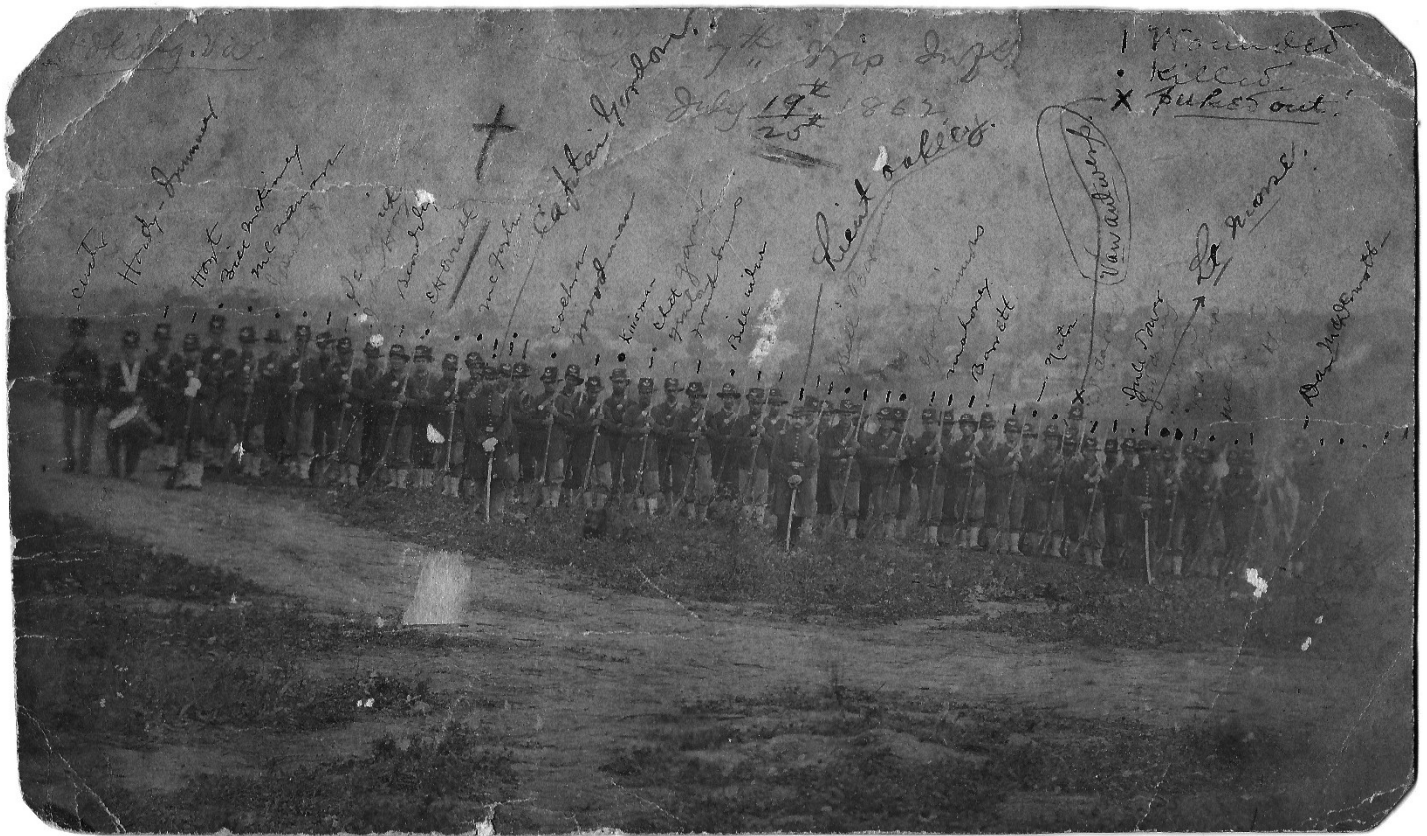


# The Civil War Diaries of Lt. Amos Douglas Rood (1839-1920)

## Company K, 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Iron Brigade



**Image of Company K, 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Iron Brigade taken between July 19-25, 1862**

Handwritten notations indicated which men were later killed, wounded or “puked out (deserted)”. Every one of the approximately 50 men were killed or wounded except one. And the author of another Iron Brigade book found that it was his ancestor, who, in fact joined up with another unit and the record of that transfer was not communicated between the units.

