

Col. Edward D. Baker (- 24 Oct 1861)

The Evening Star, July 29, 1861

The California Regiment, of which Col. E.D. Baker, U.S. Senator from Oregon is the commander, reached here on the evening before last. It numbers between fourteen and fifteen hundred men, and we regret to hear is in a very bad state of discipline, indeed. Without proper discipline its presence on a battlefield would be worse than useless, except to the enemy.

There can be little doubt that such a thing as proper subordination in the regiment is a thing almost unknown.

Col. Baker is a candidate for a brigadier generalship. While we entertain the kindest feelings for that gentleman, it is our plain duty thus to call the attention of the President to the alleged condition of his regiment, which, if it be true, embraces positive proof that he may not be safely intrusted with a higher grade of military responsibility. The insubordination of the men of course grows out of the failure of his officers to control them, and to set them proper examples, and their failure to control their men embraces at least prima facie evidence that their colonel fails to control them.

Our army lost the battle of Bull Run mainly through its lack of discipline. It is our duty to leave no effort untried to profit our cause by the disasters of that field. Hence, alone, this publication concerning the state of Col. Baker's California regiment.

The Evening Star, October 23, 1861

The Death of Colonel Baker

Headquarters, Army of the Potomac

Washington, Oct. 22, 1861

General Orders, No. 31

The Major General Commanding with sincere sorrow announces to the Army of the Potomac, the death of Colonel Edward D. Baker, who fell gloriously in battle, on the evening of Monday, the 21st October, 1861, near Leesburg, Virginia.

The gallant dead has many titles to honor. At the time of his death he was a member of the United States Senate for Oregon, and it is no injustice to any survivor to say that one of the most eloquent voices in that illustrious body has been silenced by his fall. As a patriot, zealous for the honor and interests of his adopted country, he has been distinguished in two wars, and has now sealed with his blood his devotion to the national flag. Cut off in the fullness of his powers as a statesman, and in the course of a brilliant career as a soldier, while the country mourns his loss, his brothers in arms will envy while they lament his fate. He died as a soldier would wish to die, amid the shock of battle, by voice and example animating his men to brave deeds.

The remains of the deceased will be interred in this city with the honors due to his rank, and the funeral arrangements will be ordered by Brigadier General Silas Casey.

As an appropriate mark of respect to the memory of the deceased, the usual badge of military mourning will be worn for the period of thirty days by the officers of the Brigade lately under his command.

By command of Major General McClellan

The Late Colonel Baker

The remains of the late gallant Col. E.B. Baker have not yet reached Washington. They are to be taken to the residence of Major J.W. Webb, at the corner of Fourteenth and H streets--No. 363. We learn incidentally that his body was pierced with six balls, either of which would probably have been fatal; thus showing that his person on the field was a shining mark indeed.

On leaving his quarters at his friend, Major Webb's for the field of his death, he remarked to that gentleman that he expected to be in action in less than forty-eight hours, and felt that he should lose his life; closing the conversation with a request that Major W. should send for his body if his presentment proved true.

Sketch of the Late Col. Baker

Col. E.D. Baker, who fell at the head of his command while charging upon the enemy, near Leesburg, was an old Philadelphian and of Quaker origin. His ancestors were English Friends, Colonel Baker himself was born in England, but was brought to Philadelphia when an infant, where he and a younger brother were left orphans soon after their arrival. This calamity left them no resource but to work their way through the world with their own hands. For a while young Baker worked as a hand loom weaver in a small manufacturing establishment near Thirteenth and South streets, where the loom upon which he labored is still standing. It is likely, now to become an object of interest. Before he reached manhood he paid some attention to the study of the law, and left Philadelphia for the Great West. His purse being light, he and the younger brother crossed the Alleghenies and went through Ohio and Indiana, all the way on foot, until they reached the Wabash river, which they descended in a canoe, and at last found themselves upon the broad prairies of Illinois. In this State Colonel Baker took up the study of the law in a regular way, and soon made for himself a name, even at the bar of Springfield, where he met--sometimes as colleagues and sometimes as adversaries--both the deceased Douglas and President Lincoln.

Colonel Baker was a representative in Congress from Illinois during the years 1846 and 1847, and was subsequently Senator for the new State of Oregon. His military career shows that this is not his first campaign, for we find that in May, 1846, he was colonel of the fourth regiment of twelve months' Illinois volunteers in the Mexican war, and commanded the brigade of Gen. Shields after his fall. He was well distinguished in the battle of Cerro Gordo. He received his discharge in May 1847. In a military capacity he was not again known until the present troubles commenced, when at the monster meeting in Union square he ascended the principal platform and boldly announced that if he could get only a few followers he would as boldly go forth and battle for the Union. How the words of the white-haired Senator told upon the loyal citizens of the North time has already proven. He organized the California regiment and led it to the field. When offered a brigadier, and even a major generalship, he refused both, preferring to be at the head of the regiment he had organized, and, although acting in this battle as a general, he was simply the colonel of the First California regiment which started from New York city.

