



Stones River National Battlefield

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Regimental File Donation Form

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Significant Person's Name: Samuel Reedy, George William Reedy
Unit: Co. F, 1st IL 79th Infantry

List Contents of Donation Below:

History of unit involvement in Civil War,

Samuel Reedy (1840-1932) & George William Reedy (1838-1908)
Company "F", 79th Illinois Infantry Regiment

August 28, 1862

Brothers Samuel (age 22) Reedy and George William Reedy (age 24) mustered into service at the rank of Private in Company "F" of the Illinois Infantry Volunteers, on August 28, 1862. Thus began their period of service during the Civil War ("The War of the Rebellion") that cost the lives of many of their fellow volunteers from Clark County—the result of disease, imprisonment, wounds, and death on the battlefield. George W. and Samuel were not to return to their homes until they mustered out of service: Samuel on May 17 and George William on June 12, 1865. Their father, John C. Reedy, died on September 15, 1864, before their return to Clark County.

September 13, 1862

The 79th Illinois Infantry was organized at Mattoon, IL, in August of 1862 by Colonel Lyman Guinnip. All of the members of Company "F", approximately 100 in number, were from Clark County. By the end of the war, twenty-seven had died in battle or of disease, twenty-three were discharged, and thirteen were taken prisoner. When their tour of duty concluded (April – June, 1865), only forty-four members of Company "F" mustered out of service.

Their training continued at Mattoon until September 13, 1862, when they were ordered to action in Kentucky where Confederate forces were moving northward. They traveled by train (on flatcars) to Louisville where they were assigned to the Third Brigade of the *Army of Kentucky* under Brigadier General Craft's Division. Later that same month they were transferred to Colonel Buckley's 4th Brigade, General Sill's (Second) Division (*Army of Ohio*), and then in November (1862) to the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division, Right Wing 14th Army Corps of the *Army of the Cumberland*.

The Battle of Perryville (October 7-8, 1862)

By the end of September 1862, forces of the Confederacy were threatening Louisville from the Bardstown area of Kentucky. The 79th Infantry marched east toward Frankfort, KY, and then turned south toward Perryville where the Confederate forces under Generals Braxton Bragg and Edmund Kirby Smith were engaged in battle by Union forces under Major General Don Carlos Buell the evening of October 7. The battle continued without clear victory on either side until late in the evening of October 8 when Confederate forces began a retreat south into Tennessee. The 79th Infantry was among the reinforcements that reached the Perryville battlefield late in the evening of October 8 after the battle had already concluded. Colonel Guinnip resigned on October 17, and Lieutenant Colonel Sheridan P. Reed was promoted to Colonel in command of the Regiment.

The Battle of Stone's River (Murfreesboro), TN (Dec. 31, 1862 – Jan. 2, 1863)

On October 24, General William S. Rosecrans assumed command of the Army of the Cumberland, replacing Major General Buell whose conduct of the war was under investigation. From October 16th through November 7, the Army of the Cumberland continued its march south through Crab Orchard, Lebanon, Bowling Green and then to Nashville where it remained until November 27.

After his retreat from Perryville, General Bragg assumed command of the Confederate Army of Tennessee and began to concentrate his troops to the south at Murfreesboro. Concurrently, General Rosecrans moved his army out of Nashville toward Murfreesboro where he engaged General Bragg just west of Stone's River. Fought on multiple fronts, the Battle of Murfreesboro continued in a seesaw pattern with ferocious assaults and without a victorious outcome for either side, although historians consider the battle a tactical victory for the Confederates in view of the superior numbers on the side of the Federals. Both armies lost thousands of gallant soldiers: almost 13,000 Federals and about 12,000 Confederates. The 79th Infantry Regiment was engaged in battle until the 4th of January 1863, losing one officer killed, three wounded and three missing. Among the enlisted men, 23 were killed, 68 wounded and 121 missing. Colonel S. P. Read was killed at the onset of the battle, and the command fell to Maj. Allen Buckner. Buckner reported to Headquarters on January 7, 1863, that his regiment left Nashville on December 26 and did not enter action until Wednesday, December 31. His regiment "came under a destructive fire of artillery and musketry, killing and wounding a great many of our men" [Report # 41, Jan. 7, 1863, *The War of the Rebellion*, Vol. XX, p. 326-27].

