



53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" July 2018

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trump!"

This Month:

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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

Some Original 53rd Veterans' Headstones

submitted by Marc Benedict



Corporal Cornelius Uxley, Co. A
Died June 19, 1873. Buried in Rock Church Road Cemetery,
Morgantown, PA.



Priv. George Woodcock - Residing in Blair County, Pennsylvania at the time of enlistment. Enlisted on January 29, 1864 as a Private in the 53rd Pennsylvania Infantry, Company C, at the age of 19. Wounded in left forearm and neck on May 12, 1864 at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia. Died of wounds received. Buried in Arlington National Cemetery



Sgt. Calvin Wilson, Co. D - Born in 1838. Killed in Battle of White Oak Swamp, June 30, 1862. Buried in Presbyterian Cemetery, Williamsburg, PA



Corporal Franklin Westover, Co. F - Buried in Shawnee Cemetery, Luzerne County, Plymouth, PA

53rd PVI Quartermaster Meeting

On 20 June, several of us met at Mike Espenshade's home to go through the boxes that we've assembled as part of our quartermaster program. Attending were: Mike Espenshade, Eric Ford, Mark Fasnacht, Marc Benedict, and Matt Steger. In about 5 hours, we determined what we had, determined approximate values for each item, and then I documented the list in a spreadsheet. Mike also provided a cheeseburger picnic for us. Photo provided by Mike Espenshade.



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]

Headquarters, 53d Regt., P.V.
Camp California, Va.
Saturday, Jan. 18th, 1862.

Messrs. Editors:--Rain, Hail, snow and mud; and mud, snow, hail and rain, has been the weather "order of exercise" during the past week. The sun appears to have entirely disappeared and thick fogs, forboding clouds, and spattering rain-drops are in the ascendancy. The bad weather, and per consequence, miserable roads, makes martial movements on any very extended scale an impossibility, unless a new military road is cut through the fog. So far this year we have done very little drilling, the condition of the weather and six inches of mud, preventing it. For the last four or five days, dress parade has been dispensed with for the same reasons.

We were visited last week by Messers. John W. Casselberry and David Weand of Pottstown. Although the weather was not very favorable for an inspection of our quarters, yet they expressed themselves pleased with the manner in which we were getting along, and were somewhat surprised to see how comfortable we were fixed up to resist the attacks of Jack Frost and his icy friends. Mr. Weand came on to procure a furlough or discharge for his son, Milton S. Weand, a prominent member of the Regimental Band, who has been for months past sick with typhoid fever, at the Indiana Hospital, Patent Office, Washington/ At one time he was dangerously ill, but he is now convalescent, although it will perhaps require some time yet before he will be "himself again." We hope that when our friend Milton is surrounded by the friends and comforts of home, (and to the sick soldier home is truly sweet) he will speedily recover. His efficient services are missed in the Band, and his genial smile and hearty good nature are wanting in the camp.

Major Yeager has returned with his health much improved, and Captain Bull, who has been acting in that position during the Major's absence, has again resumed command of Company A.

Nearly every night, and sometimes during the day, we hear heavy firing down the Potomac. It is the rebel batteries firing at the vessels running the blockade. When the Pensacola left her anchorage in the river off Alexandria and proceeded down the river, protected on the right side by a schooner loaded with wet hay, we plainly heard the sullen boom of every gun fired at her. Last evening continuous firing was kept up all the night; sometimes as many as ten or twelve shots a minute were discharged. We have not heard what was the cause of it.

