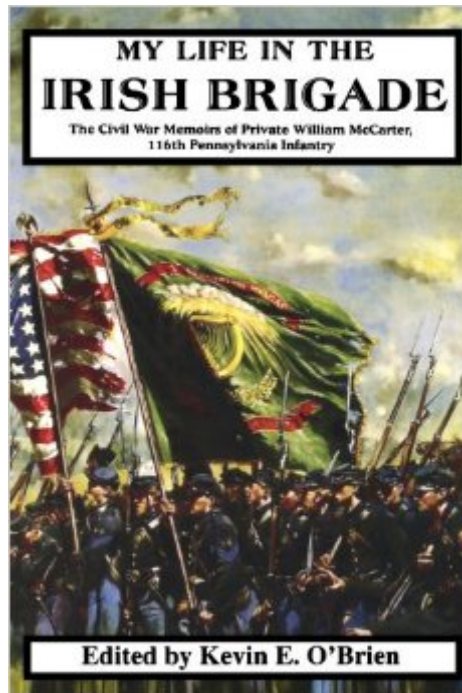


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# My Life In The Irish Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs Of Private William Mccarter, 116th Pennsylvania Infantry



## Synopsis

The first full-length memoir published by an enlisted man in the Irish Brigade, from the Seven Day's Battles to the charge up Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg-a no-holds-barred firsthand account.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

William McCarter was a twenty-one year old Irish immigrant when he enlisted in the 116th Pennsylvania Infantry in August 1862. The unit soon became part of the Second Brigade, First Division, Second Corps, Army of the Potomac, better known as the fabled Irish Brigade and Carter's memoirs, "My Life in the Irish Brigade" has the distinction of being the first full-length memoir published by an enlisted man in the Irish Brigade. McCarter's account covers the brigade from the Seven Day's Battles in which it made its battlefield reputation, to its assault against the Bloody Lane at Antietam, to the charge up Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg where McCarter was gravely wounded and forced to leave the army. Because he was detailed as the personal scribe to General Thomas F. Meagher, commander of the Irish Brigade, McCarter was able to meet and judge the famous generals of the Union Army such as Ambrose Burnside and Winfield Scott Hancock. Kevin E. O'Brien, who has written widely on the Irish Brigade, edits the volume and in addition to his Endnotes he has included several interesting items in the Appendixes, such as the poem "The Irish Dead on Fredericksburg Heights" which was printed in the "Irish-American" in 1863. McCarter's recollections are quite engaging, and his description of the Brigade's actions at the fateful battle of Fredericksburg, where the vast majority of its 1,200 men were killed or wounded, is the best part of

the book. If you have more than a passing familiarity with the history of the Irish Brigade, this is an excellent book to give you a unique and fascinating perspective on their glory days during the Civil War. It is also one of the better written memoirs, by enlisted man or general, you will find.

The Civil War has always been of great interest to me. Consequently, when I find a book that tells of real-life experiences coming directly from the pen of the man who experienced the things he wrote about, I am automatically interested. Private McCarter wrote candidly of what he witnessed, felt and thought while in the Irish Brigade. His book is easy to understand and evokes vivid mental pictures of the scenes he describes. He seemed to be an educated, good-hearted man who, if he was alive today, I would love to meet.

William McCarter's book is quite an interesting tale of his involvement as a private for the famous Irish Brigade. McCarter's vivid descriptions of soldier life, marching, camping, facing cold weather, hard living and the Battle of Fredericksburg was very well done. McCarter missed Antietam although his regiment did face the Confederates at the heights of Fredericksburg. McCarter tells such a fascinating, informative, sad, happy, yet chilling story at times during his soldier career that it was hard to put this book down. His vivid story of Fredericksburg and how the brigade battled it out, how he was injured and how he escaped death while suffering upon the battlefield was certainly the best part of the book. I wish more soldier accounts were written as well as this one as this book is one of the better books I've read that tells a soldier's story. 5 STARS!

The author only served with the Irish Brigade for a few short months but they were the most harrowing times in the unit's history. From Antietam to Fredericksburg this memoir is one of the few soldier-told tales of the Brigade.

The Irish Brigade was in Hancock's Division along with Zook's Brigade which included a regiment with a number of my ancestral family members. One of the cousins in the Pa. Reserve Division had a similar experience at Fredericksburg, being wounded in the arm & having to resist having it amputated. I liked the description of everyday life in the army, so it's a good companion to "Hardtack and Coffee".

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