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Stories the Monuments Tell

The First Corps on July 1

LEON REED

To friend and foe alike, this whole field is sacred. The baptism of fire and blood is upon it. It was dedicated in smoke of cannon and rifle, which rose like incense during three long summer days and it needs no word nor stroke of pen to reiterate the consecration then given to it.

—Address of Major E. B. Wight, Dedication of 24th Michigan Monument, June 12, 1889

The First Corps at Gettysburg

On June 30, 1863, two brigades of Brig. Gen. John Buford's cavalry division passed through Gettysburg and took up position along Chambersburg Pike west of the town. Although he had no orders to defend Gettysburg, he had recognized the heights south of town (Cemetery Hill and Ridge, Culp's Hill) as superior defensive ground for a battle. On the evening of June 30, Buford dispatched a note to First Corps commander, Maj. Gen. John Reynolds, informing him of his decision to make a fight and urging him to hurry forward.¹

Reynolds arrived on the field around 8:30 a.m. on July 1, conferred with Buford, and agreed that the high ground south of town was a good site for a battle. He hurried Brig. Gen. James Wadsworth's division onto the field to replace Buford's over-matched cavalry. Wadsworth's Second Brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Lysander Cutler, was the first to arrive. The 56th Pennsylvania earned the honor of being the first Federal infantry regiment to deploy in line of battle and fire an organized volley.²

Wadsworth's division deployed on McPherson Ridge, with most of Cutler's brigade north of the Chambersburg Pike and most of Brig. Gen. Solomon Meredith's "Iron Brigade" south of the Pike in Herbst's Woods. Confederate Maj. Gen. Henry Heth, commanding the lead division in Lee's advance, was slow to bring his troops forward and Wadsworth's division held its own in the morning phase of the fight. In fact, the Iron Brigade staged a counterattack and captured hundreds of prisoners from Brig. Gen. James Archer's brigade, including the brigade commander himself.³

Maj. Gen. Abner Doubleday's Third Division, now commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas Rowley, arrived on the field around 11:00 a.m. Col. Chapman Biddle's brigade was placed on the far left while Col. Roy Stone's brigade deployed near the McPherson barn along Chambersburg Pike.

Initially held in reserve near the Seminary, Brig. Gen. John Robinson's Second Division was deployed north of Wadsworth on Oak Ridge to deal with the new threat posed by the arrival of Maj. Gen. Richard Ewell's corps. At first, Confederate Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes put his brigades in piecemeal and Brig. Gen. Henry Baxter's regiments (with some help from arriving Eleventh Corps troops on their right) had little trouble handling Col. Edward O'Neal and Brig. Gen. Alfred Iverson's solitary attacks. Col. Gabriel Paul's brigade joined Baxter's line on Oak Ridge later.

¹ Henry J. Hunt, "The First Day at Gettysburg," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol. 3, *The Tide Shifts* (Secaucus: Castle, 1984), 273.

² Bradley M. Gottfried, *Brigades of Gettysburg: The Union and Confederate Brigades at the Battle of Gettysburg* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2002), 50; Frederick W. Hawthorne, *Gettysburg: Stories of Men and Monuments* (Gettysburg: Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides, 1988), 25.

³ Report of Abner Doubleday, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), Series 1, Volume 27, Part 1, 245. All references to the Official Records are taken from Series 1, Volume 27 and will be cited as OR, part and page number.

<i>Brigade</i>	<i>Percent Loss</i>
Biddle	71
Meredith	65
Cutler	46
Paul	67
Stone	65
Baxter	47

The First Corps success could not last. When the fighting resumed in mid-afternoon, both Heth and Rodes organized more effective attacks on the entire First Corps line while Early's division arrived to handle the Eleventh Corps. The First Corps lines were outnumbered, flanked, and pushed back. They made a brief stand on Seminary Ridge, then retreated through town in some disorder, taking up new positions on Cemetery Hill.

The First Corps paid dearly for its stubborn fight on July 1. Every one of its six brigades engaged on July 1 took at least 47 percent casualties at Gettysburg.⁴

After July 1, the First Corps was basically finished as a fighting force. It was disbanded and combined with the Fifth Corps the following spring in the reorganization of the Army of the Potomac.⁵

This perishable stone conveys at least one thought. It stands where many are reared, to tell future generations that here the unity of the nation was cemented in blood—that here on the soil of Pennsylvania, by the sinews and sacrifice of her sons was reset the keystone of the arch.

