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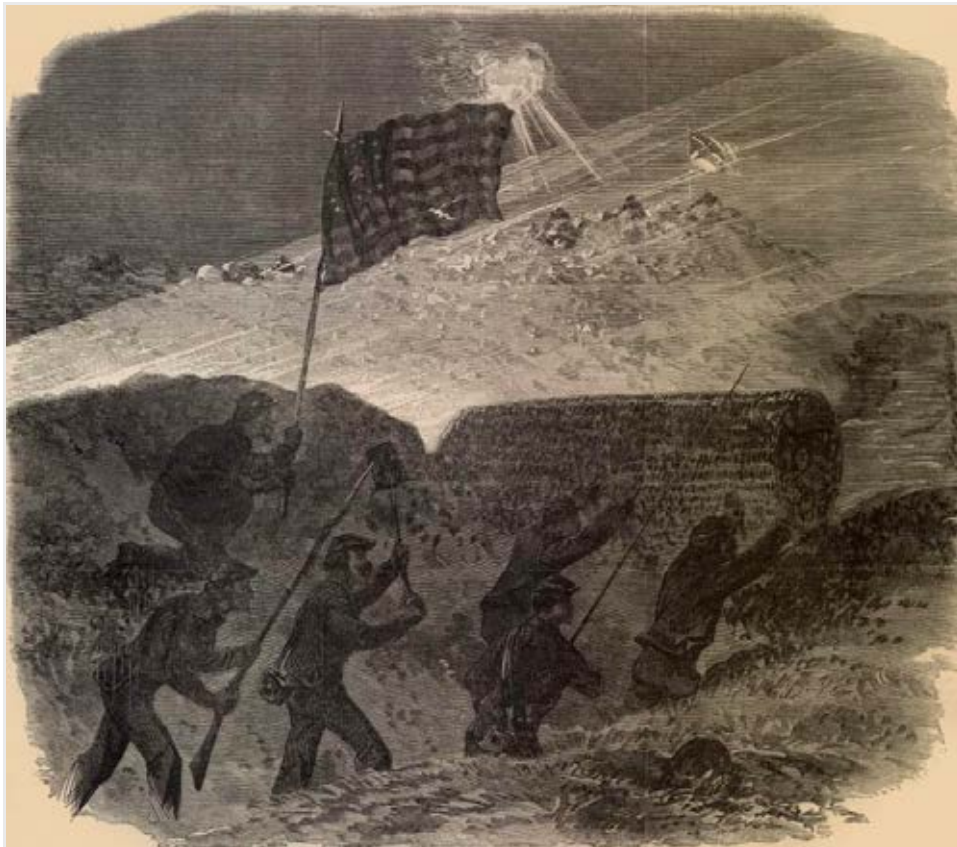
# 169<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Newsletter

October 2013

## The Time Traveler.

### Part VII.

In the wake of failures by Union forces in July of 1863 to capture Fort Wagner by direct assault, Maj.-Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore began a siege which would prove successful. On the night of September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1863, as the sap line advanced to the bastions of the fort, Federal artillery unleashed a terrible bombardment, forcing the Confederate garrisons to evacuate Morris Island. Only two soldiers from the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. would be killed during the siege, but brackish drinking water, exposure to the weather, insects and disease would take their toll on the men, leading to 25 fatalities from illness.



The Siege of Charleston – The Last Night Before Wagner – The Head of the Sap  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (October 3<sup>d</sup>, 1863)

The first week of September, 1863, would find the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. occupying the siege lines in front of Fort Wagner, making inexorable progress towards their objective. The men of the 169<sup>th</sup> guarded the parallels from enemy attack while Black labor-



**Detail from "Plan of a Portion of the Siege Operations Against the Defenses of Charleston Harbor, prior to the Capture of Fort Wagner, September 7, 1863" Prepared by Julius Bien & Co., New York, and published in the "Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865" (1895)**

*The Federal siege parallels and sap lines are in blue; Fort Wagner is outlined in red.*

ers excavated the sap under the supervision of the 1<sup>st</sup> N.Y. Engineers. A letter written on September 4<sup>th</sup> by Priv. Theodore Schutt, Co. A, published by the *Troy Daily Press* on the 14<sup>th</sup>, illustrated the dangerous duties of the regiment:

"Listening as I am to the heavy boom of an occasional gun from Morris Island or one of the many rebel batteries which send their screaming missiles after our poor boys crouched in the shallow parallels just in front of Wagner, I can well apprehend and appreciate the acute feelings of anxiety, and the throes of doubt and fear which are crowding the minds of our Northern friends... There is no clash of small arms, except now and then a sortie by the rebs or ourselves – no charge of bayonets – no shouts of victory – no yells of defiance. To be sure, there is noise enough at times – when Wagner opens upon us with grape and canister, case and shrapnel, interspersed with mortar and rifled shells, and our own guns in position behind us, return the compliment to W., sending their missiles three feet over our heads – the air and trenches are filled with shrieking monitors, and we shrink still closer to the ground by an intuition too potent to be resisted – natural instinct.

"We relieve each other in the trenches every night. At what hour, precisely, I dare not say, even to you; but Wagner has argus eyes – if not she is singularly good at guessing, and it is at such times she is particularly to be feared. There are many exposed places in the long lines of parallels through which we must pass that are swept by her fire. Across these points we make as fast time as possible; but we cannot all pass in two ranks at the same moment. It takes some time for even a hundred men to get by on the double-quick; but we have a brave army of men here, and some even scorn to take the double-quick, but leisurely follow-up and take their positions in good time, with their comrades; very, very close under the sand-bags of Wagner – so close that we dare not speak much louder than in a whisper for fear of eavesdroppers among the rebels over the next bank. For neighbors engaged in such a quarrel as ourselves, the proximity is certainly unenviable.

"At nearly right angles with the parallels are dug small pits, say eight feet in length, four in breadth, and two and a half in depth, making them, with the earth thrown on top, nearly five feet deep. – There is no covering over these, and they are, at best, a precarious means of protection. Into these 'holes' we manage to stow our persons to the number of from seven to nine into each, packing ourselves with head, feet, legs and arms promiscuously 'mixed,' the latter of which members soon



**Confederate guns at Fort Johnson, Charleston Harbor, following the evacuation on February 17-18, 1865. Fort Sumter is seen in the distance.**

become so perfectly numb and comatose, by reason of non-circulation of the blood, that it is difficult to identify one's leg from that of his neighbor, unless specially remembered by some peculiarity of clothing.

"Silently and patiently we sit in these shallow pits, through the long, weary hours of night, and the tedious, *scorching* ones of day. *Bam!* a dull, heavy roar far away to the west of us. It is night. Someone whispers, 'Johnson!' (we dislike Johnson) and instantly we raise our heads and turn them towards Johnson. We see something that resembles a burning star, mount high, very high in the air, until it is nearly over us, when it suddenly commences to descend. The thought then strikes us – will it fall into our pit and explode, or into our neighbors'; or will it explode in the air, and crush us with its pieces; or will it fall short, or fall beyond us? But there is very little time to speculate. We hear the rushing noise and sputtering of the fuse, and we know its mission, for harm or otherwise will be known in another second, and we shut our eyes, or hug still closer the sides and bottom of our pit. A terrible explosion follows, and we draw a breath of relief. *We* are safe, but not all. We thought that with the explosion we heard a cry of pain, and groans following. Five minutes after a stretcher passes us with the form of a man upon it. That form is motionless, and to an inquiry, one of the bearers answers – 'dead!' Another form is carried by in a blanket, and then another, another, another, another, and another. The last seven are only wounded, however. Only wounded! one poor fellow had his arm blown off above the elbow, which is equivalent to death in this climate. Brave boys! Not one of them groaned or whimpered, as they were borne to headquarters, some two hundred yards in the rear, but preserved the injunction of silence, even in the throes of mortal agony. Yes they are brave boys, and their country should feel



**Hospital gangrene of an arm stump**

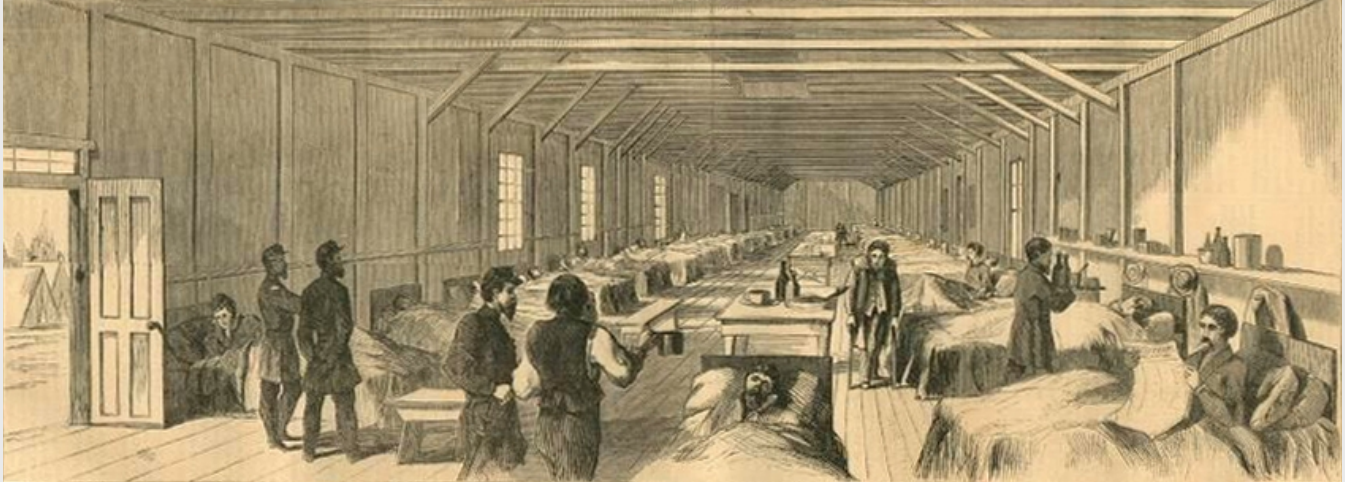
**Published in "The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion, Part II, Vol. II" (1876)**

proud of them, and honor them, dead or alive. They belong to the 100<sup>th</sup> New York, and on this occasion, in conjunction with the 169<sup>th</sup>, occupied an extremely dangerous position in the advanced parallels, close to Wagner. And a single shell made all this havoc – that shell from Johnson. – Why shouldn't we fear Johnson? Why not watch that blazing fuse, as it cleaves the air like some meteor of the sky, through the dim haze of night, with lips compressed and suspended breath? Is life so cheap, or dear ones at home so indifferent, that even the bravest should not fear? The bravest of men the world ever saw, are those who experience every phase of fear, yet who, by their powers of mind and superior intellect, can command sufficient moral force to crush the rising legions of instinctive dictates, and calmly contemplate the most imminent peril.

"The rebels have opened another battery just alongside, or very near Johnson, but thus far it has not proved very effective. Battery Gregg also hurls destruction among us, and mans some powerful guns.

"But where is Fort Sumter? When we performed our first pilgrimage to the trenches from this Island, Sumter was our greatest dread – her range was so accurate, her monster shell scattered such fearful missiles about us, Sumter, to use one of the choice phrases of this country, is 'done, gone for.' She stands there dismantled, a distorted pile of brick and mortar; great irregular breaches through and through her sides are plainly visible to the naked eye. The obstructions will soon be removed that prevent our monitors from passing up the channel, and then once more that flag, struck down by the ingrate hands for whose protection this mighty structure was reared, shall once more proudly float over its disgraced battlements, and from it battered ruins our monster guns will thunder the death knell of Charleston.

"God grant that this moment will not be long delayed. Our lives and health are fast wearing out here. The climate is bad, the water is bad, the service is hard, the exposure constant. I doubt whether we have three



**Interior of the United States Hospital at Hilton Head, South Carolina**  
From a sketch by William T. Crane (1832-1865)  
Published in "The Soldier In Our Civil War, Vol. II" (1890)

hundred effective men in the regiment, or nine hundred in the entire brigade. This is a sad admission, but nevertheless true.

"There is much of interest connected with operations here, which I could furnish if its publication would not be considered contraband by the Government. A special order has been issued upon this subject, and we have to be very guarded in writing to our nearest relatives.

"Col. Clarence Buel, our able and brave commander, wounded on the Edenton road during the siege of Suffolk, rejoined the regiment last Saturday. It was a most gratifying and happy event to every officer and member of the regiment, and congratulations poured in upon him from every side.

"Col. Buel looks decidedly well, and he returns to us, apparently, in the best possible health, with a renewed and vigorous constitution, and takes a deep interest in the work in hand. Believe me, himself and regiment will play no mean part in the operations before Charleston.

"On the occasion of the first dress parade since the Colonel's arrival, which occurred last night, the following congratulatory and complimentary order was published:"

HEADQUARTERS 169<sup>TH</sup> REG'T. N. Y. S. V.,  
FOLLY ISLAND, S. C., Sept. 3, 1863.

General Order: –

The Colonel commanding embraces the earliest opportunity of expressing to the regiment his grateful acknowledgements for the cordial reception with which he was greeted on his recent return to duty. It is exceedingly gratifying to find that four months of absence have not, in any degree, weakened the mutual ties of interest and sympathy which previously existed. During this period the regiment has performed a vast amount of arduous service, and has gained a reputation for courage and efficiency of which, as soldiers, we have all just reason to be proud. And it cannot but gratify you to know that your labors and services have gained for you an honorable reputation throughout the country, and especially in that portion of it which most of you call home. – Had it been in his power, the Colonel commanding would gladly have shared with you all the experiences of your recent honorable campaign; but his inability to do so, has not prevented him from taking the most lively interest in all that has concerned you, and he has had the satisfaction of knowing that, during his absence, you have been under the command of a most faithful and competent commander, whose plan, as well as that of his associate officers, has been to promote your best interests. To him and to them, the Colonel commanding tenders his cordial thanks for their efforts in behalf of the regiment, as well as



**Frock coat of Colonel Clarence Buel, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.  
Collection of the Military and Historical Image Bank, Southbury, Conn.**

for their kind expressions of regard to himself. In his command, at this point of operations, the most prominent in the whole theatre of the war, the Colonel commanding can only assure you that it shall ever be his purpose to promote your success, and to unite with you in endeavoring to secure the success of the glorious enterprise in which we are engaged. Trusting in God, and wish in firm faith in the justice of our cause, let us all do and endure manfully whatever may fall to our lot and look with hope and faith to the achievement of the glorious results which we all so ardently desire.

By order, CLARENCE BUEL, Col. Com'dg.  
CLARK SMITH, Acting Adjutant.

In a letter on September 1<sup>st</sup> to his friend John Newton in Cincinnati, Lieut.-Col. John McConihe correctly predicted that the Confederate forts on Morris Island would be in Federal possession within ten days:

"When I first looked upon the distant steeples and spires of the rebellious city of Charleston, I wandered back to days gone by, and recalled to mind the letter you wrote me from the 'Mills House,' Charleston. The envelope had a print of the Mills House on it, and you extolled its management and cuisine. All was fresh in my memory, and



**The Mills House, Charleston, South Carolina**  
**Published in "Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion" (ca. 1853-'54)**  
**Collection of the Charleston Museum Archives, Charleston, South Carolina**

I wondered if I could not, on entering the city, see the shadows of John and John, friend and friend, flitting around the Mills House. But there were so many ships outside the harbor – not peaceful, majestic-appearing merchantmen, but low, dark monitorial crafts and large, black, frowning men-of-war, that I was admonished that I could not now appear where you had been a few years since, and that I was not like Kellogg and you, a peaceful traveller before Charleston, in search of health and pleasure, but a delegated agent to administer to this people a sufficient dose of Uncle Sam's secession-curative powder, to cure their wicked malady. You and John accomplished the object of your mission, and I trust we shall be alike successful.

"Sumter's battered walls already show that she must soon succumb, and I feel confident that the whole of Morris Island will be in our possession within ten days. We are progressing finely, and doing as well as the most anxious could expect. The Rebels have fortified Charleston to the best of Rebel ability, and they will fight until the last ditch yawns, when they will leave and join that boastful throng which 'long has sought but found it not.' They never see the last ditch when it is nearby, (instance Vicksburg, Port Hudson, &c., &c.), but cherish its memory dearly over their segars and around their firesides.

"I have been up in the trenches twice since I wrote last as Field Officer of the Trenches, remaining each time over 30 hours. It seems to get more unhealthy up there every time I go up, and it is a fact that our casualties increase. The guns boom almost unceasingly and new batteries open every few days, both from us and from the Rebels. We are so cramped for room on these small islands and labor under many disadvantages in consequence thereof; but Yankee ingenuity and perseverance will be victorious despite white sand and swampy marshes. The evening I was up in the trenches, the chief engineer directed a detail, under charge of a lieutenant, to explore or examine a certain spot for the purpose of planting a new battery. The lieutenant did so, as far



First parallel, Morris Island, South Carolina (ca. 1863)

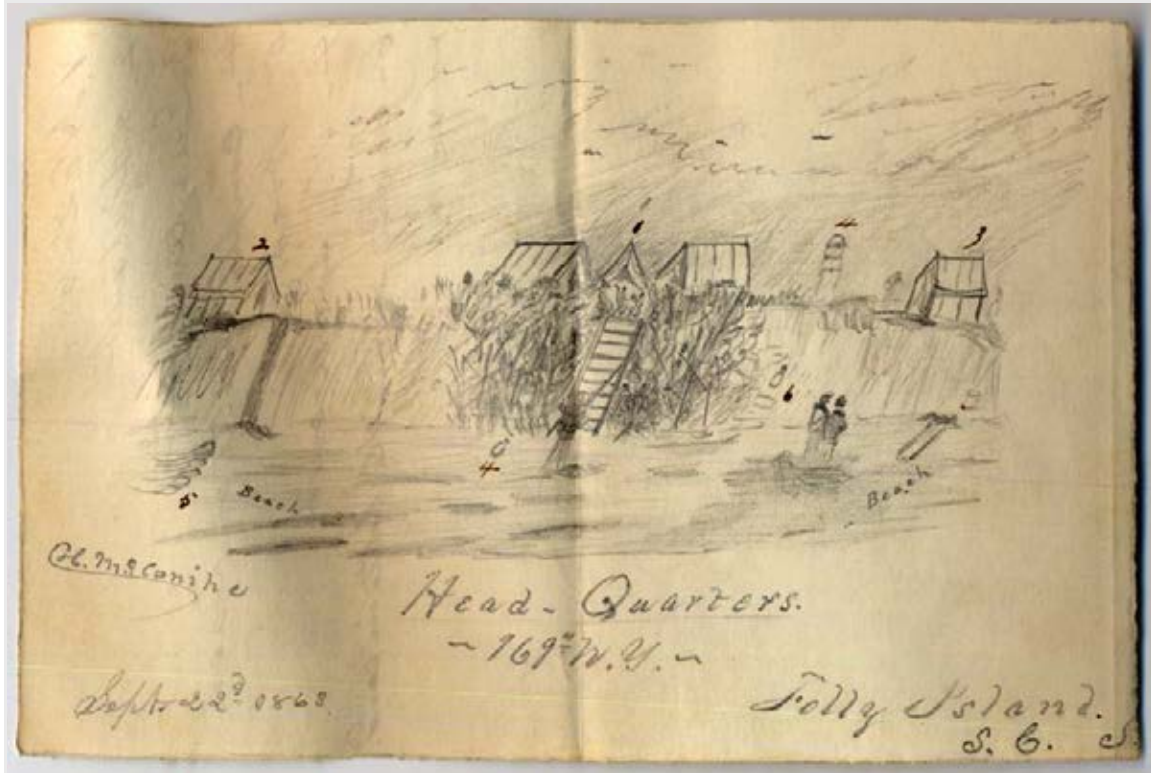
as possible, and reported he could go no further, as the men were already up to their waists in the marsh. 'Go on, go on.' said the colonel. 'But it is impossible for the men to go on' said the lieutenant, 'and how can you expect to get heavy guns out there?' 'Make out a requisition for what you want' replied the colonel, 'but examine the spot.' The lieutenant took pen and wrote, 'I desire a detail of fifty men, eighteen feet long, to explore a swamp fifteen feet deep' and sent it in. The colonel was wroth and placed the facetious lieutenant under arrest, but after three days considered it a good joke and released him. The material required was not issued and another spot was examined for the battery."

Col. McConihe's letter of the 3<sup>d</sup> to John Newton's wife Lavinia presented "the picture of his existence on Folly Island," including a description of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.'s regimental headquarters. In commenting on the return of Col. Buel, John would write that it was a great relief to have him back.

"As I wrote John last evening and gave all this news relative to the siege of Charleston, I will not weary you with war and its conflicts, although it seems little else can be thought of in this constant cannons-roaring latitude. While writing this last sentence, I counted eight discharges of heavy guns, and still their sullen throats are belching forth in the distance. The noise of the artillery is now hardly noticeable, and like the unceasing rushing and tumbling of the breakers on the beach, has ceased to elicit any notice or comment, so accustomed to it have we become.

"Colonel Buel rejoined the regiment on Saturday, and was detailed this afternoon as Field Officer of the Trenches and is now in the midst of the iron hail. I think of him as the sound of artillery reverberates upon my ear, and wish him a safe return to-morrow night. Worn and weary he will come back, and from the appearance of the heavens, drenched with rain, as I arrived at my quarters last Friday night after having been up in the trenches through the sun's heat and the night rain





1. Headquarters. 2. Adjutant. 3. Quartermaster. 4. Old 'Look-Out.' 4 (again). Empty bottle on beach.
5. Wreck. 6. Empty stone ale bottle in sand; &c., &c., &c.

Sketch of the Headquarters of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. (September 22, 1863)

Correspondence of Lieut.-Col. John McConihe, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.

Collection of the Albany Institute of History & Art, Albany, New York

over 34 hours. It is a great relief to me to have him back, as thus my duties are lightened and my responsibility removed.

"An officer appreciating the responsibilities of a regiment or command, as I think I do, judging from my silent feelings and untold anxiety at times, feels like another man when that accountability is removed, and he is allowed to sleep with both eyes closed. Yet I would not shirk the weight of position when duty calls me to assume it. But I feel to-night relieved in mind, and the colonel's presence, after over four months' absence, months of active and severe campaigning for any regiment, is indeed a blessing. Beyond these considerations, the most cordial and warm friendship exists between us, and his open-hearted, unselfish ways, united with his ability in social acquirements and gentlemanly manners, materially overwhelm the many annoyances of a military life.

"A camp is like a home, and its occupants like brothers. You are compelled to daily meet and hourly associate with all; each knows your every action and there are no secrets untold in camp life; you are without stint the object of the scrutinizing gaze of hundreds of observing eyes, and in the midst of all this, one naturally draws closer the precious ties of a true and noble friendship. My relations with the regiment have uninterruptedly been of the most pleasing nature, and the colonel and myself have fully enjoyed each other's unlimited confidence. Thus truly, I most cordially welcome his return.

"My quarters are now very comfortable. They are located upon the first ridge of sand back from the beach, and at high tide the sentinel stands upon the lower step of my stairs, being driven there by the breakers. The first two days after my tent was pitched upon this sand bank, I was lit-



Eating dinner at Fort Ramsay, near Falls Church, Virginia (January 9, 1862)  
Chief Bugler Charles Wellington Reed, 9<sup>th</sup> Mass. Light Artillery (1841-1926)  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

erally covered with sand. The gale, then raging, really blew the sand in such volumes that it was impossible to do anything, even to cook. But now, trees and shrubbery surround me, and are planted to where the waters flow at high tide. My tent is nicely floored, with a portico in front, and a pair of stairs of fourteen steps, (made from a large, sawed pine stick, which floated in to me from the Atlantic), lead down to the beautiful beach, lined on either side by trees planted in the sand for thirty feet. The trees are small and crowded thickly together to prevent the sand drifting. I have a nice pine table, wash stand, and bunk with mattress, sheets, quilt, two generous feather pillows, and a mosquito-bar.

"When I get up in the morning, I go down the stairs into the ocean and enjoy the luxury of saltwater bathing. Then comes breakfast, composed of such food as the commissary has to sell. After breakfast, the duties of the day commence. Sign and examine the morning report, approve passes, and forward such papers as are to be acted upon, 'higher up.' The balance of the day is used up in various ways – drills, musters, inspection of arms and accoutrements, sending off and receiving orders and official papers, acting as brigade or general officer of the day, attending to such duties as arise in military life, and about once a week, going over to Morris Island in the trenches, (at such times being gone over 30 hours), and at six o'clock, dress parade. Then my time is usually my own, but too often the past summer I have been too much fatigued to employ it usefully. Hardly an evening passes but that more or less officers call at my quarters, and I am never lonesome.

"Thus, Mrs. Newton, I have presented the picture of my existence on Folly Island. I now prefer these quarters to those I so artistically portrayed to you at Bower's Hill. I would here sketch my tent, as it looks out upon the limitless waters, with the stairs which descend to the beach, and the trees and bushes that surround me. But you discouraged my first attempt and I have not practiced since then. So I leave all to your vivid imagination, and will not mar this cleanly sheet with other than pen scratchings."

But in a letter to Mrs. Newton on the 22<sup>d</sup>, John changed his mind about his artistic tendencies: "I enclose you a sketch of headquarters drawn by myself. The sketch was taken during the last heavy storm! Am I not improving? At high tide the sea washes those stairs." Continuing with his letter of the 3<sup>d</sup>:



**Sunrise on the Beach (ca. 1885)**  
**William Trost Richards (1833-1904)**  
**Private Collection**

"My arm, thanks to you, Dr. Potter, Dr. Clymer, Dr. Seymour, Yorktown, and saltwater bathing, has entirely healed up and is now a very useful member. It looks as natural as life, and you would not now know I had patiently suffered its many tortures for long months. The fingers do not closely fold up, and the wrist is weak, so that when the arm is extended, the hand lops down. But this is not noticeable, even when the arm is extended, with a coat sleeve to cover the wrist. I use it with perfect freedom, and can now place and remove articles from my left pockets, which I have not attempted until quite recently. The wound finally healed up while I was *resting* at Yorktown after that exhausting, terrible expedition to Hanover Junction. It probably became obstinate because it could not occupy my whole attention, and when I gave out from other causes, healed up. It does not feel or look but 'that its troubles are o'er.'

"Your father's curiosity and scientific learning would be fully employed in exploring the wonderful missiles and their singular effects on sand,



**Pot of Raspberries**  
**Hand-painted photograph by Brigitte Carnochan**  
**Exhibited at Galerie BMG, Woodstock, New York (2007)**

boards, shovels, gun carriages, guns, and wheelbarrows for several days. The 'steam fire engine' is nothing to the enemy's fire. The former throws liquids powerfully, while the latter belches solids fearfully. The steam plough, even, is lost sight of, and called a slow machine, compared with the ploughing of a 15-inch shell. But the peaceful pursuit of science is more agreeable than to be hunted by ball and shell, and I know I could better enjoy myself seeing Mr. Graham squeezing raspberry wine down cellar on McFarland Street than to be squeezed into a splinter-proof to avoid being buried in Morris Island sand by several hundred pounds of cast iron. Give your father my best respects, and tell him, while he scents the flowers and tastes the wines, I will smell the powder and endure the shells.

"I enclose you a flower, gathered near my tent, but you must excuse me from marking it 'Folly Island, September 1, 1863,' as I have no gum to attach it to paper. I enclose also some flowers and a green plant gathered by me to-day, September 3<sup>d</sup>, on the banks of Folly River, at the advanced picket post on this island, while making the rounds of the pickets as Field Officer of the Day, the duties of which position are assigned to me for the next 24 hours. The green plant was growing in the salt marsh in water 18 inches deep at low tide, and looked very pretty and bright. The other flowers bloom plentifully in the marsh.

"Colonel Buel returned unharmed this morning. Wagner, Sumter, and *Charleston* will hold out for some time yet, despite reports to the contrary...

"If not asking too much of you, I wish you would preserve my letters, as they may refresh my memory of scenes, incidents and places, when I come to call on you at Cin'ti. Whenever the pile and number becomes burdensome, you may get rid of them by sending them home to me,

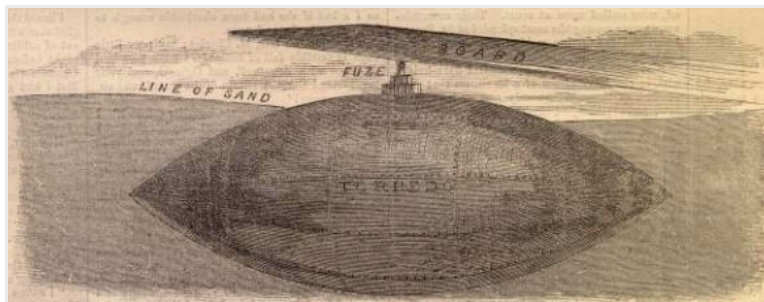
care of Mother. I have all of yours and John's carefully filed, and enjoy many an idle hour perusing them over and over again. The above is a mere suggestion, and you will receive it as it is intended."

A case of "Rebel barbarism," involving a ghoulish booby-trap set on the beach at Morris Island, was reported by Northern newspapers, including the *Troy Daily Times*: "Just the other side of our trenches, the rebels had shot down a negro, had stripped him naked, and attached a torpedo to the body, so that if the attempt was made to remove it, the infernal machine would explode and kill the person who ventured upon the act." Priv. Robert Whitcomb, Co. D, wrote his parents on the 25<sup>th</sup>: "I suppose you have seen the pictures in *Frank Leslie's* of this place and Sumter, and the dead [Negro] laying on a torpedo. That we saw, and was within reach of it." Col. McConihe informed his father about the incident:



**The Siege of Charleston – The Rebels' Last Device in the Torpedo Line**  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1863)

"The siege of Charleston progresses slowly, but satisfactorily, and the city is destined to return to the Union. The tying of two colored soldiers to torpedoes by the Rebels, and then telling us they would allow us to remove them is a fact, and transpired while I was in command of the trenches. One body we removed unsuspectingly, and the torpedo burst, wounding two soldiers of the detail. The other lay in the hot sun within six yards of the trenches all day Friday, and the engineers removed it Friday night, without exploding the infernal mach-



**The Siege of Charleston – Diagram Showing the Torpedo Buried in the Sand**  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1863)

ine of the high-toned chivalry. When the first torpedo burst, the Rebels opened furiously on our advanced trench, killing two men and wounding three. I picked up five or six Rebel bullets filled with sulphur. I was

## Explosive and Poisoned Bullets.

1570

4-7-32

A Cavalry Battle was fought at Burnsboro 9<sup>th</sup> July between our Cavalry under Kilpatrick and Buford, and Rebel Cavalry under Hampton and Jones of Stuart's command 1800 strong - with 4 pieces of horse artillery. The Enemy were repulsed with loss of 2 pieces of artillery 250 prisoners, and many killed and wounded. (W.S. 101%) In this fight the sabres of our troopers were more than a match for the Rebels, and a desperate conflict was had for 2 hours. Stahel's Cavalry on 8<sup>th</sup> Captured 2 officers and 50 men (Rebels) near Nagarstown Mt. Gen Kelly's cavalry Captured a rebel train of 15 wagons 60 mules 2 officers and 20 men. 4 miles from Williamsport. The Rebels at Gettysburg Battle used explosive bullets, and another kind which were poisoned. This is a new missile in warfare, and the effect on those wounded by them is sure death. At 2<sup>nd</sup> Bull Run, the explosive bullet was first used by the Rebels - now the poisoned ones will make our men dread contact with them more than ever.

Rebel Bullets.



