

History of the Civil War's 49th Indiana Volunteer Infantry **By The 49th Indiana Re-enactment Company**

During the closing days of August, 1861 and the following month of September, the nucleus of what became the 49th Indiana Volunteer Infantry entered "Camp Joe Holt", a rendezvous for troops, situated on the north bank of the Ohio River, and just west of Jeffersonville, Indiana.

The 49th Indiana Regiment was organized at Jeffersonville on the 18th of October, 1861, and mustered into service at the same place on the 21st of November, 1861, with John W. Ray as Colonel. Beginning its first march by crossing the Ohio River on the 11th of December, it marched through Louisville, KY, into the interior of Kentucky, reaching Bardstown on the 13th, where it entered into a camp of instruction.

On the 12th of January, 1862, under orders to reinforce General Thomas, who was watching the movements of the rebel General Zollicoffer, who seemed to threaten another invasion of Kentucky. The 49th reached a point five miles south of Lebanon, when it received the news that General Thomas had defeated the rebels at Mill Springs, Kentucky, where the southern General Zollicoffer was killed. The Regiment preceded through Lebanon, Crab Orchard, Mt. Vernon, London, and Barboursville, to Cumberland Ford, Kentucky, arriving there on the 15th of February. On the 14th of March a part of the regiment was engaged in a skirmish at Big Creek Gap, Tennessee, and on the 23rd of March, took part in an ineffectual attempt to take Cumberland Gap. It remained at Cumberland Ford for the remainder of the winter, until June, 1862. While at that place the regiment was severely scourged by disease, losing by death a large number of its members. For a time scarcely a hundred men could be mustered for duty.

In April, 1862, Governor Morton of Indiana, received word that 370 men in the 49th were sick and needing food and hospital supplies suitable for sick men. Nothing of that kind could be had there. On this same date, Governor Morton promised to send a good lot of supplies, and additional surgeons. Even with this aid conditions grew rapidly worse. An Agent sent to check on the Unit, in the middle of May sent back a report stating that only 377 men were then fit for duty, and 188 were sick and in camp. 321 were absent and on sick leave. They men needed Fruit, pickles, kraut, and potatoes, but most of all it seemed best to send them on furlough to Lexington. This was never allowed, however. Conditions grew even worse, and early in June, 229 out of the 900 Officers and men could report for duty. Their camp was in an unhealthy locality, and supplies were meager, and not fit for sick men!

On the 12th of June it marched with General Morgan's forces toward Cumberland Gap, and on the 18th it occupied the Gap, the rebels having evacuated it the same day. The 49th proceeded to add to the strength of the already well-fortified position. In the month of August the rebel General Kirby

Smith, with a strong force, came through the mountains, and succeeded in cutting off supplies and all communications in the Gap. At the same time supplies were already low in Cumberland Gap, and the men were in need of clothing. The regiment remained at Cumberland Gap until the night of the 17th of September, when General Morgan, whose army the 49th was part of, abandoned the works, and started its retreat with General Morgan leading them through Eastern Kentucky to the Ohio River. During the march the troops subsisted mostly upon green corn. After a march of sixteen days, the regiment reached Greenupsburg, Kentucky, on the 3rd of October, from whence it moved to Oak Hill, Ohio.

Going into camp at Oak Hill, Colonel John W Ray met up with the regiment, having been on detached service, and tendered his resignation on October 17, 1862. He was succeeded by James Keigwin, who

continued as its colonel until the close of the war. After a few days rest, the 49th started for Western Virginia, going up the Kanawha as far as Coal's Mouth. Returning from this expedition it embarked on transports at Point Pleasant on the 17th of November for Memphis, arriving there on the 30th of that month.

On the 19th of December it embarked, with Sherman's army, on the expedition to Vicksburg, landing at Chickasaw Bayou on the evening of December 26th, and engaging in the five days battle that followed. It lost fifty-six men in killed and wounded. The attempt to storm the rebel works being unsuccessful, the regiment re-embarked on transports and left Chickasaw Bayou on the 2nd of January, 1863, and proceeded to Milliken's Bend, Young's Point, Louisiana, where a change in commanders took place with General John A.

McClermand succeeding General Sherman in command. From this place it started in steamers on the expedition against Arkansas Post, a strongly fortified position held by a force of over five thousand men under General Churchill. On the 11th of January, after a fierce fight, and a gallant defense, the enemy surrendered. Returning to Young's Point, it assisted in digging the canal across the point, remaining in that vicinity until the 2nd of April. It then moved with Grant's army as part of the 13th Corp on April 2, 1863, and moved down the west bank of the river to a point below Grand Gulf, where it boarded transports, which, with gunboats, had ran past the batteries of Vicksburg and Grand Gulf, and had landed at Bruinsburg, near the mouth of Bayou Pierre. On weeks of siege warfare, the garrison at Vicksburg capitulated on July 4, 1863.

After the fall of Vicksburg the regiment marched to Jackson, Mississippi, taking part in the seven day's fighting at that place and vicinity. Returning to Vicksburg, the 49th embarked on the 10th of August for Port Hudson, and from there proceeded to New Orleans, where it was assigned to the Department of the Gulf. From New Orleans the regiment was transported by train to Brashear City, on Berwick Bay. Moving from Berwick's Bay it took part of the expedition up the Teche, passing through the towns of Pattersonville, Franklin, New Iberia, going as far as Opelousas, Louisiana. Returning to New Orleans, the regiment left in transports for Texas on the 10th of December, boarding the steamer Blackstone, reaching Decroe's Point on Matagorda Peninsula on the 14th. From there it moved to Indianola, where on the 3rd of February, 1864, one hundred and sixty-seven men and four officers re-enlisted.

In March the regiment moved to Fort Esperanza, on Matagorda Island, and remained there until April 19th, when it embarked for Alexandria, Louisiana, to reinforce Banks' army on Red River. Here it was engaged with the enemy for thirteen days with the enemy until the 13th of May, when the army retreated to the Mississippi river. Returning to New Orleans, the regiment proceeded to Indiana on Veteran furlough, reaching Indianapolis on the 9th of July.

At the expiration of its veteran furlough, it was ordered to Lexington, Kentucky, where it remained until the 7th of September, 1865. Leaving there on that day it proceeded to Louisville, where on the 13th of September, 1865, the regiment was mustered out of service. The following day it reached Indianapolis with two hundred and sixty-one men and seventeen officers, where it was finally discharged from service.

The whole distance marched by the regiment during its term of service was eight thousand miles. The Regiment lost during service one officer and 40 enlisted men killed, and mortally wounded, and 3 officers and 192 enlisted men by disease; total 236.