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Captain's Column

Even though the Cedar Creek Foundation had received warnings that there would be attempts to disrupt the reenactment, I fully expected the Cedar Creek Reenactment to be the usual end of the season powder burner that it has come to be known as. At least for the first part of Saturday, 14 October, it was.

F Company had fallen in with the 57th VA commanded by Captain Ray Pickett. There were also several members of the 12th VA in the ranks. The 12th is the unit we fell in with at Malvern Hill back in July. We formed the color company for Longstreet's Corp for the afternoon battle. Everything seemed to be going along fine, the usual shoot-em-up with the disorder and confusion in the ranks that goes along with the battle. But we made it through the affair no worse for the wear.

It was shortly thereafter that things began to go haywire. Back in camp, about 4:30 we were informed that the event was in lock-down. No one could enter or leave camp. A little while later we were told that the campsite had to be evacuated. Apparently, an explosive device, i. e. pipe bomb, had been found in the sutlery. The camps were to be searched in an effort to make sure that there were no other such explosive devices in the area. As the evening progressed it became apparent that it was going to take some time to complete the search. Arrangements had been made for the reenactors to sleep in the nearby middle school but with everyone's gear still in camp that really didn't help much. So, F Company did the following. Several members live relatively close to Middletown. The Captain, 1st Sergeant, and Jack went to Jack's place. Steve and Jeremy went to Jeremy's place. Ray Hanson went home. Greg Hanson and Mike Toart decided to stay, in the hope that they would be allowed back in camp soon! That hope did pay off because the camps were opened back up at about 10:00 PM. But the damage had been done and the event had been turned on its head. What would Sunday bring?

It brought a Sunday morning battle with no spectators. The afternoon battle was canceled but the reenactors felt we had to do something in order to make a statement. So, we had this "in your face" battle that said we were still going to have our reenactment regardless of those who wanted to and actually tried to shut the event down. So once again we took the field, loaded our muskets, took aim and fired at the Yanks and they fired back at us. It was actually a pretty good fight. But more important than that was what happened at the end of the battle. The Yanks and Rebels came together in a show of unity that defied those trying to put an end to the event. There were handshakes, man-hugs, hat waving, flag waving, the singing of "Dixie", "Battle Hymn of the Republic", and the "Star Spangled Banner" in a show of unity and mutual respect and admiration and support for each other. I think everyone came away with a new determination to stand up for what we believe and not cower to those who seek to take it away. We may have been a little stunned by what happened Saturday night but we came away Sunday more determined and resolved than ever. Thanks to everyone who stayed and made this response possible.

Now will this change the way reenactments are conducted? Probably, but we will do whatever is necessary to preserve our hobby and celebrate our heritage. It may complicate things but in order to keep everyone safe it will be worth it. Now, let's move on.

Looking at November, we do have a couple of activities scheduled. They are the Civil War show at the Richmond Raceway and the Remembrance Day Parade in Gettysburg. There is no registration fee for either of these events so if you did not sign up for them you can still come and participate. The 1st Sergeant will give you all the details. I hope to see everyone at one or the other or even both of these events

With kindest regards,

Captain Turley

1st Sergeant's Column

Battle of Cedar Creek (14-15 Oct 2017)- I arrived at Cedar Creek on Fri afternoon around 2:30 PM, got thru registration w/no problems and found our campsite along the fence line around 3:00 PM, and got set-up w/a dog tent so the rest of our company could easily locate the bivouac site. The two Hanson brothers arrived at different times during the evening, and later that night Steve Adams closed on the camp. The next morning saw the arrival of Jack Alexander as well as Privates Villanueva and Touart, and Captain Turley. We formed up w/the 57th VA which was serving as the color guard for Longstreet's Corp w/all of us in F Co serving as private soldiers. The Sat battle was the Battle of Winchester so we moved thru the camp and then to the attack on the Federals. The weather was warm, but not hot so things went off pretty well for the troops. The battle concluded right at 4:00PM and that was when things began to really get interesting!

