

## CHAPTER ONE

# A Profile of Lysander Cutler and His Brigade

**Lysander Cutler** pursued several diverse and unrelated careers prior to the Civil War.

He was born on February 16, 1807, in Worcester, Massachusetts. As a young boy, Cutler strove to improve his education despite protests from his farmer father. He studied both the clothier trade and surveying, and at the age of 21 assumed the position of headmaster of a Maine school. Rowdy pupils had driven the previous instructor from this job. Cutler dealt with the problem in a direct and firm manner that was later reflected in his future endeavors. To assert his control, Cutler spent the first day at the school whipping the troublemakers!

As a young man, Cutler advanced swiftly through the ranks of the Maine militia. When a border controversy between Maine and Canada led to the bloodless Aroostook War, Cutler served as a lieutenant colonel in the militia from February 20 – April 25, 1839. Four years later he established a woolen mill and earned a fortune within ten years. However, a fire destroyed his mill and left him financially destitute. Undeterred, Cutler not only rebuilt the mill but participated in the development of a foundry, a grist mill, and a sawmill as well as some tenements. By the mid-1850s, Cutler's business acumen had earned him another small fortune and a stellar reputation. He became a selectman, a railroad director, a trustee for Tufts College, and a state senator.

Unfortunately, the Panic of 1856 wiped out Cutler's fiscal security. Broke, he moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where a mining company hired him. His work

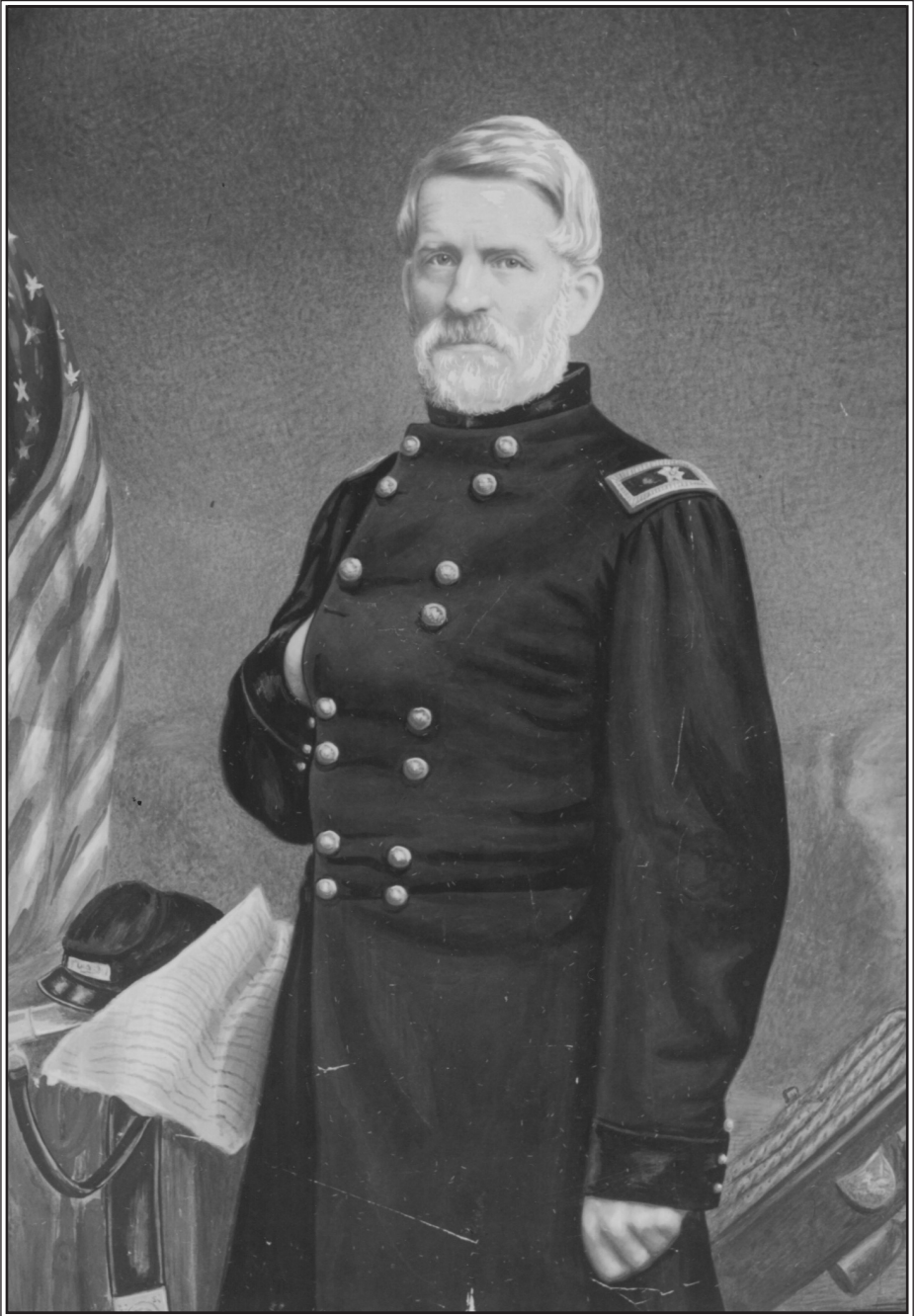
utilized surveying skills he had learned 20 years earlier and also required him to travel alone through Indian country. When the war began in 1861, Cutler was employed as a grain broker and a fish inspector.<sup>1</sup>

