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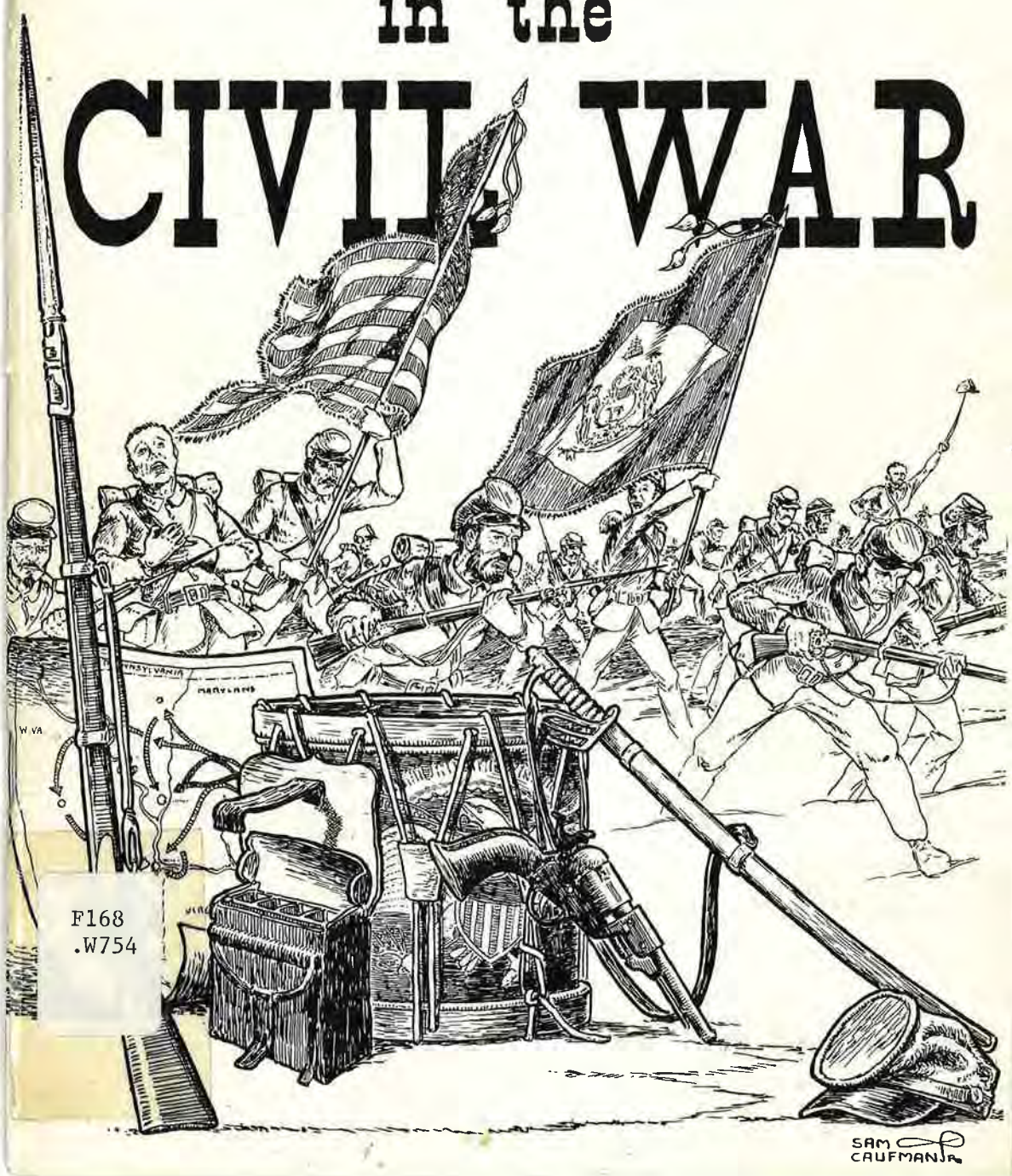