Some amusing incidents occur in camp sometimes. One of the members of Company A secured a large and fat white rabbit, which by continued caressing has become quite tame and playful, and as a matter of course is a favorite. One evening the happy owner of the pet animal returned from Alexandria with several heads of cabbage, intending to make a small lot of sour-crout. He stuffed the cabbage under the bed and retired. On getting up in the morning, behold the cabbage was non est. The appearance of things indicated, and truly, that soft coat had made away with it. In looking around behind some wood near the tent, a head of cabbage was discovered. On examining it the impress of the rabbit's teeth could be plainly seen. The animal was not able to devour more than one head that night, and so he was cute enough to drag the other out of the tent and hide it behind the wood for future meals, in what, we presume, he considered a safe place. One day while standing on the Washington side of the Long Bridge, we noticed as the soldiers had their passes examined by the Lieutenant of the Guard, the canteens were examined, and if containing any liquor it was emptied upon the ground. A Zouave came along pretty well "happy, happy be." He noticed the decided and whiskey conduct of the Lieutenant. He eyed him for some time and then suddenly turned as if struck by a bright idea, and hastens to a pump near by and pumps water in his canteen, and then boldly walks up to the guard and presents his pass. The pass was right. "What have you in the canteen?" asks the Lieutenant. "Water mixed," answers Zoo-zoo. In the meantime the guard scented the whiskey, and was about to pour it out. "Hold on now," says the half tipsy

soldier, "I own you have a right to spill out the whiskey, but you have no right to empty my water!" It might have been a fine thing but the guard couldn't see it, and the consequence was liquor and water was scattered indiscriminately on the ground, and the Zouave passed over the Bridge with an empty canteen and a doleful face.

A member of Richard's Cavalry of Reading, was doing picket duty on the Upper Potomac. He was stationed where two roads met. About twilight two persons came driving along in a buggy. He halted them, examined the wagon to see if it contained anything contraband, and

finally asked where they were going. They answered that they were going to a wedding a few miles beyond his post. "Will they have anything to drink there?" asked the guard. "Oh! lots of it." "Well then I'll go along," and he jumped into the buggy and away he went. During his absence the corporal came round and found the post deserted. While looking around for the guard and leaving off a few mild oaths, the absentee made his appearance. After explaining matters, the guard accompanied by the Corporal again started for the wedding; where they spent several free and easy hours. Of course when they returned to quarters they were severely reprimanded, and punished, I believe, by being made to walk the ring for several days. Some of the three months boys in Pottstown can tell what kind of a punishment the ring is.

There is nothing of moment transpiring, and your readers must bear with me in writing these uninteresting letters. I have hopes that ere long we will have an opportunity of participating in events that will furnish us with sufficient items for a valuable correspondence. The officers of the regiment are, for obvious reasons, endeavoring to get out of this brigade. We like Gen. French very well, but this is a New York brigade, composed of German regiments, and there is not much friendship and less association between us. We belong in a Pennsylvania brigade, and we have pretty good reasons for believing that ere long we will be. L.J.F.

[Ledger, January 21, 1862]

Spring Monument Cleanup

Photo submitted by Eric Ford. Present were: Eric Ford, Alec Bohnenblust, Kerry Williard and Croce Volpe.



NPR Article: "Civil War Battlefield 'Limb Pit' Reveals Work Of Combat Surgeons"



(This is a short excerpt of the NPR article.. I didn't post the entire thing here as its lengthy with lots of photos - editor)

Scientists have uncovered a pit of human bones at a Civil War battlefield in Virginia. The remains are the amputated limbs of wounded Union soldiers.

It's the first "limb pit" from a Civil War battlefield to be excavated, and experts say it opens a new window on what is often overlooked in Civil War history: the aftermath of battle, the agony of survivors and the trials of early combat surgeons.

The bones first surfaced in 2014 when a utility crew was digging at the [Manassas National Battlefield Park](#). The National Park Service runs the site, and fortunately it had an archaeologist and Civil War expert on hand: Brandon Bies.

Bies says at first they weren't sure what they had. "Just pieces of bone," says Bies, who is now superintendent of the Manassas site. But over time more bones surfaced. The Park Service sent them to some of the world's leading forensic anthropologists at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

(to read the rest of the article, please click on this link)

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/06/20/620394034/civil-war-battlefield-limb-pit-reveals-work-of-combat-surgeons>

2018 Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade Photos – submitted by Mike Espenshade



Fire!

