

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" May 2022

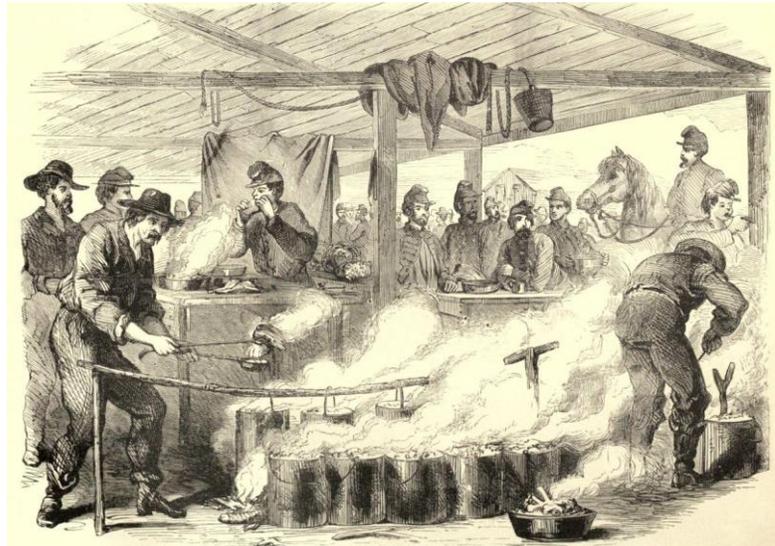
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

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I am always looking for newsletter content, so please forward your articles, book reviews, event summaries/photos, stories, etc.) to me for inclusion in a future edition of "The Sentinel". – Matthew Steger, editor

"He was 'Tail Up' All Day": Meet The Very Good Boy Who Fought (And Fetched) In the Civil War: Maine Soldier' Beloved Canine Companion Joined Them In Many A Battle

By Nicholas Picerno

Published 22 February 2022 on [History.net](https://www.history.net)



One of the more touching and little-known mascot stories of the Civil War is that of "Major," described as a "large black Newfoundland cross-breed dog," weighing about 110 pounds.

Major had his first experience in the war while with the 1st New Hampshire Infantry, a three-month regiment, and was with them at the First Battle of Bull Run. During the battle on July 21, 1861, Major received a slight wound and afterward

would return with the regiment to Portsmouth, N.H.

But on October 6, 1861, he volunteered again, jumping aboard a southbound train containing a newly recruited two-year regiment, the 10th Maine Infantry. He followed Captain Charles Emerson of Company H into the train car and was immediately adopted by the men of the company and given the name "Major."

A comrade recalled that while the 10th Maine was stationed at the Relay House railroad transportation hub near Baltimore in November 1861, Major “was always among the most advanced of the pickets, and no dog was ever allowed to cross the lines with impunity.”

On December 6, 1861, Captain George H. Nye of Company K, 10th Maine, penned the following to his wife, Charlotte: “We have some domestic animals in the house –first-we have a dog-weighs about a hundred pounds—he is on the sick-list today—he has a great dislike for the engine as the engineer squirted some water on him the other day, since then whenever he sees the cars coming he puts for the engine on the clean jump. Today he got a little too near and the cow-catcher gave him a pretty hard thump—knocking off a piece of his nose and his rump....I guess tomorrow he will get up in good shape and be a wiser dog.”



On May 25, 1862, during Union Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks’ retreat following the First Battle of Winchester, Major was so crippled by the long march that he could hardly walk and was eventually captured and spent two days behind Confederate lines before “escaping” to rejoin his comrades in Company H.

Recounting the September 1862 Battle of Antietam, regimental historian Lieutenant

John Mead Gould wrote, “Old dog ‘Major’ behaved well under fire, barking fiercely, and keeping up a steady growl from the time we went in till we came out. He had thus contributed his part towards the uproar which some consider so essential in battle. He had shown so much genuine pluck, moreover, that the men of H were bragging of his barking, and of his biting at the sounds of the bullets, asserting besides that he was ‘tail up’ all day.”

A comical—though potentially fatal—trait began to be observed of Major during battle: He would leap into the air to snap at bullets as they whizzed by or as they created small dirt clouds when they hit the ground.

Counted On to Fetch...or Fight

The “Capt. Stearns” in this photo was Daniel Stearns of the 104th Ohio, Harvey’s → owner. Stearns was gravely wounded at Nashville, as was Harvey. (USAHEC)

