

Ancestor Profile - Pvt. Julius Krag

Service for the Union during the Civil War

Name: Julius Krag

Enlisted: 30 Jun 1863 in Buffalo, New York

Branch: Artillery

Regiment: 2nd Brigade, 22nd Army Corps - renamed 15th New York Heavy Artillery

Commander: Lt. Col. Louis Schirmer (*Enlisting Officer*)

Company: G

Mustered out: 22 Aug 1865 at end of war

PERSONAL STORY –Julius Oluf Waldemar Petersen was born in Copenhagen, Denmark on July 21, 1837, the son of Sophie Hedevig Krag and Peter Larsen Petersen. The father, Peter, served in the Danish military from the age of 15 to 32 - first as a bugler attached to an artillery unit in Skanderborg, and then as a light infantryman.

Julius was only 12 when his father died following a short illness, leaving his mother and six siblings behind. Julius, like his father, joined the Danish military as a musician at the tender age of 12. He remained in the Danish army for eight years before enlisting with the Bremen military on February 3, 1862. His service in the Bremen military probably made him “persona non grata” in his home country, as they were about to enter war with the Prussians over the disputed Duchy of Schleswig, in southern Jutland.

A year later, with tensions mounting between the Danes and the Prussians, the six-foot ¾-inch, blond-haired, blue-eyed musician and soldier was released from duty and promptly boarded the 3-mast sailing ship, *John J. Boyd*, bound for America. Julius arrived at Ellis Island on May 29, 1863 after a 29-day voyage. He then took a train to Buffalo, New York. Why he chose this destination is unclear, but a month later, on June 30th, Julius enlisted as a Musician/Private with *Co. G, 15th Regiment, New York Heavy Artillery*, using his mother’s maiden surname, Krag.

As soon as it was organized, *Co. G* joined the rest of the regiment already on duty at Fort Lyon, Virginia. Fort Lyon (*usually recorded as Camp Lyon in Northern records*) was a timber and earthwork fortification constructed south of Alexandria, Virginia as part of the defenses of Washington, D.C. Built in the weeks following the Union defeat at Bull Run, Fort Lyon was situated on one of the highest points south of Alexandria. The fort overlooked Telegraph Road, the Columbia Turnpike, the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, the Little River Turnpike, and the southern approaches to the city of Alexandria, the largest settlement in Union-occupied Northern Virginia.

The regiment performed garrison duty until March 1864, when it joined the *Army of the Potomac’s 5th Corps* at the front, assigned to Ayres' (2nd) division. The regiment took part in the engagements of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, the North Anna, Totopotomoy, Cold Harbor, White Oak swamp, the first assault on Petersburg, Weldon railroad, Poplar Grove Church, Hicksford raid, Hatcher's run, and the Appomattox campaign, including actions at Five Forks, the fall of Petersburg and Appomattox Court House. Throughout this series of battles, the regiment was conspicuous for its steadiness and bravery - and sustained severe losses.

On June 9, 1863, several men were accidentally killed by the explosion of a magazine at Fort Lyon, Virginia, a couple weeks before Julius’ arrival. At Spotsylvania, its casualties were 160 in killed, wounded, and missing. In the assault on the works of Petersburg in June 1864, it lost 85 killed and wounded; at the Weldon railroad, 14 killed, 75 wounded and 5 missing; at White Oak Road, 18 killed, 81 wounded and 11 missing. The regiment also lost heavily in the trenches before Petersburg from the constant and deadly firing which prevailed there, having 83 men killed, wounded, and missing.



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The 15th Regiment, New York Heavy Artillery lost by death during service 8 officers and 148 men killed and mortally wounded, plus 5 officers and 225 men of disease and other causes – for a total loss of 13 officers and 373 men - with 63 of those men dying while in the hands of the enemy.

Brig. Gen. Romeyn Ayres, Cmdr. 2nd Div., V Corps, Army of the Potomac

Julius Krag made it through unscathed until the battle of Cold Harbor, fought near Richmond, Virginia from May 31 to June 12, 1864. The most significant fighting occurred on June 3rd. The massive assault on that day ended with Union soldiers using cups, bayonets, and their hands and feet to dig out rudimentary protection under the mouths of the Confederate guns. These were quickly developed into more elaborate entrenchments. In some places, the opposing lines were less than 75 yards apart. Sharpshooting was particularly fierce for days. Ulysses S. Grant, perhaps unwilling to admit defeat, delayed the process of requesting the formal truce that was needed to gather the several hundred wounded men that were trapped between the lines.

