



# The Union Guards, 1861-1865

That was then.....

## Union Guards, Company A, 19<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Indiana Volunteer Infantry

The original Union Guards organized at Anderson (Madison County), Indiana in the early summer of 1861, and were assigned to the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry regiment as Company A after reporting for muster at Camp Morton in Indianapolis on July 5. The original captain was Isaac May, a cabinetmaker from Anderson and a native Virginian.



*Solomon Meredith, the first colonel of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana.*

The colonel of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana was fifty-one year old Solomon Meredith of Cambridge City, a six-foot seven-inch Quaker and a native of Guilford, North Carolina. At the age of nineteen Meredith had walked to Indiana. Working as a woodcutter and as a clerk in a store he put aside enough money for an education. He became a prosperous farmer in Wayne County, specializing in the breeding of improved strains of cattle, swine, and sheep. Meredith was quite active in politics, serving for a time as sheriff of Wayne County, and became a force in the new Indiana Republican Party.

Regimental field officers of state volunteer regiments were appointed by the governors of the states that raised them. Perhaps Meredith's main qualification for the colonelcy was that he had made the nominating speech for Governor Oliver H. P. Morton at the 1860 Republican state convention. Indiana Democrats suggested that "Long Sol" be cut in two, and that his lower and better half be appointed lieutenant colonel.

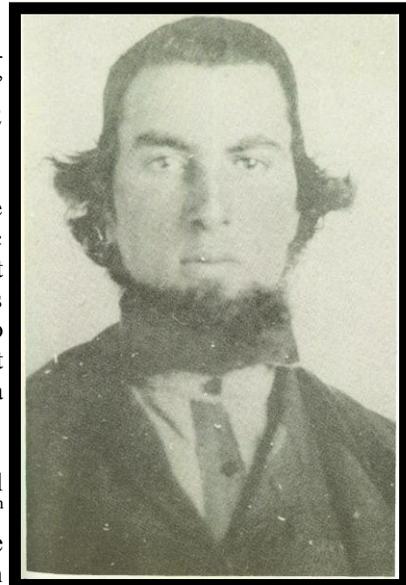
After being mustered in July 29, 1861 (and issued state uniforms of "grey doeskin cassimere") the regiment was sent to Washington, DC by train on August 5. This was unusual for Indiana troops, because most Hoosier regiments served in the western

theaters of operation.

In the winter of 1861-62 the army spent good time re-examining many of the volunteers whose pre-enlistment "physicals" had been perfunctory, at best. The result was that by February of 1862 thirty of the original Union Guards had been discharged for "disability".

Its early service time was spent in the construction of the capital defense fortification network on the Virginia side of the Potomac River. In an early command shakeup, the 19<sup>th</sup>'s original lieutenant colonel resigned and was replaced by the original major, Alois Bachman, and Captain May was promoted to major. Alonzo Makepeace became captain of Company A vice May. The 19<sup>th</sup>'s earliest armed action was in a "reconnaissance" near Lewinsville, Virginia, a hamlet northwest of Fairfax.

The 19<sup>th</sup> was assigned to the brigade of Brigadier General Rufus King. King's brigade came to consist of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin and the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana, and was the only "all-western" brigade in the eastern theater. In the summer of 1862 Brigadier General John Gibbon (a native Pennsylvanian who grew up in North Carolina, and three of whose brothers were Confederate officers) assumed command of the brigade.



*Isaac May, the first captain of the Union Guards*

Gibbon was a West Point graduate (1847), and a Regular Army artillery officer whose pre-war command had been Battery B, 4<sup>th</sup> US Artillery, posted on the Utah frontier watching Mormons. He was pleased with the quick intelligence of his volunteers, believing that fine soldiers could be made of them with proper drill and training. Some of his field officers were not pleased with being commanded by a Regular Army officer, and an artillerist at that. He drove his volunteers, officers and men alike: hard. Gibbon had to first train the field officers, who could then train their regiments. The entire brigade went to school. His troops were drilled, with frequency, by squad, by company, by battalion, and by brigade. The volunteers learned their West Pointer could command infantry as well as artillery. His subordinates never knew that he had had to purchase a copy of a brigade drill manual to study at night, and to peek at on drill.

