

# Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association  
2018 – Edition VIII - July

## Upcoming Civil War Events

### Sponsored Events

**Beverly (see below) - July 13-15**

### Events Recommended by WVRA

#### members

**2018**

**McConnellsville** - August 3-5 (contact Ralph McCready -see below)

**Cedar Creek** - Cancelled

**Remembrance Day** - November

#### **Other Events**

**Bulltown** - October 12 -14, 2018 contact Sam Krafft (cwarcapt@yahoo.com)

**Droop Mountain** - October 12-14, 2018.

#### **Other Time Periods**

**Beverly Centuries of History** - July 13-15

Editor's note - if you plan to attend events, please work with your Unit Rep.

shops anchored by the Beverly Heritage Center (BHC).

For reenactors for Beverly Heritage Days Camping is open any time Friday. If anyone wants to arrive Thursday, that's OK too, but let BHC know so they'll be ready for you. 304-637-7424 for any questions.

BHC will be open early-to-late for restrooms and facilities. There is one shower, upstairs, reenactors can use - bring your own soap and towel, take turns. The building will be locked overnight for security, but each camp will have a portopot and access to water.

Friday evening, 7 to 9, is a free welcome **ice cream social** for all reenactors and volunteers. Come by BHC to say hi. Please register to get your meal ticket either when you arrive, or during the ice cream social.

Reenactors are encouraged to provide living history scenarios in your camp or around town. Any drill or demonstrations in the Town Square or in your camps are encouraged. We are offering a "children's drill" at 1 Saturday - if a couple of folks familiar with Civil War drill could help with that, contact Terry Hackney at the event.

We hope all will participate in scheduled activities:

History Parade - line up by 10:45 am Saturday near the World War II camp

Civilian presentations and Social - Saturday afternoon

Dance - Saturday evening, 7:30

Weapons Demonstrations - for all periods. 2 pm Sunday

Thanks to all for making this event a success!!  
Phyllis

Editor's Note: nothing is planned at Camp Garnett or on Rich Mountain.

## McConnellsville

The annual reenactment at McConnellsville, Ohio, will be held in August this year. Normally held in July, the event has been moved to August 3-5 according to WVRA member Ralph McCready (himself).

## Next Meeting

None scheduled at this time

### **Correction**

In the last issue two after action reports were published from the Ravenswood and Philippi events. I stated that these two reports had been submitted by John Brasuk. They were in fact, written and submitted by **Stormy Brasuk**. My apologies to Stormy for the error. We appreciate her efforts to report on past events.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Beverly Heritage Days**

Editor's Note - the WVRA has voted to make this a sponsored event.

Living historians from 1750 until 1950 eras are invited join our timeline heritage event to share the history of settlement, conflict, and daily life in the Tygart Valley. Beverly, West Virginia was the original county seat of Randolph County, and was a crucial crossroads through settlement, Civil War and 20<sup>th</sup> Century history. Located 6 miles south of Elkins along US Rt 219, Beverly is an active heritage tourism destination with town historic district, Rich Mountain Battlefield, and multiple museums and

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Ralph writes: "This year we are changing the battlefield for Sunday's battle and having it at the fairgrounds. We will be reenacting Buffington Island. Have reenactors contact me for more information and registration forms. E-mail: [irishman1020@hotmail.com](mailto:irishman1020@hotmail.com) or phone: 740 - 638-2126.

## Reenactment Event is Cancelled

*This was posted on the Cedar Creek Website*

New circumstances beyond the control of the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, and our paramount concern for the safety of our reenactors and visitors, have forced us to cancel this year's reenactment. We do not take this matter, the community of supporters, or the public interest lightly, and we have made this decision with the best of intentions.

