

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association
2015 – Edition 9 – MID-June

Upcoming Events

More information will be added later if made available to the editor

WVRA Sponsored Events

Rich Mountain – July 10-12

<http://www.richmountain.org/reen15/reen15prelim.html>

Droop Mountain – October 9-11

Droop Clean-up – August 8

Events Recommended by WVRA members

McConnellsville, Ohio – July 10-12 (Contact Ralph McCready for more information)

Bulltown Heritage Days – July 26. (Contact Sam Krafft for more information)

Fort Mulligan Day – August 15, Petersburg, WV

Dry Creek – August 14-16, White Sulphur Springs

Carnifex Ferry – Sept. 11-13 (FULL IMMERSION EVENT??)

Zoar, Ohio – Sept. 19-20

Locust Grove – October 23-25, Walkersville, Va. (ANV max effort event)

<http://www.oldbedfordvillage.com/events.php>

Guyandotte – Oct. 30-Nov. 1

Other events

Matewan, W. Va. – June 19-21

St. Marys, W. Va. – Sept. 4-6

Logan State Park – Sept. 25-27

11, 12 at the Rich Mountain Battlefield Civil War Site near Beverly, West Virginia. With a focus on history and small town welcome, this is an event you won't want to miss. NEW on the schedule -- Tower Street Stringband will present Civil War era music after the Saturday skirmish.

Early registration is only \$5 through May 23. You may register individually (indicate your unit on the form.)

For more information and on-line registration see:

<http://richmountain.org/reen15/reen15prelim.html>

WVRA paid 2015 members - your registration fee will be paid by the organization if you sign up by July 1. Please indicate this and put 0 for registration owed on your registration form. You are responsible for your own meal costs or late fees. PLEASE pre-register so we know how many to prepare for.

Everyone - we are looking for interesting living history scenarios to share with our visitors on Saturday afternoon. If you have an impression you can do, or the idea for one, please share that with us for planning leading up to the event. (Contact Phyllis Baxter or myself).

See you there!

*Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation and
West Virginia Reenactors Association*

Droop Mountain

Droop will be held at its normal weekend October 9th through the 11th, while the leaves are in their full glory in the Greenbrier Valley. The WVRA voted overwhelmingly to hold the event, so please overwhelmingly support and volunteer to help the event. *Droop Mountain clean-up* is scheduled for August 8. Please let your unit rep (see list below) know if you are coming.

June Newsletters

The members have been very generous in their contributions to the Trans-Allegheny Dispatch in the past few weeks. As a result of your generosity, it is necessary to publish this mid-June edition.

Next Meeting

At Rich Mountain, Saturday July 11 at Rich Mountain reenactment. Time and location to be determined.

Rich Mountain

You are cordially invited to participate in the Battle of Rich Mountain reenactment, July 10,

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Francis H. Pierpont Statue

NO FALSE ALARM THIS TIME. I have a formal invitation. The WVRA is invited to the unveiling of the Francis H. Pierpont monument at West Virginia Independence Hall, Saturday, June 20 at Noon, in Wheeling. The statue of the "Father of West Virginia" will be dedicated at a ceremony outside of the building this coming Saturday.

WVRA member Jenny Smith was participating in a 'promote West Virginia tourism event' on Saturday, June 20 from 10 am to 4 pm at the I-79 rest stop at the Pennsylvania state line north of Morgantown. She has had to cancel and is seeking a replacement. You can bring a display but mostly it is interacting with the travelers at the Welcome center. She has requested that you contact her at 304-288-5702.

Monroe County, West Virginia Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony

Union, West Virginia's monument to 'Confederate Soldiers of Monroe County' was the scene of a "Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony" on Monday, May 25, 2015. An 'Honor Guard' consisting of local citizens in American Civil War uniforms presented the ceremony before those in attendance. Initial greetings and remarks were given by Scott Womack, 'Captain' of the Honor Guard, regarding the beginnings and significance of Memorial Day.

