

Richard Paul Montjoy, 43rd Virginia Cavalry

“His death was a
Costly sacrifice to victory.
He died too early for Liberty
and his country’s cause,
but not too early for
his own fame.”

The above was written as a general order by Lieutenant Colonel John S. Mosby after Captain Richard Paul Montjoy’s death and was inscribed on a monument erected by members of Mosby’s Command in 1907 near the Confederate Mound in Warrenton Cemetery, Warrenton, Virginia. Montjoy was a hero in the 43rd Virginia Cavalry Battalion who likely had no equal in Mosby’s Command, either in life or in death but, in truth, had a controversial career as captain of Mosby’s most flamboyant company of Partisan Rangers.¹

Richard Paul Montjoy was born March 15, 1842 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. He was the son of John William Montjoy and Harriet Bradford. John and Harriet Montjoy were from New Jersey and New York respectively. Their first three children, John G., Harriet J., and Frances F. were all born in the state of New York. The Montjoy family migrated to Illinois between 1840 and 1841 where Richard was born as previously noted. By 1850, the Montjoy family had migrated to Meriwether County, Georgia where they were enumerated in the 1860 Federal census of that county. John Montjoy, Richard’s father, left his family and went to South America or died about 1851. His mother, Harriett Montjoy died May 4, 1854. There is little known of what happened to Richard and his siblings after the death of their parents and up to the beginning of the Civil War. One account indicates they migrated to Coffeerville Ms., then to Greenwood Mississippi.²

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Richard P. Montjoy was residing in New Orleans, Louisiana, where on a “Record” of his regiment, he was identified as having the occupation of a machinist. Montjoy enlisted in the Confederate Army on May 22, 1861 at New Orleans. He was mustered in as a 4th Sergeant in Company E, 7th Louisiana Infantry Regiment at Camp Moore, Tangipahoa, Louisiana on June 7, 1861 by Capt. S. H. Gilman. Montjoy appears as present on all muster rolls for the 7th Louisiana Infantry through April 11, 1862. An undated roster for the 7th Louisiana covering the period June 7, 1861 to Aug. 1862 showed Montjoy as absent without leave. On an engagements listing for the 7th Louisiana Infantry, Montjoy was listed as present at Bull Run, July 18, 1861; Manassas, July 21, 1861; Front Royal, May 25, 1862; Middletown, May 26, 1862 and Winchester, May 27, 1862. He was recorded as absent for engagements at Cross Keys, June 8, 1862; Port Republic, June 9, 1862; Cold Harbor, June 27, 1862; Malvern Hill, July 1, 1862 and Cedar Run, Aug. 10, 1862. He was again shown as present for the battle of 2nd Manassas on August 28 and 29, 1862.³

Richard Montjoy had a younger brother, Gideon Montjoy, also born in Cook County, Il. who also enlisted in the Confederate Army. He served in Swett’s Company, Mississippi Light

¹ Keen, Hugh C. and Mewborn, Horace, *43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry Mosby’s Command*. Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1993, (hereafter, *43rd Battalion*) pages 225-6; Richard Paul Montjoy memorial headstone, Warrenton Cemetery, Warrenton, Virginia.

² Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (CJCLDS), Salt Lake City, Utah. International Genealogical Index, Vol. V. On-line ed. (www.familysearch.org). Family Group Record, “John William Montjoy.” Downloaded August 19, 2007; National Archives, Washington D.C., 1850 Federal Census, Meriwether County, Ga. Series M432, Roll 77, page 343; Long, Nella Fae Bradford. “Richard and Elizabeth Long and Allied Families.” (S.L.) Nortex Press, 1987, page 149.

³ National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 109, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Microfilm M253, Compiled Military Service Records for soldiers serving in the 7th Louisiana Infantry Regiment Microfilm #253, Roll #181, record #1353.

Artillery (Warren Light Artillery) and Packer's Company, Mississippi (Pope) Guards. He survived the war and was residing in Sunflower County, Mississippi in 1870.⁴

There is no known record of Montjoy's activities between 2nd Manassas and May 3, 1863 when he is documented as being with Mosby's Command in the fight at Warrenton Junction. It is not known how long Montjoy had been serving with Mosby's Command prior to his involvement in the Warrenton Junction fight. Postwar biographers of the 43rd Virginia Cavalry Battalion indicate that Montjoy was transferred to the ranger command, but, there is no record in any of his service records or records of the 43rd Battalion to indicate there was a transfer.⁵

