

**The Trans-Allegheny
Soldiers' Aid Society**
Civilians in the Civil War

The civilians back home on both sides did more than their share to support their respective causes during the Civil War. Many of them banded together into aid societies to raise money and send needed supplies and welcome delicacies to the hospitals and troops at the front. The armies supplied only the most basic necessities to their troops, and any additional aid and comfort for the soldiers had to come from these civilian volunteers. In the North, the individual societies supported the U. S. Sanitary Commission, which improved sanitation in the army camps, set up needed hospitals, provided medical supplies and nursing care, and donated innumerable goods and supplies to the soldiers. In the South, the same efforts took place, though they were more often organized on a local level.

Women also actively contributed to the war effort in many other ways, as nurses, cooks, and laundresses, and helpful visitors to the hospitals and camps determined to find some way to aid their country's cause, or to seek out, visit, and stay near their loved ones. Many civilian gentlemen were also found near the armies, including relief workers, preachers, political agents from all levels of government, photographers and correspondents, and sutlers, (merchants who were licensed to sell goods to soldiers).

**SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT
REENACTING**

WHAT IS REENACTING?

Reenacting is an attempt by modern people to "walk a mile" in the shoes of our ancestors. By adopting the clothing, equipment, and sometimes even the speech and ideas of a now-vanished world, reenactors are trying to explore the personal meaning behind our public history.

HOW IS REENACTING DONE?

Reenactors are involved in many different kinds of activities: "REENACTMENTS" typically involve the re-creation of a specific historic battle. Most reenactments take place during the course of an entire weekend, and may include a number of other activities besides the main battle scenarios, such as memorial ceremonies, parades, dances, dinners, entertainment, and so on. "LIVING HISTORIES" are also mostly weekend long events, involving setting up typical scenes and activities of the period for the benefit of non-reenacting visitors. Living histories usually don't include active battle reenactments, but often take place at actual historical sites. Many of the secondary activities listed above also occur at living history weekends.

Memorial services, parades, period dances, and other events are also held as special events in their own right. In addition, reenactors give personal presentations for schools and civic groups.

WHY REENACT?

For spectators, reenacting brings the past back to life in a vivid way. Reenacting has the ability to dramatically remind viewers that real people were once involved in great historical events that are often recalled today only in old books, fading signs, and dusty museum exhibits. Reenacting can wake people up to the reality and significance of their own past, and such improved public awareness often translates into increased support for important historical preservation efforts going on today.

For reenactors, reenacting satisfies a deep personal curiosity about the past. The interest that a reenactor has in history can be related to the traditional academic world of documents and artifacts, but it is not identical. While reading an account of a Civil War campaign, for instance, a reenactor will KNOW what it feels like to march for many dusty or muddy miles on hard leather soles: he will KNOW how (and why!) a soldier welcomes his campfire and coffee at the end of the day. This intimate revelation often "brings home" the documentary record in a striking fashion, and the direct experience is one highly valued by reenactors.

**KEEP HISTORY ALIVE!
RECRUITS WANTED!
JOIN US TODAY!**

THE WEST VIRGINIA REENACTORS ASSOCIATION is dedicated to the commemoration and preservation of West Virginia's rich Civil War Heritage, and to encourage the popular hobby of Civil War Reenacting within our state. Members of the WVRA portray the appearance and manners of typical citizens and soldiers of Western Virginia, both Union and Confederate, during the crucial period 1861 to 1865.

A tax-exempt, non-profit, West Virginia corporation, the WVRA strives for the highest standards of historical authority and accuracy in our impressions. We are very much a family-oriented group: we invite full and appropriate participation by all family members of any age and gender. Members of the WVRA share a serious concern with things like event safety and historical scholarship, but we still find a great deal of personal satisfaction and real enjoyment in sharing this extraordinary hobby with each other and with the public.

Through our appearances in historic battle reenactments of all kinds, in living histories, parades, and other ceremonies, as well as visits to schools, clubs, and civic groups, we try to bring the valor and agony of West Virginia's birth during the Civil War to life for her modern citizens. Your personal or financial support will enable us to continue to bring vital and lively Civil War experiences to a wide variety of today's West Virginians.

If you are interested in joining the WVRA or want more information about our activities, or would like to send a tax-deductible contribution to aid the living history efforts of this Non-profit historical and educational corporation, you can write to:

**WEST VIRGINIA REENACTORS
ASSOCIATION, INC.
P.O. BOX 227
BEVERLY, WV 26253
OR
WWW.WVRA.ORG**

WVRA.ORG

AN
INTRODUCTION
TO

**CIVIL
WAR
REENACTING**



WITH THE

**WEST VIRGINIA
REENACTORS
ASSOCIATION**

1st (West) Virginia Infantry

The Rough and Ready Rifles



The First Virginia Infantry, United States Volunteers, was organized at Wheeling as a 90 day regiment in April of 1861, and mustered into the Federal service on May 10. It was the first regiment organized by a “southern State” under President Lincoln’s initial call for volunteers. On 3 June, 1861, the First helped win a federal victory in the first land battle of the Civil War at Philippi, (West) Virginia. Some companies of the First also participated in the Rich Mountain campaign. These early Union military victories secured the area for the United States and made possible the later creation of a separate new sate: West Virginia.

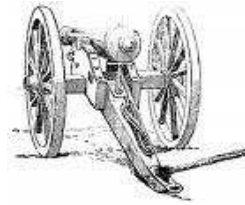
The 1st Virginia Volunteers were reorganized for three years service on 30 October, 1861, and during the next year participated in the First Battle of Winchester, Cedar Mountain, Rappahannock Station, Thoroughfare Gap, and the Second Battle of Bull Run. The regiment was then assigned to duty in the defense of Washington City until October, 1862, at which time they were transferred to the Department of West Virginia. During 1863 they guarded the many strategic railroad passes and other vital positions in Northern and Northwestern Virginia.

