

THE REGIMENTAL DISPATCH: THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 12TH UNITED STATES INFANTRY, COMPANY A

Volume 3 Issue 3

Winter 2012

Special points of interest:

- **Dues are \$20 per family plus \$10.00 per individual to the 12th US Infantry. Mail to 12th US Infantry / PO Box 5384 / Syracuse, NY 13220-5384**

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Commanders Column

Hi All,

Looking back on the 2012 Reenacting Season, I had hoped I would be able to attend more of the events. Circumstances didn't cooperate but I would not trade for anything, the good times that I did have with my brothers and sisters in the 12th US Infantry. The Wolf Mountain event turned out to be a highlight for me and I hope that we can build on that.

Peterboro is always good time and while it is a challenge on the battle level, that event always shines as a time to dust off and chill with our pards. The future of Erie Canal Village is somewhat in the air at this point. More on that as the Winter and Spring progress.

National events for the upcoming 2013 season will include Chancellorsville and, of course, Gettysburg. There are unfortunately two Gettysburg

events. Many are planning to attend both and I have no guidance for you at this time. Some decisions may be made at the USV meeting in January as to which the 1st Regiment will make it's primary focus. I'll pass on information as I get it and if you want to attend both, then go for it. They are only a week apart and some will camp there in between them.

Beginning in January, we will start having our Winter drill sessions at the Presbyterian Church in Oneida on the 2nd Friday of each month. This will be a great opportunity to bring anyone who might be interested in reenacting and give them a taste of the hobby. There are great materials in the member section of the website for study and I encourage everyone to be familiar with the responsibilities and drill from the perspective of all ranks. I have been pleased to

have other local units join us for our drills. I think that it supports our hobby as a whole to have others join us.

In February, we will have our annual meeting, at which we will affirm or elect new NCO's, military and corporate Officers. More details to follow. If you wish to run for military rank then you will need to take the NCO Exam. That can be found on the member section also. We will be reviewing our numbers in accordance with the by-laws regarding NCO's and Officers. Remember that the numbers must meet the criteria of members in good standing, etc.

I look forward to another year of reenacting with my friends. It will be an exciting to one I'm sure.

Yours,
Capt Jim Hurd
12th US Infantry

From the President— 1st Sgt. Neil K. MacMillan

As I type this we are in the midst of Christmas season. Turns out, (who figured) the people that thought the Mayans predicted the end of the world were, (what's the term? Oh Yeah!) WRONG! We had a good year and one with no injuries or such so what now?

We move on. I will be standing for office again. Having said that, if you are interested in running for a corporate position, please let Mrs. Mayers or

myself know. We have tentatively scheduled the annual meeting for February 9, 2013 please plan accordingly. If you want a say, it helps to be there! As soon as we have a location, we will pass it along. If you have suggestions for a place let myself, Mrs. Mayers or Captain Hurd know ASAP.

Check the Facebook page and the website for news and keep in touch! Your

opinions and suggestions are welcome and valued. We may not adopt them all, but we do take them seriously. We have an invitation to march in North Syracuse's Memorial Day parade and I plan to. We also have our annual set up the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend for North Syracuse's Family Festival.

Have a very safe Holiday Season and stay safe out there!

First Call: So you want to lead— 1st Sgt. Neil K. MacMaillan

So, you want to lead. You've carried a musket for a while and you think you're ready to take on greater responsibility. But are you? Leadership isn't something you're born with. People will claim that some have it and others don't. It's hard to argue with that. The germane question is why.

If you're not born a leader then how do you acquire the skills needed to be a leader or in this case, a non-commissioned officer in the 12th United States Infantry. The first requirement is that you be technically proficient. That means that if you are a rifleman you know the drill and are able to impart that knowledge to those privates that are junior to you. If you are a musician, you should be competent in that field and should have an idea of what the "grunts" are doing and how they do it. We have instituted a test to see who is capable of the task. Is that it?

Not quite. Allow me to give you a

bit of insight to how I see leadership. Those of us who are NCOs or aspire to those ranks or that of commissioned officer should have one trait above all others an ability and desire to look out for the men and women placed in our care.. We're not drafted into this unit or to the re-enacting community. We join out of a common love of history. We give up our time to pass on that love to the spectators who come to see us perform., but make no mistake, we have an obligation to ensure all of our troops and civilians leave an event in the same condition that they got there. We need to ensure they have adequate food and water and that they have the safest possible conditions to re-enact in. Is it a pain to do so? You bet! That's why we don't get the big bucks.

Do you look like a Regular? We're all guilty of occasional lapses, but if you look like you rolled out of a dung heap, the new

people will have no respect for you no matter how competent you are. Anybody can slob it up and look like a member of some other unit. It takes a bit of pride to portray a Regular.