MAJOR, OF COURSE, was not the only dog to find a deserving home as a regimental or company mascot in either the Union or Confederate armies. There were several famous ones—including “Jack,” a stray bull terrier adopted by the Pittsburgh-based 102nd Pennsylvania Infantry. According to the regiment’s soldiers, many of them former members of Pittsburgh’s Niagara Volunteer Fire Company, Jack would join them on the march and would stand near the “firing line” during combat. Jack, they stressed, comprehended bugle calls and would obey orders. He was also known to roam the battlefield in the wake of fighting, seeking out wounded and dead “comrades.” Captured twice, Jack at one point survived six months in a Confederate prison camp. Another canine mascot of note was “Sallie,” a brindle Staffordshire bull terrier adopted by the 11th Pennsylvania (remembered with the memorial below). Sallie was with the regiment at Gettysburg, famously standing guard over wounded or dead Federals on Oak Ridge during the battle, and thereafter survived several intense engagements before being killed in action at Hatcher’s Run, Va., in February 1865. She was, appropriately, buried on the battlefield. A white bulldog named “Harvey” (shown right) was a mascot of the 104th Ohio—the so-called “Barking Dog Regiment”—and was wounded in action at Kennesaw Mountain during the Atlanta Campaign and later at Nashville. And let’s not overlook “York,” who faithfully accompanied Union Brig. Gen. Alexander S. Asboth, joining him at Pea Ridge and during the Siege of Corinth, Miss. Or “Calamity,” known as a foraging specialist with Company B of the 28th Wisconsin. Just a few! For those of us with cherished dogs who, yes, shrink and hide at the sound of thunder or fireworks, we salute these canine anomalies. –C.K.H.



Major returned home to Maine with the two-year enlistees of the 10th Maine, and the regiment was mustered out on May 8, 1863. News of the dog's deeds in the war had spread to his native New Hampshire, and the veterans of the 10th Maine faced an attempt by his former master to claim Major as his property. The men of Company H offered to purchase the dog at the owner's price, but he insisted on having the dog returned. Emerson refused to return Major, and the owner next appealed to Colonel George L. Beal, the regimental commander.

Beal refused to get involved, saying the matter did not concern him and insisted the owner settle Major's ownership with the men of Company H. While the dog's owner was meeting with Beal, two of the Company H men took Major away from camp and kept him out of sight. The owner was forced to return home without his dog or the money the men had offered.



Sallie was the canine mascot of the 11th Pennsylvania Infantry (11th PA's monument on Doubleday Ave. Gettysburg NMP)

The soldiers paid to have a silver collar made for Major. On the collar was engraved an oak leaf, signifying the rank of major. Also inscribed on the collar were the battles in which Major participated.

The collar was given to 1st Lt. Granville Blake, who assumed responsibility for Major after Emerson became lieutenant colonel, keeping Major at his home in Auburn, Maine. On December 16, 1863, Blake was commissioned a captain in Company H of the 29th Maine Infantry, made up of many 10th Maine veterans, including the faithful Major.

Major accompanied Blake and the 29th Maine to New Orleans, arriving on February 16, 1864. They would take part in Banks' ill-fated Red River Campaign. It would be Major's second campaign with Banks—and his last.

In late March 1864, Major went missing for a short period. Gould wrote in his journal: "The dog Major is lost: was last seen in Washington [Louisiana] where he went in swimming with the Reg't. In the 10th he used to march at the head of the Reg't. as Company H was on the right but in the 29th H is near the left and old Mage is wild when it comes marching time...." Shortly afterward, Major returned to the regiment.

On April 8, 1864, the 29th Maine entered the fight at the Battle of Mansfield. While positioned at Chapman's Bayou, also known as the "plum orchard fight," Major was barking fiercely at passing stragglers.

In a tribute to Major in his 1871 regimental history, Gould wrote: "He was always a dog of singular behavior, but never acted so strangely as in his last fight. While in camp at the saw mill he was much disturbed at hearing the sound of the battle, and appeared to know that we should have to, or ought to go to the front. He barked wildly at every cavalry-man we met on the march[,] he seemed to know a straggler and skulk, and knew, too, that it was safe to bark at them. We never shall forget his actions at the top of the hill where we fought. As before stated, we came at that point upon almost a solid mass of fugitives, and here, too, we first heard the bullets whistle. The dog seemed to comprehend the situation, and bracing himself against the torrent, he gave one long, loud howl that rose above all other sounds, and then went on again. He ran wildly around the field, always keeping in our front, and biting at the little clouds of dust raised by the enemy's balls. At our first volley he jumped into the air, howled and bit at the flying bullets, and was going through strange capers when the fatal bullet struck him. He died like a hero, far in the front of the line, and had he been human we should not have felt his loss more keenly."



← *Granville Blake, a lieutenant in the 10th Maine, became Major's handler in late 1863. He escorted the dog to Louisiana for the Red River Campaign, serving in what was now the 29th Maine. (Nicholas Picerno Collection)*

In a letter home written shortly after the battle, Nye, then commanding the 29th Maine's Company K, poignantly summed up Major's death:

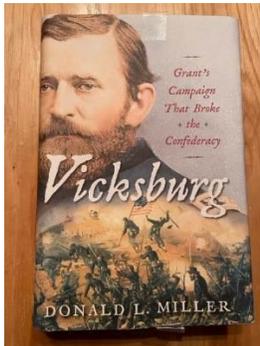
Our old dog Major which was such a great favorite with us was killed at the battle of Mansfield in the first days fight—he fell just in front of my company, he was running in front of the company jumping for the bullets as they knocked up the dust in front of us. We miss him very much for we were all greatly attached to that poor fellow—but he fell on the field of battle nobly facing the foes.

