

HISTORY
OF THE
FIRST REGIMENT MINNESOTA
VOLUNTEER INFANTRY
1861-1864

WITH MAPS AND
ILLUSTRATIONS

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pay in gold and treasury notes. The privates received pay then at \$11.00 a month, which rate was soon after raised to \$13.00 a month. When the men received their pay and heard the gold and silver jingling in their pockets, Lochren says "discontent vanished at once."

The march was then resumed, and on the evening of August 5, Rockville, the county seat of Montgomery County, was reached. At this time Rockville was a "pleasant village, but with rather a disloyal population." The truth was, Bull Run made many Marylanders and other border state men disloyal. On the evening of the 7th, Seneca Mills, on Seneca Creek, was reached and here the regiment began its picket duty on the upper Potomac and remained nine days.

August 16 Seneca Mills was abandoned and a permanent camp established in a slightly sloping field about midway between Poolsville and Edwards Ferry over the Potomac, and about a mile and a half from each of these points. Poolsville was a little village five miles back or east of the Potomac. Edwards Ferry was at or near the mouth of Goose Creek, thirty miles northwest of Washington. The camp became the permanent locale for the regiment for more than six months, or until the latter part of February, 1862. In honor of the brigade commander, Gen. Charles P. Stone, the camp was called Camp Stone.

General Stone had long been an officer in the regular army. He was very prominent, active and useful in the operations to prevent Washington City from falling into the hands of the secessionists in the winter and early spring of 1861, and commanded a brigade in Patterson's army. August 4 he was given a brigade in the "Division" of the Potomac, as it was then called. This brigade was composed of the First Minnesota, the Fifteenth Massachusetts, the Second

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Regiment N. Y. State Militia (Eighty-second Volunteers) and the Thirty-fourth Regiment of New York Volunteers. Upon the organization of the army of the Potomac (Oct. 15, 1861) General Stone was given a division composed of three brigades, viz: His old brigade, now under General Gorman, and to which had been added Kirby's Battery; Lander's Brigade of Michigan and Massachusetts regiments, and Vaughn's Battery B, First Rhode Island Artillery, and Baker's Brigade of Pennsylvania Volunteers, (chiefly) including the Seventy-first Pennsylvania command, called the California Regiment, and Bunting's Sixth New York Battery.

Kirby's Battery was the old Ricketts' Battery (I, First U. S.)* reorganized and now under Lieut. Edmund Kirby, who at Bull Run brought away three limber chests and 56 horses, and all the battery that was saved, doing this while his face was covered and streaming with blood from wounds. (See Howard's report Vol. 2, War Recs., p. 418). A number of the men from the infantry regiments of this brigade were transferred at their request to this battery. August 8, while at Seneca Mills, John Thorp of Company K, Winona company, wrote his father at Rollingstone as follows:

"I wish we could stay here for two or three weeks, as this is a beautiful country and there is plenty of good spring water, which we prize more than anything else. The health of the camp is a great deal better than it was when we were in Virginia. Some of our men are pretty well used up by exposure and fatigue, but I have stood it first-

*Somehow many of the Minnesotians came to believe that Kirby's Battery of the First Artillery was identical with the old Sherman Battery of the Third Artillery, and even with the old Fort Ridgely Battery of the Second U. S.

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rate so far, and so have all the Rollingstone boys." (Bloomer's Scrap-book.)

August 18, a member of a St. Paul company wrote to the Pioneer:

"Scarcely had we become familiar with the scenery and associations around Seneca Falls before we were again ordered to move. On the 13th the Red Wing, Hastings and Wabasha companies proceeded to Edwards Ferry and two days later the remaining companies followed them. Our march this time led by Seneca Mills up a steep hill and thence through a fine wooded country bordered on both sides with waving fields of corn and rich orchards, while elegant dwellings dot the landscape. In some places, where orchards lined the sides of the narrow road, the branches (drooping under the heavy load of apples and peaches) formed natural arches of foliage and fruit. About noon we passed through Poolesville, a little village of about 150 inhabitants. Here Ricketts' Battery was re-organized after the late battle. Dr. Murphy, from St. Anthony, is now our surgeon and with zealous devotion attends to the suffering of our sick and disabled. Dr. Hand acts as assistant surgeon."

