

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Company C

"The Sentinel" October 2017

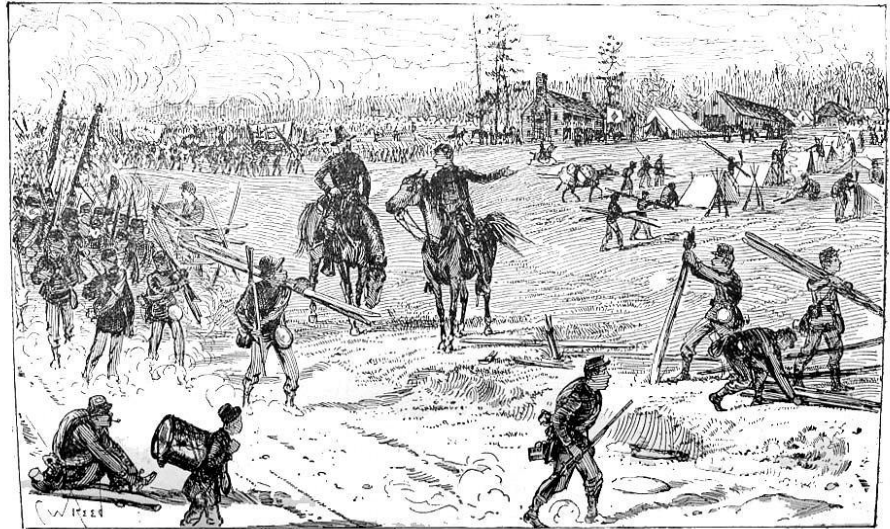
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trump!"

This Month:

1. *Burkittsville Event - Summary and Photos*
2. *Book Review - "No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery & Desertion"*
3. *A word from our president...*
4. *Upcoming Events*
5. *Calendar of Events*
6. *53rd PVI Contact Info*



I am always looking for newsletter content, so please forward your articles, book reviews, photos, stories, etc. and your "Get To Know Your Pard" profile (if you have not done so already) to me for inclusion in a future edition of "The Sentinel". – Matthew Steger, editor

Burkittsville Event Summary and Photos

By Travis Shick

This year, the National Regiment pitched its tents for the 155th anniversary of the Battle of Crampton's Gap. The battle, which was fought in and around the tiny hamlet of Burkittsville, Maryland, was a key component of the larger South Mountain battles, just prior to Antietam. As the National Regiment sank its tent stakes into the ground, they learned that the mid-sized yard they were encamped upon, bordered on two sides by vast corn fields, was special.

Unlike previous years, the Federal camp was posted in the backyard of the Hamilton Willard Shafer home. This very yard was the site of General Franklin's Corps headquarters, during the battle. The Shafer home, recently acquired by the Burkittsville Preservation Association, and barn are currently in dire need of restoration. This year's event helped raise money toward repairs of this historic site. Additionally, Maryland has selected the home as a "Six to Fix" site, which means it will receive some state funding to assist in repairing the roof and foundation. The Association is not sure if they will be able to raise enough money over the coming months to save the bank barn, as well as the house, but if the reenactment is any indicator, they may have reason to be optimistic.

The three members of the 53rd PVI in attendance fell in with the 116th PA, in preparation for the fight. Over one hundred and twenty Union reenactors were present, but a small Confederate turnout gave cause for concern. Rumors abound regarding the effects the current political climate in the country is having on Confederate reenactors. Two major events were cancelled in South Carolina, this year alone. However, other factors may have played a bigger role in Confederate attendance at this year's

Burkittsville event. Just a half dozen miles away, the Antietam Battlefield was having their 155th anniversary weekend, which included a full company and cannon crew of Confederates for demonstrational purposes.



Sunrise in the valley

Additionally, the Antietam National Cemetery was being rededicated for its own 150th anniversary. If that wasn't enough, there was a competing progressive campaigner event that put Confederate reenactors on the road to retrace Hill's march to relieve the Army of Northern Virginia, at Antietam. Rumor has it that the road march of these reenactors included a wet crossing of the Potomac River, and still they managed to 'beat' Hill's time by about an hour (improved surface roads and lack of traffic jams typical of a 1860's division sized movements may have helped the modern reenactors with their speed). Despite all this, about twenty Confederate reenactors, plus a cannon crew, arrived at Burkittsville to ensure that the National Regiment (and elements of Vincent's Brigade) did not go unopposed.



The men on the march!