Cutler had not mellowed in his 53 years. He was still a tough and active individual. His experience with the Maine militia led to his colonelcy of the 6th Wisconsin. During the next year and a half he helped mold the western regiment into a competent fighting force that would become part of the famed Iron Brigade, one of the most renowned fighting outfits in the Army of the Potomac. His personality made an immediate impression. According to Rufus Dawes, who later commanded the same regiment, Cutler was “rugged as a wolf.” Another officer of the regiment described Cutler as “gruff and gouty and when roused . . . emitted a grunt, like an enraged porker.” When the 6th Wisconsin reached Washington, Cutler pinpointed line officers he felt were unacceptable and administered a test to eliminate seven captains and lieutenants “under the thin disguise of failure to pass the exam.”

Another incident further illustrates Cutler's mettle. When President Abraham Lincoln relieved Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan from command of the Army of the Potomac in November 1862, widespread dissatisfaction gripped the army. Some officers in the Iron Brigade thought about resigning their commissions. When Cutler caught wind of the rumor, he let it be known that anyone considering a resignation in the face of the enemy would be recommended for dismissal—which effectively ended the demonstration. “Cutler had in all matters of command and discipline the courage of his convictions,” explained Dawes. Occasionally, the crusty colonel displayed a tender side. November 28, 1861, was the first Thanksgiving away from home for many of the boys in the 6th Wisconsin. To help alleviate their anxiety and homesickness, Cutler bought 20 mince pies for each company in his regiment [about ¼ of a pie per man]. Cutler's nickname, “Old Graybeard,” was almost certainly one of affection.<sup>2</sup>

1 Ezra Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (New Orleans, 1964), p. 110; Jesse B. Young, *The Battle of Gettysburg* (New York, 1913), p. 386; Alan T. Nolan, *The Iron Brigade, A Military History* (Madison, 1975), pp. 16, 34; *Arrostook War, Historical Sketch and Roster of Commissioned Officers and Enlisted men Called into Service for the Protection of the Northeastern Frontier of Maine* (Augusta: Kennebec Journal Print, 1904), p. 22.

2 Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, pp. 16, 53, 64-67, 88-96, 112, 170; Rufus Dawes, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin* (Marietta, 1890), pp. 26, 27, 31; John Tregaskis, comp., *The Battlefield of Gettysburg* (New York, 1888), no page nos.; Glenn Tucker, *High Tide at Gettysburg: The Campaign in Pennsylvania* (Dayton, 1973), p. 114.



Oil painting of Lysander Cutler.

*Courtesy of David Cutler Ahlgren*

Cutler's military record prior to Gettysburg was excellent. On August 5, 1862, he commanded an independent wing during the Frederick Hall Raid. Under his leadership the 6th Wisconsin, a squadron of cavalry, and a section of artillery penetrated enemy lines, wrecked two miles of track along the Virginia Central Railroad, destroyed some Confederate supplies and warehouses, and eluded a Rebel cavalry force led by Maj. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart. In all, Cutler's group marched 90 miles in just three-and one-half days while fulfilling their mission.<sup>3</sup>

