Fuller, Charles A. Lieut.

New York at Gettysburg. Dedication of monuments. 61st Regiment infantry.

J. B. LYON, PRINT. F. J. SEVERANCE, PHOTO.

61ST NEW YORK INFANTRY.

In the Wheatfield.

(*INSCRIPTIONS.*)

(Front.)

61ST REGT. N. Y. INFY.

1ST BRIG. 1ST DIV.

2ND CORPS.

ORGANIZED SEPTEMBER 1861.

MUSTERED OUT JULY 14TH 1865.

(Reverse.)

THIS POSITION HELD BY THE

61ST REGT. N. Y. INFY.

ON THE AFTERNOON OF

JULY 2, 1863.

CASUALTIES,

KILLED 6; WOUNDED 56.

TOTAL LOSS, 62.

DEDICATION OF MONUMENTS.

61st REGIMENT INFANTRY.

July 1, 1889.

ORATION OF LIEUT. CHARLES A. FULLER.

COMRADES:

It lacks but a little of twenty-six years since the members of this organization, or some of them — all who could be — were present on this very spot, then as active members of a hardy, fighting regiment.

Those here to-day who responded to the order, "Forward," on the 2d of July, 1863, if they then thought of anything beyond the immediate present, did not look ahead a quarter of a century and anticipate this occasion. We all felt then that a desperate encounter was before us, and we were mostly anxious to acquit ourselves like men.

To-day we, the survivors of the Sixty-first Regiment of New York Volunteers, meet to dedicate a monument sacred to our dead who fell on this field, and in recognition of the stalwart services of the regiment.

The story might be briefly told, and still be wonderfully eloquent. We went into the fight with less than 100 muskets, and we left on the field over 60 killed and wounded. Gettysburg is by no means the only great battle in which our little regiment did deeds of valor. But it is not practicable to erect costly monuments at every place where soldierly acts were performed worthy of commemoration.

This is one of the great battlefields of the world, and is, so far as post-bellum attentions go, the greatest. There is no other place on this broad earth, noted as a battle site, where so much has been done by art and labor to make it worthy of pilgrimage as here. This expenditure and expression is not a forced and artificial affair. No one has said that it is the proper thing for the leading nation of the world to have a pet battlefield, and in assent selected this one. Many things conjoined to make it the place where people from all nations would desire to visit. The location was fitted by nature for a great battle. Here two well-matched and unexcelled armies joined issue, in what each at the time believed might be the decisive struggle. With us it was a battle in defence of our firesides; with the enemy, they felt that to be broken up and routed was the grave of their cause. The number engaged was great, the fighting was fierce and prolonged, the dead and wounded on each side were numbered by the thousands. It was a time when the people, North and South, outside of the armies, looked on with bated breath, and regarded the result as almost conclusive. When the plans of the enemy were here brought to a halt, when, in place of a glorious victory, he pulled out under cover of night and marched for a ford over the Potomac, which he placed between himself and our following troops, there was throughout the North such a sense of relief and gratitude that its remembrance has not faded away, but is readily recalled; and, therefore, it is that this has become the place of places in regard to the War of the Rebellion.

We meet to-day around this granite pile in response to a sentiment. The State of New York has expended thousands on this field in response to sentiment. The effect of all this effort and expenditure will be considerable and prolonged; bodies of men such as we are from a dozen different States cannot come together after years of separation and dedicate a monument in memory of deeds here transacted, without such action having a lasting moral effect that will radiate as does light and heat from the sun.

Our patriotism is brightened, our regard for the land we fought for is enhanced, and we will return to our homes better fitted to do the remnant of our work, part of which is to perfect the Government we saved. It is proper that we should briefly refer to the history of the regiment that calls us here, and makes possible this occasion. What eventually became the Sixty-first New York Volunteers, was at the start named the "Clinton Guards," and Spencer W. Cone was its first colonel. It was organized, uniformed, drilled and armed at Staten Island, between the months of August and November, 1861. During the time spent on Staten Island, difficulties of some sort resulted in a change of officers, and in, what may be said to have been the making of the regiment, the appointment of Francis C. Barlow to the lieutenant colonelcy.

