

= James Gwyn =

James Gwyn (November 24 , 1828 - July 17 , 1906) was an officer in the Union Army during the American Civil War . He immigrated at a young age from Ireland in 1846 , initially working as a storekeeper in Philadelphia and later as a clerk in New York City . At the onset of the war , in 1861 , he enlisted and was commissioned as a captain with the 23rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry . He assumed command of the 118th Pennsylvania Regiment in the course of the war . Gwyn led that regiment through many of its 39 recorded battles , including engagements at Seven Pines , Fredericksburg , Shepherdstown , Five Forks , and Gettysburg .

Gwyn was wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864 , but returned to service after recuperating to take command of the Third , and eventually the First and Second Brigades of the First Division of the Union Army 's V Corps . Gwyn was brevetted as a brigadier general President Abraham Lincoln and then as a major general by President Andrew Johnson for his service . His men described him as " a handsome and accomplished officer , and a bold and aggressive leader " . After the war , Gwyn returned to Philadelphia , although later moving to New York , and resumed his business dealings . He died on July 17 , 1906 , and was honored with a military funeral and buried in Woodlands Cemetery , Philadelphia .

= = Early life = =

Gwyn was born in Derry , Ireland on November 24 , 1828 . He was one of ten children raised in the Protestant household of Alexander Gwyn and Catherine Garvin . His brother , Hugh Garvin Gwyn , would later serve in the Confederate States Army as a major with the 23rd Tennessee Infantry Regiment , as well as an adjutant to General John Hunt Morgan .

He lived in the rural Irish city until he enrolled in Foyle College . Like many Irish in the 1840s , Gwyn left Ireland for the United States during the Great Famine . He boarded the John R. Skiddy , a packet ship from Liverpool , bound for New York City . On November 4 , 1846 , Gwyn arrived in America via the Port of New York , 22 days before his 18th birthday , although his immigration papers list him as 20 .

Upon arriving in the United States , Gwyn and many other Derry immigrants made their way to Philadelphia as was noted by an Emigration Officer Edward Smith at Derry that , " Nevertheless , the money that recent arrivals in America remitted for the passage of others was central to the whole link between Derry and Philadelphia " .

In August 30 , 1850 , Gwyn took up residence in the North Mulberry Ward where he owned a house . He married Pennsylvania native Margaretta E. Young in February . Although he worked as a clerk throughout the 1850s , he later formed a dried goods business with George H. Stewart , called " Gwyn & Stewart Dry Goods " .

Gwyn purchased a 141 square feet (13 m2) plot in the Woodlands Cemetery on October 12 , 1853 . Records show that on April 28 , 1857 ' James Gwyn & Lady ' from Philadelphia visited the Imperial Hotel Belfast until at least July 2 . Gwyn 's wife gave birth to his first child , Elizabeth Gailey Gwyn , on December 7 , 1858 , and their second daughter , Matilda Geddes , on January 2 , 1861 .

= = Military service = =

= = = Enlistment with the 23rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry = = =

Gwyn enlisted in Company G of the 23rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry on April 21 , 1861 , one week after the American Civil War began . He served in that company without interruption until July 31 , 1861 , when he transferred to Company F. He resumed duty with the new company on August 2 , 1861 . Gwyn served with the 23rd Volunteers for over one year ; in that time , he took part in the Battle of Seven Pines , where , on May 31 , 1862 , Gwyn led the 23rd in aiding other Union companies in collecting escaped fugitives . Gwyn resigned from the 23rd Volunteers on July 22 ,

1862 where he accepted a promotion to lieutenant colonel in a new regiment .

= = = Lieutenant colonel , 118th Pennsylvania Infantry = = =

Gwyn joined the 118th Pennsylvania Infantry , on July 25 , 1862 . The 118th , which was commissioned by the United States Department of War for three years of service , gathered recruits from the Philadelphia area during August 15 to 30th , 1862 . Gwyn was officially mustered into service on August 16 , 1862 . During this time , the 118th became known as the " Corn Regiment " , because the funds for raising the regiment were furnished by the Corn Exchange Association of Philadelphia . Having gathered 1 @, @ 296 volunteers during the two @-@ week period , the " Corn Regiment " left for Washington , D.C. , to be assigned a position in the Union Army on September 1 , 1862 . The regiment was embedded with the First Brigade , First Division , Fifth Army Corps under the regiment command of Colonel Charles Prevost , and brigade commander Colonel James Barnes .