Explosive Bullet



Poison in this part  
in cavities of  
upper section

Poisoned Bullet (copper)

### Explosive and Poisoned Rebel Bullets

From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical Engineer of the III Army Corps, Vol. 4, 1862 October 26 - 1863 November 8  
Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia

anxious to cut one of them open, but at the suggestion of an engineer I desisted, it being feared the thing might explode. These were fired at us by sharpshooters. Thus they are devils incarnate and up to devilish tricks, but they will avail them nothing, as God and justice are on our side."

Capt. Nathaniel C. Wood, Co. B, returning to his regiment in September, described his voyage from New York as well as the progress being made against Fort

Wagner in a letter on the 6<sup>th</sup> to the *Troy Daily Whig*, published on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The *Daily Whig* introduced Capt. Wood's account with these remarks: "The following letter from an officer of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth, before Charleston, will be read with interest by all Trojans, especially those who have relatives and friends in the besieging army. The writer was one of the number of officers who recently visited Troy on special duty."



Deck of the U.S. Army Transport "Fulton" (left); steward and head cook

"We started in the staunch ship *Fulton* for this place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of last month, arriving safe, – but, as far as myself was concerned, not very sound, – on the 28<sup>th</sup>. What a fine thing it is to be a landsman and write glowingly of the 'glorious sea!' and what another 'fine thing' it is for that same landsman to be tossed about on the ocean he has so often admired, with no land in sight, no solid foundation under foot, and nothing but the fearfully treacherous water as far as the eye can reach. One travels under such circumstances much faster than fifteen knots an hour through the labyrinthine trenches of the past. The skeletons of his former eccentric actions become perfect, living, and uncommonly lively bodies, and cling to him so unpleasantly that he feels very much like the man in the play who was comically anxious to get back under the roof of his 'paternal parent.' He is like the man in *Pickwick*, who said he could skate, and yet suddenly remembered that he had a coat at home which would just fit Samuel Veller, who was kindly holding him up. I know such a one, who, by the way, is in my tent at present – and remember, painfully well, of his sitting on the deck of the vessel in New York harbor, humming the tune of that rare old song –

'A life on the ocean wave.'

The day following he was rolling in his bunk dismally thinking, that

'The man who wrote it was green,  
He had never been to sea,  
And a storm he had never seen.'

"A sea voyage, like many other calamities, *stirs up* the fine feelings of a man's nature and makes him more kindly disposed towards life and the living. I think I do not flatter myself, or speak unwisely, when I say this was true in my case, and in the strictest sense. Three times each day I crept from my state-room to the table, but after having eaten a little I suddenly bethought me of the myriads of famishing fishes, who



**The Flag of Sumter (October 20, 1863)**

**Conrad Wise Chapman (1842-1910)**

**Collection of the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia**

were hunting through the waters for the means of sustaining life, and the impulse to mitigate their miseries and fill their stomachs was so strong upon me that I would spring from the table, and reaching the deck, would project my head dreamily over the vessel's side and wonder how many fishes and what their names, who were then and there feeding at my expense far down in the deep blue sea. The passengers soon informed themselves of this peculiarity of mine, and cheered me on with hilarious shouts each time I started for the table. Need I add that Lieutenant Merriam appreciated this part of the voyage most fully, and always applauded longer and louder than the rest? And now, as the surf rolls up almost to the very door of my tent, I think of the voyage, and the three daily meals, and the hungry fishes.

"We arrived at Port Royal on the noon of the 28<sup>th</sup>, and took a tug for the island (which is, say, sixty miles from Port Royal) at midnight, reaching the landing at early morning. I had a fine view of the Sumter ruins from this point, but concluded to defer my taking of Charleston until I had visited the regiment.

"I need not attempt the description of the island here; your readers well know its white sand would make any Troy grocer rich. The shade of its largest trees would burn any man up, the 'grub' hereabouts would starve any man, and the mysterious sand flies, fleas, and other horrible and carnivorous insects, drive to desperation every man who comes here, and makes a heavy remark or so, regarding their stings, and eyes, and bills, and 'souls' a positive luxury. The government has wisely furnished each soldier in this lively department with mosquito bars, and it is a pleasant study, indeed, to lie and watch the mosquitoes as they light upon the threads of the meshes, look sharply around, and then come down on you for the blood you have, with so much labor, distilled out of 'hard tack' and 'salt horse.' But the 'bars' would do very well, as they keep out everything which does not measure more than



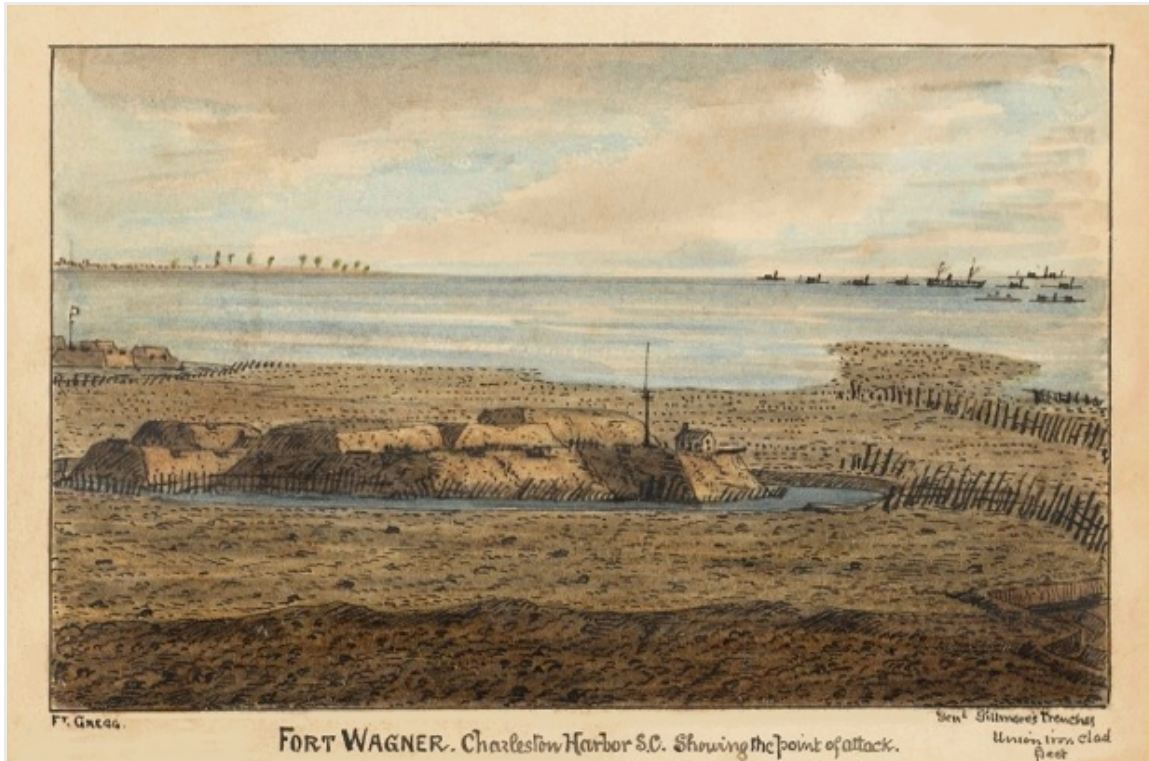


**The Grand Guard Marching To, and Negro Fatigue-Party Returning From,  
the Trenches in Front of Fort Wagner  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1863)**

five inches from tip to tip – were it not for huge horned bugs which come from the ground at night and crawl over you and make horrid noises in your ears. But these fleas and things cannot interest you as much as though they were in your ears, and I will leave them (I wish they would leave me) and give you a night and day in the trenches, right under the banks of Wagner. I say the 'banks,' as a huge shapeless mass of sand cannot be dignified by the name of walls.

"On the second of this month, our regiment occupied the fifth or advanced trench in front of Wagner. The getting out and into the trenches, is far more dangerous than remaining there after once in, and most of the casualties occur at dusk, when the 'relief' comes in and the relieved go out. At that time Wagner pours in grape and canister, and Johnson and Gregg shell the beach. We pay not so much attention to the order of our going, as we do to going, and the boys dance in and out pretty lively. It was so dark when we reached our position in front, that I could see nothing, but laying down in the sand, watched the shells, with their burning fuses, course through the air and explode away behind us. No description can convey an idea of the hissing, horrible noise of the shells tearing through the air, and of the thunder of their bursting. Take the scale of fearful noises, run the gamut through in a few shrieks and screams, and you have it.

"As soon as morning broke I was looking around, of course. Through a hole in our wall I could see the whole thing, as it lay before me. Wagner was directly in our front, not a hundred yards from us; and there, a little to our left, was the *in*-famous Charleston. We could see people on the docks and walking the streets. It is an easy matter to shell the thing to the ground, but that is not yet a part of the play. Sumter, or what is left of it, is just across the bay from Wagner and says never a word. The *Ironsides* and the monitors were lying lazily in the harbor close to Sumter, 'throwing things' at Wagner. Wagner didn't like it much, and threw back, but soon got weary and remained quiet. Johnson, further yet to our left, fired often and wonderfully accurate, making the sand and soldiers fly in all directions. And so the affair continued, and we started for home at night very dirty, very hungry, and arrived there, after wading through the surf, very wet and weary. I forgot to mention that we must have marched over seven miles from



**Fort Wagner, Charleston Harbor, S.C., showing the point of attack**  
**From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical Engineer of**  
**the III Army Corps, Vol. 4, 1862 October 26 - 1863 November 8**  
**Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia**

our camp to the trenches, including the crossing of [Lighthouse] Inlet, which is only a stone throw across, and were consequently pretty tired when we reached camp at midnight.

"Of course you want to know the present state of affairs. To-night, or to-morrow morning, Wagner is to be assaulted and without doubt taken. – We have run our 'sap' so close to it that our men to-day have been throwing hard tack and onions into the fort, and the old stars and stripes are planted on the *very corner of the rebel stronghold!* The storming brigade was received this afternoon. To-morrow night the place will be ours unless the General countermands the order. I think Massachusetts and Illinois troops are to make the attack. To-day we fired several experimental shots into Charleston, setting it on fire in several places. The ball is moving, and as rapidly as we who are *here*, can desire or expect. Those wiseacres who sit at home in their easy chairs, and take Charleston daily, are wanted here now, if things are not going on fast enough to suit them."

The *New South*, published in Federal-occupied Port Royal, S.C., provided an excellent summary of the siege of Fort Wagner in its issue of November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1863:

"The siege of Fort Wagner, considering the character of the ground over which the approaches were made, marshy on one side and subject to be overflowed by high tides; the narrow front for the development of the parallels and zigzags; and the heavy fire to which the besiegers were subjected without being able to reply to it by counter batteries, forms a memorable epoch in the engineer's art, and presents a lesson fruitful in results.



Scene from "Glory" (1989)  
Directed by Edward Zwick

*In this scene of the assault on Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863, the Atlantic Ocean and Federal columns are incorrectly depicted to the left of the fort instead of to the right.*

"Morris Island, the site of Forts Wagner and Gregg, is but a narrow ridge of sand, formed by successive accumulations from the beach, running along the entrenchments to Charleston Harbor. This ridge slopes from the shore inwards, terminating in the salt-water marshes, intersected by narrow cracks, which lie to the west of it. The width of the portion disposable for the trenches in no point exceeds 225 yards, whilst in others it narrows to 25 yards at high tide.

"The plan of attack, it is now known, proposed by General GILLMORE, was: To effect a lodgement on the south side of Morris Island, which it was known that the enemy was then strongly fortifying. 2<sup>d</sup>. To besiege and reduce Fort Wagner, by which all the works on Cummings Point would necessarily fall. 3<sup>d</sup>. From the positions thus gained, to reduce Fort Sumter. 4<sup>th</sup>. The vessels of war to remove the obstructions at the entrance of the harbor and reach the city by running by the works on Sullivan's Island.

"The first point was effected by the diversion made on the Stono, which drew off half the enemy's forces from Morris Island, and rendered its capture by surprise comparatively bloodless. This was done July 10<sup>th</sup>.

"It is known that two assaults on Fort Wagner were unsuccessful, though the troops making it were on the brink of effecting their object. These failures led to a modification of General GILLMORE'S plan, which was to effect the reduction or demolition of Fort Sumter, from which an annoying fire was kept up on his trenches over Fort Wagner, before advancing on the latter work, the fire of which he expected to keep down from destructive effects by his mortar batteries and the iron-clads of the Navy.

"Having effected this important object, the approaches and other works against Fort Wagner were more easily pushed forward. Armed with seventeen heavy guns, well-flanked, with a wet ditch, a bomb-proof



**Skull of a soldier of the 54<sup>th</sup> Mass. Infantry Regiment (Colored)  
Collection of the National Museum of Health and Medicine,  
Silver Spring, Md.**

*This skull was discovered in 1876 near the site of Fort Wagner and belonged to a man of African descent, a soldier of the 54<sup>th</sup> Mass. Volunteers, which led the assault on the fort on the night of July 18, 1863. Of approximately 600 men who made the charge, 256 were killed, wounded, or missing. From the size of the wound, and the remains of the projectile itself, it can be determined that the type of munition which hit this man was an iron canister ball from one of two field gun-howitzers used in the repulse of that attack.*

for its garrison that resisted the heaviest shells, approachable only in front over the narrow sand ridge which narrows down to 25 yards in width just in front of the work, guarded on the east by the sea and on the west by Vincent's Creek and the marsh from surprise, seen in reverse by Battery Gregg and thirty guns on Sullivan's Island, in flank by the batteries on James' Island; whilst all the ground in advance of it is swept at one point or another by all its guns, a more difficult problem has seldom, if ever, been presented for the solution of the engineer than its reduction; certainly none in modern times.

"In spite of these obstacles; in spite of the shifting sand under him, over which the tide swept more than once during his advances; in spite of the succor and relief of the garrison from Charleston, with which their communications were free, General GILLMORE addressed himself to his task with that preparedness for every eventuality and that tenacity which are characteristic traits of his character.

"The first parallel and the batteries in it were ready on July 18<sup>th</sup>, and the fire was opened at 1,350 yards several hours prior to the assault on that day. The second parallel was opened by the flying sap on the 23<sup>d</sup> July at 750 yards from the fort, was made the principle defensive line,

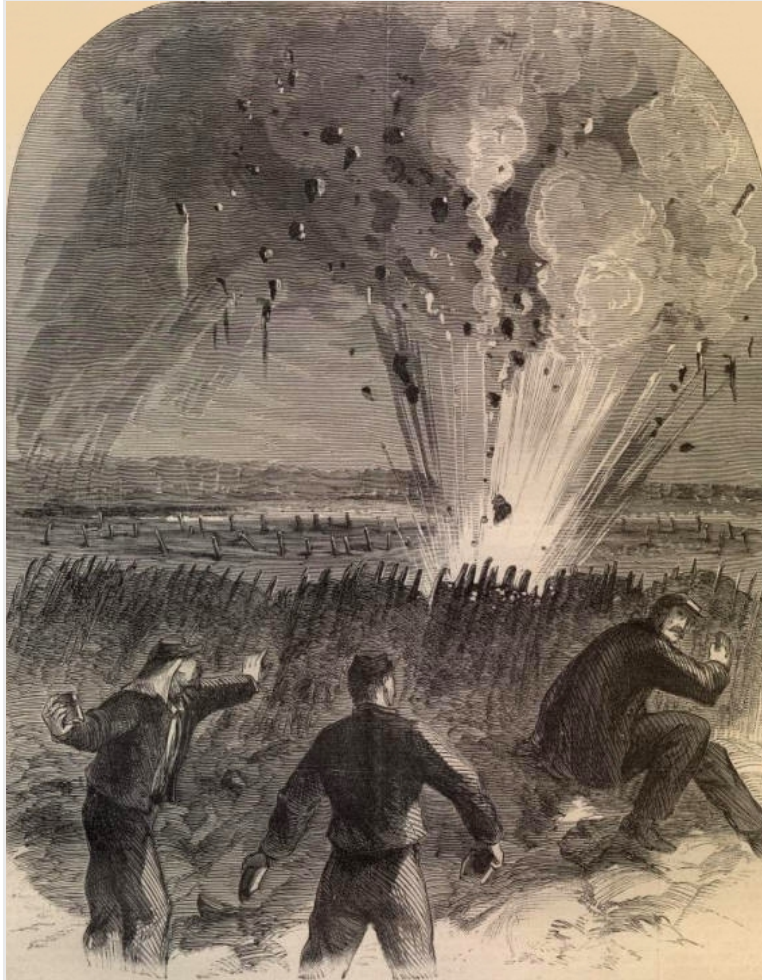


Advanced works of Gen'l. Q. A. Gillmore, U.S.A., shelling Fort Wagner, Morris Island, August 1863  
 From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical Engineer of  
 the III Army Corps, Vol. 4, 1862 October 26 - 1863 November 8  
 Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia

*The Federal siege parallels may be seen to the right of Fort Wagner  
 in the drawing by Private Sneden.*

was well-secured from sorties, and contained the breaching batteries afterwards used against Sumter. The third parallel, at 450 yards, was made by the flying sap also, on August 9<sup>th</sup>, and beyond this point the trenches were sometimes pushed forward by the flying sap, sometimes by the full sap, as opportunity demanded. The fourth parallel, at about 300 yards, was made on the 22<sup>d</sup> August. The fifth parallel, at 200 yards, on a ridge wrested from the enemy, August 26<sup>th</sup>. Beyond this point the approaches were simply zigzags, making very acute angles with each other, as there was not front enough for a parallel.

"In this emergency new means and redoubled efforts were called for, and General GILLMORE was equal to it. He moved to the front all his light mortars, enlarged the positions for his sharp-shooters, obtained the cooperation of the *Ironsides* by day, used powerful calcium lights to blind the enemy by night, opened fire with as many heavy guns to his rear as he could without danger to his men in the trenches, thus essaying to keep the garrison confined to their bomb-proof, and to breach this through a breach in the work. These measures were inaugurated on the morning of September 5<sup>th</sup>, and for forty-two hours one who was present writes: "The spectacle was magnificently grand, even sublime." The fort was silent. The garrison were immured in their bomb-proof,



**The Siege of Charleston – Soldiers Exploding Torpedoes by Throwing Pieces of Shell On Them from the Saps  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (October 3<sup>d</sup>, 1863)**

and the work went on in safety except from the batteries on James' Island. The men moved about in the trenches, even sat on their parapets, and hunted torpedoes, at which they had become as skillful as rat-catchers scenting out rat-holes. The counterscarp of the work was crowned on the night of September 6<sup>th</sup>, and some formidable obstructions in the ditch removed. All being now ready for an assault, the order for it was given; but seeing the hopelessness of their position, the enemy evacuated just in time to avoid the result.

"This is a triumph of American military science and skill of which the nation may well be proud, and General GILLMORE, in the reduction Fort Pulaski, the demolition of Sumter, and the capture of Wagner, has fairly earned the title of Poliorcetes." – *Army & Navy Journal*.

[Note: Demetrius I Poliorcetes (336-283 B.C.) was one of the great generals of the Hellenistic era.]

The decision by the South to abandon Fort Wagner and Battery Gregg is apparently the subject of some controversy, at least as far as this writer has determined. Sources quoted by Wikipedia, for example, claim that the Confederates withdrew all operable cannons from Fort Wagner prior to its evacuation, and that the primary reason for abandoning the fort was the poisoning of its fresh water well



**The Naval Battery, located on the first parallel before Fort Wagner and armed with two 8-inch Parrot Rifles (ca. 1863)**

from the decomposition of the remains of Union soldiers who were buried in the ditch following the infantry assaults of July. In a letter from its correspondent dated September 10<sup>th</sup>, however, the *New South* provides a very different explanation for the evacuation. It is left to the reader to decide the truth of the matter:

"Since my last letter to the NEW SOUTH the whole of Morris Island has come into our possession, and we hold Fort Wagner and Battery Gregg. Heavy guns and spades were too much for the rebels, and they incontinently got out of the serious scrape impending, by leaving with bag and baggage, for the mainland. The details of the causes for the hasty evacuation and our occupation of the island, is one briefly told. Our preparations for opening a bombardment of Fort Wagner, by all our batteries, and continuing it for forty-eight hours were consummated on Friday last. On Saturday morning, at daylight, the work of demolishing the rebel strong-hold, or rendering it incapable of defence, was begun by the opening of all our guns upon it. The fire from our batteries was skillfully directed and well-managed. Not many shots were lost, after the proper range had been obtained. Nearly all of them went straight to their work, and began to level down the parapet of the fort, and batter up its bomb-proof and magazines. The rebels replied spiritedly for several hours, throwing shells, grape and canister, in reckless profusion against our lines, but with little loss to us. Their fire grew less active after nine o'clock, in the morning, gradually decreased, and finally, by ten o'clock, died entirely away, and the fort became silent. Our fire was so hot and effective, that it rendered the working of the guns a matter of sheer impossibility. Not a living being could have existed for a single moment, exposed to such a shower of shot and shell as were rained upon that falling battery by our guns and those of the Navy, represented by the *New Ironsides* and the monitors, at times.



**Battery Rosecrans, located on the second parallel before Fort Wagner and armed with three 100-pounder Parrot Rifles (ca. 1863)**

"During the day at least eight feet of sand had been torn or plunged from the top of the bomb-proof, and the parapet was damaged and cut up to a considerable extent. At dark all but two of our heavy guns suspended fire, but these two fire during the night, together with a number of mortars, to keep the rebels from repairing damage. The gunners were aided in securing accurate aim, and the rebels were deterred from attempting to repair, by a broad flood of white-light almost rivaling the splendor of the sun, from the Calcium light arrangement of Prof. Robert Grant, who handled his apparatus to the satisfaction of all, and rendered valuable aid in the operations of the night. The fire from all the batteries was again opened at day-light on Sunday morning, continuing during the day and closing at nightfall, when the mortars took up their part of the work, and stirred up the rebels. The Naval Battery paid its attention to Battery Gregg, aided by a number of smaller guns in other batteries, and kept that work quiet and reserved.

"On Sunday afternoon it was determined to attempt to carry Fort Wagner by assault at 9 o'clock Monday morning by the following plan of operations. The fire was to be kept up until the troops mounted the parapet, when, at a given signal the batteries should cease firing.

"The assault was to be made in three columns: 1<sup>st</sup>. A column of picked men, under Col. Guss, was to debouch from the advanced trenches, mount the parapet on the sea front, spike the guns and seize and hold the sally-port.

"2<sup>d</sup>. A column under Gen. Stevenson was to pass the sea front, file to the left, and enter the place on the North and West faces.

"3<sup>d</sup>. Another column under Col. Davis, was to pass the fort and deploy across the island between Wagner and Gregg. The entire force was to be under Gen. Terry in person. The plan was an excellent one and would have been carried out if the rebels had not evacuated the island,





**The Siege of Charleston – Evacuation of Morris Island by the Rebels on the Night of September 6, 1863  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1863)**

which they succeeded in doing Sunday night, although it appears that the greater portion of their force had left on Saturday night. The evacuation of the island was discovered, through a deserter at midnight, and before day-light, Capt. Walker had planted the flag on Wagner and the 3<sup>d</sup> New Hampshire on Gregg. We took 23 pieces of artillery and large supplies of ammunition, and about one hundred prisoners, most of the latter being caught in boats by Major O. S. Sandford of the 7<sup>th</sup> Conn., between Cumming's Point and Fort Johnson."

Newspapers in Richmond confirmed that the guns of Fort Wagner and Battery Gregg were spiked and left behind prior to the Confederate withdrawal from Morris Island. The following dispatches from the Richmond *Inquirer* and Richmond *Whig* were carried by the *Daily Times* in Troy on the 10<sup>th</sup>:



**Confederate Brigadier-General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard  
Commanding the Coastal Defenses of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida**

"CHARLESTON, Sept. 7. – Morris Island was evacuated yesterday afternoon. The enemy had advanced their sappers up to the moat of Wagner, and it being impossible to hold it, Beauregard ordered its evacuation, which was executed between 8 P.M. and 1 A.M. with success. We spiked the guns of Wagner and Gregg, and withdrew noiselessly in forty barges. Only one barge, containing twelve men, was captured. All quiet this morning. The enemy hold Cumming's Point, in

full view of the city. Heavy firing is now going on between our batteries on Sullivan's Island and Fort Moultrie and the monitors."

"CHARLESTON, Sept. 7. – The bombardment was kept up all day yesterday without intermission and far into the night. About one hundred and fifty of our men were killed and wounded on batteries Wagner and Gregg. The attempt to assault battery Gregg was repulsed before the enemy had time to effect a landing. At dark on Wednesday, the enemy having advanced their sappers up to the very moats of Wagner, and it being impossible to hold the island any longer, Gen. Beauregard ordered its evacuation. All quiet this morning."

In an attempt to capitalize on the Federal victory, Rear-Admiral John A. Dahlgren demanded the surrender of the Confederate garrison at Fort Sumter:



**Rear-Admiral John A. Dahlgren**  
**Commanding the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron**

*Rear-Admiral John A. Dahlgren is pictured on May 21, 1865, on board the U.S.S. "Pawnee" in Charleston Harbor, with the ruins of Fort Sumter in the background. He is seen standing beside a 50-pounder Dahlgren rifled gun of his own design.*

"CHARLESTON, Sept. 7, noon. – A despatch from Maj. Elliott, commanding at Fort Sumter, announces that Admiral Dahlgren had just demanded the immediate surrender of the fort. – General Beauregard telegraphed to Maj. Elliott to reply to Dahlgren, that he can have Fort Sumter when he takes it and holds it, and in the meantime such demands are puerile and unbecoming."

The thunder of the final bombardment of Fort Wagner "was distinctly heard at Beaufort, a distance of fifty miles," according to a Port Royal correspondent.



Fort Wagner Captured, September 6, 1863, Charleston (ca. September 7, 1863)  
Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The *Daily Times* reported that just before the surrender of the fort, the advanced pickets on Morris Island "...had a fight with the enemy with brickbats. An old tumbledown chimney afforded the weapons. After the first volley from the rebels, brickbats flew from both sides with great animation."

The *Daily Press* reported that Priv. Charles O'Reilly, Co. B, was "the first United States soldier to enter Wagner." The *Daily Whig* reported the same, but as the 169<sup>th</sup> had already departed the trenches for its camp, we are left to wonder why Priv. O'Reilly was left behind. The *Daily Press* proclaimed that Charles was "on the road to promotion," and we find him mentioned in dispatches with the rank of sergeant by the end of September.

Accompanying the news of the Federal victory was the announcement of the death of Corp. John W. Guyer, also of Co. B, killed just hours before the capture of Fort Wagner, as reported by the *Daily Times* on the 14<sup>th</sup>:

"KILLED NEAR CHARLESTON. – Corporal John W. Guyer, of Co. B, Capt. N. C. Wood, One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment, was killed at 9 o'clock on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst., in the trenches in front of Fort Wagner. He was struck by several pieces of shell, and had both legs shot off, but lived till the next morning."

Priv. Alfred Carmon, Co. H, in writing to his sister on the 8<sup>th</sup> about the army's success, stated that not only Fort Wagner and Battery Gregg were captured, but Fort Sumter as well. An amphibious operation was underway at Fort Sumter that day, involving the marines, sailors, and infantry, but it would fail due to the lack of coordination between the army and navy. Alfred retracted his claim about Fort Sumter at the end of his letter:

"Fort Wagner, Battery Gregg and Fort Sumter is ours at last! Yesterday morning, our troops charged on Wagner and took it. Our brigade left the breastworks about ten o'clock at night to return to our quarters, and the next morning, at daylight, they charged on the fort and took it. I heard a little while ago that our men were in Sumter, but they are a



Battery Gregg, Cummings Point, Charleston, South Carolina (ca. August - September, 1863)  
Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

firing pretty lively to-day.

"I suppose that the folks up there think that we are a great while in taking Charleston, but if they think that, you are too sorry about it! They had better come down here and help a little! If we capture Charleston in two month's time from now, I think that we will be pretty lucky. There will be some pretty hard fighting yet before it is taken, but we are bound to take it.

"Tell Fred that Mint [Corp. Minturn S. Knowlton, Co. H] wants him to come down here and take a look at Fort Wagner. Mint sets here. He looks as tough as you please! It is a healthy place here, but the mosquitoes are so thick that we cannot get around after dark. Well, I wish that this siege was over, for when this is through, I think that the war will be pretty near over.

"Since commencing my letter, we have had to go up to Morris Island. We got to camp last night about twelve o'clock. They were very quiet on James Island. The Rebel batteries did not fire scarcely any. The Rebs are throwing up earthworks on the beach in front of Charleston. The Rebs had 100 barrels of hardtack and 100 barrels of pork stowed away in Fort Wagner. I suppose that they thought the fort was impregnable, but they could not stand the shells.

"So Captain Wickes thinks that we are a going to man the fort, does he? Just tell Mr. Wickes that we are not a heavy artillery regiment yet! I believe that they don't put infantry in forts down here to the front.

"There was a report around that Fort Sumter was in our possession, but when we got on Morris Island, we found out different, for the Rebel flag floats over it yet. Our folks hain't yet ready to take it. If we had it now, it would not be of any use to us because we could not hold it. There is not much of anything going on now. There is not much of any firing going on. Folks are moving all of their heavy guns up closer to the Rebs."

From his letters it is apparent that Alfred was not fond of Capt. William H. Wickes, Co. H, who was under investigation in Washington for submitting false vouchers to the government for recruitment expenses while the regiment was being organized. Capt. Wickes was found guilty in a court martial and dismissed from the service in 1864, but was pardoned by President Lincoln.



**The Appearance of the Ditch the Morning after the Assault on Fort Wagner, July 19, 1863**  
**Frank Vizetelly (1830-1883)**  
**Published in "The Illustrated London News" (ca. 1863)**

*In the aftermath of the failed Federal assault on Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863, the Confederates buried the remains of 800 Union soldiers in a mass grave in the ditch located in front of the fort. In September, many of these corpses were unearthed by the advancing Federal siege trench.*

Col. McConihe wrote of the corpses of Union soldiers buried in front of Fort Wagner, the dangers of sharpshooters, and his narrow escape from a bursting Confederate shell, in a letter on the 7<sup>th</sup> to his friend John Kellogg in Troy:

"Your letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> of August greeted my eyes day before yesterday, just as I was buckling on my sword to lead the 169<sup>th</sup> over into the trenches on Morris Island. I read it with great pleasure, as a letter from a friend to one banished to this island is indeed a treat. I have indeed had more leisure to write since the return of the Colonel, but he has been quite sick the past three days with diarrhea and fever, as well as the Major. The Colonel is quite sick to-night, although I think he will feel better to-morrow.

"I could not fully carry out your hope and plant the 'stars and stripes' on Wagner, but some of our men, of the 169<sup>th</sup>, threw an onion into the rebel work yesterday as they lay in the advanced sap. I watched, gun in hand, cocked and aimed some fifteen minutes, hoping the Rebel that shot at me when I looked around the corner of our nearest parallel, would show his head and give me the same chance to shoot at him. But timidly he kept out of sight, and being called elsewhere, I was compelled, unwillingly, to leave him without administering a Secession curative pill.

"Instead of acting as Field Officer of the Trenches night before last and yesterday, I was detailed as Field Officer of the *Advanced* Trenches,



**The Siege of Charleston – View From the Sea-Face of Fort Wagner  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1863)**

and my duties kept me in the advanced parallels and saps over twenty four hours. It was hot, close work, and my command was within speaking distance of the Rebels, whom we did not allow to show themselves; and that night and day the sharpshooters under my command prevented them from doing any shooting, excepting eight shots. We lay in the traverses and trenches, surrounded by torpedoes and infernal machines, and in throwing up the advanced trench, the fatigue men exhumed the bodies of many of our brave dead who fell in the first assault on Wagner.

