

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" January 2025

Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

This Month:

1. Party Invite – Last Call!!
2. Blast From The Past!
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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

HAPPY 2025 TO ALL OUR MEMBERS, ALUMNI, AND FRIENDS!

53rd PVI Co. C Holiday Banquet.

You're cordially invited to the 53rd's annual Holiday Banquet to celebrate with us what will be the start of the 53rd's 45th anniversary year.

Date: January 18th, 2025

Location: The Dobbin House

Time: Guest arrival & cocktails, 5:30pm. Dinner at 6:30pm.

Cost: \$30.00 per person

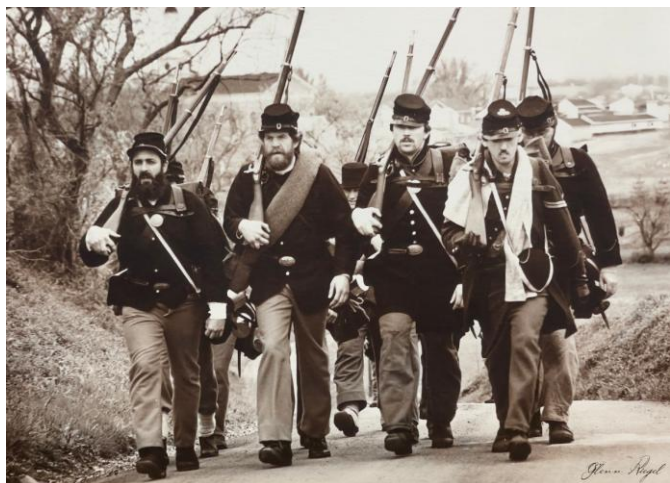
RSVP: December 27th, 2024. Payments due December 31st.

The dinner is a buffet style with salad, breads, and choice of three entrees, three sides, three desserts, coffee and tea. Full cash bar will be available.

Following the dinner, we'll retire to the Spring House Tavern. The Dobbin House will keep the tavern open exclusively for us from 9:00pm – 10:00pm.

This is the last call for the 53rd's Annual Holiday party on Saturday Jan. 18th. Reservations and payment are due by the 31st of December as Pete needs to report our total number to the Dobbin House in a few days so that we are locked in. All payments get sent to me and checks are payable to "53rd PVI". Dues (\$40/man) are also due on the 31st Dec. and you can pay your dues and party money in a single check. Additional details are included in the official party invite to the left. If you need my mailing address for sending your check, email me. If you still need to RSVP for the party, you must contact Eric or Pete ASAP!

BLAST FROM THE PAST

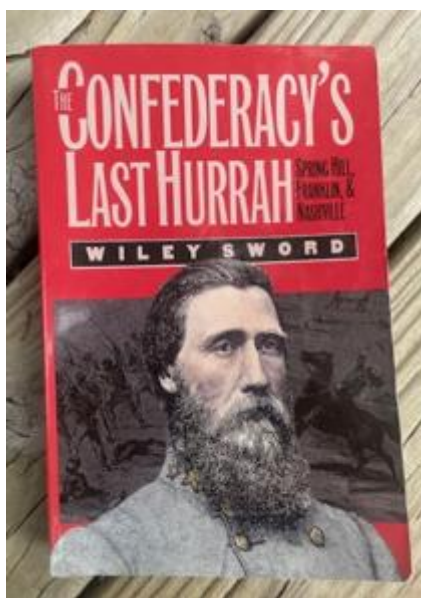


Glenn Riegel provided this photo called "Second Corps on the March". It includes elements of the 53rd PVI Company "C" living history group undertook a march up from Hagerstown, MD in 1987. The photo is on Irishtown Rd. with Emmitsburg in the background

BOOK REVIEW: THE CONFEDERACY'S LAST HURRAH – SPRING HILL, FRANKLIN, AND NASHVILLE

Author: Wiley Sword

Reviewer: Mike Espenshade



Paperback; 1992, University Press of Kansas; 443 pp text; 46 pictures, 22 maps; Order of Battle; 34 pp notes, 15 pp bibliography and index. Free from a friend of Pete Zinkus.

First published as *Embrace an Angry Wind: The Confederacy's Last Hurrah – Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville*, Wiley Sword has established the definitive account of Hood's offensive into Tennessee in the fall of 1864. Often referenced by other historians and authors, this work is a masterful combination of historical fact and human interest – both brilliantly informative and deeply moving.

Sword compellingly recreates the heroism, missed chances, political backbiting, and flawed rebel leadership underlying the outcome at these killing grounds. Narrated with brisk attention to the feelings of the soldier as well as the nuances of strategy – this book never misses the solemnity over the waste of life in war. He effectively engages the reader from the confident feelings of The Army of Tennessee as they marched northward out from Georgia in October - to the miserably cold, starving, and shoeless retreat of the survivors back into Alabama in late December. This reader sometimes had to put the book down to escape the vivid descriptions of the horrid conditions, loss of most of their comrades, and hopelessness experienced by the southern soldier starting during the Nashville battle.

