

Discovery Of A Civil War Veteran

by Lynne Belluscio

A few days after Veterans Day, I received a call from a man who is researching members of the 136th New York Volunteers who served in the Civil War. He was trying to locate any information about John Bark, Peter DeCaseasy and Ezra Higgins. They were listed as being from LeRoy, but there were no records. He had searched census records and none of them showed up.

So I checked some of our records. First I went to "Saul's" notes which lists people buried in Genesee County. I found Ezra Higgins, buried in Machpelah Cemetery and the cemetery records lists Ezra Higgins, died April 30, 1870, 52 years of age.

He is buried with Emerilla Higgins, Frankie (or Fannie) and Willie. I went to the clipping file and there are no clippings about Ezra and I checked the *LeRoy Gazette* for a month after his death and there are no notices. When I called the researcher back, he confirmed that Ezra's wife was listed as Emerilla, so it appears that we have located Ezra Higgins, but there is still some doubt.

Ezra was listed as being born in 1841, but if he died at 52, he would have died in 1893, not 1870. I'll have to locate his grave to check the dates. But so far we have no more information about him. None of the men are listed in any of the veteran's lists or appear on the monument in Trigon Park.

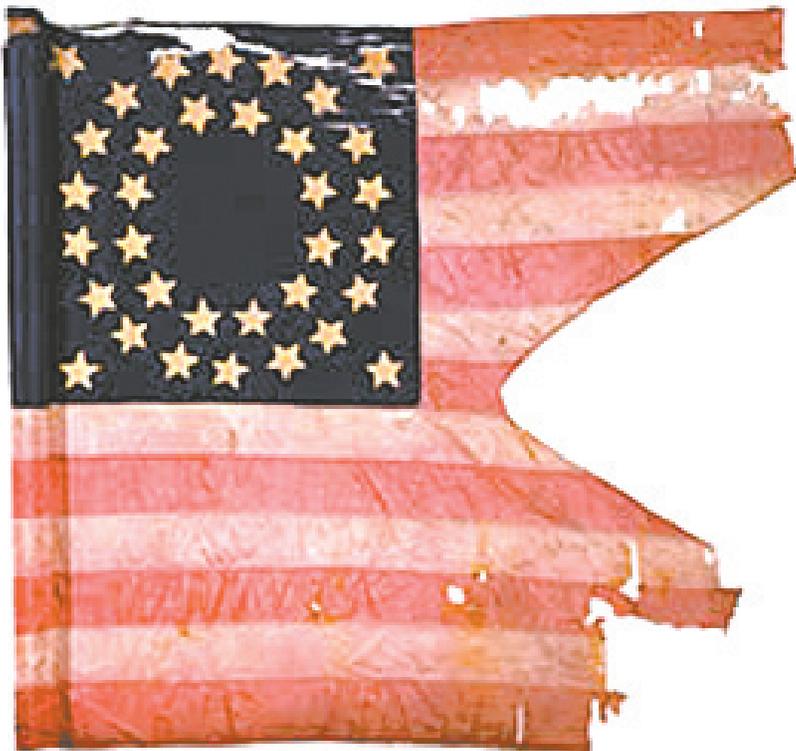
The 136th Volunteer Infantry was known as the "Ironclads." They were recruited from Allegany, Livingston and Wyoming Counties. They gathered at Portage and the unit was mustered into service for three years in September 1862. The unit left for duty on October 3 and was assigned to the 2nd Brigade and went into winter's quarters at Stafford, Virginia.

The unit was first engaged at Chancellorsville and was heavily engaged at Gettysburg on the first two days of the battle, losing 109 men, either killed, wounded or missing. In April 1864, the

unit was attached to the 3rd Brigade in the Atlanta campaign. After the fall of Atlanta, it marched with General Sherman to the sea, engaged in the siege of Savannah and closed its active service with the campaign through the Carolinas.

After the war, it marched back to Washington where it took part in the Grand Review and was mustered out on June 13, 1865, under the command of Col. Wood. The unit lost 168 men during the war. Two of the 136th Regiment's guidons (flags) are at the New York State Military Museum. The silk flags have two concentric circles of 34 gold painted stars.

"The Diary of a Soldier" by Maletiah L. Calkins was reprinted by B. Conrad Bush, and is based on the Civil War writings of Sergeant Calkins of the 136th New York. From the account at Gettysburg: "Thursday there was heavy fighting on our left and right. - "Our regiment was in skirmishes all day, two to four companies at a time. Just after dark there was very severe and heavy firing to our right, and we changed our position to support the 73rd Pa., who were behaving badly." From the account at Chattanooga, Tenn., Nov. 1863: "The reb's pickets and ours are only five rods apart - a small creek divides them - they on one bank and we on the other; there they stand with gun in hand, but all on good terms, for we trade coffee for tobacco with them and on the sly exchange papers. They come down to the water's edge on one side and we on the other; there we will sit for hours after washing together in the same stream, and talk of the war on friendly terms. They say they



136th Regiment NY Volunteer Infantry Flag. They are at the NYS Military Museum and Veterans Research Center.

are sick of fighting, for they are satisfied that it will accomplish them nothing. Their action shows it, for every night some

of them ford the creek and come to our lines." This next year, we will make sure that there is a flag on Ezra Higgin's grave.



136th Regiment NY Volunteer Infantry Plaque at the parade grounds in Letchworth State Park.