

Lee was slow in realizing that Grant was across the James but he did finally move. In the meantime, the Legion was marched across the Chickahominy at McClellan's Bridge, marched by Seven Pines and over to the Charlestown Road, moved on down that, turned off at Williams and then camped near the battlefield of Frazier's Farm.(11)

Grant was across the James by June 13 but it was on the 17th before Lee ordered Kershaw's Division with the Legion, now at River Station, to move to the south side by forced marching which, by sunrise, had turned almost into a run. They arrived at Petersburg at sunrise the next day after marching all night and took a position on the extreme right of the thin Rebel line. The Federals attacked at around 4:00 PM and furiously assaulted the Southern line until nightfall. Kershaw's and Field's Divisions plus approximately 10,000 troops, already in the defensive line, held off the entire Federal army which was several times their number. Wofford's Brigade, with the Legion, held a portion of the line near the "River House".(12) By noon the next day, Lee had his entire army in the defense around Petersburg and the long siege began which would continue through the remainder of the summer and through a terrible winter of unequalled hardships into April of next year when Lee would be forced to abandon the city.

The Legion would remain in the Petersburg trenches for the next two weeks with almost constant shelling by the enemy's artillery and constant sniper fire. "Don't show your head above the works!" Both sides were constantly strengthening their lines. After the two weeks in the trenches, the Legion and Company B were moved to some vacant lots in the city itself to be held in reserve, ready to go to any threatened point and to get some well-earned rest.

On the 13th of July, Kershaw's Division was moved back to the north side of the James as the Yankees were making a move toward Richmond on that bank of the river. They crossed, after an all-night march, on a pontoon bridge located near Chaffin's Bluff and took up a position on a high ridge running out from the river at Fort Harrison. They had occupied the same position in June of 1862.

In the front was a swamp called "Deep Bottom" and beyond this swamp the enemy had taken positions, being supported by their gunboats on the river. Kershaw was asked to take this enemy position and he decided on a night charge to accomplish the assignment. His old brigade was to make the attack supported by the other brigades of his division with Wofford's Brigade held in reserve. During the night, his troops were quietly advanced and completely surprised the Union troops who were mostly foreigners who spoke little if any English and who were not eager for a fight but knew well how to run back to their gunboats for protection which they quickly did.

Kershaw's men threw up breastworks opposite the enemy's new position. Around 3:00 PM on the following day, the Federal Navy began a tremendous shelling of the Rebel lines with everything they had including 300 pound shells which the Bowdon men called "Camp Kettles". Trees that were one and one-half feet in diameter were shot down by these shells and they passed through the earthworks "like moles in tunnels." No one could stand this type of shelling for very long and soon the Yankees began advancing their infantry lines. At the same time, they were sending their cavalry, which Grant had sent from the southside during the night, to threaten the Rebel left and rear. To say that Kershaw's men left in a hurry would be an understatement. As Benji Mobley would say, "They left at the double quick." It would have been a stampede except for the swamp slowing them down and which also prevented the foreign-born Yankees from getting too close, which they really didn't want to do. Cobb's Legion was not actively engaged in the attack against the foreigners but was out on the left flank in a supporting position but felt their share of the shell from the gunboats on the following day.

At this time, Wofford's Brigade with the Legion moved down the River Road to near where the New Market Road turns off and formed a line of battle in the road near New Market Hill while receiving the fire of the gunboats which did little damage. On the 28th they moved down near Frazier's Farm and skirmished with the enemy but were not heavily engaged. We have found no casualties in Company B during the Deep Bottom affair. Colonel Hutchins of the 3rd Georgia Sharpshooters was badly wounded from a shot from the

gunboats but would recover and be with his troops the next April at Saylor's Creek where he was captured and sent to prison in Boston Harbor with other captured officers.

The Rebels returned to their old works near Chaffin's Bluff where they stayed until July 31st without being seriously bothered by the enemy.

The summer of '64 had been a very busy one for Bowdon's Company B, Cobb's Georgia Legion. Their ranks were much thinner now than when the campaign began in early May. Wofford's entire Brigade could count no more than 900 men present and available for duty. At one point, earlier in the war, the brigade count was approximately 4,000 men. We do not have the information on how many were left in the Legion or in Company B; however, there were probably no more than 25, if that many, of the Bowdon Volunteers, Company B, available for the next campaign.

They had now been away from Bowdon and home for three long, grueling years.



LT. GENERAL JAMES LONGSTREET

**“OLD PETE” AND HERO
MONUMENT AT GETTYSBURG NBP
PHOTO BY CHRIS E. HEISEY**