NOTE: The unnamed daughter noted by transcriber James W. Creasman, whom he had lost her name was Edith Irene Rood (Harrison) (1875-1966).

# **The Civil War Diaries of Lt. Amos Douglas Rood (1839-1920)**

## **Company K, 7<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Iron Brigade**

Memoir written between 1889 and 1892 by Amos D. Rood, and recopied with added remarks in 1918, based on the diaries he kept during his Civil War service with the 7th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment (the Iron Brigade). This lively and dramatic reminiscence is filled with detail about Rood's personal experiences, including descriptions of his unit's battle actions. Also of interest are his descriptions of his wounds and their treatment, the soldiers' methods of living off the land (which included stealing from civilians), how he came to be married to his wife, his feelings of patriotism and attitude toward the war, and his feelings at being one of the relatively few survivors of the Iron Brigade. Also included is a typed transcription of the 1918 memoir prepared, and with an introduction describing its provenance, by James W. Creasman.

<https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9911125081902121>

### **Biography of James W. Creasman (1914-1999)**

James W. Creasman ("Jimmie" to his family and friends) was born in Ducktown, Tennessee in 1914 but four years later relocated to Miami, Arizona. His family moved again, years later, to Phoenix, Arizona.

Creasman lived the rest of his life in Phoenix and became known as "Mr. ASU." He enrolled at Tempe Normal School and spent most of his life helping to build what is now Arizona State University. It was through his efforts as Chairman of the Name Change Committee that Arizona State College became Arizona State University in 1958. His life at Arizona State University, however, is only part of the story. "Jimmie" belonged to many charitable organizations, represented the Valley Bank in television commercials, and spent three years in Brazil with an Arizona State University sponsored Peace Corps program.

Prior to working at Arizona State University Creasman worked as a broadcaster for KTAR in Phoenix and then for the government sponsored radio program "Voice of America" in New York City. Like most of his generation, he served in the army during World War II. He belonged to the 42nd Infantry "Rainbow Division." In basic training he became an M-1 expert and sharpshooter but it was his journalistic skills that were put to good use. He was there to witness and document the liberation of the concentration camp at Dachau, Germany on April 29, 1945.

After the war was over Creasman returned to his broadcasting job in New York City until 1947 when, at the request of Grady Gammage, he returned to Arizona to take up the position of Alumni Association Secretary at Arizona State College. Retiring in 1984, he was awarded an honorary doctorate degree and the James W. Creasman Award of Excellence was established by the Alumni Association in his honor. At the time of his retirement, he had known each ASU president since 1900. Although retired, "Jimmie" remained actively involved with both Arizona State University and community events and programs in the Phoenix area.

James W. Creasman died on August 30, 1999 at the age of 85. He was survived by his wife, Dorothy, two daughters and six grandchildren.

## TRANSCRIBER'S FOREWORD

### Provenance of the Diary:

In 1963 or 64, Dr. Ivan Bell, pastor of the Phoenix First Baptist Church, and I visited a woman who was in a rest-home in Phoenix. I don't remember her name, but she said that her father had served throughout the Civil War in the famous Iron Brigade of western volunteer soldiers, and had kept a diary throughout his service. She produced a copy, and wondered if I would take the notebook and "do something with it". Unfortunately, she died before I did very much.

Her "Daddy" was A. D. Rood. I do not recall whether she was a maiden-lady who still bore his name, or whether she used a married name.

My assignment to Brazil to lead a Peace Corps project for 2 years intervened in '64, and when I returned to Arizona State University the press of work limited my transcription work to about 52 pages of typescript. I did not seriously begin to finish the project until 1984, when I retired .

To relieve my burden of regret that I didn't finish in time for Rood's daughter to enjoy it, I am now pledged to find descendants of Colonel Rood so that they may reap the fruits of many labors.

As I have read the Colonel's delightful first-person account of great battles and marches, body-lice and maggots, (in the vernacular of Civil War soldiers) a persistent question arose : was he 'for real', or did he perhaps elaborate cleverly on the history of the Seventh Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment found in official volumes of the "O.R." ?