Major would share the fate of many a soldier, whether they wore blue or gray: an unmarked grave on the battlefield.

BOOK REVIEW –

Vicksburg - Grant's Campaign That Broke the Confederacy

Author: Donald L. Miller Reviewed by Mike Espenshade



Hardback; 2019; Simon and Shuster; 500 pp.; in addition: 12 maps, 36 pictures; 99 pages of notes in back; 37 pp of glossary, 25 pp of index. Author-signed copy \$31.00 new in 2000.

This review is longer than most due to the power and breath of the book. Deeply-researched work by Miller that spanned 12 years to write, **Vicksburg** is a coherent history of monumental efforts to take Vicksburg by Grant, his army, and Porter's navy.

Primarily from U.S. Grant's perspective, the author takes you through the key events along the Mississippi River from 1861 until the surrender of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863. This includes the events relative to his rise from colonel to major general, a fair evaluation of his positive and negative performances, his genius and his flaws, and his relations with other Union officer superiors and contemporaries.

The overall descriptions are very good of the varied, and often unsuccessful, maneuverings and early battle events. This extremely difficult and complex campaign, requiring a close partnership between the Union Army and Navy, becomes known to the reader as a herculean task with many costs in lives on both sides. As obstacles to Grant, the staunch defense by the Confederate forces pales to the challenges of terrain (swamps, bayous, rivers) and heavy losses from disease (on both sides). Miller's excellent coverage on the US Navy's essential role in this campaign does not leave you wanting.

From December 1862 until late April 1863, Grant unsuccessfully attempted 4 different approaches to Vicksburg on her east side of the Mississippi River. The first approach was overland through northern Mississippi where his single railroad supply line (Grant should have known better) was cut by Rebel cavalry. The other approaches used the Navy to disembark troops at different points north of Vicksburg: on the Yazoo River (leading to the bloody repulse at Chickasaw Bluffs), Yazoo Pass Expedition, and then Steele's Bayou Expedition.

Finally successful was the month-long back-breaking work of Union soldiers and negroes to construct a 65 mile wagon road on the west (Louisiana) side of the winding Mississippi River across swamps and bayous. This road enabled Grant to avoid the huge troop transport losses expected from the deadly river guns in Vicksburg. It also gained river crossing access to firm land on the east side of the river about 40 miles south of Vicksburg. This crossing, starting on April 29, 1863 opened the final approach and series of battles that led to the 6-week siege.

Happily, sufficient primary source accounts of the average soldiers' and civilians' ordeals and descriptions of the Confederate leadership situations regularly populate this well-balanced book.

The battle descriptions of the final push are good overviews, but not voluminous in detail. These include the Battles of: Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hill, Big Black River, and the brave but futile and bloody Union assaults on expertly built forts and breastworks along the land side (east) of Vicksburg on May 19 and 23, 1863. The Union's explosive mining attempts on June 25 and July 1 are provided. Miller touches often on the wise logistical attentions by Grant to enable his success in such trying conditions.

The effects of the Emancipation Proclamation to this campaign were significant and often described by this author, as a secondary theme to his book. Grant skillfully leveraged the thousands of now-freed slaves, abandoned on their plantations by the fleeing owners, into labor forces for purposes of canal digging and guard duty in rear areas.

The faults of this book, in my mind, are minor: No table of either maps or illustrations, no Order of Battle for any of the key battles, and sometimes a reader is left wondering on what dates the narrative events happened. This is one of those masterfully compiled and described stories that I did not want to end - and I did not hurry through. I highly recommend you read it.

EXPERIENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR (PART 8)

By Leavitt W. Cushing (a member of the original 53rd PVI, Co. G)

(supplied by Tom Kear, a decedent of Cushing)

[Note – any grammatical and typographical errors were kept intact as they are original to the letter - editor]

[NOTE - This letter is undated except for the 17th, and is very difficult to read. I believe it was written Dec 17th 1862 as they were in Falmouth at the time and Benjamin's diary as of Jan 1863 places him in the hospital recovering from a wound to his hand. Shortly thereafter he is furloughed home to finish recovering. I think the references in this letter to the difficulty writing and to not being able to do much refer to that wounded hand.]

Falmouth 17th [editor - probably Dec 17th 1862]

Dear Parents Bro & Sisters:

We have not had a chance to send a letter W-[Wilson] wrote in Fr – g and I will put in a little a send this morning I have just come from the Core Hospit[al] Camp. Wilson is there yet waiting on the wounded. He is well and myself also, But cannot write very plain as you can readily percieve. Charles Parker and some others out of our Co, left on the cars last night he was feeling well. Wilson may stay over to the hospital til our Regt. are all sent of, guess I shall come back here and stay after this as I can not do much for any one, as soon as Wilson gets here he will write I have just got Chloes & Mas letter of the 9th. One of our Sergts. has gone over the river to see to burying the dead of our Co. 3 killed & one died from his wounds, I believe 18 wounded, will write more as soon as possible, your affectionate son.

