indiana Infantry Regiments.

Unfortunately for Wallace, he missed his opportunity at the Battle of Shiloh, less than three weeks later and his career went into decline. Kroff's diary, like all soldiers' accounts, cannot meet the question of Wallace's judgement and speed of execution from personal knowledge. But ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> does indicate what the men of his regiment thought at the time.

Let's look then at what Kroff wrote <sup>at the time</sup> and what Levi Wallace put down at a later <sup>time</sup> in his autobiography.

Kroff tells how on Sunday 6 April, his regiment moved out at 12 noon, while the cannon could be heard in the direction of Grant's Army. The troops had marched about 11 miles, when they found that the Union forces had been driven back to the river and that Kroff's regiment (we) were advancing in the direction of the rear of the rebel army. But General Wallace thought it best not to hazard an engagement on the rebel left and rear with his division of 9,000. So he retraced his steps and took the river road.



Now for Wallace's account. He moved out at noon under the orders given personally by Grant to march and form junction with the right of Grant's Army. Enroute, he came closer and closer to the battle itself. At 1:30 P.M. a courier brought word from Grant to hurry. A few moments before 2:00 P.M. a Staff officer from Grant came to hurry Wallace.

Wallace knew. He was actually in rear of the whole Confederate army. Should he move to attack or hurry back to Grant's right? Attack might mean Grant's salvation but at this moment, Wallace claims he received his third order from Grant "He wants you at Pittsburg Landing - he wants you there like hell!"

So Wallace turned back - according to his story - "and never reached Pittsburg Landing that day".

Now can we reconcile the different versions. I think they are close enough but I do believe Wallace did not want to hazard an attack with his forces. This recruit general missed the opportunity of a life time - But he was inexperienced.

The second point is Wallace's failure to get to the field of battle that Sunday.



Some say he lost his way; others, that he took the wrong road; still others that he took a circuitous route. Wallace admits that he wasted time in his change of direction to insure the right regiments as far as fighting qualities were concerned in the lead.

Kroff tells how his regiment retraced its steps and took a road near the river and soon found themselves nearly cut off and determined to cut their way through mud and mire. This was quite a job.

Wallace admits he refused to abandon his artillery in order to speed his movement and to hasten his forces forward piecemeal. Then he logged at Snake Creek - and the going was slow - almost a snail's pace.

There is no inconsistency in these tales. But the facts are - that the Union Army was badly punished at Shiloh - because Wallace's forces never arrived that day. They were saved by the arrival of Buell's forces the next day, and went on to drive out the Confederates.

I think I have shown you the value and the weaknesses of the diaries of enlisted men - such as our eye sees and a record of what the enlisted men behind had happened.



You can also see that I am having a good time with the diary.

Am sorry to hear that Marie is not feeling too good. If she were a horse, I'd pull her shoes and put her out to pasture. But since she is not a quadruped, she should see an M.D. soon -

I laughed at you and Theodore Tilton, and think you handled him just right. You'd be a whiz as a diplomat.

Hope you and the Evans have a fine time at the game - and that it don't overwork Marie - when she's not at the hotel.

Am especially glad to learn about the Leather Red Chairs - which are nice with soft back and seats - and so high powered - 8 of them -

Edna is enjoying the Baltimore Rock Show - Mother can worry while she's away - and I'm still good at taking my ease -

I do nothing better than that and I am really a decadent fatty bum - going to seed fast -

Over