The 79th Infantry Regiment remained at Murfreesboro during the winter where it was assigned to the Second Brigade of the Second Division under the command of Brig. Gen. Richard W. Johnson. [See "Report of Brig. Gen. Richard W. Johnson", Jan. 8, 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion*, Vol. XX, p294-97.] In the months that followed, the 79th was involved in several campaigns against Confederate forces in the area of Tullahoma.

Battle of Liberty Gap (June 23 – June 25, 1863)

On June 21, the 79th left Murfreesboro and marched to Tullahoma, TN. At Liberty Gap, they encountered Rebel forces during the day of June 23. In his report to Headquarters, Brig. Gen. Richard W. Johnson, states that "The gallant 77th Pennsylvania and 79th Illinois, supported by the 34th Illinois, charged over an open field and up a steep hill, driving the rebels before them. These fine regiments lost heavily" [Report # 31, July 6, 1863, Vol. XXIII, p. 483-85]. Major Allen Buckner's report, as commander of the 79th, is equally interesting; he states in part, "When we were within one-half or three-fourths of a mile of the enemy, the effect of their sharpshooters was terrible. We formed first behind a fence in an orchard, and fired a few rounds.... Our brave boys faltered not, but rushed on, and soon gained the foot of the hill, the enemy being posted upon the top and along the sides, and began to pour upon the enemy a terrible fire, and kept it up at an excellent advantage, with but little damage to us. We had already suffered our great loss in crossing the field [Report # 39, July 7, 1863, XXIII, p. 504-05].

The Chattanooga Campaign (August – November, 1863)

Believing that General Braxton Bragg was retreating toward Atlanta after being forced out of Chattanooga August 16 – September 8), General Rosecrans moved the Army of the Cumberland into the area and was trapped by the Confederates at *Chickamauga Creek* where a battle ensued on September 19 - 20, 1863, with Rebel losses put at 18,454 and for the Union, 16,179. Confederates broke through the Yankee lines and Rosecrans was forced to retreat in disgrace to Chattanooga where General Bragg's forces quickly took up positions along Missionary Ridge across the Chattanooga Valley to Lookout Mt, thus surrounding the Army of the Cumberland. The siege of Chattanooga continued from September 23 until October 23 when General Ulysses S. Grant reached Chattanooga to replace Rosecrans. In the interim, Union army troops in the besieged town had virtually starved for lack of supplies.

Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge (November 23 – 28, 1863)

Battles to lift the siege of Chattanooga began in earnest on November 23, 1863. At Chattanooga, the 79th was assigned to Colonel C. G. Harker's (Third) Brigade, General Sheridan's (Second) Division, Major General G. Granger's (Fourth) Army Corps. On November 24, action began to take the strategic top of *Lookout Mountain* that was occupied by two Confederate brigades. The battle continued throughout the day, but on the 24th, Union soldiers scaled the heights of the mountain to plant the U.S. flag.

In the interim, Union troops, including the 79th Illinois Infantry, were deployed to prepare for an assault on *Missionary Ridge* (November 25-26), another strategic point of defense for the Confederates. Colonel Allen Buckner later reported (No. 50, Feb. 12, 1864), Vol. XXXI, p. 232-33) that his regiment was positioned to the rear of the first line. On the morning of the 25th, the order came to attack, and Buckner recounts what followed: "We took a right oblique direction through a peach orchard until arriving at the wood and logs on the side of the ridge, when I ordered the men to commence firing, which they did with good effect, and continued it all the way up until the heights were gained. At this point the left of the regiment was near the right of the house [Gen. Bragg's headquarters], and I claim that my officers and men captured two large brass pieces, generally punching the cannoneers from their guns" (p233). The 79th suffered 2 enlisted men killed, 1 mortally wounded, and 4 others slightly wounded. While General Grant and his officers made preparations to push into Georgia, the 79th moved back to the vicinity of Knoxville where it remained until the Atlanta Campaign began on May 3rd.

The Atlanta Campaign (May - September, 1864). The 79th Illinois Volunteers were to take an active role in several battles of the Atlanta Campaign.

May 8 – 9, 1864 – Combat at Buzzard's Roost Gap (near Dalton, Georgia). On the 9th of May, the 79th, with other regiments, was ordered to assault the fort at *Rocky Face Ridge*, GA. Early into the battle on the 8th, Col. Allen Buckner was severely wounded, and Lieutenant Colonel H. E. Rives assumed command temporarily.

