

Memorial Statue

107th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment



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The total height of the monument including the figure is seventeen feet five inches. It is made of Quincy granite. The first base is six feet eight inches; the second is five feet six inches; the third is four feet six inches. On the latter base are the figures 1861-1865. The die is three eight inches. On the front are the words in sunken letters: "Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Resaca, New Hope Church." On the right side the words: "Pine Knob, Culp's Farm, Kenesaw Mountain, Peach Tree Creek,, Siege of Atlanta." On the left side: "Sherman's March, Siege of Savannah, Carolinas, Averysboro, Bentonville." The upper die (two feet eight inches) has "107" in ornamental letters in a wreath of laurel, with N.Y. Vols. in raised letters, polished face. The cap (three feet eight inches) has a star being the corps to which the regiment belonged. Surmounting the whole is a magnificent figure of a uniformed soldier (in bronze) in the attitude of "at rest." The figure is seven feet three and one fourth inches high and weighs 1,589 pounds. The contract was awarded to A.W. Ayres, who performed the work in the most satisfactory manner. It was designed and built under the supervision of the capable foreman of the shops, Joseph Cartledge. The lettering was done by Henry Baker, a superior workman

Elmira Sunday Telegram, Sunday September 17, 1882



The Bronze Soldier

He gets down from his pedestal to talk with his old comrades

There had been a meeting of the post to discuss arrangements for Memorial day. At a late hour Comrade Frank Frost and myself walked leisurely down Lake street. Our minds ran back to the old war days. Our talk was reminiscent. As we drew near the Court House park, the soldier's monument attracted our attention, and we halted. The grassy terrace about the monument looked inviting and we entered the grounds and seated ourselves thereon. The street was deserted and an unusual quiet prevailed. Our talk reverted to the battles

inscribed upon the granite pedestal above us. They were battles that we had each participated in. Some of them were historic, 'Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Atlanta, Sherman's March to the Sea, Savannah, Carolinas--names that thrill every patriotic heart. We had "fought over" two or three of these, unmindful of the passing time, and were about taking up the Atlanta campaign, when the city clock clanged out the hour of 12--mid-night. Aroused from our meditation, we began to "limber up" for the homeward march.

A noise over our head attracted our attention. We gazed upward to the bronze figure that crowns the monument, and were amazed to see in the dim light a movement' of the hitherto rigid form. As we gazed there came a distinct command, "Attention." The figure relaxed from the long "parade rest," and stood at "attention." Then came "Shoulder Arms." Up swung the Old Springfield to a shoulder. "Arms Port" followed, then "Break Ranks," as the hand of the bronze soldier rattled against the rifle stock, the figure leaped down from the pedestal and stood beside us. Too much surprised to speak, we stood fast and stared. "How are you, comrades of the 107th?" spoke the figure. "Glad to see you. Fortunate that you happened here at this time--the time of my annual rest. It's mighty hard work to stand up there for a whole year--that is--it would be were I flesh like you. What do you think about it, eh?" and the figure actually poked his thumb against Comrade Frost's ribs and grinned.

Comrade Frost loves an old soldier so well that the supernatural character of the Comrade who thus addressed him had no chilling effect upon him, and he said, "I never tried it for more than five minutes at a time, but I stood on a barrel once for four hours for some trifling neglect of duty. That was before I became such a fighter, when I was a sergeant. I was promoted afterward." The bronze figure laughed and said: "Sit down, boys; let's talk," and he proceeded to talk. He did all the talking. Neither Frost nor myself are shorthand writers, so could save but a portion of the utterances of our strange visitor. "You fellows don't remember me. I was killed at Averysboro, North Carolina, in 1865, after passing safely through all the great battles that preceded it. Yes, the name is on the monument, next to the last battle Sherman's army fought. There were several of us mustered out at that time. But say, those were great days. I just stand up there thinking about them, having nothing else to do. You who continue to live are too busy to remember as I do. You forget more than you remember. It's all as real and vivid to me as if it were happening now.

