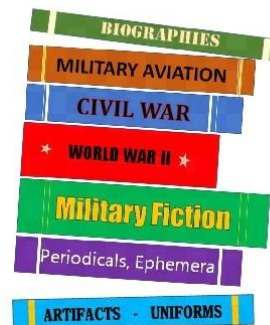


Volume 2
Winter 2022



SATURDAY, DEC 10, 2022
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

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FAIR**



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WHAT'S NEW AT THE MUSEUM

By Ken Wiggins

Volunteer Daphne Robertson



Daphne is a member of the Mid County Center and first discovered the Delaware Military Museum just up the stairs, and became interested in our activities. She soon became a regular visitor and volunteer.

Daphne has a degree in Political Science from East Stroudsburg University and saw a connection between her education and history. When asked what attracted her she replied, "I was impressed by the self-discipline to create interesting educational exhibits. They are not childish, they are not watered down, and they are just right!"

As to her volunteer work, Daphne added, "I get to choose my tasks, and there are lots of choices. I like the flexible schedule, and there is no pressure here. Everyone is very friendly and relaxed."

Daphne has been married to her chemical engineer husband David Robertson for 32 years and has a 38-year-old son. She resides in North Wilmington.

Recent Acquisitions



Teddi Silver brought to our attention that we have paintings of all the USS Delaware's – except one, the most recent.

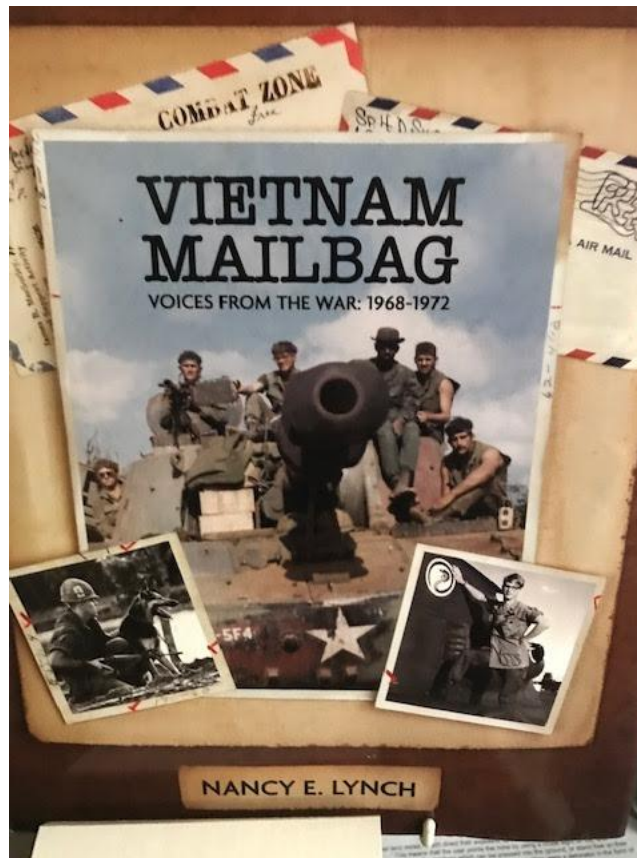
The Virginia-class Attack submarine Delaware (SSN-791) was represented by a small photograph on our wall.

So, at Teddi's prompting Ken Wiggins painted this sub and presented it at our board meeting in November. We now have a complete collection of all the eight USS Delaware's.

There are two others on the same wall which include the Kalmar Nyckel and the USS Wilmington. This will cause some headaches for Bob Seidle to rearrange the existing paintings and their legends to accommodate the new piece. It was suggested that we may want to one day reproduce these images as a set of prints and sell them as a fund raiser.

Editor's Note: It was a very small photograph of the submarine taken of the bow. Ken painted the submarine from a great angle and it is a much better view of the USS Delaware than anyone could imagine. Bob Seidle got all of the paintings arranged and the USS Delaware "wall" looks great!

