

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" April 2021

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trump!"

This Month:

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An illustration of the burning of the Wrightsville Bridge

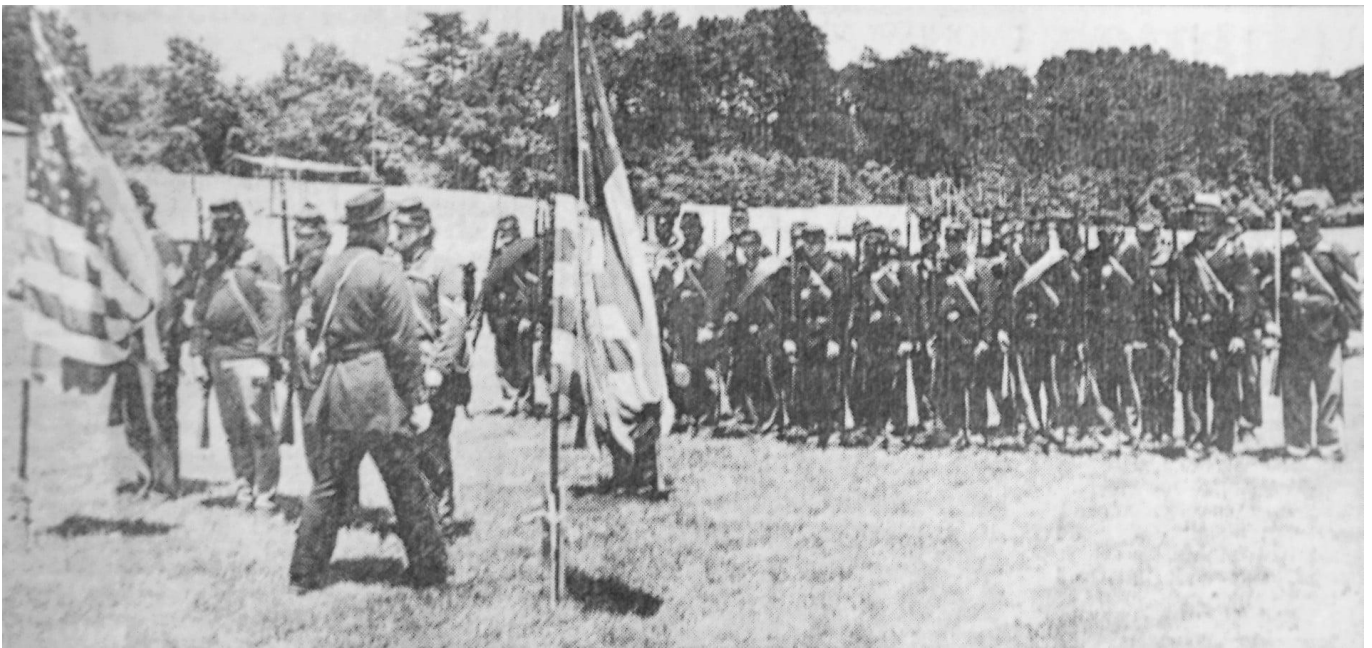
I am always looking for newsletter content, so please forward your articles, book reviews, event summaries/photos, stories, etc.) to me for inclusion in a future edition of "The Sentinel". – Matthew Steger, editor

SOME OLD 53rd-RELATED PHOTOS -

Shared by Jeff Marks



Jeff Marks of Denver, left, looks as if he is ready to leave for the Civil War with his close partner, John Lowry of Ephrata. Lowry's wife, Debbie, stays calm and collected.
(Photo by Preston Whitcraft)



The National Regiment at Gruber Wagon Works circa June 1989.

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.,
Falmouth, Virginia,
Tuesday, Dec. 30th, 1862

Messrs. Editors:--Nothing out of the routine of our military duty has transpired since our last—this letter must therefore necessarily be short.

Col. Brooke was, day before yesterday, by request of Gen. Howard, detailed to command Dana's Old Brigade, in Howard's (recently Sedgwick's) Division. He will probably be absent from the regiment for several weeks—in the interim the 53d will be efficiently and familiarly commanded by our "old war horse"—Lieut. Col. McMichael, who, sixteen years ago, from Saturday last, "slung" his knapsack, and took up the line of march, for the theatre of war in Mexico. He fought bravely and well in nearly every prominent engagement of that war. Was in the three months' service. He has been in every battle that our regiment has been in—on the Peninsula and in Maryland.—At the Battle of Antietam, when Col. Brooke was commanding our Brigade, he had command of the regiment.

