

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" December 2019

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, event summaries/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

DUTIES AND ROLES OF NCOS AND COMPANY OFFICERS

At the 2019 National Regiment's "School Of Instruction", there was a great presentation on the duties and roles of different important personnel including company officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs).

Duties of Corporals –

The number one duty of a corporal is to act as a 'shift supervisor' for an 8-hour tour of guard mount. Guard mount is the corporal's time to shine since corporals lead the men of the various guard reliefs out and back into camp, supervise guard, and respond when called upon. He also needs to be proficient in drill and maneuvers (the basic and complex ones) since another job function of the corporal is to train and instruct the soldiers (privates) on the manual of arms, basic drill, and weapons care and firing.

Corporals also organize and directly supervise work details, such as filling canteens, meal prep, wood gathering, camp layout, fire pit preparation, etc.

In some cases, such as if the company officer or a sergeant is not available, the corporal may be called upon to lead the men in drill or into battle. Due to this, corporals must know the duties of the sergeants [1st Sgt., 2nd Sgt, etc.] (and the Lieutenant, too!) including the job functions, positions in formation, and all of the 'stuff' that goes with having the company ready to obey the officer's orders. Corporals must be ready to immediately take over a Sgt.'s duties at a moment's notice, if and when called upon. Corporals must possess leadership skills.

Duties of the 1st Sgt./Other Sgts. –

The 1st Sgt. has the immediate supervision of the company. He prepares the company to do whatever is required. His preparation includes inspecting the men, their weapons, and their gear BEFORE a formal inspection and inspecting men chosen for guard details before they report. The 1st Sgt. gets his orders from the company commander (the Captain or sometimes the Lieutenant). He lays out and superintends work details. He also keeps rosters and assigns each soldier to details. Ideally, he should memorize his roster so he can even call roll in darkness. The Corporals report to the 1st Sgt.

In calling roll: without arms, men fall in at parade rest. With arms, men should fall in at ‘shoulder arms’.

Morning roll: company forms between *Musician’s Call* and the last note of *Reveille*. The means that the men should be familiar with these bugle calls. When the music ends, the 1st Sgt. calls “attention, support arms”. As each man’s name is called, he responds “here”, comes to shoulder arms and then to order arms. After calling the roll, the 1st Sgt. turns to the company commander (normally the Captain) and reports. He also prepares the morning report for the Captain’s signature.

The other Sgts. will normally be file closers (such as the 2nd Sgt.) during battle, firing demos, etc. They need to keep a close eye on the men in the ranks in terms of rifle/firing safety, the general health of the men, whether the men are following orders properly, etc. All non-1st Sgts. need to know the duties/functions of the 1st Sgt. and be ready to assume that function, if and when called upon, at a moment’s notice. The Sgts. should also know the duties and positions of the Lieutenant (and the Captain) as they may be called upon, at times, to assume their jobs or positions in drill or battle.

Duties of the Officers (Company Commanders) –

A good company commander should stay with his company and be present at all times to attend to any matter that may need attention. The instruction of a company in tactics is best attained by instructing the NCOs in the school of the soldier and then require them to instruct their squads or sections.

In an illustrative sense, the Captain is the proprietor of the company, and the 1st Sgt is the foreman. All orders and instructions should, therefore, pass through the 1st Sgt. from the Captain to the other NCOs (the Corporals and other Sgts.) and men, otherwise errors and conflicts of authority will occur. The 1st Sgt. must know, and should be held responsible for a knowledge of the whereabouts and duty of every man in his company.

In quarters, the daily inspection of arms usually takes place at Retreat, but in campaign, and on the march, the men should be required to fall in with their arms, both at *Reveille* and *Tattoo*. When there is a parade, at Retreat, or any other time, after the roll is called, the Captain pauses the ranks to be opened, and then makes a rapid inspection, to see that the arms and accoutrements are in order, that the men’s clothes are clean and shoes blackened.

Duties in Manuever and Line of Battle –

Privates – Be quiet. Pay attention. Listen. Follow orders! Remember, no talking when in formation except at ‘in place, rest’. The NCOs need to remember to remind the privates of this important item. If the privates are talking to each other in formation or on the march, they likely can’t hear the commander’s (Captain, Lt., or 1st Sgt.) commands.

Corporals – quietly correct alignments and dress, call out men specifically by name, if warranted. The eyes and ears of the 1st Sgt. who will normally be at the right end of the platoon, company, etc. The 1st Sgt. often can’t see the center or left end of the line (especially when the group is large in number) so the Corporals (especially 4th Corporal) need to help manage the portion of the front rank away from the 1 Sgt.

