

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" July 2024

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

This Month:

1. What Does the *Free State of Jones* Movie and My Civil War Ancestor Have in Common?
2. Book Review – *Tullahoma – The Forgotten Campaign that changed the Course of the Civil War*
3. Winslow Homer Card
4. The Diary of Benjamin Jay Cushing
5. James Wilson Barnett Diary
6. Upcoming Events
7. The Civil War Merchant
8. 2024 Calendar of Events
9. 53rd PVI Contact Info



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

WHAT DOES THE *FREE STATE OF JONES* MOVIE AND MY CIVIL WAR ANCESTOR HAVE IN COMMON?

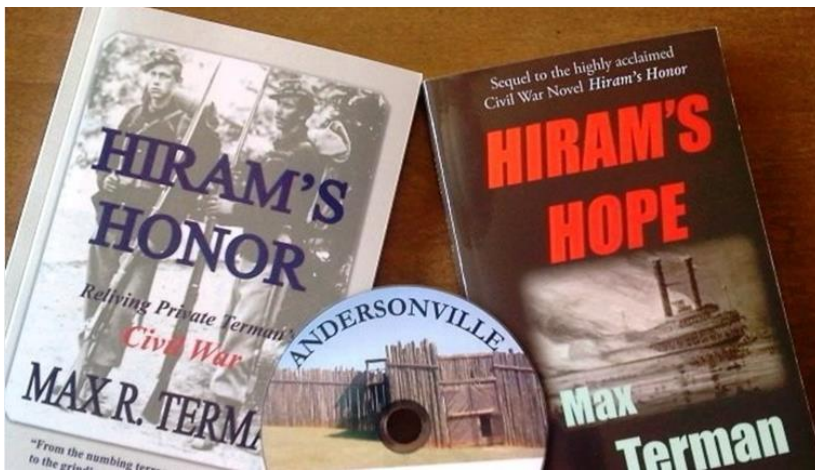
Max R. Terman, PhD, May 10, 2024, blueandgrayeducation.org

Discovering that you have a Civil War ancestor unleashes unbounded enthusiasm for all things about that conflict and the decades following its close. In my case, it led to walking in my 82d Ohio ancestor's footsteps and seeing the war from his viewpoint (and the writing of two books about his experiences—see photo above).

The historically based movie *Free State of Jones*, which released in 2016 and starred Matthew McConaughey, also gives us an unusual perspective. It opens with graphic views of the fighting in the Civil War. We see exploding heads, gaping abdominal wounds, hogs chewing on corpses, and screaming soldiers undergoing amputations. While gruesome, these scenes, it can be argued, are necessary to provide a proper view of the violence of the American Civil War, if not war in general.

In the movie, Newton Knight, the historical figure who founded the Free State of Jones, flees the carnage (after carrying home the corpse of a young relative) and, now a deserter, makes his way to the swamps. Here he meets up with angry destitute farmers, escaped slaves, and other deserters who he eventually organizes into a small army.

As the movie progresses, Knight's army grows as the war turns against the Confederacy. So does the viciousness of the fighting and retributions. Young boys and enslaved African-Americans are hung after surrendering, and skirmishes and battles with Confederates are shown in gruesome detail.



Books by Max Terman about his ancestor, Hiram Terman of the 82d Ohio Infantry. The CD about Andersonville, created by former prison tour guide Kevin Frye, provided Mr. Terman with much insight about the prison during his research. / photo courtesy of author

I include this story in my book *Hiram's Hope*, a historical novel about my Civil War ancestor. In it, I recount the terrible journey of the very last survivors of Andersonville and Cahaba prisons to Vicksburg. The prisoners ride, walk, and crawl their way to waiting steamboats, where they unbelievably board the ill-fated Sultana. This severely overloaded vessel later

explodes, burns, and sinks into the cold waters of the Mississippi, a terrible human tragedy overshadowed in the news of the time by other events in the tumultuous month of April 1865.



Newton Knight / public domain

In my book, the bedraggled prisoners come across some of these Free State of Jones men and warily engage in conversation. The prisoners learn about the hated conscription act and 20-slave rule that allows slave owners to avoid serving in the Confederate army. The act also allowed the Confederate army to perform requisition raids on their farms, which drove these men to rebel against the Confederate government and to violently set up their own "country," The Free State of Jones featured in the movie.

Did the Andersonville prisoners trekking to Vicksburg encounter Newton Knight's men? I believe this meeting was possible, and the characters in the movie helped me write about this encounter in my book.

Toward the end of the film, the war ends and Reconstruction begins, but the fires of freedom are soon extinguished with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, black codes, and lynchings. In glimpses of the future, Knight's descendants are shown decades later fighting laws against mixed marriage in the Mississippi courts.