We have been out to the camp of the 68th, and find the boys as well as can be expected, although, greatly disheartened at the unsuccessful issue of their first battle. In this connection we may say, that in the evidence given before the Committee on the conduct of the war, we are pleased to find that Gen. Sumner is the only Grand Division Commander who has the courage to say plainly that the army is disorganized—in the fact that "there is too much croaking and not enough confidence." It is amusing to see in the report of the War Committee how the Generals endeavor to shift any and all responsibility from their shoulders.—It is pretty certain, that after an advance upon the enemy at Fredericksburg, was ordered or decided upon—the chiefs agreed upon the Burnside plan of attack. But, with the exception of Gen. Sumner, who says he acquiesced in the plan of attack, and if the commanding Gen. "made a mistake he made one too," both Hooker and Franklin, seems to have agreed to the manner of advancing on the enemy's position, like a certain politician once accepted a bribe, with a "mental reservation." And now after our defeat, they endeavor to throw any and all responsibility from their shoulders. Hooker had a pet scheme of his own, of crossing the Rappahannock, at an upper ford, and advancing down the southern bank, and occupying the city, the ridges in its rear and thus preventing the recent battle.—Franklin had a theory of his, that must be aired before the committee for the benefit of the country. His manner of doing the business was to "concentrate all our forces on the left," make the real attack there, only make a feint in the centre and "right." By the by in the course of

the evidence Gen. Franklin acknowledges, "that he knew nothing about the enemy's strength or fortifications."

Now with all due respect for the chief of a Grand Division, we would like to know whether a General who admits that he knows nothing about the enemy's position, and says further *that it was none of his business to know*, is a proper person either to criticize General Burnside's plan, or make it one of his own. Thus the commander of the Army is made to bear all the responsibility of the plan of attack at Fredericksburg. Everybody seems to agree, however, that the battle could have been prevented if the pontoons would have been in Falmouth at the time that Sumner's advances (Hancock's division) reached here. A very feasible excuse. But our advance could have *forded* the river here at Falmouth, and occupied the other side at that time with scarcely any opposition. But we never made a show of crossing. Our cavalry could have crossed at this point and made a reconnaissance at least; but no, we arrived on the north bank of the river, and with our batteries drove the four pieces of the enemy, and then—stood stock still,

Gazing at the air,
While the rebels possessed the hills,
And planted their batteries there

The pontoons *should* have been up, but we do not believe that their non arrival is sufficient reason for not throwing our advance, on its reaching this place, at once over the river. There is great fault somewhere. Somebody ought to be sent to New Jersey.

Yours, &c.,

L. J. F.

We have orders to be packed up and ready to move at a moment's notice. Another "change of base," we premise.

L. J. F.

[Ledger, January 6, 1863]

THE STRANGE TALE OF NATHAN TRINE

Submitted by Marc Benedict

The Early Years

Nathan Trine was born in Mercer Co. PA on Nov. 9, 1838. He lived in Meadville, PA and worked as a farmer. He married Susannah Kitch (b. 1840) in 1860. At 25, he enrolled and mustered in on the same day as a private in Co. G, 145th PVI for 3 years on Feb. 10, 1864. He stood 5' 10 1/2", had blue eyes, dark hair and a dark complexion. He was taken prisoner during fighting in the trenches before Petersburg on June 22, 1864 and sent to Andersonville until Nov. 10, 1864 when he was exchanged. At an unknown date, he was transferred to Co. A, 53rd PVI by Special Order #136 and was discharged by General Orders on June 22, 1865.

His marriage to Susannah produced seven children by the time she died in 1891.

He said, She said

Nathan moved to Taylor County, KY and on Aug. 4, 1892 married a widow. Permelia Victoria Phillips (b. 1838) had married Edward M. Wayne. They had seven children when he died on Jan. 6, 1886. Permelia left her small farm with son Ben, aged 22 and daughter Willie, aged 12, and moved to Campbellsville into Nathan's, now aged 52, large two-story frame dwelling with some of his children.

Things began to take a turn for the worse in a little over a year. According to Permelia, she tried to make Nathan happy and comfortable including buying her own clothes, making clothing for his children and Nathan and working the farm. She claimed that he persuaded her to move back to her earlier old home and would follow her as soon as he attended a neighboring wedding. She testified that he didn't keep his promise and had, in fact, abandoned her.