Through the Spring and Summer of 1864, the regiment, now renamed the 1st West Virginia Volunteer Infantry, participated in some of the significant campaigns in the Shenandoah Valley. Their battles included the famous clashes at New Market, Winchester, and Cedar Creek, Va. On 29 October 1864, the re-enlisting veterans were consolidated with part of the Fourth WV Infantry to form the Second Regiment of West Virginia Veteran Volunteer Infantry, which served until after Appomattox.

The First is the oldest and largest Union reenacting group in West Vir inia.

1st W Va Light Artillery

& the Danville Artillery
The Cannon’s Thunder



The artillery arm of the WVRA was formed to honor all the artilleryman from western Virginia who served during the Civil War. Unit members portray cannon crews of both Union and Confederate armies, in two units which each have some local significance as well as long and distinguished histories with their respective forces.

Battery A of the 1st (West) Virginia Light Artillery was organized and mustered into the Federal service on 26 Sept 1861. The unit had already gained experience as volunteers defending western Virginia against the Rebellion, for they were active in Wheeling as early as 3 July, 1861, before their formal mustering. Battery B was organized in October 1861. Both Batteries were especially noted for their gallant service in the Battle of Kernstown, Va in March 1862. Battery A also served at the Battle of Greenbrier River and Elkwater in Oct 1861 and later was at harpers ferry, Parkersburg, and the Kanawha Valley. In was mustered out in Charleston 21 July, 1865. Battery B was stationed at Winchester, VA and in Beverly and Webster, WV. They participated in all of Averell’s raids into the mountains of West Virginia. It was consolidated with Battery E 31 Dec, 1864 and was stationed at Camp Barry, Washington City at the end of the war.

The Danville Light Artillery was organized into service of the Confederacy in April 1861 and was composed mostly of men from Pittsylvania Co. Va. The unit took part in all of R. E. Lee’s Cheat Mt. campaign, and in the Jackson’s Valley campaigns. It also participated in the Seven Days Battle, Cold Harbor, and the siege at Petersburg. The unit surrendered 4 officers and 79 men at Appomattox 9 A ril 1865

6th West Virginia Cavalry

17th Virginia Cavalry
Those Splendid Horsemen

Company K of the 6th West Virginia Cavalry was organized from the 3rd West Virginia Mounted Infantry in Jan 1864. It operated in the Eastern Theater of operations performing scouting and guard operations until it was reorganized and remounted in July and August of 1864 in Maryland. It remained in Maryland until the close of the war. In June 1865, the regiment was transferred to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where it performed patrol and escort duties operating against hostile Indians until it was finally mustered out of service in may 1866.



Company F, 17th Virginia Cavalry, the Nighthawk Rangers, was formed from personnel taken from Wood, Jackson, Wirt, and Roane counties. Originally organized as Company N of the 14th Virginia Cavalry, the company was assigned to the 17th Virginia upon the regiment’s reorganization in 1862. Serving the Confederate cause throughout the war, the unit found itself finally at Appomattox. After taking part in the final battles, the unit decided to not surrender with the Army and cut their way through the Union lines intending to join Gen. Johnson’s forces in the Carolina’s. When word of Gen. Lee’s surrender reached them however, the unit disbanded. Some of the men turned themselves into local authorities and were paroled, but most of the members went directly home and never took the oath of allegiance. Thus they were and always will be Rebels.

The mounted members of the WVRA are proud to portray the members of Co K of the 6th West Virginia Cavalry and Company F of the 17th Virginia Cavalry. We honor the memory of those loyal patrons that fought in the Civil War.

25th Virginia Infantry

The Upshur Grays were organized in Upshur County (West) Virginia by Captain John C. Higginbotham 27 May, 1861, despite strong Union sentiment in the county. On 3 June, the fine new tents of the Upshur Grays became the target of the first cannon shots fired at “The Philippi Races”. The group was designated Company A of the 25th Regiment Virginia Infantry when state forces were organized by Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnet at Huttonsville in mid-June. Lt Col. Jonathan Heck became the first official commander of the regiment. As part of the Army of the Northwest the 25th took an active part in the Tygart and Cheat campaigns, and participated in the battles of Rich Mountain, Greenbrier River, and Allegheny Mountain.

In the regimental reorganization during the winter at Allegheny (to replace losses incurred at the Battle of Rich Mountain), Co A became the second “Co B”, while the companies of Lt. Col. George Hansbrough’s 9th Virginia Battalion were organized into the empty companies of the 25th. The 9th had been active battalion in the Army of the Northwest participating in action at Corrick’s Ford, Cheat Fort, Greenbrier River and Allegheny Mountains.

The “new” regiment would fight at McDowell with “Stonewall” Jackson, and under the command of Gen. Ewell they would take part in all of the 1862 battles of the Army of Northern Virginia including Cross Keys, Port republic, Cold Harbor, Malvern Hill, Cedar Run, Second Manassas, Chantilly, Cedar Mountain, Sharpsburg, and Fredericksburg.

In 1863, the 25th was again reorganized under the Brigade command of Brig. Gen. John “Grumble” Jones. They were temporarily transferred to John Imboden for the spring raid into West Virginia. The regiment returned to Jones in time to take part in the Gettysburg campaign. Afterwards, the 25th would be in the center of action at Mine Run. The 25th and Jones’ Brigade would be decimated during the campaign at the Wilderness in May 1864. The few men remaining would be attached to John B. Gordon and continue the fight through Earlys’ valley campaign of 1864, at Petersburg, and at Saylor’s Creek. Of the 2,000 men compromising the wartime rolls, only 1 officer and 14 men were left at Appomattox.