

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Company C

"The Sentinel" November 2017

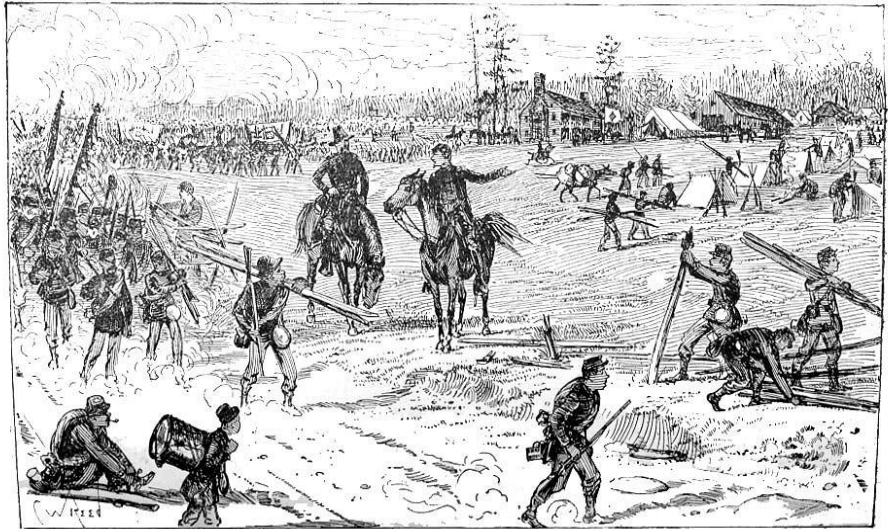
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trump!"

This Month:

1. [Gettysburg Event Summary w/photos](#)
2. [A word from our president...](#)
3. [Cedar Creek event after-action reports](#)
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

Gettysburg Event Summary

By Matt Steger

The 53rd PVI held our annual living history event at Spangler Spring on Oct. 7/8th. Attending were Corps. Mike Espenshade and Matt Steger, Privates Eric Ford, Michael Fedorshak, Pete Zinkus, Travis Schick, and 2nd Lt. Croce Volpe.

Saturday was a tad breezy but otherwise nice. We weren't quite sure what sort of turnout we'd get being in a less traveled location and being in October, but we had help from several Boy Scout troops who were visiting the park. For our firing demos, Corporals Espenshade and Steger took turns commanding the men out to the demonstration area. Private Ford talked with the public to explain the uniform, firing procedures, etc. and Priv. Fedorshak was our model to show the public the loading-in-9-times steps. From rough counts, it seemed that we had anywhere from a number ranging between 25 to 75 visitors for our 3 demos on Saturday. As we marched over, it appeared that people came out of the wood-work to watch us. The demos went well other than a broken ramrod amongst the men. Due to limited space in the area, we could not drill. A small contingent from Sgt. Richard Moylan's family (veteran of the original 53rd PVI) also stopped by. Several 53rd PVI members took the family over to the 53rd PVI monument for photos. Saturday evening, the men sat at the camp fire sharing stories (including some 1st person discussions circa late June 1863) and had a good time sharing camaraderie intermixed with periodic visits from ghost hunters along the road.

By early Sunday morning, light rain had started. I figured the event would be called based upon the weather forecast of heavy rain off and on during the day, so I packed up by 8:30AM and called it a day. I was staying in town on vacation so I figured I'd see what activities my wife had planned.

(Event Summary – continued) The weather turned out better by 11AM so the event continued with Sgt. Benedict falling in and taking my spot and the normal firing demo schedule going on as originally planned.



Above photo courtesy of Croce Volpe. The men firing a volley for the crowd.



Above photo by Matthew Steger. Private Fedorshak showing his display items and equipment to a troop of Boy Scouts.

A word from our president.....

