



Colorbearer Joseph Hastings

Joseph Hastings, aged 74 years, died at his home in North Bolton, July 1, 1901. Deceased was a veteran of the Civil War, having served as color bearer in the 118th regiment.

"Old Joe Hastings," as his veteran comrades fondly called him, was a gentle, modest, unassuming man, without brag or bluster, counting the doing of duty, however trying or dangerous, only what was to be expected of a soldier. I considered him a hero, for he rendered splendid and conspicuous service as the color bearer of our old 118th regiment, New York "Volunteers, all through its term of service. He enlisted in Company D of that regiment at Horicon, and when the regiment was organized at Plattsburgh, Hastings, who lacked but a half inch of being six and a half feet in height, was elected and appointed sergeant of "its color guard, which was made up of the tallest men of the regiment. He received from the state the bright and new silken regimental colors, bore them in every one of the many engagements in which the regiment participated, cared for them in camp and on the march through the three years of service and returned them, torn and worn and

tattered, to the state authorities. This is an unusual record. He had been in all the battles which were finally inscribed on the regimental colors, which are now, with others, in the capitol building at Albany. I do not know as any other of our original color guard came back with Hastings.

At the second battle of Fair Oaks, VA, October 29, 1864 the regiment lost in killed, wounded and prisoners, 111 officers and men and every regiment of our brigade lost its colors except the 118th. When nearly surrounded and successful resistance was no longer possible, orders were given for every man to act for himself, Sgt. Hastings and his color guard made such a daring and rapid retreat under a concentrated fire upon the escaping colors as to win the admiration of all who saw it, whether friend or foe. The colors were saved, as they were at Drury's Bluff, by Hastings' brave purpose to keep them out of the enemy's hands. Conspicuous in height, and as color bearer always in the center of the regimental line, he was, of course, more of a target than any other man of the regiment, yet he escaped wounds, except a slight hurt from a sharpshooter's rifle in the trench before Petersburg. Hastings was a cheerful, uncomplaining soldier, known and respected by every comrade. His only "kick" was, because the Quartermaster never provided trousers of sufficient length for his use, he was obliged to draw two pairs, using one to splice the legs of the other.

Joseph's father, Asa, was brought to Mississquoi, Quebec, by his father probably because of his Loyalty to England during the Revolution. By the mid 1830s, Asa had brought his family to settle in Warren County. Joseph A. Hastings was born in East Farnham, Quebec on April 14, 1827. His younger brother, James M. Hastings, also born in Canada, was also in the 118th. James died on October 28, 1863 and is buried in Arlington, Cemetery, VA. Another brother, Artemis A. Hastings, born in Bolton, NY, was in the 93rd NY Infantry and survived the war.