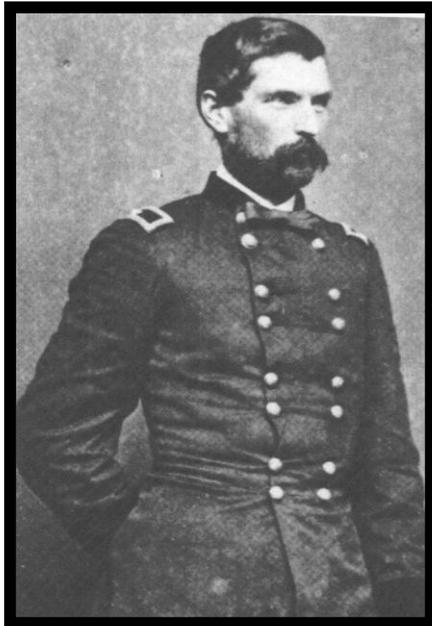
Gibbon had problems with the lack of personal military discipline of his westerners. Sentries would lounge instead of walking their posts, Gibbon noted, even smoking. Further, the sentries regularly failed to acknowledge and salute passing officers, even Gibbon. One day he spoke to a sentinel, asking why he did not walk his post and pay proper respects. There was no reply, because there was no acceptable reply that could be made. Gibbon had the man stripped of his accoutrements and made to stand on a barrel head in front of the guard tent for a few hours. Notice was taken, the man was jeered by all passersby, and there was never again a lack of military bearing and attention to duty by sentries. They walked their posts in a manner obedient to standing orders. Gibbon wrote that this was the only arbitrary punishment he ever ordered in his brigade, and the lesson was learned.

Concerning the evolution of his brigade into an efficient military force, Gibbon wrote,

*“The mere efficiency in drill was not by any means the most important point gained in this month of instruction. The habit of obedience and subjection to the will of another, so difficult to instill into the minds of free and independent men, became marked characteristics in the command.”*

Gibbon also caused a modified Regular Army dress uniform to be issued to his brigade. The new issue consisted of the regulars’ tall black felt hat (the “Hardee” hat), frock coat, white gloves, and white canvas lace-up leggings (gaiters). The men of the brigade balked at the gaiters, and one morning the unamused Gibbon found four of them on his horse. Over time the gaiters, gloves, and many of the frock coats disappeared, but the brigade became inextricably linked to the tall black hats. The brigade became known as the “Black Hat Brigade,” or the “Black Hats.”

The men of the 19<sup>th</sup>, whose nickname among their brigade mates was “Swamp Hogs”, were known as “indifferent” regarding discipline. Men of the regiment were known to remove the numeral “1” from their hats and turn the “9” upside-down, so that if they were caught on unauthorized “foraging” expeditions the blame would go to the 6<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin. It was a common practice of volunteer soldiers on the march to throw away knapsacks, overcoats, and things which needed to be shined. The 19<sup>th</sup> was typically insensitive to army regulations and government expense concerns. Gibbon’s solution was to hold frequent inspections and to have all missing equipments replaced and charged against the men’s pay. They were now the unamused, but they understood the economics. Gibbon prevailed.



*John Gibbon transformed his volunteer regiments into the Iron Brigade. He commanded at Brawner Farm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bull Run, South Mountain, and Antietam.*

Straggling on the march was an army-wide problem, but Gibbon again found a way to deal with straggling among his troops. The brigade was ordered to harass and shame stragglers they encountered along the march route. The fallen out were thoroughly cussed out and humiliated by Gibbon’s boys, then

marched along at the head of the brigade at bayonet point. That cut straggling down considerably among nearby troops, and virtually eliminated it among Gibbon's men.

Gibbon had discovered that while Regulars might respond to the threat of punishment, volunteers responded better to appeals to their pride, and to simple rewards such as a 24-hour pass during blackberry season.

Gibbon's brigade was assigned to King's division of Hooker's First Corps (I Corps) in the newly created and short-lived Army of Virginia.

King's division, including Gibbon's brigade, made contact with Jackson's Confederate division on the evening of August 28, 1862 along the Warrenton Turnpike, near the crossroads village of Groveton, on a farm tenanted by a family named Brawner. Gibbon's brigade, along with the 56<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania and the 76<sup>th</sup> New York of Doubleday's brigade, fought Jackson's division in a standing battle at a range of about seventy-five yards for an hour and a half, until darkness fell. The 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana fought on the left flank of the Union line, anchored near the farmhouse. Only after darkness had fallen were Gibbon's regiments withdrawn.

