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Marching as to war : the Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteers, a citizen-soldier regiment in the Union Army, 1862-1865

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**"Marching As To War" The
Thirteenth New Jersey
Volunteers; A Citizen-
Soldier Regiment in The
Union Army, 1862-1865.**

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"Marching As To War"

The Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteers:
A Citizen-Soldier Regiment in the Union Army, 1862-1865

by

Sarah M. Hilgendorff List

A Thesis

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in Candidacy for the Degree of
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Abstract

During no other war in the history of the United States was the role of the citizen soldier so important. This study explores the character and motivations of the Union army volunteers--citizen soldiers as distinct from other state militiamen and regular army soldiers--through the examination of one representative regiment, the Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteer Infantry. It will trace the events and activities of the regiment from August 25, 1862, until the end of the war. It also will demonstrate the thesis that volunteer soldiers were a valuable asset of the Union army, which in 1861 numbered 16,402 officers and men, and that, under officers formally trained at military institutions, the Thirteenth New Jersey regiment was molded from an assortment of eager civilians into a premier infantry unit.

THE VOLUNTEER

Elbridge Jefferson Cutler (1831-1870)

"At dawn," he said, "I bid them all farewell,
To go where bugles call and rifles gleam."
And with the restless thought asleep he fell,
And glided into dream.

A great hot plain from sea to mountain spread,-
Through it a level river slowly drawn:
He moved with a vast crowd, and at its head
Streamed banners like the dawn.

There came a blinding flash, a deafening roar,
And dissonant cries of triumph and dismay:
Blood trickled down the river's reedy shore
And with the dead he lay.

The morn broke in upon his solemn dream,
And still, with steady pulse and deepening eye,
"Where bugles call," he said, "and rifles gleam,
I follow, though I die!"

Introduction

Virile young men, clad in grey and in blue, gallantly marched forward to war, the gleam in their eyes reflected in the sunlight's dance off of bayonets, the smile on their lips elicited by a sweetheart's kiss. The mere mention of the American Civil War fuels the imagination and evokes the emotions. Yet, the romance disappears when one is confronted with the ghastly sights of these men struggling on the battlefields, bleeding for country, dying over the question of Union. It is these images that compel us to consider the men who fought so bitterly and so long across contested terrains in a war meant to determine whether two nations or one would survive.

Striking contrasts marked the northern and southern halves of the United States, a nation comprised of peoples of differing cultural origins, traditions, and ways of life. Separated by the compromise line between freedom and slavery, the industrial North's population swelled with immigrants as the primarily agricultural South's smaller populace clung to its "peculiar institution." Tensions, mounting since the annexation of Texas and the ensuing war with Mexico, widened the chasm between the two halves as questions of slavery in the newly acquired territories and of states' rights tore at the seams of American politics. The anger peaked during the 1860 presidential campaign as

Abraham Lincoln's successful bid resulted in the rapid secession of many southern states.

After the collapse of the Union, the Confederate States of America glared northward across the Mason-Dixon line at its northern enemy, the United States. In 1861, as the two nations prepared to wage war on one another, the armies they raised reflected the physical and ideological characteristics which differentiated them. For example, Michael Shaara, in the foreword to his powerful novel about the battle of Gettysburg, The Killer Angels, rendered the following descriptions of the two enemy armies: "the Army of Northern Virginia...[was] an army of remarkable unity, fighting for disunion....the Army of the Potomac...[was] a strange new kind of army, a polyglot mass of vastly dissimilar men, fighting for Union."¹

The Civil War erupted in April 1861 with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, a Union stronghold in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. President Lincoln's subsequent call to arms was answered in the North by volunteers, from laborers to merchants, who risked their lives in the hope that the Union might be preserved. And ultimately it was the superiority of Union arms, together with the North's overwhelming industrial and financial resources, that defeated the Confederacy.

The purpose of this study is to explore the character

¹Michael Shaara, The Killer Angels. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974), xv.

and motivations of the men in blue by focusing on a single, northern regiment, the Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteer Infantry. It will show that the unit's makeup was representative of the majority of volunteers in the Union army and will demonstrate the thesis that the combination of "dissimilar men," trained, disciplined, and drilled by professional commanding officers, transformed these citizen-soldiers into an effective fighting force.

Chapter I

The Call of the Bugles

"Give us a brigade of these Jerseymen and we'll beat the enemy still," cried Senator Wade [after the first Battle of Bull Run]...and more than once in after campaigns that same appeal, from commanders in sore straits, attested the universal confidence reposed in the battle-beaten veterans who, all the way from that first shameful day down to the hour when Johnston vainly essayed at Bentonville to shake the lines of the brave Thirteenth, never, on one single occasion, failed or turned away from obvious duty.²

On 2 May 1861 President Abraham Lincoln signed a proclamation calling for 42,000 volunteers to serve for a term of three years in the Union army. Subsequent state recruitment was impressive, yet the quota remained unfulfilled.³ Then in July 1862 Lincoln asked for an additional 300,000 volunteers, and again the response was disappointing. However, after more than a year of a war that had been expected to last but three months, the reluctance of many civilians to enlist was understandable.

Under these circumstances, Congress passed the Militia Act of 17 July 1862, which required individual states to reorganize and expand their militia systems as a means of providing the army with soldiers. If the states failed to comply, the government threatened outright conscription, yet

²John Y. Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion: History of the Services of the Troops and People of New Jersey in Aid of the Union Cause. (Newark, New Jersey: Martin R. Dennis and Company, 1868), iii.

³Phillip Shaw Paludan, "A People's Contest:" The Union and Civil War, 1861-1865. (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 18.

still the quota remained unmet. - In an effort to encourage volunteers, businessmen and civic leaders in various communities raised bounty funds, whereby bounties of fifty to one thousand dollars would be paid to enlistees. The bounty system also provided other incentives for service. In addition to monthly pay, each man completing a three year enlistment received one hundred dollars upon discharge. Also, many states gave supplementary pay; for example, New Jersey provided an extra six dollars per month.⁴ On 4 August Lincoln reiterated his promise of conscription in any state failing to reach its quota of three-year volunteers by the fifteenth of that month. The threat never materialized,⁵ however, as states completed their recruitment and quickly mustered volunteers into regiments for immediate military service.⁶

All men, obviously, were not physically fit for duty that required marching, running, load-bearing, and agility in tactical movements. Examination of the recruits revealed physical deformities or deficiencies and mental illnesses that disqualified applicants from enlistment. The physical

⁴James W. Geary We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 12.

⁵Altogether, conscripts and substitutes comprised only seven percent of the Union army. The threat of the draft was intended to spur volunteering. Donations to bounty funds also helped to sweeten the pot for those who would volunteer. James M. McPherson Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 605.

⁶Robert I. Alotta Stop the Evil: A Civil War History of Desertion and Murder (San Rafael, California and London, England: Presidio Press, 1978), 4.

disqualifications included deafness, impaired vision, loss or deformity of the nose, impaired speech, excessive curvature of the spine and severe head injuries. Other bases for rejection included diabetes, excessive obesity, loss of an appendage, limb, or dislocation of any joint, tumors or deformities, and ulcers or hernias. In 1863, the War Department determined that chronic rheumatism, a frequent ground for discharge in the early years of the war, no longer exempted soldiers from duty.

Union army regulations fixed the minimum height at 5'3", yet shorter men--who were otherwise physically qualified--were allowed to enlist.⁷ On 25 August 1862 at Camp Frelinghuysen, in Newark, New Jersey, 899 males, averaging 5'7", passed physical and mental inspections and were mustered into service as the Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteer Infantry.

The Thirteenth was one of forty-one regiments of volunteer infantry raised by the state of New Jersey for the Union army during the course of the war. Colonel Ezra Carman, formerly commander of the Seventh New Jersey, accepted the commission to lead the Thirteenth New Jersey. Lieutenant Colonel John Grimes and Major Frederick H. Harris assisted him in the raising of the regiment. In accordance

⁷Roberts Bartholow, M.D. A Manual of Instructions for Enlisting and Discharging Soldiers: With Special Reference to the Medical Examination of Recruits, and the Detection of Disqualifying and Feigned Diseases (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1863), 17-84, 176-7.

with Federal regulations, a regiment consisted of ten companies, each having a captain, a first lieutenant, a second lieutenant, one first sergeant, four sergeants, eight corporals, two musicians, one wagoner, and somewhere between sixty-four and eighty-two privates. (Nearly every company of the Thirteenth had more than the cadre requirement of eighty-two enlisted men). It was the governor of the state alone who possessed the power to commission officers. However, the colonel of the regiment, during the formation of companies, held the authority to appoint non-commissioned officers. After the incorporation of the regiment, the corporals assumed this power; however, promotions required recommendation by the captains. Finally, quartermasters, adjutants, and surgeons were chosen from the ranks.

The Thirteenth drew volunteers representing many ethnic backgrounds, every economic and social class, varying occupations, and all ages. In fact, ethnic communities contributed heavily to the muster rolls of the Union Army. During the course of the Civil War, nearly 150,000 Irish-Americans and between 175,000 and 185,000 German-Americans wore the Federal uniform. Men of Scottish, Welsh, French, Dutch, Scandinavian, and Hungarian descent also bore arms for the Northern cause. Altogether, foreign-born soldiers constituted approximately one-fourth of the Union army.⁸

Skilled craftsmen, unskilled laborers, and businessmen

⁸Paludan, "A People's Contest," 22.

volunteered for military service. Predominantly, skilled and unskilled workers enlisted, for the wages paid by the army exceeded the nominal earnings of many craftsmen, farmers, and laborers. The average age of the Union soldier increased gradually (as the soldiers matured during their service) from 25.10 years in July 1862 to 26.32 in May 1865.⁹ There were many under the age of eighteen and over the age of forty-five; not until 1862 did a War Department order prohibit the mustering of men over forty-five. However, either enlisting before the mandate or lying about their ages, a significant number of those filling the ranks were over this age.¹⁰

The Thirteenth New Jersey reflected the Union army's statistics for ethnic, occupational, and age populations within the ranks. American-born volunteers comprised 65.46% of the regiment; citizen-soldiers of foreign descent made up 32.60%. Of the total, 14.98% were Irish-born and 9.11% were German-Americans. Foreigners from other countries accounted for the remaining 8.51 percent. Included in the ranks were two white men from the West Indies as well as several from Canada and Switzerland.

