

John(Johannes) Von Der Au
Corporal, 121st Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 2 Div., XIV Corps, Army of the
Cumberland

John Von Der Au was born March 21, 1842 at the home of Jacob Ritner near Carlisle, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. He was a young boy when his family moved from Pennsylvania to Union County, Ohio.

On August 18, 1862 John Von Der Au enlisted in the 121st Ohio Volunteer Infantry (OVI) and his brother John Philip Von Der Au enlisted four days later on August 22. The brothers served together in Company I of the 121st OVI throughout the war.

The Ohio 121st OVI was organized and mustered in for three years of service on September 11, 1862. Initially under the command of Colonel William P. Reid, the regiment was recruited in Delaware, Knox, Logan, Marion and Morrow Counties.

The 121st was involved in 16 significant engagements, among these Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Kennesaw Mountain, the Siege of Atlanta, Sherman's March to the Sea and Bentonville, the biggest battle ever fought in NC.

During the Georgia Campaign, John Von Der Au was wounded on June 27, 1864 in the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain while on forward picket duty. An enemy musket ball entered the back of his right thigh and traveled to the front of his thigh. John Von Der Au was first taken to a field hospital where the wound was cleaned and dressed. He was then hospitalized in Nashville, Tennessee and did not return to active duty until late August 1864. His regiment was then camped in the vicinity of Atlanta, Georgia.

After returning to his regiment, John Von Der Au completed his service participating in the "March to the Sea" and subsequently the "Carolina Campaign". The Regiments final battle was at Bentonville, North Carolina.

On April 17 Confederate General Joseph Johnston and Union General William T. Sherman met at the farmhouse of James Bennitt (now called Bennett Place) to negotiate the terms of Johnston's surrender. On April 26, 1865, the Bennett home became the site of the largest troop surrender of the Civil War. Following the end of the war the 121st OVI marched in the Grand Review of the Armies in Washington DC on May 23 and 24th, 1865.

By the end of the war, the 121st OVI had fought in eight major battles, 8 military campaigns and numerous skirmishes. They captured an enemy battle flag and battery and suffered through nearly three years of bloody civil war. During the service of the 121st OVI from September of 1862 to June of 1865 the regiment had suffered the losses of 9 officers and 92 enlisted men killed or mortally wounded, and another 2 officers and 246 enlisted men died of disease for a total loss by death of 349 Officers and Men.

After the war John Von Der Au returned home and married Susan Huber. From this union, a daughter Mary Von Der Au was born. She subsequently married Clinton Johnson and moved to Mansfield, Ohio and thus started the Johnson family lineage. John Von Der Au was BCWRT member James Johnson's great grandfather.