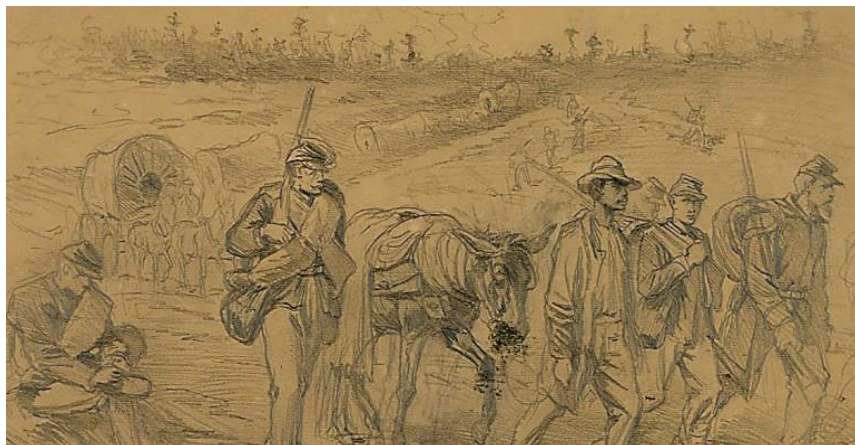


Charge Bayonet!

Daily reports coming on VI Corps march

(reprinted with permission from [The Jersey Gallinipper](#))

A small company representing Company E the 15th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry leaves Edward's Ferry, Md., Thursday morning to trace the VI Corp's approximately 90-mile march to join the battle at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863.



I'm helping with the logistics on this and hope to post photos and brief updates daily on [my Facebook feed](#), depending on internet access and the winds of fortune. I'll then combine them for a full report via blog a week or so after the march.

Today, here's a report on the 15th New Jersey, researched by event organizer Joe Bordonaro. It's filled with good information, but Joe also managed to capture the depth and texture of the Jerseymen's experience with some

collected anecdotes and battle reports. The report you see will be used by the marchers to, as the organizer of a previous march said, "remind the 21st Century whose shoulders we stand upon."



We will be representing the 15th NJ Volunteer Infantry on the march. So that you are able to share basic information to interested citizens whom you may talk to while on the march, and so that you will have topics to talk about while doing first person ... here are some facts about the regiment:

Served from 1862 to 1865. Organized at Flemington, New Jersey, in July and August 1862. Left for Wash., D.C., on 8/27/62, with nine hundred and twenty-five officers and men, Colonel Samuel Fowler commanding.

Encamped at Tennallytown, where it remained for about a month, engaged in drill and acquiring discipline for future service. While here, the men were also employed upon the defenses of Washington, slashing timber, making military roads, and throwing up earthworks – Fort Kearny being constructed entirely by their labor. Original Company E commanders: Captain John H. Vanderveer; First Lieutenant Stephen H. Bogardus; Second Lieutenant Ellis Hamilton.

Battles prior to Gettysburg: December 11–15, 1862 – [Battle of Fredericksburg](#); April 30 – May 6, 1863 – [Battle of Chancellorsville](#) (The above info is from Wikipedia. The info below is from "Remember You Are Jerseymen!" by Joseph Bilby.)

The 15th NJ was in camp at Tennallytown when General Pope's Army was defeated at the Battle of Second Manassas on August 30 and 31, 1862. They were still there when General McClellan took command of the Army of the Potomac again and his troops marched past the 15th NJ's camp. After the Battle of Antietam, the 15th NJ was ordered to join the Army of the Potomac. They went into camp in Bakersville, Maryland, with General Torbert's First New Jersey Brigade, which was the First Brigade of the First Division of the Sixth Corps. The Jersey Brigade had seen hard service and hard combat on the Peninsula and the First, Second, Third, and Fourth NJ together mustered only a few men more than the green 15th NJ. Toward the end of October, typhoid fever struck the Fifteenth NJ. A third of those infected died.

