

# Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association  
2018 – Edition XII - November

## Upcoming Civil War Events

### Sponsored Events

None at this time

### Events Recommended by WVRA members

2018

Remembrance Day - November

### Other Events

Nothing at this time

### Other Time Periods

Nothing at this time

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

## Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 11, at 1 pm at the Weston Steakhouse.

## Meeting Minutes - October 13

Meeting minutes are not available at this time.

## Officers

Don't forget fellow members of the WVRA, nominations for Association offices are open and can be made to any existing officer. Terms of office are over on December 31 of this year. The list of offices and the current office holders can be found below in this newsletter.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 100th Anniversary

November 11 will mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. Pause to remember the men and women of that period on November 11, 2018, at the 11th minute of the 11th hour.

### Upcoming Event-Morgantown

My name is Nathan Wuertenberg, I am a research assistant at the Aull Center for Local History and Genealogy Research in Morgantown. We're having an event here in November that I believe your members may be interested in attending. We will be hosting a historical wargame based on a battle from the American Civil War here on Saturday, November 3rd at 1 PM, which will feature an introductory talk on the war by a professional historian. You can find more information on the event here:

[https://www.facebook.com/event\\_s/29793273103611](https://www.facebook.com/event_s/29793273103611)

was wondering if you would be willing to publicize this event to your members. It would be greatly appreciated. Please let me know if you have any questions.

-- Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable member

## Treasurer's Report

For the period September 1 through Sept. 30, 2018

Beginning Balance \$3,622.10

### Credits

Memberships \$ 0.00

### Debits

Unit money (Art. and Cav) \$ 2 00.00

Contribution to Rich Mtn.

Bttfld Found (Ambulance) \$ 100.00

Ending Balance \$3,362.10

Submitted by Jack Rush October 3, 2018

## AFTER ACTION REPORTS

### The Garrison at Union

August 22-23, Union, West Virginia

I participated in a Living History and while a Monroe County Historical event they appreciated a showing of interest from the WVRA . This was mainly a Saturday event with the opportunity to show up early setup on Friday and relax. Besides us old timers there were several new local people and many stopped by to see what was going on. The cavalry and cannon from Chapmans Battery (sorry if I did not remember the unit properly) that you could "pull the cord" for a donation to the Historical Society. We did not have a battle since the scenario was as a Garrison encampment waiting on our next battle assignment . This allowed us to interact more with the spectators taking the time to explain things and several got to fire their first musket.

For those who are there the last few years the weather was much better than in years past. With the relocation from the upper field to a field in town we basked in the shade with all the water and firewood we could use. There was a display of original guns, swords and other material from a father son combo from Frost who I had never meet before and are relatively new to reenacting. The son , a teacher in Pocahontas Co, also had his French 1720's uniform which he wore to our supplied dinner. The dinner

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was hosted by the owner of Elmwood who has turned his home into something to be envied by all <https://www.facebook.com/ElmwoodEstate-1211210018997525/> while we sat in the bar we had a round table discussion with the patrons as to why and how we got into reenacting in the first place and the challenges we face in the current political climate. I of course talked about my family and the telegraph. However I also put in plugs for the WVRA and our branching out into other time periods as an example of how groups are adapting to the new times.

We had discussions about new Bulltown and Sam doing the event, The Mill, we talked about Droop both the hard core event as well as the normal event. All good and positive comments about all the events was had. It was a very enjoyable weekend appreciated by all who attended.

-- Tim Glaser

25th Virginia Infantry, WVRA

## Presentation to Boy Scouts

On September 17, Linda and I gave a presentation on the Civil War in West Virginia to the Scouts of Troop 40 at the Simpson Creek Baptist Church in Bridgeport. There were approximately 30 Scouts plus their adult leaders and some parents in attendance.

I took both Union and Confederate uniforms, equipment and weapons and discussed their use during the war. The kids seemed interested and asked a lot of questions. The presentation took a little over an hour and at the end, they wanted me to fire a musket, so I took the 1842 Springfield out into the parking lot and fired a blank. My friend, Dave Hosaflook, one of the assistant Scoutmasters, had cleared this in advance with the police. He also took the precaution of calling 911 just prior to the firing and advised them that it was about to occur. Anyone else planning to do this may want to keep that in mind. Anyway, the Scouts loved it.