While there are no doubt fictional scenes in the movie, I believe it was well done and reflects not only the history of the Civil War and Reconstruction, but the emotional human drama from a unique and little-known perspective. This background helped me write about my ancestor's story.

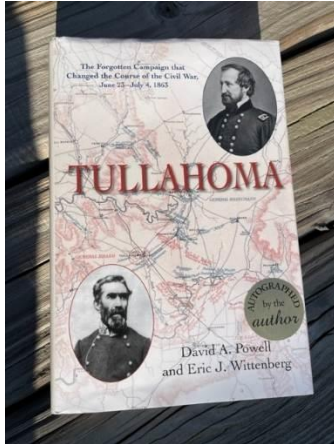
Movie poster / fair use



BOOK REVIEW - TULLAHOMA – THE FORGOTTEN CAMPAIGN THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF THE CIVIL WAR

Author – David A. Powell and Eric J. Wittenberg

Reviewed by Mike Espenshade



Hardcover; 2022 Savas Beattie; 356 story pp.; 18 pictures, 16 maps, notes on every page, Order of Battle 9 pp, Bibliography 19 pp, 11 pp Index. \$34.95 signed copy from the author, bought at Stone's River NPS Visitor Center.

I really enjoyed this new work by these well-proven authors, Powell and Wittenberg, whose respective expertise in the Western Theater and Civil War Cavalry rewards the reader. I rate it among the top 5 best-written books in my Library.

The Tullahoma Campaign of June 23 – July 5, 1863 is often obscured by the simultaneous and much higher profile Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Union Major General William Rosecrans' operational masterpiece – the 60,000 man Army of the Cumberland's almost bloodless conquest of hundreds of square miles of Middle Tennessee. This hard-won success also prevented Confederate Major General Braxton Bragg from using his 55,000 Army of Tennessee (along with its heavy cavalry force) to free Vicksburg and forced Bragg southward into a defensive line at Chattanooga.

Rosecrans' carefully planned, yet complex, design to deceive and out maneuver Bragg's defenses north of Tullahoma, TN. 30 miles south of Murfreesboro, proved to be one of the most brilliantly executed actions of the war. The Confederate cavalry, for multiple reasons, did not properly notify Bragg of the Union column moves and progress. Bragg was ill and could not make timely or decisive decisions.

Steady rains in 10 of the 12 days of the campaign created the worst road conditions imaginable and slowed the Union forces in their out flanking maneuvers of Bragg's army. Only by herculean efforts, both armies moved night and day extracting supply wagons and artillery through axle-deep mud up mountain roads (and everywhere) – sometimes needing 50 men to pull each wagon. Haversacks were a soggy mush and gunpowder was wet.

After a long winter and spring of begging his leaders in Washington, Rosecrans had greatly improved the size and strength of his cavalry by mid-June of 1863. They could now fight the veteran Rebel cavalry with confidence and their endurance, skills, and head-on bravery in the campaign showed clearly. We read about over a dozen significant combat actions including the Yankee's successful saber charge against prepared defenses at Shelbyville and Wilder's mounted infantry Lightning Brigade's battle debut at Hoover's Gap (a critical and stunning Union victory involving their Spencer repeating rifles against four times their number). The well-coordinated efforts of Union infantry and artillery to support the up-front cavalry advances and the logistical challenges of supplying/feeding the horses and men are all well-described. Total casualties for the Campaign: Union = 570, Confederate = over 5,100 (mostly prisoners and desertions). Don't let these numbers fool you. Nearly everyone in both armies suffered greatly for almost 2 weeks from wet, mud, hunger, lack of sleep and physical exhaustion. Many hundreds of horses and mules were lost from their exertions.

The objective and encompassing assessment of the leaders, strategies, political conditions, and their armies' performance is nicely provided at the end of the book. The notes, maps and Order of Battle are also very useful.

The Tullahoma Campaign was a brilliantly conceived and executed piece of strategy in a war better known for mistakes and artless bloodbaths. One of Rosecrans' most impressive military achievements, this campaign deserves a closer look.

Enjoy!!

WINSLOW HOMER SOUVENIR CARD



Noted American artist Winslow Homer (1836 ~ 1910) created a series of drawings entitled "Life In Camp" originally published circa 1864 by L. Prang & Co. The series was exhibited in "The Civil War in America" at the Library of Congress in 2013. This image is entitled "Extra Ration".