*(Editor's Note: Although rumors regarding the reason for the cancellation are rampant, I have heard nothing official other than the above statement.)*

### Treasurer's Report

For the period June 1 0 June 30, 2018

Beginning Balance \$3,598.26

Credits

Membership \$15.00

Ending Balance \$3,613.26

*Submitted by Jack Rush July 10, 2018*

## AFTER ACTION REPORTS

### Gettysburg 155

As big reenactments go, this was a well organized and the battle scenarios were pretty good. This event was held by the folks of the Gettysburg Anniversary Committee up north of town at the Table Rock Road site. This is the group that has been sponsoring this event for many years and their experience and the support from other Gettysburg organizations was evident.

Other pertinent facts that come with any event review, be it verbal around the campfire or formal in a review include: about 6,000 reenactors (others

claim more); four-day event; 6 infantry battles, 2 cavalry and the Gettysburg address; good amenities and two days of very hot weather and two days of more comfortable conditions. There were plenty of sutlers, although there seem to be fewer and fewer; plenty of side demonstrations such as a firing contest between mortar crews each day that culminated in a spectacular explosion and numerous spectators unafraid to ask questions.

I fell in with the 2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery (which was an infantry unit). Kevin Skaggs commanded the 1st Regiment of the United States Volunteers, Ron Wenig was surgeon for the same regiment. His wife Debbie attended and Chris Carroll joined us on Saturday. If there were other members present, I am not aware.

The battle scenarios seemed to be better organized than many large events. We didn't seem to get those "cluster" events that often plague big events. Many times there are more reenactors than space; or units that fail to follow scenario (there was a bit of that) or just plain failure to plan anything that resembles the scenario. The scenarios that were reenacted: The militia vs. Confederate regulars; First Corps vs. Confederates on first day; the 11th Corps routed from the Brickyard also first day; the Wheatfield; Anderson's charge at the Federal Center (2nd day) and of course, Pickett's Charge. Pickett's Charge was a bit rushed I thought, but then again, I was a picket at the Emmetsburg Pike and was chased by the Confederates back to the main line. Although everything on the Federal front was carefully planned and to a point, executed better than any other Pickett's Charge scenario I have done, this is still a complicated scenario and there were a few flubs.

The weather was brutal on Thursday when I arrived and continued so until Friday evening when relief from the west blew through the camps. Friday evening temperatures actually dropped to around 60 and Saturday below 60. But Thursday was around 90 and until a slight breeze arrived, was dangerously hot for those unprepared. Four days of reenacting, living in the open and general wear and tear led to equipment and physical issues. My rifle went inoperative with a broken sear spring. This led to my first visit to the sutlers, only to discover there was no gunsmith. The North States sutler was selling gun parts and he and I managed a field repair. My tent is worn to a point that when I took it down Sunday afternoon, it ripped to a point that it is no longer field worthy. Repairs will be necessary for Beverly.

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And of course the old body had a stiff back and stiff left knee at the end of event.

This was an enjoyable event accentuated by a good group of pards in the 2nd Connecticut who welcomed me into their camp with open arms. And by the way they did add me to their daily duty roster. Big events will always be my preference. The music, the sheer spectacle of large numbers of troops, horses, cannon and theater, will always remain an attraction to me.

## OTHER FEATURES/NEWS

### FOR SALE

Former member Rob Freeman is selling some of his Civil War period clothing that was worn by himself and his father. He is selling shirts, a military vest and civilian vest, a almost new Union frock coat, a Confederate sack coat with Virginia buttons and two pairs of sky blue pants. Contact Pam Nicholson [jmpnicholson@aol.com](mailto:jmpnicholson@aol.com) or Rob at [rfreeman1373@gmail.com](mailto:rfreeman1373@gmail.com) for more information.

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Jim Barnes reports that at the Clarksburg Gun Show, a National Guard recruiter stopped by and said he had a nice Civil War officer's desk he wants to sell if anyone is interested contact Jim Barnes.

## 155 Years Ago

July 1863

### The 1st West Virginia

The Gettysburg campaign was coming to a climax in the fields out side of the town. The First was still stationed on the western edge of the Confederate advance, in Cumberland, watching the B&O. Rawling writes at this time "much alarm" was felt as the troops were waiting to see the outcome of Lee's invasion and how it would affect them.