I think this is a good way to get some history education across to an appreciative audience of young people. They generally paid attention and some seemed fairly well informed on the subject. (As opposed to some of the UHS students last spring who never took their eyes off their phones). A big thanks to Dave and the other Scoutmasters for the invite.

Jim Barnes



Figure 1 Jim Barnes making a presentation to Boy Scouts in Bridgeport

## Droop Mountain

by Sgt. Stormy Brasuk

Thursday: arrival to encampment at overlook. Due to the late hour we slept in our transport, opting to set up camp in the morning.

Friday: we set up camp, and prepared rounds for the upcoming engagement. We spent the remainder of the day gathering wood, cooking, and repairing any gear that required attention.

Saturday: officer's meeting to set details of engagement, a call for volunteers was made to signal the start of the skirmish.

Lurty's Company volunteered and coordinated with the col. of the 31st to fire the first shot at 1:30 pm to start the skirmish which led into the battle. We fired a total of eight shots, including a "Rolling Thunder" battery shot (0 second intervals between guns firing) Major John Brasuk served as field observer for the artillery; spotting the troop movements for Col. House, battery commander.

Sunday: the battle began with an impressive "Rolling Thunder" with a total of 9 shots ending with another Rolling Thunder battery shot.

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Figure 2 - Droop was chilly in 2018. WVRA members Rick Byrd, Mark Tennant and James Bonaparte Barnes. Greatcoats for all!!

## Droop - A Second Perspective

Under the meteorological impression that it would be a cool but nice and dry weekend ( boy did they ever miss this forecast). I arrived around 4PM on Friday Oct 12th at a cool( mid 40's) Droop Mtn.. Bryan's Battery was just setting up registration and I and 2 other reenactor's had to wait a few moments to register. One reenactor was dressed in blue but said he was in 31st Va. Inf. Paid my \$15 walk-on fee and received schedule. No powder.

Drove up to Union camp and unloaded. Set up beside Rick Byrd the only other tent there. An older guy from Pa. doing a living history impression as an embalmer also set up nearby. Over the course of the evening, Jake Thompson and 4 soldiers and several civilian members of his 7th WV Inf. arrived, also a guy from 5th Ohio and his friend Richard from England doing research for a CW book ( this would be Richard's first reenactment). Another Yank from Winchester, these 3 all set up in dog tents. Jim and Linda Barnes stopped by, they were camped behind registration in pop-up camper. About 10:30 PM

several vehicles rolled in 7 soldiers of dismounted 7th Ohio Cav.

Went to bed with stars twinkling and cold temps but about 3:30 AM was awakened by the pitter-patter of rain on the canvas. It was 46 degree's at 8am but the rain soon stopped but I was nice and warm in State Park's shop enjoying hot coffee and doughnuts and a delicious home made pumpkin roll made by Carl's wife, one of the Park's employee's. Nothing going on Sat. morning but in PM 1:30 tactical to go directly into battle at 2:30. 22 Rebels vs. 16 Yanks, neither side could capture the other sides flag but each side captured several soldiers. Tactical ended in draw, altho 7th Ohio Cav. had some anxious moments as the surprised a black bear cub and was afraid the Mama bear might show up .The battle scenario was the skirmish at Mill Point, with the Union force pushing the Confederates from the field across from registration to almost the end of the field across from Supt. residence where at least 4 Rebel cannons were posted and stopped the Federal advance. I counted about 70 spectators watching on this cool but sunny afternoon.

Just before the tactical the Union troops had a small memorial service at John Baxter's and Lt. Bender's monuments , keeping green their memory by telling their stories and placing flowers and flags on their monuments. But before placing flowers and flags had to ask members of Chapman's Confederate Battery who were camped nearby to please remove some cooking utensils from Baxter's monument. This is DISRESPECTFULL...Many Confederate reenactors are complaining about Southern monuments being desecrated, but some of these Confederate's are disrespecting a monument to a Union soldier who gave his life to preserve the Union.