We're coming up on the close of the 2017 campaign season. Our annual Adopt a Position event at the 53rd's monument site will be held November 4th at 10AM. Please bring rakes and pruning tools. We should be able to wrap up by noon. I'll need to start getting attendance Remembrance Day in the near future. The event is scheduled for November 18th. Let me know if you are 100% sure that you will there. I don't want to provide over inflated numbers to Col. Downes. The final event is our annual business meeting scheduled for December 2nd at 9AM. Sgt Fasnacht will be hosting us in his home again this year. Please bring a covered dish or something to go along with our pot luck lunch. Please communicate to Mark your contribution so we don't end up with 8 bowls of potato salad.

I'll send out the meeting agenda closer to the time but some highlights of the business to handle will be the election of Civil Officer's and NCO's. We will also have three new recruits petitioning for membership. We opened up the call for nominations from October 1st through 15th. This year's election will have the office of President, Treasurer and NCO's on the ballot. Here is the list of nominee's that have accepted:

President: Eric Ford

Treasurer: Pat Rose

1st Sgt: Mark Fasnacht

2nd Sgt: Marc Benedict

Cpl: Matt Steger

Cpl: Mike Espenshade

Finally, I would like to share the After Action Reports from Cedar Creek. I'm sure all of you know by now that there was a threat sent to the site a couple of weeks before the event and that some type of an IED was discovered in the Sutler's area. Lots of rumors have been flying and I hope this helps to clear the air. We did have one member, Travis, in attendance and I believe that he has also provided insight to the editor for this issue. I fully expect this to be a topic of discussion at the annual NR meeting next month. We will report on that at our meeting if needed. It goes without saying that we live in a world full of ignorant people. Unfortunately, they have brought this BS to our front door. I'm sure that security concerns will be a part of the discussion for all events moving forward. Take the time to read the reports. If you have any issues or concerns please let me know. I will make sure they are conveyed to the NR leadership.

Thanks,
Eric

Report of Brig. General Darrell N. Markijohn, USV, commanding OCTOBER 14-15, 2017--The BATTLE OF FIRST WINCHESTER AND CEDAR CREEK,

**HDQRS. USV Brigade,
Middletown, Va. October 17, 2017**

The USV returns from the Cedar Creek Fall Campaign with much to talk about and remember. Cedar Creek is an event that we attend every year. We sometimes complain that CC is the "same ole, same ole." Well..... it was anything but that this year!

The USV Brigade mustered 188 rifles from all three of its infantry Regiments. Overall Commander, Maj. Gen. Ted Brennan designated the USV as the 1st Brigade. It was the largest Federal Brigade on the field. Col. Childs and Col Young, and all of their Field Grade officers and adjutants were present. We assigned two companies of the 3rd USV to Col. Young's 2nd USV Regiment giving us a balanced two regiment Brigade.

The USV Artillery Regiment was also in force and a significant part of the US Artillery Reserve under the command of Col. Rick Dennis.

Battle of 1st Winchester

For Saturday's battle, the USV Brigade was positioned on the far right of the union line. General Brennan placed us along the ditch south of the Heater House. We sent skirmishers forward on top of the hill in our front to keep an eye on the enemy. They weren't there long. A large force of CS infantry pushed against our front. The CS mounted and dismounted cavalry harassed our right flank, but were held back by our own Cavalry. As the CS army pressed us, we were ordered to fall back. The Brigade did so in order, and continually positioned itself to pour fire into the enemy. We were able to slow down the enemy's advance significantly, and at about the time that we fell back to the top of the hillside north of the Heater House, the scenario was stopped.

Historically, the Federal Army was pushed back hard by the CS Valley Army, and the USV Brigade did its historical roll in fine order. Colonels Childs and Young handled their regiments very well, and gave up ground grudgingly. It was a good fight.

Saturday Evening Pipe Bomb Evacuation

Obviously, any after action report for 2017 Cedar Creek has to include the unfortunate incident that forced the entire CS army to evacuate their campsite. It is so significant however, that it deserves its own AAR. *(please see that after action report after the General's first report – editor)*

Sunday Morning Cedar Creek Battle

The Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation cancelled all of Sunday's scheduled events "for spectators" for obvious reasons. Much credit is given to US General Brennan and CS General Shelton for making the decision to go forward with the Cedar Creek battle. They secured permission from the Foundation, and since there would be no spectators, moved the battle to 10:30am.

