

20th New York Militia: The Ulster Guard

By David Babetski

20th New York Militia

- These men of the 20th signed up for three months, which most Americans thought to be sufficient enough to finish the war
- Throughout this three month period the 20th New York Militia did not see fighting; however, this pre-war militia unit would form the nucleus of a regiment that represented the ideas of bravery and unity
- The militia was soon reorganized at Kingston as a regiment of volunteers officially becoming the 80th New York Volunteers in September of 1861

PRATT



- On February 19, 1852, Pratt became Colonel of the 28th New York Militia
- It is during this 5 year tenure where Pratt really enhanced his military knowledge
- Pratt gave the 20th the nickname the Ulster Guard as well as its motto “This Hand for Our Country”
- A religious man who restricted his men from cursing during camp life
- Mortally wounded at the Second Battle of Bulls Run

GATES

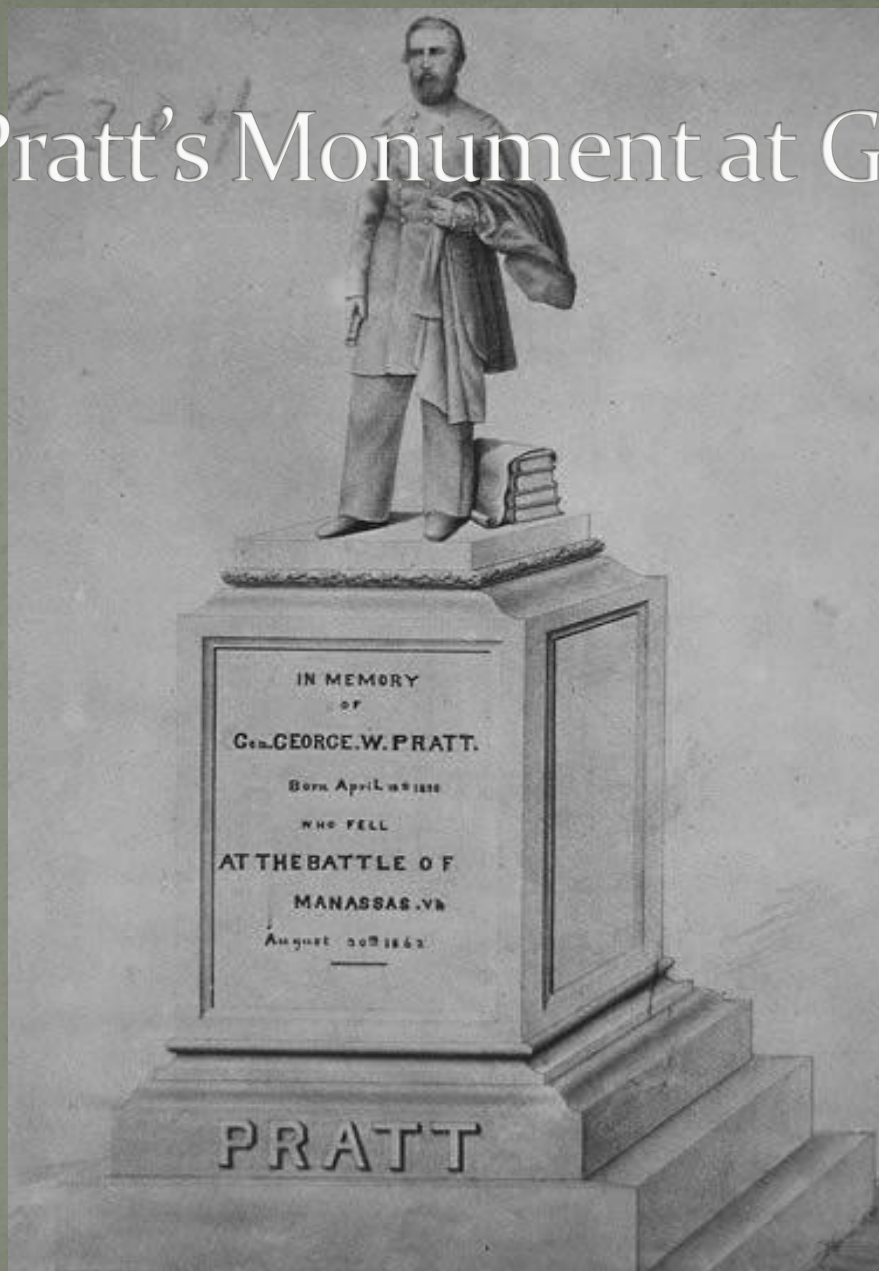


- Gates was born on December 16, 1824 in Oneonta is Otsego County New York.
- Gates only assumed command of the regiment when Pratt fell mortally wounded
- For Gates outstanding duties in leading the 20th through Chantilly, South Mountain, Antietam and Gettysburg he was awarded a sword and sash

SECOND BATTLE OF BULL RUN

- The Second Battle of Bull Run was a horrid day for the Ulster Guard
- The regiment along with other units were ambushed in the forest
- Through the chaotic volleys of fire, men could not find their regiments
- Colonel Pratt was mortally wounded in the initial attack of the confederates

Colonel Pratt's Monument at Gettysburg



ANTIETAM



At sunrise of Sept. 17th 1862, the battle of Antietam, one of the bloodiest in the Civil War, would begin

The Ulster Guard was up early and was taking heavy confederate bombardment

The men were soon ordered to Captain Cambell's Battery B which was partially positioned on Millers Farm

Miller's Corn Field



Hell in the Corn Field

- The cornfield completely concealed the movement of the enemy who snuck through the thick stalks
- Many of the Ulster Guard were killed in the initial surprise attack of the confederates
- As the Confederates came close to the battery the Ulster Guard attacked with bayonets
- Waves continued and were successfully deterred by the Ulster Guard until they were relieved by another regiment

GUARD DUTY

- On January 7th, the Ulster Guard along with many other units from the same brigade were transferred to the Provost Guard, commanded by General Patrick
- The duties of the Ulster Guard at this point were to guard the railroad and depot of supplies, take charge of military prisoners (which the 20th obtained many), and sometimes conduct railroad trains
- In one week alone, they rounded up over 700 prisoners

Conclusion



The Ulster Guard carried a legacy of discipline and bravery spanning its pre Civil War history to its mustering out in January 1866

Despite having the official name the 80th Volunteer Infantry Regiment, they were known throughout the war as the 20th Militia.

PICTURE CITE

- “Theodore B. Gates 80th New York Infantry” taken between 1860 and 1865. Web. 29 November. 2012. <http://www.old-picture.com/civil-war/Theodore-Infantry-Gates-York.htm>
- “Soldiers on Antietam Battlefield” taken in 1862 by Gardner, Alexander. Web. 29 November. 2012. <http://www.old-picture.com/civil-war/Battlefield-Soldiers-Antietam-on.htm>
- “Colonel George Pratt, 80th New York Infantry” taken between 1860 and 1865. Web. 29 November. 2012. <http://www.old-picture.com/civil-war/Infantry-Colonel-Pratt-George.htm>
- “The Cornfield (Miller's Cornfield)” National Park Service Driving Tour . Web. 29 November. 2012. <http://civilwarlandscapes.org/cwla/states/md/an/places/cf05.htm>
- “80th Regiment Col. George W. Pratt Monument at Gettysburg” taken from *Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg*. Web. 29 November. 2012. <http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/80thInf/80thInfMonumentPratt.htm>
- “80th Regiment Monument at Gettysburg” taken from *Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg*. Web. 29 November. 2012. <http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/80thInf/80thInfMonument.htm>