

Some Information about the 37th Illinois for Ft. Blakeley

By Dom Dal Bello, Nov. 25, 2018

Sources:

The Fremont Rifles: A History of the 37th Illinois Veteran Volunteer Infantry,
by Michael A. Mullins, 1990.

Compendium of the War of the Rebellion, Frederick Dyer, 1908

The original field and staff, captains, company nicknames and company county of origin.

Colonel..... Julius White; promoted Brig. Gen'l 6/9/62
 Lieut. Col..... Myron Barnes; prom. Col., 6/9/62, dismissed 11/20/62, Gen'; Ct
 Martial, various charges including conduct prejudicial to good
 order (veteran of 2nd Illinois during Mexican War)
 Major John C. Black, prom. Lieut. Col. 6/9/62; prom. Col., 11/20/62; wounded
 at Pea Ridge (3/7/62) and Prairie Grove (12/7/62); prom. Bvt.
 Brigadier, 3/13/65; resign 8/16/65. (Serg't Major of 11th
 Indiana during first 3 months of war in W. Virginia)
 Adjutant Anton Neiman, resigned 3/24/62 (West Point Graduate)
 Quartermaster John H. Peck; resigned 1/4/64
 Surgeon..... Luther F. Humeston, mustered out, 9/17/64
 1st. Ass't Surg. Elijah A. Clark, transfer to 8th Mo. Cav. as Surgeon, 3/63
 Chaplain Rev. Edward Anderson; resigned 4/25/62.
 Serg't Major..... Samuel Hartley, reduced in rank to private, co. A.
 Quartermaster Serg't Baker, Asa D.
 Commissary Serg't..... Frederick Kellog
 Principal Musician/Fife Major: Jacob Ruby
 Drum Major: Adolphus Simons
 Hospital Stewart, John Major; prom 2nd Ass't Surg., 8/6/62; prom. 1st Ass't. Surg,
 5/25/63, resigned 10/19/63

Table 1. Original Captains, Company Nicknames, and County of Origin.

Co.	Original Captain	Original Designation	County
A	John A. Jordan	Rock Island Rifles	Rock Island
B	Charles V. Dickinson	Lafayette Rifles	Stark
C	Eugene B. Payne	Lake County Rifles	Lake
D	John W. Laimbeer [1]	Manierre Rifles [2]	Cook
E	Phineas B. Rust	Mendota Rifles	La Salle
F	Erwin B. Messer	Lake County Guards	Lake
G	Henry N. Frisbie	Turner Rifles	Cook
H	John B. Frick	Moline Rifles	Rock Island
I	Ransom Kennicott [3]	Audubon Rifles	Boone
K	William P. Black [4]	Vermilion County Zouaves	Vermilion

[1] Capt. Laimbeer would be dismissed 1/1/63 for "lack of competence".

[2] "a group described as 'eighty sturdy men from Manistee and other lumber ports in Michigan' "
(Mullins, pg. 5)

[3] Major at Ft. Blakeley.

[4] Brother of Major J. Black (both would earn the Medal of Honor during the war).

Line of Battle

The companies were posted left to right as follows: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K (not A, F... G, B, as was typical). Thus, Cos. A and K were the flank companies; Co. A & K were issued Colt Revolving Rifles. Co. E was the color company. This disposition seems to have been maintained throughout the war.

Chain of Command at Ft. Blakely

Military Division of West Mississippi
..... Maj. Gen'l E.R.S. Canby
13th Army Corps..... Maj. Gen'l G. Granger (the 13th A.C. was reactivated for the Blakely campaign)

2nd Division Brig. Gen'l C. C. Andrews
3rd Brigade..... Col. Frederick W. Moore, 83^d Ohio Vols.
20th Iowa, 34th Iowa, 37th Ill., 83rd Ohio, 114th Ohio
37th Ill. Vet. Vol. Infy Col. John C. Black

Prelude to the Siege

The 37th Illinois arrived at Ft. Barrancas in February 1865. They would serve in Maj. Gen'l Frederick Steele 13,000-man column, composed of the 2^d and 3^d Brigades of the 2^d Division, 13th A.C; Brig. Gen'l J.P. Hawkin's division of U.S. Colored Troops ("smoked Yankees" (Mullins, pg. 300)); and a brigade of cavalry.

