

53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Company C

"The Sentinel" April 2025

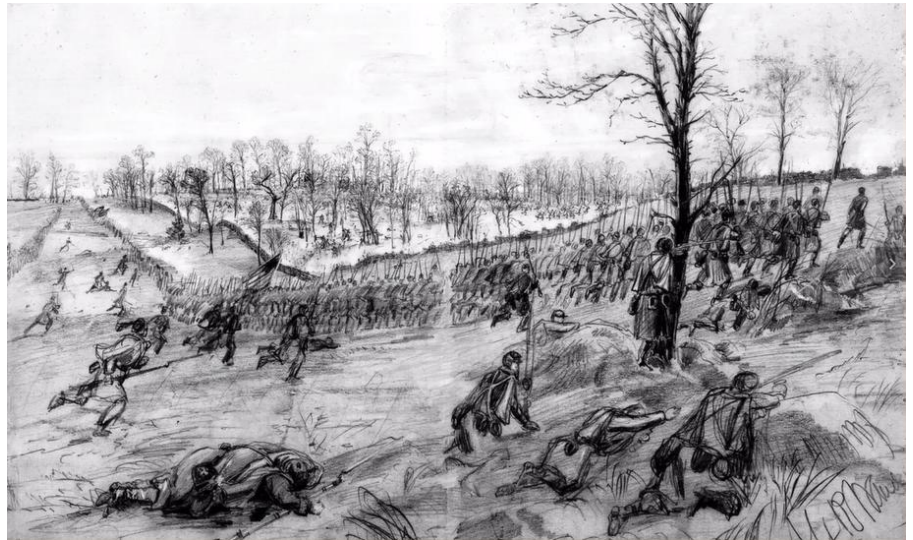
Newsletter of The James Creek Guards



"Clubs Are Trumps!"

This Month:

1. Ft. McHenry Drill Info
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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

FT. MCHENRY DRILL INFO

After Sailor's Creek, the 53rd's next event is Ft. McHenry with our fellow-ELF pards on April 26~27th. We will be able to spend Friday and Saturday nights in the barracks, but we will also set up tents in a company street outside the Sally Port. Participants can elect to sleep either in the fort or in their tents. There will be a commissary fly adjacent to the Sally Port and light meals will be provided for Saturday lunch and Sunday breakfast and lunch, as well as a dinner Saturday evening. You are also free to go to dinner offsite should you choose. Tim Ertel has agreed to provide a fly. The Fort will be available until 9:00 pm Friday night and after 7:00 am Saturday morning to bring in gear and set up camp. Everyone should be onsite and ready to fall in by 8:30 AM Saturday. We will be conducting drills in the Fort between the two featured demos each day. While we will be portraying very early war (Spring 1861), your regular kits (kersey blue trousers, sack coats, forage caps, etc.) are fine. Below is the schedule for both days. We will NOT be firing so leave your rounds at home. We will also be joined by some of our other NR (non-ELF) pards. Let's get a good turnout from the 53rd to support our fellow-ELF pards! Please respond to this newsletter delivery email concerning (1.) if you'll be attending the Ft. McHenry drill and (2.) if you'll be partaking in the company mess Saturday evening dinner as I will need to get numbers to Tom and Dan shortly so they can plan the meals.



APRIL 1861 Fort McHenry Saturday, April 26-27, 2025



More than 2,000 civilians had been arrested and imprisoned in Fort McHenry, including the grandson of Francis Scott Key. These charges varied in severity and veracity, but most of the citizens held in Fort McHenry were held indefinitely, made possible by Lincoln's wartime suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Learn about the first bloodshed of the American Civil War and Fort McHenry's prominent role. Living historians will portray the defenders of April 1861 with guard mount, musket drill and soldier life.

