

### American Civil War Regiments

REGIMENT:	8th Infantry Regiment Vermont
Date of Organization:	1 Feb 1862
Muster Date:	28 Jun 1865
Regiment State:	Vermont
Regiment Type:	Infantry
Regiment Number:	8th
Enlisted Died of Disease or Accident:	4
Officers Died of Disease or Accident:	7
Enlisted Killed or Mortally Wounded:	115
Enlisted Died of Disease or Accident:	214
Regimental Soldiers and History:	<p><a href="#">List of Soldiers</a></p> <p><b>Regimental History</b>  VERMONT  EIGHTH REGIMENT.  (THREE YEARS.)</p> <p>BY S. E. HOWARD, CAPTAIN EIGHTH REGIMENT.</p> <p>IN April 1, 1861, Governor Fairbanks called a special session of the Legislature to consider what part Vermont should take in the conflict already begun, and the committee having in charge the various bills for raising troops, etc., had under consideration a bill providing for raising half a million dollars, when Judge Thomas, the last member of the committee to speak, in an impassioned speech, urged that the bill be amended to read ONE MILLION DOLLARS, adding: "Until this rebellion shall have been put down, I have no friends to reward and no enemies to punish, and I trust that the whole strength and power of Vermont, both of men and of money, will be put into the field to sustain the government."</p> <p>Judge Thomas was, during the greater part of its service,</p>

the colonel of the Eighth regiment, and the spirit which moved him in the legislative committee to lead in the apprehension of the national danger and in provision for it, was the same spirit that inspired him, and through him his regiment, in its active and successful career.

Judge Thomas's commission as colonel was dated November 12, 1861, and his appointments to recruiting officers were given November 18 and 19, and the last company reported in camp January 22, 1862.

The regiment was raised, armed and equipped under direct authority of the U. S. government, through General Butler, as a part of his New England division, authorized by the Secretary of War, September 16, 1861, for special service. The regiment was in mid-winter quarters at Camp Holbrook, christened for Governor Holbrook, at Brattleboro, until the 4th of March. The winter was one of unusual severity; the snow was deep, mercury frequently went below zero, the men were housed in cheap sectional houses, and much sickness and discomfort ensued. The First Battery had been recruited for the same service as the Eighth regiment, and reported to Colonel Thomas at Camp Holbrook, and on the 4th of March the regiment and battery left for New York, and on the 9th of March left New York on the ships "Wallace" and "James Hovey," with sealed orders, which, on being opened at sea, directed the troops to report to General Phelps at Ship Island, in the Gulf of Mexico, which, after a rough passage, was reached on the 5th of April.

Here the regiment remained, drilling and getting in condition for service, until Farragut had taken Forts Jackson and St. Philip, guarding New Orleans, and had captured the city, when the regiment again went aboard the "James

Hovey" and sailed for New Orleans, reaching there May 12, and going into quarters in the Mechanics' Institute building. The people of the city were in a state of ugliness and vindictiveness hardly to be expressed. Men and women seemed to be filled with the spirit of the Evil One, but the stern hand of General Butler had a very salutary effect, and after the hanging of Mumford, and General Order No. 28, matters assumed a more reasonable shape. The regiment did much police and provost duty, large detachments being detailed for this purpose. On the last day of May, 1862, the regiment was sent to Algiers, opposite New Orleans, and Colonel Thomas was placed in command of the district of La Fourche; pickets were thrown out as far as La Fourche Crossing, and by means of a volunteer force of railroad men from the regiment, the Opelousas railroad was opened to that point.

Engaged in guarding this road, company H was stationed at Bayou Des Allemands, and on the 22d of June a detachment of thirty men were sent up the road to Raceland Station, where it was reported the track was being torn up. The detachment proceeded cautiously, being pushed in a passenger car with engine in the rear and having skirmishers in front, but owing to an almost impassable swamp, the skirmishers had all been forced to take to the road-bed, and while in this condition the party was ambushed by a large party, and a volley fired on them at the distance of only a few paces, killing five and wounding nine men, among the latter Lieuts. A. B. Franklin and W. H. H. Holton, in a few moments. The engineer had dropped on the floor of his cab at the first volley, and as soon as the fire slackened, succeeded in reversing his engine.