Camp Stone was the one particular bright spot of all the many camps sojourned in by the First Minnesota. The site was fine and healthy, and the country as beautiful as any in all bonnie Maryland. Loyal people abounded, the young ladies were attractive, and everybody was friendly—even the "secesh" of the country. More clothing was issued, pay day came again, a sutler arrived with a big stock of notions and other supplies, the men built good cookhouses and bake ovens, and by drawing rations of flour instead of hardtack, and buying corn meal at a neigh-

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boring mill, greatly improved their fare, so that (as they expressed it) they lived like "princes and fighting cocks." Being well fed, well cared for and well exercised, the regiment became more efficient and contented than ever before. (Lochren).

Only the proper amount and the right kind of exercise were practiced. There were daily drills, of course—would they never have done with them?—and picket duty down along the Potomac. The latter was performed readily. There was just enough danger about it to give it sufficient spice and relish. The Confederates from Leesburg were performing similar duty along the opposite shore (the Virginia side) and there was danger of great bodily harm to a Union picket if he wasn't careful. The Minnesotians composed the Union pickets for some distance up and down the river on either side of Edward's Ferry. Sam Stebbins, although still suffering a little from his Bull Run wound, was back on duty and August 24 wrote about life at Camp Stone to the Winona Daily Republican:

"We are stationed about two miles from the Potomac river, 30 miles from Washington, and form a line of guards from Harper's Ferry to Washington. I like this guard duty first-rate. There is something exciting about it. It takes three companies for picket guard at a time. The companies whose turn it is to go on duty put their knapsacks in a wagon, take two days' rations in their haversacks and march down to the Ferry, which is headquarters for the guards. Then we are distributed to the posts, six or seven in a place except at the Ferry, where besides the guard there are twenty or thirty men left as a reserve. The posts are half a mile apart. In the daytime we can all sleep except one at a time, but

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at night we all have to keep awake, with our eyes and ears wide open. The river here is about 80 rods wide and the enemy has pickets on the other side; but there are trees and brush on the banks of both sides, so we can keep out of sight of one another, save when we go down to the water. We have a little skirmish almost every day, but as yet there have been none of our regiment killed or wounded, although there have been several narrow escapes.

"We can see our enemies every day and sometimes we can talk with them. The other day some of our boys were working in the river when two of the rebels came along on the other side and asked them where their guns were. Our boys replied that they had them close by, and inquired what kind of gun the others had. The rebels responded that they had the Minie rifles, and one of our boys told them it was 'a d—d lie.' The rebels thought that was an insult, so they instantly fired at our boys, and then ran into the bushes out of sight. At the Ferry our boys have a swing put up among the trees and I have often seen them sit and swing for a long time right in sight of the enemy. In fact, none of us would take any pains to keep out of sight of them if it were not for the strict orders of General Stone. We are told by the men on the other side of the river that they have the same orders over there, so all of our little battles must commence in disobedience to orders."

Thus it will be seen that the mode of warfare practiced by the contending forces in the neighborhood of Edwards Ferry was a most comfortable and exemplary one, and entirely appropriate to the conduct of a war between fellow-citizens of the United States. But, however commendable it was in that respect, it was not practical in results, and did not

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hasten the close of hostilities. Rougher work had to be done, and it was done.

The duties of a day in permanent camp were regulated by a prescribed program. If they were such as required the co-operation of more than one company, or called for similar action of all the companies at the same time, although acting independently, the command was given by the bugler stepping to the center of the parade ground and sounding the appropriate "call." Thus there was the "reveille," which waked the soldier in the morning. The men readily came to set appropriate words to the music of the first and last call of the day as well as some others.

The words which seemed to flow from the bugle at "reveille" were:

"I CAN'T wake 'em up, I CAN'T wake 'em up,
I CAN'T wake 'em up in the morning.

(Repeated.)

"The corporal's worse than the private, the
sergeant's worse than the corporal.

"The lieutenant's worse than the sergeant, and the captain's worst of all!"

"I CAN'T wake 'em up, I CAN'T wake 'em up,
I CAN'T wake 'em up in the morning."

By the time this call ended, anyone who still slumbered was rudely awakened by some comrade, for it meant to turn out to first roll call.

The last call of the day—"Taps"—seemed to say:

"Put out the lights. Go to sleep. Go to sleep.
Go to sleep.

"Go to sleep. Put out the lights. Go to sleep. Go to sleep."*



*See brochure, "Two Bugle Calls," by O. W. Norton.
The Neal Pub. Co., New York City.

