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1st Sergeant's Column

Cedar Creek Battle Report (16-18 Oct 2015)- I arrived on the scene at Cedar Creek on Fri afternoon around 2:30PM, hit the registration tent where everything went smoothly, and entered the Longstreet Corps camp area to locate a suitable bivouac site for F Company. I found a good site along a fence line w/good access to porta johns, water and firewood. I was joined later in the afternoon by Pvt Hanson w/his usual large amount of camping equipment! A fire pit was dug, firewood gathered and a fire started. Pvt Hanson and I shared his excellent rations of buffalo meat and beans for a very tasty evening repast. It proved to be a crisp evening and the extra blankets I brought along proved to be very useful.

Dawn broke w/a thick overhead cloud cover and cold wind blowing which continued through the day. Throughout the next morning we had co members straggling in w/finally a small company of eight men- Both Alexander's, Clements, Firth, Hanson, Touart, Vice and Weidman, B. Fortunately, I was able to persuade Longstreet's Corps to let us function as our own company w/myself serving as Acting Co Cmdr. The morning dress parade for Longstreet's Corps proved to be "interesting" as always w/myself functioning as CO and Johnathan Alexander as Acting 1st SGT. Following an 8:30 AM dress parade we had a battalion drill session commanded by LTC Russell w/everyone beginning to get it together and working together what w/wheeling in line and forming company's in column.

Following this it was back to camp, and throw some more wood on the fire as it was right chilly! Several were off to the sutler's w/Pvt Hanson returning sporting a new slouch hat which actually looked pretty good on him! We formed at around 1:30 PM for a 3:00 PM battle which was necessary given that we marched a long circuitous route to the other side of the battle site to begin our attack on the Federals. Positioned on the CS left and just to the left of the Color Co, we moved out in the attack and continued to push the Federals back into the low lying draw and up the other slope as they retreated. Fortunately, we got to march directly back to camp from

our final battle position. Got the fire stoked up and hot water going for musket cleaning. More firewood was gathered as everyone was concerned about an adequate supply of wood to get us thru what was going to be a very cold night.

The next morning it was right chilly at the 8:30 AM dress parade which saw the retirement of several senior officers from Longstreet's Corps followed by another battalion drill session. Soldiers were restricted to the bivouac site starting at 12:00PM in anticipation of a 1:30PM battle. We formed at around 1:00PM and moved thru the CS camp in column and formed in the line of battle just outside the camp perimeter to begin our fighting engagement. You could say the Color Co went "crazy" as they lead the Corps at the double quick across the field and had to be constantly cautioned about maintaining the needed organized line of attack! This battle proved to be rather uneventful and was done by about 2:00PM. We broke up, got our loaded up and were on the road back to our homes.

Upcoming Events

Richmond "Capital of the Confederacy" Civil War Show (14-15 Nov 2015)- One of the premier CW collector's show and has proved a good venue for F Co recruiting. The show is being held at the Richmond Raceway Complex (600 E. Laburnum Ave., Richmond, VA). You need to advise/respond to your Corporal w/what days you are planning on manning our recruiting table, and remember you need to be there in uniform. The show is open on Sat 9-5 and Sun 9-3. Advise folks at the door your w/F Co which has a recruiting table at the show for a pass.

Gettysburg Remembrance Day Parade (21 Nov 2015)- A premier event which ends the CW living history season on a very high note w/an excellent parade and all kinds of other events in Gettysburg, the center of Civil War activity in America!

We will meet at our usual place, The Unity Park by one of the large oak trees. Unity Park is located at the corner of Baltimore and Lefever Streets. You must be in place by 12:00PM as the parade begins at 1:00PM. Recommend you come early in order to find a parking place.

Uniform for the parade is kepi w/matching coat and trousers w/accoutrements and canteen (no haversacks). This is a military parade so your uniform needs to be clean. Additionally all leather items (accoutrements and shoes) must be polished as well as all brass (buttons, bayonet tips, belt plates, etc.). Bring white cotton gloves if you own them. Again, it's a military parade so you need to present a soldierly appearance!!!