Of the Brawner Farm engagement, Confederate General W.B. Talliaferro wrote,

*"...out in the sunlight, in the dying daylight, and under the stars, they stood, and although they could not advance, they would not retire. There was some discipline in this, but there was much more of true valor."*

Gibbon's brigade, plus the two regiments from Doubleday's, had fought all or major parts of five Confederate brigades to a standstill. Casualties on both sides were appalling. The Confederates had lost the services of generals Ewell and Talliaferro, both severely wounded, and had lost about a third of his engaged troops. The 19<sup>th</sup> suffered a loss of 62 killed and mortally wounded, 153 wounded, and 44 missing out of 423 engaged. Colonel Meredith was injured by his dying horse, and Major May, late of the Union Guards, received a fatal head wound and died on the field. Other of Gibbon's regiments suffered similarly, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin also taking losses of sixty percent, including the death of the 2<sup>nd</sup>'s colonel, Edgar O'Connor. In all, about one third of Gibbon's brigade was dead, down, or missing. The loss of the Union Guards was seven killed, thirteen wounded, and three missing.

A result of the Brawner Farm engagement was a growing appreciation, throughout the brigade, for the discipline instilled by General Gibbon. The volunteers had promptly responded to their duties as *soldiers*. Gibbon's leadership was valued. The Black Hats were developing a fearsome pride and a courage born of confidence. A veteran later noted that after Brawner Farm the brigade was always ready, but never again eager, for battle.



*Isaac May in his major's uniform.  
May was mortally wounded at the  
Brawner Farm.*

Two days following the Brawner Farm battle the brigade was engaged in the second battle of Bull Run. The Iron Brigade was one of three that did not make a disorganized retreat from the battlefield, and it covered the retreat of the Union forces toward Washington. The other two brigades that stood were commanded by Phil Kearney, killed September 1 at Chantilly and Jesse Reno, killed September 14 at South Mountain. At 2<sup>nd</sup> Bull Run the Union Guards' losses are noted as one killed and four wounded out of the 19<sup>th</sup>'s total of two killed, eighteen wounded, and eleven missing.

As Lee moved his army north into Maryland, the brigade followed closely. Lee placed forces to block the gaps over South Mountain. Hooker's I Corps was assigned the mission of breaking through Turner's Gap, and Gibbon's brigade was the lead element. As night fell on September 14 the western regiments forced the gap and held until replaced. A probably apocryphal story has General McClellan saying something like, "Look at those men! They must be made of iron!" Another version has Hooker asking McClellan something like, "What do you think of my Iron Brigade, General?" In any case, the brigade began being known as the "Iron Brigade." South Mountain cost the Union Guards another man killed and four wounded. Total loss for the regiment was nine killed, thirty seven wounded, and seven missing.

The fighting from August 28 through September 14 had reduced the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana's effective troops available for battle to just over two hundred. Lieutenant Colonel Bachman was the regiment's only field officer, and the Union Guards were commanded by Sergeant Ephraim Eager, he being the highest-ranking man in the company still in the field.

By September 16 the army had moved again into the presence of the Army of Northern Virginia north of Sharpsburg, Maryland. On the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the men awoke in their bivouac north of the David Miller farm along the Hagerstown Pike. The bulk of Lee's army, less Hill's Light Division, moving from Harpers Ferry, lay waiting north of Sharpburg, partly along Antietam Creek. The Black Hats moved south past the Miller farm, along the turnpike, through and beside Miller's cornfield. The 19<sup>th</sup> was deployed west of the cornfield, across the road.

Some of the fiercest fighting of the Civil War took place in and near the cornfield, as the battle moved up and down along the turnpike. At one point in the fight the 19<sup>th</sup> crossed the road south of the cornfield. There they pressed forward until turned back by fresh Confederate troops, and it was in that area east of the Hagerstown Turnpike that Lieutenant Colonel Bachman, the 19<sup>th</sup>'s sole remaining field officer, was killed. Command of the regiment passed to the captain of Company B, William Dudley.

Subsequently, Hooker's corps was withdrawn and replaced with fresh troops as McClellan committed his army piecemeal against Lee. It was mid-morning on the 17<sup>th</sup>, but the I Corps' fighting was over for the day. The Hagerstown Turnpike and Miller farm sector was already littered with the dead and wounded of both armies, including 28 killed and mortally wounded and 75 wounded men of the 202 men the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana took into battle that morning. The Union Guards' loss was four killed, seven wounded, and three missing (two of whom are listed as captured). Sergeant Eager, who led the Union Guards at Antietam, was among the killed.