The 15th NJ was lucky and their brigade was deployed in a somewhat quiet sector in the Federal center during the Battle of Fredericksburg. It was, however, involved in a limited

attack which involved several companies of the 15th NJ. The 15th suffered a total of 8 kia at the battle. The 15th NJ was involved in General Burnside's infamous "Mud March". Upon returning to their camp, they found that their winter quarters were wrecked and the wood stolen. Morale hit rock bottom. Gen. Burnside was relieved of command and Gen. Hooker was the new commander. Ample rations were issued and the men were paid. Winter quarters were rebuilt and packages from home arrived. Sutlers set up shop. Morale improved quite a bit. Colonel Fowler resigned after typhoid fever wrecked his health. Lt. Col. Campbell led the regiment.

In April, the 15th NJ engaged in their first formal target practice since entering the army. Corps badges were introduced by Gen. Hooker. The men of the Fifteenth proudly wore the red Greek Cross of the VI Corps' First Division. On April 17, 1863, Col. William H. Penrose, the regiment's new commander, arrived in camp. He introduced regular army procedures to the 15th NJ.

During the Battle of Chancellorsville, the VI Corps remained at Fredericksburg to fix the Confederates in place while the rest of the Union Army marched upstream and crossed the Rappahannock. On May 3rd, the VI Corps commander attacked the Confederates on the high ground beyond Fredericksburg. While other elements of the corps successfully stormed Marye's Heights, the 15th NJ skirmished with the rebels and lost several men wounded, two of whom later died. With the Sixth Corps' task completed, Gen. Sedgwick set them on the road to Chancellorsville. Gen. Lee was able to reinforce the Confederates who faced the VI Corps, however, due to Gen. Hooker's lack of aggressiveness. The reinforced Confederates deployed near Salem Church, and the VI Corps marched into their ambush.

"As heavy firing began to the front, Colonel Penrose's Fifteenth New Jersey, marching down the Orange Turnpike as a reserve to the First Division's forward elements, was ordered across a field to the Union right, where the Third New Jersey had been driven out of the woods by two Georgia regiments. Penrose's men dropped their knapsacks, formed into line of battle and stepped over their prone fellow Jerseymen.

With muskets loaded and capped, the men of the Fifteenth clambered over a fence and then pushed forward through the brush to their front. The Jerseyans advanced to within eighty yards of the Rebels, who then opened up with a deafening volley. Men fell to the ground all down the Fifteenth's line. Some were shot, others simply collapsed in shock. Those still standing cut loose with a ragged return volley, and the shooting on both sides soon reached a crescendo. Lieutenant Lewis Van Blarcom checked four of

his men who were laying on the ground and found two of them dead and two simply incoherent. Van Blarcom dragged the live soldiers to their feet and to them into line and firing by the numbers.

Shortly after the Fifteenth, aided by some men from the Third who returned to the line, began its battle, the outflanked Yankees to their left gave way and retreated across the regiment's rear. Unaware of the developing debacle, the Jerseymen fought on, and casualties began to mount. Color Sergeant Dave E. Hicks was hit in the head by a bullet that splattered his blood and brains all over his comrades and his flag. Corporal Samuel Rubadeau grabbed the color and with it a promotion to sergeant.

Much of the Rebel fire was high, and twigs and branches rained down on the Yankees. Many men were wounded in the hand or arm while ramming bullets down the muzzles of their rifle-muskets, a problem compounded by ill fitting ammunition that jammed in their barrels after a few shots. Corporal John A. Cutter of Company A was hit in the hand by a bullet and had his fingers shattered by four buckshot.

Other Federals established a defense line on a rise of ground several hundred yards behind the Fifteenth, and began firing into what they believed to be enemy held woods. In fact, they were shooting at the Fifteenth, and several of the regiment's men were hit from this "friendly fire". Among them was Private William Tharp of Company E, who fell dead with a Yankee bullet in the back of his head.

The fire from the front was much hotter, however. Quincy Grimes' cartridge box belt was shot off his body and Sergeant Lucian Voorhees' haversack was drilled by a ball that scattered his rations across the forest floor. There were many other close calls. George B. Henderson, violating regimental policy against privately owned handguns, kept his revolver stuck in his pants. It stopped a bullet and saved his life. Another ball drove through George Beavers' cartridge box plate, lodging in the box without penetrating his body. Corporal William Dungan of Company A was spared a probably mortal wound when an iron breastplate he wore under his uniform was severely dented by a ball. A number of men had their clothes ventilated by buckshot used in the enemy's smoothbore musket "buck and ball" cartridges.

