

Reprinted from the Philadelphia Weekly Times, July 31, 1886

REGIMENT HISTORIES

The Gallant Record of the Eighty-Eight
PENNSYLVANIA VOLUNTEERS

THE CAMERON LIGHT GUARD

An Organization That Had Its Fingers in
MANY A HARD FIGHT

ANNALS OF THE WAR

Events Described by Those Who Were
Active Participants

BY JOHN D. VAUTIER

The formation of the Eighty-Eighth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, Cameron Light Guard, was the result of an offer to the Secretary of War of a regiment for the three years of service, made June 2, 1861; by Major George P. McLean, of the Twenty-Second Pennsylvania, then in the field, in what is popularly known as three months service. This tender brought the following response:

“WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, AUGUST 9, 1861”

“COLONEL GEORGE P. MCLEAN, PHILADELPHIA, PA.”

Sir:

The regiment, which you offer, is accepted for three years or during the war, provided you have it ready for marching orders in thirty days. This acceptance is with the distinct understanding that the department will revoke the commissions of all officers who may be found incompetent for the proper discharge of their duties. You will promptly advise Adjutant General Thomas the date at which your men will be ready for mustering, and he will detail an officer for that purpose, who will be instructed to muster by company.

By Order of the Secretary of War,
JAMES LESLEY, JR.
“Chief Clerk, War Department”

It will be seen by the above order that the regiment was recruited entirely independent of State authority, and was known for two or three months as "United States Volunteers," until Governor Curtin claimed the regiment as part of the State's quota. In the meantime recruiting was being actively pushed and the field and staff organized as follows: Colonel, George P. McLean; Lieutenant Colonel Joseph A. McLean, of Reading; Major, George W. Gile; Adjutant, B.F. Foust; Quartermaster, D.D. Jones, of Slatington; Surgeon, J.H. Seltzer; Chaplin, Charles W. Clothier. A camp was established in Fairmount Park, on the Schuylkill River, about half a mile below the Wissahickon creek. It was the intention of Colonel McLean to muster fifteen companies, but while recruiting was being briskly pushed by the various officers of these companies peremptory orders were issued from the War Department to all colonels forming regiments to raise ten companies only for each full regiment, and accordingly, the following companies were selected: Company A, Captain, G.W. Knabb, Company B, Captain, H.A. Myers; Company C, Captain, J.J. Belsterling; Company D, Captain, G.W. Fairlamb; Company E, Captain C.S. Carmack, Company F, Captain T.W. Dunham; Company G, Captain, J.S. Dull, Company H, Captain, D. Griffith; Company I, Captain, J.R. White; Company K, Captain, W.F. Powell.

OFF TO THE FRONT

On October 5, 1861, the regiment struck tents, and 800 strong reached Washington on Sunday night, and on Monday morning the men were fed at the Soldiers' Rest. On long tables the "grub" was spread, consisting of "coffee in tin cups, minus milk; bread, minus butter, and a luscious chunk of boiled pork, dripping with fat." The only thing that prevented these gentlemen from rebelling against such fare was the assurance of our kind-hearted colonel that "it would be better after we got in camp and had our own cooks." As it was many of the dainty ones refused to touch the "mess." And satisfied the cravings of their stomachs by investing their spare change in leathery pies and spongy-gingerbread, which really was far less wholesome than the meal provided by the government. They knew that when they took the field, and wished many times for the rations they so contemptuously refused that morning at the Rest.

During the day the regiment marched to Kendle Green, about a mile from the capitol, and went into camp. Our rifles had not been issued yet, and it appeared to the Colonel a very unmilitary, and, to the men, a very ludicrous spectacle, guarding the camp with clubs, and the officers, with keen swords and resplendent in showy new uniforms, assembled at the guard house and fearlessly took the posts assigned them. During the night a tremendous storm broke upon the camp, the wind howling and the rain falling in torrents, but the officers courageously faced the pelting rain and gloriously waded through the mire until morning – a more bedraggled and forlorn-looking set of officers it would be difficult to imagine.

