

THE FIGHTERS OF '61

THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH BOYS RE-
CALL THEIR BATTLES.

The Twenty-sixth Annual Reunion of the Regimental Association—The Occasion Calls Out Many Reminiscent Letters—The Roll of the Survivors—The Year's Necrology.

Apparently the clerk of the weather did not want the veterans of the Seventy-seventh to go dry on their reunion October 5, else he overlooked the fact that they were assembling in a watering place, consequently they did not require the rain water.

It was the boys of 1861-5 of the old Seventy-seventh Regiment, New York State Infantry Volunteers, a regiment which had a loss in officers above the average, in its fifty-one engagements; a regiment which has been placed by Colonel Fox among the fighting regiments, therefore a regiment of which any place may be proud.

Members of this regiment assembled in Luther M. Wheeler G. A. R. Post rooms October 5, 1898 to attend the twenty-sixth annual reunion; an event which especially permits those present to live over again the old days of the tented field, the march and battle as they talk over their experience of the days of their army life. Now thirty-three years since the "Cruel war is over."

That to the boys of '61-5 all was not pleasantness, perhaps the boys of the American-Spanish war may learn by their experience. On Meridian Hill December 1, 1861, the Seventy-seventh went into camp with about one thousand men. It was not long before they began to feel the scourge of new regiments. Disease became almost universal. The only medical officer we had became as worn by the difficulty of organizing his department as by attending the sick, and as before the month was out the majority of the men were sick, the demand upon the surgeon was almost incessant. Inspection in the middle of June 1862 showed only about two hundred and fifty men present for duty. Although the regiment had been in exposed position from the commencement, its losses were mostly from disease from fevers and the exposures of the campaign.

At 11.45 o'clock the President, Colonel French, called the comrades to order, and then invited Rev. Dr. Norman Fox, of Morristown, N. J., late chaplain of the regiment, to offer prayer. After prayer Col. French welcomed the comrades saying in part that we can hardly realize that it is a little over twelve months since last we met, since which time many changes have occurred. Our country has been in another war, a war which began and ended this year. Probably not a veteran present, but who wished, when he read President McKinley's call for enlistments, that he was twenty or thirty years younger so that he might again fight for his country. Many of those who were foes in 1861-5 fought side by side in this war with Spain, which ended so gloriously for us. To the American soldier behind the gun, either on land or sea is the credit due, whether he be a dude with a stovepipe hat, or a rough rider under a sombrero, and behind the soldier and sailor was the hand of God.

Secretary Fuller then called the names on the roster of survivors. Comrades Charles W. Compton, Barnett Downen, Robert Dixon; William Eastham, George F. Houghtaling, Luther Irish, Ebenezer W. Jaquith, Albor Hoh, Horatio G. Peck, Cyrus F. Rich, David A. Thompson, George Welch, and Charles E. Weatherby were reported to have died. The following named comrades were present: Dudley Avery, George Bowers, Edward M. Bailey, George H. Brown, Charles H. Bartlett, John P. Burns, Alonzo D. Bump, Julius P. Barnett, William Brooks, Nathan Brown, Albert M. Burrows, Edgar O. Burt, Nelson Rootier, Clarence Brusio, Jesse Buringham, Erskine W. Branch, Henry S. Craig, Otis Conklin, William G. Caw, John Conklin, Daniel H. Cole, James E. Couse, Alfred H. Clements, Augustus A. Cox, John H. Cozzens, Obed M. Coleman, Charles Chapman, John H. Clements, John E. L. Deuell, Seth W. Deyoe, John H. Downen, Charles Davis, Emory Doolittle, James L. DeGroff, John W. Derby, John E. Evans, Edward Evans, T. Scott Fuller, William Francisco, Norman Fox, Winsor B. French, Edward H. Fuller, Michael Panther, James K. Galusha, Fred Gleesettle, Alonzo Howland, James Harrington, Charles E. Houghtaling, W. H. Hart, John P. Hudson, Myron B. Hall, James H. Hudson, James Holsapple, Isaac S. Hodges, William J. Hammond, Charles H. Hodges, A. DeLoss Hammond, Edwin Ham, Ezra Harris, George W. Hurley, Henry Jones, W. H. Johnson, Charles Juber, S. B. King, Samuel E. Kidd, Oscar F. Lockwood, William T. Lattimore, John H. Mosher, John Moore, Nathan Munn, William McAdoe, Michael McGuire, Charles W. Mosher, James Nolan, George N. Peacock, Horace A. Post, George Purdy, Cardner Perry

