

By John P. Reynolds - Salem, Mass. (Major) 59.

Camp of the Salem Light Infantry
Co. "H" 8th. Regt. M.V.M. at Newburyport
July 25-29, 1868

The muse, a story would relate,
Of eighteen hundred sixty eight,
When Company "H" Eighth regiment,
To Newburyport in July went,
To serve the state in camp five days,
But put its time in, many ways.
Do not a wrong impression get.
It did its duty, don't forget.

This eastern city of the county,
Had offered something of a bounty,
As an inducement, to allure
Or in any other way secure,
The Brigade encampment at its door,
Not far from beautiful Merrimac's shore.
Other towns had tried in vain.
And what they lost, has proved their gain.

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The train into the station rolled,
Filled with soldiers, brave and bold.
The Second Brigade of M. V. M.
The flower of Essex County men.
Disembarking from the cars,
They formed in line, these sons of Mars,
The order came, "in places rest."
The Commanding General thinking best,
To wait for the Battery on the way,
Marching from Lawrence far away.
And thus in force with martial tread,
On to Old-town camp be led.
Giving the people a chance to view,
The glorious column of "boys in blue."
If such the intent, it didn't work.
The boys were given the chance to shirk,
The tedious march, and "tumbled" to it.
Though well we know, they well could do it.
The waiting proved a fatal error.

The boys got loose, and many a terror,
 Now tells the tales of weal and woe,
 That we and other comrades know.
 While waiting the expected orders,
 One by one, beyond the borders
 Of military sway, the boys
 Strolled and strayed without much noise,
 'Til more than half the valiant band,
 Were far beyond the General's command.

The battery comes, the line is formed.
 The officers fumed, and swore, and stormed.
 "Where's all the men?" the Captain yells,
 "Dampino," the Sergeant tells.
 The bugle sounds, some few return,
 With stores and products of the churn.
 One man whose breast with stuff distends,
 A comical appearance lends.
 "What have you there?" the Captain queried,
 And poked his breast. The soldier wearied.
 The Captain's too emphatic tap,
 Had caused a direful mishap,

And sent a stream of "busted" eggs,
 Trickling down his trousers legs.
 "Forward" is sounded, off we start,
 Marching to music brisk and smart.
 Every effort being made
 To show to advantage our Second Brigade.
 Over the long and dusty road,
 Each man tugs his weary load,
 Until the line of tents he gains,
 Pitched on famed "Grasshopper Plains."
 Sad remnant though, of the gallant host,
 From depot to camp, the march could boast.
 On teams and barges, hay rick, 'bus,
 Two thirds arrived, and hence the muss.
 "Holding the fort," as the faithful enter.
 "Officers to the front and centre!"
 The Colonel shouts, and to each Commander,
 Asks "where's your men"? The Captains wonder.
 "Who are all those, the tents in rear?"
 The Captains look; fond memory dear,
 Will ne'er forget the gang that stood,

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 Gaping in listless idle mood,
 At the little band that made the tramp,
 Over the dusty road to camp.

"Break ranks"! To quarters the faithful go,
 Make themselves comfortable, and so
 At Old-town, ere the set of sun,
 On Grasshopper Plains, the camp begun.

—
 Lax discipline, betrayed at start,
 Inaugurates methods sharp and smart.

—
 The new commander of the S. L. I.
 Took to camp, good reasons why,
 As a reception tent, the old marquee,
 Flying from peak, the old bargee.
 The General's eye rests on this flag.
 Down comes an Orderly on his nag,
 "The Colonel's compliments, Sir!" said he,

"The General says: take down your bulgees."
Saluting, he no longer staid,
The order, promptly is obeyed,
Reluctantly the flag is lowered,
And officers and men, are soured.
The old bell tent, its signal gone,
Left nothing, old members to rally on.
Absorbed as 'twere quite out of view,
Among that sea of canvass new.

The detail for Officer of the Guard that night,
Fell to our company, and at sight,

"The General says:- Take down the barge."
Saluting, he no longer stayed.

The order, promptly is obeyed.

Reluctantly the flag is lowered,
And officers and men are soured.

The old bell tent its signal gone
Left naught, old friends to rally on
Absorbed as 'twere quite out of view,
Amidst that sea of canvass new.

Small matter though, of flag bereft,
We were lucky to have the old tent left.

But some how the little circumstance,
The best of feeling did not enhance,
And while no order, we could gainsay,
It sewed to rub the fur, wrong way,
And put the spirits out of joint,
Almost at the very starting point.

