

IN MEMORIAM

LIEUTENANT HENRY I. GODBOLD

OF EAST WALPOLE, MASSACHUSETTS

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The following obituary was taken from the Dedham Gazette, October 18, 1862. It gives a brief biography of Lieutenant Henry I. Godbold, of East Walpole, who was died after being struck by a Rebel shell during a fierce artillery engagement along the Rappahannock River, Virginia on August 23, 1862. "South Dedham" refers to what is now called the town of Norwood.

Military Funeral in South Dedham.

It is a sacred duty to honor the noble true-hearted men, who died in the contest for their nation's life and well being. They have gone beyond the reach of the glorious results which will eventually flow from their patriotic labor and suffering, and the least which the promptings of grateful hearts would lead us to do, is to pay all the honors which we can to their dust, and enshrine them in our memories, as men who have deserved well of their nation and their race. Such seems to be the spontaneous and universal feeling in the hearts of hundreds of people, who assembled from all the neighboring towns at the Congregational Church in South Dedham, on Sunday, Oct. 5th to pay the last tribute of respect to the remains of Lieut. HENRY I. GODBOLD, of the 1st Regiment of Pennsylvania Artillery.

The deceased was a native of Methuen, Mass., where he was born Oct. 26, 1838; but in early life he, with his father's family, removed to East Walpole, where his home has ever since been. He continued to reside in this part of the country until some two or three years since, when he went to Harrisburg, Pa., when the outbreak of this infamous rebellion found him. When the bombardment of Sumter sent an electric thrill through the hearts of the nation, he was among the first to offer himself for the nation's preservation and life. His services were accepted, and he was appointed Second Lieutenant of Artillery, from which grade he was subsequently promoted to the post of First Lieutenant. It was his good fortune that his battery was in the same brigade as the 12th and 13th Mass. Regts., in which he found many personal friends, so that he could feel that through nominally a soldier of another State, he was still heart to heart and shoulder to shoulder with the men of his native soil, who had grown up with the memories of Lexington and Bunker Hill. In following the various fates of the war, he was in several battles, among them the fierce and bloody one at Cedar Mountain, but escaped uninjured.

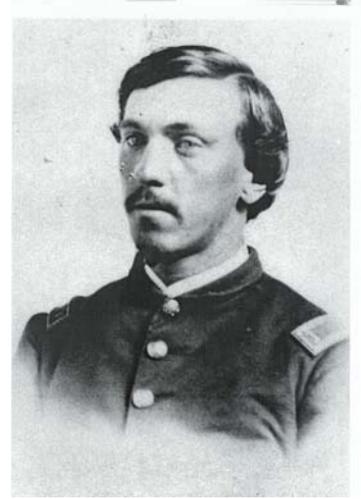
On the 23d of August his battery was engaged in defending the passage of the Rappahannock in an artillery duel, perhaps the sharpest and fiercest of the war. In this contest, a percussion shell from one of the enemy's batteries, two miles distant, struck his leg near the front, and exploding at the same moment, shattered his leg, killed three of the horses and wounded a fourth attached to the piece. His men were at first thrown into confusion, but he reassured them by his perfect coolness. He himself applied the handkerchief which served as a tourniquet, and held the rod by which it was twisted. He was taken to the rear, where amputation was performed by Surgeon Cox, assisted by Surgeons Heart and Chapin of the Mass. 12th and 13th Regts. After amputation he was started for Washington, but was thirty-three hours in reaching the hospital, and was greatly exhausted. He, however, soon rallied, and when his father joined him, as he did as soon after receiving news of his wound as was possible, he seemed on the way to speedy recovery. But after a



few days, unfavorable symptoms appeared, the matter which should have passed from the wound was absorbed into the system producing abscesses in different parts, attended by severe and constant pain. At length erysipelas supervened, which resulted in death on the 27th of Sept. He had for some days foreseen this result, and commending himself to Him, "who was dead and is alive forever more," calmly breath his last in his father's arms, and, as may be confidently trusted, went "home to die no more."

His body was embalmed, and brought, in accordance with his request, to lie with his kindred in the family burial ground.

The funeral ceremonies took place on Sunday, Oct. 5th, and as they were new to this region, so they were very impressive. Through the kindness of Capt. Whitton, Post Commandant at Readville, the detachment due to the rank of the deceased was detailed, under command of Lieut. Jordan, to perform military escort. Lieut. Jordan's personal experience of similar bereavements gave him a personal sympathy with the spirit of the occasion, and his command seemed also to enter fully into it. The body, preceded by the Walpole Brass Band, and followed by a large procession of relatives, friends and citizens, was escorted to the Congregational Church, where the services were opened with prayer by Rev. Mr. Tucker, after which a funeral address was delivered by Rev. Mr. Colburn, the Pastor of the Church. At the close of the services the remains were brought to the grave, where after the usual military ceremonies, they were deposited to be disturbed no more till the great reveille of the Resurrection.



He is dead, but thank God, the country for which he died still lives, and God grant that she may live for ever, to enshrine in "her heart of hearts," the memory of her noble defenders.

(Dedham Gazette; Oct. 18, 1862; pg. 2, col. 3.)

Lt. Gobold is mentioned numerous times in the Official Records of the Civil War, and received much praise from his commanding officers. Apparently he was an expert artillery officer, according to a report made in the Official Records dated April 18, 1862, titled "Reconnaissance to the Rappahannock River, Va., by Lt. Col. Timothy M. Bryan, jr. , 12th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. A very good history of his artillery unit, Battery F, of the 1st Pennsylvania Artillery, mentions the following which occurred on 23 August, just a few weeks after heavy engagements with Rebel General Stonewall Jackson: "*Pope withdrew his forces across the Rappahannock, and at the crossing Hartsuff's Brigade, with Battery F, was posted upon a wooded knoll upon the south bank, where it completely covered the crossing, and the entire plain beyond. Here a severe engagement between the artillery ensued; but the enemy was successfully held at bay until our forces were secure from attack, and the covering party was ordered to retire. The battery had two guns disabled, and several horses were killed, but the guns were brought off. Lieutenant Godbald, in command of the left section, was struck by a percussion shell, losing a leg from the effects of the wound, and soon after died. He was a valuable officer and his loss was severely felt.*"

photos: courtesy of US Army Military History Institute Carlisle, PA Barrett Collection, RG9985-CWP137.60 & RG985-CWP137.59

Part of this story appeared in the Walpole Times in 2005

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