At Ft. Barrancas:

...The division commander instituted a rigorous program of drilling and target practice, because, he explained to the rank and file, he wanted to prepare them for some hard campaigning and fighting. Company drill, including "considerable attention to the manual of arms and target practice," was held for two hours each morning. Brigade drills took place in the afternoon and were conducted by General Andrews. The men were impressed with the division commander... Dress parade was held each evening and completed the enlisted men's daily schedule. The field officers, however, met in the evening to study brigade drill and tactics. The results of the concerted efforts of men and officers were soon manifested. Lieutenant Clark of the 34th Iowa observed that the "battalions moved with so much precisions and beauty... their bayonets gleaming and their alignment grandly preserved" that all the soldiers felt confident of success in whatever task they were assigned.

Andrews also prepared the soldiers for the forthcoming campaign by ordering that all surplus baggage should be dispensed with and that they would "go it as Sherman did with little or nothing." The Illinois Greyhounds appreciated this no-nonsense approach to soldiering and their spirits soared. Sergeant Ketzle wrote that they were "preparing to give the tottering fabric of rebellion another stunning blow..." Colonel Black anticipated "a long and arduous [sic] and splendid campaign. One that will leave as many and bloodier than did Gen. Sherman!" The men were

not sure if Mobile was their objective, but whatever they were sent, the Illinois Greyhounds were “anxious for the fray.”

...

The 37th Illinois remained at Fort Barrancas until March 11, when it responded to marching orders received the previous day. At 5:50 A.M. the Illinois Greyhounds moved to Pensacola. The regiment stayed at that city for eight days. On Sunday evening of the 19th, marching orders were issued again. The following morning the 37th Illinois started on its last campaign. **The 289 Illinois Greyhounds carried five days’ rations and an extra pair of shoes** [emphasis Dom’s] Two days’ rations and other supplies and equipment were carried in the two wagon’s allocated to the regiment... Colonel Black issued strict orders to company commanders which prohibited straggling and emphasized the importance of having roll call as soon as camp was established. The number and names of absent soldiers were to be reported promptly to regimental headquarters.

Pp 297–299, *The Fremont Rifles*, Michael A. Mullins, 1990.

Steele’s marched towards Selma on the 20th to threaten the city as a diversion for Canby’s main column of 32,000 men marching from Dauphine Island to Spanish Fort and Ft. Blakeley. On the evening of the 20th and until noon of the 21st, it rained.. Colonel Black wrote that the ground was similar “to a hard crusted pie, the crust consisting of the roots and tufts of grass and piney needles... resting on a quicksand foundation.” (Mullins, pg. 299). The column pulled wagons out of the mud, and built corduroy roads and bridges. The column encountered some confederates, and tore up track.

By the 27th, the diversion completed, the column marched westward parallel to Mobile and Great Northern Railroad. By April 2, the brigade skirmishes engaged Ft. Blakely’s pickets. Steele’s column formed around Ft. Blakely, from left to right: 3rd and 2nd Brigades, 2nd Division, and Hawkin’s Division. The 37th was on the very left, with the 20th Iowa, 114th Ohio and 83rd Ohio to its right, the 34th Iowa was in reserve.

Field and Staff at Blakeley (from Mullin’s appendix of the Roster of the 37th.

Colonel..... John C. Black
Major Ransom Kennicott
Adjutant Charles B. Chroniger
Quartermaster James M. Culberson
Serg’t. Major Samuel M. Lemoine (or Lemoin)
Q’master Serg’t Wells C. Morrill
Comm. Serg’t Austin Cruver
Hosp. Steward..... Hershell Smiley
Prin. Musician Horace G. Pickett

Surgeon/1st Ass’t Surgeon/2nd Ass’t Surgeon:

..... None listed as active at Blakeley

Chaplain..... None (second and final chaplain, Pleasant Bishop. resigned, 9/9/64, mustered out as private.

