

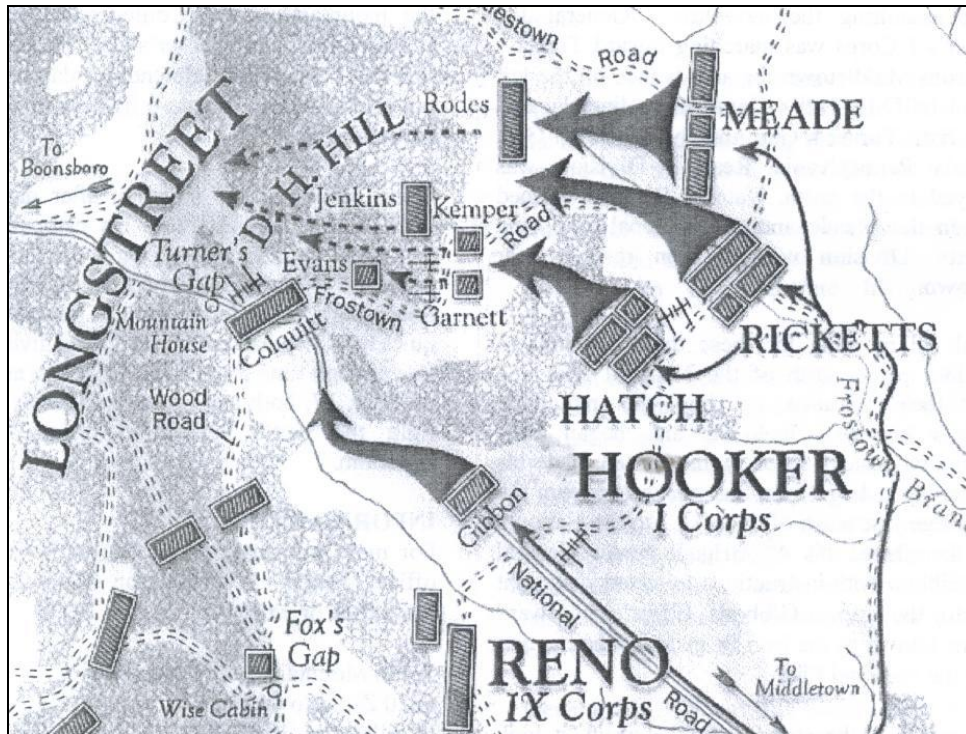
CHAPTER 5

The Antietam Campaign

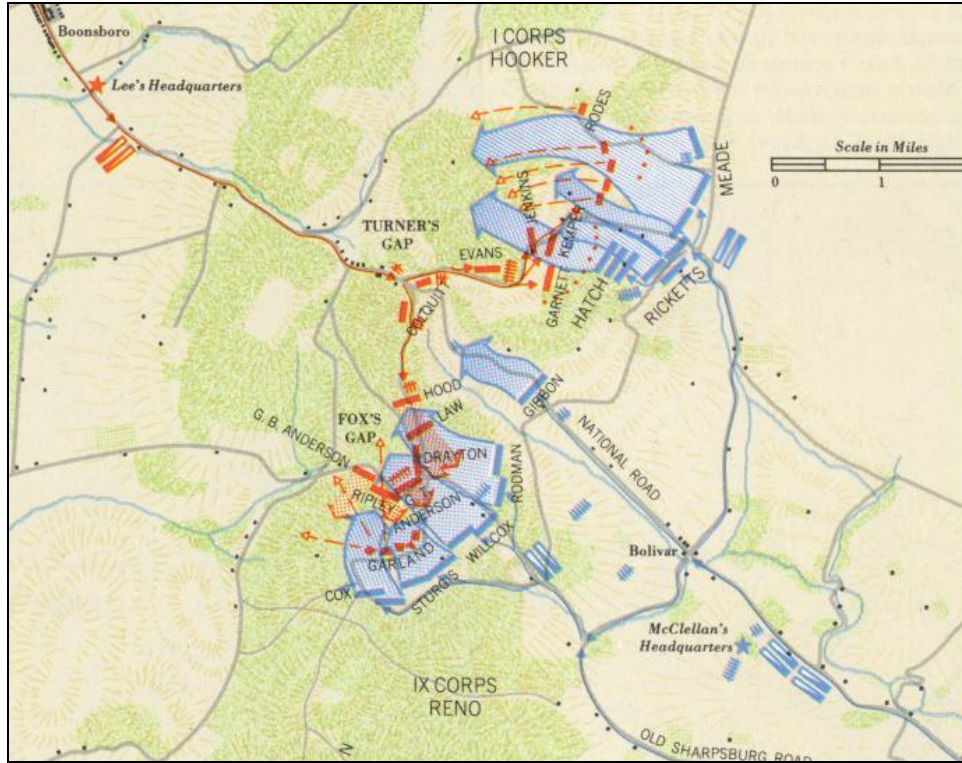
After the Confederate victory at Bull Run, General Robert E. Lee decided to take the offense and invade the North by entering the western part of Maryland with the intention of moving eastward toward Washington, D.C. The Army of the Potomac, under recently reappointed General George McClellan, countered by moving towards Sharpsburg, Md. As Lee moved his Army through Harpers Ferry, Va (which soon became WV), Frederick, Md, and to Sharpsburg, Md. The Union Army moved toward South Mountain, Md. The 24th had fallen back from Bull Run to Centreville, remained at Centreville 2 days; fell back from Centreville to Chantilly, where Generals Kearney and Stevens were killed. This was about the 2nd of September, they remained there 24 hours; from Chantilly they fell back to their old quarters at Upton's Hill, where they encamped for 5 or 6 days. From there they moved into Maryland through Washington, via Rockville, Md, New Market, Va and Frederick City to South Mountain, Md, where they arrived and went into the fight between four and five o'clock on Sunday evening, 14th of September.³² There were 3 gaps through the mountains. Crampton's Gap was located furthest south, Fox's Gap was further north, and Turner's Gap was the furthest north located near Boonsboro, Md. The 24th NY Infantry fought its way through Turner's Gap on September 14th, 1862 and prepared for battle near the Antietam River near Sharpsburg. Early on the 14th the Rebels held the sides and top of the mountain at Frog's Gap (later called Turner's Gap). Fighting started around 2:00pm and orders were given for the old Iron Brigade to advance.³⁴ Hatch's brigade (including 22nd, 24th, & 30th NYSV Infantry Regiments) began to climb the mountain and forced their way through rocks, brush, and trees. Eventually the Confederates were driven back and as darkness set in the

Union brigade marched back to a hollow where they rested for the night. In spite of a relatively disorganized battle tactic, the battle was won. At Turner's Gap the total of Union casualties reported was 325 killed, 1403 wounded, and 85 missing.^{36,64}

Although General McClelland had a copy of Lee's Special Orders No. 191 (which clearly described his attack strategy) before the Battle of Antietam in his possession, he was slow to pursue the Rebel forces. Thus, Lee had time to regroup and fortify his forces.