B. Jay Cushing to Mr. Leavitt Cushing

GEN. GEORGE MEADE'S SISTER: A DEVOTED CONFEDERATE

By Norman Dasinger, Jr., November 5, 2021

Blue and Gray Education Society

Elizabeth Meade was born in 1805 and grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1827, she married Alfred Ingraham, a businessman and merchant trader. In 1840, the Ingraham family moved to Claiborne County, Mississippi, and began construction of Ashwood on 1,100 acres east of Port Gibson. The two-story house was situated in the Willow Springs Community and had many galleries, fine furnishings, a library, and a six-acre garden. Alfred had moved his family to southwest Mississippi to manage his bank's interest in the Grand Gulf & Port Gibson Rail Road Company. Their household included six children: Francis, Edward, Thomas, Jane, Apolline, and Alice.

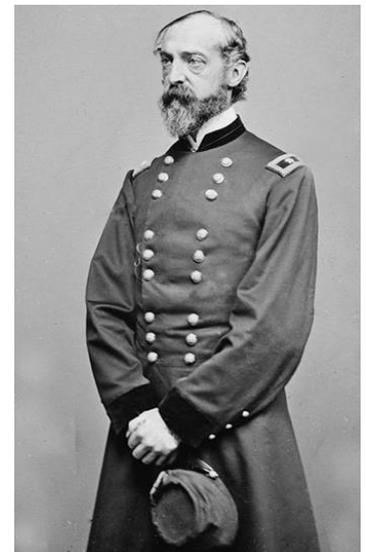
Elizabeth had a baby brother born in 1815 named George Meade. The year 1863 would be an important one for the Meade siblings.

In June 1863, George would be made the commanding general of the Union Army of the Potomac, and then lead his men against Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee at Gettysburg. In the meantime, in May 1863, Union Gen. U.S. Grant would lead his large army from the banks of the Mississippi River deep into the middle of the state and, in doing so, at a straight line toward Ashwood.

Grant's men arrived at Elizabeth Meade Ingraham's plantation in Mississippi on May 3. She kept a diary of their exploits. Adding to the drama, two of Grant's subordinate generals, McClelland and McPherson, used Ashwood as a headquarters. McClelland, in fact, wrote a letter to President Lincoln from there.

I wonder if Elizabeth ever told the generals about her brother?

When Grant moved on east toward Jackson, the Ingrahams were left with few livestock, and most of their possessions had been destroyed or taken. On July 23, 1863, Elizabeth wrote to her brother: "My dear George, We have been despoiled of everything, our crops ruined, our home literally gutted." The



only room not plundered was Elizabeth's. So, that being the case, maybe she did tell them about her brother.

Adding even more intrigue to this story: Two of the Ingrahams' sons, Francis (Frank) and Edward (Ned) Ingraham, both served in the Confederate Army. Frank was in the 21st Mississippi Infantry and he was killed—no, not at Gettysburg, that would have been over the top, but at Fredericksburg, Virginia, on May 3 1863, another noteworthy 1863 date for Elizabeth and her family. Ned was an officer in the 1st Regular Confederate Cavalry and died in May 1862 from wounds received during a clash near Farmington, Mississippi.

Following the Civil War, Alfred and Elizabeth moved to New Orleans, where Alfred managed a large land business for his northern friends. When he and Elizabeth died, they were both buried in All Saints Episcopal Cemetery, Byberry Township, outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Their two Confederate sons were later reinterred and now rest next to their parents. This was done despite the active protests of an angry mob that did not want these "Rebels" in their cemetery. Sibling Thomas died in 1860, and later he was added to the Pennsylvania family plot. A "Three Brothers' Memorial" was installed to remember General Meade's southern nephews

USAHEC EVENT UPDATE –

We have some updates on the USAHEC event in Carlisle that was cancelled for its regular May weekend. The organizers have announced that they are actually planning two (2-day) events later this summer and fall.

The first event will be 10~11 Sept. This event will revolve around the U.S. Army Cavalry, the Air Cavalry, and support.

The second event will be 15~16 Oct. This event will revolve around the U.S Army Artillery and Armor support. They want Civil War infantry to fall in to support the artillery so the 53rd will add the Oct. event to our 2022 schedule. They plan on having CW artillery onsite.

I have registered the unit for the Oct. event. This is a paid event assuming that we have, at least, a minimum number of members present. In past years, the 'magic number' was about 8. We also normally get paid more if we have members present both days. Due to this being a paid event, we are making this a 53rd MAX Effort event. Please add this event on your calendar!