Rawlin provides little detail about the regiment after Lee's defeat at Gettysburg. The massive Army of Northern Virginia turns south and begins to move on July 4 back to Virginia. This adds to the alarm in Cumberland and these enemy army moves closer to the troops guarding the B&O.

Winters writes that on July 4 the First was awakened by "30 shots out of the artillary for the 4th." Winters relates in this same letter the sad story of the first

lieutenant of Company G who had been under arrest for two weeks. "(h)e got a dispatch that his child was ded and thay woodant give him a furlow and he went on his own hook. (W)hen he got off the cars at Wheeling thay took him and sent him back. (H)e didnt get to see his child. (I) dont no what thay will do with him. (I) hope thay will let him clear."

July 6, with Lee's army in retreat, the First, along with other troops moved 12 miles towards Lee's columns stopping at Flintstone. The next day they arrived at Hancock putting them closer to Confederates who were trapped against the swollen Potomac River. The Federals had gathered six infantry regiments, two batteries of artillery and Ringgold Cavalry in the area. Confederate mules were captured, proving that Lee's men were not too far away. On the 10th the troops around Hancock moved east again and contacted the cavalry screen protecting Lee's army, skirmishing as they advanced to Clear Spring, Maryland, now just a day's march from the main Confederate force near Hagerstown.

The next day the Army of Northern Virginia began crossing the falling Potomac, escaping into West Virginia and then into the Virginia. The First, part of Kelley's Brigade along with General William Averall's forces, moved to Williamsport and would spend the next several day's moving back and forth across the Potomac. At times they encountered Southern pickets and many stragglers were captured, but no major engagement of any type was initiated. Lee's men had moved well south. By the 31st, the First was camped at Hedgesville, West Virginia.

*From "History of the First Regiment West Virginia Infantry" by C. J. Rawling and "Civil War Letters and Diary of Joshua Winter - A Private in the Union Army Company G, First Western Virginia Volunteer Infantry" edited by WVRA member Elizabeth Davis Swiger.*

### The 12th West Virginia

June 1863

The 12th, on the other hand, stood right in the path of Lee's left flank as it headed towards the Potomac. When I last wrote of the 12th, the regiment escaped capture at Winchester and would spend the first part of July trying to stay out of the way of the Rebel army which would retreat right at the 12th if it did not move.

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The 12th crossed the Potomac and moved along the river reaching Hancock, Maryland. The exhausted Federals did get something to finally eat here. Rumors and contradictory reports led to the 12th, in conjunction with other straggling units to march north to Bloody Run, Pa., between present day Bedford and Breezewood, Pa. Beginning on the 3rd, the 12th would start marching, visiting places like Mercersburg, Pa to the north and other Pennsylvania towns, all in response to the Confederate movements underway. By the 14th, the regiment rested outside of Hagerstown, just recently vacated by the retreating Army of Northern Virginia. As Hewitt wrote "...we of Milroy's late command, marched to Sharpsburg, Md., ten miles distant." It was here that Major C. B. Curtis received his commission and was elevated to command of the 12th. And here, the tattered remnants of the 12th rested for the remainder of July.

Thomas Jefferson Orr, our diarist, left the regiment on June 19 as it fled the debacle at Winchester. Walking home, he and his comrade reached their destination on June 23 - 265 miles since leaving Winchester on June 15. On July 6 he would start back towards the 12th. But he was trying to reach a moving target. Finally on the 18th he reached the 12th at Sharpsburg. I found his July 25 entry into his diary very interesting: "Went out to the Potomac on a fishing excursion. Rather dangerous business. Rebs across the river on picket."

*"From "History of the 12th West Virginia Volunteer Infantry" by William Hewitt and "A Company of BOYS IN BLUE" by Mark E. Paul and Thomas Jefferson Orr. (Donated by Orr's descendant Mark E. Paul) Even though we don't portray the 12th, I continue to study it because it was raised from our area and I have so many cousins in the unit.*

## The 1st Virginia Cavalry, Co. A

The 1st Virginia Cavalry completed its organization at Winchester, Virginia, in July 1861, under the command of Colonel James Ewell Brown (J.E.B.) Stuart at the command of General Thomas Jackson. Unlike most regiments, the First contained twelve companies. The men were from Amelia, Augusta, Berkeley, Clarke, Frederick, Gloucester, Jefferson, Loudoun, Rockbridge, Rockingham, and Washington counties.