THE DIARY OF BENJAMIN JAY CUSHING (53RD PVI, CO. G)

[Transcribed and provided to me by Thomas Kear, a direct descendent of the Cushing brothers. Any typos or grammatical errors were left in place. – editor]

1864

- May 1 - Got up early and wrote to Emma. Went and drew a days rations Sunday before breakfast. Went over to the 64th Church & heard an excellent sermon. Give out two days rations. Went to the first prayer meeting I have attended in the army, and hope they may be continued, hereafter, for the benefit of all the soldiers and that God may be honored and glorified.
- May 2 - Drew one days rations as usual. Fair weather during the day, but had a hard blow at night which tore down the tents and filled the air with clouds of dust.
- May 3 - Draw rations again in the morning. Write to A.S. Orr and. send him my Chester Co. Bond, assigned over to him so that he can draw the money on it. Get orders to take down the tents & pitch them in the streets, issue three days rations to the men, so that they have six on hand from tomorrow morning, pack up at dark and are ready to start at short notice.
- May 4 - Started at 12 oc A.M. & marched towards the Rapidan Cross, at 'Elys' Ford between 7 & d oc & halt and rest an hour or so. Then resume our march toward Chancellorsville reach the old battle ground about 10 oc A.M. and form in line of battle on the left hand side of the road leading to Fredericksburg. Lay all night in line of battle.
- May 5 - Started about 6 oc & came out to the Old. Brick house, lay there til 9 oc & then move out on the plank road leading to Fredericksburg & then leave it to the left & move toward "Mine Run" get into position about 4 oc P.M. opposite the enemy, quite hard fighting about 1 mile to our right. 4th Brig, is moved out to the battlefield, at sundown.
- May 6 - Fighting commences at sunrise and continues with little interruption all day. The rebs make several. attempts to gain one point, but, failed and were driven back with heavy loss every time. James Blackman of Co. G was killed in the Skirmish line, only two others wounded in the Reg. Went up and staid with the Co. after they come in from Skirmishing.
- May 7 - Issued fresh beef in the morning. Skirmishing commenced in the morning and continued all day. Hard fighting on the right. The main part of the Reg. joined us about night, moved to the right just at dark and lay all night expecting to move, but the 5th Corps did not get by til daylight. The rebs cheered lustily about 9 oc PM.
- May 8 - Started about 7 oc & marched towards Spotsylvania Courthouse. Sunday stopped at Todd's Tavern & formed in line of battle. Threw up slight works and lay there during forenoon, a little skirmishing and arty. firing. The trains came up and we drew 5 days sugar and coffee & 4 days hard tack. Drew beef in the evening. Quite a sharp fight just at night.
- May 9 - Moved forward into the front line of breastworks in the morning. Moved about 3 miles towards Spotsylvania C. H. Formed in line of battle and piled up the rails for a breastwork. Our artillery shelled their trains, our lines advanced on the rebs & they opened on them with arty. Drove the

rebs back about 2 Or 3 miles. Joined the reg. about 9 oc, none wounded in our reg. and only a few in the brigade.

- May 10 - Picket firing commenced as soon as light. The brigade was moved back & forth, right & left. The rebs commenced shelling & I went back with some of the boys who were sick. The 1st Div. was obliged to fall back across the stream they crossed on the 9th. Staid near the ambulance train til night and then joined the reg. They lost about 75 in all, Co. G only 3 or 4. There was hard fighting all along the lines. Am very thankful to find. my brother safe and sound & nearly all my old friends the same.
- May 11 - Picket firing commenced at light. Staid with the boys til they said they were to commence shelling & then went back with some of the boys that are sick. Came back to the Reg. and drew 2 days rations. Moved about 9 or 10 oc & were on the move about all night. Went to the left of the lines.
- May 12 - The 1st Div. formed before it was fairly light & charged on the rebel works & took between 3 and 4 thousand prisoners & 1.8 Or 20 pieces of artillery but were obliged to fall back to keep them. Many of the boys were wounded, went to the Division Hospt. and waited on the boys some. Came back to the Reg, at night. The wounded were Sergts. Barr & Brown, J. Thompson, Shutts & Wheeton & quite a no. missing.
- May 13 - Went to the Reg. in the morning, drew one days beef. Picket firing all day & a little Arty. firing. Found two of Co. G dead on the field, Frank Crook & W. Haines. Drew 3 days rations after dark & was kept up til 12 oc at night, rainy, lowry(?) day. Find that our troops took 36 pieces of artillery & over 6000 prisoners on the morning of the 12th.
- May 14 - There has been sharp shooting going on all day. Our men got tired of it & shelled the woods, which quieted them a good deal. Considerable Arty. firing on the left where Burnsid's Corps. is. Drew 1. days beef. Drew another days beef after dark.
- May 15 - Were waked at 2 oc & marched at 6 oc to the left 2 or 3 miles. Sunday Halted a short distance from Army Red. Qts. Germ. Barnaby came and saw us. Wrote to Emma & gave to a Hospt. attendant to mail. Had quite a heavy shower in the afternoon. Put up tents & fix for staying all night. Draw beef after dark.
- May 16 - Drew 2 days rations in the morning. Busy washing & cleaning up a little & sleep some. Feel rather tired & weary. Edwin is not very well tonight For which I am sorry indeed as we can do almost nothing at all for the sick in the field. issue one days beef at night.
- May 17 - Had orders to pack up and move about two miles & pitched tents & fixed for staying all night. Drew one days beef. I missed Co. B in the issue & they made such an uproar about it that I sent \$ bought some. Gave 6 dollars for it. Marched as soon as dark back to the old battlefield of the 18th and laid. all night.
- May 18 - Marched to the breastworks and took up a position supporting a battery, quite hard shelling takes place, & Capt. Whitney was wounded with a cannon ball and soon died. Drew two days rations and one of beef at dark, started about 9 oc. and marched back to where we lay Sun, & Mon. & passes what is said to be Spotsylvania C-H. (courthouse) & stopped in sight of it in a large plain.
- May 19 - Lay all day in the field, went and took a wash. Received our mail for the first time since leaving camp. Wrote to Emma, reading or writing nearly all day. Orders to pack up and move just at night went about 1 mile back when the order was countermanded & we came back & pitched tents & laid down to rest,
- May 20 - Were waked about 1 oc AM to draw rations, drew 2 days regular issue & 2 days extra to supply loss & deficiencies existing as the men had only about 1 days on hand & should have had four, or up to the 24th, drew 1 days beef. Lay quiet all day and have a good rest, which all very much need.
- May 21 - Were waked at 1 oc last night & started at 11 oc marched to Guinneys Station about 15 miles from F-g & from there to Milford Station a few miles below. Marched 2 miles from Milford and the 2nd Corps formed in line of battle and bivouaced on the field, all were tired and sleepy. Left Edwin back at the division Hospt. Took a good wash & laid down to sleep before sundown.
- May 22 - Everything quiet & have a good days rest. Issue 1 days beef, & Sunday drew 3 days bread, sugar, & coffee. Went down to the river and took a good bath, received a mail in the evening, get a letter from Emma & an Examiner. Started to go to the ambulance Train to see Edwin, but did not find him.
- May 23- Drew beef in the morning. Started at 7 oc and marched toward Saxton Junction pass a brick church on the road, about 2 oc Find that our whole Army is in the vicinity. Get down near the

