

# 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

## Company C



"The Sentinel" August 2018

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards

"Clubs Are Trump!"

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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 haven't done so already) to me for inclusion in a future "The Sentinel". With several recent events, I am calling this our 'summer event' photo edition –*  
Matthew Steger, editor

### Event Photos from Gettysburg 155th

submitted by Alec Bohnenblust





A nice shot taken from grass level looking out across to the enemy line of attacking secesh. The men of the Federal army were surely ready to drive back the hoard of rebels.

**Gruber Wagon Works Event Photos -**  
(courtesy of Michelle and Pete Zinkus)



The men of the 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI saluting the crowd after our presentation and firing demo. Attending the event – Mark Fasnacht, Michael Fedorshak, Matt Steger, Pete Zinkus, Pat Rose. Off camera speaking to the crowd was Marc Benedict.



The forecasted wet weather likely kept some 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI members away, but the diehards showed up for our Sunday event at Gruber Wagon Works. We did dodge a few light showers and sprinkles, but things went fine otherwise. We did 2 firing demos for the crowd and talked to camp visitors.

In this 'candid' shot, Mark, Matt, Marc, and Michael sit in the bridge during a rain shower. It looks like we didn't know that Pete was taking a photo of us at the time.

### **Spring Monument Cleanup**

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



## Landis Valley 2018 Event -

Another successful Landis Valley event has come and gone.



Image of the men ready to head out to a firing demo on Sunday. Absent from the photo were Marc Benedict and Matthew Steger as we stayed in camp to get ready for the children's musket drill to occur immediately after the company firing demo. Photo by Matthew Steger.

Sgt. Benedict enjoying his Sunday breakfast while the surgeon looks on either wondering if Marc is going to share or possibly telling Marc of the ills of such a diet on a daily basis. Photo by Matthew Steger.





Our camp and company street bright and early on Sunday morning. No, the street was not abandoned. The men were simply getting ready for breakfast and drinking coffee at the camp fire situated behind the photographer. Photos by Matthew Steger.



After completion of the Saturday schedule, the 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI held a sale of our quartermaster inventory. We were able to sell a good amount of items including frocks, great coats, leathers, etc.





Photos submitted by Eric Ford. One shows the men maneuvering for the company firing demo. The 2<sup>nd</sup> shows Zinkus, Volpe, and Benedict.. I think we should have a caption contest for this photo. The last shows Ford enjoying some pie after Saturday dinner.



## **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. A link to the complete article is listed below. - 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> NJ's camp. After the Battle of Antietam, the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> NJ. Toward the end of October, typhoid fever struck the Fifteenth NJ. A third of those infected died.

The 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> NJ. The 15<sup>th</sup> suffered a total of 8 kia at the battle. The 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 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 Jersey men 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.....*

Pards,

Gruber Wagon Works and Landis Valley are in the books. I've asked Matt to give a brief recap of the Gruber event since I wasn't present. [editor note – please see the Gruber event photos above for the event summary] Landis Valley was held this past weekend with support of our friends in ELF Co. The early Saturday morning fog and near 100% humidity gave way to bright sunny skies and comfortable conditions by lunch time and the weather was quite pleasant for the remainder of the event. I want to express my gratitude to ELF for their long time and continued support at this event. We have a great time every year and Landis Valley could not be happier with the effort that we all give to them. I think it goes without saying that we're all looking forward to next year. Chia Lincoln and Tony Albright stepped up again this year and provided the Company with an outstanding Saturday supper and Sunday breakfast. Even the blueberry pie was good! (ask me later if you're out of the loop) I didn't see Tim Essig at the end of the day to get confirmation but it appears that this event may have set a record for attendance. They had 350+ through the gate on Saturday and Sunday looked to me like it was busier. They typically see 500+/- for the weekend. All in all, it was a great event shared with great friends. Very low stress and a years worth of laughs in two days.

Next up is Burkittsville. [see info below - editor] We decided at Landis Valley that we will register individually for this event. Please secure your registration ASAP and confirm with me when you've done so. Tom Downes will be looking for numbers in the near future.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for our Living History event at Gettysburg October 6 & 7. We'll be camped at Spangler's Spring again this year. We'll split the impression between the 53rd PVI and 95th PVI for those of us who have 95th jackets.

Eric

### Upcoming events -

#### **11~12 August – Cedar Mountain Living History (supporting our friends from the 1<sup>st</sup> MN)**

From James Owens, "a well preserved site and fairly easy to get to. Also, it a site that welcomes quality living history-something that is becoming rare in this era of bomb threats and defacing monuments." Please contact James ([JDO@npmhu.org](mailto:JDO@npmhu.org)) for more info about this event.

#### **7-9 September – Burkittsville, MD – (NR Max Effort)**

*[info borrowed from the NR Facebook page]*

This will be a campaign style event, if you bring a tent, all personnel will be in dog tents. "A" tents will be permitted for health or medical reasons only. Camp will be bivouac style, company areas. 1862 Army of the Potomac campaign dress. Bring 60-80 rounds per man. What you don't use you can take home again. The event will provide dinner on Saturday evening; we are on our own for the rest of the weekend. Foraging in town is limited, so be prepared to be self-sufficient. NB. There will be no staff mess at this event; you're on your own. More details will follow as they are received. Event info (including registration):

<http://www.burkittsvillepreservationassociation.org/>

#### **6-7 October – 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI Gettysburg Living History – 53<sup>rd</sup> Max Effort!**

Our annual living history at Gettysburg NPS. We will be encamped at Spangler's Spring as we did in the fall of 2017. Bring your 95<sup>th</sup> gear if you'd like. Firing demos, possibly some light drill, life of the soldier, etc.

## 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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