Sergeants – less quietly correct alignments and dress. In our modern ‘re-enactor’ world, especially the 2nd Sgt. (since he is normally behind the line), pay attention to firearm safety/misfires and periodically check for physical distress.

Commanding Officer – Focus on the battalion commander’s orders and pay attention to what the company ahead of you is doing. Think what orders you must give to carry out the maneuver. Call for silence if everyone ignored the above. It is imperative when maneuvering that the Captain hears the Colonel and the men hear the Captain (another reason why silence in formation or on the march is so important). Do NOT do the Corporals’ jobs! Ignore alignment.

DON’T BE A DAMNED FOOL

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

An avoidable injury at a Western Theatre event proves it’s never a mistake to caution against reenactor ignorance, lack of training, and lack of supervision.

I'm pretty well known for being Granny Watson when it comes to checking weapons for actual loads or accidental projectiles. I check them when people arrive and periodically through the weekend, because you never know when some distracted reenactor forgot to unload after hunting, or when some video-game-crazed kid is going to drop marbles or stones down the barrels of an arms stack. I periodically annoy fellows who saw period photographs of someone with hands clasped over a muzzle and believe that justifies them doing it; like Joe Biden, I don't wait for an invitation to grab and move their hands, and I try to explain that with guns, you don't do anything with an unloaded gun that muscle memory might cause you to do with a loaded gun; good habits, and all that. They are still annoyed. Hence, "Granny." I can live with it.

But I have to admit that firing into someone's face from a reported distance of 28 inches is a new one on me. I'm waiting to find out what was going through the shooter's mind. The shootee, meanwhile, had powder picked out of his eyes at a hospital and may have some under his skin that isn't coming out.

So just to make the point, I did some firing and took some photos. Remember, I did tests last year that showed powder disperses before it reaches four yards. Four YARDS, not feet. And I wouldn't be comfortable shooting at you under 20 yards, which is the distance from home base to the pitcher's mound. At 20 to 40 yards, I'm aiming at legs, if I absolutely have to shoot, but my belief is that at anything under 60 yards, generally you were either running at the enemy or away from the enemy. And staking out the distances with unobtrusive markers might be something for field commanders to do, because I guarantee that if you ask three reenactors how far away something is, you'll get four different answers.

So here's your face at 28 inches:

8x10 card stock at 28 inches, 60 grains of powder →



← That's stiff card stock taped to an old hollow core door I recently replaced and converted into a work surface. This photo may not impress you, but I'm not done. Here's the backside of that paper

That's a closeup. Note that a couple of those fragments not only punctured the card stock, they caused scorching.



But I'm still not done. Look what it did to the hollow core door. Another closeup, this time the hollow core door behind the target. →

Why, yes, a bunch of the powder splintered the door and a couple of pieces went through the wood completely. So, this is your face at 28 inches. Your sinuses may bother you for a long, long time.

Now, let's go one step farther. What might happen if you put your muzzle right against someone and let fly? You might ask television actor Jon-Erik Hexum, except you can't, because he's dead. He [shot himself](#) in the head. Joking around during a production delay, he picked up a prop gun, put it to his head, and pulled the trigger. The force fractured his skull and drove bone into his brain. Dead. So don't be like Jon-Erik.

I will let those with specific information chime in if they want, but the difference between pressure from an unloaded gun and pressure from a loaded gun is huge, and the heavier the bullet, the more pressure is generated. Unloaded, the pressure disperses in the air quite rapidly, which is why we can even reenact. Push it against a 200-pound "bullet" in the form of an opposing reenactor and you've just created enough pressure in a .58-inch circle to blow apart flesh. We are talking several thousand psi.

A final point. At the reenactment in question, the foolishness came, as it often does, during a non-spectator scenario, which we euphemistically refer to as a tactical. According to reports, there were people acting on their own, no real command and control. That just isn't right. "Sharpshooter" battalions did exist on both sides in which rank and file were not so much sharpshooters, but specialists in skirmishing, advance guard, rear guard, etc. They did act more "on their own", but in small groups we'd call squads, and with squad leaders, and with a lot more training than the stand-and-fight rank and file. That would seem to be something worth pursuing. The training, I mean. Be careful out there.

Remembering The Original 53rd PVI -

Charles Christman - Musician born on March 7, 1833 in Pottstown, PA. He enlisted Nov. 7, 1861 as a bandsman. He was discharged in 1862 by General Order No. 91. He died on Mar. 6, 1914, one day short of his 81st birthday. He is buried in Pottstown Cemetery, Pottstown, PA.



