

THE REGIMENTAL DISPATCH: NEWSLETTER OF THE 12TH US INFANTRY COMPANY A

Volume One, Issue One. Winter/ Spring 2006



Caption: Major Allen inspects the infantry at Newark Valley. Photo courtesy of Peggy Reilly.

Upcoming Events

Sat., Mar. 11, 2006 – Drill 2:30pm, Dance and Potluck supper 5:00pm. Army Reserve Center, Liverpool

Sat., Apr. 8, 2006, Drill 5:00pm, Army Reserve Center, Liverpool.

Sat. May 13, 2006, Drill 5:00pm Army reserve Center, Liverpool

Sat. May 20, 2006 Dance and Potluck supper in period attire 5:30pm Masonic Temple, Oswego Street, Liverpool.

Please check our website www.the12thUS.com for updates and changes!

Bring leathers and rifle to all drill sessions

Let your friends know! We like seeing new faces! (Old ones too!)

Masthead:

Commanding Officer: Capt. Jim Hurd
Corporate President: Mrs. Maria Killius
Editor: 1st Sgt. Neil K. MacMillan

Change of Command 1st Sgt. Neil K. MacMillan

Major Allen has stepped down as the day-to-day commander of the unit and as unit president. He will remain with the unit at his current rank. This was a hard decision on his part and there are several reasons why he chose this path. The major is still an active member of the unit and retains a position on the Board of Directors. Major Allen is still the ranking officer in the unit and available for advise and training. I strongly advice we avail ourselves of his vast knowledge and experience.

Captain Hurd assumed interim duties as commander until earlier this month when he was elected unit commander for a three-year term. Transitions like this are always stressful so I know each and every one of you will give Major Allen and Captain Hurd all the assistance they may require. Very respectfully, Neil K. MacMillan, 1st Sgt, Company A, 12th Regiment United States Infantry.

Election Results!

1st Sgt. Neil K. MacMillan

The 12thUS Infantry Civil War Living History Company held their annual business meeting and elected corporate officers.

Maria Killius was elected Corporate President. Maria will serve a one-year term and has served on several committees for the unit in the past, including chairing the Erie Canal Village Planning Committee and serving on the Election Committee.

Sgt Charles Poltenson was elected Corporate Secretary, a position he was appointed to last year.

Peggy Reilly was elected Financial Officer. Peggy has held this position since last year.

Captain James D. Hurd was elected to a three-year term as Unit Commander and as such will be in charge of the day-to-day running of the unit.

The elections prove this unit can move forward from adversity and continue to function with competence and élan. I know you join me in wishing our newly elected officials the best in their new jobs. Three cheers for all of the! Huzzah! Huzzah! Huzzah!



Captain Hurd presents Major Allen with a lifetime achievement award. Photo courtesy of Peggy Reilly

Announcements

Registration for 1st Bull Run is due March 15. Cost is \$15 for registration and \$15 for mess. Mess must be paid with registration.

Congratulations to Private Matthew Gurniak on his acceptance to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. Three cheers!

Congratulations to Corinne Armstrong on her acceptance as a foreign exchange student. Miss Armstrong will be studying in Slovakia this fall.

Lancet and Laudanum: Heat.

Capt. Bill Mayers, Assistant Regimental Surgeon

Though we are “just playacting” when we reenact the events of the American Civil War, there are certain steps we need to take to ensure our safety and well-being at reenactment events. Most of us are well aware of the rules for the proper handling of our weapons and those who are not will most assuredly learn quickly under the-ahem- “gentle tutelage” of the First sergeant and training officers. However, reminders and refresher sessions are appropriate for all of us old-timer and fresh fish alike. The same goes for the matter of attending to our physical well being while on the field

Gentlemen, it's hot out there. At least, everyone will agree, it sure was this past season. We roasted at event after event, and there were some anxious moments now and then as, in the heat of battle, some of us overdid it and began to show signs of heat injury. Gentlemen (and ladies: women certainly aren't immune to high temperatures and humidity), this can become deadly in a matter of minutes even for the youngest and heartiest of us. Here's where the surgeon plays more than a reenactors role: He's got to remind officers and NCOs to remind everybody that prevention is a heck of a lot more pleasant than recovery. Drink at least a quart of water before stepping off for battle, and carry a full canteen when you go. Stop and drink from that thing during the battle. My hope is that everyone's canteen is empty by the time Taps is sounded.

If a person does drop from the heat, or is directed off the field by an Nco or officer who suspects the person has become overheated, immediate treatment is necessary. The treatment is simply to cool the patient down fast. The person

should be brought to a shady spot, remove the woolen coat and vest if one is worn and unbutton the shirt. Sponge the patient down with cold water and give them copious amounts of water to drink. Contact the Attending EMT and direct him to the affected person so a proper medical evaluation can be done.

This past season, I treated a young man who'd become overheated, who once he began t feel somewhat better wanted to put his gear back on and return to the fight. While that would have been accepted in 1864, it's not a good idea. Re-injury, and yes, overheating is an injury, is much more likely at such a time. Please Folks, reenacting isn't going away and there will be another battle. In a situation like this, be content to sit this one out and be sure you're well hydrated in time for the next one.

