

Wednesday July 1 1863

Our regiment was unfortunate in the position assigned it, or rather where it happened to fall, here on this low ground, where nothing could be seen on our immediate left, or in front of the left wing of the regiment.

Our brigade was composed of 4 small regiments, reduced probably after the battle of Chancellorsville to about 1,000 men, and consisting of the 154th New York, 134th New York, 27th Pennsylvania, and 73rd Pennsylvania. From these, 50 men each had been detailed at daybreak of July 1st, to form an observing party, in the nature of a picket force, to march along the left flank of our corps upon its march, to look out for the enemy and prevent surprise. This detail left us not more than 800 men with which we went into action. Of these the 73rd Pennsylvania was held in reserve, back by the railroad, in the outskirts of the village. About 3 o'clock we marched from Cemetery Hill down through the principle street, and out the one running parallel to the one near us, across the open field between, and past the brick house which you see there; and when the rear of the line had crossed this street we were halted and came to a front with the 134th on the right in what was a wheatfield then; the 154th in the center, along where we stand; and the 27th Pennsylvania on the left, out towards the brick house. This higher ground which you see commencing near where we stand, and extending on past the brick house and across the street beyond, while it protected the left of our line, also prevented its firing, except obliquely to the right. Our left ought to have been advanced upon this higher ground where we could observe the whole movement of the enemy, and doubtless would have been, except for a strong post and a rail fence which occupied the same position as this present one. The enemy consisting of Early's whole division came down upon us almost before we had got in line.

I heard cannon and some musketry firing off in front and to our left as we marched out under cover of this high ground, and believed that we joined onto something, so that we would be better protected on our left. Even from the right of my regiment, where I immediately went, as soon as we came to a front and the firing commenced, I could see nothing of how far the enemy's right extended on our left. I relied upon orders for withdrawing the regiment in case we were in danger of being flanked in that direction. We stopped the enemy and were holding them in our front, but their line so far overlapped the 134th on our right that they swung around almost in

their rear, and had such an enfilading fire upon them and our whole line, that that regiment was compelled to give way, and I immediately gave orders for my regiment to fall back. They retreated towards the left. When I reached a position in rear of where the 27th Pennsylvania had formed, I found that they had been withdrawn without my knowledge, and that the enemy had outflanked us to a much greater extent upon our left than on the right; that their line had advanced unopposed down the road and across the open field beyond. The ground directly in rear of the position which we had occupied, was cut up into village lots surrounded by board fences, so that the retreat was greatly impeded in that direction. The men being almost entirely surrounded by the enemy, who outnumbered them more than 5 to 1 and were right in their midst, many of our men were compelled to surrender.

After the battle I was informed that the brigade commander sent an order for the 154th and 134th to retreat at the same time he withdrew the 27th Pennsylvania. This order I did not receive. It was very unfortunate that I did not, as I had confidently relied upon receiving such an order in case there arose unusual danger from the direction in which I could not see.

From Lt. Col. Allen's Speech in New York at Gettysburg