

# 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

## Company C

"The Sentinel" February 2018

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trump!"

### This Month:

1. Holiday Party Photos
2. Civil War Letters (Levi Fritz)
3. Newspaper clipping about one of our veterans
4. NR School of Soldier Schedule
5. A word from our president
6. Upcoming Events
7. 2018 Calendar of Events



*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*

**Holiday Party Photos** – all photos are courtesy of Matthew Steger (unless listed otherwise)



*The men of the 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI as well as our guest speaker*

On 13 January 2018, members of the 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI met for our annual Holiday Dinner at the Dobbin House in Gettysburg. A good time was had by all who attended. Cocktail hour began the event, followed by dinner, results of our civil and field officer election, and then a presentation by John Hoptak. Our civil officers will remain Eric Ford (president) and Pat Rose (treasurer/secretary). Our field officers will remain Mark Fasnacht (1<sup>st</sup> Sgt.), Marc Benedict (Sgt.), Mike Espenshade (Corporal), and Matthew Steger (Corporal).

A special thank you goes out to Croce Volpe (our vice president) for once again organizing our annual holiday dinner.

John Hoptak gave a detailed account of the 48<sup>th</sup> PVI, specifically, their actions at Petersburg and the Battle of the Crater. The 48<sup>th</sup> PVI originated from Schuylkill County and many of its men had mining backgrounds pre-war. With little to no assistance from the Federal Army, these men of the 48th dug the tunnel resulting in the Crater. The 48<sup>th</sup> did their job but the battle which ensued after the explosion is widely known as a failure due to the lack of proper planning on the part of Gen. Ambrose Burnside.



Our guest speaker John Hoptak and our president Eric Ford.



Spouses and significant others of the 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI members attending.

Various other photos from the party.







The above 2 photos are the courtesy of Traci Ford.

## 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,  
Monday, Sept. 10th, 1861.

Messrs Editors:--During an absence from camp of more than a week I have lost the run of events here, and consequently can give your readers nothing more than a short account of matters as they appeared after a hasty inspection.

Last week all of the old linen tents that have been in use here for the last four months, and were much worn dirty and torn, were, agreeable to order, struck, and new ones of a much better article of canvass, pitched in their places. More regularity was also observed in placing them. The streets or company parades being more roomy than heretofore. As a general thing you can make a pretty fair judgment of the character of the men by inspecting the tents they bunk in. If you see things lying around loose--everything in dirty confusion, you may rest satisfied that the occupants of it are slovenly fellows who look as if they never changed clothes or seen water for weeks. On the other hand if you observe a tent kept clean, blankets, if not in use, neatly stowed away, clothing hanging up, eating utensils all in some proper place: the dwellers beneath that canvass will be respectable men and good soldiers. These remarks are as true of officers as of the privates. Nothing looks so comfortable as a well arranged camp in its every particular kept perfectly clean and tidy, and it should be the first duty of the proper officers to see that such is the case.

Last Thursday the Base Ball club of our company (recently organized) played a match game with a picked crowd from Capt. Wise's (Reading) company. The game, which was very exciting, lasted more than four hours and resulted in the complete victory of the Pottstown boys--they making 31 scores to their opponents 19. Our boys were commanded by Lieut. Potts and the Readingers by Lieutenant Rogers.