Meantime

our men had returned the fire with spirit, and the Confederates suffered a loss of six killed and many wounded.

The skirmishers who had not been killed ran for the car and

succeeded in getting on board. Meanwhile the enemy attempted

to destroy the track below the train, but were foiled by the

prompt action of our men, who rushed to the engine and fired

from there, and the party escaped, leaving three dead on the

field. This was the first blood shed in the regiment. On the

23d of July Lieut. Truman P. Kellogg died of disease at Algiers; on the 22d of July Lieut. Gilman S. Rand died, and on

the 20th Lieut. Darius G. Child died at the same place.

On the 4th of September, another detachment of sixty men

under Captain Clark, guarding a railroad train, was ambushed at

Boutte Station by Confederate Colonel McWaters, with a force of

1,500 strong, and badly cut to pieces, losing fifteen killed and fatally hurt and twenty wounded, but the train escaped.

The force which attacked this train now turned to Bayou Des Allemands station, which was held by a detachment under

Captain Hall, and demanded its surrender, and Captain Hall,

apprised of the enemy's strength, surrendered with Lieutenant

Sargent, Co. E., Lieutenants Green and Mead, Co. G., and 137

men.

Among our men surrendered here were seven Germans who

enlisted from New Orleans, and, being recognized, they were

tried by a hasty Court Martial, condemned to death and shot

on the pretext that they were deserters from the rebel army,

which was entirely untrue, and a more dastardly murder was

never committed.

On the 24th of October General Weitzel began an expedition

for the capture of the whole La Fourche district by landing at Donaldsonville and going down the La Fourche, and the Eighth regiment, having been assigned to his brigade, began on the 26th of October the opening of the Opelousas railroad to Brashear City, which was accomplished on the 8th of December, having put in order 80 miles of road, built two bridges covering 1,150 feet, rebuilt four miles of track, captured seven cannon, and opened complete railroad and telegraph communication between Algiers and Berwick Bay.

The regiment remained in camp at Brashear City until the 8th of January, 1863, when it moved to Camp Stevens at Thibodeaux, but returned in two days to engage in the expedition against the gunboat "John L. Cotton," which was located in the Bayou Teche, being a strong boat with a heavy armament and partially iron-clad.

The force left Brashear City under command of General Weitzel January 13th, and skirmished somewhat on that evening. On the 14th, sixty picked men from the Eighth Vermont were sent under command of Captain Dutton to pick off the gunners of the "Cotton," and the regiment crossed to the east side of the Bayou for the purpose of driving out a force of sharpshooters from rifle pits which were doing serious damage to our gunboats which had now engaged the "Cotton." The sixty men under Dutton were proceeding up the Bayou on a gunboat when they were hailed by one of our boats in action and begged to send a messenger to Colonel Thomas to hurry and take the rifle pits as one of our boats, the "Calhoun," was aground, the gunners driven from the guns, her commander, Commodore Buchanan killed, and the boat in imminent danger of capture. The messenger was sent with all speed and the regiment rushed forward at double quick, Captain McFarland with Co. A as skirmishers being thrown out on the right flank and Captain Dutton, with his picked sixty

men being in advance on the left, but such was the swiftness of the charge that neither party was more than a moment in advance of the regiment, which swept into and over the rifle pits, killing seven of the enemy, wounding twenty-seven and capturing fifty-seven prisoners and more than two hundred stand of arms, and the "Calhoun" was saved.

Night came on and the position of the regiment was one of peril, as it occupied alone the left bank of the stream. In this dilemma, Colonel Thomas ordered built a line of camp fires nearly two miles in length on the right extension of our line, leading the enemy to think we had been strongly re-enforced, and at about eleven o'clock they fired the "Cotton" and she drifted down the Teche, a pillar of fire, and sank. The expedition returned to Brashear City, the regiment not having met any loss, but having performed without question the most signal service done by any organization in the expedition. On the 20th of March Captain John S. Clark died of disease at New Orleans. On the 12th of April, the Nineteenth Corps under General Banks, moved against the enemy at Bisland on Bayou Teche. The Eighth Vermont led the column and had a sharp engagement on the evening of that day, and on the 13th it was resumed and raged all day.