"Yet despite the tons of cast iron thrown at us from numerous Rebel batteries, the 169<sup>th</sup> lost but one man, Corporal John W. Guyer of Co. B, killed by a shell. His legs were terribly mangled and he lived but a few hours.

"This morning at 3 A.M. the troops took possession of Wagner and Gregg, the Rebels having evacuated during the night. To-day our guns are working on the James and Sullivan Island batteries, and what the next move will be for the land forces, now that we have possession of Morris Island, it is difficult to say. Sumter is battered down and the Rebel rag still flaunts on one corner. Now that we have Wagner and Gregg, I suppose we can occupy Sumter if tenable or desirable.

"The best thing I have seen in this war was the new patent calcium light, invented by a Mr. Grant and used here for the first time the night I was last in the trenches. Mr. Grant claims his largest lamp will throw a bright light ten miles. I was an eyewitness to his making the darkness of Wagner as light as day at a distance of over two miles, while our works, even in the advance trenches, were enveloped in the shades of night. Our sharpshooters could see anything that moved on Wagner, and our guns ploughed their works with solid shot and shell as well that night as during the day, and thus effectually preventing them from repairing damages. It was a great scene, we working within twenty yards of them in the dark, while the enemy were in full view and plainly visible. The Rebels were undoubtedly astonished at this Yankee performance, and for a long time Johnson, Gregg, and other batteries dir-



**Night Bombardment (December 10, 1864)**  
**Conrad Wise Chapman (1842-1910)**

**Collection of the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia**

*This painting by Conrad Wise Chapman depicts Col. Robert Grant's calcium light illuminating Fort Sumter from Morris Island*

ected their fire at the lamp in the marsh, but the lamp shone o'er their works until the lamp of day arose in the heavens.

"Sunday at 7:10 o'clock A.M., the firing on both sides was more rapid than anything I have ever experienced. Solid shot were chasing each other in rapid succession through the sand, and the bombs, comet-like, moved among the stars, bursting and plunging with a fearful noise, their fragments flying near and far.



**Lieut.-Col. Orrin L. Mann**  
**39<sup>th</sup> Illinois**



**Lieut.-Col. Elias F. Carpenter**  
**112<sup>th</sup> N.Y.**

"I had one very, very narrow escape last evening, just as I was being relieved. I was turning over my instructions to the new officer, Colonel Mann, who was relieving me. Colonel Carpenter completed the trio that stood just outside of headquarters, when Fort Johnson hurled a shell, as



**Confederate 10-inch mortar shell with wooden fuse, recovered from Fort Wagner**

was remarked by the Signal Officer, 'after the three Colonels.' I concluded it was going to the left and over us and stood firm, when it burst high in air. I did not think there was sufficient danger to 'cover' in the splinter-proof, nor did Colonel Mann, but Colonel Carpenter did, and jumped under the shelter. It was well he did, for before he had covered, a mass of iron opened the earth where he stood, with a ka-chunk noise, filling Colonel Mann's open eyes and covering his person with sand, besides marring about an inch of the skin of my left leg, just below the knee, and removing the sand so close to my left foot, that the foot slipped into the hole and partially threw me off my balance. Such an escape seems almost incredible, and how one can receive so slight an injury, a mere discoloration of about an inch of the leg, with a trifling soreness from such a truly fearful thing is wonderful, yet such injuries occur almost daily. That very day, a piece of shell struck near a soldier's foot, and it pained him, so he was carried up to the surgery. On examination it was found that his foot was badly contused, although the skin was not broken. My contusion was a mere discoloration, with a very trifling soreness. But I can assure you I felt thankful it was no worse, concluded my instructions, left the new Colonel digging the sand out of his eyes, bid him good night, and departed down the trenches to the beach, *en route* for camp, very willing to get beyond the deafening noise and out of the reach of exploding cannon and bursting bombs.

"An eleven-inch shell exploded over the Baptist Church steeple on Third street, to usher in a '4<sup>th</sup> of July;' would so *scarify* and frighten that dastardly editor of the *Lansingburgh Gazette*, (who made light of our Edenton road fight and Col. Buel's wound), that he would scratch his skin in terror the balance of his days. At one o'clock A.M. I counted nine of these shells moving at the same time through the heavens, discharged from Gregg, Moultrie, Johnson and another unknown, (by name), battery on James Island. One of our large mortars, planted some distance back of the trenches, throws a shell which sings and whistles most musically as it gracefully moves through the heavens and until it





**Mortars at Battery Kirby, Morris Island (1863)**

*Battery Kirby was positioned the furthest from Fort Wagner and is likely to be the "large mortars" described by Col. McConihe.*

reaches its destination, when it bursts with anything but a musical sound. We have a rifled gun back of the trenches, whose shot passes over our heads into the Rebel works, saying as it goes along, 'whit-whit-whit-oot-ugh.' Most every shell and shot has some peculiar sound or 'call' as it sails through the air.

"Although we have Morris Island, yet the seige of Charleston is not over, nor can anyone tell when the Rebel stronghold will fall. It is easy for the papers to say what should be done, but if some of those Editorial Military Critics would come down here and take us forward with a loss of one-third, one-half, or nineteen-twentieths of our troops, and all our Monitors and wooden gunboats, I, for one, would be willing to join the forlorn hope. Patience, Perseverance, Powder and Iron, with sufficient strategy to get a foothold on the beach or in the marshes, will finally drive out these Rebels from this vicinity. The troops have done nobly so far, and they will victoriously march on until the last Rebel battery is evacuated.

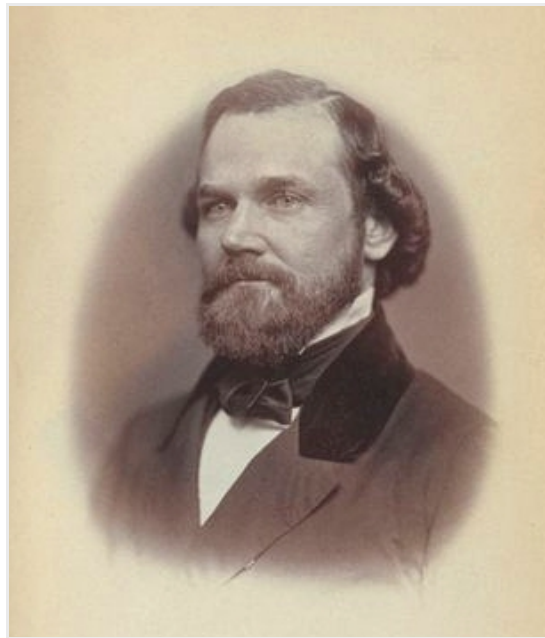
"The firing to-day has been incessant, as much so as any day previous. Colonel Buel and Major Alden are both on the sick report and have been for several days, but as they are able to write and will undoubtedly do so in a few days to their relatives, please don't inform them that I have mentioned it to you. As their trouble is diarrhea and fever, from which they will soon recover, their friends might be unnecessarily alarmed about them. They are ordered to keep quiet in bed or quarters, and no serious illness is thought of in either case."

The Charleston *Mercury* reported on the 7<sup>th</sup> that the bombardment of Fort Wagner was "the most terrific fire that any earthwork has undergone in all the annals of warfare," and that the casualties amounted to over one hundred and fifty in killed and wounded. The Confederates planned to blow up the magazines at the

fort and Battery Gregg, but a defect in the fuses foiled the attempt. The story was carried in Northern newspapers, including the *Daily Times*:

"To sum up the events through which we have just passed, Battery Wagner has been subjected during the last three days and nights to the most terrific fire that any earthwork has undergone in all the annals of warfare. The immense descending force of the enormous Parrott and mortar shells of the enemy had nearly laid the woodwork of the bomb-proofs entirely bare, and had displaced the sand to so great a degree that the sally-ports are almost entirely blocked up. The parallels of the enemy yesterday afternoon had been pushed up to the very mouth of Battery Wagner, and it was no longer possible to distinguish our fire from that of the enemy. During the entire afternoon the enemy shelled the sand hills in the rear of Battery Wagner, (where our wounded lay,) very vigorously.

"The loss at Wagner during the awful bombardment was considerable. Up to eight o'clock on Sunday it amounted to one hundred and fifty in killed and wounded. Probably many more were added to these casualties in the course of the day.

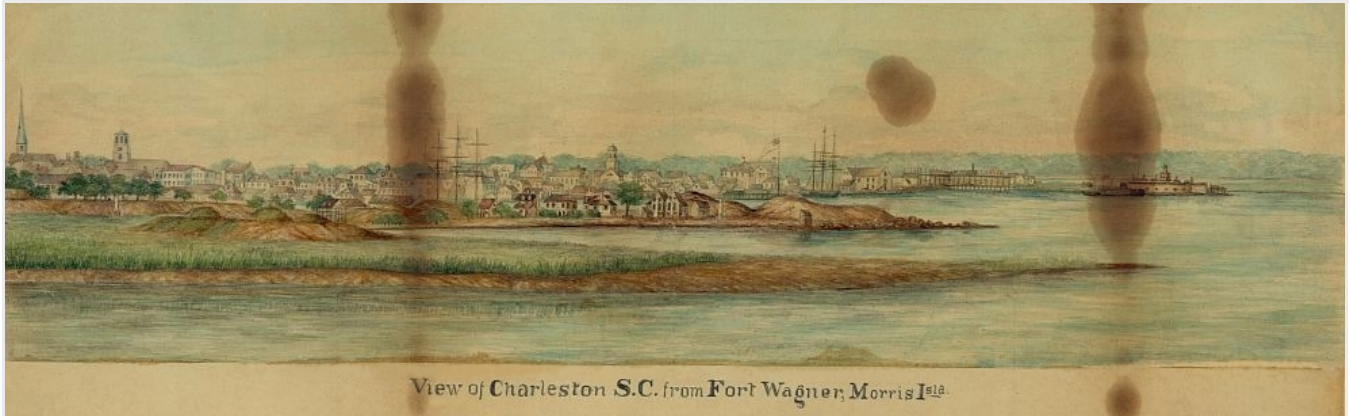


**Former U.S. Congressman and Confederate Colonel Lawrence M. Keitt, commanding the 20<sup>th</sup> S.C. Infantry**

"Batteries Gregg and Wagner had both been carefully mined, with a view of blowing them up. It was about one o'clock this morning when the last three boats, containing Col. Keitt and a number of his officers, just left the island. The slow match was lighted by Capt. Hugenin at Wagner, and by Capt. Kesesne at Gregg, but owing to some defect in the fuses, no explosion took place at either fort."

Priv. James Caton, Co. D, in a letter on September 12<sup>th</sup> to his mother and sister in Sandy Hill, N.Y., wrote of the "splendid view of Charleston City and harbor" from Battery Gregg and the inevitable fall of the birthplace of the Confederacy:

"I was on duty over on Morris Island. We got over about once in five days. We went all through Battery Wagner and our post was picketing in Battery Gregg, which is on the extreme point of the island, directly

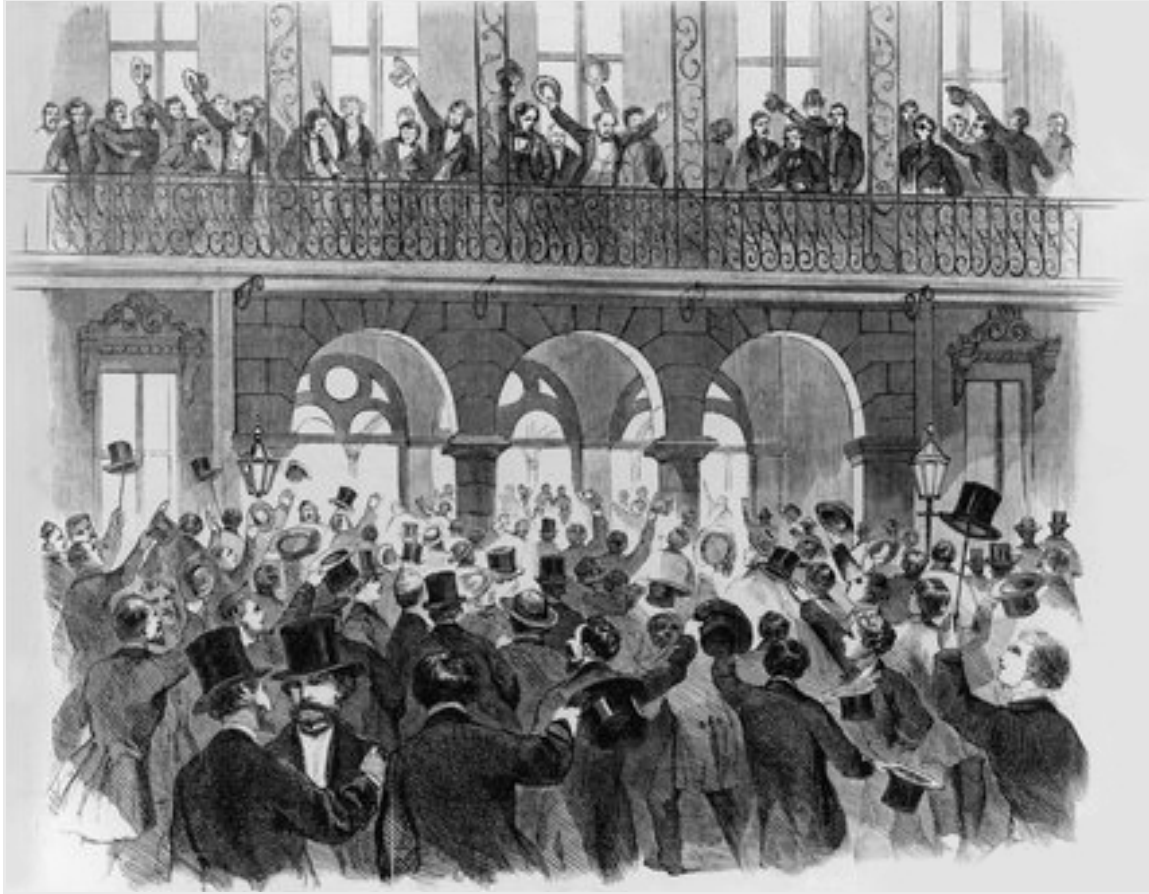


View of Charleston, S.C., from Fort Wagner, Morris Island (ca. 1863)  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

opposite Fort Sumter. It is worth all our time, labour, and trouble to visit those celebrated forts that has cost us so much trouble. Sumter is the worst looking ruin I ever saw; it is a complete pile of rubbish. When we go to Morris Island on duty, we go in at night so that the rebs cannot see us from their forts. As it is, they throw a good many shells



Letter from Private James Caton, Co. D, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., September 12, 1863, to his mother and sister in Sandy Hill, Washington County, N.Y.



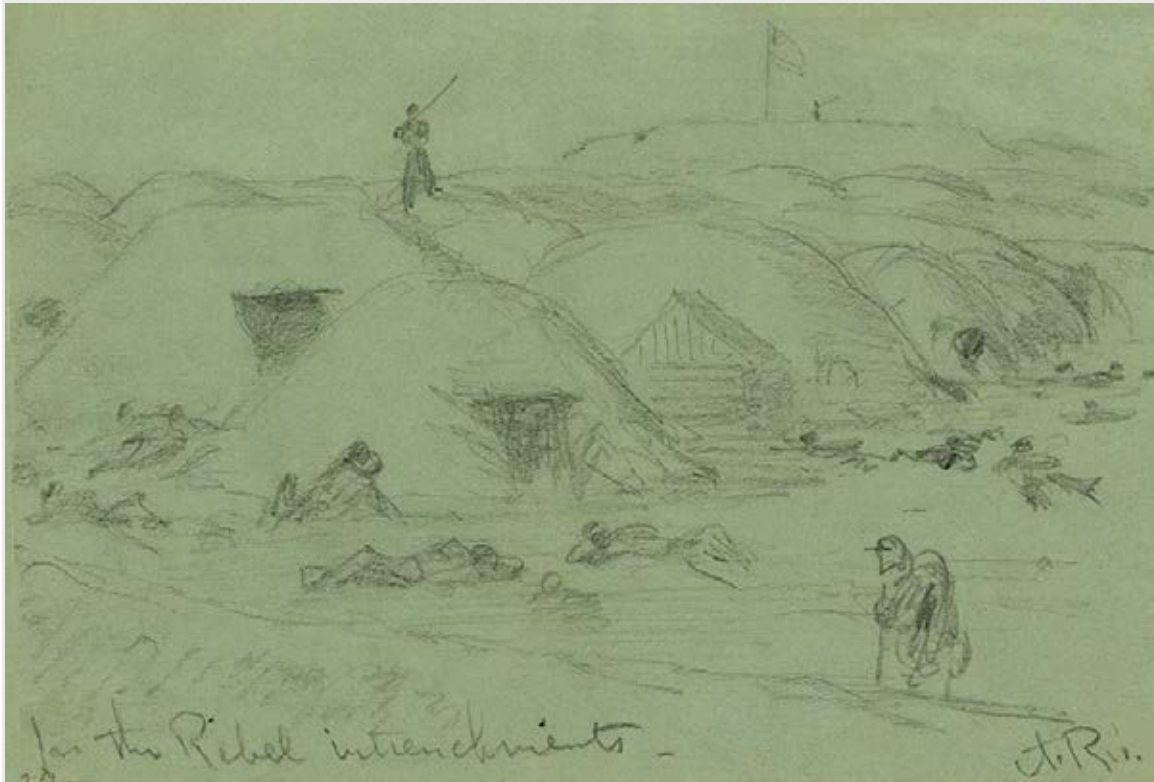
Celebration of the Southern Secession in front of the Mills House at Charleston, South Carolina, December 20, 1860  
The Peter Newark American Pictures Collection, Bridgeman Art Library, New York

among us. We have had only two men killed in our regiment, while some of the other regiments has had over a hundred men killed. We have ten miles to march when we return. We are not relieved in the trenches until about 10 o'clock at night, and then it is almost daylight.

"We get a splendid view of Charleston City and harbor this time, but we soon expect to have a closer look at that doomed garden of secession, and it will be the pleasure of every soldier to see it in ruins, for it was that polluted spot where the first act was committed that opened this unholy rebellion. It has always been the hot house and nest of traitors, and I for one want to see it laid in ashes. Its fate is sealed. Sooner or later it must fall. With such a man as Gillmore, there is no such word as fail."

The ghastly remains of the Confederate dead, many of which having been buried inside the fort and exposed during the bombardment, greeted the Federal troops with a terrible stench as they entered Fort Wagner, as reported by the *New York Times* and published by the *Daily Times* in Troy on the 16<sup>th</sup>:

"To show how soon Fort Wagner must have surrendered had it not been prudently evacuated, suffice it to say that the advance or flying sap made by our troops was within eleven feet of the outer rampart of the fort. Our approach has been so gradual, and yet so sure, that to the 'rebs' it must have seemed like a wall gradually narrowing upon them. In order to further annoy them, a large calcium light was used during the night in such a manner as to take in the whole of the fort, and out of

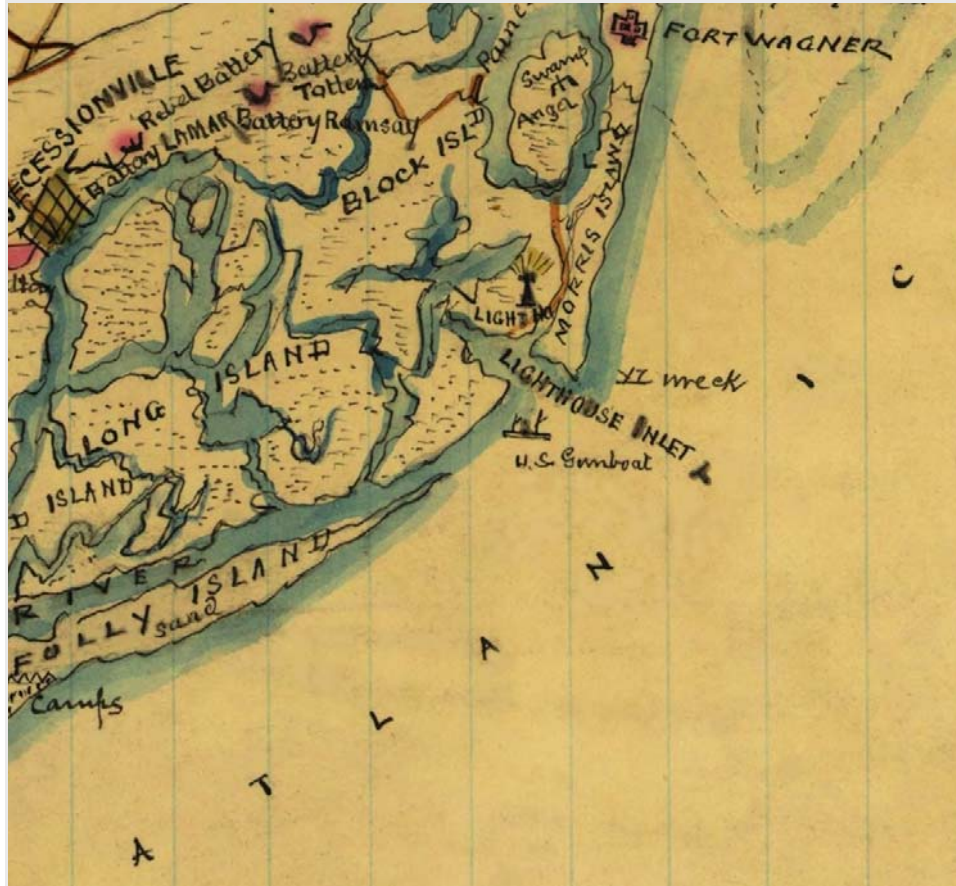


**In the Rebel intrenchments (ca. 1861-'65)**  
**Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)**  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

its focus picked riflemen were stationed, who 'popped' at every head that showed itself over the parapet. Between that light by night, and the sharpshooters eleven feet from them by day, they could not work their guns very effectively, and so Monday morning revealed the fort empty. In consequence of the closeness of our fire, the men had been unable to go out of the fort to bury their dead, and consequently were compelled to bury them inside. As our shells came plowing into the fort, the buried men were rapidly uncovered. The stench, on entering this renowned battery, was awful. Here an arm half-consumed by decay stuck up from the ground, there a leg, here a head, etc. It will require some time to purify the place. But one man was found in the fort, and he was asleep in the bomb-proof, and on awakening found himself a prisoner.

"On Saturday night Fort Wagner was to have been stormed from the water, and the boats were going for that purpose, when they met and forced to surrender a rebel boat containing a wounded rebel, Major and his Surgeon. They were taken prisoners, but not before they had thrown up a rocket, which warned the defenders of Wagner, so that the storming party retired, and the next night the fort was evacuated. The front face of Wagner was covered with over a thousand spikes of the shape of a boat hook stuck in the ground, in order to prevent our men from coming up that way. Capt. Drayton, Third Rhode Island battery, with one hundred armed negroes, said: 'Boys, shall we go on to Gregg?' 'Yes,' they answered; so, seizing these pikes, they rushed on to Gregg, which they found also deserted, and took possession."

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, the *Daily Times* reported the details of another mishap experienced by Col. McConihe, this time while boarding a transport with his regiment at Light-



Detail from "Charleston, S.C., November 1864. Showing Union and Rebel Defences, 1863-4,"  
 From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical  
 Engineer of the III Army Corps, Vol. 5, 1863 November 9 - 1864 August 10  
 Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia

house Inlet, on the return trip from Morris Island to Folly Island. Once again John suffered no harm:

"NARROW ESCAPE OF LIEUT.-COL. MCCONIHE. – During the siege of Fort Wagner, our gallant townsman, Lieut.-Col. John McConihe, of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment, had a narrow escape. A piece of shell, which had exploded in the air, struck in the sand directly at his feet, covering him with dirt. On the return to Folly Island from Morris Island, Col. McConihe had another narrow escape. He fell overboard from the *Croton*, a Troy craft which plies across the inlet, but managed to swim ashore, although encumbered with his accoutrements.

"Our correspondent, W. E. K., says that he found on the hospital ship *Cosmopolitan*, in-charge of Dr. Bontecou, a young man named Leonard, of Troy, a soldier in the Forty-seventh New York, who had his arm blown off by a shell. He will probably recover.

"Our correspondent says that on the previous evening, General Gillmore gave as his toast: 'Spades are trumps.'"

In his letter to Mrs. Newton on September 9<sup>th</sup>, Col. John explained the circumstances regarding his recent mishaps, proclaiming his apparent immortality to his friends: "Now don't you exclaim, 'He will be the death of himself, someday!' for this affair proves, that besides being proof against bullets and shells, I am water-proof."



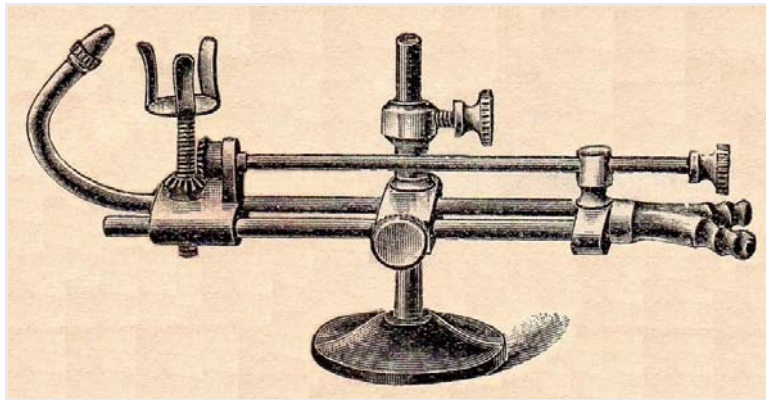
"Your last letter dated the 23<sup>d</sup> ult. came per last steamer, and I take this quiet hour of the morning, when all but the 'knats,' flies, and mosquitoes of the living kingdom are lazily lounging, seeking such comfort in the shade of 'quarters' as the intense heat will admit of in this latitude, on this sandy island, to write you another of my effusions, and to assure you and John, my two excellent friends, that I am well, in good humor, and ready to laugh at the importance, which these miserable little gnats, now tickling my ear, my nose, my neck, and hands in a most persistent manner, have assumed in your imagination.

"The latest news from this benighted region you will read more fully in the New York *Herald* than I could give it to you in a mere letter. The *Herald* is said to have a good reporter at General Gillmore's headquarters, and of course he writes fully the latest news.

"I was ordered over on Morris Island Saturday night last, and detailed as Field Officer of the Advanced Trenches and Saps, and was posted with my command, about 800 fatigue men and sharpshooters, within a stone's throw of the enemy's works, until late Sunday night. Our men 'hallooed' to the Rebels, and one of them threw an onion over to them, but if we showed ourselves above the parallels – 'biz-z' sang the minie bullet. But the fatigue parties worked on, day and night, and when I was relieved Sunday evening, we were nearly ready to throw down the embankment into the ditch in front and then enter the enemy's works.

"The troops did take possession of both Wagner and Gregg the next morning, at 3 A.M. Sunday morning, at one o'clock, ten minutes, the most brilliant bombardment and rapid firing took place, and exceeded anything I ever witnessed. Solid shot flew over us from our own guns, situated over a mile in the rear of us, into the enemy's works, saying as it sped on, 'to wit, to wit, t'wit' and as it plunged into Wagner, 'ka-chunk.' One ball was particularly noticeable for its peculiar noise. It came from a large, rifled gun back of us a mile and a half, and every

shot from this gun swept by, unseen, with a 'who-a-who-oo-oo—who,' and when it struck the works of Wagner it said, 'ung.' I hoped each time, as it passed, that several Rebels would respond to its 'who' with their rebellious lives. High in the air the shells coursed among the stars, some near and some afar, and at one time I counted eleven bombs moving to and fro in the Heavens at one and the same time. I counted eight at another time, and there was hardly a moment but at least one could be observed. The roaring of guns and mortars, together with the terrific noise of the bursting shells, made such a pandemonium among those sand-hills, that the sweet music of the myriads of mosquitoes was lost to the ear, and their presence only made known to me by the unpleasant itching sensation over face, neck, and hands.



**Drawing of a calcium light from an advertisement by the Brooklyn Calcium Light Company, Brooklyn, New York (ca. 1910)**

*The calcium light, also known as the limelight, produces an intense illumination when an oxyhydrogen flame is directed at a cylinder of quicklime, (calcium oxide). Col. Grant's device, used in lighthouses, included a parabolic mirror to focus and direct the beam of light.*

"To add to the beauties and grandeur of this night's scene, a Mr. Grant, for the first time, introduced his new and patented calcium lamp, throwing its light upon the Rebel works, and making their night into day, while our very advanced trench, within 20 feet of the light thrown on the Rebel works, was wrapped in darkness. By this means, he prevented them from repairing the damage of the day as is the custom. The Rebels seemed astonished at this unexpected Yankee trick, and vainly threw several hundred tons of cast iron into the marsh, where they supposed the offensive lamp was located. But all to no purpose, for Mr. Grant's luminary shone on, until the bright orb of day overwhelmed its diminutive glare. Mr. Grant was placed with his lamp nearly two miles back of our advanced trenches, and the glare and haze so obscured it that it was impossible for one looking straight at it to determine whether it was 'near or afar.' It was a good scheme.

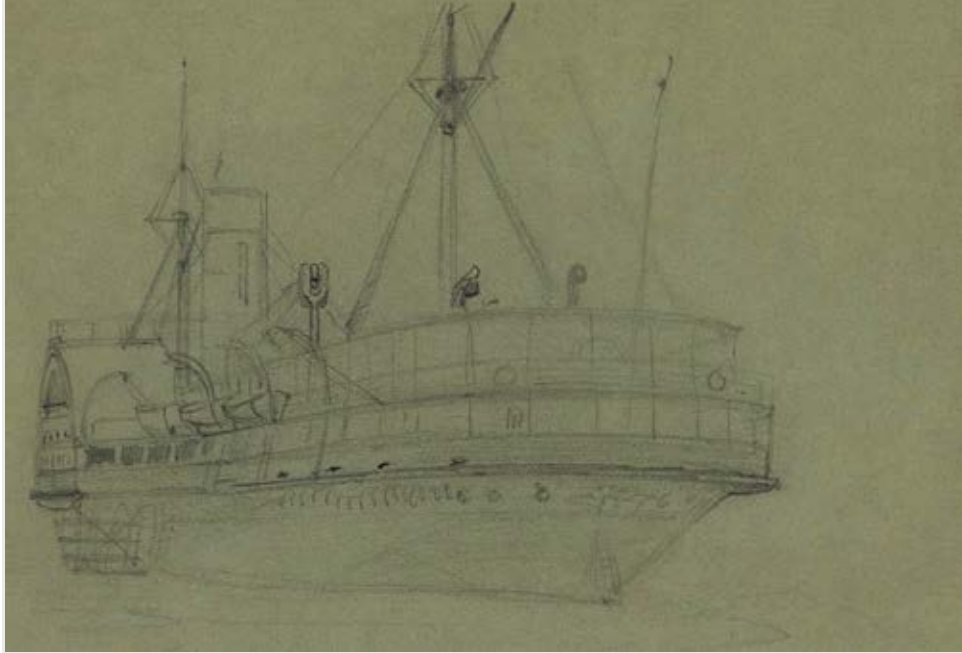
"The scenes inside of Wagner when occupied by us are described as awful and sickening. Our shot had ploughed and plunged and disarranged things very muchly, and unburied dead Rebels were strewn thickly around, festering in the sand. In close proximity to one gun, (dismounted and shivered), lay the bodies of eighteen of these poor, misguided creatures in all stages of mutilation and decomposition. Such are the horrors of war, and I almost shrink to even relate them. But we are becoming so hardened to these scenes that I write them without thought, yet knowing your good and innocent soul cares not to know these heartrending scenes.





