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HISTORY OF TWENTY-FOURTH INFANTRY.

“The Twenty-fourth Infantry of Illinois Volunteers, known as the First Hecker Regiment, (the Eighty-second being the Second), was organized at Chicago, with two companies, to-wit: the Union Cadets and the Lincoln Rifles, from the three months' service in June, 1861, and mustered July 8, 1861, by Captain T. G. Pitcher. It left Chicago early in July, under orders to report at Alton, 111., whence it moved to St. Charles, Mo., and thence to Mexico, Mo. It remained at Mexico until the 28th of July, when it was ordered to Ironton. Mo., where it joined General Prentiss' Brigade. On the 3d of August, a detachment of the Twenty-fourth, under Lieut. Col. Mihalotzy, was thrown forward to Centreville, where Secession troops had gathered in force threatening communication with St. Louis. The Regiment moved to Pilot Knob, Mo., where General Grant was then in command, on the 8th of August, and was sent by him to Frederickstown, with instructions to effect a junction with the Union troops at Cape Girardeau. The command reached Cape Girardeau, and moved thence to Cairo, early in September, and on the 15th of the month received orders to join the Army of the Potomac at Washington.

Arriving at Cincinnati, it was detained by the railroad accident which disabled the Nineteenth Illinois, also on route for Washington. Meanwhile, however, the Confederate General Buckner had taken possession of Muldraugh Hill, south of Louisville, and threatened the capture of that city. The Regiment therefore received counter orders, and left Cincinnati on the 29th of September for Louisville. It was the first command of Union troops that trod the soil of Kentucky during the earlier days of the Rebellion, and upon its arrival at Louisville, the loyal people there accorded the Regiment a most hospitable and brilliant reception.

From Louisville the command proceeded to Colesburg and from there, on the next day, part of it took possession of Muldraugh Hill, General Buckner having fallen back on Green River. There it remained until November 30, when it was assigned to Turchin's (Eighth) Brigade, Mitchell's (Third) Division of the Army of the Ohio, and went into camp near Elizabethtown, Ky., where the Nineteenth Illinois also was stationed.

On the 22d, Turchin's Brigade marched to Bacon Creek, where it remained until February 10, 1862, when, intelligence having been received of the surrender of Fort Henry, the movement on Bowling Green and Nashville commenced. Mitchell's Division left camp on the 10th, Turchin's Brigade, with the Twenty-fourth in the advance, leading the column of Infantry. After a march of 40 miles over a frozen, rocky road, obstructed by trees felled by the enemy in their retreat, the Big Barren River was reached, and as soon as an old ferry-boat could be repaired, the Infantry, in the dead of night, crossed in parties of 50—all that the boat would hold at one time. The Twenty-fourth was the first Regiment across, and with the Nineteenth pushed on toward Bowling Green, choosing to face the possible enemy yet lingering there, rather than the bitter cold of that winter

night. The town was reached, but was enwrapped in flames, the Rebels having set fire to their stores and the railroad buildings.

Leaving Bowling Green on the 24th of the month, the Regiment arrived at Edgefield, opposite Nashville, which place General Johnston had previously occupied as headquarters, on the 27th. Nashville was surrendered the following day, and the troops crossed the river and went into camp.

Mitchell's Division having been assigned the task of penetrating the enemy's country to Huntsville, Ala., and, by occupying that place, severing the main line of communication between the Rebel armies in the East and in the West; the command moved to Murfreesboro, remaining there until April 4, building bridges, repairing roads, and making ready for the coming campaign. Huntsville, Ala., was a railroad center of vital importance to the enemy, and General Turchin therefore solicited and obtained permission from General Mitchell to advance with his Brigade, and, if possible, surprise and capture this city before the enemy was prepared for defense.

