

## One for the Ninth Connecticut Volunteers



The sketch "Digging a canal across the Isthmus" is from the Civil War Harper's Weekly dated July 26, 1862. Likely sketched from a boat out in the Mississippi, the Union soldiers could be from New England, Michigan or Wisconsin.



Melanie Stengel/Register

Jim Sheehan, left, Robert Larkin and Tom Callinan, shown here at New Haven's monument to the Ninth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers, want to have a monument to the regiment placed in Vicksburg, Miss. Larkin has raised thousands of dollars for the project, while Sheehan built the model shown here. Callinan is a former Connecticut state troubadour.

### Civil War soldier's descendant leads charge to raise a monument in the South

By Jim Shelton  
Register Staff

#### RALLY 'ROUND

■ Anyone wishing to make a donation to the Vicksburg monument to the Ninth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers may contact: HRT Inc., 9th Vicksburg Monument, Box 6028, Hamden, CT 06517.

ancestor in a Mississippi swamp. And he's getting remarkably close to his goal.

Larkin wants to put up a black,

granite monument — 8 feet, 10 inches tall — at the Vicksburg National Military Park on behalf of the Ninth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers. More than 150 members of the Ninth Connecticut, including Larkin's great-great-grandfather, died of disease while digging a canal at Vicksburg prior to one of the Civil War's key engagements.

See Ninth, E2



The colors of the Ninth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers.

### Ninth: Vicksburg monument will honor 'Irish Regiment'

Continued from E1

However, because the Ninth Connecticut didn't see combat in the Battle of Vicksburg proper, its efforts are not recognized at the site among those of Civil War soldiers from other states.

Larkin and his cohorts, including the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, the Irish History Roundtable, the Irish American Historical Society and the local Civil War Roundtable, will not abide this. The Ninth Connecticut was known as "The Irish Regiment."

"It's terrible there's no mention of the Ninth," says Larkin, a 65-year-old SNET retiree. "This has taken a lot of turns, but it looks like we'll finally see something."

Larkin has been working at

this for about six years. He figures it will cost \$30,000 for the monument, and he has donations and pledges for \$18,000 so far. The biggest donor is the Knights of Columbus, which has pledged \$10,000. One of the Knights' original leaders, James Mullen, was a sergeant in the Ninth Connecticut who served at Vicksburg.

As for Larkin's ancestor, Pvt. Marlow, he was an Irish immigrant who came to New Haven some time before 1850. He lived on East Street, worked as a laborer, and he and his wife had five children.

Marlow signed up for the military in September, 1861.

"They left in November and he was dead by July," Larkin notes.

Vicksburg, located on the Mississippi River, was critical to the Union Army's plan to control all shipping along the Mississippi and isolate the Confederacy. Northern war strategists wanted to dig a canal at a bend in the river near Vicksburg, thus allowing Union ships to avoid Confederate guns positioned there.

Hundreds of soldiers, as well as slaves, began digging the canal in the summer of 1862, but were unable to complete the task. Working in 100-plus temperatures, with a lack of sufficient drinking water, many of the soldiers fell prey to malaria, dysentery and other diseases in the swamp.

The official engagement at Vicksburg didn't get going until the spring of 1863. Combined Union and Confederate casualties reached 20,000.

"There's a detached area at Vicksburg National Military Park called Grant's Canal," Larkin says. "That's where they tried to dig. There's no mention of the Ninth Connecticut."

However, in 1990 the federal government expanded the official definition of the Vicksburg engagement to include the canal project of 1862. Larkin was able to get permission for a Connecti-

cut monument, pending various design approvals.

"We got a committee going," Larkin says. "We started out with the idea of putting in a signpost marker and then gradually got to the idea of having a piece of granite with a bronze plaque."

Ultimately, Larkin and company agreed to a design submitted by Mathieu Memorials and Granite Works of Southington. The company is an agent for Royal Melrose, which has worked on national monuments such as the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The new monument proposed for Vicksburg will include the Ninth Connecticut's seal, etchings of the faces of several soldiers and a brief narrative of the regiment's service during the war.

"I'm hoping that in a month we can submit our plans to the National Parks Service," Larkin says. The approval process could take up to six months, after which the local group could enter into a contract to build the monument.

"We just want to tell the story," Larkin says. "This will do it."

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