

# 4 Civil War Veterans Recall Conflict in Plane Broadcast

(Picture on Page 15.)

"I've been shot at more this morning than I was in the whole Civil War," cracked 92-year-old Maj. Robert E. Wilson yesterday. But the ammunition consisted of photographers' flash bulbs instead of Union bullets and cannon balls.

The heaviest firing took place 5,000 feet above the rolling green hills of Maryland, but there was another sharp photographic barrage when Maj. Wilson and three other Civil War veterans posed by a twin-motored plane at the Washington Airport.

The veterans began their strenuous morning with a flight over Arlington National Cemetery, climaxed by the moment when a bouquet of rose petals and evergreen sprigs was dropped from the plane. Interviewed in the air for a Nation-wide radio broadcast, the old soldiers, two Northern and two Southern, spoke softly of battles three-fourths of a century old.

Sergt. Peter Pierre Smith, now of Washington, who fought for the Confederacy from 1862 to 1865, told of Gettysburg and campaigns in the Shenandoah Valley and gave his impressions of Lee and Jackson. Another voice was that of Col. H. C. Rizer, 1461 Belmont street northwest, who enlisted in the Union Army at the age of 16 and rose to command of a regiment in the Army of the Potomac before his twenty-first birthday.

Back on earth, Smith and Rizer, both 94 years old, felt tired and were taken home. But Wilson and William H. Jackson, 95, of New York, were good for another flight and were joined by a battery of cameramen when the airliner pointed northeast toward the site of the crucial battle of the Civil War.

Plans to circle over Gettysburg were abandoned, however, and the veterans had to settle for Frederick, Md. The country below looked familiar to Jackson, who marched up from Virginia through Maryland in the summer of 1863. With the last Union brigade to reach Gettysburg, Jackson's regiment was assigned to duty behind the battle lines.

Wilson, who lives today at 3548 Warder street northwest, did not enlist in the Confederate Army until nine months after Gettysburg, in days when Southern fortunes were low. "It wasn't easy," he recalls, "to get from my home in Prince Georges County in Maryland, across the river, and down behind the Southern lines. I did most of my traveling at night."

Enrolled in the First Maryland Cavalry, Wilson saw action in western Virginia "almost every day" through 1864. He had a horse killed under him, but was never wounded himself. He was still with his company in 1865 when it retreated nine days and nights from Richmond to Appomattox.

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Post Staff Photos

### Daughters of Union Veterans Honor the Dead.

Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War acted as colorbearers (above) in Memorial Day ceremonies at Battle Ground National Cemetery. At right, old-time enemies in the Civil War united in a flight from Washington Airport to broadcast flowers over graves from the plane. The veterans were William H. Jackson (left), 94, of New York, Union Army, and Maj. Robert W. Wilson, 96, a Confederate. At left, Senator David I. Walsh as he delivered the Memorial Day address at Arlington. He urged a strong national defense.