

## CAPTORS OF LEE'S LAST RATIONS.

### THE SECOND NEW-YORK CAVALRY GIVEN THE CHIEF CREDIT FOR THE FEAT.

To the Editor of the New-York Times :

In Gen. Sheridan's "Recollections of the Last Days of the Rebellion," published in the *North American Review* for July, he describes the capture of Lee's last rations, loaded upon four trains of cars, at Appomattox station, and gives the credit for this exploit to "two of Custer's regiments." A service so important and daring, in the very face of the enemy, whose skirmish line at the time was within short firing distance of those trains, ought to be credited to the actual participators and not vaguely to any "two regiments" of Custer's incomparable division, which, during the period of his command of it, "captured every piece of artillery that was pointed toward it."

Allow me, therefore, to state that it was the Second New-York Cavalry, Col. A. M. Randol commanding, of the First Brigade, Custer's division, which, after a run of four or five miles, reached those trains, drove off the armed guards, pulled the engineers from the locomotives, and replaced them with men of their own regiment who had been in the railway service before their enlistment. All this was accomplished and the trains run toward Richmond before even the whole regiment succeeded in reaching this indescribable scene. As fast as the regiment could be got together company after company was thrown upon the skirmish line to cover the trains and prevent the skirmishers of a brigade of Confederate troops from coming in upon the boys who were manning the trains. The fighting became heavy against both infantry and artillery before the next regiment in the column, the Third New-Jersey Cavalry, came on the ground at a gallop, and went into action on the right of the Second New-York, whose line was already overlapped by the enemy. These two regiments confronted and held in check a vastly larger force until nearly dark before the head of the main body of Custer's division came up, and as regiment after regiment went into action they found the enemy's line still growing stronger and stronger, until Devins's division reached the field and still further prolonged the right of the cavalry line. It was not until about midnight that Custer's division succeeded in routing the enemy and capturing the battery, which, from the first attack, was in easy range of the station where the trains were captured.

With no desire to disparage any other regiment, it may be said that the Second New-York Cavalry (early in the war known as Kilpatrick's Harris Light Cavalry) participated in more skirmishes and battles than any other regiment in the Union Army. The regiment was organized by Col. J. Mansfield Davies in August, 1861. It was successfully commanded by Col. J. M. Davies, Judson Kilpatrick, Henry E. Davies, Otto Harhaus, Walter Clarke Hull, and Alanson M. Randal. The regiment was reorganized in the Fall of 1864, having been reduced to one battalion at the muster-out of the original three years' men who had not previously re-enlisted. Two or three months later its ranks were again filled by the addition of two companies made up from returned prisoners of war and various old members gathered in again, and by six companies of entirely fresh men, mainly recruited in Onondaga and adjoining counties by Lieut.-Col. M. B. Birdsaye, whose popularity in that section was very great. It was the universal opinion that these new companies were composed of the finest men enlisted at that late period of the war. Indeed, most of them had grown to the age of military service since the war had begun. Certainly the reputation of the regiment did not suffer by this infusion, for it continued to be a favorite with superior officers, and was constantly called upon for perilous duties. Throughout its four years' service it was engaged in over 100 encounters with the enemy, and there were, from first to last, about 3,000 enlistments on its muster rolls. Any General might be proud to boast of the signal exploits of such a regiment without injustice to any other organization under his command.

HARRIS LIGHT CAVALRY.

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