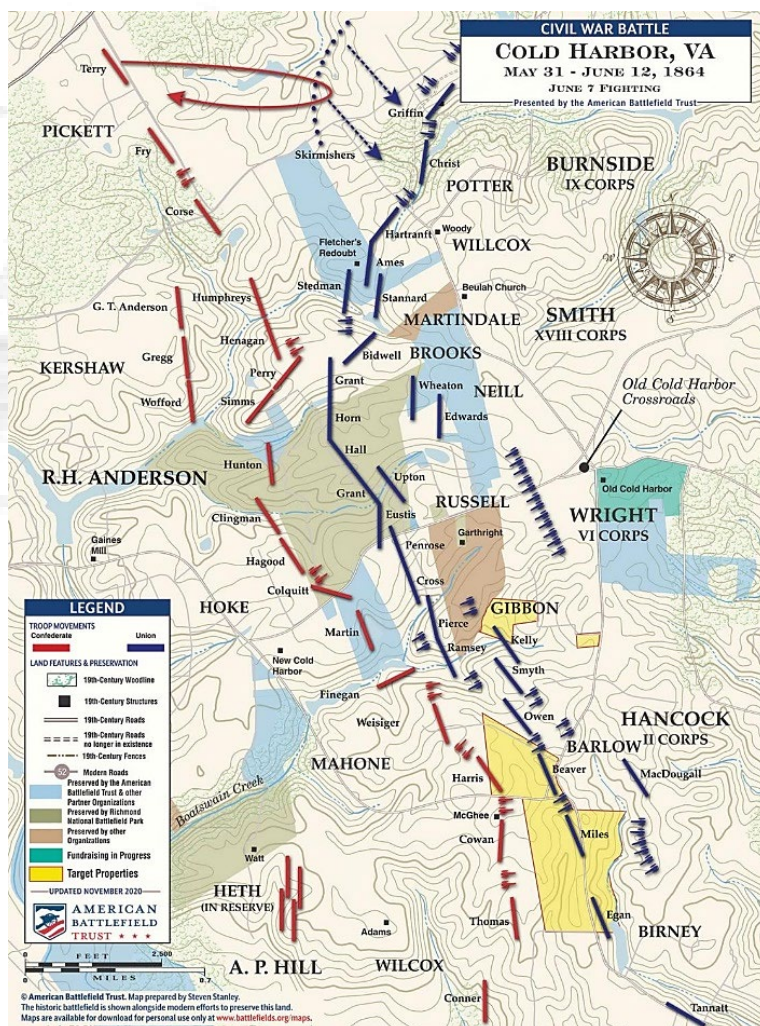
It was not until June 7th that the terms were arranged, and Union soldiers ventured into no-man's-land to recover their comrades. Most of them had already died. One Federal remembered that *"I saw no live man lying on this ground. The wounded must have suffered horribly before death relieved them, lying there exposed to the blazing southern sun o' days, and being eaten alive by beetles o'nights."*

Cold Harbor Battle Map, 7 June 1864

It was one of the final battles of Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign, and is remembered as one of American history's bloodiest, most lopsided battles. Thirteen thousand Union soldiers were killed or wounded in a hopeless frontal assault against the fortified positions of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's army.

At some point during the battle, Julius suffered a gunshot wound to the throat, and was captured on June 7th at Bottoms Bridge, a few miles south of the main battlefield. The same day, he was transferred to a hospital in Richmond, where he was treated for his injury.

A month later, on July 9, 1864, Julius was released to prisoners' quarters and, on August 13th, exchanged for Confederate soldiers at a location called Aiken's Landing on the James River. Aiken's Landing was also known as the Varina Farms Plantation established in the 17th century. It was one of two major exchange locations for soldiers during the civil war. It was connected to the south bank of



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the James River by a military pontoon bridge. Two days later, Julius was admitted to a convalescent hospital in Annapolis, Maryland.

