

Private Newton Camper

Company D – 11th Virginia Infantry

Newton Camper, age 19, enlisted in the “Fincastle Rifles” on April 23, 1861 in Fincastle [Botetourt County], Virginia. Enlistment documents show Newton’s occupation as a mason.

Newton was mustered in on April 26, 1861 in Richmond, Virginia. He was mustered in for one year of service and it was noted on the form that he had traveled “188 miles from his place of enlistment.”

During the Battle of Seven Pines (June 30, 1862), near Richmond, Newton was wounded.

Newton penned the following in late June, 1863 as the Army of Northern Virginia moved northward, “. . . *the army was in Pennsylvania moving slowly and halting frequently, which circumstances gave the men time to straggle off after provisions. While Co. D was passing a farm house a member whom we shall call H espied a patch of onions and having a weakness for that vegetable, soon cleared the fence and was proceeding to help himself, when the landlady swooped down on him with a broom and made him beat a hasty retreat. He now went to the barn and gave chase to some chickens and ducks. Again were his hopes destined to be dashed to the ground. In anticipation of this kind of marauding, two girls had been stationed there with sticks; and while H was making desperate efforts to lay hands on a fleeing pullet, one of these girls belabored him over the back till he was glad to escape, minus the pullet and amid the laughter of his comrades. . . .*”

After spending time near Plymouth, N. Carolina in the winter & early spring of 1864 the 11th Virginia was sent to Petersburg and Drewry’s Bluff. On May 16, 1864 Newton wrote, “*Before day (0445) on the morning of the 15th [16th], Co. D took part in an attack on the enemy lines. The Federals were preparing for an early breakfast and were taken completely by surprise. Leaving their frying pans and coffee pots on the fires, they fled in confusion. After the enemy were out of the way, our boys turned their attention to the deserted breakfast and found it just ready to be eaten. The coffee especially was enjoyed . . .*”

Over the next 11 months Newton and the Fincastle Rifles saw action at Cold Harbor, Bermuda Hundred, Five Forks, remnants were captured at Sailor’s Creek and only 10 remained to surrender at Appomattox.

Newton Camper died on May 14, 1917 in the Soldier’s Home in Richmond, Virginia

(Compiled Service Records CSA Soldiers, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Richmond, VA., Micro Copy 324, Roll 500; Private Newton L. Camper, “A Short Sketch of the Fincastle Rifles”, E. A. Luster, editor, Fincastle, 1979.)