

OUR CAMP JOURNAL

Volume 17, Issue 4

"We are but few in number but formidable." - Pvt. James Shelton, 7th Md. Co. B

January 2012



**1st Regiment
Federal Volunteer Brigade**

Notes from the 1st Regiment

As of newsletter press time, the 1st Regiment FVB meeting has



Col. Jay Henson

not been held. That meeting is scheduled for January 14th, in Gettysburg. Information on events and schedules from that meeting will be offered at the 7th Maryland Annual Meeting. *Please attend the very important 7th Maryland meeting on Jan 21st.*

Inside this issue:

Upcoming Campaigns	2
December 1861	2
Lieutenant's Report	3

President's Message

Happy 2012. The second year of the sesquicentennial is here. This past year was an exciting one for the seventh. The first year commemorations are past and are memorable in many different ways. The mud at the Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, the heat at Bull Run and since I did not attend it, the reminiscences of Ball's Bluff will have to be supplied by those who did. Several of our members experienced injuries and medical emergencies, indeed serious scares that took them out of action temporarily, but thankfully not permanently.

Our encampment and the renewal of annual soiree held this year at St. Michaels was especially unforgettable. It was a thorough success and I hope to see us continue to gather like this and have an event that is designed just for us to enjoy ourselves. I intend to propose a committee to plan and oversee the soiree so look to putting your knowledge and talents toward contributing to this goal. We will need a site (sponsors have already invited us to use several different places), music, (and a caller for dances which we lacked this last time around), entertainment for between sets, a food coordinator, and whatever. Please be thinking about this and what you can do to help.

Thanks to the efforts of the 7th Maryland Ladies Sewing and Perloo Society, we are now the Beau Brummells of the Federal Volunteer Brigade and most probably of the entire Army of the Potomac. Remember when you wear your shirt about how much time and work the ladies put into bringing them from an idea put forward at last year's meeting to reality. They are exceptional and I have to thank all who worked on them again. Thank you.

We gained new national colors. Again, it was due to the efforts of a few. Thank you flag committee (Dawn Giovannini) for finding a source and negotiating the deal to procure it. Thank you also to the those who worked to earn extra funds to make the purchase. The ladies who covered so much ground pushing the cart around battlefields and towns. I have a mental picture of Sarah Harris in sun-bonnet setting off pushing the raffle wheelbarrow off toward the Rebel camp in 105 degree plus heat with accompanying humidity to sell tickets. Brutal, but she did it. All of the individuals who sewed, knitted, baked, canned, and crafted to make the goods to be sold to raise the funds. Kevin Harris who built the cart to carry the goods and who also built the raffle wheelbarrow. Also to the anonymous donor to

gave so generously to our flag fund.

Can't forget our newsletter editor. Jay has outdone himself this year in coercing, threatening and cajoling material out of our reporters. Once gathered, he was able to organize, assemble, and put the result to bed before distribution while all the time making it look professional despite having to contend with last minute inputs. I know I didn't get more than about two of my contributions in before deadline and then I missed one submission altogether. Jay had to put up with all that and still maintain his cheerful confidence. What a guy! I should not forget the contributors either. For all the tardiness, we did come up with a lot of interesting stories. I think that this year's volume of *Our Camp Journal* taken as a whole is the best ever.

Our meals were if anything better than ever. Sarah didn't up the fee, but we were getting fed pretty high on the hog so maybe she's been having a few of the boys out doing some late-night foraging from other company's supply tents. If so, I don't want to



**Pvt. Bill Hart
President**

(Continued on page 4)

Upcoming Campaigns

Saturday, January 21, 2012

(Snow date, Sat. Jan. 28th)

17th Annual Meeting

7th Md. Regiment

Marietta Mansion

Glenn Dale, MD

(Company)

Join your pards for the first "event" of the 2012 season, our annual planning, election and business meeting. **The meeting will begin promptly at 10 AM.** Please don't be late.

This year the meeting is being held at the Marietta Mansion, our "home" for many past events and drill days.

Also as a change, *dress uniforms* will be requested. Civilians and spouses are also invited to attend.

Association elections will be held and planning for events in the sesquicentennial year of 1862 will be slated.

Among the events in the coming year will be the (annual) New Market event, Gettysburg, and this year's big event, Antietam.

The fare this year will be light appetizers, so please bring your favorite hors d'oeuvres (please, not everyone bring chips and dip...) The company will provide the sodas and water.

Located at: **5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD.** From the Capital Beltway (I-495) north, take **Exit 20A, Lanham (Route 450 East).** From the Beltway South, take **Exit 20 A-B, Lanham/New Carrollton (Route 450).** Turn left onto **Route 450 East at the end of the ramp.** Follow **Route 450 East (Annapolis Road)** for about **4 miles to Route 193 West and turn left.** Proceed **1/4 mile and turn left onto Bell Station Road.** **Marietta is the first driveway on the left.**

From **Route 301 South, turn right onto Route 450 (Annapolis Road) West and follow for about 6 miles.** From **Route 450 West proceed to Route 193.** Turn right onto **Route 193.** Proceed **1/4 mile and turn left onto Bell Station Road.** **Marietta is the first driveway on the left.**

December 1861: Getting Ready for Winter

By Ron Baumgarten,

Civil War blogger from McLean, Virginia via ViennaPatch.com

As December 1861 got underway, thousands of soldiers from Pennsylvania called Camp Pierpont in Langley their home away from home. Federal commander George B. McClellan had sent Brig. Gen. George A. McCall's division to Langley back in October as part of an advance into Northern Virginia. Now McCall's division had the privilege of occupying the far right of the Union lines, not far from the banks of the Potomac River. But with such responsibility also came the monotony of camp life, consisting mainly of drills, picket duty, and all around bad food, not to mention disease. The harsh winter weather also loomed just around the corner. Things were pretty quiet along the Potomac, although the men occasionally had the chance to experience something a little more interesting.

A Few Excursions to the Environs of Dranesville

The Pennsylvania Reserves required forage, and McCall knew perfectly well that a ready supply awaited him on the secessionist farms lying in the no-man's land between the Union and Confederate armies. At the start of December, he dispatched two expeditions to the area near Dranesville, about ten miles down the Leesburg-Georgetown Turnpike (today's VA-193) from Langley. The first expedition on December 3, with the brigade of Brig. Gen. John F. Reynolds in the lead, succeeded in carrying away 50 wagons full of forage.

A few days later, on December 6, Brig. Gen. George G. Meade headed to the farm of "bitter secessionist" John Gunnell, two and half miles northeast of Dranesville. (*OR*, 1:5, 455.) Meade was to collect forage and arrest two of Gunnell's nephews, who were "reported . . . to have shot two stragglers of [Nathaniel Banks' division, and left them for the hogs to devour." (*OR*, 1:5, 456.) The brigade of Brig. Gen. E.O.C.

Ord followed behind, just in case.

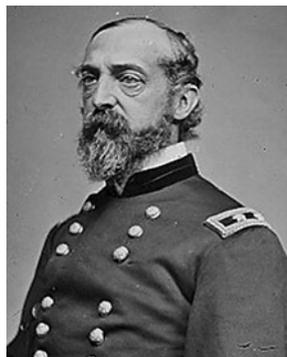
Meade's brigade set out early in the morning from Camp Pierpont. An anonymous soldier from the 11th Pennsylvania Reserves described what happened at Gunnell's in a letter to the *Ebensburg Alleghanian*.

Companies A and D . . . were detailed to take charge of the farm and loaded the wagons of which latter articles we had about sixty. The boys immediately fell to with a will and in a comparatively short space of time every wagon was loaded down with wheat, corn and potatoes. In addition we captured eleven head of horses, a pair of oxen and wagon, thirty-eight hogs, averaged two hundred pounds each, two buggies, a splendid carriage and a lot of excellent light harness. Two negro slaves, the property of said Gunnell were also taken in tow and brought into camp. They were exceedingly glad to be afforded opportunity to effect their liberty and are now, I understand, employed as cooks in some of the regiments.

As prisoners, Meade's men brought back Gunnell's nephews and three other "rank secessionists." (*OR*, 1:5, 456.) The entire expedition returned to Langley by around six that evening.

Meade was not fully satisfied with his day's work. The general had experienced more than a

few disciplinary issues with his men, who "got into their heads that the object of the expedition was the punishment of a rebel, and hence the more injury they inflicted, the more successful was the expedition." (Meade 234.) As he lamented to his wife, "it was with considerable trouble they could be prevented from burning everything" that was not carried away. (Meade 234.) Meade, whose conciliationist sensibilities were offended, was "ashamed of our



Gen. George G. Meade

(Continued on page 3)

Lieutenant's Report



Lt. Jeff Bush

I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and the New Year has started well for you! I do look forward to being with you all in the field. It always seems like an eternity from mid November until we first get back together again. Getting my kit in order and spending extra time researching does make the time go faster. In the last couple of months I have had the opportunity to read a couple of books that have provided some special insight into the war.

The first is Corporal Si Klegg and His "Pard" by Wilbur F. Hinman, the second The Civil War Chronicle by J. Matthew Gallman. Wilbur F. Hinman was a veteran of the war reaching the rank of Lt. Colonel in the 66th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The book was written in 1887. It follows a fictitious character Si Klegg through his enlistment in the 200th Indiana Company Q to the end of the war. The book was hard for me to put down; it was the story of every enlisted man who served. It covers nearly anything that the average man would have experienced in the Volunteer army of the Civil War. Si is the

green enlistee who transforms into a lean veteran guided by his veteran pard Shorty. Si learns nearly all of the ins and outs of military life usually by doing it wrong the first time! You may have already met Si in a couple of drawings that are from the book. The first is of a round "cheeky" fellow who has everything but the kitchen basin on his back ready to march to war. The second drawing is a lean soldier that he becomes carrying only what he needs. The question came up around the fire at Cedar Creek I believe, if I could think of a book that could be turned into a movie this was the one! If you want some ideas for your impression or just to provide an activity or a moment this would be an excellent resource!

Now if you want something that was written a little more closer to the action or may I say more real time, The Civil War Chronicle may be for you. Put together by J. Mathew Gallman a Professor of History at the University of

Florida and an authority on the Civil War. He has written several books on the subject. Some of these include "The North Fights the Civil War The Home Front" and "Mastering Wartime". The Civil War Chronicle is a compilation of correspondence chronologically arranged and written by civilian and military. It starts with letters written in late 1860 (November) and carries you to May 1865. Some of the people whose letters, reports and such are President Lincoln, Horace Greeley, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, Roger B. Taney, Ulysses S. Grant, George B. McClellan, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Frederick Douglas, Louisa May Alcott, and others, some who are not named. If you are looking for the mindset of the time or trying to get a better picture of how some of these folks reacted to things you can find quite a bit here. At over 500 pages there are hundreds of letters, reports, orders and thoughts.

I highly recommend both of these books. Both give you an idea of what, when, where and how of the people we try to portray. So while in "winter quarters" you may find one of these useful if for nothing else making the time fly while waiting for "action".

Winter 1861

(Continued from page 2)
cause." (Meade 234.)

McCall painted a somewhat different picture. In his official report, he informed McClellan about "the very exemplary conduct of all the troops on this occasion" and "commend[ed] from personal observation the good discipline maintained." (*OR*, I:5, 456.) Perhaps McCall was still bristling from "a very severe letter" he received from McClellan in November commenting on the poor state of the discipline in his division and wanted to avoid even the suggestion of lax behavior of the part of his men. (Meade 226.)

Winter Quarters

Back in camp, Pennsylvanians prepared for the season ahead. As the unknown soldier from the 11th wrote to the *A-*



Photograph of a Union winter camp showing typical log huts, similar to those described in the letter to the Alleghenian (courtesy Library of Congress) Credit Ron Baumgarten

leghanian, "The weather here is becoming pretty cold and winter-like, but considering that . . . the climate is not far different from that of Pennsylvania and in fact of the Alleghenies, we should not expect it to be otherwise." The troops

ensured that they would be well protected from the elements by constructing crude log huts topped with tents. According to soldier from the 11th, "some of them boast of the possession of stoves; others compromise on homemade fire places called 'California stoves.' Between the two we are right comfortably situated."

The Grand Review

McCall's entire division participated in a military review in front of Johnston's Hill near Langley on December 12. The *Philadelphia Press* noted that since the Grand Review at Bailey's Crossroads on November 20, "there has been no such military display on the line of the Potomac." Many officers

(Continued on page 4)

Our Camp Journal

Winter 1861



(Continued from page 3)

from other divisions attended, although it is uncertain whether McClellan himself was present. The regimental bands "by their inspiring music, gave patriotic zest and liveliness to the occasion." (*Phila. Press*, Dec. 14, 1861.) The *Press* could not help but notice that the soldiers' movements "were marked with the precision of old and long-drilled regulars." Apparently McCall had instilled some degree of discipline, at least for the purposes of parading.

The review ended after two hours, and "all who witnessed it pronounced it a brilliant success." (*Phila. Press*, Dec. 14, 1861.) In a little more than a week, some of these same soldiers would be sent on another expedition to Dranesville, and would score even greater accolades.

Sources

Ebensburg Alleghenian, Dec. 26, 1861; Meade, George Gordon, ed., *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade*, Vol. 1 (New York, 1913); *Philadelphia Press*, Dec. 14, 1861.



Civil War Re-enactors; America's living Historians.

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

hear about it, but whatever she's doing, we do have a first-class mess. Thank you Sarah, Rizzie, Melanie, Mary, all who have done such a fine job in providing the food and preparing it. Thanks too to the pot-wallopers who clean up after.

We got to try something new too, base ball as a (sort-of) organized sport. As I wrote earlier in these pages, that event was great fun. I heard that our team captain is working to organize at least one re-match with the Excelsiors for the coming year. I for one am looking forward to that and encourage anyone who was unable to enjoy this year's match to join up for the next.

Our education mission to the youth continued with support to the Salisbury Christian School and the Tome School. I would like to sustain and see if we can put more effort into those endeavors and perhaps find a way of doing additional educational activities. We do have several members who have done individual presentations to school

groups so thank you for doing your part. The young people are our future as an organization and as a hobby. The young people and their parents.

And finally the military. Thanks to our NCO's, especially to Corporal Giovannini, we are being instructed in many of the basics to get our drilling down correctly. The more who can attend our early season drill events, the more we can have at least twice-a-day drill at events, the better we are going to look and the better we are going to feel about our impression. When we work at it, the 7th is absolutely the sharpest unit on the field but that happens only when we do work at it. Drilling can be boring, but it is essential and there are things to be learned about the men we represent when we do practice. They drilled relentlessly and from their writings, they developed a pride in their unit through becoming proficient. I have seen the same thing with us and want to see it again. Put us to work First Sergeant and Captain-Lieutenant. Speaking of the later, I do enjoy seeing him puffing on his pipe in his own inimitable style while observing our drill and contributing a few words of wisdom to the First Sergeant now and

again.

If I have forgotten to mention anyone who has contributed to our success this year, I apologize. There have been so many who have gone the extra distance in helping in their own specific manner, so many who have contributed in ways both big and small. Much of what has been done has been done because someone decided to do it, they found a need and filled it, not because they were asked to but because they stepped up and did it. What a group we have!

Start looking now to the sesquicentennial events for 2012. We will definitely be scheduled for those the FVB will engage in and I know that some members have already signed up individually for more distant events. Do your research early and have your favorites ready to present at the annual meeting. This is going to be another exciting year. I look forward to seeing you all at the annual meeting where we will bring in a new organizational administration to oversee our new year.

See you at the meeting!