—Address of Walter L. C. Biddle, Dedication of Original 121st Pennsylvania Monument, July 3, 1886

Stories the Monuments Tell

For years, I thought the monuments at Gettysburg were little more than statements by the old veterans that “we were here.” After I moved to Gettysburg and began to explore the battlefield on foot, I came to realize that they are much more. They can

⁴ A few regiments from the First Corps were engaged in fighting on Culp's Hill or near the Angle on July 2 and 3, so some of these casualties were taken later in the battle. However, the vast majority were taken on July 1.

⁵ Harry W. Pfanz, *Gettysburg: The First Day* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 330.

help us understand the movements and sequence of fighting and the strengths and weaknesses of positions taken by various regiments. They are also statements by the veterans. Some of them show us how the regiments fought.⁶ Others honor heroic deeds by members of the regiment⁷ or honor fallen officers.⁸ Some make a sentimental statement⁹ while others appear to be an effort of the veterans to get something off their chests.¹⁰

Most important, perhaps, the monuments often tell us what the veterans thought was important about their three days at Gettysburg and what they wanted us to remember. They are imperfect historical records but they express the veterans' memories. Speaking at the 149th Pennsylvania monument dedication, Major J. F. Slagle stated:

The 149th Regiment held the point of the angle . . . and notwithstanding the many assaults made upon it, not a foot of ground was lost. We are clearly entitled to place our monument upon the apex of this “bloody angle” of the first day.¹¹

Unfortunately, Confederate regiments and states built almost no monuments at Gettysburg while the veterans were alive. This happened because: (1) Gettysburg represented a Union victory and was not seen as a place for celebration by Confederate veterans, (2) Southern states were impoverished and not in a position to sponsor construction of monuments, (3) the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association's (GBMA) “line of battle” rule meant

⁶ Examples include a soldier on Culp's Hill firing from behind breastworks (78th/102nd NY), the fight for possession of Wiedrich's battery on East Cemetery Hill (73rd PA), the heroic charge of the 1st Minnesota fighting Wright's forces near Codori barn (106th PA), and skirmishing on Bliss Farm (12th NJ).

⁷ Color Sergt. William Lilley mending the flag under fire on Culp's Hill (149th NY) and Col. Harrison Jeffers holding the flag for the 4th Michigan (Wheatfield).

⁸ Examples include Col. Strong Vincent (83rd PA and an individual marker), Col. Augustus van Horn Ellis (124th New York), Brig. Gen. Samuel Zook monument on Wheatfield Rd., Col. George Willard marker in Plum Run, and Col. George H. Ward monument (15th Massachusetts), near Codori barn.

⁹ One regiment making a sentimental statement was the 86th New York, whose monument shows a woman praying over a dead soldier and bears the caption “I yield him unto his country and his God.”

¹⁰ The 13th Vermont was clearly taking a shot at over-zealous staff officers when its monument showed Lt. Stephen Brown standing on a hatchet. Brown had carried a hatchet into battle because his sword had been confiscated when he disobeyed an order not to allow troops to fall out and get water while on the march to Gettysburg. The original design showed Brown carrying the hatchet, but that was considered to be an endorsement of insubordination and was rejected.

¹¹ Address of Maj. J. F. Slagle, dedication ceremony for 149th Pennsylvania, *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg, Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments Erected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: W. Stanley Day, State Printer, 1914) Vol. 2, 746.

The location of the First Corps monuments on the July 1 battlefield. Phil Laino.

that Confederate units were required to place their monuments out along Confederate lines, far from the Angle and other spots where they had fought and died, and (4) Union veterans (including GBMA leadership) were often not sympathetic to Confederate proposals. Although every Confederate state eventually built a monument, there are only eight monuments on the field honoring Confederate regiments or brigades. Five of these were built in the 1980s or later.

Now, on this field where the young blood leaped in our veins, we . . . here saw our comrades expire, breathing only prayers for our country's welfare. . . . We may quickly pass away, centuries will roll by, but these granite monuments will long endure. And the American youth who will come to this monumented field to study its lessons, will come from every State of a Union greater, more populous, and grander than we can now conceive.