One tents crew of Innocents,
As yet, lacked camp experience,

But though Recruits, were jolly sparks,
And styled themselves by name the "Larks"
Old Soldiers bow in reverence,
The Larks are first in evidence.
On forage tent they pinned and cocked all,
And "swipe" the tent floor of the Doctor,
While floors to Headquarters, were being distributed,
The Larks to themselves, this one contributed.
With all their youthful strength they tug it,
And to their company street they lug it,
Placing it under their tent secure,
And join their comrades with thoughts demure.
A moment later the Quartermaster,
With rage, his face quite alabaster,
Informs the Captain of the deed,
Who quickly of the act takes heed.
No words with the Q.M. does he banter,
But orders the tent floor back instantler,
The few with muscle, might and main,

Drag the tent floor back again,
Placing it firmly, the Surgeon's tent under,
From whence the many removed it asunder.
The act was bold, but displayed on reflection,
An energy only needing direction,
And so no punishment was accorded,
But good work, all the week recorded.
This first offence, not magnified,
The Captain on their honor relied.
Not yet in vain, for like the rest
They soon "caught on", and did their best.

The detail for Officer of Guard that night,
Fell to our company, and at eight,

The Captain sent an officer true
 Who, how to do his duty knew.

Little he thought his duty here,
 Would give him a chance to deal severe,
 With high officials on duty bent.

But so it happened. The Lieutenant lent,
 All his nerve to do and dare,
 And officer or man, with all get squall.

Night approaches, the Countersign,
 Is given out along the line.

All in, stay in. All out, keep out.

The sentries pace and turn about,
 A stranger comes. "Who goes there?"
 There are two or three. The strangers stare,
 The Countersign? They have it not,
 And so are held up, on the spot.

"Corporal of the Guard, post me!" is sounded.
 The Corporal comes and looks confounded.
 "Call the Sergeant!" He obeys.

The Sergeant comes, He also says
 They cannot pass. What's to be done?
 The stranger in Commanding tone,

Says "call the Lieutenant of the Guard!"
 This thing is getting to be kind of hard.
 The Sergeant turns and quickly bounds,
 To bring the Lieutenant from his rounds.
 The latter comes at this behest,
 To overlook the stranger guest.
 The stranger says; "from Boston down
 All the way to this old town,
 I've come to inspect these troops a-field."
 The Lieutenant firmly declines to yield.
 "I'm Adjutant General Cunningham!"
 The Lieutenant does not care a damn,
 "You cannot pass this sentry line,
 Unless you have the Countersign."
 The General baffled, takes his leave,
 The Lieutenant laughing in his sleeve.
 For well he knew the General's face,
 But Orders, he could not efface.
 So back to town the General went,
 And at the tavern, the night he spent.
 For this one act, Lieutenant Symonds,
 In common parlance, should "wear diamonds."

Among the company's personnel,
 Was one, the whole brigade knew well.
 Day and night, sunshine and rain,
 Was heard through camp his loud refrain,
 "Wake up! Wake up!" until the howl,
 Proclaimed him far and near "Go Owl".
 Thus introduced a king-pin, he,
 Became with all for deviltry,
 Yet never seemed to break the Law
 Of discipline, but quickly saw
 The difference 'ween good and bad,
 And soldierly reputation had.
 A veteran of Army and navy he,
 Had service seen on land and sea.
 Nor failed to take another's part,
 When one was prone to be too smart.
 And let it be recorded here,
 Go Owl would often volunteer,
 To do another fellow's duty,
 Without reward, or pay, or booty.
 To go on guard, was his delight.
 But you couldn't find him day or night.

Joseph A. L. L.

Until you heard his loud acclaim,
 "Wake up!" but then it was his aim,
 To be heard, not seen. Though far away,
 He always turned up bright next day.
 With every thing ^{clearly} to the spick and span
 To volunteer for another man.
 Went on post again all night,
 And stood on guard clean out of sight.

The muse recalls no accidents,
 But fruitful is of incidents.
 One day a Private had a fit.
 Came very near to dying, "Nit!"
 Full half a dozen comrades true,
 Bore him tenderly from view,
 Safely to the company street,
 When jumping quickly to his feet,
 He put his thumb upon his nose,
 And that's the last was seen of those.
 A muse adopted with a will,
 That afternoon to skip the drill

One night when tongues were glibly wagging,
 And each in turn the other nagging,

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The Captain strolling through the street,
 Heard silvery sounds, and jargon sweet.
 Clamoring within the darkened tent,
 Where doubtless sleep was the intent,
 By some, that others kept awake,
 Compelling them to sleep forsake.
 The Captain was about to quell
 The jabbering tongues when with a yell,
 A nettled inmate shouts askeance,
 "Shut up and give your ^(the rest) — a chance"
 The laughter following this remark,
 Was more ridiculous in the dark.
 Came little rest to that tent's crew
 For tongues kept running as hours flew.

A farmer dwelt not far from camp,
 And by his place the steady tramp,
 Of soldiers going to and fro,
 One now and then would stop, you know,
 To purchase what he had to sell,
 And get a drink at the good old well.
 The farmer willingly at first,
 Allowed each man to quench his thirst.