For those who have not been to the US Army Heritage Education Center, it is a great wide-open site with lots to see including WW2 barracks, WW1 entrenchments, French & Indian War buildings, a British Redoubt, CW winter huts, 20th century tanks, a Vietnam fort, etc. There is also a museum with lots to see regarding America's military history. I will provide parking passes, maps, etc. to those attending. The site is near the Carlisle exit of I-81 and the PA Turnpike (I-76). There is no cost for us or the general public to attend. Food is on our own although some modern food trucks/tents are normally onsite for participants and the general public.

Please let me know ASAP if you plan on attending as well as which day(s): Saturday, Sunday, or Both. You can reply to the newsletter delivery email with your intentions.

THE CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF LEVI J. FRITZ

(thank you to Rich Sauers for providing this series)

[Note – any grammatical and typographical errors were kept intact as they are original to the letter - editor]

Levi J. Fritz served in Company A, 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. He enlisted in 1861 and was mustered out with the regiment in July 1865. During the course of the first three years of the conflict, Fritz wrote a number of lengthy missives to the *Montgomery Ledger*, a Pottstown newspaper.

Headquarters 53d Penna. Vols.,
Camp Near Brandy Station, Va.,
Wednesday, Nov. 25th, 1863.

Messrs. Editors:—"When in the course of human events it becomes necessary" for Gen. Meade to advance why, we presume he will move forward. Yesterday morning at 3 o'clock, we were all fondled up in our blankets,—the morning air was cold, and just about nine-tenth asleep. "All through the house not a creature was stirring not even a mouse." And the cat was asleep; for we have a dear little cat. It was captured on the picket line. If it was a black cat we would class it as contraband of war and at once issue letters of confiscation, but as pussy is white as the driven snow, we simply consider it as being transferred from the rebel lines to within ours. Pussy is very discreet and maintains a strict silence with regard to matters in the notion of Jeff; but we have reason to believe that she is a good Union man at heart and don't like snakes. It was noticed that tears stood in pussy's eyes when some person casually mentioned the name

of Horace Greeley. The question arises, categorically, do cats read the *Tribune*? Some one said that our cat belonged to "Brown." How can a brown man own a white cat? The idea is beneath our scorn.

But to return to our tent where we were when we commenced. It was 3 o'clock in the morning when we heard some one approach the tent. Then a voice that we recognized at once as belonging to Col. Brooke's fat Orderly, said "Adjutant." The Adjutant snored, and we were asleep—apparently. "*Adjutant?*—The Adjutant snored. "Hello, Adjutant." The Adjutant snored. "I say, Ad-ju-TANT!" The Adjutant wakened up. "Here's a circular to copy, sire, marching orders," says the Orderly. The last two words of the Orderly's remark at once put the Adjutant in a good humor—of course. "March at 8 o'clock." Ah, well if it's march at 8 o'clock we are good for a few hours more sleep, and we rolled over. In the meantime the Adjutant went to the tents of the Company Commanders, and with each one held an interesting conversation pretty much as above.

Before daybreak we had everything packed up, tents struck and were ready to "fall in." The sky was gloomy; it rained. It rained a great deal. We began to think of Burnside, and how he stuck in the mud. Did Meade intend to stick in the mud. The sky was surely not bright. We began packing the baggage in the wagons and the rain kept descending. Cheers were heard on the right of the 3d Division, and the cheers were following the lines of that Division. Something was up.

The boys declared in a rather loud manner, that "Porter was going in on the right." Perhaps the reader does not know what the expression means. It originated as follows:—On the afternoon of June 26th 1862, Gen. Porter's Division occupying the right of the Army of the Potomac, then besieging Richmond, advanced to Mechanicsville. This was deemed a great success, and so it was—providing the position could have been held. In the evening or rather in the night, after the cannon was hushed, and Porter was perhaps dreaming of what he could have for dinner in Richmond the next day, a congratulatory order was read to the troops. If I am not mistaken the order said in these words, that "our success was so great that the Commanding General looked forward to a speedy occupation of the rebel Capital." This was excellent news. This was glorious news! In the camps no drums were permitted to be beaten or bands allowed to play, but on the reception of this news, every drum began to rattle; musicians, whose horns had been muzzled for weeks began playing national airs. Everybody cheered and was happy. Men got out of their beds and jumped about, and threw up their caps and cheered. There was a general jollification over this promising news. The next day instead of marching triumphantly into Richmond, we began the severe and bloody retreat to the James River. We were badly sold when we made merry over "Porter's going in on the right." Since that memorable date, whenever cheering is heard in any part of the camp, the boys invariably say that "Porter is going in on the right." The moral is an old maxim, "Don't hello until you are out of the woods."

The rain still descended. The orders to march were countermanded and we again pitched our tents.

Saturday, Dec. 5th, 1863.