"We started out of the trenches, homeward bound, about 9 o'clock P.M. Sunday evening, as we came the night before, with one exception – Corporal J. W. Guyer was killed by a shell and was buried on Morris Island before we were relieved. He was a good soldier, a married man, and a member of Dr. Baldwin's church in Troy. His last and only expression, after he recovered from the shock of the wound, and recognized his mangled and dying condition, was 'My wife! Oh, my dear wife!' In his prayer book I saw her photograph, and, although a fine, ladylike woman, I imagined her face wore a melancholy expression.

"While I was delivering over my instructions to the new officer, Colonel Mann, who was relieving me, and we were talking just outside our splinter-proof, Colonel Carpenter completing the trio, a shell was observed coming towards us from Fort Johnson. We all concluded it was passing to the left and far beyond, and consequently did not take to our shelter, but stood gazing at its flight. Just as it was over us, being a little to the left, it burst high in the air. Colonel Carpenter ran into the cover, and Colonel Mann unconsciously moved back from me a step, while I stood firm. 'Siz-chung,' and I became conscious that a huge piece of said shell had descended in close proximity to the left side of my body with fearful velocity, and had buried itself so close to my left foot that said foot slid down into the hole, causing me partially to lose my balance. I soon also discovered that the windage had made a very slight contusion, about an inch in diameter, on my left leg just below the knee. It simply discolored the skin and caused a slight soreness, but it is all well now. I heard Colonel Mann exclaim, 'This is a fine recaption to give an officer at headquarters!' and turning to him saw that he was removing the sand from his eyes, evidently with much pain. The sand had literally turned him grey. I finished my instructions, left the



**Oblique view of sidewheel steamship (ca. 1861-'65)  
Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.**

colonel digging himself out, said, 'Good evening,' and in company with Colonel Carpenter, wended my way through the trenches, out on the beach, and when beyond the reach of the Rebel missiles, congratulated Colonel Carpenter on his narrow escape. Had he remained by my side a minute or second longer, he never would have told the hair-breadth escape of his companions, for it descended where he had stood.

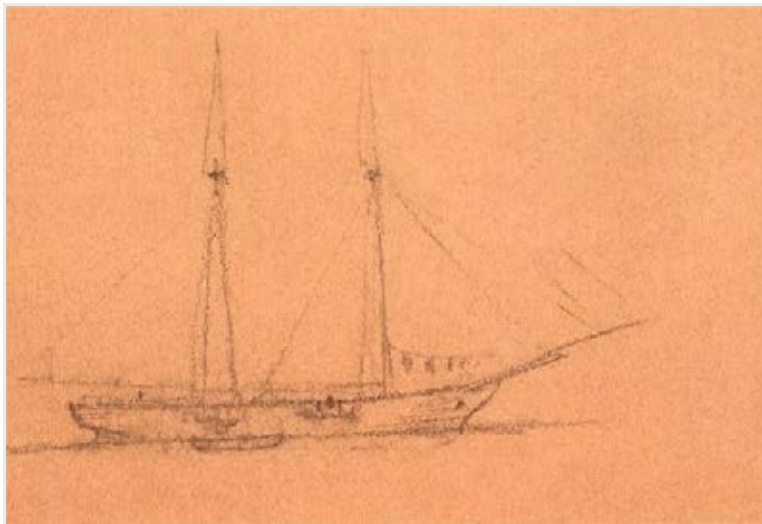
"I thought, going down the beach, of you and John, and wondered whether you would accuse me of rashness in this matter, for not going inside when experience had demonstrated that a shell, coursing as that was, would not come near us. But there are exceptions to all rules, and in this exception I am consoled by the thought that a miss is as good as a mile, although I certainly prefer these *things* to go a little farther to the left and burst beyond, instead of above.

"Not satisfied with this incident, I must deliberately walk off the steamer into the broad ocean, as we landed on this island, crossing over from Morris. I emerged from the dark passageways of the boat through the opening at the side, where we were accustomed to get off, and proceeded to go ashore. I discovered saltwater trickling about my face, and recognized that I was not on the gangplank by the different sensation of having saltwater, instead of salt air, in my nostrils. I believe I laughed, down in the water among the fishes, at this exploit, for I was imbued with the ludicrousness of my situation – but it was only a smile, not a real good laugh, such as I enjoyed when I obtained a good supply of air. I went down, down, down, accoutered as I was with full military dress, sword, haversack and canteen, but finally I ascended to the surface, about three yards from the boat, and some distance from the scow, which lay between us and the dock. I struck out as manfully as did Harry, when swimming the Ohio, with no cry like that of the great Caesar: 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!' but noiselessly, I regained my footing, dripping, on the deck, with the simple aid of the musket of Sergeant Philips [Serg't. Charles S. Philips, Co. C]. So



quiet was the bath that not over three or four of the 700 soldiers knew anything of it, until I related it to them. My hat, like a sensible creature, did not go down into the blue depths of the ocean with me, and when I ascended I gathered it in and replaced it on my wet cranium to keep it warm. We had four miles yet to go to reach camp, and I think I should have gone to sleep *en route*, had it not been for this unexpected bath. The next time I essayed to get off the boat, I walked on the plank, which I discovered in another place than I supposed it to be.

"Now don't you exclaim, 'He will be the death of himself, someday!' for this affair proves, that besides being proof against bullets and shells, I am waterproof. It is a great consolation, Mrs. Newton, for me to know that I can swim, and it will be gratifying to my friends to know that the arm which so recently caused them so much trouble sustained me in the hour of need, above the heaving waters of the broad Atlantic. Had *it* not been for duty, I firmly believe *I* would not be here now. But it has recompensed me for all my trouble.



**Schooner (1864)**  
**Edward Lamson Henry (1841-1919)**  
The New York State Museum, Albany, New York

"I have just received notice, (it came while writing the last sentence from the general's headquarters), that the schooner *Amy Chase*, chartered by the Sanitary Commission, has arrived at the upper end of the island with a cargo of ice, and that it will be distributed to-morrow morning. I bless you, Miss Amy, for your staunch sailing qualities, and your cold heart is very acceptable in this warm region. I have not tast-



**U.S. General Hospital, Hilton Head, S.C., where many men from the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. were treated while serving at Folly Island**

ed ice since our arrival but once, but I find I can get along without it quite comfortably. Yet I verily believe the first thing I would do to-day, could I enter your house, would be to push down the button on that famous ice tank with as much curiosity as we did last summer, and ask you and John, 'to take a drink.'

"While my health is good and my spirits tremendous, I cannot say as much for my command, the Major quite sick the past ten days and the Colonel very sick the past four days. They are talking to-day of trying to get permission to go to Hilton Head, where they can get better sanitary attention. But they dislike to leave and without concluding what to do, I know they will remain until they are very low, unless they improve and go not at all.

"Corporal Reed [Corp. Irving H. Reed, Co. A] died in hospital to-day, and thirteen others are in hospital, very sick. Eighty-six men sick in quarters and but eight officers report for duty. Dr. Reynolds [Asst. Surgeon Porter L. F. Reynolds] has been very sick but is well now, although not quite as strong as before. Lieutenants Hughes and Palmer have died within the past thirty days. The former from the effects of wounds – he received a contusion by a shell above and below the knee; and the latter from fever, contracted up the Peninsula.

"The hardships and severe services which we have endured and are enduring, is melting away, like dew in the morning sun, the heroic men of the 169<sup>th</sup>. Two have fallen in the trenches, but more fall exhausted and worn out. Such has always been and always will be the history of troops in the field, especially when they are as actively employed as this regiment has been. Although this is a cruel war, it is a Holy one, and God in His justness will uphold us and sanctify the blood of the fallen heroes, who have sacrificed themselves in unknown, unremitting thousands, upon the altar of their country. Excuse the length of this letter, and I will do better next time in conciseness when Charleston is taken and I can get a drink of ice water at the Mills House.



**The Siege of Charleston – Explosion of the Magazine at Fort Moultrie  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (October 3<sup>d</sup> 1863)**

"P.S. The magazine in Fort Moultrie has blown up and Moultrieville is burning. The Rebel flag is yet over Sumter's battered walls."

The U.S. Navy, seizing the initiative upon the capture of Fort Wagner and Battery Gregg on the 7<sup>th</sup>, attacked the Confederate batteries on Sullivan's Island the following day, as mentioned at the end of Col. McConihe's letter. On the 10<sup>th</sup> the *New South* published a riveting account of the action:



**The iron-clad U.S.S. "New Ironsides" in fighting trim  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.**

"On Tuesday the severest fire that has taken place occurred between the iron-clads and the rebel batteries on Sullivan's Island. The *Weehawken* had got aground in easy range of Moultrie, and to help her out it became necessary for the ironclads to run up and keep up a heavy fire. This they did. The *New Ironsides*, Capt. Rowan, anchored off Moultrie at about a thousand yards distance, and brought her batteries to bear directly on the work. The monitors took up a position head and astern of her in line, getting in a cross-fire on the rebel works. The fighting was magnificent. Moultrie was silenced several times, to resume in a weak manner, only when the guns of the frigate were ham-



**View from the parapet of Fort Sumter showing the U.S. Monitors "Weehawken," "Montauk," and "Passaic" firing on Fort Moultrie (September 8, 1863)**

*This photograph by Confederate photographer George Cook is believed to be the world's first combat photograph.*



mering other batteries. Silence always reigned about Moultrie or indeed any of the batteries that the broadside guns of the *Ironsides* fired upon. At about 2 o'clock a portion of the fleet withdrew in consequence of the want of ammunition.

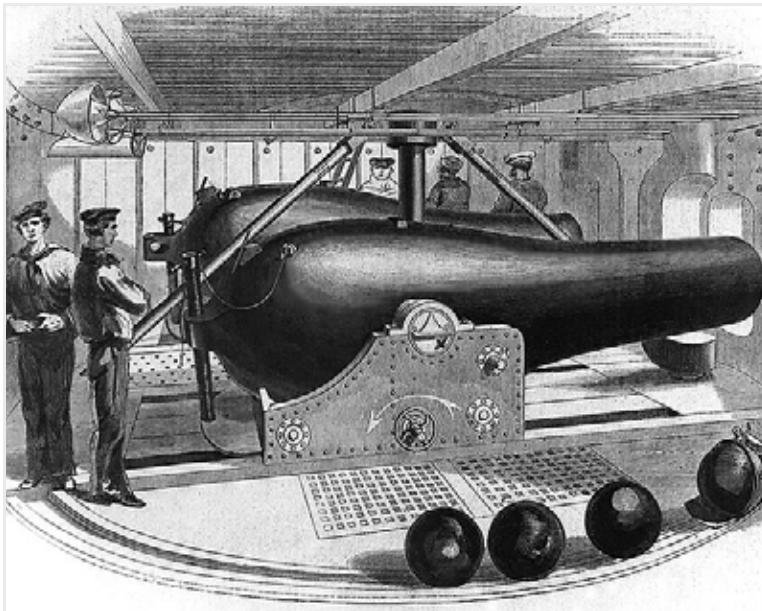
"Two monitors remained by the *Weehawken*, to prevent any boat expedition to capture her, as well as to keep down the enemy's fire as much as possible. At five o'clock she floated and came out sending her heavy shells into Moultrie as a farewell act. During the afternoon, a house in Moultrieville was fired by a shell, and was soon wrapped in flames. The conflagration spread rapidly and soon three houses were



**Model of the U.S. Monitor "Weehawken"**

burning furiously. Before night from twelve to fifteen buildings had been destroyed, and the smoke sweeping towards Charleston must have enveloped the city as with a pall.

"While the *Weehawken* was sustaining a furious cannonading in the morning, she was not idle with her guns, although high and dry aground she kept her two guns at work steadily, and with so much effect, that she blew up one of the large magazines of Fort Moultrie. The concussion was terrible; Morris Island was perceptibly shaken by the concussion. Immediately after the terrible report, a hundred or more small reports of bursting shell were heard, and the rebel batteries became silent and began to fire again, only when our monitors worried them. Deserters and contrabands report the number killed by the explosion of the magazine as 17, with a large number wounded. The damage done the fort was considerable.



**Interior of the turret of the U.S. Monitor "Passaic" showing one Dahlgren 11-inch gun and one 15-inch gun**

"Captain S. T. Baker, one of the best officers in the 9<sup>th</sup> Maine Vols., while looking at the fight from Battery Gregg, where he had gone to see the affair, not being on duty with his regiment, was instantly killed by a solid shot from Battery Bee. His left side was torn to pieces, and death ensued, of course, immediately. His death is invariably lamented.

His pleasant and genial disposition, manly character and soldier-like qualities, had endeared him to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. His loss will be greatly felt both in his regiment, and the command, and by a large circle of friends in the North, to whom these findings of his sad end will come with crushing effect.

"Quite a number of deserters are now coming in, and all express the opinion that the Georgia and North Carolina troops are growing tired of the war, and anxious to return home, and to have their states again under the old flag. They report that the rebels are straining every nerve to put Charleston in a still stronger state of defence. They are daily building new batteries and putting heavy guns in position; and seemed determined to make as strong a defence as in their power.

"What we shall do now, is a question I can't answer. Gen. Gillmore will not lie idle long, you may be assured. Let us watch and wait."



**Horatio Seymour, Governor of the State of New York (1863-'64)**

A number of changes occurred within the officer ranks of the 169<sup>th</sup> while the regiment was posted at Folly Island, the first being an officer's commission awarded to Priv. William H. Merriam, Co. H, as a 2<sup>d</sup> lieutenant in the 118<sup>th</sup> N.Y. by New York Governor Horatio Seymour. The *Daily Press* announced the promotion on August 14<sup>th</sup>:





**Brigadier-General Robert S. Foster and staff, X Army Corps (ca. 1864)**

"GOOD-BYE. – Lieut. Wm. H. Merriam (lately private Merriam) left last evening to assume the duties of his newly acquired position of aide on Gen. Foster's staff. Lieut. M. will proceed direct to the seat of war in front of Charleston. Numerous friends accompanied the rotund and jolly officer to the cars. God speed him to greater greatness. Lieut. M. assured his friends, (in confidence,) just before bidding them good-bye, that he would accept any further honors the Administration choose to thrust upon him, except the command of the Army of the Potomac."

Political undercurrents prevented William from mustering-in with the 118<sup>th</sup>, and in early October Gov. Seymour commissioned him once again, this time as 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant of Co. E in the 169<sup>th</sup>. He was appointed to serve on Brig.-Gen. Robert S. Foster's staff. The *Daily Press* reported the change on October 8<sup>th</sup>:

"PROMOTED. – A few months since it was announced that W. H. MERRIAM, of the New York 169<sup>th</sup>, had been promoted to a Second Lieutenantancy. Lieut. M. has now just received his commission as First Lieutenant, and has been transferred to his old regiment, 169<sup>th</sup>, but still retaining his position on Gen. FOSTER'S staff.

"Mr. Merriam entered the service in 1862, as a private, and faithfully served as such, at the same time making himself not only useful to his regiment, but one of the most agreeable and popular members of it. His promotions have been asked for by officers who have known him well in camp, on the march, and in the battle. We are glad one of so much talent, good nature, and such generous impulses, is meeting with something better than the 'kicks and cuffs of outrageous fortune.' – Wave! William, Wave!"

Priv. Schutt offered no hint of controversy in his letter of September 4<sup>th</sup> to the *Daily Press*, published on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The *Daily Times* published the letter the next day, accompanied by the following introduction: "Theodore Schutt, a very intelli-



Illustration by Charles Wellington Reed (1841-1926)  
in a letter to Mrs. Reed, August 29, 1863  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

gent soldier of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth regiment, writes a letter from Morris Island, in which he thus speaks of some of the officers."

"Lieut. William H. Merriam, of Gen. Foster's staff, also returned with Col. Buel, and was received with lively demonstrations of the satisfaction every individual member of the regiment experienced, by a promotion so worthily bestowed. Lieut. Merriam is a fine-looking officer and wears his honors with becoming dignity.

"And yet another mark of distinguished favor has been conferred upon the editorial fraternity by Gen. [Vogdes]. William E. Kisselburgh, our brave and dashing Adjutant, has also been appointed upon the General's staff. This is a good appointment, and shows the sagacity and discrimination of the General in selecting his staff officers. None will be found more efficient, prompt and competent to discharge the important duties of this post, amid the trying scenes we are passing through, when a clear head, undoubted courage, and unshaken nerve are among the prerequisites, than Adjutant Kisselburgh.

"Lieut. Clark Smith, of Co. A, will act as Adjutant until Adjutant K. shall be returned to his regiment. Lieut. Smith is well qualified for the position and will fill the office with honor to himself and credit to the regiment.

"I am sorry to notice that several of our officers are about tendering their resignations, or have already resigned. The regiment is already quite deficient in the number of officers.

"Capts. Parmenter, of Co. I, and Wood, of Co. B, also returned with Col. Buel, much to the gratifications of their companies. It is but justice to Lieut.-Col. McConihe, to say that during Col. Buel's absence, he has administered the affairs of the regiment in the most satisfactory manner to all concerned, sharing our long marches and privations like a true soldier, and setting an example that will never be lost upon the men. And the same will apply to Major Alden. Long may they survive

to wear the honors which must inevitably attach to their names at the termination of their careers at the close of the war."

Col. McConihe's letter on September 1<sup>st</sup> to John Newton stated that Lieut. Merriam was serving on Gen. Foster's staff, although his status with the 118<sup>th</sup> N.Y. was somewhat tenuous:

"I cannot close this without enclosing a photograph of our old friend, William Merriam, until recently a private in this regiment, but now a lieutenant in the 118<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteers, and already detailed on General Foster's staff. Bill is the same, good-natured fellow, and says if he is obliged to act as lieutenant of a staff, and away from my 'hilarious presence,' he 'will resign, yes sir, resign.' The picture will revive pleasing reminiscences, and I told William he must send it to Newt, and he sends it, remarking 'I'd like to see old Newt.' Bill is the life of a camp, and I keep him in my quarters at all times. He is a good specimen of a true humorist. A 'Fat Boy.'"

The birthday celebration held for Col. McConihe on September 4<sup>th</sup> was a featured topic of his letter to Lavinia Newton on the 23<sup>d</sup>. Lieut. Merriam, playing the role of a *raconteur*, engaged in his "Merriamic narrative," entertaining the guests with his customary wit and humor:



"Here's a health to the next one that dies" (ca. 1861-'65)

Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)

Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

"You ask me did I observe my birth-day, and I can assure you my headquarters presented quite a singular scene for Folly Island on that memorable occasion. There was a fair supper spread, the best articles thereon the various sutlers could supply, plenty of bottled ale and sherry wine, and a large gathering of officers. Mr. Merriam was present in all his rotundity and amused all by reading his inimitable lecture on 'Cosmopolitan Life,' which is a Merriamic narrative of his eccentricities and mishaps, and which has been listened to by enlightened and appreciative audiences at 50 cents a head. You can imagine the scene on this sandy beach, and John can see Private Merriam on this occa-

sion, *borne* down by his newly acquired lieutenant's straps. Mr. Atlas, with his terrestrial globe on his shoulders, never exerted his nerve to straighten up more than did the aforesaid lieutenant to hold unbendingly straight his immense shoulder straps. Everything passed off pleasantly, and no one, not even Mr. Merriam, obtained too much beer. The occasion will long be remembered by me."

Col. McConihe's correspondence with John Kellogg reveals the nature of the controversy over Lieut. Merriam's promotion, which was nothing compared to the intrigue concerning the perceived disloyalties of 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. and Adj't. William E. Kisselburgh, as seen in a letter, marked "private," written on October 16<sup>th</sup>:

"Yours of the 2<sup>d</sup> inst. came yesterday, and I indeed feel grateful to you and my other friends in Troy for their testimonial to evince their approval of my conduct. I thank you heartily and I thank them all generously for this token of friendship and interest. Modesty, John, forbids me to say more, but I can assure you and them, that I fully appreciate the gift and that their great goodness is not thrown away upon an ungrateful subject. I shall remember the event and the motives which induced it, and preserve the emblem, the Sword, with a sleepless eye. 'Such things make life dear.' I have tried to do my duty to my Country and my friends, and if I have through such scenes and times, won and retained the good opinion of loyal friends, I am satisfied. I desired nothing more, and I hope in the future to continue to deserve your and their good opinion. I know I have their and your good wishes, as you have once again evinced it.



**John M. Francis, Founder and Editor-in-Chief  
of the Troy "Times"**

"Yet, John, I do not expect to be well-spoken of by everybody. There are always slanderous tongues, ready to assail any who may come in their path. What Mr. Francis has against me, I do not know. He has always spoken well of me publicly and privately, up to the hour I was selected to the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of this regiment. He had evidently intended, or *wished*, some more intimate, and perhaps interested



The Troy Times Building, Troy, New York (ca. 1910)

friends to have had the several positions in the regiment. He told me 'Morrison' should have been selected for Colonel and he seemed to doubt whether Buel would be able to fill the position! His entire action, from the beginning, has been sullen and cold. The *Troy Times* is not recognized, nor has it ever been, as friendly to the 169<sup>th</sup>, particularly to Buel, Alden, and myself. We have canvassed the whole matter and have endeavored to get at the real cause. I wrote Colonel Buel when Kisselburgh went home on furlough to watch him and make minit of any spiteful or un-Officer-like remarks he might make and he, Colonel Buel, reported to me that Adjutant Kisselburgh seemed friendly. I have had some trouble with Kisselburgh. I placed him under arrest at Suffolk and released him therefrom on his promise to act differently and more like an Officer. I told him not to mention my name in his account of the Edenton road fight to be published in the *Times*, and he did not mention me. I do not care, under the circumstances, to seem to court the *Times'* influence and publicity. Yet nothing would be more desirable and pleasing to me than to know that Mr. Francis had not changed his opinion of me since I became acquainted with this regiment and his friend W. E. K. Recently, Mr. Kisselburgh has been very friendly and I trust he will continue to be so. I have never injured him or Mr. Francis, and why their hostility, I do not know. I hope they will both live to see 'the error of their ways' and treat me as a friend. Colonel Buel thinks it is Kisselburgh's way and that he has never meant anything hostile.

"I thank you for your warning and it shows your judgment seldom goes astray. I wish you could get an opportunity to talk with Francis and set him right. You can easily upset all his convictions based on falsehood and evil report by telling him what you know of me, and I do not know what libel has been promulgated, but you can find out. If it is my ability and competency which has been assailed, I have nothing to say. If it is my habits, a lifetime has made them familiar to all my friends. I might, incidentally, mention here, that I am getting rather more virtuous as I grow older, as I neither smoke, chew or drink intoxicating

liquors. I gave them all up on the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month, and do not intend to revive them while in the army, if at all. But enough on this subject."

A follow-up letter to John Kellogg, marked "private, destroy when read," was penned on the 19<sup>th</sup>:

"Since I replied to your friendly letter of the 2<sup>d</sup> inst., I have thought much of your remark, 'I judged someone in the regiment had bullied you.' A feeling of annoyance, then of indifference, and then of perplexity at times seizes upon me. To think that anyone would thus secretly and insidiously attack his fellow soldier's reputation, with or without cause, surpasses my comprehension, and there must be some secret motive to induce it – hate, *spite*, or innate natural meanness. A look, a shrug of the soldiers, an important-knowing manner of such a hissing-bowel-groveling-snake-in-the-weeds [next words covered by a slip of paper with the name 'Kisselburgh' on it] to the mind of one already wavering, [words covered by the name 'Francis'] in any friendship; very lackable intelligence.

"I am sorry to be the victim of any defamer's tongue, yet there is but one course for me to adopt – if I cannot prevent it, I must try and live through it, no matter how annoying and unpleasant it may be to me, or to my friends who think enough of me to care about my reputation. I am not aware of ever having written ill of a fellow soldier, knowing full well that such idle words would bring pain to some heart and anxiety to some mind.

"I have to you, *and to you only*, mentioned many things in previous letters concerning myself, my own feelings in my office, and my own feelings towards those around me, in order that you might know, as my friend, how I was situated. You can now conceive my motive and that I wrote nothing idly, though perhaps seemingly-so then. I conceived the idea that someone would malign me secretly and *confidentially* out of pure spite, and thinking thus to advance himself. Those who grasp at false, one-sided intelligence, without giving the defamed an opportunity to be heard from, himself or through his friends, would seem to lend a willing ear and stretch a helping hand to the Informer and Tale-bearer. My friends, like you John, who know me intimately, would pay but little attention to such idle malignity, but continue to judge me by my record and by the facts. I do not claim to be pure, I do not claim to be free from fault, nor do I claim to be the greatest military man of the war. Yet I do claim, despite the snarls of a few, that while in the command of this regiment, I have endeavored to do my duty to the regiment, to my Country, to my friends and to myself. And from whence have any and all venom emanated? I do not *tangibly* know, but I have now, (and for a long time have expected this), and have had most rank suspicion. But the end of this drama is not yet. Let us patiently await the last act. You, my good friend, will understand fully the meaning of all the above.

"You suspect Lieutenant Kisselburgh as one not friendly to me. I have already written you concerning him. At times he has seemed unfriendly and at other times quite friendly. He has been disappointed in some things that have been done and has thought I have not done as much for him as circumstances admitted of; that I have not fully appreciated him as the electric current of the *Troy Times*, the embodiment of the attained (by his labor) prosperity of the *Times*, and the Sancho Panza [from the novel *Don Quixote*, a squire to Don Quixote, providing broad humor, ironic Spanish proverbs, and earthy wit] to Mr. Francis in his battles with the wine bags in the garret or in the highway.



**Group of commissioned officers and NCOs in camp (ca. 1861-'65)**

I say this good-naturedly and with no hostility to Mr. Francis or his friend Mr. Kisselburgh. Mr. Francis has truly and really been my friend since I arrived to manhood, and if he ceases to be friendly and wish me good fortune, something beyond my own acts and somebody hostile for cause to me has envenomed his mind. I wish Mr. Francis could think and speak well of me, for I have always spoken well of him, his paper, his ability as an editor, and his cleverness generally. I know, if actions ever speak the heart, that he has been up to, within a year, a good friend of mine. But, John, it is useless for me to write more on so unpleasant a subject and when I am so ignorant as to what the tongue of slander has emitted.

"Again, I have been informed that Mr. Blair, whose foul mouth I supposed Mr. Olin had forever closed to decent people, returned home from a *five* minute's visit to our camp at Bower's Hill with not a word about our most beautiful camp, (for it was praised without stint by other visitors), not a word of comfort to our friends, nor a sound of cheer to our parents and relatives, but the dastardly lie upon his lips, that all the officers, both field, staff, and line, were drunk and in liquor most of the time! He was not in the camp long enough, and I know I can prove that no one told him any such story in our camp. And that he did not himself see any evidence of such a state of things or a drop of whiskey while at Bower's Hill. He made the lie up to hear his foul tongue wag. I have been informed reliably, that he said the officers were addicted to drunkenness, including myself and the Major by name in his false story, and a story he knew to be false. But such is his character! And his reputation for truth-telling is well-established!

"I have always drank liquor, as you know, sometimes one glass and sometimes more. But liquor has never interfered with my duty and has been drank many a time for sociability, when I really wished not to drink it. But it seems some of those who have drank with me socially belabor me now for it. Alas, the ungratefulness of many. But I shall silence my enemies in this. I will not drink at all, either by myself or

with them. I will not chew or smoke, and like 'George W.,' when I cut down the tree, by mistaken zeal, I will own up and tell the truth.

"I fear my back-biters will compel me to remain in the service, whether or no, to vindicate myself from their aspersions. I fear them not, although vilification is not pleasant; neither am I ashamed of my past year's record, or unwilling to share the laurels which the 169<sup>th</sup> have won while I was in command, from April to August, during a most trying and severe campaign. I do not boast of my part, but I modestly, yet firmly, claim a share of that credit at home, which is awarded me in the army. These remarks are not intended for my friends, and no man owes more to his friends than I do, for by them, not by myself, have I been exalted and sustained, and to them, you and all of them, I feel most grateful. I do feel, that for them, if not for those more dear and near, if not for myself and my future hopes, I should strive to gain what credit I can and avoid the great whirlpool of sin and vice. *Depend* upon me, John, as you have always done, and that bright blade, which you and my other friends have entrusted to my keeping, will never be sheathed in dishonor nor tarnished in the service of my God, my Country, Liberty and Humanity.

"You will excuse me for writing this lengthily to you, but I did and do feel like unbosoming myself to you. I cannot write half, I would say, and must leave much to your imagination. I think, as I said in a previous letter, you can soften Mr. Francis's mind, as his opinion has been formed by others, and, I believe, contrary to his own judgment. Don't trouble yourself about it, unless it should opportunely be brought up where you can knowingly state your opinion without basing it on my words.

"Adjutant Kisselburgh is very friendly to the Colonel and hopes, in case Clare gets a Brigadier-ship, to go on his staff. I hope he may get promotion!

"General Foster, our Brigade Commander, General Vogdes, our Post Commander, (on whose staff Adjutant Kisselburgh is temporarily serving), and General Gillmore have endorsed the Petition of the Officers of this regiment to make Colonel Buel a Brigadier. Senator Harris, Judge Emmott, of Poughkeepsie, Mr. Griswold, and other distinguished persons have been written to by the Colonel to take a hold and get him the commission. I do hope it will succeed, as the Colonel is deserving of it, and I think it will succeed. He certainly has a good start, with General Gillmore's endorsement at this time. When he is commissioned, you and my other friends at home will have an opportunity of seeing and learning who are friendly and who hostile in the regiment. You will, I verily believe, find the number so small, that they will not speak out. Yet I may be mistaken. Anything you or any of my friends can do to advance the Colonel's interest in the matter of his promotion will be most gratifying to me and most gratefully received by him. If you can see or think of anything to do in the matter, John, I hope you will do it. The Colonel has always treated me in the most just, gentlemanly, and sincere manner. Our friendship is not of to-day, but I firmly believe our pleasant relations will last through life. He is a man that would take cognizance of misconduct, yet from his actions and bearing towards me, I think he evinces true satisfaction of my conduct and at my military career. Therefore, on his account, if you can do anything to reward a brave and deserving officer, lend your influence to promote the Colonel.

"It has been unofficially announced that Mr. Merriam and *Private* Bell, the latter of whom is of Co. D, Washington County, and is totally





**Brigadier-General Israel Vogdes**  
**Commanding U.S. forces on Folly Island (Vogdes' Division)**

unfit for any position as an officer, have received commissions from Gov. Seymour direct, without the endorsement of the Commanding Officer of this regiment. I am afraid they will be troubled to be mustered as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenants, and I am very certain that Bell will not be promoted, although he holds a commission. As to Merriam, I fear he is in the same boat, and that they both must be treated alike. But I shall do what I can for Merriam, if anything can be done which will not be a manifest injustice to officers who have been serving as 2<sup>d</sup> Lieutenants since the regiment came out. Mr. Merriam has acted entirely without consultation with either the Colonel or myself, and however much we might wish to befriend him, we wish to perpetrate no military outrage. But I cannot say definitely what will be done until he arrives, yet as I said, I fear we cannot help him to his appointed position.