How grandly patriotic everybody was in 1862, when President Lincoln called for 300,000 men, that is when you and I enlisted. Why, in one month more than 1,000 men were enrolled here in Elmira, and were organized into a regiment and were on their way to the seat of war. What a lot of young fellows we were; how little we knew what a soldier's life was. Do you remember that first march of our campaign? We were so green that we could hardly turn around without falling over one another, but we could carry a gun, and when the orders came to march into Maryland there were 1,000 of us in line, and we marched as bravely as those old "vets" of the Second Massachusetts and Third Wisconsin and 'Twenty-seventh Indiana, with whom we were brigaded.

That first march to battle---can you fellows ever forget it? How we sang "Old John Brown" as we crossed over the Potomac into Maryland that warm September night. How the bright gun barrels glistened in the moonlight. What a lot of us there were? Never afterward did the 107th muster as many men in line. How strange it all was--that first march. Do you remember how the first night's bivouac was disturbed by that bloodcurdling sound of "long roll?" The nerviest man among us shivered as he heard it. Do you remember how awkwardly we proceeded as we tried to prepare our first morning meal? Most of us compromised on a cup of half-cooked coffee and a hard tack. How we straggled after forage until the provost guard materialized into a thing to fear, and army orders crystallized into "obey or suffer the consequences." Oh, we had lots of things to learn before we ceased to be "green 'uns"--small wonder though--for three weeks before this first campaign began we were at our peaceful homes in York state. Nevertheless we were thought good soldiers enough to become targets for rebel shooters, and all this "freshness" ended, when, a week later, we came to the field whose name heads the battle list up there on the worst front of the monument. I should like to talk to you until daylight about Antietam, but you know all about it. There was never after that battle any question as to the soldierly qualities of "Ours."

Well, boys, don't forget in these days of comfort, the awful hardships of that first winter at Maryland Heights, Fairfax and Stafford. You cannot remember as well as I that there were more than 200 of the boys in the hospitals at Harper's Ferry, and that funerals were of daily occurrence. More than one poor boy died in his own bleak quarters. Do you remember the boys of company F working all night to make a coffin in which to bury poor Barnes, and how they, sometimes traveled to the other side of the mountain in search of boards enough to frame a rude box for some dead comrade?

Rations were poor-and clothing and camp equipage were hard to get. And the first marches we made southward in December, when the weather was so cold that the water froze in our canteens. There were days and nights of cold rain and sleet, and marches through mud almost impassable. How it tried souls and bodies, too. What a lot of the boys gave out under it. Do you remember the little cemetery at Hope Landing with the two dozen or more graves of our dead boys? And then the spring came, bringing us to that second battle named, "Chancellorsville," and more tough times, from which, with scarce a rest, we come to No. 3, up there, "Gettysburg." How the earth shook there during that tremendous cannonade. That's where there was glory enough to go all around. Are you tired, boys? If you are not let me talk a little longer. I don't get a chance very often. We dead comrades don't forget, and we don't want you living ones to forget.

After Gettysburg, you know, we were sent to the west and became a part of the grand old army of Sherman. And there began a series of operations that added fresh laurels to our flag, and a long addition to the list of our dead. Look at the battle-roll up there, "Resaca," "New Hope Church," "Pine Knob," "Culp's Farm," "Kenesaw," "Peach Tree Creek." It was at "Resaca" we saw the gallant advance of our sister regiment, the 141st. Archie Baxter can tell you about it

It was glorious, and then a week later the 107th caught it at New Hope Church, or Dallas. They nearly wiped us out there. Then it came the turn of the 141st at "Peach Tree"--a gloriously deadly fight for them; and so for four full months there was scarcely a day without the sounds of a conflict--soldiers' graves all along the battle road for 150 miles. But Atlanta was ours at last, and "fairly won."

Then came that famous "March to the Sea" and the siege and capture of Savannah, followed by a longer march and more trying times through the Carolinas. You know the rest. The end of the war and your peaceful march northward to Washington. What a circuit you had made, when you came back after three years to your camp, and what a change in the appearance of the regiment. Instead of the 1,000 less than 300; the bright new flags faded and tattered. The fresh young boys transformed into bronzed and manly veterans. Nearly as many sleeping in soldiers' graves as marched in the grand review.

