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LETTER

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE

5TH MAINE BATTERY

ASSOCIATION.

BY

G. T. STEVENS.



AUGUSTA
PRESS OF CHARLES F. NASH
1890

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AUGUSTA :
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Augusta, Maine, July 4, 1890.

MY DEAR COMRADE :

I presume that not long since you received the circular purporting to be signed by Lieutenants Whittier and Hunt of the 5th MAINE BATTERY ASSOCIATION, in relation to our GETTYSBURG MONUMENT.

I am surprised and astonished that they should issue a circular containing the false and malicious statements therein contained. I have large size photographs clearly showing the inscription on all four sides of the Monument, taken since the monument was erected, which completely refutes their false statements, and which I will exhibit to you the first opportunity. Their circular was intended evidently to prejudice the members of our Association against their late commanding officer, and make you dissatisfied with the Monument that the State has erected and dedicated in commemoration of the valuable and important services rendered by the Battery on many a hard fought field, and also get you to sign a permit or

power of attorney, authorizing them to appear before the Executive Committee of the Maine Gettysburg Commission, and have the inscription on the Monument changed to suit themselves.

The Monument is one of the finest Battery Monuments on the field, and the inscriptions were all submitted to the committee on "Locations and Inscriptions," at Gettysburg, before the same were engraved and were approved as correct.

The statement in their circular that the inscription is: "Fought here July 2, 3, 1863," is false.

The inscription on the Monument reads: "Fought here July 1, 2, 3, 1863," which is correct.

The statement in their circular that the inscription reads: "Gettysburg, 2 men killed," is also false.

The inscription on the Monument reads: "Gettysburg, 3 men killed," which is correct.

The statement in their circular that, "The number of men, 19 wounded at Chancellorsville is three (3) less than stated in the report made by Lieut. Stevens 5 days after the battle," is another detestable statement, and intended to deceive you.

My report of the battle of Chancellorsville reads: "Our loss in killed and wounded is as follows: Killed, 6; Wounded, 22," which is correct. A total of 28.

In the number wounded I made no distinction between officers and men.

The inscription on the Monument gives our losses in detail, as follows: "Chancellorsville, 6 men killed, 3 officers and 19 men wounded." A total of 28 which is also correct.

The Whittier-Hunt circular also says: "The number of men killed at Gettysburg (2) is not the same as appears in the reports of the Adjutant General, State of Maine, for the year 1863, and in the official records published by the War Department."

The inscription on the Monument as before stated, reads: "Gettysburg, 3 men killed." (See photographs); and all the official records have it the same.

Our losses were as follows:

"Killed.

Charles M. Bryant.

William Widner, (detached from N. Y. Reg't.)

Sullivan Luce."

"Wounded.

Capt. G. T. Stevens, severely shot through both legs.

Lieut. C. O. Hunt, severely, right thigh.

Private Warren B. Bailey, knee.

Private Sylvester L. Brown, severely, back.

Private Aaron Simpson, severely, leg.

Private William Leonard, severely, breast.

Private John A. Paine, severely, elbow.

Private Edwin F. Witham, slightly, foot.

Private John F. Chase, severely, right arm amputated.

Private B. Kenyon, (detached,) severely, thumb.

Private James F. Secor, (detached,) severely, arm and leg.

Private James A. Lambard, severely, right leg.

Private Homer Nichols, (detached,) right leg."

"Missing.

Private Charles Smith.

Private Isaac P. St Clair.

Private John Barry, (detached.)

Private Abner C. Marvin, (detached.)

Private John Droyer, (detached.)

Private — Huntermark, (detached.)

Total 3 killed, 13 wounded, 6 missing."

The above is an exact copy of the casualties taken from Lieut. Whittier's report under date of July 21, 1863, which exactly agrees with the losses on the monument. In giving the totals he included the 2 officers wounded with the 11 men.

They made a false statement in their circular, and then complain that it does not agree with the official reports. They also give the inscription on the

Monument as reading, "Ammunition expended, 976 rounds." This is another incorrect statement. The inscription reads, "979 rounds," which is correct, and agrees with the official report. See Official Records, Vol. 27, page 362.

