PICKETS OUT: THE STORY OF THE GLENCAIRN ENCampMENT, 1895

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In the fall of 1878, the editor of The Warren Mail (October 29), noting the organization of a National Guard company within the community served by his paper, quipped, "After all what does a town amount to without a soldier company or a brass band?" His patently rhetorical query in no small measure reflected a state-wide interest in the reorganization and rejuvenation of the active militia or the National Guard, especially in the wake of the Pittsburgh railroad riots of the previous summer.\(^1\) After the fact, it seemed evident that though the guardsmen called to the scene were brave, willing, and energetic as individuals, they were in the aggregate inadequately organized and woefully deficient in training and equipment.\(^2\) Obviously reforms were in order, and the state legislature found moneys not only to equip an expanded force but also to incorporate into its training an annual encampment during the summer months.\(^3\)

Act Number 66, in the session of 1881, provided for an encampment not to exceed eight days duration, and Act Number 20, in 1887, extended the maximum number of days in the encampment to fourteen — though this provision was not implemented throughout the remainder of the century.\(^4\) As to the actual business of the en-

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\(^{1}\) The riots, described in virtually any history of the American labor movement, evoked widespread fear in the city, especially in the outlying suburbs where the firing of cannon could be distinctly heard. Not since the Civil War, when Pittsburghers feared a Confederate raid, was there such a feeling of impending calamity. For the part played by the troops see Charles S. Howeir's "National Guard in the Railroad Riots of 1877," in Edward Martin, ed., The Twenty-Eighth Division in the World War, 5 vols. (Pittsburgh, 1924), 5: 529-36.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., 17.

\(^{3}\) The practice was to hold encampments alternately by brigade and division. In 1886, regimental camps were inaugurated and then held every third year. In 1895, the guardsmen camped by brigade, with the First Brigade at Saratoga, the Third at Mount Gretna, and the Second at Glencairn.

\(^{4}\) Act Number 66 mandated that the troops receive no more than five days' pay for the encampment period. Act Number 20 authorized pay for every day the men spent in camp.
campment, the legislature in 1887 specified only that there should be
an inspection of the troops by the inspector general. Otherwise,
what transpired in a particular year, such as 1895, when the Second
Brigade camped at Glencairn, was in the hands of the guard’s officers.

What makes this brigade encampment some twenty-four miles
north of Pittsburgh on the east bank of the Allegheny River of more
than passing interest is the extended coverage it received in papers
throughout the region and the survival of a varied assortment of
photographs of its highlights, the latter carefully preserved in the
album of Captain Fred E. Windsor, then the commanding officer of
Company I, Sixteenth Regiment. In this verbal and visual story there
is ample testament to the sometimes spirited competition communities
indulged in to secure the guard’s presence in their midst; evidence,
too, there is of the character of the citizen soldiers of Pennsylvania
in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, ever ready and yet never
quite prepared to meet the roles thrust upon them in a turbulent time.

General John A. Wiley, the Second Brigade’s commander, had
pointed out to his superiors as early as 1886 that camps scattered
throughout the state provided an opportunity for the citizenry — the
“paying patrons” of the guard — to see something of the organizations
their tax dollars went to maintain. Wiley, in his report, advocated
the establishment of regimental camps to alternate with those held at
brigade and divisional level. Though he failed to call attention to it,
Wiley was doubtless aware that the business leaders of communities
honored with neighboring encampments — especially those that hosted
a brigade of 3,000 or more guardsmen — were more than ready to
provide goods and services to the troops or to cater to the thousands
of sightseers attracted to the neighborhood.