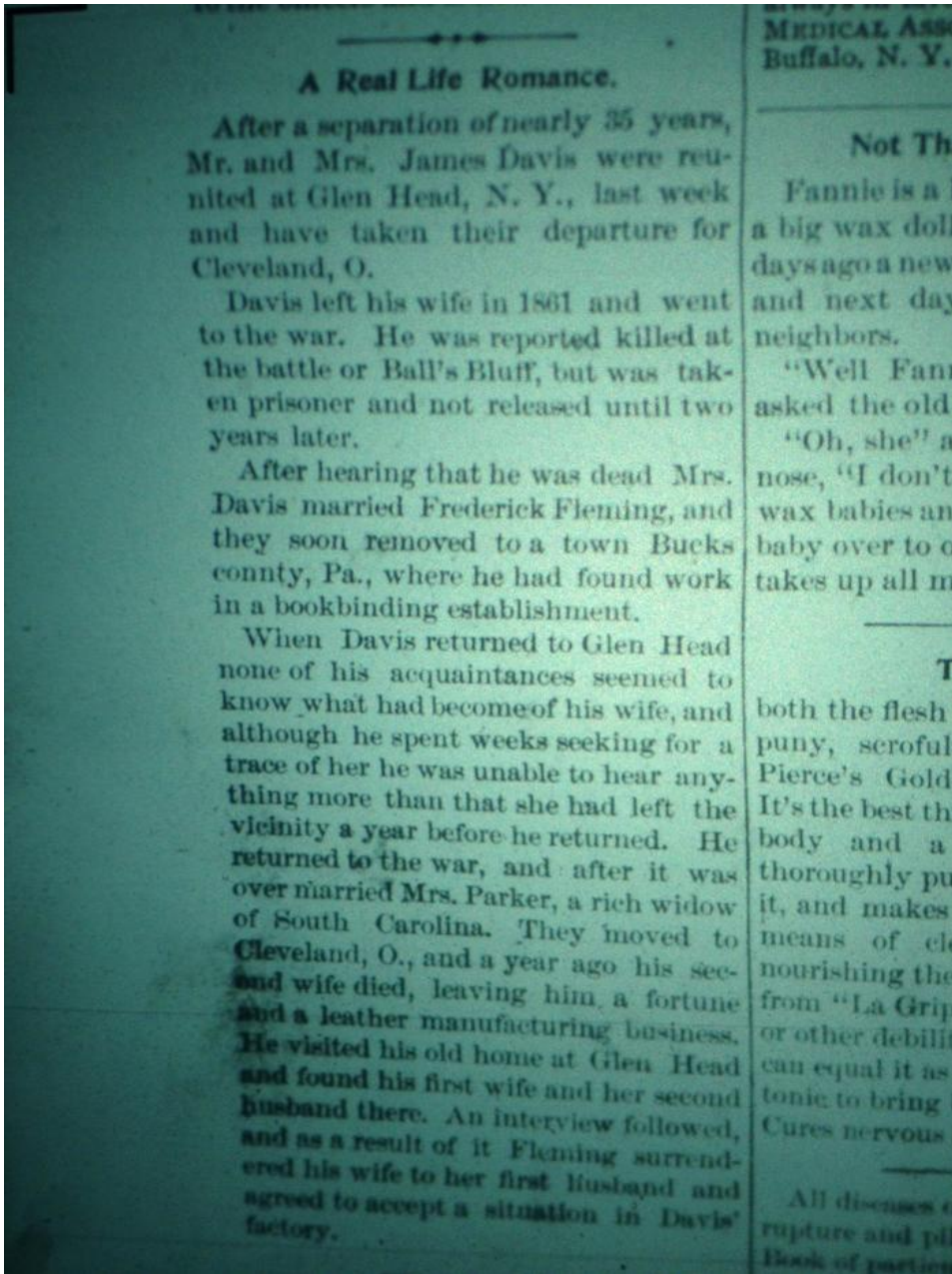
Yesterday at 3 o'clock there was preaching in Camp; one of the clergymen of Harrisburg officiated in the pulpit. There is a temporary pulpit erected which is occupied by some divine every sabbath afternoon. There is, in bold characters inscribed above the pulpit these words--"in God our trust."

Camp Curtin now covers a large field outside the fair ground enclosure--there being not sufficient room inside to pitch the requisite number of tents. The divisions of the Camps are distinguished as camp No. 1, and camp No. 2. Each has its set of guards but are under the same Colonel commanding and officers of the day. The regular routine of camp duty is suspended on Sundays except dress parade which comes off every evening at 6 o'clock. The parade is participated in by about two thousand men, and is formed in two lines of battle, one immediately behind the other; the first line being composed of those troops who have received their uniforms (dark blue pants and blouse). The appearance is fine and on pleasant days attracts numerous spectators from Harrisburg. There are three bands of music in camp. They have connected themselves with some of the regiments forming here.

Yours, &c.

L.J.F.

[*Ledger*, September 10, 1861]



This is a newspaper clipping from Nov 4, 1896 titled "A Real Life Romance" supplied by Mike Espenshade. It details the separation of a man and his wife due to the Civil War. Believing he was dead due to the war, she remarried. He later returned and could find no trace of her so we went back to serve in the war. After the war, he ended up also remarrying.

Some 35 years later, they found each other again, her then-current husband 'surrendered' her to her original husband (since they were technically still married) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> husband took a job in the 1<sup>st</sup> husband's leather factory. Almost sounds like a soap opera.