We were about to write you a long letter all about how we did not march, but our pen had scarcely written that we pitched our tents, when orders were again received, fixing the morning of the following day (Nov. 26th) as the day on which the army would move. This time there was no countermanding of orders. We moved out of camp at 8 o'clock, A. M., Thursday, Nov. 26th; the column moving towards Germania Ford, on the Rapidan River. Our Brigade led the advance of the troops moving towards this Ford. We arrived at the river about ten o'clock. Some rebel cavalry were on the southern bank of the stream, but they left very suddenly and made no opposition to our crossing. The pontoons were up, and the Engineer Corps began constructing the bridge. Our Brigade was ordered to ford the river and hold the opposite bank to cover the pontoons while putting down the bridge. The water was about three feet deep. The bottom of the channel was very rocky, and while crossing a number of the boys slipped and fell into the stream—and were completely immersed. This wading the stream was rather a cool operation when the weather was so cold that the river shore was fringed with ice. And then it was so very comfortable to march the remainder of the day with wet clothing—wet from the waist down. It was a glorious opportunity to catch a "death cold."

But soldiers seem to be made of adamant. We marched several hundred yards up a plank road when we came to the enemy's first line of entrenchments. Colonel Brooke formed the Brigade in line behind these works. The 53d Pa. Vols., and the 2d Del. Vols. Then developed a skirmish line in front of the entrenchments and advanced, following up the Fredericksburg plank road. While the Brigade was thus shifting position, the pontoon bridge had been laid down and the troops of the Corps were defiling over the river. At this point the rebels had constructed two excellent lines of works but they failed to occupy them in time to delay or prevent our crossing at this Ford. We were deployed as skirmishers until mid-afternoon, when the regiment was assembled on the plank road and moved forward about three miles, to a place termed Three Mile Run. We bivouacked for the night in line of battle.

Early on the morning of the 27th we were in line—and the column began moving out. We left the plank road and passed over rather a muddy by-road for several miles—coming out finally on the Orange Court House pike. The second Division was in the advance. The skirmishers of the enemy were met near Robinson's Tavern, and driven back about a mile and a half. At noon the skirmish line was about half a mile beyond the tavern. The country we were in, and that we passed through coming from the Rapidan, was one dense woodland and the region is known as the "Wilderness." Gen. Warren deployed heavy skirmish lines to the right and left of the Orange Road; and the entire line was constantly exchanging shots with the enemy. At moments it sounded like a general engagement, so sharp was the conflict. Central Headquarters was at the tavern. Here there was a good view of a portion of the rebels and our skirmish line. Beside the tavern, on the road, two pieces of a Pennsylvania battery were stationed. Whenever a cluster of rebs could be seen, the battery boys would plant in the crowd a shell or two—the rebs would disappear instanter. During the afternoon several regiments of our Brigade were ordered forward to support the skirmish line. During the night we bivouacked near the tavern. In the night time everything was quiet on the lines, not a shot was fired.

The next morning, the 28th, we moved forward about a mile and a half. Under cover of darkness the rebels had drawn in their lines and fell back on a strongly entrenched position on the heights of Mine Run. Our regiment was in position on the right. The skirmishers were busily engaged. The 6th and 3d corps had come up and were getting in position. The enemy occupied in our front an excellent position, naturally strong. This line they were busily occupied in fortifying—we could see them plainly—working like beavers. Towards sunset a lively cannonading was kept up for several hours. That night we bivouacked within range of the enemy's musket.

Before sunrise on the morning of the 29th we were marching. The object of the movement was to get on the enemy's right flank and rear. The corps made a detour of six or seven miles around to do this. Near New Hope Church on the plank road to Orange Court House, our Division which led the advance on this day, was deployed as skirmishers. The 53d was in skirmish line near the plank road. An advance of a few hundred yards drew upon them the fire of the enemy, and soon the firing along the entire line became brisk. Our line advanced. The enemy slowly gave way. The regiment advanced to within three hundred yards of a rebel battery. This battery shelled our line previously, and our regiment was immediately under its fire. Here eight men of the regiment were wounded—four of them severely. Our troops not being checked by the shells, the enemy withdrew his battery. By sunset our lines were advanced to Mine Run, and the enemy was withdrawn to his entrenched position beyond the Run. The troops rested on their arms all night.

The battle was to open at 7 o'clock on the morning of the 30th by a heavy artillery fire on the enemy's left. At 8 o'clock, A. M., Gen. Warren commanding the left wing was to charge the enemy's entrenchments in front of our left and thus turn Lee's flank. On the morning of the 30th everything was in position as required by the programme for the day. On our right more than one hundred pieces of artillery were plunging death and destruction within the rebel lines. Eight o'clock came and passed, but all was apparently silent on our left. At ten o'clock Gen. Meade joined Gen. Warren—other commanding officers assembled, and it was concluded that the enemy was rather strong to fight, and also for other minor reasons, it became evident that we had better go home beyond the Rapidan before the frost pinched our noses. So far as we know the army believes that Gen. Meade acted like a wise and prudent General in refusing to give battle to the enemy. Lee's position could only have been carried at an immense sacrifice of life. The weather was severe that one half of our wounded would have frozen to death on the field before they could be removed. It would have, also, been a victory dearly bought without a commensurate benefit accruing from it. Doubtless the object of the movement was accomplished without a battle.