Junction at 4 oc P.M. & skirmishing commences also Arty. firing. Quite a sharp fight takes place just at dark & picket firing continues all night.

- May 24 - Drew one days beef in the morning. The Brig. went across the river about 10 oc I did not cross til night. Heavy skirmishing all day. Write to Emma in the afternoon. Joined the Reg. after dark. They were on the front & I went back a short distance and staid all night.
- May 25 - Drew beef in the morning. Everything quiet all day, except a little picket firing. Our men at work tearing up the RR track & finishing the destruction of the bridge. Went down t_b.' the river and went in swimming. Found a letter from Emma after I got back, went up to the Reg. and got supper.
- May 26 - Drew one days beef early h the morning. Bought a beef liver and had a feast for breakfast.' Everything quiet except an occasional shot on the picket line. Write to Emma again although I've an letter already which I've had no chance to mail. Drew. 4 days sugar & coffee and 1 day of Pork & one day of beef which we carried back across the river. The troops all fell back about 12 oc PM & occupied our old position, did not get there til 3 in the morning, all very tired.
- May 27 - Lay quiet til 11 AM then move to the left down the river toward the White House. March abo(u)t 8 miles to a Brick Church & make coffee, eat supper, and then move on, Stopp for the night about 11 oc ant let down have had quite a long days march, and all are tired and weary.
- May 28 - Get up early and make coffee. Start about 7 oc. Only halt once before we reach the "Pamunkey River" rest and make coffee before crossing, Cross & go about 1 mile, form in line of battle and build breastworks of rails and dirt. Draw 1 days beef after dark. We are about 14 or 16 miles from Richmond. Hear a little Arty firing farther down the river.
- May 29 - Started out on a reconnoisanced about 10 oc AM, went 2 or 3 miles Sunday and formed in line & laid til Sundown, Then moved a short distance and took up a new position. The whole of the Division had come up and were busy building breastworks. Commenced a letter to Emma in the morning. It has not seemed like a Sabbath Day to me having been busy.
- May 30 - Drew beef early in the morning. Considerable skirmishing going on and some X shelling done by both sides. Moved out farther in front about noon. Drew three days sugar and coffee: in the afternoon & H bread. One days beef at night again, Sharp fighting in the evening. Our brigade is on support and one or two slightly wounded. Did not join the Reg. but staid back with the Hospt. Dept.
- May 31 - Lay quietly behind the breastworks all day. Sharp skirmishing all day & some artillery firing. Writing a little. Have a good days rest. Drew one days beef at night. The brigade moved out at dusk, & took up a new position & fortified with fence rails, and threw up dirt to cover them.