The men of the Thirteenth had an occupational diversity as broad as their ethnic origins. Twelve percent of those

⁹Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 303.

¹⁰Bell Irvin Wiley. The Life of Billy Yank, 302.

enlisted were businessmen; fifty percent were skilled laborers in various trades; and thirty-three percent were unskilled.¹¹ Although not every foreigner was unskilled, there was a striking difference in the proportion of skilled workers and businessmen to unskilled toilers. The average age of the Thirteenth New Jersey infantryman at enlistment was 26.39 years; the mean age of the companies varied from 24 to 28 years. Technically, no man in the regiment was over forty-five, though many were older than forty. Since these numbers parallel the Federal averages, the Thirteenth New Jersey, then, was representative of the common soldier units of the Union army.¹²

On 18 August 1862, Colonel Carman, issued General Order Number Five¹³ establishing the camp schedule and drum calls as follows:

Reveille	5 1/2 AM
Roll Call	5 3/4 AM

¹¹It should be noted that these numbers are applicable to the regiment as a whole. They are not equally reflected in each company. Some enlisted men neglected to cite a birthplace or an occupation. This creates the possibility of an increase of up to 2% in either the American or the foreign-born percentages. The probability of a higher ratio (combined of 5%) exists as well in the occupational percentages. Thirteenth New Jersey Descriptive Books and Muster Rolls. Record Group 94. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹²E.R. Brown The Twenty-Seventh Indiana Volunteer Infantry in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865 First Division Twelfth and Twentieth Corps (Gaithersburg, Maryland: Butternut Press, 1899), 23-24; The Twenty-seventh Indiana listed the majority of their soldiers ranging in age from eighteen to twenty-two. A small minority of the men were twenty-eight to thirty years of age. No mean was given, yet one assumes that the average age would have been between twenty-four and twenty-five. This also is roughly equivalent with the median age of all Union soldiers.

¹³Mrs. George A. Beardsley Collection. New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

Squad Drill	6 1/2 to 7 1/2 AM
Breakfast	7 1/2 AM
Doctors Call	8 AM
Guard Mountings	8 1/2 AM
Squad Drill	11 to 12 AM
Dinner	1 PM
Company Drill	3 to 5 PM
Supper	6 1/2 PM
Retreat and Roll Call	7 PM
Taps	10 PM

Calls of the Drum

Officers	A roll and five taps
First Sergeant	A roll and four taps
Sergeant	A roll and three taps
Drill	Assembly
Breakfast	A single drag
Dinner	A double drag
Supper	A single drag

As the regiment was being formed, many volunteers failed to sustain the enthusiasm which had led them to enlist; in fact, thirty-six men fled camp before muster. On 25 August, the very day that the Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteer Infantry officially mustered into service, two more men deserted, and during the next five days an additional seventeen men disappeared.¹⁴ Nevertheless, strict schedules and camp rules meant that army life continued for those who remained and even the slightest infractions met with stern discipline. Slowly, the Thirteenth began to act and to look like a unified regiment.

After being mustered into service, each soldier was issued clothing, accoutrements, and equipment. For example, on 28 August, the men of Company D received the following

¹⁴Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Civil War, 1861-1865, Vol. I. (Trenton, New Jersey: John L. Murphy, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1876), 628-661; Thirteenth New Jersey Muster Rolls, Records of the Adjutant General's Office. Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

issue: eighty-four each of cap pouches and picks, gun slings, complete muskets, tompions, cartridge boxes, cartridge box belts, cartridge box belt plates, cartridge box plates, scabbards and frogs, waist belts and waist belt plates; five swords complete with belts, belt plates, waist belts and waist belt plates for non-commissioned officers, and two swords with belts, plates, waist belts and waist belt plates for musicians.¹⁵ Quartermasters also distributed single bed sacks, wall tents complete with fly, poles, sets and pins, Sibley tents containing poles and tripods, pins and sets, servants tents, blankets, knapsacks, haversacks, and canteens. Additionally, the men received forage caps, trousers, sashes, blue flannel sack coats, flannel shirts, drawers, bootees, stockings, and great coats.¹⁶ This equipment, these accoutrements, and these pieces of clothing, were given to each man in every company.

On 29 August a momentous occasion took place when some ladies from Newark presented a regimental flag to the newly formed unit. Following this auspicious honor the 38 officers and 899 men of the Thirteenth New Jersey left Camp Frelinghuysen on Sunday, 31 August, after little more than one week of organization and training. A young soldier in

¹⁵"Invoice of Ordnance and Ordnance Stores, Company D." Mrs. George A. Beardsley Collection, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

¹⁶Untitled document penned by Captain George A. Beardsley, commanding officer of Company D. Mrs. George A. Beardsley Collection.

Company K, Private Andrew N. Terhune, wrote to a friend that the regiment marched to Philadelphia and bivouacked on its outskirts that Sunday night. Travelling by rail, they departed for Baltimore on Monday and arrived in Washington, D.C., the following morning, 2 September.¹⁷ The regiment then left the capital, quickly covering the four miles to Fort Richardson in Arlington Heights, Virginia. In response to Confederate troops moving towards Harper's Ferry, the Thirteenth went to work building lines of earthworks and rifle pits. But after three uneventful days at Fort Richardson, the Thirteenth embarked on a thirty-mile march, pausing to spend a night at Tenallytown. Reaching the vicinity of Rockville, Maryland, the morning of the sixth, it established camp about two miles away from the town.

Here the Union army founded the Twelfth Corps, comprised of newly mustered infantries and reorganized veteran regiments. Formerly in the Union's Army of Virginia, under the command of General Nathaniel P. Banks, the Twenty-Seventh Indiana, the Third Wisconsin, and the Second Massachusetts Volunteer Infantries made up Gordon's Brigade, Williams Division. This veteran unit combined with the newly formed Thirteenth New Jersey and One Hundred-Seventh New York Volunteer Infantries to become the Third Brigade, First Division of the Army of the Potomac's Twelfth

¹⁷Letter written by Private Andrew N. Terhune, Company K, to John Achenbach in Saddle River, New Jersey. Lewis Leigh, Jr. Collection, United States Army Military History Research Center, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Corps. Upon the arrival of the two green infantry regiments to the corps, a member of Company C, Twenty-Seventh Indiana commented that:

Their appearance--when they first came to us was in striking contrast to that of the older regiments. There seemed to be a countless number of them. We had not realized before how large a regiment really was. Their new uniforms, their enormous knapsacks, and their seemingly excess of equipments of all kinds, attracting more attention by their inexperienced way of bundling them up and caring for them, we shall not soon forget.¹⁸

Their inexperience did not last long, however, and the Thirteenth soon learned the rudiments of army life. Meanwhile, the Twelfth Corps united with the Union Army.

Under the command of Major-General George B. McClellan, the Army of the Potomac divided into three wings. Led by Major-General Edwin V. Sumner of the Second Corps, the Twelfth Corps and the Second Corps joined to form the Center Wing. The Twelfth Corps, commanded by Brigadier-General Alpheus S. Williams, moved out from Rockville on 9 September, marching by way of Frederick, Middletown, and the National Road.¹⁹ On the fourteenth it received word of an engagement at South Mountain. Like all green troops, the men of the Thirteenth were anxious, eager, and frightened, but after sixteen long hours of marching over roads obstructed by artillery trains and troops, they arrived too

¹⁸Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 225-6.

¹⁹John W. Schildt, Roads to Antietam (Chewsville, Maryland: Antietam Publications, 1985), 125.

late for the fight. The exhausted Third Brigade, led by Brigadier-General George H. Gordon, spent the night on the edge of the day's battlefield as the rebels fled. The next morning, as the Union Army rose to begin the pursuit, the First, Second, and Twelfth Corps were ordered to follow the National Road.²⁰

The Federals' route passed through Turner's Gap on the way to Keedysville. Broken muskets, disabled caissons and other indications of battle covered the ground; the slopes were littered with the corpses of dead Confederate soldiers and horses.²¹ One only can imagine the reactions of the men of the Thirteenth and One Hundred-Seventh to those sights. Fear and stress, or perhaps merely homesickness or boredom, prompted several men of the Thirteenth to desert. During the two and a half weeks since leaving Washington, twelve privates and one corporal abandoned the regiment, three of whom left after marching through the battlefield of Turner's Gap, possibly unnerved by the carnage exhibited there.²² Nonetheless, the New Jersey regiment continued its march, arriving at Keedysville later that day.

Several days earlier, on 13 September, tensions had mounted when a member of the Twenty-Seventh Indiana

²⁰Stephen W. Sears, Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam, (New York: Warner Books, 1988), 173.

²¹Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 233-4.

²²Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey, 628-661; Thirteenth New Jersey Muster Rolls.

discovered the famous Lost Dispatch, or Confederate Order No. 191, wrapped around three cigars, which detailed the movement of the southern army.²³ Consequently, on 16 September, the Thirteenth bivouacked at Nicodemus' Mill, two miles south of Keedysville, resting and eating in anticipation of the looming battle. Brigadier-General Alpheus S. Williams transferred the command of the corps to Major-General Joseph K. F. Mansfield.²⁴ Williams then led the First Division, and Gordon retained command of the Third Brigade. The next day, seventeen days after leaving home, the New Jersey volunteers were to load their muskets for the first time and receive their "baptism by fire."

²³Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 228.

²⁴John Cannan, The Antietam Campaign, July - November, 1862. (New York: Wieser and Wiser, Inc., 1990), 75-7.