—Captain J. C. Johnson, Dedication of Monument to 149th Pennsylvania

Biddle's Brigade: Stuck on the Flank

Col. Chapman Biddle's brigade deployed along present day Reynolds Avenue and had open flanks on both sides. The 121st Pennsylvania formed the left flank of the Army of the Potomac.¹² When the 151st Pennsylvania was detached, the brigade line contained only about 830 men in three small regiments.¹³ In the afternoon attacks, the brigade was overlapped on its left and attacked in front by brigades commanded by Col. Burkitt Fry (Archer's brigade), Col. John Brockenbrough (Pettigrew's brigade), and Brig. Gen. James Lane (of Pender's division). Lt. Col. Alexander Biddle, commanding the 121st, described the Confederate attack: "A large body of the enemy's troops had been seen to the west of our position throughout the day. While we were taking up a position facing to the north, to support a battery at the corner of a wood, the troops were seen advancing. We changed front . . . I saw the line of the enemy slowly approaching up the hill, extending far beyond our left flank, for which we had no defense."¹⁴

¹² Report of Col. Chapman Biddle, *OR*, 1.27:315.

¹³ Report of BG Thomas Rowley, *OR*, 1.27:313.

¹⁴ Lt. Col. Alexander Biddle, *OR*, 1.27:323.

The brigade joined the retreat and took a position on Seminary Ridge where the corps made a brief stand. Biddle reported that the regiment defended the fence of the hospital grounds until the Confederates again flanked them on the left. The regiment then retreated through town to Cemetery Hill where, Biddle reported, "I have almost exactly one-fourth of our force and one commissioned officer besides myself."¹⁵ The remnants of the regiment spent the night singing hymns, "showing that there was no panic in the hearts of men who, after so many weary hours of fighting and such heavy losses, could find comfort in their dear old tunes."¹⁶

The monument to the 121st Pennsylvania shows a bomb burst on the upper left face and an American flag draped over the top right. These features symbolize two incidents from the battle's first day. The exploding shell depicts the heavy artillery fire the soldiers withstood (from Confederate guns on Herr Ridge to the west and Oak Hill to the north). Acting brigade commander Chapman Biddle referred to this constant shelling in his after action report. In an 1880 speech given to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Chapman Biddle said: "Notwithstanding the great disparity in numbers between the contending forces, and that the left of the Federal line was greatly outflanked, the position was maintained with spirit for a considerable time under a severe direct and oblique fire."¹⁷

The American flag is a reference to the regimental flag, which was shot up and had its staff fragmented. The regimental history reported that: "While carrying the colors at Gettysburg, the staff was shot into fragments, and [Color Sergt. William Hardy] bore the flag and the staff in three pieces off the field when the entire line fell back. While passing through the town of Gettysburg on his way to Cemetery Ridge, he appropriated a shingle, which he picked up in one of the streets, and with it, on reaching his destination, spliced his staff, which was carried in this condition through the remainder of the service."¹⁸

Like the 121st, the 142nd Pennsylvania was forced out of its position on McPherson's Ridge

¹⁵ *OR*, 1.27:323.

¹⁶ *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, 677.

¹⁷ Reprinted in Survivors Association, *History of the 121st Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers: An Account from the Ranks* (Philadelphia: Press of the Catholic Standard Times, 1906), 228–29.

¹⁸ Survivors Association, *History of the 121st*, 173.

in the mid-afternoon attacks and joined the rest of the corps in a brief stand on Seminary Ridge. Col. Robert P. Cummins, commander of the 142nd, was killed during the day's fighting.¹⁹ The monument to the 142nd Pennsylvania is in the distinctive shape of a rugged cross, similar to the handmade crosses soldiers erected over their fallen buddies' hastily dug graves. At the dedication ceremonies in 1889, Col. Horatio Warren, a commander of the regiment later in the war, linked the monument to the sacrifices of the regiment.

This monument, comrades, will tell the world—yes, generations yet unborn, that the men who composed the 142nd Pennsylvania Volunteers were patriots; it will be a silent yet potential monitor proclaiming our sacrifice to loyalty, our love for the Union, and our devotion to the Stars and Stripes. It will impress our children, when we are gone, that their fathers dared to die that our country might live, and that the blessings of civil liberty might be perpetuated and passed down to them unimpaired.²⁰

Biddle's brigade has not earned the fame of other 1st Corps units and has been marked as "first to give way." But the brigade collectively took 71 percent casualties, highest in the Union army at Gettysburg, a sure sign of hard fighting. The School Teacher's regiment (151st Pennsylvania) was the last to withdraw from McPherson Ridge and took 83 percent casualties, third-highest in the Army of the Potomac.

