

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" August 2024

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

This Month:

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2. Landis Valley Civil War Days Summary
3. Winslow Homer Card
4. Book Review – "General Phillip Kearny - A Very God of War"
5. Upcoming Events
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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

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>

(continued from the July edition of "The Sentinel")

Monday, September 1, 1862—Quietude seems to reign today. We are in some doubt as to whether we are to go backward or forward.

Tuesday, September 2, 1862—About midnight we were ordered to "fall in." Took the back track and about daylight arrived at Fairfax. Marched two miles this side on the Vienna road and camped. The sun came out warm and we enjoyed a fine rest. Porter's Corps passed us and at three Sumner's Corps fell in the rear of it. Our Co, K was placed as flankers on the left, marching some 150 yards from the main body.

Wednesday, September 3, 1862—When we arrived at Balls Cross Roads last night, the 53rd with two pieces of Capt. Pettit's Battery was left to guard the turnpike until the Corps got past. Just when we were ready to start, firing was heard in front and cavalry coming back reported that we were cut off by rebel cavalry from the [rest of the] Corps. The battery and regiment were immediately ordered down the pike on a double quick towards Falls Church. At Upton's Hill, we took the road to Georgetown, halting soon in a cornfield where we remained till this morning when we marched down to the camp we left on Saturday. We are quite tired and will relish a good rest.

Thursday, September 4, 1862—Left our camp at Georgetown last eve at five. Crossed the aqueduct and proceeded up the river on the chain bridge road. when nearly there the Colonel overtook us and we

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turned up the hill taking a road which led us back to Georgetown. Then we took the pike for Tennallytown where we camped. The Colonel [John R. Brooke] and Lieut.-Colonel made an inexcusable blunder in taking the wrong road. The men are very tired and footsore. This is a pleasant place. Our whole Corps is here. Fulton came up to see us. We were very glad to see him, not having seen anything of him since last winter.

Friday, September 5, 1862—Marched at three p.m. Banks' Corps is alongside. Halted for the night one mile from Rockville.

Saturday, September 6, 1862—Marched this morning at eight. Passed through Rockville and met the [wagon] trains coming back as it was reported the enemy were advancing. Went a couple of miles where we were maneuvered about till evening and almost exhausted when we were placed in a strip of wood in line of battle and permitted to rest. Rations are very scarce and we are doing as well as we can on corn and apples.

Sabbath, September 7, 1862—A very beautiful and quiet day. Oh, how I could enjoy a seat with my friends today in the Holy Tabernacle. This evening we drew two days rations of bread which is very acceptable.

Monday, September 8, 1862—Gen. French today received the command of a new Division and Col. Brooke takes command of the Brigade. Lt. Weaver is adjutant.

Tuesday, September 9, 1862—Left Camp Defiance at noon, marched six miles, bivouacking for the night in a clover field—the clover being cut for seed. We used it for beds.

Wednesday, September 10, 1862—Marched three miles today. Bivouacked in a wood.

Lt. Col. Richard McMichael led the 53rd Pennsylvania Vols. after Col. Brooke was promoted to Brigade Command on 8 September 1862.

Thursday, September 11, 1862—Started early this morning and arrived at Clarksburg at one p.m. Our regiment lay in a cornfield. Being out of rations, we eat corn. At dark, [Lt.-]Col. [Richard] McMichael was ordered to take the regiment out on picket. He run us around nearly all night, not being able to find the line.

Friday, September 12, 1862—When we came in this morning, the Brigade was gone. We followed on in the rear. Reached Urbana in the afternoon and camped where a body of Rebel cavalry had been a night or two before on the bank of a beautiful stream where we had the pleasure of a bath.

Saturday, September 1862—Marched at an early hour this morning, passed Urbana, and soon crossed a range of hills when the Monocacy [river], its beautiful valley, and Frederick City, appeared to the view. Crossed the river on the turnpike bridge just below where the railroad crosses. Marched through the town and camped in a clover field beyond. The ladies welcomed us with flags and smiling countenances as we passed along.