A MORE WARLIKE VIEW

October 12 the regiment went to Alexandria where the situation became more warlike, for we were at last in the enemy's country and might at any moment be called upon to face the foe. The sentiment of a majority of the Alexandrians was very bitter toward Union soldiers, the female portion venting their disgust upon every favorable occasion. To show their aversion for the national flag many people would not pass under it when suspended across the pavement at company quarters, but would pass around by taking to the street. All this was extremely galling to the men, but as the offenders were mostly women nothing was done in return, until upon one occasion a young man, escorting two women conspicuously displaying the Confederate colors – red, white and red – approached the swinging flag and as usual went into the street to pass around it, and in the hearing of the soldiers expressing their contempt for flag and government generally. This was more than the soldiers could endure, and the trio had(*illegible*)..... in the presence of his now terrified companions he was given the choice of walking under the flag or to have the "top of his head" blown off. It is needless to say which alternative the man chose, but it ended these open insults of the flag. The regiment remained guarding policing the town until February 18, 1862, when the command was divided into two battalions – one, consisting of Companies A, C, D, E, and I, under Colonel McLean, went into camp on the eastern branch, near Washington, guarding with details Forte Baker, Davis, Goodhope, Ricketts, Carroll, Greble, Snyder and Stanton. The other battalion, under Major Gile, was left at Alexandria, and subsequently picketed the Orange and Alexandria Railroad until April 17, when the wings were reunited at Cloud's Mills, when they were again placed on picket duty along the railroad down to Manassas Junction.

OFF FOR FREDERICKSBURG

The regiment remained on duty until May, when it was placed on Duryea's Brigade and order to Fredericksburg. While passing through Alexandria Colonel McLean was presented with a magnificent sword by Major McKenzie, on behalf of the loyal citizens of the place. At Fredericksburg quite an army was concentrating, and it now appeared to be the boys that possibly the war might not be over, before they had a whack at the Confederates, as we now expected to go straight down to Richmond, but the anticipated march southward was not made, except by the Pennsylvania Reserves; but on the 25th of May the division struck tents and turning its back, upon Fredericksburg marched to Aquia creek, on the way to the Shenandoah Valley to capture Jackson and his army of raiders. The forced reached Washington on the 26th, and returning to Alexandria debarked, and taking the cars reached Manassas Junction at midnight. On May 28th, the division having been concentrated at Manassas took up the line of March for Front Royal, which place we reached early on Sunday morning, June 1st. Here after a show of attacking Stonewall's retreating columns, we settled down to the quiet of camp life, leaving Shields' Division to do all the marching and fighting. The division remained near

Front Royal until June 19, 1862, when it returned again to Manassas, preparatory to the advance upon Cedar Mountain. On June 21st our magnificent band, was mustered out of service and took their march for the more peaceful limits of Reading, Pa., leaving the regiment in a wilderness of grief and three cracked drums, with two wheezy fifes, to cheer the weary spirits of the men with their exhilarating music. General Pope now having assumed command of this army a concentration of the various divisions were directed upon Culpepper, and early in August quite a force was assembled here. August 5th Ricketts' Division, to which the regiment belonged, struck tents at Waterloo, and on the morning of August 9th were beyond Culpepper waiting the appearance of Jackson's Corps, who had crossed the Rapidan the day before. While halting here Banks' men came down the pike and passing through our lines proceeded to the front, pouncing open the Southern Brigades before they had time to form a line of battle, driving them back in confusion. We lay in sight and sound of the field all the afternoon. Why we not ordered to assist the now exhausted regiments of Banks' Division is not known, but if Rickett's Division, some 7,000 or 8,000 strong, had gone in sooner the story of Cedar Mountain would be different.

