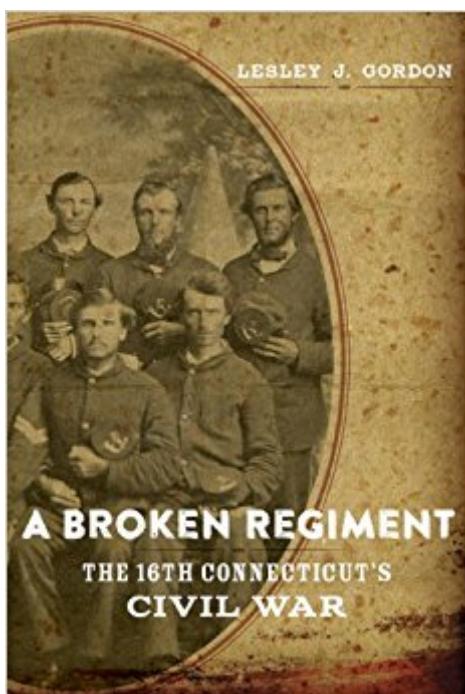


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# **A Broken Regiment: The 16th Connecticut's Civil War (Conflicting Worlds: New Dimensions Of The American Civil War)**



## Synopsis

A Broken Regiment recounts the tragic history of one of the Civil War's most ill-fated Union military units. Organized in the late summer of 1862, the 16th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry was unprepared for battle a month later, when it entered the fight at Antietam. The results were catastrophic: nearly a quarter of the men were killed or wounded, and Connecticut's 16th panicked and fled the field. In the years that followed, the regiment participated in minor skirmishes before surrendering en masse in North Carolina in 1864. Most of its members spent months in southern prison camps, including the notorious Andersonville stockade, where disease and starvation took the lives of over one hundred members of the unit. The struggles of the 16th led survivors to reflect on the true nature of their military experience during and after the war, and questions of cowardice and courage, patriotism and purpose, were often foremost in their thoughts. Over time, competing stories emerged of who they were, why they endured what they did, and how they should be remembered. By the end of the century, their collective recollections reshaped this troubling and traumatic past, and the "unfortunate regiment" emerged as "The Brave Sixteenth," their individual memories and accounts altered to fit the more heroic contours of the Union victory. The product of over a decade of research, Lesley J. Gordon's *A Broken Regiment* illuminates this unit's complex history amid the interplay of various, and often competing, voices. The result is a fascinating and heartrending story of one regiment's wartime and postwar struggles.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This insightful and well-written narrative is a welcome addition to a crowded field and deserves a wide reading."--*Journal of Military History*"Gordon's assertion of the validity and value of the regimental history--and the evidence of what she has achieved through judicious use of such source material--will be encouraging. Too long spoiled for choice by the sheer embarrassment of recorded riches that the Civil War provided, many historians have turned up their nose at what was right under it. *A Broken Regiment* shows us how much we may have missed."--*American Nineteenth Century History*"*A Broken Regiment* is a good read. It is also a finely wrought examination of the relationships between men, war, and history. Gordon has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of Civil War soldiers and the importance they attached to securing their place in our national memory."--*Connecticut History Review*"Drawing on an incredibly rich source base, Gordon highlights such key themes as soldierly motivations for fighting, attitudes toward political questions, perceptions of group identity, and the process of collective memory-making. At once a micro-history and a biography of a whole unit, *A Broken Regiment* offers a new trajectory for future studies of Civil War regiments. . . . Readers will be impressed with the depth of research, the sophistication of analysis, and the readability of the author's prose."--*Civil War History*"In *A Broken Regiment*, Dr. Lesley Gordon has mastered the art of writing a regimental history. She has conducted years of in-depth manuscript material, traveled far and wide, and written a very detailed study of a Civil War regiment that experienced the conflict differently from many of their peers. This book shows that not every regiment experienced the 'glories of war.' Rather the Sixteenth Connecticut experienced war at its worse and left an interesting tale to be told. Dr. Lesley Gordon's *A Broken Regiment* is regimental history at its best."--*Civil War Book Review*"*A Broken Regiment* is an insightful, deeply researched and informative account of the unit's war encounters. Gordon demonstrates here just how effectively executed a regimental history can be, both as a good story worth telling and as a vehicle for addressing broader questions about the war and those who experienced it." --*America's Civil War*

Lesley J. Gordon is professor of history at Akron University, author of *General George E. Pickett in Life and Legend*, and coeditor of *Intimate Strategies of the Civil War: Military Commanders and Their Wives*. Lesley J. Gordon is professor of history at Akron University, author of *General George E. Pickett in Life and Legend*, and coeditor of *Intimate Strategies of the Civil War: Military Commanders and Their Wives*.

