

1st Regiment Infantry, Pennsylvania records

02

Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Michael Gubicza through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.

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1st Regiment Infantry Museum

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Summary Information

Repository	1st Regiment Infantry Museum
Creator	Pennsylvania. Army National Guard. 1st Infantry Regiment.
Title	1st Regiment Infantry, Pennsylvania records
Call number	02
Date [inclusive]	1812-1970
Extent	16 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The First Regiment Infantry, Pennsylvania, or "The Dandy First," is considered by some to be the oldest continuously existing troop in the United States National Guard, and the only existing Pennsylvania unit that served in the Continental Army. The unit, which today is known as the 103rd Engineer Battalion, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, has fought in nearly every major American battle beginning with the Revolutionary War. The 1st Regiment Infantry, Pennsylvania records, 1812-1970, consist of about 100 record books of the regiment and its predecessor and successor units, as well as several photograph albums and scrapbooks.</p>

Biography/History

The 103rd Engineer Battalion of the Pennsylvania National Guard--nicknamed the "Dandy First"--is the oldest continuously-serving military unit in Pennsylvania, and one of fewer than ten organizations whose

lineage goes back to before 1747 (as verified by the Center for Military History). The unit, which today is known as the 103rd Engineer Battalion, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, has undergone many name changes over the years.

Benjamin Franklin started the Artillery Companies of the Associated Regiment of Foot of Philadelphia in 1747, although Philadelphia men were already meeting as an informal militia as far back as the 1730s. From 1747 to the beginning of the Revolutionary War, the regiment's predecessor was a Company of Artillery commanded by Captain Jehu Eyre. This unit was increased to battalion strength and became the Artillery Battalion of Philadelphia; Eyre was promoted to the rank of Colonel and commanded the unit until his death in 1781. The unit reorganized after the War of 1812 as the Volunteer Corps of Light Infantry, Washington Grays and in 1828 again reorganized as the Artillery Corps, Washington Grays.

Just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War many of the artillery companies in the city of Philadelphia formed the First Regiment of Artillery, The Gray Reserves. Since the Washington Grays were the senior company their officers led the new unit. When the Civil War broke out many of the members of this unit enlisted in several 90-day units, and when the call came out from President Lincoln for three-year regiments, the Grays formed the 118th and 119th from their ranks ("The Corn Exchange Regiment" and "The Gray Reserves," respectively). After the war the unit reformed as the old Washington Grays. When Pennsylvania reorganized their militia into a modern National Guard structure in 1870, the Washington Grays were enlarged to regimental strength and became the First Regiment Infantry, National Guard of Pennsylvania. (They became the First Regiment again, because of their seniority.) The First Regiment fought in the Spanish-American War, helped push Pancho Villa south of the US border during the Mexican Revolution, and died in great numbers on the front lines of World War I. After WWI, the unit was reorganized as the 103rd Engineer Regiment of the Pennsylvania National Guard. It remained a combat battalion, serving in World War II and the Korean War. In between battles, the unit never disbanded, but helped keep the peace during the Whiskey Rebellion of 1793, Know Nothing riots in the 1840s, and numerous other incidents before, in between, and since.

As of 2012, the 103rd Engineer Battalion, Pennsylvania Army National Guard is still in existence. Its armory on the campus of Drexel University in Philadelphia houses the 1st Regiment Infantry Museum.

Bibliography:

Benson, Michael R. E-mail message to author, May 29, 2012.

Crowley, Dennis. "Pennsylvania's Historic Regiments: The 103rd Engineers." Accessed May 7, 2012. <http://graywolf1.home.pipeline.com/103rdeng.html>

Murphy, Christopher. "The Armory and "The Dandy First" 103rd Engineer Regiment." February 16, 2011. Accessed May 7, 2012. <http://www.library.drexel.edu/blogs/drexelarchives/2011/02/16/students-write-7/>

Signs on display throughout 1st Regiment Museum, viewed May 7, 2012.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of about 100 record books of the 1st Infantry Regiment, Pennsylvania and its predecessor and successor units, as well as several photograph albums and scrapbooks.

The record books in this collection include a large number of minute books, roll books, and officers' letter books. There are smaller numbers of clothing account books, membership list and dues records, musket assignment registers, account books, and other records books. There are also some loose discharge reports. Of special interest is an account book of the Washington Guards, 1812-1827.

There are a number of photograph albums in the collection. Most date from the Civil War or slightly later, and include portraits of officers and soldiers--many of whom are identified by name. There are also a few cased photographs, and some later albums of snapshots (one dates from the 1930s). Of special interest is a book of memorials for veterans (mostly from the Civil War), circa 1890, with photographs of the deceased and narrative text about their lives. Several clippings scrapbooks with newspaper articles pertaining to the regiment round out the collection.

Administrative Information

1st Regiment Infantry Museum

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Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions

Contact 1st Regiment Infantry Museum for information about accessing this collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Items created by or donated to the 1st Regiment Infantry, Pennsylvania at various times.

Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2011-2012 as part of a pilot project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact 1st Regiment Infantry Museum directly for more information.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Pennsylvania. Army National Guard. 103d Engineer Battalion (Infantry Division).
- Pennsylvania. Army National Guard. 1st Infantry Regiment.
- United States. Army. Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, 118th (1862-1865).
- United States. Army. Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, 119th (1862-1865).
- United States. Army.
- United States. National Guard Bureau.

Geographic Name(s)

- Philadelphia (Pa.)

Subject(s)

- Korean War, 1950-1953
- Military history
- Soldiers
- Spanish-American War, 1898
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865
- United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783

- United States--History--War of 1812
- World War, 1914-1918
- World War, 1939-1945