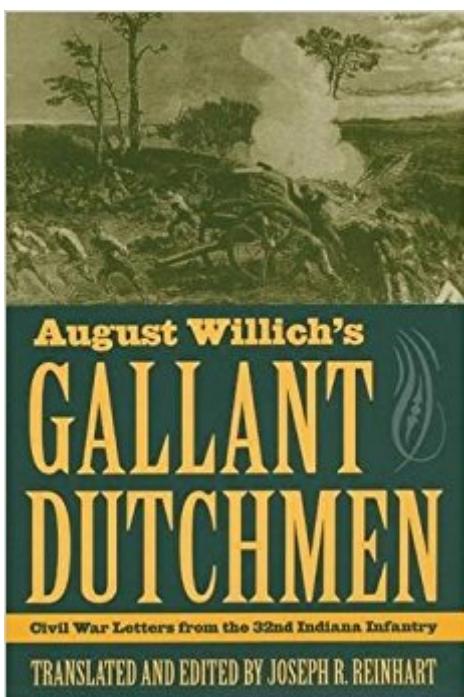


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August Willich's Gallant Dutchmen: Civil War Letters From The 32nd Indiana Infantry (Civil War In The North)



Synopsis

Civil War letters from soldiers serving in a German regiment Organized by Colonel August Willich, a former Prussian army officer who led troops during the German Revolution of 1848, Indiana's German 32nd Indiana regiment fought in the Western Theater of the Civil War. The 32nd Indiana forged an enviable combat record on the battlefields at Rowlett's Station in Kentucky; at Shiloh, Stones River, and Missionary Ridge in Tennessee; and at Chickamauga and Pickett's Mill in Georgia. The letters collected here originally appeared in German in wartime issues of German American newspapers. These rare documents connect the contemporary reader to the world of the patriotic immigrant soldier and his hard-fighting regiment, revealing personal motivations, wartime experiences, opinions, ethnic pride, and bravery, as this regiment engaged in some of the most bitter fighting in the West. These gripping letters also provide insight into the social, political, and cultural dimensions of the war and reveal the competing ethnic identities, nativism, and immigrant acculturation of late-nineteenth-century America. The Germans of the 32nd Indiana proved themselves to be "Gallant Dutchmen" in the fight to save the Union. Gallant Dutchmen is a valuable addition to Civil War studies and will also be welcomed by those interested in ethnic and immigration studies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Joseph R. Reinhart is an independent scholar who has specialized in Civil War research. His recent

publications include Two Germans in the Civil War: The Diary of John Daeuble and the Letters of Gottfried Rentschler, Sixth Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, and A History of the 6th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry U.S.: The Boys Who Feared No Noise.

I recently discovered that my 2nd great grandfather, a German immigrant, volunteered for this all German regiment who fought for the Union in the Civil War. My 5 star rating is probably influenced by my love for family history. The book gives a look into what life was like as German born men who wanted to be an American in every sense. These men wanted to prove themselves to be Americans and make a contribution. It is especially interesting to read letters from some of the men as they give their accounts of particular battles and soldier life in general. This regiment is especially interesting because of the ancestral heritage of the men. As a descendant of one of the soldier's I found the book to give me some insight into my grandfather's life during this time. This book increased my interest and as a result I ordered my 4th great grandfather's pension records!

While doing my genealogy I discovered this wonderful book on the 32nd Indiana Infantry Volunteers Regiment (The All German Regiment). The book is a compilation of the translated letters written by the members of the regiment during the Civil War and show how members of the unit lived, played and fought. The author put a great deal of work into this book.

This is a very interesting book and it has been very helpful for the article I am writing on the 32nd Indiana (First German) for a genealogy newsletter. Helped me understand why the Germans had a regiment of their own.

Well done publishing of letters from a German Regiment from Indiana in the American Civil War. The author sets the historical background and the basic facts (like correct spellings of names) and then prints out the letters. These German Hoosiers fought hard in many battles and this book is a great addition to any ACW researcher\reenactor.

Until I read this book, I really had no idea of how the "immigrant" experience must have been for a Civil War soldier. The 32nd Indiana consisted of an all-German regiment -- the majority of the soldiers were in this country no more than ten years before the war broke out. Obviously, like any immigrants they faced language and cultural barriers. Amazingly, the men who formed this unit were volunteers and totally devoted to the Union cause. Most of their letters were written to

German-language newspapers of the time. These letters have been well translated. What really strikes me most is their candor. Camp life, marching, their accounts of battles and campaigns, and even the sometimes unguarded opinions about their officers make this a good book. Not only is it translated in English for those who don't read German, but the book is well-edited with footnotes and commentary between the letters. This way the reader gets the whole picture. I had a family member who served in Co. H of the 32nd Indiana. He is not mentioned at all and most of the enlisted men are not. But for a thorough understanding of the background of this regiment and their experiences in the war, I find this an invaluable book as I proceed with my genealogical research. Also, as a "Civil War buff" I can tell you it is a great read.

A nicely translated collection of letters written by German-American soldiers of the 32nd Regiment Indiana Infantry. This work helps understand the every day life of German-American soldiers in the Civil war. For example, one letter reports the menu: "In the morning, coffee, bread, smoked meat. Noon, fresh beef, bread soup, rice soup, cabbage soup. Evening, coffee, bread soup, cold beef, smoked meat and potato salad."

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