

THE FLAGSTAFF

March 1863 (2009)

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CAPTAIN'S REPORT

It is hard to believe that Spring is here. Spring is supposed to give us some glimmer of a glorious summer ahead. Well, no matter if the good weather comes or not, I feel Company F is on track to have a great 2009 campaign. The drills that we have had since January have been very productive. I complement our NCO staff for taking charge of leading small groups in manual of arms and stacking arms drills. For those who have not been able to make the drills, Bill Baehr has done a great job at leading the company through bayonet exercise. It is my intention to perform the bayonet exercise during our infantry demonstration at the weekend event in Port Gamble or when ever appropriate.

I also wanted to remind all company F members, that your membership dues for the 20th Maine and the WCWA need to be completed as soon as possible. It is important for you to complete your paper work so that the WCWA has the need resources to put up money for events and pay our insurance premiums etc. Also important, is your company dues.. Membership dues provide equipment, supports programs such as the company store, drill day and the year end company gathering.

On a final note, an opportunity for company F to give back to Fort Steilacoom is at hand. As most of you know, Ft. Steilacoom is having a birthday party and we are invited. This is a wonderful way to support the Friends of Ft. Steilacoom in there effort to bring back a WCWA sponsored event to the Lakewood area. I am certain that most of the current members can trace their membership to a WCWA event at Ft. Steilacoom. This event is not sponsored by the WCWA, but all members are invited to come and share our hobby with the people in Lakewood/Tacoma area. The event starts on Friday, May 8 and concludes on Sunday the 10th. For more information, visit the website at www.Steilacoom160.info.

Bayonets!

Captain Keene.



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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Company Drill Saturday April 4 @10:00 Fort Steilacoom

Living History Weekend Fort Steilacoom Weekend of May 8-10

Fort Lewis Armed Forces Day Saturday May 16

Battle of Spokane Falls, Memorial Day weekend (May 23-25)

Battle of Port Gamble, Town of Port Gamble, June 20-21

Battle at Lewis & Clark State Park July 18-19

Battle at Hovander Farm, Ferndale August 8-9

Veterans' Day Parade, Auburn November 7

MESS'N AROUND

Onions and Apples

Good for a weak bowel, or disposition,

1qt of water

1/2 Pound of Salt Pork

4 Apples (use the tart green ones)

2 Large onions

Cook diced salt pork in a heavy iron skillet until crisp, and set aside the salt pork, core the apples and slice into thin rings, slice onions into thin rings also, fry in salt pork fat until brown, add 1qt of water and cook until apples and onions are tender (about five mins.) and add water as needed, when tender add in the salt pork, and season to taste. This a easy dish to prepare in the field.

Blackberry Tea

Pick the blackberry leaves and dry them.

When you want to make tea, just crumble a couple of teaspoons of leaves to one cup of boiling water.

Steep for five to ten minutes, and you have blackberry tea. *(You might want to strain it 1st)*



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FROM THE EDITOR

Here we are on the advent of another season. We have one more drill and then the season begins. March's drill was well attended and very good. Bill B. led us in another bayonet drill. I'm not ashamed to admit it didn't take long for my arms to become tired swinging my musket about. The bayonet demonstration at this season's Port Gamble event should be impressive for the crowds. Take note of this season's schedule of events. I have a suspicion this season is going to be one of the best. Last season was terrific. Scuttlebutt has it the Colonel is planning more surprises for us. Each year we strive for more authenticity. This year camp life will be more military oriented so be prepared for guard duty, inspections, battalion drills and the like.

This edition was written with the purpose of getting us ready for the upcoming season and how to better interact with the public. Remember, we are living historians and the public looks to us to educate them about our hobby. I'm convinced the more one maintains authenticity and interacts with the public, they more fun he'll have.

Speaking about authenticity, in this edition are the lyrics to the Battle Hymn of the Republic. This is a period song we will be singing a lot this season. Most of us know the first verse if we sing it with others but very few of us know all the verses. It is always an attention-getter whenever we march to and from the battlefield singing the Battle Cry of Freedom so the Captain wants to expand our repertoire. Take note my comrades, I'm learning it on the harmonica!

I must admit I'm looking forward to Canon Ball Bob's meals (I mean 1st Sgt Long). He inspires me to try my hand at cooking authentic dishes: beans, mule meat, oysters... The nice thing about cooking at reenactments is usually there's nowhere else to go for meals so complaining about the food doesn't help! The Dutch ovens we used last season were terrific. Sometimes I wonder why my family won't let me cook at home.

Let's have as many of us as possible show up for the April drill as we fine tune for the season. I'm bringing my picture box to take a company picture. I'll also continue to take individual photos and make them available.

Enjoy this edition. I hope you find it filled with thought provoking and informative materials. Until we take the field - bayonets!

DID YOU KNOW

Federal ordnance men turned down the Spencer repeating breech-loading rifle in 1860, and did not get it into the hands of troops in quantity until near the end of the war. The theory for the refusal: Soldiers would fire too fast and waste ammunition.



ATTENTION COMPANY!

The weekend of May 8-10 we will be celebrating the 160th anniversary of Historic Fort Steilacoom. It is a living history event. There will be representatives, encampments and demonstrations from the 1700's & 1800's. Captain Keene strongly recommends we attend as this will be a great tune up for the season. We will be setting up a company street, drilling and skirmishing for the public. Local television stations will be there recording the event. It should be a great recruiting event. Polish the brass, shine the muskets and clean the leathers as this is our chance to promote the company and honor the fort and its history. Be there or you will be volunteered for fatigue duty.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

March 14, 1862

Battle of New Bern, North Carolina

Union General Ambrose Burnside captures North Carolina's second largest city and closes another port through which the Confederates could slip supplies.