*NR School Of The Soldier Schedule*

**Saturday 17 February 2018**

- 6:45 a.m. Registration opens
- 7:00 a.m. Breakfast at the Fire House
- 7:30 a.m. Formation and announcements – Downes, Brennan
- 7:40 a.m. 1863 – Uniforms, general impression (officers, NCOS) – Kraus
- 8:30 a.m. Panel Discussion - Camp Security and Standard Operating Procedures (Panelists – T. Brennan, NR, Paul Dudek, USV Safety Officer, John Kubilewicz, CoS USV)



- 9:30 a.m. Break
- 9:45 a.m. Class A – Shelter Halves and Tent Stakes (Parvis)  
 Class B – Manual of Arms (McNierny, Purrone)  
 Class C – Duties of Soldiers/Officers (Brennan/Bloom)  
 Class D – The musket and it's care in the field (App)
- 11:45 a.m. Rations (Warren Stevens)
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch Break - Provided
- 1:30 p.m. Guard Mount – Duties of the Guard (Carlson, Smith)  
 a. Sentries – positions, duties, saluting, General Orders  
 b. Corporal of the Guard – Duties, challenging, reporting disturbances  
 c. Sgts and Officers of the Guard - Duties
- 2:30 p.m. Battalion in the field (Col. Downes)  
 a. evolutions of a Regiment
- 3:15 p.m. Pack Inspection (Parvis)  
 a. What each man should carry in pack  
 b. Proper placement of gear in a pack
- 4:00 p.m. Letters of Elias Peck, 10th Conn (Carlson)
- 6:00 p.m. End of Training Day

**Sunday 18 February 2018:**

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast at Fire Station
- 8:00 a.m. NR Business Meeting (Board)  
 a. Bylaws  
 b. Recruiting  
 c. Insurance
- 9:15 a.m. Dress Parade (Downes)  
 a. Positions and movements of Field Officers  
 b. Capts., Lts. And NCOs  
 c. 1 Sgts. – Reporting  
 d. Adjutant and Sgt. Major – Duties throughout formation  
 e. train all officers and NCOs for each position (pool of adjt and SM)
- 10:30 a.m. Secure Facility and Dismiss

**ORDERS:**

**Uniform will be uniform coat, cover and appropriate accoutrement. Soldiers will bring musket and leather. Officers will have sword and sword belt. Soft soled shoes must be worn in the Fire House.**

**Dinner on Saturday is not hosted. Soldiers should forage for their evening meal in town.**

## *A word from our president.....*

Gentlemen,

First, let me take a moment to say thank you for putting the trust in me to serve as this unit's President for another term.

This time of year we don't have a lot of business to cover so I'll be brief. Take a look at the event schedule for the year and do your best to make the arrangements to attend the max effort events. It's a fairly busy spring for us this year so plan accordingly. I'll point out AHEC and Wilson's Warf. We're using AHEC as a means to help offset the added expense of the NR's insurance policy for 2018. Wilson's Warf is in support of ELF Co. They have been committed to helping the 53<sup>rd</sup> at Landis Valley for many years. Let's return the favor. Please do all you can to attend this event.

**DUES. If you have not paid your 2018 dues, please do so ASAP. We are required to furnish the NR with our complete roster of dues paid members to be in compliance with the insurance policy. If you have not paid, you are not covered. No exceptions.**

Eric

## Upcoming events -

### Winter Drill –

3 - 4 February 2018 – Landis Valley Museum (Lancaster)

Our annual winter get-together (a 2 day event) to help get the rust off, do some drill and instruction, and get ready for the 2018 campaign. Check the unit's group Facebook page and unit emails for any last-minute updates on this drill weekend. Bring your normal gear/uniform, food, and anything you want to share. It will be a bit chilly this weekend, so please plan accordingly. No powder/caps nor tentage are needed. If you have an instruction topic you'd like done or something you'd like to present, please let Eric know ASAP!

### Cartridge Rolling Party –

3 March 2018 – Sgt. Fasnacht's Home (Kleinfeltersville)

As in prior years, we will meet to roll cartridges for the upcoming season. Feel free to bring scissors, glue sticks, rolling tools, etc. as well as something to share for lunch. Please let Mark know ahead of time if you plan on attending and what you will be bringing.

### “Adopt A Position” Monument Cleanup –

7 April 2018 – 53<sup>rd</sup> 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.

### Gettysburg Living History –

21 – 22 April – PA Monument (Gettysburg NPS)

Living history event with our ELF friends at the PA Monument. Bring your normal kit, rounds, tentage, food, etc. and items to show the public. Arrive by 8AM on Sat. Updates on the event schedule will be forthcoming as we get closer to the event.

## 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 “School Of The Soldier” – 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](mailto:reenactor53@gmail.com))

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

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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>

**Dues must be submitted by 31 Jan. 2018!!**

Mail checks payable to "53rd PVI" to: Pat Rose, 919 North 26th St., Reading, PA 19606