Early on the 14th, the troops were moved on the enemy's works only to find that they, having been flanked by General Grover at Irish Bend, had hastily retreated in the night. The losses in this engagement were slight, being one man killed and ten wounded. The enemy retreated rapidly with our force following and with an occasional skirmish. We halted on the 20th for a few days' rest at Opelousas, where, on May 4, Capt. S. G. P. Craig of Co. G, died of disease. On the 5th, the march was resumed and Alexandria reached on the 7th.

May  
11th, the regiment moved with Weitzel's Brigade to  
attack a  
force reported to be thirty-five miles beyond Alexandria,  
but  
the enemy retreated so rapidly that our troops could not  
overtake him and the Brigade returned to Alexandria.  
On the  
17th, the regiment marched, reaching Simsport the 24th,  
where  
it embarked on steamers, passing through the  
Atchafalaya and  
Red Rivers, and landing at Bayou Sara May 25, and  
immediately  
moved for Port Hudson. On the 27th came the grand  
assault on  
Port Hudson. On this day Colonel Thomas commanded  
Weitzel's  
Brigade, of which the Eighth Vermont was a part. In the  
original formation this Brigade held the third line of  
battle,  
but so fierce was the resistance and so great the  
obstacles in  
the thick forest, that before the outer works could be  
carried  
the two front lines were thrown into confusion and  
Thomas was  
ordered to charge with his Brigade, which was done with  
a rush,  
the enemy driven inside his main fortifications, and the  
Brigade had advanced within seventy-five yards, when,  
being  
badly enfiladed, they were obliged to fall back to the  
cover of  
a ravine, where they continued to hold the front line,  
having  
done most distinguished service. The regiment lost in  
this  
battle twelve killed and seventy-six wounded, including  
among  
the latter Colonel Thomas, Capt. H. E. Foster and Lieut.  
James  
Welch.

Then followed life in trenches with its horrors. On the  
night of the 10th of June there was a fruitless  
reconnoissance  
in which there were some casualties to the regiment. On the  
14th came the second great assault, which resulted  
disastrously. The Eighth Vermont led the assaulting  
column on  
this occasion, being in command of Lieut.-Colonel  
Dillingham,  
Colonel Thomas being very sick, and it accomplished  
prodigies

of valor, reaching the enemy's breastworks, but the ground over which it passed was strewn with its dead and wounded, and it was obliged to fall back. Its losses in this fruitless affair were twenty-one killed and seventy-five wounded, of whom seven afterwards died of their wounds. Among the killed were Lieut. Stephen F. Spaulding of Co. B, and among the wounded were Capt. Edward Hall and Lieut. A. J. Sargent of Co. E, Lieut. John M. Pike of Co. G and Lieut. John Bisbee of Co. B.

Two days later, General Banks called for a volunteer storming party of one thousand men to lead another assault as a forlorn hope, but there was little enthusiasm and the number was never obtained, though several members of the regiment volunteered, among them Capt. John L. Barstow. On the 9th of July, Port Hudson surrendered, and the regiment was at once ordered to Donaldsonville, reaching there on the 10th, where there was a sharp fight the next day, and immediately afterward marched to Thibodeaux, and went into camp for the first time since April 9.

On August 15, a detail consisting of Captain Leach, Lieuts. Geo. N. Carpenter, and A. K. Cooper and six non-commissioned officers were sent to Vermont on recruiting service. On the 1st of September, the regiment moved to Algiers and went by sea on the Sabine Pass expedition, which was not successful, the troops returning to Algiers on the 11th. The regiment then went again over the ground covered on the Port Hudson campaign, and camped at Carrion Crow Bayou, but fell back to New Iberia on the 16th. A detail consisting of Lieut. S. E. Howard and a sergeant from each company of the regiment was sent to Vermont on recruiting service about this time.

