



Vol. XV. May, 2016 Issue V.

Captain's Column, May 2016

F Company held its annual Camp of Instruction the weekend of 8-10 April 2016 at our Fort site. We had ten people able to attend. The weather was almost perfect, pleasant during the day. It did get cold at night but not oppressively so and there was no rain or snow.

The program went pretty much according to schedule. Drill consisted of training for the new recruits and refresher for the veterans including myself. We were able to get the live firing in this year. Johnathan Alexander won the individual competition with an overall score of 35. In the team shoot, the Grays beat the Butternuts 85 to 62. The Butternuts consisted of Bob, Johnathan, and Ray while Greg, Jack, and Travis made up the Grays. Good shooting, guys. Sunday's program included Church Call, a full field layout inspection, bayonet drill, and skirmish drill.

Master Chef Mark Riemer was our cook for the weekend providing breakfast for both days and a superb supper meal Saturday night. We had a surprise visit from Mr. Harvie shortly after supper. He toured the camp and visited with everyone. By this time we had been joined by Courtney, Travis's significant other. Somehow she was already acquainted with Mr. Harvie. Courtney stayed for the campfire sing-a-long. Most everyone at least made a joyful noise. It was a good time.

I would like to thank everyone for the spirit of cooperation and the camaraderie among the men at this year's camp. It made my adjustment back to being Captain that much more easier. I look forward to serving the unit in that capacity for the 2016 reenactment season.

The weekend after the COI, F Co had its first living history program of the year. This was at the Appomattox National Park site. The host unit was the 24th VA. We had coordinated with their commander, Captain Cravens, at the Longstreet meeting back in January indicating that we

were interested in attending the event. We have been wanting to get our feet back in the door at Appomattox for a long time. This site is considered "holy ground" among reenactors. It was just unfortunate that it turned out to be back to back weekends with the COI.

There were several units represented with the bulk of participants coming from the 24th VA and the 28th NC. With it being back to back events, F Co could only muster three members those being the First Sergeant, long time member Scott Wilson, and myself. We all served as privates with Captain Cravens in command.

The event went very well and the weather was gorgeous. Saturday's program consisted of an open field tactical (somewhat unusual), firing demonstrations, and stacking of arms. Sunday we just did the stacking of arms. Saturday night the 24th VA treated everyone to a bar-b-que dinner at the Appomattox location of the MOC. This was to celebrate the completed restoration of the 24th VA's battle flag which is now on display at the museum.

We did see some familiar faces at the event. General Lee was there and Richmond's own park ranger, Ed Sanders was there. All in all it was a very nice event in an awesome place. I do believe we will be invited back next year.

Looks like our next event will be the living history at Cold Harbor in Mechanicsville the weekend of 4-5 June. Please keep this date in mind. There is no registration fee for this event so if you did not sign up you can still come. More info on this in the June Newsletter. That's all for now. Take care.

Respectfully submitted,
Captain Turley

1st Sergeant's Column

Camp of Instruction (8-10 Apr 16) - Everyone from Company Commander to Recruit should have been happy w/the outcome of the Camp of Instruction! This year the weather cooperated so we had sunny days for training and cool nights for sleeping. The previous Fort Clean-Up Day had the whole place in excellent condition to receive the troops. I arrived on Fri afternoon w/our two NEC members (Gorgone and Riemer) and were able to get all our personal equipment along w/mess gear unloaded in the daylight, and up w/the tents. We had a real "adventure" trying to locate the restaurant we wanted for that evenings meal, and it turned out we hadn't driven far enough to get to it, however, Mario's close to the Fort proved to be a good alternative for our Friday evening meal.