Saturday and Sunday, April 26-27

10:00 a.m. Rally Round the Flag!—Morning Flag Change and Dress Parade
Location: Star Fort

10:45 a.m. - Skirmish Drill!
Location: Outside Fort

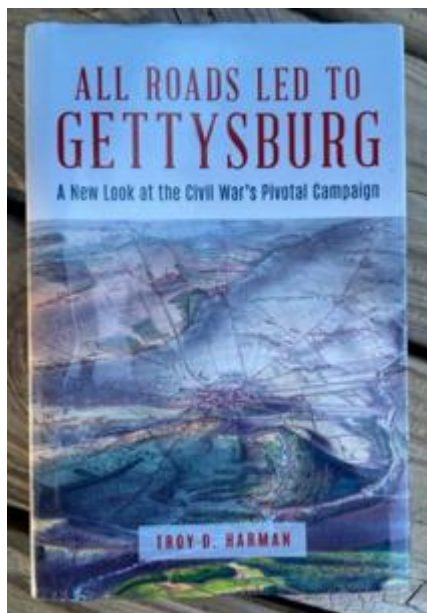
11:15 a.m. - Ranger Program—American Bastille:
The Civil War at Fort McHenry
Location: Chesapeake Bay Map

12:00 p.m. "Roast Beef"—Fife and Drum program
Location: Inside Fort

1:00 p.m. Bayonet Drill
Location: Outside Fort

2:15 p.m. - Ranger Program—American Bastille:
The Civil War at Fort McHenry
Location: Chesapeake Bay Map

4:00 p.m. Retreat—Evening Flag Change Location: Star Fort



BOOK REVIEW – ALL ROADS LED TO GETTYSBURG

Author – Troy D. Harman

Reviewed by Mike Espenshade

Hardback; 2022 Stackpole Books; 221 story pp.; 2 pictures, 35 maps, 67 pp excerpts from O. R. listing Personnel/Artillery counts and Order of Battle, 46 pp

Notes/Sources, 14 pp Index. Free from a friend of the Hummelstown Area Historical Society.

Why yet another book on Gettysburg? Troy Harman has been an NPS Park Ranger since 1984, serving at Gettysburg NMP since 1989. Harmon tells us how armies depend on the triad of "water, rails, and roads" and how that dependency pre-determines the location of battles. In this case, he goes at length to argue how Gettysburg was not an accidental location for the collision of the two armies.

Harmon also scholarly describes the less-known General George Meade objective of early July 2 to pivot his right wing (using the 12th and 5th Corps) around Wolf Hill and force the Confederates there back westward of Gettysburg. This advance would clear the north-south Rock Creek valley and deprive Ewell's Corps of that vital water source. would secure the Gettysburg/Hanover Railroad for repair (damaged by Rebel Cavalry during Gen Jubal Early's advance

towards York), This maneuver would also secure the Baltimore Pike while taking control of the

Hanover, York and Harrisburg roads.

The author includes the late July 2 discussion at the Leister House of Meade asking his commanders if they wish to stay or withdraw, and the ensuing left flank actions that night to determine Lee's intentions below the Round Tops.

I had a hard time making my way through the first 55 or so pages as Harmon argues his points for the book, but I was rewarded for my staying power by the content of the next 170+ pages. Did you know that 10,000 gallons of water are needed to sponge the barrels of 60 artillery pieces in just 2 hours of steady firing? (Harmon mentions 7 times the water needs of sponging barrels). It takes 10 gallons of water per day to water a horse in the summer – there were 60,000 horses and mules at Gettysburg. Did you know that the Confederates destroyed the 32 railroad bridges and telegraph lines along the Gettysburg to York to Wrightsville railroad? ... and all the railroads/telegraph from Chambersburg north to Harrisburg and southeast to almost Westminster MD? It is not forgotten of the heroic exertions of Herman Haupt and his USMRC (U. S. Military Railroad Construction Corps) railroad/bridge/telegraph repair crews to repair the devastation very quickly.

Many of the 35 maps are hard to read and there is no listing of them in the Table of Contents.

Read this book if you are interested in learning more about Lee's and Meade's strategies during the Gettysburg Campaign, some of them not executed, some not known by most Civil War buffs.

MOVIE SHOOT PHOTO

I saw this photo from 2021 pop up in Facebook again recently so thought I'd re-share it here. It's from the railroad movie shoot scenes for "I Heard The Bells" at the Strasburg Railroad.





Rick Sauers sent me this photo a while back of the 53rd PVI, Co C. at Bull Run (Manassas) in 1862.

