

Railroad Accident At Ringgold on July 6, 1862

By

Dell Thomasson

I found all this information on a web site called "Civil War Talk" that was posted on January 19, 2019 by a person only identified as "lelliott19." I copied the article, minus all the advertising that went along with it.

Railroad Accident at Ringgold, GA July 6, 1862: 12th Battalion Georgia Light Artillery - killed and wounded



"...This sad accident occasioned the death of five men.....Nineteen are wounded and twenty-four bruised. The fortunate circumstance of having my horses in advance of the cars bearing the men, has saved me the pain of reporting a more terrible tragedy...Of my horses, but seventeen remain living, and of these but three are unhurt."

THE ACCIDENT ON THE STATE ROAD

We publish below a letter from Major Capers related to the serious accident on the State road; and add the hope that a thorough investigation of the circumstance will be had. It would be well for the Legislature to enact a law by which engineers and conductors would be held responsible for accidents resulting in loss of life and limb, and held for trial without delay. It

might have the effect of lessening number and severity of such accidents:

Ringgold, Ga., July 7th, 1862.

James Gardner, Editor Constitutionalist --

My Dear Sir: Yesterday at 3 1/2 o'clock, P.M., the train of cars bearing my command from Atlanta to Chattanooga, came in collision with a heavy train of empty freight cars near this station. This sad accident occasioned the death of five men, four from Capt. Hanvey's company, 'Newnan Artillery,' and one from Capt. Johnson's company, 'Stephens Battery.' Nineteen are wounded and twenty-four bruised. The fortunate circumstance of having my horses in advance of the cars bearing the men, has saved me the pain of reporting a more terrible tragedy. Of my horses, but seventeen remain living, and of these but three are unhurt.

The cause of the collision is yet to be definitely ascertained, but that gross negligence on the part of some official on the road will be developed, I feel perfectly assured.

We left Atlanta following the passenger train on Sunday morning at 4 o'clock. Upon arriving at a station this side of McDonough, the engine of the passenger train was detached for some reason, and our train backed down and coupled to the passenger cars. This threw us behind time an hour and ten minutes, and, I believe, was the principal cause of our misfortune.

I enclose a list of the killed and wounded, which you will please insert in your paper. The command is comfortably bivouacked at this place, and will remain until the road is made passable.

Very respectfully,

Your ob't serv't,

H. D. Capers

Major Commanding 12th Georgia Battalion

LIST OF KILLED AND WOUNDED

Capt. Allen's Company - Oglethorpe Artillery Co. A -

Privates C.W. Battey, L.F. Flemming, W.D. Patton, J.C. Pierson, R.F. Thompkins, slightly wounded.

Two negroes killed, and wounded badly.

Company B - Capt. Hanvey's command Newnan Artillery--

Killed--Privates L.A. Bullard, W.R. Lane, W.V. Martin, and Z. Phillips.

Dangerously wounded-- Lieutenant Beedles [William S. Beadles], Corporal J.N. Goodwin, and Dr. M.H. Davis.

Slightly wounded-- Privates J.C. Attaway, Bearden [Reuben H. Bearden or Thomas P. Bearden], W.G. Orr, Ranney [Richard E. Rainey or W.R. Ramey], and P.L. Ward.

Two negroes mortally wounded.

Company C - Capt. Rudisill commanding Rudisill Artillery.

Private Durden [F. Durden or S.M. Durden] slightly wounded.

Company D - Capt. G.W. Johnson commanding Stephens' Battery

Killed - Private Giles [Calvin Giles or Hugh Giles].

Dangerously Wounded - Thomas Johnson and Benj. Smith.

Slightly Wounded - Privates Braswell [G.A. Braswell], Arnold [R.C. Arnold], Ranney [Richard E. Rainey or W.R. Ramey] and Scudder [S.S. Scudder].

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Very respectfully,
Your ob't serv't,
H. D. CAPERS,

Major Commanding 12th Georgia Battalion.

LIST OF KILLED AND WOUNDED.

Capt. Allen's company—Oglethorpe Artillery. Co. A.—Privates C. W. Battey, L. F. Flemming, W. D. Patton, J. C. Pierson, R. F. Thompkins, slightly wounded. Two negroes killed, and wounded badly.

Company B.—Capt. Hanvey's command—Newnan Artillery.—Killed—Privates L. A. Bullard, W. R. Lane, W. V. Martin, and Z. Phillips.

Dangerously Wounded—Lieutenant Beedles, Corporal J. N. Goodwin, and Dr. M. H. Davis.

Slightly Wounded—Privates J. C. Attaway, Beardin, W. G. Orr, Ranney, and P. L. Ward. Two negroes mortally wounded.

Company C.—Capt. Rudisill commanding Rudiaill Artillery.—Private Durden, slightly wounded.

Company D.—Capt. G. W. Johnson commanding Stephens' Battery.—Killed—Private Giles.

Dangerously Wounded—Thomas Johnson and Benj. Smith.