May 14 – 15, 1864 – Battle of Resaca. The battlefield shifted from Rocky Face Ridge to the west and north of Resaca, GA, where the 79th once again engaged in battle. Lieut. Col. Terrence Clark, commanding officer, reported the following on September 14, 1864: "On the 14th of May we reached a point near Resaca, and were again ordered in

line of battle.... My regiment gained a point near the enemy's works, and were hotly engaged for a period of three hours, until we were relieved by the Second Brigade" (Report # 49, Sept. 14, 1864, Vol. XXXI, p364). Other actions continued: May 27th at New Hope Church; June 18th at Muddy Creek; June 21st near Kenesaw Mountain.

June 27, 1864 – Battle of Kenesaw Mountain. Once again Commander Terrence Clark reports: "On the 27th, in the memorable charge made on the enemy's works near Kenesaw Mountain, my regiment was ordered in double column at half distance on the third line of battle, Captain O. O. Bagley, temporarily commanding. He advanced the regiment to the front line, when he, on account of the troops on the right falling back, was compelled to retire, losing, in commissioned officers, 1 wounded, 1 enlisted man killed, and 11 enlisted men wounded" [Report # 49, Sept. 14, 1864, Vol. XXXI, p364].

July 20, 1864 – Battle of Peachtree Creek (north of Atlanta). Although present at the Battle of Peachtree Creek, the 79th took no active part in the battle, being held in reserve.

July 22, 1864 – Battle of Atlanta. The 79th had 2 enlisted men wounded.

August 31 – September 1, 1864 – Battle of Jonesborough (Georgia). On September 1, the 79th was positioned on the skirmish line, near Jonesborough, where they lost 2 enlisted men wounded.

September 2, 1864 – Lovejoy's Station. The 79th was on the front line of battle in the advance toward the enemy's works near Lovejoy's Station. They met with heavy fire and lost 2 enlisted men wounded. Commander Terrence Clark states at the conclusion of his report on the Atlanta Campaign: "I will merely state in behalf of my officers and men that during the extended campaign, its marches, numerous battles and skirmishes, they have done their duty, ever cheerful and active in the performance of every duty required of them at my hands" [Report # 49, Sept. 14, 1864, Vol. XXXI, p364].

After the fall of Atlanta and the start of Sherman's march from Atlanta to the sea, what remained of the Army of the Cumberland, under General Thomas, was redirected toward central Tennessee and the Nashville area. On November 29, 1864, the 79th Illinois Infantry was involved in an **Engagement at Spring Hill** (TN) and the following day, November 30, in the **Battle of Franklin** (TN) where it lost 3 officers, 80 men killed, wounded and captured of its 210 veteran soldiers. The final major engagement of the 79th came in the **Battle of Nashville** (Dec. 15-16, 1864) when General Hood's Army of Tennessee made one last desperate attempt to recapture Nashville from the Union forces. The Army of the Cumberland, with numerous regiments from Illinois, overwhelmed the Confederate Army and pursued it to the Tennessee River in Alabama, essentially eliminating it as a force for the remainder of the war. The Third Brigade (including the 79th) was sent to Decatur Alabama, where it arrived January 6, 1865. On March 30, it moved by train to Bull's Gap, then to Knoxville, TN, where it remained until April 22 when it moved once again to Nashville.

April 9, 1865, Appomattox Court House, Virginia

General Robert E. Lee surrendered and the War of the Rebellion came to an end.

June 12, 1865: The 79th Illinois Infantry Volunteers were mustered out of service. They arrived at Camp Butler, Illinois, on June 15. On June 23, they received their final pay and discharge. During the three years of service, the 79th Regiment lost 4 officers, 81 enlisted men killed or mortally wounded, and 1 officer and 211 enlisted men succumbed to disease—a total of 297.

Postscript:

Once they had returned to Clark Center, IL, George William and Samuel Reedy wasted no time in reestablishing their lives in Clark Co.

- On March 29, 1866, George William Reedy married Rebecca Ann Mafsey Davis.
- On May 01, 1866, Samuel Reedy married Elizabeth Ann Buchanan.

The rest is family history.