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Captain's Column

Gentlemen,

Well we have completed the Spotsylvania and New Market events. Both were good events, and the weather wasn't bad. It has been cool at night during almost every event this season so far. Unfortunately, there has been some dragging in the ranks where attendance is concerned. Gentlemen, I can't stress enough that if you sign up for an event, you need to make every effort to attend. Other people depend upon you to make the event worthwhile. We were forced to fall in with another unit at New Market because 50% of the people that signed up did not attend for whatever reason. We play like we practice guys. If we can't get folks to come out, we will not be able to keep our edge. Please do your best to support the unit for the rest of the season.

Cold Harbor is coming up on May 31st and June 1st. Please see the 1st Sgt.'s report to know what you need to do. Don't forget to bring your rounds and caps in a bag with your name on it. I will more than likely come out on Friday to set up. I may stay the night, but most likely will need to leave and return very early on Saturday morning. We have visitors coming from afar, so please come out and help out with this.

Please keep Tony in your prayers. If you have read the emails of late, you will already be aware that his Father passed away in April. We look forward to seeing Tony back in the field whenever he is ready.

Respectfully,

Captain Gammon

1st Sergeant's Column

Gentlemen,

As part of this newsletter you have received the basic outline of the upcoming Cold Harbor 150th anniversary program which the National Park Service has outlined for us. It will be a great opportunity for you to interact w/the public in camp as well as conducting firing demonstrations and the evening candlelight tour. I'll be arriving on Fri afternoon w/members of our New England Contingent and bivouacking at the Confederate turnout on the park's tour route road, so come on out and join us. Please note the following for this event:

(1) Ammunition and Percussion Caps- You need to bring 30 rounds of blank ammunition and 50 percussion caps for this event which must be placed in a plastic or paper bag w/your name on them for turn-in to the NPS and re-issuance for each firing demonstration. I'll provide a period ammunition box for us to use for turn-in/issuance of ammunition.

PLEASE NOTE- No ammunition or percussion caps will be in your cartridge box or cap pouch until the time of the firing demonstration, so make sure you empty out your cartridge box and pouch prior to arrival at Cold Harbor. You can expect the NPS to inspect weapons, cartridge boxes and cap pouches each morning so insure that you comply w/their rules!!!

(2) Authenticity and Event Interpretation- The public is going to be looking at us closely at this event, so let's keep everything to the Civil War period, and most especially be prepared to interact and answer the public's questions concerning soldiering in the ANV. Let's make use of those ponchos and shelter halves in bivouacking and correct mess gear for cooking in the field.

(3) Participation- You don't have to be registered for this event so come on out! We've got high quality Confederate and Federal units participating so we need to put forth our best numbers and effort. I think you'll get a lot out of the program especially w/the excellent NPS artillery crews that will be participating.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll see reports from Pvt DiSimone on his experiences at the 150th Wilderness/Spotsylvania CH as well as an additional report on this event from Pvt Kyle Weidman (one of the "Fighting Weidman Brothers").

See you at Cold Harbor!!!

Sincerely,

Michael L. Vice
1st Sergeant
F Co, 21st VA Infantry

Cold Harbor – National Park Service

On behalf of Richmond National Battlefield Park, I'd like to thank the members of F Company, 21st Virginia Infantry for agreeing to participate in the Cold Harbor 150th program on the weekend of May 31-June 1, 2014. The living history part of the program will run from 9:00-5:00

on Saturday and 9:00 to 4:00 on Sunday. Also, there will be candlelight tours starting at 8:30pm on Saturday night. We could not do this type of program without the support of volunteer groups such as yours. Thank you all for your help. Below is some information about the event.

The address for the Cold Harbor Battlefield and Visitor Center is 5515 Anderson-Wright Drive, Mechanicsville, VA 23111. It is located off Rt. 156 about 9 miles northeast of Richmond. Your unit will be able to arrive and start setting up on the afternoon of Friday, May 30. The campsite will be behind the Confederate turnout along the one-way 1 1/4-mile park tour road.

After unloading your vehicles, you'll be able to park on private property near the visitor center. If you arrive before 4:30pm, you can stop in at the visitor center for directions. If it is after 4:30pm, you can proceed down the tour road to your campsite at the second turnout. Bert Dunkerly will be onsite during the afternoon to help with getting everyone situated. He will have the necessary volunteer paperwork to sign up the group and get a listing of all the participants.

Your unit will be participating with the other Confederate infantry groups in two firing demonstrations. The first is Saturday at 1:30pm and the second is Sunday at 2:00pm. Each demonstration should last approximately 20 minutes.

Overall, there will be three firing demonstrations on Saturday and one demonstration on Sunday. We have the Federals presenting two of the small arms demonstrations on Saturday and the Confederates presenting one demonstration each day. The Park would like each of the groups to bring blank rounds and caps for these demonstrations. If possible, please place the unit's rounds and caps in ammunition boxes. The park will secure the rounds and caps either Friday afternoon or Saturday morning. Prior to each demonstration we'll have NCOs from each of the groups retrieve their boxes and distribute rounds and caps. After each demo we'll take up any unused rounds and caps. There will be an inspection of small arms on Saturday morning.

