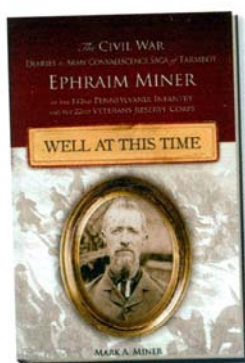


# BOOK REVIEWS



## **Well at This Time: The Civil War: Diaries & Army Convalescence Saga of Farmboy Ephraim Miner of the 142nd Pennsylvania Infantry Troops and the 22nd Veterans Reserve Corps**

By Mark A. Miner

(Beaver, PA: Minerd.com Publishing, 2011)

128 pp., softcover \$24.95

Reviewed by David Neville

The events of December 13, 1862, would forever remain in the memory of Ephraim Miner. A private in Company C, 142nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Miner would taste combat for the first and only time that day at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia: his eardrums were shattered by cannon blasts as his regiment withdrew from the battlefield. Safely back in camp after the fighting ended, Miner found he had difficulty hearing; his health further eroded when in the inclement weather following the battle his feet became frozen. Unfit for duty, Miner spent the next 30 months convalescing

in various army hospitals and serving in the 22nd Regiment of the Veteran Reserve Corps, where he performed various tasks, including guarding enemy POWs.

In *The Civil War Diaries & Army Convalescence Saga of Farmboy Ephraim Miner*, Miner's life is recounted by author and great-grandnephew Mark A. Miner, who employs a variety of primary and secondary source material, including Private Miner's diary, which commences on January 1, 1864. The first 50 pages of the book provide an overview of Miner's pre-war life in Somerset County, where he was a farmer, and his service in the 142nd Pennsylvania Infantry. The balance of the book consists of a transcription of Ephraim's diary, and a chapter on his post-war life, which ended at age 83 in 1921.

The diary entries, written from hospitals where Miner was a patient, and from duty stations while serving in the 22nd Regiment, Veteran Reserve Corps, consist primarily of short descriptions of his efforts to regain his health, of guard duty, and of army friends he encounters from time to time, especially men from his old regiment, the 142nd Pennsylvania. Given that the diary was kept by Miner while away from the front, one will not find stirring accounts of battle, but entries that describe the day-to-day life of a young man who continued to serve his country despite being hobbled by illness and a battle injury.

This book will definitely appeal to readers interested in Pennsylvania Infantry troops and of the role Somerset County residents played in the American Civil War.

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**David Neville** is a military historian and publisher of *Military Images* magazine and co-author of the forthcoming *The Civil War in Pennsylvania: A Photographic History*.