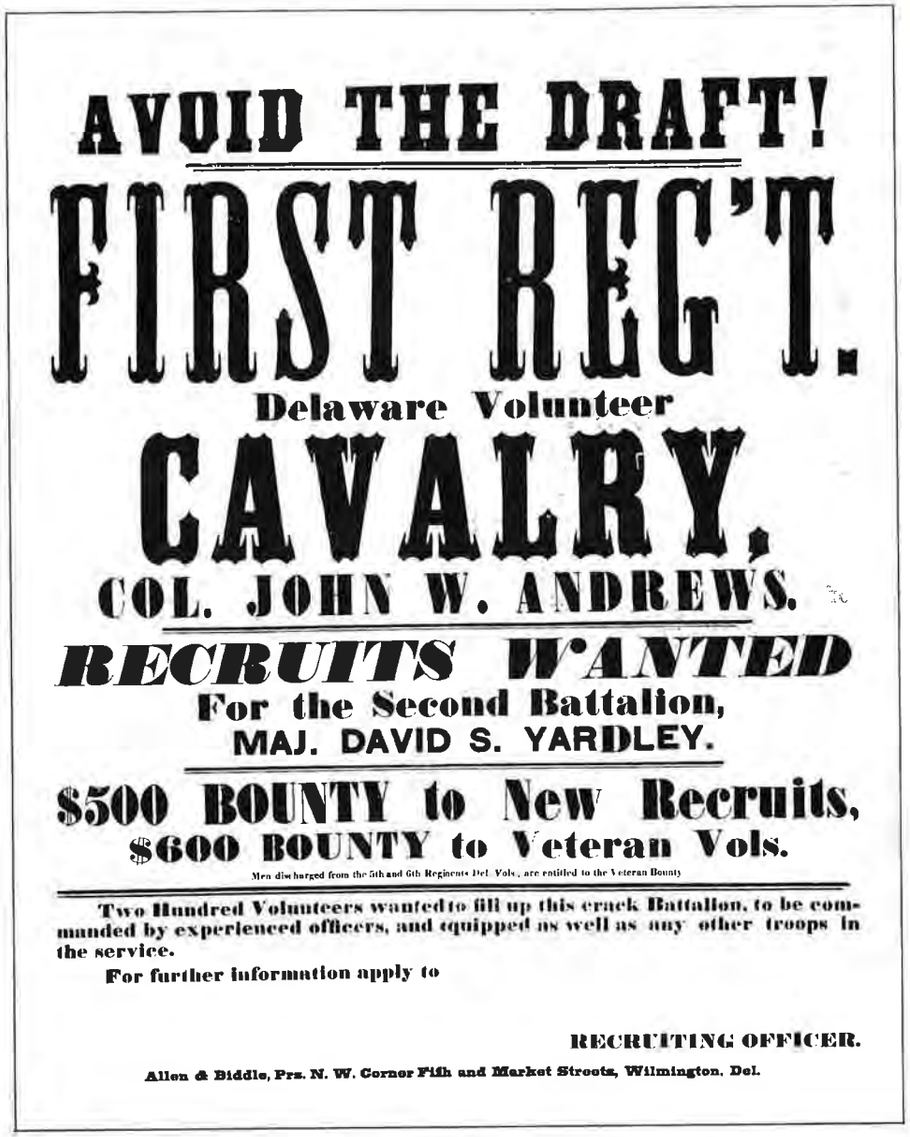

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Chancellorsville and Gettysburg

By THOMAS MASSEY, III

On April 29, 1863, the First and Second Delaware regiments left their camps near Falmouth, Virginia, marching west along the Rappahannock River as part of General Joseph E. Hooker's well devised plan for destroying the Confederate army under General Robert E. Lee.

Leaving General John Sedgwick with 60,000 men to cross the Rappahannock and engage Lee at Fredericksburg, Hooker with an equal force moved up river, crossed and came in behind Lee with intentions of crushing the Confederate Army in a giant vise. By midnight April 30 Hooker with 60,000 men was at Chancellorsville ten miles west and in the rear of Lee's army. Sedgwick's force was across the river and preparing to attack the Confederates on the old Fredericksburg battlefield. Lee found himself in the unpleasant position of being between two forces each of which equalled the number in his entire army.

On May 1 while the First Delaware and most of Hooker's force waited for orders to move, the Fifth Corps resumed the march toward Fredericksburg. The country for miles around Chancellorsville was a gigantic tangle of woods, vines and undergrowth so thick it was possible to see only a few feet. Just as the Fifth Corps reached the eastern edge of this "Wilderness" it met Confederates dug in along a ridge. Hancock's division of the Second Corps (with the Second Delaware) was sent out to reinforce them. They arrived about the same time that Hooker lost his nerve and ordered everybody back to Chancellorsville. The Union army was now destined to fight in the Wilderness where its excellent artillery would be almost useless. Lee, meanwhile, left General Jubal Early with 10,000 men at Fredericksburg to hold Sedgwick. With the rest of his army he marched to attack Hooker.

