

# 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

## Company C

"The Sentinel" January 2022

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

Happy New Year 2022 to all members and alumni of the 53rd PVI, Co C

*This Month:*

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*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*

## **BOOK REVIEW - THE UNION CAVALRY COMES OF AGE - HARTWOOD CHURCH TO BRANDY STATION 1863**

Author: Eric J. Wittenberg

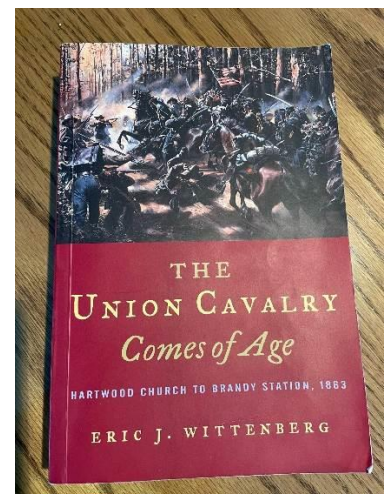
Reviewed and Submitted by Mike Espenshade

Paperback; 2003; Potomac Books, Inc.; 358 pp.; copious notes at end of each chapter (total = 1315 notes); 15 maps, 30 pictures; an additional 42 pp of glossary and index, \$21.95 new in 2004).

**The Union Cavalry Comes of Age** is a splendidly written and thoroughly researched work of chronicling the amazing maturation of the Union Cavalry. The author impressively shows how and why the Union horsemen in the eastern theatre were transformed from the non-to-reliable appendage of the army into a powerful combat arm that became a crucial element to winning the war.

Mr. Wittenberg smoothly integrates his deft analysis of the strategic administration issues being discussed by generals and politicians with the day-to-day experiences of the troopers in the field. He correctly provides the appropriate Order of Battle for each major engagement.

This is a delightful read – but one that should not be hurried. The reader will learn about and absorb the series of gripping and fast-paced clashes and raids to the climactic watershed battle of Brandy Station. The author does a masterful job helping the reader “visualize and hear” the crashing close-combat experiences of the front-line soldiers and their feelings before, during, and after action. The excitement can result in a reader becoming exhausted!! (and the book ends only half way through the war!)



“This is Wittenberg’s writing at its best, presented with all the breath-taking excitement of the cavalry itself”. – Frank A. O’Reilly, author of “The Fredericksburg Campaign: Winter War on the Rappahannock”

## **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 Near Morrisville, Va.,  
Thursday, Aug. 6th, 1863.

Messrs. Editors:—The conclusion of our last communication left us in camp in a briar field near Warrenton Junction, at which place we arrived on Sunday afternoon, the 26th of July. Madame Rumor whispered around that we were to have a few weeks rest after our fatiguing marches—this seemed to be true from the fact that the teams had unloaded officers’ baggage, tents, &c. But in this as in nearly all other cases the mythical crinolinish lady “with her thousand tongues,” out of modesty we premise, took a wide circuit around the naked truth, for at five o’clock on the afternoon of the 30th ult., the peculiar and by no means welcome notes of the “General” was sounded by half a dozen bugles from as many headquarters, and instant and active preparations were made to resume the march, for

“Don’t you hear the “general” say—  
Strike your tents and march away.”

By the time we were fairly started it was nightfall. The moon was full and it would have been beautiful marching if it had not been for a number of black clouds, that seemed to be moving by “divisions closed in mass” towards sunrise. And so we were deprived of the sweet witching light of pale Luna. When we broke camp, “we were only going a few miles,” “they” said, and we did only go a few miles—at a time. The road we were passing over was in splendid marching condition, that was one consolation, still there were several if-you-get-in-you’ll-stick-fast mudholes that we had to navigate our government flatboats (that is, shoes) through. Every one of these pools of mire was the abode of a full choir that made “night hideous” with mutilated harmony. We were sensibly reminded of the gorgeous yet mournful ditty, commencing—

“There was a frog sat on a log, &c.”

