



PATRIOTIC RECOLLECTIONS



Just a Little Bit of History:

Interview with Jason DeFoe, Company H, 5th West Virginia Volunteers USA^(a)

Mr. DeFoe, the brave boys all over the country are giving us their Narrow Escapes, making quite fascinating reading for the REGISTER. We have let you escape long enough. You are my prisoner now. So please consider yourself under guard for about an hour, while you narrate one of your narrowest escapes. Then, if I can capture someone else, I will exchange you for him.

I don't know whether I have any Narrow Escapes', but as it is a soldier's duty to obey, I will give you one. I thought at the time I was in a very narrow place, and as I got out I suppose you can call it a Narrow Escape. I was a member of Company H, 5th West Virginia Volunteers under Capt. Enochs. We were positioned at Gauley Ridge. Ten or twelve of us started on a general scouting expedition to Summerville, about thirty miles or so from our camp. We got to Summerville all right, and coming back ten or fifteen miles o the right of the place, we came across some more of our boys who were also scouting. It was shortly after meeting these boys that the fun began. These boys hadn't had their breakfast when we met them. We had, and were looking out for dinner. Sergeant Fuller who now runs a sawmill in Kentucky, (if you run across him attack him for a 'arrow Escape'; he'll give you some that will make your eye-balls tingle). Fuller told me to go to the house of a rebel for our dinner and he would follow with more men. While he was gathering up his men, a lady told him the rebels intended to cut us off at this house. We were at the house waiting for our dinner or we thought. I was talking to a girl who was making soap in the yard. The other boys were seated close by. The first intimation we had of rebels was a loud cry of "Surrender!" We looked to see who wanted us but could see no one. Close by was a strip of weeds. We heard the cry "Surrender!" three times before we saw anyone. If they hadn't hollered so soon, they would have captured us all, but as it was it put us on our guard. Just then about forty rebels came out of the weeds dressed in our uniform. There was a company of home guards in that section, and at first we thought they were the ones, but a second look told us we wanted to save our "bacon"... Reporter, What bacon? Don't you know what bacon is?" If you had been there you would have known. I didn't have time just to sit and talk anymore to the soap girl, but left very abruptly. We didn't even leave her a lock of our hair. She may have found several locks afterward. I never went back to see. Well, I said we left rather unceremoniously. Close by the house was a meadow, and we had to cross that with our bacon. It was about three hundred yards across. I thought it was about three thousand. They were shooting uncomfortably close to us. Their bullets were tearing up the ground all around us but they didn't hit us. Just as I was at the fence getting over...I didn't stop to tear it down... a bullet struck the top rail. I used to jump as a boy and was considered an expert, but my longest jump when a boy sank into insignificance

when compared with that leap from the fence. I hadn't had time to measure it. Just outside the meadow was the timber. After reaching that, one of the boys Jno. Duncan, lay down behind a log. I stopped and asked him if he was hurt. He said "No; don't run any further or you'll get shot," I said, " Get out of that and come on if you stop there, they'll get you for sure." I ran on and left him. They got him and three others, Tom Osborn, Jack DeBard and Sam Dean. All died in prison. The rest of us reached camp the next day.

(a) Having been a camp Patriotic Instructor, I know how hard it is to find interesting topics for camp meetings. Over the past year I have compiled 200 stories/bios of Civil War Veterans from Ohio. The first series is from the 1886 Ironton, Ohio REGISTER and is re-printed with the permission of Martha Kounse and Sharon M. Kouns, webowners of lawrencecountyohio.com website. The REGISTER produced 91 articles under the heading of Narrow Escapes, (one a week for 91 weeks) by interviewing Civil War Veterans from their area. This article appeared February 27, 1887.

Submitted by:

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Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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