Jacob Rice - born in Dallas, PA on June 16, 1817. He mustered in as a Lt. and Regimental Quartermaster on Nov. 7, 1861. He mustered out Oct. 12, 1864 at the expiration of his 3 year enlistment. He died March 6, 1892 and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Dallas, PA.



Pvt. John Calvin Biss - born in Clearfield Co., PA in 1836. He mustered into Co. C on Oct. 17, 1861 for 3 years. He died on July 25, 1903. Buried in Aiken First Baptist Church Cemetery, Aiken SC.

Pvt. Calvin W. Bisbing - enlisted in Co. F on Oct. 21, 1861 for 3 years. Taken prisoner June 16, 1864 at Petersburg, VA and released April 24, 1865. Discharged June 14, 1865. Died May 14, 1903. Buried in Kocher Cemetery, Ruggles, PA.



Henry Hebron Yarnell - born on a farm near State College, PA on July 10, 1844. He entered military service in Co. D, Independent Battalion Emergency Militia June 1863-Aug. 8, 1863. He was 19 when he enlisted in Co. G, 148th PVI on Feb. 25, 1864. He listed his occupation as farmer, stood 6' with black hair, brown eyes and a florid complexion. He was transferred to Co. B, 53rd PVI June 1, 1865.



Timothy P. Galutia, Jr. - born on July 27, 1840. He was 5'6" with dark eyes, hair and complexion. He worked as a shoemaker in Coudersport, PA when enrolled on March 28, 1864. He mustered into Co. H on April 4, 1864 as a private for a 3 year enlistment in Harrisburg. He died on Nov. 3, 1913 and is buried in the Osage City Cemetery, Osage City, Kansas.



Abiram D. Galutia - born May 13, 1838. He and his brother, Timothy, both enrolled in Coudersport, PA on March 28, 1864 for 3 years as privates in Co. H. He was promoted to Corporal on Feb. 22, 1865 and mustered out with the company June 30, 1865. He died on June 10, 1928 and buried in the Osage City Cemetery, Osage City, Kansas aged 90.

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.

Headquarters 53d Regiment, P. V.
Camp at Fair Oaks, Virginia.
Monday, June 16th, 1862.

Messrs. Editors:—Early last evening a deserter from the rebel army arrived in camp, and on being taken to Headquarters, reported that the rebels intended to attack us last night in force at this point of our lines. He said the whole of yesterday was passed in the camp of the enemy in reviewing their soldiers. Jeff. Davis was there and addressed the troops, telling them that they should be ready to march upon the Yankees between the hours of seven and twelve last night. This account of the intentions of Gen. Johnson appeared to be verified by the fact that during yesterday our pickets were driven in, and the enemy was evidently feeling our position, preparatory to some movement upon our lines. Of course this important information had the effect of putting us all under arms. The pickets were strongly reinforced, and active preparations were made for the expected night attack. The men slept with their accoutrements on and their muskets in their arms, in order to be ready at a moment's notice to form line of battle. Until nine o'clock P.M., the rebels kept up an incessant drumming in their front, as they have been doing for the last few nights, but no attack was made, with the exception of a few shots fired about three o'clock this morning, nothing of any moment transpired. Whether the deserter lied, or whether Gen. Lee found that we were as ready to drive back his battalions at night, as we proved ourselves able to do in the sunlight, and felt it policy to postpone his attack, we do not know. One thing we do know and that is that the rebs would like greatly to break our lines at this point. Let them "try it on" and they will learn a few things more than was taught them at the battle of Fair Oaks.

Richmond is besieged and if the enemy permits, will be taken by regular approaches. We noticed some time ago that one of the Richmond papers informed its readers that Gen. McClellan had commenced "throwing up dirt" before their capital, and said that the rebel Generals had better put a stop to it, or the Yankees would "work their way into Richmond with the spade" The way in which our Commander in Chief caused them to "skedaddle" from the strong fortifications of Yorktown, has given them a holy horror of the pick and spade, and they watch the progress of dirt throwing with a peculiar fear and trembling. We do not believe, however, that they will allow us to as boldly proceed with our siege operations as they did at Yorktown, but will make a desperate attempt to break our lines somewhere, and force us back from our position. This is expected and we are on the alert for it daily. Feeling confidence in the courage and steadiness of our brave troops and the strong manner in which they are disposed, we expect to defeat the enemy in his future attacks as we have done in his past ones.