Had a good meal served by the host unit- Bryan's Battery- pulled pork bar-b-que on buns, coleslaw, baked beans and corn, iced tea and punch to drink and cookies for desert. Sugar Run was the band and I heard them play the Virginia reel and some other CW songs when I wasn't listening to Mountaineer's get pasted by Iowa State on my truck's radio. At 10PM it was 38 degree's and clear. I went to bed under several wool blankets and was warm in my sleeping cap. But at 7AM I heard the dreaded sound of rain on my canvas tent ( drat-have to take home wet canvas). The rain lasted til past 10 AM but persisted in a misty cold and cloudy day. This cold rain also depleted the ranks for the Sunday battle at

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1:30 PM- 7 Union Infantry, 5 from 7th WV and 2 from 1st WV (Jim and I). The Confederates also lost several men only mustering 14 Inf for battle plus 4 Artillery cannon's , each with 4-6 men per piece.

The battle scenario seemed to me as the same as the Saturday skirmish at Mill Point, even though the Confederate field commander-Jason Studenwalt said it represented Schoonmaker's 14th Pa Cav. advance on the Rebel left during battle on Droop Mtn. The outnumbered Yanks pushed the Rebels across the field inflicting numerous casualties until confronted by the massed Rebel cannon's- took over 50% casualties and retreated from the field. Only counted around 50 spectator's who braved the cold drizzle and low clouds. My pet peeve is that none of the Rebel cannon's offered to 'galvanize' to make the numbers a little more even.

Impressions of Droop Mtn. reenactment under Bryan's Battery management.

**POSITIVES:** Good dinner, Band OK, plenty of wood and water, coffee and donuts in shop, plenty of cannons-( 4).

**NEGATIVES:** No powder, only 1 porta-john below parking lot at Supt. residence and pit toilet in parking lot for Union camp, and 1 port-john at Artillery camp, ( 7th WV civilian ladies were not happy about this). Rebs had 4 porta-johns and pit toilet at overlook. Limited number of Infantry/dismounted Cav.

The weather had a dampening effect for Sunday's battle with reduced CW reenactors and spectators. For the first time in 29 years of CW reenacting I wore my great coat during a battle ( it was that cold and damp and it was a GREAT coat).

Met the new Supt. of Droop Mountain State Park-Sam (forgot his last name) seemed like a friendly young guy who last worked at Twin Falls state park. He just took over Droop 2 weeks ago. I guess the state fills vacancy's at a glacial pace as Mike Smith has been retired for nearly 2 years. Saw Beal, Ken and Jim at Confederate camp, Ken and Jim cheated and had heater in their tent ( it was 75 degrees inside). Griff King said Droop would be his last reenactment as he was retiring after 32 years as a reenactor. Greg Watterson was only 25th Virginia Infantry soldier I saw. Mark Poling, Thurman and John and Stormy Brasuk was there with their mountain howitzer.

If the weather had been better and fall colors (the trees were still mostly green even above 3000 feet elevation)had cooperated maybe the crowd would have been bigger. But hosts need to work on getting more Union and Confederate Infantry to come and have a cannon or two galvanize to make numbers look more even

-- Mark Tennant

## **OTHER FEATURES/NEWS**

### **Looming Civil War**

Hunter Lesser emailed me a book review from the Wall Street Journal for a book entitled Looming Civil War by WVU professor of Civil War Studies Jason Phillips. The reviewer, historian Fergus M. Bordewich, writes "A head of the actual fighting, Americans thought of the Civil War in many ways: as an adventurous lark, as a class war between competing labor systems, an avenging act of God. In 'Looming Civil War,' Jason Phillips delves into the mid-19th-century American psyche to explore its dreams, fantasies and nightmares. 'Before the Civil War was fought or remembered,' he writes, 'it was imagined by thousands of American who peered at the horizon through an apocalyptic atmosphere.' "

The reviewer praises Phillips for researching "a landscape people with a diverse cast of Americans: farmers and poets: thinkers and visionaries slaves and free citizens" in his attempt to paint a picture of what Americans were experiencing and expecting in the days leading up to the war. He is a bit critical of two of the conclusions that Phillips makes. However Bordewich finishes by saying that the WVU professor "provides us with a new and often original understanding of how Americans of the 1860's grappled with their fate, offering a multitude of voices that we are rarely privileged to hear."

Maybe in this modern day of continuing argument of how the war began and it's meaning to us in 2018, this would be a good tool to help us understand.