Later that same month, on August 28 during the Second Bull Run Campaign, Cutler suffered a severe leg wound during the battle at Brawner's Farm when a bullet struck him in the upper right thigh. The wound continued to cause him great pain after he returned to duty that November. According to one of Cutler's staff officers, "Old Graybeard" frequently required assistance to mount his horse due to lameness and stiffness in his injured thigh. On at least one occasion in 1864, the lingering effects of his wound led to temporary paralysis. E. B. Wolcott, a Wisconsin surgeon and prewar friend, believed Cutler's death in 1866 was "clearly traceable to the effects of the wound and exposure in the service."<sup>4</sup>

Soon after Cutler returned to duty with the 6th Wisconsin, his brigade commander, John Gibbon, received a promotion to lead a division. For a brief time Cutler replaced Gibbon in charge of the collection of western regiments now nicknamed "the Iron Brigade." Many felt "Old Graybeard" deserved to remain in command. However, politics intervened as it often did in the Army of the Potomac, and Solomon Meredith was put in command of the brigade. It was not a smooth transition. At Fredericksburg, Brig. Gen. Abner Doubleday became irritated with Meredith when the subordinate failed to move his brigade quickly enough to satisfy him. Doubleday relieved Meredith, and Cutler once again found himself in temporary command of the brigade. Cutler made an immediate impact. During the December battle, the 19th Indiana held an advanced picket line and was nearly left behind when the army retreated across the Rappahannock River. Only Cutler's vigilance prevented the Hoosiers from being stranded on the wrong side of the river.

During the winter months of early 1863, President Lincoln removed Ambrose Burnside and put Maj. Gen. Joseph "Fighting Joe" Hooker in command of the

3 Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, pp. 64-68.

4 Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, pp. 88-96; Lysander Cutler Pension File, National Archives & Records Administration, hereafter cited as NARA; Jack D. Welsh, M.D., *Medical Histories of Union Generals* (Kent, OH, 1996), pp. 88-89.

Army of the Potomac. It was the beginning of a major reorganization. Cutler was promoted to brigadier general, dating back to November 29, 1862, and assumed command of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 1st Corps in Brig. Gen. James S. Wadworth's division. Cutler's mixed brigade of five regiments consisted of the 76th New York, 56th Pennsylvania, 95th New York, and 7th Indiana regiments, as well as the newly added 147th New York. The 1st Corps saw but limited action during the disastrous Chancellorsville Campaign that unfolded in late April and early May of 1863.<sup>5</sup>

Soon after the conclusion of the devastating spring campaign the Army of the Potomac underwent further changes. Attrition, battle casualties, and the discharge of 58 regiments whose enlistment terms had expired necessitated the major reorganization of Wadworth's division. The unit had dwindled from 19 to just 11 regiments and was consolidated from four brigades into two. The Western Iron Brigade became the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 1st Corps, and Cutler's command remained the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 1st Corps. Fortunately for Cutler, he picked up an additional regiment in the 14th Brooklyn. Chasseur John Vliet commented favorably about Cutler soon after his regiment joined the brigade. Vliet maintained that Cutler made frequent visits to the New Yorkers' camp and seemed to show more interest in the Brooklyn boys than any previous general. Although the 76th and 95th New York and 56th Pennsylvania had served together for about a year, Cutler's brigade as a whole entered the summer of 1863 campaign having never cooperated as a consolidated unit. It is important to understand each regiment's unique history prior to being brigaded under Cutler.<sup>6</sup>

5 For more on the reorganization that winter, see Al Conner and Chris Mackowski, *Seizing Destiny: The Army of the Potomac's "Valley Forge"* (Savas Beatie, 2016).

6 Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, pp. 170, 180-184, 196, 197, 233; Henry J. Hunt, "The First Day at Gettysburg," in Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4 vols. (New York, 1956), vol. 3, *Retreat From Gettysburg*, p. 258; Young, *The Battle of Gettysburg*, p. 386; Warner, *Generals in Blue*, p. 110; John Vliet Letter, June 6, 1863, John Vliet Collection, Brooklyn Historical Society. In May 1861, the 14th Brooklyn mustered in "for the war." After First Bull Run the regiment was brigaded with the 22nd, 24th, and 30th New York regiments, all two-year outfits. The 2nd United States Sharpshooters joined the brigade in March 1862 and left the unit in January 1863. In April 1862, the brigade made a grueling march from Catlett's Station to Falmouth, which earned the command the nickname "Iron Brigade." The Eastern Iron Brigade fought well at Second Bull Run, South Mountain, and Antietam. Throughout May 1863, the 22nd, 24th, and 30th New York regiments headed back to the Empire State when their terms of service expired. The 14th Brooklyn, a regiment without a brigade, was then assigned to Cutler's brigade.