“Too much lion, not enough fox” described John B. Hood's style as he sloppily let Union General Schofield slip his grasp at Spring Hill and dismissed his advisors warnings by ordering foolish murderous frontal assaults at Franklin. Hood liked to be in the comfort in rear areas, and was never close enough to the front to properly manage things, so the Union assaults at Nashville resulted in a full Confederate rout out of Tennessee. Hood confirmed a reputation of blaming others for results. The Union cavalry in this campaign had indeed come of age, was very effective, and contributed greatly to Union General George Thomas's victory at Nashville.

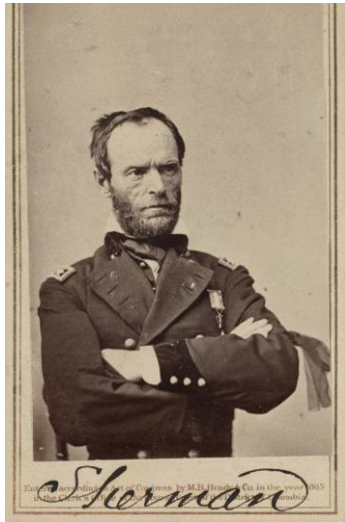
Total Confederate casualties for the campaign were estimated = 23,789; Union = about 6,000. Hood also lost 72 guns, majority of his equipment, and his 14,200 survivors were completely demoralized, exhausted and desertions rampant. The Army of Tennessee was, effectively, destroyed.

While the maps provided were numerous, they are crude and often lacking in date/time information and omitting the relevant topographical features such as hills and woods that strongly determine a battle's strategy and outcome.

SHERMAN AND THE 2ND WISCONSIN: PART I

Michael Kirschner (SecondWisconsinInfantry@gmail.com)

August 16, 2024, blueandgrayeducation.org



William T. Sherman | National Archives

At the onset of the Civil War, William Tecumseh Sherman was positioned to gain prominence within the Union war machine. An 1840 graduate of West Point, he served in the U.S. Army for 13 years before resigning his commission as a captain in 1853.

In addition to his military credentials, Sherman had strong political connections. He was closely tied to the influential Ewing family of Ohio in two significant ways: he was both the foster son and the son-in-law of Thomas Ewing, a prominent Ohio Whig who had served as Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and as the first U.S. Secretary of the Interior. The Ewing family was so prominent that a “Who’s Who” of the country’s most eminent politicians attended Sherman’s wedding to Ellen Ewing in 1850, including President Zachary Taylor, Vice President Millard Fillmore, and Senators Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.

Sherman’s younger brother, John, was an even greater political asset. John was a prominent Republican who had nearly been elected Speaker of the House for the 36th Congress. When Lincoln appointed Senator Samuel Chase of Ohio to Secretary of the Treasury, the Ohio legislature selected John Sherman to replace Chase as the state’s second senator in March 1861.

Another important political connection was to the influential Blair family. Sherman was well-acquainted with Congressman Frank Blair, a Republican power broker in St. Louis and brother of Lincoln’s Postmaster General, Montgomery Blair. Both were sons of Francis Preston Blair, another key figure in the Republican party.

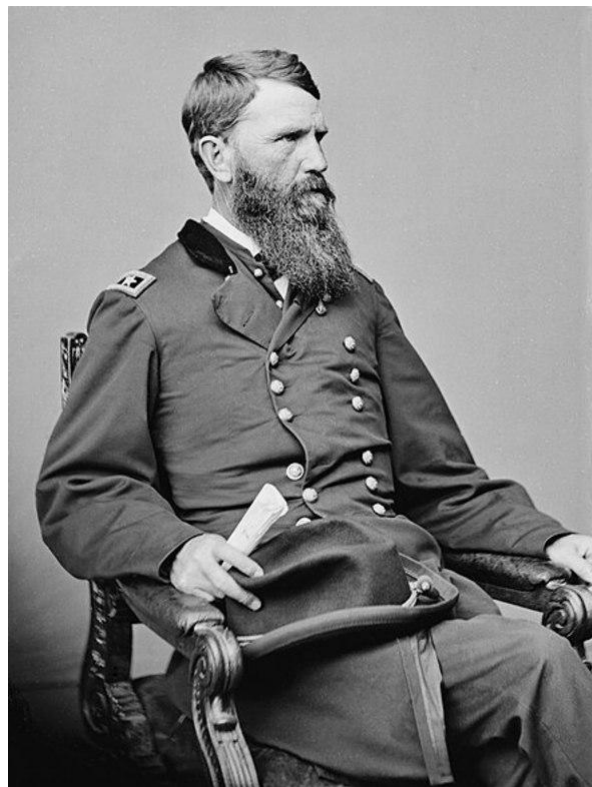
In the spring of 1861, armed with these advantages, Sherman, who abhorred disunion but not slavery, traveled to Washington, D.C., where he and his brother John met with President Lincoln. Sherman hoped to be appointed to a prominent position in the U.S. Army, which he assumed Lincoln would reinvigorate. However, the meeting left Sherman dumbfounded. Lincoln informed William and John that he “did not think he wanted military men,” a stunning reflection of Lincoln’s mindset in the earliest days of his presidency.