At midnight we passed through Elkton, a village containing a population of perhaps twelve souls; near this enterprising burg we bivouacked, having marched twelve miles. The following morning at an early hour we were again on the road. It was said that all the marching we did during the night was so much muscular activity uselessly exerted, as we moved on the wrong road, and as we had to retrace our steps, like a certain king of France, that, with twenty thousand men marched up a hill and then marched down again. The day was warm; while we sweated and grumbled, we wished old sol would “change his base” and concentrate all his beams for a vigorous attack on the hay fields of the old Keystone. We marched four miles and was halted for a short rest. We left the regiment and went about half a mile to a house, on a search after some good water. The only occupants of the building seemed to be a negress and an ancient lady “left fading (no, blooming I believe is the word Moore uses) alone.” She was secesh, you could tell that by the twinkle of her eyes. We opened negotiations with the lady, which we had hopes would result in our becoming the sole and undisputed possessor of about four pounds of antiquated rooster, but, alas for human hopes, while we were bargaining, some audacious soldier not having the fear of the Provost Marshal before his eyes, “confiscated” the fowl, and thus unexpectedly closed the negotiations.

About two o’clock P. M., we arrived at a cross road, and stacking arms the troops were soon busy putting up their shelter tents, and in making fires to cook dinner. We marched about twenty-two miles since we left quarters near Warrenton Junction, and you can judge in what a roundabout way we moved when we state that we now, at this place are only four or five miles from the Junction. We slept one night in our new camp, when it was discovered that we were too much in the sun, so the Division was moved several hundred yards into a woods. This was on Sunday last. During the night nearly every man was detailed on picket. The next day we were busy as bees fixing up, or, as we term it, “policing” our camp. Things were commencing to look snug and comfortable, and we began to feel at home, when again, we were ordered to “pack up and be ready to move at a moment’s notice.” Well we packed up and we moved at least one mile, and settled down into our present camp. We have been here for several days now and we have fixed up our camp, which is pleasantly situated, very nicely. If this is a rest for the Army for goodness’ sake don’t have this moving of camp several hundred yards every few days.

We call this “Camp near Morrisville.” It is said that there is a village so christened near us, but we have not seen it, but we take it for granted, however, that there is such a town, and date our letter accordingly. This is a fine, breezy camp we are now in. Off to the west there is a splendid view—a wide

expanse of country at least fifteen miles in width, is spread out before us, bounded on the west by the blue heights of the Alleghanies.

The Provost Guard of the Corps (Companies A, B, and K of this Regiment) are in camp a few hundred yards from us. The duties of this guard is pretty severe and sometimes very unpleasant. When the column is moving their position is in the rear of the Corps. They are kept busy during the march is arresting and keeping up such soldiers who straggle from their regiments for the purpose of plundering, &c. This, as a matter of course, is a very thankless task. When the troops are halted for the night, instead of spreading themselves upon the ground and sleeping until break of day, they have a regular routine of guard duty for the night. Fifteen of the guard that was left back at Gettysburg to do the guard duty at the general hospital near the battle-field, rejoined the command yesterday. The Guard is commanded by Lieut. B. C. Ammon and Lieut. M. S. Ludwig, who use every means to add to the efficiency and usefulness of their command.

A few days ago, Major Bull, accompanied by Lieuts. Wagner and Patton and six enlisted men, left for Pennsylvania for the purpose of bringing on drafted men to fill up our thinned ranks of the 53d. We require over 600 men to fill up our regiment to the maximum number. Our regiment needs filling up, and if volunteering is played out why send on the "drafted." The 53d will teach them the "ropes" quicker than they can say "hard tack." During the last fifteen months our regiment has lost nearly four hundred men in killed and wounded. On our morning report we have but eighty officers and enlisted men fit for duty in the regiment. In Company E, there is no commissioned officers, one Sergeant, two Corporals, and one private for duty. Our whole brigade of five regiments since the battle of Gettysburg scarcely musters five hundred men. We are supporting the 12th corps consequently we have not been bothered by any tantrums of Stuart's cavalry feeling his position. It is drawing near midnight and we are sleepy, so good night, and pleasant dreams, we were about saying, but it sounds rather sentimental.