JAMES WILSON BARNETT DIARY -

THE 1862 DIARY OF JAMES WILSON BARNETT, 53RD PENNSYLVANIA INFANTRY

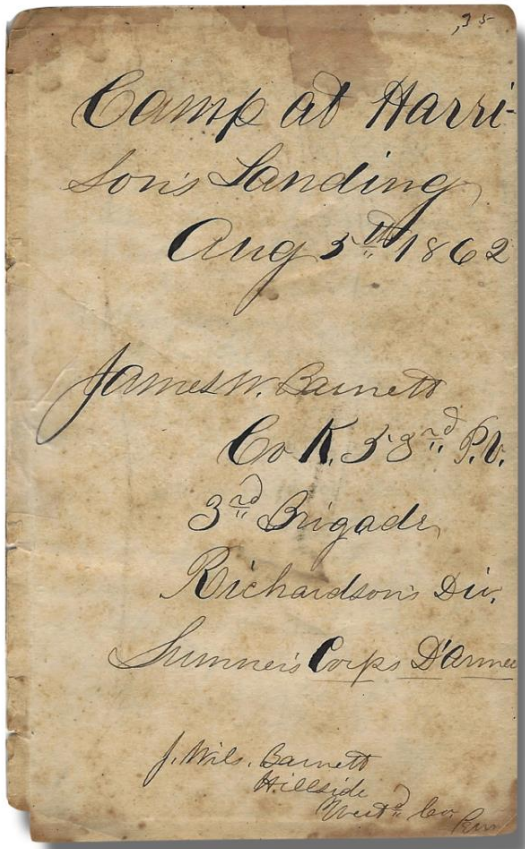
By William Griffing (Spared & Shared)

For more info, see <https://www.facebook.com/Griff.CWLetters>

In 1860 he was a 20 year old divinity student living on his parent's farm in Derry Township, Westmoreland County, PA. His parents were John and Nancy (Morrison) Barnett. James mustered into service as Private, Co. K, 53rd Pennsylvania Infantry sometime after 16 September 1861.

After the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, James was appointed Commissary Sergeant of the regiment and later Quartermaster Sergeant. He passed an examining board and was commissioned First Lieutenant, 10th Regiment, US Colored Troops, and mustered and joined the regiment on 22 November 1863. He was appointed acting regimental Assistant Quartermaster in February 1864, and was acting Brigade Quartermaster (in 1st Division, 25th Army Corps) from June to September 1864. He was back with his regiment from January to April 1865, then detailed again to Brigade staff (in 3rd Division, 25th Army Corps), then at Corpus Christi, TX. From October 1865 to January 1866 he was Brigade Assistant Inspector General, briefly back with his regiment, then in March and April 1866 the Depot Quartermaster at Houston, TX.

After the war, he taught school for a year and was a clerk in a Pittsburgh, PA store. He opened his own store in Johnstown, PA in 1868, then, in 1870, with 2 partners, two more stores, in Derry and Hillside, PA. He ran the Hillside store as sole owner after 1874. At the 1870 census he was living with his parents in Derry Township but by 1880 he was a dealer in general merchandise living in his own place with his wife and 5 children. In 1900 he was ticket agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad, but by 1910, still living in Derry, was the postmaster at Hillside, PA. He'd finally retired completely by 1920.



Inside cover of Barnett's Journal

To read excellent letters by other soldiers in the 53rd Pennsylvania that I've transcribed and published on Spared & Shared, see:

George Scheetz, Co. A, 53rd Pennsylvania (1 Letter)

Lionel Stanley, Co. H, 53rd Pennsylvania (1 Letter)

Adam Yeager, Co. I, 53rd Pennsylvania (1 Letter)

James W. Burrell, Co. K, 53rd Pennsylvania (1 Letter)

[Note: This diary is in the personal collection of Greg Herr and was transcribed and published on Spared & Shared by express consent.]

Transcription

Camp at Harrison's Landing, August 5th 1862
James W. Bennett, Co. K, 53rd P. V., 3rd Brigade
Richardson's Division, Sumner's Corps D'Armie

The only image of James Wilson Barnett not in an officers's uniform so this might be the image he had taken at Harrison's Landing in August 1862. There is no back mark on the image.

Monday, August 4, 1862—Went down to the artists and got picture taken. Cost \$1.00. Were paid off on Sabbath for the two months ending June 30th. Making the fifth payment, sum total one hundred and twenty-three dollars and fifty-five cents (\$123.55) I sent home \$15. I altogether I have sent home \$80 and from various sources have received \$30 in addition to the above. Deducting the amount sent home from the sum total leaves \$73.50. What I have spent since entering the service on the 16th of September 1861. A rather large sum considering that Uncle Sam has kept me in grub and clothing.