Chapter II

The Gleam of Rifles

On 16 September, the Twelfth Corps moved out towards disaster. McClellan planned to attack the Confederates on the following day near Sharpsburg, Maryland. Intending to begin the assault on the Confederate left, he ordered Major General Joseph Hooker's First Corps to cross the Antietam Creek late in the day of the sixteenth. In response to Hooker's request for support, McClellan instructed the Twelfth Corps to follow the First. General Sumner wished to follow also with his Second Corps, but McClellan withheld his permission.²⁵

Just before midnight on the sixteenth the Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteers crossed Antietam Creek and positioned themselves with the reserves on the right of the Union Army. At 2:30 A.M. Mansfield's Twelfth Corps found themselves on the Hoffman and Line farms, approximately one mile behind Hooker's First Corps. At daybreak, led by advancing pickets, the First Division, Twelfth Corps, crossed the Smoketown Road, then swung left and southward in column of battalions en masse; the Third Brigade followed Crawford's First Brigade. As it marched, the Third Brigade crossed the

²⁵Sears, Landscape Turned Red, 190; Ezra Ayers Carman. Untitled Civil War Manuscript, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., , Vol. II, Ch. 13, 49. (Chapter headings are provided for the sake of clarity. Duplicate chapter headings, discussing different subjects, exist in Carman's manuscript. Fortunately, he assigned duplicate numbers in Roman numerals).

line of fire from Confederate Colonel Stephen D. Lee's Virginia battery. Colonel Carman described the brigade's movement as slow, cautious, and frequently halting, but not hesitant enough to allow the men to make coffee.²⁶

Finally, the call to halt came at 6:30 A.M. and the division remained near the woods by the Poffenberger farm while Mansfield rode off to find Hooker. Meanwhile, the First Corps had launched its attack from the North Woods, but met with strong resistance; the men could be seen ahead, retreating. When Mansfield returned, Williams declared himself ready to deploy, but, Mansfield, a regular soldier who distrusted volunteers, believed the new regiments would run away under fire, and delayed their advance. Plans were finally relayed to advance and assault the enemy in tight compact lines, with veteran infantry units and newly formed regiments alternately positioned. Gordon's Brigade followed Crawford's Brigade into the field.²⁷ At this time

...the Thirteenth New Jersey was detached and thrown into the edge of a piece of woods, to observe the right flank of the marching columns in the direction of the Hagerstown Road, where, for the first time in its experience, its colonel instructed it how to form line of battle by deploying it along the fence, skirting the woods...²⁸

As the division prepared to move forward, General

²⁶Carman, Ch. XVI, 121.

²⁷Ibid., 122.

²⁸Ibid., 133.

Mansfield was mortally wounded in the East Woods while deploying infantry. After receiving command of the Twelfth Corps, Williams consulted with Sumner. He then ordered Gordon's Brigade to the support of Hooker's Corps. The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, Third Wisconsin, and Second Massachusetts moved out with the Thirteenth New Jersey and the One Hundred-Seventh New York in their rear as support. As the advancing column crossed Miller's farm, the Second Massachusetts remained on the far right in the orchard, while the Twenty-Seventh and Third advanced through the cornfield to repulse the assault by Confederate Brigadier General John B. Hood's Division of Major General James Longstreet's Corps. After withstanding a deadly fire from the enemy, the hard-pressed troops were relieved by Major General John Sedgewick's Division, Second Corps, thus allowing the embattled brigade to withdraw to the relative safety of the East Woods.²⁹

Soon, however, Sedgewick's division was itself in need of assistance and at approximately 9:45 A.M., Williams ordered the Thirteenth New Jersey and the Second Massachusetts to support Sumner. The regiments advanced through the cornfield to the Hagerstown Pike, the Thirteenth on the left and the Second on the right as they faced the road north of Dunker Church, unaware that the Confederate 49th, 35th, and

²⁹Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 241-245; Sears, Landscape Turned Red, 229; Historical Marker designating Gordon's Brigade, Twelfth Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, Hagerstown Pike, Antietam National Park, Sharpsburg, Maryland.

25th North Carolina infantry regiments were across the road, hidden from sight by a ledge of rock. As the Thirteenth and Second unsuspectingly crossed the fence bordering the Pike and came into view, the North Carolinians let loose a withering fire. The Union troops were stunned and badly hurt; Captain Hugh C. Irish of Company K, Thirteenth New Jersey, was killed instantly. At this point Sumner's men were nowhere in sight and rebel reinforcements could be seen coming up behind the Carolinians. Since no movement forward could be made, the two regiments briefly returned the fire before retreating 300 to 400 yards in perfect order to the East Woods.³⁰

Moments after they reached the woods, Gordon received a plea for help from General Greene, who had engaged Longstreet's command in the West Woods. The Thirteenth reformed and advanced again to the support of Greene's Second Division. At approximately 10:30 A.M., the New Jersey regiment recrossed the Hagerstown Pike and entered the woods adjacent to Dunker Church, positioning itself on Greene's right. Shortly after noon, enemy troops struck hard at the flank of the Thirteenth. This action surprised Greene's Division which had ventured too far into the West Woods without support, not realizing that Sedgewick's

³⁰Carman, Ch. XVII, 180, 245; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 319; Historical Marker designating Thirteenth New Jersey and Second Massachusetts Infantries, Third Brigade, First Division, Twelfth Corps, Army of the Potomac, Hagerstown Pike, Antietam National Park, Sharpsburg, Maryland; Sears, Landscape Turned Red, 254-5.

Division had already left the field. Overwhelmed, the Thirteenth New Jersey and Greene's startled division retired once again to the East Woods.³¹ For the Thirteenth, the battle was over. During the morning phase, twice they had been sent in as support to the West Woods and twice they were repulsed by the Confederates.

The Thirteenth New Jersey sustained ten killed, seventy wounded (eleven would later die from their wounds and an additional ten from disease), and twenty-one missing. Of the missing, eighteen privates were later cited as deserters; one was presumed dead.³² Throughout the battle, various Union commanders noted the regiment's courage under fire and complimented their order as they retreated.³³

General Gordon wrote that

this regiment [the Thirteenth New Jersey], for the first time under fire, moved coolly, and in an orderly manner...I am much gratified to report that the General [Greene] has spoken to me of their conduct, in terms of high commendation....The Thirteenth New Jersey...being new troops, might well stand appalled at such exposure, but they did not flinch in the discharge of their duties. I have no words but praise for their conduct.³⁴

The battle ended late in the day indecisively with

³¹Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 319; Historical marker designating Greene's Second Division, Twelfth Corps, Army of the Potomac, Hagerstown Pike, Antietam National Park, Sharpsburg, Maryland; Sears, Landscape Turned Red, 274-5.

³²Quarterly Returns of Deceased Soldiers for the Quarter ending 30 September, 1862. Office of the Adjutant General. Box 2510. Record Group 94. National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey, 628-661; Thirteenth New Jersey Muster Rolls.

³³Sears, Landscape Turned Red, 254-5, 274-5.

³⁴Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 319.

no clear victor. Of the approximately 130,000 troops in the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia, at least 21,000, a staggering sixteen percent of the combatants, lay dead or wounded on the field.³⁵ The Thirteenth New Jersey remained in position that night, rested, resting, and eating. While it had by no means routed the enemy that day, far from it, its entry into combat was an admirable one.

The Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteers stayed at Sharpsburg for two days after the battle. Changes in command occurred, as McClellan reassigned General Banks to the head of the Twelfth Corps. With Gordon on sick leave, Colonel Silas Colgrove, of the 27th Indiana, assumed command of the Third Brigade. On 19 September, under new leadership, the brigade slowly made their way towards Harpers Ferry. After encamping four miles from Sandy Hook, Maryland for three days, the unit moved on to Maryland Heights. There, the regiment attempted to restore its strength and structure despite the fact that its men had to suffer the elements without tents. Also, many soldiers were stricken by disease, leaving the healthy men to perform the tasks of cutting timber and building fortifications on the slopes and summit of the mountain. Nevertheless, strict

³⁵Allan Nevins, The War for the Union: War Becomes Revolution, 1862-1863. (New York: Scribner's, 1960), 225.; The Antietam National Park puts the losses at 12,410 Federal casualties and 10,700 Confederate killed, wounded, captured or missing.

discipline was maintained. Soldiers returning from overextended leaves were immediately placed under arrest, and officers who left camp without permission were reduced to the ranks.³⁶ As a result of these measures intended to regain troop health and morale, the unit was soon in fighting trim.

Capping off the dull period of recovery, an unexpected visit by President Lincoln on 27 October boosted the spirits of the volunteers. Renewed in purpose, the Thirteenth left decamped on the thirtieth under orders to protect a portion of the Chesapeake and Ohio canal. Marching up the Potomac to the mouth of the Antietam, the regiment passed through Sharpsburg and camped three miles west of the town. Upon arrival, thirty privates and one officer from each company were assigned to a daily picket roster.³⁷ From their posts, the pickets could clearly see rebel troops on the opposite side of the canal. Yet, the Confederates did not stay long, and anxiety soon languished into boredom.

On 5 November, General George McClellan was relieved of command of the Army of the Potomac and replaced by General Ambrose P. Burnside. Hoping to create a more efficient army, Burnside created three "Grand Divisions" consisting each of two corps. For the men of the Thirteenth, however,

³⁶General Order No. 28, dated 25 October, 1862, at Maryland Heights. Thirteenth New Jersey Descriptive Books.

³⁷General Order No. 44, dated 28 November, 1862, near Sharpsburg. Descriptive Books.

the reorganization caused little disruption, since changes occurred only at the highest levels of command. On 12 November, half of the New Jersey regiment moved one mile closer to Sharpsburg, continuing to share the tedium of picket duty with other regiments of the Third Brigade. An indication of the monotony of everyday life could be seen in the numbers of desertions. During the month of October, six men fled camp; eight more men disappeared in November.

