

# REMINISCENCES OF WA

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## Address of N. A. Chaffee at the Reunion at Ellicottville.

The Republican has received several requests for the publication of the address delivered by N. A. Chaffee at the recent reunion of the 154th regiment and companies I and H of the 37th regiment at Ellicottville. Mr. Chaffee has kindly furnished a copy of the address, which was as follows:

I have a few words to say to my old comrades from thoughts that came to me while reading our invitation to attend this reunion, which is upon the 42d anniversary of the 154th leaving Jamestown for the seat of war. Did we take in the import of that announcement? As you look back to that time, do you realize the number of years that have gone? What has not been done in those years? Here is a space covering more than the average life of man. History makes no record of any 40 years in which so much has been done. Forty-two years would put you back to the closing of your school days, when life was full of hopes and bright prospects, when you started out upon your own account, with joyfull spirits, full of ambition and a determination to succeed in life's battle. How often does your mind refer back to those happy days? You remember so well that grand regiment of over 1,000 men that marched down the streets of Jamestown Sept. 29, 1862, to take the cars for the seat of war, a war that you were told would probably close before you would be called upon to engage in battle.

Where are those men now? There is only a handful of them here, and you represent about all that remains of them on this side of the great unknown. You remember well how this and that one was taken from us, and how disease and the effects of army wounds and exposures have told their story. We often call their names, but we get no reply. We hear occasionally from some number of our regiment who has wandered into other states, and that some of them have been honored and successful in this battle of life. We do not envy them because they have been more successful than some of us here have been; no spirit of envy or jealousy exists between comrades of the war. Every one of us is proud of them, thankful that honor and riches have come to them. You never will find any other organization where such a spirit of true fraternity and good will exists.

You remember the barracks at Jamestown, the hash that the boys con-

also remember the many times since, when, coming into camp from some long hot and dusty march, with not any too much hard bread and salt pork in our haversacks, that we wished we could sit down to some more of that same hash.

I shall not detain you to re-arse the advancement in the mechanical sciences, the disc veries, the unprecedented growth of our country during these 40 years. Your heroic deeds of valor and your patriotic, unselfish services made it possible for this country to exist and exemplify to the world what a nation can accomplish where true freedom rules.

I was strongly impressed with the thought of this being our 42d anniversary, and at the request of your committee I will speak of a few of those recollections that our reunion brings to my mind. You have not forgotten the conding girl who you thought then was the only person you could ever love, and whose initials you cut along with yours on a tree on that last walk you took with her 42 years ago. You have not forgotten that angel mother's voice and face, though covered with the wrinkles of years and care, to you the most beautiful and truest friend you ever had; the broken accents of her voice as she gave you to your country, or that prayer she offered that God would protect you. You never will forget the last look you took of that old home with its vine-covered doorway, nor how those you loved watched you as you marched away in your suit of blue.

You have not forgotten how it came that the 154th was called the "Hard Tack Regiment." The 11th corps was by a very large majority Germans and ours was the only Yankee regiment for a long time in our brigade. As a rule the Yankees cared more for bread than for coffee, and the Germans wanted more coffee and not so much bread; so in order to bring our rations up to the standard of our wants, our men after steeping their coffee would save and dry the grounds, add a little new coffee so as to keep the aroma perfect, and go over to the German regiments and trade for hard bread. After a long time they discovered the deception and the reduced article of coffee they were getting, and always after that they called us "Hard Tacks."

You never will forget the regiment's first baptism of fire and death at Chancellorsville, where we were so full of hope and confidence, nor how we were doomed to disappointment, humiliation and worse then defeat in this our first introduction to war. We never shall forget the many poor fellows we had to leave

there on that field, disabled or captured. Some of them died in Southern prisons. Forty years has not blotted out of your minds the pictures of sadness our camp presented to us when we returned to it after this campaign, with over half of the winter huts vacant. Forty years has not blotted out the remembrance of that long, hot and dusty march from our camp at Stafford Court House to Gettysburg, and what took place there. Again you hear the fearful roar of the greatest artillery battle the world had ever witnessed, the shrieking and bursting of shells, the whistle of the deadly minnie; you hear again the veil of the charging enemy and recall the fearful moments on which hung the destinies of our nation.

You remember the campaign from Chattanooga to Atlanta and on to the sea. Again you stand on Rocky faced Ridge, where we lost six of our color guard in less than 20 minutes. Again you hear the clash of arms and the shout of victory at Peach Tree creek. You see every mile of that march, with its hills, rocks, mountains, rivers and woods. You know where your comrade was shot who died from disease and where you had to leave him. You never will get away from the fraternity of brotherhood that you formed there. The chains that bind together with mutual respect and sympathy are stronger today if possible than ever before. This fraternity was not made around an altar erected by man, where pledges and promises are made to be easily and quickly disregarded and broken; no eloquent and imposing ceremonies were then performed; there were no shaded and subdued colored lights, no rich tones of harmonious music. Your initiation into this fraternity was under entirely different surroundings and conditions than those; it was amidst the screaming and bursting of shells, when the harvest of death was on, with comrades falling upon every side, while defending the flag of our country. The music you heard was the yell of the charging enemy, the groaning of the wounded and dying, while you bent down over some wounded comrade trying to cheer him up, giving him water to drink from your canteen and promising to carry his last mesage to her he loved.

Do people wonder why the old soldiers persist in holding these reunions? Why they every year meet to decorate their comrade's graves? Do they wonder at the strong bonds of comradeship existing between the veterans of the war? If they ever are called upon to experience what you passed through which we pray God to forbid—then, and not until then, will their questions all be answered, and they will know then what true fraternity means.

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