## 25th Virginia Infantry

The 25th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment was an infantry regiment raised in Virginia for service in the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War. It fought mostly with the Army of the Northwest and Army of Northern Virginia. Its brave soldiers saw action from the first battle (Philippi) until the last (Appomattox).

The 25th Virginia was organized during the early summer of 1861. Its members were raised in Upshur, Augusta, Highland, Bath, Pendleton, and Rockbridge counties.

As always, I welcome any similar information on the activities of the actual 25th Virginia or 1st Virginia Cavalry.

## They Said It (or didn't)

*The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world.* - Robert Penn Warren

They were all friendly but the Virginians - written by Thomas J. Orr of the 12th West Virginia about Confederate prisoners that he encountered in Baltimore after Gettysburg.

## Sites of Interest

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

## WVRA Officers 2018 (executive board)

President - Jim "Hawkeye" Barnes  
Vice President - Ken Connell  
Treasurer /Secretary - Jack Rush  
Newsletter editor - Chuck "Pathfinder" Critchfield\*  
Website - Peter Baxter\*  
1st W. Va. Rep - Mark "Biscuits" Tennant  
25th Va. Rep - Bill "Beal" Brisendine  
1st Va. Cavalry - John Brasuk  
Artillery - Stormy Brasuk  
TASAS - Diane Tennant  
*Union Rep - Debbie Rush \*\**  
*Confederate Rep - Sherri Skidmore Goff \*\**  
*20th Century Rep - Linda Barnes \*\**

\* Non-voting member of executive board

\*\* Not members of executive board

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Figure 1 - Robert E. Lee's headquarters, July 2018. A couple years past, this property included the HQ, a motel, pool and other touristy items.

## Editor's Corner

*The Editor's chance to speak*

MY APOLOGIES - this issue is a bit late. Family vacation and the Gettysburg reenactment interfered with the normal publishing date around the first of the month. Also apologies to Mark Tennant. Mark did NOT burn the second batch of biscuits and actually both batches were delicious.

JOHN AND STORMY BRASUK were featured in the Times - West Virginian paper of Fairmont in July. I have been unable to get a copy of the paper, but am pleased to see them recognized.

THANK YOU to everyone who made contributions to this issue - Phyllis Baxter, Jack Rush and Jim Barnes. A special thanks as always for Peter Baxter's able help.

I HOPE to have a report on the WVRA mini-tour to West Virginia Civil War burial memorials in a future newsletter.

BILL SNYDER - has anyone had any contact with Bill? He has not responded to me. I dropped by his house but got no response.

PERSONAL - Jack and Tonya Daft ask that you keep their family in your prayers. We missed Jim Barnes at New Market and hope he is feeling better these days.

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 liability insurance policy purchased by the WVRA, you must be a member of record.

There are two Facebook pages currently in use as avenues of communication by WVRA members. One is the WVRA-The Trans-Allegheny Soldiers Aid Society group page. The other group is labeled simply West Virginia Reenactors Association. Tonya Daft is the administrator on the West Virginia Reenactors Association page. Please address all questions to her about that page. I am not sure who is administrator to the WVRA-TASAS page. I continue to use the WVRA-TASAS page to post announcements as it has been the page getting the most use (by far) over the past 3 years.



Figure 2 - Federal artillery camp. About Union 25 cannons were present at the Gettysburg reenactment. There was probably not much more room for additional cannon.

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WVRA website - [wvra.org](http://wvra.org)  
Chuck Critchfield – editor  
608 Skyview Drive  
Clarksburg, WV 26301  
[Ccritch608@yahoo.com](mailto:Ccritch608@yahoo.com)