MEMORANDUM FROM PRISONER OF WAR RECORDS.						No. _____				
(This blank to be used only to the arrangement of said records.)										
NAME	RANK	ORGANIZATION				INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM—				
		No. of Reg't.	State.	Arms of Service.	Co.	Records of—	Vol.	Page.	Vol.	Page.
Krag Julius	Priv. P	15	WV	Newly	G	Ment B. of W. R. L. S. T. M.	59	76	21	96
Captured at <u>White House</u> , 1864, confined at Richmond, Va., <u>June 14</u> , 1864.										
Admitted to Hospital at <u>Richmond Va</u> July 7, 64, with <u>V.S.</u> returned to where he died <u>August 9</u> , 1864, of <u>Cholera</u> . Admitted to <u>Convalescent Hospital</u> .										
Paroled at <u>W. S. Landis Va</u> Aug 12, 1864, reported at Camp Parole, Md., <u>Aug 14</u> , 1864.										
Handed to _____ C. Aug. 19, Oct. 28, 64.						Copied by <u>over</u>				



Aikens' Landing with prisoners waiting to be exchanged

On December 2, 1864, Julius Krag was granted a 30-day furlough. Now fully recovered, he used this free time to marry Anna, the 17-year-old nurses aid who cared for him at the hospital at Camp Parole.

On January 15, 1865, Julius rejoined his unit, which was besieging Petersburg, Virginia. Petersburg was a highly industrialized city of 18,000 people - and a vital railroad artery for the Confederates. Supplies arrived here from all over the South via one of the five railroads or the various plank roads. Northern forces had already cut off many of the other supply lines leading into Richmond. Petersburg was the last major outpost, and without it, Richmond, and possibly the entire Confederacy, would be lost.

On April 1, 1865, Grant forced Lee's forces out of their fortifications by attacking their supply line at Five Forks, south of Petersburg. The resounding Union triumph heralded the end of the stalemate outside Petersburg and set the stage

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for the breakthrough that followed the next day. On April 2, 1865, Lee informed Jefferson Davis that Petersburg and Richmond would have to be evacuated. Lee surrendered to Grant only seven days later at the Appomattox Courthouse.

At 9:00 a.m. on a bright sunny May 23rd, a single shot was fired by a signal gun. Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade, the victor of Gettysburg, then led an estimated 80,000 men of *Army of the Potomac* down the streets of Washington, DC from Capitol Hill down Pennsylvania Avenue past crowds that numbered into the thousands. The infantry marched with 12 men across the road, followed by the divisional and corps artillery, including Julius' 15th NY Heavy Artillery Regiment. A following array of cavalry regiments stretched for another seven miles.

The mood was one of gaiety and celebration. The crowds and soldiers frequently engaged in singing patriotic songs as the procession of victorious soldiers snaked its way towards the reviewing stand in front of the White House. President Andrew Johnson, Commanding General Ulysses S. Grant, senior military leaders, the Cabinet, and leading government officials awaited in the stand. Meade dismounted when he arrived at the reviewing stand and joined the dignitaries to salute his passing men. The procession took over six hours to pass by. Julius' regiment, now under the command of Maj. Dieckman, was finally mustered out at Washington, D.C. on August 22, 1865.

Julius and Anna's Krag's first daughter, Emma, was born in Annapolis in August 1865. The Krag's eventually settled in Rome, in Northeast Georgia near the Alabama border. They raised two sons and five daughters. Julius worked as an upholsterer until his death in November 1906 at age 68. He is buried at the Myrtle Hill Cemetery in Rome, although the exact location of his grave is unknown.



Brother Frank 'Nick' Nichols Jr. is the gr-grandson of Pvt. Julius Krag. He is also member of the *Sons of the American Revolution (Patriot #P-175603, Capt. Stephen Harriman, Jr. - b. 1727 - d. 1804)*, and is himself a decorated Navy Veteran.

Frank 'Nick' Nichols Jr.

Nick contributed most of the details and documents about his ancestor, Julius Krag, for this profile. Through his extensive research on Ancestry.com and excellent personal research through Danish contacts, details were uncovered, and other details confirmed.

K	15 H. Art'y.	N. Y.
<i>Julius Krag</i>		
<i>Pvt.</i> , Co. <i>3</i> , 15 Reg't N. Y. Heavy Art'y.		
Appears on Co. Muster-out Roll, dated		
<i>Washington, D.C., Aug 22, 1865</i>		
Muster-out to date		
<i>Aug 22, 1865</i>		
Last paid to		
<i>June 30, 1865</i>		
Clothing account:		
Last settled....., 186 ; drawn since \$.....100		
Due soldier \$ <i>10.25</i> 100; due U. S. \$.....100		
Am't for cloth'g in kind or money adv'd \$.....100		
Due U. S. for arms, equipments, &c., \$.....100		
Bounty paid \$ <i>25</i> 100; due \$ <i>75</i> 100		
Remarks:.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		
Book mark: <i>10334-A-24468-186</i>		
<i>(over)</i>		
<i>J. Brown</i>		
(361)		Copyist.

through Danish contacts, details were