"There is little news in camp. Colonel Buel has been placed on a Court Martial as the President thereof, and Major Alden detached to take command at Pawnee Landing. Consequently, I am the only Field Officer in the regiment for duty with it. My enemies again have an opportunity to assert the 169<sup>th</sup> will not survive my administration. Like Uncle Tobey, I say to them, 'Go poor devils.' ['My Uncle Tobey' is a character in the novel *Tristram Shandy*.]

"It might be well for you to post Isaac [Isaac McConihe, Jr.] up on these various subjects, in case you think it necessary for him to know of them and are of sufficient importance at this time. I would like to have you close Francis up if possible.

"I hardly think it necessary or politic to let Francis know that I have been and am aware of his course towards me, and, I might say, towards others, high in office in this regiment. Let us keep quiet and to ourselves, what I write."

In a third letter to John Kellogg marked "private," dated October 24<sup>th</sup>, Col. McConihe asked his friend to advise Lieut. Merriam to keep quiet about his situation. Col. Buel went as far as to write to Gov. Seymour requesting him to revoke the commissions of Lieuts. Bell and Merriam, but no reversal in the governor's decision would be forthcoming.

"I wrote you a long letter a few days since and hope you will be able to arrive at my feelings when you have duly perused it. I shall not allow the subject to trouble me more, and I wish you would suggest to Mr. Merriam to 'lay low and keep dark' on this matter.

"Colonel Buel has written to Governor Seymour, asking him to revoke Bell's and Merriam's commissions. What will be the upshot of these appointments, I cannot say. I am sorry Mr. Merriam did not advise with the Colonel or myself about this matter beforehand. Merriam, as you say, is a good friend, but he is not always discreet."



War Department, Washington, D.C. (ca. 1870)

Capt. Wood became involved in an imbroglio with the War Department for submitting a claim after paying far more than the standard cost of rations for the subsistence of his men at the time of its organization. He tried to secure a return of a portion of the amount paid out. Major Turner, Judge-Advocate, deemed this claim fraudulent and dismissed Capt. Wood from the service. Gov. Seymour looked favorably upon the case, however, re-commissioning Capt. Wood, but the Federal government's position was unchanged, as reported in a letter from Lieut. Kisselburgh, published by the *Daily Times* on December 3<sup>d</sup>:

"Capt. Nat. Wood, of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth, who was recently dismissed from the service by the War department, and re-commissioned by Gov. Seymour, has been again deprived of his position by the War office. The charge against Capt. W., was the pres-

entation of fraudulent accounts against the Government, and upon it he was summarily dismissed. The first notice the Captain received was the order of dismissal. Whilst I know nothing of the truth or falsity of the charge against him, except that I believe him to be entirely innocent, so far as any intention was concerned to defraud the Government, I share the general feeling that he has been most unjustly dealt with, insofar as he has thus been denied a hearing of any kind. The Government ought to give every officer or man in its service an opportunity to defend himself, and not, as in the present case, wipe him entirely out by one stroke of an official pen. – Capt. Wood, I can conscientiously say, has been a faithful officer. He is undeniably brave, and in his misfortune he has the sympathy of all his fellow officers. His company (B) will, I learn, present him with a sword before his departure for the North.

"– Since the above was in type we learn that Capt. Wood has been fully reinstated. There was an irregularity on the part of the mustering officer, which has been corrected, and Capt. Wood is 'all right.' Good."

In the end, the Federal government did not view the situation as kindly as the State of New York. The register of the regiment indicates that Capt. Wood's second muster-in was revoked on December 17, 1863.

The New York *Herald* published some news on October 20<sup>th</sup> about former Capt. Warren B. Coleman, Co. D, (who resigned on March 30, 1863, on account of ill health), and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. Bernard N. Smith, Co. B, appointed brigade quartermaster on Gen. Foster's staff. The story was carried by the *Daily Press* the same day:



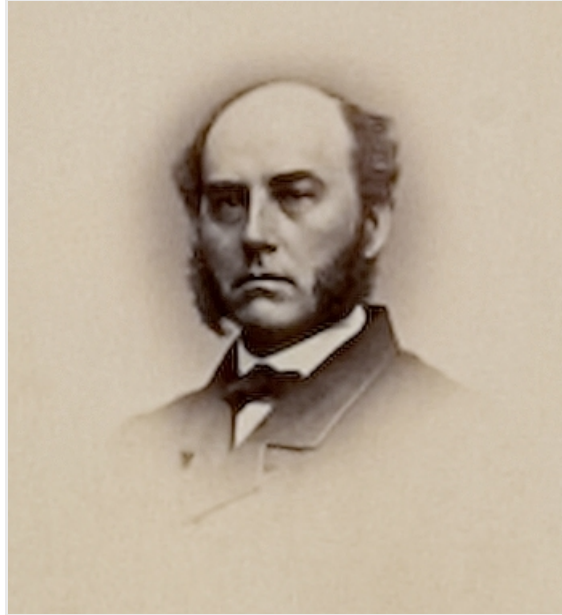
**Bird's-eye view of Sandy Hill, Washington County, N.Y. (1884)  
Published and Drawn by Lucien R. Burleigh, Troy, N. Y. (ca. 1853-1923)  
Beck & Pauli, Lithographers, Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

"Warren B. Coleman, of Sandy Hill, in this State, late Captain of Company D, One Hundred and Sixty-ninth New York Volunteers, has been offered the Majority of one of the foremost regiments in the field from this State. Capt. Coleman was obliged, on account of ill health, to resign his captaincy, while his regiment, to the formation of which he so largely contributed, was doing duty last winter and spring in the defences of Washington, where on several occasions he discharged important duties entrusted to him with conspicuous fidelity and success. Continued ill health compels Capt. Coleman to decline the newly proffered military honor.

"Lieutenant Bernard N. Smith, of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth New York Volunteers, Colonel Buel, has been appointed Brigade Quartermaster on the staff of Brigadier-General R. S. Foster. Lieut. Smith

went out as a private at the beginning of the war in the Forty-fourth New York Volunteers, and was severely wounded in the face and neck, immediately subsequent to which he was promoted to a Lieutenancy for his gallant bravery. Lieut. Smith is a most accomplished soldier, and succeeds Lieut. S. N. Kinney, who returns to the humbler position of Regimental Quartermaster of Colonel Buel's regiment, the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth."

The 169<sup>th</sup> gained a new chaplain following the discharge of Joel W. Eaton on August 20<sup>th</sup>, on account of disability. The *Daily Times* reported the appointment of Edgar T. Chapman, a veteran of the 2<sup>d</sup> N.Y. of Troy, on October 5<sup>th</sup>:



**Chaplain Edgar T. Chapman, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.**

"CHAPLAIN OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH. – We understand that Col. Buel has forwarded to the Governor a recommendation for the appointment of Rev. E. T. Chapman, of this city, as Chaplain of the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment. It is signed by all the officers. Mr. Chapman filled a similar position in the old Second, in a manner surpassed by few who have assumed the delicate and – when faithfully performed – the arduous duties of the chaplaincy of a marching and fighting regiment."

The promotion of Serg't. Charles Dumary, Co. G, to 2<sup>d</sup> lieutenant, Co. D, was characterized as "faithfully earned" by the *Daily Times* on October 26<sup>th</sup>:

"A DESERVED PROMOTION. – We take great pleasure in announcing the promotion of Chas. Dumary, a well-known resident of this city, and former member of the Board of Education. – He had charge of Dickerman's Steam Marble Works for some time, and of late years he has carried on the business in the lower part of the city. As a citizen and an honest, upright man, none ranked higher than he. He enlisted over a year ago in Capt. J. T. McCoun's company, in the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment, as a private – from which he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. Always ready when duty called, and by his exemplary conduct, he soon won the confidence of his superior officers, and upon the recommendation of his Colonel, Gov. Seymour has rewarded him with a Lieutenant's commission. Charley has a host

of friends in this city, and they will all agree with us in saying that his promotion was well-deserved, and has been faithfully earned and worthily bestowed."

Following his recovery from dysentery, Major Alden was detached from the regiment and assigned to command the supply depots at Pawnee Landing on the Folly River. In his letter to John Kellogg on October 16<sup>th</sup>, Col. McConihe wrote, "Colonel and Major are well and in good spirits. The Major has been sent up to Pawnee Landing, about ½ mile from here, to take command there of the working parties, &c. He had much rather remain with the regiment." The major evidently changed his mind, as reported in Col. McConihe's letter to Kellogg on the 24<sup>th</sup>:



Detail from "Charleston, S.C., November 1864. Showing Union and Rebel Defences, 1863-4,"  
From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical  
Engineer of the III Army Corps, Vol. 5, 1863 November 9 - 1864 August 10  
Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia

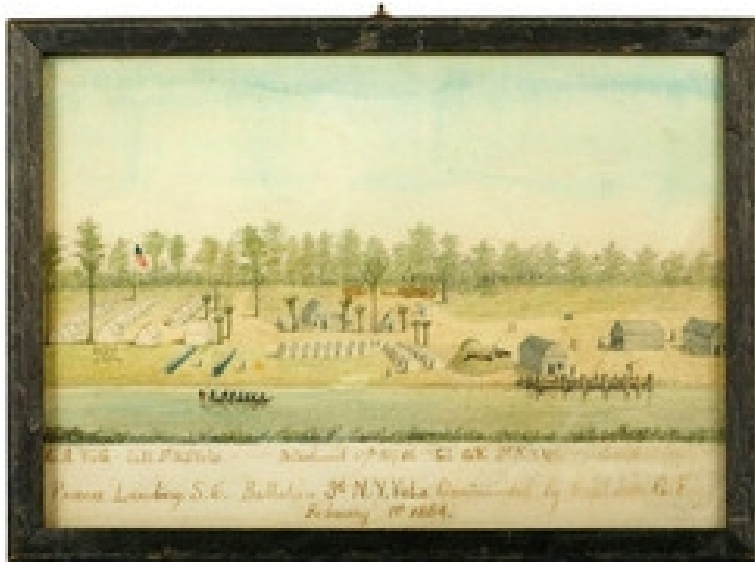
*The location of Pawnee Landing on the Folly River is indicated by the blue dot at the eastern end of Folly Island.*

"Colonel Buel's health, as well as the Major's, is now good. The Colonel is President of a General Court Martial, sitting at the north end of the island. The Major is detached and in command at Pawnee Landing. The Major likes his new command much better than he thought he should at first."

Brig.-Gen. Alonzo Alden wrote about the two-month assignment in his memoir:

"On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, I was detached from the regiment by order of General Israel Vogdes and assigned to the command of Pawnee Landing and its environments, including the ordinance, quartermaster's and commissary depots, two entrenched batteries of artillery, a three-gun redoubt, and a garrison of two regiments of colored troops.

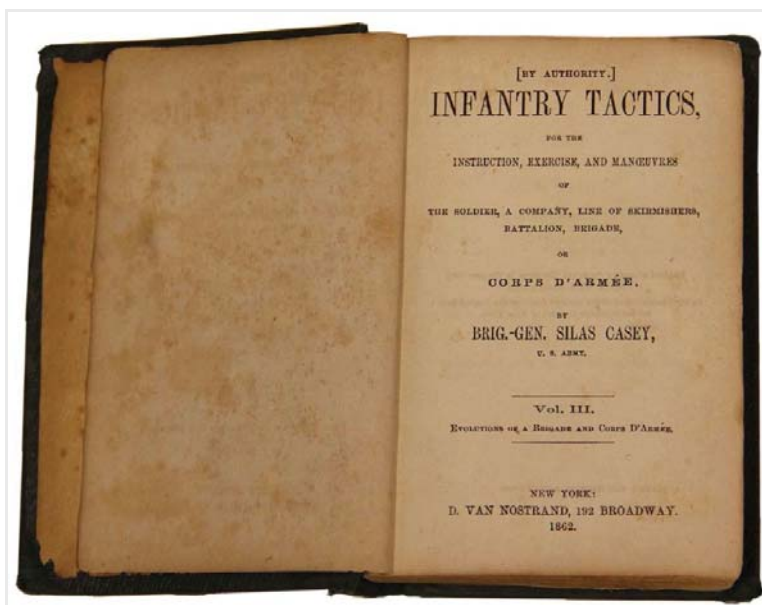
"This post, though subordinate, was the most important on the islands commanding Charleston Harbor, because of the frequent arrivals and departures of steamers and other craft of miscellaneous character, most of them with valuable lading. This landing was the most secure from the enemy and from the coast storms. While it was the target for the enemy's heavy guns on James Island, it was just a trifle beyond their reach, and was only rarely annoyed by predatory musketry across Folly River from the James Island marshes and ambuscades. This occasional



**Pawnee Landing, South Carolina (February 10, 1864)**  
**Captain John G. Fay, 3<sup>d</sup> N.Y.**  
**Private Collection**

fire availed in keeping our own outposts on the alert. This post was regarded as possessing peculiar interest, because concentrated there were the depots of army supplies for all the operations of the Union Army on Morris Island and other points.

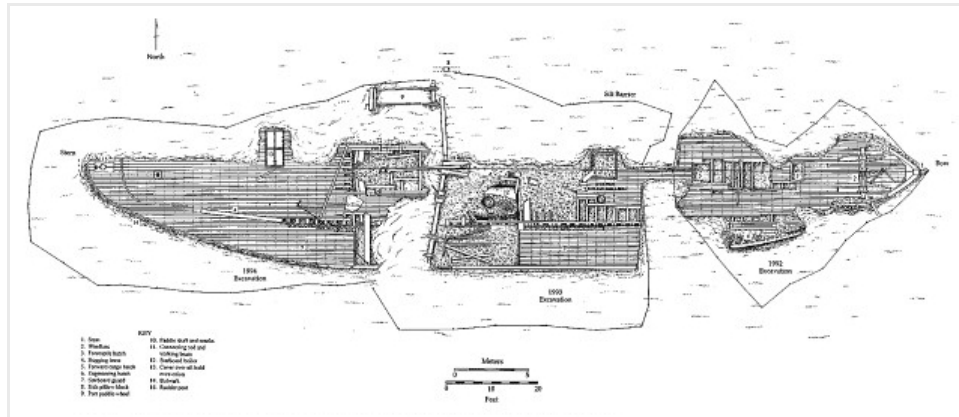
"For my own diversion I found opportunities, often in my headquarters tent, for general reading and for social intercourse with official and social callers from different departments of the Army of the Coast.



**"Infantry Tactics, Vol. III," by Brigadier-General Silas Casey (1862)**

"During my two months' sojourn as commandant of that post I also found much pleasure in preparing a syllabus of *Casey's Infantry Tactics*, with notes, which were critically examined and commended by General Vogdes. In his favorable criticism, I was pleased because the general was an accomplished officer, educated at West Point, and had been the tutor of General Grant while he was a cadet in that academy. My effort

at authorship was not originally intended for publication, but its preparation was simply disciplinary and for the purpose of improvement in tactics, as the art and science of war was appropriately within my curriculum since entering the profession of arms. The manuscript and most of my private baggage may possibly now be secure among the saline deposits and quicksands at the bottom of St. John's River in Florida, where they probably went with the steamer *Maple Leaf*, wrecked by the explosion of an enemy's torpedo in the spring of 1864, while that steamer was restoring to the troops at Jacksonville their personal effects left at Folly Island on the occasion of their recent hurried departure from the island."



**Diagram of the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" site excavation, 1992-'94  
Published in "The Historical Archaeology of Military Sites: Method and Topic" (2010)**

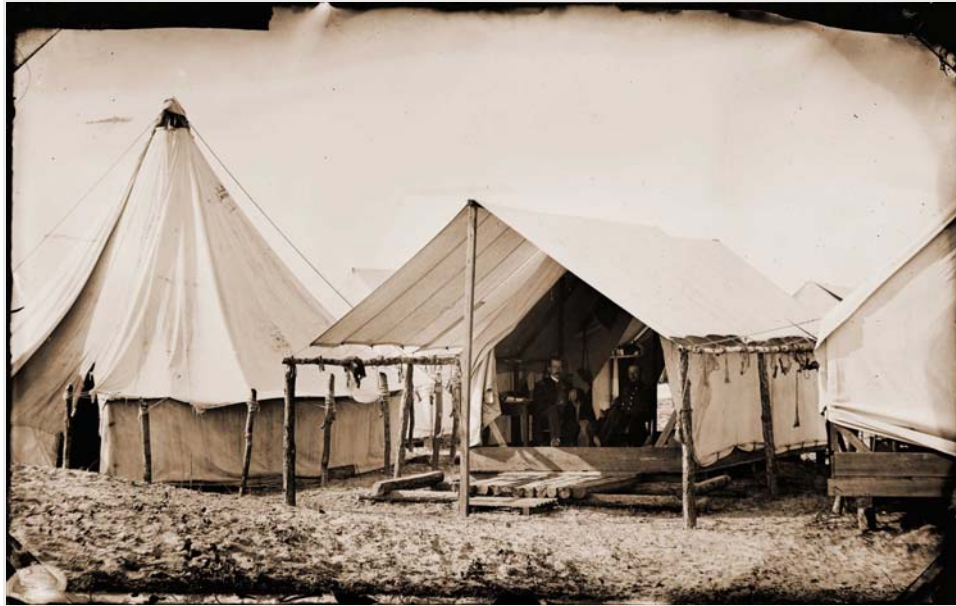
The story of the sinking of the *Maple Leaf* is a very interesting one, and shall be addressed in the April 2014 issue of this newsletter. Even more fascinating, however, is the rediscovery in June of 1984 of the wreck off Mandarin Point in the St. Johns River, Jacksonville, Fla., by Dr. Keith V. Holland. The hold of the vessel contains the equipment and personal baggage of three regiments, including



**Artifact No. 95NS003.001611.0001, Poncho or Rain Coat, Rubberized, belonging to Private Joseph B. Follet, Co. K, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., recovered in 1989 from the wreck of the U.S. Army Transport "Maple Leaf" by St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc. Collection of the U.S. Army Center of Military History, c/o Collections and Conservation Department, Bureau of Archaeological Research, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, Tallahassee, Fla.**

the 13<sup>th</sup> Indiana, 112<sup>th</sup> N.Y., and 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., and other organizations, making it the largest repository of Civil War artifacts in existence. Approximately **400 tons** of archaeological material and wartime artifacts still await recovery.

The contents of the wreck are in a remarkable state of preservation, protected by river mud and an anaerobic environment, enabling the survival of delicate items such as leather goods, clothing, and even photographs and paper documents. In addition to the thousands of individual items belonging to the officers and men of the 169<sup>th</sup>, Gen. Alden's syllabus of *Casey's Infantry Tactics* may still be intact.



Upon his arrival at the regiment's camp in September, Capt. Wood discovered that the Rebels were not the only enemy the men were fighting. His scientific analysis of their arthropodian foes was one of the subjects of a letter on October 9<sup>th</sup>, published in the *Daily Whig* on the 17<sup>th</sup>:

"As a friend is about returning to Troy, I cannot resist the opportunity afforded me of sending a line. We are doing simply nothing at all, at present, if drilling four hours a day, laying in the marsh at Stono every other night, running a hill at the Sutler's 'heap Cash Store,' and entertaining bugs and 'things,' may be considered as doing nothing. Sometimes, in our insane moments, we almost wish in our nightly marches of seven miles through surf and sand, back again, and sigh for other Greggs and Wagners, with their disconcerting protests of shot and shell – to conquer. We strive, however, to relieve the monotony of our lives by gathering shells and watching for the transports which are to bring the conscripted members of the gallant Twenty-fourth. This last remark, is, I understand, contraband; but, as I am aware you will say nothing about it, I give it to you in all confidence. We are greatly cheered at the prospect of those deeply laden transports, and will give a heart-felt welcome to the dauntless heroes, who were so effective during the riot, of the 15<sup>th</sup> of July.

"The minds of the regimental philosophers have, of late, been deeply agitated on the bug question, and their researches have resulted in the discouraging fact, that there are over 9,000,000 classes of those animals on this island, the individual members of each class being furnished with bills from two and a half to five inches in length, steel pointed and





ingeniously arranged for the purpose of tapping and drawing blood from the patriotic bodies of Uncle Samuel's chosen. Each individual has a name, the utility of which the sages have not as yet discovered. The following are the names of those most generally known and highly appreciated:

Wood-Tick.	Mus-Key-Toe, (very old family).	Sand-Fly-Flea.
Sand-Fiddler.	Head-Louse, (imported).	Jigger.
Thing.	Bed-Bug, (ancient house).	'Crumb,' (imported).

"Some, you will see by the names, are as familiar as 'household words,' or old friends; but the greater portion are indigenous. It is wonderful how soon these last named accommodate themselves to circumstances. We had no sooner landed and encamped than they swarmed in upon us, perfectly willing to share our indifferent beds, or form parts of our meals, and we have now become so accustomed to their peculiarities, that a piece of meat, without palpable evidence of animation, or dried apples, minus active life, would make our meals perfectly lonesome, and I verily believe there is not a soldier in camp who could eat his rations without the accompaniment of the ubiquitous maggot sandwich, (this last named article is generally known by the name of 'hard tack,' and is supposed by imaginative persons to be a good substitute for bread). Although there seems to be a perfect willingness in the minds of our big bug friends to remain with us, and at present a Christian-like resignation on ours to submit, I fear that sooner or later a falling out will take place, and then look out for civil war and a recognition of the South.

"We find a slight difference between the duties imposed on us now, and those we performed during the Morris Island controversy. Here, we may ramble over the beach for hours and hunt shells; there, the shells were in the habit of rambling over the beach for hours to hunt *us*, and we are, in regard to the change, what many officers in the service would like to be in regard to their positions – *resigned!* I suppose the time will come, and soon enough for most of us, when even a very deep mud hole will again command a premium, with shot and shell fluctuating with a downward tendency.

"The call for drill has just been sounded, and is, like the fabled voice of Justice, inexorable. Therefore, I must close by performing the chirographical feat of subscribing myself."

The white sands of the island's dunes joined in the fray with nature when the wind began to blow. Adj't. Kisselburgh described the "mysteries and miseries" of life on the island in a letter published in the *Daily Times* on September 16<sup>th</sup>:



"Sand! Sand everywhere – in my eyes, in my ears, in my mouth, throat and lungs, in the roots of my hair, all over my body, pricking, tickling, teasing the life out of me. To be more explicit, yesterday (Sunday,) we moved camp, settling down in the midst of a sand-hill. Up went the tents in a jiffy, and with hammer and nails I soon erected for myself a comfortable couch, upon which to stretch my weary limbs and beguile with sweet repose the long hours of night. Very tired, I was soon lulled to sleep by the roar of old ocean, which ten feet down the sandy bluff rolls in awful majesty before me. The fatigue of moving had worn me out; and when at night the winds arose, and picking up the tiny particles of which this island is composed, wafted them like so many snowflakes through the half-open tent, covering the floor and even the bed on which I slept, I little dreamed of the unpleasant predicament in which the morning was to find me, and in fact everyone else in camp. Literally, I was buried alive, with just enough of my nose protruding to enable me to breathe and give to the sleeping victim the appearance of life. Well, believe me, when I awoke, and had partially cleared my mouth and throat, I was somewhat disgusted. To swear, though I felt

very much like it, would have been useless, and so I simply contented myself by going through the camp and taking observations of the condition of the tents and their inmates. Everybody was in the same plight as myself, and all at once jumped to the conclusion that there was no further use for jails or penitentiaries at the North, – only send your criminals and rioters down here to Folly Island, and let them enjoy just one sand-storm on this barren waste. No punishment could be greater.

"The sand has blown all day. My internal improvements are thoroughly McAdamized [i.e., like a gravel road]. The paper on which I write is covered with the gritty substance, and thus I am spared the trouble of using the blotter when I wish to turn over the sheet. There is no ill without some corresponding gain, but in this case the gain is far from compensating. The Lieut.-Col. says 'it is horrible;' the Major varies the expression to 'awful,' and the Doctor allows it is worse than one of his No. 4 pills. To be terse, my private opinion is that it is damnable Sand! I say this very much as the old lady says 'seat!' to a pestilent mouser, that has just tumbled over her best jar of preserves."



Map showing Folly Island as Coffin Land (ca. 1777)

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Folly Island was nicknamed, "Coffin Island," from the sick and dying cholera passengers of passing ships who were left to die on the uninhabited island in order to avoid quarantine restrictions in Charleston. With no supplies or shelter available on the island, these poor wretches would soon perish from exposure. Their remains were eventually interred in coffins, hence the ghoulish nickname for the island.

In a letter published in the *Daily Whig* on October 1<sup>st</sup>, Capt. Wood suspected that the poor quality of the drinking water was connected to the island's dark and mysterious past:



"Nothing on this surf-bound heap of sand, so forcibly reminds one of his great distance from the Verandah saloon, as the almost complete impossibility of procuring anything drinkable. – When this statement is coupled with the fact that these islands are the grounds where Quarantine corpses have been buried for a century, and that consequently the naturally villainous water is hardly endurable, does it seem strange that the distance to us is almost fabulous? Saratoga has its mineral waters, and Clarendon its sulphur springs; but the fountains of the islands of Charleston harbor are greater than those, for they are stronger to the nostrils, ranker to the palate, and more weakening to man, than are the waters of either Saratoga or Clarendon. A glass of cream headed ale, glowing like liquid amber in its crystal prison, would be to us a more tempting incentive to deeds of valor, than a golden cross of honor, and a dozen Wagners or Greggs would be daily stormed for a foaming goblet of milk punch with its miniature icebergs, snow crested and mottled with spicy nutmeg, fragrant and yellow. – Besides the water, we have sometimes issued by the Quartermaster, something under the dignified name of whiskey. Luckily it is seldom issued, and in such small quantities that few men die immediately from its effects. One is not aware of the immense length and superfine windings of the tube leading from the mouth to the stomach, until he has surveyed the premises with a gill of government 'tangle foot.'

"The 9<sup>th</sup> of this month was a red letter day in the annals of the regiment. The Sanitary schooner, *Amy Chase*, sailed into Stono Inlet, with a cargo of ice, and the troops rejoiced. A barrel of water, generously seasoned with ice, was soon at the disposal of the men, and whoever thirsted might come and drink. As the soldiers came up under the hot sun and through the burning sand, and filling their cups drank eagerly, I could imagine the cool spring in the shade of an old tree by a Northern home, from whose crystal wave one less drank than in days of langsyne, and I saw one sad face gazing down into its mirror-like depths where *two* had gazed before, and time and space were annihilated; the sad face grew joyful, for another brown and bearded soldier was beside



**United States Sanitary Commission – Our Heroines**  
**Published in "Harper's Weekly" (April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1864)**

it, and then a hot southern gust shivered the mirror, and there stood the barrel with its fast decreasing supply and the brown and bearded soldiers coming and going. Blessed be the Sanitary Commission and its supporters, and may 'Amy Chase,' with her heart of ice, which melted at the prayers of our soldiers, be long spared for the good deed she has done them.

"You are now, probably, rejoicing over the fall of Wagner and Gregg. To us it is an old thing. We have plenty to do until James Island is taken, and no time for congratulation. The incidents connected with our operations, few ludicrous but many more sad – so occupy our thoughts that we have little time to realize or rejoice. Our regiment, although losing but two men, has had its full share of the glories and dangers of the campaign. Private Frisbie of company 'A' fell a victim of his own carelessness. He was shot through the heart, while sitting unconcernedly on our advance trenches. Two days before we took Wagner, our 'sap' was so close to the walls of the fort, that we planted the stars and stripes over the very heads of the enemy on the outer ramparts of the fort, and our men amused themselves by throwing 'hard tack' and onions over the wall, accompanying each article with 'how are YOU, grey back?' 'We're coming over to call on you.' 'How do you like the spoon victuals our monitors feed you on?' etc., etc. That night we arranged several Calcium lights so that while we remained in total eclipse, Wagner was completely flooded with light. The enemy could not work his guns, for the moment a head appeared, bang! up went a pair of rebellion's arms and down dropped a very dead rebel. About nine o'clock corporal John W. Guyer, of company 'B,' was standing with several others in our advanced parallel, watching operations, when the alarm was given by the look-out, 'cover, Johnson!' All covered



**Military funeral, Harrison's Landing, Virginia (ca. July-August, 1862)**  
**Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)**  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

except Sergeant Chas. O'Reilly and Corporal Guyer. They both stood watching the shell, thinking it would fall short, but soon the death-bearing star came nearer and nearer, and with a shriek it buried itself in the ground between the feet of Corporal Guyer, bursting at the same time, mangling his limbs terribly, and making a frightful wound in the abdomen. He fell, exclaiming, 'My poor wife and mother!' He died the next morning at three o'clock, and was buried on the Island with military honors. He was an exemplary man and soldier, and died regretted by every officer and enlisted man in the regiment. Sergeant O'Reilly escaped by throwing himself on his face. He was buried in the sand, but exhumed himself with wonderful rapidity, unhurt, but with nostrils, eyes, ears and mouth filled with dirt. Lieut.-Col. McConihe had a narrow escape the next night. A piece of shell weighing some fifteen pounds, came tearing through the air and his coat, gouging a hole in the sand into which his foot slipped, almost upsetting him. His escape with only a bruised foot, is almost miraculous.

"The taking of Wagner is an indisputable proof of the brilliant engineering skill of Gen. Gillmore. The bomb-proofs were capable of holding 900 men and so strong that we might have continued on bombardment until the death of our antediluvian friend Hagadorn, and accomplished nothing. – Gillmore dug them out, and so skillfully, that our 'sap' was under their very noses before they knew it. We rushed in and found them – absent, with the exception of two, who were lying asleep among the fragment of shell and gun carriages. They were reminded of the presence of interested parties by insinuating caresses from the toe of a Government 'gunboat' – sometimes called a shoe. – On learning that the 'Yanks' were in possession they said they 'didn't care a Continental d---n, they would have some coffee now.'

"We secured much valuable ordnance. Many of the guns were dismantled, but enough were in order to supply grape and canister liberally. I would like to write more about operations here, but cannot

disobey orders. I think Capt. Parmenter will be obliged to return home on sick leave. He rejoined the regiment before fully recovering from his severe illness, and against the advice of his physician. He is now suffering from a relapse, caused by exposure and overwork in the trenches in front of Wagner. He has persistently refused to accept a leave of absence, but the surgeons insist upon his returning home for a season, knowing that he cannot recover here."

The spectre of sickness among the men of the 169<sup>th</sup> reared its ugly head once more, this time being attributable to the foul water supplies encountered upon the regiment's arrival on Folly Island in August. In his historical sketch of the 169<sup>th</sup>, Col. James A. Colvin commended the efforts of Surgeon John Knowlson and his staff in skillfully treating the sick and minimizing casualties:



**Dr. John Knowlson, from a collection of postwar photographs of the veterans of C. H. Joyce Post 49, G.A.R., Poultney, Vermont. Published in the website "Vermont in the Civil War"**

"The mortality from disease among the troops in front of Charleston was very great, the 169<sup>th</sup> losing less men perhaps than any other regiment. This was due to the care and skill of its medical staff, Surg. Knowlson devoting his best efforts to the physical welfare of the command with a fidelity which distinguished him during his entire period of service. The casualties for six months, during which the regiment was engaged in the siege of Charleston, were comparatively small, only a few men being killed or wounded."

