

In 1901 Sergeant T. C. Davis, also of Company G wrote in detail about the engagements of the 40th Regiment of Artillery. Here is an excerpt of the unit history as it pertains to Frank.

The day after mustering into 3rd Company G on July 12, 1863, Company G was ordered to Bald Head (Smith's Island), and was subject to severe shelling from the Union fleet, all day Sunday was spent trying to recapture the Steamer Kate, a blockade runner that had run ashore on the beach, on the backside of the island with the aid of a detachment of men from Company E from Fort Caswell and also with Company B from Fort Fisher. Their efforts were aided and Frank was set charged with a Whitworth Breach Loading Rifle/Canon. The men were able to drive away the enemy and save a portion of the cargo from the Kate.

There were a number of blockade fleets on both sides of the island firing relentlessly and severely. The units on the west side suffering the most. Their gun carriage and wheels were shot away with many men wounded. Company G rescued the blockade-running steamer Pungo and a portion of her cargo from capture after she had been run ashore on Bald Head beach.

On September 4, 1863, Confederate President Jefferson Davis visited the command in knowing all the detached heavy artillery companies on the Cape Fear River and in the vicinity of Wilmington were then reorganized into the 40th Regiment of Artillery. The unit was then relocated the newly formed 40th, now of 1200 men to Bald Head (Smith's Island) where the unit was then increased to 1,400.

Between September 4, 1863 and March 6, 1864 the commencement of construction of the new Fort Holmes was completed with 12 guns opposite Fort Caswell, along with a 6 gun battery on the creek, in view of the lighthouse. In this effort, the two positions were intersected by clearing two new roads

through the island, with strong breastworks and redoubts to provide better mobility for the Whitworth and Parrot Rifles that were being used to protect blockade runners while attempting to reach port. The Whitworth had an immense range and accuracy.

On March 1, 1864 the regiment was at Fort Holmes with a small detail at Smithville and Lieutenant Gushing, with his boat's crew from the confederate fleet, made a raid at Smithville, landing at the salt works wharf about 1:00am. They managed to capture a negro pilot there. Lt. Gushing then made his way to Brigadier-General Hebert's quarters in Wilmington, where his boat crew captured Captain Kelly, of the General's staff and made their escape. It was at this point that the boats kept between Bald Head Island and Fort Caswell established a picket with rocket signals used to expose any movements of the enemy. A picket station was established on the low and narrow flat beach at the head of Buzzard Bay, or present day (1901) Corn Cake Inlet. This area was often used by negroes and other deserters where they hauled boats over the beach, preparing and launching them to the sea in the cover of night, escaping to the Union fleet, just offshore.

On 6 March, 1864, with the blockade steamer Peterhoff laying back on the beach, east of the cape, the unit fired six shots with expected result. The Peterhoff ran out to another blockade ship to offload her supplies and sank before completing the offload. On, or about the 8th of March, a heavy northeast wind and heavy seas broke the Peterhoff apart and she washed up on the beach and her strewn debris lay up and down the beach. The unit gathered up many valuables necessary for their survival and pleasure.

Later during the night of the 8th, a small-sized steamer ran aground under the guns of Fort Holmes. The tide waning, she could not get off the bar before day-break. To prevent her capture, the crew set her ablaze and made their escape to

another ship that was nearby. The following day the unit retrieved two cannons from her.

In July 1864, Governor Vance, a candidate for re-election against W. W. Holden visited the command. The regiment went on review, in honor of the great "War Governor." The election was held in August, following the result of which Z. B. Vance received almost the entire vote of the regiment; that was this writer's first opportunity to vote.

On 29 October, 1864, Company A, Captain A. W. Ezzell, was ordered to Fort Anderson about ten miles above Smithville up the Cape Fear river.

By 24 November, 1864, Company B, Captain Tripp, Company C, Captain Legget, Company D, Captain Lane Company G, Captain Buchan Company I, Captain Whitehurst under the command of Major Holland, with five companies of the 36th Regiment under the command of Major Stevenson were ordered to Georgia in an effort to reinforce Lieutenant-General W. J. Hardee who was then falling back from General Sherman's Army in Atlanta, Georgia.

On 27 November 1864, upon reaching Augusta, Georgia, the unit went forward in the direction of Waynesboro and about midnight received a citizen of Waynesboro at their picket. The unit was advised that the enemy, under the command of General Sherman, had demolished the railroad between Augusta and Millen, cutting us off from General Hardee's command.

