



Henry W. Hale

SERGEANT
HENRY W. HALE



2nd Massachusetts Cavalry
Company H 1863 – 1865

3rd Michigan Cavalry
Company L 1861 – 1863

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2nd Massachusetts Cavalry

Henry W. Hale was born and raised in Waterford, Oxford County, Maine, in 1833, where he was well educated and held a civilian job as a bookkeeper and accountant.

On November 3, 1863 Sergeant Hale ventured to Boston, Massachusetts and enlisted with the famed 2nd Regiment Massachusetts Cavalry, Company H (later Co. K). He mustered in as a private but was immediately promoted to Sergeant.

The war record of the 2nd Mass Cav was equaled by few cavalry units of the Union Army. The Colonel appointed was Charles Russell Lowell, a hard fighting but devoted leader, young and of Boston gentry. He had been with the 6th Regiment, U.S. Cavalry and was a member of General George McClellan's staff. Five of the companies were organized and fought under Major Casper Crowninshield. These men had volunteered for service from California and were hard riding, fierce fighting men who wanted to be involved in the war and had traveled all the way from California to do so. They were known as the Cal 100 and Cal Battalion.

Sent to the Shenandoah Valley, the regiment was constantly engaged with Confederate General John Mosby's Partisan Rangers. Some of the skirmishes and battles included Aldie, Dranesville, Leesburg, Upperville, Battle of the Wilderness, Point of Rocks, Mt. Zion Church, Poolesville, Snicker's Gap, Sheridan's Shenandoah campaign, Opequan Creek, Dinwiddie Courthouse, Five Forks, Tabernacle Church and Sailor's Creek. The last action they would see was the capture of Robert E. Lee's supply trains at Appomattox



Station. Two days later, Sergeant Hale witnessed the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House. The fighting had now ended for him. Prior to Sergt. Hale's military service with the 2nd Mass Cav., he had mustered into Company L of the 3rd Michigan Cavalry on October 1, 1861 only a few months into the Civil War. Henry enlisted as a private but during the early fighting rose through the ranks to eventually receive a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Michigan unit. During most of 1862 he worked in the adjutant General's office, but was also active in the field. They saw action at numerous battles, including the capture of Island #10, Boonesville, Spangler's Mills, Iuka, Battle of Corinth, and the Central Mississippi Campaign.

On May 9, 1863 Lt. Hale was arrested and court martialed under the 5th

Article of War (drunkenness while in command of troops), while on a scout in the vicinity of Elmoreville and Huntington, Tennessee. The transcript of the trial is contained herein, as is Lt. Hale's eloquent written response suggesting ulterior motives by his accusers, and also enlisting support from his many friends in the regiment. In the transcript, he suggests lenience, pointing to his past war record, and his having risen through the ranks. Lt. Hale ended his statement by declaring his devotion to the Union saying he had joined out of patriotic motives "...to add what I could to suppressing the unholy rebellion which threatened to destroy the best government the sun had ever shown upon." He added that he "...wished to stay in (the cavalry) until the glorious consumption of the war." Hale was found guilty of three of the four accusations against him and was "cashiered" from the service, but in an unusual act of leniency, possibly in deference to his prior unblemished record, he was permitted to sign on with another unit. He cast his fortune with the 2nd Mass Cavalry.

Following Henry's remarkable service in the military, and after rising through the ranks in two different Cavalry units, Sergeant Hale returned to Maine where he resided at Peak's Island, Portland Harbor, and Gorham. He married Anna E. Russell on November 4, 1875 and died on August 20, 1897 at the age of 64. Henry was survived by his wife and son, Edward Russel Hale who was born on May 15, 1884.



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Images:

1. Saber inscribed to Sergt. Henry W. Hale, 2nd Mass Cav, Co. H – author's collection
2. Identification Disc worn by Sergt. Henry W. Hale – author's collection



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SERGEANT

HENRY W.

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2nd Massachusetts Cavalry & 3rd Michigan Cavalry

Civil War Service Chronology

1861	Oct 01	Enlists with 3 rd Michigan Cavalry
	Oct 12	Musters into Company L as a Private, 28 years of age
1862	Mar 14	Action and surrender of Island No. 10 , Mississippi River
	May 10	Siege operations against Corinth , Mississippi
	Jun 17	Promoted to Corporal
	Sep 19	Battle of Iuka , Regiment receives commendation from Genl. Rosecranz
	Oct 3	Severe fighting at Corinth , Mississippi
	Nov 01	Promoted to Sergeant Major
	Nov 07	Action at Holly Springs , Mississippi
	Dec 11	Promoted to 2 nd Lieutenant, Company K
1863	May 09	Court Martialed – 45 th Article of War (drunkenness while command)
	Aug 30	Cashiered from Service, Genl. Order 54, Department of the Tennessee
	Nov 30	Mustered into 2 nd Massachusetts Cavalry, Company H as a Private
1864	Jan 13	Promoted to Corporal
	Jan 26	Fighting at Ellis Ford , Virginia
	Jan 29	Promoted to 1 st Sergeant
	Apr 28	Action at Leesburg , Virginia
	Aug 27	Promoted to 2 nd Lieutenant
	Jul 06	Action at Mt. Zion Church , Virginia
	Jul 11	Defense of Washington D.C. at Ft. Stevens
	Sep 19	Heavy fighting at Opequan Creek , Virginia
	Sep 21	Fighting at Front Royal , Virginia
	Sep 22	Battle of Fisher's Hill , Virginia
	Oct 19	Severe fighting at Cedar Creek , Virginia
1865	Mar 30	Engagement, Dinwiddie Court House , Virginia
	Apr 01	Battle of Five Forks , Virginia
	Apr 08	Engagement at Sailor's Creek , Virginia
	Apr 09	Surrender of Robert E. Lee, Appomattox Court House
	Jul 20	Mustered out at Fairfax Court House, Virginia