The dirty, brackish water the soldiers were forced to drink, possibly contaminated from the cholera victims buried on "Coffin Island," would take its toll before new and deeper wells were ordered constructed, saving many lives. Major Alden almost died from "bloody flux" on Folly Island, as recounted in his memoir:



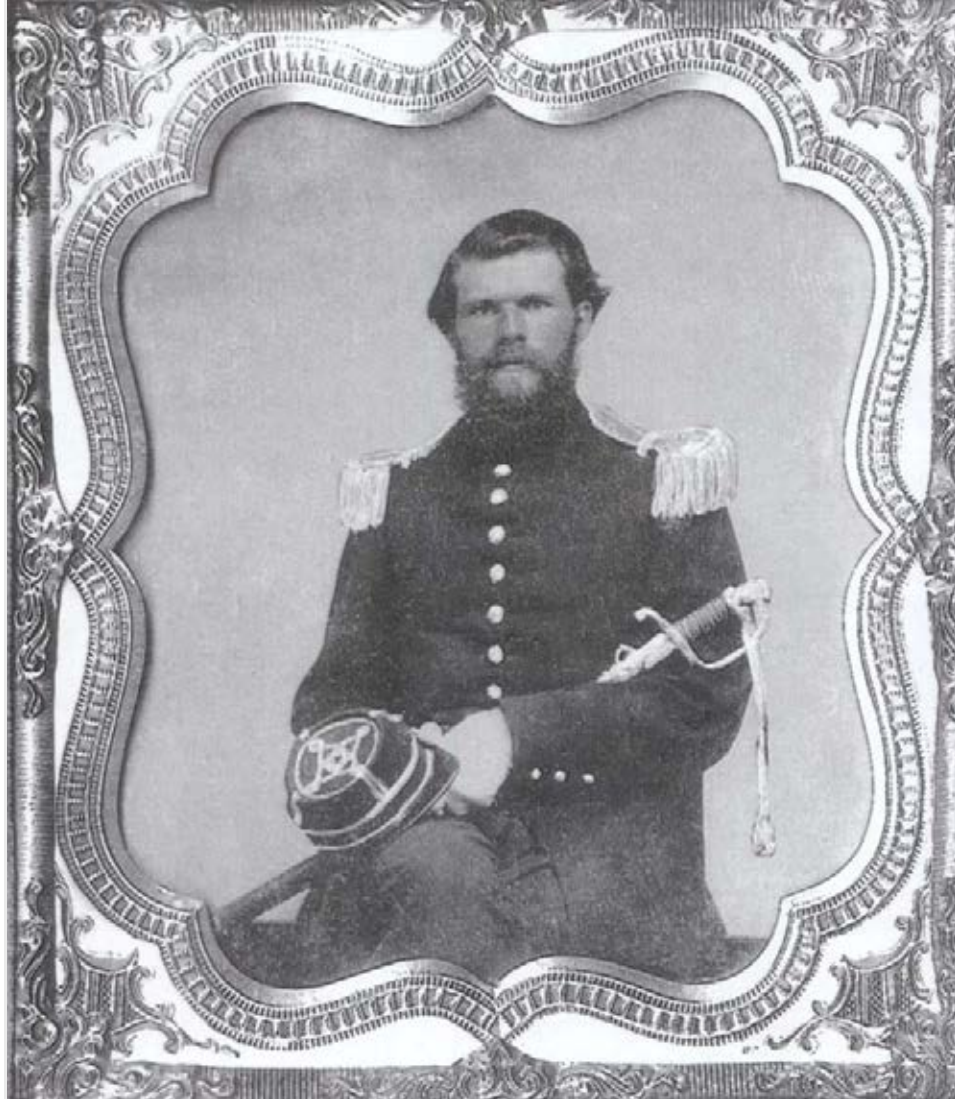
**Soldiers' wells (July 1864)**  
**Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)**  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

"We learned, to our dismay, that there was no drinkable water on Folly Island, except such as was obtainable by digging wells in the sand. By digging about four or six feet we secured the ocean water that had been leached through the sand, which, although drinkable, was somewhat brackish and refused to satisfactorily slake our thirst.

"The water temporarily and in a measure served the purposes of thirsty soldiers, except that in very many cases it caused dysentery in an aggravated form. As far as could be ascertained, all the troops upon the island suffered intensely from bloody flux, until acclimated by time, experience and medical skill; and death, with alarming frequency, occasioned almost a panic. The writer had occasion in the line of his duty to ride horseback the distance of about five miles to the south end of the island during the hours of daylight, for about a month, in discharge of the duties of the commissary, but rarely ever without hearing the significant strains of the funeral dirge from the regimental band or the fife and drum, or witnessing the solemn processions winding their way among the trees to the extemporized burying plots. The most solemn ceremonial occasions were scarcely ever without the accompaniment of the booming cannon of Sumter and many other Confederate forts that commanded the harbor.

"An almost fatal experience with that terrible malady for ten days, after he had indulged the hope that he had successfully evaded the prevailing distemper, will never escape the memory of the writer; and at every





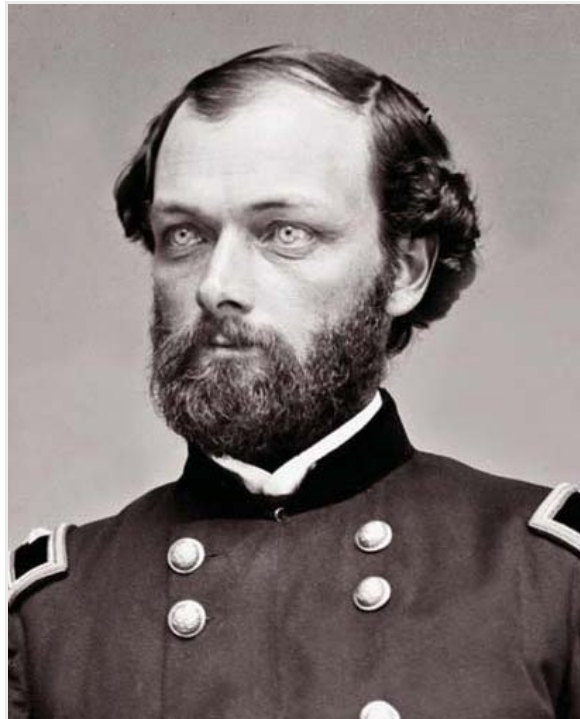
Major Alonzo Alden, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., in parade dress uniform, Washington, D.C. (1863)  
Provided by Frederick A. Alden

recurrence of those memories and of the circumstances of comrade love connected with it, he gives most humble thanks to the Great Physician for his tender care.

"Before this disease had made material headway among officers and men, and before we had fully established organization in our camp, we received orders to send to Morris Island for duty in the trenches, a detail of about one fourth of our command, and to station strong picket guards along Folly River, which, including Folly Island, was day and night menaced by predatory bands of Rebels, which seemed to breed like mosquitoes and alligators in the swamps, swales and bayous of James Island."

In an article appearing on September 15<sup>th</sup>, the *Daily Times* quoted an officer of the regiment who wrote that "the health of the regiment was tolerable" and that "eighty of the men were sick and in the hospital." The *New South* published an article on the 19<sup>th</sup> describing Gen. Gillmore's visit to the hospitals of the Dept. of the South, ending with the wish that he would visit the wounded more often:

"Very suddenly and unexpectedly Gen. Gillmore, giving himself a short leave of absence from his Headquarters at Morris Island, arrived here on Friday morning, last week. After visiting the Gen. Hospital, and taking kindly by the hand the wounded soldiers and speaking to them words of encouragement and comfort, inquiring into their wants and treatment, he made a flying visit to Beaufort, where he was received with a salute and other appropriate honors. While there, he visited all the hospitals in the town, and had a general word of comfort for every patient. His visit had a good effect on the patients. Their eyes grew brighter; their spirits, cramped and low, seemed to have imparted to them some of the glow and vivacity of their visitor. Everyone seemed to have gained a new hold on life, and all signs of depression and des-



**Major-General Quincy A. Gillmore**  
**Commanding X Army Corps and Department of the South**

pair passed quickly away. Such acts of kindness directed to each and every one, on the part of General Gillmore, are worth a thousand tonics. It shows to the poor sufferer stretched upon a bed of pain, and necessarily to a great extent, without the cheering presence of a friend, that they have one in the Commanding General who has a care for and interest in their welfare. And in this is found potent medicine – a mysterious balm that carries with it a power to reanimate the drooping, cheer the depressed and awaken in all the brightest and most sunny emotions of the human breast.

"We hope that General Gillmore may find time in the midst of his arduous duties to frequently repeat the pleasant visitation among the wounded of his command."

In a letter to Mrs. Newton on September 22<sup>d</sup>, Col. McConihe noted that the regiment lost five men the previous 36 hours, but hoped that the situation would improve with cooler weather. John wrote his father on the 24<sup>th</sup>, reassuring him that the 169<sup>th</sup> "had more men for duty in proportion to numbers than any other



**The Siege of Charleston – The Morning Call to the Rebels  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1863)**

regiment in the brigade, and turns out as strong and is as effective now as at Suffolk." Disputing reports that the men of the regiment were all sick, he stated: "Let it be known that the 169<sup>th</sup> is able to-day to whip any and the largest Northern disloyal mob that can be raised in Northern cities."

Priv. Robert Whitcomb was not faring too well, writing to his parents on September 25<sup>th</sup> about his affliction with the ague. Defined as alternating periods of chills, fever, and sweating, the term is chiefly used in reference to malaria:

"I was greatly pleased Wednesday to receive a letter from you and hear that you was all alive and well, and this leaves me and George the same. I have had the fever and ague lightly, but I have got the chills stopped, but I han't in very good health yet. I am weak; don't you see my hand tremble? I think that if I was a going to enlist again, it would be terribly worse.

"Father, I don't know what to write. There han't any news here. There is some heavy cannonading to-day, and General Gillmore is hard at work preparing for the final trial which can't fail to prove successful...

"Brother, I have had two of them old-fashioned shakes, such as I had that summer that I had the ague at home. But there was no mother here to care for me and I lay and roughed it out. But it is alright; it all helps punish me for coming away and leaving my family and friends as I did.

"The weather is cool here and it is very unhealthy. We lose about one man each day by sickness, but I think it begins to abate a little as the weather gets cooler. I don't know but that we will have to winter here, but I hope not.

"Father, I shall try and come home this fall or the forepart of winter, but I don't know how it will be. They may stop giving furloughs by the time that I get ready to come. I should like to come home and help you



**Sick call – Doctor Boyd (ca. 1861-'65)**  
**Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)**  
**Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.**

butcher this fall, but it is a long road to travel and I am afraid you will have to butcher without me again this fall... We are going to be paid tomorrow, and there is no way for us to send our money home safe. We will have to run a great chance of losing it if we send it and I shall keep mine until I can send it safe or fetch it myself, for it is too hard work to get it to throw it away... Write soon. A kiss for the children."

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the *Daily Press* reported the deaths by illness of two men from Co. I, Priv. Thomas Kiernon and Priv. Albert S. Hall. The death of Priv. Hall brought "an undoubted relief to the regiment," according to the report. Another soldier from their company, Priv. Charles Myers, was discharged from the service due to illness:

"A detachment of seven privates from Col. Buel's regiment, the 169<sup>th</sup>, arrived in this city this morning – having reached New York from Charleston Harbor in the steamer *Arago*, on furlough of thirty days each, by reason of gallant service rendered in the trenches during General Gillmore's recent campaign. Among them from this city, is Sergeant Rainsbury of Company I, Sergeant O'Reilly of Co. B and private Charles H. Meyers, discharged on account of illness. The health of the regiment is generally good, though Col. Buel was still convalescing on board of the steamer *Cosmopolitan*, leaving Col. McConihe in command. Two deaths occurred recently in the regiment. Thomas Kiernon and Albert S. Hall, of Co. I. The former was an excellent soldier and a good man, ever obedient in his disposition and quiet in his manners, engaging the confidence of his immediate, as well as all other superior officers. Hall, who was a brother of Andreas Hall, hung in this city some years since for murder, partook in a large degree of all the vicious characteristics of the felon, and died a terrible death, the Surgeon being obliged to cause his removal from the hospital on



**Return of Veteran Volunteers on Furlough**  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (January 23<sup>d</sup>, 1864)

account of his vulgarity and oaths in the death struggle. He had been convicted of stealing money from a comrade before Major Alden and Lieut. Merriam of the Regimental Court, and was compelled to make restitution, being sentenced in addition to severe punishment and prolonged confinement in the guard house. His death is an undoubted relief to the regiment. The other members of the detachment are from Washington county."

More deaths were reported by the *Daily Press* the following day:

"In addition to the deaths announced yesterday, in this regiment, the following are mentioned in a letter from Folly Island dated September 23<sup>d</sup>: James Colden, a member of Company D, died Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>. He belonged at Fort Edward. Wm. McKelvy, Company F, died Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>. Both deaths were produced by prostration from fatiguing marches. The same writer states that Captain Parmenter's health is very poor, and that he will probably be compelled to come home."

Capt. Wood explained in his letter on October 1<sup>st</sup> that four fatalities were caused by the sweltering march in Virginia the previous July. Although the men had gone with the regiment to Folly Island, their weakened condition made them susceptible to disease:

"Since my previous letter nothing of note has occurred in regard to the progress of the siege that it would be proper for me to write. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> the following deaths from disease, in the regiment, have occurred, and on this point your readers may be assured I will keep you fully posted: Albert S. Hall, Co. I, died Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>, Grafton; Thomas Kiernan, Co. I, died Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>, Troy; James Colden, Co. D, died Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>, Fort Edward; William McKelvy, Co. F, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>. The cause of their death was by prostration from their fatiguing marches on the Peninsula, on Gen. Dix's July 'feint,' at and from the 'White House,' and the Pamunkey."

The *Daily Press*, in citing a letter from "a prominent officer" of the regiment, alarmingly reported on the 6<sup>th</sup> that "a great amount of sickness prevails among the members of the regiment and deaths averaged from three to five per day." Two days later, the newspaper offered advice to worried families and friends of soldiers at the front:

"OUR BEST PARLORS. – Don't keep a solitary parlor, into which you go but once a month, with your parson or sewing society. Hang around your walls pictures which shall tell stories of mercy, hope, courage, faith and charity. Make your living room the house. Let the place be such that when your boy has gone to distant lands or even when, perhaps, he clings to a single plank in the waters of the wide ocean, the thought of the old homestead shall come to him in his desolation, bringing always light, hope and love. Have no dungeon about your house – no room that you never open – no blinds that are always shut."

The death toll for the 169<sup>th</sup> due to illness on Folly Island continued to rise, but a number of fatalities were either unreported by the newspapers or the notices are yet to be found through further research. The official register of the regiment helps to fill in the blanks and a more thorough list of these casualties has been collated by your correspondent:

Priv. Claudius Baker, Co. C, enlisted at Pittstown; Priv. Levi B. Brundige, Co. C, enlisted at Pittstown; Priv. George Burk, Co. E, enlisted at Fort Edward; Priv. James Colden, Co. D, enlisted at Fort Edward; Priv. James Craig 2<sup>d</sup>, Co. F, enlisted at Lisbon; Corp. Chester L. Craver, enlisted at Sand Lake; Priv. Thomas Cunningham, Co. D, enlisted at Kingsbury; Priv. James Gibbons, Co. A, enlisted at Troy; Priv. Amos Green, Co. F, enlisted at Fort Ann; Priv. Ottmar Griminger, Co. C, enlisted at Brunswick; Priv. Albert S. Hall, Co. I, enlisted at Troy; Priv. Adam Heusse, Co. A, enlisted at Troy; Priv. Daniel Hydenburg, Co. A, enlisted at Nassau; Priv. Thomas Kiernon, Co. I, enlisted at Troy; Priv. Elijah Knapp, Co. K, enlisted at Lansingburgh; Priv. William McKelvy, Co. F, enlisted at Lisbon; Priv. Charles Mead, Co. E, enlisted at Fort Edward; Corp. Mandelbert J. Palmer, Co. E, enlisted at Fort Edward; Priv. Rensselaer Palmer, Co. A, enlisted at Nassau; Priv. Irving H. Reed, Co. A, enlisted at Nassau; Corp. William H. Reed, Co. A, enlisted at Nassau; Priv. Leonard M. Savage, Co. E, enlisted at Fort Edward; Priv. Joseph Smith, Co. I, enlisted at Troy; Priv. William Smith, Co. A, enlisted at Troy; and Priv. John Wagner, Co. A, enlisted at Poestenkill.



Steamers at wharf, vicinity of Charleston, South Carolina (ca. 1865)

The war pressed on, and the men of the regiment found themselves assigned to guarding the north shore of Folly Island against a night attack, reported to be in the works according to a captured Confederate soldier. Col. McConihe mentioned the alert in a letter to Mrs. Newton on September 22<sup>d</sup>:

"I have been on duty with the regiment the past seven nights. A rumored attack from the Rebels keeps us awake and down on the banks of Folly River every night. I wish they would come, or else the general would conclude they were not coming. It is so tedious to lay in a marsh night after night."

Priv. Alfred Carmon was feeling well despite the hardships, though he had lost some weight from all of the marching. A letter to his sister on September 28<sup>th</sup> mentioned Priv. Nelson Clemmence and 1<sup>st</sup> Serg't. Michael Russell, of Co. H:

"I am well and never had better health than I have now, but I am quite poor. I only weigh one hundred and seventy pounds. Nelse Clemmence is so fat he can't hardly see out of his eyes! They are giving out furloughs in our regiment. Our orderly sergeant started for home to-day. He has got one for thirty days.

"Then Humphrey is now saying he don't want to come in the army. Any man that will give him a cent had ought to be sent in his place. I would like to be up there to laugh at those fellows that has been drafted. It would be fun for me!

"We have plenty to eat down here. Of course, it is not quite as nice as we would get at home. We get soft bread now and we have good water.



Federal camp at Morris Island, South Carolina (ca. 1863)

When we first come on the island we did not get very good water, but we went and dug new springs. Then we got water that was fit to drink.

"There is no news that I know of. We have not been up on Morris Island in two weeks. They have been firing pretty lively with some of their large guns. I guess that General Gillmore has got his two hundred-pounder mounted down on Fort Gregg, which is about one mile and a quarter nearer to Charleston than we were before we got possession of Fort Wagner.

"We had a fine time coming down from Morris Island. The tide was in and we had to come down the beach, as there is no other road. But we had a great deal of fun over it. The water would be waist deep one minute, and the next, it would not be over our feet. We had to march over four miles through the water in that way. It was after nine o'clock when we got off the beach. We got a ration of whiskey when we got into quarters to keep us from taking cold. We got our hot coffee and then went to bed, and had to get up again at three o'clock in the morning, as they expected an attack on this island, but there was none.

"Most of the company wish that Captain Wicks would be dismissed from the service. The company don't think as much of him as they did six months ago, but I don't think that we will ever see him down here again, nor do I want to."

In a letter to his sister on October 3<sup>d</sup>, Corp. Lyman Ostrom, Co. A, eloquently described the suffering and hardships of the men of the 169<sup>th</sup> while in the performance of their duties. He condemned those "who have all along been striving to protract the war":

"At the time we were up to Morris Island, we went up Tuesday and returned Wednesday, reaching camp about 12 o'clock. As we came back the sea was coming in, the wind blowing hard, and rain falling fast, and for a good portion of the way we were obliged to wade in water nearly waist-deep. At three o'clock, we were called up again and





**Union Soldier, 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment  
Julian A. Scott (1846-1901)  
Private Collection**

remained under arms until six. The rain was falling in torrents and wind blowing hard. The reason was that a raid was expected from the rebels for the purpose of destroying our stores at Pawnee Landing, on the opposite side of the island. In order to be prepared for this, should they make an attempt, four companies of my regiment go out shortly after dark and are joined at 3 A.M. by four others, remaining until daylight. A brigade is stationed near us to support us if needed. Should the Rebels attack, they would be obliged to pass through a couple inlets that empty into our army along this island. I think if they should come, of which I believe there is but little chance, they would find us ready and something besides infantry to contend with.

"Two companies of the regiment are out most of the time on picket. Besides this, we have a heavy drill of 2½ hours each day. Was it not for the sea breeze which we get and seems to temper the air, the heat, even at the present time, would be oppressive. The sand in places is full of fleas, and last night, together with the mosquitoes, gave us but little rest. There has been a great deal of sickness and the army here has lost far more from sickness than bullets. The health of the army is now much improved and our ranks are filling up much faster from the hospitals than any other sources. No conscripts have reached us as yet, though a detachment from our regiment has been at them two months waiting for them.



**Sand Dunes Palmetto (Sabal) and Steamboat**  
**William Aiken Walker (1839-1921)**  
Private Collection

"Whenever I see a palmetto, the motto South Carolina has taken to represent her society [i.e., 'The Palmetto State'], I start expecting to see a rattlesnake above the top. Flowers new to me and some of great beauty grow in wild profusion. But you know that where beauty is nearest, there disease often lurks the deadliest. So here from the swamps and ferns, which lie around these islands and from which many of these flowers spring, there springs also the seeds of pestilence and disease.



**Still Life with Oysters (19<sup>th</sup> century)**  
**Augustin Théodule Ribot (1823-1891)**  
Collection of the York Museums Trust, York, England

"When we are on picket we help ourselves to oysters, at least while we can get any quantity. This is the only chance we have to 'forage.' Luxuries here are scarce and high. By luxuries I mean such things as butter, for which the sutlers charge for a poor article 50¢ per lb., cheese 30, potatoes 50 per peck, and apples 5 to 8 each. The government does not furnish us here with potatoes even. The water is a miserable yellow color and sulphurous taste, and so we are obliged to get it near the seashore in order to be able to drink it at all. It is sometimes more or less brackish.



**The Valley of the Shadow of Death (1867)**  
**George Inness (1825-1894)**  
**Collection of Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York**

"While our soldiers are hopeful in the expectation of a close of this war, you can little imagine the intense desire a soldier has to see its close, and will he may from what he is obliged to endure. He sees his comrades falling around him from disease and the enemy, against which he strives. If a private, he is a mere machine that can be used at will. He is robbed in every way imaginable and possible, from the highest to the lowest official, and yet when worn down by fatigue and at times weak from hunger and sickness, he bears all uncomplainingly, and in writing his friends puts the bright side upon all his wrongs and sorrows and trials, feeling that they have already sufficient anxiety concerning him.

"When I remember that God is just, I feel that He will visit those who have all along been striving to protract the war with a terrible retribution. Upon their heads will be the blood of thousands, the sorrows and sufferings of the widow and the orphan, and parent and friend also. Before this reaches you an act will probably be performed that will bring sorrow and mourning to many a heart. I believe many lives are yet to be sacrificed before the object for which we are here striving is gained.

"As for myself, I feel I have placed all into the hands of Him who watches the bubble as it floats upon the ocean, who sees a sparrow when it falls, and will do for me and mine as seems to Him best, and the only regret I have at the thought that I may fall is that others may suffer because of me and who are to me dearer than life itself. I can only hope and pray for the best, knowing that in the end all will be well. If my life is spared until the end of this war, others may learn more of what I have suffered than they have as yet."



Major-General Quincy A. Gillmore studying a map of Charleston (1863)

The capture of Fort Wagner and Battery Gregg led to much debate in the North regarding the strategy for taking the city of Charleston. Some newspapers were critical of the lack of progress in the wake of the Union victory on Morris Island, whereas the Confederates claimed that the loss of the forts was of little consequence since Fort Sumter still remained in their hands. Priv. Schutt explained the situation with clarity in a letter on September 26<sup>th</sup>, published by the *Daily Press* on October 7<sup>th</sup>:

"No doubt the nation drew an inspiration of decided relief when the intelligence of the fall of Fort Wagner and Gregg reached its portals, and was flashed across magnetic wire from one extreme to the other of our expanded boundaries. And it must too, have been subject matter for additional rejoicings and congratulations in hundreds of patriotic homes, to know that the denouement of the tragedy that yielded to our persevering arms undisputed possession of Morris Island, was attended with so little loss of life and limb...

"Henceforth, I opine, one leading mind will conduct the land operations against this great maritime port of the South. Gen. Gillmore is equal to the emergency, qualified for the task, and to his clear perceptions and wonderful facility of resources, all hazily defined and uncertain appliances for the accomplishment of desired ends, will be held in abeyance. The Gordian knot has already been severed, – a few tangled meshes and shreds of detail alone mystify the problem to all, save the General himself.

"When you hear, Messrs. Editors, that Gen. Gillmore has divulged so and so much of his plans – when certain correspondents to the New York city press talk pretentiously of their knowledge of the General's plans, and their sage predictions are copied extensively by their country reflectors, believe me, as your own observations must have taught ere this, there is not the slightest truth in their assertions. And it is this very reticence on the part of our leader, that induces these 'undoubted authorities' to play upon the credulity of an excited and expectant public. Gen. Gillmore's plans are conceived and matured without entrusting any of their secrets into the keeping of others. None of his



**Rear-Admiral John A. Dahlgren and his staff aboard the U.S.S. "Pawnee,"  
Charleston Harbor, South Carolina (ca. 1864)**

subordinates know, as the work on this or that battery progresses, to what particular point of the horizon its gun will radiate, until the embrasure, or the gun itself, when mounted, indicates the same. Our General holds long and frequent consultations with *himself*, and results witness with what wisdom.

"The navy, thus far, can claim very little credit for the work accomplished up to the present state of the siege. There appears to be such a lack of that union of effort between the land and naval forces, so essential to a successful prosecution of the work in hand, that the most unobservant cannot fail to remark it, and which, I believe, has materially retarded our operations. It is a common opinion here that Admiral Dahlgren could serve the country to far better advantage were he to immerse himself within the Governmental workshops, and look after the construction and improvement of our ordnance.

"The fleet seldom engages any of the rebel forts, and when it does, at such long range that very little execution can be expected. If Gen. Gillmore exercised as much care to screen his soldiers and guns from harm as Dahlgren does his Monitors, Sumter would not now stand the wreck it is, nor would Wagner and Gregg float the stars and stripes.

"It appears, too, that after Gen. Gillmore had battered Sumter to pumice, Admiral Dahlgren fitted out a night expedition of many boats and several hundred men, and sent them to demand the surrender of the fort in *his* name. The whole thing was shabbily conducted, and resulted as might have been expected – in a disastrous defeat to the brave tars engaged in it. The boat actually reached the fort, and could have landed most of the men, so silently was their approach, and the walls could easily have been scaled, before the surprised rebels had time to offer any effectual resistance; but instead of pursuing this course, a flourish of noise, in the shape of a loud demand to surrender, was made, when



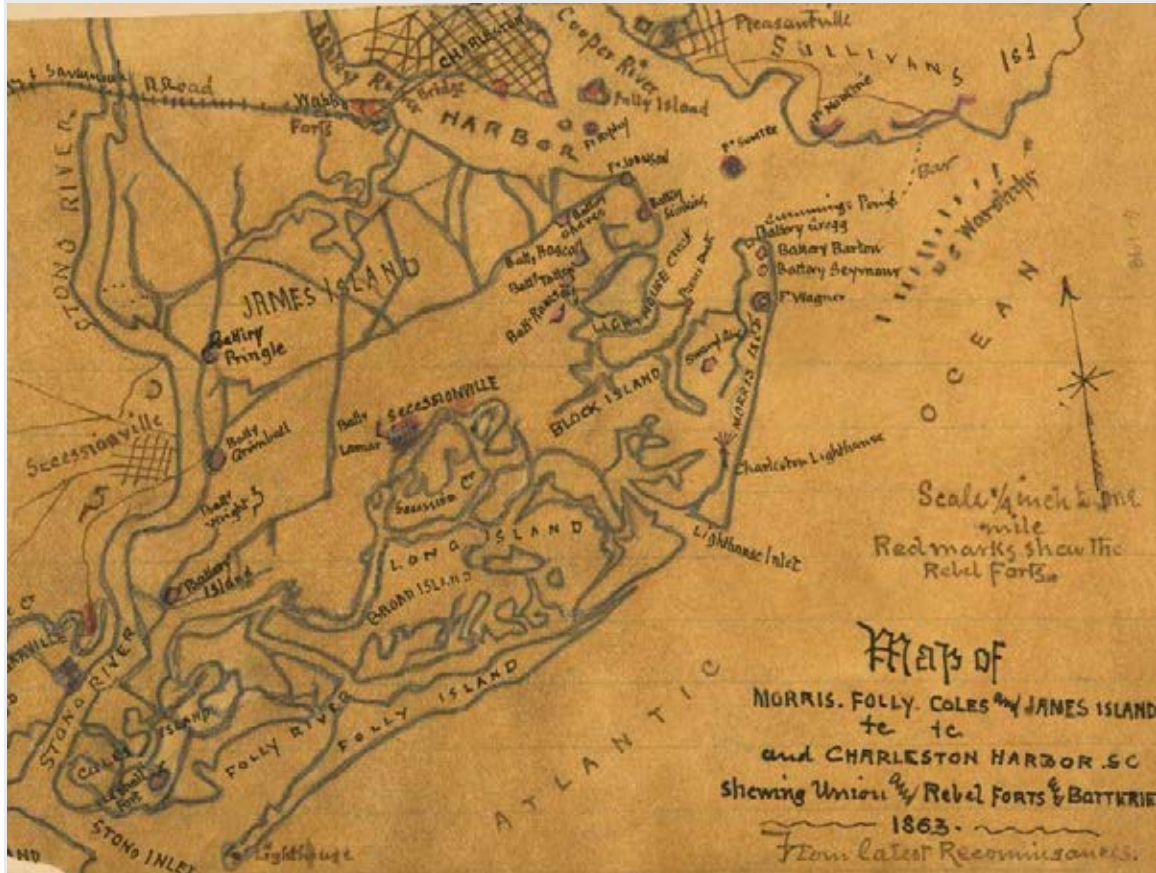
Site of the night assault on Fort Sumter, September 8, 1863 (1865)

the alarmed garrison sprang to arms, and the boats were obliged to beat a hasty retreat, with many killed, wounded.

"This little episode of the Admiral, which looks somewhat superficially, at least, like an attempt to snatch well-earned laurels from the brow of Gen. Gillmore, has tended, no doubt, to create feelings akin to animosity between two great leaders by land and sea, and I am assured they are scarcely on speaking terms. Admiral Porter, I am happy to say in this connection, is expected here every day, when we may look for a vigorous resumption of the offensive programme. Give us a naval commander here, who will heartily second and support Gen. Gillmore's plans, and the siege will make progress, slow as it may be, but successful to the end.

"So perfectly enigmatical are the plans of Gen. Gillmore, that while the siege is nominally conducted by land and water on the east of Charleston, the country may yet be surprised to learn that the city is not to be taken, if taken it is, from that quarter. Operations, pregnant with events of greater or less magnitude, are now in progress elsewhere, of which I dare say nothing that would discover their location or nature. Although the city is now within easy range of Gen. Gillmore's guns, I incline to the belief that it is not the intention to burn the city, else why the delay? And yet there may be this variety of reasoning to reach an antipodal conclusion – that Gen. Gillmore wished first to reduce every fort and battery, and remove every intervening obstacle thrown in the way for the defense of Charleston. Pride might dictate the latter course to one zealous of his skill and reputation as an engineer. But would this policy conserve the best interests of the Government, soldiers, and country? To protract the siege for months longer, at a fearful waste of life and materials of war, when the final end could be gained by more decisive and summary means, appears simply ridiculous, and I cannot believe that the earnest bombardment of the devoted city will be much longer delayed.

"A few nights since, three deserters managed to escape from James Island, and made their way to our pickets on this island. What inform-



Map of Morris, Folly, Coles and James Island, & c., &c., and Charleston Harbor, S.C., showing Union and Rebel Forts and Batteries from latest Reconnaissance (1863)  
 From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical Engineer of the III Army Corps, Vol. 6, September 1, 1864 - May 1865  
 Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia



View off of northwestern side of Folly Island, South Carolina (ca. 1863-'64)

ation they brought I do not know precisely, but it was regarded of grave importance, judging from the preparations since made to guard against a surprise. The northwestern side of this island, at certain points, now bristles with bayonets nightly, while other adequate means to repel a sudden night attack have been made. I think, however, that nothing more than a *Ram* raid is anticipated by the rebels, down one of the water-courses that have their confluence in Light House Inlet. For the past eight nights, the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth have been kept under arms, 'watching and waiting' for the enemy. Rest assured, when he does come, we will accord him a warm reception.