Their circular also states that "Lieut. G. T. Stevens, in his report dated May 8, 1863, of the part borne by the Battery at Chancellorsville makes no mention of the fact that Leppien was mortally wounded while in command of the Battery." By this you would be led to believe that I did not report the loss of Leppien at all. Evasion is as wrong as positive falsehood. In my field report of that date I did not give our losses in detail, simply stating that, "Our loss in killed and wounded is as follows: Killed, 6; Wounded, 22." The 22 wounded, included Capt. Leppien, Lieut. Twitchell and myself, 3 officers and 19 enlisted men, making the 22. That report was made to Capt. D. R. Ransom, Division Chief of Artillery, under whose command we were temporarily thrown.

I stated totals that our depleted ranks might at once be filled, which was done by a large detail from the infantry. It was not then known nor for days afterwards that Capt. Leppien was mortally wounded. His wound was not necessarily mortal any more than that of Lieut. A. B. Twitchell and others who recovered.

In my report to the Adjutant General of the State of Maine of that engagement, the State that had honored Leppien with a commission as Captain of the Battery, and afterwards as Lieut. Col. of Maine Mounted Artillery, and from which source he could only expect future advancement and promotion. I reported as follows, and Lieut. Whittier and Hunt knew it.

REPORT.

"Officers Wounded.

Capt. George F. Leppien, severely, left leg amputated.

Lieut. G. T. Stevens, slightly, flesh wound left side.

Lieut. A. B. Twitchell, severely, flesh wound in leg, two fingers amputated."

"Enlisted Men.

Sergt. W. F. Lock, killed.

Corp. Benj. F. Grover, killed.

Private William W. Ripley, killed.

Private Timothy Sullivan, killed.

Private James Nason, killed.

Private James P. Holt, killed."

"Wounded.

Sergt. James C. Bartlett, leg.

Sergt. Andrew McRae, severely, right breast.

Corp. Lemuel A. Cummings, neck.

Private Alonzo Hinkley, face.
 Private John Bolinger, head.
 Private Charles L. Crane, foot.
 Private Rollistan Woodbury, back.
 Private Edwin F. Witham, foot.
 Private Corydon Powers, arm.
 Private Joseph Woods, face.
 Private Napoleon B. Perkins, leg.
 Private Charles M. Kimball, arm, amputated.
 Private Edward A. Stuart, leg, amputated.
 Private William H. Nason, hand, amputated.
 Private Edwin L. Knowlton, leg.
 Private James Russell, back.
 Private Cornelius O. Neal, leg.
 Private Joseph Holsinger, slight, arm.
 Private George Denison, severely, side.
 Total 3 officers wounded.
 6 men killed.
 19 men wounded."

This is one of the most complete and accurate reports that the Battery ever had, and the numbers lost are precisely the same as those on the Monument.

Their circular also declares that, "The records of the Association show that the subject matter or text of the inscriptions was never submitted to the Battery Association for discussion or approval."

I can only say that the records of the Association in the hands of Capt. Thomas B. Mennealy, Secretary, *do not show any such a thing.*

The records of our meeting at Gardiner on August 10, 1887, do show that the "Report of the Committee on Gettysburg Monument, G. T. Stevens, Chairman, the same discussed and accepted. Remarks by C. O. Hunt, R. Woodbury, J. F. Chase, E. E. Maxwell and others. Voted to accept the Monument presented by the Committee."

The design for the Monument then and there presented, discussed and accepted, bore the following inscription :

STEVENS' BATTERY,

5th

MAINE.

1st

CORPS.

JULY 1, 2, 3, 1863.

This together with cross cannons and the badge of the Corps. I have a photograph of that design with the inscription which is open for your inspection. At our reunion at Oakland on August 16, 1888, it was reported by the Chairman of your Committee that

he proposed to inscribe eleven of our principal battles on the Monument, naming them all, together with all of our losses, which was freely discussed. One member of the Association (Withee) thought we were not authorized to use "Wilderness" as he did not know that the Battery was engaged there. The records of that meeting show the following in relation to the Monument and nothing more :

"Report of Committee on Monument read and approved. Remarks of G. T. Stevens and other members in regard to the Monument to be erected at Gettysburg."