PAINTED CANTEENS DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND ONE ARTIST WHO PAINTED THEM

Shannon Pritchard, October 9, 2023, www.blueandgrayeducation.org



The canteen, typically made up of two pieces of wood or tin with a pewter spout and cork, was part of every Civil War soldier's kit. They were carried over the shoulder using a leather or cloth strap. And, they became popular surfaces for artists to create works of art, both during and after the Civil War.

The front of the canteen, depicting a Confederate cavalryman and his weary infantry companion

This oil-painted Confederate canteen depicts a Confederate cavalryman wearing a gray kepi, an oilcloth raincoat, yellow pants, and knee-high riding boots. He is supporting his weary infantry companion, who is wearing a gray jacket and dark pants under a full-length gray greatcoat. The weary horse, rider, and infantryman are traveling through a war-torn area in the rain, and the sun is setting on the Confederacy in the background.

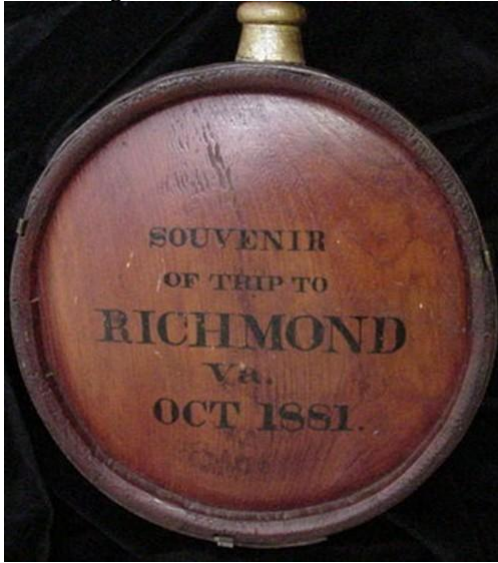
I believe the artist was depicting the road from Appomattox, as both are unarmed and both have despairing countenances. The painting is outlined in gold, which is still brilliant. The spout is also painted gold.

“Souvenir of the trip to RICHMOND Va Oct. 1861,” gives great insight into the history of painted



canteens. Just above the date, lightly written in pencil, is "Yorktown Centennial."

October 1881 was the centennial of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown. In 1881, meetings of Confederate veterans were still very much frowned upon by the Federal Government and evidently the veterans gathered in Richmond under the auspices of celebrating the Yorktown centennial.



The reverse side of this same canteen.

At that gathering, two prominent Confederate artists donated work to the ladies' bazaar; one was Alan Shepard, and the other John Adams Elder. Elder painted the canteens shown here, and later, it would be the model for one of his most famous works, "After Appomattox" in 1886.

Author and historian Michael Aubrecht says, "Elder remains the most coveted of pre- and post-Civil War artists and is considered one of the most celebrated artists ever to come out of the Civil War era."

And, in 2008, Christopher O. Uebelhor wrote, "Elder's work played a significant role in postwar America, helping to perpetuate the idea of the glorious Old South and the 'Southern mystique,' which is still very much alive today."



The front of this 2nd canteen, depicting what is believed to be Bellona Arsenal.

The second painted canteen appears to depict the view from Bellona Arsenal toward the hills of Richmond overlooking heavy artillery and a prisoner of war camp at Belle Isle. Both canteens were painted by the same artist in Richmond, which lends credence to my impression that the artillery scene is indeed Bellona.

The discovery of the dated and addressed canteen sheds light on other painted canteens. Since both of these were painted and sold as souvenirs of the trip to Richmond, it stands to reason that a large portion of the few surviving painted canteens with a military scene were painted at the same time by the same artist.



A note describing the 2nd canteen's subject matter.

Photos are courtesy of the author, Shannon Pritchard, at [Old South Antiques](#).

ORIGINAL WILLIAMS CLEANER ROUNDS

Marc recently sent me these photos showing original Williams cleaner round cartridges:



BENTONVILLE EVENT SUMMARY

On 15~16 March, the 160th Battle of Bentonville re-enactment was held. Attending from the 53rd PVI were Lt. Michael Fedorshak and Corporal Mike Brumbaugh. Photos and event summary are both courtesy of Lt. Fedorshak.