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The hunting horn quality of the bugle made its tones reverberate throughout the camp. There were calls for breakfast, dinner and supper; sick calls; calls for sergeants, reports to the adjutant, officers report to the colonel, companies to form (or "fall in") for roll call, for mounting guard, for companies to form in line for dress parade and various calls for use in company and battalion drill. But the use of the bugle in the various evolutions of the company and battalion in drill maneuvers as well as in battle was mostly confined to the cavalry and artillery.

On the 24th of August there was a skirmish at Conrad's Ferry, five or six miles above Edward's Ferry, and thereafter the situation was no longer "all quiet along the Potomac." The Tammany regiment was stationed on the Maryland side, at Conrad's and a detachment from Leesburg was stationed back from the river on the Virginia side. The Confederates were not much in evidence at Conrad's as were their brothers down at Edward's, and on the 23d, to ascertain if they were there at all, two Tammany officers crossed the river and reconnoitered. It seemed that the Confederates kept close watch on the river only at night. Their headquarters were in an abandoned house, half a mile from the river. Back at Leesburg was a fortified position which they called Fort Evans, for their commander. In Fort Evans was a battery, Captain McCarthy's Richmond Howitzers, six 12-pounder Napoleons. The captain of the battery frequently resorted to the headquarters called the Daly house, and the Tammany officers visited it and found evidences that the artillery officers frequented it, and left their cards, on which were written invitations to return the call. (Stebbins.)

The next morning the Richmond Howitzers moved down to the river and cannonaded the position of the

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Tammany regiment for an hour or more. (Stebbins.) The regiment at the time was armed with what were known as Harper's Ferry muskets, old smooth-bore guns, altered from flint-locks to percussion at the Harper's Ferry arsenal, and which had doubtless seen service in the Mexican War and elsewhere. The Tammanyites had them in the battle of Bull Run. Now they had them at Conrad's Ferry, but they were not effective against artillery at a distance of half a mile, since they could not be depended upon to carry a ball more than 400 or 500 yards. After a time, finding that they were only wasting ammunition, the Confederates went back to Leesburg. One Tammany man had been slightly wounded. (Ibid.)

Alarmed at the cannonading, Lieutenant-Colonel Miller, then temporarily in command of the Regiment at Edward's Ferry, sent out a detachment of 42 men, six from each of the seven companies not on active duty—under Lieut. Gus. Holzborn, of the Winona company—to see what the trouble was. The lieutenant marched his men up to Conrad's and encamped there for the night. The next morning the Richmond Howitzers came down and resumed the cannonading, this time coming closer to the river. The 42 Minnesotians returned the fire with their Springfields, which carried well into the Confederate line and perhaps did some damage. At all events, the battery retired after an hour or so, and Lieutenant Holzborn marched his detachment back to Edward's Ferry and reported. The men had been sheltered in a ditch and were unscathed. (Ibid.)

Firing now began at all the other stations up and down the river from Edward's Ferry. At the latter post, however, the Minnesotians soon arranged a truce with the Nineteenth Virginia, on the opposite side of the river. The conditions were, "I'll let you

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alone if you'll let me alone," and they were religiously observed for many days. Frequent conversations, friendly enough, were held between the opposing factions, even with the consent of the officers.

General Stone, who was in command, did not forbid these courtesies. In fact, he was all courtesy, kindness, and chivalry himself toward the Virginia people. He gave numerous passes and permission for men and women (chiefly women) to cross the river each way. It was claimed that his good nature was imposed upon and that many a pretty woman who was allowed to pass upon some plausible excuse, sweetly and irresistibly alleged, was really a Confederate emissary or spy.

The Confederates were stricter. Stebbins says that on one occasion, about the first of September, a woman with a little girl came to the Ferry with a pass from General Stone and wanted to cross over into Virginia. A man was with her, and the Confederates made them wait until they sent back five miles to General Evans and obtained permission for them to enter the lines and go to Leesburg.

The first Minnesota had a fine time at Camp Stone during the month of September. That month is generally ideal weather in Maryland. The skies are clear, the temperature agreeable, apples and peaches abound and sweet potatoes are ready for the digging. At one time Stebbins wrote, "The condition of the regiment seems to be in many respects better than it ever was before. Many peddlers come into camp every day, bringing in for sale vegetables, butter, pies, cakes, family bread, etc. I have gained eight pounds since pay-day." These good halcyon days continued until late in October, when they were rudely disturbed.