Because of the severity of its recent fighting (Brawner Farm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bull Run, South Mountain, and Antietam, all within the space of three weeks), the 19<sup>th</sup> was reduced to fewer than one hundred junior officers and men and commanded by a just-turned-twenty-year-old captain. The Union Guards now numbered about ten fit for duty.

Perhaps of some consolation was a message sent by General McClellan to Governor Morton, "I am glad to say that there is no better regiment in this or any other army." A similar message went to the governor of Wisconsin regarding the other three Iron Brigade regiments.

The 17<sup>th</sup> of September, 1862, went into the history books as the bloodiest day in American military history. Twenty-two thousand Americans, north and south, were killed, wounded, or missing in one long day of battle. Contrast that with the size of the entire United States army just sixteen months previous on the eve of the Civil War: 15,000 officers and men. The 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana, and the Union Guards, had contributed more than their fair share to the toll.

The Battle of Antietam left the Iron Brigade severely under strength. To maintain the western character of his command, Gibbon had asked McClellan for another western unit, and received the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry in October.

When it arrived the 24<sup>th</sup> was larger than the other four regiments combined. The Indiana and Wisconsin troops, all early patriotic volunteers, had heard an unsubstantiated rumor that the 24<sup>th</sup> was a “bounty” unit, whose men had enlisted for the money and not for patriotism. They did not receive the Michiganders well. Colonel Henry Morrow of the 24<sup>th</sup> gave a rouser of a speech extolling the bravery of his men, and expressing their pride in being attached to such a famous brigade. The veterans gave no acknowledgement. They were waiting to see the 24<sup>th</sup> in action, and then they would decide whether or not to appreciate it.

John Gibbon was promoted to command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the I Corps, and the Iron Brigade passed to the colonel of the newly-arrived 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan, whose date of commission made him senior to colonels in the brigade who had already led troops in battle. That angered Gibbon, but not nearly so much as did the return of the newly-minted Brigadier General Solomon Meredith to take command of the Iron Brigade. During Meredith’s convalescence following his horse-wallowing at the Brawner farm, he had spent time in Washington, DC lobbying hard for a promotion to general. Gibbon despised Meredith for being a politically-motivated officer, and sought to have the brigade given to a more capable officer with military experience. Meredith’s political connections proved stronger than Gibbon’s military logic.

Samuel Williams was named colonel vice Meredith. Williams was a prominent Selma, Indiana businessman who had raised the 19<sup>th</sup>’s Company K.

Following some maneuvering after the Antietam battle the brigade, still part of the Army of the Potomac’s I Corps, went to Falmouth, Virginia, across the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg. Command of the Army of the Potomac had passed from McClellan to General Ambrose Burnside. Burnside proved himself inept, hurling a major part of his army across an open field and against Confederate forces arrayed behind an impregnable stone wall and supported by elevated artillery positions. The 19<sup>th</sup> was spared the killing field in front of Marye’s Heights, and was engaged against the Confederate right near the Rappahannock. When the brigade was ordered forward the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan asked for the privilege of leading the assault. That met with the earnest approval of the veterans. The 24<sup>th</sup> behaved well in their first battle and the brigade began to accept them, although the 24<sup>th</sup> did not receive their coveted black hats until May, 1863. Regimental losses at Fredericksburg were one killed, four wounded, and one missing, and the Union Guards had no casualties.



*Samuel Williams, second and last colonel of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana; killed May 6, 1864 in the Wilderness.*

After the Battle of Fredericksburg, Burnside withdrew the army to the north side of the Rappahannock. In order to mask his withdrawal he ordered all pickets to be abandoned. The 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana was on picket duty. The brigade was reluctant to leave the regiment to certain capture, so permission was granted to quietly call them in. The 19<sup>th</sup> was the last Federal unit to cross the river, doing so as the pontoon bridge was being taken up. The regiment made winter quarters at Falmouth.

The regiment was involved in Burnside’s “Mud March,” an abortive January attempt to flank the Confederates which bogged down in a winter rainstorm that ruined the roads. Following the Mud March the 19<sup>th</sup> returned to winter camp.