Frustrated and irritated, Colonel Carman issued General Order No. 38 from his headquarters at the center of the Thirteenth's line in late November. Calling attention to the regiment's high rate of desertion and citing the 20th Article of War, Carman ordered that "all officers and soldiers who have received pay, or [who] have been duly enlisted in the service of the United States, and shall be convicted of having deserted same, shall suffer death, or such other punishment as by sentence of Court Martial shall be inflicted."³⁸ Unfortunately, the threat appeared to have little effect on would-be deserters, for in the next month an additional ten privates abandoned the regiment.

On 9 December, after a relatively uneventful month outside Sharpsburg, the Thirteenth received orders to strike tents, to prepare and issue three days cooked rations, and

³⁸General Order No. 38, dated 21 November 1863, near Sharpsburg, Maryland, *ibid.*

to be ready to move out at 7 A.M. the following day.³⁹ Accordingly, the regiment began its long march towards winter camp the next morning, travelling over nearly impassable roads and through heavy snowstorms. After finally reaching and crossing Harper's Ferry, the Thirteenth's route proceeded by way of Hillsborough, Leesburg, and Fairfax Station, bring the unit well past Occoquan Creek by the 16 December. Shortly after the crossing of the creek, however, the brigade received reports of the battle at Fredricksburg and received orders to return to Fairfax Station.⁴⁰

There the Thirteenth encamped until 4 January when it was directed to move to Wolf Run Shoals. While visiting the unit on the twelfth, an army paymaster noticed the low state of troop morale. This attitude was reflected in the soldier's careless performance of picket duty on the Occoquan Creek and, not surprisingly, thirteen men deserted during this time. At last, the regiment broke camp on 20 January, embarking on a long, slow twenty mile march through rain and mud, and arriving three days later at Stafford Court House, Virginia.⁴¹ Signalling as it did both the end

³⁹General Order No. 42, dated 26 November 1863, near Sharpsburg, Maryland, Descriptive Books; General Order No. 49, dated 9 December 1863, *ibid.*

⁴⁰Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 320-1.

⁴¹General Order No. 1, dated 11 January 1863, Wolf Run Shoals, Virginia, Descriptive Books; General Order No. 3, dated 14 January 1863, Wolf Run Shoals, VA, *ibid.*; Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey; Form entitled "Enlisted Men on Extra or Daily Duty," dated 31 January 1863, written by Captain David A. Ryerson, commanding Company D, while stationed at Stafford Court House. Mrs. George A. Beardsley Collection.

of the Thirteenth's journey and Burnside's tenure as commander of the Army of the Potomac, the "Mud March" ended January's activities.

After Burnside's resignation and Lincoln's acceptance of it, General Joseph Hooker assumed the already well-worn cloak of commander of the Army of the Potomac on 25 January 1863. As the rate of desertion in the Union army climbed to nearly 200 per day, Hooker's first priority was to restore men to the army and morale to the men. The Twelfth Corps alone had lost 136 of every 1000 soldiers, while total desertions from the Army of the Potomac neared 85,000 men.⁴² The high rate of absenteeism in the Thirteenth attested to the fact that it was no exception. Upon taking command, Hooker announced that there would be no more delays in courts martial; discipline had to be reestablished. To make the point, a few arrested deserters were shot as examples, and desertion rates dropped drastically. In the Thirteenth only one soldier deserted from camp during February and March.⁴³

In addition to tightening discipline, Hooker ordered increased drilling, larger rations, and improved quality of food. As a result, soldiers received less hardtack and more

⁴²Allan Nevins, The War For The Union: War Becomes Revolution 1862-1863, 434.; Nevins listed a total of 81,964 men and 2,962 officers absent without leave.

⁴³Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey, 628-661.

fresh bread.⁴⁴ As officers closely monitored camp sanitation, the troops, including the Thirteenth, enjoyed a healthier winter in camp. Their rations included the addition of potatoes, onions, salt pork, beans, and rice. Since wood was plentiful, stockades and small log houses with chimneys were erected. Four men tented together, buttoning four pieces of shelter tent to form a roof capable of allowing the men to stand erect. Thus, although the daily schedule included more activity and mail arrived regularly, life in camp remained monotonous,⁴⁵ as February and March passed without enemy engagement. The only diversion from everyday routine occurred during the first weeks of February, when companies E, F, G, and H were detached from the regiment and sent to White House Landing on Aquia Creek. These companies spent the next two months performing fatigue work and unloading stores of supplies.

Although fairly strict discipline set the tone of camp life, the officers and men of the Thirteenth did not always measure up to military standards. General Order Number 9, dated 9 February 1863, complained of the "great ignorance evinced by many of the officers of some of the most simple matters pertaining to their duties." Subsequently, all officers were required to attend daily schools of

⁴⁴Nevins, War Becomes Revolution 1862-1863, p. 435.

⁴⁵Samuel Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, (Orange, New Jersey: Journal Office, 1878), 42.

instruction in Butterfield's Outpost and Picket Duty.

Furthermore, each officer was required to own a copy; the punishment for failure to attain proficiency was immediate reduction to the ranks.⁴⁶ Also, earlier deficiencies in camp sanitation were rectified, and when the Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac visited the regiment on the twenty-sixth, the Thirteenth passed inspection with flying colors. Nevertheless, weekly orders reminded the soldiers to keep the streets, parade grounds, their quarters and cookhouses, and their persons as tidy as possible. Lieutenant Colonel Grimes conducted daily drills in field movements and bayonet exercises. Beside the drills and regular picket duty, General Thomas H. Ruger kept the soldiers of his brigade busy with camp guard and fatigue assignments.⁴⁷ Now, with little time to slack off, the atmosphere of low morale began to dissipate. When the four companies on duty at White House Landing returned by 5 April, the regiment began to wind down its stay at Stafford Court House.

During his months of reorganization, Hooker abandoned Burnside's "Grand Divisions" and reestablished a system whereby corps commanders reported directly to him. He also

⁴⁶General Order No. 9, dated 9 February 1863, near Stafford Court House, VA., Descriptive Books; General Order No. 25, dated 25 March 1863, near Stafford Court House, VA, *ibid*.

⁴⁷General Order No. 26, dated 25 March 1863, near Stafford Court House, *ibid*; General Order No. 35, dated 3 April 1863, near Stafford Court House, Virginia, *ibid*.; Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 62.

assigned Major General Henry Slocum, the youngest commander in the Army of the Potomac, to lead the Twelfth Corps. In a further effort to restore morale and promote unity, Hooker and his staff devised and implemented a badge system, whereby each corps would be assigned an identification symbol with a different color for each division. When in April each member of the Thirteenth received a red pointed star denoting the First Division, Twelfth Corps, it instantly became a source of great pride. Hooker also scheduled three Grand Reviews to be held in March and April. The men passed in review before Generals Slocum and Hooker in March, but perhaps the most important was that by President Lincoln on 10 April. The impressive sight of the entire Twelfth Corps and the charismatic presence of Lincoln did much to bolster the soldier's morale. After three long months of reorganizing and rebuilding, the happier and healthier soldiers of the Army of the Potomac embarked upon the road which ultimately would lead to Union victory.

Chapter III

Prepare to Move!

"Fall in Thirteenth, fall in, strike tents and prepare to move," came the call on 27 April 1863. After receiving eight days rations of hard tack, coffee, sugar, and one hundred rounds of ammunition per soldier, the New Jersey regiment left its winter camp at Stafford Court House. Led by General Ruger, the Third Brigade joined the Twelfth Corps as the Union offensive began. Hooker's objective was to surprise Lee's army and force it to fight. Under orders to move swiftly and quietly, the Twelfth Corps and the Fifth Corps followed the Eleventh Corps, making its way towards Kelly's Ford. (Hooker cleverly instructed the Second Corps to serve as a diversion, creating a ruckus as it advanced towards United States Ford and Banks Ford). Moving in silence, the other three corps rested the night of the twenty-seventh without fires near Hartwood Church, resuming its march the next day past Mount Holly Church. As directed, the units stayed out of sight of the river until they crossed the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford on the twenty-ninth. Thus, their true size remained undetected as they continued their quiet movement towards Germania Ford on the Rapidan. Confederate General Jeb Stuart's cavalry reconnaissance recognized them only as a large body of

infantry.⁴⁸

Upon reaching Germania Ford, the Third Brigade captured rebel troops building a bridge. While the Union soldiers forded the river, Twelfth Corps engineers completed the construction of the bridge. Then the Thirteenth moved one mile beyond and provided picket duty for the night. On the thirtieth the brigade resumed its movement forward, serving as rear-guard for the Twelfth Corps. As evening fell, the Twelfth Corps advanced down the Orange Plank Road towards the Chancellor House. When the call came to halt, Slocum arranged his corps in an arc between the Orange Turnpike and the Orange Plank Road. The Thirteenth bivouacked in line of battle nearly parallel to the south side of the plank road. After hearing that Hooker had praised the movements of the Fifth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Corps as "splendid achievements," the regiment settled down for the night with heightened morale.⁴⁹

Early the next morning, 1 May, Hooker planned to make his advance in three columns. At approximately 11 A.M., Slocum led the third column, comprised of the Twelfth and Eleventh Corps, along the Plank Road toward Tabernacle Church. Intending to assist the Third Corps in their

⁴⁸Toombs, Reminiscences, 44-46; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 322; Ernest B. Furgurson, Chancellorsville 1863: The Souls of the Brave, New York: Alfred P. Knopf, 1992), 91; General Edward J. Stackpole, Chancellorsville: Lee's Greatest Battle, (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1988), 95-117.

