

THE 22ND REGIMENT IN THE WAR OF 1812

WILLIAM YOUNG BRADY¹

THE Twenty-second United States Regiment of Infantry was organized under the Act of Congress of June 26, 1812, and Hugh Brady, grandson of the pioneer of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, was commissioned its colonel on July 6—just eighteen days after the declaration of war with England. It was known as a Pennsylvania regiment, though not under the authority of the state.

Here is Colonel Brady's letter accepting his commission:

Carlisle, 14th July, 1812.

Sir:

I had the honor of receiving by yesterdays mail your letter of the 7th Inst. announcing my appointment of Colonel of Infantry of the United States. This appointment, Sir, I accept with the utmost cheerfulness, & in communicating to you this intention, I have only to express my readiness & wishes to render to my country my most active services whensoever the Government may require them & (*your*) orders direct. Any communication which you may think proper to make to me, you will be pleased to address to "Clarks-Ferry Post Office, Cumb'd Co." as it is the nearest Office to the place of my present residence. In the mean time, I have the honor to be with the highest respect, your very
H. Servt.

The Hon. Mr. Eustis.

H. BRADY.

The nucleus of the 22nd Regiment was a detachment of men who were transferred from Province Island (within the present limits of Philadelphia) as a part of the "Northern Army." At Carlisle Barracks and at Fort Fayette in Pittsburgh, Colonel Brady carried on the work of recruiting and drilling soldiers for that army in the years 1812, 1813, and 1814, some being sent to the front through Pittsburgh, some through Baltimore, and one detachment at least through and

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over the old state road passing through Center and Jefferson counties in 1814 under the command of Brigade Adjutant Major William McClelland, according to Dr. W. J. McKnight in his *Pioneer History of Jefferson County*, 169-170 (Philadelphia, 1898).

Colonel Brady's headquarters alternated between Carlisle and Pittsburgh, at which places and at Province Island there were detachments under his command, while his family residence was at Milton, Pennsylvania. At length, on May 27, 1814, he was notified from Washington that "your Regiment is destined to make part of the Division of the Left, under the command of Major General Brown. The part now serving at Plattsburg has been ordered to Buffalo on the Niagara River & also that marching from Philadelphia. You will order Major Martin with his detachment now at Erie and all the recruits of the 22nd hereafter obtained by the nearest route to the same point." Colonel Brady had previously requested (May first) to be relieved of the recruiting service and wrote: "I humbly request an order to take command of my Regt before the campaign opens."

Evidently his request was granted. On June 20 he wrote from Pittsburgh that Capt. Reed would be in command there. After two years of hard military training and discipline the hour had struck for the 22nd Regiment to go into action with Colonel Hugh Brady at its head in some of the most sanguinary and brilliant fighting in the annals of the United States Army.

What followed is history. The regimental officers in 1814 were as follows:

Colonel

Hugh Brady

Lieutenant Colonels

George McFeely

Ninian Pinckney

Majors

Robt. Lucas

Ralph Martin

J. T. Arrowsmith

H. R. Martin

The regiment assembled in the month of June, 1814, at the town of Buffalo, New York, and was formed with three other regiments and a battery of guns into a brigade under the command of General Winfield Scott. General Scott's was one of three brigades under the division commander, General Jacob Brown. The 22nd Regiment, under command of Col. Hugh Brady and Lt. Col. George McFeely, included companies commanded by Captains David Espy, John Greene, George W. Barker, Thomas Lawrence, Willis Foulk, John Pentland, Joseph Henderson, Jacob Carmack, John Foster, and Sampson S. King.

On July 3, an attack led by Winfield Scott's brigade was made at daylight upon the British Fort Erie, which lay on the Canadian shore of Lake Erie, nearly opposite Buffalo, at the entrance to the Niagara River. The surprised garrison of 153 officers and men surrendered. Two days later, while General Brown's army was marching down the Canadian bank of the Niagara River, Scott's brigade, which was in the lead, unexpectedly met a British force and quickly formed in line of battle. The fighting was intense but before the other brigades could get into action Scott's brigade defeated and threw into retreat the entire British force, though greatly outnumbered. This brilliant victory, known as the Battle of Chippewa, so excited the enthusiasm of the American people that the gray uniform which Scott's brigade wore was adopted in 1915 as the permanent color for uniforms of cadets at West Point.

Scott's brigade, which numbered about fifteen hundred officers and men, suffered a loss of over three hundred killed and wounded. The 22nd Regiment was in the middle of the fight.

Nearly three weeks' maneuvering of the two armies followed along the Niagara River. On July 25 the American forces en-

countered the reinforced British army at Lundy's Lane, just a few miles from the scene of the Chippewa battle and close to the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when Scott's brigade, consisting of the 9th, 11th, 22nd and 25th regiments, met and attacked the larger British force with repeated unsuccessful charges which lasted until dark. About nine o'clock, the two other American brigades came up and relieved the exhausted brigade of General Scott, while the British also received large reinforcements.

The battle now took on a weird setting in the partial moonlight where guns were aimed at the flash of the enemy's fire while the thundering roar of the nearby cataract deadened the noise of battle. The Americans were fighting seasoned British veterans who had conquered Napoleon and now had posted on top of a hill a battery of large cannon that they had captured from the French at Toulon. General Brown decided that the battery must be taken at all costs and ordered Colonel Miller to capture the guns. His reply, as recorded in the school books, was "I'll try, sir." He made the desperate charge and at the critical moment, the 22nd Regiment was thrown in to his aid. The battery was taken, but the British made charge after charge, sometimes recovering the battery only to be driven off by the Americans. At eleven o'clock the firing died down and the British retired, leaving the battery to the Americans who were not able to remove it from the battlefield. The next morning the British returned to the field and reclaimed the battery—and claimed a victory.

It was during this struggle that Colonel Brady received two wounds, both severe. General Brown and General Scott were also severely wounded and were removed to a hospital at Buffalo. The 22nd Regiment was so badly cut up that the remnants were now attached to the 9th Regiment. The American army retired to the stronghold of Fort Erie where they

were followed two weeks later by the reinforced British under General Drummond. On August 15 the British attacked the fort and were repulsed with great slaughter, losing 905 men, while the American loss was only 84 killed and wounded.

The British continued the siege of Fort Erie and were preparing for another assault when a sortie by the Americans inflicted a loss of about 800 men on the enemy, not however without a loss of over 500 on their part. After this the British withdrew and the Americans, at the approach of winter, abandoned the fort and crossed to the American side.

The 22nd Regiment, in this campaign, suffered very heavy losses. In the Battle of Lundy's Lane, alone, their loss was 36 killed, 90 wounded, and 17 missing (probably killed)—the heaviest loss of any regiment in Scott's brigade, and probably the heaviest of any American regiment. At Sackett's Harbor, New York, where the regiment wintered, an inspection report showed 20 men dead in Joseph Henderson's company while Capt. John Pentland's company showed only 19 men left fit for duty out of the enrollment of 107.

Colonel Brady's headquarters, in the winter of 1815, were at Sackett's Harbor, N. Y., where his regiment was probably disbanded. A petition by state officials and prominent men, dated Sunbury, May 30, was issued urging Colonel Brady's retention in the regular army, which request was complied with. In reply to an inquiry from the War Department, Colonel Brady submitted the following list of platoon officers who were most deserving (Carlisle, Pa. 4th April, 1815) :

Captains, John Pentland, Willis Foulk, John Greene.

1st Lieut's, John Culberson, Thomas Wright, John R. Guy, Samuel Brady.

2nd Lieut's, George S. Wilkins, John Brady.