An experienced campaigner asked me at an event this past summer whether I'd suggest a sports drink over plain water. I admit that the sales hype makes sports drinks appear ideal, however, they're actually not as good for you as is plain water. People naturally like variety, and a cheap alternative, a heck of a lot cheaper than sports drinks, to a boring canteen is lemonade. Get the sugar free stuff. Any brand is acceptable so go with the cheap stuff. Another alternative might be to try and talk the mess sergeant into making up a good supply of switchel. Spend the money you save on insect repellent and sun block.

Insects are a part of life out there. Bug repellent is cheap insurance against being eaten alive. You can use the spray stuff or the lotion; there are several brands out there and they're all good. My personal preference is Deep Woods Off® because this product contains Sun block, another cheap and easy protection against the elements. Sure, I can give you an ointment for sunburn and another for

bug bites, but those aren't nearly as effective as preventing those complications in the first place. Use the product and then leave the container in camp. It will last through the longest battle. That's enough for now. Until we meet again, I remain, your obedient servant, Assistant Surgeon Captain Bill Mayers 12th United States Infantry.



*Caption; "Doc" Mayers tends to the wounded at Erie Canal Village 2004
Photo courtesy of Peggy Reilly*

First Call: The War you Don't see in the History Books 1st Sgt Neil K. MacMillan

It's February. It's bitterly cold and we've nowhere to go, so let's take a walk, you and I and explore some lesser known facts about America's bloodiest conflict.

A Rose by any Other Name

The Civil War was known by a wide ranging assortment of names. Among these are; The Great Rebellion, The Second War of Independence, The War of Northern Aggression, The War Between the States and my personal favorite told to me by the widow of a Confederate colonel, The Late Unpleasantness. (It has an ever so genteel touch to it.)

Some Firsts

The Civil War has been called the first modern war and while the tactics and medicine didn't keep pace with the

technology, the statement is by and large accurate. The most telling advances came in naval warfare. The War Between the States saw the first use of armored ships. Ungainly and barely seaworthy ships like the USS Monitor and the CSS Virginia paved the way for the destroyers, cruisers, frigates and battleships of the modern navy. The war also saw the first practical use of a submarine and the first deaths in that branch of naval warfare. When the CSS Hunley sank the USS Housatonic a revolution in sea borne warfare that would have consequences unforeseen for fifty years.

The Civil War also saw joint amphibious operations. Although the Mexican War saw amphibious landings at Vera Cruz, the operations in the Civil War were the first to be jointly planned and conducted. The tactic would not come into its own until the Second World War, but the lessons were learned on the coast of the Carolinas during the War Between the States.

Average Statistics

The average Civil War soldier, be he Yank or Reb, was 21 years old. He stood approximately five feet, eight inches tall and weighed 140 pounds. Until serving in the army he had likely never been more than 25 miles from his home and most would never stray that far after the war. He was a religious man. Most were farmers particularly in the South, but even in the North most came from an agricultural background. In the Union army fully a third and almost a half by some estimates were foreign born.

The Germans were the largest ethnic group in the army followed closely by the Irish. Most regiments were raised by the various states. They would pepper our language with their talk giving our language some of our most frequently

used slang today including brogan for show fro the Irish word bróg for shoe and the word slim from the German word schlimm. Language is a big thing and the Civil War affected it in a large way but I'll save that for another article

I hope you enjoyed our stroll. Come back soon and explore more of the Civil War with me.



Caption: 1st Sgt MacMillan emphasizes a point at Peterboro 2004. Photo courtesy of Peggy Reilly

Some safety tips

- Ladies should avoid the fire particularly if they are wearing hoops. Fire was the leading cause of accidental death in the 1860s.
- Before using your canteen rinse it with a mixture of bleach and water to kill all the microscopic livestock. Make sure you rinse it thoroughly.
- If you smoke, don't while handling black powder. You could get more smoking excitement in Marlboro country than you bargained for.

-Excessive alcohol consumption will leave you dehydrated. That's part of what a hangover is.

CLASSIFIEDS

Joe Jadhon and Jim Fitzgerald are looking for a ride to Bull Run .If anyone can help. Contact Capt. Hurd.

Dues are due on March 1st! Please remit them as soon as possible. Make the check or money order payable to the 12thUS Infantry for \$20.per family and \$7.50 for insurance per person.

Your humble newsletter editor wants articles from anyone willing to submit. If you want to see your name in print, here's your chance. I'm looking for ideas too!

Good Reading

Hardtack and Coffee, John D. Billings, Bison Books. A vivid and detailed account of the day-to-day life of the average enlisted man in the Union infantry.

Sykes Regular Infantry Division, 1861-1864 Timothy J. Reese 1990 McFarland Publishing. The history of the Regulars during the Civil War. I highly recommend this book if you want a good history of the 12th US during the war.

Next Issue

An overview of Bull Run.
Lancet and Laudanum "Doc" Mayers
The Home Front View One of our ladies
Commander's Corner Capt. Hurd
Safety officer's column
First Call 1st Sgt. MacMillan
And more photos!