

# Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association  
2017– Edition 6 – May

## Upcoming Civil War Events Sponsored Events

**Rich Mountain** – July 14-16 Beverly and on the battlefield.

### Events Recommended by WVRA members

**Living History** – May 5, Morgantown (see below)

**New Market, Va** – May 20-21 USV sanctioned [www.vmi.edu](http://www.vmi.edu)

**Grafton National Cemetery** – May 26 (contact Mark Tennant)

**Jackson Family Cemetery, Clarksburg** – May 28 CANCELED

**McConnellsville, Ohio** – July 8-10

**War Comes to Monroe County** - Union, W. Va., August 25-27

**Cedar Creek** – October 6-8 USV Sanctioned  
**Other – 2017**

**On to Richmond** – June 2-4

**Gettysburg** – July 1-3

**Jackson's Mill** – Labor Day Weekend

### **Other Time Periods**

None at thistime

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Centuries of History featuring the Battle of Rich Mountain

The WVRA has voted to SPONSOR the Beverly Heritage Days – Centuries of History, Featuring the Battle of Rich Mountain Reenactment on July 14, 15 and 16. Activities will take place at Beverly and at Field of Fire location at Camp Garnett.

This year will be a "better-than-ever joint event to commemorate the Battle of Rich Mountain and history of nearby Beverly, Randolph County. Civil War camps and reenactment on the Battlefield park property will be joined by timeline living history and multi-period camps in Beverly. Battle reenactment, living history scenarios, displays and music from the range of periods will bring exciting and educational activities for our visitors. Activities for spectators and participants will be shared between the two locations."

Go to [beverlyheritagecenter.org](http://beverlyheritagecenter.org) to learn how to register. Also the link can be found on the WVRA-The Trans-Allegheny Soldiers Aid Society Facebook page.

### Grafton National Cemetery Lantern Tour

Mark Tennant received confirmation from Kevin Stead, Grafton, City Manager that the National Cemetery Lantern Tour is officially approved for Friday, May 26, 2017 at 8:30 pm. This is at "old" National Cemetery on Walnut Street near Grafton/Taylor Co. Library, not the "new National Cemetery at Pruntytown.

Anyone willing to help Mark Tennant please contact him now (304-363-0935). Tour usually lasts approx. 1 and 1/2 hours. There will be a catered meal at 6 pm at Graton city park for reenactors and gas money will be available for those who want it. Those who have them, please bring candle /kerosene lanterns. Hope for good weather.

## APRIL 29 MEETING CANCELED

The Saturday April 29 at 1 pm at the Christ Episcopal Church Parish House in Clarksburg, West Virginia has been CANDELED. No additional meetings have been scheduled as of press time for this newsletter.

## New By-Laws

The By-law revisions were approved at the March meeting. The primary changes were detailed in the last meeting, but once again the main change will allow other time period reenactors to join the WVRA. Also the new by-laws combine the office Secretary and Treasury into one office when that is needed.

Anyone wishing a copy of the by-laws can contact me to obtain a copy.

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## **Jackson Family Cemetery Ceremony - CANCELED**

This event has been canceled. Tonya Daft reports that a number of issues have prevented this event from taking place. It is CANCELED.

## **New Market**

The USV 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, of which the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia is a member, will portray the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia at the annual New Market reenactment this year, May 20 and 21. This is a quite an honor for the First, once again. Please sign up now to attend!

Go to [www.vmi.edu](http://www.vmi.edu) to learn how to register.

## **Droop Mountain**

Bryan's Battery and the WVRA have been discussing the possibility of holding the Droop Mountain reenactment in October of 2017. The WVRA has offered to help and is waiting to hear from the battery. Stay tuned for further developments.

## **Living History – Morgantown**

Covenant Christian School in Morgantown is asking reenactors to participate in their living history program on Friday, May 5 from 9:30 – 3:00. The organizer, former artillery reenactor Tiffney Batton, has requested that we reply to her by April 30. Her contact information is [tiffbatton@hotmail.com](mailto:tiffbatton@hotmail.com) or 304-288-4877.

## **WVRA Officers 2017 (executive board)**

President – Jim Barnes

Vice President – John Brasuk

Treasurer /Secretary – Jack Rush

Newsletter editor - Chuck Critchfield\*

Website – Peter Baxter\*

1<sup>st</sup> W. Va. Rep – Chuck Critchfield

25<sup>th</sup> Va. Rep – Tim Glaser

1<sup>st</sup> Va. Cavalry – John Brasuk

Artillery – Stormy Brasuk

TASAS – Diane Tennant

\* Non-voting member of executive board

**\*\*\* 155 Years Ago \*\*\***

## **Moving About the Shenandoah and Luray Valleys**

As March moved into April, the First (West) Virginia remained near Strasburg, Virginia. What would unfold in April was Stonewall Jackson's slow retreat southward, while Nathaniel Banks' Federal command hesitantly followed him up the Valley. By the end of the month, the Confederates were at the Southern end of Massanutten Mountain waiting on the Federals.

