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Earl S. Pomeroy

Military Affairs, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Autumn, 1948), 168-174.

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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

THE LEBANON BLUES IN THE BALTIMORE CAMPAIGN, 1814: EXTRACTS FROM A COMPANY ORDERLY BOOK

BY EARL S. POMEROY*

The War of 1812 is perhaps the clearest exception to the first part of the saw that "the United States has never lost a war or won a peace." In point of failure to win a clear victory over the enemy it is distinct from later international wars of the United States, and yet so close is the balance of military victory and defeat that the main pattern of the war is not unique. It happened that the British enemy of 1812, emerging from the worst pressure of the strictly European conflict even as the United States declared war, was able to transfer a large part of his force across the Atlantic, sufficient to neutralize if not to overcome the American forces, whereas after 1917 and 1941 the enemies of the United States in Europe continued to be occupied in much fuller measure by European armies and navies. Otherwise there are some closer analogies: in unpreparedness in material and personnel, in wartime and postwar discussions of compulsory military training in peacetime, in the painful fitting of civilians into military requirements. The spirit and the discomforts of American citizen-soldiers were less different between 1812 and 1917 or 1941 than the fortunes of American arms, which depended in large part on events in Europe and on shortcomings among generals and politicians rather than on the readiness and military worthiness of rank and file.

*Assistant professor of history, Ohio State University.

Most of the Pennsylvania militiamen, somewhat as the militiamen under General Hull's command at Detroit in 1812, saw no action in the Chesapeake campaigns, and that, because of mismanagement at the top rather than because of any defects inherent in Republicans or even in the militia system. It was true that by oversight of the legislature the state militia was incompletely organized when it was most needed, in the late summer of 1814,¹ but as the House committee investigating the capture of Washington later concluded, "the difficulties . . . in relation to the militia laws of Pennsylvania had no bearing upon the failure of our arms, as no specific call was made upon that State until the 17th of August . . ."² By that time the battle of Bladensburg was only a week away, though long foreseen. So far as they were tested, the Pennsylvania militia apparently responded adequately to Governor Snyder's invitation "earnestly . . . to rise . . . superior to local feeling and evasions that might possibly be drawn from an imperfect military system . . ."³ The Cumberland county complement, marching at Carlisle earlier in the year, had impressed Hezekiah Niles's correspondent: "Their appearance was truly martial, and their spirits animating. *They*

¹*American State Papers*, Series V, Vol. I, 526.

²*Ibid.*, 531. General Winder had argued otherwise. *Ibid.*, 548.

³August 26, 1814. *Niles Weekly Register*, VII (September 10, 1814), 3.

were all volunteers."⁴ General Harrison called the Pittsburgh Blues "the first in the North-western Army."⁵ Before Baltimore only the Baltimore (whom Vice Admiral Cochrane, if not later critics of the militia system, described as "the flower of the enemy's troops"⁶) had opportunity to distinguish themselves in open combat although three companies of Pennsylvania volunteers, from York, Hanover, and Marietta, took part in the defense of the city. Captain Spangler's "elegant uniformed company of volunteers from York" and Captain Metzger's "fine company of volunteers from Hanover"⁷ "recommended themselves in a particular manner to the attention of the commanding general."⁸ Governor Snyder told the legislature in 1815 that experience showed the value of the volunteer system over the "idea of converting every man into a soldier."⁹

The Lebanon Blues, as the six other Lebanon County companies at Baltimore in 1814, had no opportunity even such as Captains Spangler's and Metzger's companies, but their experience in the Baltimore campaign was probably not far from representative among militiamen. It was recorded in unusually full fashion in the company's orderly book, which includes journal entries and company, brigade, and regiment orders as well as accounts proper.¹⁰ The extracts and summarized portions following afford a more personal view of the citizen soldiery of 1814 than is available in most of the published official records. From the beginning there was occasional trouble among the Penn-

sylvania militiamen with individual citizens who did not take easily to military status, but the Lebanon Blues apparently were proud of their company and apparently also had reason to be so.