Lastly communicate! I cannot stress this point enough. Communicate to the people who you aspire to command and those you are commanded by! You expect to know what the unit is doing and rightly so. The unit meaning the command structure has that right as well. If you can't make an event, that is fine. You'll be missed, but let us know so we're not wondering and trying to feed someone who isn't there. Make sure it is what you want. If it isn't, stay in the ranks. I need energetic NCOs not ones who have the stripes but no ambition. I look forward to welcoming you to the ranks of the finest NCOs and officers in the hobby. Are you ready?

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting for the 12th US Company A will be held on Saturday, February 9, 2012 2:00 PM Dewitt Community Library. The library address is 3649 Erie Bld E, Syracuse, NY. This is the Shopping town Mall. The library is on the north side,

Elections for corporate officers, military officers and NCO positions will be held. Anyone interested in the military officers or NCO

positions please take the exam posted on the unit web site and bring it to the meeting.

We will also be planning our unit calendar for the upcoming season. As we are in the 150th Civil War Anniversary season there are several National Events. Two of them for the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Chancellorsville and

of course Gettysburg.

We also have our hosted event of the 21st Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend—June 8—9, with an education day on Friday, June 7th.

A Beginners Perspective

A year has passed and I think I can safely speak for Mrs. Camp also by thanking the 12th for making us feel so welcome and part of the family. In this year we have met some very good friends and learned so much. As of yet we have not had the opportunity to attend a large event, but the three events that we did attend (Peterboro, Massena, Erie Canal) were great learning experience and alot of fun. Along the way we met some great and interesting people from other units who we now look forward to seeing at future events.

From the eyes of a new recruit with no experience in re-enacting, I entered into this new hobby with open eyes and open mind. I'll first

start with Drill; this if vital for not only the new recruits, but for the seasoned members also. Learning the basics not only was a must for safety, but also I did notice made the unit look more professional at events. I noted that during drilling it benefited not only the soldiers, but the NCO and the Officers as well. Me personally, I'd like to see more drilling, and possibly incorporate a "drill" for the era dancing.

Events; my first event was Peterboro, and again I find myself with a long list of names to thank for a great learning experience, from teaching me how to properly roll rounds, making sure my new uniform was properly worn, loading and firing the musket and so much more. I also enjoyed passing on a bit

of history during the education day and the subsequent slightly soggy event over the weekend.

From a newly recruited privates perspective, I was never overwhelmed by anything since there was always someone handy to help me with any question I came across. I admit, I'm hooked. The smell of burnt powder, the taste of unburnt powder, the ringing in my ears from 1st Sgt. bellowing orders, the stories of past events, the memories from present events, and of course the new friends we've made from the 12th US, 2 Michigan, 28th NY, just to name a few will keep us coming back.

Respectfully submitted

Private, Shane Camp, 12th US Company A

Let's write

We who do this weird thing called "re enacting" are usually quite clear on why we do it. The same can't be said of spectators at our events, and that can be a problem, especially as the nation grows more concerned about firearms. They often don't grasp the difference between those we use at our events and present-day firearms. They also perceive us as glorifying combat and its bloody aftermath. This, in turn, leads to fewer opportunities for future events and even threatens those we've counted on year after year.

Simply put, we gotta disabuse the public regarding who, why and what we are.

A few of us are driving the rest to contribute to a monthly newsletter. Well, the foregoing is why. Both print and electronic media matter very much and I don't think we can concentrate on one and not the other of these.

Why do you do this? Your reasons certainly parallel mine, but there are differences. Some of you just like to get out and do something different. Some of you feel it is important to recognize your ancestor(s) who participated in this world-changing event. Some of you are simply nuts about this period of history, like that ugly guy in my mirror. But your reasons are best described by you, not by me. Some of you, like me, also believe that younger people can get a better grasp of history when they see it being re-acted, and we think that's important.

History is the roadmap to tomorrow. If we don't know where we've been, we won't know where we need to go from here. We certainly don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past: one Holocaust is quite enough. One pandemic like the "black death" is enough. I could go on, but you get

the picture.

We also must confront the issue of firearms. We need to emphasize that we frown on cowboy attitudes - we're not just "playing guns". At the same time, an accurate portrayal of history MUST include the role firearms have played in human interactions ever since they were invented. Whether or not that role as been generally good or bad is not my point. Understanding the things and helping dispel erroneous ideas about them - well, that is my point. And as Santa Claus rides the Bridgeport fire truck through the falling snow this Saturday morning, my point is also - we need your help. What does reenacting mean to you? You don't need a graduate degree in literature to write for your unit's newsletter; you just need to write - and get it in to Carol at caroljmayers@yahoo.com.