I think it was in November that we left the Island about 700 strong, a fact that convicts the State Government of a blunder, little short of a crime. That fact and the later one, of organizing new regiments when further requisitions were made for men instead of keeping full the ranks of veteran regiments whose numbers had been thinned by battle and disease, reduced the efficiency of New York troops at least one-half. No possible excuse could be rendered for such a practice, except the desire on the part of the State officials to furnish offices for ambitious men who wanted shoulder straps without earning them by service in the old regiments that had received the baptism of blood.

The regiment arrived at Washington without incident, and went into camp for a week or two on Kendall Green. The next move was across the Potomac, where a camp was made about three miles out of Alexandria, called Camp California. Here the winter was spent in drilling, camp guard, and picket duty. It was a trying time to the men; the measles took down many, and there were numerous deaths from that and other diseases. We were here brigaded with the Fifth New Hampshire, the Fourth Rhode Island, and the Eighty-first Pennsylvania, under Gen. O. O. Howard. During the winter the Fourth Rhode Island was detached, and the Sixty-fourth New York took its place. The first real campaign of the regiment was the hard march to the Rappahannock, where the sight was permitted us of a handful of withdrawing Johnnies, and where we received a few harmless shots. This bootless movement was valuable in disposing of the surplus and unnecessary things which the men had received from loving hands when they said "good-bye," and had up to that time deemed essential to their army work. About the time of leaving the Potomac for the Peninsula, the organization of the army was changed by corps formations, and our brigade was called the First of the Third Division of the Second Corps. If there was any burning desire in any man of the Sixty-first to be a fighting soldier and go where there was likely

to be something besides brass bands, dress parades and grand reviews, he could hardly have been better served.

Barlow was almost unapproachable for bravery, skill and discipline. Howard demonstrated that a godly man could fight, and that it was not necessary to be wicked to be valiant. General Richardson — "Old Dick," as we lovingly called him — captured the admiration of every man in the division the day they looked upon his herculean frame. And we all cheered for Sumner, the grand old fighter from "way back," whose locks were bleached with years of army service, but whose "eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated." With these surroundings, was it likely that we could return, go up Broadway, and have a reception, without a casualty? From the commander of the corps to the colonel of the regiment, it was believed that the Rebellion was to be conquered by hard fighting at short range.

We were in the second line at the ridiculous siege of Yorktown. Williamsburg and West Point were fought before we got there. But few who made it will ever forget the night march from Yorktown towards Williamsburg.

On Saturday, May 31, 1862, we were in camp at Cold Harbor. It was afternoon. Suddenly the thunder of Casey's guns greeted our ears. Johnston was making a mighty effort to crush our left before help could come from across the swollen Chickahominy. In a few minutes we were under arms and awaiting our turn to cross the log bridge that was dancing on the surface of the stream. We reached the battlefield of Fair Oaks after dark; too late for a hand in that day's proceedings. It was our turn next day. Gallantly we were led, and the regiment was no discredit to its colonel. We took in about 400 muskets. I will not attempt a description of that battle, suffice it to say that we lost six officers killed. Colonel Fox in his valuable work on "Regimental Losses in the War," says that the average is 16 men killed to 1 officer. That estimate would make a loss of 102. Company C lost in killed, 2 officers and 6 men. If that rate was maintained in all of the companies, it would make a death loss of 80. Whatever may have been the actual loss, it was heavy. The regiment stood like a rock, and its reputation with every other one in the First Brigade was made, as a "fighting regiment."

Then followed three weeks in the trenches, with frequent picket duty that was hazardous. Early on the morning of the 29th of June, our corps fell back on the line of the railroad. We passed the commissary depot where millions of rations were piled, to which the torch had been applied. A little beyond, at Peach Orchard, the advance of the enemy overtook us. We formed line of battle, and maintained our position. We were under destructive Rebel artillery fire, but we were not engaged with musketry. Then we fell back to Savage Station, where just at dark the corps had a brisk fight, and repulsed the enemy. This is the place where Sumner was so disgusted that he came near disobeying the order of the commanding general to "fall back." The old fighter said it was against his practice and principles to run away from a beaten enemy. But McClellan was down on the gun boats seeking for a new spot in which to set his base, and the unwise order could not be reversed.