Table 2. Company Commanders at Blakeley (from what I can figure)

Co.	Ft. Blakeley Captain	Rank	Promotion Date	Original Rank, Enlistment Date, Where Enlisted	Born
A	Lorenzo B. Morey	Captain	9/27/63	1 st Serg't., 8/14/61, Geneseo	1837
B	Francis A. Jones [1]	1 st Lieut. Captain	7/9/62 Oct. 64???*	2 nd Lieut., 8/19/61, Goshen	1831
C	Judson J. Huntley	Captain	11/20/62	1 st Lieut., 8/1/61, Waukegan	1838
D	John Moran	Captain	4/10/63	Serg't, 8/15/61, Lincoln, MI	1835
E	James P. Day	Captain	4/10/64	Serg't, 8/20/61 Mendota	1840
F	Gallio H. Fairman	Captain	6/25/64	2d Lieut., 8/19/61 Antioch	1839
G	Manning F. Atkinson	Captain	7/24/64	2d Lieut., 8/15/61 Chaney's Grove	1837
H	Herman Wolford*	Captain	2/8/62	1 st Lieut., 8/12/61 Rock Island	1831
I	George Kennicott	Captain	10/19/63	1 st Serg't, 8/1/61 Dunton	1840
K	Thomas Chapman	1 st Lieut.	2/23/64	Pvt., 9/7/61 Vermillion County	1839

[1] Promoted Captain in October 1864 while regiment was in Louisiana (Mullin, pg. 283), although appendix indicates 7/25/65, and he was never mustered and discharged as 1st Lieut 8/3/65.

[2]Promoted major, effective 9/9/64, but never mustered. Mustered out as Captain, 8/13/65.

The Charge on the Blakely Batteries

“During the charge, the color sergeant of the 37th Illinois became exhausted, and when he began to falter, Sergeant Morrill grabbed the regimental flag. Morrill carried the colors to the parapet and began climbing alongside Lieutenant Morse, when a Rebel cannon fired directly over them. The flag was picked up by First Lieutenant Thomas Payne[Co E, 1st Lieut, 4/10/64), who was temporarily commanding Company B, and he placed the 37th Illinois colors on Redoubt Number 4. Payne was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor... the fourth member of the regiment to be so distinguished.” (Mullin, pg. 311)

37th Illinois Casualties at Blakeley

“The 37th Illinois lost 1 man killed, Private Boyd, who had joined the 83rd Ohio [in the charge], and 7 men wounded” (Mullin, pg. 313).

This was James Boyd, Co. I, b.1843, enlisted 8/8/61, Boone, Illinois. Killed “charging Blakeley Batteries, Ala.”, 4/9/65 (pg. 394).

37th Regiment Infantry "Fremont Rifles" "Illinois Greyhounds"

ORGANIZATION. —

- ★ Organized at Chicago, Ill., and mustered in September 18, 1861.
- ★ Moved to St. Louis, Mo., September 19, thence to Booneville, Mo., October 2, 1861.
- ★ Attached to Dept. of Missouri to February, 1862.
- ★ 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, Army of Southwest Missouri, to May, 1862.
- ★ Cassville, Mo., District of Southwest Missouri, to September, 1862.
- ★ 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division, Army of the Frontier, Dept. of Missouri, to June, 1863.
- ★ 1st Brigade, Herron's Division, 13th Army Corps, Army of the Tennessee, to July, 1863.
- ★ 1st Brigade, 2nd Division, 13th Army Corps, Dept. of the Tennessee, to August, 1863, and Dept. of the Gulf to June, 1864.
- ★ 1st Brigade, 3rd Division, 19th Army Corps, Dept. of the Gulf, to December, 1864.
- ★ 4th Brigade, Reserve Corps, Military Division West Mississippi, to February, 1865.
- ★ 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, Reserve Corps, M.D. W. M., February, 1865.
- ★ **3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, 13th Army Corps, M.D. W. M., to July, 1865.**
- ★ Dept. of Texas to May, 1866.