Sabbath, September 14, 1862—Was on guard last night. Nearby the inhabitants of it were a fair specimen of secession sympathizers. Marched this morning. Crossed the Catoclin Range and descended into the valley of the same name. The advance of our army was fighting on the next mountain. Towards evening the heights were carried and our Corps was ordered up. We halted for the night at the foot of the hills. Passed quite a number of wounded which was evidence of a pretty hard fight. On our way we met Lt. [Hugh] A. Torrence, Quartermaster of the 11th P. R. C. [40th Penn. Infantry] wounded in the face [at Turner's Gap] and unable to speak.

Monday, September 15, 1862—This morning our Division moved up the mountain supporting Hooker. Cast about awhile for the enemy but found him not. Our Division was then ordered down the mountain on the national pike in pursuit. By ten we arrived at Boonsboro—a pleasant village—an hour behind the enemy. The 8th Illinois Cavalry and a battery of flying artillery took the Hagerstown Road while we turned off on the Sharpsburg Road. About five miles out we hove in sight of the rebel front, formed on a range of high hills. They presented a very bold front. Gen. R[ichardson] got three pieces up and commenced shelling them—a rather hazardous experiment considering our small force. We were formed behind a hill and did not suffer any. Towards eve the army began to come up.

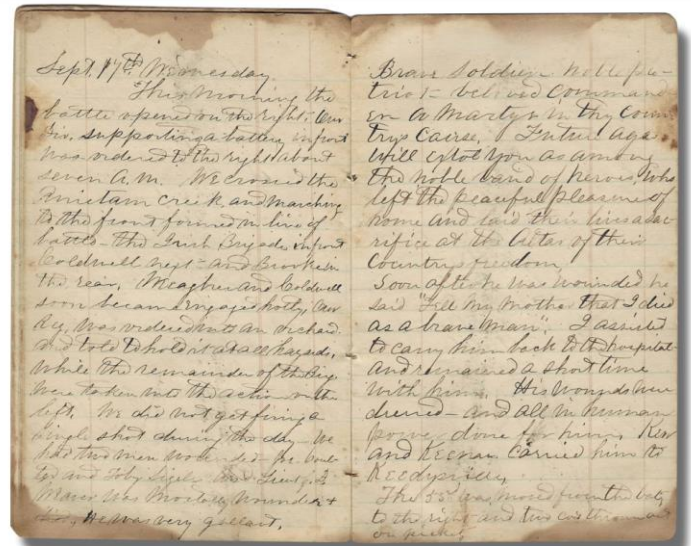




Maj. Gen. Israel Bush Richardson led the 1st Division of Sumner's 11 Corps at Antietam. The 53rd Pennsylvania was in the 3rd Brigade of his Division. He was mortally wounded in the battle.

Tuesday, September 16, 1862—Shelling commenced on both sides this morning and continues vigorously Our troops are getting up and into position ready for the expected battle. It seems certain that tomorrow will witness a great battle and a very desperate one. The contending armies are now putting on their armor and burnishing their weapons for the conflict. The loyal and patriot heroes wait with longing for the command of the young and gallant chieftain to move on the traitor horde.