The spring of 1863 saw a new army commander, Major General Joseph Hooker, the Iron Brigade’s old corps commander. Hooker’s accession to army command brought a reorganization that made the Iron Brigade the First Brigade, First Division, I Corps, Army of the Potomac. It was quickly noted that if all the armies of the United States were arrayed on one long line of battle, the Iron Brigade would be on the right flank. Hooker also issued a general order for all troops to wear a “corps badge,” a cloth device whose shape and color indicated the corps and division to which a unit belonged. The First Corps badge

was a circle, with red denoting the First Division, white the Second Division, and blue the Third. When the army moved north for what became the Gettysburg campaign the I Corps bore circles on their corps, division, and brigade flags and the Union Guards wore red cloth circles sewn to the black hats.

In preparation for the Chancellorsville campaign the brigade forced a bridgehead at Fitzhugh's Crossing, downstream from Fredericksburg. Hoosier casualties at Fitzhugh's Crossing were light, with but one killed, six wounded, and one missing, none of them Union Guards. Following the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville Lee headed north toward Pennsylvania, pursued shortly by the Army of the Potomac.

Of the Iron Brigade on the march north after Chancellorsville, Lieutenant C.A. Stevens of the 1<sup>st</sup> United States Sharpshooters wrote in 1892,

*“Loud cheers were frequently given when some particular regiment or brigade passed by. Especially when, while resting on the roadside for coffee, the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps came by with the “full moon” on its banners, and as the great Western or Iron Brigade passed, looking like giants with their tall black hats, they were greeted with hearty cheers by the Sharpshooters. And giants they were, in action...When I look back and see that famed body of troops marching up that long muddy hill unmindful of the pouring rain, but full of life and spirit, with steady step, filling the entire roadway, their big black hats and feathers conspicuous...the pride of looking upon a model American volunteer, which they so truly represented, turns now to utter sadness, at what hard fate befell them in the next battle.”*

The march north in pursuit of Lee was grueling because of distance and heat. The 19<sup>th</sup> was pained in another way, also. The march was interrupted on June 12 for the execution by firing squad of James P. Woods of Company F for desertion. Private Woods had left the regiment at the time of the Fitzhugh's Crossing fight.

On the march Gibbon stopped at the Brawner farm battlefield, and found the farm abandoned. The dead lay half-buried and the ground was still littered with cartridge papers. The bones and the papers clearly delineated the line of battle of the previous August 28.

During the march to catch Lee the Army of the Potomac received a new commander, Major General George Gordon Meade. The army was ordered to converge on Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

On the evening of June 30, 1863 the First Corps, commanded by Major General John Reynolds, was bivouacked along Marsh Creek, just inside the Pennsylvania line between Emmetsburg, Maryland and Gettysburg. On the morning of July 1 Union cavalry made solid contact with a Confederate infantry column on the Chambersburg Pike west of Gettysburg. The I Corps was the closest Union infantry, so it was ordered up to relieve the cavalry and check the Confederate advance toward Gettysburg. The XI Corps followed.

Augustus Buell, the historian of Battery B, 4<sup>th</sup> US Artillery, which served as artillery support to the Iron Brigade on many battlefields and in whose ranks served many volunteers detached from the Iron Brigade regiments, wrote of the marching infantry column on its way to join the fighting west of Gettysburg,

*“No one...will ever again see those two brigades of Wadsworth's Division - Cutler's and the Iron Brigade - file by as they did that morning. The little creek made a depression in the road, with a gentle ascent on either side, so that from our point of view the column, as it came down one slope and up the other, had the effect of huge blue billows of men topped with a spray of shining steel, and the whole effect was calculated to give nerve to a man who had none before.”*

The Iron Brigade was the second brigade in the First Division column, and was thus the second under rebel fire. Legend has it that the Confederates were heading to Gettysburg because there was believed to be a large supply of shoes stored there. They also believed Gettysburg to be defended only by Pennsylvania militia troops, which the battle-tested Confederates knew they could easily brush aside. As

the Federal soldiers came onto the field rebels were heard to say something like, "There's them black-hatted fellows again! This ain't militia; it's the Army of the Potomac!"

General Reynolds, the I Corps commander, was directing the Iron Brigade regiments into position when he was killed by a bullet through the base of his neck. Command of the I Corps passed to Brigadier General Abner Doubleday. Wadsworth's First Division engaged the Confederates across Willoughby Run, quickly driving the rebel line back up the next ridge west before being drawn back to a defensive position in and near the Herbst Woods, on McPherson's Ridge just to the east of Willoughby Run. The initial contact had been successful, with many Confederates of Archer's Brigade being killed or captured. Among the captured was General Archer, he being the first general officer taken alive from Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

As the rest of the I Corps came up it deployed across a nearly one-mile front with its right flank on the Mummasburg Road. Soon the Union XI Corps deployed from the I Corps' right flank across the north of the town to the Harrisburg Road.