He was real all right! I have obtained a film-strip listing Wisconsin Civil War soldiers from a genealogical library, and the "General Index" card printed from it shows - voila! - "Rood, Amos D., of Co. "K", 7 Wisconsin Infantry: Pvt - 1st Lt." [a copy is included in this manuscript].

I now shall write the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, in Madison, for a complete service record.

Nowhere in the diary does Rood refer to himself as "Amos", but twice, however, he quotes a relative who refers to him as "Ame".

Rood reveals in his diary that Jan. 25, 1864 was his 25th birthday. So he was born in 1839 and would have been 79 years old when he was copying his diary in May of 1918.

Alan T. Nolan, who wrote The Iron Brigade, A Military History (cited elsewhere in this study), writes of the "finest hour " of the famous outfit which included the 24th Michigan, 19th Indiana, 2nd and 7th Wisconsin regiments, of the "First Corps", Army of the Potomac. It was the first day (July 1, 1863) of the Battle of Gettysburg. He termed it "the 'formal demise of the Iron Brigade". But it was their determined, bloody, stand on Seminary Ridge and in

McPherson's Woods, and retreating through town at dusk to Culp's Hill and other high ground, which enabled the main body of Meade's forces to take what proved to be impregnable positions and defeat Robert Lee.

I quote from p. 255:

...the storied fights at Culp's Hill, the Wheat Field, the Peach Orchard, Little Round Top, and "the little clump of trees" were to be but anticlimax to the men of the First Corps. For them the battle of Gettysburg was the first day. Fighting largely in the open, with no other protection than the flannel blouses that covered their stout hearts, the First Corps counted casualties of more than 6,000 of its 9,403 men. This was 2,000 more than the losses of the Eleventh Corps, 2,000 more than Sickles was to lose the next day in the Wheat Field and the Peach Orchard, and 2,000 more than the Second Corps was to give up in defending the Federal center against Pickett's assault.

Of the 1,883 Western men who had marched up the Emmittsburg Road that morning, 1,212 (65 per cent) were casualties, of whom the great majority were killed and wounded. The Second Wisconsin had lost 77 per cent of its numbers and the Nineteenth Indiana 72 per cent. In the Seventh [Rood's] and Sixth Wisconsin the percentages were 52 per cent and 48 per cent. (op cit, p 256).

In his Epilogue (pp. 265-6, op cit), Nolan writes that citizens of Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan residing in Washington, planned a huge celebration in tribute to their heroes. It involved presentation of a brigade flag, an evergreen arch, and lots of food and drink. It was set for the first anniversary of Antietam, on September 17, 1863. Along with the officers and prominent citizens, the enlisted men were also to be feted, the officers having contributed \$1,000 for the cost of the soldier's party. Unfortunately,

on the eve of the big day, the brigade was suddenly moved to Culpeper, where on September 19th, the flag caught up and was presented in curtailed ceremonies.

The great flag was acquired by the First Brigade of the First Division of the First Army Corps of the Army of the American Republic, as one soldier exclaimed.

Rood's diary, pages 73 & 74 of this transcription, also tells of the affair, for which Rood was named "Chairman of the Invitation Committee". He even names the restaurateur (Gautier) and writes about stashing "drunks" in his tent!

However, he fails to mention the change in plans and the move to Culpeper for the festivity . I believe this was an omission to save space in the diary.

Nolan (op. cit) does confirm much of Rood's account about "Old John Burns of Gettysburg", [pages 147-58 of this transcript]. In his chapter titled: Gettysburg: The Last Stand, he wrote, "Down went the Seventh's Lieutenant Colonel Callis, severely wounded, as did the old volunteer John Burns, who was to be three times wounded before the day was done and to whom Doubleday's official report would extend 'thanks .... especially due'". (page 245) [emphasis mine].

In all chronicles of battle, reliability should be tested rigorously. Confusion is the rule, especially in infantry actions. [At Antietam, several Union units got lost in woods while advancing toward the famous Burnside

Bridge less than a mile away. They never did find it in time].

