

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association
2015 – Edition 13 – Early September

Upcoming Events

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

Droop Mountain – October 9-11
Events Recommended by WVRA members

Jackson's Mill – September – weekend of Sept. 4, 5 & 6. See article below.

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.peninsulaartillery.com/locustgrove.htm>

Guyandotte – Oct. 30-Nov. 1

<http://www.guyandottecivilwardays.com>

Other events

St. Marys, W. Va. – Sept. 4-6

Logan State Park – Sept. 25-27

A hearty thanks to members of the WVRA for making the 2015 Battle of Rich Mountain reenactment a success. Special thanks to those who volunteered to do interpretation on the trail & in the camps. It's not always easy to engage the public (try shouldering a heavy wooden casket!), but it is important.

Whether in military or civilian garb, costumed reenactors breath life into the past. For visitors who dozed through history class and especially for youth, your impact can be significant. Is it too much to suggest that the future of society might rest on something a spectator gleaned from your efforts?

Americans are jaded & distracted; reenactor numbers are smaller and aging. Could an emphasis on interpretation & "living history" be our future?

Again, thanks to all!
Hunter (Lesser)

Next Meeting

No meeting is scheduled at this time.

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. Contact Mark Tennant or Tim Glaser to volunteer.

The Droop Mountain flyer, including the registration form is included with this mailing. Please complete the form and mail it to Tim Glaser as directed on the form or complete it, scan it and email it to me. We are trying to get an accurate count of the number of reenactors that we need to prepare for. Per the membership-approved guidelines, the WVRA will cover registration for dues-paying members of record who pre-register.

A Thank You and a Question

Thanks Chuck;

Feel free to include this in a newsletter. I speak only as a member of the WVRA:

Received from the **Disabled American Veterans** **Cincinnati, Ohio**

W. Va. Reenactors Assoc.

Dear Friends of DAV:

I am so grateful that you've chosen to donate in honor of Carol Watterson. Your recent gift of \$50.00 is a very generous and meaningful way to call attention to someone whose values include a special concern for veterans who came home ill and inured defending our freedom.

Your kind support will play a large part in helping DAV fulfill America's promises to the men and women who served. As a veteran myself, I can assure you that our services are key to empowering veterans to find new lives of dignity and respect after war has done its worst. Your gift will support a wide range of services, from making sure each veteran gets the help needed to move on with a full and production life, to transporting veterans to hospitals and clinics for needed care.

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association

2015 – Edition 13 – Early September

There's so much to describe, more than I can share in this brief letter so let me invite you to visit our web site at www.dav.org to learn more about what your gift will achieve.

In the meantime, let me thank you once again for honoring a person about whom you care with a gift to DAV. We truly appreciate your obvious compassion for our work and your desire to make a real difference in the lives of the many veterans who benefit from your gift.

Sincerely,
J. Marc Burgess
National Adjutant/CEO

Fort Mulligan By Mark Tennat

I went to Fort Mulligan Day at Petersburg (W. Va.), August 15, to participate in a living history and small skirmish. For second year in a row the Union forces outnumbered the Confederates in the middle of Rebel territory by at least two to one. The 3rd and 8th Maryland (Union) Infantry showed with about 15-16 soldiers. Along with myself and Cameron Mallow's 7th West Virginia Infantry of four men, we totaled slightly over 20 Yankees versus nine Rebels. It was a hot and sunny date but the crowd was kind of small, but many seemed very interested in history. I had a blanket display and several persons asked about it. This small event offered a chicken dinner and a very generous one-pound ration of powder and a Civil War era band and dance later that evening. Gave out Droop packet to 3rd & 8th MARYLAND.

Jacksons Mill Jubilee

(Editor's note – the following was received from Ronna Studenwalt.) Firewood provided. Union enter at pool gate and Confederates enter at lower gate in historical area. Cars will be permitted on site all day Friday up til 8:00 am Saturday morning, if coming for just the day they will need to park in the airstrip and ride the bus over where their uniform will be their gate

pass in. For persons camping they can contact Jason Studenwalt for more info and or gate/parking passes. **304 884 7710**.

In talking with Jason at the Droop Mountain Clean Up, it sounds as though the event is making a comeback. Talk to JASON for more information.

Are You a Jonah or a Beat? Let's Hope Not

John D. Billings, in his classic reminiscence of his service in the Federal army titled "Hard Tack and Coffee or The Unwritten Story of Army Life" dedicated a whole chapter to the "jonahs" and "beats" of the army. The fact, that he dedicated the whole chapter to the two classifications leads ME to believe that possibly, there were many soldiers who fit into these descriptions.

Mr. Billings served in the 10th Massachusetts Battery in Sickles III Corps and after the demise of that organization thanks to its decimation at Gettysburg, in Hancock's II Corps of obviously, the Army of the Potomac. This classic book is mandatory reading for any Federal reenactor.

He described a "jonah" as an unlucky man. But, oh there was much more to it than that. "Now, accidents will happen to the most careful and the best of men, but the soldier whom I have been describing could be found in every squad in camp – that is, a mind of his kind. Such men were called "Jonahs" on account of their ill luck." Billings' colorful examples of jonah behavior should be enjoyed in the context of the book. But let me say, that he describes the poor jonah, who upon completing his guard duty at 2 a.m. and returning to his sibley tent, and finds his spot opposite the door, manages to step on the foot of one of his tent mates who "having a large voice, a large temper, but a small though forcible selection of English defiled" manages to startle the jonah who then jumps "thinking to clear all other intervening slumberers...but alights instead amidst the comrade who sleeps next him" who recovers consciousness sufficiently to know that it was not a twelve-

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association

2015 – Edition 13 – Early September

pound cannon ball that has doubled him up....strikes up the same strain and pitch and force as that of the first victim.” Soon adjoining tents are awakened and then the entire camp...by the unfortunate jonah.