Later in the morning the Confederates renewed their advance with fresh troops, and Wadsworth's division began being pushed to the Lutheran Seminary on the next ridge east. The I Corps positions became untenable as the recently-arrived XI Corps gave way in the fields north of the town, exposing the I Corps' right flank. The Union withdrawal became a rout as the Federal troops passed through Gettysburg to a newly established defensive line along Cemetery Ridge south of the village. On the evening of July 1 the 19<sup>th</sup> was digging entrenchments on what is now called Stevens' Knoll, a saddle between East Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill. There they remained until July 4. (The trench line is still visible today.)

The 19<sup>th</sup> had taken 288 men into the Gettysburg battle, and lost 210. Records show 41 killed or mortally wounded, 119 wounded, and 50 missing. Union Guards' losses for the day were one killed, twelve wounded, and five missing (one listed as captured). The regiment's dead were on the morning's field or on the Seminary grounds. Records show that "not a backward step was taken except under orders." Eight color bearers were shot down, including Sergeant Major Asa Blanchard, killed when a bullet severed his femoral artery while he was unfurling the regiment's flag.

A group of several officers of the 19<sup>th</sup> were captured during the retreat through Gettysburg. Among them was the Union Guards' Captain Makepeace. For the remainder of the war the Union Guards were commanded by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Adam Gisse.

Brigadier General Meredith, who was proving to be a capable brigade commander despite Gibbon's misgivings, was again severely injured when crushed by a dying horse, and commanded the brigade in person again only for two weeks in November.

The carnage of the morning of July 1 was the death knell for the I Corps as a tactical organization. It had died to buy time to bring up the rest of the Army of the Potomac. By the morning of July 2 the II, III, V, VI, and XII corps were either deployed on the field or within marching distance of it.

The XI Corps, whose collapses were popularly blamed for the Union loss at Chancellorsville and the destruction of the I Corps on July 1 at Gettysburg, was soon disbanded and merged with the XII Corps, which was sent west and redesignated the XX Corps. The Army of the Potomac derided it, calling it the "Collapsible Eleventh", or the "Flying Dutchmen" in reference to its high number of German immigrants, or the "Flying Half Moons" in reference to its crescent corps badges.

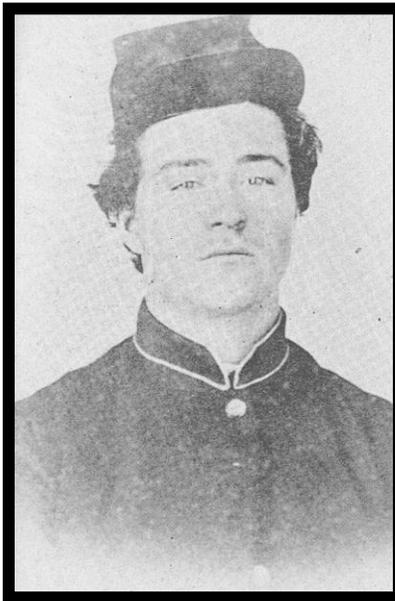
The Army of the Potomac saw little action for the remainder of 1863. The 19<sup>th</sup> played a peripheral role in the Mine Run campaign, and took no casualties,

The spring of 1864 brought serious changes. The I Corps was gone. On March 23 it was consolidated into the V Corps under Major General Gouverneur K. Warren. The I Corps veterans, including the Union Guards, resented the loss of their corps identity, but there were a few familiarities to ease the

transition: Lysander Cutler was the new brigade commander, they were in Wadsworth's division, and they were allowed to keep their round corps badges instead of adopting the Maltese cross of the V Corps.

General Meade retained command of the Army of the Potomac, but U.S. Grant was made commander of all United States forces with the rank of Lieutenant General, and he chose to make his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac. Grant also brought a new philosophy. The objective was no longer to capture Richmond; it was to destroy the Army of Northern Virginia. No longer would there be the old pattern of fight, then rest and refit. Now there would be steady and unrelenting pressure against Lee.

During the 1864 campaign the Union Guards were under fire almost daily from May 5 through June 18. The Wilderness battle began May 5, and among their lost associates were their popular Colonel Williams, dead from a cannonball through the chest, and the popular division commander Wadsworth. Williams was the last of only two colonels to command the 19<sup>th</sup>.