January 5, 1864, three hundred twenty-one of the regiment made a second claim of being patriots by re-enlisting for



three  
years more of service. Camp was moved to Franklin,  
January 6,  
and remained there two months. A furlough of thirty  
days  
having been granted those who re-enlisted, by order of  
the War  
Department, on the 7th of April, the regiment embarked  
in  
steamer "Constitution" for New York, and reached  
Montpelier on  
the 16th. The recruits and the portion of the regiment  
that  
did not re-enlist remained in camp at Algiers under  
command of  
Major Barstow, but afterward moved to Thibodeaux  
where they had  
active service. On the 6th of June, Major Barstow sailed  
for  
New York with the non-veteran portion of the regiment,  
and they  
were mustered out of service at Brattleboro, June 22,  
1864.

On the 3d of June the veteran portion of the regiment,  
returning from their furlough, reached New Orleans and  
were  
placed in camp at Morganzia Bend, from which place the  
regiment  
went on several scouts, but without important results.  
July 2d  
the regiment went by transports to Algiers, and on the  
5th  
embarked on the steamer "St. Mary" for Fortress  
Monroe, and  
from there it was ordered with all speed to Washington  
to  
resist Early's attempt upon the city. Joining the Army of  
the  
Shenandoah, the regiment, during July and August,  
made a series  
of marches and maneuvers, oftentimes forced and  
severe.

August 10, General Sheridan took command, and on  
September  
19, was fought Winchester or Opequon. Reaching this  
field at  
the critical moment when Grover's division was being  
driven  
back after its successful advance, the first duty of the  
regiment was to help stem the tide and check the enemy,  
and  
when this was successfully done, the Eighth Vermont  
and Twelfth  
Connecticut were ordered to advance and take position

immediately in front and quite near the enemy's center, which was on a wooded crest and very strong both by nature and armament. This was done successfully and the position held with considerable loss until afternoon, when Sheridan advanced the Eighth Corps on the right and the Sixth Corps on the left. Colonel Thomas, seeing the movements but receiving no orders, took the responsibility, and with his two regiments, charged the enemy's center and strong position, carrying

everything before him, throwing the enemy into confusion and silencing a battery posted in rear of his line. It was a most gallant charge and entirely successful. A monument now marks the spot and tells the story. When Sheridan's dispatch was published saying that Early had been sent "whirling up the valley," the Eighth Vermont and Twelfth Connecticut felt that they had borne no small part in producing the result. The losses of the regiment were seven killed and thirty wounded, among the latter being Lieut.-Colonel Dutton, Capt. George O. Ford, Lieuts. Wheaton Livingston, Nathaniel Robie and Perry Porter, Jr.

On September 22, the regiment was again in battle at Fisher's Hill, where, through the strategy of Sheridan, we won a great but almost bloodless victory, six of our men being

wounded, including Lieutenant Edward Gould, and in the night chase which followed near Woodstock, the regiment had a sharp fight in which it lost some men wounded, and captured 250 prisoners with the Major commanding them.

After Fisher's Hill, the army followed Early to Harrisonburg and then returned to Cedar Creek, where it lay in camp when the fateful attack was made on our left in the early morning of October 19, 1864, the last great battle the

regiment  
was to see.

When the attack was made in the early dawn on our left, the reserve brigade under Colonel Thomas crossed the pike, and took position to cover the great but unavoidable rout of the Eighth Corps, and check three divisions of the enemy that had surprised and defeated our left. Our line was not fairly formed in the fringe of timber before we were in most desperate fighting. It was so dark the enemy could hardly be seen, but the timber was ablaze with the flash of his muskets, the air full of bullets, and above all rose the din of his victorious yells. The Eighth Vermont held the left of the brigade and was much more exposed than any other troops. Charge after charge of the enemy was repulsed. The colors of the regiment were taken away from us three times and as often re-taken, and they now grace the Capitol in Montpelier. There were hand to hand conflicts, "bayonets dripped blood and skulls were broken by clubbed muskets," but the little band held on until, almost exterminated, it fell back, still showing its teeth and still fighting. During the day the brigade lost more than one third of its fighting men, the greater part of them on this "horrible hill of sacrifice," and on this spot the Eighth Vermont has a granite boulder from the Green Mountain Hills, with this inscription: "The 8th Vermont Volunteers, Col. Stephen Thomas commanding the brigade, advanced across this field on the morning of Oct. 19, 1864, engaged the enemy near and beyond this point, and before sunrise lost in killed and wounded one hundred and ten men, out of one hundred and forty-eight engaged, and thirteen out of sixteen commissioned officers. Whole number of men engaged one hundred and sixty-four." Lieut. A. K. Cooper was killed here and Capt. Edward Hall and Lieut. N. C. Cheney fatally wounded, and the wounded who recovered were Maj. J. B. Mead, Capts. A. B.