Turner Ashby's cavalry watched and skirmished with the Northern troops, including the First. By the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, both sides faced each other at Rude's Hill north of New Market, an important road junction. Here a road moved eastward through Massanutten into the Luray Valley, the only such road through the Mountain northward. From this position, Jackson blocked Banks' further movement southward and could watch the gap in Massanutten should any Federal force appear from that direction.

To this point, Joshua Winters in Company G, made note of General Shields reviewing his division (including the First). The "devishin got in one big field. He rode out in a buggy. It was a big croud of peapell."

Jackson lingered only a short time after Banks' arrival opposite the Confederate position at Rudes Hill. He dropped back to Harrisonburg and then eastward to Conrad's Store from where he could move north, east or west. Meanwhile the Federals moved forward into New Market and from there Banks sent a detachment of 1,000 men or more through the gap in Massanutten into the Luray or Page Valley. On April 30, the First was sent to reinforce this detachment.

"On the 26<sup>th</sup> the regiment hailed with delight the appearance of Colonel Thoburn, who had just rejoined the command, though yet suffering from his wound.

So as April ended, the First was at Columbia Bridge, on the South Fork of the Shenandoah, watching for Confederates. April had been relatively quiet. May would not be.

- ***From History of the First Regiment West Virginia Infantry by C. J. Rawling, and Civil War Letters and Diary of Joshua Winters, edited by WVRA member Elizabeth Davis Swiger***

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## Living History – University High School

On Friday April 21<sup>st</sup>, a number of us had the pleasure and honor of taking part in the living history program organized by the Civil War Trust's 2016 National Teach of the Year, Phil Caskey at University High School outside of Morgantown.

Hundreds of middle school and high school students from Monongalia County schools visited the living history site adjacent to University HS. About 15-20 living historians were divided into 9 or 10 stations and students rotated from station to station to learn about the American Civil War and the people who fought in that war.

The students came in three waves. The first wave was comprised of sophomores at UHS and unfortunately was interrupted rather rudely by a cold rain. Those students retreated to the shelter of the school where Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln made a presentation in one of the gymnasiums at the schools to the wet students.

The second wave came in the form of eighth graders from Westwood, Mountaineer and Clay-Battelle middle schools. Those students did make the complete circuit of reenactor stations, finishing in the sunshine that was baking the humidity out of the ground. Those students also got a chance to hear the Lincolns in the gym.

After lunch the third wave was open to all other students at UHS and a few of them wandered down to the field below the school to talk to us. At the end of this group, about a dozen of us did a skirmish line demonstration across the field.

From the WVRA, John and Stormy Brasuk held down one station, with the help of a couple of members. In addition to the live fire of their artillery piece, they were presenting short programs medical and cavalry.

### Sites of Interest

[Beverlyheritagecenter.org](http://Beverlyheritagecenter.org) – Beverly Heritage Center  
[WVRA.org](http://WVRA.org) – our website  
<http://www.wvmasondixoncwr.org/> -- W. Va.  
Mason Dixon Civil War Round Table (Morgantown)  
Civil War Trust – [civilwar.org](http://civilwar.org)

## REVIEWS

### Yankees, Rebels and Rabble Rousers

The Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation presented an excellent symposium on April 1 in Beverly on the second floor of the IOOF Hall. Upon arrival, I found a number of displays set up including an excellent display of West Virginia Federal hospital/medical carte de vistas, put together by Rick Wolfe. Terry Lowry and Hunter Lesser were present with a supply of books written by those two respective authors.

Rick Wolfe kicked off the program and then opened the schedule with a very interesting presentation on a man I new little about, but one who was involved in West Virginia Civil War history, William Powell The Iron Man. Powell was one of those fascinating 19<sup>th</sup>-century stories of self-made men, successful in business and politics who rise to further prominence leading men in the Civil War. Powell was associated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> West Virginia Cavalry and saw plenty of action in the war. He was wounded and captured, spending time in Libby Prison before being released.

Robert E. Lee's Feuding Generals: Wise vs. Floyd was the title of Hunter Lesser's presentation. Both those generals saw action in West Virginia's mountains during the war, both on the Confederate side.

The third presentation, Colonel Joseph Thoburn and the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign from Scott Patchan, had to be canceled, but was more than ably replaced with Terry Lowry's Battle of Charleston. The program closed with Soldiers, Statesman and Politicians: Commanders of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ohio by Dr. Billy Joe Peyton.