(below) A sample of Barnett's Handwriting; his entry on 17 September 1862



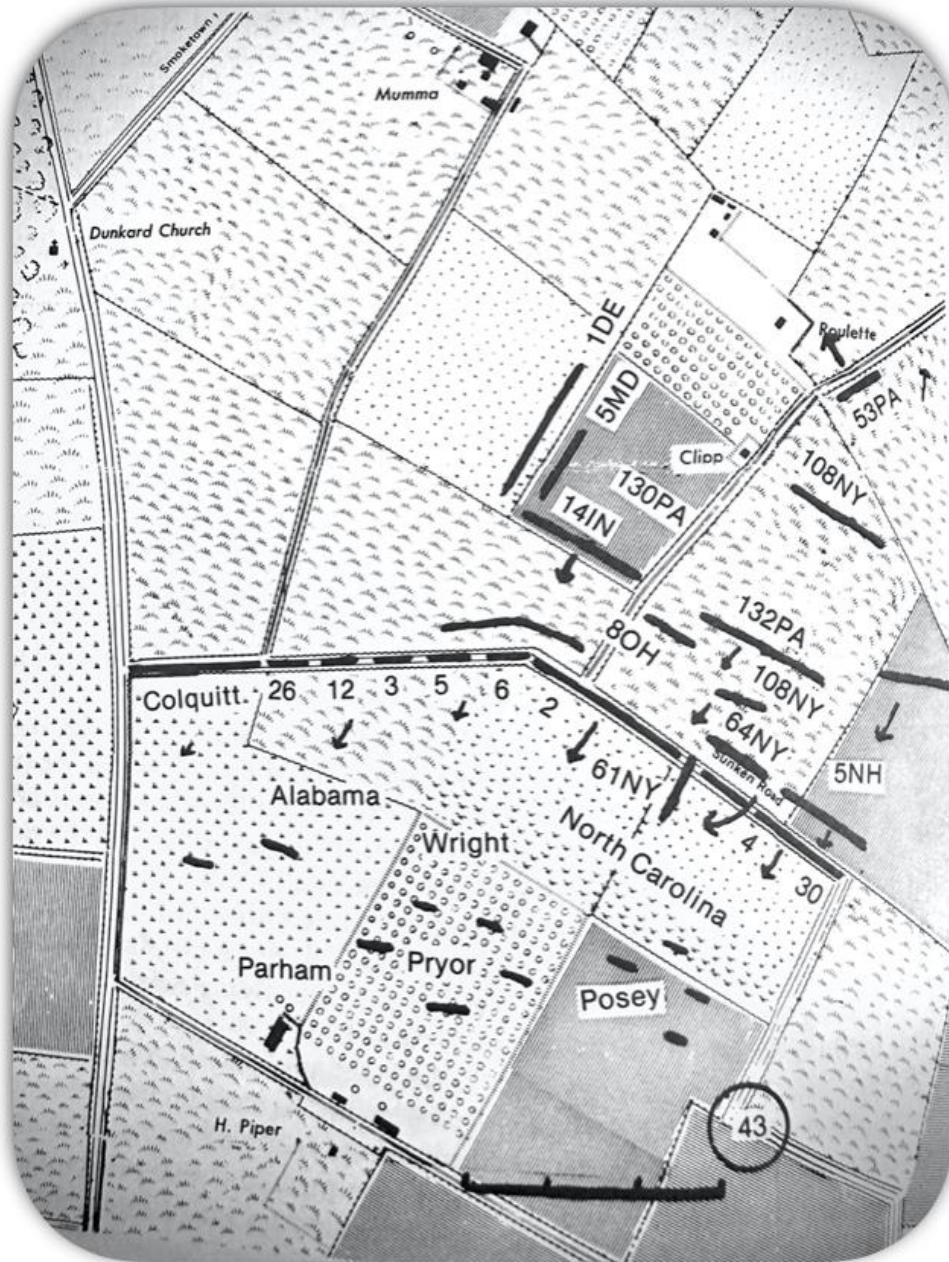
Wednesday, September 17, 1862—This morning the battle opened on the right. Our Division supporting a battery in front was ordered to the right about seven a.m. We crossed the Antietam creek [at Pry Ford] and marching to the front formed in line of battle—the Irish Brigade in front, Caldwell next, and Brooke in the rear. [Thomas] Meagher and [John] Caldwell soon became engaged hotly. Our regiment was ordered into an orchard and told to hold it at all hazards while the remainder of the Brigade were taken into the action on the left. We did not get firing a single shot during the day. We had two men wounded—Joe Coulter and Toby [Tobias] Sigel. Lieut. John D. Weaver [of Co. K] was mortally wounded & he was very gallant brave soldier—a noble patriot—beloved commander—a martyr in the country's cause. Future ages will extol you as among the noble band of heroes who left the peaceful pleasure of home and laid their lives a sacrifice at the altar of their country's freedom. Soon after he was wounded, he said, "Tell my mother that I died as a brave man." I assisted to carry him back to the hospital and remained a short time with him. His wounds were cleaned and all in human power done for him. Kew and [John] Keenan carried him to Keedysville.

