



Vol. X. August, 2011 Issue 7.

Captain's Column

Gentlemen,

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. That is the phrase that comes to mind when I think of the Manassas event. Depending upon your perspective you probably either loved the event and were not bothered by the heat or you were bothered by the heat and humidity and did not have a very good time.

The numbers were good. The soldiers looked great in formation and as they took the field for the Saturday morning battle. I thought the organizers of the event did a relatively good job of getting ice and water to us. But in some cases it was to no avail. About half of F Company left the event early due to the extreme heat.

Kudos, however, to the Alexander contingent. They did not seem to be effected by the weather and I heard that they even went to the ball on Saturday night with all the girls' oowing and aawing at their militia uniforms. Kudos also goes to Scott Wilson for toughing it out.

For some of us the event may not have lived up to our expectations. Don't be disheartened. There will be more 150th events. For some of us the event may have met or surpassed our expectations. That is great. There will be more. This is only the beginning. I want to thank everyone for their participation to whatever degree that was. It was especially good to have Brett Weidman from PA and our newest recruit, Jeff Pennise in the ranks. They both seemed to have a great time.

Now for the month of August we have something much more relaxing and comfortable planned. It is the company muster on Saturday, August 13th. If you want to get an early start come up to Jack's house on Friday night. I believe that there has already been an e-mail sent out concerning this event. If you have any questions please give Jack a call.

Looking ahead to September we have two possible events to consider, the Front Royal/Luray Reenactment (September 10 & 11) and Ft. Harrison (September 24 & 25). Our participation depends on the level of interest/numbers we can generate. If you want to go please let us know if you have not done so already.

That's all for now. See you at the muster.

With Kind Regards
Captain Turley

1st Sergeant's Report

Gentlemen,

The only thing going on for August is the annual muster event. Jack will be hosting and leading the muster which will be concerning F Company's role in the retreat from Gettysburg. Details and directions will follow in the newsletter.

I still need to hear from those of you who may be interested in the fall events, like Luray and Fort Harrison in September and Cedar Creek in October. We need to get some more interest to be able to register. Please let me know if you can or cannot attend these events. If you answered one of the first two e-mails, thank you.

With Kind Regards
1st Sgt. Gammon

Muster Report

Attention: F Company Muster August 13th

Retreat from Gettysburg: One Continuous Fight

Everyone is invited to spend Friday night (8/12) at my house, in Frederick, Md. We will share a Pizza and watch Gettysburg or something else, discuss F Company's/ 21st Virginia role at Gettysburg. Leave my house 8-9am Saturday morning, travel to Gettysburg and follow the retreat of the ANV back to the Potomac crossing at Williamsport, Md. Our tour will include a visit to the site of F Company's rearguard action, the battle of the Wagoners on July 6, 1863, where Captain Pegram of F Company was killed. We will share a meal at the conclusion of the tour, Golden Corral buffet. For those of you who can not come up Friday night we can rendezvous in Gettysburg. I will have maps and summary of the tour available for your convenience. Please respond via email yankee7@gmail.com or phone **301-624-8999**. No expense other than your meals.

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Your friendly travel guide,
Jack Alexander

1st Manassas, a report by Jeff Pennise

For many years now I have enjoyed learning about the Civil War. I have read Bruce Catton, Shelby Foote, McPhearson, Coddington, Sears, Freeman, Burton, Furgurson and countless others. I've walked the Hornet's nest at Shiloh, stood on board the Ironclad "Cairo" at Vicksburg, looked out from Kennesaw Mountain in Atlanta, stood in the Round Forest at Stones River and saw where Lyon's fell at Wilson's Creek. I've been to Perryville, Fort Donelson, Chickamauga, Petersburg, the battlefields of the Seven Days, North Anna, Manassas, Sharpsburg, Gettysburg (go every year), Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, The Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor and numerous other smaller battlefields. But for all that, I've never experienced the Civil War... until now.

On Saturday July 23rd, at Manassas Virginia, just as the first rays of dawn were crossing the sky, I fell into line with the 21st Virginia, F Company. As our Company formed ranks, it hadn't really hit me yet. But as our unit formed with another unit to form an even bigger unit, and then that new formation formed up with other larger formations to make us even larger still, that's when it started to sink in. I had become a part of something special. It's an amazing feeling when you realize that you've become part of a greater whole, that you're now a part of something bigger than yourself. You instantly bond with people you never knew. People cheer you on as you march by in column just as you cheer them on when they march past.