WILLIAM DUNCAN MEMORIAL LECTURE presented on Saturday, November 12



The speaker for the November program at the Delaware Military Museum was journalist Nancy E. Lynch, author of the award-winning book, *Vietnam Mailbag, Voices From the War: 1968-1972*, and Vietnam veteran Rick Lovekin, who joined forces for this multi-media program on November 12 at 1 p.m. at the Delaware Military Museum.

Underwritten by a grant from Delaware Humanities, Lynch and Lovekin's presentation was sponsored by the museum as part of its Maj. Gen. William H. Duncan Memorial Lecture series for 2022.

A Bethel, Delaware resident, Lynch read selected correspondence from servicemen featured in her book, based on the nearly 1,000 letters and hundreds of pictures her popular News Journal column, *Nancy's Vietnam Mailbag*, received for five years, from our troops on the front lines, during the undeclared and polarizing war. In her final column in December 1972 she promised "her guys" she would someday put all their war letters and pictures in a book to honor them. The 2008 Veterans Day release of her 456-page social history fulfills her pledge. The book earned a gold medal from Independent Publisher in 2009 for Best Non-Fiction in the Mid-Atlantic.

Lovekin had a medical disability and could have avoided service in Vietnam but chose instead to enlist in the Army and spent a year in combat as a door gunner on a Huey helicopter and later as crew chief on a Cobra chopper. He was based in Bien Hoa and Vung Tau with the 147th Helicopter Company. He wrote frequently to Lynch during his 1969-1970 tour, always signing his letters, "Your Man in Nam." He shared some of his combat experiences as well as a media presentation of images from Vietnam enhanced with 1960s music. Now retired, Lovekin, formerly of New Castle County, lives in North East, Md.



THE CRAZY DELAWARES AT THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

By: Sean Protas

The Antietam campaign of September 1862 was the first attempt of General Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia to take the war north of the Potomac. This bold move was conceived following the humiliating defeats of Gen. McClellan's Army of the Potomac during the Seven Day's Battles before Richmond and the thorough rout of General Pope's Army of Virginia in August 1862 at the Battle of Second Bull Run. Morale was extremely high in the Confederacy and in stark contrast, Northern morale was at a low point. The London *Times* stated the following in late July 1862, "After pouring forth blood like water and fertilizing the fields of Virginia with thousands of corpses, the North finds itself obliged to begin all over again, with credit destroyed, ruined revenue, a depreciated currency, and an enormous debt." (Gallagher, 1989) The Army of the Potomac received a morale boost on September 2nd, when the beloved General George B. McClellan was returned to command and the remaining units from the disbanded Army Virginia were combined with it.

The campaign began in earnest as Gen. Lee's army crossed the Potomac into Maryland on September 5th, 1862. When this information became known in Washington, the 2nd and 12th corps of the Army of the Potomac, representing the center column, began their march from Tennallytown, MD, which was located on the Northwest border of Washington, DC and marched about 10 miles to Rockville, MD. During the introductory phase of the campaign, the Second Corps received a third division composed of 2 brigades of new volunteer regiments. This affected the 2nd Delaware directly because, Maj. General Sumner, the commander of the 2nd Corps would select Brig. Gen. William French as the commander of the third division. Gen. French had been the unit's brigade commander during the Peninsula campaign. The Colonel of the 53rd Pennsylvania, John R. Brooke, was chosen to assume command of the Brigade on September 9th. (Armstrong, 2008, p. 81) From the 9th to the 13th of September, the 2nd Corps would march from Rockville to Frederick, MD and pass through towns such as Clarksburg and Urbana. (Walker, 1886, p. 93) When the soldiers entered Frederick, MD, they were treated like conquering heroes as the city had until recently been under Confederate occupation. It was described this way by Sgt. John H. Rhodes of Battery G, 1st NY Light Artillery: "... as the full ranks of Sumner's brigades, in perfect order and with all the pomp of war, passed through the quaint and beautiful town, their proud commanders and glittering staffs, and General Sumner at the head, the inhabitants responded with applause, and, from balcony and windows fair faces smiled, and handkerchiefs and scarfs waved to greet the army of the Union, as they passed along the streets from which, only the day before, the Confederates had been driven." (Armstrong, 2008, p. 108)

