

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Company C

"The Sentinel" March 2022

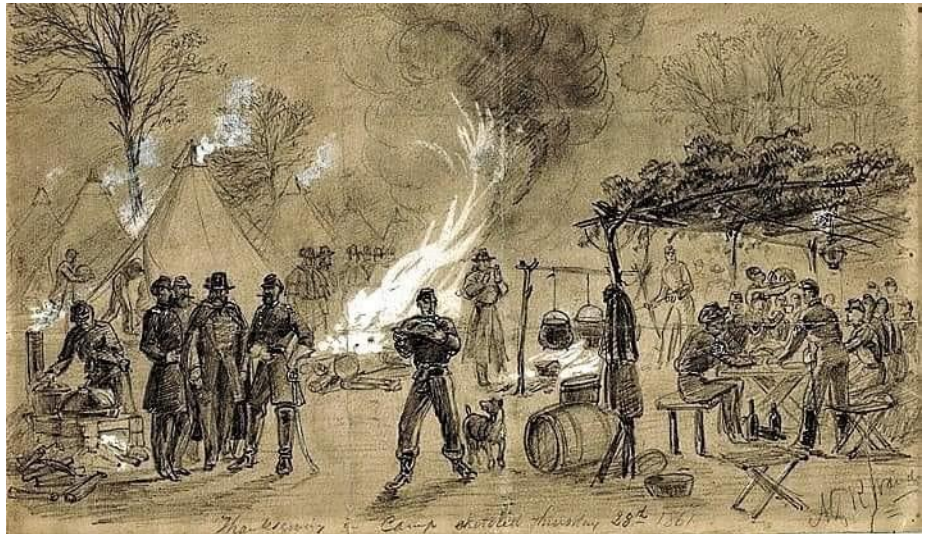
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

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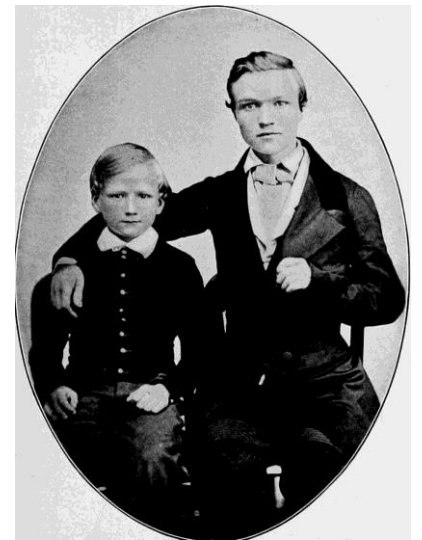


I am always looking for newsletter content, so please forward your articles, book reviews, event summaries/photos, stories, etc.) to me for inclusion in a future edition of "The Sentinel". – Matthew Steger, editor

CARNEGIE & THE CIVIL WAR: PART 1

By Doug Smock, January 7, 2021
Blue and Gray Education Society

The photo to the right shows Andrew Carnegie at age 16 with his younger brother and future business partner, Thomas. Carnegie had just landed the job of personal secretary and telegrapher for Thomas Scott, Pittsburgh-based executive of the Pennsylvania Railroad. (From Project Gutenberg's Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie)



One of the unlikely storytellers about the early days of the Civil War was Andrew Carnegie, who had a six-month stint in Simon Cameron's War Department before returning to Pittsburgh and creating one of the world's greatest industrial companies. His *Autobiography*, originally published in 1920, contains a somewhat fanciful version of events in 1861 as well as interesting observations of Lincoln and Gen. Winfield Scott.

The son of poor Scottish immigrants, Carnegie began his meteoric ascent as a teenager when he caught the eye of Thomas A. Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company who hired him as his secretary and personal telegraph operator in 1853. Six years later, Scott named Carnegie superintendent of the Western (Pennsylvania) Division of the railroad.

Fort Sumter was attacked on April 12, 1861, and on April 20, Carnegie was told to ship munitions from Pittsburgh's Allegheny Arsenal "by fast train tonight" to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He was also told to transport 1,100 freshly arrived Ohio troops to Harrisburg. The trip to Washington via Baltimore, however, quickly became a major problem. On April 19, rioters in Baltimore attacked Massachusetts troops in transit, and blocked use of the only rail line to Washington. Not long after, Carnegie was summoned to Washington by Scott, who had been made a colonel and appointed assistant secretary of war in charge of transportation and telegraph communications. Carnegie, who described himself as an "ultra abolitionist" and strong supporter of the Republican Party, was anxious to support the war effort and do the bidding of the top bosses at the Pennsylvania Railroad, which benefited from military contracts. Carnegie became Scott's assistant in the War Department.