The New Bucktails: Stone Holds the Middle of the First Corps Line

Brig. Gen. Lysander Cutler's and Col. Roy Stone's brigades held the center of the First Corps line between the Iron Brigade on the left and Brig. Gen.

¹⁹ C. Biddle, *OR*, 1.27:316.

²⁰ *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, 692.

Monument of the 121st Pennsylvania showing the flag and shell burst.
Leon Reed.

John C. Robinson's Second Division on Oak Ridge. Cutler was to the north of Chambersburg Pike, while Stone's three regiments (143rd, 149th, and 150th Pennsylvania) took positions near McPherson barn and along Chambersburg Pike. This would be the first combat for Stone's "New Bucktails." Each member of the original Bucktails, the 13th Pennsylvania Reserves, wore a buck's tail on his hat as a symbol of his marksmanship. Because of that unit's success, Stone was sent back home in July 1862 to recruit a new "Bucktail brigade." The "new Bucktails" (the 149th and 150th Pennsylvania) were

The unique, cross-shaped monument of the 142nd Pennsylvania. Leon Reed.

viewed with contempt by the originals.²¹ But they fought hard at Gettysburg.

Doubleday stated that Stone's position was "in truth the key-point of the first day's battle, for it overlooked the field, and its possession would cut our force in two."²² In his after action report Doubleday stated: "I relied greatly on Stone's brigade to hold the post assigned them, as I soon saw I would be obliged to change front with a portion of my lines to face the northwest and his brigade held the pivot of this movement. . . . They repulsed the repeated attacks of vastly superior numbers at close quarters and maintained their position until the final retreat of the whole line."²³

In the afternoon, Stone's regiments faced attacks from both Heth's division from the west and from Rodes's troops to the north. Two monuments be-

sides the regimental monuments show elements of Stone's brigade in action on July 1. The "infantry" frieze of the Pennsylvania memorial shows Stone's troops firing to the west along Chambersburg Pike near the McPherson barn. The original 1886 monument for the 149th Pennsylvania, now located along Hancock Avenue near the Pennsylvania Memorial, shows an infantryman firing from behind a stone wall along Chambersburg Pike.

The 143rd Pennsylvania was the "outcast" in its brigade. It was a late addition to the Bucktail regiments, who viewed the 143rd as "bounty men," soldiers who had signed up for the pay.²⁴ The 143rd initially lined up in the middle of the brigade line, near the McPherson barn, with the 150th occupying the position between the barn and the Iron Brigade in Herbst's Woods and the 149th along the Chambersburg Pike, facing north. As the attacks intensified, the 143rd moved to the right of the 149th.²⁵

21 Richard E. Matthews, *The 149th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Unit in the Civil War* (Jefferson: MacFarland and Co., 1994), 3–5.

22 Doubleday, Abner, *Chancellorsville and Gettysburg* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), 113.

23 Doubleday, OR, 1.27:247.

24 James J. Dougherty, *Stone's Brigade and the Fight for the McPherson Farm* (Conshohocken: Combined Publishing, 2001), 19.

25 Col. Edmund L. Dana, OR, 1.27:335.

The bravery of Color Sgt. Ben Crippen is immortalized on the monument of the 143rd Pennsylvania. Leon Reed.

Avery Harris of Co. B related that “the enemy in our front” (Daniel’s brigade and part of Scales’s) “could not gain a foot of ground against the accuracy of our Enfield’s.” But the defense collapsed due to the overwhelming numbers the Confederates were able to bring to bear on the Iron Brigade to their left and their own front. “Two fine lines of the enemy had been used up in our front but their supply of men seemed inexhaustible, as fresh troops were seen swinging into line to their relief just as we change front to meet the attack of the enemy who were coming on us from our left rear.”²⁶

Regimental commander Charles Dana reported that the brigade was engaged continuously from noon until about 4:00 p.m., when a more heavy advance was again repulsed. But with the regiment’s support on both sides withdrawing, Dana reported the enemy could “threaten both our flanks and rear. . . . The line was withdrawn in good order

²⁶ Quoted in Peter Tomasek, “The 143rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry in Hell’s Firestorm, July 1 at Gettysburg,” *Gettysburg Magazine*, Vol. 38, 49.

toward the town, where it was halted, and several volleys were fired . . . The supply of ammunition—60 rounds per man—having been exhausted, was here replaced and expended. On the withdrawal of the artillery, this command moved along the embankment toward and through town, the last organized body of troops, I believe, to leave the field.”²⁷

Lt. Col. John Musser, who replaced Dana in command when Dana took command of the brigade, described their retreat to Seminary Ridge and through town.

