HISTORY OF THE 159TH REGIMENT, N.Y.S.V.

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History of the 159th regiment, N.Y.S.V. by Edward Duffy

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EDWARD DUFFY

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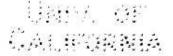
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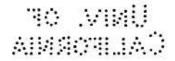
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DURING the latter part of October, 1862, negotiations were made by which the 167th Regiment, Colonel Homer A. Nelson, in Camp at Hudson, was consolidated with the 159th Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Edward L. Molineux, in camp at Brooklyn. The consolidated Regiment was designated the 159th, Colonel Nelson retaining command. The Regiment left "Camp-Kelly," Hudson, on the 30th day of October, proceeded on board the steamer Connecticut, arrived in New York next morning, and marched



to Park Barracks. Remained there until November 1st, when we were mustered, into the United States service by Lieutenant R. B. Smith, U. S. A. Left Park Barracks and marched to Castle Garden; from there proceeded by steamboat to Staten Island, and went into Camp at New Dorp. Next day pitched our tents and had things very comfortable.

Colonel Nelson having been elected to Congress from his District, Lieutenant Colonel E. L. Molineux was appointed Colonel, and took command of the Regiment, which he virtually had from the first.

November 24th the Regiment broke Camp and was placed on board U. S. steam transport Northern Light, pier No. 3, North River, and remained at the wharf until December 2d, when we hauled into the stream. Early on the morning of the 4th weighed anchor, and the 159th Regiment put to sea. On the 13th we reached Ship Island, in the

Gulf of Mexico, having enjoyed a tolerable good passage for the season of the year, being more fortunate than other ships of the expedition, some of them having suffered considerable from rough weather off Cape Hatteras.

December 14th reached New Orleans, and anchored in the stream over night.

—The following day pursued our course up the river to Baton Rouge, and arrived there on the 17th. The enemy, learning of our approach in force, concluded to evacuate, while our monitors gave them a parting salute, and the same day the Stars and Stripes were hoisted to the breeze from the Capitol, amid the shouts and cheers of the gratified soldiers.

Now the work began of making thorough soldiers of men, the greater portion of whom never used-fire arms before, at least not in the manner required by the service. Squad, Company, Battalion, and Brigade drill, with any quantity of discipline considered

essential to fit men for the campaigning and hardships visible in the distance, were gone through with.

Perhaps few in the volunteer service, none of whom could boast of very much practical experience, were better adapted than Colonel Molineux for this severe task; very quick, energetic, ambitious to do his own duty and to keep every man in his command busy, was the true secret of his success as a disciplinarian.

For nearly three months the men were kept steadily under instruction, and became quite proficient in the use of the musket, and all the essential discipline to make an effective army.

On the 13th of March, 1863, broke camp, and the army moved up to the rear of Port Hudson. Colonel Molineux having command of a provisional Brigade with Nims' Massachusetts Battery, went up the Clinton Road, while the main army proceeded down the Port Hudson Road about eighteen miles, skirmishing the Rebels the whole way,

driving their pickets and scouts as they advanced.

At this time Port Hudson was strongly manned, there being from 23,000 to 25,000 men in that natural stronghold. Manœuvred about this quarter until the 20th, when we again joined the main body of the army on the Port Hudson Road, returning to Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

This movement was made to attract the attention of the enemy, and enable Admiral Farragut's boats to proceed up the river past the fort that here impeded his passage. This was a bold but brilliantly successful move, that only an "iron Farragut" could have accomplished. This blind enabled General Banks to more successfully pursue his future designs, as the enemy had been led to suppose by the formidable movements around Port Hudson that a general attack was to be made at once to reduce the place. Subsequent events exhibited the picture in a different light.