The capture of New Bern continued Burnside's success along the Carolina coast. Five weeks earlier, he led an amphibious force against Roanoke Island between Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. The Yankees captured the island on February 8; now Burnside moved against New Bern on the mainland. On March 13, he landed 12,000 troops along the Neuse River, 15 miles south of New Bern. Accompanied by 13 gunboats, Burnside's army marched up river to face 4,000 Confederate troops commanded by General Lawrence O. Branch.

The city was protected by extensive defenses, but Branch did not have enough soldiers to properly staff them. He concentrated his men along the inner works a few miles downriver from New Bern. Early on the morning of March 14, Burnside's men attacked in a heavy fog - two of the three Yankee brigades crashed into the fortifications. General Jesse Reno's brigade struck the weakest part of the line, where an inexperienced Rebel militia unit tried to hold off the Federals. Burnside's third brigade joined Reno and the Confederate line collapsed. That afternoon, Union gunboats steamed into New Bern.

Union casualties for the battle were 90 killed and 380 wounded, while the Confederates suffered 64 killed, 101 wounded, and 413 captured. The conflict produced a Confederate hero, Colonel Zebulon Vance, who rescued his regiment by using small boats to bypass a bridge set afire by his comrades. Vance was elected governor of the state later that year.



BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC



Julia W. Howe (1819-1910)

This hymn was born during the American civil war, when Howe visited a Union Army camp on the Potomac River near Washington, D. C. She heard the soldiers singing the song “John Brown’s Body,” and was taken with the strong marching beat. She wrote the words the next day:

“I awoke in the grey of the morning, and as I lay waiting for dawn, the long lines of the desired poem began to entwine themselves in my mind, and I said to myself, “I must get up and write these verses, lest I fall asleep and forget them!” So I sprang out of bed and in the dimness found an old stump of a pen, which I remembered using the day before. I scrawled the verses almost without looking at the paper.”

The hymn appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1862. It was sung at the funerals of British statesman Winston Churchill, American senator Robert Kennedy, and American presidents Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon.



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BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC LYRICS

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch fires of a hundred circling camps
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery Gospel writ in burnished rows of steel;
“As ye deal with My contemners, so with you My grace shall deal”;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with His heel,
Since God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Since God is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat;
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet;
Our God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free;
[*originally ...let us die to make men free*]
While God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! While God is marching on.



HOW TO GIVE A HAVERSACK TALK

A haversack talk is an informal talk addressed to a group of people in which items of equipment or clothing are worn or placed on a blanket for display. A haversack talk is a constant part of being a living historian. People will ask you about the unusual clothes you are wearing or displaying. You can expect to be interrupted by questions, by follow-up questions and by silly questions, and they will often leap ahead to points you want to make later in the talk or go down paths you don't want to tread. Be friendly to the questioners, as they are showing an interest in what interests you. Remember when you started in the hobby, you asked similar questions.

Keep a sense of humor. Children often ask frank questions that may be embarrassing to answer in public. Realize, however, that the audience will be sympathetic to you and will appreciate a good honest reply.

When speaking about the contents of the haversack, you can begin by discussing the eating implements of knife, fork, spoon, plate and dipper; then move onto foods, such as hardtack, beans, desiccated vegetables, fatback, and salt pork; then personal gear such as letter, cards, and jackknife; and then armaments, leather works, bayonet, cartridge boxes, percussion caps, the rifle and loading and firing sequences.

Point directly to the object you are speaking about, or better still, hold it up. Keep the front of the object you are discussing toward the audience, and hold the object so that it can be seen. Anything that the audience can touch or hold will be appreciated. Handling some minie balls or hardtack will give people a more lasting impression of what they are learning. Be sure to count the number of items you pass around and how many come back.

There is one important rule of speaking: KISS (keep it short and simple). Keep your talk fast-paced, short, and to the point. Don't try to say everything: it is better to say too little than too much. If you make a mistake in your talk, admit it and move on. Spectators can appreciate the human qualities of the speaker. Also, if you don't know the answer to a question, say so rather than trying to think up a probable answer. No one can know everything.

Remember, that while you are in uniform in front of a group, you are considered an authority on the subject. The audience will believe what you say, even if you give them incorrect information, so it is very important to be sure that what you say is correct or to admit you don't know. You have an ethical responsibility to tell only the truth.

Speak naturally and informally. Make eye contact and smile. Try to make each spectator feel you are talking to him individually. Not only does this make the audience more attentive, it also relieves you of a feeling of talking to a big group.

Source: *Reliving the Civil War: A Reenactor's Handbook* by R. Lee Hadden, 1999.



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THE SAME CANTEEN

By Private Miles O'Reilly

There are bonds of all sorts in this world of ours,
Fetters of friendship and ties of flowers,
And true lover's knots, I ween;
The girl and the boy are bound by a kiss,
But there's never a bond, old friend, like this,
We have drank from the same Canteen!

It was sometimes water, and sometimes milk,
And sometimes apple-jack "fine as silk;"
But whatever the tipples has been
We shared it together in bane or bliss,
And I warm to you, friend, when I think of this,
We drank from the same Canteen!