Yours, &c. Levi J. Fritz

[*Montgomery Ledger*, August 11, 1863]

## **EXPERIENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR (PART 4)**

By Leavitt W. Cushing (a member of the original 53<sup>rd</sup> PVI, Co. G)

(supplied by Tom Kear, a decedent of Cushing. Typos and grammatical errors were left in 'as is')

Falmouth Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> 1862

Dear Sister:

Wilson wrote a few days ago but we have had no chance to mail yet so I will write a few lines again, and let you know that we have changed our position but little, Our Regt. has all taken up quarters in the Town of Falmouth and doing guard duty we came down here yesterday and slept last night under the shelter of a good roof for the first time since I was in the army. Night before last was very rainy indeed and those that were out had rather a stormy time of it, but it was our luck to have our tents pitched and lay snugly in them There has been nothing done since we arrived here towards crossing the river yet that I know of,

Gen. Burnside's Head quarters are near here so that there must be some movement going on around this point or in contemplation. But what it is we are ignorant of. It is rather strange to us why we get no mail and have no chance given us to send out letters Our Co. is quartered in the second story of a large brick building which has been last used for a warehouse and we found a pile of wheat which we had to pile up in one corner, the next floor above is covered with tobacco and every other thing that you can think of. There is a small fireplace in each end of our room which is larger than our barn floor. We have just had some mush and Molasses for dinner, meal is very high, flour 10 cts per, lb, and potatoes a dollar a peck so that we cannot indulge in many luxuries, in the present hard times for money which is very scarce with us at present, But we are in hopes to be paid off soon if we stay here long,

Wilson has just got the coffee ready and I will stop a few minutes I forgot to state that we are enjoying good health at present and hope the same blessings are being enjoyed by yourself and the rest of our friends in Ulysses. The rebel pickets are on the opposite side of the river in plain sight and talk with our pickets considerably.

We are getting quite anxious to rec. our mail and think you will be somewhat disappointed at our long silence but it can -not be helped by us. You may think that it is a sign that something is about to be done but I have got so that I hardly think that anything of importance is ever going to take place but hope for the best and hope for the best until something does take place which shall change the present state of things (and change them for the better.

I have nothing more to write, and will mail this the first chance I have and if I have no chance will write a little more in a day or two if we move from here and have a chance to.

Your affectionate Brother.

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# THE 10TH OHIO INFANTRY & THE JACKSONVILLE (ALABAMA) CITY CEMETERY

By Norman Dasinger, Jr., November 29, 2021  
Blue and Gray Education Society



*Gen. William S. Rosecrans (LOC)*



*Gen. William H. Lytle (PD)*



*Gen. Don C. Buell (LOC)*

Known as the Montgomery Regiment, the 10th Ohio was organized near Cincinnati on May 7, 1861. One of the most famous antebellum literary and political personalities of the time was assigned to command the unit: William H. Lytle. By the summer, the celebrated Colonel Lytle was elevated to general and left the 10th.

The unit marched to western Virginia on June 24, 1861, and participated in operations in Grafton, Clarksburg, and Buckhannon, and saw action at the battle of Carnifex Ferry in September. By 1862, the 10th was moved to Nashville, Tennessee, and was put in a division of Gen. Don C. Buell's army. In the spring of that year, it was part of the force that captured Huntsville, Alabama, on April 11. Using Huntsville as a base, the 10th Ohio participated in some curious patrols ordered by division commander Gen. Orsmy Mitchel. These patrols traveled several miles from Huntsville and were done as a fact-finding enterprise.

In October, the 10th moved with Buell to Kentucky, and then it received an assignment it would maintain for a long time. Following Buell's removal, Gen. William S. Rosecrans took command of the Army of the Cumberland, and the 10th was consigned to Provost Duty at Rosecrans's headquarters.