⁴⁹Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 322; Furgurson, Chancellorsville 1863, 110-111; Stackpole, Chancellorsville, 124-129, 146-147.

crossing of United States Ford, the corps became engaged with the enemy one mile from the Chancellor House. As they formed a line of battle, the Thirteenth placed their knapsacks along the side of the road. (To their dismay, the sacks were gone upon their return.) Then the regiment was ordered forward into an open field where the troop lay down. Answering the call to advance, the Thirteenth crossed the field and the fence beyond. During the ensuing assault, Colonel Carman was injured and subsequently carried from the field. Major John Grimes assumed command, leading the Thirteenth into the woods on the other side of the fence. Shortly, the regiment was ordered back to its previous position. Eventually, the regiment and the rest of the corps was pushed out of its original line.⁵⁰

The Thirteenth spent the early hours of 2 May building breastworks with abatis in front. A great deal of time and energy was focused on fortifying the four mile line of the Twelfth Corps, which extended to meet the left flank of the Eleventh Corps, which built none. That afternoon sharp fighting took place on the left of the Twelfth Corps. At approximately 5 P.M., believing that an enemy retreat was in order, the corps moved out to pursue. Shortly after its departure, however, Confederate General Stonewall Jackson hit the now exposed flank of the Eleventh Corps with great

⁵⁰Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 48-49; Foster, Chancellorsville 1863, 322; Furgurson, 123-129; Stackpole, Chancellorsville, 150.

force. His assault threw the corps into chaos and the units began to flee down Chancellorsville Road, as the Confederate troops promptly moved into a portion of the deserted breastworks. Meanwhile, the Third Brigade was returning to its former position. In the pandemonium created by the retreating Eleventh Corps and the advance of the Confederates, the Thirteenth proved that months of drill had paid off. The men stood steady and checked the rebel advance. Eventually, as the evening wore on, the battle died down. Finally, as the Thirteenth took count of its casualties, Major Grimes was among the wounded, the second officer to fall in two days. Captain Beardsley of Company D took over the regiment, ordering the Thirteenth to get what rest and sustenance it could during the uneasy lull in the fighting.⁵¹

Regrettably, the regiment was not to repose for long, for an unexpected advance by General Daniel Sickles Corps into the area of the Twelfth Corps was to disturb the evening. Around 11 P.M., Sickles obtained permission from Hooker to attempt to reclaim the original line, assisted by William's First Division. Williams, however, did not want to proceed without the Slocum's approval. Unfortunately, a consultation with Slocum did not materialize before Sickles began his advance. Pushing forward in the dark around

⁵¹Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 52, 62; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 323; Stackpole, Chancellorsville, 186, 219, 247-249.

midnight with no scouts or skirmishers, Birney's Division of Sickles Corps accidentally hit Williams Division. During the confusion, a barrage of friendly and enemy fire resulted in catastrophe, with the Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteers firing into the backs of the Third Wisconsin. Finally, the assault was halted and an effort made to restore order, but it took nearly one hour to reform the line of the Thirteenth. For all his intentions, Sickles' blunder achieved only unnecessary loss of Union life.⁵² Years later, General Alpheus Williams would write that "human language can give no idea of such a scene - such an infernal and yet sublime combination of sound and flame and smoke, and dreadful yells of rage, of pain, or triumph, or of defiance."⁵³

After the turmoil subsided, the period between midnight and 4 A.M. remained relatively quiet. At daylight, however, picket firing resumed, and rebel troops could be seen massing in heavy columns along the front of the Twelfth Corps where general fighting soon erupted. For hours the Twelfth and Third Corps took the brunt of fire by rebel sharpshooters. Although Hooker had a large forces in

⁵²Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 323; Stackpole, Chancellorsville, 263; Furgurson, Chancellorsville 1863, 208; David Martin, The Chancellorsville Campaign, (Conshohocken, Pennsylvania: Combined Books, Inc., 1991), 148; Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 53.

⁵³Major General Alpheus S. Williams, From the Cannon's Mouth: The Civil War Letters of General Alpheus S. Williams, (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1959), 194.

reserve, only portions of the Fifth, Twelfth, and Third Corps actually was used in repelling the Confederate attack. At this point the rebel troops greatly outnumbered those of the Union.⁵⁴

Despite the odds, the Third Brigade led by the Twenty-Seventh Indiana and the Second Massachusetts, moved forward. The Thirteenth aligned itself to support the advance, while the Indiana soldiers once again suffered heavy casualties. When the equally battered Second Massachusetts exhausted its ammunition, the Thirteenth came to its relief. Fighting fiercely for two hours against a rebel line which was reinforced three times by fresh troops, the plight of the New Jersey regiment became so desperate that its soldiers searched the corpses of nearby dead for ammunition. Still, withstanding an incredible fire and returning volley after volley with precious little ammunition, the Thirteenth managed to make a considerable advance against Jackson's troops and even captured a few prisoners.⁵⁵ The men of New Jersey were finally relieved and retired around 8 A.M. Limping to the rear, they unfortunately came under the fire of Confederate batteries, thereby suffering further casualties. Moments later they were to receive word that the brigade which had relieved them had broken, losing the

⁵⁴Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 323; Stackpole, Chancellorsville, 292-294.

⁵⁵Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 54; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 324.

ground for which the Thirteenth had so desperately fought.

Dejected, the regiment marched two miles to United States Ford, where the men received more ammunition and rested briefly before returning to the front. Shortly after noon, the battle ceased and the Thirteenth moved to the extreme left of the Union line at Scott's Dam on the Rappahannock. The remainder of the afternoon and evening was spent completing the breastworks which the Eleventh Corps had begun. This respite afforded the officers time to compile the casualty list; the losses suffered by the Thirteenth New Jersey consisted of 18 killed, 89 wounded, and 22 missing. Of the wounded, eight would later die of their wounds; two of the missing were later presumed dead. Five New Jersey men deserted during the fighting on the third and three privates of the Thirteenth were taken prisoner. When the battle failed to resume on the fourth, the beaten Union army rested. In his final report on the battle at Chancellorsville, Colonel Colgrove wrote that he had the "opportunity of witnessing the manner in which the...Thirteenth New Jersey [regiment] acquitted [itself] during the engagement, and [took] great pleasure in stating that the officers and men behaved handsomely and fought bravely. ¶ Troops of their experience could scarcely have done better."⁵⁶

On 5 May, Hooker moved his army back over the

⁵⁶Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 342.

Rappahannock in the rain. Returning on muddy roads, the regiment arrived a few days later at Stafford Court House.⁵⁷ After establishing camp, the regimental quartermaster reissued clothing, food, and ammunition to the exhausted men of the Thirteenth. On 10 May, the Thirteenth's regimental Roll of Honor for Gallantry was posted, naming sixteen non-commissioned officers and eleven privates.⁵⁸ In an effort to boost morale after the defeat at Chancellorsville, the regiment passed in review on 11 May. Additionally, on 13 May, Captain George A. Beardsley nominated ten officers and five enlisted men for "favorable mention for coolness and efficiency on the battlefield" of Chancellorsville. Unfortunately, his action ignited already smoldering envies and jealousies among some of the officers. Captain David A. Ryerson and six other officers, accused Beardsley of favoritism, since one of the men nominated for bravery was Samuel Beardsley, the commanding officer's brother, and another man nominated for commendation had fallen mortally wounded only moments after being reprimanded for cowardice. As a result of this intra-regimental squabble, Beardsley brought charges against Ryerson and his fellow agitators of insubordination and conduct prejudicial to good order and

⁵⁷Furgurson, Chancellorsville 1863, 226; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 324-325; Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey, 628-661; Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 56.

⁵⁸General Order No. 44, dated 10 May 1863, near Stafford Court House, Descriptive Books.

military discipline. Also charged with "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" and violations of the Sixth and Seventh Articles of War, the delinquent officers were severely reprimanded.⁵⁹

Thereafter, the remaining days of May passed without further internal conflict or enemy engagement. On the twenty-third, General Williams presented the regiment with new colors on behalf of the State of New Jersey. Shortly, the Thirteenth began its march in pursuit of Lee's daring army, which had moved north toward Pennsylvania. By way of Dumfries and Drainsville, the regiment marched to Leesburg, where the men were assigned to the construction of earthworks. Here the tedium of work and camp life was interrupted by a dramatic court martial. News of the trial of Christopher Krobot, a German private arrested for his January desertion from the Thirteenth New Jersey at Wolf Run Shoals, circulated quickly through the brigade. When asked his reasons for deserting, Krobot offered the explanation that

I was a coming from the country the eleventh of May and was a going to report myself when I was taken. I told the man who took me that I was a going to report myself under the proclamatory. I cannot read English and there [was] no German

⁵⁹Untitled documents and records from the trials of Captain David A. Ryerson and First Lieutenant William G. Cunningham, Mrs. George A. Beardsley Papers.

where I was working.⁶⁰

Finding Krobart's statement to be without merit, the trial officers sentenced the private to death by firing squad.

Drums beat "Assembly" as the soldiers of the First Division paraded out to the field where Krobart and two members of the Forty-Sixth Pennsylvania were to be executed. An otherwise lovely day, the nineteenth of June brought what Samuel Toombs called "one of the most affecting sights of the war." After the division halted, a closely guarded ambulance containing the prisoners, followed by a wagon carrying three coffins, rambled to the spot where freshly dug graves lay waiting. Upon its arrival, guards removed the men, tied their hands behind their backs, and placed blindfolds over their eyes. An officer intoned the death sentence and the Chaplain of the Thirteenth offered a short prayer. At the command "Ready. Fire," thirty-six rifles discharged, shattering the silence. All troops present were ordered to file past the bodies of the executed men. With the last breath of the condemned went any and all doubts as to the seriousness of the punishment which would accompany desertion. The executed soldiers subsequently were buried without the dignity of a service.⁶¹

Surprisingly enough, however, six men did desert during

⁶⁰Court-Martial Case Files, 1809-1938, File No. LL 445, Christopher Krubert (Krobart), Company B, Thirteenth New Jersey Infantry, 8, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army), Record Group 153.