The next morning got off well w/our cook serving up bacon and hard boiled eggs supported by our mess detail, and then it was onto training which went well, but not before Inventory sales which proved to be brisk w/several members acquiring needed equipment from Co. stores as well as from Honest Mike's Sutlery! The Captain and myself taking the troops thru their drill paces throughout the morning demonstrated good skills on everyone's part. During the afternoon musket firing session everyone showed a good proficiency w/their musket despite the windy conditions, but best of all no fouled muskets! The wind proved to be a challenge in keeping the paper targets up, but nonetheless the target frames proved up to the task. The evening meal by Mess Cook Riemer was exceptional! The roasted chickens along w/stewed rice, turnips, onions and carrots was a great meal which hit the spot after a long day of training. This classic

Southern meal was also educational in that we discovered several co. members who'd never eaten turnips! We will continue to provide meals that "expose" our membership to original Southern foods of the CW period! A great plus following dinner was an unexpected visit by Taylor Harvie, the landowner of the Fort and our sponsor. It was a real opportunity for everyone to meet Mr. Taylor and get acquainted w/him. Everyone one slept well on Sat night what w/being busy all day and having had an excellent supper!

We were up the next morning dealing w/the thorny issue of sufficient participation at events for fielding a company. While a troublesome discussion, it proved to be useful in getting the membership to focus on participation needs. Additionally, Member-at-Large Greg Hanson took on the task of working the issue to get participant numbers up for some key 2016 events. Following a short class on the soldier's great friend the bandana, a full field layout by all the privates and corporal proved to an educational and useful experience in learning for our new recruit, Ray Hanson, in seeing what constituted a correct F Co Confederate impression. All of this was followed by a bayonet class by 2nd Sgt Firth and then Skirmish Drill conducted by Captain Turley to round out our training weekend. Striking the Camp proved to be a well organized and down right easy exercise!

All in all, everyone should have been more than pleased w/their experience at the Camp of Instruction which got the company membership off to a good start for the year. We got in a lot of skill building, fired our weapons, and got to fellowship together. What other outfit gets to camp and train in an original Confederate earthen fortification!

Appomattox CH (15-17 Apr 16) - I journeyed down on Fri afternoon to Appomattox CH (NPS site) in order to take advantage of the warm spring day and the budding out of the trees and flowers which proved to be a most enjoyable drive. Interestingly enough I found an excellent Mexican restaurant in Culpeper, VA by accident! Arriving that afternoon at the park, I figured out a decent bivouac spot in the midst of all the tents and watched the "fun" of everyone setting up! Being a campaigner is so much simpler and easy! Additionally, I made contact w/the company commander of the New River Rifles, 24th VA, whom the three participating members of F Co. (Turley, Vice and Wilson) were falling in with for the weekend. That evening I was off to Granny Bee's, my favorite locals Appomattox restaurant, for fried oysters which were excellent. Then back to camp to watch more of the "fun" and smoke a good cigar. Despite a warm day it proved to be a more than cool night since I had to use two blankets and added a third about three in the morning!

After passing NPS weapons inspection the next morning I bowed out of the morning tactical in order to await the arrival of Pvt's Turley and Wilson. Yes, all three of us participated as privates w/the New River Rifles. The day's activities consisted of several co firing programs and arms stacking to simulate the CS surrender as this was the 151st anniversary of the event. While only a limited number of Federals attended the event, several CS participants "galvanized" for the event in order to make the numbers work out. The whole program generated interest among the visitors and a lot of questions at the afternoon firing program.

The Sat evening activities proved to be most festive and most gracious on the part of our host, the New River Rifles. All the reenactor participants (probably 200 persons including family members) were invited to the Museum of the Confederacy branch museum in Appomattox for a free BBQ dinner w/all the trimmings! This meal was the prelude to the dedication of the newly conserved 24th VA Infantry battle flag which had been funded by New River Rifles and was to be exhibited in the museum! It was a great get together what w/really good NC BBQ cooked by co. members and a visit to the MOC which I hadn't gotten to see during the 150th anniversary. A

real example of great Southern hospitality and tremendous support for the preservation of our Confederate heritage!

Now, this event was not the only thing happening on Sat, as the 16th of April was my birthday as well! That evening following the BBQ dinner, Scott Wilson and Tony Turley took me out for a beer in Appomattox which was a nice treat, but better than that the next morning paid for my birthday breakfast at Granny Bee's! An excellent kindness which was much appreciated by an ole guy like myself! Goes to demonstrate what a great outfit F Co is!