THE CHRISTENING BATTLE

At sunset Colonel McLean led the regiment forward and we were soon under a heavy artillery fire, but being in the front of our batteries the missiles of the contestants sung merrily overhead, inflicting but small loss to us in this, our christening battle. Throwing out skirmishers, we occupied the field all night and in the morning the enemy were gone, but the litter of broken gun carriages, dead horses and men indicated the terrible scorching Hall had given the Confederate cannoneers the night before. After the enemy had retired beyond the Rapidan the regiment advanced and occupied this line until the concentration of the Confederate armies compelled Pope to retrograde to the Rappahannock, which movement was begun on the evening of August 18, 1862, Tower's Brigade, covering the rear and standing in line of battle until the other brigades were out of danger. In, cutting away the railroad bridge over Cedar Run Lieutenant Harry Anderson, a promising young officer of Company C, was killed, having been caught in the falling timbers and carried down with the bridge. The Rappahannock was reached on the night of the 19th and a stand made there for several days, the fighting along the line being at times quite severe, as Lee at various places attempted to force a crossing. Captain Hall, commanding the Maine Battery, so skillfully handled his guns that it was dangerous for the enemy to uncover themselves. A party of the enemy, led by a mounted officer, attempted to cross at the ford near the railroad bridge, but Hall cleverly emptied the saddle. The horse coming over was confiscated by Lieutenant Fairlamb, acting adjutant, and was killed under that officer at the battle of Bull Run. On the night of August 23rd Tower's Brigade, of which the Eighty-Eighth Regiment was part, being the rear guard, destroyed the bridge and other property and made a night march in the mud to the Upper Rappahannock. This miserable march will long be remembered by the men as Pope's mud march, the mire being so tenacious that many of the soldiers had their shoes torn from their feet and lost

them in the mud. Until the 26th the regiment marched and countermarched over the hills and through the briar fields near Culpepper pike, fighting and marching day and night, but on the night of the 26th took the back track through Warrenton, it being discovered that we were wanted in the rear; in fact, our rear was our front, it being just now impossible to locate the rear long in any particular direction. We went in every quarter, hoping to find the enemy, but he was always gone by the time we got there.

COLONEL COULTER'S REGIMENT SUFFERS

But it was at length discovered that Lee's army was divided and we enjoyed a night march to Thoroughfare Gap to prevent Longstreet coming through to Jackson's assistance. Reaching the gap in the afternoon it was found that Longstreet's advance was there disputing our advance. Skirmishers were thrown out and a brisk engagement ensued, the enemy being(*illegible*)..... quite severe, principally in Colonel Dick Coulter's Regiment, which did the heaviest fighting. The division then rested on their arms until dark, then fell back to Gainesville, and from there the next day proceeded to Greenwich and Manassas Junction, when, hearing firing over near Bull Run, the head of the column was directed there. Passing through Porter's troops lying by the roadside, we reached the battlefield in the evening. The condition of the men in this division was now pitiable, being without rations, many without shoes, and all dirty, hungry and weary. Numbers of them from sickness and exhaustion had fallen out by the way, and those who remained with the colors were reduced to the last extremity for something to eat, it being no unusual thing to see the men searching by abandoned camp-fires, picking up morsels of crackers and bones, with scraps of meat, to satisfy their hunger. The quartermaster or the troops were lost; it was not clear which. The morning of August 30th (Saturday) was spent in issuing rations and massing the troops of McDowell's Division near the Stone house. In the afternoon the joyful news was imparted to the men that Lee was on the skedaddle, piking it straight for the mountains, and our division was instructed to pile their knapsacks and go after fugitives with all speed, ample arrangements being made to care for all the abandoned guns, wagons, flags, etc., which was supposed they would throw away in their flight. Accordingly head of the column was started along the Sudley Springs road, but scarcely had Duryea's Brigade disappeared over the hill when the real purpose of Lee was manifest in launching all of Longstreet's Corps upon our left and crushing in on our lines. The order to "about face," "forward, double-quick," was quickly given, and Tower, with his own and Hartsuff's Brigades, were rushed past the Stone house, across the pike, down a hill and over a little rivulet in the direction of the place known as the Clunn farm, the extreme left of the Union line. The fields and hills a mile or so in our front wore gray with Confederate regiments as they swarmed from the woods, and with waving flags and glittering bayonets swept down the hill and up the slope to our position.

