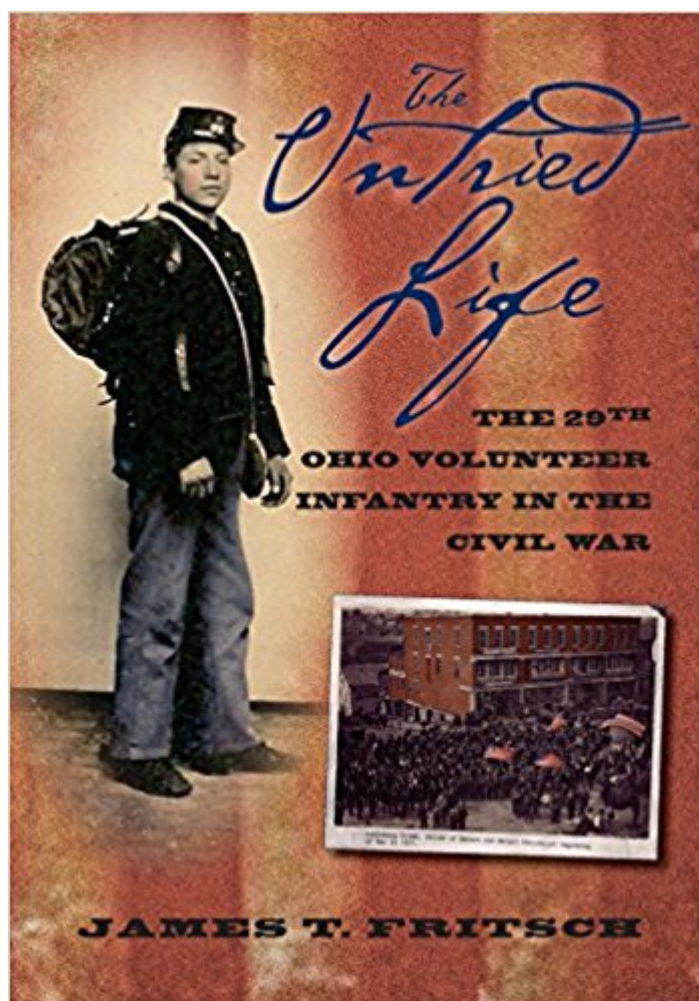


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# The Untried Life: The Twenty-Ninth Ohio Volunteer Infantry In The Civil War



## Synopsis

Told in unflinching detail, this is the story of the Twenty-Ninth Ohio Volunteer Infantry, also known as the Giddings Regiment or the Abolition Regiment, after its founder, radical abolitionist Congressman J. R. Giddings. The men who enlisted in the Twenty-Ninth OVI were, according to its lore, handpicked to ensure each was as pure in his antislavery beliefs as its founder. Whether these soldiers would fight harder than other soldiers, and whether the people of their hometowns would remain devoted to the ideals of the regiment, were questions that could only be tested by the experiment of war. *The Untried Life* is the story of these men from their very first regimental formation in a county fairground to the devastation of Gettysburg and the march to Atlanta and back again, enduring disease and Confederate prisons. It brings to vivid life the comradeship and loneliness that pervaded their days on the march. Dozens of unforgettable characters emerge, animated by their own letters and diaries: Corporal Nathan Parmenter, whose modest upbringing belies the eloquence of his writings; Colonel Lewis Buckley, one of the Twenty-Ninth's most charismatic officers; and Chaplain Lyman Ames, whose care of the sick and wounded challenged his spiritual beliefs. *The Untried Life* shows how the common soldier lived—his entertainments, methods of cooking, medical treatment, and struggle to maintain family connections—and separates the facts from the mythology created in the decades after the war.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

James Fritsch has written more than simply a regimental history of the 29th Ohio Infantry. Through his skill as a writer and researcher he breathes life into these young men from Ohio and we feel their hopes and joys, fear and suffering, through four years of war as if we were one of them. This is history at its best. — D. Scott Hartwig, historian, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

The detail (in *The Untried Life*) is fascinating. At times so plentiful the book feels like a real-time march, these particulars ultimately give the story its unexpectedly emotional resonance. A meticulous, human-scale history that lends new immediacy to events of 150 years ago, *The Untried Life* rewards the reader who sticks with it. — The Plain Dealer

*The Untried Life* provides a view of the Civil War from the soldier on the ground. Using letters, diaries, and newspaper accounts, the book offers an unfiltered view of the challenges, hardships, and personal sacrifices the soldiers faced and confirms the major role Ohio played in the Civil War. The book is a must read for both the amateur and professional historian of the Civil War. — Donald C. Maness, coeditor of *Do They Miss Me at Home? The Civil War Letters of William McKnight, Seventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry*

