

ANDERSON ZOUAVE

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IS E. D. HAWTHORN'S ZOUAVE IN HAYWARD'S PORTER HOUSE AN ANDERSON ZOUAVE?

By John Tierney



The painting *Interior of George Hayward's Porter House, 1871 Sixth Avenue, N.Y.C.* by Edmund D. Hawthorn, owned by the New-York Historical Society, is an unusual and rare scene depicting the elegant New York bar which once stood on the south-west corner of 13th Street and Sixth Avenue during the Civil War. Among the patrons are several figures in the colourful uniforms of New York regiments. With the formalised grouping and the distinctive features of each figure there is little doubt that this painting depicts people who were probably well known at the time, today, however, their identities are lost.¹ Despite this stated ignorance as to the identities of the individuals in the painting, it has for some time been believed that the zouave seated in the foreground with cigarette, backpack and musket is a member of the Advance Guard, or company "I", of the Anderson Zouaves – 62nd New York State Volunteers.

On the left of the painting, standing at the bar, there appears to be an officer of the Gardes Lafayette (55th New York State Militia) in conversation with, what may be meant to be, a member of the 79th New York Cameron Highlanders, however, if this is the case then Hawthorn has done a poor job of depicting the Highlander uniform as it is known that in the period before the Civil War members of this regiment wore the Cameron of Erracht (Modern) tartan with red and white hose. Perhaps the highlander is merely a foreign visitor. For the purposes of this interrogation of the painting it is probably best to ignore the highlander.

Behind the 55th officer and the highlander is another officer of the 55th and, in the grey uniform, what appears to be a member of the famous 7th Regiment NYSNG. At the very back of the bar, and to the

right of the waiter, there appears to be a member of another regiment but his uniform is too indistinct to be certain of which. This being said, there does appear to be a number '11' on the front of his kepi. If this is the case then it could be that this is meant to represent a member of the Eleventh Regiment of New York, which at the beginning of the war belonged to the 4th Brigade of the First Division of the New York Militia. Besides these military men and the zouave, the rest of the figures appear to be a few bar staff, a beggar, a boot-black and a number of gentlemen conversing.

The identification of the zouave, in the painting, as a member of the Anderson Zouaves, seems to date from 1991 when Roger Sturke wrote and illustrated a description of the early war uniforms of the regiment for the journal, *Military Collector & Historian*.²

However, besides Sturke's assertion that the figure in the painting is a member of company "I" of the Anderson Zouaves, there appears to be no proof that this is actually the case and it seems that Sturke may have made an assumption as to the individual's identity.

While it is true that the zouave in the foreground does wear a uniform remarkably like the contemporary descriptions, photographs and the one extant example of the uniform worn by company "I", the appearance of the other military figures in the room seem to suggest that this is a pre-war or, at the most, an early war scene. If this is the case then the zouave is unlikely to be a member of company "I" of the Anderson Zouaves.

The New York Historical Society's catalogue description says of the painting:

*In the right foreground a group seated about a table listens to a bearded man talk; one of the men is dressed in Turkish military uniform.*³

It is interesting to note that the New York Historical Society's description does not even recognise the zouave uniform as American and, as none of the other individuals in the group has been identified, it is likely that Sturke's conclusion that the zouave is a member of Riker's regiment is based upon nothing more than the physical similarity between the uniform in the painting and the identified example in the collection of the Smithsonian Institute. If this is the case, then there is reason to question whether or not Sturke has got it right.



Detail of Hawthorn's zouave.

While the stated year of the painting is 1863, this scene is clearly set at an earlier date. It is possible that while the painting was completed in 1863, and therefore dated as such, Hawthorn may have been commissioned to paint the picture in 1861 or even before.

The key to working out who the individuals in the painting may be and which regiments they may represent is an accurate date for the scene. Having identified some of the uniforms it should be possible to approach an approximate date which should, in turn, allow the zouave to be correctly identified.

Prior to the outbreak of the Civil War the First Division of the New York State Militia was made up of volunteer regiments which, while ostensibly responsible for the defense of the state, were mainly used for parades, being brought out on significant occasions like visits by foreign dignitaries, state funerals and important state celebrations such as Evacuation Day (November 25th) and the 4th of July. The design of their uniforms was, in the main, left to the discretion of the members of the regiment and their officers and was changed from time to time. In a number of cases the design of the uniforms was based on continental examples with the emphasis being on ceremonial effect rather than martial practicality.

Such was the case with the uniforms of the 55th Regiment – Gardes Lafayette and the 79th Regiment – Cameron Highlanders, with a tendency towards conspicuous displays of epaulets, gold braid and bright colours. However, the outbreak of the Civil War quickly saw changes introduced to these flamboyantly impractical uniforms.