The 53rd was moved from the battery to the right and two companies thrown out on picket. Gen. Richardson was wounded severely in the shoulder by a grapeshot and carried off the field. Although our regiment did not get firing any, we were in pretty hot places at times and at other times the sharpshooters' bullets whistled uncomfortably near. The storm of battle raged fiercely on the left where Burnside was posted late in the eve., seeming to be one great spasmodic effort of either party to gain the day. When night came on, we arrived at the conclusion that the enemy were practically whipped but they might be rash enough to try it again on the morrow. Many of our generals were wounded and many regiments disorganized.

A map of the Fighting in and around the Sunken Road ("Bloody Lane") on 17 September 1862.

The 53rd Pennsylvania is shown at upper right being detached from the rest of the Brigade and sent to support a battery planted in the orchard of William Roulette behind which his house and barn were filled with Union wounded soldiers. (Map from Antietam, the Soldiers' Battle)

Thursday, September 18, 1862—This morning there is a lull—pickets skirmishing now and then—but there is no sign of a renewal of the conflict. Both parties seem exhausted. Our lines embrace the greater part of the battlefield and the rebel dead are strewn thick upon the ground.





Historic photo of Roulette Farm taken several days after the Battle of Antietam. Alexander Gardner (Antietam National Park Archives)

The following is Lt. Col. R. McMichael's Post-Battle Report:

*Headquarters 53rd Pennsylvania
Camp of Richardson's Division
September 21, 1862*

Sir, I have the honor to make the following report of this regiment in the several engagements near this place. On Monday, the 15th ultimo, we arrived in sight of the enemy near Antietam Creek. My command being on the left of the brigade, I was ordered by Colonel Brooke, commanding the brigade, to halt in a cornfield, being then in rear of the 57th New York. We were considerably exposed to the shells from the enemy's batteries while in that position. Some time afterward I was ordered to march by the right flank and follow the 57th New York. My command was then placed in the second line, in rear of the 69th New York, of General Meagher's brigade. I remained in that position until the morning of the 17th ultimo, when I was ordered to march by the right flank on left of the brigade.

After crossing Antietam Creek, I was ordered to halt in front of the 57th New York, and have my men load and prime their pieces. Shortly afterward we were again advancing in same order as before, until we came near the scene of action. I was then ordered to form in line of battle on the left of the 66th New York, which was done speedily and in good order. We were then in the second line. While in this position, General Caldwell's brigade passed through the line of this brigade on the right of my regiment. Shortly afterward we were ordered to advance to the front and take position on the left of the brigade. On arriving there, however, found the enemy, after repeated efforts, had succeeded in piercing the line of the division immediately on our right, leaving us in imminent danger of being flanked. Colonel Brooke at once saw that they must be held at bay at all hazards. Ordering the 53rd to file to the right, my regiment passed down the enemy's line to the right in perfect order, receiving their fire with entire composure. General Richardson ordered Colonel Brooke to send the 53rd Regiment forward, and hold in check the rebel brigade now on our right and in front; also to hold at all hazards the barn and orchard a short distance in front, the barn being used as a hospital. Steadily, under a shower of musketry, my regiment advanced to the orchard and gained the barn about 100 yards in front of the main line, and, still pressing onward, reached the crest of the hill and drove back the enemy. We moved forward until we formed a connection with General French's division, and held that position until ordered by Colonel Brooke to support a battery.