I returned to camp at 4:15 PM, and had just checked my watch at 4:35 for the correct time when a runner arrived requesting Captain Turley's presence at an urgent Corps meeting. Tony returned in about 10 minutes w/word that a pipe bomb had been discovered in Sutlers Row and that that area was cordoned off, and that the CS camps were on lockdown w/no one to enter or leave the camps. Around 15 minutes later we were advised that the personnel in the CS camps were to be evacuated across Route 11 to the parking area, but without any equipment nor muskets per the order of the Frederick County Sheriff's Department. This evacuation movement took a good 30-45 minutes. Once we'd accounted for all the 8 participating members of F Co we waited to see what was to happen. At around 7:00PM we were advised we wouldn't be allowed to re-enter camps until the next morning in order to allow camps to be cleared of any potential destructive devices, but that the Sheriff's Dept. would escort those back into camp to retrieve and needed car keys and medications, while those w/a place to go could leave the parking area, and that those who had no other place to spend the night outside the camp would be evacuated by bus to the Middletown Middle School to spend the night. Adams and Villanueva headed back to Chantilly, VA while myself, Turley and Alexander set out for Jack's home in Frederick, MD, and the Hanson's and Touart decided to wait it out, but Sheriff's Deputies were not optimistic that camps would be cleared for re-entry until the next morning. Interestingly enough, Greg Hanson called us at Jack's a little after 10:00PM to say they were allowed back in camps, and that they would secure our equipment along w/muskets. My group spent a "restful night" at Jack's, and were up the next morning and on the road. We arrived back in camp around 8:30AM and were advised that the battle for that day had been moved up to 10:30AM w/no spectators allowed on sight for security reasons. There was large scale participation by both sides in the battle which concluded w/a moving ceremony as both CS and US troops comingled. Continuing shouts of USA...USA...USA were followed by the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner and Dixie. A real expression of solidarity for all those participating!

I've reported here what I knew to be true or verifiable. For those of you not attending Cedar Creek, the Cedar Creek Foundation had received an anonymous letter some two weeks prior to the event threatening bodily harm to participants at the event. Law enforcement did not feel the letter was creditable, but the Cedar Creek Foundation posted this threat on their website so everyone was aware of the potential threat. It's now obvious that Civil War living history has now become part of the political struggle in this country right along w/the Confederate flag and monuments, but w/a much more disruptive element. Everyone needs to be mindful of the environment and those around them at any future CW reenactment. F Company is going to proceed w/its planned activities for 2017 at the CW Show in Richmond (11-12 Nov) recruiting, and our participation in the Remembrance Day Parade (18 Nov) in Gettysburg. See you there!

Capital of the Confederacy Civil War Show (11-12 Nov 2017)- The nation's oldest CW Collectors Show now in its 37th year! Not to be missed especially since you can help recruit for F Company at our reserved tables. We need you to assist in manning our recruiting table for both days of the show in uniform. Show runs 9-5 on Sat and 9-3 on Sun. I'll be setting up exhibits on tables on Fri PM, but will need help in taking down on Sun after the show. Show location at Richmond Raceway Complex, Old Dominion Bldg., 600 E. Laburnum Ave, Richmond, VA.

Gettysburg Remembrance Day Parade (Sat, 18 Nov 2017)- This great CW major commemorative event in Gettysburg, PA is one of the highlights of the reenactment season. It's more important than ever that Confederates be seen in this parade demonstrating that they are a part of American history to be appreciated and respected for what they are doing! We need at least 10 soldiers to make-up a good marching contingent w/our own colors.

We will assemble at the Unity Park by one of the large oak trees. Unity Park is located at the corner of Baltimore and Lefever Streets in Gettysburg. You need to be present by 1130 hours as the parade starts at 1300 hours as we need to rehearse our drill for needed participation. Recommend early arrival to find a parking place as the town will be very crowded both w/CW participants as well as spectators.

You've got work to do to be prepared for participation in the parade:

(1) Uniform- Kepi (NO slouch hats) w/clean matching uniform jacket and trousers w/accoutrements and canteen (filled!), but NO haversack.

(2) Accoutrements and Brogans- All items must be polished, that is you need to clean and polish cartridge box, cap pouch, belt and bayonet scabbard. Additionally, ALL brass must be polished including uniform buttons, belt plates and bayonet tips.

(3) This is a military parade, not a field event!!! You need to present an exceptional appearance especially in view of the continued "notice" that Confederate's are receiving in American society today. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your support of F Co, Southern history, and America!

Cancellation of Impression Improvement Class (16 Dec 2017)- We didn't get enough takers for this class to make it worthwhile to conduct. It appears I'd scheduled it to close to Xmas activities for some of our membership which created a conflict. We'll try it again next year as Mark Riemer and I have knowledge and skills which many of F Co could profit from.

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

Ode to Joe