Lebanon 1st September 1814

Israel Uhler was Discouraged to March and proved Coward he hired A Substitute and when he was hired he Returned again to Middletown and wanted to be reported he Said that he would get clear from Military Duty. he cried like A Baby.¹¹

Lebanon 1st Septemb 1814

Started at 3 O Clock and arrived at Millerstown¹² at 5 in the Evening. Lodged with Michael Forrey.

Millerstown 2d Septem

Started at Millerstown at 7 O Clock and Arrived at Middletown at 5 O Clock Distance 17 Miles John Reinalt fainted with Heat and Mathias Greenawalt had A Battle with A fellow that Said that the Lebanon Blues were Rascals. Lodged at George Etters Tavern.

Middletown 3 Sept 1814

We Quartered at this place and marched Out and put up our tents and agreed not to Lodge in them Capt. Henry Doebler would not agree to it as the place was not Healthy.

By Order.

Middletown 4th September 1814

The Company marched Out to meet the Citizen Volunteers of Harrisburgh and guarded them in to Town. this morning they paraded on the commons and the people of Middletown & Harrisburgh Reported that the Lebanon Blues were the best Disciplined men that composed the Detachment of the Colonel's Command.

¹⁰The orderly book covers the years 1814-29; journal entries are for the year 1814 only. The diarist is anonymous; probably he was First Sergeant Andrew D. Hubley. A few entries are in the hand of Captain Henry Doebler, whose name appears on the title page: "Accounts of the Lebanon Blues: 1st September 1814 Capt. Henry Doebler's Book." The orderly book is in the possession of Mr. William K. Rentz of Berkeley, California, a collateral descendant of Captain Doebler. Except where otherwise footnoted, all following quotations are from the orderly book.

¹¹This entry was concealed by a piece of paper pasted over the page. Philip Greenawalt substituted for Uhler, being one of a total of eight substitutes in the company. *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series VI, VIII, 869.

¹²Five miles west. Later called Annville.

⁴*Ibid.*, VI (March 19, 1814), 46.

⁵John H. Niebaum, "The Pittsburgh Blues," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, IV (October, 1921), 263, quoting general orders of August 28, 1813. Cf. *American Weekly Messenger*, II (1815), 379.

⁶*Niles Weekly Register*, VII (December 3, 1814), 200.

⁷*Ibid.*, VII (September 24, 1814), 23.

⁸Major General Samuel Smith, September 19, 1814. *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹Annual Message, December 8, 1815. *Pennsylvania Archives*, Fourth Series, IV, 883-84.

Adam Richard Co[1]¹³
 Notice the Privats and non Commissioned Officers
 are to Respect and Obay his Commander the[y]
 must be up in the morning at Role call and Obay
 Corporals and Sergeants or Else Obay the Con-
 sequences

by order *Henry Doebler Captn*

* * *

Middletown 7 Sept 1814
 Marched from this place and came on to York
 the Men stood the March Well and in good
 Spirits. We Drummed A Woman out of the Com-
 pany at George Etters for being A faggot¹⁴ on
 the 6th of September and Marched Out to Our
 Encampment for to do Our Duty we took one
 man Under Guard for being Saucy to the Cap-
 tain A Drummer of Privates.

York 8th September
 Quartered in the Court House for one Day and
 Marched to the Camp ground and put up Our
 Tents on the Same Day.

York 9th 1814
 Still Remain in Camp and have to parade twice
 in A Day.

Saturday York 10th 1814
 Still Remain in Camp and have to parade twice
 in A day pass heare 1 Light Dragoon Company
 wich have Gid [?] there Disgarge in boldimore¹⁵

York 11th 1814
 We still remain encamped here and have paraded
 twice A day. A Picket guard has been Ordered
 Out to prevent the people from Crowding in to
 Camp
 It began to rain on September 13, while the com-
 pany remained at York.