The 76th New York, nicknamed the “Cortland County Regiment,” recruited its members primarily from Cortland, Otsego, and other central New York counties. The enlistees mustered into service on January 16, 1862, and departed for the capital the following day. The experience of the 76th offers a good illustration of how Federal regiments were often shifted within the army’s command structure. From January to March 1862, the regiment was part of the 3rd Brigade, Casey’s division, Army of the Potomac. During March, April, and May, the central New York outfit fell under Wadsworth’s command in the Military District of Washington. During May through June the regiment came under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Rappahannock, and from June to September 1862, the 76th New York was in Abner Doubleday’s 2nd Brigade of Maj. Gen. Irvin McDowell’s 3rd Corps, part of Maj. Gen. John Pope’s Army of Virginia. It was during its time under Pope that the regiment fought its maiden battle. On August 28 it was ordered, together with the 56th Pennsylvania, to reinforce Brig. Gen. John Gibbon’s Western Brigade, which had been attacked by several Confederate divisions in the wing of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia led by Maj. Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson. The Battle of Brawner’s Farm was a stand-up, slug-it-out affair at close range. The fighting cost the 76th New York about 100 casualties. Soon after the campaign, the New York regiment became a portion of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 1st Corps, Army of the Potomac, and would remain in that capacity until January of 1864.<sup>7</sup>

By May 13, 1863, the 76th New York was a skeleton of its former self. Disease and battle attrition had severely depleted its ranks. To compensate for its losses the regiment received recruits from two disbanded regiments: about 50 men from the 24th New York and about 205 officers and men from the 30th New York. As a result, the 76th New York would enter the July 1, 1863, battle at Gettysburg with 375 officers and men.<sup>8</sup>

7 *New York Monuments Commission for the Battlefields of Gettysburg and Chattanooga, Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg* (Albany, 1900), p. 612 [hereafter noted as *New York at Gettysburg*]; Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, pp. 88-96; Bruce Catton, *Mr. Lincoln’s Army* (New York, 1951), pp. 21-23; William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865* (Albany, 1889), pp. 31, 209; Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (New York, 1959), p. 1434.

8 Adam Smith, *History of the 76th Regiment, New York Volunteers* (Cortland, 1867), p. 223 [hereafter cited Smith, *76th New York*]; John Busey and David Martin, *Regimental Strengths at Gettysburg* (Baltimore, 1982), p. 24; *New York at Gettysburg*, p. 611; Warren W. Hassler, *Crisis at the Crossroads* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1970), p. 143; Cutler’s Field Return, RG 393, Part 2, NARA.

The 56th Pennsylvania history closely paralleled that of the 76th New York. The regiment was recruited for a three-year enlistment term and organized and trained at Camp Curtin, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Its colonel, Sullivan Amory Meredith, was a prominent Philadelphian. Like the 76th New York, the command traveled to the capital in early 1862. During April 1862, the Pennsylvanians guarded government property and stores left behind by Brig. Gen. Joseph Hooker's Peninsula-bound division. On the 24th of April, the unit was transferred to Aquia Landing, a Union supply port and depot near Fredericksburg, Virginia. While there, the regiment was kept busy repairing wharves, cutting wood, rebuilding the railroad, and performing other "unsoldierly" duties. From May to June, the regiment was designated as part of the Department of the Rappahannock. The 56th Pennsylvania and 76th New York, brigaded together in the 1st Division, 3rd Corps, Army of Virginia under John Pope, encountered their initial enemy fire at Brawner's Farm. The fighting cost the 56th Pennsylvania 61 out of 300 men engaged. Both regiments would continue to serve together throughout the war.<sup>9</sup>

