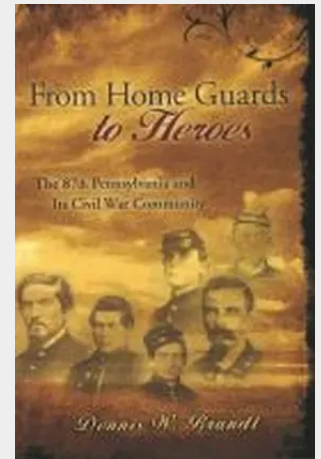


From Home Guards to Heroes: The 87th Pennsylvania and Its Civil War Community

The soldiers of the 87th Pennsylvania Infantry fought in the Overland campaign under Grant and in the Shenandoah valley under Sheridan, notably at the Battle of Monocacy. But as Dennis Brandt reveals in *From Home Guards to Heroes*, their real story takes place beyond the battlefield. The 87th drew its men from the Scotch-Irish and German populations of York and Adams counties in south-central Pennsylvania—a region with closer ties to Baltimore than to Philadelphia—where some citizens shared Marylanders' southern views on race while others aided the Underground Railroad. Brandt's unique regimental history investigates why these "boys from York" enlisted and why some deserted, the ways in which soldiers reflected their home communities, and the area's attitudes toward the war both before and after hostilities broke out. Brandt takes a humanistic approach to the Civil War, revealing the more personal aspects of the struggle in a book that focuses on the soldiers themselves. Using their own words to describe action both on and off the battlefield, he sheds light on the lives of ordinary men: the comparative values of farm and city boys, their motives and concerns, the effect of battle on soldiers and their families, and the suffering that veterans took to the grave. Brandt also looks at soldiers' racial views, illuminating their deepest worries about the war, and at community politics and problems of discipline surrounding this ideologically divided unit. Grounded in more than a decade of research into nearly two thousand military records, this is one of the few regimental histories based on more than one thousand pension records for the entire regiment, plus nearly eight hundred additional record sets for other area soldiers. Brandt tapped regional newspapers and a cache of unpublished letters and diaries—some from private collections not previously known—to provide an invaluable account of Civil War sensibilities in a northern area bordering a slave state. *From Home Guards to Heroes* is a book about war in which humanity rather than troop movement takes center stage. Engagingly written for a wide audience and meticulously researched, it offers a distinctive image of a community and the intimate lives of the men it sent off to fight—and a story that will intrigue any Civil War aficionado.



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