⁶¹Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 68-9.

the last two days of June 1863, one of them escaping from the U.S. Army General Hospital in Washington, D.C. Nevertheless, the executions had a profound effect on the men who were present, for with the exception of only a few, the men who later deserted the regiment did so from hospital beds, not from camp or march.⁶²

The regiment left Leesburg on 26 June and crossed the Potomac at Edwards Ferry. As they passed from Frederick City, Maryland, to Taneytown and Littlestown, the word was passed that General George G. Meade had replaced Hooker as commander of the Army of the Potomac. Meade's first orders to the Twelfth Corps directed them to Two Taverns. And so, on 1 July, unaware of the battle brewing five miles northwest at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the Twelfth Corps arrived at their destination, planning to rest and eat.⁶³

Shortly after their arrival, however, General Slocum received orders from General O.O. Howard requesting immediate reinforcement on the field at Gettysburg. During the movement, Williams' Division fell into line behind the column of General Geary's Second Division. With much of

⁶²Bruce Catton noted that "the hospital system ...was practically guaranteed to leak men back into civil life and to do it in such a way that the leaks could not easily be plugged....this was so because the army had been making an honest and generally successful effort to give its men better medical care than any soldiers had ever had on earth before." Bruce Catton, "Glory Road," Bruce Catton's Civil War, (New York: The Fairfax Press, 1984), 282.

⁶³Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 325; General Edward J. Stackpole, They Met at Gettysburg. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1956), 94; Joseph K. Kirkley, Itinerary of the Army of the Potomac and Co-operating Forces in the Gettysburg Campaign, (Washington: [s.n.], 1882), 3.

the first day's fighting already over, the Twelfth Corps arrived on the field late in the day, occupying Culp's Hill and McAllister Hill. The Thirteenth spent the night on the east side of Rock Creek in support of Battery M, First New York. Early the next morning, William's Division crossed the creek, and the Thirteenth moved to the west side of Culp's Hill to construct breastworks.

Late the next afternoon the Twelfth Corps was called to aid the Third Corps's struggle in the Wheatfield. Leaving only a brigade from Geary's command on Culp's Hill, Williams' led his division to the rescue. Their arrival came too late, however, and the unsullied Thirteenth accompanied the division back to its former position. Upon approaching their breastworks, members of the Second Massachusetts captured a few rebel soldiers, who told them that the enemy had occupied the earthworks in their absence. Tired and angry, the brigade withdrew to the still unoccupied entrenchments across the swale on McAllister's Hill. Detached, Company D of the Thirteenth left the regiment to accompany the captured men to Two Taverns.

The rumbling of cannon fire and musketry broke the summer night calm as the men of the Third Brigade waited behind breastworks made of heavy logs, stone and dirt, reinforcing here and there with tree branches, in anticipation of a daylight attack. During the early morning of 3 July, the Union artillery on Powers Hill opened up on

Johnston's men in the entrenchments on Culp's Hill. The Twenty-Seventh Indiana and Second Massachusetts exchanged volleys with the Confederate troops across the swale. The Thirteenth, assuming a support position to the two regiments, also came under fire from sharpshooters occupying a house across Rock Creek. The regiment suffered one killed and twenty wounded before Captain Winegar of the First New York's Battery M set his battery's sights on the house and eradicated the threat to the Thirteenth.⁶⁴

Later in the morning, when the Second and Twenty-Seventh were ordered to cross the swale and force the Rebels from the earthworks, it became necessary for the units to exchange positions. Due to an erroneous command, troops of the Thirteenth and Twenty-Seventh turned into one another, falling in a tangled heap on to the ground. Minutes passed before the men were able to disengage themselves. Then the Twenty-Seventh charged down the slope towards the enemy while the men of the Thirteenth arose, straightened their line, and began to fire in support. Around 11 A.M., after two charges across the swale, the battle ended as the Confederates retreated over Rock Creek.⁶⁵

When the action was over, members of the Thirteenth New

⁶⁴Samuel Toombs, New Jersey Troops in the Gettysburg Campaign, (Hightstown, New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1988), 274-275.

⁶⁵Monument describing the actions of the Twelfth Corps, Army of the Potomac, July 1 through 3, 1863, Carman Avenue, Gettysburg National Military Park; Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 380.

Jersey buried the body of Private Henry Dammig, the regiment's only killed, in their entrenchments.⁶⁶ Soon after, the Thirteenth moved to the extreme right to support Union cavalry reconnaissance, but saw no action. On the fourth, the Thirteenth returned to McAllister's Hill, where it remained until the seventh. As the regiment's officers surveyed the field of battle, they realized that it had suffered relatively little in comparison to the other units in the division. For "when the results were reviewed, it was recognized that Culp's Hill had been the scene of some of the most determined, sanguinary fighting of the war."⁶⁷

On 7 July, the Thirteenth New Jersey left Gettysburg, leaving behind three enlisted men to serve as nurses at Camp Letterman, the large field hospital where many of its wounded lay.⁶⁸ Travelling via John's Crossroads, Hagerstown, Maryland, Sandy Hook, and Loudon Valley, the Thirteenth crossed the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers at Harper's Ferry on 19 July; choruses of "John Brown's Body" could be heard as they marched through the town. Continuing towards Snickersville and Warrenton Junction, the Third

⁶⁶One of the wounded, Private James Parliament, succumbed to his wounds received on the third day's battle. His body and Private Henry Dammig's were laid to rest in the Soldiers' National Cemetery, which was dedicated 19 November 1863, by President Lincoln.

⁶⁷Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Books, 1983), 325.

⁶⁸Camp Letterman Papers, Gregory Coco Collection, Gettysburg National Military Park, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Brigade arrived at Kelly's Ford on the thirty-first of the month. Following the Draft Riots in New York City, General Ruger received orders to depart with the Twenty-Seventh Indiana, the Second Massachusetts, and the Third Wisconsin for the troubled city. Joined earlier in the month by the One Hundred-Fiftieth New York, the Thirteenth New Jersey and One Hundred-Seventh New York remained at Kelly's Ford. Colonel Carman took charge of these three regiments and Captain Beardsley again assumed command of the Thirteenth.⁶⁹

On 15 August, the brigade crossed the Rappahannock River at Kelly's Ford and travelled to Raccoon Ford on the Rapidan. Soldiers of the Thirteenth could clearly see enemy troops on the other side as they served picket duty near the river. Sporadic fighting erupted, yet, the men in blue and gray soon abandoned their futile attacks against each other. Utilizing small wooden boats and meeting in the middle of the river under a flag of truce, the soldiers began a trade of tobacco and coffee, instead of volleys, that lasted for nearly a month. On 12 September, excitement spread through the regimental camps of the Third Brigade as Ruger's detached infantries returned from New York. Laughter and stories filled the following days. Then, on 16 September, the reunited brigade received orders to move at a moment's notice. Immediately, tents were struck, blankets rolled,

⁶⁹Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 327; Kirkley, Itinerary of the Army of the Potomac and Co-operating Forces in the Gettysburg Campaign, 3-6; Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 89.

canteens filled and equipments donned. At the command to "Fall in," the brigade crossed Racoon Ford, heading south towards Stevensburg.⁷⁰

One week later, commanders of the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps spread the word that the two corps were to be shuttled by rail to Tennessee to support Major General William S. Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland. Departing on the twenty-fourth for Bealton Station, the Third Brigade boarded freight cars bound for Alexandria two days later. In Washington on the twenty-seventh, the Thirteenth took another train to Annapolis Junction, where it then disembarked and boarded the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for its journey through Maryland and Virginia. At Benwood, West Virginia, the men left the trains and crossed a pontoon bridge spanning the Ohio River to Bellare, Ohio. Here they boarded the train which was to take them to Indianapolis, Indiana. From there, the regiment moved via ferry to Louisville, Kentucky, where freight cars waited to bring them to Nashville. After a transfer in Nashville to the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad, the New Jersey soldiers finally slept on the ground at Stevenson, Alabama. The next day, however, they again boarded railcars to Dechard, Tennessee. This final day on the train brought the brigade past Elb River Station, through Tullahoma, to Garrison Run,

⁷⁰Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 91-99; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 327-328.

and the long trip ended at last.⁷¹

⁷¹Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 99-103; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 328; George Skoch, "Miracle of the Rails," Civil War Times Illustrated, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, Sept/Oct, 56-59.

Chapter IV

The First Priority

After returning to Tullahoma on 11 October, the Thirteenth was moved yet again, but this time only on paper. At this time, much needed reorganization was occurring in the western theatre. Rosecrans, who proved to be a disappointment to the War Department, was relieved of command by Major General George H. Thomas. The old Twentieth and Twenty-first Corps, of the Army of the Cumberland, joined to become the Fourth Corps, a number no longer used by the Army of the Potomac. The Eleventh and Twelfth Corps combined to form a new Twentieth Corps, boasting 25,000 veteran troops, commanded by Joseph Hooker. Additionally, Lincoln's call for 200,000 new troops in February meant that many new recruits would join the Union armies. Formerly a member of the Third Brigade, First Division, Twelfth Corps, Army of the Potomac, the Thirteenth was transferred by assignment to the Second Brigade, First Division, Twentieth Corps, Army of the Cumberland, Military Division of the Mississippi. To the delight of the soldiers formerly of the Twelfth Corps, the "bloody star" was adopted as the emblem for the Twentieth Corps.

On 23 October, the Thirteenth and its corps marched towards Chattanooga. Plagued by rainstorms, they became bogged down in the mud, failing to arrive in time to participate in the "Battle Among the Clouds." Slowly

slogging through the muddy Tennessee roads, the Thirteenth headed towards Duck River Bridge, its mission being to secure the line of supplies to the Union Army. The First Division, Twentieth Corps, assumed the responsibility of guarding the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. As the New Jersey men settled into their winter quarters at Duck River Bridge, they undertook the usual picket and patrol duties.⁷²

By January 1864, the regiment had completed earthworks and erected a system of rifle pits surrounding the camp. Drilled daily, it seems that the men of the Thirteenth enjoyed their duties. A visit by the Inspector General of the Department of the Cumberland praised the cleanliness of the camp, but it also revealed that the men were equipped with short rammers and badly fitting bayonets. The Military Division of the Mississippi quickly remedied the deficiency and the men received updated firearms. Otherwise, each company's cookhouse produced fresh bread daily and generally provided an abundance of food. Thus, the standards of camp life remained high throughout February, March, and April of 1864.⁷³

Finally, marching orders arrived on 25 April notifying the Thirteenth to move out on what would become known as the

⁷²Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 103-107.