Richard P. Montjoy's first claim to fame came nearly a month later on May 30, 1863 in the raid on the Orange & Alexandria railroad near Catlett's Station and subsequent defense of the Rangers new 2-1/2" mountain howitzer near Greenwich in Prince William County. Montjoy was captured along with Alonzo B. Snyder, Samuel F. Chapman and Fountain Beattie defending the little howitzer. A Federal cavalryman noted that Montjoy "was credited with a reputation as spy, scout, desperado, and an all-around bad man." Mosby noted in his post-war reminiscences that "Mountjoy, who was one of the bravest of the brave, was captured at the gun after he had fired his last cartridge."⁶

The rangers captured near Greenwich on May 29, 1863, including Richard P. Montjoy, were first forwarded to the Provost Marshal of General Stahel's Cavalry Division at Fairfax Court House. The Confederates were forwarded to Old Capital Prison on June 1, 1863. Montjoy was described as, "22 years of age, height 5 ft 7 1/2 inches, brown hair, brown eyes, light complexion taken by Colonel Mann near Greenwich, Virginia." He next appears on a Roll of Prisoners of War paroled at Old Capital Prison, Washington, D.C. on June 10, 1863.⁷

Montjoy was able to rejoin what was now the 43rd Battalion, Virginia Partisan Rangers and their leader, John S. Mosby, on June 21, 1863 for a scouting expedition through the Bull Run Mountains near Aldie. The purpose of this scout was to locate the positions of Hooker's army for General Stuart. The next day, the rangers were ambushed by both Federal Cavalry and Infantry near Ewell's Chapel. In the ensuing fighting, three rangers were injured including Richard Montjoy who had a finger shot off.⁸

On October 4, 1863, Captain William R. Smith led about 45 men from the newly formed Company B, including Richard P. Montjoy, on a raid on a Union cavalry camp located about a mile below Warrenton on Lee's Ridge. The rangers captured 6 men and 27 horses in what would become known as the 'Billie Smith Raid'.⁹

Sometime in the late summer or fall of 1863, Richard P. Montjoy and companion, Lieutenant Tom Turner were nearly captured at the home of Joseph Blackwell Smith, 'Evergreen', located about 4 miles north of Warrenton. Smith was the father of rangers Captain William R. Smith and Norman E. Smith. The two rangers escaped detection thanks to the stubbornness of Smith's youngest daughter, Rosa.¹⁰ It was during this period that Montjoy boarded at the residence of

⁴ National Park Service. "Civil War Soldiers and Sailor System." Online file. <http://www.itd.ups.gov/cwss/>; National Archives, 1870 Federal Census, Sunflower Co., Ms. Series M593, Roll 749, page 486.

⁵ Henderson, E. Prioleau. *Autobiography of Arab*. Oxford, Ms.: The Guild Bindery Press, 1991, page 86; Williamam, James J. *Mosby's Rangers*. 2nd ed., New York, N.Y.: Sturgis & Welton Company, 1909, page 154.

⁶ "43rd Battalion," page 62; Mosby, John Singleton. *Mosby's War Reminiscences - Stuart's Cavalry Campaigns*. New York, N.Y.: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1898, page 150.

⁷ National Archives, Compiled Military Service Records for soldiers serving in Mosby's Regiment, Cavalry (Partisan Rangers) Microfilm #324, Roll #208, record #978.

⁸ *43rd Battalion*, page 70.

⁹ *Ibid*, pages 84-85.

¹⁰ *Fairfax Herald*. May 19, 1905.

John Jeffries, 'Highlands', located near Rectortown. Also boarding at Highlands were brothers William and Samuel Chapman, their cousin Judah Forrer and Prussian, Baron Von Massow.¹¹

Mosby along with 40 men, including Montjoy, raided a wagon camp near Warrenton, Virginia on the night of November 6, 1863. The Federal guards were aroused and the rangers were able to bring out only a few mules and horses on this raid.¹² Twenty days later, Mosby and 125 rangers of companies A and B, including Richard Montjoy, raided another wagon camp, this time near Brandy Station. Montjoy and a few men had responsibility for burning the wagons after the animals had been unhitched. The rangers got away with over 150 horses, mules and cattle although some got away in the darkness of the night. This raid would become known as the '1st Culpeper Raid'.¹³

Richard Montjoy was involved in the Cavalry fight with Colonel Henry Cole's Maryland Cavalry (1st Regiment, Maryland Potomac Home Brigade) at Five Points on January 1, 1864. Montjoy was in the vanguard of the initial charge against the Federals in this fight. Montjoy was also involved in the ill fated attack on Cole's cavalry camp on Loudoun Heights in the early morning of January 10, 1864. Montjoy and his group of men had the assignment of capturing the outpost at Piney Run that was guarding the south end of the camp. Montjoy's assignment was completed as planned but very little else went as designed as this affair turned out to be, arguably, the worst defeat the 43rd Virginia Cavalry Battalion would suffer.¹⁴