Evidently communities considered as possible sites by regimental
and brigade commanders competed with each other to attract guards-
men. By way of example, a committee of citizens from Meadville,
under the chairmanship of Senator G. W. Delameter, met with the
Second Brigade’s quartermaster, Major W. W. Greenland, to inspect
ground adjacent to Conneaut Lake as a potential site for the 1888
brigade encampment. Delameter, the general manager of the Mead-
ville and Linesville Railroad, was far from a disinterested host, and
his fellow committeemen must have seen their own ends served, as

5 In the Collections of the Warren County Historical Society, Warren,
Pennsylvania.
6 Pennsylvania, Adjutant General’s Office, Annual Report of the Adju-
tant General of Pennsylvania, 1886 (Harrisburg, 1887), 191.
well, by the brigade’s presence. Witness their willingness to provide the site, clear it of all obstructions and brush, and to pipe water to the different regimental camps — all free of charge. Moreover, the committee gave outright the sum of $250 to pay for the transportation of baggage and supplies from the railroad station — four miles distant from the camp — and promised to deliver gratis ten tons of straw for use as bedding and thirty-two tons of ice.7

Much the same story is revealed in the selection of a location for the Second Brigade encampment in 1891. Two sites were under consideration: Ellwood and Arnold Station. Both were found to be suitable, and at both places interested citizens offered inducements in the way of lumber, ice, straw, fuel, and cash to attract the brigade. The choice of Major A. J. Logan, the brigade quartermaster, was Arnold Station, where the grounds were larger and more convenient than those in the vicinity of Ellwood. However, after the decision had been made in favor of Arnold, the owner of the campsite demanded $1,000 for its use for a thirty-day period.8 The brigade balked at meeting this figure and was about to look elsewhere when the Burrell Improvement Company stepped forward and agreed to pay the sum and in addition to furnish 75,000 feet of lumber and $300 in cash for the guard’s use.

The Allegheny Valley Railroad, the line serving Arnold, was no less persuasive, agreeing to remove all the fences that were then located upon the grounds, cut away the underbrush, cover an open drain that passed through the center of what was to be the parade ground, and put up a water plant to supply the brigade. Furthermore, the railroad agreed to furnish without charge twenty-five tons of ice and fifteen tons of straw and to transport the lumber donated by the Burrell company to the camp. That the management of the Allegheny Valley Railroad, in particular, felt it had much to gain from a site selected along its route seems borne out in the planning for the 1895 brigade encampment. Several sites were visited by the brigade quartermaster, and Glencairn, a station on the Allegheny Valley Railroad, was selected.

As it had previously, the line agreed to pipe water throughout the camp and to deliver fuel and ice to the company kitchens. The railroad also agreed to construct and deliver tent floors as well as sufficient lumber for sinks and kitchens.9 Of course, the troops were

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transported to and from the camp by the line at a cost borne by the state, and if this return was not sufficient to recoup what had been laid out to attract the brigade, the railroad knew from past experience that profits were to be made out of transporting the thousands of visitors expected during the eight-day period of the encampment. On the second day of the encampment, for instance, the road scheduled fifteen trains from Pittsburgh to Glencairn, commencing at 6:05 A.M., and fifteen trains returning. From Dubois, Driftwood, Brookville, and New Bethlehem specials ran, as they did from Oil City, Titusville, and Franklin, and from Ridgway and Clearfield. Given such activity on the part of the railroad, it is difficult to imagine how the line or any of the business interests serving the area could envision themselves the losers by the guard’s presence in their midst.

The encampment at Glencairn formally opened on Saturday morning, August third. Prior to that date, however, there were increasing signs of activity, beginning with four or five visits before July 30 by Major Edward E. Robbins, the brigade quartermaster, who with the engineer of the Allegheny Valley Railroad located and staked out the camp. Then, on July 30, the Tuesday preceding the encampment, Robbins opened headquarters on the grounds, designated in honor of the late adjutant general as Camp W. W. Greenland. General Wiley arrived the following day and was pleased to find it “verily a model camp.” Making it so, in part, were the water lines and gas pipes for light and fuel laid throughout the camp.