Do you think of those boys? You will on Memorial day. They are a part of your glorious history. They camped with you, stood picket with you, marched with you, fought with you, endured with you, and died by your side. In the consideration of your glorious army record they should be accorded a part no less prominent than the living ones. They are in bivouac in the beyond waiting to welcome you to a grand reunion. Don't forget them. My time is up. Good-bye, boys, hope I haven't tired you, the relief guard is coming. There are enough of us to stand guard here, a year at a time, as long as this monument shall need a guard." At this the bronze figure saluted and sprang back to his position, there was an distinct murmur of voices, a rattling of arms, and as we turned away the dawning light fell upon the again immovable figure, and as we gazed into each other's faces, each beheld an expression, no less thoughtful than that upon the bronze face above us.

ARTHUR S. FITCH

Brevet Captain, Retired
107th NYV Infantry Reg't.



Elmira Sunday Telegram

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1882



IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE.

"They never fail who die
In a great cause; the block may soak their gore;
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs
Be strung to city gates, or castle walls
But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
E lapse, and others share as dark a gloom,
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overspread all others; and conduct
The world at last to freedom."

Yesterday, in this city, tardy justice was done to the memory of brave men who persisted in a righteous cause; yet though procrastinated the period when plaudit was paid, the magnificence of the' memorial makes up and atones for the delay in honoring by a substantial shaft the brave men and true who, in the defense of their country's honor, liberty and perpetuation, laid down their lives. The monolith unveiled in the county square yesterday will forever stand as an eloquent reminder that the comrades who survive did not forget the comrades who fell. In the good work of symbolizing in granite, as imperishable as recollection itself, the lofty deeds of daring and sacrifice. of the heroes of twenty years ago, the members of the 107th regiment of New York Volunteers were warmly seconded by patriotic and public spirited citizens. The contributions were not confined to the old soldiers of that regiment. True, they conceived the idea of erecting the monument, matured the plan, went to work to carry it out,



and freely gave of their own resources, as they had their services to, suppress the rebellion, but their appeals to others found a hearty response, and thus were they enabled more completely to carry the noble work on to the grand and successful termination that was reached yesterday. On the base are the records of the battles in which the 107th so gallantly comported itself, and yet, as one passes by, or stands in silence before the memorial pile, if he is a thoughtful man, he cannot but consider that the beautiful monument tells, by the force of connection, the story of other brave men, who, as members of different organizations, too fought a good fight for the Union, and fell, as they of the 107th, in its defense. Soldiers all, by the brotherhood of danger, by the impulses of patriotism by the victory won on southern battle-fields, by the grand triumph at last!

All these the 107th held in common with the soldiers of other commands, and the shaft to their dead emphasizes the honors and deservings of gallant men, no matter from whence they hail! And not only is the monument memorialistic of those who are no more--of thee to whom never again shall the beat of the drum rouse to valor, for none the less to the living shall the unveiled statute of yesterday stand in pride and commemorative honor. They who are dead are saintly in their heroes' death. They who are still with us--the veterans of the Potomac, of the southwest, and the Cumberland, deserve our respect, our congratulations, our sympathy and our honors! The men who fought and lived were as brave as those who fought and died, and so long as they shall be with us and amongst us are they entitled to our praise and appreciation. And they shall have it! They have earned it by proven valor! They have gained it by worthy citizenship! Mean and small souled would be the man who would begrudge them honor, or seek to rob them of it!

One iota of the advantage that should accrue to them as men who periled all for the undeserved union now enjoyed, while others stayed at home. Such men as those of the 107th made possible the present peace and prosperity. Therefore all honor to the men of the war for the union. If dead, the laurel and bay of remembrance! If living, the honors and emoluments even that shall show while they are able to appreciate it, that the republic is not ungrateful. It was mete and proper that the day of Antietam, a score of years afterwards, though it is, should be selected as the day to dedicate this monument, and right well was the work of love and patriotism accomplished.

On, Sunday, September 17, 1882, the day of the dedication of the statue memorializing the 107th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the Elmira Sunday Telegram distributed the above piece.

I found it in a book that I purchased at a house sale. To my knowledge, it is the only one in existence.