SERVICE.—

1861

- ★ Expedition to Arrow Rock, Mo., October 10-14, 1861 (Cos. "C" and "K").
- ★ Fremont's Campaign against Springfield, Mo., October 13-November 3 (Cos. "C" and "H," at Rolla, Mo., until February, 1862).

1862

- ★ At Lamine River until February, 1862.
- ★ Curtis' Campaign against Price in Missouri and Arkansas February and March.
 - Springfield February 12.
 - Sugar Creek and Bentonville February 17.
 - Battles of Pea Ridge, Ark., March 6-8.
- ★ At Cassville, Mo., guarding frontier in Southwest Missouri, and operating against guerrillas until September 29, 1862.
 - Cassville June 11 (Detachment).
 - Expedition from Ozark to Forsyth August 14-17 (Cos. "A" and "K").
- ★ March to Osage Springs September 29-October 24.
 - Occupation of Newtonia October 4.
- ★ Expedition from Osage Springs to Fayetteville, Ark., October 27-30.
- ★ March to relief of Blunt, December 3-7.
- ★ Battle of Prairie Grove, Ark., December 7.
- ★ Expedition over Boston Mountains to Van Buren, Ark., December 27-29.

1863

- ★ Operations against Marmaduke in Missouri April 17-May 2, 1863.
 - Action at Cape Girardeau, April 26.
 - Chalk Bluffs May 2.
- ★ Moved to St. Louis, Mo., thence to Vicksburg, Miss., June 3-14.
- ★ Siege of Vicksburg June 14-July 4. Surrender of Vicksburg July 4.
- ★ Expedition to Yazoo City, Miss., July 12-21.
 - Capture of Yazoo City July 13.
- ★ Moved to Port Hudson, La., July 24, thence to New Orleans, La., August 13.
- ★ Expedition after Taylor's and Green's forces, west of the Atchafalaya River September 8-October 11.
 - Action at Sterling's Farm on Bayou Fardoche September 29.
- ★ Moved to the Rio Grande, Texas, October 24-November 4.
- ★ At Brownsville and guarding Rio Grande to Ringgold Barracks until February, 1864.
 - Expedition to Rio Grande City November 23-December 2, 1863.

1864

- ★ Regiment veteranize February 28, 1864. Veterans on furlough until April.
- ★ Moved to Memphis, Tenn. Expedition from Memphis, Tenn., to Ripley, Miss., April 30-May 9.
- ★ Moved to Atchafalaya Bayou, La. Construct Steamboat Bridge across Bayou for Banks' forces.
- ★ At Morganza, La., until July 12. Moved to St. Charles on White River, Ark., July 12 and duty there until October.
- ★ Non-Veterans mustered out September 20.
- ★ Duty at Duvall's Bluff, Ark., October 7, 1864, to January 4, 1865.

1865

- ★ Moved to New Orleans, La., thence to Barrancas, Fla. March to Pensacola, Fla., March 11.
- ★ March to Fort Blakely, Ala., March 20-April 1.
 - Occupation of Canoe Station March 27.
- ★ Siege of Spanish Fort April 2-8.
- ★ Assault and capture of Fort Blakely April 9.
- ★ Occupation of Mobile April 12. Moved to Montgomery April 20-29, thence to Selma May 1.
- ★ Moved to Mobile and duty there May 15 to June 28.
- ★ Moved to Galveston, Texas, June 28-July 1, and to Sabine Pass July 1-5.
- ★ To Houston July 17. Railroad guard duty in that vicinity until May, 1866.

1866

- ★ Mustered out May 15, 1866.

Regiment lost during service 4 Officers and 60 Enlisted men killed and mortally wounded and 1 Officer and 168 Enlisted men by disease. Total 233.