George E. Pulling, Samuel K. Porter, Alfred Pickett, Emmet J. Patterson, Lester A. Pratt, J. R. Rockwell, Frank Reed, H. H. Richards, William A. Rose, J. N. Rose, Henry C. Rowland, Cornelius Rose, Job Stafford, Charles E. Stevens, George D. Story, Amasa D. Shippee, Oliver Sutliff, D. C. Simonds, John G. Strang, George H. Seidmore, Charles D. Thurber, Jesse B. Thorn, Andrew G. Van Wie, W. W. Velie, Benjamin R. Velie, Andrew J. Walker, Henry Warner, James M. Wood, Henry Wilbur, George L. Wendall, W. G. Watson, Hiram H. Weaver, Augustus R. Walker, Patrick Winn, David N. Weatherwax, William W. Worden, Lewis Wood, William H. Yale, Robert Aucock.

It was reported that a comrade who had wandered to California after the war had returned as far as Galway where, on the day of the reunion the storm had rooted him.

Dues were paid to the treasurer, Charles D. Thurber, who reported \$20.95 on hand.

With pleasant memories and wishing all may have a happy reunion, regrets for not being present were received from Charles Blanchard, Hector E. Bentley, Benjamin B. Bennett, Henry A. Barker, Sanford E. Campbell, John Chapman, Sidney O. Cromack, Charles E. Deuel, Dr. W. A. DeLong, David Davenport, Simon Flansburg, Nicholas Geltzleighter, George Housman, W. H. Hare, Benjamin H. Hudson, Cornelius S. Huyck, Frank H. Juckett, Altus H. Jewell, Thomas King, Alfred H. Kingsley, George E. Lane, James A. Lawrence, Peter Morris, Stephen Mab, William McNeal, Fred Owen, A. J. Palmatier, Charles Palmater, W. H. Quivey, N. N. Rice, Carlos W. Rowe, Dr. George T. Stevens, Horace L. Stiles, Jeremiah Stebbins, M. F. Sweet, James L. Slingerland, D. B. Smith, Albert Snyder, David Stringham, George F. Will, A. P. Waldron.

S. O. Cromack writes: I have promised myself that when I have been here twenty years I hope to visit my old home. So I am looking to 1901 with pleasurable anticipations for a meeting with you. Comrades who took part in the Gettysburg campaign will remember our march through Fairfield valley, up over Monterey and down through Waynesboro to Antietam Creek. That while our regiment was on the skirmish line in the valley the rebs opened quite a brisk fire. We halted near a large white house, which Colonel French will remember for he and other officers took dinner there. Under a shed near the barn stood a wagon in which was a few sacks of land plaster. Captain Carpenter, E company, had a man detailed as cook, one of those wide-awake, never-get-tired fellows who always looked for something to eat. I told him it looked like buckwheat flour in the sacks, and that he had better take some along and surprise Capt. Carpenter, as he was fond of buckwheat cakes. When we halted near Monterey Springs for dinner, Carpenter came over to B company and invited Captain Smith and myself to come over and have some buckwheat cakes with him. As we walked over Captain Carpenter told us that his man was a hustler and a good all round fellow; that if there was anything in the line of eatables lying around loose he would be sure to get some. His man put water into a jar, adding salt and soda and then the flour. When the flour struck the water it set as plaster paris will. Captain Smith laughed. Carpenter's face was a study, and the way he talked to his man for a few minutes would have made the hearer conclude that he had changed his mind as to his man's good qualities.

D. H. Cole writes: As it will not be many more reunions that we will be spared to enjoy, I do not want to miss any of the meetings of the boys, for even at this date they seem like boys to me, as I recall them as in the early sixties.

C. E. Deuell writes: I was sent home to die but concluded not to. Although my weight had been reduced from one hundred and forty pounds when I enlisted to eighty-one pounds. On the way home from Washington I was accompanied by Jimmy Deuel and Charles Cork, who I would like to see if living.

[Charles Cork gave his address about September 27 as 52 Rural avenue, Gloversville, N. Y.]

Dr. W. A. DeLong writes: I take pleasure in reading the names of those present and absent, and though I do not remember them all, I recognize enough to set me thinking of them and the times we had in Virginia and Pennsylvania. It was a fad in those days to exchange photos. I have all of mine and occasionally I get them out and we have a pleasant visit.

A comrade who has been so silent for years that we supposed he wanted nothing on this mundane sphere, writes: I see by your report of last reunion that Gettysburg medals were given to those entitled to one. If there is anything relating to the war in which we served that I hanker after, it is one of those medals. I started on the march with you from Fredericksburg; on that march I was ordered to report to headquarters; from there I was ordered to report to John Moore, who ordered me to shoe mules. The Lord knows that I was in more actual danger than any man who was in the front line of the battle.