Nathan had another story. He stated that, without fault, she had abandoned him on Sept. 13, 1892 and lived apart until June 1, 1893 when he convinced her to return living as husband and wife at his house. On Oct. 18, 1894, he claims, she abandoned him by leaving his house and refusing to return despite being treated affectionately and providing her comfortable support. A divorce was granted in Taylor Co. KY Circuit Court in April 1897.



Nathan Trine and Susan Kitch
1st wife

The Third and Final Wife

Nathan Trine was not finished. Lucinda "Cynthia" Thompson (b. 1855) married a Civil War veteran, George Carter, in 1875. They had a daughter, Daisy, who was only 4 when her parents separated and finally divorced. Lucinda married Nathan in 1897. In the issue of Sept. 16, 1897, The *Larue County Herald* reported that 2 days earlier the dead bodies of Nathan and Lucinda Trine were found at noon lying near the road on Stone Quarry branch about 2 1/2 miles south of the Campbellsville house. Both had been shot in the head by a pistol. It was believed Nathan murdered his wife and then shot himself.

Nathan Trine is buried in Elkhorn Cemetery, Elk Horn, KY. He was 58.



Daisy Carter was placed in a Orphan's Home and later in the home of a doctor. She died in a Friday fire in the rear room of a 3rd floor flat in Louisville, KY on July 28, 1912. She was to begin work at a local firm the next day. She was 18.

ORIGINS OF A SECESSIONIST COUNTY

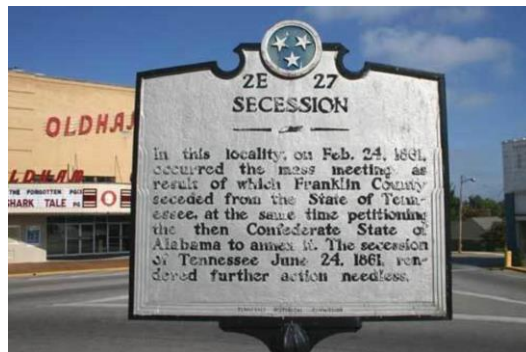
By Tim Mulligan, July 3, 2020

blueandgrayeducation.org

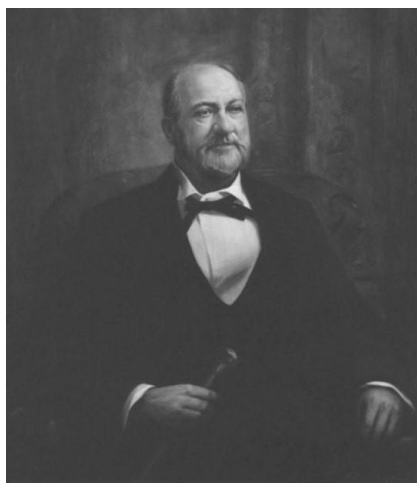
In the aftermath of Abraham Lincoln's election, Tennessee authorities held a referendum on February 9, 1861, to determine whether the state ought to convene a secession convention, and join with the seven other southern states that had departed the Union. The proposal was defeated, with 69,675 opposed to the idea of a convention against 57,798 in favor. The vote varied widely from county to county, but the most

extreme result belonged to Franklin County in southern middle Tennessee. There those supporting a secession convention

outnumbered their opponents 1,240 to 206, or more than six to one. After the referendum's defeat, Franklin County leaders petitioned the state of Alabama for annexation, and began organizing military units that would form the core of the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment (Provisional Army, C.S.A.), a unit that was already drilling in Virginia before Tennessee left the Union.



Historical secession sign for Franklin County



Peter Turney | Tennessee State Library and Archives

What made Franklin County so wildly pro-secession, in relation to the rest of Tennessee? The central issue of slavery does not provide an obvious explanation. The 3,551 enslaved blacks did represent almost 26% of the county's population, although the numbers represented both an absolute and relative decline from the 1850 census data. Yet in neighboring and wealthier Bedford County, where over 31% of the population represented enslaved blacks, voters rejected the proposed secession convention by a two-to-one margin. The strongest political figure in Franklin County was attorney Peter Turney, whose father, Hopkins Lacy Turney, had fought for southern interests in the U.S. Congress from 1837 to 1851. His son Peter led an effort in 1857 to expel Franklin County's free black population, and during the November 1860 presidential election he warned an audience in the county seat of Winchester as to Abraham Lincoln's ultimate goal: ". . . to promote the negro to your level, or rather to degrade you to the negro's."