*Cpl Seth Peden, Union Guards.  
Peden was wounded at  
Gettysburg, then killed at the  
Wilderness while carrying the  
colors.*

After his death the regiment was never large enough to rate another colonel, so was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Lindley, former captain of Company F. In all, twenty-one of the 19<sup>th</sup> died in the Wilderness. Union Guards' losses were two killed, eleven wounded, and four missing (three listed as captured).

As the army moved south against Lee the 19<sup>th</sup>'s battle deaths became a steady trickle. Nine died at Spottsylvania, two on the North Anna River, one at Bethesda Church, two more at Cold Harbor. Union Guards' losses during that time are shown as nine wounded, one missing, and one captured.

By June 18 Lee, who had kept his army between the Army of the Potomac and Richmond, had taken position behind fortifications and trenches south of Petersburg. The Army of Northern Virginia was no longer capable of mounting an offensive campaign, and could only lie entrenched and hope for a political settlement to the war.

On June 18 the Army of the Potomac unsuccessfully assaulted the Petersburg trenches, costing the 19<sup>th</sup> another nine killed, thirty two wounded, and one missing. The Union Guards lost one man killed and two wounded. Corporal John Hawk became the last Union Guards combat death. All the 19<sup>th</sup>'s deaths from that date were from illness or in rebel prison camps. Following the failed assault the entrenchment began.

The three-year enlistment of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana was due to expire in July. A regiment could retain its identity only if three-fourths of its men would reenlist as Veteran Volunteers. It could then be identified as a Veteran Volunteer Infantry regiment. The 19<sup>th</sup>, as with many of the old units, could not meet the required number. Still, a number of its veterans reenlisted, and there were recruits whose enlistments had not expired.

In an engagement at Yellow House on September 7, 1864, Private Louis Gauguin of the Union Guards was wounded, and is recorded as the last combat casualty of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry.

Only four Indiana infantry regiments remained in the Army of the Potomac: the 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>. The veterans and recruits of the 14<sup>th</sup> Indiana were consolidated into the 20<sup>th</sup>, and those of the 7<sup>th</sup> into the 19<sup>th</sup>. On October 18, 1864 the 19<sup>th</sup> was merged into the 20<sup>th</sup>, and the whole was designated the 20<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry (Reorganized) and assigned to the II Corps. The 20<sup>th</sup> Indiana (Reorganized) was commanded by Colonel William Orr, recently the major of the 19<sup>th</sup>.

The story of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana ended with the consolidation on October 18, 1864, but the military service of some of its men did not. Two hundred eighty eight veterans and recruits of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana passed onto the roster of the 20<sup>th</sup> Indiana (Reorganized). Among that number were thirty one Union Guards, including sixteen of the originals of 1861. It is interesting that some of the men transferred to the 20<sup>th</sup> were in Confederate prison camps. It was simple army bookkeeping to keep them on the rolls, since they could not be discharged while held as prisoners. The Black Hats in the 20<sup>th</sup> took a few more casualties, but none are recorded among the Union Guards.

After the 20<sup>th</sup> (Reorganized) participated in the raid on the Boydton Plank Road in October 1864, shortly after the consolidation, the II Corps passed the camps of the V Corps, and observers noted that a number of men with red circles on their black hats broke from the II Corps column and headed back to their old companions in the V Corps. They were restrained, and were forced back into the II Corps column at bayonet point.



*Sgt. Ephraim Bartholomew,  
Union Guards. Wounded at  
Petersburg June 18, 1864.  
Reenlisted as a veteran in 1864,  
then transferred into the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Indiana as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.  
Wounded again at Amelia  
Springs, Va April 6, 1865.*

The 20<sup>th</sup> (Reorganized) fought at Hatchers Run, and at Farmville during the pursuit of Lee in April of 1865, and was at Appomattox to witness the end of the rebellion in Virginia.

On May 23 the 20<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry (Reorganized) marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in the Grand Review of the Army of the Potomac, and in its ranks were a hundred or so men with red circles still on their tall black hats.

William Fox, in *Regimental Losses in the Civil War*, shows a loss of 199 killed and mortally wounded and 117 dead of disease out of a total enrollment of 1246 men who served in the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana. The Union Guards show 18 killed and mortally wounded and 9 dead of disease out of a total enrollment of 128. The killed and mortally wounded represent 15.9% of the regiment's membership. That places the 19<sup>th</sup> eleventh in the US army in the percentage of battle deaths. Among the ten who exceed that percentage are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin (first, 19.7%) and the 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin (tied for fifth, 17.2%).