The troops on December 1st were occupied in throwing up earthworks in front of their position. At sunset the corps began moving in retreat to the Rapidan. We remained with Capt. Mintzer's Detachment, which brought up the rear of the corps, and, which New Hope Church near midnight. The night was intensely cold. We marched on the plank road. All along the route fires were kindled. Whenever the column was halted the boys built fires to keep themselves warm. Sometimes the fires would just be kindled when the column would move on. These almost countless fires, set fire to the leaves of the forest around and the wind spread the flames in every direction, our army left in its tracks miles of woodland with crackling fires.

Early on the morning of the 2d we arrived at Culpepper Mine ford, and immediately re-crossed the Rapidan on a pontoon bridge. This ford is several miles below Germanna Ford, where we forded the river on the advance. The troops were rested several hours for breakfast, when the march was resumed. At nightfall the troops were in their old camps near Brandy Station. The eight days campaign, what may be called a semi-reconnaissance, was over. Our retreat to the Rapidan was unmolested by the enemy. December 5th, Lee made a show of crossing in force at Raccoon Ford. Meade was on the *qui vive*. Our cavalry, Gen. Custer's Division, repulsed the enemy and forced him to the south side of the Rapidan.

We broke camp and moved about three miles to a knock-kneed village called Stevensburg. The entire corps was camped on high hills, where the cold winds bleak and dreary whistled round us. There was no doubt an object in thus positioning us, what it was, we could not exactly see. Unless it was to give us a splendid view of the country for miles around; but a beautiful landscape is not properly appreciated when the observer must freeze ginfers and toes for the view. On the 7th we moved a few miles into the woods. The troops are engaged in putting up winter quarters. We have no direct orders to do so, but that is the understanding. Nor are we certain that operations for the year are closed, we hope that they are. The soldiers need rest.

[Montgomery Ledger, December 22, 1863]

PATRIOTIC ORDER SONS OF AMERICA EVENT

On 23 April, the 53rd participated in the Patriotic Order Sons of America "Patriots Day" event in Robesonia. It marked the 175th anniversary of POSofA. We did our normal living history setup and also two firing demos. This was our 2nd year doing this event and the organizers are hoping for a larger event in 2023. In attendance were Sgts. Fasnacht and Benedict, Corporal Steger, and Privates Ford and Parvis.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE DETAILS

We will once again form up for the Hummelstown Memorial Day parade on 30 May 2022. Wear your frocks if you have them. Light marching order. Polish your brass, bring at least 3 rounds and sufficient caps for weapons inspection and clearing. Meeting place is the NW corner of the Olde Factory Antiques (139 S. Hanover St.) by 9:15AM. Park at Rita's Italian Ice or nearby. Parade starts at 10AM. Afterwards, we are invited to the American Legion picnic and then a debriefing at Mike's hut.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Gentlemen,

As we move into the month of May, we're starting to get into a busy season. As previously mentioned, AHEC has been postponed until October and the cartridge rolling party was rescheduled to the original AHEC date. While we require individuals to supply their own rounds, we need as many as possible to attend the cartridge rolling party. We have a busy schedule this year and I want to be prepared to support the unit with as many reserve rounds as needed. In order to meet the demand, we need to pull together and resupply our inventory.

The next MAX EFFORT event is the annual Hummelstown Memorial Day parade. Due to covid, the last time this parade was held was 2019. Our own Mike Espenshade was the 2020 keynote speaker that year and he's been rescheduled for this year. Mike has completed extensive research into PA Civil War veterans who are buried in the Hummelstown Cemetery and will present a short outline of his research at the service following this year's parade. I'll expect a strong turnout to support the unit, the town, and Mike at this year's ceremony.

Looking deeper into the schedule, Gruber Wagon Works and Landis Valley are upcoming in June and July respectively. Our parades in ELF Company will be supporting us at Gruber. Landis Valley will be the 2022 National Regiment's Camp of Instruction. This year's Camp at Landis Valley will focus on preparation for the 160th Antietam event in September. With our strong registration for Antietam, I'm expecting (at least) everyone registered to attend the Camp of Instruction.

While we were hopeful that 2021 would have been a "rebound year", the schedule fell flat. It appears that 2022 has us back on track and I'm asking all of you to give the schedule honest consideration.

I look forward to spending nights around the campfire with all of you this year!

Eric

THE CIVIL WAR MERCHANT

(if you have something for sale or are looking for something, email me to include it in a future edition of "The Sentinel")

For Sale –

(1.) Listed by Rick Kramer for a friend. All items are in good shape unless noted otherwise. Contact Rick directly for any inquiries/questions - auktion8@comcast.net

Keune McDowell Kepi - some brim cracking	\$20.00
Grey Blanket with black stripe	\$35.00

(2.) Dave Towsen, a fellow pard of mine in the old 83rd PVI, is selling off most of his CW gear. You can contact him directly at: grumpydave58@comcast.net with any inquiries about items, pricing, etc. He lives in Mechanicsburg and he has only quality gear.