Economic developments also bound Franklin County more closely to the South. The Winchester and Alabama Railroad, chartered in 1850, linked the county and its western neighbor Lincoln County to the main Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad at the small town of Decherd. Though never completed, by August 1859 trains from Nashville were running to Winchester and beyond, representing potential "avenues of trade and travel to Central and South Alabama (which) will be consumers of the products of Middle Tennessee," as a Franklin County newspaper enthused. Reflecting this perceived trade opportunity, local farmers focused on wheat production, resulting in a sevenfold increase in both Franklin and Lincoln Counties from 1850 to 1860.

But the real investment for Franklin County's future prosperity involved more than commercial trade. In late November 1857, the Board of Trustees for the University of the South selected Sewanee in Franklin County as the site for their new educational institution and Episcopal theological seminary, a university to rival Oxford or Harvard in its academics but dedicated to the preservation of southern cultural values.

Sewanee won out over several other locations, but final approval required generous land donations by individuals and Franklin County's commitment to construct two access turnpikes to Sewanee. A \$21,000 county tax to fund the turnpike construction narrowly passed a county referendum in May 1860, a victory won largely on the promises of Turney and his allies that the new university would in time multiply local real estate values.

Lincoln's election and Tennessee's status in the Union, however, threw all this into doubt. Construction work on the university ceased, and its possible relocation discussed. This was the threat on which Peter Turney focused in his speeches supporting a secession convention in February 1861. A Unionist eyewitness later reported the influence of Turney's arguments: "Many ignorant people were made to believe that the benefits to the County arising from (the University of the South) would be worth more than the Union."

Thus Franklin County's strong secessionism reflected a variety of factors. Traditional concerns about the Republicans' hostility toward slavery blended with new regional economic opportunities brought by railroad expansion. The founding and potential loss of the University of the South, however, touched sensitive nerves: The strengthened regional identification and shared social institutions and values of the county with the Deep South, and the investment of land and treasure for a more prosperous future. When Peter Turney led the 1st Tennessee out of Winchester on May 1, 1861, they marched to war not only for a better tomorrow, but for claims already staked.

INTERESTING PAINTING -

I ran across this interesting painting of the 7th Regiment NY National Guard marching through Manhattan on the way to war (spring 1861) and though I'd share.



BIG CHANGES AT CULP'S HILL -

I was in Gettysburg recently for the weekend and headed over to Culp's Hill as I knew the NPS was in the process of starting to thin the trees on the eastern slope of Culp's Hill. Personally, I think this was very long overdue. Back in the later 1800s, Culp's Hill was a very frequented place on the battlefield. Sort of what we see with Little Round Top in modern times. After the battle, the trees on the eastern slope of Culp's Hill showed the battle damage of bullets and artillery cutting through them. That was much of the attraction. In the 1900s, animals were not accessing the area as much and, therefore, the lower vegetation which been controlled naturally by the animals was allowed to grow and essentially get out of hand. Over time, attendance at Culp's Hill dropped. If you've ever been there in the past several decades, you'll know why. The vegetation had gotten so dense that, unless you tried walking through the dense brush and trees, you couldn't quite experience what the battle in that area was like. Finding the rebel sharpshooter's rock was rather tough.

With the NPS partially clearing much of the area starting recently, you can now see into the area of the sharpshooter's rock and see quite a few monuments that you may have never seen. I am not sure how much NPS is going to clear the area, but what we can see even now is impressive. I encourage you to visit the area and see what you're all been missing for so many years. Below are some photos that I took of the area to show what the area is like now. The 2nd photo shows the remains of a witness tree that can now easily be found there. For whatever reason, someone put concrete in the tree to apparently try to keep it upright as the tree's inside, as can easily be seen now, is pretty much dead. Two large fallen limbs from this same tree also lay alongside the vertical remainder.





The last photo (above) shows General George S. Green who (jokingly) is said to have disliked other centuries so much, he only wanted to live in the 19th century. He lived 1801 to 1899. This view is from the top of Culp's Hill looking south from the Federal position.

NEW EVENT IN MAY -

With the "Army Heritage Days" event being cancelled once again in 2021 at USAHEC, an alternative event has been planned for Newville (west of Carlisle). James Owens of the 1st MN contacted a friend of his who has land in Newville. A private event (not attended by the public) is scheduled for 15~16 May. Details are still being worked out but the 53rd PVI is invited. Tentatively, 3 meals will be provided (2 on Saturday and a Sunday breakfast). Once we get more details, I will forward them to the unit. Please consider adding this event to your calendar since it's been a long time since many of us have been able to get back out into the field.