The rich and great sit down to dine,
They quaff to each other in sparkling wine,
From glasses of crystal and green;
But I guess in their golden potatoes they miss
The warmth of regard to be found in this,
We drank from the same Canteen!

We have shared our blankets and tents together,
And have marched and fought in all kinds of weather,
And hungry and full we have been;
Had days of battle and days of rest,
But this memory I cling to and love the best,
We drank from the same Canteen!

For when wounded I lay on the center slope,
With my blood flowing fast and so little hope
Upon which my faint spirit could lean;
Oh! then I remember you crawled to my side,
And bleeding so fast it seemed both must have died,
We drank from the same Canteen!

This is a good poem about comradeship in the ranks. Soldiers say a bond develops between fighting men during battles that can never be broken. I know in our unit we can come close.



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FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH: MY OPINION

Thomas Chamberlain: "I don't mean no disrespect to you fighting men, but sometimes I can't help but figure, why are you fighting this war?"

Rebel Soldier: "Why are you fighting it?"

Thomas Chamberlain: "Well, to free the slaves of course; to preserve the Union."

Rebel Soldier: "I don't know about some other folk, but I ain't fighting for no darkies one way or the other. I'm fighting for my rights. All of us, that's what we're fighting for."

Thomas Chamberlain: "For your what?"

Rebel Soldier: "For our rights. Why is it you folks just can't live the way you want to live and let us live the way we do? Live and let live I hear some people say. There'd be a lot less fuss and bother if more folks took it to heart."

Scene from the movie Gettysburg.

I seriously doubt this is a historically accurate depiction of a conversation between Union soldiers and Confederate prisoners. In fact, I believe most survivors of the War Between the States would cringe and shout "Farb!" if they watched this scene.

Quite often during a reenactment I'll ask children visiting the 20th Maine's camp why we fought the Civil War. Invariably the children (as well as most adults) respond: "To free the slaves." The frequency of this answer bothers me because I believe it is both inaccurate and a reflection of attempts by special interest groups to re-write history. While on a recent vacation to the tropics, I had the time to research this concern. My research took me back to the formation of our country and how the founding fathers addressed the slavery issue.

Since I was raised and educated in New England, I might have a different understanding of the issue. Although I claim not to be a scholar on the Civil War, I will argue that this answer is incorrect for the majority of the 20th Mainers, if not for many of the Union soldiers. This article will take a brief look at this question and its controversial answers. Hopefully it will generate further discussion, understanding and appreciation of our hobby.



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There is no doubt that forced slavery of Africans is a stain on the fabric of America. Its roots can be traced to the settling of the colonies. For the next 168 years before the U.S. Constitution was drafted in 1787, slavery became a major component of the colonies' economic infrastructure. During the late-antebellum period, southern, agricultural states could not compete with the production of northern factories. Slavery was a type of manual labor that enabled southern states to increase economic output with low labor costs.

In the first decennial census of the United States (1790), it was noted there were 3.9 million citizens, of which almost 700,000 were slaves. Slaves constituted such a large cohort of population its impact was felt in the drafting and adoption of the Constitution. Most southern state delegates to the Constitutional Convention proclaimed the Constitution could not be ratified if it prohibited slavery. Conversely, northern state delegates maintained unless the Constitution addressed the issue, it would not be ratified. As with most bodies politic, a compromise was reached. Article 1, Section 9, paragraph 1 of the Constitution reads:

“The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight.”

In other words, the federal government would not tamper with the slave trade during the first twenty years of the nation's existence. However, Pandora's Box was opened when on February 11, 1790, two Quaker delegates, one from New York and one from Pennsylvania, presented petitions to the House calling for the federal government to put an immediate end to the African slave trade. Southern representatives immediately referred to the Constitution and claimed northerners were meddling in southern affairs. Many arguments for and against slavery were put forth based on political, economic, and moral grounds. James Madison's published Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 recorded discussions of southern states possibly seceding from the newly formed Union. The fervently contested issue of state rights versus federal authority which dominated debates in the Constitutional Convention, resurfaced. For the next 18 years, Congress couldn't and wouldn't take action as the very existence of the newly formed government was at stake. However, ignoring the slavery problem did not make it go away. Founding Father, John Adams correctly predicted that unless Congress presently addressed this divisive issue, future generations would go to war over it. As we know, Congress could not come to a resolve and the problem wasn't settled for another two generations.



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When I attended public school in the northern state of Massachusetts, I was taught the Civil War was fought for political reasons: the primary issue being state rights. Did the federal government have the authority to impose laws and policies over independent, self-governing states when states' policies and popular opinion are directly opposed to federal mandates? A review of history shows wars are chiefly fought over political ideologies or want of resources not moral issues (one may argue the Crusades are a notable exception). Slavery was a moral issue. Abolitionists of the times such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Fredrick Douglas and others sought to make slavery a political issue in order to bring about change. For some northern citizens, usually not those fighting the war, the anti-slavery position became the "politically correct" issue of the time. Through the use of mass media, i.e. debates, speeches, plays, songs, and the printed word, abolitionists sought to make slavery the poster child of the federal-authority verses state-rights issue.

When I explain the war was not fought over slavery but over state rights, a challenge is then put to me in the form of this question: "But didn't President Lincoln issue the Emancipation Proclamation to free the slaves?", as if this singular act by the President justifies this mistaken belief. The answer to this is: "Yes he did free the slaves, but this action was a response to military and political events occurring mid-way through the war and not the cause of the war." A proper understanding of Lincoln's decree and its historical/political context is needed to correctly answer this question. Let us examine the issues surrounding the Proclamation.

