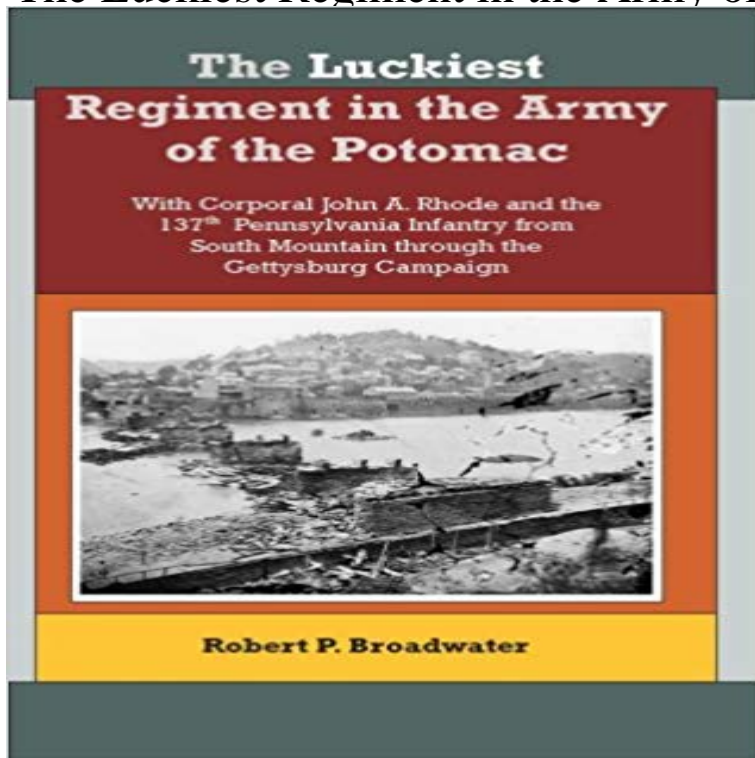


The Luckiest Regiment in the Army of the Potomac



The summer of 1862 saw the Union army in the midst of a potential crisis that might well have left the supporters of the Federal Government despairing the outcome of the war. Thousands of Union troops who had enlisted the previous summer were about to be mustered out of the service, their one-year term of enlistment complete. State and Federal governments scrambled to replace these men, and to maintain the balance of military power. Fifteen emergency regiments were raised in the state of Pennsylvania, in July and August of 1862, enrolled to serve for a period of nine months. These 15,000 men would go a long way toward filling the vacancies that were threatening to cripple the Army of the Potomac. Though their numbers would help to swell the ranks of the army, these green volunteers were replacing men who had become veterans on many hard-fought battlefields of the war. With only the scantest of military training, they would be called upon to turn back Robert E. Lees invasion of Maryland, during the Antietam Campaign, learning the school of the soldier on the battlefield rather than in a camp of instruction. The 137th Pennsylvania was one of the fifteen emergency regiments raised by the Commonwealth. The Luckiest Regiment in the Army of the Potomac - With Corporal John A. Rhode and the 137th Pennsylvania Infantry from South Mountain Through The Gettysburg Campaign tells the history of the regiment through the diary entries of one of its members, Corporal John A. Rhode. During the time of its enlistment, the 137th Pennsylvania saw service at South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville, being several times under fire from enemy artillery and musketry. It took part in several of the bloodiest battles of the war, while sustaining only one casualty attributed to combat, that being a wounded man in their last battle, at Chancellorsville, where their

brigade was a victim of friendly fire. Indeed, the 137th Pennsylvania was extremely lucky to have faced

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