South Mountain (24th was brigaded with Hatch)⁵⁴



South Mountain, Md

(NYS 24th Infantry fought through Turner's Gap in Hooker's Corps)⁷⁰

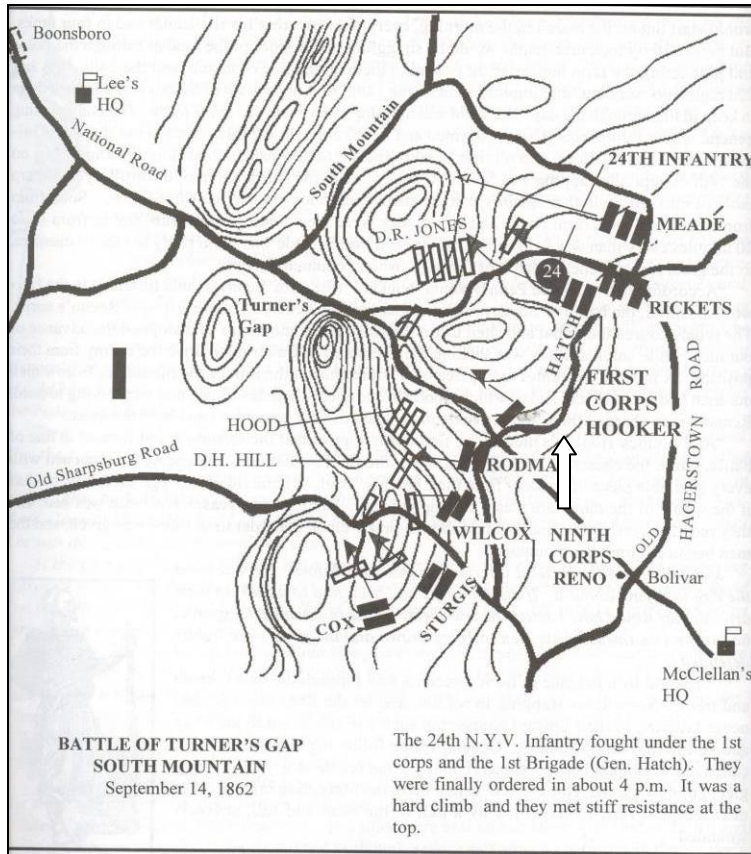


Officers of 24th,

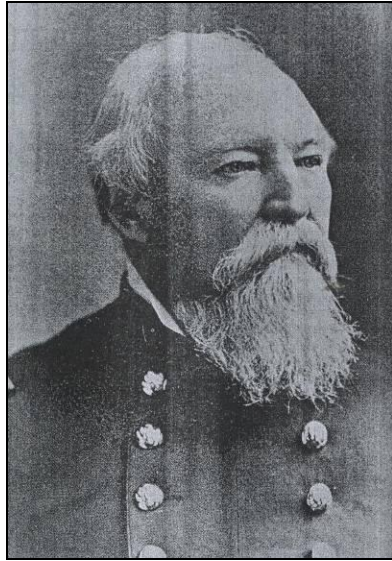
Co. E (Captain Orville Jennings, 1st Lt. Ten Eyck Pawling, & 2nd Lt. Richard J. Hill)^{24,27,31}



Photo of Military Camp in Distance with Unidentified Soldier from the 24th
 (On back of CdV: 24th NY Regt)⁶⁵



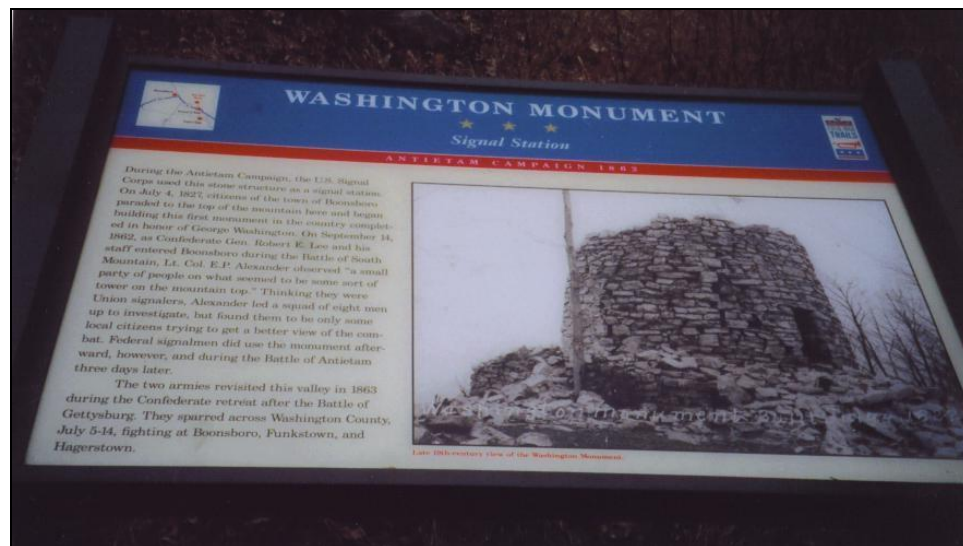
Battle of South Mountain (White arrow indicates 24th NY approximate position)³³



John Porter Hatch

Born in Oswego, NY he led the Brigade formed by the 22nd, 24th, and 30th NYSV at Second Manassas and South Mountain. Wounded at South Mountain (replaced by Col. Phelps before Antietam).⁴⁶