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued as an executive order by the President in 1863 shortly after the Battle of Antietam; almost two years after the war began. The proclamation declared "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free." The Proclamation was limited in many ways. It applied only to states that had succeeded from the Union, leaving slavery untouched in the loyal Border States. It also expressly exempted parts of the Confederacy that had already come under Northern control. Most importantly, the freedom it promised depended upon Union military victory.

From the first days of the Civil War, slaves acted to secure their own liberty. After January 1, 1863 every advance of federal troops expanded the domain of freedom. The Proclamation announced the acceptance of black men into the Union Army and Navy. The Proclamation added moral force to the Union cause and strengthened the Union both militarily and politically.



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Until this point, England maintained military neutrality in the war. The Confederate States were aggressively courting England's support and entry into the conflict as evidenced by the Trent Affair of 1861. England was, however, seriously considering allying itself with the Confederacy due to its desire for southern cotton. President Lincoln was aware of this possibility and also aware that England abolished slavery within its empire in 1834. Solely as a matter of political strategy, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation (when he finally received something resembling a victory) as a means to block England's entry into the war. President Lincoln was gambling on the fact that England's population would not support a war in which England sided with a pro-slavery ally. By issuing the proclamation, the Union, in addition to declaring slaves free, used slavery primarily as a political tool to block England's entry into the war. His gamble worked and England did not become militarily involved.

A review of the diaries, biographies, and literature written by and about members of the 20th Maine reveals a significant lack of mentioning the slave issue as a reason for fighting. Aside from Joshua Chamberlain briefly referring to slavery in his writings as one rationale for enlisting, no other member of the regiment cites this motive. To put the issue in the proper context for Mainers, of the more than 628,000 state residents, there were only 1,327 freed Negroes and no slaves in the state. One may safely assume, therefore, slavery was not an issue and motivation in the Pine Tree state. Could this situation hold true for other northern states? I believe it is so for the same reasons. Elisha Rhodes, a Colonel in the 2nd Rhode Island Volunteers, states repeatedly in his diary, All for the Union, the singular reason he enlisted and fought the war: to preserve the Union. It is not until the end of his memoirs does he mention slavery and that only in passing as an afterthought.

Some readers, scholars, and historians might find errors and exceptions to my statements and conclusions. Others with hidden agendas or even the general public attending reenactments may find my remarks controversial. Be that as it may. In today's society and public educational system, it may be more important to be politically correct than historically accurate. However, as a living historian, I believe it is more important to portray and teach history as accurately as possible.

Hic sto.
(Here I stand).

Letters or articles stating opinions on aspects of the Civil War are encouraged and welcomed.



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WHAT DID YOU DO?

During one of his battles in the West, it is said that an officer rode furiously up to U.S. Grant as he stood with his staff. Touching his cap in salute, he addressed the general in a heavy German accent, "Dschenal, I wants to make vun report: Schwartz's battery is token."

"How was that?" said Grant.

"Vell, you see, Dschenal, die sczessionists come die front of us, and die sczessionsits come up in die flank of us, and then die sczessionists come up in die rear of us, and Schwartz's battery was took."

"Well, sir," inquired the General, "you of course spiked the guns?"

"Vat!," cried the officer, "schpike die guns, schpike die new guns! – no, it vould schpoil dem!"

With a sharp look, Grant asked, "What did you do?"

"Do? Vy we took dem back again!"

Source: A Civil War Treasury by Albert Nofi, 2006

DANCE ETIQUETTE

Since we frequently have dances at our events, it is necessary to be aware of the following points of grace. After all, Mainers are known for "cutting the rug" every now and then.

Gentlemen never wear spurs on the dance floor, as they may catch on the ladies' dresses. If possible don't wear riding boots; wear shoes or booties instead. If you have heel plates and hob nails, cover them with duct tape so they won't scratch the floor.

Side arms should not be worn at dances.

Ladies and gentlemen both should wear gloves. Men's gloves should be plain white cotton. Ladies can wear what is appropriate for their dress and station.

If the dance is outdoors, men and women can wear their hats and bonnets. If held indoors, men should remove their hats; women may or may not remove their bonnets or head scarves.

Dances are held for fun and relaxation. It is boorish not to participate unless injured.

Don't go just to watch others dance with no intentions of joining in. Women often go to extraordinary lengths to prepare for dances, with appropriate clothing and jewelry. Officers and regimental representatives should encourage their men to dance with the ladies.

There is nothing so silly as a bunch of shy men in uniform lingering on one side of a room, and women wanting to dance waiting on the other. One word of warning to Union troops, Southern men seem to congregate naturally on the side with the women. If you don't invite the women to dance first, you may find that the Southern boys have cut you out.

Source: Reliving the Civil War: A Reenactor's Handbook by R. Lee Hadden



LETTERS TO HOME

The following is a letter from a series of letters written by Sgt. James Parsons, a relative of one of our more distinguished members, Jack Parsons. It nice to have some "local" history to present in order to gain more insight into the daily life of a soldier during the War Between the State. We will publish other letters of Sgt. Parsons in future editions of the Flagstaff. Thanks Jack for sharing your family history with us again.