Saturday morning was calm, but not uneventful. After morning parade and some drill, those who were interested were treated to a very interesting guided tour of the Shafer home's interior and exterior points of historical interest. Additionally, a local historian was brought in to give an informative lecture on the battle itself.

Saturday afternoon, the Union forces headed off down the main road leading to Burkittsville. The road leading to town and the main street itself were closed down for the event, which allowed the Union troops unhindered access to their line of march. The heat and humidity were up, but the

boys in blue struck the Confederate defenders in grand style, sending company after company down the street to push back the defenders. The National Regiment looked sharp executing its practiced street fighting formations, having each company fire a volley and then peel back out of the way to the left and right, in order to allow the next company to push forward. Halfway through the town, the Confederates went "off script" and executed an ambush on the lead Federal company from across a vacant lot to the left of the column. The Yankees quickly responded and wheeled by company into battle line, answering the ambushers with intense sheets of fire. Once the rebels were pushed westward, out of town, the Union column began heading up hill toward the Gap and the hidden Confederate gun.

The heat and humidity started to have an effect on the numbers of blue troops, but their final push leveled the remaining defenders. After a few rounds, the cannon was seized by a gallant charge made by a detachment lead by the Regiment's own adjutant.

The battle won, all of the participants were treated to a fine, catered meal, in town. The next morning, the Union forces formed up again for a tactical.

Unfortunately, the leadership of the Regiment was informed that the Confederate detachment had quite literally spent all their powder during the previous day's battle. Therefore, the Union troops were immediately released from active service. Considering the anniversary weekend and the proximity of other battlefields, this was not the end of the day for many of our parads. Several members of the National Regiment were seen later that day perusing the grounds of the War Correspondents Memorial, the Gathland Museum at Crampton's Gap, the Fox's Gap battlefield, as well as the special events that drew such large crowds at the Antietam National battlefield.

The 155th may not be considered a "major cycle" in many respects, but the 155th Burkittsville weekend was, on the whole, a most fulfilling and enjoyable experience.



←The War Correspondents Monument at Crampton's Gap



(above right)– “First floor of a small museum across the street. This museum is for the Gapland/G.A. Townsend estate, but the old stone kitchen has a small museum of Civil War artifacts, mannequins in uniform, and, as you can see, some of the coolest carpet I've seen.” - Travis



Privates Shick, Rose, and Fasnacht

Book Review – by Mike Espenshade

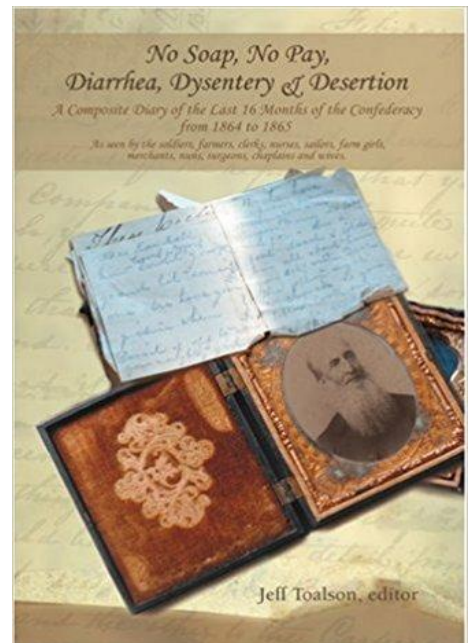
Book: ***"No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery & Desertion"***
A Composite Diary of the Last 16 Months of the Confederacy from 1864 to 1865

Authors: Common people in the Confederacy, from their letters and diaries, as it happened

Editor: Jeff Toalson

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Soldiers, sailors, nurses, clergy, clerks, farmers, family, merchants, doctors, and others write about lice, food, prison life, mail, desertion, railroads, camp life, medicine, salt, sickness, recipes, starvation, currency value of goods, possible use of negroes as soldiers, local government, blockade running, cargo manifests, the front and the home front. No subject is left untouched. This book is not about generals, campaigns, politically correct viewpoints, or post-war memories (which are prone to distortion).



"You are there, now", throughout the Confederacy, in all states and on-ship, in 1864-1865.

The strengths of this book are numerous: each of the 16 months has its own chapter which begins with a 1-2 page editor's summary of the war progress. This puts that month's diaries'/letters' entries in context with what is happening across the Confederacy. This work is properly noted (34 pp), indexed (43 pp), and abundantly sourced [from (69) manuscripts/collections/letters plus dozens of regimental histories]. I did not find that the absence of maps, timelines, or photos detracted from my absorption of the material.