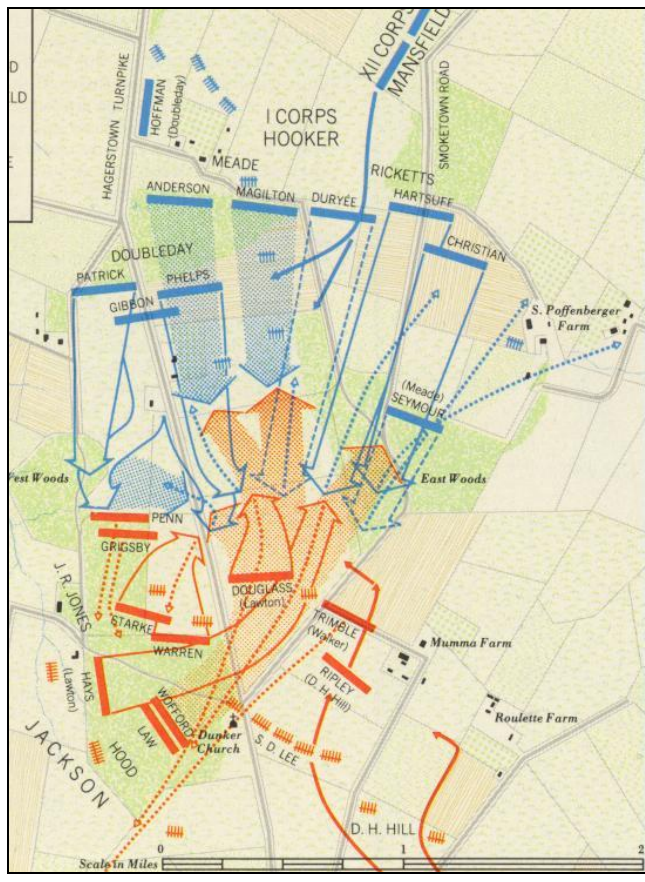
More confusion followed when the attacks at Antietam on September 17th were ordered, many divisions and corps were reporting to different generals than they were 2 days earlier at South Mountain.³⁴



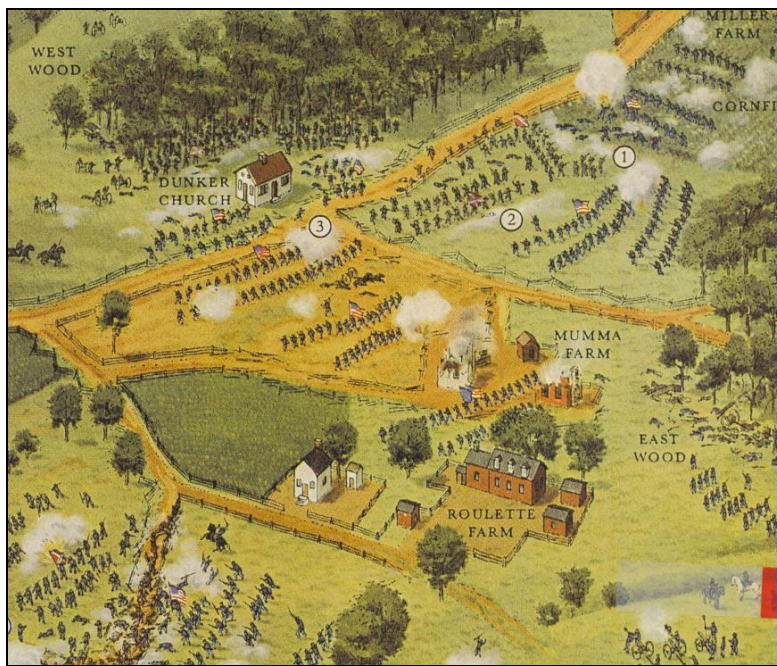
Historical Marker from South Mountain, Md
("Original" Washington Monument – Photo by R. Eslinger)

On September 15th the Oswego County regiment moved via Boonsboro to Antietam, arrived there in the afternoon; skirmishing was brisk that day; the regiment remained encamped along the Sharpsburg Pike. On the morning of the 16th they remained in the same place until noon, when they forded Antietam stream and moved to the right, abreast of the celebrated “Cornfield”. They camped there until daylight the next morning (September 17th), and went into the fight about eight o’clock. They had been changing positions and skirmishing until that time.³²