-- Chuck Critchfield

### **Dennis Frye**

*"What is history but a fable agreed upon."*

Nationally known historian, retired National Park Service Chief Historian at Antietam, former occasional reenactor, founding father of what is now the American Battlefield Foundation and one of the

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producers for *Gods and Generals*. Quite a resume. And I was privileged to hear him speak in Clarksburg, October 9 to a packed house.

The Stonewall Jackson Roundtable of the Clarksburg area was one of the sponsors of Mr. Frye's entertaining talk about the myths and machinations of Antietam.

Far from being a traditional recounting of the campaign, Dennis, in a style particular to him, delved into some topics, starting with "beware history." He spoke of history as opinion. After all, it comes from somebody's memory, opinions, perceptions and other personal filters that shape recollection.

Again edging into controversy he advances the question did McClellan outsmart Lee at Antietam and then backs up that hypothesis with some explanation. He presents his evidence that Lee had not given up hope of invading Pennsylvania after Special Order 191 was found and after the Harpers Ferry forces joined his command. But McClellan outsmarted Lee by crossing the I and XII Corps to the west side of Antietam Creek and blocking the road north.

The entire presentation was quite enjoyable and Dennis stuck around to sell and sign his new book *"Antietam Shadows - Mystery, Myth and Machinations."* During this signing session Mark Tennant and I got him talking (which is not hard) about *Gods and Generals*. He served as a producer and got his choice of where he could appear in the movie. He is the messenger that crawls through the mud to reach Joshua Chamberlain with a message to withdraw. Frye described his experience doing this as quite sobering when he realized the wall of bodies he crawled up to, was in fact live reenactors filling in as dead bodies. I pulled out the movie the next day and found him rolling around in the mud with Jeff Daniels. He was shocked to learn that I appeared in more than one scene. This, after the producers worked hard to limit each face in the movie (other than the stars) to one scene. He was soothed by the fact that my face appears but once in the movie.

A great event!

-- by Chuck Critchfield

## **Harold Holzer**

On September 24 at the WVU Mountainlair Ballroom, one of the nation's leading Lincoln

scholars addressed over 100 people about "Lincoln and West Virginia Statehood: The Other Big News of January 1, 1863.

Mr. Holzer lectured on the events leading up to statehood and offered the opinion that in many ways the decision to support West Virginia's creation took more time and effort than his decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. Both decrees took effect on January 1, 1863. He did not go into a narrative of the events, but highlighted some of the more interesting decisions or problems that preceded statehood.

During questions and answers after his talk, he encouraged us to ask about his role with Stephen Spielberg's movie "Lincoln," in which Holzer was a script consultant. Holzer related how Daniel Day-Lewis had vetoed Holzer's visit to set of the filming of the movie because Mr. Day-Lewis did not want a third script consultant on the set. (Doris Kearns Goodwin author of *Team of Rivals* and Tony-award-winning play writer Tony Kushner were already on set). Holzer did describe other times when Kushner would call for advice on the script.

The event was co-sponsored by our friends in the Mason-Dixon Civil War Roundtable. I noted some history professors and WVU President Gordon Gee in the audience. A very enjoyable evening and a good speaker.

## **Medieval Reenactor Killed**

(Editor's note: We normally do not report on historical reenacting outside of the WVRA's range - which is American History from the 1500's to Vietnam. But I thought this worth reading for all reenactors)

A Medieval knight re-enactor has impaled himself with his lance during a performance and died.

Dad of two, 53-year-old Peter Barclay, of Virginia, was competing in an equestrian game in Williamstown, Kentucky, when he was wounded Saturday. Barclay's brother and the president of event holder Society for Creative Anachronism, John Fulton, says Barclay was trying to spear a paper plate on the ground. Fulton says in a Facebook post that the metal-tipped lance hit the ground and flipped, stabbing Barclay's chest. The lance hit him in the sternum and impaled him.

'I've never had an injury on the field like this, ever, that led to something like this' he said. 'Everybody that knew him

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is just dead stunned. His ability, skill and attention to detail is just total' said Fulton. Barclay was a master within the organization and had practiced medieval sports for more than 30 years. He even had a website dedicated to all things medieval devoted to attempt to recreate life in the 14th century.

Barclay, who performed under the name 'Master Terafan Greydragon,' died while being flown to a hospital. He led a distinguished career as a retired Lt. Colonel in the US Army.