Colonel John William Hofmann led the 56th Pennsylvania during the 1863 summer campaign. Hofmann was born in Philadelphia on February 18, 1824, the son of a German immigrant. As a youth he joined the Military Company of Junior Artillerists and remained with the organization from 1840-1843. He switched allegiance in 1843 to the Artillery Corps of Washington Grays and served in that unit until the Civil War erupted. As a member of these militia groups, Hofmann participated in suppressing four riots in the Quaker City (August 1842, January 1843, May 1844, and July 1844). Service in these quasi-military groups earned him a captaincy in the 23rd Pennsylvania in 1861 and later an appointment as major of the 56th Pennsylvania. His efforts in recruiting the 56th Pennsylvania, together with his soldierly bearing, led to his promotion to lieutenant colonel. When Col. Sullivan Meredith was wounded during the Second Bull Run Campaign, Hofmann assumed control of the regiment. During the Antietam Campaign, battle casualties and seniority temporarily elevated Hofmann to command of the brigade. On January 8, 1863, the Philadelphian was promoted to colonel of the 56th

9 *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg, Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments Erected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1904), pp. 339-347; Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, pp. 88, 95, 96; Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, p. 1593; Catton, *Mr. Lincoln's Army*, pp. 21-21; *Military Record of Brevet Brig. Gen. John William Hofmann, United States Volunteers* (Philadelphia, 1884), pp. 3-5; William B. Franklin, "Notes on Crampton's Gap and Antietam," in Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4 vols. (New York, 1956), vol. 2, p. 598; Warner, *Generals in Blue*, p. 320.

Pennsylvania. Hofmann was never wounded, never reported sick, and was almost constantly with his command. His regiment entered the Gettysburg fight with 17 officers and 235 men.<sup>10</sup>

The 95th New York, also known as the “Warren Rifles,” was raised from November 1861 through March 1862. Seven companies came from New York City, one from Haverstraw, one from Sing Sing, and one from Westchester County. A sprinkle of enlistees, who simply joined the first regiment that struck their fancy, hailed from Newark, New Jersey. On March 6, 1862, the 95th New York mustered into service with George H. Biddle commissioned as colonel, James B. Post as lieutenant colonel, and Edward Pye as major. Approximately 1,000 strong, the “Warren Rifles” reached the capital on March 19, 1862, and bivouacked at Camp Thomas. During May and June 1862, the regiment became part of Abner Doubleday’s brigade, Department of the Rappahannock, where it united with the 76th New York and 56th Pennsylvania. The brigade was later designated the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 3rd Corps of Pope’s Army of Virginia. The 95th New York saw limited action at Brawner’s Farm on August 28, but was actively engaged the next evening on a ridge overlooking Groveton. The regiment lost more than 100 men during the three days of fighting at Second Bull Run. In September of 1862, the 56th Pennsylvania, 76th New York, and 95th New York became the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 1st Corps, Army of the Potomac. Colonel Biddle, a 61-year-old Mexican War veteran, led the “Warren Rifles” when the Gettysburg Campaign opened. Major Edward Pye, a 40-year-old graduate of Rutgers College and a pre-war New Jersey lawyer, was second in command. On July 1, 1863, the regiment carried into battle 21 officers and 218 men.<sup>11</sup>

The 7th Indiana Regiment’s career began differently from the experiences of the previous three regiments. This unit originally mustered in as a three-month organization. During its term of enlistment, the Hoosiers toiled in western Virginia to help neutralize the Confederate threat in the region. When their term of service expired, the regiment boarded Baltimore and Ohio Railroad passenger cars to head

10 *Military Record of . . . Hofmann*, pp. 3-5; *North to Antietam*, p. 598; Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths at Gettysburg*, p. 24; Frank Taylor, *Philadelphia in the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1913), p. 76; Hassler, *Crisis at the Crossroads*, p. 143; *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg*, p. 312; 56th Pennsylvania Battlefield Marker; Cutler’s Brigade Field Return, RG 393, Part 2, NARA.

11 *North to Antietam*, p. 497; *New York at Gettysburg*, p. 737; Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* p. 1442; Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, pp. 89-90; Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths at Gettysburg*, p. 24; Edmund Raus, *A Generation on the March* (Lynchburg, 1987), pp. 74-75; Cutler’s Brigade Field Return, RG 393, Part 2, NARA.



home. During their return, Col. Ebenezer Dumont organized a meeting in his headquarters car where he and his officers and some of the men discussed reenlistment. They agreed to reorganize the regiment as a three-year outfit and to retain their numerical designation. On September 13, 1861, after a brief period of recruitment, the 7th Indiana Volunteers committed to a three-year enlistment. The regiment promptly returned to western Virginia, and on October 3, 1861, participated in its first combat at the Battle of Green Briar.<sup>12</sup>