On the morning of the 10th, the expedition marched from Fayetteville. Turchin's Brigade, which consisted of the Nineteenth and Twenty-fourth Illinois, Eighteenth Ohio, Thirty-seventh Indiana, Fourth Ohio Cavalry, and Simonson's Battery, was followed by the other two Brigades of the Division at a little distance. Their progress was slow and exceedingly laborious owing to the terrible condition of the roads, which led through swamps and forests, or over high and precipitous hills, up which the mules could hardly drag the wagons. About 6 o'clock in the morning of the 11th, Kennett's Cavalry, which was in the advance, came in sight of the town. A section of Simonson's Battery was placed in position on the Meridianville road, which, while the infantry was coming up, by a few well directed shots succeeded in capturing a locomotive which, with train attached, was steaming out of Huntsville toward Stevenson, carrying 150 Confederate soldiers, who then became prisoners. As the infantry came up. Colonel Mihalotzy sent a detachment of the Twenty fourth to tear up the track and prevent the escape of any trains. The troops in the meantime entered Huntsville, taking the town completely by surprise, and capturing without a blow all the rebel soldiers that garrisoned the place, besides seventeen locomotives, one hundred and fifty cars, and an immense amount of railroad and war material. On the same day Huntsville was occupied, the whole of the Twenty-fourth Regiment and two companies of the Nineteenth Illinois, with one section of Simonson's Battery, moved to Decatur, on the Memphis & Charleston Railroad, and captured in the fortifications built there for the protection of the Decatur bridge, 500 bales of cotton, and on the opposite side of the bridge the full equipage of a Confederate Regiment. Turchin's Brigade pushed on from Decatur to Tuscumbia, in western Alabama, and some sixty miles from Huntsville. This point was seized and occupied, thus extending Mitchell's line from Stevenson on the east, along the railroad, to Tuscumbia on the west, about 120 miles. With the small force at his command so long a line could not be held, and Turchin's Brigade, after occupying Tuscumbia until April 22, was obliged to fall back to Huntsville.

The command reached Jonesboro on the 24th, crossed the Tennessee at Decatur on the 26th, and reached Huntsville on the 30th. On May 1st the Brigade was sent to Athens, from which Colonel Stanley had just been driven by the enemy's cavalry, with orders to occupy and hold the place. The Brigade was stationed there nearly a month. On May 26th, the Twenty-fourth Illinois marched to join General Negley's forces at Fayetteville, Tenn., and with them on the 1st of June set out on an expedition to Chattanooga to disperse a force of cavalry concentrated at that point. On the 4th of June the command encamped at the foot of the Cumberland Mountains, crossed Waldron's Ridge on the 5th, and driving back General Adams' Cavalry across the valley, arrived opposite Chattanooga on June 7th. A portion of the enemy's cavalry was found on the north bank of the Tennessee on the arrival of Negley's command. He formed his line, with the Twenty-fourth deployed as skirmishers, and moved forward, the cavalry recrossing the river on their advance. Batteries were placed in position commanding the town, the enemy's guns were silenced, and the Union troops remained on the north bank of the river until the 7th, when, being unable to procure supplies, General Negley was obliged to abandon the attempt to occupy Chattanooga, and withdrew. The Regiment arrived at Stevenson on June 11th, and marched thence to Jasper, Tenn., where it encountered the enemy and engaged him in a sharp fight, in which Captain Kovats and Lieutenant Gerhard were wounded.

From Jasper the Regiment moved to Battle Creek, and thence on July 11, to Tullahoma, remaining on the Nashville & Chattanooga railroad employed in guarding various stations until September 7th, when Bragg having commenced his march into Kentucky, it proceeded with General Buell's army to Nashville. It was there assigned to Starkweather's (28th) Brigade, Rousseau's Division, McCook's Corps, and with the rest of Buell's army, marched to Louisville, where it arrived on the 28th of September. On October 1st, it marched from Louisville in pursuit of Bragg, and on the evening of the 7th encamped with the Brigade near Mackville. On the morning of the 8th, after marching about twelve miles, the command reached Chaplin Hills near Perryville, and formed on the extreme left of Rousseau's Division. The ranks of the Twenty-fourth had been sadly thinned ere this, by disease and hardships. Colonel Mihalotzy was left behind at Louisville severely sick, as were also Lieutenants Schweinfmth, Bornemann and Poull. The field officers were all sick, and only seven commissioned officers were left to the ten companies fit for duty. Captains acted as field officers, and Lieutenants and Sergeants as Captains commanding companies. The men who acted as field officers in this battle were Captain Aug. Mauff and Captain Geo. A. Guenther; and the companies were commanded as follows: Company A, by Sergeant Chas. Fritze, afterward its Second Lieutenant. Company B, by First Lieutenant Andrew Jacobi, afterward transferred to another regiment and promoted. Company C, by First Lieutenant Wm. Blanke, afterward Captain. Company D, by Sergeant Major Wm. Voeke, afterward Second Lieutenant, Adjutant of the Regiment, and finally Captain of Company D. Company C, by First Lieutenant Arthur Erbe, subsequently Captain of Company H. Company F, by Second Lieutenant Hugo Gerhardt, afterward First Lieutenant. Company G, by First Lieutenant Peter Hand, afterward Captain of Company G.