He leaves behind his wife Deborah and two daughters Amy and Taryth. The family say he died doing what he loved, but will still be missed. The Hamilton County coroner's chief administrator, Andrea Hatten, says an autopsy hasn't yet been performed. His death is listed as accidental.

- Dailymail.co.uk  
Submitted by Jim Barnes

## 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 [rffreeman1373@gmail.com](mailto:rffreeman1373@gmail.com) for more information. (These items were still available recently).

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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.  
me.

## Book Review

Just read *The Day of Battle-The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-44* by Rick Atkinson and I highly recommend it to those who are interested in reading about a WWII campaign that is not well known. Rick Atkinson does a marvelous job in bringing the battles to life with stories of not only the Generals and politicians but also the GI in the trenches. Gen. Mark Clark was the American commander who was a complex individual ( my parents named me after this General), not flamboyant like Patton but showed commitment in continuing the fight toward Rome. Like most generals he wanted the spotlight and did not share the glory with the other Allies -Britain, France and Poland with the liberation of Rome.

I knew a little about the Sicily- Italian campaign- Salerno, Anzio and Monte Cassino. Churchill said the campaign would be into the soft underbelly of Europe, but the Allies soon found out different as the Germans mounted a spirited defense. But the campaign kept German focus and several divisions busy in defending Italy while the Russians advanced on Eastern front and Allies built up for D-Day. The Allies also got invaluable experience in amphibious landings and supplying troops for build-up for an attack. Without the Italian campaign, I'm not sure D-Day would have been successful.

So if you want to read a great history of a little known WWII campaign, read this book.

-- Mark Tennant



Figure 3 - Infantry at Droop in 2018 on Sunday. Apparently the chilly weather reduced Saturday's attendance to this. Also in attendance was the artillery of Lurty's Battery.

## 155 Years Ago

On hiatus until further notice.

## They Said It (or didn't)

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

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*"No society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law."*

-- Thomas Jefferson

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*"What is history but a fable agreed upon"*

-- Napoleon Bonaparte

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*"The loss of his leg is a great gain to us, whatever it may be to him."*

-- Captain Henry Abbott remarking after Dan Sickles lost his leg at Gettysburg

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*"My defences were stone walls, and since Jackson is dead I think I have a claim to this title."*

-- Alexander Hays after repulsing Picketts Charge

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## 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)

## WVRA Officers 2018 (executive board)

President – Jim Barnes  
Vice President – Ken Connell  
Treasurer /Secretary – Jack Rush  
Newsletter editor - Chuck Critchfield\*  
Website – Peter Baxter\*  
1<sup>st</sup> W. Va. Rep – Mark Tennant  
25<sup>th</sup> Va. Rep – Bill Brisendine  
1<sup>st</sup> 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

## Editor's Corner

*The Editor's chance to speak*

LET ME REMIND the readers of this publication that the opinions expressed in this newsletter **are not necessarily** the opinions of the WVRA. And believe you me, we have members who are 180 degrees apart on a few subjects as has been demonstrated once again recently.

MY APOLOGIES to Tim Glaser for failing to see his After Action Report on the event at Union, West Virginia in August. The report is included in this edition of the Dispatch.

THE EDITOR WELCOMES articles and pictures from time periods other than the American Civil War as the WVRA has opened its ranks to historical reenactors of all time periods of AMERICAN history. That should be obvious in this Edition.

THANK YOU to everyone who made contributions to this issue including Jim Barnes, Stormy Brasuk,

Hunter Lesser, Marvelous Mark Tennant and Tim Glaser. I hope that I have not missed any submissions. A special thanks as always for Peter Baxter's able help.

NO SIGN OF THE dreaded journalist from Reuters at Droop. So everyone can rest easy.

SO YOU THINK the Civil War is over and forgotten - Once again I revive this category as the midterm elections have revived the Facebook posts about the relationship between Civil War political parties and modern Civil War political parties. The argument being there is a straight-line relationship between the parties after 150 years.

BOSTON - If I have the space next edition, I will provide a brief review of my trip to Massachusetts. In particular Boston and Plymouth. It will was nice to see the ground that Revere, Adams and others trod 250 years ago.

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.

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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

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