Near, Fairfax Court House
May 4th, 1863

Dear Brother,

Rec'd a letter from home last Friday written on the 20th Apr. I also rec'd Almeria's of Apr. 4th containing her photograph. I was very glad to see both these letters & particularly so to get Almeria's picture. She returned to Ypsilanti much sooner than I expected she would. I do not think I can send my photograph home very soon as there is no gallery between here & Wash or Alexandria. When I go to those places it is with official business (often in great haste) & my time usually is limited so that I have no time to spend. We are leading a military life now & everything else must be succumb to the one great thing, war. The fine arts can not flourish here for war demands only the necessaries. Last Tuesday 4500 cavalry troops left this place with eight days rations for parts unknown. They were the 1st Bir[?] (loyal & a set of tigers) the 18th Pa, the 9th Ny, the 2nd Mich, a part of the 5th Mich, & the 9th Mich battery. We have heard several rumors from them to the effect that they have had hard fighting. They sent 40 prisoners here at one time from Stewart's noted cav. Most of the Mich 6th cav are now away about five mi from here on picket duty. The boys like it first rate & very often get a crack at the rascals who are trying to get through our lines in the night. Company J is yet at Poolsville Md. scouting. Our reg't got its pay a few days since but unfortunately mine did not come. It was either necessary for one to sign the pay rolls or give my captain the power of attorney to do so and draw the money but being about 50 miles from my company & not knowing exactly when the pay would be made I failed to do this. I shall however write to Capt Dean tonight requesting my descriptive list & with this I can go to Wash & draw my pay at any time. I intended to have got money before this time for Almeria but Dod[?] has not paid us promptly. I have delayed this letter for some time that I might send money with it. Mother speaks about sending a box. I would like one very much but probably it is not the best to do so. Several here have had boxes sent by express & it costs pretty heavily. As it is I fare first-rate much better than I would with my regt. We have had dried peach or dried apple sauce once every other day with a plenty of pork (sometimes ham), beef, beans, potatoes, rice, good bread, coffee & sugar. We have a first rate good negro cook to do our cooking & pay him \$.50 apiece per month. He has been with us ten wks. I can buy good



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fried apples or peaches here for ten cts per pound I think quite as cheap as I could in GB. The only object in sending a box would be to get butter, honey &c. I have not had a taste of butter since that mother sent to me while at the Rapids. Butter here (1/2 Lard and half something else) is worth \$.40 per pound & eggs \$.30 per dozen. Last week Head Quarters were moved from Fairfax Court House 1 1/2 mi east on the Alexandria & Winchester Pike. The Gen & Staff occupy tents which are tastefully arranged among the large trees in the door yard of a country residence. We Orderlies have our tents pitched just one side on a pleasant rise of ground in a little peach orchard. The trees are now in full bloom. We do not have stables but our horses are hitched around under the large apple trees to protect them from the rain. We have little. A tent large enough to accommodate four. We have bunks & every thing convenient & nice as you could wish. There are only two others in my tent so we have plenty of room. One large square room in the house is used for the Adjutants Office other ways the staff & officers are all in tents. The Generals wife & daughter, Mrs Dr Wilson, another daughter and Captain Copeland's wife are here. Mrs Wilson has two little boys three & six years old which makes things quite lively around here. Dr Wilson is Brigade Surgeon. We were all very glad to leave the plastered room at Fairfax & get into the tents again. They are perhaps warmer during the day but cool off very quick at night and are much more healthy & pleasant. We have been setting out evergreens & making fence & have everything in fine style here. Tell Jacob if Brooks thinks he can put it through it would be good plan to plough up the green sward for corn as it is quite rough to mow & will be more profitable in corn. I like the idea of sewing barley & think that that piece will raise a fine crop. You will find two rail cuts[?] one on the NE the other on the NW corner of that field. They aught to be split as they will be in the way ploughing. The general opinion here is that there will be two or three more heavy battles & the war will be over but of course this is guesswork. I hope it may be true. There is now doubt that the south is suffering for food & if we can keep supplies out she is gone. The prisoners brought in usually tell a sorry tale. Tell Jacob I was glad to get those postage stamps. Our Captains name is Greely, said to be cousin of Horace Greely. Services on the Sabbath are now held at the regt. We have meeting here a J.C.H by the Christian Commission. I attend when off duty but sometimes I am gone all day with dispatches. You know war knows no Sabbath. The prospect now is that our H.Q. will remain here some time, perhaps all summer. The weather now is hot & dry. I shall try & send in my next a sketch of this place. I like this leusinep[?] here still what would you think of riding 34 miles in 6 hrs or 14 miles in 2[?] hrs & 17 min. Write soon. Direct as before.

Truly, James C Parsons.



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GENERALLY SPEAKING

Each edition of the Flagstaff contains a short biography of two lesser known generals who fought on opposing sides of the Civil War.

Jesse Lee Reno (April 20, 1823 – September 14, 1862) was a career United States Army officer who served in the Mexican-American War, the western frontier, and as a Union General during the American Civil War. Known as a "soldier's soldier" who fought alongside his men, he was killed while commanding a corps at Fox's Gap during the Battle of South Mountain.

Reno was born in Wheeling, Virginia (present day West Virginia), the third-oldest of eight children of Lewis Thomas and Rebecca (Quinby) Reno. His ancestors, who came from France in 1770, changed the spelling of their surname 'Renault' to the simpler 'Reno' when they arrived in America. His family moved to the Franklin, Pennsylvania, area in 1830, and Reno spent his childhood there.

Reno was admitted to the United States Military Academy in 1842 and graduated eighth in his class of 59 cadets in 1846, initially commissioned a brevet second lieutenant of Ordnance. Reno and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson became close friends while at West Point. Other classmates and friends included George B. McClellan, George Pickett, Darius N. Couch, A.P. Hill, and George Stoneman.