**Detail from "Napoleón III" (1865)  
Alexandre Cabanel (1823-1889)  
Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland**

"From a number of the boys of the Sixty-Second Ohio, while on Morris Island, in the trenches last week, I was informed that inducements were being offered them in the shape of a bounty of four hundred dollars to re-enlist for the term of three years (they have already served two years and three months) to join an army now organizing for the protection of our borders against an apprehended invasion by the French. Such soldiers as see fit to avail themselves of the offer, are to be mustered out of the present service, for the suppression of the rebellion, receive the one hundred dollars bounty, due them by the terms of their former enlistment, and be mustered into the new branch of service under the same stipulations as regards bounty applicable to veteran soldiers re-enlisting to fight the rebels.

"Whatever may be thought of this matter at home, if the statement is true, which I do not doubt, it would seem that the danger of a war with



France is imminent, and no little excitement is the result in this department. Nearly every private soldier with whom I have conversed upon the subject, though averse to re-enlisting for three years longer, would still prefer to fight a foreign foe for that length of time than to serve out the remainder of his term in the war against the rebellion. "That's what's the matter." Mr. Editor, we would rather fight a foreign enemy, white or black, with a few Bengal tigers, and other beasts thrown in, than to meet our own countrymen in arms. It is true patriotism, principle and duty that assures us we are right, and we are doing our utmost, yet we know we are battling with a people who, for the most part, are simply tools in the hands of unscrupulous leaders, – they know not what they are really fighting for, and hence are not the particular objects of our vengeance.

"For the past eight or ten days, very little cannonading has been heard, the rebels doing what little has been done in that time. This in part is owing to the fact that Wagner, Gregg, and an immediate battery, which we are erecting, have claimed all our available energies, and as no particular benefit could be had by making ammunition until the works were completed, and a shorter and more effective range secured, our artillery have never had time to recuperate in a measure, the exhaustive demands made upon their physical energies during the unremitting labors imposed by the siege for the past few weeks..."

Priv. Schutt's letter of October 4<sup>th</sup>, expressing frustration with the continued occupation of Fort Sumter by the Confederacy and the lack of action on the part of the U.S. Navy, was published by the *Daily Press* on the 14<sup>th</sup>:



Fort Sumter – Gun Gallery (December 8, 1863)  
Conrad Wise Chapman (1842-1910)

Collection of the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia

"The obstinacy with which the rebels cling to the ruins of Fort Sumter is a little singular. It would seem, naturally enough, that with the loss of that stronghold, the fall of which gave to the conspirators the first victory of the war, their prestige was gone, and they still hold it as the



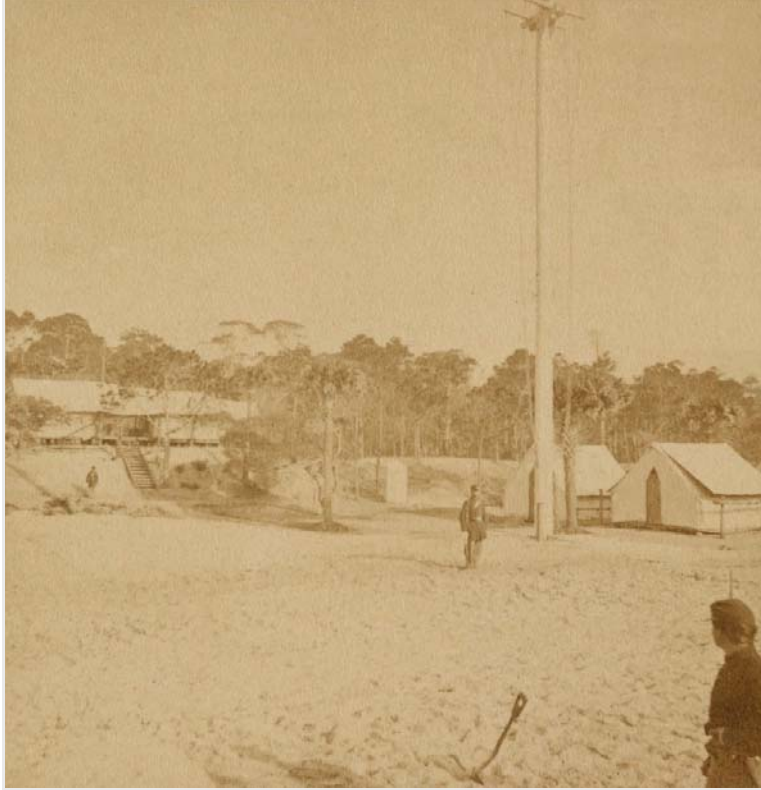
**General Gillmore's staff quarters on Folly Island, South Carolina (1863)**

creeping parasite encircles the mighty oak; while it is an apparent object of affection, they ensure its ultimate total destruction. That Beauregard has been strengthening the interior of Sumter with cotton bales and sand bags, there is no doubt. It cannot be, however, that he seriously entertains the idea of its permanent occupation. He may, possibly, retain a small garrison within its walls until the fall of Sullivan's Island, but no longer, unless he desires their capture.



**General Gillmore's headquarters at Folly Island, guarded by a Zouave soldier of the 3<sup>d</sup> N.Y. (1863)**

"The removal of Gen. Gillmore's Headquarters from Morris Island to this Island, is the subject of much speculation between officers and men. – It is generally conceded, however, that Folly Island, which boasts a luxuriant growth of palmetto, oak and pine, is by far the most pleasant and desirable as a camping ground while the water in some

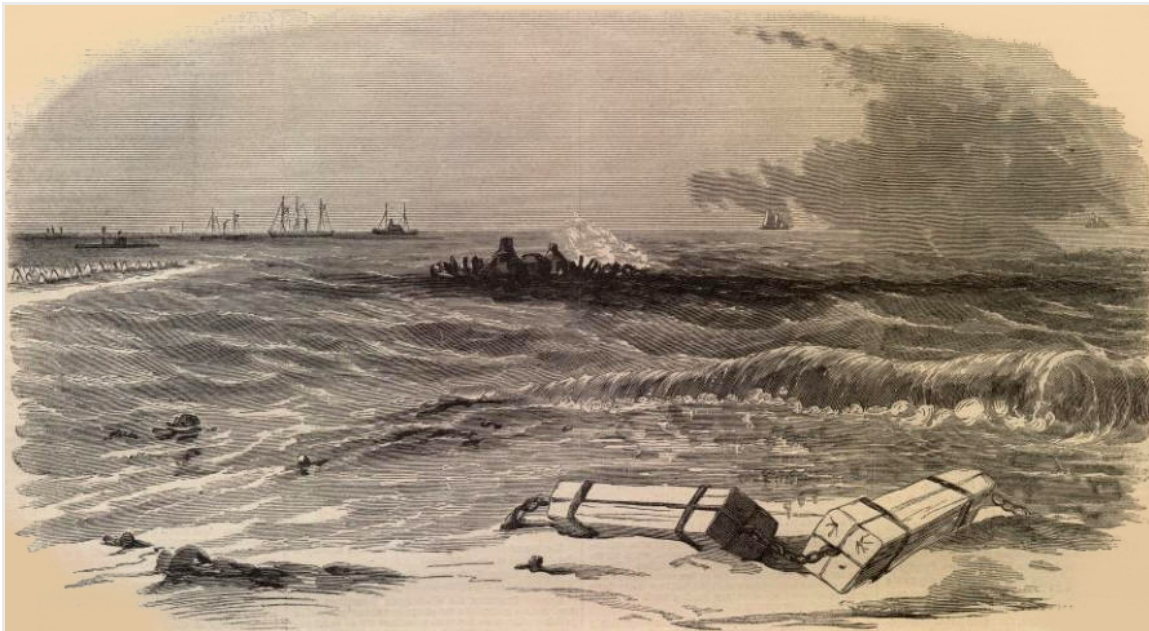


**The soldiers in this photograph may be from the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., its camp being situated just 50 yards to the west of Gen. Gillmore's tent.**

localities is superior to that of Morris Island. The fall of Wagner and Gregg having in a great measure obviated the necessity of the General's daily presence in that quarter, the considerations above-named may have influenced him to take up his abode amid the palmetto groves of Folly. The General's tent occupies a site only about fifty yards to the left of the 169<sup>th</sup> and in consequence he is becoming quite familiar in our area.

"The great query in the mind of all now is, why the nature and magnitude of the obstructions in the harbor are not ascertained? If they are too formidable to be overcome by the means now at the disposal of the navy, then prompt steps should be taken to supply the deficiency. Unless the Monitors can pass up and hold undisputed possession of the harbor, there would be no use of investing the city from the South by way of James Island, or any other direction, and it is also a matter of serious doubt in my mind, if the city should be taken by way of the harbor, whether it could be successfully held while the rebels maintained possession of James Island. Complex and implicated as the question appears to the unskilled in war engineering, it has no doubt an easy military solution.

"Three obstructions, which have apparently so long paralyzed the operations of the navy, I believe, when they come to be removed, will be found insignificant compared with the magnitude now imputed to them. The chain cable and 'net work' of ropes said to be stretched across the channel from Sumter to Moultrie, should easily succumb to the skill of the most unpretending and mediocre engineering skill. As for the torpedoes, said to be anchored in different parts of the harbor, they are really of small account. Every one of them could be exploded as the vessel advanced at least one hundred feet ahead of her bow, which would in all conscience, be far enough to avoid the danger of



**The Siege of Charleston – Portion of the Obstructions in the Harbor, Washed Ashore on an Island  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (October 3<sup>d</sup>, 1863)**

accident. No complicated machinery is necessary for the purpose of exploding the torpedoes, and they no longer should be held up before the people's eyes as such terrible objects of fear, but capable of frightening only timid Admirals, not the brave and invincible navy of Uncle Sam.

"Whether Admiral Porter or Farragut is to take charge of naval affairs here, appears to be a matter still shrouded in some doubt. That a change is necessary to the successful prosecution of further operations, the whole country must be aware ere this, and none will hail the debut of either of the first named, with feelings of greater relief than the land forces of this Department. We all begin to feel that much now depends upon the active co-operation of the navy, and the only hope is, that the Government will send us a man for the occasion...

"Among the many institutions which will ever be held dear in the memory of the soldier is that of the Sanitary Commission. They are doing what they can to ameliorate the condition of the soldier, so far as wealth is concerned, but when there are so many to care for, and to claim a share of the dispensations of its benevolence, the quantity of any particular article served out is so small, that many are tempted to ungratefully reject it. For example: we have been the recipients on two occasions, of cabbage, etc., sent us by the Commission. When it came to be dealt out, each man's share, as near as the Commissary Sergeants could divide the same equitably, was as follows: of pickled cabbage, half a pound; of potatoes, two per man; onions, (according to size), one and two per man; fish, a good mouthful per man; crackers, four ounces per man. Ice has been furnished, but the quantity was so small for each regiment, that by the time it reached its destination, so little was left that it would hardly suffice to cool half a barrel of water; so that as far as ice is concerned, it has really done us no good whatever...

"The quantity of this 'much needed article of comfort' however, has been, in my opinion, totally inadequate to the demand of the soldiers' urgent necessities, so far as the matter of health is concerned, and no further proof of this is required than the figures above set forth. If the Commission, instead of trying to accomplish too much in the same



**Still Life of Fruit (1900)**  
**Robert Spear Dunning (1829-1905)**  
**Private Collection**

breath, would wisely select such localities as the one in which we are now operating, where love nor money can secure for the soldiers such fruits or vegetables as his appetite craves, and which would do more to insure health than any amount of doctor's prescriptions, for the judicious dispensations of their formulas, and see that the articles were dealt out periodically, and in quantities sufficient to benefit the men, then indeed would this work be felt and appreciated. In more northern latitudes, where almost anything may be had for the money, the soldier stands little or no need of the Commission's attentions, except it be after some great battle like that of Chancellorsville or Gettysburg...

"While on the subject of the Commission, it may not be inappropriate to make some allusions to the immense amount of professional labor required by our regimental surgeons just now. At the morning 'surgeon's call,' from one hundred to two hundred and fifty patients daily repair to the hospital for medical treatment. This number is exclusive of those confined in the regimental hospital, general hospital, – and sick in quarters. – When it is considered that each particular case has to be examined, and the nature of the disease decided, prescriptions written and administered, it will readily be admitted that the surgeon's position and duties are in no wise enviable, and the only wonder is, that so few cases ever prove fatal – that a patient, if he promptly reports himself before his disease has become seated and chronic, rarely fails to find immediate relief.

"Assistant Surgeon P. L. F. Reynolds, who has charge of the sick, has done, and is doing all in his power to alleviate the suffering of the invalid in hospital, and prevent the many diseases incident to this climate from fastening their deadly fangs upon the comparatively healthy.

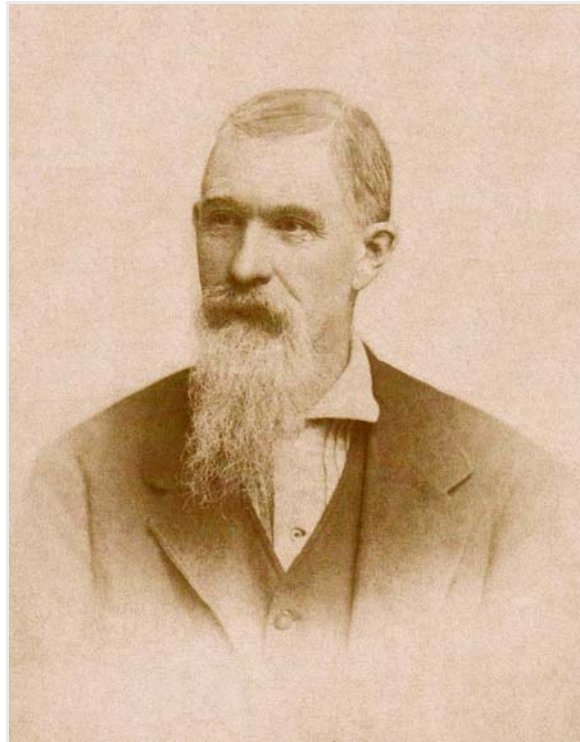
"Dr. Reynolds has been identified with the regiment since its organization, and the proverbial urbanity with which he receives all who approach him for professional advice, his long experience and the great success that has attended his practice during the past year, most unmistakably indicate that there is reserved for him a well-earned and more exalted position in the service of his country, than that which he



**The Scout**  
**Published in "Harper's Weekly" (February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1865)**

now occupies. If professional zeal and unremitting attention to his patients' requirements are qualities of merit, he certainly possesses them in no ordinary degree.

"Lieut. Thompson, of Co. F, assisted by Seth Pierce, of Co. A, have been temporarily detached from duty in the regiment, to act as scouts. This is a very dangerous business and requires not only good judgment and a clear head, but nerve and courage, all of which Lieut. Thompson and Seth possess, and for which qualities they were recommended to the General.



**Sergeant Seth M. Pierce, Co. A, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., in a post-war photograph. Mr. Pierce was a noted Adirondack guide, carpenter, and craftsman of furniture after the war.**

**Provided by M. Bernadette Green**

"I am happy to say that Col. Buel's health is quite restored, and he is again at the post of duty, perfecting the regiment in drill and infusing into its ranks renewed energy and a laudable emulation to excel in the different evolutions essential to a perfect 'mastery of the situation,' when upon the field of battle."

Col. McConihe's left arm, severely injured by a gunshot wound at the battle of Shiloh, was much improved by the time of his letter on October 5<sup>th</sup> to John Kellogg, once again marked "private." The regiment fared better with the cooler weather and received high marks from Gen. Gillmore's inspector for the cleanliness and order of its camp, and the condition and management of its kitchen:



Cooking in Camp-Kitchen of the Fremont Dragoons  
Published in "The Soldier in Our Civil War," Vol. I (1890)

"The Colonel is well and has again fairly fitted his military harness and is at his post. It relieves me very much. The Major has also recovered his health. I am well and my arm is getting stronger every day. You may remember I wrote of its healing, while I rested for three days at Yorktown and overtook the regiment at Fortress Monroe. It probably became disgusted that my body should become wearied and thereby withdrew attention, which the said wound had received so long away from it, and concluded to heal up. I do not think that wound will trouble me anymore. I am astonished myself how much I use it. I found myself swinging by it, unaided by the right arm, from the limb of a small tree this morning. I can jump up, seize a limb, and hold up my own weight by it. The hand looks as natural as ever, and is as *ornamental*.

"I understand many of my friends in Troy are purchasing me a new sword and that you are the prime mover. Thank you, John, (I will write more gratefully when it arrives), but I *thank you* now. I will try and wear it honorably the balance of my term of service, which, thank Heaven, is less than two years longer. Then I hope to lay aside the

sword, find me a wife, and settle down in peace and comfort. What think you of it?

"The 169<sup>th</sup> is doing well, and I trust now the weather is cooler, that the number sick, which is quite large, will be reduced. We received the best report from the Inspector detailed by General Gillmore of any regiment on the island, concerning the cleanliness and order of our camp, and the condition and management of our kitchen. Some of the regiments have been severely reprimanded. Our regiment, also on account of good conduct and discipline, was allowed two percent of furloughs, seven men, while the 112<sup>th</sup> N. Y. Vols. of our brigade and camped next to us *were not* allowed the privilege of sending a man home. I mention these things simply to show you that the 169<sup>th</sup> has and is doing well, and winning credit.



**Home on furlough – aboard an army transport**

"Of course, some men and some officers become dissatisfied, or the Government becomes dissatisfied with them, as the following figures will show: *twenty* of the original officers are out of the service – died, dismissed, discharged, and resigned. *Ten* are absent detached, sick, and on leave of absence, (of the last, but *one* is absent on leave). There are then but ten of the old officers present with the regiment, and of these, one (the Major) has been on detached service since our arrival, on a Court Martial, but is now doing duty with the regiment; the Colonel has been for duty but a few days, having been quite sick since his return; and to sum all up, but *seven* of the officers who came out as such with the regiment, &c., including the Colonel, Major, and myself, are for duty. Of officers, *old and new*, but *twelve* are for duty with the regiment.

"Our service since April has been awfully severe and has thinned our ranks of all doubtful cases. Those who could not stand the service have gone home and many have died. Those that remain will hold out the three years, unless killed in battle or by casualties, and the regiment, without any more battles, would return to Troy, and in the meantime undergo all the hardships of active campaigning in the field, as strong



in 'duty men' as to-day. That is, about 400 men would receive the congratulations of their friends. But an Antietam, a Gettysburg, or a Chickamauga, would leave but a few to represent the 169<sup>th</sup>."

A glowing introduction prefaced Priv. Schutt's dispatch of October 14<sup>th</sup>, published by the *Daily Press* on the 20<sup>th</sup>: "We beg to call the attention of our readers to the very excellent letter of 'T. S.,' our correspondent with the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth Regiment, in to-day's paper. The German paper, published in Albany, recently translated and published one of T. S.'s letters from Charleston – a compliment not often bestowed on correspondents of metropolitan journals."

"The sullen roar of an occasional gun alone breaks the tedious monotony and perplexing silence of inactivity which prevails, both on land and water, at the present time, in front of Charleston. In vain your correspondent has importuned this and that officer, supposed to be 'posted' to a certain degree as to the probable cause of all this seeming delay in the prosecution of a siege, which at one time promised such speedy and brilliant success to our arms. There is a wide and almost limitless field for speculation to feed and suggestion to build upon, but beyond this, nothing in tangible form or of palpable defined outline even.



**Major-General William S. Rosecrans  
Commanding Army of the Cumberland**

"It was the general opinion here previous to the disastrous battle of Rosecrans upon the plains of Georgia, that the inactivity which has characterized our operations in this department for the past few weeks, was due, principally, to the advance of the above-named General, and that until the success of this invading army had become established, we should do little further than keep the rebels on the *qui vive* and force them to retain for the defence of Charleston the large army at present disposed about its defences. The advance of Rosecrans' army having been temporarily checked, it remains to be seen whether this hypothesis is a correct one or not. If it be, active operations may be still further delayed, and the siege of Charleston be protracted for months to come.



Chickamauga – Union line advancing through forest toward Confederates (1863)  
Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

"The soldiers in this department had been watching the progress of Rosecrans with feelings of interest and anxiety, and when Chattanooga was surrendered to him, without a struggle, we began to think, not without reason, that the current of our success in that direction was irresistible, and that the van of his advancing columns would soon join our forces on the shores of the Atlantic. Disappointed we may be for the time being, yet we have every confidence that our hopes in this respect will yet be fulfilled, with a full fruition of the attendant good results to our cause which would naturally follow such a victorious march through the heart of the Confederacy. We were looking forward to this auspicious event, too, as one which would, in connection with the fall of Charleston, prove the death blow to this rebellion. And I am afraid that some even went so far as to indulge in pictures of home and a speedy reunion with the loved ones so anxiously awaiting their return. But these pleasant visions have been suddenly, violently dispelled; we know that defeat to our arms, unimportant as it may seem at first glance, is procrastination, the substitution of a slower fuse which is to explode, finally, this 'cockle-shell of rebellion' as some of our political sages are pleased to term it. By operating as they evidently now do, upon their interior lines, the rebels secure at once a vast advantage over our widely scattered forces, and can move with facility on our entire army from point to point, in season to render it effectual wherever its presence may be essential to defeat our further advance. – *Concentration* is now the only plan which our Government can pursue and successfully conduct the war, as it must hereafter do, in the heart of the Confederacy, consuming as it will, with defeat or victory, the vital resources of the rebellion.

"The great battle of Chickamauga will have the moral effect of strengthening the hands of the rebels – it will encourage the wavering, and stimulate the leaders to greater exertion; if they succeed in repossessing themselves of Chattanooga, it will infuse a degree of con-

confidence into their cause not experienced for the past year. If the Government has failed to succor Rosecrans, and allowed the prize already apparently securely within our grasp, to be wrenched from us, it will have the most disheartening effect upon the army in other departments, whose eyes and hopes were concentrated Tennessee and Georgia to see the crowning blow struck at this rebellion.

"We will not believe yet, however, that the defeat of Rosecrans is anything more than a temporary check, and that ere this he has, like the refreshed giant, girt up his loins and smote with terror and confusion the serried ranks of his weakened, and only half-confident enemy.



**Stockade for Confederate prisoners, Morris Island, South Carolina (ca. 1865)**

"Very few deserters now come in through the enemy's lines at this point, owing to the fact that it is almost impossible to escape the strict surveillance which is especially exercised by the rebels to prevent this class of would be non-combatants from effecting their escape. So long as the enemy held Wagner and Gregg, on Morris Island, deserters almost daily found their way into our lines, often accomplishing the feat in broad daylight, under a heavy fire from their late companions in arms. The information obtained through these sources by Gen. Gillmore was often valuable, and of vital importance to the successful prosecutions of his plans. Other means are now employed to gain information of the enemy's doings, which are ample in their developments I am assured, for all practicable purposes, and of which I dare not speak in terms sufficiently definite to acquaint you of their particular character, or how conducted.

"The colored regiments, some seven of which are now under Gen. Gillmore, perform the greater share of the fatigue duty. The immunity thus gained by the white regiments is a matter of no little moment in



*The Contraband*



*A Bit of War History (1866)*



*The Veteran*

*The Recruit*

Thomas Waterman Wood (1823-1903)  
Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

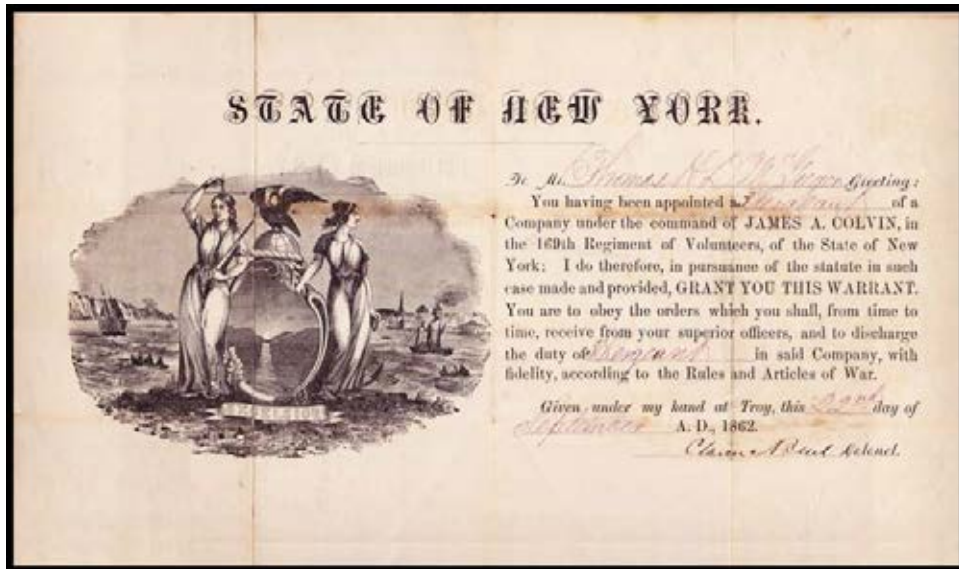
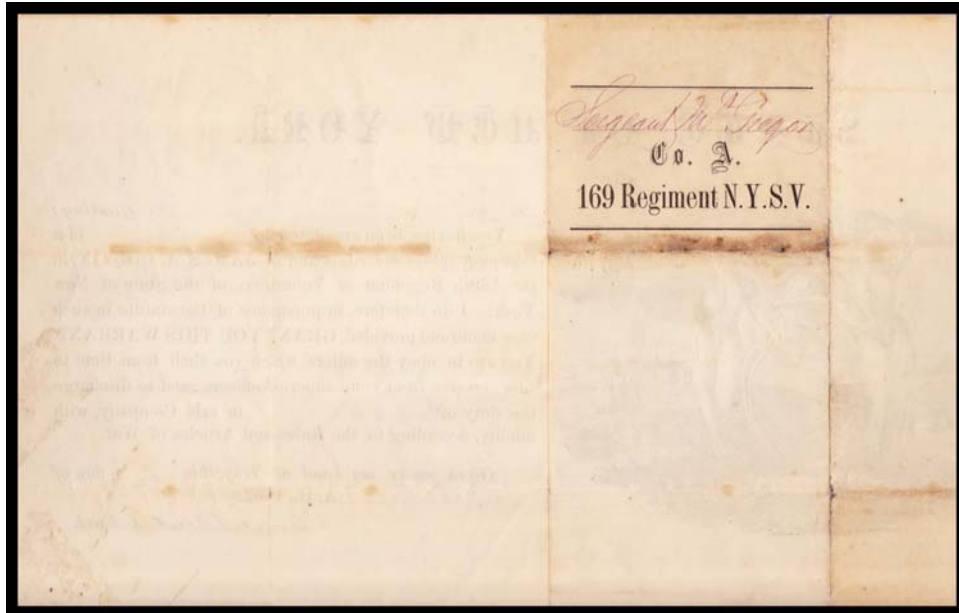
the climate, and as a consequence, for this very reason, the negro troops are growing into favor every day; but yet our boys have a decided aversion to fighting with them, and say if the contrabands will do the digging, they will take care of the rebels.

"Aside from the perfection which our works upon Morris Island have obtained during the present lull in the storm which has broke over the city of Charleston, formidable works in other quarters have been thrown up, so that, with the success of Rosecrans, Charleston will be completely invested on every side, with no avenues for escape left Beauregard and the deluded followers. Although it is a matter no longer left in doubt that Gen. Gillmore could destroy the city at his leisure from the present eligible position of our guns on Cumming's Point, he forebears for reasons best known to himself and the Government; yet in him the citizens of that doomed city cannot fail to recognize the avenging angel, and they may exclaim of him in the language of Revelations: –

'And I saw another angel, come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his feet as pillars of fire; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.'

"The Milesian flame which so suddenly burst upon the Charlestonians some three weeks ago, and struck such terror to the hearts of this modern Sodom, was only the handwriting upon the wall, which awoke them to a true sense of their danger, and a slight foretaste of that perfect storm of 'Greek fire,' which will be rained upon them if they finally refuse to surrender the city peaceably into our hands.

"On Folly Island every precaution is taken to guard against surprise. Every night the 169<sup>th</sup> lies out in the open air under arms, which would seem to indicate that serious apprehensions are entertained of a night attack. How many troops are thus nightly under arms on different parts of the Island, besides several sections of Artillery, I cannot say. Captain Colvin, of Co. A, having been indisposed for the past two weeks, the Company has been under the charge of Acting Orderly Thomas H. D. McGregor. Mac. is the first enlisted man, whose name was placed upon the roll of the 169<sup>th</sup>, and if efficiency, a strict performance of duty,



Certificate of Thomas H. D. McGregor's appointment to Third Sergeant, Co. A, Captain James A. Colvin commanding, by Colonel Clarence Buel, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., September 22, 1862

and an exceptional conduct are recommendations for advancement, he will also rank as one of the first officers of the regiment, on its return to Troy.

"Inhabitants there have been upon this Island, previous to the war, as a respectable-looking white house, one and a half stories in height, with verandah and other appearances of former comfort, with several negro houses contiguous, surely indicate. By the names inscribed upon a few wooden monuments erected on a sand mound nearby, the name of the proprietor of this homestead appears to have been Campbell. I cannot resist giving you a specimen or two of these inscriptions, painted upon the pine slabs which mark the resting place of the defunct Campbells.

SACRED TO THE MEMOR  
Y OF SARAH CA  
MPBELL, WHO D  
IED ON 27 J  
UNE 1847.

"Upon another slab the record says, 'Sacred to the memory of *Benjamin Campbell*,' &c.

"Then there is a very respectable marble monument erected to the memory of a Scotch emigrant which, after chronicling time of death, age, &c., commences an eulogy of his virtues thus:

'By this sad bereavement kind friends *was* bereft, &c.'

"Grammatical errors like the last when cut in marble, look decidedly bad, and read worse, and if the sleeper beneath that stone was a gentleman and a scholar as his epitaph would have us infer, I doubt whether he would thank his 'kind friends' for allowing so palpable an error to go uncorrected upon his tombstone.

"But all this may not be very interesting to your readers, and I will say *au revoir!*"

The approach of winter obliged the 169<sup>th</sup> to move its camp further back from the beach on Folly Island, where it would not be as exposed to the ocean tides. Col. McConihe wrote of his new quarters to Mrs. Newton in a letter on October 20<sup>th</sup>:



**Camp of the New York One Hundred and Third Before Charleston  
Published in "Harper's Weekly" (February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1864)**

"Our night work has ceased, excepting a detail of one hundred men which go out to support a battery on Folly River at night and remain until daylight. I shall not be called upon even to act as officer of the day, as I am commanding the regiment, the colonel being detailed on court martial, although he is present in camp.

"But we have been changing our quarters back from the beach, on the dividing ridges between Folly River and the ocean. We have cut away the brush. Another major being detached and absent from the camp, we have appropriated his tent and drawn others, so that now the colonel and myself have an uninterrupted pine floor, covered with canvas, in length 45 feet and in width 9 feet – a fair-sized bowl alley.

"We are still in the confusion of moving, and I will not attempt to write much to-day. But when the buzz of the saw and the rap of the hammer ceases, I will write you a good letter – I mean in length."