Pennsylvania Railroad executive Thomas Scott was the first person to see Carnegie's potential genius. He was assistant secretary of war for transportation and telegraph operations during the Civil War. (From Project Gutenberg's Autobiography of Andrew Carnegie)

He said his first government job was to repair rail lines from Annapolis to Washington so that Union troops could rush to Washington, D.C. The line was fixed in a few days, and Carnegie jumped on the first engine, quickly spotting downed telegraph wires. He continued the story in his *Autobiography*:

"I stopped the engine and ran forward to release them, but I did not notice that the wires had been pulled to one side before staking. When released, in their spring upwards, they struck me in the face, knocked me over, and cut a gash in my cheek which bled profusely. In this condition I entered the city of Washington with the first troops, so that with the exception of one or two soldiers, wounded a few days previously in passing through the streets of Baltimore, I can justly claim that I 'shed my blood for my country' among the first of its defenders. I gloried in being useful to the land that had done so much for me, and worked, I can truly say, night and day, to open communication to the South."

Carnegie's story of his injury "doesn't bear scrutiny," according to Carnegie biographer David Nasaw, who maintains that Carnegie was still in Pittsburgh at the time of the incident.

Carnegie was then put in charge of building rail lines and telegraph systems into northern Virginia. Union soldiers marched from their Virginia camps toward Bull Run Creek, where they were routed by Confederates on July 22. Carnegie then supervised evacuation of wounded soldiers from the battle.

President Abraham Lincoln often came to Carnegie's office in the War Department for news of the war. Carnegie wrote:

"He was certainly one of the most homely men I ever saw when his features were in repose; but when excited or telling a story, intellect shone through his eyes and illuminated his face to a degree which I have seldom or never seen in any other. His manners were perfect because natural; and he had a kind word for everybody, even the youngest boy in the office..."

"I have often regretted that I did not note down carefully at the time some of his curious sayings, for he said even common things in an original way. I never met a great man who so thoroughly made himself one with all men as Mr. Lincoln. As Secretary Hay so well says, 'It is impossible to imagine anyone a valet to Mr. Lincoln; he would have been his companion.' He was the most perfect democrat, revealing in every word and act the equality of men."

Carnegie described a situation of confusion and incompetence at the War Department, particularly with leading Union military officers based in Washington in 1861: Commander-in-Chief Winfield Scott, 75, and Commissary General of Subsistence Joseph P. Taylor, 65. Scott was "paralyzed not only in body, but in mind; and it was upon this noble relic of the past that the organization of the forces of the Republic depended ... They were seemingly one and all martinets who had passed the age of usefulness. Days would elapse before a decision could be obtained upon matters which required prompt action. There was scarcely a young active officer at the head of any important department—at least I cannot recall one. Long years of peace had fossilized the service." In Scott's defense, he was the architect of the Union's Anaconda Plan to strangle the Confederacy.



U.S. Commander-In-Chief Gen. Winfield Scott and his staff in September, 1861. Andrew Carnegie was not impressed. (Library of Congress)

In an effort to get things moving, Secretary of War Cameron authorized Scott and Carnegie to make necessary moves without getting approval from the Army.

Carnegie returned to Pittsburgh in late August to work for the Pennsylvania RR and tend to his financial stakes in at least seven companies. He had been guided in his investments by Scott and Edgar Thomson, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Conflicts of interest and insider trading

were rife. "Unwilling to wait until the war was won, Carnegie dedicated himself to expanding his economic empire," Nasaw wrote in Andrew Carnegie.

Carnegie maintained in his *Autobiography* that he and Scott had been recalled to their jobs by Thomson, but Scott in fact remained the Union's logistics chief for another year and was credited for his role in pushing flag officer Andrew Foote to capture Island No. Ten on the Mississippi River.

BOOK REVIEW – BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA

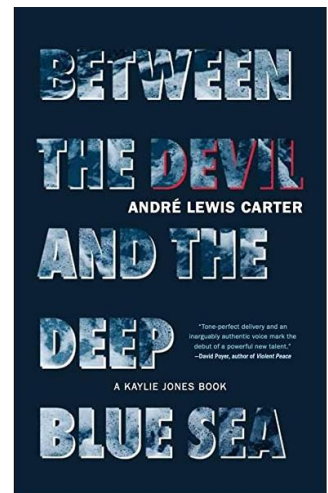
Submitted by Travis Shick.