C. S. Huyck writes: I have not forgotten our lying in line of battle in the mud and slush while the cavalry and artillery were at work ahead of us, and our wading over ankle

deep through it as we charged Fort Magruder just before its capture.

F. H. Juckett writes: I expected to have attended the reunion, and anticipated much pleasure in being present, as I had never attended a reunion of the regiment. But business duties necessitated my return home after visiting in Saratoga before the date of the reunion. In expectation of being present I had prepared the following:

Fellow Comrades:—I assure you it gives me great pleasure to be present with you after a lapse of thirty years time. It seems almost like a dream to me, and it looks as though there was a Rip Van Winkle in it to those whom the Almighty has seen fit to spare, and those that are present here tonight should feel thankful that they are the Rip Van Winkles.

Thirty-seven years ago, the month of September just past, I placed my name on record with the rest of you to protect the Stars and Stripes and to assist in putting down the Rebellion should it cost us our lives in the attempt. It is not necessary for me to say it was a long, cruel, tedious war. But the victory was ours, and in the closing scenes there was some romance in real life. Jeff Davis, the now immortal, tried to make good his escape in Mother Hubbard style. We had no use for such heroes in ancient times, and we have no use for such heroes at the present time. Give us such men as President McKinley, Commodore Dewey, Schley, Hobson, and let any nation call us "Yankee pigs" if they dare! We will sink their navies, take possession of their colonies and, if necessary, drive them into the extreme corner of the globe.

While my heart leaps with joy to be with you, still beneath the veil there is another scene which causes my heart to be sad. It is this: Thirty-seven years ago when the Seventy-seventh boarded the train for Washington, we were nearly all young men, active, full of vim and vigor. Today we are old, whiteheaded veterans, more or less scarred and bruised from the enemies guns or diseases. Time has done its work with us. Yea, there is something more that makes my heart sadder still. It is on recollection of those who are not here. Their bodies lie moulding in the grave and a portion of them with the red poppies growing over them. Here I halt and console myself with the thought that some day there will be a general reunion and we will all be present to answer the roll call in eternity.

Thomas King writes: It does my heart good to read the report of the reunion and the old familiar names. I think I have a strong claim on the Seventy-seventh, as I enlisted November 7, 1861, and was mustered out with the regiment July 26, 1865. Was in every engagement with it until taken prisoner on that terrible day, October 19, 1864, while on the picket line on the extreme right, at Cedar Creek. I had charge of several posts on the main line and also some men stationed at a ford about thirty rods in front. I had been thinking that as our three days picket duty would expire that morning, we would soon return to our camp near the pike, when about 3 o'clock the rebs opened a fire. After a silence of about ten minutes, they again fired, the sound indicating their advancing. Again was a short silence followed by more firing. In the mean time I ordered the men towards the reserves. The rebs were almost on us as they fired again. While the men were going back to the big reserves I went down to the ford to order back the men on duty there. When we came back over the hill I could feel the heat from the flashes of the guns of the rebs. I made out to run shy of them for about eighty rods to the woods, where I stopped and fired three shots in the direction of the flashes, for it was not yet daylight. It was a sorrowful stop for me, as I found the rebs all around me. Several came up saying: "Here, surrender, Yank." They took me to a colonel who asked me where our main forces lay. I told him about ten rods distant, though they were about two miles away. I thought I had had hardships enough up to that date, but it was nothing compared to the five months following that I was forced to endure in Libbie and Pemberton prisons.

James A. Lawrence of Tecumseh, Nebraska, writes: I have had the pleasure of meeting with the boys but once since the war, at Gloversville in 1890. My active career as a soldier was brought to an end June 21, 1864, at Petersburg, Va., where I lost a leg by the explosion of a shell, fired from the enemies works on the right of our line. The shell did great execution in the trenches of Co. A, and it proved an unlucky day for the three Jims of the company—James G. Allen, James E. Barnes and James A. Lawrence—each of whom lost a leg by the shell. Allen and Barnes are dead, Barnes dying on his way home from the 1890 reunion. I was at his funeral at Westport. I am proud of the humble part I took in that war. I shall think of my comrades as you are assembled in annual reunion once more, and shall be pleased to hear from any of the old boys of the Seventy-seventh which has as good a record as any regiment in the service.

