

Private Joseph Moyer, 176th Pennsylvania (Drafted Militia)

While in his teens, Dale Kratzer first heard the stories about his great-great grandfather Joseph Moyer. His aunt told him he was the first person in the family to sport red hair since an ancestor who died during the Civil War.

Decades later, Dale went in search of his ancestor. He recalled that he was in the Union army, and that he apparently died of "home sickness" while on duty in South Carolina where he was interred. But, Dale could not recall his great-great grandfather's name!

This lapse went on for a number of years until Dale read his grandmother's obituary and realized he had been looking on the wrong limb of the family tree. With this new information, Joseph Moyer had been "found."



Private Moyer entered the service of his country on November 7, 1862 as a member of Company B, 176th Pennsylvania - Drafted Militia. Scheduled to serve a nine-month term, the 34-year old soldier left behind his wife, Sarah, and four daughters and a son. He would never see his sixth child, a daughter, who was born a month before his death.

Moyer's army life would take him to Philadelphia; Washington, D.C.; Suffolk, VA; New Berne, NC; and finally to South Carolina where he would serve at Beaufort, Saint Helena and Port Royal. The 176th did not engage in any hostile operations, but spent its time on fatigue duty constructing and improving fortifications, provost duty and supporting the blockading fleet off the Palmetto State coast. It is possible Private Moyer would have been aware of the arrival of the famed 54th Massachusetts ("*Glory*") when they arrived in the Charleston area in mid-1863.

Unfortunately, Joseph would never see his home or family again as he succumbed to chronic diarrhea in the general hospital at Hilton Head on July 19, 1863. His final resting place would be in the Beaufort national cemetery where he reposes to this day in grave 4381.



DEAD				
NAME OF SOLDIER:				
Moyer, Joseph				
SERVICE:				
Late rank, Co. B, 176 Regt Pa. Inf				
TERM OF SERVICE:				
Enlisted Nov 7, 1862 Discharged				
DATE OF FILING:				
1863 Oct 7				
CLASS:				
Invalid,				
APPLICATION NO.:				
35, 510				
LAW:				
102, 636				
CERTIFICATE NO.:				
ADDITIONAL SERVICES:				
REMARKS:				
Died July 19, 1863, at Hilton Head, S.C.				

It appears the Moyer family fell on difficult times following Joseph's death (and many families of limited means were never able to return their soldiers to rest eternally nearer their homes and loved ones). Sarah would receive her husband's pension (in October 1863, which was somewhat of a bureaucratic speed record!), and the 1870 census records show that she and her family all resided with different relatives.

Private Moyer was not alone in his suffering. Before the 176th was mustered out on August 18, 1863, five officers and 44 enlisted men also meet their end as a result of disease, the biggest killer of the Civil War.