That night we crossed White Oak Swamp, and the next day supported our batteries under a heavy fire from the enemy's artillery. At this place we lost

some men, but it was child's play with what was to follow. As the sun was going down, orders came for us to move. All the afternoon there had been heavy firing in the direction of Glendale. Now we were headed towards it. Soon the order came, "Step out;" then, "Double-quick;" and then, "Run." It would take too much time to attempt a description of that fight. In it we lost in killed and wounded, Deming, Moore, Spencer, Gregory, and a good share of our men. It was fought after dark, and we aimed our muskets at the flash of the enemy's rifles. Towards morning we withdrew, and again formed our lines at Malvern Hill. This was a magnificent battle. The enemy were thoroughly whipped, but there was no one in authority to direct an onward movement; consequently the army fell back to Harrison's Landing.

In due, or rather dilatory, course of time, with our corps we were again on the old camp ground of the winter before; then, at Arlington Heights; and finally, after Pope was beaten, we reached Centreville. We ought to have been in the Second Bull Run. One or more people ought to have been killed by slow torture, for this damnable blundering — or worse.

Again, movements were started that resulted in the battle of Antietam, where brave fighting was done by piece-meal; where Lee ought to have been crushed, and where he wasn't. In this battle the Sixty-first, I believe, did the most brilliant thing in its career, in the capture of more of the enemy than it had men, and where Captain Greig took a Rebel battle flag. This was due to the generalship of Barlow. Here, on account of a dangerous wound, we parted company with the man who had up to that date given us a special character. Barlow was to lead us as colonel no more. When he rejoined the army, it was as general of a brigade in the Eleventh Corps. It was fortunate for us that the next in command was Nelson A. Miles. It is rare that any regiment has at one time two such men.

While at Harper's Ferry, or on the way to Fredericksburg, a new company, under Captain Bain, reached us, and about doubled our numbers. On December 13, 1862, we had a losing hand in the slaughter at Fredericksburg. It is said that while we were lying down on the right side of the road, behind the close-board fence, that Miles was prospecting, and had sent back for permission to charge the rifle pits beyond. If such is the case it was lucky for us, that a bullet clipped his throat in time to prevent such an heroic act; had it been done, some of us, who to-day can enjoy a good dinner, would have added our names to the list of "killed in battle." Miles recovered in time to lead the regiment at Chancellorsville, where he gained great credit by soldiership while in charge of the picket line. Our losses were not heavy in this campaign aside from Miles, who was dangerously wounded and never served again with the regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Brody succeeded him.

In a few weeks' time we were again in motion. We were going where the enemy led us, and that happened to be here. As I have said before, we had less than 100 muskets. There was not to exceed six in Company C, a company that started out one of the strongest. Clearly do I now recall what happened as we reached this vicinity on the evening of the 1st of July; how we stacked arms; ate supper; removed a rail fence and worked it into a line of rifle pits; went to bed, or rather rolled up in blankets and slept the sleep

of the night; how we were called at an early hour; prepared breakfast; had a thorough inspection; and then moved towards the town. I remember passing our doctors in a little piece of woods, and giving a good-bye shake of the hand, and moving on. I remember our position in the meadow, between the town and the "wheatfield." The brigade was closed in mass, the Sixty-first with 97 men; then the Eighty-first Pennsylvania with, perhaps, 150; then the One hundred and forty-eighth Pennsylvania with 300 or 400; and the Fifth New Hampshire with about 200. These numbers, except in the case of the Sixty-first, are estimates. I remember, while we were nervously awaiting the order to advance, the admonition of Colonel Cross, commanding the brigade. He said: "Men, you know what's before you: give 'em hell!" Sickles' troops had been engaged for some time and were falling back; then came the order for the First Division to go to the rescue. The brigade moved by the left flank, and in that formation reached the narrow cross-road in rear of the wheatfield. We deployed by filing right and marching along the road. When deployed to have fronted would have presented our *backs* to the Rebels, and that was not the side we had been accustomed to present to them. There was no time to countermarch. We, therefore, "left-faced," and advanced officers and file closers ahead of the men. We scaled the fence and were in the field — the celebrated "wheatfield." We advanced to our position, supposed to be about where this monument is located. Here the officers and file closers took their proper place and awaited the onset. Soon it came. Well do I remember the first rebel that showed himself, and in an instant the appearance of the entire force. The enemy were partially protected by the stone wall. We were without any cover. Here we remained until 63 of our number were killed or seriously wounded. It is, of course, but seldom that a regiment loses such a percentage of its men. Before the fight ended I ceased to be an eye witness, and what I know of its heroism I know from the lips of others. But history says the old regiment was at Bristoe Station, Wilderness, Corbin's Bridge, Po River, Spotsylvania, North Anna, Totopotomoy, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Strawberry Plains, Deep Bottom, and Reams' Station.