Following opening remarks, 'Private' Chris W. Johnson read a few stanzas from Theodore O'Hara's "Bivouac of the Dead". Presentation of a wreath of flowers was given by the 'Honor Guard' who then fired a three round volley over Union's Greenhill cemetery in salute to those buried there. The ceremony completed with a 'present arms' salute and a moment of solemn remembrance of those who "Gave the Last Full Measure of Devotion".

Chris W. Johnson



Figure 1 - Jeff Goff at Philippi – 2015

Grand Review – Review

By Chuck Critchfield

Let us begin this journey back to the 150th Anniversary Reenactment of the Grand Review, with some comments about the parade itself. A trip of over one mile from the National Mall near the scaffold-covered Capitol building down Pennsylvania Avenue to a spot a couple blocks from the White House at Freedom Plaza.

We were dropped off on 3rd Street a couple blocks from the Capitol next to the reflecting pool and opposite from U. S. Grant's heroic statue, which like the Capitol rotunda, was covered and undergoing some type of maintenance. We were ushered across 3rd Street to the Mall and in the shade of the trees we formed the USV. The weather was tolerable, but hot enough that the shade was much appreciated.

Our company was composed of the 1st West Virginia, our comrades from the 25th Virginia, and friends from the 4th Ohio, Sean McCready's group. We were allowed to carry our regimental colors and national colors on the left of the company, since we would be marching in column of companies. Overall USV command had devolved upon Lt. Col. Kevin Skaggs, who was the ranking USV officer present. Our

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regimental commander Dave Childs was one of the parade organizers – more on him later. Our company numbered about 21 or 22, probably similar to many companies that marched down dusty Pennsylvania Avenue in 1865.

We stepped off onto 3rd Street about 20 minutes late, delayed by the final arrivals from the mustering point at RFK Stadium. We did an immediate left wheel and headed up 3rd to Pennsylvania, a half block a head of us. At Pennsylvania we did another left wheel and the wide avenue opened up before us. The left half of the street was reserved for the parade and our left flank rested on the curb to our left. We marched about a mile to Freedom Plaza, past a reviewing stand full of dignitaries, mostly in period dress. I believe US Grant could be spotted there.

As parades go, this one was similar to others with some notable exceptions. 1) There were about 1500 reenactors (so they say); 2) there was music everywhere in the parade (wonderful to have); 3) the parade was on the very ground where the men marched in 1865 4) (Confederates don't read this) it was great to recognize the victory of the Northern troops and finally the big one 5) marching down Pennsylvania Avenue was just a big thrill, a thrill that I will remember. With the Capitol, the Washington Monument, Federal Triangle and Grant's memorial all in the plain view, it was an atmosphere that could not be repeated elsewhere.

It was great to have my fellow WVRA members there with me. 1st Sgt. Ross Wetherell, Color Sgt. Mark Tennant, Senior Private Jim "Comrade" Barnes, Ralph "The Irishman" McCready, Ed "Burnsides" ChapdeLaine; Bryan Cokeley, Esq. and Lt. Col. Kevin Skaggs. A special thanks to the 25th Va. members who joined us: KC Watterson; Greg Watterson, Guy Covey and Chris "Monroe" Johnson. Friends of the WVRA Hampton Cokeley, Sean McCready and Ross's nephew marched with us also. A few of Sean's comrades from the 4th joined us and a good group of soldiers they were.

Now to the logistics, something that seems to be in every event review we do. I drove into the city early on Sunday morning from my motel in Leesburg. The drive in was quite an adventure. There was little traffic until I neared the Potomac, but some of the toll booths, etc were a challenge. We assembled at RFK stadium, about a mile or so due east of the

Capitol, although as it turned out we might as well have been 5 miles away. There in one of the massive stadium parking lots, next to the Anacostia River reenactors began to pour into asphalt fields. We had infantry, cavalry and civilians. Somebody said we had horse-drawn artillery, but I missed it if it was there. The US Colored Troop reenactors made a nice showing and parade itself was dedicated to remembering the USCT who were denied participation in 1865.

After a short time, the registration process began. Now registering that many reenactors and having their weapons inspected in the short time allotted was going to be a task that I suspected was impossible. The line soon grew to football field length, but once things got underway, it seemed to flow at reasonable speed. Of course you went from registration to the adjacent weapons inspection which was not ready to start as all these reenactors came out of the registration line.