APPARENTLY A WEAK LINE

To us our line appeared very weak. We could see no troops and but a few scattered batteries, who manfully held their ground and were vigorously firing upon the gray lines advancing by the Clunn house. To our left a crowd of zouaves in red uniform said to be the Fifth and Tenth New York, were slowly retreating before the Confederate troops. They were apparently badly damaged, about every other man being wounded, and others assisting disabled comrades to the rear. Amid the confusion our regiment deployed as they could on the hill, and at once opened a savage fire on the yelling Confederates in their front. To strengthen our line two pieces of artillery were rushed through our regiment, but after un-incumbering the horses attached to the caissons were wounded, and dashing frantically through our ranks, disappeared, leaving the guns without ammunition, they being afterward taken by the enemy. The loss of the regiment at this point while resisting the assaults of Longstreet's Brigade was appalling. Lieutenant Colonel McLean, commanding was killed; Captain Belsterling killed at the head of his company, Captain Wagner, of Company D; Stretch, of Company I; Lieutenant Fairlamb and Lieutenant Patterson were wounded, together with nearly 200 of the rank and file, who were killed or wounded. Notwithstanding this terrific storm of destroying missiles the Union battalions manfully clung to the hill, repulsing all attempts to drive them off, until a heavy force debouched from the timber directly on their left flank, which at once opened an enfilading fire that racked the line from left to right. The left wing intuitively swung around to face this attack, but the Confederate brigades at this moment, charging at all points, swept the Union troops from the field. The companies of the Eighty-Eighth retreated down to the pike, and rallying in detachments, after dark, proceeded to Centerville. This ended the bloody battle, one of the most disastrous this regiment ever participated in and, from which it never fully recovered. The regiment took in the battle less than 500 men and of these lost near 200. On the 31st the regiment reorganized at Centerville, defeated, somewhat discouraged, but not dismayed, and advanced in line of battle toward the front. On the 1st of September the brigade was double-quickened to Chantilly and formed the second line, waiting in line of battle all night, soaked by rain, chilled by cold, a night that will not be soon forgotten by those who were there.

GOING TO THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN

With the rest of the brigade and army the regiment lay in camp at Hall's Hill until the 6th of September, when the march was taken up for Maryland, passing through the Capital in the night, encamping near Cooksville on the 11th, Frederick the 13th and on South Mountain battlefield on the 14th. The battle was almost over when we reached the field, but what we lost here in experience we gained at Antietam on the 16th and 17th. That battle opened on the afternoon of the 16th, and the Eighty-Eighth was well up in the front, under an exceedingly interesting fire, which was maintained by the enemy long after nightfall. When the firing ceased the regiment groped around among the tree's in a darkness so thick that it almost be felt, and

after blindly stumbling around for a while the men lay down to rest. At the first ray of daylight the rapid pop, pop, pop of the pickets' rifles warned the soldiers that their Southern friends were on hand and ready for business. There was no time for breakfast, as there had been no opportunity for supper the night before, but the regiment moved forward in column of division, and soon deploying faced the enemy and opened fire. The regiment was under a wicked fire from both infantry and artillery, suffering very severely in killed and wounded. Major Gile, while passing along the line encouraging the men, was seriously wounded and carried from the field; but the battalion held its ground without thought of retreating, until the order was repeatedly passed along the line to "fall back." Even then many of the men were reluctant to go. Some other troops took our place, and the regiment fell to the rear to support batteries the remainder of the day. The Eighty-Eighth mustered about 350 present on the 16th and lost about 100 of those, almost all in killed and wounded. After the battle the division encamped near the field, until the Army of the Potomac turned their faces southward, when, October 31st, 1862, the Potomac was crossed, and the series of maneuvers performed that culminated in the hopeless contest at Fredericksburg on December 13th. So severe had been the duty and heavy the losses in action that the regiment carried into battle barely 250 men, yet this handful, led by Major Griffith, covered their flag with honor and were the last to leave that disastrous field, having crossed the river on the 12th and recrossed at 4 A.M. on the 16th. The brigade now settled down in camp near Fletcher's Chapel until January 20th, when the celebrated mud march occurred. After this fiasco the discouraged troops returned to Fletcher's Chapel and lay in winter quarters until Chancellorsville campaign in the early part of May, 1863, and at the conclusion of this brilliantly planned but abortive(illegible)..... until June 12th, when tents were struck and the grand march that resulted in the battle of Gettysburg commenced.

IN GOD'S COUNTRY AGAIN

The regiment reached Bealton on June 13th, Centreville the 15th, crossed over the Pennsylvania line on the 30th, the boys shouting for joy as they again tramped the soil of the old Keystone State, being back in "God's country" once more.