The Sixty-first was scant in muskets from the start. Before the first battle, sickness, slinks, and details reduced the fighting force 50 per cent.; and beginning with Fair Oaks, the bullets of the Johnnies kept down the number, so that frequently it was less than 100.

Colonel Fox says that the records show that of all the regiments in the United States service during the Rebellion — and there were hundreds of them — only 45 lost 200 and over in killed and mortally wounded. Of these the Fifth New Hampshire lost the largest number of any regiment in the service, 295, of which 18 only were officers. The Eighty-first Pennsylvania lost 208. The Sixty-first New York, 189, and of that number 18 were officers. You will see by Colonel Fox's book that few regiments lost over 10 officers killed. For example: the One Hundred and Fortieth Pennsylvania lost 188, and but 10 officers. Most regiments entered the field with a plump thousand, and some had a large number of recruits. This tells the story. The Sixty-first had part of the time a full complement of officers; hence there was the same chance for large losses, as if she had carried full ranks. She was in the battles. She never

let go her grip. Estimating losses on the basis of officers killed, she would be rated with a death loss of at least 250. Few regiments graduated from their numbers. She furnished two major generals, and such as Barlow and Miles. Among the tribes, she was like Jacob's Benjamin — small in numbers; but she had in prodigal abundance Sauls and Jonathans. No good man who ever served in her ranks would ever to-day exchange her number for that of any other. Her dead were found on almost every infantry battlefield of the Army of the Potomac from Fair Oaks, June 1, 1862, to Appomattox, April 6, 1865.

There was but little in her make up of fuss and feathers; but it was solid work. Her blows told, and if her enemy ever came to personally know her, he must have respected her courage and endurance.

This monument, about which we are now gathered, plain, solid, and enduring, well typifies her characteristics. Here it will stand for years after the last one of her ranks has been mustered out to join the countless throng of those who have been and are not.

For myself, and I trust that I speak the sentiments of every one who ever had honorable membership with her, I am proud of the fact that I had a voluntary hand in the War for the Union, and that my efforts were put forth in the ranks of the Sixty-first New York.

TRANSFER OF MONUMENT.

Address of Capt. Lee Nutting.

Comrades:

We are assembled here this beautiful Sabbath afternoon to dedicate this monument erected by the liberality of the great State of which we are citizens, to the memory of her sons of the Sixty-first New York Regiment, who fell on this and other fields, in defence of the Union and the Flag.

This monument by its rough simplicity fittingly typifies, and by its substantial outline shows forth, the solidity of the regiment for which it stands. The Sixty-first New York was a service regiment; when the call to duty came it was always ready. On this and many another battlefield it testified its devotion to Country and Flag, and sealed that devotion with the blood of its members. Of the 93 men who came upon this field in its ranks to battle for the right, 63 fell, killed or wounded.