When he returned from Utah in 1859, Reno was promoted to captain for fourteen years of continuous service. Captain Reno then took command of the Mount Vernon Arsenal near Mount Vernon, Alabama, in 1859. At dawn on January 4, 1861, Reno was forced to surrender the arsenal to troops from Alabama, a bloodless transfer ordered by the governor of Alabama, Andrew B. Moore. Alabama seceded from the Union a week later.

Upon leaving Alabama with his small force, Reno was temporarily assigned to command the Fort Leavenworth Arsenal until he was appointed brigadier general of volunteers in the fall of 1861. He transferred to Virginia, took command of the 2nd Brigade, IX Corps, and soon had organized five regiments. The 2nd Brigade fought in Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's North Carolina Expedition from February through July 1862. Reno became a division commander in the IX Corps, which had become part of the Army of the Potomac. In the Northern Virginia Campaign, Reno actively opposed his friend and classmate Stonewall Jackson during the Second Battle of Bull Run and the Battle of Chantilly. Burnside became commander of the Army of the Potomac's Right Wing for the start of the Maryland Campaign in September, elevating Reno to command of the IX Corps from September 3.



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Reno had a reputation as a "soldier's soldier" and often was right beside his troops without a sword or any sign of rank. On September 12, 1862, Reno's IX Corps spent the day in Frederick, Maryland. Two days later, while he was stopped directly in front of his troops as he reconnoitered the enemy's forces at Fox's Gap at the Battle of South Mountain, Reno was hit in the chest by a Confederate sharpshooter's bullet. He was brought by stretcher to Brig. Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis's command post and said in a clear voice, "Hallo, Sam, I'm dead!" Sturgis thought that he sounded so natural that he must be joking and told Reno that he hoped it was not as bad as all that. Reno repeated, "Yes, yes, I'm dead—good-by!", dying a few minutes later. In his official report, D. H. Hill sarcastically remarked, "The Yankees on their side lost General Reno, a renegade Virginian, who was killed by a happy shot from the Twenty-third North Carolina."

Reno was posthumously promoted to major general, retroactive to July 18, 1862.



Major General Jesse Reno



Top of South Mountain



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Benjamin Franklin Cheatham (October 20, 182 – September 4, 1886), known also as Frank was a Tennessee farmer, California gold miner, and a General in the Confederate States Army during the Civil War, serving in many battles of the Western Theater.

Cheatham joined the Confederate States Army as a brigadier general on May 9, 1861 and became a brigadier commander in the Western District of Department Number Two, under Gen. Leonidas Polk. His first test in the war was in Missouri on November 7 at the Battle of Belmont, leading three regiments in Brig. Gen. Gideon J. Pillow's division against Union Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, also in his first Civil War combat. In December, Cheatham and his division received the Thanks of Congress. "for the desperate courage they exhibited in

sustaining for several hours, and under most disadvantageous circumstances an attack by a force of the enemy greatly superior to their own, both in numbers and appointments; and for the skill and gallantry by which they converted what at first threatened so much disaster, into a triumphant victory."

Cheatham was promoted to major general, on March 10, 1862, and was appointed commander of the 2nd Division, First Corps, Army of Mississippi. He led his division at the Battle of Shiloh and was wounded, although it is unclear whether this occurred on April 6 or April 7, 1862.^[2] General Braxton Bragg became commander of the Army (soon to be designated the Army of Tennessee) and Cheatham served under him at Perryville and Stones River. At the latter battle, Cheatham performed sluggishly, ordering piecemeal assaults; observers claimed he had been drinking heavily and was unable to command his units effectively.

Cheatham continued as a division commander under Bragg at the Battle of Chickamauga and, following that rare Confederate victory in the West, was elevated to corps command on September 29, 1863. He was on the right flank of Missionary Ridge when Bragg was defeated by Grant at Chattanooga, engaged to block the Union Army in the final hours of the battle.

In 1864, Cheatham fought well in the Atlanta Campaign under General Joseph E. Johnston, and later Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood, inflicting heavy casualties on William T. Sherman's Union Army at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, and being wounded at the



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Battle of Ezra Church. He was in corps command for the battles around Atlanta, replacing William J. Hardee, who had resigned when Hood took command. Cheatham's most famous service came as a corps commander under Hood in the Franklin-Nashville Campaign. He was engaged in all the major battles of the campaign, receiving notoriety when the Union Army under Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield was able to slip by him and escape from the Battle of Spring Hill, which foiled Hood's plan and led to the disastrous Confederate defeat at Franklin. Hood accused Cheatham of dereliction of duty and the enmity between them lasted for the rest of their lives. After the collapse of Hood's army at Nashville, Cheatham rejoined Johnston's army for the Carolinas Campaign (as a division commander, the highest position this small army could justify), surrendering to General Sherman in North Carolina in April 1865.

After the war, Cheatham declined an offer of Federal civil service employment from President Grant. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the United States House of Representatives in 1872. He served for four years as superintendent of the Tennessee state prison and postmaster of Nashville (1885–1886). He died in Nashville and is buried there in Mount Olivet Cemetery.

DID YOU KNOW

Firing on both sides was so inaccurate that soldiers estimated it took a man's weight in lead to kill a single enemy in battle. A federal expert said that each Confederate who was shot required 240 pounds of powder and 900 pounds of lead.