This book is an excellent reminder that the Civil War was an extraordinary national struggle but was also an individual struggle for men in the ranks and those left at home. — Ohio History

*The Untried Life* is an impressive work of considerable scholarship. — The Midwest Book Review

The reader who buys this book will be rewarded with a wealth of information that sheds light not only on the experiences of the 29th Ohio but likely applies in many respects to Federal infantry units across the board. This up-close examination of a Civil War regiment is strongly recommended. — Civil War News

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We got this book because my husband is very interested in history, most especially anything to do with Ohio military. This book is an absolute gem if you are interested in history, the military, the Civil War, or just life as it was in the 1800's. I have also started to read this because it is written in a way that brings history to life. I do not want a book loaded with facts and figures and on a level that only a general could understand. This book brings history ALIVE! Haven't you wondered what life was really like in the 1800's? What did these poor guys in the military go through during the Civil War? When I read this book I feel like I am witnessing life as my ancestors lived. Excellent!

Author James T. Fritsch's love of his subject and attention to details results in a fascinating and heartbreaking tale of one regiment's Civil War experience. I was riveted while reading about the various real-life characters. The result of Fritsch's meticulous research made me grateful for the sacrifice of the generation who fought the American Civil War. They endured so much, and Fritsch recreates the suffering, boredom, triumphs, and loves of some of the historically-overlooked participants. Regarding the size and word count of the book: Lots of value for the price!

This book covered the 29th Ohio Infantry volunteers in great detail and from the point of view of the soldier instead of the usual textbook version.

This well written book brings to life what being a soldier in the civil war was like. Misery. My husband and I found it really personal because we live in the area in Ohio where the BOYS are from. My husband has finished reading it but I have not finished it yet but am really relishing it.

Being an Ohioan I was interested in their war record. I wasn't disappointed. They acquitted themselves very well. I was a good read.

The guy did some welcome research on the civil war and its impact on Ohio citizens. However, he seems to do too much wording on the process of what he researched.

I have been wanting to read this book for awhile. I enjoy regimental histories of Union regiments and expected this to follow the format of..oh say, *My Brave Boys* about the 5th New Hampshire, *Harvard's Civil War* covering the 20th Massachusetts, or *The Last Full Measure: The Life and Death of the 1st Minnesota*. I was wrong in this assumption. This particular tale covers aspects of the war rarely mentioned in traditional/modern regimental histories. *The Untried Life* is impeccably researched, incredibly well written, and perfect in its emotional pull. The story covers this seemingly non discreet Union regiment, 29th Ohio Volunteers, from 1861-1865. One aspect of this book that the author hits on extremely well is the fact that the Civil War included battles other than Gettysburg and Antietam. I will mention, however, that the 29th was a participant in the former battle. These men lost friends at places like Cedar Mountain, Port Republic, and Dug Gap not to mention those that died of disease or accidents. This book also covers life in the small Western Reserve town that many come from. What happened to those folks during the four year war? The 29th Ohio would fight in two theaters of the war and the author gives us a glimpse at life in the Army of the Potomac and Army of the Cumberland. The regiment is marches to the sea with Sherman, chases Stonewall Jackson in the 1862 Valley Campaign, and holds the crossroads at Chancellorsville until the bitter end. They also spent some time in my home town of Cumberland Maryland, a back water posting for sure. The author found a gold mine of Civil War adventures with the stories of these heroes of the 29th Ohio. Unfortunately, there are major issues with this book. Maps! I'm not sure if it's the authors fault or more than likely the publishers but you can't do a regimental history that includes battles without maps. This book has none. The author compensates on occasion, mostly in describing the Battle of Dug Gap and Chancellorsville, but the reader without prior knowledge is lost. The other error, which I thought was absolutely ridiculous was the lack of photographs of the men in the regiment. I've always figured, and I'd be willing to defend this in an argument, that 90% of the men that fought for the Union were, at one point, photographed. Granted many were lost with the passage of time but the author only includes three photographs of members of the regiment. He attempts to describe a few members throughout the book though. The lack of photographs and maps is inexcusable. That being said it's still worth ones time. The author makes a few historical errors also. One that stuck out was claiming Grant commanded the Army of the Potomac during the latter half of the war. These errors are minor and really didn't hurt the narrative. Another issue is the lack of a regimental roster. The majority of unit histories include one. The reader is also left wondering what happened to the men after the war? While the ending is very poignant and powerful it ends in August of 1865. Despite these issues, which had they not been there would have made

this one of the finest Civil War books I've ever read and I've read a few, this book is definitely a phenomenal effort on the authors part. He incorporates the senses, the emotions, and the struggles of those "on the threshold of an untried life." Bear in mind this is a big read. The small print and large size of the book make it probably closer to a 700 page book in standard form. For me though, if the author kept telling the story for a thousand pages I would have kept reading.

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