So stern was the discipline inculcated and commanded by Col. Francis C. Barlow, and so renowned did the regiment become by reason of that discipline, that finally the veteran regiments of the division dubbed us "Barlow's Regulars." From Yorktown to Appomattox, the colors of the Sixty-first were always to the front, and Colonel Fox, in his book on "Regimental Losses" puts the Sixty-first in the list of "fighting regiments," who never had soft snaps, but fought, and fought from start to finish. The regiment while nominally 770 strong when it left New York, numbered probably not over 600 men. We were sworn into the United States service by companies, and captains

ambitious to be mustered, and not having the requisite number of men, borrowed from other companies for the occasion. I mention this, as I notice that Colonel Fox names the Fifth New Hampshire of our brigade, as the infantry regiment losing the greatest percentage of men in action in the whole army. I am satisfied that if Colonel Fox had made his calculations on the basis of 600 instead of 770, he might have awarded the honor to us.

But there is no occasion to sing the praises of this (to say the least) renowned regiment of the grand old Second Corps. Its memories are enshrined in all your hearts, and I have no doubt you will teach your children and children's children to reverence its memory, and tell them of its deeds until they are proud to exclaim, "My father belonged to, and fought in the Sixty-first New York, the regiment which gave to the country the two great generals, Francis C. Barlow and Nelson A. Miles; that captured four flags from the enemy, and brought home its own, unsullied by traitor's touch; that on two occasions captured more prisoners than it had men in its ranks; that while willing to shake hands with the old Johnnies, never forget that we fought for Freedom and Union, and they for Slavery and Disunion; and that we stood for the right, and they for the wrong."

Comrades, as I look over and through your attenuated ranks, I behold another line; and in it I see Massett, Plumb, Garland, Angell, Deming and Owens. Grouped around them I see a long line of the private soldiers of our old regiment, who with their comrades of like rank, at the points of their bayonets, finally conquered and won for us the peace of Appomattox; and it seems to me as I gaze upon them, that from their voiceless lips there comes a silent benediction on our proceedings here this day.

And now, Mr. Secretary, I have the honor and pleasure in behalf of this regiment and the State we represent, of turning over to you this monument, hoping and trusting that the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association will guard it as vigilantly as the regiment it represents guarded the interests of the Republic.

HISTORIAL SKETCH.

By Capt. Lee Nutting.

The Sixty-first New York Volunteers — "Clinton Guards" — was raised and organized on Staten Island to serve for three years of the war. It was mustered into service of the United States from August 22 to October 26, 1861. Seven companies re-enlisted in the winter of 1863 for three years, and they, with the recruits, were mustered out July 14, 1865, in accordance with orders from the War Department.

The first colonel was Spencer W. Cone, and commanded by him, we left Staten Island, November 9, 1861, en route for Washington, where we arrived without adventure, after a hearty midnight supper given us by the loyal ladies of Philadelphia. We encamped for a few days on Kendall Green, from whence we marched to McCloud's Mills, three miles from Alexandria, where we went into winter quarters and settled down to hard and laborious drill. The regiment was composed of seven companies raised in and around New

York City, and three companies from Hamilton and Madison Counties, the latter being largely officered by students from Hamilton University. The seven city companies were recruited mainly in the coal boxes, and were rough, insubordinate, and, as it seemed, poor material; but under the exacting discipline they became model soldiers, and were found to be better able than the countrymen to withstand the hardships and privations of a soldier's life. At Kendall Green, Lieut. Col. Francis C. Barlow joined the regiment, a medium-sized, slender man, with no beard, and looking so much like a boy that he was named the "Boy General" when he attained that rank. But though boyish looking, the spirit that animated Francis C. Barlow was a mighty one, and the discipline which he enforced and, above all, the gallantry and wisdom with which he led the Sixty-first into battle endeared him to both officers and men. As our poet, Quartermaster Wren, says in some doggerel verse composed to the air of Billy Barlow —

> Governor Morgan, he didn't do slow
> When he gave us a colonel in Billy Barlow.

The surviving members of the regiment revere his memory. Singularly modest, no trumpet proclaimed his gallant deeds. In fact, he shrank from notoriety; and, yet, the fact remains that in our estimation no soldier from this State was his equal in anything which goes towards the making of a great soldier or general, and when New York finally writes the history of her sons who fought in the Great Rebellion, the name of Maj. Gen. Francis C. Barlow will occupy the highest niche in her Temple of Fame.