It might seem that after major battles such as Antietam (under 100 remained fit for service) or Gettysburg (seventy-eight effectives remained) that such losses would put a regiment out of existence. In reality, there were always a number of men in hospital recovering from wounds or illnesses, or at home on convalescent leave. Others were on detached service, such as those who volunteered to serve with Battery B, 4<sup>th</sup> US Artillery, or were detailed as teamsters. Fox shows one man having been killed while detached to gunboat service on White River, Arkansas. Those men who recovered sufficiently returned to the regiment to resume their service, and to bring the regiment back up to fighting strength. A look through the 19<sup>th</sup>'s reports will show that some men were wounded in more than one fight, even up to four times. For example, Abram Buckles of Company E, the 19<sup>th</sup>'s only Medal of Honor recipient, was wounded at Brawner Farm (leg), Gettysburg (shoulder), the Wilderness (chest), and at Hatchers Run (leg, amputated). The last wound came as a lieutenant of the 20<sup>th</sup> Indiana (Reorganized).

An infantry regiment's full strength was about one thousand officers and men. Recruiting brought the 19<sup>th</sup>'s total enrollment to 1246. At any point in its history its strength in the field likely never exceeded five hundred, and was most often less. The 19<sup>th</sup> was unusual in that its battle deaths exceeded its deaths from illness. In the Civil War, twice as many died from illness than from combat-related injuries.

Solomon Meredith never received another field command after his injuries at Gettysburg. After losing a bid for a congressional seat in 1864 he resumed his Civil War career as the military commander at Cairo, Illinois, then at Paducah, Kentucky. After the war he returned to Cambridge City, Indiana, and, except for two years (1867-69) when he served as Surveyor of the Montana Territory, he spent the rest of his life raising livestock. He died in 1875, and rests in Riverside Cemetery in Cambridge City, Indiana under the largest monument raised to an individual soldier in the state of Indiana. He is surrounded by the rest of his family, including two sons who died in Federal service.

Alonzo Makepeace went from his capture in Gettysburg to Richmond's Libby Prison. At Libby he barely missed out on a breakout. He was transferred to Danville, then to Salisbury, then to a prison in Macon, Georgia. He jumped off the train to Macon, but was immediately recaptured. From Macon, Makepeace and his fellow officers were sent to Columbia, South Carolina. He and two other Hoosier officers escaped a wood-gathering detail. They covered almost four hundred miles in nearly seven weeks, but were recaptured when smoke from their cooking fire was spotted. Makepeace and his fellows were returned to captivity. He was exchanged March 1, 1865, exactly twenty months after being captured at Gettysburg. He returned home, and was later elected sheriff of Madison County, Indiana.

John Gibbon continued his service in the US Army. At Gettysburg he led the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, II Corps and commanded the sector of the July 3 battlefield which received Pickett's Charge. During that battle he temporarily assumed command of the II Corps after the severe wounding of General Hancock. He was wounded twice, at Fredericksburg and at Gettysburg. By January 1865 he commanded the XXIV Corps, and was one of the commissioners designated by Grant to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. After the war he commanded the 36<sup>th</sup>, and then the 7<sup>th</sup> US infantry regiments, fought Indians in the west, and commanded the infantry column which cleaned up Custer's mess after the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876. He was promoted to Brigadier General in the Regular Army in 1885, and retired in 1892. When he could, he attended reunions of the Iron Brigade Association, once lightheartedly asking for the names of the men who had put the gaiters on his horse in 1862. He did not get them. He died in Baltimore in 1896, age 68.

Today in Arlington National Cemetery, on a hillside near the Custis-Lee mansion and overlooking Washington, DC, there is a large gravestone bearing a bas-relief of John Gibbon on the front. On the rear, facing the walkway, is a large Iron Brigade Association insignia, and the inscription,

*"The Iron Brigade rears this block of granite to the memory of a loved commander."*

Gibbon lies just a few feet from Mrs. Lee's old flower garden which, since the Civil War, has contained Arlington's original Tomb of the Unknowns. It is a large masonry ossuary containing over eleven hundred unidentified sets of bones recovered from northern Virginia battlefields, and which likely includes remains from the Brawner farm, and possibly a few Union Guards.