After crossing the crest of a hill [Seminary Ridge], which lay a quarter mile in our rear and toward the town, we halted, faced about, and fired several volleys, checking their advance in front but not on our flanks. We then fell back to a peach orchard, where our battery was stationed. We again halted and, with others, saved the battery . . . It was with great difficulty I could get all

²⁷ Dana, *OR*, 1.27:335–36.

the men to fall back from this point, which was a good one, and in front of which the enemy fell thick and fast. Still, they moved in columns on our right and left and superior numbers compelled us to fall back to the town.²⁸

The 143rd Pennsylvania regiment's monument shows Color Sergt. Ben Crippen, one of the last to withdraw, shaking his fist at the Confederates as the regiment began its withdrawal.²⁹ British army observer Lt. Col. Arthur Fremantle reported that Confederate corps commander A. P. Hill expressed admiration for Crippen's bravery and sorrow when he was shot and killed.³⁰

On September 11, 1889, when the Pennsylvania monuments were dedicated, the monument to the 143rd had not been completed. It was later erected in 1895.³¹ Speaking at the 1889 dedication ceremonies, M. D. Roche, Esq., stated:

Survivors of the One Hundred and Forty-third are about erecting a monument upon the spot where he fell, to be chiseled of marble, life-size, and in that defiant attitude in which he met his death. . . . The statue will serve to mark the spot where this regiment fought its brave fight. The fate of the young soldier will stimulate the patriotism of future generations who will envy us the privilege we have enjoyed in our time, of receiving from the lips of the veterans the record of his experience, and contributing our mite to the erection of this memorial.³²

The 149th Pennsylvania (Bucktails) also fought in Stone's brigade near the McPherson barn. Regimental commander Lt. Col. Walton Dwight reported that the regiment received a heavy artillery fire from both Hill's troops to the west and Ewell's forces on Oak Hill. As the final coordinated attacks began, the 149th moved forward to occupy the railroad cut across Chambersburg Pike, deploying in a single line of troops with their arms resting on the bank. The hidden troops in the railroad cut loose and fired a devastating volley at the

unsuspecting Confederates, driving them back twice. Dwight reported: "The fight was of the most desperate character, we losing heavily, the enemy's dead and wounded completely covering the ground in our front."³³ Daniel's troops fell back, regrouped and attacked again, then attacked for a third time. The 149th took heavy casualties, eventually falling back when the Confederates placed a cannon in a position to enfilade their line.

The regiment's monument shows a soldier staring intently at a point just across Chambersburg Pike. It is the place where the regiment's colors were placed as a ruse during the early afternoon of July 1. As the regiment came under fire from artillery on Oak Hill, Lieutenant Colonel Dwight moved the colors forward to fool the Confederate artillery. The ruse apparently worked, for after action reports noted that the Confederates indeed shifted their fire to where the colors were posted. Dwight reported that the Confederate confusion even continued beyond the cannonade into their initial attack on his troops in the railroad cut. When "he saw my colors flying," the Confederates fired, "my regiment not suffering therefrom, as it was directed at my colors."³⁴

Unfortunately, when the Confederate attack began several hours after the initial deployment of the colors, several of the officers in the chain of command were out of action and the color guard never got the order to retreat. Color Sergt. Harry Brehm was killed trying to save the colors. In 1888, when the regimental monument was built, the soldier representing the whole regiment was still staring fixedly at the spot where the colors stood.

The monument near the McPherson barn is actually the second monument dedicated to the 149th Pennsylvania. The original monument was erected in 1886 by the veterans and showed a soldier firing from behind a stone wall. It was moved to a position on Hancock Avenue near the Copse of Trees when Pennsylvania provided funds for the second monument in 1888.

Robinson's Division on Oak Ridge:

11th Pennsylvania

The six regiments of Brig. Gen. Henry Baxter's brigade arrived on the Seminary grounds at approx-

28 Lt. Col. John D. Musser, *OR*, 1.27:338.

29 Hawthorne, 33; Gottfried, 95; Tomasek, 51; Dougherty, *Stone's Brigade*, 85–86.

30 Lt. Col. James Fremantle, *The Fremantle Diary: A Journal of the Confederacy*, Walter Lord, ed., (Short Hills: Burford Books, 1954), 204.