The 118th Regiment moved out with the rest of the Fifth Army Corps marching towards Maryland . Upon reaching Maryland , the 118th along with the rest of the Fifth Army Corps , became involved in the Battle of Antietam . While that battle would become to be known as " the bloodiest day in American history " with over 22 @, @ 000 casualties , the 118th was not involved on the front lines . They instead assisted in artillery stocking .

The 118th Regiment returned to battle three days afterwards , taking part in the Battle of Shepherdstown . The regiment took heavy casualties during the battle , suffering 71 deaths , 75 wounded , and 67 captured . The Confederates also suffered heavy losses with approximately 262 casualties in the battle . Among the Union wounded was Prevost , colonel of the 118th Regiment , who was shot through the shoulder on the last day of the battle . Prevost resigned from active duty , and Gwyn , as second @-@ in @-@ command , took over the regiment as acting commander . Gwyn 's " courage and coolness " during that battle were praised by Colonel Barnes , the brigade commander , in a letter written five days after the battle ended .

On September 28 , 1862 , Gwyn sent a letter to Colonel Barnes stating that the 118th Regiment did not provide the Philadelphia Inquirer with information that the paper used to publish a map and a report of the incident . Two days later , Gwyn issued a report on the Battle of Shepherdstown , noting the efforts he made to rally troops to fight back against the Confederate troops , though his efforts were in vain , as Colonel Barnes ordered to regiment to fall back .

The 118th Regiment returned to the front lines on December 11 , 1862 , in the Battle of Fredericksburg . Barnes formed the First Brigade , First Division from the 118th Pennsylvania (Gwyn) , 22nd Massachusetts , 25th New York , 13th New York , 1st Michigan , and 2nd Maine Regiments . In a recorded incident during the battle , a house was discovered with hidden tobacco crates which the soldiers raided . Gwyn sharply criticized the men for breaking rank but " inwardly smiled at their enthusiasm " .

Following the unsuccessful Mud March of January 1863 , the regiment went into ' winter quarters ' until June . The Fifth Army Corps resumed activity on June 10 , 1863 , as it began to travel northward through enemy territory , with skirmishes frequently occurring . These travels ultimately led the Fifth Army Corps to Pennsylvania , where , on July 2 , 1863 , they arrived to aid the Union Army during the Battle of Gettysburg . Gwyn , still as acting commander of the regiment , was given the orders to position the 118th Regiment on Cemetery Hill and to hold the position . In the afternoon , the regiment was ordered to assist Major General Daniel Sickles on the left flank that same day . On July 3 , the second day of the battle , Gwyn led the 118th to Little Round Top where they held their position for two days until Union forces had achieved albeit a costly victory . Following Gettysburg , the 118th Regiment moved around the state to various positions . On August 6 , the regiment stationed at Warrenton , Virginia , received 109 new recruits , and on September 5 , another 185 . On September 30 , 1863 , Prevost officially retired , and Gwyn was promoted to colonel and the commanding officer of the 118th . During this time , Prevost had been stationed as commandant of a military prison in Elmira , New York .

= = = Colonel , 118th Pennsylvania Regiment = = =

During the autumn of 1863 and through the winter , the regiment engaged in " desultory fighting " . Gwyn served perfunctorily while in command of the 118th Regiment for the ensuing five months with no notable confrontations until the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864 . On the first day of battle , May 5 , Gwyn was shot in the thigh , and put out of commission for at least one month . Gwyn would receive his promotion to colonel at Beverly Ford for his actions at Wilderness . Due to his injury , he was unable to lead the 118th Regiment into the multiple conflicts , including the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House , the Battle of North Anna , the Battle of Totopotomoy Creek , the Battle of Bethesda Church , and the Battle of Cold Harbor .

Gwyn , having returned to active duty by this time , led the 118th in the Siege of Petersburg and Richmond campaign that lasted from June 9 , 1864 , to March 25 , 1865 . The exact date and orders where Gwyn received his commission as commander of the Third Brigade is unknown , although subsequent documents show Gwyn reporting to headquarters as the brigade commander .