Tuesday, August 5, 1862—The first item of importance that I have to record is my ne memorandum is the taking of Malvern Hill by our forces this morning by portions of Hooker's and Sedgwick's Divisions. The cannonading commenced about six a.m. and was very heavy for two hours. The affair was attended with a good deal of loss on both sides. We packed up expecting to be called out but when the news came of the success of the expedition, we felt much relieved. Two hundred prisoners were taken, 5 killed, eleven wounded on our side. Received a letter from Father & one from J. S. this morn. John sent me his pen. Wrote home & to A. F. Sent a gold dollar to father.



Wednesday, August 6, 1862—Are under marching orders today. Went with Ed to the artists. Got his picture taken. I stand behind him leaning against a tree. Gen. French drilled us in Division drill till eight p.m. A few minutes after, orders came to march in ten minutes.

Thursday, August 7, 1862—Marched out within half a mile of Malvern Hill. Remained an hour and marched back to a hill a mile and a half from our fortification where we remained till this morning. After daylight all of our Division left us except the 57th and a battery (Frank's). All of our troops having gone in except some few regiments that had been left on picket. The sun was scorching hot and we suffered a good deal. In the afternoon most of us left our stacks and sought the shelter of trees.

Friday, [August 8, 1862]—Slept well last night on corn husks. This morn one of the 11th came up. He is one of the released prisoners who came down from Richmond on Thursday. All of the 11th that were taken during the seven days fighting. Orders came near noon for our Brigade to go to camp. Though but three miles, it was a most terrible hot and fatiguing march. The roads were dusty and the heat intense. The men suffered very much. Went to the river to bathe this evening.

Saturday, [August 9, 1862]—Went over to the 11th last eve. Saw several of my old friends. Rob, Roy, Jos. Walkinshaw, and others. They were rather the worse for their hardships and were very glad to get back. McNulty, Holther & some more were up here today. They give a sorry account of their captivity and have no desire whatever to try it over. It seems that the rebels are somewhat short of provisions and cannot supply the prisoners with a sufficient quantity of food. All they got daily was half a ration of bread and beef full of maggots, a little soup. This was rather hard fare. And if all the soldiers knew it, would shun capture.

Sabbath, August 10, 1862—This is another very warm day and the flies are as bad as ever. They are an almost intolerable nuisance. There was preaching this morning in the 64th. I did not get there in time to hear the text as I was up assisting to draw rations. It was a good sermon. I received a letter from Mr. J. Culbertson this morning. Everything seems to indicate an onward movement at no distant day. Orders for baggage were read this eve on dress parade. Richmond is again to be attacked in front and rear. God grant that our arms may be successful and but little blood be shed, and that rebellion may speedily be crushed out.

"It does seem a little as though the Peninsula was to be abandoned and the James left to the gunboats entirely. Perhaps it is as well so. It has been and is one vast charnel house where the bones of brave comrades and their rebel foe lie moldering."

—James W. Barnett, 53rd Pennsylvania, 11 August 1862

Monday, August 11th 1862—Last evening we were told that we would march at one today. This morning we were ordered to pack up all our baggage and carry it out. we did so, only keeping tent and gum blanket. The knapsacks were taken down to the river to be put on transports. Appearances indicate that we are going to make a big move but we don't know where we are bound for—whether to the rebel city or northward. It does seem a little as though the Peninsula was to be abandoned and the James left to the gunboats entirely. Perhaps it is as well so. It has been and is one vast charnel house where the bones of brave comrades and their rebel foe lie moldering.

Tuesday, August 12, 1862—Last night I was detailed with a squad of nine men to load the knapsacks on the boat. We packed them into an old canal boat which was to hold the baggage of French's Brigade. It was rather an old hulk and there will be some danger of them getting wet. We got through at midnight. This morning an order came round for roll call every hour, and to be in readiness for marching at a moment's notice. The sutlers have packed up and left. Everything seems dull and lifeless. All seem to be waiting for the order to march and all too are anxious to get away. This state of uncertainty is what we all dislike.

Wednesday, August 13, 1862—This is a cool pleasant morning—not near so warm as it has been for several days. No more signs of a speedy movement today than were yesterday. This evening copious orders were read on dress parade from which I would infer that we are to make a big march, Some think it will be towards the York [River] and connect our lines with those of Pope. I rather think we will move up the [James] river and attack Richmond in the rear. But whether we move on the rebels or away from them, I don't think that our movement will be the result of fear. The officers of the 11th came down from Richmond today.

Thursday, August 14, 1862—Was down to see Col. Gallagher today. He is quite unwell. They give (the officers) a hard account of their treatment while in Richmond prison. And the clothes and appearance of each bears out their testimony. Quite a number of them came up to our quarters this eve. Ate supper with the Captain and had a jolly time generally. Our company officers got a keg of ale with which they treated their visitors and also their company. I expect there will be a rather high time in [Co.] K tonight. Some of the officers did not present a very sober appearance on dress parade. Lieut. Weaver is acting Quartermaster—Rice being sick.