The regiment now being attached to Baxter's Brigade, Robinson's Division and Reynolds' First Corps, mustering 325 men 294 being present for duty. The other divisions of the corps had march toward Gettysburg on the morning of July 1st, Robinson's Division quickly following. A halt was made behind the seminary and an impromptu barricade of fence rails hastily erected. In short time the brigade fell in line preparatory to reinforcing their hard pressed comrades of the First and Second Divisions, and at the command to "load at will" the ramrods sparkled in the warm sunshine and jingled merrily as the soldiers tore their cartridges and with many a jest of the pills and medicine they were preparing, shouldered their arms and marching over the ridge prolonged the Union right to the Mummasburg road. Here behind a low stone wall (now marked by a granite tablet, to commemorate the event)

the regiment, with the brigade, maintained their position for several hours against the assaults of the enemy.

THE TAR HEELERS COME

About 3 o'clock Iverson's North Carolina Brigade, having made an unsuccessful charge on the Union line, countercharged by order of Baxter, who, riding behind the Eighty-Eighth, ordered them to fix bayonets and give them the cold steel". The boys were full of fight and charged through the Confederate lines, capturing almost the entire brigade with colors and officers, the Eighty-Eighth taking two flags, one of them, the Twenty-Third North Carolina, being captured by Captain Richards and Sergeant Gilligan in a hand-to-hand contest with the color guard. Shortly after 3 o'clock, the Eleventh Corps being swept away from our right, the brigade was flanked and forced to leave the position so valiantly held with the loss of so many true companions. So close were the enemy that the boys were obligated to "git" with the least delay. Many were captured, many were killed, and when the regiment gathered around the colors on the hill back of the town scarcely one hundred answered the roll call. On July 2nd, the regiment, with the brigade, were engaged on the left, and on the 3rd occupied the position marked by the tablet and know as Ziegler's Grove. Many valued officers and men were lost in this battle, both in prisoners and killed and wounded, among the latter being Major Foust, commanding the regiment. In the subsequent pursuit of Lee's army the regiment took an active part, always in the front, ready for any and all duty. On July 17th the morning report shows 180 present. On July 18 the Potomac was again crossed. On the 23rd we passed through Warrenton and landed on the banks of the Rappahannock at the railroad bridge on August 1st, the identical ground from which Lee had chased us nearly a year before, our position with Colonel Lyle's Regiment and four companies of the Sixth New York S.S. being on the red hills on the south bank. While encamped here, the guard one dark night was surprised to see a Federal soldier with dripping garments come out of the river, and in answer to inquiry of the guard proclaimed himself a deserter from the Yankee army and wished to be sent South. He proved to be a substitute from the Twenty-Eighth Massachusetts, who supposed we were Confederates. He was surprised to still find himself under Uncle Sam's flag, and was sent back to his regiment under guard. September 16th we struck tents and proceeded to the Rapidan, relieving the Twelfth Corps, who have "shook" the Army of the Potomac and are going westward to seek fresher and better pastures.

SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE

The famous retrograde march when our army retreated to Centerville was inaugurated on October 10th, Centerville being reached on the 14th. Our corps advanced out to Cob Run on the 15th, through Bull Run battlefield, and encamped near Gainesville on the 19th, and while busily engaged preparing the evening meal we were startled by the rebel yell, sharp and distinct, on our left. Every man sprang to arms and the artillery opening a rapid fire the Johnnies were soon repulsed, it being a body of Confederate horsemen, who had charged our camp. They had

possession at one time of some of our cannon, but the artillery men quickly rallied and drove them off before we could get close to them. In November we participated in the advance which resulted in the victories at Rappahannock and Kelley's Ford and on November 27th went to Mine Run with Meade, but, after some sharp fighting, on December 2nd we were glad to leave that ugly looking place and silently march back to the river. We forded the chilly waters of the Rappahannock at Kelley's Ford on December 3rd and, for a change, on the 4th waded back again, much to the disgust of the men. December 18th, 1863, the regiment was paraded to receive two new flags, presented by the State, through Colonel Wagner, being received for the regiment by Major Sellers, of the Ninetieth.