Friday the 16 th 1814
 We started for Baltimore this Morning and came
 on in as Great A Rain as ever I experienced for
 five Miles we were as wet through as we could
 have been and came on 12 Miles and Quartered
 near Doudies Tavern Martin Yensell has been
 Sick this Morning

¹³Probably Reitscher.

¹⁴Camp follower, *femme de guerre* (rendered by the
 late Professor J. W. Thompson as *hors du combat*),
 perhaps officially a laundress or nurse. On women in
 early American army camps, see James Ripley Jacobs,
The Beginning of the U.S. Army, 1783-1812 (Prince-
 ton, 1947), 140, 201, 293.

¹⁵This entry seems to be in Captain Doebler's hand.
 The diarist frequently records remaining in camp and
 marching.

Saturday Camp near Doudies Sept 17th 1814
 Started for Baltimore and came on from 10
 'OClock 18. Miles till sun down and Quartered
 in the woods Martin Yensell is not better¹⁶
 Peter Cross took sick last evening but has re-
 covered again. Took Dinner at Henry Brookers
 Tavern on the road

Sunday Morning 18th September 1814
 Started from the Woods and came on to A
 Tavern calld pavillion Garden were we encamped
 for the Night Distance Fourteen Miles The
 Men Stood the March well We Drew Rations
 for this Day in full

Baltimore Monday 19th 1814
 encamped at Fairfield Camp which is 2 Miles from
 Baltimore but we expect to Move off in the Morn-
 ing¹⁷

September 19th 1814. Fairfield
 We had agreed not to encamp here the Men
 Said that they were Freeman. the Waggon Mas-
 ter Said we must he run to the Waggon and
 threw out two or three Knapsacks when the Men
 Run up and pushed him away and Swore they
 would run him through after that he Chased
 Out.

Tuesday 20th 1814 September
 Remain encamped at Fairfield and have to do
 Duty twice A Day. But the men are not Satis-
 fied to remain encamped here as the place is not
 very healthy

21 September 1814. Fairfield
 Still Remain encamped here and perform duty
 twice A day it has been very bad weather this
 day 22d & 23d Still Rain and leaks thro the Tents
 so that all the Straw is so wet that we can hardly
 Sleep.

22d September 1814
 The Captain was at Fort McHenry and reports
 it is all Cut up Round about it he brought A
 piece of the bumb Shell with him he further

¹⁶On September 20 the brigade surgeon certified that
 Yensell was "disqualified to perform the duties of a
 Soldier on account of general debility, under which he
 has laboured for considerable time previous to leaving
 home"

¹⁷By this time General Ross' troops had been landed
 at the mouth of the Patapsco River and Ross himself
 killed (September 12) in an encounter with the Balti-
 more militia; Colonel Brooke had reembarked (Septem-
 ber 15) and Cochrane sailed for Halifax (September
 19). British troops remained in the bay until October
 14.

Says that there is some so large that they weigh 200lb

Brigadier General Watson ordered the troops to "hold themselves in Readiness to March at a moments warning" (September 22), but the company remained most of the time at Camp Fairfield, marching twice a day, while the men grew more restless.

[September 26?]

We Still remain encamped at Fairfield and paraded in Battallion on the 25th September 1814 and Still are encamped here and do Duty from the 26th when we Started for Bladensburg and went on to Elk Ridge Landing which is 11 Miles when we were Countermanded and Marched to Baltimore again.

General Watson ordered (Division Orders, September 27) "that no Officers or Soldiers leave the encampment to go into the City or elsewhere without permission from the Officer of the day," and "the guard so placed as to prevent all from leaving the Camp without leave. The example of the Officers will be followed by the Men. The Captains of Companies are particularly charged to prevent the firing of Guns by their Men either in or out of Camp; every man who disobeys must be put under guard instantly for one hour." Later (September 30) each brigade was ordered to furnish a patrol "to be sent immediately into the City and suburbs to take up all non-commissioned officers & privates who are absent without leave, and bring them to Camp to be put under guard."