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Until the supply now getting shorter,
He asked for a guard put on the water.
The disappointed followers came,
And soon began the Guard to blame.
Near by the well, a stone wall stood,
'Twas quickly scanned, so far, so good.
At night there came from camp a crew,
Of 'vengeful' men. What did they do?
The fact, the muse will truly tell,
They with the wall, filled up the well.

Another curious episode,
Doth the muse in time unload.
One day a tradesman came to camp,
And said his sign had taken a tramp.
'Twas missing from over his door 'twas true,
"And some one stole it," this he knew,
The man in camp was well received,
And by some his story was believed.
So by the Colonel he was permitted,
To find out who the deed committed,
Up and down and in and out,

1/ The streets and tents he looked about,
 But nothing like a sign he found,
 Any where upon the ground.

Though sawed in two, by skillful hands,
 The sign in use as table stands.

The tradesman saw it, but didn't know it,
 For nothing he could see, could show it.

Though gazing on with looks benign,
 The "table" of course would give no "sign."
 Satisfied, the man departed

From the "Tom fools errand," ^{on which he} started.

The table having served its end,
 The men begin the sign to mend.

And to its former use restore,
 At night, above the tradesman's door.

Returning when the camp was o'er,
 The troops pass by this self same store.

The tradesman looks with gaze intent,
 At every passing regiment.

With sly looks now and then the boys,
 One by one set up a noise.

Several chaff him, left and right.

3/ "How 'bout that sign?" "That sign's all right!" 74

What sounds are these, so sweet and rare,
That float upon the midnight air?
And turn the soul to thoughts serene,
From the daily hurly burly scene.

Church bells sure; what does it mean?
The buggers are pulling the rope Iween.
And so it proved. From out the steeple,
Peal on peal, alarms the people,
Until the Provost on the run,
Stops the clang, but just began.

But by the muse, must all be told?
Perhaps within this little fold,
The memory will unlock a fact,
That should upon the scamps re-act.
This boldest deed of mischief done,
Will be confessed by every one.

The bells may have suggested fire.
At all events the fun ran higher,
Culminating in a schism,
Nothing short of vandalism.

14/ 75.
The Surgeon's buggy, at our headquarters,
Was sieged upon by some "rip-snorters";
Filled with straw, and drawn by rope,
Up and down the gentle slope,
The Battery boys a probrange lent,
And joined those of the regiment,
In the devilish midnight jamboree.
They yelled and shouted. Hully gee!
What's this? A brilliant lurid glare
Lights up the camp. How did they dare,
Thus far to go, and break the Law,
That all should hold in wholesome awe?
The gang set fire to the gig,
And round the camp they hauled the rig,
'Til nothing left for flames to sup.
They burned the Doctor's buggy up!
Where were the Guards? They were not in it,
The deed was done in about a minute.
That is the fire. 'Twas well prepared,
Or else the boldest, had not dared.
Much preparation of course was had,
The Devils must have worked like mad,

15/ To carry out this little joke,
For the few minutes going up in smoke.

Thus Satan ruled, both day and night,
Between the drills, 'tween dark and light.
The brigade was full of fire and life,
Much of it gained in battle strife.
For lots of soldiers of the rebellion,
Were in its ranks, and hence the hell-ian,
Military work to them seemed tame,
And so they hunted wilder game.

Turn now the muse from carnival high,
To duty done, perfection nigh.
Our company made a record here.
Performed its drills, sometimes severe,
With credit to officers and men,
That, all will freely admit, I ken,
With full ranks, fifty-five in all,
We left the armory at duty's call.
The Cadets, that year on their camp tour,

Had marched away with forty-four,
 Though but a Company, as the record runs,
 We beat the Battalion, eleven guns,
 This record now, would care to barter,
 It was a good one for a starter.
 And then the first night spent in camp,
 The Guard contained no shirk or scamp,
 And our Lieutenant, set the pace
 For respect, by those who held high place.
 And by the Colonel for this was praised,
 Who, his estimation of him, raised.
 Bad beginning, good ending makes,
 And often times, the record breaks.
 And when we formed for homeward march,
 Didnt we simply take the starch,
 Out of every thing in the line?
 Our company front was grand, 'twas fine,
 Straight across High street it ran,
 Soldiers thorough, every man.
 And then the Sergeants, tall and straight,
 All five present and up to date.
 Never was ^{the} {your} Captain prouder.

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Never was salutation louder,
 The files extend from curb to curb,
 The step, alignment, all superb,
 Three officers, five sergeants, men half a hundred,
 The record of all other companies rendered.
 The rogues may have merited condemnation,
 But the Company, official commendation.
 The lights and shadows, thus cruelly blended,
 Our task may well, right here be ended.

Much more the muse could dwell upon,
 But already the screed, is quite too long.
 And so for service, pride and sport,
 We yield the palm, to Newburyport.

'Twill thus be seen, in peace and war,
 Are many things to cause a jaw,
 And companies of less heroic mould,
 Even though they've been both brave and bold
 Have stranded on some useless rock
 After enduring the battle's shock.