



Vol. XXI. May 2022 Issue IV.

### Captain's Column

Gentlemen,

It is now officially Spring as we have had the F. Co Camp of Instruction. As usual COI was at Fort Harvie and was the weekend of April 8-10. We had wonderful weather, food, and friendship as well as two new recruits. New faces are always a plus. They both survived and I believe enjoyed themselves so hopefully we will see them in the field. In attendance were the Hanson's who also brought along their cousin Mike. The Alexanders were there as well as Chuck Arrington, Kendal Chapman, myself, and my recruit Marcel Ciascai.

Most gathered on Friday, and we set up camp in the Fort as usual. Either we were a week or two early or the season is later this year, but the fort was free of new growth and looked very presentable. On Friday eve we had dinner at Mario's and that is where the fun began with good conversation, food, and stories. After a few people stayed up talking late everyone finally went to bed but it seemed there was always someone up and throwing logs on the fire as it glowed through my tent walls sort of like a morning sun.

The next morning, we had formation, raised the flag and the weekend officially began. Greg got breakfast going and even if members from north of the Potomac have their reservations Greg's concoction of hominy, sausage, eggs, onion etc. goes down well with me. After breakfast we cleaned up and then fell in for our first drill session. We began without arms and accouterments, simply working on the footwork of basic drill. After a while we began to get into the routine. There were moments of entertainment, a couple of times when left and right were, shall we say, transposed. The looks on faces would be interesting to capture on film. Kendall and Marcel had a "one of us is wrong but which" moments. Though Kendall was right and about 99% sure he was right, that 1% still leaves a curious look on one's face that is hard to shake. Their moment of confusion was topped by Mike though who had a bit more trouble and suggested he instantly regretted. I will leave it up to him if he wants it publicized but let's just say it was not something that a Confederate unit would consider though perhaps some Yankee units would as they have different outlooks on decorum.

After a break we fell in with arms and went through the manual of arms, loading, fixing bayonets, etc. Again, old hat to some, new to others but we got down the basics. We worked on stacking of arms multiple times and got it, so the stacks looked pretty good most of the time. The key is getting those first two muskets in the proper place, by the foot with the flats of the bayonets together and the third drops in easily. After drilling in the fort for a while, we went into the field and marched working on our wheeling and facing, forward into line etc. With 9 people it was just enough for two full ranks and made it easier to fall into place rather than to have to leave spaces.

We marched for a while and then broke for lunch and a break. After a bit more drill we had our live firing session and while no one shot perfectly at least everyone got a few shots in the numbers and a feel for shooting an 1860's black powder musket. I think the live firing is a nice addition to the COI and something we couldn't do just anywhere. I know in my case it was probably 15 years after I first got my musket before I live fired it. It does give one an appreciation of how their shoulders must have felt after 60,100 or more rounds. I can imagine they were black and blue.

Dinner on Sat was brought by Chuck Arrington and was some very good BBQ as well as collard greens, cornbread and I think it was banana pudding. The BBQ was very good and thank you Chuck. I am not sure if it was banana pudding as I didn't have any but writing this, I am thinking that not to many Confederates would have had that for desert! Sat night was a bit cooler than Friday but still pleasant enough, especially considering some years we have been to the fort.

On Sunday we again had breakfast thanks to Greg and then church service. After church we worked mainly on the bayonet drill and got down some of the basic moves. I want to work on that for our demonstrations as it is interesting and will give the public

one more reason to come out and see us if say the NPS can put it on their advertising when we do something for them.

We did have some sad news and a loss of participants on Sat afternoon. Ray and Greg's great aunt who is Mike's Grandmother passed away on Sat morning while we were in the field, so Ray and Mike left in the afternoon to go be with family. Our prayers go out to them, especially Mike as apparently, he was taking care of her and so the closest member of the family to her. it was obvious it hit him hard. Sorry for your loss Mike.

Next up, this weekend in fact, April 29-May1 is Kernstown, and we will be doing our living history demonstrations. I hope to get there by 5 on Friday so that I can get a key for the gate and if anyone one else is coming on Friday let me know. If not on Friday if you can get there by about 9 on Sat, it would be good. They open at 10 and we will probably do our usual 11, 1 and 3 demos so if you can be in camp and set up by 9 it works well. Bring 20-25 rounds minimum so we can do some live firing and have some spares. If we do the bayonet drill, we might not fire quite as much and it all depends on the audience.

Well, I believe that is the news for this report. Thanks again for the COI turnout. If you have good pictures, put them on the Facebook page. I have written a couple time on there and people are looking at it. Some of you know Wes Catlet, well he read about the COI, and I may have him talked into coming out to Kernstown and seeing us. People are out there who still like the idea of reenacting, we just need to reach them. The Facebook page needs content. Just add a picture or two it will help.

I look forward to seeing you all at Kernstown.

Thank You,

Travis Clements, Capt. F. Co. 21st Va.

**1<sup>st</sup> Sergeants Column**

Gentleman,

This is the roster for this weekend at Kernstown. Travis, Chuck, Greg, Ray. Jack and I will be there on Sunday morning. We also have the McDowell event on the 13-15 of May. Those who are signed up for that event are Travis, Chuck, Kendall and Greg. If you have any questions about anything let me know.

1st Sgt. Alexander

### **Ode to Joe**