On 29 November 1864 , the unit returned to Augusta and took the train for Savannah, reaching Charleston, South Carolina on the 29th. The unit found the city of Charleston under constant bombardment from the Union batteries on Morris Island. Those encountered in Charleston told the unit that this relentless activity had been going on for more than 500 days, nearly destroying all of Charleston.

On 30 November 1864 we arrived at Coosahatchie, South Carolina where we were ordered to leave knapsacks and make a forced march to reinforce General Gustavus W. Smith at Honey Hill, near Grahamville, South Carolina. This is where General Foster had concentrated a large force of negro troops from Hilton Head to destroy the railroad and cut off reinforcements from General Hardee, now falling back towards Savannah, Georgia.

Just before the unit had moved far ahead, they were ordered back as the enemy had been defeated and were falling back to the Tullafuiney River, with heavy loss of both wounded and KIA.

In anticipation of a move against the railroad at Coosahatchie bridge and under cover of their gunboats, the 40th sent out a picket down the river banks and with no movements of an advance of the enemy, returned to the corps of artillery.

2 December 1864 the 40th arrived to Savannah, Georgia and boarded the Georgia Central Railroad for 50 miles to Rocky Ford, Georgia where they were joined by General Hardee's corps. General Hardee's corps was composed largely of senior and junior reserves.

Colonel Washington M. Hardy, of the Sixtieth North Carolina, was assigned to the command of the regiment and provided rear guard. Through the negligence of Wheeler's Cavalry, which were deployed as scouts, the 40th was nearly cut off and vulnerable to capture if not for Major Young's 10th North Carolina Battalion. The 10th arrived just as a skirmish with the enemy broke out and drove them back with some loss on both sides.

At this point General Sherman's army numbered about 80,000 men of the great Northwest. Sergeant T. C. Davis writes: "Their ancestors, for the large part, were of the emigrants from North Carolina and Virginia. He had a fine command, which lay between the Savannah and Ogeechee rivers, which effectually

protected his flanks from any movements that we could make to flank him. We skirmished with his advanced picket every day, but would have to fall back as soon as his main army would push forward its flanks in order to surround us. At the junction of the Charleston railroad about ten miles from Savannah, the skirmish became a general engagement, which lasted for some time, with some loss on both sides. “

From 8 December 1864 to 20 December 1864 the unit fell back, within a line of works, about five miles above Savannah, extending to the Ogeechee River. The unit strengthened these works by filling up culverts, flooding the water in their front, running telegraph wire fastening it to stumps and trees along side the palisades and Cheveaux de-frise in front of the regiment to prevent an assault on the works. In this position, the unit kept up a fire from their artillery along with sharpshooters firing from the entrenchments every day with picketing every night.

On the 20th until around midnight, with all supplies and stores exhausted, the 40th evacuated the works and fell back to the Hardeeville river crossing, where they crossed on a pontoon bridge around 4:00am. After establishing a picket to serve as rear guard and burning the government warehouse containing at least 500 bales of cotton. The picket returned, burning the pontoon bridge and setting all else adrift as they passed back across the river to rejoin their command in Hardeeville.

On Christmas Day 1864, the 40th was ordered to Pocotaligo, South Carolina and moved off at early dawn marching all day in a cold, drenching rain. The 40th bivouacked that night at Grahamville. The following day, the 40th resumed at 0500, marching all day through swamps and mud. As the enemy was shelling the Coosahatchie bridge, 40th crossed the river at Tullafuiney bridge, finally arriving at Pocotaligo at dusk.

Boarding the train, headed for Charleston, they arrived the following day and were held as reinforcements in the hopes that the enemy, who had withdrawn from the first attack on Fort Fisher would now be compelled to attack the White Point battery at the junction of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. This fortification had two large Blakely Rifles, which carried 600 pound rifle shot. These guns were brought in at Wilmington on the Sumter, a blockade runner and shipped to Charleston by railroad. After remaining in Charleston for a few days and learning the enemy had returned to Fortress Monroe, the 40th was ordered to return to Wilmington on 30 December 1864.