Horses began to be in short supply for Montjoy beginning in February, 1864. He had a horse wounded on February 18, 1864 while he and about 25 rangers were trailing a Federal expedition on the 'Cornwell Raid'. Two days later, Montjoy had another horse shot when about fifty of the rangers attacked 250 men of Cole's Maryland Cavalry near Blakeley's Grove School House. In this affair, Montjoy killed Captain William L. Morgan of Company A, 1st New York Veteran Cavalry in hand-to-hand combat. Montjoy was promised a "commission" by Mosby and was one of 11 men identified by the Partisan leader for "Conspicuous Gallantry" in his report to Major General Stuart dated February 21, 1864.¹⁵

Richard P. Montjoy, still a private, was again in a lead roll in the ambush of about 125 men of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry and 25 men of the 16th New York Cavalry near Anker's shop on February 22, 1864. Montjoy was assigned about 20 men with carbines to attack the center of the Union force. This engagement ended in a major defeat for the Federals and forever a bright spot in the history of the 43rd Battalion.¹⁶

Montjoy was promoted (technically, elected) to Captain of the newly formed Company D on March 28, 1864. Mosby's confidence in the young ranger had risen fast over the past few months. Interestingly, Montjoy wasn't even considered for a lieutenantcy three and one half months earlier when Company C. was formed on December 15, 1863. Company D was composed primarily of Marylanders, many whom had previously served in units from that state. They would become known as "Company Darling," for the pride they took in their dress, their gallantry, and attentiveness to the ladies of Mosby's Confederacy.¹⁷

Mosby and about 100 rangers including Richard Montjoy attacked a heavily fortified Union picket post at Guard Hill, north of Front Royal, on May 19, 1864. The rangers returned to Fauquier County in three parties, one led by Montjoy who crossed the Shenandoah River near Howellsville. Mosby with Companies B, C and D attacked Duffield Station in Jefferson County, West Virginia on June 29, 1864. The guard at the station surrendered along with a Pennsylvania

¹¹ *Religious Herald*, February 27, 1902.

¹² Williamson, James J. *Mosby's Rangers*. 2nd ed., page 106.

¹³ *43rd Battalion*. pages 93-94.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, pages 98, 100.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, page 111; Williamson, James J. *Mosby's Rangers*. 2nd ed., pages 135, 141.

¹⁶ *43rd Battalion*, page 113.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, page 118.

sutler who was in process of setting up a store at the station. The rangers thought the store would be better suited in Fauquier County and proceeded to help the sutler move his merchandise accordingly. Richard Montjoy was at the head of Company D in this affair which would be known as the '1st Calico Raid'.¹⁸

Sometime during the early summer of 1864, Richard Montjoy got into trouble with his commander, Lt. Col. John S. Mosby, or some other unidentified superior officer, the result being Montjoy's arrest and court marshal. The details of the court marshal are identified in a letter dated August 1, 1864, written at "Head Quarters Valley District," which involved four soldiers including Richard P. Montjoy. Montjoy's case was the 3rd tried and is described in the letter as follows:¹⁹

3. Captain R. P. Montjoy Co "D" 43^d Battn. Va. Cavalry
Charge I. Disobedience of orders
Charge II. Conduct to the prejudice of good order & military discipline
Finding – Of the I. Charge and Specification – Not Guilty
– Of the II. Charge and Specification – Not Guilty
And the Court do therefore acquit the said Captain R. P. Montjoy Co
"D" 43. Battn. Cavalry of the Charges and Specifications ----- against him.

The proceedings and findings in the cases of Capt. R. P. Montjoy of Co "D" 43^d Battn Va. Cavalry and Lieut John W. Stafford Co "K" 36th Va. Regt are approved. Being acquitted they will be released from arrest and resume their swords and commands.

