

Major H. Allen Skinner  
TF East OIC

Indiana Recruiting and Retention Battalion  
Indiana National Guard

Photos courtesy of Eli Lilly and Company Archives

Archival information provided by Lilly Corporation through Ms. Lisa Bayne, Lilly Corporation historian

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Eli Lilly was born in Baltimore, Md., on July 8, 1838. The Lilly family eventually moved in 1851 to Greencastle, Ind. There Eli attended the Asbury preparatory school (now DePauw University). Following graduation, Eli Lilly apprenticed for four years with a Lafayette druggist. During that time, Lilly also joined a local militia company, the Lafayette Guards, where he served as a junior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) and learned the rudiments of military drill.

When war came in April 1861, Eli Lilly had married and opened his own drugstore in Greencastle. When President Lincoln called for infantry regiments from the Union states, Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton quickly mustered several regiments of infantry and artillery for service in Virginia and Kentucky. Answering the call, Lilly left his new business and bride to accept a commission in the 21st Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Instead of seeing combat, the 21st Indiana was shipped to Baltimore to garrison the harbor. Frustrated after six months of inactivity, Lilly resigned his commission and returned home to Indiana. There, Lilly badgered Governor Morton for permission to form an artillery battery. While waiting on Morton's decision, Lilly studied artillery theory and tactics:

"Meanwhile, I studied artillery practice. I recited my lessons and learned the theory of maneuvers". Impressed with Lilly's persistence and skills, Governor Morton appointed Lilly as the captain of the 18th Indiana Volunteer Artillery battery in July 1862.

Lilly posted recruiting handbills around the Greencastle, and used his drugstore as his recruiting office. In no time, Lilly filled his battery, mustering into service on 06 August 1862 at Camp Morton, Indianapolis. Lilly's battery received six Rodman rifles, along with horses and support equipment. However, Lilly had only three days to train his green soldiers before joining the Army of the Cumberland in repelling a Confederate invasion of Kentucky. Lilly's battery spent the remainder of 1862 campaigning across Tennessee. In December 1862, the 18th Indiana Artillery was attached to Wilder's Mounted Brigade, part of the Army



Newly commissioned Lt. Eli Lilly, 21st Indiana Infantry,  
1861

of the Cumberland. Wilder's unit was unique, being mounted infantry as armed with seven shot Spencer rifles instead of muzzle loading Springfields. Wilder's brigade spent the winter and spring of 1863 performing "scouts and raids" against the Confederate Army of Tennessee commanded by General Braxton Bragg. Lilly constantly drilled his men to quickly emplace, provide fire support, and limber while keeping pace with the mounted infantry columns. Lilly also created a howitzer battery, known as the "Jackass" battery for his use of mules to pull four ex-Confederate mountain howitzers. Lilly's battery was the most powerful and best trained battery in the entire Army of the Cumberland.

In June 1863, Wilder spearheaded the advance of the Army of the Cumberland against Army of Tennessee. Wilder's men swept aside Confederate pickets, seized the critical Hoover's Gap pass, and held off superior Confederate forces until friendly infantry arrived. During the fight, Lilly's battery overmatched Rebel artillery, disabling two cannons with no loss or damage. Lilly was commended by General Rosecrans for his support of the attack. Afterwards, Wilder's

Brigade outflanked the Confederate defenses, forcing the evacuation of Chattanooga on 11 September. Subsequently, the Army of the Cumberland consolidated along Chickamauga Creek south of Chattanooga to face the reinforced Army of Tennessee. Wilder's Brigade protected the left flank of the Federal army by screening two bridges across the creek with skirmishers and detached guns from Lilly's battery.

On 18 September, Bragg attempted to outflank the Union left, but Wilder's infantrymen, closely supported by Lilly's battery, stalled the Rebel advance until nightfall. By doing so, Rosecrans had time to redeploy an infantry corps to the threatened flank. The next day, the Rebels drove in the Federal skirmishers and threatened to overwhelm the Fourteenth Corps. Wilder's men poured volley after volley, halted a Confederate division in a ditch parallel to the line. Lilly bravely redeployed two of his guns forward to place an enfilading fire on the Rebels with triple charges of canister. Lilly's action killed hundreds of Rebel soldiers, and drove the Confederate division from the field. Afterwards, Lilly's battery fired triple charges of canister to break another attack, this time by Longstreet's Corps. All that day, Lilly remained on horseback directing his battery, and helping to carry up ammunition, while Rebel sharpshooters tried to kill him.

On 19 September, Bragg massed Longstreet's Corps in an all out attack on the Federal line, collapsing the Federal right and center, and driving much of the army towards Chattanooga in panicked retreat. Wilder's brigade, backed by Lilly's firepower, checked the Rebel left and helped to slow the breakthrough – buying precious time for General George Thomas (the Rock of Chickamauga) to reorganize the Union left to stave off total disaster. Late that afternoon, Wilder screened the Union wagon trains and served as rear guard in the Federal retreat to Chattanooga.