After about an hour of fighting, the Fifteenth New Jersey began to run out of ammunition. Part of the regiment retreated along with the Third New Jersey while the rest of the outfit stayed on in the woods, contesting against almost impossible odds until the Second Rhode Island regiment fought its way in and helped the New Jersey men extricate themselves.

As the Jerseyans fell back into and across the field to their rear, Lieutenant John Fowler, the ex-colonel's thirty-eight-year-old brother, was shot and killed while firing away the last of the regiment's cartridges from a casualty's musket. Captain Ira Lindsley of Company C was shot through the head at the edge of the woods." The Fifteenth NJ lost 151 men killed and wounded on May 3, 1863, 131 of them in the woods by Salem Church. General Sedgwick ordered a retreat and the VI Corps recrossed the Rappahannock on the night of May 4. The Fifteenth crossed the river on a shaky pontoon bridge under artillery fire early in the morning of May 5.



When Gen. Lee started his army north, the Union army followed. The VI Corps was the last Union force to leave the Rappahannock River line. "The Jerseymen marched hard through a heat wave, engulfed in clouds of gritty dust raised off dirt roads by thousands of pounding feet. At the end of the first day's tramp the Fifteenth counted but fifty men around its colors. The rest straggled in throughout the night."

A word from our president.....

Gentlemen,

I hope everyone is have a great summer so far. I want to take a moment to thank Mike Espenshade, Mark Fasnacht, Marc Benedict and Matt Steger for their help in completing the Quartermaster inventory. By now, you should have seen the list which was emailed to everyone on June 25th. When this newsletter is published, the inventory will be attached to it and will be made public. Anyone wishing to purchase anything from the list should contact me directly with the description of the item(s) so we can keep the list as accurate as possible. Mail your payment to Pat Rose ASAP.

Thank you to everyone who sent their feedback regarding the unit's purchase of a rifle to complete our new recruit's kit. We have a unanimous vote in favor of the purchase. We will be adding the Enfield to our inventory. For those concerned about all of us using the same rifle (Springfield), this Enfield may or may not ever see the ranks. We're simply going to use it as a recruiting tool in order to get someone into the ranks for an event or two. Once we see that they are a good fit for the 53rd and if they wish to move forward, they will be directed to purchase the Springfield as they build their own kit.

As we move into July, we'll be preparing for Gettysburg 155th, Gruber Wagon Works (**MAX EFFORT**) and Landis Valley (**MAX EFFORT**). As of now, I have Rose, Shick and Fedorshak on the roster for Gettysburg. Gruber is a Sunday only event. We do have the option to arrive Saturday evening and camp overnight. Let me know if this is your intention so I can let make Gruber aware that we will be on the grounds overnight. At Landis Valley, we'll be under Tom Carlson's command. Chia will be preparing supper for Saturday and breakfast Sunday. **I need to give him a head count no later than JULY 20.** Further details for Landis Valley will be coming in the near future.

See y'all soon.
Eric

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Upcoming events -

22 July – Gruber Wagon Works (Reading, PA)

1 day event in Reading for some drill, encampment, talking to the public, and maybe even some free ice cream. Many of us will setup after 5pm Saturday. Bring your normal kit, food, etc. Arrive no later than 9AM Sunday.

28 - 29 July – Landis Valley Civil War Days (Lancaster)

2 day event at Landis Valley Museum's "Civil War Days". Bring your normal kit, food, etc. Bring sufficient rounds for 3 firing demos each day, although the schedule may change. Plan on drill, bayonet drill, food issue, etc. Arrive by 9AM Sat.

2018 Calendar of Events -

~~13 January – Holiday Party – Gettysburg~~
~~3 February – Winter Drill (Landis Valley) – Lancaster~~
~~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



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