Yr Ob't Servant
Surgeon, Capt. Will Nickel
aka Bill Mayers

21st Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend

June 8 – 9, 2013 will be the 21st Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend. 2013 is the 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, United States Colored Troops (USCT) entering the Civil

War and Peterboro African Americans in the Civil War. One of the focuses of the 2013 Peterboro Civil War weekend will be the USCT. Programs being considered are “Life as a Colored

Troop”, “Frederick Douglas Family Enlisting”, and the “Emancipation Proclamation”. More information as plans are confirmed.

Carol Mayers

Fire on the Rappahannock 150th Fredericksburg–Cpl Denis

December 8th was the date of a reenactment unlike most others seen before. For the day I fell in with a company of approximately 50 rifles representing the 63rd NY. Our very own Capt. Hurd served as one of the LT's. We fell in, took roll, and then marched out to conduct some company drill. This consisted mostly of a street fighting maneuver that we would need later in the day. In short, the company (or platoon) fires, then immediately faces left or right depending on section or platoon, and then marches back along the sides of the attacking column, loads, and cycles back into the column. The battalion then assembled, and we stood along the ridge overlooking the river and the city of Fredericksburg. Below, a detachment of modern National Guard engineers was busy finishing a modern floating bridge across the river. This was the first time the river had been bridged since the pontoon bridges of 1862. Soon the artillery began to fire, and troops representing the 89th NY began to be ferried across the river in reproductions of war period pontoon boats. After a bridgehead was secured, we began our crossing on the bridge. Unfortunately, it was about 6 feet short. Fortunately, the Guardsmen were there to help us through the thigh deep water and up the muddy bank. I was hoisted bodily through the air by a few of them! We formed the company and immediately engaged, pushing the “enemy” back through the same streets as was done 150 years ago. The spectator crowd was very large, and pressed right up to the side of the street, so we split into platoon fronts to keep our flanks a bit away from them for safety's sake. After a few blocks, the objective of our company was apparently finished, so we moved out of the way and stacked arms. Shortly, another neat period moment happened when a slightly flustered reported to our Captain, and stated that his men were having trouble driving the enemy out of a crossroad, and if we could come assist. We were immediately ordered to fall back in, and double quick marched to the needed area. Our appearance, and volley soon left the rebels running and surrendering. The scenario finished here.

The battalion was reformed, and we marched to Federal Hill. This was the farthest forward that Federal artillery were posted during the original battle. We took lunch here, swapped the usual reenactor stories, (including some with a reenactor all the way from Belgium) and got a bunch of laughs from some local Cub Scouts trying some stunts on nearby tree swings. After this respite, we reformed and our battalion commander read to us what Gen. Meagher had told each regiment in the Irish Brigade before their attack on Marye's heights. We then marched toward the heights. Soon we were near, and formed in the order that the actual brigade had made the attack. Our company (63rd NY) was one of the last to go. It was quite stirring to see the first companies run past from a side street with only their tops of their muskets, and their streaming flag go by. The sound of the firing was intense. I can't really accurately describe the ensuing action, but it was loud and intense. Attacking units surged and broke like waves on a beach, and no one made it to the wall.

The traditional Taps ended the scenario, and the spectating crowd mingled with the reenactors for quite a while. Reassembling in the crowd was a challenge, but accomplished eventually. With the band in the lead, we marched through the actual sunken road and left the boxwood sprigs from our caps along the actual stone wall. This was a very moving experience. In perfect step, we continued our march back through town. Upon reaching a rail underpass, the band stepped aside and played their best. The acoustics in the underpass were fantastic, and the cheers from the passing companies were continuous. Back at the pontoon bridge, we found that the engineers had erected a ramp to spare us another soggy trip. They received three hearty cheers for their efforts. We recrossed, said our farewells, and I was soon back on my way to NY. All in all, a fantastic event, and one I will remember for a long time.

Lee Takes Command: The Peninsula in PA - Cpl Denis

On June 14th Zach Wentworth and I traveled to Elizabethtown, PA for a reenactment commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Peninsula campaign. After a mostly uneventful journey, we arrived near dusk. After a quick registration, we parked and walked to the Federal camp. We were not able to immediately find our company, but a company in one of the battalions offered us a spot on their company street, which we accepted. After setting up our wedge tent (thanks for the loaner Garrett!), and settling in a bit, we heard a very familiar accent in the street next to us. It was Simon from the 28th NY, who was in the company we had planned on joining for the weekend. Since we were only one company off from where we were supposed to be, we decided to turn in and move the next morning.

The next morning (after a surprisingly chilly evening) we awoke to musicians call and had fallen in by the time reveille had finished. Our company from the weekend consisted of about 50 privates from at least 8 units. As it turned out, our company was only about 4 men short of being bigger than the rest of the battalion combined! Most of the rest of the battalion consisted of the Mifflin Guard, while our company was made up of USV, Army of the Ohio, Birney's, and several independents. Officers consisted of the Captain, a 1st LT, 2 Sergeants, and 4 Corporals. (I was chosen ahead of time to be one of these) The next order of business after breakfast was a dress parade. If you've never had the chance to participate in one that is well conducted, with field music, etc, they are a neat experience. Our company was the sixth company in the battalion, and was the left flank company.