While at Culpepper in winter quarters, in January, 1863, the regiment nearly all reenlisted and went home for furlough, those who did not reenlist being temporarily transferred to Colonel Lyle's Ninetieth Regiment, then encamped on the Sperryville pike, near Culpepper, where they were kindly entertained until the Eighty-Eighth returned from home on April 10, 1864. During April a complete reorganization of the army was effected, the corps being consolidated and equipped for a campaign which, it was hoped, would result in the destruction of Lee's army and end the war. The Eighty-Eighth was still in Baxter's Brigade in the Fifth Corps, being entitled to wear a white Maltese cross with a circle in the centre. On the 5th of May the regiment crossed the Rapidan and marched to the front, where the brigade was already at work. As the men quietly passed through the gloom of the dense woods, the rattle and patter of the musketry came with awful distinctness through the trees, sometimes in fitful spats, but at other times in a fierce, steady roar, not unlike the noise made by a troop of boys with sticks rattling along a picket fence. This was music, the crescendo and diminuendo of the battlefield, and as the soldiers quickly and silently stepped through the forest, every man thoughtfully communed in his heart and speculated on his chances of occupying a soldier's grave before the struggle should be decided.

WILD GOOSE CHASE

Through all these terrible days of fire and smoke and blood the brigade marched, now here or there, wherever a reliable body of troops, were needed.(*illegible*)..... through a slashing into the woods, the men waited along the road to see what the videtto's would uncover, when away down the left of the line firing commenced by file, gradually extending up to the Eighty-Eighth Regiment's position. No enemy appearing, the firing stopped there. The report of the rifles had scarcely ceased when our line of skirmishers, led by Henry Booz, of E Company, came tearing from the woods, greatly excited and shouting to our men not to fire, as there were no Confederate there. Late on the 7th an officer brought the intelligence that Lee was retreating and at nine o'clock that night our division started in pursuit, taking the Brock road for Spottsylvania. The marching was of the most exhausting nature, going but a few yards, then stopping, then starting, but at daybreak the cavalry brigade was relieved, and Baxter, filing to the right and left of the road, charged the

enemy, who had two pieces of artillery on the road, but their shot went over the heads of our men and did but small damage. Before the troops could reach the guns they and their supports were up and away out of reach. Reforming, the regiment advanced by Alsop's farm and "tackled" a second line, very strongly built and manned by Anderson's Division of Confederate troops. The charge on this position was gallantly made, but being flanked on the left by a strong column was compelled to fall back in quick order. On reaching the woods in our rear a band of music was playing "Hail Columbia." And though the men had just got a heavy dose of the same they rallied on the colors and in the evening again advanced to the front. On Monday, the 9th, the regiment constructed elaborate breastworks and repulsed an attack of the enemy, and on the 10th we returned the compliment by charging their works, but they repaid us back with interest, all our attempts to pierce their line proving futile. In these two contests our regiment lost about seventy-five men, leaving only a handful, a little more than one hundred present with the colors. In the afternoon a division, wearing the diamond badge of the third corps, formed in our rear, preparatory to trying their hands on the Confederate works.

A BRAVE COLOR BEARER

As they were forming the Confederates open a savage fire upon our lines, and these men being in our rear got the full benefit of it. To save themselves as much as possible they lay flat on the ground, all except the color bearer, who, disdainful to shield himself, stood upright amidst the iron tempest with his standard in his hand. Presently, with a terrible shriek, a shell came tearing directly over our heads and burying itself in the ground in front of the color bearer exploded, throwing up an immense cloud of dust and smoke. We thought surely the poor fellow was a "goner," and we watched the place, dreading that our fears should be realized. Presently the dust settled and the smoke drifted away, but our flag was still there. Proudly and firmly the color sergeant stood as immovable as an oak, with the folds of the standard fluttering gayly in the breeze.

All through this terrible campaign, day and night, the regiment was on the skirmish line, in battle array or lying in reserve under fire. We had fire and ball and shell almost every day until the middle of June, an unprecedented series of struggles, which in the former history of the Army of the Potomac every one of them could truthfully be called a battle. On the 21st the regiment went down to Jericho and fell in with the enemy again, who suddenly opened a terrific cannonade upon our division as they lay in line, massed in column of division, and though the balls struck around almost everywhere but slight loss was inflicted, the most damage being done to the coffee-coolers and stragglers in the rear, who fled in terror to the river bank for protection. Leaving the North Ann we crossed the Pamunkey, but found the ubiquitous Johnnies awaiting our approach and we were again received with unstinted doses of powder and lead. Our rations often ran short and the quartermaster sometimes went back on us and failed to come in time, but the Confederates never. They were always on hand and their supply of ammunition

appeared to be inexhaustible.