During the course of both days, the park will have "Visit the Camps" programs where a staff member will alternate taking visitors through the Union or Confederate camps while giving an overview of the life of the soldiers in the field during the Overland Campaign. After each program, the conductor will encourage the visitors to stop into the different camp sites for a short program. So, if you have a special program that your unit would like to give, please let us know.

There will also be a candlelight tour of the battlefield on Saturday night starting at roughly 8:30. This is a ranger led program with living history volunteers at different stations along the tour road giving short 1st person presentations about Cold Harbor. We often have five or six large groups of visitors attend this program.

The park will have the following units at the Cold Harbor 150th Weekend Event:

15th New Jersey Infantry (The group will have members of other units supporting it at CH. The unit camps at the Hanover County Cold Harbor Park adjacent to the Garthright House. It will come up to the visitor center for demonstrations.)

1st Minnesota Infantry

48th New York Infantry

2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery

8th New York Heavy Artillery Fife and Drum (NPS group from Fort McHenry)

U.S. Grant - Larry Clowers

F Company, 21st Virginia Infantry
4th North Carolina Infantry
Confederate Sharpshooters
Confederate Staff, Eppa Hunton's
Robert E. Lee - David Palmer

Civil War Photographer - Terry Thomann

Confederate Artillery - Two guns, NPS detachment from Richmond NBP and NPS detachment from Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania NMP
Federal Coehorn Mortar - NPS detachment from Petersburg NB

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further questions, please let me know.

Thank you again for your support at Cold Harbor. I know your group will help make this a great event!

Ed Sanders
Richmond National Battlefield Park

Private Mike DiSimone

On the weekend of May 2, I attended the 150th Spotsylvania reenactment. This was by far one of the most enjoyable events I have experienced in some time. We had a great time as we had three battles to include a tactical where we were successful in capturing a hill top of union artillery. We also had a unique trench battle which lasted quite a while and was surprised that most of us spent around forty five cartridges each. As usual F Company stood out amongst the ranks especially during the field battle planning and rehearsals. We were the only company that was properly maneuvering and following orders passed down by the chain of command as a real unit would have. This once again proves the success of how our company is organized and why the camp of instruction is both unique and crucial to our company. Another stand out was our uniform presentation which was complimented by more than one unit out loud during our movements. Thank you to all that showed up I truly enjoyed myself and am looking forward to seeing you all at New Market.

You're Obedient
Mike DiSimone

Kyle Weidmans report for the Sunday battle of the Mule Shoe.

Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia.

F company, 21st Virginia, Longstreets corps, ANV.

Sunday, May 4th, 2014

F company awoke on Sunday morning knowing that carnage was just around the corner. It was the second day of battle at the 150th anniversary of Spotsylvania Courthouse; the Mule Shoe. We knew we would be in the thick of it. The morning light revealed a drop in F companies numbers, but our resolve to fight the battle did not falter. After some parade and drill we assembled for battle in the breezy afternoon sunshine and watched our fellow troops mobilize. It did not take long for us to realize that rebel cannons were on both sides of us. It was going to be a noisy affair indeed.

After our corps was settled into the trenches the long lines of blue federals began advancing towards us. Our company was in reserve, behind the trenches. Cannon volleys and musketry began in earnest. We could hear rebel yells one moment, and then the low pitch "hurrahs" of the Federals as the tide of battle ebbed and flowed. Our company was ordered to provide support fire from behind the trenches. We began firing over the heads of our comrades. After a few volleys we were sent into the trenches to relieve our brothers in arms. The trenches were filled with mud, cartridge paper and the dead and dying. F company fired into the enemy, as fast as we could. But that did not stop the enemy from reaching our trenchworks. After taking a few hits we managed to push the Yankees back. To our left the enemy had made a large breakthrough. F company swiftly refused the line at a right angle. Our timely maneuver kept the enemy breakthrough in check. Soon the yanks had all been captured after being counterattacked by our reserve troops. Soon after, an incorrect order from a foreign NCO brought F company out of the trench during the chaos of the battle. We used the time to reform and count our cartridges. After a few minutes we were again ordered into a vacant stretch of trench. We held our fire, at this time we were down to an average of 10 cartridges per man. When we saw the next federal push we fired like furies, our rifle barrels were white hot, our throats were parched, but we managed to stand firm and keep the Yankees from another breakthrough.

We now noticed the grassy plain in our front consisted of Yankee dead and wounded. There was nothing left to shoot at. After a few more minutes of musketry to our left the enemy gave up entirely and the bugle call sounded; ending the battle. F companys' performance was admirable. We had been the extreme left of the colors, and we had repelled a bayonet charge in our front, refused our line to protect our flank, and fired the bulk of our ammunition. Though our numbers were few our grim resolve and patriotism made sure we did not fail on this bloody day. Our conduct on this day was a fine tribute to the real southern men who had fought so well on this day 150 years earlier.

Ode to Joe