This is a labor of love from the author to the reader. It is a combination of social more than a strictly

military study. By the end of the book we have a very good picture of what this very unlucky regiment went through. If you believe history is people and places then this is a must have book. When you go to ANTIETAM and see the stained glass church windows from the 16th and/or the blood residue still on the floor of the church you understand a little of what this regiment went through. Not only is this great writing but also has over 132 pages of notes and bibliography. LESLEY HAS WRITTEN ONE OF THE MOST DEFINITIVE MODERN REGIMENTALS I HAVE EVER READ AND ENJOYED.

This book is by far one of the best regimental histories I have ever read. Expertly researched, detailed, crisply written, you will not go wrong reading this one.

This book tells the ALL about the Connecticut 16th Regiment and the reality of what was war on a short notice. Less than a month after first muster you march to Sharpsburg and have to ford the Antietam Creek into America's bloodiest day! I came to it while researching a relative and this has inspired me to dig deeper as well as visit the ground where this all took place as Lesley Gordon has certainly done her research in the process. They gave their all. Had the planning been better, Antietam should have been the end of the Civil War. It was all possible. The Connecticut 16th was at the heart of the third phase of the battle! Instead, what a horrible day it was for all who were there and who lived through it. Antietam is but chapter two - there is much more to follow about the regiment.

Very interesting about the dark side of valor: a regiment disgraced by running at Antietam but redeemed its honor at the battle of Plymouth, N. Carolina until the fort was surrounded and forced to surrender. The rest of the war is a prison story. This is well written, emphasizing the personal soldiers' stories. A very large section at back of the book is book notes and references. The author has really done her research but all those pages of notes? I guess this is necessary when doing historical research.

One of the most vital bits of information which can come from Civil War history are the stories of the regiments who fought on the front lines and gave their all for the sake of their country. Some regiments are more memorable than others such as the 54th Massachusetts and the 20th Maine. Then there are the regiments whose deeds are known, but more well-known through the work of historians who have worked tirelessly to bring their heroism to our attention. In A Broken Regiment,

Lesley Gordon has accomplished this feat in remembrance of the 16th Connecticut and showcases not only the history of the 16th Connecticut but other aspects about the state during the Civil War. Lesley J. Gordon is a professor of history at the University of Akron. She is also the author of General George E. Pickett in Life and Legend and is the coeditor of Inside the Confederate Nation: Essays in Honor of Emory M. Thomas. She is also an avid book reviewer and has authored many articles. She is the current editor of the scholarly journal Civil War History. When people usually think about the 16th Connecticut, one event comes to mind: Antietam. While it was their first major action in a major battle, Gordon spends the rest of the novel describing what these men accomplished throughout the war. She opens her work with short biographies on some of the participants in the regiment including Jacob Bauer, Henry L. Pasco and many others. After a brief description of the regiment's muster and their life at Camp Williams, Gordon moves to Antietam where the regiment's participation is described in great detail. After reading through Gordon's description of the 16th Connecticut at Antietam, I can easily say that it is one of the best accounts of a regiment in a battle I have read in quite some time. As the narrative goes on, Gordon takes the reader through the various events of the regiment's history ranging from Fredericksburg, Portsmouth and Plymouth. One of the more gut wrenching accounts throughout the text is the portion of the work which has been dedicated to Andersonville. The words of Robert Kellogg wrote in his diary of soldiers who were once men and had turned into skeletons is just one of the many accounts which showcases the horrors of Andersonville Prison. This story is one of the many reasons that this regimental history stands out over some of the others written in recent years. Not only does Gordon give us the history of the regiment, she also gives us the humanity of the regiment which is an art that is hard to come by these days. I highly recommend this work to anyone interested in regimental histories or anyone interested in the history of the state of Connecticut during the Civil War. I believe that I can say easily that this is one of the best regimental histories I have read in my lifetime. There is much in this book that can teach others not only in creating a compelling narrative, but by teaching a history of a regiment not usually discussed past their actions at Antietam. I would also consider this the best book about a Connecticut regiment to have come out in years. I hope that this work will be considered a classic in the realm of Connecticut history in the years to come as it is a triumph of scholarship. Matthew Bartlett - Gettysburg Chronicle

This is definitely the most unique and interesting book on the American Civil War I've read this year. Gordon goes far beyond the classic (and frequently maligned) regimental history genre to present a

fresh and compelling work of analysis. Through a truly amazing amount of research, she tracks the lackluster service of the 16th Connecticut, its extremely poor luck, and its members' attempts to rehabilitate their regiment's reputation during and long after the war. This work is a standout example of new Civil War studies uncovering the war's darker aspects: the selfishness of many people involved in it and the physical and emotional toll on veterans. This is not the version of the Civil War you probably learned in school, but is truer for it.

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