Richmond, we have not the least doubt, will ultimately be ours; but our friends must not be to much in a hurry—they must not expect the crowning and decisive victory of the war to be accomplished without a vast amount of preparation. McClellan wishes to make assurance doubly sure, and who can blame him who rightly understands the vast interest at stake? Do not, therefore, become dissatisfied with the apparent slowness

with which things are moving before Richmond. There are a thousand and one things to be done, must be done, by our Generals and our soldiers, before certain desired designs can be accomplished, that the anxious citizens have not the least idea of. Let McClellan alone, and ere long the star-spangled banner of Union and freedom will eave brightly, triumphantly and gloriously over the capital of the traitors and the defunct Southern Confederacy.

Captain Bull of Company A, since the unfortunate death of the gallant Major Yeager, has been detached from the Company to act as Major of the regiment, until the vacant position is filled by appointment. We have not the least doubt that Captain Bull will soon be promoted to fill this vacancy. A better choice could certainly not be made. His brilliant bravery during the desperate fight on the morning of the 1st of June entitles him to it. Lieutenant Mintzer is now acting Captain of the Sumner Rifles. In case of the promotion of Capt. Bull, Lieut. Mintzer will be promoted to the command of the Company. The Lieutenant is a brave, well liked and patriotic young officer and is well worthy of the honor that will be bestowed upon him.

Last Friday the rebel cavalry about twelve hundred strong, made a bold dash inside of our lines. They came through near Hanover Court House and proceeding down the Hanover road, succeeded in destroying several trains loaded with stores, and doing other damage. A squad of from fifty to a hundred made their appearance in the evening at Tunstall's Station, only four miles from the White House, on the York River Railroad, and fired upon one of our trains returning to the White House, killing one and wounding seven or eight. The telegraph wire was cut and some rails in the road torn up. The road at this point was deemed perfectly safe, and it was not guarded. The rebels did all this as quick as possible, and then galloped in retreat as fast as their horses would carry them. The damage to the road was quickly repaired and the railroad is now efficiently guarded throughout its whole extent. The foray of the rebel cavalry was undoubtedly a dare-devil act, but was nevertheless, to a certain extent successful.

Everything appears quiet along the lines—very little firing among the pickets since the late alarm. Perhaps it is the calm that proceeds the storm. What an anxiety there in among the boys to know what is going to “turn up.” Every one appears to know something about our plans and the designs of the rebels in our front, and it is amusing to listen to the conversation of the soldiers with regard to what we intend to do and what secesh had better do.

After the Saturday and Sunday fight at Fair Oaks, two Michigan regiments were sent to the battle field for the express purpose of burying the rebel dead. They gathered up and interred thirteen hundred. Our pickets saw one grave near the line in which one thousand and two dead rebel soldiers were buried. The rebel loss in the late battle must have been very severe—the loss of life terrible.

The rainy spell appears to be over, and the hot sun of this season makes the heat very oppressive during the day. The nights, as usual in this latitude, are very cool, and we can sleep comfortably. We get plenty of rations. I understand that arrangements are being made to have issued to the troops regular rations of potatoes, onions and dried fruit. This would meet with the hearty appreciation of all the troops, and should be done as soon as possible. During the hot term the diet of our soldiers should be made nearly a vegetable one. Our camps are by special order, policed (that is cleaned) several times a day, and everything is made as clean and comfortable as is possible under the circumstances.

Yours &c., L.J.F.

[Ledger, July 1, 1862]

Photos from Monument Cleanup

On 2 November, the group assembled at the 53rd PVI monument on Brookes Avenue for our fall cleanup. We raked leaves, trimmed brush, and substantially opened up the view beyond the south side fence.



These shots show the new clear view to and beyond the fence on the Rose Farm south of Brookes Avenue.



The above group shot shows the clear view to the field Rose Farm behind us. And, of course, our annual cleanup crew group shot in front of the 53rd PVI monument. In attendance: Pete Zinkus, Eric Ford, Mark Fasnacht, Matthew Steger, Travis Shick, and Mike Espenshade. All present to help was Eric's friend Brent, my wife Cathy, and Travis' children.



Remembrance Day Parade Photos

After the annual National Regiment meeting on the morning of the 23rd of November, we participated in the annual Remembrance Day Parade. In attendance were: Steger, Ford, Mitchell, and Travis and Zach Porterfield.



The men of the 53rd PVI before the parade starts. The first 2 parade-related photos are courtesy of Eric/Traci Ford. The 3rd photo is courtesy of Matt Steger (your editor).



After the parade, we also went over to the 53rd PVI monument for a group photo as well as across Brooke Avenue for a shot of us at the fence bordering the Rose Farm (where we worked earlier this month at our cleanup event).