31 See <http://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/union-monuments/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-infantry/143rd-pennsylvania/> (accessed October 22, 2016).

32 M. D. Roche, Esq., Address at Dedication of Memorial, September 11, 1889, *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, II, 702.

33 Col. Walton Dwight, *OR*, 1.27:342.

34 *OR*, 1.27:342. This incident is discussed in Pfanz, Appendix B, 360–66, "We have come to stay," fn. 29, and Hawthorne, 20.

A soldier stares across the field on the monument of the 149th Pennsylvania. Leon Reed.

The original monument of the 149th Pennsylvania featured a prone infantryman firing. Leon Reed.

imately 11:30 a.m. and at first were held in reserve. Shortly after, the brigade was ordered to Oak Ridge to close the emerging gap between Cutler and the newly arriving Eleventh Corps.³⁵ Around 2:30, Rodes attempted to assault this position. Fortunately for the First Corps, Rodes's brigades initially attacked piecemeal, with Col. Edward O'Neal going first, followed by Brig. Gen. Alfred Iverson. Baxter was assisted by the 45th New York and by Dilger's battery, some of the early arriving Eleventh Corps troops who formed up on Baxter's right flank.³⁶

Rodes finally organized an effective, multi-brigade attack, just as Heth and Pender organized an overwhelming punch against Stone, Meredith, and Biddle's brigades to the south. At this point, Baxter's men had been fighting in the intense heat for close to three hours and for most of the time

without water.³⁷ Col Richard Coulter, commanding the 11th Pennsylvania, reported: "The line was steadily maintained under a brisk fire until after 3 pm, at which time, the ammunition being exhausted, we were relieved by a portion of [Gabriel Paul's brigade]. Upon being so relieved, the regiment was moved to the railroad embankment on the left, and there remained in support of a battery until ordered to fall back to the town of Gettysburg."³⁸

In 1861, the brand new 11th Pennsylvania was presented with a young bull terrier puppy. The dog was adopted by the troops and given the name "Sallie." She lived and marched with the troops and was always one of the first to answer reveille. During battles she stayed with the color guard and barked loudly at the enemy. Sallie was separated from her boys during the retreat through the town. She returned to the ground where the regiment had fought and kept the dead and wounded

³⁵ Gary G. Lash, "Brig. Gen. Henry Baxter's Brigade at Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Magazine*, Issue No. 10, January 1994, 7–12, and Capt. Henry B. Piper, Dedication of Monument, September 3, 1890, *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, Vol. 2, 178.

³⁶ Lash, 14.

³⁷ Lash, 22.

³⁸ Col. Richard Coulter, *OR*, 1.27:292.

"Sallie" the bull terrier as she appears on the monument of the 11th Pennsylvania. Leon Reed.

soldiers company during the rest of the battle. She was found after the Confederate retreat and returned to the regiment. She remained with them until February 1865, when she was shot and killed while accompanying the front line at the Battle of Hatcher's Run. The tearful troops buried her with honors. When they built their monument twenty-six years after the battle, the soldiers included a small image of Sallie at the foot of the monument.³⁹

In his speech at the dedication ceremony, Capt. Henry B. Piper mentioned Sallie first when he dedicated the monument "to the memory of our fallen companion of the old 'Eleventh Pennsylvania Volunteers,' the heroic dead who lost their lives in the service of their country, and to the regiment in whose ranks they fell."⁴⁰

³⁹ Hawthorne, 32; Lash, 26.

⁴⁰ Piper, *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, 180.

In the initial deployment of Baxter's brigade, the 90th Pennsylvania occupied the far right of the corps, with its line partially refused, facing north. The 90th played a leading role in shredding Iverson's poorly coordinated attack.⁴¹ When the 90th erected its monument in 1888, the veterans chose an unusual design: a shattered tree trunk holding a bird's nest with a mother bird feeding her babies. The bark on the tree trunk is stripped in areas and the trunk is shattered at the top. A cannonball is still embedded in the tree. The regiment's flank markers also are tree stumps.⁴²

⁴¹ Address of Brevet Col. A. J. Sellers, Dedication of Monument, September 3, 1888, *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, Vol. 2, 491.

⁴² The 90th Pennsylvania monument is similar in many ways to "La Chene Brise" ("The Broken Oak"), a monument to French dead in the 1870 Franco-Prussian War. The broken oak monument is located in Sedan and also shows a shattered oak tree. The figure of a mourning woman is included in the French monument.