No less pleasing to the general was the layout of the two hundred acres that comprised the encampment. The camp was almost equally divided by the railroad tracks, which served as a convenient demarcation in the allocation of quarters to the units comprising the brigade. For instance, to the left of the tracks and facing them, the mess tents, the men’s tents, and the tents of the company officers were to be found. These were arranged in streets running north and south from the railroad to the river — the mess tents positioned nearest the water. On the right of the tracks, directly opposite and facing the company officers’ quarters, were the brigade headquarters and the brigade sutler’s quarters. To their right on gently sloping terrain the governor’s headquarters, comprising six wall tents, was positioned, while high on the hillside beyond, quite a distance from everything else, the brigade band was located. Not to be forgotten were the officers’ mess tent, adjacent to Wiley’s headquarters, and the three-

10 Pittsburgh Press, Aug. 4, 1895.
The general's arrival was followed by that of details from the Fifteenth and Sixteenth regiments; those from the Fifth, Tenth, Fourteenth, and Eighteenth regiments, from the Sheridan Troop and Battery B — the remaining units of the Second Brigade — were scheduled to arrive on Friday, August 2. Those detachments present on Wednesday and Thursday comprised a noncommissioned officer and four privates drawn from each of the eight companies of the regiments concerned. In charge of a lieutenant, each regimental detail set about the business of constructing cook houses and sinks out of the loose lumber and setting in place the tent flooring, provided by the railroad, that added so materially to the guardsmen's comfort.

In passing, it might be noted that the latter had drawn the fire of at least one regular-army observer, Captain Clinton B. Sears, United States Engineers. Sears, who had been present at the 1890 encampment, commented that such ground covering, never used in the field in the face of the enemy, should be dispensed with. Very evidently his recommendation fell on deaf ears, for tent flooring reappeared year after year as did civilian cooks, valets, and the like. In fact, at the Glencairn encampment much was made of privates having more luggage than some of the officers on previous occasions — so much so that it took no fewer than 702 wagon trips from the railroad to get the brigade's baggage into camp.

The first of the advance details to complete their labors were those from the Sixteenth Regiment, who knew their companies were to arrive Thursday evening, the first. However, by 7:00 p.m. Thursday the parties from the other regiments and from the Sheridan Troop and Battery B were ready to receive their fellow guardsmen, scheduled to arrive Friday morning after a vigorous send-off — especially in Pittsburgh — which indicated widespread support for the guard if not necessarily an understanding of its character and potential as a military force. But, as Glencairn made so evident, Pennsylvania's National Guard was comfort-minded and convenience-prone. Highly social and strongly convivial in its orientation, the guard's camps made only token concessions at approximating the conditions of actual service, and never did the routines presume to overwork the

11 These arrangements are described in the Pittsburgh Press, Aug. 1, 1895.
12 Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1890, 213.
13 Pittsburgh Press, Aug. 1, 1895.
men — “a bad thing to do,” as General Wiley had long known, “in the National Guard.”

Though Camp Greenland’s romantic and picturesque setting may not have been familiar to many in the brigade, Friday’s program duplicated that of previous encampments. That is to say, the day of arrival, especially what remained of the morning and afternoon hours, was devoted to the business of settling in but with opportunities for the men to busy themselves in their own ways. Some were to be seen lounging about beneath the “tall and stately shade trees” while others enjoyed a plunge in the “placid waters” of the Allegheny River. Not until after supper were demands made on some of their number, when the Eighteenth Regiment scheduled a dress parade and following that a guard mount. Afterwards, boys from the Eighteenth may have joined other venturesome spirits in exploring the possibilities of Freeport, the nearest community of any size.

So many guardsmen were abroad on Freeport’s streets that an alarmed burgess sent word to General Wiley that his men were making things “quite lively” — though from the guardsmen’s point of view, the town quickly exhibited itself “a dry, a dreadfully dry, town.” For as the boys from the Sixteenth discovered to their sorrow, neither soldier nor civilian could get a “snake antidote” for love or money, except on a prescription from a duly registered physician. Not that they had time to search very thoroughly, for General Wiley directed Colonel Hulings, commanding the Sixteenth, to send in a detail after the truants, a hundred of whom were scooped up, marched back to camp, severely reprimanded, and then ordered to their quarters to ready themselves for the morrow.