While the elegant surroundings of Hayward's Porter House may seem to us like an unlikely meeting place for Civil War soldiers it would not

have been uncommon to see members of the New York State Militia in such a place in the years and months prior to the firing on Fort Sumter.

The militia regiments of antebellum New York were renowned as clubs for social elites. The Seventh Regiment New York State Militia (represented by the individual in the grey uniform) had existed in some form since 1806 and was known as the "Silk Stocking Regiment" precisely because of the disproportionate number of social elites counted among its members (four members of the 7th served in the Anderson Zouaves: John F. Bisbee, Albert V. Meeks, Samuel C. Thwaite and Charles R. Stirling). The 55th New York State Militia was formed in the 1850s and was composed mainly of French and Continental expatriates, some of whom had seen service in the Crimea, Italy and Algeria. Like the Seventh Regiment it was essentially an exclusive club. The regiment was so renowned for its dinner parties that the members had adopted the nickname "Gardes de la Forchette" (Guards of the Fork) in place of Gardes Lafayette.

The 55th adopted a new uniform of light blue soon after the beginning of the war. This is not the uniform being worn by the members of the 55th in this painting and so this narrows the date for the painting to the first few months of the war.

Interestingly, the nucleus of Company "I" of the Anderson Zouaves was formed when a whole company of the 55th NYSM, frustrated by the perceived reticence or inability of their commander, Colonel Eugene Le Gal, to gain approval from New York State Governor Edwin D. Morgan for the regiment to be sent to the seat of war, defected from the Gardes Lafayette and joined Colonel John Lafayette Riker's new zouave regiment. Just when this happened is unclear, but by May 25, 1861 it is known that only about 50 of the recruits of the Anderson Zouaves were uniformed.⁴

It is very likely that these 50 men were the defectors from the 55th who had undoubtedly brought with them the uniforms they had worn in their previous company.

Prior to the war the 55th militia had included among its organisation a company of zouaves which, according to Colonel Regis de Trobriand, who commanded the regiment after the resignation of Le Gal, wore a uniform which "was precisely that of the French Zouaves".⁵ The authentic uniform of the French Zouaves is the uniform which is depicted in Hawthorn's painting. On the other hand, the uniform that was worn by nine of the ten companies of the Anderson Zouaves was not an authentic French zouave design. Like many other zouave companies and regiments during the Civil War the main zouave uniform of Riker's regiment was based on a zouave design but was distinctive enough for it to be identified as the specific uniform of this singular New York volunteer regiment. The main uniform of the Anderson Zouaves, in the early months of the war, was a zouave jacket with sky blue trousers tailored to be less full than the traditional red pantaloons of the French zouaves. The tombeaus of the jacket did not feature the coloured panel which was used to identify the specific regiment to which the wearer belonged. A white stripe, about an inch wide, ran down the outside leg of the trouser in place of the ornate Russia braid design of the traditional zouave uniform. All things considered, it must be assumed that the similarity between the uniform of company "I" of the Anderson Zouaves and the zouave company of the 55th NYSV, must owe something to the uniform previously worn by the enlistees from the Gardes Lafayette.

It is interesting that on the date mentioned above, May 25, the 55th had formed on Fourteenth street between First and Second avenues for inspection by the Union Defence Committee and that while the regiment still featured a zouave company, the captaincy of that company was vacant. While there is no specific evidence to support it, it seems a reasonable conclusion that the members of the 55th who enlisted as company "I" of the 62nd did so on or just before May 25 and that these men had, in the main, composed the zouave company of the 55th. It would also seem to be more than a coincidence that the authentic French zouave company of the Gardes Lafayette was, like that of Riker's regiment, known as company "I". If this was indeed the case then it is very likely that the uniform of the Advance Guard of the Anderson Zouaves was in fact the very same as that of the zouave company of the 55th NYSM.

On May 26 the *New York Times* described the uniform for the 55th's zouave company as "red cap, dark blue jacket, red trimmings, red Zouave breeches, with yellow and white leggings" a description which is almost entirely consistent with the zouave in Hawthorn's painting.

Being privately purchased and having made such an investment in their ornate uniforms, it is understandable that the members of 55th's zouave company may have been reluctant to give up their uniform when they changed their enlistment to Riker's regiment. Riker, no doubt, would have appreciated the financial relief of having recruits with their own uniforms as the regiment was being equipped almost entirely at his own and Lieut. Colonel William S. Tisdale's expense.⁶

In light of this, it seems reasonable to conclude that the company of the 55th which joined the Anderson Zouaves brought with them their distinct 3eme Regiment French zouave uniform.

Given the evidence how likely is it that the zouave in Hawthorne's painting is a member of company "I" of the Anderson Zouaves rather than a member of company "I" of the 55th NYSM? If there was some way of dating the scene more accurately then it may be possible to definitely put the case one way or the other.