The portion of the monument of the 90th Pennsylvania showing the bird and nest. Leon Reed.

In the dedication speech, Brevet Col. A. J. Sellers, described the monument: "In front of Ziegler's Grove you have erected a second monument, whereon is inscribed your record in more extended phrase than this representative of the stalwart oak tree will warrant us doing. The war is over! The dove, which brought the glad tidings of a regenerated world, here is used to symbolize the era of peace and good feeling between man and man."⁴³ According to a story, a soldier in the regiment noticed that a bird's nest had been blown out of a nearby tree during an artillery barrage. The soldier recovered the nest under fire and placed it back in the tree.⁴⁴

Paul's Brigade: the Sacrifice of the 16th Maine

As the Eleventh Corps on his right and First Corps troops on his left began to retreat at about the same time, General Robinson realized his men were cut off, had the longest route to safety, and were in danger of being surrounded. He selected the 16th Maine to cover the retreat of the rest of his division, directing them to proceed to a stone wall at the northern end of his collapsing line and "hold it as long as there is a single man left." Upon receiving the order, Colonel Tilden, then commanding the regiment, stated "Boys, you know what that means. About face! Forward 16th!"⁴⁵

Lt. Col. Augustus B. Farnham, commanding the 16th Maine at the end of the day, reported: "We took the position as ordered, and held the same until, finding the enemy in such force, and rapidly advancing on us, and seeing no support coming to our aid, we fell back into the hollow and formed again, but could not hold our position, and finally fell back into the woods, where we engaged the enemy until, finding that we were again left without support, and the enemy engaging us both front and flank, ordered a retreat, but not in time to reach the main body of the brigade."⁴⁶

Their desperate stand along the Mummasburg Pike and their fighting withdrawal to the railroad cut allowed Robinson's other troops to get a good

start on their trek to Cemetery Hill, but cost the regiment 81 percent casualties, fourth-highest in the Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg.⁴⁷ The regiment's killed and wounded were relatively light; the bulk of the regiment's casualties were captured near the unfinished railroad cut.⁴⁸ Capt. J. A. Hopkins of the 45th North Carolina reported that his regiment captured 188 Union troops in the railroad cut.⁴⁹

At dedication ceremonies for the regiment's principal monument, Adjutant Abner Small remarked: "It meant the saving of the rest of the division. It meant death to many, and a captivity worse than death to the survivors of that little band of already exhausted troops, forced by an imperative order to the foot of a sacrificial altar . . . And so the 16th Maine was the last regiment that left the extreme front on the 1st of July—if four officers and thirty-six men can be called a regiment."⁵⁰

Only thirty-eight officers and men from the regiment made it on July 1 to Cemetery Hill. Another group that had been on detail supporting a battery also rejoined the regiment.

Cemetery Hill: Reforming on "the Beautiful High Ground"

After the chaotic retreat through town, the survivors of the First and Eleventh Corps rallied on Cemetery Hill and began to form the distinctive Union fishhook. Maj. Gen. Winfield Hancock sent Stevens's 5th Maine battery to a small knoll between Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill, to deter attacks on either hill through the small valley between the hills. Wadsworth's tiny remnants, barely 500 men at this point, were sent to the north slope of Culp's Hill, providing some protection for Stevens's battery.

In its day of fighting in Herbst's Woods, the 24th Michigan took the largest number of casualties of any regiment in the Army of the Potomac.⁵¹ Five color bearers were killed during the action on July

⁴³ The "regenerated world" reference is to the dove Noah sent out from the Ark at the end of the Great Flood, which brought back an olive branch as tidings of dry land. *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, Vol. 2, 500.

⁴⁴ Hawthorne, 28.

⁴⁵ Richard A. Sauer, "The 16th Maine Volunteer Infantry at Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Magazine*, Issue No. 13, July 1995, 33.

⁴⁶ Farnham, *OR*, 1.27:295.

⁴⁷ The three Union regiments with higher casualties were the three regiments to withdraw last from other positions on July 1: 154th New York (Brickyard, 87.1 percent), 25th Ohio (Barlow Knoll, 86.4 percent), and 151st Pennsylvania (Herbst's Woods, 82.9 percent).

⁴⁸ Ward, 42; Sauer, 39.

⁴⁹ Report of Cpt. J. A. Hopkins, *OR*, 2.27:575.