The following recalls the actions of Company D of the 21st Michigan Infantry during the 160th Anniversary of the Battle of Bentonville, NC. On Friday, the company was shuttled from reenactor parking approximately three miles east to a secluded part of the battlefield, near the original breastworks of Buell's brigade during the battle. Company D numbered at 48 rifles, plus an 8 man color guard. The company was led by Captain Chase Petro and 1st Lt Michael Fedorshak. After the men got settled into the woodline, rations were distributed, and awaited further orders. Around 10pm, Company D was called to form up for a raiding party of local civilian homesteads. For the next two hours, the company went from cabin to cabin interrogating civilians and scavenging anything they could get their hands on. The soldiers took loaves of bread, cigars, smoked sausages, bottles of whiskey, wines, and anything else that was not nailed down. One soldier wrangled a chicken out of one of the civilians' hands and the company unanimously voted in favor of making him the company mascot, giving him the name Braxton Bragg. As the raid progressed, the confrontations with the civilians became more violent. We encountered Company B who was also tasked with a raid and began to drag women and children out of their homes in search of a Confederate deserter. The civilians fought back, claiming we had no right to search their only homes they had left after being displaced. This only led to more violence, as Company B made sure they regretted starting a fight with Sherman's Army. Eventually we did find the Rebel deserter. He was not compliant at first, but after taking him to regimental staff under the guard of Cpl. Brumbaugh, Cpl. Hale, and Pvt. Nester, we were able to make him talk and we had the general location and strength of Johnston's army. The company retired for the night around 12am.

Reveille sounded at 6am the following morning. We had orders to be formed up and ready to begin our march by 8am as a brigade. The company was formed in a timely manner, however, due to unknown reasons, the brigade did not step off until 9am. The entire morning involved us marching westward 3 miles towards the Cole Plantation. By 1pm, the brigade stopped in a narrow clearing awaiting the next orders. There was talk of cavalry engagements occurring in the area so we had to hold until the rebel cavalry was repelled. Finally, at 3pm, we were ordered to deploy into a line of battle. The skirmisher company was deployed in front of us as we advanced on the Rebel skirmishers. We pushed them back into the tree line and knocked out an artillery battery that was emplaced just outside the woodline. It was then that we started to receive heavy resistance from the woods. We fell back and the order was given to dig in. The men frantically began to dig into the sandy ground, using bayonets, picks, shovels, cups, canteen halves, and anything else they could to throw up earthworks. After 15 mins, the rebels formed their lines and began their assault. The men held strong, until we were ordered to withdraw and reform. Other brigades used our works to take cover and repel the enemy's assault. After we redressed our lines, we anchored on their left flank and helped end the attack.

We marched back to the main camp alongside the rest of the army. Once we got back and settled down, we received word that Sunday's actions were canceled due to a tornado warning in the area. Many soldiers left after hearing of this news, however, those who stayed were treated to kegs of beer and libations from a tavern in the area. The night was filled with music, singing, drinking, and friendship. By 9am on Sunday, Company D and the rest of the 21st Michigan, dissolved once again.

-1st Lt. M.D. Fedorshak
Company D, 21st Michigan Infantry

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 27 March 2025. Contact Kerry directly with any and all inquiries: shamokin71@aol.com (see the updated list below)

Quantity	Item Description	Detailed Description	Price
Uniform Clothing			
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	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
1 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	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
2	Soap Bar		\$1.00/ea
1	box rifle cleaning kit	pads, steel wool, rags, etc	\$5.00
1 Pair	shoe tree		\$3.00
1	Green Army Duffle Bag		\$3.00
1	drawers for use as patches		\$1.00

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]**
22~23 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
3 May - POSA Living History - Robesonia, PA
17 May - Lancaster Cemetery Flag-in Event
26 May - Hummelstown Memorial Day Parade **[53rd MAX EFFORT]**
7~8 June – Manassas (ELF Event) **[NEW DATE!]**
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)

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Treasurer/Secretary: Matthew Steger (n3ntj@outlook.com)

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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 Sgt.) & Marc Benedict

Corporals: Mike Espenshade & 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>