On August 18 , 1864 , Gwyn led the Third Brigade to the Weldon Railroad , where he met with the First and Second Brigade . The First Brigade was ordered to New York City , and by Special Order No. 32 , he was ordered to also take command of Second Brigade and in the absence of Col. A. H. Grimshaw . The next day , the combined Union troops moved forward along the railroad until they joined the Second Division , led by General Romeyn Ayres . The Third Brigade remained at that station for the next eight days without incidence , with Gwyn submitting a report to the Headquarters of First Division concerning what transpired during those three days .

It was recorded in this time the regiment suffered heavy losses and according to Frank H. Taylor , " Grant was remorselessly wearing out the besieged enemy . Regiments were used unsparingly , and the " 118th " was accorded its full share of the work . " In particular , on the morning September 30 , 1864 in the Battle of Pegram 's Farm , and later the Battle of Peebles 's Farm , to capture Fort McRae , 118th along with 16th Michigan were in direct line of four artillery guns from a church and fired upon with " special severity " . At a two road junction in the afternoon , near Fort McRae , Gwyn 's leg was severely wounded when his horse fell upon him , though , did not permanently cripple him or lead to amputation . Captain Wilson , the 118th second @-@ in @-@ command assumed command and pressed on with Ayres offensive that eventually led to a Union victory late in that evening .

= = = Brevet Brigadier general , Third Brigade and 118th Pennsylvania Regiment = = =

Gwyn 's service during the Siege of Petersburg was noted by the commanding officer of the First Division , V Corps , General Charles Griffin as examples of Gwyn 's " gallantry " , " bravery " and " valor " . Charles Griffin informed the Department of War that Gwyn should receive the rank of brigadier general , and if that was not possible then he should be brevetted the rank . The Federal Government approved of the idea and issued Special Order 347 on October 14 , 1864 in which James Gwyn was awarded the grade of brevet brigadier general of volunteers , to rank from September 30 , 1864 , by President Abraham Lincoln . Gwyn was formally nominated by President Lincoln on December 12 , 1864 and his appointment was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on February 14 , 1865 . The First Division received word of Gwyn 's promotion on October 14 , and passed down to Gwyn on the 17th . In a letter , Griffin wrote that Gwyn 's promotion was " evidence that the gallantry of our little command has been appreciated " .

Gwyn continued his military duties with service around the James River near City Point , Virginia . Feeling ill , he returned to Philadelphia on October 31 , 1864 . He was diagnosed with malaria fever and prescribed a seven @-@ day break to rest and recover . His leave was approved on November 4 , and he was permitted to recover for a week , resuming duty of November 7 , 1864 . At his return , Gwyn , by Special Orders No. 301 was assigned to the First Division , First Brigade under Brigadier General Griffin by Major General Fred T. Locke . On November 19 , 1864 , he was transferred from the First Division to the Second Division , which was under the command of General Romeyn Ayres .

Ayres ordered Gwyn to take command of the Third Brigade on November 21 . Two days later , Gwyn was notified that General Ayres would be absent for three days and would be fulfilling his role as acting commander of the Second Division . On December 14 , General Ayres sent a report praising Gwyn 's ' prompt ' and ' efficient ' service during the Battle of Globe Tavern , August 18 ? 21 , 1864 , to the Fifth Army Corps . Gwyn led the Third Brigade without problems until December 21 , when he was informed that General Ayres would be on a leave of absence for the twenty days , and that he would lead the Second Division until Ayres ' return .

Gwyn took control of the Second Division , but soon went on a leave of absence from January 8 , 18 days into his 20 @-@ day service assignment , to January 21 , 1865 . On February 5 , he led the Third Brigade into the Battle of Hatcher 's Run . On February 6 , the Confederates engaged the Union army at 1 : 30PM . The Third Brigade engaged the Rebels and were eventually overwhelmed and were forced to retreat . The Assistant Adjutant , Major General Locke , ordered Gwyn to reform the Third Brigade and to take on stragglers from assorted Maryland regiments . The fighting continued into the next day ; by February 8 , the Union forces near Hatcher 's Run had retreated . On February 14 , Major General Ayres highlighted Gwyn 's leadership during the Battle of Hatcher 's Run by stating that Gwyn had " seconded me with zeal and energy " . Three days later , Gwyn wrote his own letter with names of soldiers whom he thought were deserving of merit for their exceptional service during the Battle of Hatcher 's Run .

