

Civil War

Battery B 1st NJ Light Artillery



Three of the twenty-four Civil War veterans buried in Butler's Historic Manning Avenue Cemetery served in the same regiment. Abram Brown, James Walker, and John Henry Luther not only served in the 1st NJ Light Artillery Regiment, they all served in Battery B, manning and maintaining a set of six field artillery cannons.

Battery B was mustered into the Union Army for a three-year enlistment on September 3, 1861 with Captain John E. Beam as its commanding officer. The battery consisted of 151 officers and men, four ten-pound Parrott rifled cannons, and two twelve-pound howitzers.

The regiment first saw action as part of General George McClellan's Peninsula Campaign in Virginia. At Williamsburg, Abram Brown's military career came to an end when he received a serious leg wound and was sent home to New Jersey.

When Robert E. Lee turned the tables on the Army of the Potomac, the Jerseymen joined the retreat back toward Washington D.C. At the Battle of Malvern Hill, during an artillery barrage, a rebel shell struck Captain Beam, killing him instantly. After the war, the local Grand Army of the Republic Post (GAR, Civil War Veterans' Organization) was named the John E. Beam Post 92 in his honor.

Battery B covered the retreat of the Union Army in their defeat at the Battle of Chancellorsville, suffering three men killed and seven wounded.



Stationed at the base of Little Round Top, the regiment was engaged in heavy fighting at the important Battle of Gettysburg. Records show that Battery B fired 1,342 rounds on July 2, 1863. General Henry Jackson Hunt, Union chief of artillery, later stated that no battery had fired that many rounds in a single day during the entire war. He stated that, "I have never seen better effect in firing. The New Jersey gunners have never been equaled." The regiment went on to fight in the major battles of Spotsylvania Court House, the Wilderness, and the Appomattox Campaign.

On April 9, 1865, a flag of truce came through the Union lines and Battery B's war was over. On the way home, the regiment passed through the nearly destroyed Confederate capital of Richmond, marched in the Grand Review of the Army in Washington D.C., and on June 16, 1865, Battery B, one of the best field artillery units in the U.S. Army, was mustered out of service.



Other than being listed on the roster of Battery B, little is known about James Walker. John Henry Luther's record, on the other hand, is well documented. Born in Saxony, Germany, Luther, his wife and three daughters, arrived in the U.S. on June 19, 1854. He settled near West Bloomingdale (Butler) where he established a blacksmith and wheelwright shop.

Late in 1863, he left his family behind and enlisted in Battery B. On May 14, 1864, John was wounded in the right leg when his unit was engaged in action at Drury's Bluff, Virginia. During his recovery, he was transferred to Battery F in the 5th NJ Artillery and served until the end of the war.

John and his wife Anna had six more children, all of them girls. He and Abram Brown received invalid pensions because of their wounds and their wives received widows' pensions after the war.



Battery B 50th Reunion, Gettysburg 1913