



THE CALIFORNIA REGIMENT

Diary of the action at Acton (2008)

71st Pennsylvania, Company B
Private Brian Ruskauff

Friday evening, the 6th of June.

I arrived late to camp that night, though to my surprise and delight it was to the most part, already established. I arrived with the 2nd Lieutenant as well as a few other Privates and unloaded the gear. After getting reacquainted with the current watchman, I went and passed out happily in my tent.

Saturday morning, the 7th of June.

I woke up this morning squinting through the open tent flap and groaning as I got rose. I then prepared for the delicious meal that I knew would accompany dawn. My wait was rewarded and soon afterwards when my stomach was full, First call was sounded. I quickly strapped on my leathers, picked up my rifle, and got in line. Too early to fight...

As we marched into battle I noticed several new faces among us. I hoped I wouldn't have to march next to any of them. I'm still a new face but you just don't know how the new guys will do the first time. Time for them to see the elephant.

The battle did not go well for me. The nipple on my rifle was getting clogged with residue, so I had to painstakingly remove the cap. Unfortunately I was hit about a third into the battle. I hear we lost horribly and were driven back into the tree lines.

Saturday afternoon, the 7th of June.

This afternoon we were woken early from our rest and told to rally for battle. It turns out I only got a bit of shrapnel and was able to fight on. As we lined up, I had noticed that our number had increased. We walked with confidence into battle, sure that this one was ours to win.

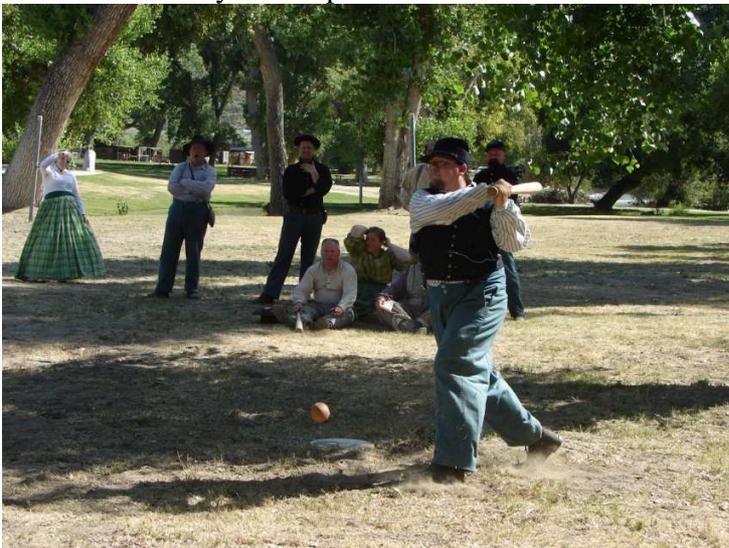
We advanced quickly to the enemy's battle line. Unfortunately for us, a cannon was waiting. Half of our company got blown away as we retreated to a safer position. Despite our losses, we held our ground and killed many rebels that day. We walked into camp tired, but satisfied.



Saturday evening, the 7th of June.

A temporary cease fire was called. Unexpectedly, a message came from the Confederate base. They had challenged us to a game of baseball. All too pleased to crush them again after the victories we had won today in battle, we strutted over to the field ready to win. Wrong. We got crushed worse than peanuts in peanut butter. I can't remember the exact score but I do know they had more than twenty points; we had less than ten.

That night dinner was fantastic as always, as our cook is the best I know of. With full stomachs me and two of my fellow privates retired to our tents and soon our snores shook the earth.



Sunday morning, the 8th of June.

I woke to the smell of biscuits and gravy. I could tell it was going to be a good day...

After breakfast we loaded our ammo boxes and cap pouches and prepared for battle. Word was that the cease fire was over and we would once again be marching into battle. We kept the

pressure on them and fought steadily forward even while sustaining great losses. We took out a cannon and captured many rebels. Unfortunately that was the end of my good day. I was shot by a stray rebel and he was taken care of. Unfortunately the damage was done. As I limped into the camp, the medic gave me a mischievous grin as he twiddled his scalpel between his fingers. I shuddered and made my way towards him...

Sunday afternoon, the 8th of June.

The one good thing about going to the medic is the free “painkiller”. He let me go and I reminisced about what I had done to deserve getting shot two days in a row. No matter. I felt ok as I only got grazed so I made my way over to the horseshoe pit. We had scheduled a little unofficial game with the confederates hoping to get even for the previous day’s baseball game. We managed to beat them, the reason unknown to all of us as they had all experienced players, and none of us had really played before. We shook hands and parted.

First call was sounded and strapped up and moved out. Our numbers now were not as great as the day before in either battle. We pushed the enemy line hard but they outnumbered us and pushed back. Once again we were in the tree line firing in skirmish formation. Once we got the word the battle was lost we surrendered.



We managed to escape later on and joined up with the battalion as it was leaving to reorganize and replenish our numbers. I hope I’ll always be able to fight along these brave men that I have shared many a good time with in the 71st.

End of report.
Private Ruskauff
71st Penn. Company B