Friday, August 15, 1862—The Orderly of Co. G was buried this morning. He died yesterday. A man in Co. H fell over dead. Do not know what ailed him. It was a very sudden death. It is said that we will march at five a.m. It is as yet to us a mystery where. Have been waiting very patiently all day for the order to march. Everything is torn up and in marching trim. I suppose the advance has left ere this and on their way down the peninsula. Our pickets are out yet as far as usual & the Rebs will be apt to be surprised in a day or two to find Harrison's Landing & the Yankee Army goners.

Saturday, August 16, 1862—At eleven got orders to march. Was in line in a few minutes where we lay for an hour. After fixing up things around our camp in a manner to suit our taste, we “fell in” and took up the line of march. We made frequent swoppegs [?] before getting outside our fortifications, marched four miles at a moderate pace and passed some very fine farms. Halted for the night in a large bottom and side by side to a cornfield. We made good use of our opportunity and enjoyed a good big mess of roasting ears—roasting them on the coals. Oh! Secessia!

Sabbath, August 17, 1862—Started pretty early this morning and made a big day march of 16 miles and through rough, wooded country. Passed by Charles City Court House—a rather dilapidated looking place for a county seat. At dark arrived at the Chickahominy half a mile from its junction with the James River. Crossed it on a pontoon bridge half a mile long. It was solid, noiseless, and a great success. It proves a great benefit to our army. Camped for the night on the point of land between two rivers. One other Division (Slocum’s) is camped on this side.

Monday, August 18, 1862—Moved at eight this morning. Passed through a tolerable looking country. A great deal of timber land but not very heavily wooded. A great [deal] of scrub and underbrush. Stopped for the night on a farm near the James. Strolled around and found a cornfield which was laid under [] for a large quantity of roasting ears. They were delicious and formed quite a feast for us. The roads were quite dusty today and made the marching very disagreeable.

Tuesday, August 19, 1862—Left camp at an early hour and marched to Williamsburg where we halted an hour. In the afternoon we marched three miles out from town and camped. Williamsburg is a very pretty rural village and wears the aspect of one of the old provincial towns. The homes are scattered and the streets very much shaded. It is indeed a pleasant place, or rather was before the war commenced.

Wednesday, August 20th 1862—Marched to Yorktown today. Camped near our old camping place. The probability is that we will have to march to Newport News. Kearny and Hooker’s Division are embarking tonight. Go to Burnside.

Thursday, August 21st 1862—Left early this morning and going outside of the Rebel fortifications, took a road leading most of the way between the two lines. Halted three hours at Warwick Court House and got our dinner. Found an orchard not far off and got as many peaches and apples as could carry. Marched five miles further making 16 miles for the day and camped for the night. It was a pretty hard day’s march and very many of the boys gave out. Our company was rear guard and had great difficulty in keeping up stragglers. We were about played out ourselves.

Friday, August 22, 1862—Newport News. Arrived here this morning after a short march of five miles. It rained very hard the last half hour of the march but it didn’t incommode us very much. By the time we got our tents pitched, the rain had ceased. We are camped above the point on a bluff overlooking Hampton Roads. It is a beautiful and pleasant location. This afternoon I sauntered down to the landing which is inside the fortifications and found it to be a very business-like place. There are barracks for several thousand men and a great number of army stores and sutler shops. Franklin’s Corps are embarking today. We will likely go as soon as possible.

Saturday, August 23, 1862—Am on guard today. Our stacks being right on the edge of the bluff. The sea breezes wafted o’er the “Roads” are a luxury well worth enjoying. It is indeed pleasant to sit on the bluff. The salt water foaming on the beach below making music melodious to the ear—the zephyrs playing with the sea air—while the broad expanse of water the shipping on its bosom and the landscape around found a panorama equally grateful and pleasing to the eye. We received a large mail today which had been waiting on us nearly a week. I got four letters—one from home, [], M. R., & sister M. J. P. The boys are fishing for crabs in the river today.

Sabbath, August 24, 1862—Orders came to go on board a vessel this morning. Got on the steamship *United States* about noon—our regiment and the 64th. Gen. French was on board.

Monday, August 25, 1862—Our corps is getting on board the different vessels as rapidly as possible. Will not get away till morning. The most of the troops will be loaded this evening.

Tuesday, August 26, 1862—Cast anchor at an early hour and steamed down the roads past the fortress and rip raps and our noble ship ploughed her way up the bay. Our boat is very much crowded.

Wednesday, August 27, 1862—Cast anchor last night in the river and today were taken on shore by a lighter. Remained about two hours when we were ordered on board again. Steamed up the river and cast anchor off Alexandria at ten p.m.