The USV Brigade marched out onto the field to the top of the hill facing the Confederate Camp. Since there were no spectators, it was eerily quiet. I don't think I will ever forget that feeling. We were placed in the middle of the Federal line. The 2nd Brigade was to our right, and the 3rd Brigade was to our left. The engagement opened with a cavalry assault on the right flank of the Union line. Our cavalry fought it off. Immediately thereafter, a large line of Confederate Infantry emerged directly in our front. They marched through their artillery line and from about 200 yards, opened fire with a resounding rebel yell. The battle was on.

As the CS troops advanced, the Union line began to fall back. After securing three separate lines of defense, we decided to hold our ground. At about that moment, led by companies in the USV Brigade, Federal Troops began to charge the CS line. Once it started, groups of US soldiers up and down the line double quick' d into the Confederate Lines. When about half the army had done the same, we decided to end the scenario.

The battle ended a little earlier than planned. Yet as I looked at the troops, now totally commingled with their Confederate Counterparts, it was easy to see why. After all of the crap that we all had to deal with the night before, including an entire evacuation of the Confederate Army from their camps for over 5 hours, it was a very fitting end. It was clear that our troops charged the enemy not to engage it, but rather to embrace their brothers in arms. It was one of the most emotional moments I have ever experienced. Men were sobbing. Shouts of USA... USA... USA... erupted up and down both lines. We quieted the troops, and I asked the Federal band to strike up the Star Spangled Banner. EVERYONE placed their hand over their heart and SANG. General Shelton asked his bugler to play Dixie. Hugs were a plenty, and well wishes were exchanged everywhere.

As we walked off the field, I was inundated with comments from fellow soldiers saying this was the RIGHT thing to do, and that this was the greatest battle EVER.

Aftermath

153rd Cedar Creek will be discussed for years to come. Our hobby, which already had a number of issues to deal with, now has new and more foreboding challenges to address. It is hard to know how the events from this past weekend will shape the future of this hobby. All I can say is that I have never seen the Hobby more UNITED than I did this past Sunday. And trust me, we are going to need every bit of this unanimity to overcome this new assault.

I commend the USV Regimental Commanders, their field grade officers, their company commander, the non-commissioned officers, and every soldier and civilian. While we are only an army on the weekend, it was because we were an army THIS past weekend that allowed us to resolve a very serious situation. Your thorough search of your camp, and the written reports that you assembled were the sole reasons that the Union Army was not forced to evacuate the site. The men and women leaders of the USV DID THEIR JOBS, and did them well. You all deserve to step back and take pride in this extraordinary effort.

Next up.... Remembrance Day. WE WILL NOT STAND DOWN. We have already had a number of discussions with law enforcement and safety organizations in Gettysburg and the PARADE IS A GO. Security is obviously an issue, and TOP MEN are working on it. In the meantime, get the word out. Let's send a message to the entire Country that this hobby will endure. I cannot think of a better way to do that than to swell the streets at Gettysburg with three regiments of USV infantry, USV Cavalry, USV Artillery, USV Sharpshooters, and USV Civilians.

Very Respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. MARKIJOHN

Brig. General, United States Volunteers, 1st Brigade at Cedar Creek, Comdg

**Report of Brig. General Darrell N. Markijohn, USV, commanding
OCTOBER 14-15, 2017--The BATTLE OF FIRST WINCHESTER AND CEDAR CREEK,**

**HDQRS. USV Brigade,
Middletown, Va. October 17, 2017**

REPORT ON PIPE BOMB EVACUATION AND ITS AFTERMATH

Immediately after Saturday's Battle, at approximately 4:00pm, a Sutler owner found a large pipe bomb in her tent. This particular tent was adjacent to the large activity tent and adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Confederate Army camp.