After Frank Wilkeson's eloquent, unvarnished account of his service in the Army of the Potomac was published in 1886, he received reviews any author would crave.

"No book about the war for the Union can compare either style or in readableness," the Philadelphia Times wrote about *Recollections of a Private Soldier in the Army of the Potomac*. "Mr. Wilkeson's style is as crisp as a new treasury note. It is as clear as a trumpet-call. It is as deliciously breezy as a morning in May. It is impossible to take up his book and put it down without reading it.

"Its interest is a thoroughly human interest. He takes his reader to the camp-fire and does not so much as let him have a peep at headquarters. It is simply a private soldier's book about private soldiers."



*A fallen Confederate at Petersburg in 1864.
(Thomas C. Roche | Library of Congress)*



Frank Wilkeson

Noted the Baltimore Sun: "Mr. Wilkeson occupies a rank as a writer which entitles his opinions to be weighed as those of a man of recognized ability, and his fearlessness in publishing them, when he knew they will be unpalatable to most of his readers and probably expose him to much obloquy, deserves respect."

"Everyone," a Montana newspaper wrote, "will gain a prize by possession of this book."

A son of a well-known journalist, Wilkeson enlisted at 16 in 1864 after running away from home. On July 1, 1863, his older brother Bayard, a lieutenant in the 4th United States Regular Artillery, was mortally wounded at Gettysburg. As a private in the 11th New York Light Artillery, Frank witnessed some of the worst fighting of the war -- at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Courthouse, North Anna River, Cold Harbor and Petersburg. He somehow finagled his way onto the battlefield and fought as infantry at the Wilderness.

Wilkeson -- who became a well-known journalist in his own right in the 1880s -- wrote compelling chapters on the major Overland Campaign battles in *Recollections*. But it's an 11-page chapter entitled "How Men Die in Battle," as raw and ugly as a large, open wound, that captivates — and horrifies — me most. Here's an excerpt from Wilkeson's remarkable work:

Almost every death on the battle-field is different. And the manner of the death depends on the wound and on the man, whether he is cowardly or brave, whether his vitality is large or small, whether he is a man of active imagination or is dull of intellect, whether he is of nervous or lymphatic temperament. I instance deaths and wounds that I saw in Grant's last campaign.

On the second day of the battle of the Wilderness, where I fought as an infantry soldier, I saw more men killed and wounded than I did before or after in the same time. I knew but few of the men in the regiment in whose ranks I stood; but I learned the Christian names of some of them. The man who stood next to me on my right was called Will. He was cool, brave, and intelligent. In the morning, when the Second Corps was advancing and driving Hill's soldiers slowly back, I was flurried. He noticed it, and steadied my nerves by saying, kindly: "Don't fire so fast. This fight will last all day. Don't hurry. Cover your man before you pull your trigger. Take it easy, my boy, take it easy, and your cartridges will last the longer." This man fought effectively.

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During the day I had learned to look up to this excellent soldier, and lean on him. Toward evening, as we were being slowly driven back to the Brock Road by Longstreet's men we made a stand. I was



Famous "Harvest of Death" photo of Union dead at Gettysburg. (Alexander Gardner | Library of Congress)

behind a tree firing, with my rifle barrel resting on the stub of a limb. Will was standing by my side, but in the open. He, with a groan, doubled up and dropped on the ground at my feet. He looked up at me. His face was pale. He gasped for breath a few times, and then said, faintly: "That ends me. I am shot through the bowels." I said: "Crawl to the rear. We are not far from the intrenchments along the Brock Road; I saw him sit up, and indistinctly saw him reach for his rifle, which had fallen from his hands as he fell. Again, I spoke to him, urging him to go to the rear. He looked at me and said impatiently: "I tell you that I am as good as dead. There is no

use in fooling with me. I shall stay here." Then he pitched forward dead, shot again and through the head. We fell back before Long-street's soldiers and left Will lying in a windrow of dead men.

When we got into the Brock Road intrenchments, a man a few files to my left dropped dead, shot just above the right eye. He did not groan, or sigh, or make the slightest physical movement, except that his chest heaved a few times. The life went out of his face instantly, leaving it without a particle of expression. It was plastic, and, as the facial muscles contracted, it took many shapes. When this man's body became cold, and his face hard-ened, it was horribly distorted, as though he had suffered intensely. Any person, who had not seen him killed, would have said that he had endured supreme agony before death released him. A few minutes after he fell, another man, a little farther to the left, fell with apparently a precisely similar wound. He was straightened out and lived for over an hour. He did not speak. Simply lay on his back, and his broad chest rose and fell, slowly at first, and then faster and faster, and more and more feebly, until he was dead. And his face hardened, and it was almost terrifying in its painful distortion.

