

Samuel E. Day
Captain
37th Infantry (USCT)
Company G



Private
1st Infantry (MA)
Company A

1st Infantry (MA) memorial at Gettysburg, PA

Born: 1833
Where: New York
Town Affiliation: Great Neck
Spouse: Widower
Enlistment Date: 5/23/1861 (1st Infantry (MA))
10/30/1863 (37th Infantry
(USCT))
Enlistment
Location: Camp Ellsworth, Cambridge, MA

Rank on	Private (1861)
Enlistment:	1st Lieutenant (1863)
Promotions:	Major (03/16/1865)
	Captain (3/1/1866)
Result of Service:	Discharge
Date:	2/7/1867

Notes:

Just as Colonel Robert Shaw, a white Union officer, famously commanded the 54th Infantry (MA), an African-American regiment, Captain Samuel E. Day led Company C of the 37th Infantry (USCT). Day began his army career when he enlisted into Company A of the newly-formed 1st Infantry (MA) in Cambridge, MA on May 23rd, 1861.

As a member of the 1st Infantry, Day participated in (and somehow survived) many of the greatest battles of the Civil War. Upon arrival in Washington, D.C. in June 1861, the 1st joined the Army of Northern Virginia under Brigadier General Irwin McDowell. The 1st participated in the advance on Manassas, VA and the subsequent Battle of Bull Run. From September 1861 to March 1862, the 1st joined General Joe "Fighting Joe" Hooker's Brigade. The 1st participated in the "Peninsula Campaign," and fought in the Siege of Yorktown, the Battles of Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, Oak Grove, Malvern Hill, and others. Day and the regiment fought through the three-day carnage of "Second Bull Run," then returned to aid in the defenses of Washington, D.C.

The regiment did not play a major role at Fredericksburg, but joined the famous "Mud March" of late January 1863. (as did the 119th Infantry (NY) of Roslyn) At Chancellorsville, the 1st suffered heavy losses, including division commander General Hiram Berry. As part of the Third Corps under General Daniel Sickles, the 1st was involved in one of the major blunders of the Battle of Gettysburg, when on the 2nd day (July 2nd 1863) General Sickles overextended his men to such a point where Confederate General James Longstreet nearly overran the Federal lines. Positioned at the far right of Sickles' corps, the 1st, under brigade leader Brigadier General Joseph Carr, was nearly overrun after fierce Confederate attacks and fervent resistance. In all, the 1st lost one-hundred twenty-three men, including many officers. After a pursuit of General Robert E. Lee, the 1st was sent up to New York City to help quell the New York City draft riots. Between August and October 1863, the regiment served at Governor's and Riker's Islands.

On October 29th 1863, Day officially mustered out of the 1st Infantry (MA). The next day, Day both received a promotion to 1st Lieutenant, and received a commission to join the newly-formed 37th Infantry (USCT) in Company A.

Companies A, B, C, D and E of this regiment were organized at Norfolk, Virginia, during the winter of 1863 and '64, by Lieutenant Colonel CHAMBERLAIN. To this efficient officer and strict disciplinarian much credit is due, for the ability and perseverance he displayed during the organization of the regiment, having many obstacles in his way to contend against, the most formidable being the strong prejudice against Negro soldiers. This feeling was happily soon banished, for our ablest generals and statesmen were not slow to

perceive the importance and necessity of arming the Freedmen, thus giving them a chance to strike a blow for their own liberty, which they have done manfully, and, by their bravery and soldierly conduct, have not only helped win their freedom, but also the glorious privilege of a representation in the army and navy of the country, which honor they probably never would have had, if they had not shown themselves worthy of it. Everyone knows what an important and brilliant part the colored men took during the late war, and it is often remarked by Southern people, now since it is all over, that if they had only armed the negroes and allowed them to fight for the South, they would have gained their independence, and slavery would probably have existed in the Southern States for many years to come--perhaps for centuries.

It was under such circumstances as these, that our first colored regiments were organized. Although many of those that availed themselves of the opportunity offered by the Government, and took up arms in the country's hour of danger, saw more and harder service than this regiment, it nevertheless has achieved a military record that every officer and soldier belonging to it may well be proud of.

There might be much said in praise of both officers and men who are and have been connected with this regiment. Some of them have exhibited great military ability, and filled the various positions they were placed in, under the most trying circumstances, with the greatest credit to themselves and to the service, thereby eliciting the highest commendation from the War Department on several occasions. In consequence, this regiment is held in high repute at military headquarters, and has been retained in the service on, that account, being the last and best colored regiment remaining in this Department.

The first five companies, as soon as organized, were ordered to the field, with the First Brigade, Third Division, Eighteenth Army Corps. Companies F and G were mustered and joined the other companies in the month of May, 1864; the regiment at this time was engaged in active campaign duty. Company H was soon after added, and the regiment was ordered to the front of Petersburg, and took an active and conspicuous part in the siege of this city; it was then ordered to the forts at Wilson's and Harrison's Landings, on the James River, where it remained until the 25th of September, when it was ordered to Deep Bottom, Virginia, where it arrived on the 28th of September, 1864, was immediately put into action, and after three days hard fighting completed the reduction and capture of New Market Heights and Fort Harrison, and for distinguished bravery and soldierly conduct at this battle, was honorably mentioned by the Major-General commanding the right wing of the army. Although the regiment lost a great many men it remained upon the field it had won, and successfully resisted the repeated attempts of the enemy to retake the ground. There it completed its organization as a regiment by receiving companies I and K, which were mustered into service on the 28th day of November, 1864.

On the 3d day of December, the regiment was ordered to join in the first expedition against Fort Fisher [NC], under General B. F. BUTLER, where it arrived on the 25th, but was soon ordered back to Virginia, and went into camp at Chapin's [Chaffin's] Farm, December 20th, 1864. On the 3d of January, 1865, this regiment joined the second expedition against Fort Fisher and Wilmington, under Major-General TERRY, and near dark on the 11th disembarked, taking the lead of the forces charged with the important duty of

cutting off the land communication between Fort Fisher and the rebel forces in the immediate vicinity. The regiment crossed the Peninsula to Cape Fear River, and entrenched themselves about three miles above the fort. Here it was forced to remain until the surrender of Fort Fisher and the other fortifications at the mouth of the river and General TERRY'S forward movement towards Wilmington, in which it took part, driving the enemy from their entrenchments, and marching steadily onward until February 22d, when, after much fighting, Wilmington was captured. On the same day the regiment fought the enemy at North-East Station, North Carolina. Soon after this engagement it started on the march to Raleigh, forming a junction with General SHERMAN'S army, at Mount Olive, North Carolina, and remained under SHERMAN until after the surrender of General JOHNSTON, when it was ordered to Goldsboro in May, remaining until June, when it was ordered back to Wilmington, to perform provost duty in that city, in which capacity it gave the utmost satisfaction to the citizens, who expressed themselves highly pleased with the soldierly manner in which these troops performed their duty.

On the 25th of November, 1865, Companies H, I and K, commanded by Major Weinman, were ordered to Fort Macon, Roanoke Island and Hatteras; the remaining companies to Smithville, Fort Fisher and Fort Caswell, at the mouth of Cape Fear River; headquarters being at Smithville.

Census Records, including the 1880 Federal Census and the 1890 Veterans Schedules census, show that Day lived in Great Neck in the years after the War.