The following day the fight for the passes through the South Mountain range that became known as the Battle of South Mountain erupted. The 2nd Delaware and its corps were tasked to support the assault of Turner's Gap but did not become engaged. This battle set the stage for the forthcoming battle near Sharpsburg, MD. The Confederate forces were able to hold long enough to prevent the Union army from crossing the range and cutting off Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's corps that was still occupying Harper's Ferry, WV to the South. On Sept. 15th, the 2nd Corps crossed the South Mountain Range through Turner's Gap after it was discovered that the Confederate forces had left the area over night. Once across the mountain, Gen. Israel "Dick" Richardson, commander of 1st Division ordered the 5th NH deploy as skirmishers across the Boonsboro Pike and to move through Boonsboro, MD to meet a group of Confederate cavalry that was resting on the western side of the

town. This cavalry force was engaged by troopers of the 8th Ill. Cavalry who moved forward supporting the 5th NH. Gen. Richardson deployed his division and forced the rebels back for over four miles to the banks of the Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg. The Confederates escaped to the western side of the Antietam where Lee's army was waiting. Richardson's Division remained in this position because the full corps was not in place; the remainder of the corps was still several miles away along with the commander, Gen. Sumner. (Armstrong, 2008, pp. 132-137)

The morning of Sept. 17th had the 2nd Delaware stationed on the Eastern of bank of Antietam creek just west of Boonsboro, awaiting orders to cross with their division and engage that Confederates now camped just east of the town of Sharpsburg, MD. The initial movement orders for the 2nd Corps came at 7:20am, and the 2nd division of Gen. Sedgewick and Gen. French's 3rd Division crossed the Middle bridge over the Antietam Creek. Maj. Gen. Sumner accompanied his 3rd division troops into a full on engagement across the Hagerstown Pike in the West Woods, Gen. French's brigade without clear orders from its corps commander turned to the south towards the sunken road. The 2nd Delaware at this time was still on the eastern side of the Antietam creek with their division awaiting a division from the 5th corps which was ordered to replace it on the union lines. (Walker, 1886, pp. 100-101)

At about 9:30am, Gen. Richardson's division crossed the Antietam creek and moved to the south in support of French's Division. The division formed up in a ravine behind a ridge that was to the east of the Roulette House that is located to the North of the sunken road. It formed with the Irish Brigade under Brig Gen. Meagher on the right and the First Brigade commanded by Brig. Gen John Caldwell on the left, with the 3rd Brigade of Col. John Brooke in reserve. The initial attack began with Meagher's brigade engaging the Confederates stationed in the Sunken Road at about 10:30am. Meagher's Irish Brigade would hold their position for approximately 20 minutes and suffer severe casualties in the process. At this time, Gen. Richardson supported the Irish Brigade by committing his first Brigade commanded by Gen. John Caldwell. This brigade consisted of the 5th New Hampshire, the 7th NY, 61st NY, 64th NY, and the 81st PA. The brigade moved up behind and to the right of the Irish Brigade and directly engaged and drove the Rebels from the Sunken Road. About ten to twenty minutes after Caldwell's men entered the fight, gaps began to appear in his line and they were noticed by Col. Brooke. Col. Brooke had his brigade in reserve to the north of the sunken road. Brooke's brigade from left to right consisted of the 53rd PA, 66th NY, 57th NY, 2nd DE, and the 52nd NY, whose flank was on the farm lane that ran north from the sunken road. As Brooke advanced south towards the road, Meagher's brigade left the field, having been relieved by Caldwell's men. Brooke advanced his brigade forward across the sunken road and into a position of support for Caldwell who was fighting on the southern side of the road.

