

***** THE COMPANY OF GIANTS *****

Dubbed the "biggest Yankee in the world," David Van Buskirk held the distinction of being the tallest Union soldier to serve during the Civil War. From Gosport, Indiana, David was the eldest of ten children and was said to measure 6' 10-1/2" tall in his stocking feet. He weighed 380 pounds. At a time when Lincoln, standing at 6' 4", was considered unusually tall, David was considered a giant. Even more unique than David's stature was the company he became a member of. The Monroe County Grenadiers was composed of 105 men, all of whom were 6 feet tall and over. They would make up Company F of the 27th Indiana Infantry, commanded by Colonel Silas Colgrove. David Van Buskirk would be elected as 2nd Lieutenant. In March of 1862, the 27th Indiana would be reorganized into the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, of Banks's V Corps.

In fighting near Winchester in late May of 1862, members of the 27th Indiana, including David, were captured by rapidly advancing Confederates. David was imprisoned at Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. When rumor spread of the capture of the "biggest Yankee in the world," CSA President Davis himself came to see Van Buskirk. It was after this visit that an enterprising Confederate officer came up with an idea to cash in on their captured prize. At night, David was removed from the prison and taken to a room in downtown Richmond where people would pay money to come see him on exhibit. Although it must have embarrassed the gentle-natured David, he did benefit from his captors by receiving more food than the other prisoners. In fact, upon his exchange in September of 1862, he had gained twenty pounds, weighing in at 400.

David was promoted to Captain of Company F shortly after his return to the 27th Indiana. In a twenty-five-hour forced march to reach Gettysburg, it was said that David wore out five horses. In September of 1863, the 27th was reassigned to Maj. Gen. George Thomas' army in the West.

In April of 1864, suffering from increasing attacks of rheumatism, David resigned his commission and returned to his wife and six children. The 27th Indiana occupied the city of Atlanta until the end of the war. David's 14-year-old son, who was also considered tall, managed to join the 115th Indiana late in the war, but never saw any fighting.

David Van Buskirk died on August 12, 1886, after a long sickness with blood poisoning. A special casket had to be constructed for him and a window in his home enlarged to accomodate it. His body was escorted by the local branch of the G. A. R. to the cemetery, where the tallest Union soldier was laid to rest.

From http://ehistory.osu.edu/uscw/features/articles_new/display.cfm?NationId=23





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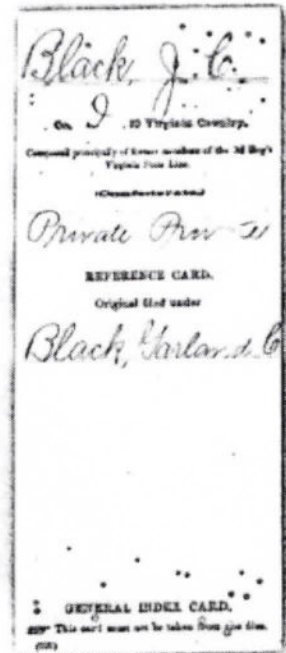
Soldiers
names and records of union and confederate troops

SOLDIERS SAILORS REGIMENTS PRISONERS CEMETERIES BATTLES MEDALS PARKS

Detailed Soldier Record

Click on the question marks for help with this form.

David Van Buskirk (First_Last)
Regiment Name 27 Indiana Infantry
Side Union
Company <input type="text" value="?"/> F
Soldier's Rank_In <input type="text" value="?"/> Lt.
Soldier's Rank_Out <input type="text" value="?"/> Capt.
Alternate Name <input type="text" value="?"/>
Notes
Film Number M540 roll 79



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