For the zouave in Hawthorn's painting to be a member of company "I" of the Anderson Zouaves the scene must be set, at the earliest, some time after late May 1861. However, even if this was the case the zouave could still be a member of the 55th New York since, as has already been shown, the uniform of 55th's zouave company seems to have been almost identical to that of company "I" of the Anderson Zouaves.

Notwithstanding this, a comparison between the zouave uniform in the painting and the example of the Anderson Zouaves uniform in the collection of the Smithsonian Institute actually reveals some significant differences between the two uniforms.



The zouave uniform jacket of Company "I" of the Anderson Zouaves from the collection of the Smithsonian Institute.

The Anderson Zouave uniform in the Smithsonian collection has the monograms "A" and "Z" in an eggshell coloured thread respectively upon the right and left tombeaus of the jacket. Hawthorn's zouave uniform does not have these monograms. The Smithsonian uniform is completely unadorned with gold braid or buttons, however, the uniform of Hawthorn's zouave appears to have eleven small gold bell buttons running along the deep sleeve slash and a design of gold braid on the outside of the sleeve and on the collar. Hawthorn's zouave also appears to be wearing a yellow or gold silk shirt with full sleeves which can be seen protruding from the sleeve slash.

Despite the claim by the New York Historical Society that the identities of the individuals depicted are now "lost", it may not be totally impossible, even now, to locate clues within the painting which may

help us to *find* these people and, in doing so, to perhaps more accurately date the painting.

We are fortunate that the officers of the 55th on the left of the painting are wearing French uniforms as it is possible to tell the rank of each from the rows of braid on their kepis. The first officer is either the colonel or lieutenant colonel of the 55th as indicated by the four rows of gold braid running down and around his kepi. Similarly the officer behind appears to be the major of the 55th as indicated by the three rows of braid on his kepi. Until at least May 25, 1861 the Major of the 55th New York was Louis Thourot.⁷ There is an existing photograph of Thourot in the collection of MOLLUS (Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States) which can be compared to the Major of the 55th New York depicted in Hawthorn's painting.

The similarity between the two images is compelling and it is probably safe to assume that Hawthorn was in fact depicting Louis Thourot, major of the 55th NYSM, in his painting.



(l to r) Louis Thourot as Lieut.-Colonel wearing the campaign uniform of the 55th New York State Volunteers; Hawthorn's depiction of the Major of the 55th which, at least until May 25, 1861, was Louis Thourot; Henry A. Ogden's illustration of Eugene Le Gal one time colonel of the 55th New York State Militia wearing a zouave officer's uniform in the late 1880's; Hawthorn's 55th Colonel; Regis De Trobriand colonel of the 55th New York State Volunteers in his campaign uniform.

The figure in the colonel's uniform is a little more difficult to identify but it is possible that it is meant to be Eugene Le Gal who commanded the 55th Militia but was replaced by Regis De Trobriand in the 55th Volunteer organisation. There is no available photographic image for Le Gal, however, there does exist an illustration.

In the late 1880's the Century Company commissioned famed military illustrator Henry A. Ogden to produce detailed studies of particular uniforms for the series *Battles & Leaders of the Civil War*. Among these was a study of Eugene Le Gal in a 55th officer's zouave uniform. While the likenesses are not identical it is important to remember that there was about 25 years between the painting and the illustration. What is clear is that the painting does not seem to depict Regis De Trobriand.

If this is the case then a more accurate date for the painting may be suggested, for while Louis Thourot was Major of the 55th N. Y. State Militia he enlisted in the 55th N. Y. State Volunteers on July 28, 1861 as Lieut.-Colonel not as Major. So while it is possible that the painting depicts a wartime scene it is clearly a scene that must have occurred sometime before July 28, 1861 when Thourot enlisted in the 55th New York Volunteer organisation.

Perhaps, when first exhibited, those viewing the painting recognised the individuals in it and were aware of the historical importance of the event, if any. The distance in time puts the modern observer at a disadvantage in this respect, however, there may be an important clue left by Hawthorn which may still allow us to identify the exact date of the scene in the painting of the Porterhouse.

The figure in the centre of the painting, clearly the most prominent of all of the people in the painting, holds in his hand a copy of the *New York Herald*. The front page displays a headline and a map which seems to fill the middle four columns of the paper. It is very likely that this paper is based on an actual issue of James Gordon Bennet's Democratic journal. A few minutes access to the early 1861 issues of the *Herald* should be sufficient to identify this paper and therefore the date of the painting. If the painting should be dated prior to late May 1861, which is around the time that the zouaves of the 55th defected to the 62nd, then it is very likely that the zouave in Hayward's painting is in fact a mem-

ber of the 55th New York State Militia and not a member of Colonel John L. Riker's Anderson Zouaves.



A close-up on the issue of the *New York Herald* which may be the best clue to an accurate dating of Hawthorn's painting.

