

SCARCE MASSACHUSETTS MINUTEMAN MEDAL TO 5TH INFANTRY, THE ONLY MA REGIMENT TO SERVE AT 1ST BULL RUN AND RECEIVE A MEDAL. LATER AS A HOSPITAL STEWARD OF THE 9TH 'IRISH' INFANTRY, HE WAS WOUNDED IN ACTION AT THE BATTLE OF MALVERN HILL WHERE HIS REGIMENT SUFFERED OVER 50% CASUALTIES



MASSACHUSETTS MINUTEMAN 'NATHAN D PARKER, PRVT. B 5TH REGIMENT.'

Nathan D. Parker aged 29, a druggist from Reading Massachusetts, enlisted into "B" Company, 5th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment (Militia) on 1st May 1861 as a Hospital Steward. Initially stationed for the defence of Washington, the Regiment was one of just three Massachusetts regiments to see action at 1st Bull Run, the first battle of the Civil War. During the battle the regiment was heavily engaged, losing 9 killed and 11 wounded and 22 prisoners. Of the 3 Massachusetts regiments at Bull Run, the 5th was the only 3 month Militia unit and as such were the only regiment to receive the Minuteman medal. Parker and his regiment was Mustered Out just days after Bull Run on 31st July 1861 at Boston, MA.

On 8th February 1862, Parker mustered in to service as a Hospital Steward in the 9th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. With the 9th Parker took part in the siege and capture of Yorktown, Hanover Court House, May 27th 1862, at Mechanicsville, June 26th, Gaines' Mill, June 27th, and Malvern Hill on July 1st. In the two last named battles the regiment lost 111 killed and mortally wounded and 286 wounded and missing, well over half the Regiment!

Parker was one of those wounded at Malvern Hill and being hospitalised after the battle, he was discharged for disability on 28th November 1862, though the reason seems to have been from symptoms contracted whilst recovering from his wounds.

FIFTH REGIMENT MASSACHUSETTS VOLUNTEER MILITIA (INFANTRY) THREE MONTHS

The 5th Regt. Mass. Vol. Mill, "Minute Men," was ordered to report for active duty and to proceed to the city of Washington by Special Order No. 35, issued by the Adjutant General of Massachusetts, April 19, 1861. To the five companies of the 5th Regt. were added four from the 7th Regt. and one from the 1st Regt., thus making up a full regiment of ten companies. On Sunday, April 21, the 5th entrained for Washington, where on May 1, its members were mustered into the service of the United States. For nearly four weeks it remained in the city of Washington, then on May 25 it was transferred to the Virginia shore, where it remained in camp near Alexandria.

At this early part of the war, both Union and Confederate Armies were clothed in a multitude of different coloured uniforms, due to the amount of Militia/Volunteer units hastily gathered into both armies, each with their own distinctive dress. However the 5th Massachusetts was one of very few volunteer units to take the field in Regular Army uniforms and were frequently mistaken for Regular troops during the Bull Run campaign. On July 13, the 5th Massachusetts received orders to march for Centreville, Virginia. On July 21, 1861, just days before the end of their 90 day term of service, the 5th Massachusetts took part in the First Battle of Bull Run the first major engagement of Civil War. Before their departure from Alexandria, Major General McDowell commanding the Union Army of Northeastern Virginia, addressed the 5th Massachusetts and, in light of their term of service being nearly at an end, offered them the option of foregoing the campaign. The 5th Massachusetts voted unanimously to go with McDowell's army. Assigned to the First Brigade (Franklin's) Third Division (Heintzleman's) of the Army of Northeastern Virginia, the 5th Massachusetts was among those units sent to probe the Confederate right flank on July 18 resulting in the Battle of Blackburns Ford. When this maneuver failed, McDowell opted to send a large portion of his forces on a wide flanking maneuver across Sudley Springs Ford, hoping to get around the Confederate left flank. On July 21, precisely three months after they departed Boston, the 5th Massachusetts crossed Sudley Springs Ford and participated in the heaviest of the day's combat on Henry House Hill.



BATTLE OF BULL RUN.

The regiment advanced more than a mile from Sudley Springs Ford to Henry House Hill at the double-quick in full gear. When they reached the foot of the hill, General Heintzelman led the 5th Massachusetts, the 11th Massachusetts and Ricketts Battery up the slope in an effort to retake several Union batteries and turn the Confederate right flank. Confederate artillery stopped their advance and the 5th Massachusetts was ordered to lay prone on the slope of the hill under direct artillery fire. Color Sergeant W. H. Lawrence stood during this time and was killed by artillery fire. Col. Lawrence, who also remained standing at the center of his regiment, was among the wounded and carried from the field. When Confederate General Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson led a counterattack, the 5th Massachusetts retreated in disorder from Henry House Hill with the rest of the Union Army. The unit suffered casualties of 9 killed and 11 wounded and 22 prisoners.

The 5th Massachusetts embarked for Boston less than a week after the Union army's retreat back to Washington. They were mustered out on July 30, 1861

NINTH 'IRISH' REGIMENT MASSACHUSETTS VOLUNTEER INFANTRY "THE FIGHTING NINTH"

The 9th Regt. Mass. Vol. Inf. was recruited in April and May, 1861, by Thomas Cass, formerly commander of a Massachusetts militia organization known as the Columbian Artillery. The regiment was composed almost wholly of men of Irish birth, and Cass became its first colonel. It was made up of six companies from Boston and one each from Salem, Marlboro, Milford, and Stoughton.



The flag of the 9th Massachusetts mixes American and Irish symbols on an Irish green flag. In the upper left hand corner are the words "Erin Go Bragh" which translate as "Ireland Forever,"

Through May and a part of June the regiment was at Camp Wightman on Long Island in Boston Harbor. Here on June 11, 1861, the regiment was mustered into the service, and on

the 25th of the month it left for the seat of war. In addition to the national and state colors it carried an Irish flag.

Arriving at Washington it was placed in camp at Emmart's farm near 7th Street in the suburbs of the city, where it remained until after the battle of Bull Run. It was then transferred to Arlington Heights on the Virginia side of the Potomac, where it built Fort Cass. From August 4 to August 20 the brigade to which it was attached was commanded by Brig. Gen. William T. Sherman. About the 29th of September the regiment was transferred to Miner's Hill, where it remained in winter quarters until March 10, 1862. Embarking at Alexandria, Va., March 21, on the 23d it reached Fort Monroe. Here it was assigned to Morell's (2d) Brigade, Porter's (1st) Division, Heintzelman's (3d) Corps. After the siege and capture of Yorktown, General Porter having now been promoted to the command of the 5th Corps, the 9th Massachusetts became a part of Griffin's (2d) Brigade, Morell's (1st) Division, Porter's (5th) Corps and served with it through the Peninsular campaign. It was engaged at Hanover Court House, May 27, at Mechanicsville, June 26, Gaines' Mill, June 27, and Malvern Hill, July 1. In the two last named battles the regiment lost in killed and mortally wounded alone 111 officers and men, including Col. Cass, who was mortally wounded at Malvern Hill and died eleven days later at his home in Boston.



So severe were its losses at Gaines' Mill and Malvern Hill that the 9th was held in reserve at Second Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburg, and suffered only slight losses in those engagements. The winter of 1862-63 was spent in camp near Falmouth, Va