In a letter on October 22<sup>d</sup> to his wife, Priv. Nathaniel D. Marvin, Co. H, stated that he was "still alive and enjoying very good health." The "rest of the boys" in his company were fine, with the exception, however, of Serg't. Richard J. Horton and Priv. Harmon Joslin:



Detail from "Study For The Wounded Drummer Boy" (ca. 1864-'70)  
Eastman Johnson (1824-1906)  
Collection of the Brooklyn Museum

"The war still continues, but it has been very still times here for some days back, until last night. And to-day they have been firing pretty smartly all day, and they are firing some old big guns just about now, so that it makes the ground tremble where I set, so that it makes me shake every once in awhile. I think if you was here you would think it was right-smart music, for I think it is myself. But it is about six or seven miles off, so we don't think much about it. But there goes one now! That will make somebody put on their thinkers, I guess, for it made this island fairly tremble.

"But I must write about something else, for I guess I have wrote enough of such news. The weather here is very warm. It is as warm now here as it is up there in haying time, except nights; it is quite cold and very heavy dew, which makes it very unhealthy for folks that are not used to the climate.

"Barney [Priv. Barney M. Marvin, Co. H] had a letter from Susan the same time that I got yours, and he has been writing this forenoon. He is well and is laying behind me now, fast asleep. The rest of the boys are all as common, except Richard Horton and Harmon Joshlin – they are not very well at present. Richard Horton has got the jaundice, and Harm I think has got the dropsy. He is bloated pretty bad.



**1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Richard J. Horton, Co. H, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. (1865)**  
Collection of the U.S. Army Heritage & Education Center,  
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

"Time to come tell William D. that he must be a good boy and not climb trees and fall and get hurt. I should be glad to see you all. Tell James and Abram that they must be good boys."

Jaundice is the yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes due to an excess of the pigment bilirubin, typically caused by obstruction of the bile duct, liver disease, or the excessive breakdown of red blood cells. Dropsy is an old-fashioned term for edema, which is an accumulation of fluid in cells, tissues, or cavities of the body, and can be caused by insect bites.

Another interesting letter on October 24<sup>th</sup> by Priv. Schutt, published by the *Daily Press* on November 3<sup>d</sup>, reported that "the boys are now busily engaged in stockading their tents, and rendering them as comfortable as possible in anticipation of the inclemency of approaching winter." He also reported that Col. Buel and Lieut.-Col. McConihe held daily battalion drills for the men, and that the health of the regiment during the fine weather was "quite good":





**View of the Marsh Battery or "Swamp Angel," Erected by Col. Sorrell, Morris Island, Charleston Harbor, S.C.  
From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical Engineer of  
the III Army Corps, Vol. 4, 1862 October 26 - 1863 November 8  
Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia**

"The past few days have witnessed a slight anomaly in the phase of almost perfect quiet which has characterized the opposing forces upon Morris, Sullivan's and James Island. Considerable firing has been going on for the three days last past, but on our part, mostly, I opine, for the purpose of obtaining an accurate range with the newly mounted guns on the formidable works now about completed on Morris Island. I think a few days only must now elapse ere we shall know, beyond all doubt, whether the attack upon Charleston is to be made during the present fall campaign, or deferred until some more auspicious moment, say when Rosecrans succeeds in his designs upon Georgia, and presses the rebels in the rear of this stronghold, or it may be that the grand attack will commence cotemporaneous with that of the Cumberland army upon the line of Bragg's present defensive operations in front of Chattanooga. Whenever our guns do open in earnest, the country may look, and confidently, for the happiest results to the arms of the Union.

"Whether the terror-stricken Charlestonians have again returned to the city, after Gillmore's notification, and the slight demonstration of 'Greek fire' pyrotechnics with which he favored them, I am not advised. There is no doubt, however, that the long immunity the city has enjoyed from the regards of the 'swamp angel,' has emboldened some of the more courageous, and if Beauregard does not positively forbid it, are again occupying their former places of residences. For all practical purposes, in a civil point of view, Charleston is, however, lost, and a dead letter to the insurgents, and must have proved, during the long weeks, nay, months of the siege, more a curse than ought else, and a continual source of solicitude, which suspense has only heightened and rendered more acute, if not quite maddening, whilst fear keeps them without its "sacred" precincts, interest and former associations – a certain affinity with everything connected with it, create a desire strong and seductive, to return and reclaim their forsaken homes. But this would be a dangerous experiment, and they have learned by this time to appreciate and respect the mighty powers of skill and engineering which



**Retribution**

Published in "Harper's Weekly" (September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1863)

are consummating their ruin, if they so choose, so it is quite probable that a large majority of the inhabitants keep at a respectful distance; for as the world "knowest not the time when the sea of man cometh," they know equally as little of the time when Gen. Gillmore's terrible missiles of destruction will be launched among them.

"The recent attempt of the rebels to blow up the *Ironsides* failed only, I am assured by one of the sailors on board, not through any fault of those entrusted with the job, but simply owing to the fact that the torpedo – one of the cigar pattern, and the most effective known – was defective. – The Lieutenant, who, with one man, was captured while attempting to make their escape after the explosion, and who had charge of the undertaking, said it was a phenomenon to him why the vessel and all on board were not blown to atoms, as from the position of the torpedo when fired, if it had been an ordinarily good one, no other result could possibly have been attained. As it was, only a small portion of the copper sheeting on the bottom of the *Ironsides* was blown



**Attack on the U.S.S. "Ironsides" by the C.S.S. "David," Charleston Harbor, October 5, 1863  
Published in "Confederate Submarines and Torpedo Vessels 1861-65" (2004)**

*The attack on the U.S.S. "New Ironsides" on October 5, 1863, was one of the first successful torpedo boat engagements in history. Confederate forces in Charleston, S.C., deployed the newly built semi-submersible C.S.S. "David" to attach a spar torpedo to the hull of the "New Ironsides." Though the attack is regarded as a rebel victory, the Union ship was saved from serious damage.*

off, and it seems almost like a special interposition of Providence, that this most effective and only really reliable watercraft afloat in the harbor, should have been saved from destruction, through, as the Lieutenant says, the over-care exercised in the selection of the torpedo, which, after due inspection, was pronounced the best one on-hand. He said also, that the *Ironsides* was the only vessel feared by Beauregard, and had they succeeded in destroying her, the Union troops on Morris and Folly Islands would be driven off within twenty-four hours after the event. Some might ridicule this idea as too illusory to be entertained seriously for a moment; but I am convinced that the possibility of such a catastrophe has created serious apprehensions in the minds of our generals, and every available resource of strategy and engineering skill have been, and are being employed, to guard against any surprise or effort of the enemy, to effect this object. I think, however, that the rebels, before attempting an attack upon either of the islands now in our possession, would pause and consider well the probable consequences which would inevitably attach to the enterprise. They would have to sustain an immense loss of life – which would be counted not by hundreds, but thousands, before they could effect a landing to render their infantry effective, and a foot-hold once gained, would prove of little avail, unless the prompt disembarkation of troops could be effected in such overwhelming numbers as to defy resistance. This could scarcely



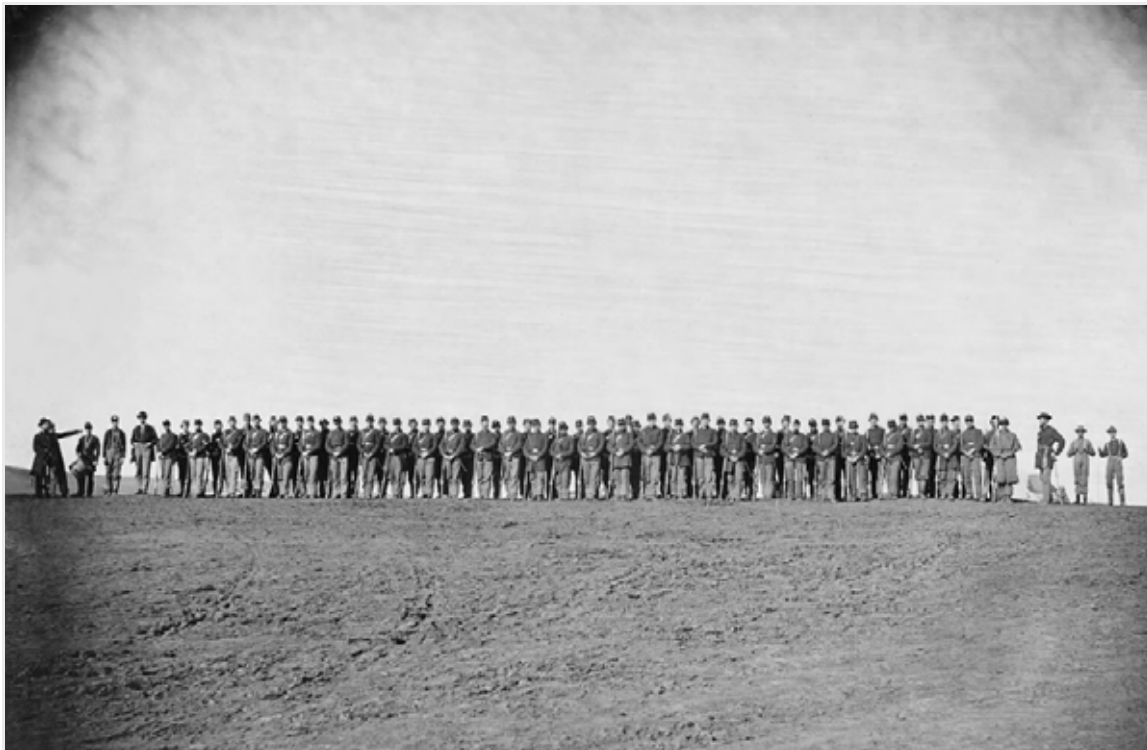
**Model of living quarters on Folly Island, South Carolina, constructed in the summer of 1864 by Sergeant Henry A. Slack, Co. A, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., while a patient at the Ira Harris U.S. General Hospital, Albany, New York  
Collection of the Military and Historical Image Bank, Southbury, Conn.**

be possible, and hence, there is no danger of our being obliged to evacuate any of the strongly fortified positions we now hold upon these islands, if proper precautions are taken to guard against surprise.

"At present, Folly Island presents the appearance of a vast work-shop. The 169<sup>th</sup>, which occupied a large area of territory, in view of its numbers and necessities, has materially contracted the liberal limits originally appropriated by some of its officers in the sites selected for their company streets, and the boys are now busily engaged in stockading their tents, and rendering them as comfortable as possible in anticipation of the inclemency of approaching winter.

"Gen. Gillmore's quarters, just on our left, also present a scene of busy preparation. Fine sheds for the staff officers' horses, and other structures are going up, all of which indicate the permanent occupation of the island by the General until the fate of Charleston is decided, and even after that event, in case the rebels choose to see it burnt in preference to surrendering. If the city should be shelled, and its stately churches, palatial residences, and magnificent public buildings consigned to ashes, I doubt whether an attempt would very soon be made to occupy its smoldering ruins. – Having rendered the place worthless to the rebels, and no longer tenable for the prosecution of any of the legitimate pursuits of life, we could well afford to await the approach of our victorious armies in the rear, when the enemy would have no other alternative than the surrender of all the fortifications which now make his defensive position so formidable.

"Of Regimental news there is little of sufficient interest to warrant remark. Lieut. Bernard Smith, of Co. B, has been appointed Assistant

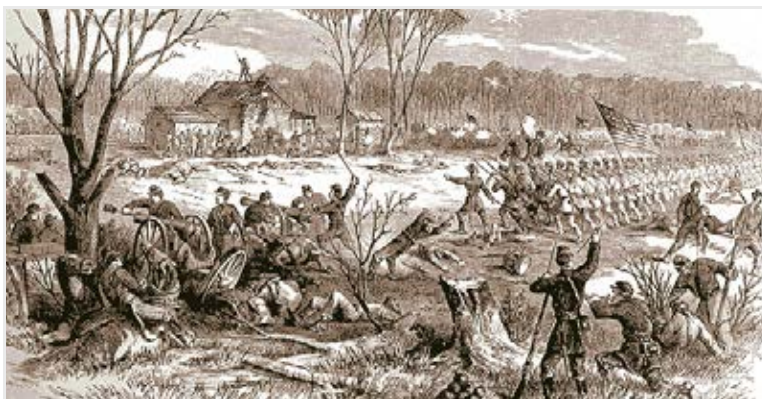


**Union army infantry company on parade (ca. 1863)**

Brigade Quartermaster, and now figures, with other notables, upon the staff of Gen. Foster.

"Col. Buel, when duty does not otherwise direct, holds daily battalion drills, and the men are rapidly improving in a perfect knowledge of these most essential evolutions. In the absence of Col. B., Lieut.-Col. McConihe conducts these drills, and by his thorough discipline as a tactician, most ably seconds the efforts of our commanding officer in promoting the efficiency of the regiment.

"During one of these drills a day or two since, after double-quicking it a couple of hundred yards, one of the line officers complained that it was warm work, Col. McConihe smiled, and quietly remarked that he had indulged in a little fun of that kind for a distance of four miles.



**Federal counterattack on the second day of the Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee (1862)**

"Although the colonel did not say where or when this was, your correspondent, who chanced to overhear what was said, needed no further prompting to divine when this exhausting feat was accomplished. The



**Folly Island sunset in late October**

bloody battle of Shiloh, and its sanguinary scenes of carnage, rose vividly to mind, and I almost felt that one might envy our brave Lieut.-Colonel, who bears from that field of glory, not only the title of HERO, which the future historian will accord to every officer and man identified with that hard-earned victory, but the double title of SCARRED HERO. May he long be preserved to us and his country.

"We are having beautiful weather here. The days are clear and warm, the nights and mornings cool and bracing. The richest skies I ever saw are those succeeding sunset, when the whole western horizon glows with a subdued light of dark crimson, flecked here and there with a purple banner cloud, fringed by the glorious dyes of reflected light, that challenge the iridescent hues of the rainbow, and fall to the earth like glimpses of supernal spheres. Here, truly, the lover of nature might satiate himself with these glories of departing days.

"The health of the Regiment, I am happy to say, is quite good, and little more sickness prevails now than at any other time during its thirteen months' service in the cause of the Union."

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, Major Alden and Lieut. Kisselburgh embarked on a risky excursion to Long Island, just north of Folly Island, to observe the entire line of Confederate defensive works from Secessionville on James Island to Charleston Harbor, "stretching out like an amphitheatre" before them:

"On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, 1863, attended by our regimental adjutant, Lieut. W. E. Kisselburgh, I visited Long Island, one of the group of islands in Charleston Harbor, where we spent the night. I was interested in making observations by the aid of my field glass, whereby we had an uninterrupted view of the entire line of Confederate works, stretching out like an amphitheatre before us. Fort Johnson, the most conspicuous in the cordon, was no silent sentinel. It was auxiliary to Fort Sumter and all the other harbor defences reaching out to Wappoo



Bird's-eye view of Charleston, South Carolina, and its environs  
 Published in "Harper's History of the Great Rebellion" (1863)  
 Collection of the Lowcountry Digital Library

Creek and also the line of intrenched batteries intermediate, including Secessionville with its defences, which were more approximate.

"Secessionville was a little hamlet, apparently extemporized for the occasion of the Rebellion. It consisted of a group of nine sizable frame buildings used as hospitals, and a few small cottages as adjuncts. It might be appropriately styled an annex to the city of Charleston – a Botany Bay for the use of that aristocratic city. But it needed no cordon of batteries to protect it from Federal guns. Their elaborate defences were conspicuous. The Rebel authorities must have judged the Federal Army according to the characteristics and practices of their own unbridled hordes, as in very many instances they paid no attention to that sentiment of humanitarian and Christian courtesy which restrained contending armies from molesting each other's infirmaries or hospitals; and in many instances they despoiled forts of women and children who held Union sentiments."

Priv. Caton alluded to the regiment's battalion drills in a letter on October 26<sup>th</sup>:

"Everything is quiet on the Island. We do not scarcely fire a shot and the rebs only a few, which they fire at our workmen in Batteries Wagoner and Gregg. We drill three hours now per day on the beach, which is a very nice place to drill after the tide has gone out. It is just like a board, so level and smooth.

"We will all be home soon if Rosecrans defeats the enemy. That is probably what we are waiting for here on Morris Island. If he gains a victory, Charleston will not long survive – she will soon go to ruin."

In his letter on October 29<sup>th</sup>, published by the *Daily Press* on November 9<sup>th</sup>, Priv. Schutt announced a resumption of the Union bombardment of Charleston's defences, striking the feared guns of Fort Johnson:

"The tedium of monotony, which has so long characterized the completion of our operations in this department, has at length been broken, and once more the dull, heavy roar of our monster guns, and the hum and terrific *snap* of exploding shells are borne to our ears from Morris



**Model of a 12-pound Whitworth breech-loading field gun, by Chris Tate**

*Designed by Sir Joseph Whitworth of the British Empire, the cannon that bore his name became a favored weapon of the Confederacy. Unusual in appearance as well as operation, the Whitworth was a breech-loader that fired an elongated 12-pound iron shell from a finely rifled 1,100 pound barrel. Accurate and easy to maneuver, it had a range of 4.5 miles and made a shrill, whistling noise which could be distinguished from all other cannon of the period.*



**12-pound Whitworth shell**

Island and the immediate scene of the renewed bombardment between the besiegers and the besieged.

"On Monday, the 26<sup>th</sup> inst., our land batteries on Morris Island opened upon Fort Johnson, and soon silenced that most annoying of the rebel works. A long Whitworth gun which the enemy had used with most disastrous effect against our working parties upon the parapets of Gregg, Wagner and the intermediate forts, (the latter now about completed) was in the language of one of the engineers, who saw the effect of this particularly happy shot of our gunners, 'knocked into a cocked hat,' that is to say, the most formidable and effective gun which John-





**View of Fort Sumter, Charleston Harbor, S.C., October, 1863, shewing effects of bombardment by Gen'l. Gillmore**  
 From the Journal of Private Robert Knox Sneden, 40<sup>th</sup> N.Y.V., Topographical Engineer of  
 the III Army Corps, Vol. 4, 1862 October 26 - 1863 November 8  
 Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia

son brought to bear upon us, was fairly struck in the teeth, dismounted, and nine chances out of ten, ruined forever. So much for Fort Johnson at the time of this writing.

"Having duly notified the enemy upon James Island 'that we still lived,' and were in capital condition, after our long *siesta*, for a renewal of the contest, our gunners began to pay their compliments to that still formidable pile of *débris* called Sumter, and stirred up that angular maze of brick and mortar in a manner which must have proved quite alarming and uncomfortable to those who still found it a convenient lurking place to watch the progress of our operations upon Morris Island; and from this most favorable position to exercise a general espionage upon our land and naval forces, who have so long been silently yet steadily perfecting their arrangements, not only for the final disposition of Sumter, but the bountiful city of whose portals it professes to hold the key.

"What the peculiar characteristics of the strengthening process are, to which Fort Sumter has recently been submitted, I am not aware; but as the rebels admit that the most invulnerable substances yet tested for the construction of forts, and one most enduring in its capacity for resistance, is the common sand which nature has thrown with such a lavish hand upon their coast, it may very properly be inferred that bags of sand are the principle feature of the preventives employed to mend the broken constitution and decidedly congestive symptoms of their deformed giant – Sumter.

"We have proved to them, however, in two most striking cases, – those of Wagner and Gregg, – that even sand is susceptible to the insinuating advances of our ten and fifteen inch conical shot, when introduced by such reliable and undoubted arms as Parrott and Dahlgren. We have proved to them that it is not even essential, as many of

our friends still suppose, to mine and sap up to their works before they can be taken by assault, for the rebels were actually driven out of Wagner by our big guns and *not by assault*. True, they feared an assault, but it appears, notwithstanding the vaunted invulnerability of the bomb-proofs, one hundred and sixty men were killed and wounded in them in a single day, the last one of the bombardment. No garrison can quietly contemplate such a slaughter day after day, without speedily surrendering or seizing upon the first avenue left open to affect an escape. As the continual dropping of water will wear the rock, so will a continued bombardment clear away and disperse sand or any other substance the world is capable of producing.



**Interior of Fort Wagner (ca. September 7, 1863)**

"During the last day of the bombardment, before the fall of Wagner and Gregg (the 169<sup>th</sup> being on duty in the trenches that day) I could plainly discern the almost frantic efforts made by the enemy to repair the damage inflicted by each successive shot of one of our swamp batteries, which was directing its fire upon Gregg, and evidently possessing an accurate range of that fort's magazine, was making rapid inroads towards the explosive reservoir. No sooner would one of the ponderous missiles strike the fort and plow its fatal road deep into the very vitals of that stronghold, then men would spring up, as if by magic, from the earth, and, which appeared to be common grading boards, attached to long handles, would work for dear life during the few seconds intervening between the next shot, to supply the vacuum with fresh sand, which they simply pushed in from the top and sides of the yawning gap made by each fire. It was hard work, and dangerous too, for the rebs, but we enjoyed the sport hugely, and it may yet fall to the enemy's lot to hold us at a similar disadvantage, and turn the laugh upon us."



In his letter of October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> Serg't. Frederick F. French, Co. D, thanked his friend Thomas F. Kelly of Glens Falls, Warren County, N.Y., for a package of Havana cigars. Frederick enjoyed the gift immensely, having "a peaceful, undisturbed smoke of a highly-scented Havana upon the sand knolls of a Declining Confederacy," "beneath the variegated foliage of the live oak and palmetto, perusing the Glens Falls *Republican*." Serg't. French's splendid letter makes mention of his commanding officer, Capt. Spencer W. Snyder, along with Serg't. Francis Biggart, Corp. Patrick Murphy, and Priv. Patrick Farrell:

"Your favor of the 15<sup>th</sup> did not reach me until the 25<sup>th</sup> instant, but notwithstanding the brief delay, it received the same hearty welcome which all letters do coming from my much-esteemed friend and correspondent, who has contributed so much to my terrestrial felicity by volunteering his services to keep me posted on affairs about home while I am passing through the fiery ordeal of this Inglorious Rebellion, which is hourly devastating the life and property of our enemy in the South and carrying sorrow and affliction to the peaceful homes of our loyal and peace-loving people in the quiet North, friend Thomas.

"Before attempting to proceed further with this letter, allow me to return my heartfelt thanks for your many kind wishes respecting my health, which I am happy to inform you, though not fully established, has somewhat improved since I last had the extreme pleasure of addressing you. You will also, dear friend, accept my many thanks for the great amount of pleasure you have afforded me by sending me the papers which you so generously have, all of which I have thankfully received and delightfully perused. One package, which I had the pleasure of opening, not only gave feast to the eyes and gratified the mind, but afforded a world of bliss in satisfying the greedy appetite of an Old Smoker, who enjoyed that evening beneath the variegated foliage of the live oak and palmetto, perusing the Glens Falls *Republican* and enjoy-



ing a peaceful, undisturbed smoke of a highly-scented Havana upon the sand knolls of a Declining Confederacy, which although based upon all of the strength, pride and aristocracy of the South, with no light sprinkling of foreign succor, is doomed to die the death of a traitor, who with his fiendish hand dare attempt the pollution of our Glorious Old Banner, which for upwards of eighty years has been the Crowning Blessing of a Free and Independent people and their Safeguard and Shield against Tyranny and Oppression, which has long sought to protrude its hideous form through the hated web of African Slavery. But alas! the doom of that (would be) *Jeffdom*, is this day written on the walls of Sumter and Moultrie in telling letters, stamped by the 300-pounders, under the well-directed aim of the indefatigable Gillmore, who is ever-watchful of the movements of the enemy, and who is on the alert, seeking a weak point that he may make an incursion on our quiet camps, under cover of sable night.

"Friend Thomas, the duties of a private soldier are at present very fatiguing in this Department, much more so than the 169<sup>th</sup> experienced in Virginia. During the long, dreary, cold nights of October, the soldier is forced from his comfortable tent in the quiet camp and compelled to repair to the woods on the margin of the ocean, under arms, subject to the heavy dews, drenching rains, and chilling winds which frequent this portion of the much talked-of Sunny South. The weather since the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month has undergone a very disagreeable change. The blue vault has been clouded, presenting to the wearied soldier a dreary aspect. A strong, northern gale has been steadily blowing, which reminds one of the climate, once so cold, would now appear more genial to your humble servant than the warmest spot in all Rebeldom.

"Yet, friend Thomas, notwithstanding we are subject to the trials and ills of cruel war, when we ruminate on the sufferings of those, our Revolutionary Fathers, who so bravely fought and dearly purchased this Independence, of which we are so proud to boast. We, as soldiers of this Free and Independent Nation should, while engaged in this Just



**Charleston, S.C., 1861 (1861)**  
**Alfred Rudolph Waud (1828-1891)**  
Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Cause of Liberty, bow our heads in silence, suffer all ills without a murmur, and remain oblivious of social life until the Banner of *Liberty* shall triumphantly wave over Our (once happy) and Ever-Beloved Country, and that glorious day is not far distant; that day so fast-approaching, when while winged peace shall spread her wings above the crimsoned field of terrible strife and proclaim to the world *Union forever*, and *Freedom* to all. But alas, though the day of rejoicing be not far distant, how many brave soldiers who have so nobly stood up in defense of Our Liberties and our Free Institutions must fall before the Scythe of Direful Rebellion, and be transferred from time to Eternity, where cruel war is never known.

"Friend Thomas, now for a word or two respecting affairs within my regiment. For the past few days we have been kept busy preparing our quarters for winter, and this I assure you is something which does not agree with your humble servant, inasmuch as I vainly hoped that my regiment might have the pleasure of wintering in Virginia. But since that pleasure has been denied us, I trust that damn fortune or Federal bayonets will gain for us free access to Charleston city, where we might winter in peace and comfort for at least a few months, undisturbed by the thundering roar of artillery which has so often aroused us from our quiet slumber and threatened the destruction of our camp. I am yet encamped on Folly Island, the number of troops on this small island I am not at liberty to tell; neither am I permitted to communicate anything concerning the operations in this department. Suffice it to say that we have confidence in our Commanding General, who is equal to the task now before him.

"The boys are all enjoying good health and in as good spirits as can be expected under the circumstances. This day, myself and my tent-mate, Frank Biggart, (who has tented with me since the date of our enlistment), rebuilt our tent and have made it quite comfortable for winter. Just for the novelty of the thing I will attempt its description. The tent is of canvas, waterproof, eight feet square. It is so erected upon a basis of yellow pine and palmetto logs, which have been hewn and snugly pinned together by my friend Frank who, by the way, has become a proficient in the art of tent building, so that when he returns, (if ever), should he chance to be caught in a thunder shower between Sandy Hill and Jim Biggart's, he can throw up a shelter at very little expense and with but little trouble.



**Captain Spencer W. Snyder, Co. D, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y.  
Private Collection**

"Friend Thomas, respecting my furlough, I will say the sad intelligence which your letter brought, respecting the affliction which recently befell Patrick Farrell, will be likely to delay my visit for at least one month, as it would be very uncharitable and un-Christian-like in me to detain him when the cries of his helpless and motherless-child call aloud for the protecting hand of a father to minister to the wants of one that is now left in infancy to buffet the waves of a merciless creation. My Captain has generously offered me the next furlough, which would be granted in the company which I have the honor to represent, which will be given on the return of Corporal Murphy. But for charity's sake, I have concluded to transfer it to a member of my company in the hour of his affliction, while I will remain here for one month longer, though at a risk of health in the meantime. I will endeavor to enjoy military life, ever-dreaming that it is social liberty.

"It is now 9:20 P.M. My ration of candle is growing short. Frank has just turned in for the night, and as taps will soon break the monotony of



our camp, I am compelled to extinguish my luminary and retire for the night.

"Before closing, allow me to ask pardon for the brevity of this. I would prolong it and attempt to make it interesting, were I allowed the privilege of communicating anything of a military character, but you may watch the daily news for an account of a terrible battle and a glorious victory over the enemy, in this or any other Department, as likely to take place here as any other place, that's what's *the matter*.

"P.S. Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>. As the mail has been delayed, I open this to inform you of the safe arrival of Corporal Patrick Murphy, who sends his kind regards to you and James. He requests me to ask you to write to him as soon as convenient and hopes that you and your numerous friends may long enjoy civil life, while he is doomed to suffer the trials and fatigues of a Yankee Soldier."

We end our travel back in time this month with the musings of Col. McConihe, recorded in his letter of October 6<sup>th</sup> to Mrs. Newton:

"One year ago to-day I was sworn into the service for three years. But two short years remain, and then I shall again be free. How I look forward to that day, yet I feel the time will pass rapidly away, although at times the monotony of camp life causes the moments to seem hours and the days weeks. One year has passed away! What of it? Since then, I have lived a soldier, I have fought my country's battles, and find myself where? Upon Folly Island, still pursuing my dreary journey, the same as one year ago, only one year nearer the end of life's *fitful follies*."



The History Center in Tompkins County, Ithaca, N.Y., has kindly provided your correspondent with photocopies of the correspondence of Priv. Lyman Ostrom, Co. A, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., and one of his letters is found on pp. 80-83.

Assistance is needed in acquiring photocopies of the correspondence of Capt. Eugene Van Santvoord, Co. G, 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y., held by the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, N.J.

The New York Public Library holds the archives of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, including the files of seven (7) men who served with the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Due to the reported fragility of the documents, the NYPL's Manuscripts and Archives Division will not make photocopies for the public, but it may be possible for an independent researcher to do so; alternatives would include making transcriptions on-site or taking photographs of the documents. Below is a list of the men:

- ✦ Priv. Anton Bond, Co. K
- ✦ Priv. John Dillon, Co. D
- ✦ Serg't. Charles F. Harrington, Co. E
- ✦ Corp. Charles Lasher, Co. A
- ✦ Priv. Arthur Roe, Co. E
- ✦ Priv. William Ryan, Co. B
- ✦ Musician Edward Smith (alias of Henry Behr), Co. C

A correction in the last issue of this newsletter (August 2013) is in order. In the section dealing with the draft riots in Troy, we find the following: "Shadowing the mob were prominent Trojans such as Congressman John A. Griswold and John McConihe's brother, Col. Isaac McConihe, Jr., in command of the 24<sup>th</sup>." In fact Isaac did not become commandant of the 24<sup>th</sup> N.Y.S.N.G. until well after the riots, as reported by the *Daily Whig* on October 9, 1863: "Isaac McConihe, Jr., has accepted the Colonelcy of the Twenty-fourth Regiment."

The following photographs of gravestones are for soldiers found on the list of casualties of the 169<sup>th</sup> N.Y. at Folly Island, S.C., on p. 78.



**Private Levi B. Brundige, Co. C**  
East Pittstown Methodist Cemetery, Pittstown,  
Rensselaer County, N.Y.



**Corporal Mandelbert J. Palmer, Co. E**  
Lynwood Church Cemetery, Hadley,  
Saratoga County, N.Y.





**Private Adam Heusse, Co. A**  
Beaufort National Cemetery, Beaufort, S.C.



**Private Daniel Hydenburg, Co. A**  
Beaufort National Cemetery, Beaufort, S.C.



**Private William McKelvy, Co. F**  
Beaufort National Cemetery, Beaufort, S.C.



**Corporal William H. Reed, Co. A**  
Beaufort National Cemetery, Beaufort, S.C.



**Private Amos Green, Co. F**  
Beaufort National Cemetery, Beaufort, S.C.



**Private John Wagner, Co. A**  
Cypress Hills National Cemetery, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Cheers,

- Steve Wiezbicki

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<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrense/169ny2.htm>