Both Saturday and Sunday were very hot and humid, but the heat proved to be no match when compared to the thrill and excitement of being in my first reenactment (I was as green as the men who had marched off to battle 150 years earlier). When the firing started, every man in F Company was there to guide me and show me what to do, how to do it and when to do it. To say it was "fun," just doesn't do justice to how much I enjoyed the experience. While we were under fire, I could see the challenges of the movement of formations, your own men moving across your line of fire, crossfire and getting flanked. I could not even begin to imagine how challenging it must have been under fire. To have stood there across that small space and exchanged fire with real bullets, that's a testament to the mettle of the men on both sides who fought there 150 years earlier.

I can never know just what it felt like to be in a real Civil War battle, but I am honored to portray the men who did. I hope that by portraying the "Living History" of the Civil War, I will inspire others to learn more about this incredible and critical period of our Nation's history. Not just the names of the Generals or the places that they fought, but how they lived and why they went to war.

Pvt. Jeff Pennise
F Company, 21st Virginia

1st Manassas, a report by Brett Weidman

My first reenactment with F Company was the 150th anniversary of the battle of First Manassas. The timing of the reenactment was not the greatest for me, having jack hammered in 95 degree weather all that week for work and recently getting over a bout of blood poisoning from an injury suffered while jack hammering! The thought of going to a reenactment dressed in wool on one of the hottest weekends ever, sort of scared me.

When I arrived at the site/camp of the reenactment however, no amount of heat could keep me from being excited. First, it was a huge reenactment with thousands of re-enactors that had set up "tent cities." Second, it was going to be my first battle and I would soon "see the elephant." Reflections of the weekend/battle:

This may not make sense to everyone, but the intense heat of the weekend was an adventure in a way, in other words, it made things interesting. One was always trying to find a way to be cooler, stay cool, or find a nice treat like a piece of ice or a drink out of Jack's cooler. It just sort of made sense to be miserable, it seemed more authentic that way. One of my favorite parts of the weekend was the march to and from the battle believe it or not. It was the first time I was part of a large mass of troops and also the first time in a long time that spectators lined the road and made me feel like a minor celebrity. The battle itself was also exciting, as the Yankees got closer and closer I became more anxious than ever. The first volley of our troops was exhilarating, and I remember smiling and laughing to myself, thinking, "This is where I belong." The battle was very confusing and sporadic, with several retreats and random long rest periods. I had planned to take a hit this weekend, and I was just waiting for the moment we'd be closer to the spectator stands, however that moment never came on Saturday or Sunday, (Jack, Jonathan and Blaine all went down on Sunday) so I appeared to be invincible like Worhsam himself.

On Saturday night Jack, Jonathan, Blaine and myself attended the Ball. We debated on whether or not we should wear our militia uniforms and decided we would. On our way to the ball, we got numerous comments from other re-enactors about how smart we looked and who we were portraying etc. We also were photographed three or four times. Thanks Jack for making me look good. At the ball itself, me Jack and Jonathan had a seat and fielded more inquiries from curious re-enactors about our uniforms, while Blaine was on the dance floor swinging the ladies all around. On a side note, you fella's missed a good time, the girls were pretty and the music was good. The ball made me and Jonathan determined to get our girlfriends involved with dressing in period dresses! Update: my girlfriend is willing to try it...:) Saturday night was an easier night for me to sleep for some reason, which was a relief from Friday night when that man screamed at the top of his lungs and ran through the woods (that scared the crap out of me).

Sunday's battle was fun because Scott, Blaine, the Alexanders and I decided to wear the militia uniform in the heat. Once again we received many looks and comments on how good the uniforms looked. The battle was a lot like Saturday's battle, we were pushed back numerous times and had to reform many times. The Yankees were yards away from us some of the time, and this was about the time when the Alexanders and Blaine took hits, leaving me and Scott all alone. We survived the heat and were glad to be able to say the militia uniforms had finally been used in a reenactment.

Closing comments...

I am really honored that I was able to attend a big re-enactment in Virginia with my Virginian and Maryland friends. I just like being in Virginia period at this point. The re-enactment was huge and the battles were intense. The heat was an annoyance, but did not ruin my experience at all. I came home and excitedly reported the weekend's highlights to my family and girlfriend but it was hard to do because there was so much to remember. I told them though that it was in the top five of the most fun I ever had. I am still working on my brother to join. He is as interested as me but just has not made the plunge. Gentleman, if any of you hear or come across a used rifle like the sergeant recently did, please let me know...as I believe this would entice my brother to join. I will see you guys at the company muster (yesss only an hour and a half drive for me) Thanks for the good time and the memories that were made

Respectfully yours,
Pvt. Brett Weidman

Ode to Joe