NEW EVENT IN JUNE -

Ft. Mifflin (adjacent to the Philly airport) will be doing an event on June 19th. This event was also posted on the NR and 53rd Facebook pages a while back. Here is some additional info: Arrival time is before 9:30 AM on Saturday morning. We will put companies together based on attendees present. Fort opens to the public at 10 AM. We will open with morning parade. We will rotate companies for drill and guard duties. Bring 20 rounds. We will close the day with an evening parade prior to 4 PM. Fort closes to the public at 4 PM. Troops can stay overnight on Saturday. Case mate 5 and barracks will be open for billet. Bring a lunch for Saturday. We may be putting a dinner for troops Saturday evening for a small fee. Registration is \$5.00. That fee goes right back to the fort. Please let me know if you plan on going as I will be putting together a list. Maybe we can also carpool.

MOVIE SHOOT -

On 16 March, several members of the unit participated in a movie shoot for an upcoming film about Longfellow's poem "I Heard The Bells Of Christmas Day". The completed film is due in 2022. Here are some photos provided by various members:



A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT.....

Pards,

As we begin to transition into Spring and what we hope will be an opportunity to hold events, I encourage all of you to keep the schedule of events that we currently have on your calendars. Some things are going to change and some things will remain as is. As I learn of potential schedule adjustments I will communicate with you timely. Given the increased availability of vaccinations and our State beginning to ease restrictions, I'll remain confident that we'll be in the field soon. In the meantime, make sure that your kit is ready to go. Roll cartridges, make repairs and/or replace old and worn out gear with new.

The NR;s School of Instruction was held virtually this past weekend. Ted Brennan was able to put together a great group of presenters again this year who all embraced the situation and technology to provide some excellent content. We'll be working on editing the sessions into individual classes and posting them on the NR Youtube channel soon. I'll encourage each of you to take some time and check them out. Our very own John Heiser did a virtual battlefield tour of East Cavalry Field to wrap up Sunday's session. I think he should apply for a position with the NPS!

Photos, video and written history of our unit; We need more of it. Matt has taken the lead in building a new NR site and also manages the content on our own site and FB page while I manage the unit's Instagram page. We need to maintain a fresh presence and we can only do so with your help. Please submit what you can to Matt or I for the website, FB and IG pages. Recruiting in the past several years has come directly from these sources. While many units in this hobby suffer from declining membership, the 53rd has been able to grow in recent years due to our digital presence. PLEASE do what you can to assist us in this effort.

I can't wait to see y'all around the campfire! Until then...Slainte!

Eric

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 –

(1.) 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

(2.) Kerry Williard is handling the selling of Dave Swigert items for Dave's wife. Marc and I met a few weeks ago to look at the items, give them descriptions, and provide approx. values. Several of the items have been sold yet many some remain. The list is current as of 30 January 2021: Contact Kerry with any and all inquiries: shamokin71@aol.com (see list on next page)