⁷³Reports dated 20 January 1864, 11 February 1864, 23 February 1864, and 31 March 1864, written while stationed at Duck River Bridge, Tennessee, Box 2510, Volunteer Organizations of the Civil War, Office of the Adjutant General, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Atlanta Campaign. En route, the Thirteenth crossed Lookout Mountain and the battlefield of Chickamauga passing by the corpses of unburied Union dead. On 12 May, in north Georgia, the regiment accompanied Williams' Division along the Resaca Road. When the battle of Resaca erupted on 13 May, the Second Brigade soon found itself hotly engaged. The Thirteenth again proved to be a capable fighting unit as it assisted the One Hundred-Seventh and One Hundred-Fiftieth New York regiments in the repulse of a Confederate attack against an unsupported Union battery. A restless night followed, preceding the advance made by the Thirteenth the next morning. Charging down a hill, across a wide plain, all the while a target of enemy artillery, the New Jersey men climbed the opposing hill.

Detailing skirmishers in front, the remaining men quickly constructed breastworks from nearby rails. After completing the works, the regiment promptly reassembled behind them. From this point, the Thirteenth successfully held off the rebel troops for two hours until a regiment from another brigade was able to relieve them. Many commanders commented favorably upon the impressive conduct of the New Jerseyans. Praise also came from their peers; a member of the Twenty-Seventh Indiana remarked that "the three newer regiments [the Thirteenth New Jersey, One Hundred-Seventh and One Hundred-Fiftieth New York infantries] took their places...with the three older

regiments, as real veterans" at the battle of Resaca.⁷⁴

Throughout the war, many men were discharged for disabilities. As wounds, disease, and age prevented many from continuing service, the size of the regiments shrank with each passing day. After the battle of Resaca, the muster rolls of the Thirteenth listed only 318 officers and men. Likewise, the other regiments in the Second Brigade claimed no more than 480 men present for duty. These small, bedraggled regiments pushed out of Resaca in the cold rain only to become embroiled in yet another fight at Cassville on the sixteenth. Hardly a day passed that did not included constant skirmishing with the enemy.⁷⁵

As the Twentieth Corps made its way past Pumpkin Vine Creek en route to Dallas, Georgia, the Second Division engaged enemy troops. Since the First Division had already passed the creek, the Thirteenth joined its brigade in a quick about-face that sent them racing back towards the other half of their corps. The heavy shelling from the enemy which greeted them wounded six Jersey men. Yet, for all their effort, the Thirteenth saw little action. They spent the evening building breastworks, then deployed to the

⁷⁴Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 119-134; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 331-332; Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 479; Albert Castel, Decision in the West: The Atlanta Campaign of 1864, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 125-129, 154-179; O.O. Howard, "The Very Woods Seemed to Moan and Groan," Clarence Buel, ed., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1989), 496-499.

⁷⁵Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey, 628-661; Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 504-509.

rear early the next morning, where the regiment lay idle all day. Following the close of the battle, the Thirteenth remained in position for several days. On 1 June, the soldiers resumed their march towards Atlanta. Upon reaching Pine Knob, the picket fire escalated into a general fight on the sixteenth and seventeenth of June 1864.

Four days later, approximately five miles from Kennesaw Mountain, as the regiment paused to construct earthworks, they were taken by surprise by the approach of rebel infantry. Throwing themselves behind their yet unfinished works, the Thirteenth allowed the Confederates to come within 300 yards of their position before firing. The volley battered the rebel soldiers, causing a moment of hesitation. However, the fight was far from over as the Confederate infantry stood their ground before pushing forward again. A second blast from the Thirteenth's line compelled them to fall back several hundred yards. The rebels reassembled in a patch of woods, peering out from the trees as they exchanged volleys with the Union regiment. The renewed fighting lasted two hours until, exhausted, the southern infantrymen retired from the field.

During this engagement, Colonel Carman served as division field officer, which placed Lieutenant Colonel Grimes in charge of the regiment. When Grimes was wounded, Major Fred Harris assumed command of the Thirteenth. The regiment remained in position on Kulp's farm until the 27th,

when its resumption of march led to yet another fight near Kennesaw Mountain. Pushing forward after every engagement, the Twentieth Corps reached Marietta five days later and established a temporary camp. The Thirteenth New Jersey and the Eighty-Second Ohio formed a reconnaissance party commanded by Colonel Carman on the eighteenth of July. As the party approached Nancy's Creek, it encountered a detachment of rebel infantry. The resulting skirmish confirmed that the enemy was indeed near. Bearing this news, the two regiments returned, carrying their wounded and two dead privates of the Thirteenth New Jersey.⁷⁶

As the Union army closed the distance to Atlanta, the Thirteenth engaged in its last battle of the campaign on 20 July at Peach Tree Creek. The Third Brigade remained in reserve, on the banks of the creek, although men from the Thirteenth held positions on the skirmish line. Repulsing two Confederate infantry attacks, forward movement by the Twentieth Corps ended the battle. Carefully transporting their six wounded, the Thirteenth moved with the corps to the enemy line of defenses north of Atlanta. Five hundred yards from the rebel entrenchments, the Thirteenth set to erecting breastworks. Heavy fire by Confederates batteries rained on the regiment for several hours, miraculously wounding only one man. Finally, the regiment pitched tents

⁷⁶Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 335; Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 140; Castel, Decision in the West, 221-226, 290-301.

housing two to four men behind the inner line of the completed breastworks. For the duration of the siege, each soldier took turns going for food and water and cooking over fires built close to the breastworks.⁷⁷

On the fifth day of the siege of Atlanta, the Thirteenth received orders to destroy a house between the picket lines of the two armies, a site from which rebel sharpshooters targeted the Union soldiers. Under fire from the enemy, the Thirteenth advanced to the house and prepared to torch it. As the flames spread, the regiment captured thirty-three southern soldiers who fled the burning house, all the while under Confederate fire that killed two and wounded six. Undaunted, the Thirteenth held its ground until the house was completely destroyed. For its actions, the regiment received applause from the surrounding Union regiments. The following day the Thirteenth advanced again, capturing sixty more prisoners. In an effort to establish a new line close to the rebel defenses, the unit constructed breastworks and began digging entrenchments. Upon their completion, the regiment returned to its old position where it remained until 25 August 1864.⁷⁸

On the day that the regiment advanced to create a new

⁷⁷Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 150, 160; Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 524-526; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 336; Castel, Decision in the West, 371-377.

⁷⁸Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 156-165; Brown, The Twenty-Seventh Indiana, 528-529; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 336.

line, word spread through the lines that General Hooker had resigned command of the corps, and the men learned that General Slocum was to take his place. A fine and familiar commander, Slocum was well-respected by the majority of the Twentieth Corps. Hooker's departure, however, was not the only loss suffered by the Twentieth Corps during the siege of Atlanta. During 1864, 455 out of 956 three-year regimental enlistment terms expired. When the Twenty-Seventh Indiana was mustered out on 1 September, that strong regiment left a void in the Twentieth Corps. Even so, the growing strength of the Thirteenth New Jersey and the New York regiments gave assurance that the brigade would maintain a high level of efficiency.

On 1 September the Thirteenth ventured out on reconnaissance without any encounter with the enemy. In secrecy and under cover of nightfall, Hood's army had fled the city, thus ending the siege of Atlanta. The following night the Thirteenth entered Atlanta, bands playing and men singing and cheering. As they encamped near the Georgia Railroad, the soldiers reminiscenced about the Atlanta campaign and boasted of their loss of only 100 killed and wounded.

After nearly four months of engaging the enemy every day, the Union armies now looked forward to much needed rest. On 4 September, officers read statements from Generals Sherman and Grant complimenting the armies on their

accomplishment. Congratulations from President Lincoln soon followed. Greatly pleased with themselves, the soldiers spent the first few days in Atlanta visiting the ruins of the railroad depot and arsenal. For the most part, however, the regiment's time was occupied with picket duty and the building of entrenchments. While at Atlanta, the various regiments of the brigade received many new recruits.

Since scarce within the city, foraging parties were sent out from the town in search of edibles. On 5 October, the Thirteenth, serving with four other regiments as guards, accompanied a train of 600 wagons as it travelled twenty miles from Atlanta to forage. Its return on the twelfth brought corn, bacon, sweet potatoes, chickens, honey, and sorghum to the hungry army. Further boosting their morale, the paymaster finally arrived in late October bearing eight months pay for each soldier. Now, well-paid and well-fed, Sherman's army prepared for its next campaign.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 338-339; Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 170-172; Special Field Orders No. 64 and No. 66, dated 4 September 1864, Letters and Reports Received and Orders Issued and Received 1863-1865, Twentieth Corps, First Division, Second and Third Brigades, United States Army Commands, 1821-1920, Part II, Polyonymous Successions of Commands, 1861-1870, Box No. 7, Record Group 98, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Chapter V

Bring the Jubilee

"Hurrah Hurrah" we bring the jubilee,
Hurrah Hurrah" the flag that makes you free!"
So we sang the chorus from Atlanta to the sea,
While we were marching through Georgia.