With all the dire warnings about the tight inspection and fatal consequences that would come cascading down on any reenactor who did not pass weapon inspection or brought a prohibited weapon or ammunition, we all wanted to pass inspection. Soon a cloud of reenactors formed around the inspection table. The organizers forced us into a line and finally once things got going, showed some common sense and things were resolved in a reasonable amount of time. The rest of the morning was spent forming the troops and then loading into the buses. We failed to make the first shift of trips to the jumping off point, but caught the buses once they returned for load number 2. The trip interestingly enough, took us to the south side of the Anacostia and back over before arriving in front of the Capitol.

All in all, things seemed to run reasonably well. Dave Childs, our regimental commander, seemed to be responsible for what was going on in the RFK parking lot. My hat is off to him for tackling that job and getting everyone to the parade.

I was glad to be a part of the 150th reenactment and to pay homage to those men who marched there long those many years ago.

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The 12th West Virginia at Rich Mountain

No, the 12th did not fight at the battle.

I continue to have an interest in the 12th Regiment. My great-great grandfather's brother, G. W. Fortney, was the captain of Company G at the end of the war and the regiment had companies from Marion, Marshall, Harrison, Taylor, Brooke and possibly Ohio Counties. There were other Fortney's in the 12th, all cousins to me. I suppose, if I were starting all over again in the hobby, I might suggest the 12th as the unit to portray. But I am not, so here is my interesting story about the 12th at Rich Mountain.

This is quotation is from "A Company of Boys in Blue", edited by Mark E. Paul, whom Mark Tennant and I met at New Market in 2014. Mr. Paul had put together this aforementioned book, which contained the letters of diary entrees of his great-great-grandfather Thomas Jefferson Orr, Company D, 12th West Virginia Infantry. Company D is composed of men from the West Liberty area, which is up on the border of Ohio and Brooke counties.

Mr. Orr is marching from Buckhannon to Beverly. We pick up the march 15 miles east of Buckhannon in a "bottom on hells run a tributary of the middle fork of the valley river."

"On the next morning we started out about daylight about 9 o'clock we came to sesesh fortifications at the foot of Rich Mountain that they put up the time the McClellan went through western Virginia in July 1861. The fortifications are of a very formidable carractor. The Beverly road runs up the creek. The fortifications are situated on both sides of the road so as to command the road for nearly a mile at the upper end of the fortifications. The passes through a narrow gorge in the mountains having a kind of a point of land at the upper end of the fortifications on which they had erected rifle pits so that the road was commanded on two sides and in front. The Rebs did not make any stand here. They fired a few rounds of canister shot at our men a peace below killing one man. I seen his grave on the side of the road he was an Indianian. Five miles up the side of the mountain we came to the place where the memorable battle of Rich Mountain was fought on the 17 of July 1861 between the forces and the rebles commanded by Gen. Garnet who was

killed at Garrics Ford. There are a great many traces of the battle here yet. I seen a large chestnut tree that a sesesh cannon ball passes clear through. There are two graves here that have 180 sesesh in them. There is only about 12 in. of dirt on top of them.

Cap. Mercer & I dug down as far as we could with his sword to try to get a lock of their hair but we could not get any that was worth any thing. They are entirely gone except their bones and blankets. They still stink yet. There is 18 of our boys buried here, the was only that number of them killed. They were all from Indiana except one – he was from Ohio. Our men are buried in a corner of a garden. I seen the rock on which Gen. Rosencrans stood during the fight. There was some of the boys cut bullets out of the trees that was shot in during the battle. The holes that the Rebels were buried in the dug them selves and hung a board up on a tree beside them with these words on it: dug to hold the d.d. Yankees. But they got put in themselves...."

From a letter to "Friends" Oct 21st (1862) at Camp Misery, Beverly, Randolph County, Va.

When I read this letter, two things about 19th century Americans we were reinforced. First, I have read the 19th century folks were very interested in souvenirs. Much more so than today's average American. Next, 19th century rural Americans were much more used to death. Especially rural Americans. Both of these traits are evident in the matter-of-fact way Orr deals with the hunt for a lock of hair.

