

## FIRST DEFENDERS

### Allen Infantry - First Defenders

On Monday, April 15, 1861, after the Confederate States Army attacked Fort Sumter in the Charleston Harbor, Charleston, South Carolina, President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 men to defend the capital in Washington D. C. The *Allen Infantry*, a militia unit from Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania was among the first five Pennsylvania companies (all former local militia units) to answer the call for troops to protect the Capital from attack by Confederate forces.

The five companies that were to become known as the "First Defenders" are as follows:

Ringgold Light Artillery - Capt. M'Knight, Reading  
Logan Guards - Capt. Selheimer, Lewiston  
Washington Artillery - Capt. Wren, Pottsville  
National Light Infantry - Capt. M'Donald, Pottsville  
Allen Infantry - Capt. Yeager, Allentown

The Allen Infantry of Allentown was organized in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1859 under the command of Captain Thomas Yeager and drilled at 716 Hamilton Street in Allentown.

Recruited at Allentown  
Mustered in on April 18, 1861, at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
Allen Infantry (First Defenders)

Captain Thomas Yeagher  
First lieutenant James M. Wilson  
Second Lieutenant Joseph T. Wilt  
First Sergeant  
Second Sergeant Solomon Goeble  
First Corporal William Wolf  
Second Corporal John E. Webster  
Third Corporal Ignatz Gresser  
Fourth Corporal Daniel Kramer  
Private Norman H. Cole  
Private Charles Deitrich  
Private Henry Wilson Derr  
Private Milton H. Dunlap  
Private William Early  
Private Gideon Frederick  
Private Mattgew R. Fuller  
Private William G. Frame  
Private Edwin Gross  
Private James Geider  
Private George F. Henry  
Private John Houck

Private Nathaniel Hillegass  
Private Joseph Hettinger  
Private George Hoxworth  
Private Edwin M. Hittle  
Private David Jacob  
Private William Kress  
Private George W. Keiper  
Private Martin W. Leisenging  
Private Franklin Leh  
Private Edwin H. Miller  
Private Henry M'Nulty  
Private Charles A. Pfeffer  
Private Jonathan W. Reber  
Private William Rhue  
Private Ernst Rothman  
Private George W. Rhoads  
Private John Romig  
Private Samuel Schneck  
Private Henry Storch  
Private Charles A. Shiffert  
Private M. H. Sigman  
Private Lewis G. Seip  
Private Adolphus Sheidler  
Private Enville Sheidler  
Private John E. Uhler  
Private Allen Wetherhold  
Private David Weiss  
Private William Wagner  
Private Joseph Weiss  
Private Berneville Weegandt



The Allen Infantry, along with the four other Pennsylvania Militia units, arrived in Baltimore, Maryland where the five companies had to change trains for Washington. During the march from one station to another, they were attacked by a mob of Southern sympathizers. Ultimately arriving in Washington, these five companies were the first troops to position themselves on the banks of the Potomac in defense of the country.

The men of the *Allen Infantry* were assigned, belatedly, to Company G of the Twenty-fifth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

The men of Company G, Twenty-fifth Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment were mustered out on 26 July 1861, and those that were a part of the original Allen Infantry returned to Allentown to a city-wide celebration.