- Henry Clay Work

In early November 1864, Sherman's army was reorganized into two wings: the right wing comprised of the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Corps, and the left wing, consisting of the Fourth and Twentieth Corps. When Slocum was placed in command of the left, Williams assumed command of the Twentieth Corps. And when Ruger left to lead a division in the Twenty-third Corps and the position of brigade commander fell to Carman. At this point, Major Harris took over the Thirteenth New Jersey. Formed and ready, the army made preparations to leave Atlanta. The Thirteenth New Jersey spent the thirteenth and fourteenth of November tearing up and destroying the railroad property between Atlanta and the Chattahoochee River. The objective of the new campaign was to establish a secure base for supplies on the Georgia Coast. Targeting Savannah as its destination, the left wing of Sherman's army moved out on the fifteenth.⁸⁰

Following the Atlanta and Augusta Railroad, skirmishers from the Thirteenth encountered enemy pickets near Sandersville at Buffalo Creek. The resulting clash left two

⁸⁰Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 172-189; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 339-341.

privates wounded: however, no further resistance was met as the unit continued forward. Arriving at the Ogeechee River, the Thirteenth paused to destroy the railroad bridge that spanned it. By 6 December, the regiment had crept within fourteen miles northwest of Savannah. Skirmishing on the ninth preceded more destruction of the Charleston and Savannah railroad on the tenth. Then the Thirteenth veered off its path as the Second Brigade received orders to occupy Argyle Island.

Crossing the Savannah River in flatboats, the Thirteenth disembarked on 16 December on the northeast side of the island and began to construct earthworks. The purpose of the regiment's stay on the island was to protect a rice mill and property of a Morristown, New Jersey native. Additionally, the brigade was to perform a reconnaissance of the South Carolina shore. Leaving the island on the nineteenth, the Thirteenth landed at IZARD'S Mill, South Carolina, and marched to Beach Hill. As it completed its reconnaissance on the twentieth, the regiment ran into rebel skirmishers near Clydesdale Creek. Suffering one man killed, the Thirteenth prepared to return to Argyle Island.

With reports that the enemy could be heard in Savannah, the Thirteenth readied itself for return to the Georgia coast the next morning. Rejoining the brigade on the mainland, the regiment marched to the outskirts of Savannah on 22 December. There the Thirteenth remained until the

fourteenth of January 1865 when the Union army finally entered the city. His objective accomplished, Sherman then planned to move his army through the Carolinas. And so, their duties fulfilled, the Thirteenth returned to the army as it began to move out of Savannah.⁸¹

The march to Savannah had been easy compared to what lay ahead. For one thing, the weather made the campaign through the Carolinas unusually trying and difficult. As the Twentieth Corps passed Columbia, South Carolina, and Chesterfield Court House and Fayetteville, North Carolina, the Thirteenth New Jersey engaged in daily skirmishes with the Confederates. As it approached Averysboro on 15 March, the regiment clashed with enemy pickets, and as the enemy fell back, the Thirteenth pressed its advantage. Battling all the way, the regiment forged through a swamp and hastily built earthworks on the other side, in the face of heavy fighting. Relieved at last, the Thirteenth gathered its two dead and twenty-two severely wounded and travelled to the rear where it rested before resuming the campaign through the Carolinas.

On 19 March, as the Second Brigade led the Twentieth Corps towards Bentonville, advance skirmishers sighted enemy pickets. Pausing, the brigade formed in line of battle before advancing over a narrow ravine and swamp. At the

⁸¹Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 193; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 343-344.

left of the ravine, the Thirteenth deployed in two lines behind the Second Massachusetts as both regiments began building breastworks. The Fourteenth Corps, engaging the Confederate troops ahead, fell back with the rebels in pursuit. Positioning themselves in line of battle behind their defense of rails, the Thirteenth and Second regiments braced for attack. However, the approaching Confederates failed to see the waiting Union infantry until it was too late. With the rebel soldiers clearly in their sights, the Thirteenth opened fire. Shocked and momentarily stunned, the Confederates tried to advance, yet, the unflinching New Jerseyans poured volley after volley into the southern line. After suffering severe casualties, the Confederates limped away. Later that evening, the Thirteenth received praise for its bravery from officers in both high and low levels of command. Colonel Hawley, commanding the Second Brigade at Bentonville in Carman's absence, lauded the regiment saying "You are entitled to the thanks of this whole army, for you have saved it."⁸²

On 24 March, the regiment ended its long march through the Carolinas within three miles of Goldsborough. Two days later, after Major Harris became ill and left the regiment. Captain John H. Arey of Company G was promoted to Major and assumed command of the regiment. Although the Thirteenth

⁸²Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 210-216; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 345-353.

saw little action during the next two weeks, a raging storm of emotions broke on 10 April when word of the fall of Richmond spread like wildfire through the Union army. On 12 April, upon Lee's surrender, Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 54 declaring

Glory to God and our Country, and all honor to our comrades in Arms, towards whom we are marching. A little more labor, a little more toil on our part, and the great race is won and our Government stands regenerated after its four long years of bloody war.⁸³

Inspired by the knowledge that the end was near, the corps followed Sherman in his pursuit of General Joseph E. Johnston's southern army, a chase resulting in a flag of truce on the fourteenth. But the jubilant enthusiasm that permeated Sherman's army was quietened by the news of Lincoln's assassination. On 16 April 1865, Lieutenant General Grant issued badges of mourning, ordering them to be worn on the swords and left arms of officers, and declaring all regimental colors in mourning for six months.⁸⁴ Negotiations following Johnston's cease-fire resulted in terms for peace, and the Thirteenth was present at Jones Cross Roads for Johnston's formal surrender.

With the war over, the regiment left camp on 29 April to return to Washington. Marching by way of Richmond and

⁸³Special Field Order No. 54, dated 12 April 1865, near Smithfield, North Carolina, Headquarters of the Military Division of the Mississippi, Letters and Reports Received and Orders Issued and Received.

⁸⁴General Order No. 66, dated 16 April 1865, Letters and Reports Received and Orders Issued and Received.

Fairfax Seminary, the regiment stopped temporarily on 24 May to take part in the "Review of Sherman's Army." While en route to Bladensburg, four miles outside of Washington, the War Department notified Sherman that all volunteer infantries whose terms expired between 18 May and 30 September immediately were to be mustered out. In camp outside Washington, various transfers in command occurred. Commissioned Brigadier General, Ezra Carman received command of the First Division when Williams was relieved. Harris returned, newly appointed Lieutenant Colonel, and took charge of the brigade. Major Arey retained command of the regiment until it was mustered out.⁸⁵

After participating in the Grand Review in Washington, the Thirteenth New Jersey Volunteer Infantry returned by rail to Newark on 9 June 1865. The following day, after being officially welcomed back by the Mayor, the Thirteenth marched to the Ward United States Hospital where the veterans relinquished their firearms. After a final parade through the city on the fifteenth, the members of the regiment attended a dinner hosted by the citizens of Newark. By 26 June the last soldier in the Thirteenth New Jersey had been mustered out, and the civilians returned to their homes.

⁸⁵Toombs, Reminiscences of the War, 219-225; Foster, New Jersey and the Rebellion, 354-355; Letter from War Department to General Sherman dated 18 May 1865, Letters and Reports Received and Orders Issued and Received.

Conclusion

Allan Nevins believed that "troops, no matter how patriotic, disciplined, and courageous, are worthless unless well-officered."⁸⁶ The civilian New Jersey men, as distinct from regular militiamen, who volunteered in August 1862 for military service were initially ill-prepared for the rigors of Union army life. Yet, through proper discipline and daily drills, Colonel Carman groomed an effective fighting force. Over a period of nearly three years, the regiment evolved into the powerful veteran unit that held the Union line at Bentonville in 1865.

Central to the success of any military endeavor, however, is the capacity for judgement and execution at the highest echelon of command. The Army of the Potomac suffered through commanders who were capable organizers, but who failed to utilize the power of the instrument in their hands. This weakness trickled down through corps, division, and brigades to the regiments below. When top commanders fail to inspire an army, problems of morale among the troops are virtually inevitable.

McClellan, ever conservative, timidly held much of his force in reserve at Antietam, while General Mansfield held personal reservations about the abilities of citizen-soldiers. Following the latter's death, command of the

⁸⁶Nevins, The Organized War to Victory 1863-1864, 132.

corps passed to officers who did not share the prejudice that non-professional soldiers were incapable of being taught to perform well in battle. Generals Slocum and Hooker, both West Point graduates and commanders of the Twelfth and Twentieth Corps respectively during the last three years of the war, believed that volunteer regiments were a vital asset to the Union army. Additionally, the men who commanded the Third and, later, Second Brigade, Ruger, Hawley, and Carman, also had formal military educations and shared the views of their corps commanders.

The transfer of the Thirteenth to the Army of the Cumberland in November 1863 was perhaps the most significant point in the evolution of the regiment. Sherman's army, boasting a chain of command consisting of formally trained military officers, was primarily a veteran force containing a large majority of volunteer troops. The men fought with the newest weapons and engaged in a war of conquest unlike any ever previously seen. As a result of high morale, professional leadership, and technical superiority, casualties were lower and fewer men deserted from the ranks. The high troop morale persisted even through the rainy, miserable marches through Georgia and the Carolinas. As conditions in the armies improved, so did the performance of the Thirteenth New Jersey. But in the end, their valuable service to the cause of the Union was remembered, not because they were citizens who learned to fight, but rather

because they were patriots who fought for their convictions
about Union.

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Biography

Sarah Moore Hilgendorff List was born in East Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A. on December 27, 1968 to Susan Ann Brown Hilgendorff and Hugo Alfred Hilgendorff III. After completing the required coursework in December 1989, she was graduated from Cedar Crest College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in both European and American History in May 1990. She was a member of the campus International and English clubs (September 1986 to December 1989) and served as secretary for the college yearbook (September 1988 to May 1989). She acted as Fire Chief for Moore Hall Dormitory (September 1988 to May 1989) and worked as a tour guide for the college's Admissions office (September 1989 to December 1989).

Additionally, Sarah served as a research assistant for the Lehigh Valley Faculty Partnership (January to October 1989), also volunteering as an interpreter at Trout Hall, a Lehigh County Historical Site (September, 1989 to March, 1990) and as an assistant to the librarian at the Holocaust Research Center in Allentown, Pennsylvania (January to December 1989).

Following graduation, she worked for Fireman's Fund Insurance Company in Dewitt, New York (July 1990 to July 1991). She accepted employment as a research assistant to an author in Summit, New Jersey in May 1992. Sarah is a member of Phi Alpha Theta.

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