Close-up of fallen young Confederate at Antietam. (Alexander Gardner Library of Congress)



I have seen dead soldiers' faces which were wreathed in smiles, and heard their comrades say that they had died happy. I do not believe that the face of a dead soldier, lying on a battlefield, ever truthfully indicates the mental or physical anguish, or peacefulness of mind, which he suffered or enjoyed before his death. The face is plastic after death, and as the facial muscles cool and contract, they draw the face into many shapes. Sometimes the dead smile, again they stare with glassy eyes, and

lolling tongues, and dreadfully distorted visages at you. It goes for nothing. One death was as painless as the other.



Skulls and bones of unburied soldiers in the Wilderness in 1865. (Library of Congress)

After Longstreet's soldiers had driven the Second Corps into their intrenchments along the Brock Road, a battle-exhausted infantryman stood behind a large oak tree. His back rested against it. He was very tired, and held his rifle loosely in his hand. The Confederates were directly in our front. This soldier was apparently in perfect safety. A solid shot from a Confederate gun struck the oak tree squarely about four feet from the ground; but it did not have sufficient force to tear through the tough wood. The soldier fell dead. There was not a scratch on him. He was killed by concussion.

While we were fighting savagely over these intrenchments the woods in our front caught fire, and I saw many of our wounded burned to death. Must they not have suffered horribly? I am not at all sure of that.

The smoke rolled heavily and slowly before the fire. It enveloped the wounded, and I think that by far the larger portion of the men who were roasted were suffocated before the flames curled round them. The spectacle was courage-sapping and pitiful, and it appealed strongly to the imagination of the

spectators; but I do not believe that the wounded soldiers, who were being burned, suffered greatly, if they suffered at all.

Wounded soldiers, it mattered not how slight the wounds, generally hastened away from the battle lines. A wound entitled a man to go to the rear and to a hospital. Of course, there were many exceptions to this rule, as there would necessarily be in battles where from twenty thousand to thirty thousand men were wounded. I frequently saw slightly wounded men who were marching with their colors. I personally saw but two men wounded who continued to fight.

During the first day's fighting in the Wilderness I saw a youth of about twenty years skip and yell, stung by a bullet through the thigh. He turned to limp to the rear. After he had gone a few steps he stopped, then he kicked out his leg once or twice to see if it would work. Then he tore the clothing away from his leg so as to see the wound. He looked at it attentively for an instant, then kicked out his leg again, then turned and took his place in the ranks and resumed firing. There was considerable disorder in the line, and the soldiers moved to and from - now a few feet to the right, now a few feet to the left. One of these movements brought me directly behind this wounded soldier.

I could see plainly from that position, and I pushed into the gaping line and began firing. In a minute or two the wounded soldier dropped his rifle, and, clasping his left arm, exclaimed: "I am hit again!" He sat down behind the battle ranks and tore off the sleeve of his shirt. The wound was very slight-not much more than skin deep. He tied his handkerchief around it, picked up his rifle, and took position alongside of me. I said: "You are fighting in bad luck today. You had better get away from here." He turned his head to answer me. His head jerked, he staggered, then fell, then regained his feet. A tiny fountain of blood and teeth and bone and bits of tongue burst out of his mouth. He had been shot through the jaws; the lower one was broken and hung down. I looked directly into his open mouth, which was ragged and bloody and tongueless. He cast his rifle furiously on the ground and staggered off.

The next day, just before Longstreet's soldiers made their first charge on the Second Corps, I heard the peculiar cry a stricken man utters as the bullet tears through his flesh. I turned my head, as I loaded my rifle, to see who was hit. I saw a bearded Irishman pull up his shirt. He had been wounded in the left side just below the floating ribs. His face was gray with fear. The wound looked as though it were mortal. He looked at it for an instant, then poked it gently with his index finger. He flushed redly, and smiled with satisfaction. He tucked his shirt into his trousers, and was fighting in the ranks again before I had capped my rifle. The ball had cut a groove in his skin only. The play of this Irishman's face was so expressive, his emotions changed so quickly, that I could not keep from laughing.



