

Pvt. Simon G. Gailey, Co. "C"

By Jeff Joyce

Private Simon G. Gailey was born in 1843 to farmer Robert Gailey and Sarah Dorris, one of four children.

Census records reflect a birth in Pennsylvania but his military records state he was born in Harford County, Maryland. His family may have moved to Maryland around the time of his birth.

In August 1862 Simon enlisted for three years in Company C, 7th Maryland Volunteer Infantry. A farmer at the time, he was described as 5' 9" tall with blue eyes and red hair.

Over the next two years Simon served faithfully with the 7th Maryland with no recorded absences or illnesses. In May 1864 the 7th Maryland left its winter camp outside Culpeper to begin the Overland

Campaign with the Army of the Potomac.

The next three months Simon and the 7th Maryland fought in the Wilderness and at Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor and Petersburg. On August 18, 1864, the Union Fifth Corps (including the Maryland Brigade and 7th Maryland) seized part of the Confederate Weldon Railroad southeast of Petersburg near Globe Tavern.

The Weldon was a vital railroad that connected Petersburg with Wilmington, North Carolina. That afternoon three Confederate brigades from Major General Henry Heath's division attacked the Fifth Corps. Major Edward M. Mobley of the 7th Maryland wrote in his diary:

"Moved to railroad south of Peters-

burg, tore up the railroad. At 2p.m. got into a fight and had to fall back, rallied and drove the Rebs over the same track. Got wounded slightly in the neck. Loss of the Brigade heavy."

During the fighting Simon was killed (some reports record him dying the following day). Buried in a temporary cemetery, Simon was moved to City Point National Cemetery after the war. His father Robert died in 1865 and his mother Sarah in 1869. Both are buried at Centre Presbyterian Cemetery in York County, Pennsylvania, near Simon's older brother John, who died in 1928.

Note: Likely due to poor record keeping Simon's last name was recorded as Gailey when he was re-interred at City Point National Cemetery, which is reflected on his headstone today.

