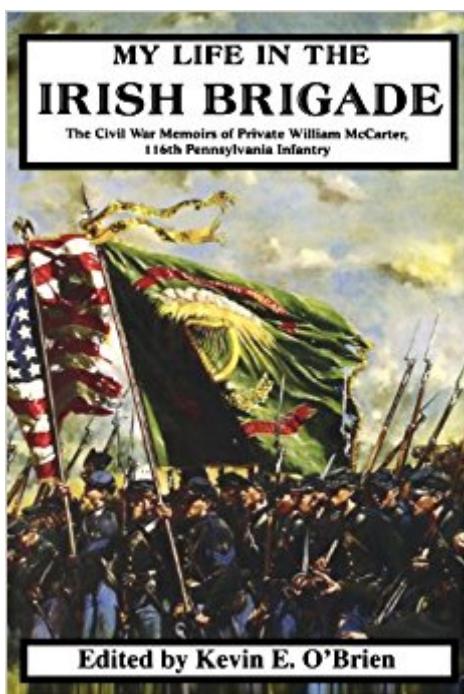


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My Life In The Irish Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs Of Private William McCarter, 116th Pennsylvania Infantry



Synopsis

The first full-length memoir published by an enlisted man in the Irish Brigade, from the Seven Day's Battles to the charge up Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg-a no-holds-barred firsthand account.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kevin E. O'Brien received his Juris Doctorate from American University, has published widely on the Irish Brigade in the Civil War, and lives in Arizona.

William McCarter's book is quite an interesting tale of his involvement as a private for the famous Irish Brigade. McCarter's vivid descriptions of soldier life, marching, camping, facing cold weather, hard living and the Battle of Fredericksburg was very well done. McCarter missed Antietam although his regiment did face the Confederates at the heights of Fredericksburg. McCarter tells such a fascinating, informative, sad, happy, yet chilling story at times during his soldier career that it was hard to put this book down. His vivid story of Fredericksburg and how the brigade battled it out, how he was injured and how he escaped death while suffering upon the battlefield was certainly the best part of the book. I wish more soldier accounts were written as well as this one as this book is one of the better books I've read that tells a soldier's story. 5 STARS!

The Irish Brigade was in Hancock's Division along with Zooks Brigade which included a regiment with a number of my ancestral family members. One of the cousins in the Pa. Reserve Division had

a similar experience at Fredricksburg, being wounded in the arm & having to resist having it amputated. I liked the description of everyday life in the army, so it's a good companion to "Hardtack and Coffee".

I thought this book was a great first hand account of an ordinary soldier in the army of the potomac.

The author only served with the Irish Brigade for a few short months but they were the most harrowing times in the unit's history. From Antietam to Fredericksburd this memoir is one of the few soldier-told tales of the Brigade.

Doing research on the Irish Brigade for some writing, This book was just what I needed.

Of all my vast readings on the Civil War, this is right at the very top of them all. It is vastly detailed and well written, providing the reader with a personal, inside look at many different considerations of Army life as if you were right there alongside Pvt William McCarter. His ability to relate the story, with the help of his modern-day editor, makes it possible for you to ride in a veritable time machine back to 1862. You experience life at that time almost to the point of breaths taken and minutes shared. On more than just a few occasions, it stirred powerful emotions within me, causing me to tear up, utter audible sounds of amazement, and literally shake my head in wonderment. Where he very well could have embellished the story, he did not, which makes me feel certain that it is completely done to the very best of his recollection and ability. Details imparted you know are the clearest he can make them, and it is done with the greatest of care for those he knew would be reading this narrative for eons to come, and my goodness it is a timeless document and a United States treasure. If you could only read one book in your lifetime about these important events of our history and of the Civil War, this would be it. Amazingly, all these years, its existence had somehow passed me by, in all of my Civil War study, and yet just by chance one day at our little public library, I happened upon it and it looked inviting...but no more so inviting than any other work on the subject. By Providence alone, having had the help of taking it rather randomly off the library shelf, I can most assuredly recommend it to all. In the form of many gifts, I do plan on sharing the words of Pvt McCarter, a great soldier, a great writer, and a great American. This book gets the very highest marks--you will not be disappointed. My Life In The Irish Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs Of Private William McCarter, 116th Pennsylvania Infantry

William McCarter was a twenty-one year old Irish immigrant when he enlisted in the 116th Pennsylvania Infantry in August 1862. The unit soon became part of the Second Brigade, First Division, Second Corps, Army of the Potomac, better known as the fabled Irish Brigade and Carter's memoirs, "My Life in the Irish Brigade" has the distinction of being the first full-length memoir published by an enlisted man in the Irish Brigade. McCarter's account covers the brigade from the Seven Day's Battles in which it made its battlefield reputation, to its assault against the Bloody Lane at Antietam, to the charge up Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg where McCarter was gravely wounded and forced to leave the army. Because he was detailed as the personal scribe to General Thomas F. Meagher, commander of the Irish Brigade, McCarter was able to meet and judge the famous generals of the Union Army such as Ambrose Burnside and Winfield Scott Hancock. Kevin E. O'Brien, who has written widely on the Irish Brigade, edits the volume and in addition to his Endnotes he has included several interesting items in the Appendixes, such as the poem "The Irish Dead on Fredericksburg Heights" which was printed in the "Irish-American" in 1863. McCarter's recollections are quite engaging, and his description of the Brigade's actions at the fateful battle of Fredericksburg, where the vast majority of its 1,200 men were killed or wounded, is the best part of the book. If you have more than a passing familiarity with the history of the Irish Brigade, this is an excellent book to give you a unique and fascinating perspective on their glory days during the Civil War. It is also one of the better written memoirs, by enlisted man or general, you will find.

A very compelling book from the viewpoint of a man that was actually there. His memoirs of what transpired in the Irish Brigade during the Civil War. Any serious Historian take notice to this book. I highly recommend it.

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