Cropped enlargement of an image of a Union field hospital at Savage Station, Va. (Library of Congress)

Near Spottsylvania I saw, as my battery was moving into action, a group of wounded men lying in the shade cast by some large oak trees. All of these men's faces were gray. They silently looked at us as we marched past them. One wounded man, a blond giant of about forty years, was smoking a short briar-wood pipe. He had a firm grip on the pipe-stem. I asked him what he was doing. "Having my last smoke, young fellow," he replied. His dauntless blue eyes met mine, and he bravely tried to smile. I saw that he was dying fast. Another of these wounded men was trying to read a letter. He was too weak to hold it, or maybe his sight was clouded. He thrust it unread into the breast pocket of his blouse, and lay back with a moan. This group of wounded men numbered fifteen or twenty. At the

time, I thought that all of them were fatally wounded, and that there was no use in the surgeons wasting time on them, when men who could be saved were clamoring for their skillful attention.

None of these soldiers cried aloud, none called on wife, or mother, or father. They lay on the ground, pale-faced, and with set jaws, waiting for their end. They moaned and groaned as they suffered, but none of them flunked. When my battery returned from the front, five or six hours afterward, almost all of these men were dead. Long before the campaign was over I concluded that dying soldiers seldom called on those who were dearest to them, seldom conjured their Northern or Southern homes, until they became delirious. Then, when their minds wandered, and fluttered at the approach of freedom, they babbled of their homes. Some were boys again, and were fishing in Northern trout streams. Some were generals leading their men to victory. Some were with their wives and children. Some wandered over their family's homestead; but all, with rare exceptions, were delirious.

At the North Anna River, my battery being in action, an infantry soldier, one of our supports who was lying face downward close behind the gun I served on, and in a place where he thought he was safe,

was struck on the thighs by a large jagged piece of a shell. The wound made by this fragment of iron was as horrible as any I saw in the army. The flesh of both thighs was torn off, exposing the bones. The soldier bled to death in a few minutes, and before he died he conjured his Northern home, and murmured of his wife and children.

In the same battle, but on the south side of the river, a man who carried a rifle was passing between the guns and caissons of the battery. A solid shot, intended for us, struck him on the side. His entire bowels were torn out and slung in ribbons and shreds on the ground. He fell dead, but his arms and legs jerked convulsively a few times. It was a sickening spectacle. During this battle I saw a Union picket knocked down, probably by a rifle-ball striking his head and glancing from it. He lay as though dead. Presently he struggled to his feet, and with blood streaming from his head, he staggered aimlessly round and round in a circle, as sheep afflicted with grubs in the brain do. Instantly the Confederate sharpshooters opened fire on him and speedily killed him as he circled.



*Union wounded at Fredericksburg in 1864
(Library of Congress)*

Wounded soldiers almost always tore their clothing away from their wounds, so as to see them and to judge of their character. Many of them would smile and their faces would brighten as they realized that they were not hard hit, and that they could go home for a few months. Others would give a quick glance at their wounds and then shrink back as from a blow, and turn pale, as they realized the truth that they were mortally wounded. The enlisted men were exceedingly accurate judges of the probable result which would ensue from any wound they saw. They had seen hundreds of soldiers wounded, and they had noticed that certain wounds always resulted fatally. They knew when they were fatally wounded, and after the shock of discovery had passed, they generally braced themselves and died in a manly manner. It was seldom that an American or Irish volunteer flunked in the presence of death.

A word from our president.....

Gentlemen,

The year almost a wrap. The final official "event" is the annual business meeting scheduled for December 7th. Elections for unit President as well as all NCO's, and the 2020 schedule will be voted on. I strongly encourage all members to attend. **The meeting will start promptly at 9:00am at Mark Fasnacht's home.** As usual, once we adjourn the meeting we'll have lunch. Please bring a dish or contribute with paper goods. For those not attending, please check your email following the meeting for your ballots and Holiday Party invitation. I'll also be sending our event attendance records over the next few days. If I missed anything, please let me know right away so I can make sure that you have the proper number of ballots for the weighted voting procedure. If possible, come prepared to pay unit dues. The dues will remain \$40.00 for 2020 which includes the insurance premium for the NR's policy. I'm also making this the last call for any proposed events for next year so i can add them to the agenda. Please provide as much detail as possible including the contact info for the event organizer.

We've heard from a few "retired" members who have expressed their intentions to attend the 40th anniversary/Holiday Party. If anyone is in touch with any past members, please pass along the party info to them. It will also be helpful if you can get their contact info to Pete, Matt or I so we can make sure they are kept in the loop as the event approaches.

Thanks!
Eric

Upcoming events –

7 Dec. – Annual Meeting – Sgt. Fasnacht's Home (Kleinfeltersville)

Meeting starts promptly at 9AM. Annual unit meeting to discuss all things 53rd... such as the 2019 season, discuss events for 2020, new and old business, etc. Please keep tuned to the Facebook group and/or email for any updates. Also, please plan on bringing a food item to share with the others for lunch. Please email Mark ahead of time so he knows what each of us are bringing so we don't have 6 people bringing the same thing.