Andre Lewis Carter's debut novel *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* is a story that examines one man's personal odyssey from the America's criminal urban underworld to the US Navy's most infamous "race riot" aboard the USS Kitty Hawk in 1972.

When most young men are looking forward to setting off chasing their dreams, César Alvarez has learned that he may have seen his last sunrise. He's a man on the run from the criminal gangsters that until recently had been the closest thing he had to a family. He attempts to evade his pursuers by shipping off with the US Navy as fast as possible. His knowledge of what military life entails is next to nothing, and the story that unfolds is the tale of a would-be sailor who must take a path of survival and discovery. This path lies through a world totally alien to him in its character, discipline, and racial dimensions. Eventually, César's past will reach him in the vortex of one of the US Navy's most infamous episodes.

César's story is that of a man caught between colossal forces that are shaping his life, without any guarantee that he will survive the collision. He will experience firsthand the racial conflicts boiling within American society, but as a Cuban-American he will be afforded a chance to see these tensions from both sides, as he finds his role is not easily defined in a black/white conflict. In the prime of his life, César will ship to Vietnam, not the tropical jungles normally associated with that war, but aboard one of the largest and most powerful aircraft carriers in the world. He will feel the compelling force of the two paths that threaten to pull him apart, one is a criminal path whose tentacles will be far harder to shake than he thinks. The other path is the promising future that may be his, if he can learn to navigate the official and unofficial laws of his new vocation.

The vividness of César's story is not simply a story of the Kitty Hawk riot. Reader's will be treated to an all too rare look at life in the 1970's Navy whose unique and intense culture is both mysterious and compelling, from the subtle and inscrutable numbering of buildings on a military base to the comradery that is the life blood of military service. Andre Lewis Carter's vivid and authentic prose will take the reader into the



disorienting yet compelling society of that Navy across a spectrum of experience, from surviving basic training to surviving shore leave to surviving one of the Navy's most harrowing nights.

From the ghetto to the top deck of a warship, the novel *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* weaves a rarely trod path that will give the reader a finely crafted taste of the potentially catastrophic choices that the young men and women of the American military must make in the harsh world they can sometimes find themselves in.

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.,
Wednesday, Aug. 20th, 1863.

Messrs. Editors:—We have been told, and we have credited the information as the heading of our letter shows, that somewhere in juxtaposition to our camp there is a place, or rather, a burg, or in rural phrase, a village, or plainly speaking a town, rejoicing and being glad in the name of Morrisville. Now some of the villages in this Old Dominion “Cuffe” Pot, are a little like the chivalry of the South—very ideal, and, like the Irishman’s flea when you have your finger on them are not there. In fact they have regularly organized towns down here, that, like their Corn-federacy, exist only in the fairy land of imagination. Therefore being well aware of the smallness of things in this country, we provided ourselves with a kind friend’s opera glass, and started out for the wise purpose of clearly elucidating to our infinite private satisfaction the fact of Morrisville being a bona fide and genuine village.

One mile of go-aheadativeness brought us to a cross roads. Now be it known that in this land of “Old Virginia shore,” a cross roads though they cross ever so little, is of itself a great institution; and residents for six miles around, all live, so they say, at “Smith’s,” or “Jones,” or “Fust Family” Cross Roads. Some one told us that at or about the cross roads, was situate in all its unsophisticated rural grandeur, Morrisville. Taking a fine position on elevated ground, we adjusted our glasses and began the search. We noticed that quite a number of larger and smaller stones covered the ground, these all appeared to be well preserved and in good condition; and further investigations developed the fact that they were the only things in good condition. We noticed the places where fences once stood in all the glory of “thus far thou shalt go but no further,” but the fence having no de-fence was compelled to feed the hungry flame of the bivouac fires. Soldiers often commit offences; that is they often go off with the fences.

Finally our eyesight was rewarded by the discovery of a house—none of your new buildings; it was evidently one of the first houses in Virginia. The appearance of a bare-legged “cullerd chile” confirmed this opinion. Near this solitary building stands three magnificently straight chimneys. We made an extensive reconnoissance with our glass but failed to find any houses minus smoking attachments to which said chimneys could by any manner of means belong. So we came to one of the following conclusions—(which one we will not say.) Either Jeff, in the amplitude of his power, had taken the houses to iron clad rebel gunboats; or, Morrisville at one period of antiquity, was the seat of a college for the graduation of chimney sweepers, and these houseless chimneys were used by the students for practicing. Having thus, by personal observation convinced ourselves of the doubtful existence of the village, we proceeded to camp, with a profound admiration of the enterprise of Virginia. I have thought of writing to the President to put Morrisville on the “Retired List” with old Rome, Carthage and other played out villages, but considering the condition of the State in which it is gloriously situated, perhaps the “Invalid Corps” would be more appropriate.