= = = End of the Civil War = = =

The Third Brigade fell back for over a month engaging in skirmishes around Hatcher 's Run , Halifax road , and Rowanty Creek as part of the Richmond Campaign . Major operations resumed on March 31 , 1865 , when Gwyn led the Third Brigade in the Battle of White Oak Road , and eventually on to Five Forks , Dinwiddie County , Virginia . The Third Brigade took part in the Battle of Five Forks on April 1 , 1865 .

A charge led by Gwyn resulted in the capture of two strategic positions and a large number prisoners . Gwyn was later appointed brevet major general for his efforts during the battle . On January 13 , 1869 , President Andrew Johnson nominated Gwyn for appointment to the grade of brevet major general of volunteers , to rank from April 1 , 1865 , and the U.S. Senate confirmed the appointment on February 16 , 1869 .

Gwyn and the 118th pushed onwards , pressing the retreating Confederate troops during the Battle of Appomattox Court House , one of the last major battles of the Civil War . At the Appomattox Court House , on April 9 , 1865 , Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant , thus ending the Civil War . The 118th was present to witness the surrender , and escorted the Confederate soldier that carried the flag of truce . With the hostilities subsided , Gwyn filed a report concerning the skirmish at White Oak Road on April 14 , 1865 . A few weeks later on April 27 , 1865 , Brevet Major General Ayres advocated that Gwyn receive a promotion on account of his " zeal and good conduct " from March 29 to April 9 of that year .

Gwyn led the Third Brigade to Washington , D.C. for the Grand Review , which took place on May 23 , 1865 . They arrived in Washington early by May 21 to attend roll @-@ call with the rest of the Fifth Army Corps . According to the New York Times , Gwyn was listed at the Headquarters Army of the Potomac as " Third Brigade , Brevet Brig.-Gen. James Gwyn , commanding ? 190th Pennsylvania , Col. W.R. Hartshorne ; 210th Pennsylvania , Major J.H. Graves ; 4th Delaware , Brevet Lieut @-@ Col. M.B. Gist ; 3d Delaware , Capt. D.D. Joseph ; 8th Delaware , Capt. John Richards ; 191st Pennsylvania , Col. James Carle . "

On June 5 , 1865 , the 118th Regiment was officially mustered out of service by the U.S. Department of War . On June 9 , a large banquet was prepared in their honor by the Corn Exchange , the same bank that had offered the initial payments for recruits to join years before , at Sansom Street Hall for the members of the former 118th Regiment who had returned to Philadelphia . According to his obituary , Gwyn was offered a position as a lieutenant in the regular army by President Andrew Johnson , but instead chose to return to civilian life .

= = Post Civil War = =

Following the conclusion of the Civil War , Gwyn resumed the life he had left behind in 1861 . He returned home to his wife Margaret and daughters Elizabeth and Matilda , now five years older than the last time he saw them . He applied for his military pension on October 6 , 1866 . Though Gwyn served in positions with a difficulty as high as major general , because he was only brevet , the payment he received would be reduced to the level of his highest non @-@ brevet rank ; which would be colonel , the position he effectively gave up on October 14 , 1864 .

His wife gave birth to a third daughter , Margaret , on December 7 , 1869 . Gwyn and his family later moved from Philadelphia to a home in New York City . Gwyn had become connected with the mercantile house , Stuart Bros and returned to that business . Later on he would take a new job as a clerk in New York . His daughter Margaret married Frank L. Rehn where they moved out of the Brooklyn area to No. 9 Grove Street Yonkers , New York . Gwyn 's middle daughter Matilda married in 1891 to a stockbroker , Andrew S. Brownell . They also moved away from the Brooklyn area to Matilda 's house in Yonkers .

= = Death = =

Gwyn died in the late evening of July 17 , 1906 while visited his daughter , Mrs. Frank L. Rehn (Margaret) , at her home in Yonkers , New York . News of his death was reported in The New York Times and The Washington Post as far away as Salt Lake City in the Deseret News . His body was taken back to Philadelphia , where he was interred in the Woodlands Cemetery following a military funeral on July 19 , 1906 . He was buried in the cemetery plot section E , Lot 33 that he bought over fifty years earlier .