A Sesquicentennial Moment

Aug. 17 – 23, 1862

Hundreds of men in western Virginia left their homes in late August 1862 to join guerrilla fighters in Webster County.

An Aug. 19, 1862, letter from Beverly, Va., that was published in the *Wheeling Intelligencer* said Gov. Francis H. Pierpont's call for additional troops caused "a great commotion amongst the people of West Virginia."

In response to the news, Col. Thomas Maley Harris assembled a cavalry and infantry in Beverly to intercept a well-mounted company of 80 Confederate guerrillas riding toward Webster County.

Two miles outside of Huttonsville in Randolph County, guerrillas ambushed Harris' cavalry as 50 to 60 enemy rifles fired in rapid succession along the front and to the rear of his column.

Though the first seven or eight shots were aimed at the colonel, "not a ball touched his clothing or his person."

His horse, however, was not so fortunate. "When the Colonel dismounted he saw the blood spouting out in a stream as thick as his thumb from a hole made by a minnie ball in the rump."

This sesquicentennial moment is brought to you by the West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Archives and History Section.

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