Slightly Wounded—Privates Braswell, Arnold, Ranney and Scudder.

Sources:

"Troop Train and depot during the Civil War." *The Soldier in our Civil War; a pictorial history of the conflict, 1861-1865, illustrating the valor of the soldier as displayed on the battle-field, from sketches drawn by Forbes, Waud, Taylor, Beard, Becker, Lovie, Schell, Crane and numerous other eye-witnesses to the strife.* Vol. 2. New York: Stanley Bradley Publishing Co., 1893, p. 227.

"The Accident on the State Road." *Macon Tri-Weekly Telegraph*. (Macon, GA.,) July 12, 1862, p. 2, column 6.

Here's the same accident, reported in another newspaper. This article includes more detail about the horrible injuries sustained by men of the 12th Battalion GA Light Artillery. It seems a number of the wounded were scalded - in addition to what must have been injuries sustained in the crash itself. There are two additional names included in this list - Private S. Neusome [S.J. Newsome] and Private King [James A.G. King] The list also references a total of six black men killed/wounded, instead of four as in the previous article. This list includes George, a free man, who was killed but whose last name is not provided.

Railroad Accident!

COLLISION ON THE STATE ROAD!

CASUALTIES IN MAJOR CAPERS' ARTILLERY BATTALION!

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., July 6.—The train bearing my command collided, near Ringgold, with the down train. It pains me to report the death of privates L. A. Ballard, W. K. Lane, M. V. Martin, and Z. Phillips, of Capt. Hanvey's Company, (Newnan Artillery,) Co B, and private H. Giles, of Capt. Johnson's Company, (Stephens' Light Battery, of Wilkes county,) Co. C.

Wounded—Co. A—Oglethorpe Artillery, Capt. Allen—none dangerous—only bruises.

Captain Harvey's company B.—Lieut. Beadles, badly scalded; Dr Davis, badly scalded; Corp'l Goodwin, ankle dislocated and fractured; Privates Attaway, very slightly; R E Rainey, slightly; P L Ward, limb dislocated; three negroes belonging to company B, badly wounded.

Captain Johnson's company C—Privates Braswell and Thomas Johnson, badly wounded and scalded; B F Smith, seriously wounded; and several slightly wounded.

Capt. Rudisill's company C. (Rudisill Light Artillery)—Injured, private S. Neusom, limb dislocated; private King, wounded in hand, and one or two slightly bruised.

The accident was caused by the delay of the passenger train.

In company A, Capt. Allen, the negro George, free, killed; a negro of private Hudson was badly wounded; and a negro of Capt. Johnson's was also badly wounded.

Weekly Constitutionalist. (Augusta, Ga.,) July 16, 1862, p. 7.

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[View attachment 261424](#)

Weekly Constitutionalist. (Augusta, Ga.,) July 16, 1862, p. 7.

From the *Record* (Richmond, Va.)

September 23, 1863

On Sunday, the 13th instant, two trains came in collision on the Georgia State rail road {Western & Atlantic RR} near Marietta, with a most terrible result. Both were special trains -- one having on board the first Tennessee battalion and fiftieth Tennessee regiment -- the other, of fifteen cars, containing only a few sick soldiers. In the dreadful crash, eighteen soldiers were killed and sixty-seven wounded.

From the pension application of Celia A. Smith, widow of Benjamin F. Smith of Company C, 12th Georgia Battalion, Newton County, Georgia, Georgia Virtual Vault:

"He [B. F. Smith] was ... killed by the collision of two trains on his way from Augusta, Ga. to Chattanooga, Tenn. with his command and was scalded so that he died in a few days at Dalton, Ga., near which place the collision occurred."

From the pension application of John B. Goodwyn, another survivor.

Enlisted in Co. A, 1st Georgia Volunteers for 1 year, and then enlisted immediately in Co. A, 12th Ga. Battalion Art. Discharged April 9, 1863. In the state of Tennessee on the 6th day of July, 1862, while being transported from Atlanta to Chattanooga, Tenn. to join Bragg's army, the train on which I was riding collided with another train, head on, and I was caught under the wreckage, being caught by the drive wheel of one of the engines on my left leg, crushing same, and ... was held in this position from 3 o'clock in the afternoon until 6 o'clock of the same day, before being extricated. When taken out my left leg was crushed, and turned round to right angle. From the day I was hurt to Christmas of the same year I was not able to use my left leg at all, and when I returned to my command about the 1st of the year 1863, I was furnished a horse to ride, as I could not walk, and I was not able to walk to do service for some three or four months, and then I began to walk, with much pain, but managed to pull through, and my old leg did me pretty good service, by being patched up. But now in my old age I can use my leg but little, and cannot walk at all on same without suffering much pain, which renders the left leg practically and essentially useless to use. ... 6th day of July 1917.

(Georgia Virtual Vault, Confederate Pension Applications, Coweta County, John B. Goodwyn)