Waterloo

The Battle of Waterloo (19-21 Jun 2015) or the French Cavalry Almost Got Me!!!- We take up our narrative again w/our arrival in Genval, Belgium by train (about 20 miles to the east of Waterloo) to discover that taxi's are non-existent in this small town, i.e., how do we get to our hotel (Chateau du Lac)?, but we got some great help from an Alabama couple, who took pity on us, at the train station in dragging our bags up the hill from the train station to the point we could see our hotel for that night's lodging! Having checked into the hotel, we sorted thru our uniform clothing and gear to get ready for an early morning trip to Waterloo. Departing the next morning by 6:00AM, we were being driven to the battle site by Bob Gorgone's girlfriend Sally, who not only had a rental car, but spoke excellent French which became imperative for making all this work! We discovered of course that rural Belgium doesn't have great road signage, and that the GPS on Sally's care was not only in French, but couldn't recognize where Waterloo was located! As we managed somehow to get into the right area we ran across a bus discharging a

whole bunch of French infantry reenactor's who are sitting on the side of the road getting ready to march into the site. Sally does a U-turn w/the car and strikes up a conversation w/these assorted characters, and finally we get enough information to get down the road about 4-5 miles and across a farm field to the battle site entrance.

We encounter this 17-18 year old kid at the registration site who has obviously just awakened from a long sleep, but does speak a little English. Myself, Bob and Mark produce our special required registration on-line printed passes, photo identification (passports for us), liability insurance forms, and weapons registration forms approved by King Philippe of Belgium himself! Well of course reenacting is the same everywhere, the kid only wanted our special pass and photo ID! Then we were off to camp to find our bivouac and muskets that Paul Brooks was bringing us from Germany. Got to camp fairly easily and stowed our gear in a tent provided by our German host, the 5th Westphalian Landwehr. Then it was pick-up our muskets and off to drill formation, where we were first issued our brandy ration! At that point "my attitude" improved dramatically w/this morning "eye opener"! We were next off to two hours of drill which was of course in a foreign language, but fortunately, I had several individuals in the ranks whom I've known for years who translated for me as we went thru the manual of arms. Then it's back to camp for the noon meal. Incidentally, our host were providing us w/a tent, rations and blank cartridges as we were their guest for this Napoleonic experience. After our short repast it was back to drill, then final preparations for the upcoming battle, as well as dealing w/the assorted visitors flowing into the camps. Reenactment's wherever they may be frequently have common characteristics and this one was no exception! We had to march some four miles over a rough road including bad stone work and thru a huge crowd of spectators which the Belgian gendarmes seemed unable to control. We arrived at a position to the left of the huge spectator stands which were supposed to handle 60,000 people and yes they went on forever and ever! This is when I "discovered" this was a commercially sponsored event by such outfits as Honda and public/private groups such as the Belgian National Lottery, so we were going to have a twilight battle under lights for the paying spectators which kicked off at about 7:30PM. By 8:00PM we were in the fray on a huge trampled down barley field which was slick as hell, firing our muskets like madmen and trying to avoid being run over by attacking French cavalry, plus listening for drill commands in a foreign language!

All this went on for a full three hours! While it stays lighter in Northern Europe in the summer we did fight in the dark, and exhausted all our ammo and then some! Very hard to describe the exhilaration of all this as we rotated firing by sections, forming squares continually against cavalry and constantly maneuvering against attacking French infantry columns. It got to the point that as the evening mist rose that all you could see of the enemy was their musket flashes! Fortunately, we had an excellent battalion commander who had us under control assisted by two very capable lieutenants commanding each section. We didn't get back into camp till after midnight what w/the artillery having to move out first and all the assorted spectator vehicular traffic. The attempt by our section commander to use the reserved emergency vehicle open path got us into "trouble" w/local Belgian gendarmes! Arriving exhausted in camp, Bob Gorgone immediately passed out in our tent and talked all night in his sleep. Mark Riemer and I had a little beer along w/bread and other rations provided by our camp followers doing the cooking, and then we "collapsed" as well.

At this point I've written a great deal more than I planned, so I'll save the second day's fighting for our next issue of the "Regimental Dispatch".



Ode to Joe

