



53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" January 2018

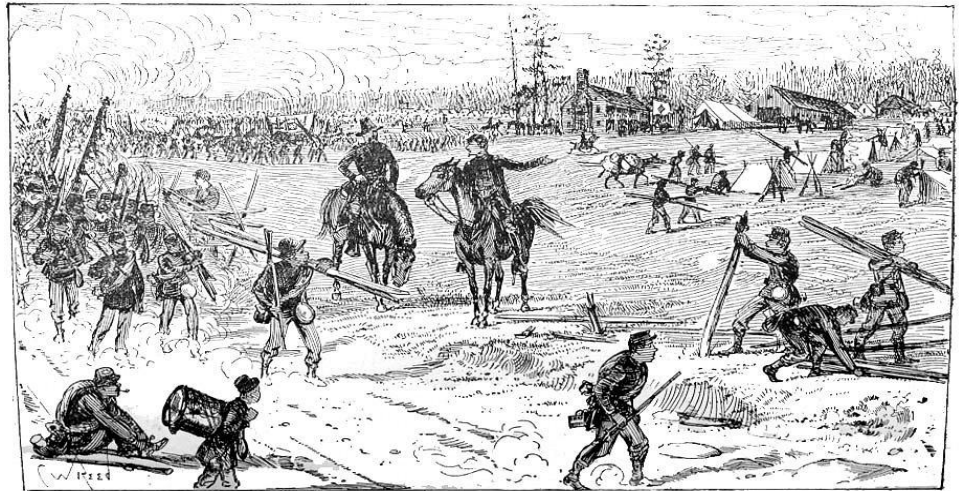
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trump!"

This Month:

1. Book Review "Marching Home"
2. The Civil War Letters of Levi Fritz
3. Annual Meeting Summary
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Happy New Year 2018! 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

Book review

"Marching Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War"

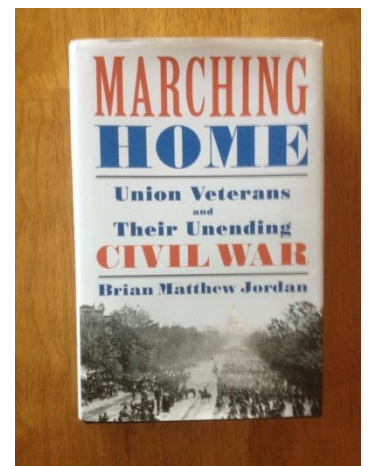
Author: Brian Matthew Jordan
Photos, Notes, index, bibliography 374 pp Hardbound \$28.95
Copyright 2014 Liveright/W.W. Norton & Company
Reviewed by: Mike Espenshade

This masterfully researched book is a groundbreaking reinterpretation of post-Civil War society and reveals the desperate fate that awaited Union Veterans after demobilization. Beginning with the restless weeks that followed Appomattox, Jordan uncovers voluminous archives recalling Billy Yank's grueling homeward journey and subsequent years of struggle to integrate into civilian routine and to be understood by the northern society, his government, and his home community.

Battling physical pain and psychic trauma that was barely understood, Union veterans came together to share and honor memories that no one else would. Chapters highlight the brotherhood of those veterans who shared experiences as amputees, prisoners, pensioners, Veteran Home occupants, GAR members, etc.

A piercing investigation into the truth of American veteranhood, this work is an unforgettable record to those whose bitter war long outlasted the final battle.

For me, as a veteran and long-time living historian in my sunset years, this is one of the most relevant and appreciated books I own. Note: John Heiser (yes, that's him, our very own) helped with the writing of this book and is acknowledged on page 206. Show up at the Holiday Party in January to happily pay him your \$53.00 for his autograph.



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.

Camp Curtin, Harrisburg,
Saturday, Aug. 24th, 1861.

Messrs. Editors:--As many of your readers know on Wednesday morning the Madison Guards of Pottstown (lately Company C, 4th Reg. P. V.) left in the morning train for Harrisburg, having enlisted for the war now existing.

We arrived in Harrisburg at 2 o'clock and were marched immediately to Camp Curtin. We were at once supplied with a complement of tents and before evening we received our quota of blankets, knives and forks, spoons, tincups, plates, &c. Rations are plenty and eatable, consisting alternately of fresh beef, corned beef and bacon; as well as hard and soft bread, rice and beans. Camp Curtin, that until a recent period was in a miserable unhealthy condition, has been thoroughly renovated. The old cattle stalls in which we spent a night on the straw some four months ago, are all torn down, and the camp looks passing tidy and comfortable. The soldiers are nearly all quartered under canvass; the tents are also furnished with boards for flooring them, being a great improvement and much more cleaner and warmer than straw. At the present date there is about eighteen hundred men in camp, these being divided amongst perhaps thirty companies.