With some fighting under its belt, the outfit was transferred to the Shenandoah Valley to serve under Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks. On March 23, 1862, the 7th Indiana fought against Stonewall Jackson's troops at the First Battle of Kernstown. That June, the Indiana regiment met Jackson's veterans again at Port Republic. Not long thereafter, it became part of Pope's Army of Virginia. Service at Cedar Mountain on August 9 followed as did combat on August 30 at the Second Bull Run debacle. When George McClellan quickly reorganized the defeated Union forces around Washington and moved westward to pursue General Lee's Confederate army in Maryland, the 7th Indiana was attached to the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, 1st Corps, Army of the Potomac, which also contained the 76th and 95th New York and 56th Pennsylvania regiments. By that September, four of the six units that would comprise Cutler's brigade at Gettysburg had banded together. During the Army of the Potomac's next four battles—South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville—the brigade saw scant action. Limited casualty totals from those fights confirm that the command had been spared from serious combat. At Gettysburg, Col. Ira G. Grover, a 31-year-old college graduate and prewar lawyer and politician, commanded the 7th Indiana. The outfit entered the battle with 437 officers and men.<sup>13</sup>

The 147th New York was added to Cutler's brigade before Chancellorsville. The 147th New York, nicknamed "The Plowboys" and the "Oswego Regiment," hailed from Oswego County. The northern New York enlistees had answered President Lincoln's July 1862 call for 300,000 additional troops. The regiment recruited from the third week of August 1862 until it mustered into service on September 22 and 23, 1862. The New York outfit had a distinctive ethnic flavor

12 Orville Thomson, *Narrative of the Service of the Seventh Indiana Infantry in the War of the Rebellion* (n. p., n. d.), pp. 4-42.

13 Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, p. 1120; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, Vol. 2* (Indianapolis, 1865), p. 47; *North to Antietam*, p. 598; *Retreat from Gettysburg*, pp. 145, 234; Raus, *A Generation on the March*, p. 19; Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths at Gettysburg*, p. 24; Cutler's Brigade Field Return, RG 393, Part 2, NARA.

with entire companies containing either Irish or German recruits. Under Col. Andrew S. Warner, a former assemblyman with no military experience, the regiment left for Washington on September 27. The next day, 837 enlisted men received their Enfield rifles at Elmira, New York. The regiment arrived in the capital on September 29, and it was attached to Washington's defenses.

Camp life appeared pleasant and easy, but it soon took a destructive turn. Many raw recruits, not realizing the importance of sanitation, contracted malaria or suffered from dysentery. Indeed, "the dead march" soon became as familiar as reveille. The inexperienced Colonel Warner failed to recognize the importance of drill and discipline. In addition, the 147th New York spent much of its time working on fortifications or building roads. The construction work, disease, and lack of drill disillusioned the regiment.<sup>14</sup>

Not all the time spent in Washington was boring or dangerous. During off-duty hours, soldiers visited the Capitol, the White House, various parks, the Patent Office, and the Smithsonian Institution. On November 2, President Lincoln and Secretary of State William Seward reviewed the regiment during a dress parade. Later in the month, near Thanksgiving, Company K received a 300-pound box of cooked turkeys, chickens, mince pies, and other delicacies from their Oswego families and friends. The next day the regiment dined on this splendid repast. When the Oswego boys finished their feast, seven baskets of food remained.<sup>15</sup>

The regiment received its marching orders the same day its members were enjoying their food from home. Colonel Warner exhibited his inexperience by drawing so many supplies and so much equipment that 33 six-mule teams were needed to haul his requisitions—and 10 loads still had to be left behind. Serving as part of the provost guard of the Army of the Potomac, the 147th New York marched to Port Tobacco and was ferried to the supply base at Aquia Landing. Once there, the men unloaded barges, performed picket duty, or guarded the bridge and rail line connecting Aquia Creek to Fredericksburg. Good fortune was their lot at the Battle of Fredericksburg, where the 147th New York was not engaged.

Soon after the battle, the regiment marched to Union headquarters at Falmouth. The Oswego unit guarded the railroad and helped the injured soldiers embark on the cars. The sight of ghastly battle wounds, the inexperienced conduct

14 Snyder, Charles, *Oswego County, New York in the Civil War* (Oswego County, 1962), pp. 54-55; *New York at Gettysburg*, pp. 997-998; Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, p. 1460.