F. N. Owen writes: As I think of the old times in the early sixties, an incident that happened on one of our marches is recalled. It was extremely hot, the perspiration running down our faces in little rivulets. Our clothes sticking to us like mucilage, and it did seem as if we would have to drop right in our tracks, conse-

quently there were many stragglers. As our company, I, passed along I saw ——— lying by the roadside, his nose bleeding; he was a sorry sight to behold. The expression on his face seemed to say, Boys, I am a goner. Just then one of the boys yelled out, Three hundred dollars and a cow gone. The laugh that followed was joined in by ———, on whom it must have had a reviving effect, as he was in camp that night with the rest of us.

I have heard Tom White tell this good one on himself. Tom, you will remember, was a very light weight. In one of our camps the boys had a horizontal bar. As some of the boys were performing on it one day they were watched closely by one of the Maine or Vermont boys, who finally offered to bet \$5 that there was not a man in the regiment who could jump up and catch the bar with one hand and pull himself up three times. Len Fletcher, I think, took the bet, and then brought Tom White forward, who did it easily five or six times. The fellow looked Tom all over carefully, and then turning to Fletcher said, the money is yours, but I will swear that that man did not pull up anything but his clothes.

Dr. George T. Stevens writes: You have no idea of the pleasure it would give me to be with the boys tomorrow and renew my recollection of their faces. This last summer with its martial atmosphere has kept me thinking of the old days and the old comrades to whom I send hearty greetings.

Jeremiah Stebbins writes: I have been laid up over three years with rheumatism, over a year entirely helpless, confined to my bed, which prevents my being with you.

M. F. Sweet, writes: It is thirty-three years since I left Saratoga, during which time I have seen only three of the old boys, Wetherby, Gates and Lattimore, though I have received letters from a number. I would like to be with you, but chronic sickness prevents my traveling far.

Dr. Fox referring to the monument said the wording on the monument may have served the purpose when it was put up and a few years thereafter; but now and for future generations, there is nothing on it to show for what war it was intended. A bronze tablet containing an inscription, as erected to the dead of the Seventy-seventh Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, which participated in the campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, Fort Stevens, Washington, D. C., and Sheridan's campaign of the Shenandoah Valley. Such a tablet would show for what the monument was erected and represents. His motion was carried that a committee be appointed to raise funds for the purpose of procuring a tablet containing an inscription that would show for what purpose the monument was erected.

Comrade Bailey, referring to the battle of Fort Stevens in which our regiment lost some men, the only battle of the war of which President Lincoln was a spectator, the battle which saved the National Capital, thought that a suitable monument ought to be erected there; therefore moved that a committee of three be appointed, of which Col. French shall be one. The motion being carried, Comrades Bailey, French and Fox were appointed the committee.

The committee to draft suitable resolutions on the deaths of members submitted the following minute, which was unanimously adopted:

Since our last meeting there have passed from earth thirteen of our comrades: Charles W. Compton, Barnett Downen, Robert Dixon, William Eastham, George S. Hotaling, Luther Irish, Ebenezer W. Jaquith, Albert H. Ott, Horatio G. Peck, Cyrus F. Rich, David A. Thompson, Charles E. Wetherby and George Welch.

We recall with affection and with honor their fortitude and bravery as soldiers, their dignity and worth as citizens and their virtues as men. We recognize in their departure a call that must soon come to us and we engage ourselves to honor their memories by emulating their faithfulness.

Norman Fox, Charles D. Thurber, Edward M. Bailey, James M. Wood, David N. Weatherwax, Committee.

The invitation for the next reunion at Ballston was accepted and Comrades George D. Story, James M. Wood, Alexander Morrison, Albert Reid, Nathan Eldridge and B. T. Simons, were appointed the executive committee therefore, who selected Tuesday, September 19, 1898, as the date.

Gettysburg Veteran medals were given to the following named, who had not received one, but claimed they were entitled to one: Julius P. Bennett, John P. Burns, Sidney O. Cromack, Fred Gleesettle, Simon Flansburg and John G. Strang.

The business having been concluded Col. French announced that dinner is the next business that it is ready at the lower Town Hall to which we would now go.

After the dinner there was music and reminiscences and a short talk by Chaplain Fox.

A vote of thanks was passed to Wheeler Post for the use of its rooms, to Supervisor Hathorn for the use of the lower Town Hall, and to the Women's Relief Corps and Citizens of Saratoga, for their hearty welcome as expressed in the beauties and excellent dinner. A number of comrades from other regiments were present.

Comrade Obed M. Coleman bears the unique distinction of having enlisted for the American-Spanish war, he having gone out as Second Lieutenant of the Citizens Corps, which became Co. L of the Second Regiment, New York Volunteers.