An amusing scene always occurs at Corps Headquarters on the arrival of express boxes. The Provost Marshal examines the contents and if any contraband articles are discovered, such articles are at once confiscated. Yesterday a wagon load of express boxes were brought from Bealton Station and unloaded at Corps Headquarters. Capt. Mintzer the Provost Marshal and Lieut. Ludwig, of the Provost Guard proceeded to open the boxes. Most of the things were eatables, underclothing, quite a number of smokeables, as well as a quantity of contraband drinkables. It was amusing to notice how the senders, or to speak *expressly*, shippers of the whiskey endeavored to hide the spirits. A number of quart and half gallon tin cans were labelled “fresh peaches,” “apple butter,” “celebrated horse imbrocation,” “horse radish,” (to be mixed we presume with the Imbrocation,) “Radway’s Ready Relief,” and other equally delusive titles. A small hole was punched through the tin, and with the experience of Professor Blitz, “peaches,” “apple butter,” and other nice things all changed to whiskey or gin; and, lo! they were confiscated. A quart stone bottle was labelled “Harrison’s Black Ink,” one glass bottle was said to contain “cough medicine,” and had the physician’s prescription on “take one tablespoon full, &c.” A suspiciously heavy box marked “smoking tobacco” was opened and it was smoking tobacco, but in feeling through it, the hand was soon withdrawn, bringing along with it a bottle that looked very much like schnapps or some other easy to take medicine.

Here’s a tin can said to contain “horse radish.” It is opened and true enough it is horse radish. Now if the inspector is green in the business he would pass the can as all right. But turn the can around,

punch a hole in the bottom of it, apply the nose, and what is undoubtedly horse radish at one end, will smell abominably like gin at the other. The can has a partition about the centre of it that fully explains the matter. In some of the boxes were complete suits of citizens clothes—these were sent on by parties to facilitate desertion. After the contraband articles were taken out, the boxes were nailed shut again and forwarded to the regiments to which they belonged. The liquors confiscated were turned over to the Medical Department.

It is somewhat amusing to notice how enamored some of the officers are of the rebel ladies living at the farm homes and other houses round about the camp. Nor is it confined to the young officers, but a few of the old superannuated shoulder straps are very regular in their devotions at the shrine of southern beauty. We really don't believe that these favored ladies ever had so much marked attention paid to them at any former period of their blissful lives. Even "mamas" of an uncertain age have polite attentions paid them that must be highly flattering to their rebel venerableness. Surgeons must gallop every day, more or less, to the well known house where "sweet eighteen" resides because, forsooth, somebody might require medical advice. Chaplains have a better reason for doting the same thing, for spiritual advice is never out of place. Gay and dashing Aids must visit the ladies—well, because they have nothing else to do.

"Oh! woman, woman thou shouldst have few sins of thine own
To answer for, thou art the author of such a book of follies
In a man, that it would need the tears of all the angels
To wipe the record out."

All quiet along the lines.

[Yours, &c. L. J. F.]

[*Montgomery Ledger*, September 1, 1863]

EXPERIENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR (PART 6)

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

(supplied by Tom Kear, a decedent of Cushing)

[*Note – any grammatical and typographical errors were kept intact as they are original to the letter - editor*]

Falmouth Nov 22nd 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 fire place 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 considerable 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

WINTER DRILL SUMMARY

On Saturday February 5th, the unit held its annual winter drill at Landis Valley. We were joined by some of our pals from ELF. Corp. Espenshade also brought his grandson Braden who provided drumming for marching while drilling. It was a cold weekend but we made it through. Several of us stayed overnight and enjoyed dinner, breakfast, and comradery.

On Saturday, we did some classroom work and then put it to action out in the field including skirmish drill, guard mount, stacking of arms, and various maneuver drills.



2022 NR SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION SUMMARY

On 26 and 27 February, the National Regiment held its annual School Of Instruction at the Gettysburg firehouse. Among some of the topics covered included blanket rolls, pioneering and their tools, skirmish drill, manual of arms, the NR's social media presence, our liability insurance, as well as the 12th OH at Antietam. The NR will be portraying the 12th OH at the Antietam 160th event in Sept. On Sunday, we were treated to a day 1 battlefield walk by John Heiser. In attendance from the 53rd were: Sgt. Benedict, Corporal Steger, Privates Ford and Shick. Private Paul Parvis (Pioneers) and Corporal Mike Espenshade (CW veterans buried in the Hummelstown cemetery) made presentations during the School of Instruction. Photos courtesy of Eric Ford and your editor, Matt Steger.





FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Pards,

I hope everyone is well. I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone to take a little time and get your kits into shape for the season. We have events coming up April - July with the first being at Robeson on April 23rd. Officially, the next event is the cartridge rolling party scheduled for March 12, 8:00am until 2:00pm at Mark Fasnacht's home. Please bring along any material and tools for the job that you have. As a reminder, the cartridges rolled at this event will go into the company inventory and will be used to supplement those who run a little short at events. Please continue to build your own inventory for personal use.

The NR's School of Instruction was held this past weekend in Gettysburg and we were presented with a lot of great information. Much of it focused on 1862, the 160th Antietam event and the 12th OH which is who we will portray at the event. We'll be putting a lot of time into preparing for this event at Landis Valley in July with the NR Camp of Instruction. I know we're still several months out but I'm asking everyone registered for the 160th to plan the Landis Valley event into your calendars.

See y'all soon!
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

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 24 Jan. 2022. Contact Kerry directly with any and all inquiries: shamokin71@aol.com (see the updated list below)

Uniform Clothing	Item Description	Detailed Description	Price
1	Trouser - Steel Blue each with suspendors	34 min waist/27" inseam-avg. condx and a little dirt w/ braces no watch pck	\$25.00
1	Dk Blue Vest Size 42	3 pockets - light wear	\$20.00
1	Colored Pattern Shirt	blue plaid with white china buttons - sun faded - good condx	\$10.00
1	White muslin Shirt	19" at shoulder 14" neck - very short in body length	\$5.00
1	White muslin Shirt	20" at shoulder 16" neck - very short in body length - cuffs are stained	\$5.00
1 pair	Woolen Grey Gloves	modern - right hand is fingerless	\$2.00
1	Underpants - Night Pants - White	36" waist - knee stains - 25" inseam white muslin - rear repair	\$3.00
1	Lt Brown Scarf - Acrylic - Modern		\$1.00
1	Havelock - White - VG condx		\$2.00
3 pairs	Grey Wool Socks - Modern		\$2.00/pr
2	Hats - Union & Confederate for cchildren		\$1.00
Accoutrements			
1	Scabbord - Late war 7 Rivet		\$15.00
1	Gum Blanket	some cracking with oversized grommets	\$20.00
1	Shelter Tent - Both Halves - Heavy Canvas w/Loops w/Mildew		\$35.00
1	Bag of 7 wooden Tent Stakes w/Rope		\$3.00
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen - Leather Sling Satinette Cover w/ Corded Stopper		\$20.00
1	Haversack - Tarred Black - Brittle Strap w/opwn seam		\$5.00
1	Haversack - Tarred Black w/Liner- Paint peeling Holes @ Strap Connection		\$10.00
1	Grey Smooth Face Canteen - Leather Sling Satinette Cover w/ Corded Stopper		\$20.00
Misc Items			
1 can	sno-seal (half full)		\$1.00
1	Wood Mirror - Haversack filler	sliding cover	\$3.00
1	Wood Comb - Haversack filler		\$1.00
1	Wooden button board		\$1.00
2	Coin Purses - Made from Tic Material		\$1.00/ea
1	Bag with Coffee	brown coffee	\$1.00/ea
1	shoe lace - undied		\$0.25/ea
2	Soap Bar		\$1.00/ea
6 1/2	Wax Candles		\$0.25/ea
1	pocket sharpenig stone	new	\$2.00
1	box rifle cleaning kit	pads, steel wool, rags, etc	\$5.00
3	match boxes w/ matches		\$0.25/ea
1 Pair	shoe tree		\$3.00
1	Green Army Duffle Bag		\$3.00
1	drawers for use as patches		\$1.00
Armaments			
1	1861 Springfield Rifle - Armi Sport		\$900.00

(3.) Dave Townsen, a fellow pard of mine in the old 83rd PVI, is selling off most of his CW gear. You can contact him directly at: grumpydave58@comcast.net with any inquiries. He lives in Mechanicsburg.

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)~~
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 - 160th 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 22nd LA)
21-22 May - Old Town, MD - ANV/USV
5-7 August - Slaughter on the Mountain (Culpepper, VA)

53rd PVI Contacts

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2022 Field Officers - Sergeants: Mark Fasnacht & Marc Benedict. Corporals: Mike Espenshade & 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>

