

## **Carlo, The Soldiers' Dog**

by General Rush C. Hawkins

The Ninth New York Volunteers was organized in April, 1861, in the City of New York. Two of the companies were made up of men from outside the city. C was composed of men from Hoboken and Paterson, New Jersey, and G marched into the regimental headquarters fully organized from the town of Fort Lee in that State. With this last named company came Carlo, the subject of this sketch.

When he joined the regiment, he had passed beyond the period of puppyhood and was in the full flush of dogly beauty. He was large, not very large,—would probably have turned the scales at about fifty pounds. His build was decidedly "stocky," and, as horsey men would say, his feet were well under him; his chest was broad and full, back straight, color a warm dark brindle, nose and lips very black, while he had a broad, full forehead and a wonderful pair of large, round, soft, dark-brown eyes. Add to this description an air of supreme, well-bred dignity, and you have an idea of one of the noblest animals that ever lived.

His origin was obscure; one camp reunion asserted that he was born on board of a merchant ship while his mother was making a passage from Calcutta to New York; and another told of a beautiful mastiff living somewhere in the State of New Jersey that had the honor of bringing him into the world. It would be very interesting to know something of the parentage of our hero, but since the facts surrounding his birth are unattainable, we must content ourselves with telling a portion of a simple story of a good and noble life. It may be safe to assert that he was not a native American; if he had been, he would have provided himself with the regulation genealogical tree and family coat-of-arms.

During the first part of his term of service, Carlo was very loyal to his company, marched, messed, and slept with it; but he was not above picking up, here and there, from the mess tents of the other companies a tid-bit, now and then, which proved acceptable to a well-appointed digestion.

His first turn on guard was performed as a member of the detail from Co. G, and always afterward, in the performance of that duty, he was most faithful. No matter who else might be late, he was ever on time when the call for guard mount was sounded, ready to go out with his own particular squad. At first, he would march back to company quarters with the old detail, but, as soon as he came to realize the value and importance of guard duty, he made up his mind that his place was at the guard tent and on the patrol beat, where he could be of the greatest service in watching the movements of the enemy.

In the performance of his duties as a member of the guard he was very conscientious and ever on the alert. No stray pig, wandering sheep, or silly calf could pass in front of his part of the line without being investigated by him. It is possible that his vigilance in investigating intruding meats was sharpened by the hope of substantial recognition in the way of a stray rib extracted from the marauding offender whose ignorance of army customs in time of war had brought it too near our lines.

As a rule, Carlo, what with his guard duties and other purely routine items, managed to dispose of the day until dress parade. At that time he appeared at his best, and became the regimental dog.

No officer or soldier connected with the command more fully appreciated "The pomp and circumstance of great and glorious war" than he. As the band marched out to take position previous to playing for the companies to assemble, he would place himself alongside the drum-major, and, when the signal for

marching was given, would move off with stately and solemn tread, with head well up, looking straight to the front. Upon those great occasions, he fully realized the dignity of his position, and woe betide any unhappy other dog that happened to get in front of the marching band. When upon the parade field, he became, next to the colonel, the commanding officer, and ever regarded himself as the regulator of the conduct of those careless and frivolous dogs, that go about the world like street urchins, having no character for respectability or position in society to sustain.

Of those careless ne'er-do-wells the company had accumulated a very large following. As a rule, they were harmless and companionable, and were always on hand ready for a free lunch. It was only on dress parade that they made themselves over-officious. Each company was attended to the parade ground by its particular family of canine companions, and, when all of them had assembled, the second battalion of the regiment would make itself known by a great variety of jumpings, caperings, barks of joy, and cries of delight. To this unseasonable hilarity Carlo seriously objected, and his actions plainly told the story of his disgust at the conduct of the silly members of his race. He usually remained a passive observer until the exercise in the manual of arms, at which particular period in the ceremonies, the caperings and the barkings would become quite unendurable. Our hero would then assume the character of a preserver of the peace. He would make for the nearest group of revellers, and, in as many seconds, give a half dozen or more of them vigorous shakes, which would set them to howling, and warn the others of the thoughtless tribe of an impending danger. Immediately the offenders would all scamper to another part of the field, and remain quiet until the dress parade was over. This duty was self-imposed and faithfully performed upon many occasions.

After the parade was dismissed Carlo would march back to quarters with his own company, where he would remain until the last daily distributions of rations, whereupon, after having disposed of his share, he would start out upon a tour of regimental inspection, making friendly calls at various company quarters and by taps turning up at the headquarters of the guard. His duties ended for the day, he would enjoy his well-earned rest until reveille, unless some event of an unusual nature, occurring during the night, disturbed his repose and demanded his attention.

During the first year of his service in the field, Carlo was very fortunate. He had shared in all the transportations by water, in all the marchings, skirmishes, and battles, without receiving a scratch or having a day's illness. But his good fortune was soon to end, for it was ordained that, like other brave defenders, he was to suffer in the great cause for which all were risking their lives.

The morning of April 18, 1862, my brigade, then stationed at Roanoke Island, embarked upon the steamer *Ocean Wave* for an expedition up the Elizabeth River, the object of which was to destroy the locks of the Dismal Swamp canal in order to prevent several imaginary iron-clads from getting into Albemarle Sound.

Among the first to embark was the ever ready and faithful Carlo, and the next morning, when his companions disembarked near Elizabeth City, he was one of the first to land, and, during the whole of the long and dreary march of thirty miles to Camden Court House, lasting from three o'clock in the morning until one in the afternoon, he was ever on the alert, but keeping close to his regiment. The field of battle was reached; the engagement, in which his command met with a great loss, commenced and ended, and, when the particulars of the disaster were inventoried, it was ascertained that a Confederate bullet had taken the rudimentary claw from Carlo's left fore-leg. This was his first wound, and he bore it like a hero without a whine or even a limp. A private of Co. G, who first noticed the wound, exclaimed: "Ah, Carlo, what a pity you are not an officer! If you were, the loss of that claw would give you sixty days' leave and a brigadier general's commission at the end of it." That was about

the time that generals' commissions had become very plentiful in the Department of North Carolina.

The command re-embarked, and reached Roanoke Island the morning after the engagement, in time for the regulation "Hospital or Sick Call," which that day brought together an unusual number of patients, and among them Carlo, who was asked to join the waiting line by one of the wounded men. When his turn came to be inspected by the attending surgeon, he was told to hold up the wounded leg, which he readily did, and then followed the washing, the application of simple cerate, and the bandaging, with a considerable show of interest and probable satisfaction.

Thereafter, there was no occasion to ask him to attend the surgeon's inspection. Each morning, as soon as the bugle call was sounded, he would take his place in line with the other patients, advance in his turn, and receive the usual treatment. This habit continued until the wound was healed.

Always, after this, to every friendly greeting, he would respond by holding up the wounded leg for inspection, and he acted as though he thought that everybody was interested in the honorable scar that told the story of patriotic duty faithfully performed.

Later on, for some reason known to himself, Carlo transferred his special allegiance to Co. K. and maintained close connection with that company until the end of his term of service. He was regarded by its members as a member of the company mess, and was treated as one of them. But, notwithstanding his special attachments, there can be no reasonable doubt about his having considered himself a member of the regiment, clothed with certain powers and responsibilities. At the end of his term he was fitted with a uniform—trousers, jacket, and fez, and, thus dressed, he marched up Broadway, immediately behind the band. He was soon after mustered out of the service, and received an honorable discharge, not signed with written characters, but attested by the good-will of every member of the regiment.

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