In November 1863, Lilly's Battery was attached to General Edward McCook's Cavalry division for operations against Rebel cavalry. Lilly's battery fought in several engagements, most notably at Mossy Creek. There, McCook left Lilly unsupported while the Union cavalry



Captain and commander of the 18th Indiana Artillery Battery

tried to outflank the Rebels. The Rebel commander undertook to capture Lilly's guns, and soon had to fight off a hostile infantry advance while under fire from Rebel batteries and sharpshooters. Eventually, Lilly had to limber his battery to a safer position to the rear. To finish the movement of his guns, Lilly had to lead a saber charge against the Rebel skirmish line.

In April 1864, Eli Lilly was offered a Major's commission in the newly organized 9th Indiana Cavalry regiment. Back in Tennessee, Major Lilly took a small detail to a fort guarding the Nashville and Decatur rail line. On 24 September, General Nathan Forrest's Corps of 12,000 troopers surrounded the Sulphur Branch fort. After a short fight, which killed the Union commander (leaving Lilly in command) and exhausted the fort's ammunition, Lilly had no choice but to surrender. Lilly was sent to a prison camp in Alabama and paroled in a prisoner exchange in January 1865. Lilly returned to duty with the 9th Cavalry, where he was

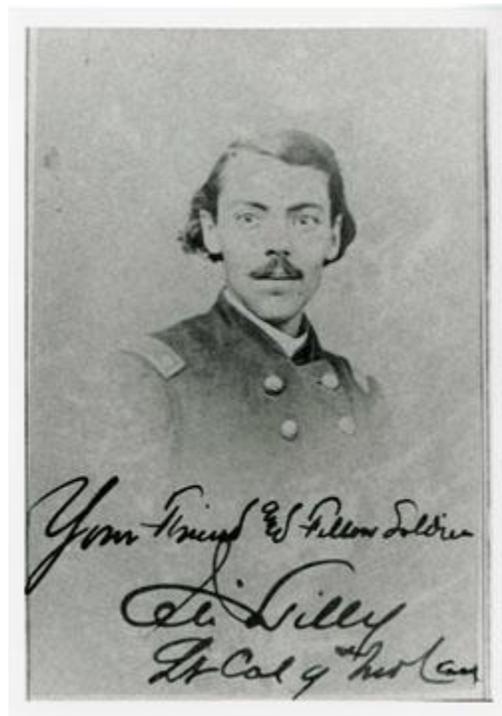
promoted to Colonel and regimental commander in June 1865. Lilly was mustered from service on 25 August 1865.

After a failed plantation venture in Mississippi (where he lost his wife and son), Lilly returned to Indiana in 1867. There he worked as a chemist, entered into short lived partnerships, and remarried. Eventually in May 1876, Eli Lilly established his own firm, Eli Lilly and Company, in downtown Indianapolis to make high quality pharmaceuticals. Lilly made many improvements to the manufacturing process, and marketed an effective alternative, all of which made his company solidly profitable.

Colonel Lilly proved as good a citizen as he was Soldier. He chartered the Consumer's Gas Trust Company (predecessor to today's Citizen's Gas) as a non-profit charitable trust to operate only for the benefit of customers and the community. In honor of his deceased daughter, Eleanor, Lilly donated property and \$10,000 to the Little Flower Mission for use as a children's hospital. He was one of the incorporators and a director of what is now the University of Indianapolis. During the Panic of 1893 (the worst depression in US history prior to the Great Depression), Colonel Lilly planned and oversaw city efforts to care for thousands of hungry and homeless citizens during the winter. Colonel Lilly passed away in June 1898 after a long fight with stomach cancer. An editorial in the Indianapolis News:

"In the death of Colonel Eli Lilly, the state and the city lost a brave and gallant soldier, a distinguished citizen, a generous, public-spirited and benevolent man. All good causes were sure of ready sympathy when presented to him. He loved Indianapolis; and everything that helped to build it up, to improve its condition, to make life easier and better for the people, won his loyal and unwearrying support. He freely gave of his means; he more freely still of his personal endeavor."

Colonel Lilly's legacy of community service and philanthropy was carried on by the Lilly Endowment, a private foundation established by Lilly's son Josiah K. Lilly Sr. Today, the Endowment seeks to give back to local charities and charitable organization. Since 2003, the Endowment has partnered with the Indiana National Guard by supporting the Indiana National Guard Relief Fund. The Fund provides grant money to help Soldiers and Airmen who experience financial hardship resulting from their deployment or military service.



Lieutenant Colonel and commander of the 9th  
Indiana Cavalry 1864-5