Very few companies come in with the regular number of men in their ranks. Volunteering is about "played out," and unless some unforeseen circumstances arise to prevent it, the next quota of men called for will be furnished by the drafting process. I have it from good authority that arrangements for drafting the militia are now being concluded. Our boys are all well and in excellent spirits, in fact our Company is becoming celebrated throughout the camp for its continuous liveliness. We have some excellent singers in our ranks, and so in the evenings our improvised concerts are attended by a large congregation of the neighboring companies, and our vocal efforts are applaudingly received. We are getting along in a merry old style, and "so let Southernors do as they will, we'll be gay and happy still." We have not yet been mustered into service--we are waiting for recruits. It is impossible at the present writing to say when we will be moved from here; it is the general desire of the men to go south as soon as possible.

The following is the "order of the day" in this camp: Morning--Company drill from 5.30 to 6.30; Squad drill, 7.30 to 8.30; Officers drill, 7.30 to 8.30; Company drill, 9 to 10.30; Sergeants drill 11 to 12. Afternoon--Squad drill by officers, 2 to 3; Sergeants drill, 3 to 4; Officers drill, 4 to 5; Company drill, 5 to 6; Dress parade at 6.

Yours, &c. L.J.F.

[*Ledger*, September 3, 1861]

Summary from the Annual Member Meeting (2 December 2017)

by Eric Ford

I need roster updates from all dues paying members. The NR insurance policy that went into effect in 2017 requires full contact info for everyone. If you were not at the meeting please send me your full legal name, address, phone and email. I need this info before the year's end. I will be glad to cover the particulars of the policy but it's a little

(Summary from the Annual Member Meeting - con't)

too much to cover here. If you missed the meeting, contact me with questions. In short, we are all covered with liability and limited medical coverage at any time that we are representing the 53rd and/or the NR.

The annual Holiday Party is scheduled for January 13, 2018 at The Dobbin House. Formal invitations will be going out in the next day or so. If you plan to attend, please send your payment to Pat Rose ASAP. His address is 919 N 26th St. Reading, PA 19606. ALL current and former members who attend the party will receive a new 53rd t-shirt. The deadline for your T-shirt order was the 26th of December. For those wishing to stay in town overnight, the Inn at Cemetery Hill (formerly the Travelodge) has rooms for \$75. If we book 10 or more rooms they will extend a 10% discount to us. Let me know if you book a room and I'll take care of the group reservation before the arrival date and the discount will be applied when you arrive and pay for the room.

All members need to submit dues to Pat Rose before January 31st. Our dues will remain at \$30 for 2018. In 2019, they will increase to \$40 to offset the cost of the NR's insurance policy. Our NR dues have been reduced from \$90 to \$50 for 2018 with a \$10 per member cost to cover the premium. The 53rd will cover this new expense for the upcoming year as the NR did for 2017. However, we will pass it along to the members next year.

Election ballots will be coming from Croce to anyone who was not in attendance at the meeting. The offices of President and Treasurer as well as all NCO positions are up for reelection. When voting for NCO's, please vote for ONE Sgt and ONE Cpl. Each rank has two nominees. The person with the most votes for each rank will be the 1st Sgt and 1st Cpl. The other nominee will be the 2nd Sgt and 2nd Cpl. Ballots were due by December 31st.

Here's the event schedule for 2018:

February 3: Winter Drill at Landis Valley. This may be an overnight event. Confirmation will come soon. **MAX EFFORT**

February 17: Winter Drill backup date in the event of hazardous weather conditions. **MAX EFFORT**

February 17: NR School of the Soldier. Gettysburg. All members are encouraged to attend. Let Eric know if you wish to attend no later than January 13.

March 3: Cartridge rolling party. 10:00am at Sgt Fasnacht's house. Pot luck lunch.

April 7: Spring Adopt a Position day. 10:00am

April 21-22: Gettysburg Living History. This will be a combined event with ELF Co. **MAX EFFORT**

May 19-20: New Market Reenactment. NR event.

May 19-20: AHEC Living History. Carlisle, PA. The expectation is that we will have a strong turnout to maximize the amount paid. The funds will go to the Treasury. **PAID EVENT/MAX EFFORT**

May 28: Memorial Day Parade. Hummelstown, PA. **MAX EFFORT**

June 2-3: Wilson's Warf Living History. Ft Pocahontas Charles City, VA. This is an ELF Co event that they have expressed a strong desire for the 53rd to participate in. This will be a **MAX EFFORT** event. We opted for this event instead of the New Market reenactment. All members should give this event strong consideration in an effort to support ELF in return for their long time and continued support for our Landis Valley Event. (See link to event website below)

July 5-8: 155th Gettysburg Reenactment.