During this advance through the lane, the commander of the 52nd NY noticed enemy forces moving to their right rear. To counter this development, he took command of his regiment and the 2nd DE, and changed fronts to the west to counter the threat posed by the advancing rebels at about 12:15 pm. The remainder of Brooke's regiments along with a regiment from another brigade advanced through the Piper cornfield to the south of the Sunken road and pushed the Rebel line to the breaking point. At this time however, the union troops in this sector were halted short of breaking the line when Gen. Richardson, the division commander was mortally wounded. Following his wounding, command devolved to Brig. Gen. Caldwell, who suspended further advances in order to hold and consolidate the gains that were made during the attack.

In researching this phase of the battle, I have encountered multiple accounts of the same action. The reports of the events from various officers are misleading or vague, as there was significant confusion in Brooke's brigade as his regiments became separated to counter the enemy threat that developed on the right of the division. He countered this threat by detaching the 52nd NY, 2nd DE, and the 53rd PA, while he remained with the 66th and 57th NY in the area of the Piper farm. In

a post-war history of the 2nd DE, Lt. Robert Smith of Co. A asserted that the 2nd DE played a key role in the charge on the Piper farm and that they were not given the credit in the official reports because the after action report of Captain Stricker was extremely vague in his description of the battle. The assertions of Lt. Smith are supported by a letter that was mailed home by Lt. Charles Lynch of Co. K. "At one time we were so far in advance of the regular line that we came near being out-flanked by the enemy, and for a short time we sustained quite a severe crossfire; fortunately for us there was another regiment in the rear of us, and they fired into them and saved us considerably." (Blue Hen's Chicken, 10/1/1862) It was at this battle that the regiment's stellar conduct on the field earned them the moniker of "The Crazy Delaware's".

Captain Stricker's report of the battle was written on September 21, 1862 and was extremely vague as to the actions of the regiment. The following is his description of the battle.

"On the morning of the 17th we moved with the brigade across the creek and took position in a corn-field, where we lay about twenty minutes, losing 1 man killed and 1 man wounded. The brigade was then ordered to move forward, and soon became engaged with the enemy, driving them for some distance. Our loss in killed, wounded, and missing foots up as follows: 12 killed, 43 wounded, 2 missing."

He did single out several enlisted men for commendation as follows:

"Among the enlisted I may favorably mention: Company D, First Sergt. John L Ogden (killed); Company H, First Sergt. Thomas Russell, who, after Lieutenant Smith was wounded, took command of his company; First Sergt. Richard Fox (missing). The color sergeants deserve special mention. Their names are James Wier (wounded) and Robert Hanna."

The 2nd Delaware's involvement in the battle of Antietam was limited to the attack on the Sunken Road but it remained in the memories of the men for the rest of their lives. The historical slight of the 2nd Delaware was still felt in 1909 when Lt. Smith wrote his history of the regiment. He included the following in the introduction:

"... and so they have described this charge of ours as a splendid charge 'by several regiments of Union troops,' and thus, though our work has received the utmost credit as a feat of arms, yet historically our name is not mentioned; therefore it is most fitting that we should go to Antietam and put tablets, even if they are but those that we can scratch out ourselves, that will serve to show the important work we did that day—not in foolish egotism; but that a proper pride may be satisfied and that interesting historical facts may be made known; no matter how crude we may make our tablets and markers, distinguished people, or people of influence, are frequently visiting this battleground and they can thus learn what regiment it was that made that charge over the 'Bloody Road' up the hill beyond, and clean out to near 'Pipers House' a long distance beyond our front lines and capturing everything in its front, cutting Lee's army in two."

Unfortunately, at this time, I am unable to clearly ascertain the validity of Lt. Smith's and Lt. Lynch's assertions as the published historical record attributes this charge to the 57th and 66th NY under the command of Col. Brooke.