Law Enforcement was immediately contacted, and the entire Sutler area and Confederate Infantry and Artillery Camp was evacuated. The Frederick County Sheriff's Office responded. A Bomb Squad was dispatched to the site. A robot loaded the device into a bomb detonation vessel and, with the use of secondary explosives, blew it up. It has yet to be confirmed if the device itself was armed and capable of exploding on its own.

At the time all of this was going on, the Federal Army was in Camp in the far North West Corner of the Cedar Creek Battlefield, very far away from this scene. The information regarding this incident that came over the radio was vague at first. Our first hint of trouble was a statement that the Sutler area had been shut down due to a bomb "threat." Then we heard that there was an actual pipe bomb found in the Sutler area.

The news of this, and a bunch of unsubstantiated rumors spread through the camp like a wild fire. As a flood of individuals converged on General Brennan's Federal Headquarters, he wisely decided to issue a general Officers' Call so that he could disseminate what we knew. Approximately 100 individuals appeared around his command tent. At that time, he was going to advise everyone that the Sutler Area had been closed and that we were to remain in camp and await further instructions. As we waited for everyone to assemble, a radio communication from a Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation Representative ordered the Federal Army to "immediately evacuate through the North Gate." We were ordered to leave "without taking anything with us." We were told that law enforcement was going to inspect our camp, and once they decided that the area was safe, we would be permitted to return. Everyone standing around the command tent heard these orders.

Further private discussions with the CCBF representative revealed that the evacuation was being ordered by law enforcement and was due in part to safety concerns as well as criminal investigatory concerns. When we asked where we were to evacuate to, there was no immediate answer.

At about this time, a Frederick County Deputy Sheriff closed the north gate, and refused to let anyone in the camp, and began preparing for the evacuation.

General Brennan's response was measured and appropriate. He asked that the law enforcement official responsible for the evacuation order be brought to our camp for an in person discussion. He also ordered the entire Federal army to conduct an immediate and thorough search of the camp. He demanded that every tent, every box, every container, etc., be searched, and that each company commander prepare a written report detailing the search of their respective company street. All reports were then ordered to be sent to Regimental headquarters, signed off by the Regimental Commanders, and then sent to and signed off by the Brigade Commanders. Within less than 45 minutes, the Federal Camp had been searched by the BEST PEOPLE that could determine if any strange and sinister device had been left there – the very folks that owned and were familiar with the camp.

We waited for our visit with law enforcement. No one came. Then about 6 pm. General Brennan and I were summoned to the Sheriff's Command Center for a meeting with the Frederick County Sheriff. Fortunately, by then, we were able to secure the written search reports from the 1st Brigade and the Federal Artillery, and we gathered them into a folder and brought them with us for our meeting.

When we arrived, we noticed approximately 30 individuals in the command post. Representatives from the FBI, ATF, Virginia Highway Patrol, Middletown Police, and the Frederick County Sheriff were present. The Sheriff advised us that he brought us there to develop a plan to evacuate the Federal Camp. We were told that 4 school buses had been assembled to take the Federal Troops and civilians to a local elementary school. Law enforcement was then going to inspect our camps, and until they were able to determine that the area was safe and clear of any dangerous devices, we would not be permitted to return.

Fortunately we had our written inspection reports, and we were able to provide them to the Sheriff and advise him they were sound and reliable. We stressed that every person in the Federal Camp had registered for the event by providing proper ID and that the CCBF had the name of every person. We also were able to assure the Sheriff that we were an ARMY, that we had a chain of command, and that every person in that area was accountable to someone up that chain, and ultimately to General Brennan. We asked the Sheriff to trust the results of the search and allow us to remain in camp. The fact that 3 hours had since gone by since the pipe bomb was discovered, and that the evacuation of 1,000 individual in 4 buses would take another hour at least was not lost in our discussions with him. After excusing himself, and having a discussion with someone at the command station, the

Sheriff wisely relented. He assigned one of his Deputies to accompany General Brennan and myself on an inspection of the Federal Camp and to review the written inspection reports. If they were deemed acceptable to the Deputy, he would allow us to remain in camp.