While in this position, First Lieut. John D. Weaver, acting adjutant of the regiment, was mortally wounded when nobly cheering the men on to victory. It was here, also, that First Lieut. Philip H. Schreyer was wounded. We were exposed to a murderous fire from the enemy's batteries during the whole time we were in this position. After we had supported the battery for some time, I was ordered to move my regiment and

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occupy the ground vacated by the 5th New Hampshire Regiment, in front line, on right of the brigade. I moved my regiment there under a heavy fire from the enemy's batteries, yet my men behaved splendidly and never once flinched. I sent out my left company (B), commanded by Captain Eicholtz, as skirmishers, to a corn-field some distance in the front. During the balance of the day my regiment was continually exposed to the destructive fire from the enemy's batteries, yet I had not a man who left his post or went to the rear. My regiment remained in front line until the 19th ultimo, when I was ordered to be in readiness to march, the enemy having retreated.

My loss in killed is 6, including Acting Adj. J. D. Weaver, who died on the 18th ultimo; wounded, 18; missing, 1. I cannot particularize any of my officers, from the fact that they all did nobly. Capt. S. O. Bull, acting major, ably assisted me during the whole engagement, as also did all the officers of the regiment.

Very respectfully, – R. McMichael, Lieut.-Colonel, Comdg. 53rd Regt. Pa. Vols.

[There are no entries between September 19-29, 1862. The regiment is known to have forded the Potomac River at Harper's Ferry on 22 September 1862 and encamped the following day on Bolivar Heights, where new shoes and clothing were given to the men to replace the clothing worn since the previous winter.]

Tuesday, September 30, 1862—Drilled this forenoon in company drill. In the afternoon we were brought out in review (Col. Brooke commanding) and formed in "close column" on the heights. Just as we got into line a pelting rainstorm came on but soon after the sun smiled gladly upon us. A salute of 24 guns warned us that some high dignitaries were on hand. In a few minutes "Old Abe" * came riding down the line accompanied by "Mac" and [his] staff. Round after round was heartily given to them as they passed from the enthusiastic soldiers. Ling live "Old Abe" and "Little Mac." They are the soldiers' hopes, and the pets of the Nation.

* It has always been assumed that President Lincoln did not leave Washington D. C. until the morning of October but this entry places him in the vicinity of Harper's Ferry on 30 September and already in company with McClellan. He would spend several more days with McClellan at Grove's farm ("Mount Airy") just outside of Sharpsburg during which time he would gently, but futilely, urge McClellan to take the offensive against Lee's army.

(to be continued in a future edition of "The Sentinel")

LANDIS VALLEY CIVIL WAR DAYS SUMMARY

On 20-21 July, the 53rd PVI once again participated in Landis Valley Museum's annual "Civil War Days" event. We had a good number of our National Regiment pardons on hand including the 1st MD, 7th PA Reserves, 3rd MD, 8th Ohio, and 72nd PVI. Attending from the 53rd were: Sgts. Steger and Benedict, Corporals Espenshade and Brumbaugh, and Privates Ford, Dicks (Jacob), Thomas, Orris. Rusty Dicks was our surgeon. We had 2 demos on Saturday and one on Sunday. 2 of the 3 demos including skirmishing with the cavalry. Saturday supper and Sunday breakfast were cooked by the 7th PA's Tony Albright and 1st MD's Dan Seibert. We met quite a few people coming through including, at least, 3 potential new recruits. Photos courtesy of Mike Koehler, Ira Seidel, Chip Smith, Jared Polin, and Landis Valley Museum: (More photos are posted at the 53rd PVI website)









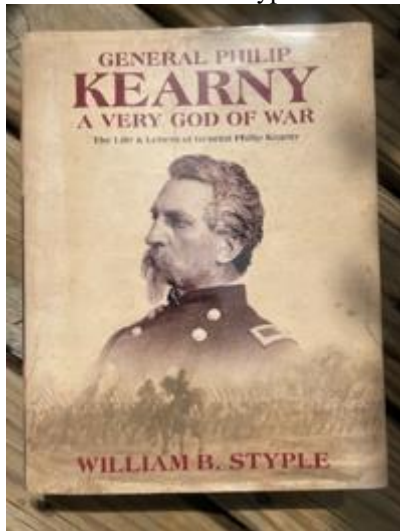
WINSLOW HOMER SOUVENIR CARD

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 month's image is entitled "Fording".



