

Father was detailed as color sergeant Wednesday, April 27, 1864, and served as such just two weeks and one day, when wounded at Spottsylvania on Thursday, May 12 following. He bore the State color. The other color sergeant, Eddie Parker, was killed.

The 17th Maine, in the Third Division of Hancock's Corps, was fighting at the "Bloody Angle," the salient, where there was a cross fire from the rebel batteries. Father's description of his experience, which he did not give in his diary, was as follows:

He said that a little handful of men advanced to a point beyond the main body, from which they were compelled to fall back. "Major Buff asked me to plant my color where he could get the men to rally and form a line. I did so, but the men did not rally. I took my color and fell back. In a moment a bullet entered my thigh. "I'm wounded, take that color," I exclaimed, and fell. In a few moments the rebels passed over me. When they were driven back a firing continued over me."

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Chaplain Loring shortly after wrote about
father as follows:

"One other has been commissioned, one
of the brave men, one of the noble Christian men,
that elevate the character of our ranks. A man who
wielded wounded at Spotsylvania in that terrific
and successful charge which made our colors
part in the battle famous, bore our State colors,
and bore them true to our State motto, 'I Brav.'
Not an inch did he give way, never once did he
quail. In the thickest of the fight his face wore
a bright smile, and his cheerful voice rung out
clear and full, encouraging those about him. At
last he fell wounded, wounded again after he
fell. His name is a name of honor, Color
Sergeant, now Lieutenant, Edwin Emery of Sanford."

It appears that when planting his color he
moved out ahead of the line towards the enemy.
In February, 1861, Captain George W. Verrill of
Portland, an officer in the 17th Maine, wrote father:
"I now fully understand how the color guard
got separated, and how you with a small squad
rushed on to capture a whole brigade of desperate
rebs with General Lee at their head, and two
batteries or so of artillery drawn across that bloody
angle. I confess that I myself was less daring

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than you, and prudently hugged those less
exposed traverses. You, with your squad, I am
persuaded, advanced further into the interior of
rebellion that day than any others. You make
me proud of you.

Captain Verrill's Claim.

In father's article on his recollections of the Battle of the Wilderness, he may have been mistaken as to the 17th Maine giving way in terror (maybe) and fleeing before the rebels, although in his diary he wrote: "Our regiment, in command of Captain Perry (Colonel West wounded this forenoon) broke and ran. A few rallied around the colors, and we drove the Johnnies from the line of breast works they had taken."

Captain George W. Verrill, an officer in the 17th Maine, in a letter to father in June, 1894, explained (or claimed) the seeming rout was really due to a confusion of orders. Verrill claims that on the afternoon of May 6, ¹⁸⁶² the regiment was lying on the south side of the plank road, "an aide ~~was~~ rode up from our left on the gallop, and sang out to our men lying down in rear of the works, '17th Maine, by the left flank double quick.' Capt. Perry at once gave the order, '17th Maine, left face.' In the noise the order was not heard by all, but I passed it along the line. The aide interfered and repeated his order, and the left portion of the regiment began to move towards the left, while the right was still facing the front. At this juncture Capt. Perry, at about the center of the regiment gave the order, '17th Maine, by the left flank.' The effect was to cause the left of the regiment to fall to the rear, and the

(over)

right of the regiment to face to the left; a part moving forward the rear in line of battle, and the rest moving to the left by the flank. I remember an officer, I think a lieutenant of the color company, saying, "that isn't the way we should go," and adding, "Come on boys," he moved to the front with a squad of men." [This confirms father's diary.]

Captain Verrill says the regiment quickly righted itself, both sections joining together and facing the front. Then Captain Perry seeing a column of troops marching on the plant road concluded this was the movement he was expected to take part in, and joined the march. Not long after a general officer met the regiment, saying there was a mistake, and he advised Perry to go back to the point originally occupied by him.

Captain Verrill also states that Captain Perry was not disciplined, and that next day General Birney, the division commander, sent one Major Moore to command the 17th Maine, with a message that he had so high a regard for the 17th that he detailed the best field officer he had in the division to command it.

Captain Verrill was rather vexed by the extract from father's diary, and so was Major William H. Green of the 17th, who confirmed Verrill's recollection.

Father may not have heard the aide's order, "by the left flank double-quick," and on seeing the men double-quick to the rear, as described by Verrill, naturally supposed it was a terror-stricken rout. I wish he had asked his superiors to Verrill's letters.

This may have been
arrived to replace
Perry by an officer
of his own rank.