The 1st Division (under Brigadier General Abner Doubleday) of the 1st Corps (under General Joseph Hooker and Brigadier General George Meade) attacked early in the morning from the North Woods. The First Brigade led by Colonel Walter Phelps (who replaced a wounded Hatch) fought through the Miller Farm “Cornfield” on the 17th of September with only about 450 men.^{32,56,63} Throughout that day a total of 6,000 Union and Confederate soldiers became casualties at that very site. It was here that nurse Clara Barton went onto the battlefield to assist wounded Union soldiers. Phelps’ brigade lost heavily in wounded and killed but held their position in the cornfield until ordered to the rear upon the arrival of General Sedwick’s division of the Second Corps.⁵⁸ At this point a retreating young soldier from the 24th NYSV shouted “Hold on boys, I have a load in my musket that I want to fire before I go” and as he turned to shoot a load of grapeshot tore off his leg.⁷ In a later newspaper account, Corporal Ben Ells stated this soldier was actually Captain O’Brian of Company A.¹⁷ Other major battles near Sharpsburg, Md. That same day resulting in heavy losses occurred at the sunken road, later named “Bloody Lane” and at a bridge crossing the Antietam River (later named “Burnside’s



Movements at Antietam “Cornfield” (24th Infantry was with Phelps)⁷⁰



Battle of Antietam (Number 1 indicates “cornfield” where NY 24th fought)⁸

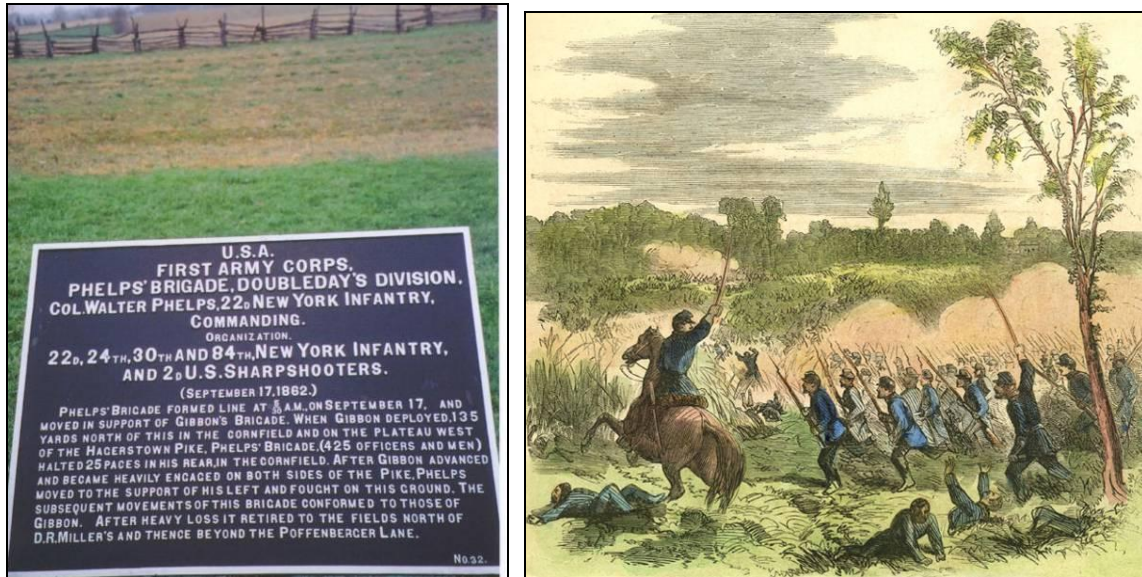
Bridge”). On September 21st, 1862, Lewis Benedict³ (Full Corporal, Company H, NYS 24th Infantry) wrote a letter to his brother to inform him he was still alive and recently in 3 “smart fights” (2 days at Bull Run & South Mountain). Apparently he was asked to stay behind after South Mountain to guard some knapsacks, care for some of the wounded, and did not fight at Antietam. He stated that he heard only about 10 of the 60 men from the company came out of the battle. Lewis Benedict was not alone in missing the action at Antietam. Colonel Beardsley was sick in the hospital in Washington, D.C. and a soldier named Robert Oliver, Jr. was returning from a one week furlough which he spent at his home in Oswego.^{2,51} Upon returning to his unit after the battle, he saw the carnage of bodies and animal carcasses left from the battle. Captain O’Brian (Co. A) had been wounded and his leg amputated and the entire regiment had barely 20 men fit for duty.⁵¹



Captain John O’Brian, NY 24th, Co A (Lost leg at Antietam)

According to Chandler’s account⁹, the regiment later bivouacked in a piece of oak woods about a mile from the “Dunker” church and the whole brigade occupied no more than one