An excellent company drill was then conducted. Several lessons were learned here about the difference between wheels on the march and stationary, and the importance of the center set of corporals in maintaining the alignment during a wheel. Getting 50+ soldiers moving together in these evolutions is an experience! During a particularly chaotic attempt at "Company into line" one of the officers commented that we looked like a flock of chickens. Many of the following maneuvers were conducted with a considerable amount of clucks, squawks, and crows. Ended up being a bit of a period moment.

Following a requisite visit to sutler's row, the Federal troops were assembled and marched about a half mile on abandoned rail bed with no modern intrusions. Discussion among the troops was almost totally in tune with the period, and events of the campaign. Upon reaching a small, we conducted safety checks, and then the most frequent soldiering task began, waiting. After a half hour or so respite, we reformed and marched out into a larger clearing, where the federal battalions began to deploy. Our company was requested to deploy as skirmishers and move across the clearing to the woods on the opposite side. Though we had not drilled this as a company, it was smartly conducted and later commented favorable on by others. One thing to note here is that a 50 company of that size covers a ton of room when at standard intervals. In hindsight, probably only half of the company should have deployed, with the other half in reserve between the skirmish line and the main body, but it worked OK in the end.

Shortly, the rebels appeared like ghost from the trees. Some sharp skirmishing occurred, but we were steadily driven back. Shortly, we were ordered to rally on the battalion, and we quickly did so. From here, the Confederate battalions deployed and a general engagement began. A single artillery piece in our lines went into action, and the advance was temporarily checked. However, they began to drive us back. At this point, I went down, and listed for the next half hour as our forces were driven back, and the Rebels swept over and past my spot. This was a recreation of most of the opening stages of the Battle of Seven Pines. I rate it pretty highly in many ways, but the best was yet to come.

Late in the afternoon, we formed again and marched to a different location, in a gently sloping field, with a wood line on the opposite side. We were now representing the 13th NY, originally from Rochester, and this was to be the Battle of Gaines Mill. In the gathering gloom, the rebels again appeared, advanced, and were stopped several times. Gun smoke hung thick in the air and clung to the ground. After several assaults, our lines had enough though. At first in ones and twos, and then in mass, our lines began to broke and run. Several units did retire in order (as they had 150 years ago) but ours was not one. Several soldiers were taken prisoner, but most ran. This was one probably the best battle scenario I've ever participated in (at least up to then)

After a dinner of slab bacon, potatoes, and onion, we turned in for another cold night. One of the neat things about this event was that more or less all of the participants brought and cooked period food. (Though hidden coolers did produce some refreshments after dark)

Sunday morning brought us to the Battle of Glendale. This was the only scenario where the public was invited to come spectate. This scenario was a little more static than the previous days efforts, but did have some back and forth assaults for capture/recapture of a disable battery. The final push even involved some (planned ahead) hand-to-hand combat, it was very exciting.

After the battle we broke camp, said our farewells and headed for home. Overall, this was an excellent event. Amenities were plentiful (though the water had a funny taste,) scenarios were accurate, well paced, and never broke down. (watching the 5th NY and Wheat's tigers nearly wipe each other out at Gain's mill was pretty moving.) The willingness and ability of reenactors from across the wide spectrum if the hobby to work together is a good thing, and I hope to see it spread to other events. Odds are good that further events of this type will be hosted, and I plan on attending at least some of them. I hope that others will too.

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THE REGIMENTAL DISPATCH:

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Upcoming Events



Friday, January 11, 2013—Drill 7:00 pm, Presbyterian Church in Oneida

Saturday, January 19, 2013—Annual USV meeting, Mechanicsburg, PA

Friday, February 8, 2013—Drill 7:00 pm. Presbyterian Church in Oneida

Saturday, February 9, 2013—Annual meeting—2:00 PM, Dewitt Community Library

Friday, March 8, 2013—Drill 7:00 pm. Presbyterian Church in Oneida

Friday, April 12, 2013—Drill 7:00 pm. Presbyterian Church in Oneida

May 3—5, 2013—150th Anniversary of Chancellorsville

Friday, May 10, 2013—Drill 7:00 pm. Presbyterian Church in Oneida

Saturday, May 25, 2013—North Syracuse's Family Festival

Monday, May 27, 2013—North Syracuse's Memorial Day parade

June 7—9, 2013—21st

Annual Peterboro Civil War Weekend

Sunday, October 13, 2013—Wolf Mountain

Saturday, November 9, 2013—Veterans Expo and Parade—Syracuse, Fairgrounds

Saturday, November 16, 2013—Remembrance Day Parade, Gettysburg, PA

Please check the website, yahoo group for updates and information.