BOOK REVIEW - GENERAL PHILLIP KEARNY - A VERY GOD OF WAR

The life and letters of General Phillip Kearny
Author – William B. Styple



Reviewed by Mike Espenshade

Paperback; 2022, Bellegrove Publishing Co.; 791 pp text; 142 pictures, 6 interesting Appendices, 1740 notes provided online. \$45.00 - signed - bought directly from the author, a reenactor-friend of mine.

This masterful culmination of fifty years of research by Award-winning author and historian William B. Styple, presents the definitive life-story of Major General Phillip Kearny – a Battle soldier of Five Wars.

Phil Kearny was trained as a New York lawyer and inherited a vast fortune at age 21. But, against the wishes of his entire family, he chose to fulfill his life-dream of becoming the ideal soldier by enlisting in the 1st U.S. Dragoons in 1837. Sent to France in 1839 to learn the art of war, Kearny served with the famed Chasseurs d’Afrique in Algeria establishing his name and honor among France’s leading military men. Kearny then served valiantly in the War with Mexico, losing his left arm to canister in a daring assault against artillery at the gates of Mexico City. Kearny then led several expeditions in the Northwest against the Indians in Oregon and northern California during the 1851

Rogue River campaign. Bored with the west, Kearny resigned to volunteer with the French Cavalry and fought/advised with victorious distinction in the bloody Battle of Solferino against the Austrians in Italy in 1859.

The wide-spread scandal in 1856 of Kearny leaving his wife to elope to France with his pregnant mistress hampered his ability to get assigned a Union command in 1861 as he returned from France to be one of the first to volunteer his (highly-qualified) services. After much political influence, he finally was assigned the Colonel of the 1st New Jersey Brigade in late June 1861. His record in the Civil War from that date until his death (from a rebel bullet on Sept 1st 1862 at the Battle of Chantilly, Va.) was one of brilliance and honor. Kearny was unliked at first by his men due to his strict disciplining and frequent training labors. But his men quickly grew to swear by him when they realized they had become one of the best brigades in the Army of the Potomac.

They learned Kearny was compassionate, fair and as brave of a leader as they come. They followed him with cheers when he, now a Division commander, led them, reins in his teeth and sword in his right hand, into the thick of the fight and thus saving the day at Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, and Gaines Mills. Having the tactical knowledge and courage to lead better than the army commander, Kearny chaffed aloud, and often, at the apparent cautiousness of McClellan. It had by late July 1862 become clear to most that the army - and the obvious opportunities

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to take Richmond - were wasted on the Peninsula from bad tactics, inactivity, and disease. Happily being one of the first divisions to be relocated to help Pope's army for the Battle of 2nd Bull Run, Kearny and his brigades fought very well, having the most success against the Rebel defenses, but losing heavy casualties. It was his habit to reconnoiter in advance of the main line the Rebel positions to accurately post his regiments to avoid surprises. Kearny, in the near darkness, rain and woods, found the 49th Ga infantry a bit too close. The alert Rebels tried to capture the general but he quickly turned and tried to gallop away. The Major General was shot out of the saddle at close range and killed instantly.

The author's labors at discovering and arranging the hundreds of letters sent and received by Kearny during his life are immensely noteworthy. The reader is immersed in Kearny's life and intimately understands his feelings on all matters. The author includes scores of letters and diary entries of fellow soldiers, friends, politicians, family and other people who experienced Kearny in some way – to give the reader a 360 degree view of the man. The coverage of this hero after his death is robust and including the correspondence relating to statues, his relocation and burial into Arlington Cemetery in 1912, etc. I highly recommend this book for the exciting Kearny experiences and lessons to be learned. This is a massive book (6 pounds), larger than 8' x 11', and printed in a finer text font than normal. It will take a commitment of some length of time to enjoy it in its entirety.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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 about 7 rounds per demo. 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 suspenders	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 sharpening 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 - Robesonia, 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

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2024 Field Officers - Sergeants: Matthew Steger (1st) & Marc Benedict.
Corporals: Mike Espenshade (1st) & Michael Brumbaugh
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National Regiment Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/842904089142263>