On May 2 Lee again divided his army. Stonewall Jackson marched his corps by roundabout trails and routed the whole right of the Union army. To help stop the panic which followed, the First Delaware was one of the regiments lined up facing west to halt the stampede. Darkness came before Jackson could complete the rout. While returning to his lines after reconnoitering, Jackson was accidently wounded by his own men who mistook his party for a Union cavalry patrol. He died on May 10.

On May 3 the Confederates renewed the attack, capturing the high ground west of Chancellorsville. From there they began shelling the ground around the Chancellor House, from which the crossroad got its name. The Third Corps was forced back and French's Division (with the First Delaware) was sent in to bolster the line. They attacked the advancing Confederates, driving them back half a mile before nearly being cut off by new Confederate

forces. The First Delaware, on the extreme right, took a prominent part in this charge, then held off the new threat until the division could be withdrawn to the prepared position Hooker had ordered nearer the river.

With the withdrawal of French's division only the area around the Chancellor House was in Union hands held only by Geary's Division of the Twelfth Corps and Hancock's Division; Geary's right was now threatened. Hancock sent the Second Delaware and four other regiments to the right of Geary. At this point the Chancellor House caught fire and the Second Delaware lost several men while evacuating the wounded. Geary's Division was soon withdrawn leaving only Hancock's Division, half of which faced east and half west, the only force opposing Lee's army. With shells going over one line into the back of the other and Confederates threatening both flanks, Hancock was finally forced to order the division back to the line nearer the river. For the Delaware regiments the battle was over but not for Sedgwick's force.

Leaving a small force facing Hooker, Lee marched back toward Fredericksburg to attack Sedgwick who had finally forced the Confederates off the heights of Fredericksburg. At Salem Church Lee defeated Sedgwick, May 4 and 5, driving his forces across the river. Lee then countermarched with the intention of attacking Hooker only to find that he, too, had withdrawn to safety on the north bank of the river.

In this battle Delaware lost 116 men killed, wounded, and missing, fifty-five in the First Regiment, sixty-one in the Second. Once again the Union army had marched on the road to Richmond only to be sent fleeing north with a bloody nose. Those who had a chance to fight did well. The trouble was Hooker lost his nerve and never gave his army a chance.

In June General Lee put his army in motion for another invasion of the North. It was felt that a Confederate victory on northern soil would bring the war to a close, either obtaining recognition from England and France or from the fact that the North was tiring of war and would give the South its independence. The Confederate army marched down the Shenandoah Valley and into Pennsylvania all the way to the Susquehanna River opposite Harrisburg.

When Lee learned that the Union army had crossed the Potomac he began concentrating his army west of Gettysburg. On June 28 President Lincoln relieved Hooker and placed General George G. Meade in command of the Union army. But Lee was in the dark about movements of the Union army because a large part of his cavalry under General J. E. B. Stuart had started on a long raid toward Washington.

As Stuart was returning to Lee's army he was met at Westminster, Md., by a portion of the First Delaware Cavalry under

Captain Charles Corbit. Corbit's furious charge with less than 100 men against Stuart's 6,000 ended in disaster and their capture, but Stuart, fearing they were only the advance guard of more cavalry, halted and prepared to take up the defensive. Thus Corbit was able to delay Stuart's return to Lee who so badly needed him. Stuart was generous in his praise of the courage of Corbit and his men, remarking that as Delawareans they really should have been with him instead of against him.

On July 1, 1863, the two armies met at Gettysburg. Union forces were driven through the town but dug in that night on Cemetery Hill. All that day and night General Meade was rushing his army to Gettysburg. Early in the morning of July second the First and Second Delaware regiments, in the Second Corps, arrived and took position along Cemetery Ridge. The First Delaware, in General Hay's (3rd) Division, took position about 100 yards north of the now famous copse of trees. The Second Delaware, with General Caldwell's (1st) Division, (General Hancock now commanded the Second Corps) formed their line of battle some distance south. All day there was sharp skirmishing between the First Delaware and the Confederates for possession of a barn standing between the lines. This continued, with heavy losses on both sides, until the Fourteenth Connecticut went out and burned the barn the next morning.