(3.) Kerry Williard is handling the selling of Dave Swigert items for Dave's wife. Marc and I met several months ago to look at the items, give them descriptions, and give approx. values. Several of the items have been sold yet some remain. The list is current as of 24 Jan. 2022. Contact Kerry directly with any and all inquiries: shamokin71@aol.com (see the updated list below)

Uniform Clothing	Item Description	Detailed Description	Price
1	Trouser - Steel Blue each with suspendors	34 min waist/27" inseam-avg. condx and a little dirt w/ braces no watch pck	\$25.00
1	Dk Blue Vest Size 42	3 pockets - light wear	\$20.00
1	Colored Pattern Shirt	blue plaid with white china buttons - sun faded - good condx	\$10.00
1	White muslin shirt	19" at shoulder 14" neck - very short in body length	\$5.00
1	White muslin shirt	20" at shoulder 16" neck - very short in body length - cuffs are stained	\$5.00
1 pair	Woolen Grey Gloves	modern - right hand is fingerless	\$2.00
1	Underpants - Night Pants - White	36" waist - knee stains - 25" inseam white muslin - rear repair	\$3.00
1	Lt Brown Scarf - Acrylic - Modern		\$1.00
1	Havelock - White - VG condx		\$2.00
3 pairs	Grey Wool Socks - Modern		\$2.00/pr
2	Hats - Union & Confederate for cchildren		\$1.00
Accoutrements			
1	Scabbord - Late war 7 Rivet		\$15.00
1	Gum Blanket	some cracking with oversized grommets	\$20.00
1	Shelter Tent - Both Halves - Heavy Canvas w/Loops w/Mildew		\$35.00
1	Bag of 7 wooden Tent Stakes w/Rope		\$3.00
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen - Leather Sling Satinette Cover w/ Corded Stopper		\$20.00
1	Haversack - Tarred Black - Brittle Strap w/opwn seam		\$5.00
1	Haversack - Tarred Black w/Liner- Paint peeling Holes @ Strap Connection		\$10.00
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen - Leather Sling Satinette Cover w/ Corded Stopper		\$20.00
Misc Items			
1 can	sno-seal (half full)		\$1.00
1	Wood Mirror - Haversack filler	sliding cover	\$3.00
1	Wood Comb - Haversack filler		\$1.00
1	Wooden button board		\$1.00
2	Coin Purses - Made from Tic Material		\$1.00/ea
1	Bag with Coffee	brown coffee	\$1.00/ea
1	shoe lace - undled		\$0.25/ea
2	Soap Bar		\$1.00/ea
6 1/2	Wax Candles		\$0.25/ea
1	pocket sharpenig stone	new	\$2.00
1	box rifle cleaning kit	pads, steel wool, rags, etc	\$5.00
3	match boxes w/ matches		\$0.25/ea
1 Pair	shoe tree		\$3.00
1	Green Army Duffel Bag		\$3.00
1	drawers for use as patches		\$1.00
Armaments			
1	1861 Springfield Rifle - Armi Sport		\$900.00

2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS - UPDATED!!

- ~~15 January - Holiday Party - Gettysburg~~
~~5 February - Winter Drill - Landis Valley (ELF and Sykes Regulars invited)~~
~~26-27 February - NR School of Instruction (Gettysburg)~~
~~23 April - Robesonia~~
 21 May - Cartridge Rolling Party (Kleinfeltersville)
 30 May - Memorial Day Parade (Hummelstown)
 11-12 June - Gruber Wagon Works Living History (Reading)
 16~17 July - Landis Valley Civil War Days (Lancaster) - NR Camp of Instruction
 16~18 September - 160th Antietam Reenactment (NR)
 8 October - Millersville Parade
 15~16 October - USAHEC Army Heritage Days - Carlisle
 5 November - Adopt-A-Position (tentative)
 19 November - Remembrance Day (Gettysburg) - NR Annual Meeting and Parade
 3 December - Annual Meeting (Kleinfeltersville)



Secondary schedule -

- ~~1-3 April - Shiloh (as the 22nd LA) - Cancelled~~
 21~22 May - Old Town, MD - ANV/USV
 5~7 August - Slaughter on the Mountain (Culpepper, VA)
 15~16 October - Cedar Creek Reenactment (NR)

53rd PVI Contacts

President: Eric Ford (reenactor53@gmail.com)

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Treasurer/Secretary: Matthew Steger (n3ntj@outlook.com)

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Unit Website: <http://www.53rdpvi.org>

2022 Field Officers - Sergeants: Mark Fasnacht & Marc Benedict. Corporals: Mike Espenshade & Matthew Steger

53rd PVI Member Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/53rdPVI>

National Regiment Phone line: 800-777-1861 (code 61)

New National Regiment Website: <https://www.thenationalregiment.com>