In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which called for the relocation of all Eastern Indians to land west of the Mississippi. Removal brought great suffering upon ten of thousands of Indians. There was also a great deal of bloodshed in Illinois and Wisconsin. In 1832 Abe Lincoln, then aged 23, volunteered for the militia and served in the Blackhawk War as a captain. On one occasion, Lincoln wrestled with another captain to see whose company would get a more desirable campsite but lost. Although the story is probably as old as the close-order drill, Lincoln is alleged to have been the green officer who forgot the proper sequence of commands which would get the troops through a defile and so ordered them to "break ranks and reform immediately on the other side of that gate". Don't feel bad Captain Keene, if you occasionally do the same!



WANTED

An A tent with the dimensions of 9' x 7'. If you have one for sale contact Gummi Stefansson at Stefnelli@aol.com

COLOR GUARD

Members of the 20th are forming a Color Guard unit to present the National Colors and arms at various events. The goals of the unit are to have fun, to promote the hobby and recruit new members, and to raise funds for future road trips to reenactments. So far several members have presented the colors at two events. If anyone is seriously interested in becoming involved, please notify either Shane C. Bob B or Cap C. Commitment of time for drilling, presentations and money for uniforms are required. So far the Seattle Mariners, Seahawks, Thunderbirds, Sounders Foot Ball Club and the Tacoma Rainiers have expressed an interest in our services.

CAPTAIN'S ORDERS

Our last drill for the 2009 drill season on April 4 at 10 am. This will be the final tune up for the upcoming campaign. For those who missed the safety test in March, you will have the opportunity to take the test after drill. Your membership forms and fees can be turned in then if you haven't done so already.

Be thinking about food rationing at the upcoming Lewis & Clark event in July. Let Chris Gove know your ideas.

CONTEST

The winner of the last contest is Robert Aquilera who correctly answered the following question:

What is the definition of a mud lark?

- A. A slang term for a Confederate soldier from the swamps of Florida; or a name given to a Southern soldier captured during battle in Florida's swamps;
- B. A farmer's pig clandestinely killed and eaten by troops. This meaning was a new twist on mud lark, which since the early 1800s in America had designated any hog.

Robert correctly answered B: a farmer's pig clandestinely killed and eaten by troops. For his efforts Robert receives a period flask suitable for smuggling "medicinal elixir" into camp. Good job soldier!



Here is an excellent article written by Chris Gove. I suggest we all read it and make the necessary changes. This is a perfect article to prepare us for the upcoming season.

Common Problems with the Union Reenactor's Impression And How to Fix Them

As Civil War reenactors, we are constantly searching for ways to improve how we bring history to life. We all have favorite aspects of the history that fascinate us. Since I began reenacting I have been interested in what makes a reenactor look like a true Civil War soldier. What the subtle, and not so subtle, details are that can make or break a reenactor's impression.

In my years as a Federal reenactor I have always been searching for the details that will improve how correct my uniform and equipment looks. It has taken me several years and a lot of trial and error to make the improvements I have, but I am still far from perfect. However, from close observation of and instruction from other, more authentic, reenactors in the ranks like our own Luke Saylor, Tiny Cook and Bill Baehr, and from my one time perspective as a Confederate (yes I have fought for states rights once), I believe I have obtained an idea of the basic problems that can ruin a correct looking Union impression.

The reason for writing this article is not to criticize or to insult anyone. What I want to do is pass on the knowledge and tips that were given to me. Hopefully you will find these tips and suggestions helpful.

The part of our persona as Federal infantry is the basic uniform and equipment, the stuff we wear and carry around camp and on the battlefield. Many of the inaccuracies in uniforms and equipment are very small and can usually be corrected easily. Most of the corrections involve minimal cost and can be made with a little extra effort. Some of the corrections do, unfortunately, come with a price tag and there is simply no way around it.

To begin, I would like to lay out what the average Federal infantryman would have been issued. I will address each part of the kit and try to outline the various problems and give practical ways to fix them.

To begin, I would like to lay out what the average Federal infantryman would have been issued. I will address each part of the kit and try to outline the various problems and give practical ways to fix them.

In the early part of the war the US government established a regulation uniform and equipment for volunteer regiments. The basic kit of a volunteer infantryman was a forage cap, four button fatigue blouse often called a sack coat, a shirt, a pair of trousers, a pair of wool socks, brogans, one blanket, one gum blanket, one shelter half, a cartridge box, cap box, belt, haversack, knapsack and canteen.



Headwear

The average Federal volunteer enlisted man was issued the forage cap, not the kepi. The kepi was restricted to officers. Too many reenactors portraying enlisted men have kepis.

Unfortunately many of the forage caps available to reenactors are almost as incorrect as the kepis. The crown of the cap should slouch down on the head and the brim should be flat. Forage caps with the “shako” look, where the crown stands straight up, can be fixed in two ways. The first way is to wear the hat higher on the head. Civil War era hats were not meant to be pulled down on the head like modern baseball caps. If the hat still stands up, the crown can be sewn down quite easily.

Unfortunately, I have not yet found a way to make a kepi look like a forage cap. This is one of the fixes that will cost you. When looking for a cap, go to a sutler in person, that way you can find a cap that fits well and looks right.

The Coat

There is usually little about the sack coat that needs to be improved. The only improvements that can be made to most coats would be to hand stitch the buttonholes. This is a small detail that can make a significant amount of difference. Hand sewn buttonholes can be seen from farther away than you would think and add an extra level of historical accuracy to your impression. This fix is as cheap as a needle and thread and requires only a moderate amount of effort. After all, the sack coat has only four buttonholes. A good way to find the correct stitch for buttonholes is to find photos of either originals or high end reproductions. The thread you will need is the thickest you can find, preferably without a shiny finish.

