

Company F – Salem, Virginia

Eileen Bolger has graciously supplied the following article.

Times Register – September 30, 1915

Editor's note - The following interesting history of Salem men composing Co. F. Second Reg., Va. Reserves, written by the Rev. Calvin S. Blackwell, D. D. LL.D. distinguished Baptist preacher of Norfolk and a native of Roanoke County.

There were eighty-one in the Company when we were called out and organized in Salem, March 12, 1864. Five of these names I cannot recall. The late Pleasant Mills, keeper of the Cemetery at Roanoke, assisted me very greatly in connecting the roll, he having remained in the county, kept up with the men while I have been away for forty-two years.

At one time I could call the roll in the dark from memory, as well as from the roll book. But forty-two years are apt to dim the memory somewhat. This is the best I can do. The late Col. Guy of Richmond showed me a complete roll some twenty years ago. But since his death I have been unable to get any information from persons having his effects in charge.

March 22, 1864, the law calling out the last reserves of the youth, sixteen to eighteen boys and fifty-five to sixty men "the cradle and grave fellows" brought the company together at Salem, Va. The notice and the law being read by an official of the C.S.A. and the following list of names were recorded as present. We were assembled in the five-acre horse lot of Dr. Griffin, south side of the rock road west end of the town. We were given the privilege of electing our own officers. The elected officers, as given below, a happy mixture of old men and boys. The second Lieut. S. Lee, mentioned, had served in the war with Mexico. None of the others had seen service. We were permitted to return to our homes subject to call, which came in a few days, April 2. Federal force was striking for the railroad at Salem or Christiansburg. We were armed and put under the general command of Col. Preston of Montgomery and marched through rain to Hanging Rock and went into camp.

Our Chief duty was to obstruct the road from the north by cutting trees across it and arranging breastworks of logs. Col. Preston being an old militia officer, our drill was after that style. While Col. Preston was nominally in command, Major Sweeney, a gallant Confederate officer on wounded furlough and resting at Salem took actual command of the defense. He inspired the boys with enthusiasm and the led men with confidence. On the second day of the defense a dashing stripling dressed in full uniform of a V.M.I. cadet rode into camp. It was Wingfield (Rough) Griffin. The call of the camp was too much for him in the quiet of the schoolroom when his native town was in danger. He took "French" leave of the "West Point of the South" and sought the field of action, remembering how only the year before Salem had been raided by the Federals, one of his neighbors, Capt. Chapman was killed his family taunted, and the property of the citizens destroyed. He being mounted with a few others was sent forward into Craig to feel for the enemy, and not finding any blue coats returned. Being fresh from the drill grounds of the V.M.I. Cadet Griffin became a very important personage in the company, as drillmaster at the campus of instruction at Lynchburg, Richmond, South Anna and elsewhere. He was unusually popular among the old and young and did much to hammer them into military shape. His heart was in the Calvary service where he served with distinction until the surrender. The enemy not appearing, we were ordered to Lynchburg and put into camp of instruction. May 1st the company was ordered to Richmond, where at Camp Lee we were again put under instruction and organized into the Second Regiment Va. Reserves. On May 10th we were put forward a few miles towards Yellow Tavern but did not get into the fight. On June 2nd the Regiment marched to the Chickahominy Bridge on the York River Railroad and placed to the extreme right of Lee's army during the second battle of Cold Harbor. General J. L. Kemper was in command of the reserves. Col. John Guy and Major Cook in command of the Second Regiment. The Federals were on the north side of the river and put us under a heavy shellfire, our first experience of the kind. After the battle of Cold Harbor Lee's whole army started on its march southward and toward the James and Petersburg. Our company lay in the pines by road along which passed whole of Lee's army of veterans. It was an inspiring sight for our boys all the days of June 12th, and 13th, 1864, the steady tramp was heard and their battle torn banners were seen by us. On June 15th we were taken to Richmond and assigned to duty on Belle Isle to guard Federal prisoners, a week later we were assigned to south Anna bridge and fortified and guarded the bridge against a second attack which was threatened. July 20th we were moved near to Deep Bottom. Hancock's Corps of Federals were