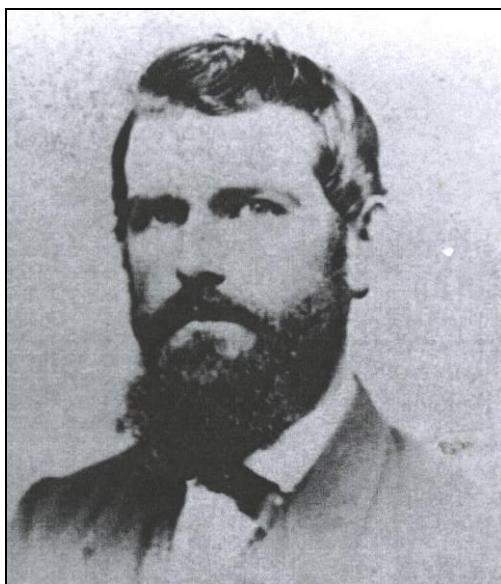
ordinary sized regiment. Chandler stated that ‘Steven’ Scriber, Orderly Sergeant of Co. H/I also acted as his company’s Orderly Sergeant and Captain Albert Taylor was in command. The 24th NYSV combined their initial 10 companies into 4 and had



“Through the Cornfield” Battle of Antietam (September 17th, 1862)
Originally published in Harper’s Weekly, Oct 4th, 1862

approximately 75 muskets available.³⁴ Losses were so great to the 24th, Col. Sullivan placed advertisements in an Oswego newspaper to recruit more young men.¹⁷

A few weeks after the single bloodiest day of the Civil War (>23,000 combined casualties), Lewis Benedict³ wrote to his sister from Sharpsburg, Md. The letter, dated October 11th, 1862 and said “They is only 3 of us Schroepel boys here with the regt, they are S.J. Scriber, Henry Limbeck and me. The rest are wounded or got the Rheumatics...”. According to one report from William Fox of the 107th NY the brigade composed of the 22nd, 24th, 30th, and 84th (14th Brooklyn) New York regiments was the first to be called the “Iron Brigade” because of its marching before their brave fighting



Col. Lewis Benedict, 24th NYSV, Co. H⁶⁵

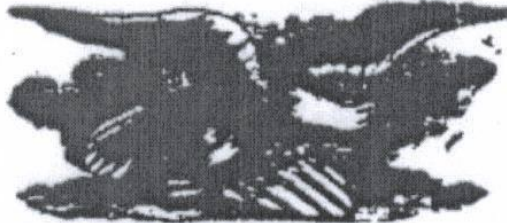
at South Mountain and Antietam.⁶⁴ This supported earlier information that stated the group gained their name while marching during the Pennisular Campaign.³⁴ Regardless, they lost this designation to Gibbon's Iron Brigade of the West when the former was reorganized in 1863 upon the expiration of the terms of service of Colonel Phelps and his two-year regiments.⁵⁸



Kent at Burnside's Bridge (Antietam Creek, Md, Photo by T. Bohn)

Miscellaneous.

RECRUITS WANTED!!



**ABLE-BODIED MEN WANTED IMMEDIATELY TO
FILL UP THE RANKS OF THE**

Gallant 24th Regiment, N. Y. S. V.,

which has won a reputation for bravery and heroic
conduct unsurpassed by any other Regiment in the
Field.

The depletion of its ranks in the late engagements
in Virginia and Maryland requires the immediate en-
rollment of a large number of men to again bring the
Regiment up to the required standard. All desirous of

SERVING THEIR COUNTRY,

will find it to their interest to enlist in this regiment,
which has been in active service since the commence-
ment of the war. The men will therefore have the ad-
vantage of experienced commanding officers.

Pay from \$13 to \$23 per Month,
besides a pension, if disabled in the line of duty,
\$100,00 Bounty.

Four Dollars Premium will be paid to any one
bringing an accepted recruit.

ANY COMPETENT PERSONS who will raise compa-
nies will be accepted and have

THEIR COMMISSIONS SECURED.

**LET OSWEGO COUNTY AROUSE AND FILL UP THE
OLD TWENTY-FOURTH!**

\$100 BOUNTY IN ADVANCE.

Recruiting Office on West First street, near
Times Office. **COL. T. SULLIVAN,**
oct1 Recruiting Officer.

Recruiting Advertisement after the Battle of Antietam

(10/ 25, 1862 Oswego Commercial Times)¹⁷