Franklin, Wm. H. Smith, Geo. O. Ford, S. E. Howard, Adjt. S. W. Shattuck, Lieuts. A. J. Sargent, Jas. Welch, Martin L. Bruce, and Wm. H. Spencer. Lieut. F. R. Carpenter was wounded and captured on the picket line. Lieuts. Lewis Child and Henry W. Newton, both on staff duty, had their horses shot under them and were injured by the fall.

The regiment, what there was left of it, bore an honorable part in the remainder of the day's fight, charging a battery which barely escaped capture by being hastily withdrawn.

On the 12th of November, the regiment was engaged in a sharp skirmish at Newtown. On the 20th of December it went into winter camp at Summit Point, where there was some skirmishing with Mosby's men.

April 15, 1865, the regiment was ordered to Washington and was posted about the City to prevent the escape of the assassin of President Lincoln. Again returning to Summit Point it remained only a few days and was again ordered to Washington, where it remained till the grand review, and was then ordered home and mustered out of service June 28, 1865.

Some of the skirmishes in which the Eighth Vermont were engaged are as follows: Near La Fourche, La., June, 1862; Parish St. Charles, La., Aug. 28, 1862; near Franklin, La., at New Iberia, La., and Vermillionville, La., in April, 1863; at Carrion Crow Bayou, La., and New Iberia, La., in Nov., 1863; near Cedar Creek, Va., and at Berryville, Va., in August 1864; New Market, Va., and Harrisonburg, Va., in September, 1864; Mount Jackson, Va., and Summit Point, Va., in November, 1864, and many others.

The history of the regiment is one of which every member

is proud. Its flag bears the story of many bloody fields, its record is always honorable, and its fame will endure in the hearts of its countrymen.

#### ENGAGEMENTS.

- Occupation of New Orleans, La., May 1862.
- Raceland, La., June 22, 1862.
- Boutte Station, La., Sept. 4, 1862.
- Bayou des Allemenads, La., Sept. 4, 1862.
- Steamer "Cotton," Jan. 14, 1863.
- Bisland, La., Apr. 12, 1863.
- Port Hudson, La., (assault,) May 27, 1863.

Port Hudson, (night engagement,) June 10, 1863.  
 Port Hudson, (assault,) June 14, 1863.  
 Opequon, Va., Sept. 19, 1864.  
 Fisher's Hill, Va., Sept. 22, 1864.  
 Cedar Creek, Va., Oct 19, 1864.  
 Newtown, Va., Nov. 12, 1864.

#### **Battles Fought**

- Fought on 10 Jun 1862.
- Fought on 22 Jun 1862 at Raceland, LA.
- Fought on 26 Jun 1862.
- Fought on 4 Sep 1862 at Boutte Station, LA.
- Fought on 4 Sep 1862 at Bayou Des Allemands, LA.
- Fought on 12 Apr 1863 at Bisland, LA.
- Fought on 14 May 1863 at Alexandria, VA.
- Fought on 27 May 1863 at Port Hudson, LA.
- Fought on 1 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 3 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 4 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 10 Jun 1863 at Port Hudson, LA.
- Fought on 12 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 14 Jun 1863 at Port Hudson, LA.
- Fought on 15 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 17 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 20 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 22 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 23 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 24 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 26 Jun 1863.
- Fought on 5 Jul 1863.
- Fought on 8 Jul 1863.
- Fought on 14 Jul 1863.
- Fought on 13 Dec 1863.
- Fought on 21 Jul 1864.
- Fought on 4 Sep 1864.
- Fought on 19 Sep 1864 at Opequan, VA.
- Fought on 22 Sep 1864 at Fisher's Hill, VA.
- Fought on 26 Sep 1864.

Fought on 19 Oct 1864 at Cedar Creek, VA.

**Fought on 1 Nov 1864.**

**Fought on 20 Feb 1865.**

**Source Information:**

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