15 Snyder, *Oswego County, New York in the Civil War*, pp. 55-56.

of its officers, and the laborious and seemingly non-military duties to which the regiment had been assigned caused a general despondency throughout the ranks. These disheartening circumstances reached a climax in January 1863 when the Army of the Potomac's commander, Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, ordered a winter offensive. Soon after the Yankees dismantled their camps and started their march, chilling rains poured from the sky and drenched the troops. The precipitation transformed the roads into boggy quagmires that made marching nearly impossible. For four days the troops endured the rain, the cold, and the muck before returning to their camps. The weather took its toll on the 147th New York. The elements contributed to new cases of typhoid fever, pneumonia, and dysentery, which resulted in 44 deaths. Ironically, Burnside's "Mud March" eventually strengthened the Oswego outfit. Colonel Warner, four captains, and three lieutenants who were either ill or dissatisfied exercised their option to resign. Major Francis C. Miller became the regiment's lieutenant colonel, and Captain George Harney assumed the rank of major. These officers, as well as the replacements at the captain and lieutenant levels, would prove to be much better leaders.<sup>16</sup>

After the "Mud March," the 147th New York resumed its fatigue duty on the docks. The labor ended in March 1863 when the regiment was assigned to Cutler's command, swelling his brigade to five regiments. The 147th New York benefitted greatly from the change. "Old Graybeard" drilled the outfit constantly and stressed discipline. New Yorker George Harney would later boast that within a month the regiment was transformed "from its indifference and demoralization into one of the best organizations in the army." The Oswego boys saw scant action during the Chancellorsville Campaign in May, losing two killed or mortally wounded. As a result, the 147th entered the summer campaign having never "seen the elephant." The lieutenant colonel, a 33-year-old prewar carpenter named Francis Miller, led the regiment throughout the Gettysburg Campaign. Miller entered the first day's battle with 27 officers and 403 enlisted men.<sup>17</sup>

16 Snyder, *Oswego County, New York in the Civil War*, pp. 56-57; *New York at Gettysburg*, pp. 998-999.

17 Snyder, *Oswego County, New York in the Civil War*, pp. 56-57; *New York at Gettysburg*, pp. 998-999; Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, p. 1460; Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths at Gettysburg*, p. 24; Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War*, p. 31; Hassler, *Crisis at the Crossroads*, p. 143; Raus, *A Generation on the March*, p. 83; Cutler's Brigade Field Returns, RG 393, Part 2, NARA.

The final regiment added to Cutler's ranks before Gettysburg was the 14th Brooklyn (also known as the 14th New York State Militia or the 84th New York Volunteers) in June of 1863. It became the longest serving and the most experienced regiment within the brigade. Prior to the war, the outfit operated as a militia regiment in Brooklyn, New York. Six days after the firing on Fort Sumter, the 14th New York State Militia answered President Lincoln's call for 75,000 three-month troops. Governor E. D. Morgan, for political or other reasons, refused to call out the regiment. For nearly a month the militia group remained in Brooklyn drilling daily. Finally, Congressman Moses Odell (who represented the Brooklyn district), together with a committee from New York's Union Defense Committee and Alfred M. Wood, the 14th Brooklyn's colonel, met with President Lincoln in Washington. The lobbying effort worked, and Lincoln used his power as commander-in-chief to call up the militia outfit. The enlistment term, however, was "for the war" instead of three months. On May 18, 1861, the regiment received orders to report to the capital. New York City's Union Defense Committee provided the transportation funds for the excursion.<sup>18</sup>

The Brooklyn soldiers had two sources of extreme pride. One was their uniform. Prior to the war, the militia group had switched to a colorful chasseur outfit. As the regiment recruited to wartime status, the city of Brooklyn gladly furnished its enlistees with the special clothing. The uniform consisted of a blue cap trimmed with red, a short blue jacket lined with two rows of bell buttons, scarlet loose-fitting pants, white gaiters, and a red breast piece or vest also decorated with a column of bell buttons. Its participation at First Bull Run that July wore out the 14th Brooklyn's red trousers. Much to the regiment's disgust, the government supplied the Brooklyn lads with blue pants. The chasseurs raised such a fuss that they received red trousers thereafter.