This is one of those books - if you try to visualize what the participants' entries are describing - that you will not turn too many pages before the book is laid down for one to rest/reflect. The subject matter is often brutally honest. War is shown how it is the roughest on the common soldier and civilian.

I highly recommend this book for the serious student.

A word from our president.....

We're coming down the home stretch on another season. The next event is our Gettysburg Living History (Oct 7~8). You know the drill by now. Bring rounds and rations for the weekend. **We will be camped at Spangler's Spring. Tom Holbrook was unable to relocate us due to another unit already scheduled to be at the PA monument.** Let's plan to be on site and set up by 9:00am. Who's committed to attending?

It's also time to start the election process for this year's business meeting. The offices of President and Treasurer will be on the ballot. Both positions will serve a two year term. I'm sure that everyone is aware of the responsibilities that each position carries but if you're not, ask Pat or myself before you accept a possible nomination. Please don't nominate anyone without their consent. They may not want the job. Should you accept, we will need your tax returns for the last 10 years. Smear campaigns are highly encouraged and we will hold five town hall debates where brawling and drunkenness is expected. All nominations are due in writing (email) to me by October 15th. If you are nominated, you must officially accept in writing (email) to me by October 31st. We'll form the election committee at the meeting and ballots will handed out at that time.

I need your input on potential events for next year. If you have any info, please forward it to me or send me the contact info for the event organizers.

The annual 53rd business meeting is scheduled for December 2nd. Mark Fasnacht has again offered to host the meeting at his home. Look for additional information closer to the date.

Save the date. Croce has confirmed the Holiday Party is scheduled for January 13th, 2018. It may sound like a long way off but it will be here before we know it.

Thanks!
Eric

Upcoming events -

Gettysburg Living History –

7 - 8 October 2017 – At Spanglers Spring (Gettysburg NPS)

Bring your normal kit, items to show the public, and enough rounds and rations for the weekend. Please be there by 9AM Saturday. Some drill, firing demos, etc. are on the schedule as normal.

Monument Cleanup –

5 November 2017 – 53rd PVI Monument (Gettysburg NPS)

Bring your rakes, loupers, gloves, etc. for our bi-annual cleanup of our monument on Brooks Ave. Please arrive before 10AM. If we get sufficient help, detail should be complete by noon.

Remembrance Day Parade –

18 November 2017 – Gettysburg

As in previous years, we generally meet behind the elementary school up on the hill (NW corner of the large group of reenactors) with our fellow parades from the National Regiment. More details will be provided as we get closer to the event.

2017 Calendar of Events -

4 February – Winter Drill – Landis Valley Museum – Lancaster

25 February – Cartridge Rolling Party

~~25-26 February – NR Officer/NCO School of Instruction – Gettysburg~~

1 April – 53rd Monument Cleanup – Gettysburg, PA

~~6-9 April – 155th Shiloh Reenactment – Shiloh, TN~~

~~29-30 April – Spring Drill – Antietam (ELF Event)~~

~~5-7 May – 155th McDowell Reenactment – McDowell, VA~~

20-21 May – New Market Reenactment – New Market, VA (NR Event)

~~20-21 May – Army Heritage Days – USAHEC – Carlisle, PA~~

~~29 May – Memorial Day Parade – Hummelstown~~

~~2-4 June – On to Richmond – Richmond, VA~~

~~24-25 June – Corbitt's Charge – Westminster, MD~~

~~1-4 July – Gettysburg (GAC) Reenactment – Yingling Farm – Gettysburg~~

~~15-16 July – Civil War Days at the Winery – Manassas, VA~~

22-23 July – Landis Valley Museum 'Civil War Days' – Lancaster

30 July – Gruber Wagon Works – Berks County, PA

~~5-6 Aug. – Cedar Mountain – Culpepper, VA~~

9 September – 53rd PVI, Co. B Veteran's Monument Dedication (near Philadelphia)

15-17 September – South Mountain Reenactment – Burkittsville, MD

7-8 October – Gettysburg Living History – Spanglers Spring – Gettysburg NMP

~~14-15 October – Battle of Cedar Creek Reenactment – Middletown, VA~~

5 November – 53rd Monument Cleanup – Gettysburg NMP

18 November – Remembrance Day Parade – Gettysburg

2 December – Annual Membership Meeting

(RED colored events are considered 53rd PVI 'Max Effort' events)

(GREEN colored events are NR 'Max Effort' events)



53rd PVI Contacts

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

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

National Regiment Website: <http://nationalregiment.com>

Still need to pay your 53rd PVI dues?

Mail checks payable to "53rd PVI" to:

Pat Rose

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