General Brennan and I left with the Deputy and walked down the entire line of the Federal Camp. We started with US Artillery, then moved on to the Infantry Brigade camps and concluded with a visit to the Cavalry Camp. It was now completely dark. At the end of our inspection, the Deputy was appeased and we were able to report to the Sheriff that our camp was secure. The evacuation order was duly lifted.

We then turned our attention to lifting the ban on folks coming in and out of the Federal Camp. Only registered reenactors would be permitted in and out of the camp. General Brennan stayed at the North Gate to assist the Deputy Sheriff to confirm that folks attempting to come and go were registered. I stayed at the command tent to assist the Confederate Army in their attempt to return to their respective camps. The USV, at the request of the County Sheriff, was able to secure three licensed law enforcement/Firemen from the ranks to assist in checking ID's of all of the

Confederate troops that were being permitted to return to their camps. We were stationed at the north end of State Rt. 11 near the Barbeque Restaurant where we checked a long line of cars and busses loaded with Confederate Troops heading back from the local elementary school. Just before midnight, all of the Confederate Troops were finally back in camp and we returned to headquarters.

Observations

This was an attack on our hobby, LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY! It was a lethal attempt to harm our family and friends. It is not known whether it was an active bomb. Most of the "reports" we have heard is that it was NOT an actual bomb. Law enforcement is understandingly reluctant to comment on that issue while it investigates this heinous crime. We may never know.

Regardless, someone spent a lot of time putting this thing together. The longstanding dispute over Confederate Flags, and the more recent assault on Confederate Monuments, is now aimed at Civil War Reenactors and their families, Blue and Gray. We must now consider security measures at our Civil War Reenactments and Living Histories. And we will. This hobby will not Stand Down.

And most importantly, we will not give this demented individual or individuals the satisfaction of knowing that they gained anything. They may have caused an event to be cancelled, and a lot of inconvenience, but they have only strengthened the resolve of every person present to continue with our mission of reenacting the history of our country. We do not tell political stories. Civil War reenactors tell military history stories and there is no place for political movements inconsistent with this respectable objective, let alone ones premised on violence.

And finally, I commend all of our friends at the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, Board Members, volunteers, and especially Pat Kehoe and the Foundation President Joe D'Arizzo. You all worked your tails off to help us. Nobody should have to deal with this kind of emergency. We saw the stress and strain in your faces and yet you never took a rest until everyone was back in camp and safe. I speak for the entire USV in offering our thanks for the extraordinary efforts you exhibited in taking care of our members.

Very Respectfully, your obedient servant,
D. MARKIJOHN

Brig. General, United States Volunteers, 1st Brigade at Cedar Creek, Comdg

Upcoming events -

Monument Cleanup –

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

Bring your rakes, loupers, gloves, etc. for our bi-annual cleanup of our monument and surrounding grounds on Brooke 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 re-enactors) with our fellow parads from the National Regiment. More details will be provided as we get closer to the event.

Annual Membership Meeting – (private)

2 December 2017 – Sgt. Fasnacht's Home (Kleinfeltersville)

Our annual membership meeting to discuss various topics including 2017, events for our 2018 schedule, treasury review, election of civil and field officers, holiday dinner, etc. Meeting starts at 10AM. Please arrive early and bring an item to share for lunch; please email Mark ahead of time so he has an idea what everyone is bringing so we don't have 5 of the same thing.

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~~

4 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

President: Eric Ford (reenactor53@gmail.com)

Vice President: Croce Volpe (vafomedic@aol.com)

Secretary/Treasurer: Pat Rose (p.m.rose@comcast.net)

Newsletter Editor: Matthew Steger (n3ntj@comcast.net)

Webmasters: Steve Dillon (steve@gofoxpro.com) and Matthew Steger (n3ntj@comcast.net)

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

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

919 North 26th St.

Reading, PA 19606