Blocked from a military position, Sherman next sought a post in St. Louis within the Treasury Department, where he hoped to settle with his family. Once again, Sherman was rebuffed. Aggrieved, he decided to sit out the war and used his business connections to secure the presidency of a local horse-drawn street railroad in St. Louis.

Almost immediately after beginning his new job, Sherman’s political connections began generating federal job offers. On April 6, Montgomery Blair asked Sherman to accept the interim position of Chief Clerk of the War Department until Congress convened, at which point Sherman would be nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of War. With his nose now firmly out of joint, Sherman summarily refused. On April 17, just days after the fall of Fort Sumter, he received another request, delivered in person by Congressman Frank Blair. In response to Lincoln’s call for 75,000 volunteers, Blair asked Sherman to raise a regiment of volunteers in the precarious battleground state of Missouri. Once again, Sherman refused to come to the aid of his country.

Why? The truth was that Sherman despised volunteers, preferring to associate only with the regular army. In a letter to his foster brother Thomas Ewing, Jr., Sherman explained that “I will not volunteer among the irregular Militia, for I like not the class from which they are exclusively drawn.” In a letter to John, Sherman expressed relief that Ohio’s governor had appointed George McClellan as the major general in charge of Ohio’s volunteer militia because, had the position been offered to Sherman, his loyalty would have been called into question if he had declined.

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Francis Preston Blair | LOC

Despite Sherman's repeated refusals, another offer soon materialized. When the government decided to replace Brig. Gen. William Harney, who had strong Southern leanings, as commander of the Department of the West, Sherman was offered the position. True to his recent pattern, he declined this offer as well. The reason? Most of the troops on hand in St. Louis were "Dutch militia."

In an April 8 letter to his brother John, Sherman named three stations "in which I can render most service": Surveyor General (which he acknowledged had already been filled), Inspector General, or Brigadier General in the regular army. Instead, on May 14, William T. Sherman was commissioned as a colonel of the new 13th U.S. Infantry regiment. After two months of careful maneuvering, Sherman had finally achieved his goal—a promotion from captain to colonel in the regular army and command of regular soldiers.

However, at this point, Sherman made a serious blunder, and all his machinations would soon come undone.

Stay tuned for part II in next month's edition of "The Sentinel".

QUARTERMASTER UPDATE

The unit recently acquired quite a few items to add to our quartermaster inventory including leathers, uniform clothing (including a 95th PVI jacket), etc. I've sold several items already; the updated list can be found at 53rd PVI's website under the "Equipment" tab (link is about halfway down the page): <http://www.53rdpvi.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/53rd-Quartermaster-List.pdf>

IS YOUR INFO UP-TO-DATE?

As part of our liability insurance policy through the National Regiment, we need to submit accurate contact info for each member in order for coverage to be in-force. If your mailing address, email address, phone number, etc. changed recently, please submit this info to Eric ASAP.

Also, if you have not already done so, please provide Eric with your emergency contact info that we can reference in case of an emergency at an event. We hope to never need this information, but we want to have it on hand in case we ever need it. The emergency contact info should include: name, phone number, email address. This can be your wife, parent, etc. We will keep this info confidential. Eric as well as Marc and I (as part of our Sgt. duties) will keep a copy.

ELECTION RESULTS

At the annual meeting earlier this month, a motion was put forth by Mike Espenshade to forgo the normal formalities of our election process since we only had 1 nominated candidate each for the positions of Vice President and for Treasurer/Secretary. The motion was passed by the membership. Therefore, Jacob Dicks has been elected as the unit's next Vice President and Matthew Steger (your editor and 1st Sgt.) was re-elected as the unit's Treasurer/Secretary. These new terms will begin at the holiday party in a few weeks.

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 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 - undried		\$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

2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 18 Jan. - Holiday Party - Dobbin House, Gettysburg
- 1 Feb. - Winter Drill - Landis Valley **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 15 Feb. - Cartridge Rolling Party **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 22 Feb. - NR School of Instruction – Gettysburg
- 14~16 March - 160th Bentonville (NC)
- 4~6 April - 160th Sailor's Creek (VA) *
- 26~27 April - Ft. McHenry Drill (ELF Event)
- 3 May - POSA Living History - Robesonia, PA
- 10~11 May – Manassas (ELF Event)
- 17 May - Lancaster Cemetery Flag-in Event
- 26 May - Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 19~20 July - Landis Valley **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 9~10 August - Cedar Mountain *
- 13 Sept. - Antietam Living History **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
- 18~19 Oct. - 161st Cedar Creek - Middletown, VA
- 15 Nov. - Remembrance Day - NR Annual Meeting and Parade *



*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>

