

Statement F. A. Demond.  
Cavendish, VT June 12, 1915.

About the first of April, 1865, my Company C. 3rd Hvy. Arty. Mass volls was stationed at Fort Manan, D C. About the second or third day of said month I was ordered to report to Lieut D D Dana at Ford Baker for Provost Guard duty. I did so and was employed in guarding prisoners who were sawing wood and also going down to Union Town looking for soldiers without passes, in fact doing police duty. After a few days I was sent down to guard the end of the bridge coming from Washington, D C and crossing the East Potomac river to Union Town, MD. The names of the other men on this same duty at the Union Town end of bridge were Corporal Sullivan in charge of the Guard and Private Drake and Johnson. I cannot remember the given names of them at this late day. At the Washington end of bridge was a detail of men under Sergt Scott. I do not know the names of the rest of his detail. On the morning of the 14th of April, we received orders not to pass any one into Washington unless it was for life or death. We had no orders to stop any one coming from Washington as the guard at that end of bridge was supposed to know who they passed. Now to explain about this bridge, it was quite a long wooden one, not in very good order. The gate was at the Union Town end of bridge and was not shut only after 9 o'clock at night then opened at 7 o'clock in the morning. This gate shut up against a post set in the ground and was built of very heavy timber to withstand a seige. When shut, it closed up against a block house that was built to protect the guard in case of a raid. On the morning of the 14th of April, as Drake and myself was setting down on a log by the side of the road, two men came along, they started to go by, when I asked them where they were going. They said only looking around. Well, I said, you cannot go across the bridge it is against orders, to allow anyone to cross that looks to us as suspicious persons. I asked them for their names but they would not tell me. Well, if you wont, we shall hold you until we get orders to let you go, as the officer in command here is over to the city but I think that you, pointing to Booth, are the actor that I have seen your photo of. He then said that I was right and that his companion was Herold. While talking with them, a soldier came along on horse back, I had seen him before when he rode by one time with Gen Auger, he was one of his aides, a capt. but I do not know his name. He wanted to know what the trouble was. Booth took him aside and they talked for some time, then the capt. says that they are alright, I spoke to Drake about it and he said we do not take any orders from him, only from Dana, Well he rode off. Before going, he made some remark to Booth which I did not hear. About 2 or 3 o'clock a orderly from Headquarters came across the bridge and gave Corp Sullivan a order to let the men go. We did so. We thought that was kind of funny but we had to obey orders. At 9 o'clock that night we shut the gate and Drake went on guard. He was to be relieved by myself at 11. Then Johnson was to receive me at 1 o'clock as Johnson was on a pass and would not get back until midnight. Just as we were getting ready for guard duty, Dana came and told us not to let any one through without the pass word LB Countersign T B Road. We thought that strange for it was the first time we ever had a pass word to use since we were at the bridge. Well about half past ten o'clock I was lying down in the block house with the door open, when I heard a horse coming across the bridge on a gallop. Just then Drake who was on ~~the~~ Post, sang out Walk that horse, as it was against orders to trot across as the bridge was old and shaky. He did not stop so Drake sang out again, dam you, walk that horse or I will fire at you. By that time, the corporal and myself sprang up and taking my gun in my hand, I stepped into the doorway. Just then the man rode up I saw that it was one of the men that we let go in the afternoon. Drake says where are you going. He said out into the country. What country, he replied, T.B. Drake said, "T.B. What?" He said T B Road. He then wanted to know if there had been any one through before he

caem. We told him "No". He said he is a dam pretty fellow. Well, I cannot wait. So Corporal Sullivan said "Demond, help open the gate." I did so and he put spurs to his horse and rode away. In a few minutes after we heard again another horse trotting across the bridge. Drake made him walk his horse. When he came up he wanted to know if a person had gone through. We told him "Yes". He said that he was a pretty fellow as he promised to meet me here. Well, he was asked, where are you going? He said "T.B." Up the T B Road, we let him through and Drake said it is funny what is going on tonight. About one half to one hour we heard a great noise across the bridge. Soon a squad of mounted soldiers came trotting across. We then learned for the first time of the assassination of the President too late to stop them. Oh, if I only knew of it before we opened the gate, they never would have got by for I would have shot them as quick as I would a mad dog. A great deal has been said about the guard stopping the only honest man when he tried to pass. In the first place, he did not have to countersign, and the next place was he was at the other end of bridge and the guards at that end stopped him. In regards to the report of Dana that he had removed the guards, it is all wrong. We were there that night and was not relieved until the 16th when I got orders to return to my Company. No guards were on the bridge after we left as the war was ended.

If I have omitted anything you will find it in my letter to Donna. I saw him talking with an officer on the bridge but do not know who it was. At this late day it is very hard for me to remember so far back. As I am 69 years old, was 18 when this happened on the night of the 14th of April, 1865.

Frederick A Demond

Late Private Co C 3rd Hvy Arty Mass. Volls.