Farther than this the records are silent in relation to the Monument, not showing one thing or another. See records. I have certified copies of the same.

Lieut. Hunt was at our meeting at Gardiner, and Lieut. Whittier and Hunt at Oakland, and no dissenting voice or vote was raised against the report of your Committee in any particular.

They also declare in their circular that, "The inscriptions are defective in this respect : that the official title of the Battery nowhere appears."

Let us see about this. The monument has it :

"STEVENS' BATTERY,

5th MAINE."

General Hunt, Chief of Artillery, Army of the

Potomac, in his official report says: "As their columns moved out of town, they came under fire of *Stevens' Battery* (Fifth Maine), at 800 yards distance."

This is official and from the highest Artillery authority in the Army of the Potomac.

See Series 1, Vol. 27, Page 234, Official Records, Army of the Potomac, published by authority of Congress.

General Doubleday commanding the 1st Army Corps after the death of General Reynolds, to which Corps we belonged, in his official report says:

"Cooper's Battery was assigned by the Chief of Artillery on the north, and *Stevens' Battery* (Fifth Maine), on the south of the Seminary." Same Vol. Page 250.

Colonel C. S. Wainwright, Chief of Artillery, 1st Army Corps, under whose immediate command we were, in his official report of the battle of Gettysburg says: "Meantime General Doubleday had moved Captain *Stevens' Battery* to the right of Captain Cooper's." Same Vol. Page 356.

On all three of the official maps of the battle of Gettysburg, published by authority of the Hon. Secretary of War, and compiled by Col. John B. Batchelder, the government historian, the position of "Stevens' † † † † † † (battery), 5th Maine," is given and so marked.

General Hunt in an article in the Century Magazine for December, 1886, gives a picture of the ground occupied by "Stevens' 5th Maine Battery." He also in the text speaks of Stevens' twelve pounders at the head of the ravine.

General Doubleday in his history of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, says: "About eleven A. M. the remainder of the First Corps came up together with Coopers', Stewart's, Reynolds' and Stevens' batteries." Page 135.

He also says: "Stewart's, Reynolds' and Stevens' batteries which had been a good deal cut up the first day, were now brought to bear on the approaching enemy." Page 182.

Swinton's Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, speaks of "Stevens' Battery." Page 354.

Harper's Weekly of June 25, 1864, gives an illustration with this title, "Grant's Great Campaign. Stevens' Battery at Cold Harbor—from a sketch by A. R. Waud." On page 410, of the same number it says: "In the Battle of Cold Harbor, June 1, Stevens' battery belonging to the Sixth Corps was so near the rebel lines that the soldiers nicknamed it '*Battery Insult.*' It stirred up the rebels in a most aggravating manner, and was an excessively dangerous spot to be seen in. After a discharge of the

pieces, hundreds of bullets would zip through the embrasures and around the earth works; occasionally round shot would batter down portions of the work, but the artillerists stuck to it and did good execution." A writer in the National Tribune, under date of February 6th, 1890, speaks of "Stevens' infallable old 5th Maine Battery."

This is the Battery of which Lieuts. Whittier and Hunt say: "The official title nowhere appears," on the monument. As a further illustration of the correctness and truthfulness of Lieut. Whittier's statements, I will call your attention to his report of the Battle of Gettysburg, where he, speaking of the wounded, says: "Lieutenant Hunt at the seminary during the enemy's charge on our position, and Captain Stevens *on the morning of the 2nd*, by a bullet from the town." All of you who were present during the 2nd day, must judge whether I was wounded in the morning or *in the afternoon* of the second day. Wishing to cover as much of the time as possible when he, Whittier, was in command of the battery he so reported. I never had any knowledge that he so reported until the publication of the War Records.

Their circular further declares, "That it does not anywhere appear that the Battery had any other

commanding officer than Captain Stevens, in any portion of its term of service."

There is nothing said on the monument about any commanding officer of the Battery. It gives the official title of the Battery, the same as that of the other Maine Batteries. The inscription on one of the monuments reads: "Hall's 2nd Maine Battery;" on another it reads: "Dow's 6th Maine Battery."