A TEAR FOR THE UNKNOWN DEAD

During this time the boys were dropping one by one. Truly “the world knows nothing of its greatest men,” and will never know how these devoted men nobly died for their country. June 13th Captain George B. Rhoades, commanding the regiment, was killed by a cannon ball and buried where he fell. One June 9th, a soldier of the Eleventh Pennsylvania was cooking and eating breakfast by the campfire. Something attracted his attention, when he raised up, and looking over the breastworks received a ball in his head and fell a corpse. His comrades gathered his body, rolled it in his blanket and in a few minutes buried him in a shallow trench, and within a half hour were sitting on his grave discussing the chances of the survivors to fill the next one. Upon crossing the James the brigade assaulted Petersburg and suffered heavily in killed and wounded. So fierce was the fire that the men quailed before the storm while charging, and halted behind a slight fence, when John Ewing, carrying the flag, gallantly charged the enemy alone, and planting the colors within a few yards of the Confederate works called the regiment to the support of the standard. While lying here close to the rebel works the men had excellent practice in sharp shooting, the enemy being engaged in strengthening their works by digging it outward giving the rifle men chances for “fancy shots” in firing at the shovels, spades, hands or whatever appeared in sight above the earthwork. The marksmanship of Private Henry Booz of Company E was especially accurate. In one of their cannon they had left a swab and so accurate was Booz’s fire that all their efforts to remove the swab from the gun failed. In the movement on the Weldon Railroad Captain Jacob Houder, commanding the regiment, was killed by a Minie ball through the head. In the fall the term of service of many of the “old sogers” expired. After three years of hard service they were honorably mustered out, leaving but a handful of veterans, the ranks being so sadly depleted that entire battalion was no larger than an original company in 1861. In November two hundred drafted men were assigned to the regiment, the first important accession of strength since 1861.

ON HAND WHEN WANTED

In the various battles preceding the final movement the regiment always had their “fingers in,” notably at Hatcher’s Run, Poplar Grove Church and the “Apple-Jack Raid” to the North Carolina line in the fall. While returning from this raid the regiment was detailed to cover the flanks of the brigade, leaving headquarters, consisting of the colors, Dr. Shoemaker and Adjutant Gilligan, to bring up the center and rear. Upon passing through a woods and crossing a field the cavalry, acting as a rear guard, were savagely charged by the Confederate troopers, who chased our horsemen pell mell in upon the “headquarters” of the Eighty-Eighth, when Adjutant Gillian undertook to rally our cavalry. Riding boldly back, he supposed he could

easily stop the rout, but when our affrighted sabers, reached him they simply divided to the right and left, and the astonished captain suddenly found himself among the "Buttermilk Hunters," who, after attempting to cut him down, accepted him as a prisoner. The rebels pursued the Union horse until they struck the brigade guard, who opened up on them and soon sent them flying back. Gilligan saw them speeding back and, slipping off his horse, lay on the ground, hoping to escape observation. When the Confederates reached him they had no time to stop and their horse all jumping over him he safely regained the regiment, but entirely encased in mud, a(illegible)..... enjoyed by all except(illegible)..... marched to Washington and participated with the Army of the Potomac in the grand review and were finally mustered out on June 30, 1865.

SOME FINAL FIGURES

Thus ended the service of this regiment in the great war of the rebellion, and the men composing the organization quietly returned to the peaceful pursuits of civil life. The list of casualties in the battalion during the term of service was as follows: Number of men on the rolls, 1,200; of these 170 died, 26 of them being killed at Bull Run and over 300 wounded. Eight commissioned officers were killed on the battlefield, three of them at the time being in command of the regiment. Quite a number of prominent soldiers graduated from this regiment, among them being Brevet Brigadier General G.W. Gile, Brevet Brigadier General B. F. Foust, Brevet Brigadier General Louis Wagner and General Robert B. Beath, Past Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, all of them earning their promotion and bearing honorable wounds, from which they will undoubtedly suffer as long as they live.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA