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Captain's Column

There was a change in F Company's schedule for the month of August. A fort work day had originally been planned for Saturday, 24 August. But because of some issues facing the unit that needed to be addressed there was a called meeting of the general membership held on that day instead. The issues discussed were recruiting, membership participation, and company leadership.

Due to the current political environment this is a very difficult time for recruiting. All things "Confederate" are considered evil and racist. Most people don't want to be associated with that view and this outlook on anything Confederate will probably not change anytime soon.

Membership participation is at an all-time low. F Company has not been able to field a unit at any of the events on its schedule so far this year.

In the leadership area, the Company is facing the impending retirement and/ or stepping down of both the First Sergeant and the Captain.

This is not a pretty picture but there is hope. A couple of good things did come from the meeting. An "Idea" Committee was established to develop new and innovative ways to attract recruits and promote F Company's presence in the reenacting community. Its members consist of Stephen Adams, Travis Clements, Greg Hanson, Ray Hanson, and Jeremy Villanueva. I wish them well. Also, in the leadership area, Johnathan Alexander expressed a willingness to take on the First Sergeant position when Mr. Vice steps aside.

I believe that these are steps in the right direction. I am, however, disappointed that the unit did not vote to support the Ft. Harrison event and the Richmond Civil War Show No more than four signed up for either event.

Ft. Harrison is a National Park Service living history program. F Company has developed a strong working relationship with the NPS by supporting their activities with our presence over the years. Why do you think we get to have our meetings at NPS sites. It's not every unit that gets to do that.

Also, while the internet with all of its different facets and new-fangled ways of doing things may be our best source of recruiting, I don't believe we should turn our backs on the traditional Civil War Shows. They are still a potential source for recruiting.

I believe that if we continue to do this, ignore NPS programs and Civil War Shows, it will be to our detriment. While this "Idea" Committee may be a good idea, I don't believe it is a good idea to ignore these other sources.

In regards to Ft. Harrison, I will be sending an email to the four members that indicated they would participate in the program. We will have to fall in with another unit (something else that we discussed at the meeting) but with these low numbers we don't have much of a choice

So there we have it. Steps in the right direction with the new committee and Mr. Alexander's willingness to be 1st Sergeant but also steps that I believe are in the wrong direction by not supporting these other programs. Two steps forward and two steps back. So where do we end up. You answer that for yourself!

With regards,
Captain Turley

1st Sergeant's Column

Well we've had our special called membership meeting on Sat, 24 Aug w/most everyone who is an active member of F Co present at the meeting. Please see the attached minutes of that meeting. I want to point out that it's impossible in such a meeting to record each and every person's remarks on this very critical subject of the survival of F Co, so what you have are generalizations of the key points made by those attending. It's now going to be up to each individual member to follow thru on making a true effort to attend F Co events as well as recruiting on a continuous basis in order to sustain F Company's future existence. Additionally, we will all be looking forward to the proposed plans from our Idea Committee to help us in sustaining F Company.

Attached you'll also find two reports along w/photos of the Winery at Bull Run which occurred the weekend of 3-4 August right next to the Manassas Battlefield.

Fort Harrison- NPS (28-29 Sep 2019)- The Richmond National Battlefield will be hosting this weekend living history program at Fort Harrison. Troops will be able to camp inside the original fort w/available firewood for cooking along w/drinking water and latrine facilities. There are no modern intrusions which make it an ideal venue for living history interpretation to the visiting public as well as immersing yourself in a CW atmosphere. No registration fees so any and every member of F Co can participate plus it presents an excellent opportunity to engage in one-on-one recruiting for F Co as well as dispelling the media myths that have sprung up about the Confederacy and the Rebel soldier.

There will be three firing programs on Sat and two firing programs on Sun. You should plan on a maximum of 50-60 blank rounds and at least 80 percussion caps for musket clearing purposes. NPS Historic Weapons firing regulations will be in effect so you need to bring (1) all our rounds and caps in a plastic or paper bag w/your name on them for turn-in and (2) make sure your musket is clean for the Sat AM musket inspection.

Directions: GPS directions are 8621 Battlefield Park Road, Richmond, VA 23231. For general directions take I-295 around Richmond to Exit 22, exiting onto Hwy 5 North and begin to look for signage to the site.

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

Winery at Bull Run

Official Report by Privates Ray and Greg Hanson:

Privates Ray and Greg Hanson reported for duty with the Stonewall Brigade at the Bull Run Winery on Saturday Aug 3rd. After being welcomed by the Stonewall Brigade and given a schedule of the day's activities, the Hanson's were free to roam the winery and mingle with the local population. Many kindness and warm remarks were given to the Hanson brothers by the local population including free water and wine by the winery. Festive music and assorted vendors added to the day's events. When it came time to form up and meet the enemy on the field of battle Private Ray Hanson bravely (foolishly) volunteered F Company to act as skirmishers for the Stonewall Brigade.

This was no small feat because only Pvts. Ray and Greg were sent out to halt the Union Advance upon the Brigade that morning. The Yankees vastly outnumbered the Stonewall Brigade by a 3 to 1 margin, however the Union advance was halted if only for a short time by privates Ray and Greg Hanson. By the time the Yankees figured out there were only 2 Hanson brothers yelling and shooting at them it was too late. The Stonewall Brigade suddenly appeared over the ridge in support of the skirmishers and began an advance upon the Yankees. The Stonewall Brigade was able to halt the Yankee advance and for a brief period were able to push back the Yankee line before a retreat was called. Sadly Pvt. Ray Hanson was wounded in this action. Another member of the Stonewall Brigade was assisted off the field due to heat issues. A good time was had by all and the opposing forces regrouped back at the winery to enjoy the festivities. Captain Austin wisely withheld the free wine vouchers until after we had met the enemy on the field of battle.

Excerpts from Pvt Alexander's diary....

July 19, 186_.....dearest love, I have received word that we will be stationed at the Winery at Bull Run for a short time on or about 3 – 4 of Aug next. I am hoping that I can get leave or you can get away from the family so we might see each other as it has been sometime and my heart grows faint thinking of you each night.....

Aug 4, 186..., the sight of you in your beautiful frock, has made my hardships so much easier to bear, arriving on Sunday morning and you being able to stay almost the entire day, our encampment was pleasant but did not compare to seeing you once again. I was surprised at the many civilians who gathered at the Winery for the festival planned, including music and such that I almost forgot there was a War.

At about 2 pm, Union scouts were sighted, all of those on hand were called together to repulse any attempt to disrupt the festivities. Captain Austin Williams of the Stonewall Brigade was on hand and at once took command of those available. A strong show of force on our part was thought would throw off any Yankee ideas, so we formed quickly, orderly and without any fanfare moving at once to a strong position that would show the Unionist that we were not to be trifled with this day. After a brief but brisk exchange of fire, the Union men withdrew, thinking better of it. Our small troop suffered only minor wounds and scraps and we returned to the tranquil site of the Winery.

I was so glad to spend the rest of the day with you, not knowing how long it would be before our next opportunity. Thankfully, the photographer was able to take your image before you left. I have placed it safely between the pages of my diary. I praise the Lord for your safe return and an early end to this conflict, always and forever yours.....



Meeting Minutes
F Co, 21st VA Called Membership Meeting
24 August 2019

This special meeting of the F Co membership was called to order at 1002 by the F Co Commander. Following an opening prayer, the Co Commander noted the good turnout of the membership to this critical meeting. F Co members attending were: Adams, both Alexander's; Clements, Firth, Gorgone, both Hanson's; Riemer, Turley, Vice, Jeremy Villanueva and Brett Weidman.

The Co Commander in his opening remarks noted that this was not a meeting to close down F Co, but rather to explore the key issues facing the future existence of F Co as a viable, functioning living history organization. He noted three key issues facing F Co- (1) Recruiting, (2) Participation and (3) Leadership. He spoke to the difficulty in recruiting in the world of today for a variety of reasons not all of which could be overcome; that he recognized that members had jobs and families that came first, but F Co was a commitment as well; and that the leadership of F Co was going to be changing following 2020 when he along w/the 1st SGT would be retiring from their positions. He noted the critical problems of participation at New Market, Cold Harbor and Gettysburg as making it impossible for F Co to function as its own separate company.

The 1st SGT then commented on the F Co standards that had been in place since the formation of the company in the mid-1980's not only in terms of dress and equipage but as to drill and personal/company discipline which demanded a lot from the membership, and had served the company well throughout the years of its existence by remaining true to these standards. More especially the 1st SGT noted his and the Co Commander's problem in leading a company which didn't have sufficient personnel to form the needed company element, and by having to fall in w/other units only served to dilute the disciplined and authentic portrayal of F Co as it sought to correctly portray the true Confederate soldier. The 1st SGT commented about the on-going anti-Confederate attitude which had begun w/the Oct 2015 Charleston, SC church mass shooting till the present day which wasn't at all helpful to unit recruiting. The 1st SGT then passed out co assignment sheets w/a realistic appraisal of the problem of member participation during the 1st half of the 2019 campaign and the negative impact on co participation and integrity.

The Treasurer noted that during the last six months (1) the number of recruit inquires had dropped dramatically which was a reflection of the problems throughout Confederate living history, and (2) that the company senior leadership was experiencing a whole lot less "fun" since they had no company to command in

the field due to the lack of member participation. Following these general comments from the Executive Committee members the floor was opened up for comments and potential recommendations from the membership to deal w/the three key issues cited by the Co Commander.

Literally all the members attending the meeting then spoke about the issues they saw facing the company from a number of different and varied vantage points. Some key points included more visibility in recruiting thru more specific recruiting efforts; possibility of other units participating in skirmish events at the Fort; the production of a series of videos for both company training use and more especially for recruiting efforts; the previous problems of the company which had been overcome in the previous years, but how this situation was very different; the need for continuing respect for the spirit and sacrifice of the Confederate soldier thru a serious authentic portrayal; and the need to continue to educate the American public on the Confederate soldier.

At the conclusion of the member's general remarks, the 1st SGT passed out sign-up sheets for the four remaining 2019 events- Ft. Harrison, Battle of Cedar Creek, Richmond CW Show and Remembrance Day Parade. Results were noted by Treasurer on white board so everyone could see participatory numbers.

A motion was made and seconded w/discussion to for an Idea Committee to pursue recruiting efforts w/emphasis on greater visibility for F Co thru Facebook, Twitter and other social media as well pursuit/production of training and recruiting videos. The members composing the committee are Steve Adams, Travis Clements, Greg and Ray Hanson; and Jeremy Villanueva. The Co Commander advised the committee that they needed to pick a chairman within 30 days of this called meeting, and that the committee could make no expenditures nor commit F Co to specific courses of action w/o prior approval of the Executive Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 1220 hours.

Michael L. Vice
1st SGT/Secretary

Ode to Joe