It is an irony of history that while the zouave in the painting, so long believed to be a member of the Anderson Zouaves, is much more likely to have been a member of the pre-war 55th New York Militia, that in May of 1861 with the defection of a company of the 55th to the 62nd, this individual may have found himself a member of the Advance Guard of the Anderson Zouaves. Knowing that the defection took place allows us speculate on the identity of the zouave. Perhaps the zouave with the gold braid on his sleeves is a sergeant of the 55th New York's zouave company negotiating with Lieut.-Colonel Tisdale of the 62nd. Perhaps the zouave is the Italian Louis La Fata who went on to become the captain of the Advance Guard of the 62nd. The officers at the bar, distant and excluded from the conversation at the table, may be the rejected Colonel Le Gal and Major Louis Thourot. Unlikely of course, but possible.

We may never know exactly who the individuals in Hawthorn's painting are, and exactly when the depicted meeting occurred, however, we can be fairly certain that the zouave in Hawthorn's painting is not a member of the Anderson Zouaves but a member of the Gardes Lafayette, 55th New York State Militia.

Notes:

1. In 1978 the painting appeared on the cover of *Civil War Times Illustrated*, where the caption read:
Interior of George Hayward's Porter House, New York, by E. D. Hawthorne (sic). This handsome wartime painting was presumably commissioned to portray a number of prominent citizens of the city who frequented Hayward's Porter House at 187 6th Avenue, but identifications have been lost.
2. Sturke, R., 1973, '62nd Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, (Anderson Zouaves), 1861-1865', *Military Collector & Historian, Journal of The Company of Military Historians*, vol. XXXV, no. 1, Spring, 1983.
3. <<http://emuseum.nyhistory.org/code/emuseum.asp>>
4. *New York Times*, May 31, 1861
5. De Trobriand, R. P., 1889, *Four Years with the Army of the Potomac*, (trans. George K. Dauchy), Boston, MA. p. 82.
6. *New York Times*, June 26, 1861, p. 5.
7. *New York Times*, June 26, 1861, p. 8.

IRISH RECRUITS IN THE ANDERSON ZOUAVES.

In the May and June 2007 issues of this paper there was some debate on the ethnicity of those who made up the recruits of the Anderson Zouaves. In the May issue the argument was made that the regiment may have been composed of mainly Irish immigrants. In response David Sanders argued that it was impossible to be certain of the major ethnic make-up of the regiment. However, it is clear that many of the recruits were Irish and the following article goes some way to reinforcing this opinion.

ANDERSON ZOUAVES.

Capt. Hubbell, of Company B, desires to acknowledge the receipt of a supply of havelocks, shirts and drawers from the ladies of St. Ann's Church, West Eighteenth-street, and to express his gratitude and that of his com-

pany for the above favors, assuring these patriotic ladies that the kindness they dispense with so liberal a hand will inspire deeds of heroism in the cause so dear to every woman in the land.

Capt. Wm N. Hathaway, Company C. has opened a recruiting office at Hibernian Hall No. 42 Prince-street, for two days only; applications should, therefore, be made at once.

New York Times,
Friday, June 21, 1861
page 8 column 5

Hibernian Hall was one of the most popular meeting and gathering places for the Irish in the city of New York and was also a meeting place for the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). The proprietor of the hall was John Heeney however, in the late 1850's, the manager was Michael Corcoran who was later to find fame as the Colonel of the 69th Regiment of the Irish Brigade. At the 1858 AOH National Convention held at Hibernian Hall, Michael Corcoran, a veteran nationalist, was introduced to the members of the convention as "their host". When war broke out in 1861, the hall's doors were flung open as a recruiting depot for the 69th Regiment and, later, other Irish military units.

When the 69th New York, marched to the front on April 23, 1861, they honored the AOH by parading past Hibernian Hall or "Irish Headquarters", as it was popularly known and old St. Patrick's Cathedral which was situated opposite the hall. In the days before its departure 5,000 men had signed up to join the 69th but by an order of the Major-General only 1,000 were permitted to embark.¹ Perhaps Captain Hathaway of the Anderson Zouaves hoped to tap into this number of disappointed recruits in order to quickly fill the ranks of the Anderson Zouaves.

Just how successful Hathaway may have been in recruiting Irishmen at Hibernian Hall is still open to debate as between June 18 and June 21 only eight men enlisted in the Anderson Zouaves and none enlisted on June 22 or 23, the two days immediately succeeding the printing of the above article in the *New York Times*.

Perhaps the men who signed up to join the Anderson Zouaves at Hibernian Hall did not have their enlistment become effective until a week later when most of the regiment was mustered in on June 30 at Saltersville, NJ.



New York's "Irish Headquarters", Hibernian Hall, 42 Prince Street.

Notes:

1. *New York Times*, April 23, 1861, p. 8.

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