Beverly Heritage Center at 304-637-7424 or [info@beverlyheritagecenter.org](mailto:info@beverlyheritagecenter.org).

- C. L. Critchfield

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Figure 1 John Brasuk stands within his impressive display.

At our other station, Mark Tennant and Ralph McCready braved the rainy night and were joined by Christ Taylor, Kevin Skaggs, Ron Wenig and yours truly to present programs on flags, surgeons and Ralph on Allen Pinkerton.

We were allowed only about 10-12 minutes per group so the program moved quickly. Also included in the groups were Eric Smallwood's station, the 27<sup>th</sup> Virginia, Barbour Grays, the Daughters of the American Revolution, a medical display and some unattached reenactors.



Figure 2 Ron Wenig discusses the role of surgeons in the Civil War to middle school students from Monongalia County. By this time in the morning, the rain had passed, despite the rain clouds over the UHS field house.

This was a worthwhile effort that reached hundreds of students and helped to educate the students on history. The Lincoln reenactors were excellent and I would have liked to spend more time hearing their presentation. Phil Caskey plans to do this next year.

■ C. L. Critchfield

## Military Organization

Civil War

1st Virginia Cavalry

UNIT REP - John Brasuk

Captain - John Brasuk

Sergeant -

Corporal -

Events - TBD

1st West Virginia Infantry

UNIT REP - Mark Tennant

Captain - Chuck Critchfield

Sergeant - Ross Wetherell

Corporal - Vacant

Events - UHS Living History, New Market, Beverly/Rich Mountain

25th Virginia Infantry

UNIT REP - Tim Glaser

Captain - Jeff Goff

Sergeant - Greg Watterson

Corporal - Jay Allman

Events - Beverly/Rich Mountain

1st West Virginia Artillery

UNIT REP - Stormy Brasuk

Battery A

TBD

Battery B

Sergeant - Stormy Brasuk

Events - Reenactor Appreciation at Gettysburg, March 10-12, the UHS event and Artillery School.

Trans-Allegheny Soldiers Aid Society

UNIT REP - Diane Tennant

Union Rep - Debbie Rush

Confederate Rep - vacant

Events - TBD

## Editor's Corner

The Editor's chance to speak

PERSONALS – Jim Barnes has been experiencing some health issues which have kept him out of the field recently. Ed ChapdeLaine has suffered some setbacks in his recovery from a broken leg that will delay his return to the field. Jack Daft has likewise undergone a procedure that has kept him out of the field.

MEMBERSHIP – Please renew your membership for the 2017 reenacting season. Remember that in the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia, insurance coverage is dependent on your paid membership within the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia. Only three members, Charles McCormick, Tag Ireland and Stormy Brasuk have paid to have the newsletter mailed.

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NRA – the executive committee is investigating the possibility of insuring the entire group under a policy from the NRA.

THANK YOU – Thanks to Peter Baxter for his help with the Dispatch.

FOR SALE – Hunter Lesser has advised that anyone who wants a signed copy of *The Civil War in Lewis County, WV*, by Roy Bird Cook, he might be able to oblige.

TRIVIA QUESTION – In Whitelaw Reid's definitive study of Ohio regiments in the Civil War, which West Virginia unit is listed as one of the regiments from Ohio? I once heard Gary Gallagher, famous Civil War historian say that every student of the Civil War, no every student period, should know the five components of the Compromise of 1850. After all the Compromise plays a big role in the coming of the Civil War. Can you name them?

Please do not send any correspondence to the PO Box in Buckhannon. Membership information can be sent to me. Remember you must be a member of record to qualify for membership benefits. To be covered under the respective insurance policies that the 1<sup>st</sup> West Virginia and the 25<sup>th</sup> Virginia infantry units participate in, you must be a member of record. TASAS members who are also spouses of 1<sup>st</sup> W. Va. members are covered under the USV insurance. Insurance questions about the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry should be directed to the Unit Representative.

Yours truly, has no connection to the TASAS-WVRA Facebook page and takes no responsibility for it. Nor do I have any responsibility for the WVRA Facebook page. I would suggest that the TASAS-WVRA Facebook page seems to have more up to date information.

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This newsletter is available free to members by email. It will be mailed by US Mail for \$10 per year.

The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the WVRA

WVRA website - [wvra.org](http://wvra.org)

Facebook – [WVRA – TransAllegheny Soldiers Aid Society](https://www.facebook.com/WVRA-TransAlleghenySoldiersAidSociety)

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Church the memory of his comrades has been nearest his heart. Arthur Lawson is a young Englishman, a man of wealth, who has made large investments in that blue grass section, and spends a portion of his time there. When he



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Chris Taylor and Mark Tennant at University High School April 21.