The day began promptly at 6:00 A.M. with the firing of the morning gun and the unfurling of the stars and stripes upon the pole positioned in front of Wiley’s headquarters. The brigade bugler then sounded reveille, the call being taken up by the regimental field music, beginning at the right and continuing down the line to the left. Even as the music died away, the first sergeants were falling their companies out and calling the roll. Police call and breakfast followed as did guard mount at 8:30. This formality attended to, the various regiments and separate companies jockeyed with one another for the use of the parade ground. Colonel Hulings of the Sixteenth secured it for an hour and a half Saturday morning and for a like period in the

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16 Pittsburgh Press, Aug. 3, 1895.
17 The Titusville Morning Herald, Aug. 6, 1895.
afternoon, rehearsing the men in what was expected of them upon the arrival of Governor Daniel Hastings that afternoon.

In anticipation of this event, all the troops in camp were drawn up in a brigade front with Battery B and the Sheridan Troop occupying a position at the extreme right of the line. Carriages to receive the official party were in readiness, and once Governor Hastings and his party had arrived and had been assigned to their places, the procession, escorted by the Sheridan Troop, moved off in front of the line of troops. This was the signal for the brigade band, positioned at the extreme left, to render "Hail to the Chief" and for the battery's guns to execute the governor's seventeen-gun salute. In his turn, Hastings arose in his carriage and raised his hat in recognition of the courtesies extended to him. These were climaxmed by a retreat parade which the governor witnessed from his carriage in the center of the field.

At its conclusion the brigade was again drawn up in line to witness the departure of the governor and his party, which included Major General George R. Snowden, commander of the state's National Guard, for the quarters prepared for them. Thereafter, the brigade remained on the field as individual commanders executed further maneuvers. Mindful of the proximity of the governor and determined to create a favorable impression, the six regiments in camp, each accompanied by its regimental band, were again on the field after supper for brigade drill and an evening review.18

In the wake of Saturday's exhausting schedule, Sunday promised welcome relief, the only activities scheduled being guard mount, religious services in the morning, and then a review at 6:00 P.M., which promised to attract 25,000 to 30,000 visitors to the camp. The press catalogued many "high social functions," indicating that activities of an essentially festive nature did not end on Sunday, especially for the guard's officers. Among these the most prominent were the reception and dinner the Sixteenth Regiment held for the governor and his party and a generous representation of influential citizens from throughout the state.19 Following Monday's evening affair, the officers of the various regiments made formal visits to each other on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, each regiment striving to outdo the other's courtesies. Clearly the encampment period was a time for congeniality and conviviality no less than it was for the panoply of arms.

18 Pittsburgh Press, Aug. 4, 1895.
19 The guest list is enumerated in ibid., Aug. 3, 1895.
While their officers were so occupied, the men of the brigade were quick to find entertainment suited to their varied tastes. For those so inclined, there was music in the camp every evening as each company had at least one quartet and one or more stringed instruments. Also, one or another of the regimental bands offered concerts beginning at eight o’clock and continuing until tattoo. For the sports-minded, baseball games were a nightly feature, those drawing the most attention involving regimental teams pitted against one another in a series of lively encounters witnessed on occasion by the general. Obviously such diversions were innocent enough, but elements among the guardsmen pursued other interests not only prejudicial to good order and discipline but to the guard’s good name. One of these activities involved “running the guard,” that is, surreptitiously passing through the camp’s sentinels and returning in the same fashion, often in the wake of “drunken, clownish, and indecent behavior” in a nearby community.20 So incensed was the Sixteenth’s Colonel Hulings by this practice that following the 1893 encampment at Massassaugua Point, just north of the city of Erie, he had suggested all the sentinels carry loaded weapons and be ordered “to fire upon any soldier disregarding a challenge, or attempting to run the guard.” 21

No less reprehensible a custom at a succession of encampments was the practice of raiding the sutlers’ stands which were scattered about the grounds. The first instance of this sort at the 1895 encampment took place on Tuesday afternoon and involved the lemonade and peanut concession opposite the Eighteenth Regiment’s quarters. Though the guard was summoned almost immediately, it looked, according to observers, as if “a regular pitched battle was in store.” 22 Similar incidents, occurring on Wednesday and Thursday, testified to the presence of “blackguards” in the ranks. Vigilance on the part of the officers was an obvious necessity, but after visits to the officers’ mess tent where Mumm’s and cocktails were so handily dispensed, they were not always at their most attentive.