⁵⁰ Address of Abner Small, "Incidents of the Battle," *Maine Gettysburg Commission, Maine at Gettysburg* (Portland: Lakeside Press, 1898), 47.

⁵¹ William Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865* (Albany: Albany Publishing Co., 1898), 390.

Fox's Summary of Killed and Mortally Wounded

<i>Regiment</i>	<i>Killed & Mortally Wounded</i>	<i>Died Other Causes</i>	<i>Total Enrollment</i>	<i>Gettysburg Losses</i>	<i>Highest Number of Killed & Mortally Wounded</i>
121st PA	109	66	891	29	Fredericksburg: 45
142nd PA	155	72	935	49	Fredericksburg: 66
143rd PA	151	152	1491	42	Wilderness: 57
149th PA	164	172	1454	66	Gettysburg
11th PA	236	181	2052	13	First Bull Run: 50
16th ME	181	259	1907	27	Fredericksburg: 76
24th MI	189	139	1654	94	Gettysburg

Source: Fox, 132, 262, 295, 299, 300, 303, 390. Note: The 90th Pennsylvania was not included in Fox's Fighting 300.

Casualties at Gettysburg

<i>Regiment</i>	<i>Killed & Mortally Wounded</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Missing/Captured</i>	<i>Percent Casualties</i>
121st PA	29	94	51	66.2
142nd PA	46	109	68	66.4
143rd PA	40	106	105	54.0
149th PA	67	186	59	69.0
11th PA	13	65	58	50.4
90th PA	12	42	36	43.3
16th ME	25	59	157	80.9
24th MI	96	199	76	74.8

Note: Gettysburg "killed and mortally wounded" figures do not precisely agree because tables are based on two different sources.

1.⁵² In dedicating the regiment's principal monument in Herbst's Woods, Maj. E. B. Wight stated: "Rest came indeed to weary limbs but hearts were overborne with sorrow and sadness banished sleep. For of the 9000 that went into action that day, two-thirds were among the killed, wounded or missing." After the war, the 24th Michigan erected a wistful marker at its secondary position on Stevens Knoll. The inscription reads: "Of the 496 men who went into battle on July 1, 1863, 99 answered roll call here on the morning of July 2-3, 1863 . . ."

There were over two thousand regiments in the Union Armies. On some of these the brunt of battle fell much heavier than on others. . . . While some were seldom called upon to face the enemy's fire,

others were repeatedly ordered into the thickest of the fight.

—William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865*

Wrapping It Up: the Eight Regiments

In his study *Regimental Losses in the Civil War*, William J. Fox argued that the best indicator of a "fighting" regiment was combat deaths. Seven of the eight regiments mentioned here were listed among "Fox's Fighting 300."

The men of these eight regiments were permanently affected by their three days at Gettysburg. Their after action reports; their correspondence over the next thirty years with the "czar" of Gettysburg history, John Bachelder; their speeches at the dedication ceremonies for their monuments; their regimental histories; and their other postwar writings show that the veterans, from corps commanders to common soldiers, were

52 Michigan Gettysburg Battlefield Commission, *Michigan at Gettysburg* (Detroit: Winn and Hammond, 1889), 115.

proud of their service and wanted to be sure that future generations remembered their deeds.⁵³

As Brevet Capt. Joseph Rosengarten stated in closing his speech dedicating the 121st Pennsylvania monument: "Henceforth, we shall feel that the One hundred and twenty-first has secured its right place, and its survivors and the families and descendants of those who have passed away, will find its memorial, the spot to which their feet will be directed whenever they may revisit this ground, fraught with

53 Two interesting examples are; (1) the letter from division commander John Robinson to Meade (OR, 1.27:291) expressing his entire division's "intense mortification and disappointment" that the commanding general did not mention their heroic actions on July 1 in his report, and (2) the 1890 letter from George Greene to Bachelder inquiring if "some recognition for services" were possible: "It would be a nice thing for me to be a little more comfortable in the few years which will be given to me." *The Bachelder Papers: Gettysburg in Their Own Words*, Vol. 3 (Dayton: Morningside Press, 1995), 1721.

historic reminiscences so full of interest for the historian and the patriot."⁵⁴

Gen. Joshua Chamberlain of the 20th Maine famously stated "In great deeds, something abides." For us, he might have said "In the monuments to great deeds, something abides."

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54 *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, Vol. 2, 677.