By command of
Lieut General J. A. Early
A. S. Pendleton
A. A. General
Major General J. C. Breckinridge
Comdg Corps

It is not known when Montjoy returned to Fauquier and again took command of Company D. In any case, there is no evidence that he was at the 'Berryville Wagon Raid' on August 13, 1864 as 1st Lieutenant Alfred Glascock was in command of Company D on that raid.²⁰

Montjoy was back commanding Company D by August 19, 1864 when he is identified with his company scouting in the Shenandoah Valley. A day later, Montjoy was involved in the "no-quarter raid" on the Federal house burners at Colonel Benjamin Morgan's near Sheppard's Mill Road in Clarke County. In one instance, Montjoy demanded the death of one of the house burners who had been captured.²¹

Richard Montjoy was part of a 300 expedition led by Mosby to Fairfax County on August 23, 1864. Mosby brought along a 12 pound howitzer and a Napoleon cannon. The object of the venture was the capture of a Union stockade at Annandale. On the morning of the 24th, Montjoy rode forward under a flag of truce to demand the fort's surrender which was refused. After firing

¹⁸ Ibid, pages 128, 135.

¹⁹ National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records. Records of the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office. Department of West Virginia & East Tenn. Letters Received. Letter #138.

²⁰ Scott, John. *Partisan Life with Col. John S. Mosby*. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1867, page 276.

²¹ Ibid, pages 280, 282.

a few rounds from the cannons towards the fort, which caused little damage, the partisans decided to return to Fauquier.²²

There was a meeting of the battalion on September 3, 1864 at Rectortown at which time Mosby sent out several detachments to operate west of the Shenandoah River. Montjoy and Company D. were to cross the Shenandoah River at Berry's Ferry for the purpose of harassing Torbert's rear. Montjoy's men found little game in this venture.²³

The partisans with two cannons set up on Stevenson's Hill south of the little village of Salem, began firing into a Union work camp on the railroad at that location on October 5, 1864. The Federals soon retreated towards Rectortown to which Montjoy and his men gave pursuit. The railroaders were overtaken near Rectortown and were charged by Montjoy's men the result being a number of Federals killed, wounded and captured.²⁴

On October 11, 1864, Mosby was scouting near the Manassas Gap Railroad near The Plains with Montjoy and Company D. A skirmish (known as the 'Whitewood Fight') ensued with a contingent of the 8th Illinois Cavalry in which Mosby narrowly escaped capture when his horse fell after being shot and penned the partisan leader.²⁵

Mosby and Companies A, B and D made a demonstration against a Union fortification near Annandale in Fairfax County on October 17, 1864. Mosby then ordered Captain Richard Montjoy to proceed to Falls Church to raid a Federal camp at that location. As the rangers were leading some horses out of a stable a fox horn was blown. The rangers quickly found the source of the alarm to be Union home guard member, Reverend John D. Reed. Reed and a black attendant were captured and taken about seven miles to near Hunter's Mill where they were shot. Reed was killed and the black man was left for dead but survived his wound. A surgeon's report indicated from the nature of Reed's wound that a pistol had been placed close to his head. Montjoy, once again, found himself surrounded in controversy but nothing came of the incident.²⁶

About 400 rangers, including Montjoy and Company D, let by Mosby, left Bloomfield on October 24, 1864 for the purpose of harassing the Valley Pike between Winchester and Martinsburg, West Virginia. The expedition culminated in the capture of General Alfred Duffie and his escort the next day.²⁷

Montjoy again found himself in trouble with his commander on November 6, 1864. The partisan captain and some of his men were returning from a scout to the Valley when, in Ashby's Gap, they ran into Edward F. Thomson and a small detail of rangers. Thomson and his detail were sent to execute seven Union soldiers in retaliation for the earlier executions of seven of Mosby's men under General's Torbert's and Powell's direction. Montjoy, being a Mason, saw the distress signal given by one of the prisoners scheduled for execution who was also a Mason. He, Montjoy, then being the ranking officer, ordered Thomson to make a switch with one of his (Montjoy's) prisoners captured in the Valley. Thomson agreed to the trade only after Montjoy indicated he would take full responsibility for the trade. Montjoy sent his prisoners directly to Gordonsville rather than Rectortown in hopes of keeping Mosby from finding out about the trade. When the incident was reported to the partisan leader, he was upset with his Company D captain. He advised Montjoy, in no uncertain terms, that his command was not a Masonic Lodge.²⁸

²² *43rd Battalion*, page 165.

²³ *Ibid*, page 167; Scott, John. *Partisan Life with Col. John S. Mosby*, page 286.

²⁴ *43rd Battalion*, page 184; Scott, John. *Partisan Life with Col. John S. Mosby*, page 325.

²⁵ Williamson, James J. *Mosby's Rangers*. 2nd ed., page 258.

²⁶ *Ibid*, page 271; *43rd Battalion*, page 202

²⁷ *43rd Battalion*, pages 203-204; Bryan, John Stewart. *Joseph Bryan: His Times, His Family, His Friends*. Richmond, Va.: Whittet and Shepperson, 1935, page 126.

