

## **REST IN PEACE SERGEANT GARLICK**

*Christopher Montagna*

In the summer of 1861, my great-grand uncle Evelyn Garlick was 18 years old, living in Lanesboro, Massachusetts and working as a clerk with Morley and Hand. On August 19, 1861, Evelyn enlisted with the 21st Regiment of the Massachusetts Volunteers. The 21<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts was formed in the summer of 1861 at Worcester, Massachusetts. The regiment departed for Baltimore, Maryland on August 23, 1861, and was eventually assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, Burnside's Expeditionary Corps. Evelyn Garlick served as sergeant with Co. I of the 21st Massachusetts and saw his first military action during the Battle of Roanoke Island in February of 1862. The regiment was also engaged at the Battle of New Bern and the Battle of South Mills.

Evelyn was part of a battle-tested regiment when the Second Battle of Bull Run was fought in August of 1862. On August 30, 1862, the Confederate forces broke the Federal ranks, who fled to Centreville, VA. The 21<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts was assigned to cover the retreating Union troops as they made their way back toward Washington, DC. The next day, in a driving rain, Confederate forces under General Lee attacked the Union forces at Chantilly, VA.

On September 1, 1862, the 21st Massachusetts Regiment was ordered to follow a regiment from New York State into dense woods. Due to the dark, rainy conditions, the 21st failed to realize the New York regiment had halted their advance. As a result, the unit passed over the New Yorkers. As the 21st entered a clearing they observed forces in front of them. Believing the soldiers to be those of the New York regiment, the 21st began to line up in formation for the advance. As the unit was regrouping, gun fire erupted in front of them. After the initial confusion, the staggered Union troops realized the forces in front of them were not the New Yorkers, but the men of Stonewall Jackson's Brigade.

It was during this firefight that Sgt. Evelyn Garlick was shot through the neck and lungs. He lay on the field without aid for two and one-half days and when found was paralyzed, but conscious. Unfortunately, Sgt. Garlick died on September 5<sup>th</sup> in the hospital at Alexandria, and was buried in the Soldier's Burial Ground.

### Epilogue

In the spring of 1998, I became the first family member to visit Evelyn's gravesite since his death. The grave is located in the Alexandria National Cemetery.



Alexandria, Va. Soldiers' Cemetery c. 1862-1865. (Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Civil War Photographs, reproduction number, LC-DIG-cwpb-03928.)

As I approached the gravesite, I was struck by the realization of being the first family member to pay respect to my fallen family serviceman. As I stood before the grave, I read the simple inscription on a soldier's headstone, which read:

**Evelyn Garlisk**  
**PVT**  
**21 MA INF**

The enormity of this headstone inscription weighted heavily upon my mind. His name was misspelled and his rank misstated for over 139 years. I set out to have these errors corrected, if only in the online registry of Civil War dead. I contacted the National Cemetery to inform them of the errors and provided them with the correct spelling and rank. To my surprise, the agency not only corrected the website, but also provided a new headstone for Evelyn Garlick with the proper spelling and rank. In 2014 I took my family to Alexandria to once again visit the gravesite and see for myself the new headstone marking the final resting place of my great uncle.