In closing, the battle of Antietam still is the bloodiest single day of warfare in American military history with over 23,000 casualties and the 2nd DE itself suffered fifty-seven casualties of the 230 soldiers engaged. This battle occurred 1 year to the day that the regiment had left Camp Brandywine in Wilmington. It was the first major combat action for the regiment and their actions under fire were a

sign of their impressive combat actions to come in the next two years of service with the Army of the Potomac.

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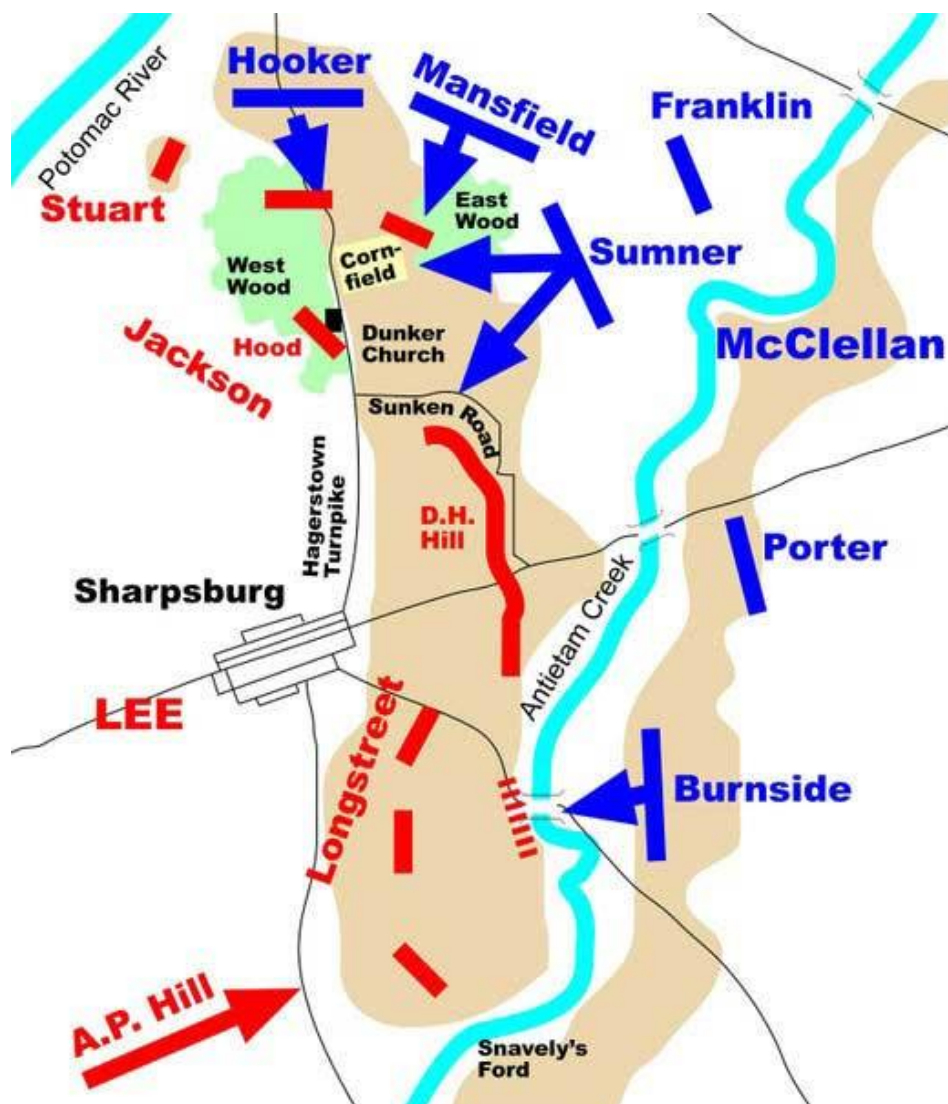
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