And so historian Nolan has a footnote about the legendary John Burns:

This well-known event is chronicled in a number of places, but few accounts are either firsthand or contemporaneous. Not surprisingly, the stories differ in detail and some - purporting years later to quote conversations with Burns - are plainly unreliable. [emphasis mine]. See, for example, the following probably colored accounts: John B. Callis', quoted in History of the Sauk County Rifleman, Philip Cheek and Mair Pointon, pp. 77-9; History of the Twenty-Fourth Michigan, O. B. Curtis, p. 182; the account of George Eustice of the Seventh Wisconsin, [emphasis mine] B and L, Vol. III, p 276; and History of the 150th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, Thomas Chamberlin, pp. 113-14. Regardless of details, the John Burns story did happen at Gettysburg and he did fight with the Iron Brigade, Doubleday's report, O. R. 43, 255. (Nolan, pp. 360-61).

It should be noted that Lt. Col. Callis, mentioned above, was with the 7th. (Wisconsin Vols), and so was Rood. His could have been a "reliable first-hand account."

  
James W. Creasman

April 9, 1992

*Er*  
in Infantry

*ti*

*Rood Amos D.*  
Co. *K*, 7 Wisconsin Infantry.  
*R.A. 1st Lt.*

See also

*R*  
Co. *O*

See also

ARD.

GENERAL INDEX CARD.

This card must not be taken from the file.

GE

This

No. 1.

My  
Diary of the War  
Kept day by day. Had it  
all. And wonder that I could  
do it so fully. Probably  
no other man in the world  
did so complete a diary  
as did your Daddy.  
May 24 - 1918.

Coit Avenue, North  
Park, Mich. (Grand Rapids)  
- its suburb.

No. 1

MY

DIARY OF THE WAR

Kept - day by day - thro it all, and I wonder that I could do it faithfully. Probably no other man in the Brigade did so complete a diary as did your Daddy!

May 24 - 1918

(Coit Avenue : North Park, Michigan. Grand Rapids - suburb ! !

Editor's note:

A. D. Rood : Full name

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Official List of Casualties: in "The Iron Brigade" : 1861 to  
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1861 to 1866

C

This memorandum of the service of the writer is written from Daily Diaries which I kept carefully every single day during my service ! ! I give the simple, daily operations; moves; some of the battles and scenes, which may be of interest to my children who have sympathized with their Daddy: in all the aches and pains; hopes and fears, and whose kind remembrances have helped him go along: all these years! ! I did my little bit with a desire to help "Humanity", and all my sufferings since the war have been gladly borne and without complaints or grunts!! ----- Daddy !

Christmas

1889

310 Indiana Ave. Chicago. -

Mich Soldiers Home. Copied April and May - 1918

---

"D"

# Official Report of Losses in the Front Brigade 1861 — to — 1865

|                                                                                                                     | Enlistments | Killed<br>in<br>Action | Died<br>of<br>Wounds | Died<br>of<br>Disease | Died<br>of<br>Other<br>Causes | Total. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| <i>Fox's Regimental<br/>Book &amp; Co. Sep: 1898.</i>                                                               |             |                        |                      |                       |                               |        |
| 2 <sup>d</sup> Wisconsin                                                                                            | 1,203       | 238                    | 80                   | 74                    | 6                             | 318    |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Wisconsin                                                                                           | 1,940       | 244                    | 79                   | 110                   | 6                             | 359    |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Wisconsin                                                                                           | 1,930       | 281                    | 108                  | 139                   | 7                             | 426    |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> Indiana                                                                                            | 1,614       | 122                    | 50                   | 115                   | 13                            | 300    |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> Michigan                                                                                           | 2,054       | 130                    | 46                   | 121                   | 21                            | 310    |
| Totals. —                                                                                                           | 8,741       | 746                    | 363                  | 559                   | 53                            | 1,713  |
|                                                                                                                     | 1,200       |                        |                      |                       |                               | 182    |
|                                                                                                                     | 9,941       |                        |                      |                       |                               | 1,895  |
| This Report does not include losses by<br>1 <sup>st</sup> N.Y.S. and others, who from time to time<br>were with us. |             |                        |                      |                       |                               |        |

Quite a number of other organizations  
were sent into our Brigade. 4,000  
altogether more than 10,000: but this Report  
only makes it 9,941!!