Company H, by Captain Frederick Hartman, fatally wounded. Company I, by Captain Aug. Steffens. Company K, by Sergeant Aug. Bitter, afterward Second and First Lieutenant of Company G.

The Regiment occupied the left of Rousseau's line, with a portion of the Thirty-third Ohio deployed as skirmishers in the woods at its foot. As General Jackson's and General Terrill's troops in front were first attacked by the enemy, and driven back panic-stricken and demoralized, passing to the rear of Rousseau's Division, the enemy pressed forward and heavily attacked his left, held by Starkweather. The Second Ohio and Twenty-fourth Illinois were ordered forward to support the skirmishers. The Second Ohio was driven back, but the Twenty-fourth Illinois personally led by General Rousseau, who on many occasions praised the Regiment as among the best under his command, reached the position and went into action on the left of the Thirty-third Ohio. With the first fierce charge of the rebels, the regiments to the right and left, both made up of new recruits, broke, and could not be rallied. The Twenty-fourth was ordered to charge bayonets; this they did, and then clubbing their muskets, a hand-to-hand conflict ensued, and the rebels were finally driven from the front of the Regiment. Captain Fred Hartman, of Company H, received a fatal wound. Captain Aug. Steffens, of Company I. Lieutenant Peter Hand, of Company G, (Chicago German Turners) were slightly wounded. Jos. Broesch, Color Bearer, and Carl Kirchner, Color Sergeant, were killed; in short, about one-third of the entire command were stricken down, but the Regiment rallied around its colors and fought until the enemy was routed. Generals McCook and Rousseau, accorded to Starkweather's brigade, and especially to this Regiment, the honor of having saved the left of the army. At one crisis of the battle the artillery horses at the left were all killed, or had become unmanageable. The Twenty-fourth Illinois and Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania, were ordered to hold the enemy in check while the guns were drawn from the field by the First Wisconsin, and the order was successfully carried out.

With the Brigade the Twenty-fourth participated in the pursuit of Bragg to Crab Orchard, and returned to Mitchellsville, where it was employed in guard and provost duty for a short time. On December 7 it marched toward Nashville, and went into camp at Stewartsboro, near that city, on the 9th. The command left camp on the morning of the 26th of December, and moved towards Murfreesboro, on the Nashville and Murfreesboro turnpike, arriving on the 30th at the crossing of the Stone River, on the Jefferson pike about nine miles below Murfreesboro. There the Brigade which formed the extreme left of Rousseau's division, was detached and, with Stone's Battery, left to cover the pike and guard the trains. During the day it was attacked by Wheeler's Cavalry in force, but succeeded in routing it with a loss of eighty killed, wounded and prisoners. The next morning the Brigade reported to General Rousseau, and was formed in line of battle on the left of the Division, in the dense cedar wood which Rousseau's command occupied. During these days the troops suffered intensely from

hunger and cold, and General Rousseau, in his official reports, accords to them the greatest praise for their heroic endurance.

After the battle the Regiment went into camp near Murfreesboro. At the re-organization of the army, on the 9th of January, the designation of Starkweather's Brigade was changed, becoming the Second Brigade, First Division, (General Baird,) of Thomas' Fourteenth Army Corps. On June 24, with the Brigade, the Twenty-fourth advanced toward the enemy posted at Tullahoma. After driving Bragg's advance from Hoover's Gap, turning his position at Tullahoma, and expelling his army from middle Tennessee, Rosecrans pressed on toward Chattanooga.

On the 4th of September Baird's Division crossed the Tennessee River at Bridgeport, and on the 9th crossed the Lookout Mountains, and encamped in the vicinity of Trenton, Ga. The following day the Division was ordered forward to the support of Negley, who had advanced across McLemore's Cave to Duck Gap, and there encountered the enemy in force. On the falling back of Negley to Steven's Gap, the Twenty-fourth, with Starkweather's Brigade, acted as rear guard to the Union troops. On the 17th Baird moved from Stevens' Gap to Owen's Gap, the next day to Crawfish Springs, and on the 19th, with Thomas's Corps, moved to the left, and formed line of battle at Chickamauga Creek. Thomas' line was formed on the LaFayette Road, facing Reid's and Alexander's bridges, where the enemy had crossed in force the evening before.