July 22: Gruber Wagon Works. **MAX EFFORT**

July 28-29: Landis Valley. **MAX EFFORT**

August 11-12: Cedar Mountain Living History. 1st MN event

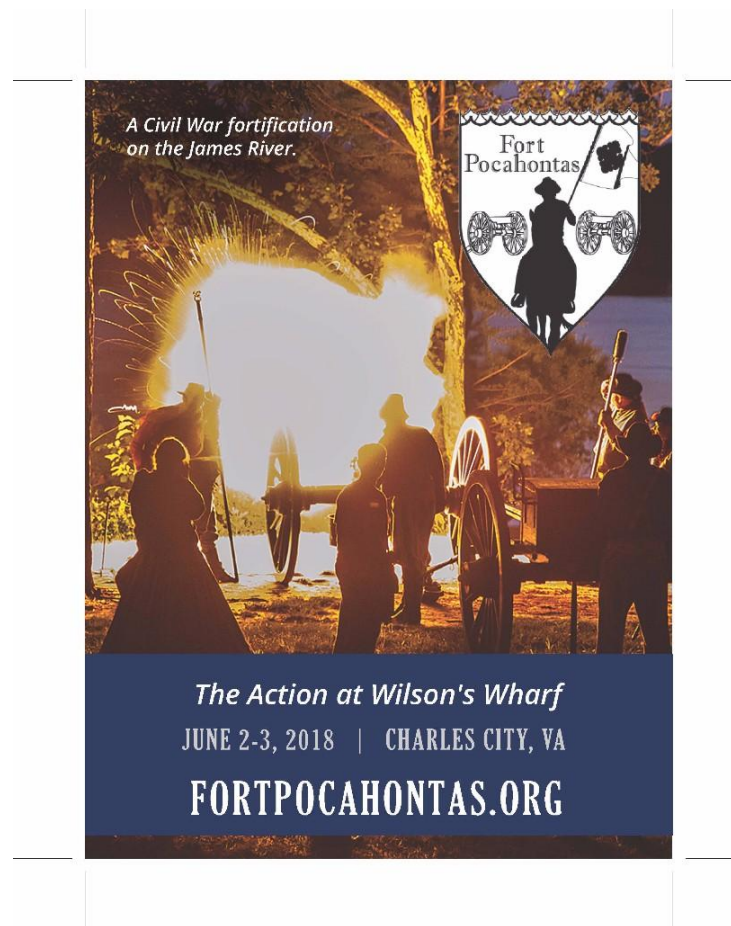
September 7-9: South Mountain Reenactment. Burkittsville, MD. NR **MAX EFFORT**

October 6-7: Gettysburg Living History. 53rd only. **MAX EFFORT**

November 3: Fall Adopt a Position Day. 10:00am

November 17: Remembrance Day. NR event.

Thanks, Eric



Event website: <http://www.fortpocahontas.org/reenactment/>
(More information about the reenactment will follow after the New Year)

A word from our president.....

Gentlemen,

For those who missed the annual business meeting, Matt will include the minutes [see above] that I also sent out in a separate email a few weeks ago. Please take the time to review the info. There is some time sensitive information that I need from ALL dues paying members. The Holiday Party is fast approaching. Please RSVP to Croce or myself as soon as possible. Don't forget to include your shirt size so I can place the order for your FREE t-shirt. If anyone is interested in purchasing a long sleeve t-shirt, Polo or hoodie you will need to contact me directly. **I need to place the order DECEMBER 26th.**

I hope that you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Be safe and enjoy the Holidays.

Eric

Upcoming events -

Annual Holiday Party – (private)

13 January 2018 – The Dobbin House (Gettysburg)

Our annual get together of pards, spouses, and significant others for a good time of mingling and dinner. Additional details will be forthcoming from Croce Volpe at the annual membership meeting on 2 December.

Winter Drill –

3 February 2018 – Landis Valley Museum (Lancaster)

Our annual winter get-together to help get the rust off, do some drill and instruction, and get ready for the 2018 campaign. An alternate date of 17 February was decided at the annual meeting but will only be used in case of hazardous travel conditions on the 3rd. There is a possibility that this may be a 2 day event (3rd and 4th of February) so please keep both days open in your schedules should we add the 2nd day. Keep posted to the unit's group Facebook page for updates on this drill in case of any weather issues and regarding the possible 2nd day addition; Eric will also update the group as we get closer to the date.

2018 Calendar of Events -

13 January – Holiday Party – Gettysburg

3 February – Winter Drill (Landis Valley) – Lancaster {Backup Date – 17 February}

17 – 18 February – National Regiment Officer/NCO School – Gettysburg

3 March – Cartridge Rolling Party – Kleinfeltersville

7 April – Spring Adopt-A-Position (Monument Cleanup) – Gettysburg NMP

21 – 22 April – Living History – Gettysburg NMP

19 – 20 May – USAHEC – Carlisle, PA (Paid Event)

19 – 20 May – New Market Re-enactment – NR Max Effort

28 May – Memorial Day Parade – Hummelstown

2 – 3 June – Wilson's Wharf – Ft. Pocahontas Charles City, VA (ELF)

5 – 8 July – 155th Gettysburg Re-enactment – Gettysburg NMP

22 July – Gruber Wagon Works – Reading

28 – 29 July – Landis Valley – Lancaster

11 – 12 August – Cedar Mountain LH (1st MN)

7 – 9 September – 155th South Mountain – Burkittsville, MD (NR Max Effort)

6 – 7 October – Living History – Gettysburg NMP

3 November – Fall Adopt-A-Position (Monument Cleanup) – Gettysburg NMP

17 November – Remembrance Day Parade – Gettysburg

1 December – Annual Meeting



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