At the battle of Murfreesboro on December 31, it was given a very difficult responsibility. It was ordered to prevent more than 3,000 Union soldiers from voluntarily leaving the battlefield. This had to be a very precarious and thorny task. Ultimately, the men of the 10th Ohio forced these evading soldiers back to their assigned regiments. Due to their success at Murfreesboro, General Rosecrans had a note sent to the commander:

*Lt. Col. Burke, Tenth Ohio Infantry  
The General commanding has received your dispatch and is highly gratified with your conduct.  
Frank Bond, Lt and ADC*

The 10th would remain part of Rosecrans's headquarters guard throughout the spring and summer of 1863. In fact, it served in a similar capacity at Chickamauga, Georgia, September 20, 1863, when the Confederates ran through an open gap in the Union line and forced the very quick retreat of Rosecrans and his entire command center. After Chickamauga, and Rosecrans's resignation, the 10th served as headquarters guard for Gen. George Thomas until May 1864. At that time, the unit's enlistments ran out, and it disbanded the first week of June.

For much of its service, the 10th Ohio's commander was Colonel Burke.

Joseph W. Burke was born in County Mayo, Ireland, in 1835. He took part in the Ireland Revolt of 1848 and then moved to the United States, settling in Dayton, Ohio. He studied at the University of Cincinnati College of Law and was an attorney for the U.S. Customs Department when the Civil War

began. He helped raise and organize the men that would become the 10th Ohio and served as its first major. He was made a brigadier general on March 13, 1865. After his service, he went back into the customs bureau and was assigned to Mobile, Alabama.

Sometime around 1880, he moved to Jacksonville, Alabama. Some speculate that at some point during his time in Huntsville in 1862, Burke journeyed to Jacksonville while on one of those remote reconnaissance/fact-finding incursions. Perhaps, however, he visited the town while working in Mobile, since Jacksonville could be reached by rail from Mobile. For whatever reason, he liked the town and moved there. Today, the original main campus of Jacksonville State University sits on the site of his former home.



*Pelham Grave Site, Jacksonville City Cemetery | Anniston Public Library Archives*

When he died in 1900, he was buried in the city cemetery. The same graveyard where the famous boy artilleryist Lt. Col. John Pelham also rests, along with two Confederate generals: brothers William and John Forney.

## **FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT**

I hope everyone had a great Christmas and New Year! For those who didn't make it to the business meeting, please take a look at the event schedule. We have a fairly busy season ahead of us. One addition to the schedule is AHEC which is a paid event and helps us cover the costs for the meals at Landis Valley and the budget for the Holiday Party. Matt has registered us as a unit. Winter drill at Landis Valley is coming up first in early February. Please let Mark Fasnacht know if you would like us to cover any specific topic or if you're interested in presenting a topic during the classroom portion of the day. The NR's School of Instruction is open to everyone and the registration fee is covered by the Treasury for anyone who wishes to attend. Mike Espenshade will be presenting his extensive research on the Civil War veterans buried in the Hummelstown cemetery at this year's School. John Heiser will be leading the group on a battlefield walk on Sunday morning after the conclusion of the School. This year's walk will highlight day one of the battle. Let me know if you're attending so I can provide accurate numbers. Breakfast and lunch is provided.

I need each of you to work on your own supply of rounds for the season. While we have a decent supply in inventory, they're not intended to cover our firing needs. If you run short at an event, we will supply enough to get you through but each man needs be responsible for his own rounds.

Ballots for the election have been sent and are due by January 14<sup>th</sup> (*editor: the day BEFORE the party*). They can be sent to Pete Zinkus, Doug Raab or Mike Brumbaugh. Results will be announced at the Party.