On New Year's Day 1865, arriving in Wilmington about 10:00pm, the 40th ferried in a snow storm and bivouacked at Camp Lamb. The following day, the 36th and 40th were transported by steamer down the Cape Fear river with the five companies of the Thirty-sixth Regiment where they were discharged at Fort Fisher and the Fortieth at Fort Holmes. "Permit me to say, right here, that I realized during that Southern campaign what I always believed, that the great popular heart was not then, and never had been, in the war. It was a revolution, of the politicians, not the people; and was fought at first by the natural enthusiasm of young men, and kept going by the bitterness of feeling produced by the cruelties and brutalities of the enemy. During the Southern campaign, the companies of the Fortieth Regiment that remained at their respective commands, performed their duties as usual.

At the first attack on Fort Fisher, and during the bombardment on the 24th and 25th of December, 1864, Companies E and K, of this regiment, reinforced that command, after which the enemy's land force re-embarked, and withdrew, leaving Fort Fisher slightly injured."

The 2nd Battle of Fort Fisher from 11 January 1865, through 15 January 1865 saw

Lieutenant-Colonel George Tait resign his commission on 11 January, 1865, to take a commission as Colonel of the Sixty-ninth North Carolina Regiment. Colonel Tait remained detached from the Regiment, where he embarked on the steamer Pettaway.

The 40th arrived at Confederate Point about dark and under fire from the Union fleet waded waist deep in water to reach the beach taking their positions at the guns and palisades on the land face of the fort. They fired in short intervals until daylight. On 12 January 1865, the Union fleet formed a firing line and opened fire on the fort for the entire day. That night, the 40th formed a picket line on the beach.

13 January 1865, the 40th having exchanged fire with the enemy, non-stop until 4:00am, fell back to the interior of the fort when a most furious enfilading fire of shot and shell from the Union fleet descended upon them. The Union fleet steadily increased their barrages, with steady increase in frequency and intensity until the morning of the 15th.

On 15 January 1865 at, or about 8:00am on Sunday morning, the entire Union fleet began a coordinated and relentless barrage of unprecedented magnitude upon Fort Fisher. "From about 11:00am until 3:00pm, the booming of cannon and bursting of shells was like the roar of heavy peals of thunder. All the guns on the land face of the fort were disabled, but two, and the palisades were demolished, which left our garrison, of about 1,500 men, almost helpless when the assault was made upon the fort. This occurred about 3 o'clock Sunday evening on the right and left, both at the same time. We were on the right where the marines and sailors, 2,000 strong, charged, who were repulsed with heavy loss, after which, we were ordered to the left to drive back the enemy, who had made lodgment on the fort. We rushed in that direction, led by General Whiting, who commanded the troops in person, and drove the enemy from the traverse and

parapet in front and recaptured one gun chamber with great loss, and on the parapet and traverse of the next gun chamber, the contestants were firing into each other's faces, and in some cases clubbing one another with their guns, being too near to load and fire. It was in this charge that General Whiting was wounded. The fight continued after the enemy entered the fort about 10 :00pm, when the last traverse was taken and firing ceased. Thus ended the greatest bombardment ever known in modern warfare. It was the largest hand-to-hand fight during our civil war, and the struggle inside the fort was unsurpassed in stubbornness. Our casualties were not known, as the roll was never again called.

Captain Buchan, of Company G, was seriously wounded and captured at Battery Buchanan, at the point of beach, and was carried to Point Lookout, thence to Johnson's Island, Ohio, where he remained a prisoner until the close of the war.

Major-General W. H. C. Whiting was mortally wounded, fell into the hands of the enemy and died soon afterwards in prison on Governor's Island, New York.

Colonel Lamb, of the 36th Regiment was also wounded and captured. The enemy's killed and wounded lay thick upon the battlefield, especially in the front of the 40th Regiment, which was in the hardest of the fight. Surely the valor displayed by North Carolinians in that effort to hold the last gateway of the South against such overwhelming numbers, both on land and sea, is glory enough to perpetuate their names in the annals of this State for all Time.

After the battle was over, seeing so many of our comrades alive and able for duty, was a cause of deep gratitude to Almighty God. The next morning, the 16th, the magazine in the fort exploded and killed about two hundred of the enemy, which was a scene of inexpressible horror. That evening, we were put on board the

Steamships De Mollay and General Lyon, and carried to Northern prisons, the sick and wounded to Point Lookout, and those able for duty to New York City, thence transported by railroad to Elmira, New York, where they remained until after the war, when they were paroled and sent home. The officers were carried to Governor's Island, New York, and released on parole there. During our stay in prison, many of our men died from starvation and exposure.”