-- C. L. Critchfield

WVRA Officers 2015

President – Mark Tennant

Vice President – Bill Brisendine

Treasurer – Tim Glaser

Secretary – Jack Rush

Newsletter editor - Chuck Critchfield*

Website – Peter Baxter*

1st W. Va. Rep – Chuck Critchfield

25th Va. Rep – Chris Johnson

1st Va. Cavalry – John Brasuk

Artillery – Sam and Connie Krafft

TASAS – Diane Tennant

* Non-voting member of executive board

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Registration Fees – WVRA Events

By vote of the membership, the WVRA will pay for any member, who registers for a WVRA sponsored event. The WVRA will reimburse at the EARLY registration rate. Members will be responsible for any amount over and above the EARLY registration rate and any other costs such as meals. Members must register to be eligible. Walk-ons will not be reimbursed. PLEASE SEE INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT REGISTERING FOR RICH MOUNTAIN.

We are now 6 months into the membership year and this is my last request to please renew your membership if you are interested in remaining a member. We will cease emails to you after this month assuming that you are no longer interested.

Editor's Corner

A big thank you to Peter Baxter, who continues to provide valuable support to the production of the *Trans-Allegheny Dispatch*.

Correction – It is MONROE County and not Mercer. My apologies Chris. I should know the difference between President James Monroe and General Hugh Mercer, the hero of Princeton.

We welcome back Gary and Millie Goetze (aka Senator and Mrs. John Carlisle) who have renewed their membership.

Inevitably, this issue will create charges of favoritism towards the Federal infantry side of our group. I continue to welcome all contributions and contributions from other units will be considered for publication.

I have 'snatched' some pictures off of Facebook posts. If you have any objections to that let me know and I will not do so in the future.

Elizabeth Swiger !!! - In case you are reading the Dispatch, your emails keep coming back undeliverable. If you have a new email address, please send to me.

Anyone interested in some sort of Rich Mountain March?

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 1st West Virginia and the 25th Virginia infantry units participate in, you must be a member of record.

The newsletter is being sent by email to members of record. It is posted on the WVRA website also. It is mailed to anyone who pays the \$15 mailing costs. It continues to be my plan to publish related articles of interest in addition to the items mandated by our by-laws (meeting minutes, treasurer's report, etc.)

Yours truly, has no connection to the TASAS-WVRA Facebook page and take no responsibility for it. Nor do I have any responsibility for the WVRA Facebook page which seems to be abandoned.

Please contact your unit rep (listed to the left) with any questions about your unit.

As always, if anyone has anything for the Dispatch, send it along. I will consider it.

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The views expressed here are not necessarily the
views of the WVRA
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Facebook - [WVRA - TransAllegheny Soldiers Aid Society](#)
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Figure 1 - Waiting in the lot of RFK Stadium. Greg Watterson, Chris Johnson, Kevin Skaggs, Mark Tennant, KC Watterson, Guy Govey, Gentleman Jim Barnes, Bryan Cokeley, DJ (nephew or Ross Whetherell), Ralph McCready, 4th Ohio, Ross, your editor, Sean McCready. 4th Drummer.



Figure 2 - On Pennsylvania Avenue with the Capitol in the background right. Chris Johnson, Ed ChapdeLaine, KC Watterson and Mark Tennant can be seen in the front row. We had drumbeats from two different directions at this point as you can probably tell from this picture.



Figure 3 - Guarding the colors on the National Mall



Figure 4 - Picture of Memorial Day 'Honor Guard' at Union, West Virginia's Confederate Monument (Monroe County). Chris Johnson is standing next to the monument on the right. In a previous Dispatch, I misidentified the county as Mercer County. My apologies.



Figure 5 - Another young lad in front of the beloved regimental flag



Figure 6 - Surgeon and Mrs. Wenig and Jim and Linda Barnes (and other family members) at Phillippi. Mr. Barnes' early war impression is impressive



Figure 7 - At Grafton National Cemetery – Jim Barnes and Mark Tennant (the man behind the ceremony). I believe the threatening weather may have been in the vicinity.