October the 2d 1814

There was one Man of Berks County drum'd out of Camp for disobedience of Orders he said he did not care A damn for all the Officers that he would be damned if he would not Shoot some of them he was put to Jail then for one Day he was Brought out again and Tried was then found Guilty and Sentenced to be drummed Out All the Troops about Five Thousand were Brought up and he was Marched through he had A Crown Made of Straw and A long plume of the Same with A long hair tail with A parcel of Bones

hanging to it and A head of Cabbage hanging Round his Neck in front of Him The fellow Laughed as he passed through the Ranks.¹⁸

Sunday 9th October 1814

There were fifteen Deserters came back to camp and were Sentenced to be taken to the fort and to be kept there for A term not known. there were twenty five Men called up out of each company and taken to guard them down They lookd quite down hearted and Said they would never take a tour of Duty after this because they had returned again but the cause was they went with-out Orders

There was no mention of desertions among the Lebanon Blues, and Captain Doebler was able to note, in requesting "a forlow for Going home on Pertigalor business" for the company fifer that "this is the first that Maid obligation for Going home in my Company." (October 13)

Reports of forthcoming British reinforcements in the Chesapeake (which never arrived) demanded readiness, without producing it. "Rigid discipline must be maintained," ordered Major General Smith (October 4), "the training be Continued; No relaxation in preparation must be countenanced." "The commanding Gen^l Learns, with regret that many outrages have been committed by the Soldiers on the property of individuals about the Camp, in robbing of Hen Roosts, digging potatoes, Carrying off apples, destroying fences, and other petty Larcenies, disgracefull to those assembled for the protection of this City and defense of the Liberties of our Country."

Company, state, and national elections broke the routine, training of battalions and regiments being dispensed with on the day of elections, October 11. All was not holiday, however, for General Watson forbade sale of spiritous liquors on election day and "observed with regret [October 10] that card

¹⁸See John S. Hare, "Military Punishments in the War of 1812," *Journal of the American Military Institute*, IV (Winter, 1940), 225-39.

playing has been permitted within the precincts of the Camp, The Officers of companies and field officers will see that this practice is promptly *suspended*. The General expects that the Officers will set the example to their Men."

The Lebanon Blues (of whom at least thirty voted, out of a total of fifty-six) went Republican by a slight margin, Isaac Wayne,¹⁹ Federalist, receiving thirteen votes to Governor Snyder's seventeen. General John Foster ran behind Melchoir Rahm for state senator, twelve to fifteen.

Thursday 6th of October 1814 This day I was Pollene Captain and had 15 man along for a Potick party over the hole Pennsylv Militia which is hear in Camp Springfield near baltimor²⁰

"A day of thanksgiving and prayer for the recent deliverance of this City from A hostile Fleet & Army" was set (October 13) for October 20, by order of General Smith, but drilling and minor infractions of discipline continued. On October 21 General Watson again cautioned officers "against permitting their men to Straggle beyond the limits of the Camp, as Patrols are ordered to scour the Neighbourhood and take up all persons belonging to the army, who may be found one mile from camp"

October 18 & 19th

This Day there was A party of Men in the City to bring out Stragglers that go to the City without leave of the Officers

October the 20th 1814

This was fast and Prayer Day we were up at the Generals Quarters there was A Sermon preached by A Methodist. Sunday October 23 the whole Regiment was marched up to the Generals Quarters without Arms to hear A Sermon delivered by the Request of Brigad^r General Watson it was delivered on the Occassion of the

¹⁹Wayne was colonel of the Second Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Snyder had no military record; his German antecedents might have been expected to appeal more strongly in Lebanon.

²⁰This entry is in Captain Doebler's hand.

