

The 115th New York in the Civil War: A Regimental History

Mark Silo

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The 115th New York began its military career as part of the largest surrender of U.S. troops to take place before World War II and ended its career as part of the largest successful amphibious landings of U.S. troops before World War II. In between, it traveled a fighting odyssey through the American Civil War that is unique among Union regiments. Not only did it fight mainly in theaters and battles unknown to all but the most serious Civil War student, but it endured mass arrest and banishment by its own army and a cabal of its own officers against its commander. In earning distinction as one of "Fox's Fighting 300" Union regiments, the 115th fought in obscure campaigns along the Southern coast, joined briefly in the famous combat between Grant and Lee in Virginia, fought alongside African American units, witnessed the liberation of thousands of slaves and captured Union soldiers, and ended up campaigning with William T. Sherman's western army.

The soldiers of the 115th New York were common men from Saratoga County, the Mohawk Valley, and Adirondack Mountain areas of New York State. In telling their story, author Mark Silo utilizes the words and recollections left by sixty-seven of these men, as well as vast amounts of source material regarding the events and battles they experienced. The result, states National Park Service historian John J. Hennessy, is "Truly exceptional... a woven story that is both excellent history and engaging narrative--an important chronicle of common men on an uncommon quest for survival and triumph."



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