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Remains of Col. Baker

All residents of the Pacific coast at present in the city are requested to assemble at the rooms of Gen J.W. Denver, 486 Twelfth Street (Kings Gallery) this Wednesday afternoon at 5 o'clock p.m. for the purpose of adopting such measures as may be deemed necessary in relation to the remains of Col. E.D. Baker.

The Evening Star, October 28, 1861

The Battle In Leesburg

We learn through a source on which we are enabled to place entire reliance some particulars coming from the other side of the Potomac in relation to the recent battle near Leesburg. It appears that when the intention of throwing the Federal troops across the Potomac first became apparent, the Confederate force in the neighborhood of Leesburg was so small that it was almost decided not to offer any resistance. Some reinforcements were, however, brought up from back of Leesburg, and with the force thus gathered not altogether exceeding three thousand, it was resolved to make a stand. Both parties, it was admitted at Leesburg, fought desperately. The Confederates feared that they would be surrounded by the large force which they anticipated General Banks would throw across the Ferry above, the battle was fought and the most desperate efforts were directed to defeat General Baker before the expected reinforcements come to his relief. The Federal troops, though overmatched in numbers, stood out against the attack manfully and bravely. The result was that both parties suffered severely in killed and wounded.

The party from whom our information comes saw over one hundred of the Confederate dead whilst their wounded was so numerous that all the farm houses in the neighborhood were occupied as temporary hospitals. The number of Federal soldiers captured our informant did not know. He saw one party of one hundred and ten taken off, but understood that two other squads had previously been sent away.

The expectation, which at first prevailed, that the National troops would be able to advance in overwhelming numbers to Leesburg, occasioned the utmost excitement. The Unionists, of whom there are a large number in the vicinity, were prepared to receive and welcome the army, whilst many of prominent made Secessionists made preparations to leave. The repulse of the National troops of course caused a corresponding depression with one class, and the most extraordinary exultation with the other.

After the battle the Confederate rapidly hurried up reinforcements, and at the time to which information extends it was estimated that they had from ten to fifteen thousand men at Leesburg and Waterford.--Balt. American

The Evening Star, October 29, 1861

The Body of Col. Baker

The evening after the funeral of the lamented Co. Baker, the corpse was removed from the vault in the Congressional Cemetery, where it was deposited, to the embalming rooms of Dr. Holmes, to be prepared for transmission to its final resting place in California. The committee of Californians who have charge of the body, have taken great care that all the arrangements for the removal of the body should be made in the most appropriate manner. The undertaker's work, by Buchly, is in his best style. The temporary coffin in which the body of Col. B. was brought from Poolesville, has been replaced by a handsome metallic case, imitation of rosewood, mounted with silver; a large plate of glass covering the face, through which the features of the deceased may be seen by his friends, below which, over the breast, is a silver plate with the inscription: "Col. E.D. Baker, killed in battle near Ball's Bluff, Virginia, Oct. 21, 1861." The process of embalming was made very difficult by the shattered condition of the body, upon inspection of which eight wounds were apparent. One large wound in the left temple; a small ball wound above the right ear; one in the back of the neck; one between the collar bone and shoulder blade, passing down into the body; one through the chest; one passing across the thighs; one dividing all the interior fleshy portion of the left arm; and one in the breast, near the left armpit. Notwithstanding these difficulties, Dr. Holmes succeeded in thoroughly embalming the body. The torn and blood-stained uniform in which he was killed was removed, and this morning, clad in a new uniform, he lay in the coffin not a ghastly and pale corpse, but as life-like as we have seen him in all the

glow of health, and if lying upon a couch, he would be easily mistaken for a sleeping soldier. Today, by invitation of the committee, the President and other distinguished friends of the gallant dead will visit the rooms of Dr. Holmes, at Buchly's establishment, Pennsylvania avenue near Ninth street, and see the face of their late friend for the last time; after which the case will be sealed for transmission to New York, thence to California.

The Evening Star, April 13, 1868

Statue of General Baker

On Saturday last a beautiful statuette of the late General E.D. Baker, Senator from Oregon, who was killed at the battle of Ball's Bluff, in the early part of the war, was received here from Rome, by Colonel Stephens, of California, for whom it was made by the well-known Washington, Dr. Horatio Stone, who is now in the Eternal City. It is now on exhibition at Messrs. Galt & Bro.'s jewelry store. Gen. Baker is represented with a roll of manuscript in his right hand, in the act of delivering a speech, and the likeness is pronounced by all who knew the deceased, to be most striking. The work is mounted on a pedestal, the upper portion of which revolves with the statue. It bears representations of justice, war, etc., and below are the following lines from the last speech of the deceased in the Senate delivered August, 1861. "There will be some graves reeking with blood, watered by the tears of affection. There will be some privation. There will be some loss of luxury. There will be somewhat more need of labor to procure the necessities of life. When that is said, all is said. If we have the country, the whole country, the Union, the Constitution, Free Government, with all these will return all the blessings of well ordered civilization. The path of the country will be a career of greatness and glory, such as our Fathers in the olden time foresaw in the dim visions of years yet to come; and such as would have been ours today had it not been for the treason for which the Senator (Breckinridge) too often seeks to apologize."