Calamities of the late Invasion this Morning there was three Men Sent to the Fort for Misbehaving to their Officers the Court Martial Consisted of the following Officers Capt. H. Doebler Lieut. Still & Kline there Sentence was 12 Days hard Labour. to be kept in the Fort On Monday the 26th October 1814 John Baler was Buried with the honours of War A detachment of men from my company consisting of Twelve Men. They fired Twenty Rounds in the Grave and Ten in the Air he was an Inhabitant of Lebanon County

Camp Springfield

October 26th 1814

The First Regiment was Ordered out to Work at the entrenchments and Batteries they done a good piece the Bottom was So Sandy that some fell down and they had to put it up again after they Returned there was no bread here yet the Men Cursed and Damnd the Col^{el} came up to pacify them they Surrounded him and Said Rum Beef & Bread or no Soldiers the Col^{nl} Said he would Draw his Sword the Men could hardly be kept in at last they let him go

Camp Springfield Octobr 27th 1814

Last Night we had the Severest Storm We ever experienced it blew down the Guard House and A Number of Tents It Rained So hard that all the Tents that did fall were Wet through & through We Sent for A Quart of Whiskey at two O Clock in the Night and drank it for to keep them Warm

29th 30th & 31st October 1814

We received Rations as usual in full for these days the Contractor had given us bad Beef we threw it out of the tents and told them Beef & Bread or No Soldiers

1st 2d & 3d November 1814

We Received good Beef and Bread for these three days past and more regularly than at former times

General orders refer to the perennial problems of poor rations and delinquencies in pay. Drilling continued.

November 1st 2d & 3d

The Weather has been rough and Cold these three or four days past. On Monday the York Volunteers arrived here under the Command of Captn Spangler the company consists of about fifty

good looking young fellows they encamped to the right of us

4th 5th 6th November 1814

This day commenced with Rain and kept on for two days and two nights the rain came through the tents so that the Straw was all wet through Some of the Men went into A Barn to sleep the Straw is Scarce with us at this time but we expect some this day. I hope that it will be received with pleasure.

4 5 6th November 1814

We Received Rations for these three days they Were better than ever we received before especially the bread Salt Soap Candles Beef Bread Vinegar & Rum. Our Men are so hearty that the Beef will hardly last for these Rations

* * *

November 10th 11 & 12th

We Still parade twice A day, in the Morning in Companies in the Afternoon in Regiments the Men march as well in line as the 5th Regiment. Last Night the Second Brigade *Stocked there arms and Said they must pay them or else they would not do Duty*

* * *

13th & 14 November 1814

We had Rain those two days and nights as severe as ever we had so muddy that all the Straw was so wet & Muddy that they could hardly Sleep We had Rain the 16th and 17th November 1814 and Still Continues to rain they promise us Straw this day but I think they will fail in the object

* * *

November 17th 1814

This day we had A heavy Rain it was so wet and Muddy that we could not parade in Regiments 18th Still Continues raining with A great Storm commencing in the Afternoon This day we had no parade in Regiment.

Baltamor November 19 th 1814

This day we had A great Storm from morning to night we had no parade this day I was sick I god a Stiff nack but in 2 Days it was better again²¹

Baltamor November 20 th 1814

This day we had to parade in Regiment again

November 21 th 1814

We Still parade twice A day in the morning in Company the afternoon in Regiment

Baltamor November 22 th 1814

We Still have parade twice A day in the Morning

in Companys in the afternoon in Reigiments the man march very well in line this day

On November 23 General Watson ordered company captains to collect arms and take charge of them until delivered at York, but at the request of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety of Baltimore, the divisions were ordered to give further assistance in completing fortifications and breastworks around the city.

November 23d 1814.

Camp Springfield. near Baltimore

We Still have to parade Twice A day the men are equal to the 5th Regiment in Marching and wheeling forming Column & Sundry Military Movemts

* * *

Received November 22d 23d 24d & 25th Rations in full for the above days we have to quarrel sometimes with the Quartermaster about the Beef

* * *

[November 27?]

We had the greatest Rain on Saturday Night the 26th November and Continued on till Sunday evening I most ever experiences the Men had to Suffer Severely as it was so cold & Wet

On November 28 Major General Scott ordered General Watson's division of Pennsylvania militia to be mustered for final discharge on December 2 and 3, and to be marched to York.