Other officers besides Hall and Dow commanded those batteries in some portion of their term of service.

Our monument was not intended to give the history or biography of any individual, but an outline of its services and sacrifices as an organization at Gettysburg and elsewhere. Had Lieut. Edward N. Whittier's name incorrectly appeared on the monument as commanding the entire second and third days, as you must infer from his official report; and also had Lieut. Charles O. Hunt been inscribed as wounded and captured, you would never have seen or heard of their circular. On November 10th, 1887, after our reunion at Gardiner, and after the design for the monument *with the inscription on the face or front* had been presented, discussed and accepted by the Association, Lieut. Hunt wrote me as follows: "The more I have thought of the matter of the in-

scription on the monument the more thoroughly opposed I am to having the Sixth Corps badge and the names of the other battles put on it. It is not (he says) intended to be a historical monument to the 5th Maine Battery, but to indicate the place and the part taken by it in that particular battle; and I feel that it is very inappropriate to put on the stone, names referring to events that happened after the battle of Gettysburg, even if some other organizations have done so. I feel sure that the impression made on visitors will not be so favorable as the plain inscription, giving the date when the Battery held position, marked, and the badge of the First Corps. Henry is decidedly of this opinion, and *Whittier also*, whom I saw a few days ago." These were the sentiments of Lieuts. Hunt and Whittier at the time when the monument was in process of construction. Now they find fault because we did not inscribe all of our skirmishes, where we met with no losses, and that have no place in history; completely ignoring all of our losses and sacrifices except Gettysburg, and not one word said about Captain Leppien, in any way, shape or manner.

Lieut. Hunt afterwards consented that the battles might be put on, and under date of November 17, 1887, wrote me as follows: "I did not expect that they

(a Boston Granite Company) would have anything as good as the one you had, which *I for one, was perfectly delighted with.* I hope there will be no difficulty in getting your design carried out." What design? The design presented at Gardiner; the design with the "Stevens' Battery, 5th Maine, 1st Corps, July 1, 2, 3, 1863," printed upon it; the design that the eleven battles, and all of our losses were to appear upon. We have got all that correctly done, and now what is the matter? The Lieut. Hunt letters are open for inspection. The Gettysburg Battle-field Memorial Association, a corporation existing under the laws of Pennsylvania, having charge and control of the field, and under whose instruction and guidance we were, entertained a different opinion from Lieuts. Whittier and Hunt, and recommended as follows:

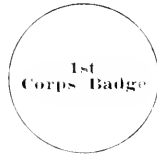
"As the memorials erected on this field will not only mark the positions held by the several commands but will also be regimental or battery monuments and in most instances the only ones ever erected by them, the Memorial Association strongly recommends that the inscriptions be not only historically accurate, *but sufficient in detail to give an idea of the services of the command.*" This being in accordance with the idea of your committee all of our battles and losses were inscribed.

The inscription on the Monument reads as follows.

(North side.)

STEVENS' BATTERY.

5TH MAINE, 1ST CORPS.



FOUGHT HERE.

JULY 1, 2, 3, 1863.

ALSO ENGAGED

JULY 1ST NORTH OF THE

SEMINARY.

AMMUNITION EXPENDED

979 ROUNDS.

(West side.)

BULL RUN 2ND.

FREDERICKSBURG.

CHANCELLORSVILLE.

GETTYSBURG.

WILDERNESS.

SPOTTSYLVANIA.

COLD HARBOR.

PETERSBURG.

OPEQUAN,

FISHER'S HILL.

CEDAR CREEK.

(South side.)

LOSSES.

BULL RUN 2ND,
1 OFFICER AND 3 MEN KILLED.
8 MEN WOUNDED,
6 MEN MISSING.

CHANCELLORSVILLE.
6 MEN KILLED,
3 OFFICERS AND 19 MEN WOUNDED.

GETTYSBURG.
3 MEN KILLED,
2 OFFICERS AND 11 MEN WOUNDED.
6 MEN MISSING.