Save The Date! January 11, 2020

The 53rd PVI Company C will soon be celebrating our 40th anniversary! This event is open to anyone who has ever been in our ranks. Stay tuned for more details. If you know of a past member of the 53rd PVI and have their contact information, please forward it to Eric and Pete ASAP.

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Dues and Annual Party \$\$\$\$\$

53rd PVI member dues for 2020 will again be \$40 per person; this includes membership as well as the per person cost for our liability insurance through the National Regiment's carrier. The annual party is Sat. Jan. 11th at the Dobbin House. Cocktails begin at 5:30pm. Dinner at 6:15pm. Program to follow. 9pm tavern. The cost per person fee is \$28. Please bring a check to the annual party and you can pay your dues and party/dinner cost at once. All checks get paid to: **53rd PVI**. If not attending the meeting, please get your dues and dinner party money to me ASAP. The deadline is 31 December 2019.

The Civil War Merchant -

(if you have something for sale or are looking for something, email me to include it in a future edition of "The Sentinel")

For Sale -

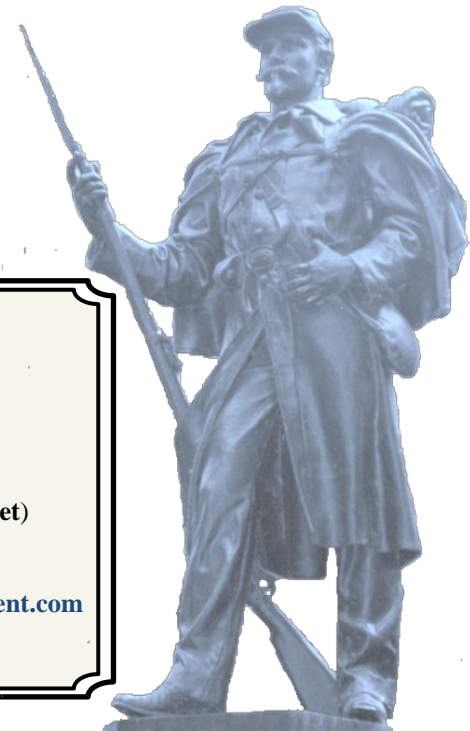
Listed by Rick Kramer for a friend. All items in good shape unless noted otherwise. Contact Rick directly for any inquiries/questions - auktion8@comcast.net

Unlined Sack Coat (approx. XL)	30.00	CD Jarnigan Great Coat (approx. XL)	100.00
Keune McDowell Kepi some brim cracking	20.00	Grey Blanket with black stripe	50.00

If you have not submitted your "Get To Know who have yet to share theirs with their pards. This isn't meant to pry into your private life, but simply a fun way of letting your pards get to know you more.

2019 Calendar of Events -

12 Jan. — Annual Holiday Party — Dobbin House (Reservations/Payment due by 31 Dec.)
2 Feb. — Winter Drill — Landis Valley (weather back up date is 16 Feb)
16 Feb. — Cartridge Rolling Party — Mark Fasnacht's home (9 March back-up date)
2-3 March — NR School of Instruction — Gettysburg Fire Hall
5 April — Ephrata Middle School — Civil War Day event with Michael Fedorshak
6 April — Spring Adopt A Position
13-14 April — NR Camp Of Instruction — Ft. McHenry **NR MAX EFFORT**
18-19 May — USAHEC (Carlisle, PA) — PAID Event **53rd MAX EFFORT**
27 May — Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade
5-7 July — Gettysburg GAC — 2ndary Event
20-21 July — Landis Valley Civil War Days — **53rd MAX EFFORT**
28 July — Gruber Wagon Works (Reading, PA) **53rd MAX EFFORT**
24-25 Aug. — 53rd Gettysburg Living History — Spangler's Spring **53rd MAX EFFORT**
4-6 Oct. — Shenandoah 1864 (Lovettsville, VA) **NR MAX EFFORT**
19-20 Oct. — Cedar Creek (Middletown, VA) — 2ndary Event
2 Nov. — Autumn Adopt A Position — spring cleanup at the 53rd PVI Monument
23 Nov. — Remembrance Day Parade — Gettysburg
7 Dec. — 53rd PVI Annual Meeting (Mark Fasnacht's home)
11 Jan. — Annual Holiday Party — Dobbin House (Gettysburg)



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