**2022 dues should be paid ASAP if you haven't already done so. \$40 covers unit dues as well as our liability coverage through the NR. Email Matt if you need his mailing address.**

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 are in good shape unless noted otherwise. Contact Rick directly for any inquiries/questions - [auktion8@comcast.net](mailto:auktion8@comcast.net)

Keune McDowell Kepi - some brim cracking \$20.00  
 Grey Blanket with black stripe \$35.00

(2.) Kerry Williard is handling the selling of Dave Swigert items for Dave's wife. Marc and I met several months ago to look at the items, give them descriptions, and give approx. values. Several of the items have been sold yet some remain. The list is current as of 6 July 2021. Contact Kerry directly with any and all inquiries: [shamokin71@aol.com](mailto:shamokin71@aol.com) (see the updated list below)

Uniform Clothing			approx. value	Misc Items			approx. value
Quantity	Item	Item Description		Quantity	Item	Item Description	
1	Sack Coats - Assume Size 42 Dk Blue Wool	unlined faded course wool	20	1	Tin Cup	sturdy	5
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 can	sno-seal (half full)		1
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	Wood Mirror - Haversack filler	sliding cover	3
1	Dk Blue Vest Size 42	3 pockets - light wear	20	1	Wood Comb - Haversack filler		1
3 pairs	Grey Wool Socks	modern	2/pair	1	Wooden button board		1
2	Hats - Union & Confederte for children		1	2	Coin Purses - Made from Tic Material		1/each
1	Light Brown Scarf	acrylic - for modern use	1	1	Cloth dittry Bag	used (1 left, 7 sold)	1/each
1	Havelock - White - VG condx		2	1	Bag with Coffee	brown coffee	1/each
1	Underpants - Night Pants - White	36" waist - knee stains - 25" inseam white muslin - rear repair	3	1	shoe lace - undied		.25/each
1 pair	Woolen Grey Gloves	modern - right hand is fingerless	2	2	Soap Bar		1/each
<b>Accoutrements</b>				6 1/2	Wax Candles		0.5
1	Cap Box with Caps w/ pick		20	1	pocket sharpenig stone	new	2
1	Haversack - tarred Black	w/ liner - paint beginning to flake. holes at strap connections.	10	3	box rifle cleaning kit	pads, steel wool, rags, etc	5
1	Scabbord	late war 7 rivet	15	1 Pair	match boxes w/ matches		0.25/each
1	Cartridge Box with Tin Inserts	w/ sling and brass and late war plate - tools, cone, etc.	35	1	shoe tree		3
1	Haversack - tarred Black	brittle strap, open seam	5	1	Green Army Duffle Bag		3
1	Shelter Tent - Both Halves	heavy canvas with loops w/ mildew	35	1	drawers for use as patches		1
1	Bag of 7 wooden Tent Stakes	with rope	3	1	large shite cotton sheeting		1
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				

## 2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

- 15 January - Holiday Party – Gettysburg
- 5 February - Winter Drill - Landis Valley (ELF and Sykes Regulars invited)
- 26~27 February - NR School of Instruction (Gettysburg Fire Hall)
- 12 March - Cartridge Rolling Party (Kleinfeltersville)
- 2 April - Adopt-A-Position (tentative)
- 23 April – Robesonia
- 21-22 May - Army Heritage Days (USAHEC Carlisle)
- 30 May - Memorial Day Parade (Hummelstown)
- 11-12 June - Gruber Wagon Works Living History (Reading)
- 16~17 July - Landis Valley Civil War Days (Lancaster) - NR Camp of Instruction
- 16~18 September - 160<sup>th</sup> Antietam Reenactment (NR)
- 8 October - Millersville Parade
- 15~16 October - Cedar Creek Reenactment (NR)
- 5 November - Adopt-A-Position (tentative)
- 19 November - Remembrance Day (Gettysburg) - (NR Annual Meeting and Parade)
- 3 December – Annual Meeting (Kleinfeltersville)



## Secondary schedule -

- 1~3 April - Shiloh (as the 22<sup>nd</sup> LA)
- 21~22 May - Old Town, MD - ANV/USV
- 5~7 August - Slaughter on the Mountain (Culpepper, VA)

### 53rd PVI Contacts

President: Eric Ford ([reenactor53@gmail.com](mailto:reenactor53@gmail.com))

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Unit Website: <http://www.53rdpvi.org>

Field Officers - 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>