At about 10 o'clock A. M. on the 19th of September, Croxton's Brigade of Brannon's Division became engaged. Brannon's Division formed the left of Thomas' line. Baird joined him on the right. Croxton's Brigade had nearly exhausted its ammunition when Baird advanced to its support, Starkweather's Brigade in the reserve. The enemy was driven back, Croxton's Brigade moved to the rear to replenish their ammunition boxes, and General Baird halted his command to re-adjust his line. Before this could be completed his right and front were attacked by an overwhelming force, and Scribner's and

King's Brigades driven back in disorder through Starkweather's reserve Brigade. The Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania, which was in front, was likewise thrown back in dismay, leaving Ruch's Battery wholly exposed, with the Twenty-fourth Illinois a few steps away in the rear. There now ensued a desperate struggle for the possession of the Battery, many of its men having fled or been killed. The loss sustained by the Regiment in this encounter was even greater than that suffered at Perryville. Colonel Mihalotzy was shot through the hand while waving his sword and urging his men on to save the Battery; Major George A. Guenther was severely wounded in the shoulder, while other officers and many men were stricken down and disabled. For a time the Regiment stood alone against an overpowering force of the enemy, until finally Johnston's Division came to their relief, and driving the enemy before it, aided in saving the Battery. At noon of that day, when the engagement was over, the Division Commander, General Baird, rode past the Brigade, when Colonel Starkweather took occasion to say to him, in loud tones of praise, pointing to the Twenty-fourth Regiment: "General Baird, the boys of the

Twenty-fourth are bully boys. They saved my Battery this morning. I'll never forget it." The Brigade bivouacked that night in the open field, and on the morning of the 20th were early in line of battle, somewhat protected by barricades thrown up during the night. When the retreat was ordered, towards sunset, the Brigade retired to a line of defense near Mission Ridge, and on the 22d fell back with the army to Chattanooga. In the assault on Mission Ridge, November 25, the Regiment, with its Brigade, formed a part of the reserve. It joined in the pursuit of the enemy as far as Stevens' Gap, and then returned to camp at Chattanooga, where it remained until February, 1864, when it accompanied the Fourteenth Corps in the fight on Dalton, by way of Tunnell Hill.

On the afternoon of the 24th of February, the Regiment participated in a sharp little engagement to the right of Dalton, when, toward six o'clock in the evening, it was advanced as an outpost into Buzzard Roost Gap. After nightfall a few of the pickets reported that they were face to face with the enemy's outposts, which had been advanced later in the evening. At about midnight Colonel Mihalotzy went to the front for the purpose of making a personal inspection of the picket line, when a shot was fired. Not another sound was heard, but the Colonel returned in a few minutes, and it was found he was dangerously wounded, a ball having penetrated the right side of his body. The Regiment remained in its position until daybreak, when it withdrew a few hundred yards, and there held the front of the line the entire day. During the ensuing night all the troops who had participated in the expedition returned toward Chattanooga, where Colonel Mihalotzy died of his wound, March 11, 1864, and was interred at the National Cemetery there.

Upon the death of Colonel Mihalotzy the command of the Regiment devolved upon Lieutenant Colonel John Von Horn, who, however, owing to old age, resigned his position on the 24th of March, 1864, when for several weeks the Regiment was ably commanded by the gallant Captain Peter Hand, of Company K, until Major George A. Guenther, having somewhat recovered from his wounds received at Chickamauga, assumed command, and continued therein until the term of service of the Regiment expired.

After the expedition to Dalton and Buzzard Roost. the Regiment was encamped first at Tyner Station, and next at Grayville, Ga. On the 2d of May, 1864, the command started with the army under Sherman, on the Atlanta campaign. During the march it participated in a number of engagements, chief of which were the battles of Resaca (May 14, 1864,) and of Kenesaw Mountain (June 22-28, 1864.) Its term of service having expired, it was returned to the rear during the latter part of July, 1864, and on the 6th of the following August was mustered out of the service of the United States, at Chicago. A fraction of the Regiment, composed of men who had joined it after it had been mustered into the service, and whose term of three years had therefore not been fully completed, was formed into one Company, known as Company A, under command of First Lieutenant Frederick Zengler, and Second Lieutenant Paul Lippert. It remained attached to the

Third Brigade, First Division, (General R W. Johnson,) Fourteenth Army Corps, and was finally discharged from the service at Camp Butler, on August 1, 1865.”