In the spring of 1862, the Sixty-first, then brigaded with the Fifth New Hampshire, Eighty-first Pennsylvania and Sixty-fourth New York,— the whole forming the First Brigade of the First Division, Second Army Corps, under the command of Brig. Gen. O. O. Howard,— marched to Manassas, and from there to the Rappahannock River, in pursuit of the rear guard of Johnston's army. The enemy sent a few shells back to us, but we did not get near enough to use our Enfields.

Returning to Alexandria, we took the transport J. R. Spaulding, and steamed down to the Peninsula, landing by wading ashore at Ship Point, and assisting in various ways in the Siege of Yorktown. From Yorktown we marched in the night, and in mud and rain, to the assistance of our comrades at Williamsburg. Returning to Yorktown, we took transports up the York River to White House Landing, and from there marched to Deep Bottom on the Chickahominy.

Heavy musketry firing aroused us Saturday afternoon, May 31, 1862, and our gallant old corps commander, Gen. E. V. Sumner, ordered us to fall in, and marched us to the bridge heads. Farther he did not dare to go without orders, which General McClellan finally sent him, and we started to cross the river. The rain had caused the river to rise so that the frail bridges were afloat; but the marching column kept it solid and we passed over. We were soon halted and ordered to load with ball cartridges, and then it seemed at least a serious matter. Getting on the field about 9 p. m., we were too late for the fight that day, but forming column closed in mass, we were told to

lie down behind our gun stacks. The Rebel wounded lay on the wet ground around us, and we got our first taste of the horrors of war. I know one soldier that, as he rolled his blanket around him that night, debated seriously whether he had not mistaken his vocation, and whether he would be able to stand the storm of the morrow. Sunday, June 1st, broke bright and clear, and French's Brigade was sent into the woods ahead of us. Then the storm broke; the air seemed filled with lead; and some of us were very much troubled in mind. Soon the regiment was ordered forward, and finally entered the woods relieving French's men. We were received by the Johnnies with a heavy fire, which, before we were relieved, struck down one-third of the regiment killed or wounded. French's men having replenished their cartridge boxes, started in to relieve us, and when they had nicely gotten into the woods, opened fire on us. Colonel Cone had some time before this been dismissed, and Colonel Barlow commanded the regiment. The fire in the rear was more than green troops could stand, and, supposing we were flanked, the regiment broke and started for the front. Colonel Barlow rushed up to the color bearer, and seizing the flag faced to the rear and planted the staff in the ground; the regiment drilled to rally on the colors, faced to the rear, and rallied on the flag. One of our captains went back, had the troops stop firing, and we faced about once more to the enemy. When relieved, we marched out at the cadenced step in column of fours, and through our colonel notified the general that we were ready again as soon as needed. General Howard lost his arm in this fight, Fair Oaks, near the place we were engaged.

Breastworks were built, and for the next month we did picket duty; and that was dangerous work, as both sides were in a killing mood and casualties were of daily occurrence. Later on, the pickets of the contending forces did not fire at each other, unless a forward movement was noticed. What was known as the change of base, commenced for us June 29th, and at Peach Orchard and Savage Station we had sharp encounters with the enemy. Crossing White Oak Swamp, the morning of the 30th was spent in supporting our batteries, which were handled so effectively that "Stonewall" Jackson was, for the whole day, prevented from crossing. During the afternoon Company H, Captain Mount, was sent out to picket the further side of the swamp. Towards evening the firing grew heavy in the direction of Charles City Cross Roads, and the regiment was ordered at the double-quick to the support of Kearny, who was hard pressed by Longstreet. Captain Broady had been sent to call in Mount's company, but did not succeed in finding the regiment in the darkness and confusion, and was finally ordered to join the company to the right of the Fifth New Hampshire, who occupied the reserve line of the brigade.

In the meantime the regiment advancing through the woods in the darkness came to an open field, and was saluted by the colonel of a Georgia regiment with the inquiry: "What regiment is that? Surrender, or I will blow you to hell!" Some of our fellows answered, "Sixty-first New York," and Barlow gave the command, "Ready! Aim! Fire!" Both regiments fired at this order, and at the close range the destruction was awful. The fire was kept up until both regiments were about annihilated. The writer was with Mount's