making a movement north of the James with Butler as a feint preparatory to exploding the Crater mine near Petersburg, which took place on July 30th. Though north of the James, the shock was heard and felt by us. August 16th Hancock was again in front of us at Deep Bottom. We remained in camp at Signal Hill just above the Dutch Gap where Butler was cutting the Gap day and night while our battery at the Howlett House kept up a constant fire. But unable to reach the battery would take revenge by having the guns in gunboats shell us on the north side. Not until September 28th did this get lively. Warran's corps made an attack on Fort Harrison near Chaf Farm. We were not in the fort but in a line of works northeast. The fort was taken in the morning; our line was fiercely assaulted in the afternoon and the enemy repulsed with great slaughter. The next day September 30th, Gen. Lee himself came to the north side to direct a vain effort to retake Fort Harrison. A terrific artillery fire was opened from the gunboats, Drury's Bluff and Chafin's Farm. We were laying in the ditches and behind us a battery of six guns. It was drizzling rain. At every discharge of the guns great volumes of powder smoke would pour out on us, so that by three o'clock every man was as black as powder. Just then Gen. Lee quietly remarked, "Lie down again boys, some of you might get hurt." Just then a shell exploded near by and killed several of gunners in the artillery and we got back in the ditch again. Through the fall and winter of 1864-65 we remained in the works at Chafin's Farm. We were a part of that attenuated line forty miles long held by Lee's 37,000 men and boys, half clothed, half fed and poorly equipped. February 2nd we were brought to Richmond. The veterans regiments were most reduced to no much over a hundred fighting men and the Reserves were well seasoned and so they were broken up and given the privilege of uniting with such regiments as they might choose. Quite a body of Company F was united with Company E. 36th Va. Regiment and sent on a march to Lynchburg to protect it against Sheridan. Thence to the Trans-Alleghany River and back to Christiansburg, when Lee surrendered and Echol's army of 4,000 disbanded. After our first call to Hanging Rock and before we went east to the real seat of war quite a number of old men secured exemptions from one cause or another. So they were not with after we left Roanoke County.

Following is the complete roll of officers and men of the company:

J. C. Miller, Captain
 G. Frank Beard, 1st Lieut.
 Samuel Lee, 2nd Lieut.
 John Steele, 3rd Lieut.
 Calvin S. Blackwell, 1st Searg.
 Charles Stevens, 2nd Searg.
 Charles Brady, 3rd Searg.
 Thomas H. Kefauver, 4th Searg.
 Addison H. Whitesell, 1st Corp.
 Gus Beamer, 2nd Corp.
 Jacob Smeltzer, 3rd Corp.
 Armstead Neal, 4th Corp.
 Third Lieut. Steele left the company June 21st
 1864.
 J. A. Lavinder became 3rd Lieut.
 Capt. J. C Miller resigned in October 1864
 G. Frank Beard became Capt.

Privates:

Theomas Arthur
 J. Polk Baldwin
 Christian Barnheart
 J. O. Bandy
 Mat Bandy
 Louis Blankenship
 Jas. Bonsack
 Andy Bryant
 Philip Brown
 William Campbell
 Charles Coffman
 J. C. Cox
 Polk Craft

Levi Crickenbarger
 George Cunningham
 Martin Delany
 Henry Edmundson
 Christian Eller
 Samuel Ferguson
 James Ferguson
 Randolph Ferguson
 Emory G. Frantz
 Wingfield Griffin
 George Grubb
 Jas Harris
 Austin Hardy
 George Harmon
 Samuel Hays
 Samuel Jordon
 Benjamin Keaky
 Jacob Kesler
 T. A. Kesler
 J. A. Kesler
 Martin Kittinger
 J. A. Lamb
 Andrew Lamb
 J. A. Luvinder
 John Lemon
 Thomas Lemon
 J. Ledbetter
 William Looney
 Pleasant W. Mills
 Henry Minick
 Charles Miller
 Jas. Mosely

Nininger
Joseph Offlighter
Alexander C. Owens
John or David Owens
Joseph Owens
Abner Parrish
Smith Petty
William Roberts
Jas. Ribinson
John Rout
William Roberts, Jr.
LeRoy Stanback
Laban Waldron
[Noah F. Wertz](#)
[Kyle Wertz](#)
Ed Worley
Henry Worley
Henry Worley
David Worley
Lewis Zirkle