The regiment's numeral was another source of pride. At the end of 1861, New York's Governor Morgan decided to change the 14th Brooklyn's numeric designation. When the state raised two-year regiments in 1861, it branded one of them as the 14th New York State Volunteers. To prevent confusion, Morgan decided to alter the 14th New York State Militia's number and designation to the 84th New York Volunteers. This act, with the support of the War Department, caused turmoil within the Brooklyn regiment that continued for months. Finally,

18 C. Tevis and D. R. Marquis, *The History of the Fighting Fourteenth* (New York, 1911), pp. 15-16; *New York at Gettysburg*, pp. 686-687. The War Department later defined "for the war" as a 3-year term of service.

through the intervention of Maj. Gen. Irvin McDowell, who had mustered in the 14th New York State Militia on May 23, 1861, the War Department relented, and allowed the Brooklyn boys to retain their original number. Throughout the war regimental officers avoided using “84,” which is why all correspondence, payrolls, and official reports bear the heading “14th New York State Militia” or “14th Brooklyn.”<sup>19</sup>

These were not the only features that made the 14th Brooklyn colorful. After the war, Surgeon Algernon S. Coe of the 147th New York penned a tribute to the regiment that appeared in the *National Tribune*. “Probably no regiment in the war of the rebellion,” began Coe, “took a more conspicuous part, engaged in so many battles, and did so much to enliven the spirit of the boys and keep them from falling into despondency on the weary march, in advance or retreat, in bivouac or dreary monotony of Winter quarters.” The surgeon continued:

A true history of the regiment, with a little coloring, would read like a romance, rivaling the fictions of the days of chivalry and of Charles Lever. Not much can be said in respect to the discipline of the regiment, and, indeed, a too rigid discipline would have materially impaired its efficiency, which fact seemed to be well understood by the officers in command. Their enterprise and fertility of resources in supplying themselves and comrades with comforts and necessities in the most difficult situations [and] reckless bravery in battle . . . endeared them to all who knew them; hence they very naturally became pets, and even in a measure privileged, without exciting the jealousy or envy of other regiments.<sup>20</sup>

The 14th Brooklyn saw action at First Bull Run, where it fought well. The former militia group made three determined charges up Henry Hill in an attempt to retake two batteries captured by the Rebels. The chasseurs nearly outflanked Brig. Gen. Jackson’s Virginia brigade holding the ground opposite the Federal guns. More than 150 Brooklyn lads fell killed or wounded during the engagement. Its conspicuous gallantry earned the regiment the nicknames “Fighting Fourteenth”

19 Tevis and Marquis, *The History of the Fighting Fourteenth*, pp. 15, 237 and 252; “14th Regiment New York State Militia, 1861-1864,” *Military Collector and Historian*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Fall 1958), pp. 80-82. The 14th Brooklyn’s chasseur uniform looked similar to a Zouave outfit. One difference was that the red chasseur trousers featured loose-fitting legs while Zouave pants sported an exaggerated, baggy fit. Also, Zouaves wore fezzes; chasseurs donned kepis. Throughout the war, the 14th Brooklyn received issues of both blue and red trousers. The regiment saved the red pants for parade and battle.

20 A. S. Coe, “The 14th N. Y. Zouaves,” *National Tribune*, August 13, 1885. Charles Lever was an Irish novelist whose protagonists were lively, devil-may-care heroes.

and “Red-Legged Devils.” The unit went on to serve with McDowell’s command in northern Virginia in early 1862, which later became part of John Pope’s Army of Virginia. The “Fighting Fourteenth” saw action on all three days at Second Bull Run, sustaining nearly 150 casualties. The Brooklyn boys also fought at South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. After the latter campaign, the term of enlistment of the two-year regiments brigaded with the 14th Brooklyn expired, so the “Red-Legged Devils” were assigned to Lysander Cutler’s brigade in June.

On July 1, 1863, Col. Edward Brush Fowler led 26 officers and 331 veterans from their Marsh Creek bivouac to Gettysburg.<sup>21</sup>

21 Tevis and Marquis, *The History of the Fighting Fourteenth*, pp. 24-74; *New York at Gettysburg*, p. 687; Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, p. 1438; Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths at Gettysburg*, p. 24; 14th Brooklyn Battlefield Marker; Hassler, *Crisis at the Crossroads*, p. 143; Cutler’s Brigade Field Return, RG 393, Part 2, NARA.