November 28th 1814

This day we had fine weather an continued so untill the 29th in the Evening it began to rain and still keeps on Raining till the 30th

December 1st & 2d 1814.

It is Clear Weather but pretty cold we expect to March on Saturday afternoon homewards the Men are all Glad to be on their March

On December 3 the company members were paid for one month's duty, at the rate of "Eight Dollars for Privates Sergeants Eleven Corporals Ten & Music Nine. . ."

December 3d 1814.

All the Troops under General Fosters Brigade where drawn out to See a man shot. he had

threatened one of his Officers that he would Shoot him he was marched out after his Coffin that was placed on A cart and carried before him he was guarded by Most all the Regular Troops after he was placed on the Coffin there was a Minister there that prayed for him he cried very much and he was pardoned afterwards. There were upwards of fifteen thousand Men present

Sunday December 4th 1814.

We left our encampment on this day in one of the most disagreeable days we ever Marched it rained most all day and was so muddy that we hardly could get along there were 27 Baggage Waggons the distance we Marched that day was Seventeen Miles We quartered at an old Quakers for the Night

Monday 5th December 1814

We took up our line of March and came on Nineteen Miles the day was beautifull till evening it then turned cold and we had Snow that night so that the half of the Tents were covered on one Side.

Tuesday December 6th 1814

It still continues to Snow we Marched Eight miles and it was Snowing all the time till we were within four Miles of York we arrived there at two O Clock we were marched out to the Camp ground and there delivered up our Tents & Camp Kettles.

Wednesday December 7th 1814

We were drawn up this Morning and had our discharge read to us afterwards we Saluted the General and then took up our March for home we came on Eighteen Miles that day and Staid all night at Kapp Tavern

Brigade Orders

York, Penna December 7th 1814

The general cannot take leave of the brigade . . . without expressing . . . his gratitude for their attention to his orders, and his approbation of their general conduct during the campaign They have not met the enemy on the field of battle, but the patriotic Spirit with which they entered the Service; their Strict attention to discipline, their patient endurance of hardships, added to their proficiency in Military knowledge, are sure pledges that had that been their fortune, their conduct would have been honorable to themselves and their

Country The frequent scarcity of necessary supplies rendered the duties of the quartermaster particularly arduous, and it is but Justice to the gentleman acting in this department, to acknowledge their zeal and exertions to render satisfaction to their respective regiments The general has seen with pleasure the cheerfulness with which the disappointment in not being paid for the whole service performed, was borne by the officers and man of his brigade; such privations are unfortunately but too common to a soldier's life, and in the present case, they have been borne with a Spirit becoming Soldiers.

On the return of the troops to their homes and accustomed occupations, and again mixing with the pursuits and occurrences of civil life; To reflect on the events of the campaign, cannot but yield them pleasure and consolation for the hardship and privations they endured, it will have created new associations of friendship among the gentleman of all ranks in the brigade, and will draw closer those previously formed; it will disseminate through a portion of our State correct notions of the duties of an officer and a Soldier, and a mass of information on Military subjects that May be highly useful in the crises of public affairs that appears to [be] approaching. . . . The perfect regularity and good order with which the march from Baltimore to York was conducted, Merits particular Notice. . . .

In commanding the troops the general does not mean to flatter; unmerited praise he would equally Scorn to offer, as they would distain to receive, it is not to be concealed that commissions of irregularities and omissions of duty have occurred both among the officers and privates; but these it is believed are few in number and such as are perhaps inseparable from any body of troops suddenly transferred from their homes to encounter the ordous and vigorous duties of a Camp. . . .

* * *

December 8th 1814

We Started for Lebanon this Morning and came on as far Orths Tavern where we got our dinners and started afterwards the people of the Borough had the Bells ringing until we arrived for two hours and we formed & Marched in to town and gave five or Six Street fires and then were dismissed for the day.