From the foregoing chronicle of venial pursuits it should not be concluded that they usurped the business of the encampment. The latter went forward on Monday morning with the first of a series of inspections, which before the week was out included every unit of the brigade, and in the conduct of a series of reviews that dominated

21 Ibid.
22 Pittsburgh Press, Aug. 7, 1895.
Guard tent at Glencairn

Boxing in a company street was to the taste of many young guardsmen.
The men of Company I are wearing the recently issued gray flannel shirt. Their commander, Captain Fred Windsor, is in white.

At one of many guard mounts at Glencairn, the participants are sporting gloves and here and there a starched collar.
the routine of the encampment.²³

At Glencairn, counting the ceremonial welcoming of the govern-
or on Saturday, there were four of these. The most impressive was
scheduled for Tuesday in the state chief executive's honor. For him
the regiments were drawn up in company front facing brigade head-
quarters. Once aligned properly and with all in readiness, a roll of
drums called the governor and his party to the field — not on this
occasion in carriages but mounted on horseback. After having passed
in front and rear of the brigade, Hastings, attired as was the custom
in a high silk hat and a black Prince Albert coat, took up a position
in front of the headquarters tent. General Wiley then rode to the front
and gave the command to march past. As they did so at carry arms,
the soldiers were visibly cheered by their friends and admirers, one
of whom was moved to remark, "To any living creature possessed of
a drop of patriotic blood it was bound to send that single drop with a
rush to the very roots of one's hair."²⁴

On Wednesday, General Wiley announced it was all to be done
again that afternoon at 4:30 — on this occasion for General Snowden.
That morning the grounds of the encampment presented "a picture of
life and color both beautiful and impressive." In anticipation of the
ceremony the men were hard at work, and those expecting to be re-
leased to their own devices at its conclusion found themselves sched-
uled for an evening parade as well. For this latter occasion, the ma-
jority of the regiments appeared in white duck trousers, making this
the "prettiest appearing" event since the opening of the camp. At its
conclusion the Sixteenth Regiment gave an exhibition in the skirmish
drill enlivened by the use of blank cartridges, and the Sheridan Troop
captured all eyes with a series of charges across the parade ground.
Friday, the final day in camp, saw more of the same with a review
for General Wiley and a sham battle that was described as "hot
stuff."²⁵

Unquestionably the succession of the reviews dictated the en-
campment's timetable, and when all had been duly honored, it was
time to break camp. Thus the soldier boys were up at first light on
Saturday the tenth, striking the tents and preparing the camp equipage
for loading on railroad cars for return to the state's arsenal at Harris-

²³ In the Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1890, 198, Snowden
argued against such inspections as taking up time that might be devoted to
other ends — presumably of a ceremonial nature.
²⁴ Pittsburgh Press, Aug. 7, 1895.
²⁵ Ibid., Aug. 10, 1895.
burg. Thereafter, the regiments departed by special trains for their home stations. Last to depart was the brigade band, which had remained on the field to dispense “sweet music” for the ears of the departing troops. General Wiley and his staff had entrained for his Franklin headquarters at 2:30 in the afternoon.

The guard thus completed a regimen with which it was thoroughly familiar. Captured by Captain Fred E. Windsor, the photographer-historian of Glencairn, that regimen, characterized as it was by the amenities of camp life and the pomp of the parade ground, constituted the business of soldiering. Those responsible for the look of Glencairn were obviously committed to please not only the rank and file but the politician, the proud parent, and the picnic girl, whose conceptions of the profession of arms had been not a little shaped by the romantic battle art of the Civil War, by sentimental and romantic fictions eulogizing the boys in blue, and by a sensation-oriented popular theater. So indoctrinated, they, no less than the guards’ officers, were well satisfied with the illusion of martial prowess propagated in guard mounts and evening parades by the soldiers of summer.