The Shirt

Like the coat, the only necessary improvements would be hand stitched buttonholes.

The Trousers

Many reenactors wear their trousers the same way they wear modern pants. Actually, the top of the pants should ride at your true waist, up at the navel. The cuffs should either be rolled, tucked into your socks or cut off at the top of the shoe. The modern look with the pant legs bagging around the shoe is absolutely incorrect. Having your pants hemmed is not a good idea as most soldiers were not tailors and would not have seen the point of the extra work when cutting the legs or rolling them worked fine.



Shoes

This is the one fix that is just going to cost you. Now, for young people who are still growing, it does not make much sense to go out and purchase ninety to one hundred dollar shoes that will soon be outgrown. But once you are not likely to grow more, you should make the investment in a pair of brogans. As I said, this is a fix that is expensive, but is a necessary one if you are going to portray a Federal soldier accurately.

Leathers

Most reenactors wear their cartridge boxes the way they received them from the sutler. The problem with this is that most cartridge box straps are made to fit any reenactor. Most of us need to shorten the strap to the correct length. If the belt is worn correctly the bottom edge of the buckle should ride just above the navel. The cartridge box strap should be just long enough to allow the box to fit under the belt. This fix requires a sharp knife or scissors and an awl or something else to poke holes with. Look at the strap, the rest is just common sense.

Canteen and Haversack

The problem with most federal canteens is the color of the cover. During the war the first canteens issued had sky blue covers. Almost immediately, the government found that blue cloth was too expensive to waste on canteens, so they issued canteens covered with blanket cloth and jean wool.

The correct colors for a canteen cover is either sky blue, grey or tan blanket wool or grey/brown jean wool. Dark blue covers would not have been issued to enlisted men. Officers could have purchased them, but they were not commonplace. Also, the cork should be attached with a piece of cotton or hemp twine or leather. The chain was rarely issued and usually broke or fell off.

Just like the cartridge box, the canteen and haversack straps should be shortened. A good guide for the correct height is your elbow. The top of the canteen and haversack should be level with your elbow.

A good source for canteen covers is County Cloth. They are cheap and come with instructions. The twine can be found at most garden stores

Knapsack or Blanket Roll

Should knapsacks or blanket rolls be worn regularly? This is a question that has triggered a lot of debate among reenactors over the years. Most people seem to have an opinion on this, myself included. The arguments against going full pack are usually these: the gear is too heavy, or the battlefield is such a short distance from camp, why would I carry all this stuff when I can leave it in my tent?



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To answer this question let's look at the historical facts. When we go out to battle are usually reenacting actual events. Most battles in the Civil War were fought during the late spring to early fall campaign season. During this time Civil War armies were doing a considerable amount of marching. In some instances, soldiers would have marched for miles just to get to the battlefield and were often rushed in without time to prepare, forcing them to go into combat carrying their full kit.

Even if soldiers did get a good nights rest before a battle, which they did at least half of the time, they would not have been expecting to return to that camp when at the end of the day. They would have broken camp and carried their equipment at least to the field. Once they got there some would have dropped the heavy stuff like blankets and shelter halves in order to fight less impeded, but most units, the veterans, would likely have fought in full pack. They would have known from experience that during a battle there was no telling where they might end up bedding down for the night. If they dropped their gear there was a very good chance of never seeing it again.

So should reenactors carry knapsacks or blanket rolls? My answer is yes. At the very least carry them onto the battlefield. The sight of infantry in full pack, marching to the field is accurate and therefore what the public needs to see. As I mentioned, most of our marches to the battlefield are extremely short compared to those endured by our ancestors. If the march is too tiring to wear the knapsack or blanket roll during the whole battle, the tired reenactor can do what many tired soldiers did and drop the knapsack or blanket roll.

Knapsacks can be expensive, so for those of us with less cash the blanket roll is a good choice. The best way to roll the blanket is to simply lay it out and roll it up the wide way and then twist it fairly tight. This makes it smaller and keeps it from coming unrolled.

As I said before, this article is not meant to offend anyone. My purpose is to put this information in writing so that it can help others learn. If you found any of these problems in your impression, use this as motivation to improve. I hope this helps you as we all strive to better portray this fascinating period of history.

Respectfully, Sgt. Geo. Crocker, aka: Chris Gove

This article makes you look at yourself and discover areas you need to improve doesn't it? I know there are areas I need to change. Thanks Chris for the research in putting this together for us.



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Here we are at the end of another edition. I trust you found the information contained herein provocative and helpful. As usual, there was too much to print and not enough space. I could write another volume but I better save material for the next issue due out this summer. If you have any comments, complaints, criticisms, doubts, obscurities, vulgarities or even praise, please let me know. Thank you and I look forward to meeting the Conrnfeds on the fields with you!

THE NECESSARY STUFF

The Flagstaff is published by Company F, 20th Regiment Maine Volunteer Infantry to foster communication amongst its memberships and is distributed by e-mail to members and other select persons and organizations. It is published 3 to 4 times a year. The editorial policy is set by the governing board of the Regiment. Materials may be re-published without permission. All communication regarding the Flagstaff may be directed to Cap Caputo, Editor, at: 360-705-1271, or cap10inwa@comcast.net. Please indicate 20th Maine in subject heading of email.

REGIMENTAL COLORS