About mid-afternoon Caldwell's Division with the Second Delaware was ordered to move out to assist the Third Corps which was then being unmercifully cut to pieces by the Confederate attack on the Union left. The division moved across Plum Run, over a low ridge to the edge of a large wheatfield. Hurriedly forming a line of battle the division, with the Second Delaware forming the left, struck the Confederate attackers head on in the wheatfield. The charge forced the Confederates back through the wheatfield and beyond the ridge from which their attack had started. Soon after reaching the crest Confederate reinforcements began threatening the flanks of the First Division. Slowly and stubbornly Caldwell's Division fell back. The Second Delaware, fighting desperately, kept the Confederates from getting around their left. This time the Confederates carried the wheatfield and most of the ground west of Cemetery Ridge. By nightfall the Union army was back in its old position along this ridge.

At dawn July 3 the desperate fighting for possession of Culp's Hill on the Union right, took up where it left off the night before. After several hours the Confederates were finally driven out of the Union lines and down the hill. For several hours after that an awesome hush fell over the entire battlefield.

About one o'clock two guns in a Confederate battery over near the Peach Orchard barked the signal for the opening of the greatest artillery bombardment ever recorded on this continent. For two hours one hundred and thirty Confederate guns poured shot and shell into the Second Corps position. Then silence.

Out of the woods on the far side of that broad shallow valley came the long gray ranks of the infantry. Fifteen thousand Confederates led by General George Pickett charged the Union lines held by the Second Corps. The brunt of the attack fell on General Gibbon's Second Division holding the ground around the copse of trees. The First Delaware Regiment, 100 yards north, held off Pettigrew's North Carolinians. Just as the Confederate attack stalled and the attackers began to give ground, the First Delaware sprang over the stone wall and charged headlong into them capturing many prisoners and three battle flags. Privates B. McCarran, Company C, and J. B. Mayberry of Company F each captured a flag and each was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Pickett's charge fell on the Second and Third Divisions of the Second Corps. Caldwell's First Division rushed to the right striking the flank of Pickett's line. The Second Delaware captured a few prisoners in the brief counter-attack which developed as the Confederates fell back.

That night the Confederate army started the long weary march back to Virginia. The men of the Union army had finally been given a chance to show their fighting qualities. In these two days at Gettysburg the First Delaware Regiment suffered 77 casualties; the Second Delaware 84.

Grim Fort Delaware

By W. EMERSON WILSON

In August, 1863, after the Battle of Gettysburg, the population of Pea Patch Island in the Delaware River nearly approached that of Wilmington. There were 12,500 Confederate prisoners there and approximately 3,000 Union artillerymen, guards, bakers, hospital attendants and quartermaster forces.

The prisoners included those captured at Gettysburg along with some 2,000 who had been taken at Vicksburg before the siege of that city had started. The highest ranking officers were kept within the walls of Fort Delaware, the line officers and enlisted men in barracks outside the fort.

The fort itself had a featured role in the history of the war in Delaware from the very beginning. Most of the construction had been completed in 1859, but the final touches were not added until 1860 and the first troops for its garrison hadn't arrived until February, 1861. They comprised about 120 men of the regular army artillery under the command of Captain A. A. Gibson. They moved into the new barracks, but they found no guns in the emplacements of the fort and only a few field pieces on the island. Captain Gibson considered this situation to be serious, for with seven of the Southern states already out of the Union there was some danger that Delaware, a slave state, might follow them. His fears were shared by leading Union men of Delaware who realized the importance of the fort as the principal defense of the Delaware River.

With April came the fall of Fort Sumter, the secession of other Southern states and the beginning of the war. But Delaware remained steadfast and, although some Southern members of the garrison deserted, the fort faced no special difficulties. Volunteer artillery regiments, including the swank Commonwealth Artillery of Philadelphia, were rushed to the fort to strengthen the garrison and in May the guns arrived and were placed in the embrasures facing down the river. During the summer and fall of 1861 and the ensuing winter everything was quiet at the fort, as preparations were made to make it impregnable. There was a flurry of excitement in March when Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton warned Captain Gibson to be on the outlook for the *Merrimac*.

In April, 1862, Colonel William Hoffman, Commissary General of Prisoners, decided the fort and island would make an ideal detention camp for Confederate prisoners of war. The first of these arrived late in the month and were housed on the second floor of the barracks. They were Virginians captured from Stonewall Jackson's Army after the Battle of Kernstown.

Then a great building boom occurred on Pea Patch as shanties to house 10,000 prisoners were hurriedly constructed under the