Thursday, August 28, 1862—Landed at Alexandria. Marched out to Camp California and camped a short distance from our old camp. The place seems quite familiar. I did not think when we left it last spring that we would return under the present circumstances but such are the fortunes of war.

Friday, August 29, 1862—Got marching orders this morning and ordered to have four days rations. Wallace is quite unwell and is likely to have a hard spell of sickness. Ed. Wils, Hummes, Hols. Horbach, and Blakely are also sick and will have to be left behind. The boys got somewhat rapid today and pitched into some sutlers’ wagons rather roughly, tumbling the articles out and making way with them. The sutlers were selling their truck at high rates for which there was no excuse & the boys thought they would punish them “instanter.”

Saturday, August 30, 1862—Marched last eve at five. Passed through Alexandria and took the road for Arlington Heights where we arrived about midnight and bivouacked. This morning we marched a mile

further to the Georgetown Aqueduct where we again halted and pitched tents. Any number of hucksters came around and the soldiers soon got to relieving them of their loads. While in the midst of them, orders came to march immediately by leaving tents behind. Heavy firing has been heard all day in the direction of Bull Run.

Sabbath, August 31, 1862—Marching to within 3 miles of Centerville last night. This morning came on and took up a position on the heights. The battle yesterday proved very disastrous to our arms. McDowell’s Corps retreated in great disorder to Centerville. I saw several of my old acquaintances that were in the battle. Lieut. Dalby of Hillside was killed. McDowell is severely censured and Pope seems to be played out. There was evidently a want of generalship on our side. The veterans of McClellan’s army covered themselves with glory. There appears to be a good deal of disorder. No fighting today.

(to be continued in future editions of “The Sentinel”)

UPCOMING EVENTS

20~21 July – Landis Valley “Civil War Days” – our annual event at Landis Valley. Some of our NR pards will be attending as our guests. Plan on 3 firing demos on Saturday and 2 on Sunday. Plan on 25 rounds and 30 caps. Normal kit and tentage. More info to come as we get closer to the event. This is a **53rd PVI MAX EFFORT event!**

14~15 Sept. – 53rd PVI Gettysburg Living History (PA Monument) - More info will come as we get closer to the event but the current program, as provided to me by NPS, includes the normal 3 firing demos Sat. and 2 on Sunday. Plan on 25 rounds and 30 caps. This is our first Gettysburg living history since 2019. Please make it a priority to attend as we need a good turnout in order to be invited back by NPS next year. The new NPS Gettysburg LH coordinator (Matt Atkinson) heard good things about the 53rd from Tom Holbrooke so let’s not let them down. **53rd PVI MAX EFFORT event!**

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.) I have a C&D Jarnagin size 46 federal enlisted frock coat for sale. Still in great condition. Email me with any questions/inquiries: n3ntj@outlook.com

(2.) Kerry Williard is handling the sale of Dave Swigert items for Dave’s wife. Marc and I assembled an inventory list with approximate values. Some items remain. The list is current as of 21 July 2023. 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 children		\$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

2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

13 January - Holiday Party - Dobbin House
10 February - Winter Drill - Landis Valley (note the new date!!)
2~3 March – NR School Of Instruction - Gettysburg
6~7 April - NR Camp of Instruction - Gruber Wagon Works (Federal Alliance)*
4~5 May - 160th Wilderness: Spotsylvania Court House, VA*
4 May - POSA Living History - Robeson, PA
18 May - Lancaster Cemetery Flag-in event
27 May - Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade **53rd MAX EFFORT**
20~21 July - Landis Valley Civil War Days **53rd MAX EFFORT**
14~15 Sept. - Gettysburg Living History - PA Monument **53rd MAX EFFORT**
19~20 Oct. - 160th Cedar Creek - Middletown, VA*
16 Nov. - Remembrance Day – Gettysburg, PA



**NR max effort events*

For updated event info and other news, please check out the Facebook pages of the 53rd PVI and/or the National Regiment (links below) and check your email on a regular basis

53rd PVI Contacts

President: Eric Ford (reenactor53@gmail.com)
Vice President: Pete Zinkus (zinkusp@gmail.com)
Treasurer/Secretary: Matthew Steger (n3ntj@outlook.com)
Newsletter Editor: Matthew Steger (n3ntj@outlook.com)
Webmasters: Steve Dillon (steve@gofoxpro.com) and Matthew Steger (n3ntj@outlook.com)
53rd PVI Website: <http://www.53rdpvi.org>
2024 Field Officers - Sergeants: Matthew Steger (1st) & Marc Benedict.
Corporals: Mike Espenshade (1st) & Michael Brumbaugh
53rd PVI Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/53rdPVI>
National Regiment Phone line: 800-777-1861 (code 61)
National Regiment Website: <https://www.thenationalregiment.com>
National Regiment Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/842904089142263>