OPEQUAN,
6 MEN WOUNDED.

CEDAR CREEK,
2 MEN KILLED,
16 MEN WOUNDED.

(East side.)

“ IN THE ASSAULT UPON
EAST CEMETERY HILL,
IN THE EVENING OF
JULY 2ND, THE ENEMY,
(HAYS’ AND HOKE’S BRIGADES,)
EXPOSED THEIR LEFT FLANK TO
STEVENS’ BATTERY
WHICH Poured A TERRIBLE FIRE
OF DOUBLE CANISTER INTO
THEIR RANKS.”

DUBLEDAY.

Captain Leppien was my friend and I his. Our relations were of the most intimate and cordial character.

At the battle of Chancellorsville he held a commission as Lieutenant Colonel of Maine Mounted Artillery, but had not been mustered into the U. S. Service as such. He had recommended me as his successor but I had not received my commission. In a communication to his Excellency the Governor of Maine, dated April 8th, 1863, the original draft in Leppien's hand-writing I now hold, he said: "Lieut. Stevens was very active and successful in aiding to recruit my battery under the direction of His Excellency, Israel Washburn, Jr., then Governor of the State of Maine, and he has since the organization of the battery faithfully and with credit served under me: he has in all cases acquitted himself with honor: and through his strict attention to and prompt execution of orders has proved himself to be an efficient officer earning my highest esteem.

"Through his studious habits, knowledge and due appreciation of military discipline he is worthy of trust and command.

"During the last five months when I was officiating the greater part of the time as Chief of Artillery of the Division the command and interior economy of

the battery was under the direct supervision of Lieut. Stevens, and the opportunity to display his knowledge and experience was in all cases improved to my perfect satisfaction. For these reasons I would most respectfully beg leave to bring Lieut. Stevens to the favorable notice of your Excellency, and recommend him as my successor as Captain of the 5th Battery Maine Vols. The great importance of personal qualification of a battery commander renders success in all parts of this service not frequent, and the selection of officers a point of great consideration: but I feel convinced that Lieut. Stevens will reflect credit upon your Excellency in case your Excellency will honor him with the promotion, and that he will sustain the reputation of the battery."

What more could one officer say of another? Such were the feelings existing between Leppien and myself at the time Whittier and Hunt would have you believe I did not treat him fairly. Capt. Leppien needs no encomium from me. His biography has been written by an abler hand than mine. Neither does he need a monument of granite, of marble, or of bronze, to perpetuate his memory on a battlefield *where he never was, and fought at a time when he was not living.*

You will remember that Capt. Leppien received

his death-wound in his first great battle where he was personally in command of the battery.

Lieut. W. F. Twitchell commanded at Bull Run 2nd and was killed.

Stevens (Lieut.) commanded at Fredericksburg, Leppien then acting as Chief of Artillery, 2nd Division, 1st Army Corps. At Chancellorsville Capt. Leppien was personally in command, was severely wounded and afterwards died. At Gettysburg Stevens (Capt.) was in command until the 2nd day of the battle when he was also severely wounded and the command fell to Lieut. Whittier. Afterwards Stevens (Capt.) commanded in the Wilderness at Spottsylvania, at Cold Harbor, at Petersburg, at Winchester or Opequan, at Fisher's Hill, and at Cedar Creek.

You will judge of the correctness of the statements and opinion expressed by Lieuts. Whittier and Hunt.

Let me repeat, our Monument is one of the finest Artillery monuments on the field.

The base is of Hallowell Granite, finely cut. The plinth or second base is of the same material, on the west side of which is a light twelve pounder gun with a gunner and two cannoniers in the act of loading and pointing cut in relief. The die on which the in-

scriptions are all cut in red granite highly polished, the color indicating the Artillery, our branch of the service. The cap is a high cannon ball, two feet eight inches in diameter, of black granite also highly polished, and held in place by the top of the die being concaved to fit the ball, and by a large copper spindle. The design is unique and attractive and the monument of the most substantial character.

In conclusion I would say that I have always entertained the most friendly feeling towards Lieuts. Whittier and Hunt and that they both have received many favors at my hand.

I am very truly yours,



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