More arms stacking the next morning which brings up a point. F Company's training is so much better than the average CS outfit in that we get our arms stacked the first time right because we train our troops. Or as I always say, if you train for it then you don't have to fumble around in front of the public trying to figure it out! We were done by around 2:00 PM at the park, then I got packed up and on the road back to Gettysburg. Thanks to Tony Turley and Scott Wilson for representing F Co and participation at this excellent historical site.

Battle of New Market (13-15 May 16) - F Company WILL NOT be participating in this event as a unit due to insufficient numbers to field a company. No one is registered for the event, but you can certainly attend if you wish as a walk-on registrant (\$25.00) and find yourself a unit to fall in with for the weekend.

Respectfully,
Michael L. Vice
1st Sergeant
F Co., 21st VA Infantry



Camp of Instruction 2016

Or

Turnips and Hominy

Considering the number of COI's in particular and Civil War events in general I have attended, I am always surprised to keep finding something new about this hobby. Turnips or the poor man's potato is a case in point. One of the advantages we, the men of F Company, have benefited from these last few years at COI is that we have a true cook, someone who has both the skill and the desire to cook our meals at camp. This skilled person provides us a unique opportunity that many do not get, to actually dine as our Confederate brethren did, both in style and choice of cuisine. Most of us, plan for something pre-made or are willing to try our hand at cooking over an open fire, but few of us know how and fewer still use period food items. I know it may seem doubtful, but it is true I have never eaten a turnip before. Just the thought has always made me wonder why someone would eat them. As a Middle school teacher, we study how the Europeans did not have potatoes until they were brought back by the Spanish from the New World in the 1500's but I never made the connection that what the Europeans ate prior to that was the turnip. As I said, you learn something new every day. Now as to the taste, ah...ah....let's just say I ate it. Moving on to the hominy, it is imperative that you know how to make it but more importantly where you can buy it and then be experienced enough to know how to fix it in the field. The taste? Ah, I ate some. Many thanks to the "Cook", Mark Riemer for this "New" experience!

The 1st Sgt. mentions, in his article, our trials of going to dinner Friday night. He recalls how we went looking for this mysterious Bavarian Inn, with the promise of delicious food and of course beer. However, he neglects to include his wrong turn on returning to camp. Unless, of course Mike was still in search of that mysterious Inn only wanting to impress his passengers with his infallible sense of direction and his never say die attitude. Even with all that we retired Friday night to our tents (thanks Tony) with full bellies and a promise of a warmer tomorrow. Yes, the Sun did shine but it was quite windy, just ask Ray and Greg how many times they had to re-stake their tent. Our drill was brisk but needed to prepare us for the upcoming season. Oh how I love the sound of stacking muskets in the morning and the control of being the #2 man in the front rank. When we lined up for our target shooting, I was certain of my skills, so I choose to *purposefully* miss my target, aiming instead at my competitors, so as to inflate his scores and not to disclose my prowess with the musket in hopes of being aligned with a better shooting team. My objective was accomplished as my shooting competitor, Johnathan, with my help of course scored a total of 35points, which proved to be the winning shooter. As my plan unfolded I was placed on the winning team, blowing away our competition which was announced after dinner and a visit from Mr. Harvie the Fort owner and namesake. Singing followed with my favorite "Shorten Bread" and many others thanks to all who participated.

Sunday, we sang together at church call and I scored high marks on the equipment layout. (see photo) The weather was better and we even got to bayonet the "dummy" (no not Greg). Thanks, Eldridge.

I often ask myself why I keep doing this hobby and it keeps coming back to the comradery whether it is around the campfire singing or marching in step with the man next to me. What we do is so different than what I experience during the week and I get to share some of my knowledge with the public. The COI and this hobby is my way of carrying on for those who are no longer here and honoring the heritage and traditions that has been passed down to all of us. Hope to see you in the field this year.

Respectfully,
Pvt. Alexander



Ode to Joe

