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Captain's Column

Greetings, I want to wish everyone a very Happy New Year! I hope your holidays were both enjoyable and meaningful.

When I agreed to serve as interim Captain I also agreed to serve as Captain for 2016 if elected at the annual meeting in February. I want to make it clear to the membership that I will serve if elected.

My personal experiences have shown me over the years that change is inevitable and that change does not necessarily mean something bad, just something different. To those members who have chosen to move on, I wish them well and want them to know the door is always open. To those of us who remain I just see this as another opportunity to show the re-enacting community why we are the "Best in the field". We have already added 2 new members and several other candidates have indicated a desire to attend our annual meeting. F Company has existed for more than 30 years and has seen many changes both within our ranks and in the re-enacting community. 2016 and beyond should be no different.

Please know, as always, my door is open to any questions or suggestions for events, changes or just to talk. My goal is to continue the high standards that F Company has always stood for and been recognized both on and off the field. I hope I can count on your commitment to making 2016 a successful and enjoyable year. Please join me as we embark on the 2016 season at our Annual Meeting next month. Make your plans accordingly. I hope to see you there.

Respectfully submitted,
Tony Turley
Acting Captain, 21Virginia, Company F

1st Sergeant's Column

Called Membership Meeting- I want to personally thank the co members who attended the 5 Dec 2015 Called Membership meeting in Richmond. The report on that meeting has already gone out to everyone, but I personally appreciated those who attended. It was a good meeting w/both information and viewpoints being exchanged by all those in attendance in a congenial, friendly manner which served to demonstrate that participation and knowledge are key to the success of any living history organization.

End of the Waterloo Adventure- I'm sure that some of you will be happy that this long drawn out living history travel log is coming to an end, however, others have told me they've enjoyed the story of our adventures at Waterloo! In any event, on we go! Having gotten a hot shower, a decent dinner w/a most humorous waiter, and having a good night's sleep, we were up the next morning, following Waterloo, for breakfast and packing for a trip to Paris. Having defeated Napoleon we needed to see that he was truly buried at his tomb! After a sumptuous breakfast we were off to the Genvat train station. Changing train's in Brussels went fine and we were off to Paris w/no complications despite the rain. Interestingly enough during our two weeks in Europe this was the only day of serious rain which was just fine as we were only traveling! Fortunately, we'd been able to send all our living history gear back w/Paul Brooks to be shipped back to us from Germany, so we were finally traveling light so to speak.

Arriving at the Nord (North) train station in Paris, we loaded up a van cab run by one of famed Uber (independent cab drivers), and were off to our hotel in the heart of Paris. Arriving at the Hotel de Lutece around 4:00PM in the afternoon, we proceeded to explore the local area despite the rain and try to make dinner reservations for that evening. The Hotel de Lutece sits on the small island (l'Isle Saint-Louis) in the Seine River, which is the original historic Paris settlement site. Barbarians settled this island long before the Romans invaded Gaul (France). They farmed both banks of the river, but retreated at night to the defenses of the island to protect themselves from their barbarian enemies. Once the area was conquered by the Romans, they saw the wisdom of using the island as city center due to its great defensive position. So in other words, this is the original Paris! Incidentally, my Viking ancestors attacked and besieged the city in 885-86 AD, but were repulsed, however, they would be more successful in 1066 when they invaded England. The small island is connected today by an excellent walking bridge to the large island which is dominated by the famed Notre Dame Cathedral and just beyond the cathedral is the Metro (subway) station which takes you easily to any point in Paris. By the way dinner that evening was on the island at the La Brasserie de l'Isle Saint-Louis which proved to be an outstanding choice as did all our evening dining in Paris.

The next morning we were up and onto the Metro for a visit to the Palace of Versailles, the original home of the French kings. While the Metro was crowded w/lots of tourists since it was the tourist season, none the less we got their after about a 45 minute ride so we could wait a full two hours to gain entrance to the Palace. I'd forgotten what a "magnet" the Palace is for tourist and as it turned out every third tourist was Chinese! It was a hectic visit, but the interiors and art is not to be missed, but try to go in the off season to miss the crowds! It was a fairly long day, but the weather was cool, but sunny. Fortunately, we mastered the Metro fairly quickly again as both myself and Riemers had been to Paris before. We ate like "kings" that night again at another Paris bistro. I should explain that bistro dining is the sort that you can afford in Paris, that is, not the upscale restaurants the city is famed for, but nevertheless, excellent food

and service as well. Having not been to Paris in some 25 years I found a lot more menus, exhibit labels and maps in English which made our travels a lot easier.

Day two we were off to the Musee De 'Armee- Hotel Des Invalides, which is the original old soldier retirement home created by Napoleon and that has evolved into France's national army museum. By the way we'd each purchased a Paris Museum Pass book which proved to be a real bargain and got us to the head of most waiting lines for admission as well. The Army Museum had dramatically improved since my last visit in 1990 w/great interpretive exhibits including numerous English labeling along w/expanded exhibits carrying French military history up thru World War II. We viewed a special exhibit which dealt w/both Churchill and DeGaulle as World War II wartime leaders, and what amounted to their "stormy" relationship throughout the conflict. The Middle Age armour and weapons along w/the great firearms and uniform collections on exhibit were excellent including the huge mounted cavalry exhibit dealing w/the evolution of uniforms, weaponry and equipment thru the ages. We ended up spending the entire day, which we hadn't planned on, because the museum was so fascinating and educational! We sustained ourselves as the Musee has a very good snack bar along w/high quality sales shop. We were getting into our routine of touring throughout the day and dining well by night at a local bistro. Yes, as the finale we made sure that Napoleon was still in his tomb in the chapel!

The next three days were spent on a large scale visit to Paris museums including the Louvre and Musee d'Orsay, but also including the Paris Museum of Natural History since Mark Riemer has a great liking for this topic while Janice Riemer appreciates art. I personally like walking around Paris and "discovering" things so to speak, plus watching all the locals along w/the tourists from all over the world. Sitting at a sidewalk café w/a glass of wine or a beer is a great way to spend our time just observing so to speak. Interestingly enough, quite by accident we discovered the Crypte Archeologique Du Parvis Notre-Dame. We kept passing this underground museum site each day as we made for the Notre Dame Metro stop, and finally decided to give it a try and what a surprise! I'd thought it was just the archeology of the cathedral, but turned out to be the evolution of the city of Paris from pre-historic times up thru the great re-building of the city by Napoleon III in the 1850's. An extremely enjoyable visit which gave us a whole new perspective on the city and both its growth and history! All in all a great visit!

Our departure from Paris proved to be interesting! We were due to leave on early Sat afternoon, but starting on Thu began to understand from Paris TV and newspapers that a taxi strike was looking to start on Fri afternoon as a protest about the unlicensed Uber taxis operating in the Paris area. We got hotel management to go ahead and book us a cab, but we were getting more skeptical about how firm this reservation was. Fri evening on French TV we see blocked roads around both of Paris's two airports, at least two cabs on fire, taxis drivers w/bloody heads, and French riot police out in force! Well the next day the cab driver does show up on time and turns out to be a Cambodian émigré who speaks passable English. As we are driving to Orly Field (our airport), he tells us that the cab strike is about to start up again, and he's participating, but not until he drops us at the airport! As they say adventures in travel!



Ode to Joe