Billings also added descriptions of jonahs carefully balancing full plates of some hot dish while navigating to some resting place and spilling portions onto his blanket or the blanket of a tent mate and then kicking over the coffee pot. Then there was his bad luck around the campfire.

“It was when he (the Jonah) appeared at the camp-fire which, by the way, never kindled himself, ready to occupy the choice places with his dishes; and after the two rails, between which fires were usually built, had been well burdened by the coffee-pots of his comrades, it presented an opportunity which his evil genius was likely to take advantage of; for then he was suddenly seized with a thought of something else he had forgotten to borrow. Turning in haste....he was sure to stumble over the end of the one or both of the rails, when the downfall of the coffee-pots and the quenching of the fire followed as a matter of course. At just this point in his career it would be to the credit of his associates to drop the curtain on the picture; but the sequel must be told....coffee and sugar were the staple articles with the soldier, and the least waste of them was not to be tolerated under ordinary circumstances; but to have a whole line of coffee-pots with their precious contents upset by the Jonah of the tent in his recklessness was the last ounce of pressure removed from the safety valve of his tent-mates’ wrath; and such a discharge of hard names and oaths....as many of these sufferers would deliver themselves of, if it could have utilized against the enemy, might have demolished a regiment.....two chaplains a piece to some of the men would have been not too many to hold them in check. ”

“I remember one man who seemed always to have hard luck in spite of himself. He was a good soldier and meant well, but would blunder badly now and then. His last act in the service was to plunge an axe through his boot while he was cutting wood. Unfortunately for him as it happened his foot was in it at the time. On pulling it out of the boot and looking it over he found that several of his toes had ‘got left’; so he took up his boot, turned it upside

down, and shook out a shower of toes as complacently as if that was that he enlisted for. This casualty closed his career in active service.”

Next month, the much despised ‘beat’ of the army.

- C.L.Critchfield

Sneak

So as not to be accused of being unduly favorable to Billy Yank, let me now recount a tale of Johnny Reb from the one and only Sam R. Watkins, Private C. S. A. He being a long-time member of the 1st Tennessee Regiment, had many tales to relate in his famous book “Co. Aytch – A Side Show of the Big Show.”

On page 89, he describes how almost “every soldier in the army – generals, colonels, captains as well as privates – had a nick-name.” He further proclaimed “had the war continued ten years, we would have forgotten our proper names.” Sam then lists a number of his fellow soldiers and their nicknames: Apple Jack, Old Snake, Devil Horse, Count, Left Tenant, Greasy, Buzzard, Hog, Brutus, Cassius, Caesar, Left Center and so on. “....in fact, the nick-names were singular and peculiar, and when a man got a nick-name it stuck to him like the Old Man of the Sea did to the shoulders of Sinbad, the sailor.”

Sam then goes on to explain the derivation of one particular nick-name attached to John T. Tucker – “Sneak.”

“On our retreat the soldiers got very thirsty for tobacco (they always used the word thirsty), and they would sometimes come across an old field off which the tobacco had been cut and the suckers had re-sprouted from the old stalk, and would cut off those suckers and dry them by the fire and chew. “Sneak” had somehow or other got hold of a plug or two, and knowing that he would be begged for a chew, had cut it up in little bits of pieces about one-fourth of a chew. Some fellow would say, ‘Sneak, please give me a chew of tobacco.’ Sneak would say, ‘I don’t believe I have a piece left,’ and then he would begin to feel in his pockets. He would pull

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association

2015 – Edition 13 – Early September

that hand out and feel in another pocket, and then in his coat pockets, and hid way down in an odd corner of his vet pocket he would accidentally find a little chew, just big enough to make 'spit come.' Sneak had his pockets full all the time. The boys soon found out his innuendoes and subterfuges, but John would all the time appear as innocent of having tobacco as a pet lamb that has just torn down a nice vine that you were so careful in training to over the front porch. Ah, John, don't deny it now!"

- 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

Period Quotes

This man's appearance, his pedigree, his coarse low jokes and anecdotes his vulgar smiles and, his frivolity, are a disgrace to the seat he holds – attributed to John Wilkes Booth, 1865

As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy. – A. Lincoln, 1958

All we ask is to be let alone – Jefferson Davis, 1861

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 meals. Members must pre-register to be eligible. Walk-ons will not be reimbursed.

Editor's Corner

Hunter Lesser's thank you note above raises questions that have been tossed about by the WVRA in recent years. Does our future lie in more living history, tours, etc.?

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

And a thank you to the few who are reading the *Dispatch!*

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.

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 takes no responsibility for it. Nor do I have any responsibility for the WVRA Facebook page. I have seen some correspondence about the Facebook pages recently, so possibly I will know more in the future.

Please contact your unit rep (listed above) with any questions about your unit.

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

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The official publication of the West Virginia Reenactors Association

2015 – No. 13, Early September, 2015.

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

WVRA website - wvra.org

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

Chuck Critchfield – editor

608 Skyview Drive

Clarksburg, WV 26301

Ccritch608@yahoo.com