Quantity	Item Description	descr.	approx. value	Quantity	Item Description	descr.	approx. value
Uniform Clothing				Misc Items			
1	Great Coat - Enlisted Assume Size 42	minor staining - heavy wool	SOLD	1	Tin Cup	sturdy	5
1	Sack Coats - Assume Size 42 Dk Blue Wool	lined	SOLD	1	Mess Kit		SOLD
1	Sack Coats - Assume Size 42 Dk Blue Wool	unlined faded course wool	20				
1	Trouser - Steel Blue each with suspendors	34 min waist/27" inseam - avg. condx and a little dirt w/ braces no watch pockets	25				
1	Trouser - Steel Blue each with suspendors	36 min waist/27" inseam - avg. condx and a little dirt w/ braces no watch pockets	25	1	Tin Dinner Plate		SOLD
1	Dk Blue Vest Size 42	3 pockets - light wear	20	1	Fork		SOLD
1	Colored Pattern Shirt	blue plaid with white china buttons - sun faded - good condx	SOLD	1	spoon		SOLD
1	Colored Pattern Shirt	blue and brown plaid - bone buttons - large - very good condx - neck 16"	SOLD	2	Small Fry Pan & Large Fry Pan		SOLD
1	White muslin Shirt	inside neck stains 21" at shoulder 16" neck	10	1 can	sno-seal (half full)		1
1	White muslin Shirt	19" at shoulder 14" neck - very short in body length	5				
1	White muslin Shirt	20" at shoulder 16" neck - very short in body length - cuffs are stained	5	1	Wood Mirror - Haversack filler	sliding cover	3
1 pair	Woolen Grey Gloves	modern - right hand is fingerless	2	1	Wood Comb - Haversack filler		1
1	Underpants - Night Pants - White	36" waist - knee stains - 25" inseam white muslin - rear repair	3	1	Wooden button board		1
1	Underpants - Night Pants - White	34" waist/field modified can be enlarged 4" - 28" inseam white muslin	SOLD	1	Toothbrush w/ tooth powder	bone handle bristle - new	SOLD
1	Lt Brown Scarf	acrylic - for modern use	1	1	Housewife with buttons/needles	blue plaid	SOLD
1	Havelock - White - VG condx		2	2	Coin Purses - Made from Tic Material		1/each
1	red nightcap with black tassel		SOLD	1	Cloth ditty Bag	used (1 left, 7 sold)	1/each
3 pairs	Grey Wool Socks	modern	2/pair	1	Bag with Coffee	brown coffee	1/each
2	Hats - Union & Confederte for children		1	1	shoe lace - undied		.25/each
				2	Soap Bar		1/each
				6 1/2	Wax Candles		0.5
Accoutrements				1	pocket sharpenig stone	new	2
1	Cap Box with Caps w/ pick		20	1	box rifle cleaning kit	pads, steel wool, rags, etc	5
1	waist belt	53" long w/brass keeper	5 SOLD	3	match boxes w/ matches		0.25/each
1	Scabbard	late war 7 rivet	15	1 Pair	shoe tree		3
1	Cartridge Box with Tin Inserts	w/ sling and brass and late war plate - tools, cone, etc.	35	1	Green Army Duffle Bag		3
1	Gum Blanket	some cracking with oversized grommets	20	1	drawers for use as patches		1
1	Grey Blanket	with US sewn	SOLD	1	large shite cotton sheeting		1
1	Shelter Tent - Both Halves	heavy canvas with loops w/ mildew	35	1	sky blue patch material - 3 pcs		SOLD
1	Bag of 7 wooden Tent Stakes	with rope	3	2	hankerchiefs - blue cotton	used	SOLD
1	Blue Cloth Bulls-Eye Canteen	w/ chain stopper needs new sling	20				
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen	leather sling satinette cover w/ corded stopper with light wear	20				
1	Knapsack - Black	double bag w/ blanket straps - needs light cleaning	SOLD				
1	Haversack - tarred Black	brittle strap, open seam	5				
1	Haversack - tarred Black	w/ liner - paint beginning to flake. holes at strap connections.	10				

2021 Calendar of Events - all events are tentative as of right now.



- 27-28 March - NR School of Instruction - Virtual
- 1-2 May - NR Camp of Instruction - Gruber Wagon Works (Reading) - NR Max Effort
- 15-16 May - USAHEC Event - cancelled
- 31 May - Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade
- June - Company Picnic - Date/Location TBD
- 12-13 June - Fenian Raid (8th OH) - Fort Erie, Canada - contact Tom Downes for more info.
- 17-18 July - Landis Valley "Civil War Days" (Lancaster)
- 7-8 Aug. - Cedar Mountain Re-enactment
- 28-29 August - 53rd PVI Living History w/ ELF - Spanglers Spring - Gettysburg NMP
- 4-5 Sept - Old Bedford Village - Bedford, PA - NR Max Effort
- 16-17 Oct - Cedar Creek Re-enactment (NR)
- 20 November - Remembrance Day Parade/NR Meeting - Gettysburg
- 4 December - Annual business meeting

Other events - 1st MN's Living History 10-11 July @ PA Monument (the 53rd PVI is invited)
Ft. Mifflin - June 19th



53rd PVI Contacts

- President: Eric Ford (reenactor53@gmail.com)
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- Website: <http://www.53rdpvi.org>
- Sergeants: Mark Fasnacht and Marc Benedict
- Corporals: Mike Espenshade and Matthew Steger
- 53rd PVI Member Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/53rdPVI>
- National Regiment Phone line: 800-777-1861 (code 61)
- New National Regiment Website: <https://www.thenationalregiment.com>