

The Little Forkers



In 1859, following the John Brown raid, a group of Southern men formed the Little Fork Raiders, a calvary militia that would train in Oakshade, at the Little Forks Church in Culpepper County Virginia. When Virginia seceded from the Union, they attached themselves to the 4th Virginia Calvary Regiment as Company D. They became involved in some of the most important battles of the Civil War. My brother-in-law's great-grandfather, George Sudduth, joined the Little Forkers as a private at the beginning of the war but received a field promotion and was eventually discharged as a first sergeant. He was one of 57 names appearing on the muster roll at the beginning of the war. By the end, only twelve members remained in the company. The others had either mustered out, died, or were wounded and captured.

The 4th Calvary received the nickname "Black Horse Calvary" due to the dark horses the rangers rode to distinguish themselves on the battlefield. They were assigned to General J.E.B. Stuart, who upon seeing them drill made the following observation: "Discipline very good. Instruction very good. Military appearance excellent. Arms deficient in quality, Revolvers needed. Accoutrements serviceable. Clothing remarkably good. Horses excellent." Among the noteworthy battles that the 4th Calvary faced were: Fredricksburg, the Second Bull Run, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania,

and the Seven Days' Battles.

At the end of the war, the survivors of Company D did not surrender. They simply rode home to try to rebuild their lives in the wake of reconstruction. Most, like George Sudduth, would eventually present themselves to a Federal officer to receive a pardon.

In 1904, on the 43rd anniversary of the Little Forkers enrollment to active service, a monument to their courage, bravery and loyalty was unveiled at Oakshade, the site of their original training grounds. It's inscription reads:

Firm as the firmest where duty led,
They hurried without a falter;
Bold as the boldest, they fought and bled:
The battles were won, but the fields were red,
And the blood of their fresh young hearts was shed
On their country's hallowed altar.

Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio specialize in the preservation of family memories through the digitalization of film, videotapes, audio recordings, photos, negatives, and slides. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit our [website](#). And please watch our TEDxEustis Talk on YouTube at https://youtu.be/uYlTTHp_C08.