²⁸ *43rd Battalion*, page 211; Scott, John. "Partisan Life with Col. John S. Mosby," pages 259-260.

On October 15, 1864, Montjoy led 30 of his men to the Shenandoah Valley. Early on the morning of the 16th, the partisans attacked a detachment of 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry south of Winchester on the Valley Pike. The rangers scattered the Pennsylvanians and proceeded to return east. Montjoy split his force allowing the men who resided in Loudoun County to return via Castleman's Ferry on the Shenandoah River. Montjoy and the rest of the group intended to return to Fauquier County via Berry's Ferry. About two miles west of the Shenandoah River, Montjoy and his party were attacked by a detachment of Richard Blazer's Independent Scouts. Montjoy and 2nd Lieutenant Charlie Grogan tried to rally the fleeing partisans near 'The Vinyard', to no avail. Montjoy and Grogan got away but the ranger captain suffered his worst defeat as commander of "Company Darling." He had 6 men wounded including 2 mortally in what would become know as the 'Vinyard Fight'.²⁹

Mosby and Richard Montjoy along with Companies C and D, made a scout to the Valley on November 21, 1864. The next day, the rangers captured 19 Union cavalrymen and 17 mules near Winchester.³⁰

On October 27, 1864, Mosby sent Montjoy and Company D to northern Loudoun County to find the Loudoun Rangers (Union) who had been harassing Southern families in that region. Around 2:00 PM that afternoon, the rangers caught up with a 39 man detail of the Loudoun Rangers near Paxson's store at Goresville on the Leesburg to Point-of-Rocks road. The Southerners immediately attacked the Union rangers and scattered them back towards Leesburg and some towards the Potomac River. A few of the Federals took to the fields pursued by Montjoy, Charles Grogan and Monroe Heiskell. Near what was known as the 'Burnt Chimney', Loudoun Ranger, Mahlon Best, turned and fired at Montjoy, hitting him in the head and knocking him from his horse. Montjoy was taken to Leesburg and left with friends where he died shortly thereafter. In the affair at Goresville, the Loudoun Rangers lost 13 prisoners and 25 horses. Company D had only one casualty, it's leader, Richard P. Montjoy.³¹

Upon hearing the news of Montjoy's death, Mosby issued the following order on December 3, 1864:

General Orders, No. _____

The lieutenant colonel commanding announces to the battalion, with emotions of deep sorrow, the death of Captain R. P. Montjoy, who fell in action near Leesburg on the 27th ultimo, a costly sacrifice to victory. He died too early for liberty and his country's cause, but not too early for his own fame. To his comrades in arms he has bequeathed an immortal example of daring and valor, and to his country a name that will brighten the page of her history.³²

Montjoy's death was a shock to Mosby's Command. James J. Williamson referred to Montjoy in his history of Mosby's Rangers as: "a brave dashing young officer."³³ Ranger, John W. Munson noted in his biography of the command that: "We never filled Montjoy's place. We never tried to. There was only one Captain Montjoy."³⁴ And, ranger J. Marshall Crawford wrote in his book:

"In the fall of Captain R. P. Montjoy, Mosby lost one of the most brilliant officers

²⁹ 43rd *Battalion*, pages 215-216.

³⁰ *Ibid*, page 224.

³¹ *Ibid*, page 225-226; Crawford, J. Marshall. *Mosby and His Men: A Record of the Adventures of that Renowned Partisan Ranger, John S. Mosby, Colonel C.S.A.* New York, N.Y.: G. W. Carleton & Co., Publishers, 1867, page 306.

³² Scott, John. *Partisan Life with Col. John S. Mosby*, page 375

³³ Williamson, James J. *Mosby's Rangers*. 2nd ed., page 312.

³⁴ Munson, John W. *Reminiscences of a Mosby Guerilla*. New York, N.Y.: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1906, page 142.

in his command, gallant and brave to a fault. A poor boy from Mississippi, he raised himself to the command of Company D by his own industry. Through his sobriety, skill, courage, and amiable manners, he enjoyed the esteem of his men and the confidence of his commander.”³⁵

Montjoy was buried near the Confederate Mound in Warrenton Cemetery. On November 28, 1864, 1st Lieutenant Alfred Glascock was promoted to Captain of “Company Darling.”³⁶

Let us never forget the sacrifice of Captain Richard Paul Montjoy.

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³⁵ Crawford, J. Marshall. *Mosby and His Men: A Record of the Adventures of that Renowned Partisan Ranger, John S. Mosby, Colonel C.S.A.*, page 306.

³⁶ *43rd Battalion*,” page 226.